

Spring 2014

Questing the Beast: From Malory to Milton

Malorie A. Sponseller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd>



Part of the [French and Francophone Literature Commons](#), [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#), [Medieval Studies Commons](#), and the [Modern Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sponseller, Malorie A., "Questing the Beast: From Malory to Milton" (2014). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 1078.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/1078>

This thesis (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies, Jack N. Averitt College of at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

QUESTING THE BEAST: FROM MALORY TO MILTON

by

MALORIE SPONSELLER

(Under the Direction of Julia Griffin)

ABSTRACT

The Questing Beast is a Medieval creature that has received little scholarly attention. Because of her labile nature, she is difficult to identify and therefore challenging to study. When previously analyzed, she has been considered only in her Medieval context. By comparing the Questing Beast from *Perlesvaus*, the Post-Vulgate Cycle, and the *Prose Tristan*, four identifying characteristics can be found: she is symbolic, she is multi-formed, she is a mother that gives birth, and she produces a barking noise most often made by her unborn young. Of these four signs, the last is the most prevalent and identifiable. Using these traits and exploring the impact of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* on post-Medieval authors, three developmentally important Renaissance Beast can be identified. Through comparison and critical analysis there is evidence that Error and the Blatant Beast from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Sin from Milton's *Paradise Lost* are descendants of the Medieval Beast. Her presence in Malory, Spenser, and Milton provides an unexplored link between Malory and Milton that opens Miltonian studies to further analysis through a Medieval lens. The Beast develops into an important character during the Renaissance, which allows her to influence Modern Arthurian authors and helps prove the importance of the Renaissance Questing Beasts and her continued prevalence in literature.

INDEX WORDS: Questing Beast, *Beste Glatisaunt*, Medieval studies, Arthuriana, Arthurian literature, *Perlesvaus*, The Post-Vulgate Cycle, *Prose Tristan*, Medieval French literature,

Medieval English literature, Renaissance English literature, Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Errour, the Blatant Beast, John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Sin, Percival, Tristan, Charles Williams, *Taliessin Through Logres*, T. H. White, *The Once and Future King*

QUESTING THE BEAST: FROM MALORY TO MILTON

by

MALORIE SPONSELLER

B.A., Georgia Southern University, 2011

M.A., Georgia Southern University, 2014

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

STATESBORO, GA

© 2014

MALORIE SPONSELLER

All Rights Reserved

Major Professor: Julia Griffin
Committee: Mary Villeponteaux
Robert Costomiris

Electronic Version Approved:
May 2014

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my close family and friends: my parents, my siblings, and Daniel Rivera. Without their support, my quest for the Beast may never have seen a fruitful ending.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee for their dedication and patience. Unraveling the intricacies of the Questing Beast proved difficult and time consuming. Their guidance and knowledge was important in discovering and developing my research on the Beast. I would like to specifically thank Julia Griffin for her tireless efforts in helping me wrestle my ideas onto these pages.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Preface.....	1
I. Introduction	5
i. The Questing Beast in <i>Perlesvaus</i>	5
ii. The Questing Beast in the Post-Vulgate Cycle.....	9
iii. The Questing Beast in the <i>Prose Tristan</i>	17
iv. Possible Pagan and Christian Origins for the Beast	19
A. Pagan Origin Myths	20
B. Christian Origin Myths.....	24
C. Summary of the Questing Beast's Origins	25
II. Malory's <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i> and the Renaissance Questing Beast.....	27
i. The English Beast	27
ii. Malory's <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i>	28
A. The Naming of the Questing Beast	29
B. The Questing Beast in Malory's <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i>	30
C. Summary of the Questing Beast in <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i>	32
iii. The Questing Beast in Edmund Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	34
A. The Questing Beast in Book I of <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	35
B. The Questing Beast in Book VI of <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	40
C. Summary of the Questing Beast in Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	47
iv. The Questing Beast in John Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>	48
v. Summary of the Questing Beast from Malory to Milton.....	54
III. Conclusion	56
i. Contemporary Use of the Questing Beast.....	56
A. The Questing Beast in Charles Williams' <i>Taliessin Through Logres</i>	56
B. The Questing Beast in T. H. White's <i>The Once and Future King</i>	60
ii. Conclusion	62
Works Cited	66

Preface

The Questing Beast was introduced into literature in the early thirteenth century. Her early development in *Perlesvaus*, the Post-Vulgate Cycle, and the *Prose Tristan* created a multi-faceted creature that is 'good' or 'bad' depending on which work is read. Her malleable nature is indicated not only by her duality in personality and purpose but also by her variable origins and multiple descriptions. The earliest inclusions of her are cameo appearances, often to convey a specific metaphor or concept; once her meaning is successfully communicated, she is often quickly forgotten in the text. She does not remain a peripheral character, however; because of her versatile nature she has been easily appropriated by later writers. The Questing Beast's significance increases with each subsequent work; originally only in Arthurian texts, she is adapted for non-Arthurian pieces. She develops into a main character through her adaptations in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. These adaptations are so substantial that the Questing Beast's presentation in Modern Arthuriana, such as Charles Williams' poem *Taliessin Through Logres* and T. H. White's work *The Once and Future King*, is affected by these Renaissance authors. Although originally a fleeting character, her recurring involvement in important works and sustained pervasiveness is worthy of study.

The Questing Beast's labile nature makes it difficult for scholars to pinpoint her various representations outside of traditional Medieval Arthurian tales. As a monster subject to alterations, this quality has possibly affected the critical analysis she has received and made it difficult to trace her prevalence in post-Medieval literature; her malleability should not discount her scholarly importance, however. Core aspects of the Questing Beast's appearance and actions make it possible to trace her literary progress, which has not yet been attempted by scholars. By

identifying her defining characteristics here, I am able to connect her to previously unrelated characters. Her qualities can be reduced to four distinct indicators: she acts as a symbolic or allegorical representation, she is multi-formed in appearance, she acts as a mother and gives birth to live young, and she produces a barking noise most often made by her unborn young. Of these four signs, the last is the most prevalent and identifiable. Although the other indicators are important and often shown, they are not always present. By using these four characteristics, figures such as Spenser's Error and Blatant Beast and Milton's Sin can be identified as descendants of the Questing Beast: these characters, which have not previously been considered in relation to the Beast, develop her characteristics in varied but still recognizable forms.

Little attempt has been made to identify the Questing Beast in her variant forms and compare them. In Norris J. Lacy's 1986 *The Arthurian Encyclopedia*, only a single article is listed for the Questing Beast, a 1957 piece entitled "The Questing Beast: Its Origins and Development" by Linette Muir. While Muir's article is important in its focus on French, Spanish, and Portuguese representations of her and the differences between them, it does not go beyond these foundational texts to explore and analyze the versions of the Beast that develop after the Medieval period. At least in this article, it appears that the Questing Beast has been either dismissed, forgotten, or seen as a monster confined to a particular literary period.

Contrary to these dismissive views, I argue that the Questing Beast is a progressively important character in Arthurian literature, Medieval through Modern, and deserves scholarly attention, especially once her brief appearances are put together as a group and examined. Her malleable nature enables authors to change her function over time so that in Renaissance works, the Questing Beast has developed from a fleeting Christian metaphor into an active distributor of sin. This fundamental change in purpose affects subsequent use of her. Spenser and Milton

transform the Questing Beast into a powerful character, which ultimately enables her to be used in Modern Arthuriana.

In this paper, eight works are analyzed to determine the Questing Beast's defining characteristics, importance, and prevalence. The first Medieval works, *Perlesvaus*, The Post-Vulgate Cycle, and the *Prose Tristan*, are the earliest Medieval sources for the Questing Beast and determine her defining characteristics. Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which brings together previous English and French Arthuriana into one culminating work, provides the link between these medieval tales and later English readers. Malory's treatment of the Beast is essential to understanding how the Renaissance writers, Spenser and Milton, view and use her. Lastly, to discern Malory's, Spenser's, and Milton's effect on the Questing Beast, the modern works *Taliessin Through Logres* and *The Once and Future King* will be analyzed and compared with these earlier titles.

While the Questing Beast has been examined in her Medieval context, she has not been comparatively studied outside of these texts. My research and analysis argues for her presence in important literary works beyond the Medieval period. Similarly, the connections between Malory and Spenser and Spenser and Milton are well-known, but an argument for Malory's connection to Milton has not been investigated. The Questing Beast provides a link between all of these texts, which suggests that *Le Morte d'Arthur* may have affected parts of *Paradise Lost*; if this is true, future Milton studies can expand our understanding of his works through the influence of Malory and his Medieval predecessors. Lastly, the roles the Questing Beast takes in her Renaissance adaptations promotes her importance and enables her to enter into modern culture; while many may not recognize the Questing Beast immediately, she continues to have a presence in Modern literature and pop culture.

Finally, to better understand the Questing Beast, we must examine the myths that inform her personality, description, and use. Various mythical creatures, like Scylla, Echidna, chimeras, and the Beast of the Apocalypse, are discernible behind the Beast and sometimes her descendants. Identifying and understanding these origin myths helps us further comprehend her character and determine recognizable traits she displays.

I. Introduction

The Questing Beast enters into Arthuriana after a surge in the popularity of prose. The development of prose romance during the Medieval period is a product of increased literacy rates that enabled stories, such as Arthurian tales, to be retold, prosper, and become popular with the literate public. In the Medieval period, poetry was the primary outlet for literary creativity. Prior to the *Prose Tristan's* appearance, for example, the Tristan and Iseut romances were narrative poems often using the popular “octosyllabic rhyming couplet” and sometimes “recited by *jongleurs* or professional performers” (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* xv-xvi). The recitation of poetry was public entertainment while prose “was considered unworthy as a medium for writing literature.” This attitude continued until increasing literacy made prose more popular since it could be read in the privacy of one's home. Once literacy increased, prose renditions of Arthurian tales appeared, such as the *Prose Erec* and the *Prose Lancelot*, which in turn popularized earlier prose works such as *Perlesvaus* and the Post-Vulgate cycles (xvi). The increase in private reading and desire for more Arthurian texts encouraged authors to adapt and change stories, reintroducing the Questing Beast into Arthurian genre.

The Questing Beast first appears in three French prose texts during an influx of French Arthurian writing: *Perlesvaus*, the Post-Vulgate Cycle, and the *Prose Tristan*. These three texts appear in the first half of the thirteenth century; the most probable sequence for them is *Perlesvaus*, Post-Vulgate, and then the *Prose Tristan*. Looking at these first accounts and analyzing her behavior and characteristics will help pinpoint her possible origins.

i. The Questing Beast in *Perlesvaus*

Perlesvaus is known by multiple titles, including the French *Le Haut Livre du Graal* and

in English *The High Book of the Grail*. This tale focuses on the knight Perlesvaus¹ after his failure to procure the Holy Grail. The storyline is an extension of the unfinished *Romance of Perceval – The Story of the Grail* by Chrétien de Troyes (Bryant viii-ix).

Nigel Bryant, in his translation of *Perlesvaus*, notes that the original composition is the subject “of considerable quantities of scholarly work,” and specifically “its relationship to other Grail romances” (vii). He considers the work of various scholars and their suggested manuscript dates and agrees that *Perlesvaus*'s initial appearance happened between 1191 to 1250 (vii), suggesting it “was composed after 1191 and before 1212, presumably soon after 1200” (Nitze 89).² From Bryant’s and William Nitze’s research, we can tentatively say that *Perlesvaus* is the first work that includes the Questing Beast.

Riding through the Lonely Forest, Perlesvaus comes across a beautiful glade with a red cross positioned in the center. On either side of the clearing is a person: on one side a white-clad knight and on the other an elegant maiden, each holding a golden vessel. From the surrounding forest runs a remarkable creature in great alarm, “for she bore a litter of twelve in her belly which were yelping like a pack of dogs, and she fled through the glade, terrified by the barking of the dogs inside of her” (Bryant 150). She is “as white as new-fallen snow, bigger than a hare but smaller than a fox” (150). Perlesvaus “felt great pity for her, for she looked gentle and very beautiful, with eyes like two emeralds” (150).

The animal approaches the unnamed knight for help, but receiving none she turns to the

¹ Also known as Perceval, Percival, Parzival, and Parsifal in various texts (Lupack, “Perceval”). To maintain continuity, he will be referred to as Perlesvaus in relation to the text *Perlesvaus*.

² The scholars considered include Raphael Levy, Lucien Foulet, and William Nitze. Their research was based on elements ranging from subject matter to vocabulary in order to determine *Perlesvaus*'s dates (Nitze vii). Nitze's conclusion is based on the colophon of the Brussels manuscript, which states that *Perlesvaus* was written for “Johan de Neele” (74), identified by Nitze as “Jean de Nesle II, lord of Nesle and castellan of Bruges” who took over his father's title in 1202 (75). With Jean fleeing Flanders in 1212 due to increased tension between France and England, “his two loyalties,” Nitze places the Brussels manuscript before his departure (75).

maiden. When this too is useless, the Beast goes to Perlesvaus. Compassionate, he opens his arms to catch the Beast; as she prepares to jump up to him, he is chastised by the white knight: "Sir knight, let the beast go. Don't try to hold her, for she's not your concern or anyone's: leave her to her own destiny'" (151). Finding no protector, the Beast lies beneath the cross, finally giving birth to twelve, fully grown dogs uglier than their beautiful mother. "She humbled herself before them and lay flat on the ground as though begging for mercy" from her own children, "keeping as close to the cross as she could" (151). Without hesitation, the wolves surround her and attack, killing their mother by tearing her to pieces. Although the twelve are unstoppable in their slaughter, they are unable to devour the Questing Beast's flesh, nor can they move her from beneath the cross. The newly born wolves disappear into the surrounding forest, leaving the knight and the maiden to care for the dismembered body of the Beast. Placing a piece of severed flesh into their golden cups, the white knight and maiden also "collected the blood that lay on the ground" and worshipped the spot of the murder before turning to worship at the cross (151). Once the knight and maiden retreat back into the forest, Perlesvaus dismounts and follows their example, worshipping at both areas.

Curious, Perlesvaus leaves, continuing to travel through the Lonely Forest. Later, he visits his uncle the Hermit King. Knowing that his uncle is wise, Perlesvaus divulges his experience with the Questing Beast, hoping for an explanation. The Hermit King reveals that the Beast represents Christ "and the twelve dogs are the Jews of the Old Law, whom God created" (163). God "wanted to see how much [the Jews] loved Him" and cast them into the desert for forty years, but protected them by keeping their clothes intact and fed them manna (163). Not trusting their Savior, the Jews hid manna away, fearing that God would forsake them and leave them to starve. Angered, God turned their manna stores into "lizards and snakes and vermin,"

forcing the Jews to realize they had done wrong. Because the Twelve Tribes did not have faith in their God and later crucified his son, the twelve dogs represent the doubting tribes: “the twelve dogs are the Jews whom God nourished and who were born into the Law which He'd established, but never wished to believe in Him or love Him; instead they crucified Him and broke his body as basely as they could” (164). The importance of the number twelve in Christian culture derives from the twelve disciples of Christ; the fact that the Beast gives birth to this specific number of wolves links her to Christ's disciples and makes their symbolic representation more concrete. Christ submits to the tribes' destruction, just as the Beast is torn to pieces. Their inability to eat the Beast's flesh symbolizes the tribes' inability “to partake of the sacrament of His body” (Loomis 101).

