Medieval Mirroring: Fantastic Space and the Qualities that Native Characters Reflect

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ABSTRACT

Medieval space often functions for specific purposes within the context of the literary tale. The purposes of these spaces can vary widely, but they are usually included intentionally to offer a certain purpose. These spaces can vary from real and constructed spaces. Real spaces are those that reflect or mirror spaces from our world with exact detail, and constructed spaces are those that are obviously not of our world or so indistinct that it is impossible to tell where in our world it might be situated. Constructed spaces often offer unique opportunities for authors to explore challenges and themes not inherently native to our world. The inhabitants of these constructed spaces, whether by intent or accidental design, seem to reflect the qualities of their home space. This thesis seeks to explore how characters from Marie de France's *Lanval* and *Yonec* and characters from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* come to reflect the qualities of medieval constructed spaces in their relevant tales.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Medieval Fantastic Space

Spatial place is often relatively important in literature. From a young age, English students are taught to focus on setting and the importance of place. Why is it important that *The Great Gatsby* is set in a fictional setting on Long Island? Why is it important where any story takes place? Jeff Rider states, "The other worlds of romance are thus dream worlds in which the materially or morally frustrated aspirations of their authors and audiences may find at least veiled representation and imaginary satisfaction through, when necessary…" (122). While the term "dream world" raises concerns, the idea of constructed space offering satisfaction is nonetheless true. Rider also claims, "Their eroticism and violence, the glimpses they provided of utopian and dystopian worlds, of the romantic conundrums of wealthy royalty, are the medieval equivalent of the equally idealized and artificial images of life proffered by our media" (129). We find satisfaction in the things we cannot have and find comfort in the things that we do. Part of the power of fantasy is the overlap of constructed and real space.

These dream worlds, or constructed spaces, often resemble our world as we know it, but there are several factors that usually separate them. For one, most of these constructed spaces are inherently inaccessible to a large portion of the characters and ultimately the readers. This inaccessibility is often what makes the constructed space special. Very few can access it, and thus it is made even more special for those that can

access it. Readers are the only exception to this rule. Unless access is forbidden to all characters, readers often get to experience the constructed space through a character, but these interactions are always layered with a sense of lack. We get to see and experience the space while knowing that we cannot access it ourselves, and the experiences will always lack that personal touch. However, what exactly is a constructed space? Constructed spaces can be easily divided into two categories. Isolated constructed spaces are those that are divided from the reality of the reader's existence. These are commonly seen in modern fantasies or science fiction stories where the reader is teleported to an unknown space separate from our universe. The second type of space in integrated constructed space, or constructed spaces that are somehow integrated into the reality of the reader. It is easy to question the importance of these categories. Why does the classification of constructed space matter? Constructed spaces are utilized when the author's reality is not suitable for their plans. For example, if an author wants to create a society where racial distinctions hold no value, our reality might not be the proper fit for such a society as racial issues have flooded the histories of our reality. Such an author could create a constructed space within or separate from our reality that does not have those racial distinctions and thus that constructed space is a more proper fit for the story. The choice of integrated or isolated space depends on what the author is attempting to achieve. An isolated space allows the reader to completely experience the constructed space without the influence of our reality. However, an integrated space allows the reader to see an interaction of peoples from our reality and the peoples of the constructed space thus allowing for new perceptions that might not be possible in a story set in our reality.

This discussion of constructed space begs the question of what do we call space that is not constructed. Or rather what exactly is constructed space. Technically, all space in a novel, story, poem, or fiction is all constructed. Someone has created the space. However, some elements of that space may mimic reality. These spaces, for the lack of a better term, are referred to as real space in this paper. Not because they are any more real than the constructed spaces, but because these real spaces have geographical locations that we can point to in our reality that they are uniquely based on for the purpose of the author's story. Constructed spaces then, are those spaces that have no geographical location that actually exists in or our reality, or that might exist but the location is indeterminate. Examples of such spaces that might exist in our reality are Heaven and Hell. These two locations would be classified as constructed space within the contexts of an author's work because their geographical location is indeterminate. Certain religious groups and historical documents will point to possible existing locations, but these places remain impossible to locate within real space thus are considered constructed spaces. This distinction serves as no attempt at theological discourse, but as an example of spaces that according to historical and religious documents should exist in our reality but that are inaccessible and impossible to pinpoint geographically.

The distinction of real space as something tangibly available in our reality and constructed space as something inherently separate is quite important. Jeff Rider's argument is that these spaces are meant to be attractive in some way. These constructed spaces offer items, people, and ideas that cannot possibly exist in our reality. These new encounters are highly intoxicating to readers. Why is it an important distinction that the hero is saved not by a human woman but by a fairy woman? The two versions offer

arguably different tales. If a human woman rises above her means and somehow saves a hero, she receives praise for using her ingenuity and brains to save the day. The fairy woman can save the hero in the same way, but her efforts are not so greatly lauded. The reason is because the fairy woman is perceived as having more advantages than the human woman. She is mysterious and important and potentially possesses powers. Instead of praising the fairy woman, we look to the human hero and proclaim how generous the woman is for choosing to save him and how lucky he is for having such an exotic hero. Yes, you might argue that