With its matricidal offspring, the Beast can be seen as strange and tragic. Although her disturbing murder calls into question the natural relationship between mother and young, the Beast's importance lies in her representation as Christ who throws himself at the mercy of his own Jewish people. Her children, the disciples of Christ, are shown as murderous and blood-thirsty, not caring about the harm they cause her. The unsympathetic view of the wolves depicts Christ's followers as a persecuting people, consonant with the anti-Semitism common during the time of *Perlesvaus*' creation. The Beast exemplifies the love Christ offered to the Twelve Tribes and proves that, even after being physically destroyed, neither the Questing Beast nor Christ can be taken from their true place by the cross. An image of Christ's divinity, the Beast is a positive force for *Perlesvaus*, reminding the Christian knight of Christ's love that he still has, even after his failed attempt at retrieving the Holy Grail.³

³ *Perlesvaus*'s failure to achieve the Grail is part of Chrétien de Troyes' earlier work *Le Roman de Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*. *Perlesvaus* takes place after Chrétien's work, continuing *Perceval*'s story. The author of *Perlesvaus* “assumed a knowledge on the part of his audience” of Chrétien's work to fully understand the character and plot of *Perlesvaus* (Bryant viii).

Perlesvaus has the only example of a symbolically ‘good’ or positive version of the Questing Beast. Later texts have religious themes, but these themes are explored through demons, devils, and sin and appear to depend upon the Post-Vulgate Cycle for the Beast’s origins and meaning.

ii. The Questing Beast in the Post-Vulgate Cycle

After *Perlesvaus*, come the Vulgate and Post-Vulgate cycles. Of the two series, only the Post-Vulgate includes the Questing Beast. The Post-Vulgate goes by various other titles, including the Post-Vulgate *Romance of the Grail* and the Pseudo-Robert de Boron⁴ (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* xii). As the prefix indicates, the Post-Vulgate most likely appeared after the Vulgate Cycle, “or perhaps even as it was being concluded” (xii). Since the first three of the five Vulgate romances were completed “within a decade or so after 1215” (viii), the Post-Vulgate probably appeared between 1220 and 1230. Like the Vulgate Cycle, the Post-Vulgate consists of multiple romances; the Questing Beast appears in two, the *Suite du Merlin* and *Queste del Saint Graal* romances.

The *Suite du Merlin* introduces the Questing Beast into the Post-Vulgate narrative. King Arthur, resting near a spring during a hunt, notices the sound of baying hounds, which he believes are his own. Expecting to find his hounds searching for him, Arthur is surprised to see “a very large beast, the most bizarre of form ever seen” (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* 408). Amazed at the sight, the king “said to himself, ‘Now I see the greatest wonder I have ever seen. For I have never heard of such a bizarre beast as this one. If it is marvelous on the outside, it is even more marvelous on the inside. For I can hear and recognize quite clearly that it has in its body living

⁴ This title is derived from an accidental attribution of Robert de Boron as the author of the Post-Vulgate; while he did write a Grail romance, it was not this text (*The Lancelot-Grail Reader* xii).

hounds who are barking” (408).⁵ Unlike her description in *Perlesvaus*, the Beast is large and “as strange of body as of conformation and as strange inside as outside,” all while maintaining her distinctive bark (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* 408). Overall, her descriptors are vague, but the unclear description of her body is less important than the noise she produces.

After King Arthur describes the Beast, she drinks from the spring and leaves. Only then does Sir Perceval⁶ approach the king on foot. They converse about the strange Beast, and Perceval explains it is his family's quest to capture the creature. Alan Lupack expressly states that the family members active in this capture are King Pellinore and his sons (*The Oxford Guide* 465). Curious, Arthur asks the knight to further explain his attachment to the strange animal. “[T]his beast,” Perceval explains, “is fated to die at the hand of a man of my line, but he must be the best knight to come from our kindred and the kingdom. Now, as things stand, they consider me the best knight of our land and of all our country... I've said this not to brag but to learn the truth about myself” (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* 409). With his horse dead, Perceval is hoping for brotherly aid, and he becomes upset when King Arthur, whom Perceval has not recognized, proclaims his own interest in questing the creature and refuses to give the horse to him. The Beast is a familial tool to determine who in Pellinore's family is the greatest knight; therefore, Arthur's desire to take away the quest from Pellinore's family is perceived as “ignoble” and “[d]iscourteous” (409). Not realizing he is speaking to his king, Perceval boldly denies Arthur the quest and mounts Arthur's own horse. The king challenges Perceval, to which the knight

⁵ Norris J. Lacy translates the Questing Beast as the “Bizarre Beast.” While this name makes sense in this text, it is a misleading title for the creature. All of the foundational works, *Perlesvaus*, the Post-Vulgate, and the Prose Tristan, refer to her as the *Beste Glaisant*, which roughly means Barking, Baying, or Yelping Beast (McShane). While the Beast is indeed bizarre, a more accurate title for her reflects the unique noise she produces, as this single quality is shared by all versions of the creature in some way. The more familiar name of ‘Questing Beast’ will be examined later on in this paper, when Malory's interpretation of the Beast is explored.

⁶ This knight is not actually named in the Post-Vulgate, but considering the knight has only been chasing the Beast for “a whole year” (*Lancelot-Grail* Vol. IV 168) he cannot be King Pellinore. Since the quest is associated with Pellinore's family, it is safe to assume this knight is Sir Perceval, Pellinore's son.

replies, "You will not have far to ride... if you want to find me, for I always stay in this forest in order to follow this beast. ... When you want to find me... come to this spring" (410). Arthur dismisses the knight and the *Suite du Merlin* continues with no further mention of the creature.

In the *Suite du Merlin* the Beast has little purpose other than to progress the plot. The reader learns she is strange, that Arthur is intrigued by her, and that questing after her is solely for Pellinore's family. Once this information is revealed, Arthur and Perceval argue over the acquisition of the king's horse. The forthcoming challenge allows Arthur to dismiss Perceval, enabling the plot to move forward. In this brief instance the Beast is neutral, as she is clearly not a Christ-figure and does not display any demonic qualities, creating a transitional step from the 'good' *Perlesvaus* creature to the 'bad' Beast seen later in the Post-Vulgate Cycle.

The next romance in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, the *Queste del Saint Graal*, reintroduces the Questing Beast through a tale told by a hermit to Sir Yvain. Yvain has searched for the Beast because he wants to "know where the barking comes from" and swears to leave her alone once he understands this mystery (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* 410). The hermit warns Yvain that he is going after his death and that the creature he seeks "is a beast of the devil" (410). Wanting to protect Yvain from the fate that befell his own sons, the hermit accounts for his sons' deaths, as they were also curious about the incessant barking coming from her abdomen (410).

Having one day found the Beast surrounded by water, the oldest of the hermit's sons "struck the beast through the left thigh, for he couldn't strike it anywhere else" (410). Hurt, the animal cried out and in response to her frightened call, "there came out of the water a man blacker than pitch, with eyes red as live coals, who took the lance with which the beast had been stricken" and killed all five of the hermit's sons (410). The man receded into the water, leaving the hermit to bury his sons. Undeterred, Yvain claims he wishes to follow the Beast and the

hermit reluctantly lets him. Yvain then meets the Knight of the Beast, presumably Pellinore,⁷ who informs him that he is foolish to try and capture the creature alone when he, who has quested after her for twelve years, has been unsuccessful even with all of his hunting dogs (411). Yvain's quest for the creature ends here but the Beast's story continues later with Perceval's pursuit.

Perceval determines to "follow [the Beast] to know if God will give me better luck with it than He gave my father'" (*Lancelot-Grail Reader* 411). Almost immediately after he begins to follow the Beast, Sir Palamedes,⁸ the Saracen Pagan Knight, intercepts him hoping for information concerning the creature's whereabouts. The Pagan Knight asks what Perceval is seeking, to which he replies that he is questing after the Holy Grail, but is currently interested in catching the Questing Beast (412). "[Y]ou've labored at folly,'" Palamedes exclaims, "you should [not] concern yourself with such a great thing as this... keep to your great quest for the Holy Grail, for you may be sure that if I find out that you're hunting this beast again, we'll have a fight'" (413). This scene between Perceval and Palamedes abruptly ends, and the narrative only returns to the Beast fifty chapters later.

The Questing Beast appears for the last time in the Post-Vulgate cycle as Sir Galahad travels through the Deserted Forest. The Beast is not alone, but has at least twenty dogs chasing her. Intrigued, Galahad thinks aloud, "Now it will be wrong of me if I fail at least to accomplish this adventure, since so many good men have labored at it and not been able to do anything'" (413). Turning to follow the Beast, Galahad sees two knights, Perceval and Palamedes, pursuing her. The three come together once they recognize each other and agree to chase the Beast: "they

⁷ The knight here is only identified as the Knight of the Questing Beast. As this knight has been hunting the Beast for "more than twelve years'" (*The Lancelot-Grail Reader* 411), this cannot be Perceval. Since the quest belongs to Pellinore's family, it would appear that this is King Pellinore himself.

⁸ Also known as Palamedes, Palomides, Palamede, and Palomydes in various manuscripts and texts (Johnson).

promised one another that they would never leave that quest as long as they could keep it” (413). The next day they find twenty of the hunting dogs dead, presumably killed by the Beast (413). While investigating the scene, a horseless squire confronts them and explains the creature also killed his steed. The squire points them in the direction of their quest and the three knights finally locate the Questing Beast, “weary and breathless,” drinking from a lake while the remaining greyhounds encircle the bank (414). Palamedes, intent on killing the creature, runs his horse into the water with his lance drawn. He “struck the beast in such a way that the lance passed through both its sides, and the point, with a great deal of the shaft, appeared on its other side” (414). Crying out, the Beast “went under the water and began to make such a great tumult all through the lake that it seemed that all the devils of hell were there” (414). Flames shot out of the water, producing “one of the greatest marvels in the world” (414). And although the flames did not last long, the lake began “to boil in such a way that it never stopped boiling” and “is still called ‘the Lake of the Beast’” (414).

The fact that Palamedes is successful in killing the Beast may raise questions concerning the creature’s ‘bad’ characteristics and Palamedes’ Saracen nature. If the Beast is finally killed by a non-Christian knight, does this negate some of the demonic nature the Beast possesses or change how we are to view either character? While Palamedes is indeed a pagan at this point in his journey, he is “a true Christian at heart” and is later baptized into the faith (Johnson). Thus Palamedes’ ability to conquer the Questing Beast is a demonstration of good triumphing over evil; which further solidifies Palamedes’ Christian nature and the Beast’s demonic qualities. He is a virtuous Christian at heart that is able to forgo the temptation of sin that the Questing Beast represents and ultimately kill her.

The character of the Questing Beast does not reappear in the Post-Vulgate Cycle after she

is killed, but near the end of the *Queste del Saint Graal* is an extensive story of her origins. Recently reunited knights Galahad, Perceval, and Bors take refuge for the night with King Pellehan.⁹ Knowing Pellehan to be wise, Galahad requests information on three marvels he has seen while traveling through Logres: the Questing Beast, the Spring of Healing, and the lady of the chapel (*Lancelot-Grail Vol. V* 283). Pellehan explains that there was once a King Hipomenes who "had a daughter, the most beautiful in all the kingdom of Logres" (283). The king also had a son, named Galahad,¹⁰ who was "handsome and wise," as well as full of "good grace" and "well educated" (283). However, the king's daughter was far more intelligent than Galahad, as she "had surrounded herself with the best masters in the world" and by the age of twenty "everyone marveled at her knowledge" (283). And while she was well-versed in the church, "she studied no other discipline so gladly as necromancy" (283). When the daughter "learned to love, she loved her brother because of his beauty and goodness" and she confronted Galahad with her feelings. He rejected her and threatened to burn her (283-284). Desperate to have him, "[s]he tried all the marvels she could, ecclesiastical as well as other kinds, to see if she could have him, but she couldn't" (284). Defeated, she decides to commit suicide rather than live in torment for the rest of her life. She retreats to a spring with a knife, but before she can kill herself "the devil appeared to her in the semblance of a marvelously handsome man" (284). The devil claims he loves her and grieves that she cannot have what she desires. Offering a plan, the devil states, "If you'll do what I ask of you, I'll help you to have him at your wil" (284). The daughter agrees. The devil then demands to have sex with her, and she is hesitant; her desire for Galahad outweighs her uncertainty, however. "When [the devil] lay with her, she experienced

⁹ This King is also known as the Maimed King or King Pellam in various manuscripts and texts (Lupack, *The Oxford Guide* 464).

¹⁰ The son, Galahad, is not the same person as the Sir Galahad listening to this story, although the two are connected, as is later made clear.

such pleasure that she forgot her love for her brother as completely as possible. One day she was standing by a spring with her lover the demon, and she began to think very hard” (284). The devil questions if she is thinking about killing her brother and she is, "for there's nothing in the world that would please me so much" (284). The devil explains his plan for enacting revenge on Galahad: he instructs her to bring him into her room and corner him against the wall, which will anger him, and he will retaliate by hurting her. She can then cry out and call the other knights to her aid and claim that Galahad raped her. Her accusation will cause her father, the King, to execute him (284).

The King's daughter follows the devil's plan, which results in her brother giving "her such a slap that her whole face and chest were covered in blood” (284). Crying out, the palace helpers and King Hipomenes rush to her aid. She accuses her brother of rape, and the king locks him in a tower. Questioned by the king, his daughter explains that her brother raped her some time ago but was too scared to tell him for fear of being put to death. Now, however, believing she is pregnant (which she is, though it is by the devil and not Galahad), she must tell him the truth. Grieved by his son's apparent treachery, King Hipomenes asks his barons to judge Galahad in order to ensure the law is enacted properly; they condemn him to death. The king then asks his daughter to determine how he will die, "I wish them to throw him to the dogs," she said, "when the dogs have fasted for seven days" and "[j]ust as she had commanded, the king had it done” (284).

Galahad discovers his fate when he is brought out of the tower to be executed. Realizing he cannot save himself, he disregards his father and the barons and condemns his sister: "You carry a devil, and a devil will come forth in the semblance of the most grotesque beast anyone ever saw. Because you're having me given to the dogs, that beast will have inside it dogs who

will bark constantly in remembrance of and reference to the dogs which you're having me given” (284-285). Once he finishes his speech, Galahad is thrown to the dogs, who consume him instantly (285).

The king takes great care of his daughter up until she bears the child. She had many ladies waiting at her side during the birth; however "they experienced such great fear that they all died except [the daughter] and one other lady” when they discovered the child being born was a "most grotesque and ill-favored beast” (285). Although a newborn, "[t]he beast ran away, so that there was no one in the palace of the castle who could bring it back, and it ran uttering the greatest barking in the world” (285). Upon learning that his daughter gave birth to a monster, King Hipomenes realizes his son told the truth, "and he tortured his daughter so that she had to tell him the whole truth... Then the king had her seized and made her die a worse death than her brother” (285). King Pellehan finishes his story, commenting that, because the Beast is a creature of the devil, it causes misfortune and "so many good men and knights have died” because of it (285).

The intermittent and underdeveloped story of the Questing Beast in the Post-Vulgate Cycle makes analysis and understanding of her character difficult. However, it is clear that this version of the creature is vastly different from its predecessors in physical characteristics and her moral significance. The Beast's importance in *Perlesvaus* centers on her Christian symbolism: she ultimately portrays the love and power of Jesus Christ through surprising, scary, and shocking actions. The author(s) of the Post-Vulgate Cycle focus primarily on the unsettling features of the *Perlesvaus* creature, namely the ruthlessness of her offspring and her merciless murder, and expand upon those traits, twisting the Beast into a devilish monstrosity that bears little to no resemblance to her earlier representations.

The Beast is a substantial creature in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, with a complete back story to explain her actions and intentions. Her barking, an essential component of her character, may have seemed too pagan for the author(s) of the Post-Vulgate Cycle, forcing them to repurpose her as a demonic monster. Although no longer the symbolic representation of Christ, the Beast ultimately proves that Christian ‘goodness’ can overcome powerful sin. As a physical product of deadly sin and demonic lust, the Post-Vulgate Questing Beast lures hunters to the lake, where her devilish father is able to protect her. Symbolically, she is the beguiling exterior of sexual sin, representing unchecked female wantonness and the lustful desires of men. Once cornered by her desiring hunters, her allure fades to reveal her true demonic nature and she is able to claim their souls. Only the virtuous can rebuke tempting sin and send her back into the pits of hell. The evil of sexual deviance can therefore be overcome. Here, the Beast's monstrosity is characteristic of Christian sin and her transformation from Christ-figure to sexual vice reinforces her symbolic importance. Not only does she represent lust, her creation is the result of her mother's twisted, unnatural sexual desire for her own brother. Though she isn't the product of incest, she is the product of the desire for it. Certainly she is a different animal from the one in *Perlesvaus*, and we can clearly see the change in characteristics from one version of the Arthurian legend to the next. These shifts in character will continue with the *Prose Tristan*, where yet another type of Questing Beast is produced.

iii. The Questing Beast in the *Prose Tristan*

The *Prose Tristan* was written “between 1230 and 1235, but expanded and reworked after 1240” (Curtis xvi). The popularity of the *Prose Tristan* is evident by the eighty fragmented manuscripts still available today, though it is one of the least studied Arthurian texts (xvi-xvii). While “[t]he overall theme of the prose romance... is that of the traditional legend” of Tristan and

Iseut's potion-induced love for one another, it is not focused solely on their story, “but rather a detailed biographical romance about Tristan” (xix).

Portions of the *Prose Tristan* follow Sir Palamedes, the Saracen Knight. Portrayed as a hunter of the Questing Beast, similar to the Post-Vulgate Cycle, Palamedes maintains this characteristic in the *Prose Tristan*. However, the Questing Beast is introduced in this work without Palamedes. Sir Tristan learns that King Arthur is lost in the Forest of Darvances (Curtis 194). After finding Sir Lamorat¹¹ in the woods, the two knights search for their king (195). After an unspecified amount of time, the two rest beside a fountain. As they rest, “a strange beast appears with the legs of a stag, the thighs and tail of a lion and the body of a leopard; it makes as much noise as twenty hounds. This is the Howling Beast” (Curtis 195).¹² Continuing the story, the Beast, thirsty, “jumps into the water to drink and then rushes off again” when another knight enters the area, clearly chasing the strange creature. Tristan and Lamorat know “he is the Knight of the Howling Beast” and attack him, but are unsuccessful in harming him. A valiant attempt is made to follow the Knight of the Howling Beast, but neither Tristan nor Lamorat is able to catch him (Curtis 195).

The Questing Beast is only mentioned once in the *Prose Tristan*. However, while it does not explain her origins or why Palamedes is chasing her, the *Prose Tristan* does provide the first description of her as an amalgamation of multiple animals. It is this description that Sir Thomas Malory uses to create his version of the Questing Beast, which subsequently becomes her most

¹¹ Also known as Lamorak in some texts (Lupack, *The Oxford Guide* 454).

¹² However, Linette Muir's work with various manuscripts shows that a version of the *Prose Tristan* exists in which the Questing Beast has a snake-like head. In ms. 112, the text describes the Beast as “*Le beste glatissant... a des pieds de cerf, les cuisses et la queue d'un lion, le corps d'un leopard, la teste d'un serpent*” (26, emphasis added), creating a Beast segmented into four different animals with the sound of dogs coming from her stomach. It is this four-part Beast, not Curtis' version, which is the one being used throughout this paper, that Malory uses as his model in *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

famous physical representation.

The purpose and personality of the Questing Beast diminishes here in comparison to the Post-Vulgate Cycle since she is mentioned once, and only briefly. However, while she is less important to the overall plot of the *Prose Tristan*, her distinct qualities make her stand out. The *Prose Tristan* Questing Beast's actions are similar to those in the *Suite du Merlin*, but other characters' differences change the stories. It is possible that this part of the *Prose Tristan* is an adaptation of the *Suite du Merlin*; however, there are enough differences between the two works that readers must consider them as completely separate.

The actions of the *Prose Tristan* Questing Beast effectively balance out the two extremes found in *Perlesvaus* and the Post-Vulgate Cycle. Here, she is a passive creature who does not engage any of the characters and in fact tries to avoid them. None of the knights offers a moral response to the sight of the animal. They are astounded and recognize the Beast as a creature to quest after, but do not assign a particular Christian or pagan meaning to her. She has lost her moral and religious implications in this retelling and has become another item to be wondered at and collected. In this way, she has been transformed into a neutral phenomenon of the Arthurian landscape. While no longer important for the sake of plot, the Questing Beast's influence in the *Prose Tristan* derives from her physical characteristics, which in earlier works were vague if mentioned at all. The multi-part nature of the creature creates more questions than it answers; however, a detailed look into the possible origins and myths that were considered and used by her creators can help us understand her various personalities and appearances, and how the two interact with one another.

iv. Possible Pagan and Christian Origins for the Beast

The change in physical characteristics of the Questing Beast from *Perlesvaus* to the

Prose Tristan may be due to her origins. Medieval authors of Arthurian texts had access to Christian and classical pagan legends, which they could use to fashion creatures such as the Questing Beast. Linette Muir suggests two possible origins for the Questing Beast: the classical chimera of Greek myth and the Beast of the Apocalypse (28). Her suggestion lends itself to the general idea that both pagan and Christian myths inform this monster.

There are various pagan myths that influence the creation of the Questing Beast; however, problems arise when we consider the transmission of texts like *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* during the Medieval period. Of multiform beasts, there are few that more closely resemble the Questing Beast than Scylla and Echidna and these creatures are first found in Homer and Hesiod. Medieval authors would know them through Ovid's account, the most well-known channel for transmission, and possibly from many other late-antique and medieval compilations, such as Fulgentius. Christian allegorists, medieval bestiaries, and Vatican mythographers also provided Medieval writers with interpretations of classical myths. For brevity and simplicity, we will look at Ovid's version of the Beast's ancestors, but also his source material.

A. Pagan Origin Myths

The *Prose Tristan's* depiction of the Beast may have developed from the pagan concept of the chimera. As Muir notes, a medieval writer may well have been aware of the chimera, lending its unique form to the Beast (28). In the tale of "Bellerophon and the Chimæra," reported by the hero Glaucus in Book VI of Homer's *The Iliad*, the chimera resides in Lycia causing "great havoc" to the kingdom of King Iobates (*Iliad* VI.87). Choosing Bellerophon as his hero, Iobates sends him to defeat the monster. Homer describes the chimera through the dialogue of Glaucus. As he explains his heritage to Diomedes, Glaucus recalls the various trials of his father, the first being the encounter with the chimera. The creature is described succinctly:

“...a Lyons shape before, / Behind, a dragon’s, in the midst, a Gotes shagg’d forme she bore / And flames of deadly feruencie, flew from her breath and eyes” (VI.87). The multiform *Prose Tristan* Questing Beast resembles the ancient chimera in its segmented form. The Post-Vulgate Cycle also seems to make use of the creature's fire-breathing abilities; while Homer states that the chimera breathes fire, the Post-Vulgate uses the element in her death to signal the end of the creature's life and to allow the boiling of the lake to occur.

The medieval version of the ancient chimera depicts the creature as purely evil (Bardi). In *The Malleus Maleficarum*, or *The Witches' Hammer*, the chimera is explained as not only a deadly animal, but intricately connected to women. Part I question vi asks “Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions.” This section explains the dangers of female carnal desires. Kramer and Sprenger, the fifteenth-century authors of *The Malleus Maleficarum* and expert witch hunters, turn to the first-century Latin author Valerius to express how women are like the mythological chimera. “Hear what Valerius said to Rufinus: You do not know that woman is the Chimaera, but it is good that you should know it; for that monster was of three forms; its face was that of a radiant and noble lion, it had the filthy belly of a goat, and it was armed with the virulent tail of a viper” (Kramer 46). To ensure that their Medieval audience understood the connection Valerius was making, Kramer and Sprenger added, “And he means that a woman is beautiful to look upon, contaminating to the touch, and deadly to keep” (46). We know these sentiments were common towards women from various other sources, such as the anti-feminism shown in Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath’s Tale*, which may explain why the Questing Beast is female and is a composite of several animals, like the ancient chimera.

Linette Muir expands her connection between the Questing Beast and the ancient chimera

to include “classical monsters that were part human and part animal, such as Scylla” (28). Also found in ancient texts, first in Homer's *The Odyssey* and then Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Scylla is a female human-animal hybrid with barking dogs protruding from her waist. Ovid's work includes Scylla because *Metamorphoses* is a collection of stories that explore the idea of change (Feder 253).¹³

The story of Scylla is mentioned in Homer's *The Odyssey* in Book XII. Circe warns Odysseus about Charybdis and Scylla, describing both the dangerous whirlpool and the voracious monster. First, Circe remarks on the noise Scylla makes, calling her “whuling Scylla” who has “a voice at all parts no more base / Than are a newly-kitten'd kitling's cries” (135-137). She looks monstrous as well:

Herself a monster yet of boundless size,
Whose sight would nothing please a mortal's eyes,
No nor the eyes of any God, if he
Whom nought should fright fell foul on her, and she
Her full shape show'd. Twelve foul feet bear about
Her ugly bulk. Six huge long necks look out
Of her rank shoulders; every neck doth let
A ghastly head out; every head three set,
Thick thrust together, of abhorred teeth,
And every tooth stuck with a sable death. (138-147)

Odysseus goes on to sail his ship by Scylla's den to avoid losing all of his men to Charybdis. As

¹³ This Homeric version of Scylla should not be confused with Ovid's story of Ciris. The Ciris story also has a character named Scylla who undergoes a transformation, but becomes a bird instead of a monster (Feder 99). The *Ciris-Scylla* is “a young girl who, enchanted by the handsome Minos, manages to convince herself she must betray her land and her father to win his love” (254), a very different character from the sailor-eating Scylla later in the *Metamorphoses* and in Book XII of *The Odyssey*.

Circe foretold, “Six friends had Scylla snatch'd out of our keel” (362). Hungry, Scylla returned to her den to consume Odysseus' men. Leaving his captured men “so unhelp'd” (376), Odysseus watched and listened to his men as they “lay beneath her violent rape, / Who in their tortures, desperate of escape, / Shriek'd as she tore” (377-379) his comrades apart.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tells the tale of Scylla and Glaucus in Book XIII. Starting *in medias res*, Scylla wanders naked by the sea to be seen by the newly-transformed Glaucus. Once a fisherman, Glaucus explains that he ate an herb growing by the water that turned “his neather parts” into “a fish with taylor round” (917). Naturally frightened by the sight of Glaucus, Scylla “(Not knowing if he monster were, or God, that did her chace,)” (914), ran to a hill beside the sea (910-911). Because of her reaction, “he waxing angry sore, / And being quickened with repulse, in rage [Glaucus] took his way / To Circes, Titans daughters, Court which full of monsters lay” (973-975).

Book XIII of *Metamorphoses* ends with these lines, but Glaucus and Scylla's story does not. Glaucus requests Circe to charm Scylla or produce an herb to help her fall for him (XIV.23-26). Circe then travels to Scylla's favorite pool and “Defyle[s] it” (64) with “poisons which had powre most monstrous shapes to frame” (63). Scylla visits the pool, traveling waist deep into the water. She

... sawe her hinderloynes with barking buggs atteint.

And at the first, not thinking with her body they were meynt

As parts therof, shee started back, and rated them. And sore

Shee was afrayd the eager cures should byght her. But the more

Shee shonned them, the surer still shee was to have them there.

In seeking where her loynes, and thyghes, and feet and ancles were,

Chappes like the chappes of Cerberus in stead of them shee found.

Nought else was there than cruell cures from belly downe to ground.

So underneathe misshaped loynes and womb remayning sound. (68-76)

Instinctively, Scylla knows that Circe is behind her transformation and determines to take revenge on her. “And for the hate shee bore / To Circeward, (as soone as meete occasion served therefore) / Shee spoyld Ulysses of his mates” (80-82).

Similar to Scylla is Echidna, a mythical beast whose origins were first told by the Greek poet Hesiod in his work the *Theogony*. Born to Ceto in a cave, Echidna is “another monster, irresistible, in no wise like either to mortal men or to the undying gods” (Hesiod 295-296). In form she “is half a nymph with glancing eyes and fair cheeks, and half again a huge snake, great and awful, with speckled skin” that eats raw flesh (Hesiod 299-300). Hesiod claims she “dies not nor grows old” (Hesiod 305), making her beautiful, eternal, and horrible.

“Joined in love” with “Typhaon the terrible,” Echidna conceives various multiform, often hellish creatures famous in Greek literature (Hesiod 306). They include Cerberus, the Hydra of Lerna, and, in this rendition, the Chimera of Lycia. Orthus also fell in love with Echidna and she bore him children as well, including the Sphinx and the Nemean Lion (Hesiod 326-327).

Echidna's connection to the Questing Beast lies in her two-part form and her ability to bring evil into the world. Although she is not evil herself (though her neutrality is questionable since she is half snake, a creature commonly associated with darker characters), all her offspring fulfill the traditional roles of monsters as both creatures intent on causing harm and havoc and as obstacles for heroes to overcome. Though not demonic, she has clear ties with monstrous creatures.

B. Christian Origin Myths

Linette Muir also suggests a Christian source for the Questing Beast (28). In the Book of

Revelation, a creature comparable to the Questing Beast appears. A monstrosity of blasphemy and destruction, the Beast of the Apocalypse is described as “a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy” (*Douay-Rheims Version* Rev. 13.1). Although a figure with multiple heads is a familiar image, the description continues: “And the beast which, I saw was, like to a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion” (Rev. 13.2). This multiformity suggests a debt to the chimera. Whether seen in conjunction with the chimera or not, the New Testament may have influenced the creation and description of the Questing Beast.

The objective of the Beast of the Apocalypse is to “[open] his mouth unto blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven ... And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all that dwell upon the earth adored him” (Rev. 13.6-8). The many heads of the Beast are therefore used as a means to influence the world through speech. The Beast of the Apocalypse’s powers through speech resembles the Questing Beast’s inherent noisy characteristic; both of these creatures are identified through audible attributes. Since the Questing Beast’s main recurring trait is loud barking from her stomach, this speaking quality in the Beast of the Apocalypse provides a connection to her. Later we will revisit this type of connection in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* where a direct link between the Questing Beast and evil speech is explored.

C. Summary of the Questing Beast's Origins

The three Medieval French texts deal with the Questing Beast in a slightly different manner, endowing the creature with a positive or negative nature depending upon the needs of the author. However, after her initial entrance into French literature through *Perlesvaus*, she does not reappear as a Christ figure. The Beast is presented as either a threatening creature,

sometimes explicitly evil, or neutral in her actions. Her ability to be ‘good,’ ‘bad,’ or neutral possibly comes from the multiple origin myths attributed to her; because she can be linked to Christ or Scylla, authors can decide whether their version of the Beast aligns with either background or somewhere in the middle. Though a connection cannot be proved beyond doubt, these myths are likely part of the Questing Beast’s history.

Her permanent shift away from a good Christian figure is a clear indication of character development and advancement; focusing on her multiple monstrous origins allows for authors to manipulate how she is portrayed more freely while remaining true to at least one of her origin myths. By redefinition, the Beast is able to grow and adapt from her origins into a useful Arthurian character. Her representations in the Post-Vulgate Cycle and the *Prose Tristan* are the first examples of her becoming an important Arthurian monster. Her initial Christ-like nature should not be completely discounted, however; the fact that she does not reappear as a Christian creature does not mean she cannot be written as one again. Because there is still the possibility for modern authors to use *Perlesvaus* as an origin source, the Questing Beast can still claim a dual nature.¹⁴

Her duality could cause confusion about her purpose but the benefit it confers is versatility. As a descendant from a variety of characters, the Questing Beast is a plastic figure, adaptable to the needs of various authors including Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the gateway to Arthurian legends for Renaissance writers.¹⁵

¹⁴ The Modern interpretations of the Questing Beast I have found, however, do not use *Perlesvaus* as a source. T. H. White’s version is ‘good’ in the sense that she is comic relief. Lev Grossman’s Beast in *The Magicians* could be considered Christ-like in his ability to grant wishes, which may be interpreted as miracles, but this is an extreme stretch. No overtly Christ-like Questing Beast has been included in Modern literature to my knowledge.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the translations used for foreign texts were carefully chosen for this paper. Accessibility, date of translation, reading clarity, and historical importance were all factors in deciding which translations to use. Arthur Golding’s translation of *Metamorphoses*, George Chapman’s translation of *The Odyssey* and *The*

II. Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* and the Renaissance Questing Beast

i. The English Beast

So far, we have considered the Questing Beast in her original French manifestations. Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* brings her into the English tradition. However, Malory may have known a traditional English myth derived from an account in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*; if so this perhaps informed his decision to include the Beast and to present her as he does (Muir 25). Begun no earlier than 1120 (Giles viii), William's acclaimed history details the reigns of English kings between the years 449 and 1120. J. A. Giles quotes archbishop Ussher's thoughts on William in his editor's preface: "William of Malmesbury... is the chief of our historians" (v), underlining the general reaction to William's work from the scholarly community. Such an endorsement indicates that his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* was received as a valid, authentic source. In fact, John Milton refers to William throughout *The History of Britain* as a source, proving the importance and validity of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* on later readers (*The History of Britain*). As such, the fantastical account of a pregnant dog during King Edgar's reign must have been common enough knowledge to be included by William over a hundred years after Edgar's kingship. The event goes as follows: while napping beneath an apple tree during a hunt, King Edgar awoke to "a bitch, of the hunting breed, pregnant" (156) nearby. "Though the mother was silent, yet the whelps within her womb barked in various sonorous tones, incited, as it were, by a singular delight in the place of their

Iliad, would have been accessible to the contemporary authors during the time they were writing. Latinized spellings of Greek texts we chosen for their reading clarity. Some of these classics were only accessible electronically, which limited the available translations. In some cases, such as Nigel Bryant's English Perlesvaus, the translation used is the only one available in the English language. Biblical passages are quoted from the Douay-Rheims version of the Bible, as it was the most accessible Christian text in English during the Medieval period. For authors after Malory, the King James Version will be cited. Although subject to some limitations, the translations quoted and referenced in this paper are suitable for this endeavor.

confinement” (156). Although this is a short account, the pregnant dog coincides directly with one essential characteristic of the Questing Beast; namely, the loud barking of her unborn pups. The extant copy of *Gesta Regum Anglorum* dates from 1125 (Hollister 4), giving authors of the early 1200s access to the tale of Edgar's noisy hound and making possible its use as a historical basis for King Arthur's encounter with the Questing Beast, especially since she had already been used successfully by the French.

ii. Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*

“Writing over two centuries after the composition of the French prose romances,” the English Sir Thomas Malory capitalized on the “surge in popularity” of Arthurian tales of the fifteenth century (Cooper ix). With renewed interest in these tales, manuscript copies of French romances were made so abundant that Malory would not have needed to leave Britain to find source material (ix), and as an initially respectable member of the gentry, Malory would have had the finances to acquire these materials (x). It is therefore possible that Malory had access to all three French versions of the Questing Beast. The work was finished between 1469-1470 (x). Although not the only or the earliest example of Arthuriana written in English, Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* survived “[a]fter tastes changed in the course of the sixteenth century” (ix). His work, in fact, remained popular enough to be reprinted several times up until 1634, influencing the later English texts that we will soon be exploring. Malory's work as a whole combines French and English Arthurian tales, bringing the two traditions together into a single storyline. Working with both of these traditions, *Le Morte d'Arthur* in many ways is the pinnacle of Arthuriana, gathering the core stories from both cultures, and sometimes adding to them, to create a cohesive fantasy world. By combining many Arthurian texts, Malory made the considerable number of knightly stories available in a single work.

A. The Naming of the Questing Beast

The term ‘Questing Beast’ becomes the favored name for the creature with a barking stomach because of *Le Morte d’Arthur*’s popularity. Prior to Malory, the Beast went by various names and while his title for the creature became her accepted name, later translators did not stop translating her name differently. Her multiple names sometimes cause confusion, but all of them refer to the sounds she makes and her peculiar appearance.

As we have seen, the Questing Beast's original name in the Old French tradition is *Beste Glatissaunt*. While *beste* clearly means 'beast,' the word *glatissaunt* comes from an Old French, *glatir* (*Middle English Dictionary*), which means “to screech” (*Ultralingua*). When Malory embarks on combining the French and English Arthurian traditions, he translates *glatissaunt* as Questynge, which has multiple meanings derived from its two Middle English roots, *questen* and *queste*.

The word *queste* in fact has two meanings, deriving from two Latin root words, *quaero* and *queror*. *Quaero* is a verb with two meanings: “to seek anything, to look after” and also “to earn, gain, acquire” (Anthon 740). *Quaero*’s first meaning is similar to *questen* and *queste*. Its latter meaning suggests that the Beast requires some form of prerequisite in order to seek her: she is not only hunted or acquired, but *earned*. To earn something, “to come to be duly worthy of or entitled or suited to” (Gove 260), implies that the seeker or hunter trying to earn the Beast must first prove he is worthy of chasing her. The second Latin verb *queror* means “to complain, lament, bewail (dog) whine, whimper” (Cawley). This definition bolsters the connection between the Middle English words *questen/queste* and questynge and reinforces the idea that this monster makes loud noises. Given its Latin roots, *queste* provides a particularly appropriate base for the name of questynge.

Questen also has two meanings: “to seek game, hunt” and also “to bay, bark” (Lewis 67). *Questen* has the most direct connection to *glatissaunt* since both suggest a type of loud noise, but it can also mean a monster that is hunted or sought after. Combining the two definitions of *questen*, her name takes on the meaning: “it is the barking beast for which knights hunt” (McShane). *Questynge* also resembles the Middle English word *queste*, which translates easily to its Modern English equivalent, 'quest' (*Middle English Dictionary*).

Malory's use of a present participle in his translation to ‘*Questynge*’ Beast causes further complications and confusion. The position of the word ‘*questynge*’ makes it seem adjectival, modifying the noun ‘beast.’ In this case, the Beast herself would be the object questing, not the quested object. This does not appear to be Malory’s intent, however, as there is no evidence the ‘*Questynge*’ Beast does not quest after things herself. In any case, this title remains the traditional name for the Beast. The original French description, which referred only to noise, has thus become ambiguous in the English: the Beast now acquires a linguistic association with being quested and sought.

B. The Questing Beast in Malory’s *Le Morte d'Arthur*

Malory's inclusion of the Questing Beast closely follows the Post-Vulgate’s *Suite du Merlin* and *Prose Tristan* traditions. Entertaining himself with a hunt, King Arthur awaits the return of his yeoman with a fresh horse, as his had succumbed to exhaustion and died while hunting. Sitting “downe by a fowntayne... he felle downe in grete thought,” but is quickly interrupted by a sound. “[S]o hym thought he herde a noyse of howundis to the som of thirty.” The noise preceded the creature, and when it finally appeared Arthur saw “the strongeste beste that ever he saw or herde of.” The king watched as the creature ventured “to the welle and dranke, and the noyse was in the bestes bealy [lyke unto the questyng of thirty coupyl houndes,

but all the whyle the beest dranke there was no noyse in the bestes bely].” Once finished drinking, “the beeste departed with a grete noyse” and Arthur fell asleep thinking about the animal (Malory 30).

As he slept, a knight¹⁶ approached Arthur and woke him, asking if he had seen any beast pass by. The king confirmed his sighting and added “that ys paste nye two myle.” Curious, Arthur questions what the knight wants with the Beast, and he replies that he has “folowed that beste longe and kylde myne horse, so wolde God I had another to folow my queste” (30). At this time, Arthur's yeoman returns with a new horse for the king and the knight eagerly expresses an interest in taking the steed “for I have folowed this queste this twelvemonth, and othir shall I encheveyh mothir blede of the beste bloode in my body” (30-31). Here, the narrator includes information on the family that claims the Questing Beast as their quest: “(Whos name was Kynge Pellynor that tyme folowed the Questynge Beste – and afftir hys dethe Sir Palomydes folowed hit).” Intrigued by the quest, Arthur asks the knight to forgo his chase and allow him to attempt to capture the Beast. The knight replies by calling Arthur a fool, explaining, “hit ys in vayne thy desire, for hit shall never be encheved but by me other by my nexte kynne”; the knight then grabs the reigns of the horse and takes off after the Beast, extending an offer to duel Arthur later (31).

The Beast appears once more in *Le Morte d'Arthur* during the story of Sir Trystram¹⁷ as he, Sir Lamerak, and Sir Palomydes reunite after a period of separation (Malory 292).

Palomydes is chasing the Beast when he comes across Trystram and Lamerak. A description of the Beast is finally given: “that had in shap lyke a serpentis hede and a body lyke a lybard,

¹⁶ Shepherd identifies the knight as Pellynor [sic] in a footnote on page 31, but the knight's name is not explicitly stated anywhere in the actual text.

¹⁷ Also known as Tristan, Tristram, Trostan, and Tristrem in various manuscripts and texts (Heckel).

buttokked lyke a lyon and footed lyke an harte – and in hys body there was such a noyse as hit had bene twenty couple of houndy squestynge, and such noyse that beste made wheresomever he wente” (293). Here, the narrator proclaims the Questing Beast as Palomydes’ personal quest; however, Trystram and Lamerak want to join Palomydes in his chase. Palomydes denies the two knights inclusion in his pursuit by “[smiting] downe Sir Trystram and Sir Lamerak bothe with one speare – and so he departed aftir the Beste Glatyssaunt (that was called the Questynge Beste)” (293). After this encounter, the Questing Beast is not mentioned again in Malory's work.

C. Summary of the Questing Beast in *Le Morte d'Arthur*

The Beast in *Le Morte d'Arthur* is clearly influenced by the Post-Vulgate’s *Suite du Merlin* and the *Prose Tristan*. Her physical description maintains its segmented, four-part body and the quintessential barking from her belly. The initial scene that Malory creates closely resembles the interaction she has with the knights in the *Prose Tristan* as well, down to the detail of her drinking from the fountain. As in the *Prose Tristan*, she lacks an overtly significant role in Malory’s work. While the overall presence and actions of the Beast recall the neutral version from the *Prose Tristan*, Malory does alter the timing of her entry to the story. By changing when the Questing Beast appears, Malory changes her underlying neutrality, a change that recalls the later Post-Vulgate Cycle Beast.

Almost immediately after the Beast is introduced in *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Malory explains the conception of Mordred, Arthur’s son. The story states that Morgause, Lot’s wife, greets Arthur when he rides into Caerleon. She is “a pasynge fayre lady” and Arthur “desired to ly by her” (Shepherd 30). Accomplishing his desire, “he begate upon hir Sir Mordred” (30). But, since Arthur and Morgause unknowingly share Igraine as their mother their relationship is incestuous (30). By bringing the Beast into the story after this information is presented, Malory

may be referring back to the Beast in the Post-Vulgate Cycle where she was created out of desired incest. Alexander Bruce thinks Malory uses the Questing Beast to "[symbolize] that a relationship between people is not right, that two elements which should have remained separate have been mixed, and that chaos will result from the unnatural situation at hand" (133). The incestuous nature of Mordred's conception actually heralds Arthur's death, as Merlin prophecies correctly that "he that sholde destroy hym and all the londe sholde be borne on May Day" (Shepherd 39), the day Mordred is born. The Beast therefore becomes a passive omen of incest and future ruin, and "[i]n this way, [she] becomes associated with the tragedy of Malory's work" (McShane).

Malory's decision to juxtapose the entrance of the Questing Beast with the story of Mordred's conception gives her a new purpose while remaining true to her heritage. Though she is a passive and neutral character in her actions, Malory's careful placement of the Beast's entrance allows readers to draw a deeper meaning from an otherwise uneventful encounter. This change is an important development for the creature's use in literature. Malory used neither extreme version of the Beast -- the religious *Perlesvaus* version nor the demonic Post-Vulgate version -- and settled on a neutral variant. This decision heightens the importance of the surrounding actions of the Beast's entrance: she is an omen of evil things to come; she recalls an incestuous past but isn't created from incest herself. Malory's balance of her character creates a uniquely neutral Beast that hearkens back to her darker past, and forewarns of evil to come, without making her evil. The neutrality Malory chose does not completely forgo the Beast's history and provides enough of the Post-Vulgate version to entice future writers to see her as a potentially evil character. Malory's version is what subsequent authors and poets had greatest access to and it is therefore essential in understanding her characteristics, importance, and

symbolism.

iii. The Questing Beast in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

Two distinct versions of the Questing Beast appear in Edmund Spenser's work, *The Faerie Queene*, first published in 1590 (Hamilton 19). The first is located in Book I; with the expansion of *The Faerie Queene* in 1596 and the inclusion of Books IV-VI, a second Beast is represented in Book VI (20). As a seminal Renaissance poem including two version of the Beast, *The Faerie Queene* is essential to the discussion of the Questing Beast outside of her Medieval representations.

Medieval Arthurian legends directly influence *The Faerie Queene*. In his *Letter to Raleigh*, which appeared in the 1590 edition but not the 1596 (Hamilton 713), Spenser clarifies some of his allegories since he knows "how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed" (*Letter* 3).¹⁸ The danger of writing "a continued Allegory" is the ability of the audience to create "gealous opinions and misconstructions" (4-5). To keep readers from misidentifying and misunderstanding his characters, Spenser also explains that his reason for writing the epic is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person" (8). He states, "I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes" (11-12). Spenser uses Arthurian literature because he believes young, pre-Camelot Arthur is an outstanding representation of virtue, nobility, and Queen Elizabeth I.

The general premise of *The Faerie Queene* is Arthur's journey to find Queen Gloriana while discovering various knights that represent moral virtues. The Questing Beast appears in Book I and Book VI, both books focusing on very different virtues. Book I explores the private virtue of Holiness while Book VI examines the public virtue of Courtesy. As the inspiration for

¹⁸ Editor A. C. Hamilton italicizes the entire Letter to Raleigh. For ease of reading, I have unitalicized these selections.

the first and last monsters of *The Faerie Queene*, the Questing Beast acts as a framing device for the entire poem. Using her in this way, Spenser deconstructs the traditional Beast into two separate entities instead of a single creature, widening her range and importance in his poem. Although the Questing Beast is a passive creature in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Spenser's adaptation of Error and the Blatant Beast suggests a deeper knowledge of the monster than just Malory's version alone. Ultimately, Spenser reawakens the dark, Post-Vulgate Questing Beast, uses various ancient monsters as guides for her description, retains her role, and increases her importance while keeping her in the realm of King Arthur.

A. The Questing Beast in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*

Spenser begins *The Faerie Queene* with Book I focusing on the virtue of holiness (Hamilton 8). The hero of this book is the Redcrosse Knight. He appears as the epitome of knighthood: "Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt, / As one for knightly guists and fierce encounters fitt" (Spenser I.i.1.8-9). Accompanying him on his travels is a young lady riding a donkey followed by a "milkewhite lamb" (I.i.4.2, 9); she's later identified as Una, in stanza 45 line 9.

The Redcrosse Knight's first encounter with an antagonist occurs immediately after the introduction to Una, and is foreshadowed by the change in weather. As they travel "[t]he day with cloudes was suddeine ouercast, / And angry *Ioue* an hideous storme of raine / Did poure" (Spenser I.i.6.5-7). Spenser's description foreshadows the monster they will soon meet, Error, as she is described as having a "hideous taile" (I.i.16.2)" (Hamilton 33). In an attempt to find shelter from the rain, the Knight and Una discover nearby "[a] shadie groue..." (I.i.7.2). As the Knight and Una proceed into it, they notice various types of trees. The enticing nature of the outer forest ultimately draws them inside, and only after wandering through the trees "do they

discover that they have *lost* their way and that the pleasant grove is a cunning and deadly snare” (Steadman252).

Their wandering “at length ... brought them to a hollowe caue, / Amid the thickest woods” (Spenser I.i.11.6-7) and the Redcrosse Knight moves forward to investigate the cave, although he is cautioned by Una. She states “the perill of this place / I better wot then you” (I.i.13.1-2) and then identifies the location, calling it “*Errour’s den*” in the “wandring wood” (I.i.13.6); here, “[a] monster vile, whom God and man does hate” resides (I.i.13.7). Hamilton notes the name of the monster is important and relates back to its Latin root, *errare* and a gloss from the ancient commentator Servius concerning the *Aeneid*. In Book VI of the *Aeneid*, “*errorem syluarum*, the error of the woods, leads either to vices or to virtues” (34). Because the Redcrosse Knight represents the virtue of holiness, the ‘couert’ likely holds vices or errors that will test the knight. The creature *Errour* is half-serpent and half-woman, which we will explore in-depth later, leading to a comparison of “the forest-labyrinth with its winding paths and the serpent-woman with her winding coils -- are symbols of error, the logical contrary of the truth that the knight has pledged himself to defend” (Steadman 252).

The knight continues to advance towards the den; this is not due to courage or bravery, but pride. He, being “full of fire and greedy hardiment” (Spenser I.i.14.1) looks into the cave to see *Errour* for the first time:

he saw the vgly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th’ other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine. (I.i.14.6-9)

Her tail is also a problem: “[h]er huge long tail... / ... was in knots and boughtes vpwound, /

Pointed with mortall sting” (I.i.15.2-4). It is one of the deadliest parts of Error since it is speckled (I.i.17.6). The characteristic of spots or blotches on her signifies “blots of sin” (Hamilton 35); not only is Error physically dangerous, she represents sin, the very thing that can tarnish holiness.

As disturbing as her appearance is, Error’s young are perhaps her most terrifying feature. “Of her there bred, / A thousand yong ones,” each distinct in appearance but reminiscent of their mother in their physical attributes (Spenser I.i.15.4-7). As the Redcrosse Knight peers into the cave, light reflects off his armor into the darkness, which scares the young so that “[i]nto [Error’s] mouth they crept; and suddain all were gone” (I.i.15.9). Now protecting her children, Error is able to leave her den out of fear and search for a place to hide away from the light (Spenser I.i.16.1-7). As she moves, the knight advances and forces her to remain in the center of the ‘couert’ (I.i.17.1-4). Angrily, “she loudly gain to bray” (I.i.17.5). This image of Error recalls the chimera and Echidna in her segmented form, but more importantly she distinctly resembles the Questing Beast: not only does she have thousands of young held in her stomach, she begins to make a barking noise, the hallmark of the Questing Beast.

The Redcrosse Knight hits Error on her shoulder (I.i.17.8-9). In retaliation, the animal charges the knight and envelopes him with her tail, rendering him helpless (I.i.18.1-8). The symbolic action of sin overpowering the Knight of Holiness strikes home in the last line of stanza eighteen when the narrator exclaims, “God helpe the man so wrapt in *Errours* endlesse traine” (I.i.18.9). The prayer emphasizes the debilitated state of the knight as Error’s apparently endless sin-spotted tail incapacitates him. In this instance, it seems only God can save the Redcrosse Knight from monstrous sin (Hamilton 36). The knight’s “spiritual arms are new to him, and he requires exercise and practice to prepare for his ultimate duel with the dragon of

Eden” (Steadman253). Una cries out, “Add faith vnto your force, and be not faint: / Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee” (Spenser I.i.19.3-4). Gathering his strength, both physical and spiritual, the Redcrosse Knight wrestles a hand free and clenches it around Error’s throat.

The physical act of choking Error causes her to vomit “[a] floud of poyson horrible and blacke” filled with chunks of human flesh that stinks so badly the knight is forced to release her (Spenser I.i.20.2-4). Once the monster’s neck is free, a second wave of vomit erupts from her “full of bookes and papers was, / With loathly frogs and toads, which eyes did lacke” (I.i.20.6-7). Linda Gregerson believes the vomited human flesh is a connection to the “Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation” (96) and Error’s attempt to destroy the true church. The sudden release of books and papers from the animal is a commentary on the printing press and the spread of unchristian knowledge that threatens pure faith. The inclusion of toads and frogs implies verses from the Book of Revelation.¹⁹ The books and papers, or knowledge, spewed by Error are clearly sinful.

The Redcrosse Knight remains beside the monster, choking on “the deadly stinke” (Spenser I.i.22.2) of Error’s vomit. She pauses from her vomiting to defecate her young onto the knight (Hamilton 37). Having been violently dispelled from her stomach, the serpentine youth are “blacke as inke” (Spenser I.i.22.7), linking them with writing and the dangerous knowledge from inside the books and papers from earlier. The young swarm the knight’s legs, encumbering him (I.i.22.8-9); the small, individual representations of unchristian knowledge are just as dangerous and crippling as Error when compounded together. As the young attack the knight’s legs, a swarm of “gnattes doe him molest” (I.i.23.5) attempting to “infixe their feeble stinges” (23.6), mimicking Error’s vicious sting, and infect the Redcrosse Knight with worldly

¹⁹ “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates... And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet” (King James Version Rev. 16:12-13).

wisdom that will shake his faith. The gnats murmur (I.i.23.9), suggesting that their weapon is knowledge or information in the form of gossip or unsupported talk and foreshadow the Blatant Beast in Book VI. Fearful of failure and near to succumbing to Error's false knowledge, the Redcrosse Knight swings at the monster once more, beheading her "without remorse" (I.i.24.8).

The serpentine children of Error immediately release the knight, trying to reclaim their place inside their mother. Discovering no way to enter into her mouth, they gather at "her bleeding wound, / And sucked vp their dying mothers blood, / Making her death their life" (I.i.25.7-9). The knight watches in amazement as the young drink until they are swollen with blood (I.i.26.1). They gorge themselves to death, their "fulnesse" causing them to "burst, / And bowels gushing forth" (I.i.26.5-6) As an anti-Christ figure, Error's blood causes instant death when consumed instead of the eternal life that Christ's blood gives. The Redcrosse Knight's interaction with Error and her children ends with the line: "His foes haue slaine themselues, with whom he should contend" (I.i.26.9). The act of sinful knowledge ultimately destroying its own young suggests that worldly wisdom will only bring pain, unhappiness, and death. Without faith, knowledge for knowledge's sake cannot survive and those that depend on it alone will not live fulfilling lives. By sticking to his faith in God and the true church, the Redcrosse Knight is able to withstand the onslaught of worldly philosophy and enlightenment, and refrain from taking the parody-Eucharist that would have destroyed him.

Based on Error's physical characteristics it is clear that she is connected to the Questing Beast. Both display possible origins from Christian and non-Christian sources: the Book of Revelation, chimera, and Echidna. J.D. Pfeifer explores Error's multi-creature origins in "Error and Echidna in *The Faerie Queene*: A Study in Literary Tradition," yet the Questing Beast is never mentioned as a possible ancestor. Pfeifer's exclusion of the Questing Beast

indicates that scholars have yet to recognize her as a potential influence on later monsters. While one of these sources is Christian, Error does not reflect the ‘good’ Beast of *Perlesvaus*; instead, her Christian connection is the Beast of the Apocalypse, a monster that will rise and urge humanity to gather for the battle at Armageddon. Even though she is connected to the Bible, this source underlines Error’s evil nature; clearly, Spenser looks back to the dark, Post-Vulgate Cycle Beast for inspiration instead of the Christ-like *Perlesvaus* creature.

It could perhaps be argued that Error and the Beast are entirely different creatures created separately from the same sources. This concept can be easily disproved, however, as Error has the Questing Beast’s signature characteristics: living young inside her and a loud, boisterous noise heralding her presence. With these attributes, Error is undoubtedly a reimagined version of the Questing Beast derived from Malory’s version of her in *Le Morte d’Arthur*. Furthermore, I believe Spenser takes Malory’s interpretation of the creature and builds upon it to redefine the Beast’s role in *The Faerie Queene*: Error is not an omen of sin but the physical representation of the sin of worldly knowledge itself.

Book I of *The Faerie Queene* focuses on the dangers of worldly knowledge without faith in God. Spenser transforms a version of the Questing Beast into the monster Error to represent the harm unchristian knowledge can bring to the faithful. The evident evil she personifies looks back to the demonic Post-Vulgate Beast, furthering Error’s connection with satanic figures and serpents. As the first obstacle any of Spenser’s characters encounter, Error has a unique and important role in the poem. She is the first glimpse readers have of the sins that inhabit Faerieland and themselves.

B. The Questing Beast in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*

Just as the first antagonist has a special role in *The Faerie Queene*, so too does the

Blatant Beast in Book VI, which Ronald Bond calls the “[e]pitome and culmination of intractable evil in *The Faerie Queene*” (96). Like Errour, the Blatant Beast deals with the spreading of knowledge; however, the holiness of Book I is considered a private virtue while courtesy, the opponent of the Blatant Beast, is a public one (Hamilton 5). The dangers posed by the Blatant Beast are therefore different from the threats to Christian truth embodied in Errour and must be handled carefully by the Knight of Courtesy, Calidore.

Book VI of *The Faerie Queene* examines the virtue of courtesy. As Hamilton explains, “[i]n its wide range of meanings, the simplest is courtly etiquette and good manners. In this sense, it is more a social than moral virtue” (15). Hamilton’s description of courtesy as a social virtue coincides with the earlier assessment of Books IV-VI in *The Faerie Queene*, which focus on public interactions, but by placing it last, Spenser indicates that courtesy is the hardest virtue to observe without being false (15). Overall, the virtue of courtesy most closely resembles the idea of “civility, which is the basis of civilization”²⁰ and “is the culminating moral virtue of *The Faerie Queene*” (15).

Spenser introduces the final monster of *The Faerie Queene* late in Book V. On Sir Artegall’s journey back to Faerie Land, he and his squire, Talus, confront two “Hags” (Spenser V.xii.38.1), Envie and Detraction, who have control over the Blatant Beast (V.xii.37.6-9). The Blatant Beast’s name is the first indication that he is directly connected with the Questing Beast, as it is one possible translation of her original name. Hamilton states that the Blatant Beast is usually understood as a descendant of the Questing Beast. He notes the importance of the etymology of his name, indicating that ‘blatant’ derives from the Latin words *blatero* and

²⁰ It should be noted that, with interest in the humanity and civility of nations, a Knight of Courtesy can be justified in acts of war or hostility when his enemies are deemed uncivilized. Hamilton gives an example of courteous knights killing uncivilized people without mercy. In VI.xi.46, Calidore slaughters brigands, who represent the Irish, without fear of negative repercussions.

blaterare, meaning “to bable in vayne” or *blateratus*, which means “barking” (599). The Blatant Beast’s name suggests noise, talking, and even barking, a specific attribute of the earlier creature. The connection with barking and noise is reinforced when Envie and Detraction release their monster and he begins “to barke and bay” at Artegall with “his hundred tongues” (V.xii.41.2, 7). While the sound does not come from pups in his stomach, physically impossible due to his male gender,²¹ the noise is as loud as the large broods of the Questing Beast, if not louder: “all the woods and rockes nigh to that way, / Began to quake and tremble with dismay; / And all the aire rebellowed againe” (V.xii.41.4-7). The Blatant Beast’s noisiness also indicates his purpose, as he represents false speech: “[a]s a principle of discord, the Beast represents the abuse and perversion of language, the distinctly human gift on which ‘civill conversation’ and ‘gracious speach’ rely (VI i 1-2)” (Bond 97). Spenser places importance on his cries as well as his physical attribute of multiple tongues. Similar to Errour, who symbolizes the spread of threatening knowledge through the written word, the Blatant Beast also spreads threatening knowledge, but it is done orally.

Book VI delves into the origins of the Blatant Beast and the harm he does to those he meets. The beginning of the book sees the Knight of Courtesy, Calidore, talking with Sir Artegall. Calidore explains to him that the Blatant Beast is his personal quest and it is his job to “him ouertake, or else subdew” (VI.i.7.3), which echoes Palomides’ explanation to King Arthur in *Le Morte d’Arthur* that the quest of the Beast is for his family alone. Calidore also notes that the monster was born from the three-headed Cerberus and a tri-segmented chimera (VI.i.8.1-2). The creature roams the world “[t]o be the plague and scourge of wretched men: / Whom with vile tongue and venomous intent / He sore doth wound” (VI.i.8.7-9). Artegall confirms that he

²¹ While this change in gender may raise the question whether the Blatant Beast is a descendant of the Questing Beast, the creature’s name is enough to align him with her.

too came across the Blatant Beast and explains where the encounter took place, giving Calidore a place to restart his quest (VI.i9.1-9).

The information surrounding the Blatant Beast's birth is later changed, however. According to the hermit in Book VI canto vi, Echidna and Typhaon are his parents. Here, the Beast recalls Echidna in the *Theogony*, which is hidden away inside of a cave where the giant Typhaon lives. Together, Echidna and Typhaon create multiple monsters; here, the hermit includes the Blatant Beast among their offspring (Hamilton 639). Spenser certainly had ancient monsters in mind when developing this antagonist, much like the Questing Beast herself who seems to derive from a combination of different myths. Whether born to Cerberus and a chimera or Echidna and Typhaon, the Blatant Beast has monstrous literary ancestors ensuring his evil nature. However, there is also no doubt that he is descended from the Questing Beast: his noisiness, sinful nature, and name all directly point the Post-Vulgate's and Malory's adaptation of the monster.

Calidore does not fight the beast until the end of Book VI; however, he does occasionally see him and witness the destruction he causes. It seems that "the more avidly pursued, the more rapidly [the Blatant Beast] recedes to the circumference of the poem" (Bond 97), making it impossible to capture him until the very end. Calidore is only able to begin his final chase after he mistakenly shows discourtesy. Coming across the knight, Calepine, and his lady, Serena, lounging in a shady copse, Calidore accidentally interrupts the two lovers before they are aware of his presence. This lapse in courtesy, or social etiquette, acts as a beacon for the Blatant Beast, encouraging the monster (as it seems) to join Calidore in hopes that he is vulnerable to the sin of discourtesy. The knight apologizes for his "default" "gainst courtesie" (VI.iii.21.9). Even though the breach in courtesy is forgiven, the Blatant Beast still leaps out from the forest and

snatches Serena in his mouth and carries her off (VI.iii.24.1-4). Representing the evils of slander and gossip, the Blatant Beast here symbolizes the harm done to courtly ladies when rumors surrounding their private life enter the public consciousness. Calidore and Calepine run after the Beast until he is forced to drop the wounded Serena to “gape and gaspe, with dread aghast, / As if his lungs and lites were nigh a sunder brast” (VI.iii.26.8-9). Calidore continues chasing the creature while Calepine catches up with Serena in stanza 27, and the story shifts focus to their plight for the remainder of canto iii.

Towards the end of canto iii in stanzas 48-51, Calepine is seriously wounded by the discourteous Sir Turpine, he and Serena request aid from the hermit who provides the secondary explanation of the Beast’s origins. He says that no herb or medicine can heal their wounds -- wounds that may result in social isolation and death. Instead, they must exercise adherence to courtly etiquette, making sure to be mindful of all their actions. They must “auoide the occasion of the ill” (VI.vi.14.2); in other words, Calepine and Serena must refrain from situations that invite others to gossip about them and attract the Blatant Beast to them again. The hermit gives them guidelines to help them heal:

Abstaine from pleasure, and restraine your will,

Subdue desire, and bridle loose delight,

Vse scanted diet, and forbear your fill,

Shun secresie, and talke in open sight:

So shall you soone repaire your present euill plight. (VI.vi.14.5-9)

By following these rules, the two will ensure that others have no reason to slander them about sexual misconduct, gluttony, desire for excess, or their own attempts at spreading gossip.

Carefully following the hermit’s advice, Calepine and Serena make a full recovery, proving that

with diligence it is possible to recover from the Blatant Beast's bite (VI.vi.15.1-6).

Calidore's first experience with the Blatant Beast ends mid-canto. The reader hears of the creature again in canto v and again when Serena and Calepine receive aid from the hermit at the beginning of canto vi (VI.vi.8-14); however, Calidore is not reintroduced to his quest until the final battle at the end of Book VI. He comes across a monastery and enters, having nowhere else to go (VI.xii.23.6-9). Calidore finds the brothers being "chaced here and there, / And them pursu'd into their dortours sad" (VI.xii.24.2-3) by the Blatant Beast. The creature discovers the monks' "filth" (VI.xii.24.5) or indecent behavior, and continues to scour the monastery to uncover their secrets. He does not spare the monks because they are holy men, but "more did tosse and teare, / And ransacke all their dennes from most to least" (VI.xii.24.7-8). Because of their religious work, the slander the monster creates causes more mayhem than usual and ultimately enables him to desecrate the church by speaking blasphemy (VI.xii.25.1-3). As mentioned earlier in regards to the Questing Beast's possible Christian origins, the speaking of blasphemies associates the Blatant Beast with the multi-headed dragon of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelation;²² this connects the Blatant Beast to Error as she, too, is indebted to the Beast of the Apocalypse. As both creatures look back to the Book of Revelation as a possible origin story, they can claim relation to the Questing Beast in a round-about way. Spenser has clearly used previously accepted origin myths in his development of his Beast characters, but in dividing the one creature into two and evolving her trademark barking to manifest in two ways -- the traditional way with Error and as the audible sin of slander with the Blatant Beast -- he is retaining her original role and characteristics while granting her a higher importance in the plot.

The Blatant Beast's destruction of the monastery is cut short when he notices Calidore

²² "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months" (Rev. 13:5).

and flees. Calidore competently follows his quest, cornering him in a “narrow place” (VI.xii.26.1) and strikes him with “sharpe steele” (VI.xii.26.4). The creature brazenly attacks Calidore “[w]ith open mouth” (VI.xii.26.5) and we finally receive a detailed description of the creature’s face. Calidore perceives “a thousand tongs empight, / Of sundry kindes, and sundry quality” (VI.xii.27.1-2). These tongues resemble various animals, which portray slander as base, animalistic, and vicious. Each tongue “spat out poyson and gore bloody gere” (VI.xii.28.3) and “spake licentious words, and hatefull things / Of good and bad alike, of low and hie” (VI.xii.28.5-6). The Blatant Beast’s poisonous nature recalls the poisoned blood of Errour from Book I, linking the first and last antagonists together. The clear connection between the two monsters bolsters the argument that Spenser purposefully used his interpretation of the Questing Beast as a framing device for *The Faerie Queene*.

The more the creature fights, “the more the Knight / Did him supresse, and forcibly subdew” (VI.xii.31.5-6). Like the Hydra²³, the Beast’s rage increases as he remains under Calidore (VI.xii.32.6-9); however, once he realizes he cannot defeat the knight by strength alone, “he gan his hundred tongues apply” (VI.xii.33.2), attempting to use slander and gossip against him. Unaffected by the monster’s “bitter termes” and “forged lies” (VI.xii.33.4-5), Calidore

tooke a muzzell strong

Of surest yron , made with many a lincke,

Therewith he mured vp his mouth along,

And therein shut vp his blasphemous tong. (VI.xii.34.2-5)

The Knight of Courtesy effectively silences the sin of slander via shield and muzzle. So courteous is Calidore at this moment that the once-rampant creature that could destroy innocent

²³ The Blatant Beast is once again compared to a monster that is the offspring of Echidna and Typhaon, and therefore possibly his sibling.

people by mere gossip “trembled vnderneath [Calidore’s] mighty hand, / And like a fearefull dog him followed through the land” (VI.xii.36.8-9). However, “whether wicked fate so framed, / Or fault of men” (VI.xii.38.8-9), the Blatant Beast breaks free of his iron chains and enters into the world once more.²⁴

C. Summary of the Questing Beast in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*

Although Error and the Blatant Beast have unique physical appearances, they both seem patchwork-like in quality. They are pieced together of multiple parts, suggesting a chimera-like physicality even though they are not actually segmented into three pieces. Error is half-snake and half-human, with her children as an extension of her being. The Blatant Beast is made up most prominently of a large mouth filled with hundreds of lashing tongues from various animals. Although not exactly like previous versions of the Beast, these two creatures still illustrate a monster similar to Malory’s that is physically made up of pieces from other animals. The most recurring aspect of the Questing Beast is her loud barking and braying. Malory’s version had the noise coming from the creature’s unborn pups inside her stomach, as expected from earlier adaptations. Both Error and the Blatant Beast bark at their respective knights, simulating the traditional noise. The direct links between *The Faerie Queene* and *Le Morte d’Arthur*, which is how Spenser most likely received his introduction to the Questing Beast, are clear from the young cared for by Error, the Blatant Beast’s name, the chimera-like appearance of both monsters, and their loud barking.

There is still further proof of the influence of the Questing Beast on the Blatant Beast and Error. As mentioned earlier, the Blatant Beast’s name also connects him to the Questing Beast since her original French name, the *Beste Glatisaunt*, means ‘yelping beast,’ and ‘blatant’ means

²⁴ This mirrors Archimago’s escape at the end of Book I, providing more parallel structure between the first and last books as well as between the first and last monsters (Hamilton 688).

one that makes noise. This suggests that Spenser knew earlier versions of the Beast than her representation in *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Malory's influence on Spenser's Blatant Beast can also be seen in Stanza 39. We learn that Sirs Pelleas and Lamoracke²⁵ later take up the quest (VI.xii.39.6-7). This recalls the scene in *Le Morte d'Arthur*, taken from the *Prose Tristan*: in both works Lamoracke meets with Sir Palomydes who is chasing the Questing Beast (Hamilton 688). Mentioning Sir Pelleas and Sir Lamoracke suggests that Spenser had the Questing Beast in mind specifically for the Blatant Beast. Also like Malory's monster, Errorr holds offspring in her stomach, and while they do not bark loud enough to be heard outside of her, Errorr's children do make themselves well-known once they are released into the world.

From these numerous similarities we can argue that Errorr and the Blatant Beast are Spenser's remake of the Questing Beast in *The Faerie Queene*. While he does make consequential changes to her, he ultimately bolsters the Questing Beast's significance by using the two monsters as a framing device and important antagonists. Thus we see that Spenser has continued to develop the Questing Beast, a creature likely introduced to him through Malory, but also maintains aspects of earlier versions of her. He develops her into two separate monsters that propagate similar sins while transforming her from a neutral harbinger of evil to active sin-spreading antagonists. These changes in the Questing Beast mark a significant increase in her importance and influence on later writers.

iv. The Questing Beast in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Milton hesitated for decades over his choice of an epic subject. To judge from sections from his Latin poems "Mansus" and "Epitaph for Damon," Milton considered the story of Arthur for his epic, but he abandoned the idea. In the "Epitaph for Damon," Milton focuses on Arthur

²⁵ Referred to earlier as Lamorat, see the *Prose Tristan* on p 17.

and the circumstances surrounding his conception: “*Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iogernen, / Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma, / Merlini dolus*”²⁶ (“Epitaph for Damon” 166-168). Based on these specific events, Milton clearly knew of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of Britain*²⁷ and probably had considerable knowledge of Arthuriana. Milton also talks about Spenser in his work *Areopagitica*, calling him a “sage and serious poet” (939), suggesting he had read and studied *The Faerie Queene*. Thus, it is no surprise that Milton’s character called Sin is partially indebted to Errour and the Blatant Beast from *The Faerie Queene*. While Milton almost certainly knew Malory and *Le Morte d’Arthur* directly, we know he at least had knowledge of Questing Beast-like creatures through their representations in *The Faerie Queene*. We do know, however, that Milton was familiar with King Arthur as a historical figure through William of Malmesbury. In Book Three of his *The History of Britain*, Milton provides what evidence there is for an historical Arthur, citing the historians Nennius, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and William of Malmesbury (256-257). Likewise, William is cited throughout the section on King Edgar (310), proving that Milton had read Edgar’s section in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and was familiar with William’s fantastical story of the pregnant dog that startled King Edgar in the forest. If Milton was ignorant of Malory’s work, which is unlikely, he still had the basis for a Questing Beast-like character from Spenser’s creatures and the historical account of William of Malmesbury.

The character of Sin appears in Book II of *Paradise Lost*. We first see Sin and Death through the eyes of Satan, without identification from a narrator. Sin

seemed a woman to the waist and fair

²⁶ “... then Igraine, heavy with Arthur through a fateful deception, the lying appearance, the putting on of Gorlois’s armor -- Merlin’s trick...” (Trans. Kerrigan 240).

²⁷ Section 8.19 of Geoffrey’s *History of Britain* describes this specific version of Arthur’s conception (Kerrigan 240 n 166).

But ended foul in many a scaly fold
 Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed
 With mortal sting. (II.650-653)

This initial description replicates almost exactly the portrayal of Error in *The Faerie Queene*. Both monsters are part-woman part-snake with a “mortal sting.”²⁸ The focus on the expansive mass of “scaly folds” echoes Error’s “huge long tail... ouerspread, / Yet was in knots and many boughtes vpwound” (Spenser I.i.15.2-3). In these preliminary details, Sin and Error appear to be the same creature. The descriptions begin to deviate once we reach the description of Error’s young. Unlike Error’s serpentine youth, which freely enter and exit their mother through her mouth, Sin’s offspring are attached “her middle round” (*Paradise Lost* II.652), reflecting descriptions of ancient Scylla. They are able to enter inside Sin, but do so through her stomach; she explains her children return “into the womb / That bred them” and “howl and gnaw / My bowels, their repast” (II.798-800). Milton’s description of Sin breaks away from Error even more when he describes her noises. For Spenser, it was Error herself that made the barking sounds; in Milton, Sin’s continuous cacophony comes from her canine offspring, once again looking back to monstrous Scylla and her noisy pups girt around her middle, but still more directly recalls the traditional version of the Questing Beast. Their “wide Cerberean mouths” (II.655), perhaps a nod to the creation story of the Blatant Beast in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, “never ceasing barked” with “A hideous peal” (II.654, 656). With Sin’s pups creating the noise, Milton confirms the debt to the Medieval Questing Beast: even after the animals “kennel” inside their mother, they “there still barked and howled / Within unseen” (II.658-659).

²⁸ This phrase is lifted directly from *The Faerie Queene*. See Spenser I.i.15.4.

Physically, we have yet another creature with loudly barking, ‘unborn’ pups.²⁹ Because of the description of Sin’s children we can say, without doubt, that Sin is not just a creature based on other multi-formed beasts, like Scylla, but is directly connected to the Questing Beast and owes part of her description, personality, and symbolism to earlier versions of that monster.

While engaging in a “Mexican standoff” (Teskey 46) with Death as he tries to exit Hell, Satan is stopped by a pleading Sin (*Paradise Lost* II.681-722). She refers to Satan as “Father” and Death as “thy only son” (II.727-728). In confusion, Satan claims he has no knowledge of Sin being his daughter nor Death being his son (II.744-745). Sin then recounts her creation and life to explain their association.

Sin was born from Satan’s mind, making him her father, or mother, or arguably both. The birth of Sin follows a biblical verse explained in James 1:15 that “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin” (Bush 65; vol. 6). Like him, Sin was beautiful while in Heaven, and Satan “[b]ecam’st enamoured” (765) with her, impregnating her. The incestuous nature of the coupling comes to fruition after the war in Heaven is completed. During this time, as one-third of the Heavenly host is thrown into Hell, Sin is assigned her eternal duty: a “pow’rful key” is given to her “with the charge to keep / These gates for ever shut which none can pass / Without my op’ning” (II.774-777). Once in hell, the “odious offspring” (II.781) erupt from Sin’s stomach, tearing through her “entrails, that with fear and pain / Distorted all my nether shape thus grew / Transformed” (II.783-784). Such a dramatic change corresponds with her being cast from Heaven: her dishonored circumstances require a physical transformation to tangibly represent her fallen state. Her post-fall change happens in two ways: first, when she gives birth

²⁹ Satan also notes that Sin is more “abhorred” than “Vexed Scylla” (II.659-660); while Scylla may not be an ancestor to Sin, Milton pointedly invites a comparison between his creation and the ancient Scylla. Mentioning the Greek monstrosity, he is able to describe the hideousness of his creation by saying she surpasses a well-known, mythical beast in ugliness.

it physically alters her body, forcing her to become half serpent; second, the child she bears is Death itself. Death's conception finishes the verse in James: "and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (65). Fearful of her own child, Sin tries to flee from Death only to be pursued (II.790). Death, "more, it seems, / Inflamed with lust than rage" (II.790-791), overtakes his frightened mother and rapes her, producing the barking and howling dogs attached to her stomach (II.792-795). The continued incest and addition of rape surrounding the character of Sin identifies her strongly with the Post-Vulgate Questing Beast, where the King's daughter lusts for her brother and is impregnated by the Devil so she can successfully charge her virtuous brother with rape as revenge for refusing her.³⁰

Satan remains adamant about leaving Hell through the gates they protect. He gains Sin's and Death's favor through promising them influence over Earth; they then agree to unlock the gates of Hell and allow Satan passage. Upon opening the gates, Sin rebukes God, questioning why she should listen to His request to keep the gates sealed when it is He that has restricted her to Hell "in perpetual agony and pain" (II.861). Sin sets herself up in a trinity with Satan and Death; thus she introduces a blasphemous Christian echo, much as Error does when her children die from drinking her anti-Eucharistic blood.

Sin's last action in *Paradise Lost*, as an independent character and not as general sin, is to construct a passageway to Earth with the help of Death. Sensing Satan's victory over Earth, she decides to build a pathway as "a monument / Of merit high" (*Paradise Lost* X.258-259) to

³⁰ Unfortunately, we do not have any external proof that Milton knew the Post-Vulgate Cycle, but the similarities between the stories are intriguing. There is also a looser incest connection between Milton and Malory, since Malory's Beast heralds incest. Milton may have known John Gower's *Miroir de l'Omme* where a procession of Vices has the Devil rock Murder in her cradle and she is "fed with milk of death" (Macaulay lv). This section appears to have influenced part of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* in Book I canto iv; since Milton knew Spenser, he possibly looked at pieces that influenced Spenser's work. While Gower is a possible origin source, the similarities between *Paradise Lost* and the Post-Vulgate Cycle are compelling and worth noting. Further research may also identify the Post-Vulgate Cycle as an origin source for *Miroir de l'Omme* and possibly connecting Milton to the Post-Vulgate through Spenser and Gower.

“[ease] their passage hence for intercourse / Or transmigration as their lot shall lead” (X.260-261). Sin also notes that she is “strongly drawn” by “new felt attraction and instinct” (X.262-263) to venture to Earth. Through the construction of this bridge, Sin and Death make it easy for hellions to invade Earth, and just as effortless for mankind to make their way down into Hell.

Although *Paradise Lost* is not a traditional Arthurian work, the characteristics of Sin tie her closely to the Questing Beast. All previous accounts of this monster, except for that in *Perlesvaus*, have the Beast connected in some fashion to evil or sin. The eventual adaptation of the monster into the physical representation of sin itself is therefore not surprising. What is more striking are the similarities between Sin’s appearance and the Questing Beast’s. Both have characteristics of the monster Scylla. The most recognizable attributes of the Beast come from this association, which Sin shares. Both retain multi-formed female bodies, divided at least once. They also carry dog-like children near their stomachs that bark and howl. While the Questing Beast keeps her unborn children inside her, Sin experiences her pups being born and reborn through her stomach, but they are bound to her waist. In this way, the barking from Sin still comes from the general location that the Questing Beast’s does.

With Sin, the Questing Beast acquires an importance no other work had given her. Like all other representations of the Questing Beast, Sin only appears sporadically in *Paradise Lost*. Since she only appears in two books, she seems to hold only momentary significance. However, on closer inspection, her symbolic meaning and active participation prove she is an important element of *Paradise Lost*. While she is not the main protagonist or antagonist, Satan’s desire to corrupt Man is focused on releasing his fallen comrades into the world, most notably Sin and Death. Satan’s actions make Sin a central issue in *Paradise Lost*, raising her from a subplot or framing device to an integral component of the main storyline. She has finally become an

interactive, intelligent, and critical character in a literary work. She is an active participant with goals and aspirations, unlike the original Medieval Beast figures. Milton's Questing Beast is not a simple plot device, nor is she only a spreader of vice. She embodies evil to the point her very name is Sin: she has become the representation of all immoral action, like eating the forbidden fruit.

v. Summary of the Questing Beast from Malory to Milton

Sir Thomas Malory's inclusion of a neutral Questing Beast enabled the mythical monster to survive after the peak of Medieval Arthuriana. Although not exact replicas of Malory's Beast, Spenser's and Milton's monsters share qualities with her. Thus she remains an influential character in literature. Her varied background, multiple possible origin stories, and fascinating physical appearance captured the Renaissance mind, to the point where she is included in two of the paramount works of that age. Although the Questing Beast is shown as 'good,' 'bad,' and 'neutral' in medieval texts taken as a whole, both Spenser and Milton decided to view and use the creature negatively, in a way that recalls her Post-Vulgate demonic heritage. In Spenser's and Milton's works, her major developmental change rests in her shift from representing acts of sin performed by others to actively portraying vices. She does not terrorize the survivors of sin, like King Hipomenes and his son Sir Galahad, or warn people of sins they have unwittingly committed, like King Arthur and his incestuously conceived son, Sir Mordred. Instead, the Renaissance adaptations of the Questing Beast personally spread the sins they represent, as is the case in *The Faerie Queene*, or oversee and bring all possible sin to mankind, as in *Paradise Lost*.

In reference to the original creature's accepted name, there are also levels of "questing" with each representation of the Beast. The Blatant Beast is actively quested after, reflecting his Medieval predecessors. Error and Sin do not immediately identify as quested beasts. They are,

however, always noted as dangerous forces in their respective worlds and Error does become the object of the first heroic victory in *The Faerie Queene*. While she is not actively malicious, she can still cause havoc and mayhem. Once she is found, the Redcrosse Knight refuses to forgo destroying her, accepting the quest to kill the monster when she presents herself; she is not quested *after*, but is still a quest. Sin transitions from a passive character when first introduced to an active one when she is last seen. By building the bridge to Earth, Sin has embraced her role at Satan's right hand and will actively bring sin into the world. Taking her role seriously, Sin becomes a character that can be quested after or avoided: something for humans to try and battle against and vanquish. These monsters are clearly a part of the supporting cast of characters, and as such act as their title suggests: they support the protagonists or antagonists of their works, enhancing conflict and providing an essential opponent that prompts serious discussion and analysis. From this we see the vividly revived and adapted nature of the Questing Beast helps keep her relevant for future authors and poets.

III. Conclusion

i. Contemporary Use of the Questing Beast

The Questing Beast first appeared in Medieval French texts and continued into the Renaissance. The various possible origin stories for her created a wealth of material to mold her character as she developed over time. Her undefined origins ultimately produced a monster with a diverse personality, symbolism, use, and, most importantly, clearly recognizable physical attributes. Her popularity is not limited to these earlier works, however. While her prevalence has waned since Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the Questing Beast remains a viable symbolic character even in contemporary literature, in part due to her inclusion and development in these Renaissance pieces. The Beast is used in both poetry and prose by Modernist fantasy writers and her use ranges from heavily symbolic to comic relief. Modern writers clearly look back to Malory's *Le Morted'Arthur* for inspiration, as their chosen name for the monster is the Questing Beast. This means that modern authors are at least looking at the Beast through the lens created by Malory, and a debt to the Renaissance Beasts is often found, as well. Critics have yet to note the influence of Malory's, Spenser's, and Milton's adaptations on later figures of the Beast nor has the pervasive nature of the Questing Beast been identified in modern literature and pop culture. Looking at two modern works, we can see how the significant changes Malory, Spenser, and Milton made to the Questing Beast are still influential and used by authors today.

A. The Questing Beast in Charles Williams' *Taliessin Through Logres*

Chronologically, the first Modern Arthurian work we will consider is Charles William's unfinished 1938 poem *Taliessin Through Logres*. In this series of poems, the Beast is mentioned sparingly by name and is assigned practically no physical characteristics. A few lines of poetry

do lend themselves to a vague expression of the Questing Beast's appearance, focusing mainly upon its color and the sounds it emits. The Beast seems "small, slender, pointed, crimson" (Williams 85), as well as a "scratching, biting, sliding, slithering thing" that is "smooth-backed head-cocked / snout, and fat rump, and claws on the rock; / the blatant agile beast" (85). With such an abstract description, concrete conclusions concerning her are difficult to make.

However, Williams' choice of name for his monster is telling. While he knew of Malory, based on calling his creature "the questing beast" (55) multiple times throughout the poem, he also clearly looked back to *The Faerie Queene*. Williams refers to her as the "blatant agile beast" (85). His choice of name is important, as 'blatant' means "noisy [especially] in a vulgar or offensive manner" (Gove 88). This name makes sense as the original French name had the same meaning; but, in English, it irresistibly recalls Spenser. Williams clarifies the monster's name in his notes and explains it is called the Blatant Beast after Spenser's version (273). Williams' knowledge of the Questing Beast is focused through the lens of Renaissance poets, proving that the Renaissance adaptations of Arthurian creatures continue to hold great influence over later writers.

Williams' information of the Beast also appears to go beyond Malory, as his version recalls the creature from *Perlesvaus*. While her color has greatly changed, Williams has made the Questing Beast small and slender (Williams 85). Instead of snowy white, she takes on hues of black and red. Departing from the older texts, it has no whelps barking within its stomach; however, similar to Errour and the Blatant Beast in Spenser's work, other noises come directly from the Beast itself. The monster may not bark, but the rubbing sounds of slithering and sliding upon the ground, the clicking of jaws when it bites, the scraping of nails upon rock all create sounds that can be heard clearly. Williams does not strictly adhere to the fundamental aspects of the

Questing Beast, but maintains an impression of the traditional noises she exhibits. This, combined with her name, enables Williams to change the Beast's form while keeping the monster recognizable and identifiable.

The Questing Beast in *Taliessin Through Logres* represents corporal jealousy (Lewis 310), once again illustrating a specific sin. She is born when the knight Palomides realizes Queen Iseult, whom he secretly loves, is not faithful to her husband Mark and has already taken a lover, Sir Tristan. Palomides suddenly understands she is not faithful, and therefore not perfect. At this time, he hears "the squeak of the questing beast / ... between / the queen's substance and the queen" (55). C. S. Lewis explains that the Beast, residing between the substance of the queen and the queen herself, demonstrates the discrepancy between the perfect Iseult and the real Iseult. The birth of the Beast therefore comes from the sin of jealousy (310). The lack of description given to the monster at this time may be directly linked to the fact that the Beast is not an actual creature, but a symbolic creation of Palomides' mind that displays his jealousy in a form he understands. Although he speaks of the Questing Beast as if it were real, it is nothing but a figment of his imagination.

The sin of jealousy represented by this monster connects back to Spenser's Blatant Beast. In Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, the Blatant Beast is the embodiment and dispenser of slander, which creates, intensifies, or propagates false appearances. Queen Iseult is subject to slander because of her unchaste ways; the sin that arises from Palomides as a witness, not an active participant, to Iseult's unchaste behavior is that of jealousy. Iseult has created the façade that she remains faithful to her husband; Palomides' desire to be her lover is affected by this false appearance and causes him to become jealous. The sin of jealousy can therefore be seen as one step removed from that of slander. Williams may have used Spenser's Blatant Beast as a

jumping off point for his adaptation's connection to sin.

Williams mimics Malory's final mention of the Questing Beast by keeping the creature unobtainable. Palomides' futile hunt of the monster reflects his fruitless chase for Iseult's love. In fact, the two are carefully intertwined: for Palomides to capture the Questing Beast of jealousy, he must confront Tristan and Iseult and admit defeat or win Iseult's love. But none of this happens; all of Palomides' goals "have fallen away from him" (Williams 357). This may not be as negative as initially thought, however. He "lost Iseult" (98) but at the same time is capable of forgoing carnal jealousy after his baptism and succumbs to a more or less peaceful death. He realizes the "terminable paths are only paths" (97) not conclusive ways of life, and he can pass into death a Christian, happy with the simple knowledge that "*the Lord created all things by means of his Blessing*" (98). In such a way, the failure to capture the complex symbol of the Questing Beast leads to Palomides' only victory: the victory over jealousy and carnal sin in death.

Charles Williams' use of the Questing Beast revitalizes the character, bringing her once again into the consciousness of Arthurian authors. Williams took advantage of the monster's adaptability, changing her into an incorporeal creature birthed from Palomides' mind while remaining faithful to earlier concepts, such as her noisiness, sinfulness, and being quested after. Like most of her former versions, the Questing Beast in *Taliessin Through Logres* is intricately connected to sin, but Williams changes the type of vice she represents and the relationship she has with it. She is not based on incest, false knowledge, or rumor and she represents a more specific sin than Milton's all-encompassing Sin. However, her general connection to sexual sin, as Palomides is jealous of not having Iseult as a lover, recalls the Post-Vulgate Cycle and *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Born from carnal jealousy, William's Questing Beast is the result of Palomides' resentment towards Tristan; the creature is linked to sexual vice because Palomides' love for

Iseult is tainted when he realizes she has already claimed a lover. While this Beast is not like Spenser's or Milton's representations of her, since she does not actively spread her sin to others, she does resemble Malory's version. Like the Beast in *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Williams' monster is a herald of sin, coming only after the vice has been acted upon. Minor changes in her appearance, while not based on Renaissance versions of her, look back to *Perlesvaus*, grounding her in her past representations. Although Williams makes significant changes to this creature, every aspect of her remains recognizable as the Questing Beast in looks, symbolism, and name and is grounded in either Medieval or Renaissance interpretations of her. Williams' account of her depends on her use in Renaissance texts combined with some details from her Medieval invention. By making her such an interesting figure, Williams perhaps encourages other contemporary authors to consider her as a viable character.

B. The Questing Beast in T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*

T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*, published in 1958, restores some of the Beast's traditional looks, expands her description, and completely changes her character. In "The Queen of Air and Darkness," the second book in *The Once and Future King*, Sir Grummore describes the Beast to Sir Palomides: "She has a snake's head and the body of a leopard and the haunches like a lion and feet like a hart." Likewise, he mentions she makes the sound "like thirty couple of hounds questin'" (White 275). In White's comical version of the story, the two knights Palomides and Grummore create a costume that they both must wear to simulate the real Questing Beast; if the costume takes two people to fill, naturally the actual Beast must also be near those measurements. From the depiction, it can be assumed that this Questing Beast is large like the one from the Post-Vulgate. Here again the actual Questing Beast is a conglomeration of different animals: snake, leopard, lion, hart. While the costume cannot have full-grown, barking

unborn puppies in its stomach, White does have two full-grown men inside the Beast costume that mimic the sounds of the creature's young. White's monster is not the Questing Beast in name alone, but in the traditional noisy way as well.

White's Beast does not act as a warning for incest and she does not traverse the forests with seemingly no purpose; instead, this Questing Beast is a humorous creature and the reader's first encounter with her underscores this. King Pellinore, while boar hunting to distract himself from his inability to capture the Beast, accidentally comes across her in the woods. Instead of coaxing Pellinore to chase her, she lies upon the ground in a near-death stupor. She "has pined away, positively pined away, just because there was nobody to take an interest in [her]" (White 153) says Pellinore. He, with the Beast's snake head in his lap – obviously following the multi-formed *Prose Tristan*/Malory tradition -- with "tears streaming down his face" (White 152), laments his desire for adequate sleep. To make up for his lack of questing, Pellinore dutifully nurses her back to health and releases her so he may restart his quest for her (152-153). This restored quest does not last long, however, and soon Grummore and Palomides must try to reinvigorate Pellinore's interest in the Questing Beast, for "The Royal Melancholy ... can only be dispelled by the Questing Beast" (White 275). Grummore's and Palomides' attempt to aid Pellinore highlights the creature's humorous nature. They decide to "assume the rôle of the Questing Beast and be hunted [them]selves" (275) to ensure Pellinore catches his quarry and raise his spirits. Once finished creating a Beast costume, the two knights convince Pellinore to hunt for her (287). Palomides and Grummore then sneak into the woods in their costume so Pellinore can hunt for the Beast. This situation becomes more humorous as the two knights gallop through the forest towards Pellinore, barking and baying with all their might, only to come across the real Questing Beast. The knights scramble up the side of a cliff while "At the

foot of the cliff the Questing Beast herself ... waited in the romantic moonlight for her better half" (White 291). Although White's interpretation of the Beast lacks any sense of gravity, he remains true to the Medieval idea that this animal is connected only to Pellinore's family (McShane). Continuing this tradition, Palomides becomes interested in the Beast after his interaction with her. As a member of Pellinore's family, he is able to rightly take up this quest.

Although White's Beast is recognizable in name alone, he makes sure she remains familiar by maintaining the multi-formed creature of the *Prose Tristan* and *Le Morte d'Arthur*. He also keeps her attached to Pellinore's family like in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, *Prose Tristan*, and *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Although not influenced by Spenser or Milton, White's Beast clearly comes from Malory's cohesive version with additional attributes from Medieval texts. White's comic Beast creates a stark contrast between *The Once and Future King* and any other retelling of her story. It highlights her adaptability while proving she can remain true to her roots.

ii. Conclusion

The numerous depictions of the Questing Beast throughout her literary history make her complex. With unclear origins and differing purposes, the Beast is not confined to a single description or symbolic representation. Instead, this adaptability allows her to be molded and shaped into whatever the author desires: from tiny, white, tangible beast to black, scratching, imagined symbol. Although not an eminent part of traditional Arthuriana, the Questing Beast creates a recognizable presence in the Medieval era that is traceable through to contemporary works. The continued inclusion and increasing importance of the Beast in later literature is a testament to her adaptability and usefulness.

The Questing Beast entered into English literature only after Sir Thomas Malory's careful adaptation of her since her original forms do not possess substantial importance for protagonists.

She is interesting in her duality and physical description, but has not received much scholarly attention. This is perhaps due to her minor presence and insignificance in any single Medieval work and the lack of connection between these original versions of her and later non-Arthurian Renaissance adaptations. As shown here, the Questing Beast does develop into much more important character; she becomes a creature slowly evolving with each new rendition, changing from a symbolic Christian reference to an active, sin-spreading, demonic character with goals and ambitions; she begins as the representation of Christ and, by Milton, is the embodiment of sin itself.

Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* was paramount in introducing Renaissance authors to Medieval Arthuriana. He created a neutral Beast character that heralds the sin of incest, carefully applying her *Prose Tristan* and Post-Vulgate Cycle characteristics without vilifying her. Malory's Questing Beast was easily manipulated by other Renaissance authors that saw her connection to incestual sin as a basis for much darker monsters. Malory's version of her combined with other multi-form monsters easily helped inspire Spenser and Milton to reinvision the creature into Error, the Blatant Beast, and Sin. Modern Arthurian authors have not used Spenser's or Milton's Beasts as inspiration because the connection between Malory's Questing Beast and their Renaissance versions has not been explored. Further use of a serious Questing Beast has possibly been halted due to White's uncharacteristically comic treatment of her. Current Arthuriana, if it contains a "Questing Beast" at all, diverges entirely from the multi-part tradition, as seen in Lev Grossman's *The Magicians*. While Grossman does include a creature called the Questing Beast, he is only connected to our monster in name alone.³¹ A recognition of earlier versions of the Questing Beast adapted into later works, like Spenser's and Milton's,

³¹ Grossman's Questing Beast is a white stag capable of granting three wishes if caught (167). He is a *deus ex machina* figure, enabling the protagonist, Quentin Coldwater, to return home from the magic land of Fillory at the end of the novel (389).

might draw writers back to a more traditional Beast.

This study focuses on the original French texts and later Renaissance works concerning the Questing Beast. Arthurian literature is a European phenomenon with works in many languages that portray versions of the Beast; Linette Muir's article looks mainly at Spanish, Portuguese, and French versions of the creature. Considering this wider range of texts together with their English counterparts should provide a clearer picture of the Questing Beast's purpose and importance in Medieval literature. This expanded research may also help answer some of the questions tentatively addressed: Muir questions the importance of assigned colors to the Beast in her article and we may also discover a more definite literary ancestor for her.

There are intriguing questions about the Questing Beast that this paper has not considered. The Beast is almost always female due to her connection to chimeras, but how often is she gendered male and does this change how we view the monster? A closer analysis of multi-formed creatures and the Questing Beast's relationship to them may provide more insight. Some of the multi-part monsters to consider are William Langland's Satan in *Piers Plowman*, the couatl, and the cockatrice. The classical sirens are also an interesting possibility, as they are often depicted as evil but can be interpreted as good, as Plato does in *The Republic*. Lastly, looking at representations of the Questing Beast outside of literature may prove her prevalency in contemporary culture: she is used as an antagonist in the television show *Merlin*, is quested after by a knight in "The Questing Beast" episode of *Lost In Space*, and is linked to the dangerous catoblepas in the first edition of the tabletop roleplay game, *Dungeons & Dragons*.

While this paper does not examine all possible versions of the Questing Beast, it strives to provide a concise picture of the recognizable and traceable elements of that monster, how they can be used to identify Beast adaptations, and to explore how prevalent she is in literature.

When her earliest appearances are carefully analyzed, the Questing Beast reveals discernible attributes that are clearly reflected and adapted in later Renaissance works. By the end of the Renaissance, she is a developed character that is not only important to basic plots, but is essential in understanding the stories themselves. Scholars have not thoroughly researched the relationship between the Beast and creatures like Error, the Blatant Beast, and Sin and have failed to acknowledge how pervasive her character is throughout Renaissance literature -- and beyond. The arguments laid out in this paper provide a strong foundation for physical, symbolic, and developmental connections between the Medieval Questing Beast and her Renaissance counterparts.

Works Cited

- Anthon, Charles. *A Latin-English and English-Latin Dictionary: For the Use of Schools; Part I: Latin-English*. New York: Harper, 1880. Print.
- Bardi, Ugo. "A Collection of Texts on the Myth of the Chimera." Sep. 2002. Web. 16 Feb. 2013.
- Bond, Ronald B. "Blatant Beast." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990. Print.
- "Branch Nine." *The High Book of the Grail: A Translation of the Thirteenth Century Romance of Perlesvaus*. Trans. Nigel Bryant. Cambridge: Brewer, 1978. 154. Print.
- Bush, Douglas. "Paradise Lost." *A Milton Encyclopedia*. Ed. William B. Hunter. Vol. 6. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1978. Print.
- Cawley, Kevin. *Latin Dictionary and Grammar Aid*. University of Notre Dame Archives, 1999. Web. 3 Oct. 2013.
- "Charles Williams." The Marion E. Wade Center. *Wheaton College*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Nov. 2010.
- Cook, Albert Stanburrough and James Hall Pitman. *The Old English Physiologus*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1821. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 27 Sep. 2013.
- Cooper, Helen, ed. *Le Morte d'Arthur*. By Thomas Malory. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. Print.
- Feder, Lillian. *The Meridian Handbook of Classical Literature*. New York: New American Library, 1986. Print.
- Gayley, Charles Mills. *The Classic Myths in English Literature and in Art*. New York: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1965. Print.
- Giles, J. A., ed. *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England: from the Earliest*

- Period to the Reign of King Stephen*. New York: AMS Press, 1968. Print.
- Gove, Philip B., ed. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1967. Print.
- Gregerson, Linda. *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Print.
- Grossman, Lev. *The Magicians: A Novel*. New York: Plume, 2009. Print.
- Hamilton, A. C., Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki, eds. *The Faerie Queene*. By Edmund Spenser. 2nd ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007. Print.
- Heckel, N. M. "Tristan and Isolt." *The Camelot Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 3 Mar. 2013.
- Hesiod. *Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homerica*. Trans. by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Vol. 57. London: William Heinemann, 1914. Web.
- Hollister, C. Warren. *Henry I*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. Print.
- Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*. Charlotte, NC: Saint Benedict P, 2009. Print.
- The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Salt Lake City, UT: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. 2006. Print.
- Homer. "The Sixth Book of Homer's Iliads." *The Iliads of Homer: Prince of Poets*. Trans. George Chapman. Vol. 1. London. 1611. Print.
- . "The Twelfth Book of Homer's Odysseys." *The Odysseys of Homer*. Trans. George Chapman. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. London: Reeves and Turner, 1897. 282-291. *Google Books*. Web. 12 June 2013.
- Johnson, Valerie B. "Palamedes." *The Camelot Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Nov. 2010.
- Kerrigan, William, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon, eds. *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. New York: The Modern Library, 2007. Print.

- Lacy, Norris J., ed. *Lancelot-Grail: the Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*. Vol. IV. New York: Garland Pub., 1996. Print.
- . *Lancelot-Grail: the Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*. Vol. V. New York: Garland Pub., 1996. Print.
- . *The Lancelot-Grail Reader: Selections from the Medieval French Arthurian Cycle*. New York: Garland Pub., 2000. Print.
- Lewis, Robert, ed. "Q-R." *Middle English Dictionary*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1984. 67. Print.
- Loomis, Roger Sherman. *The Grail: from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol*. New York: Columbia UP, 1964. Print.
- Lupack, Alan. *The Oxford Guide to Arthurian Literature and Legend*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- . "Perceval." *The Camelot Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Nov. 2010.
- Macaulay, G. C. Introduction. *The Complete Works of John Gower*. By John Gower. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1902. xi-lxxxvii. Web. 27 Mar. 2014.
- Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Ed. Stephen A. Shepherd. New York: WW Norton & Co., 2004. Print.
- McShane, Kara L. "The Questing Beast." *The Camelot Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2010.
- "Glatissaunt." *Middle English Dictionary*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2010.
- Milton, John. "Areopagitica." *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Eds. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. New York: The Modern Library, 2007. 927-966. Print.
- . "Epitaph for Damon." *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Eds.

- William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. New York: The Modern Library, 2007. 232-242. Print.
- . *Paradise Lost: Authoritative Text, Sources and Backgrounds, Criticism*. Gordon Teskey ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005. Print.
- . "The History of Britain." *The Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Vol. 2. Philadelphia, PA: King & Baird, 1847. 197-343. Web. 26 Mar. 2014.
- Muir, Linette R. "The Questing Beast: Its Origins and Development." *Orpheus* 4 (1957): 24-32. Print.
- Nitze, William et al eds. *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*. Vol. 2. New York: Phaeton Press, 1972. Print.
- Ovid. "P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*: XIII.898ff; Arthur Golding, Ed." *Perseus Digital Library*. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.
- . "P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*: XIV.1-74; Arthur Golding, Ed." *Perseus Digital Library*. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.
- Pheifer, J.D. "Error and Echidna in *The Faerie Queene*: A Study in Literary Tradition." *Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England: Essays Presented to Fitzroy Pyle*. Ed. John Scattergood. Blackrock, County Dublin: Irish Academic Press Limited, 1984. 127-174. Print.
- The Romance of Tristan*. Trans. Renée L. Curtis. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.
- Spenser, Edmund. "Letter to Raleigh." *The Faerie Qveene*. Eds. A. C. Hamilton, et al. 2nd ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007. 713-718. Print.
- . *The Faerie Qveene*. Eds. A. C. Hamilton, et al. 2nd ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007. Print.

Steadman, John M. "Error." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990. Print.

Teskey, Gordon, ed. *Paradise Lost: Authoritative Text, Sources and Backgrounds, Criticism*. By John Milton. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005. Print.

---. "Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990. Print.

"Ultralingua Online Language Resources." *Ultralingua* .N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2010.

White, T. H. *The Once and Future King*. Garden City, New York: International Collectors Library, 1958. Print.

Williams, Charles. *Taliessin Through Logres*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974. Print.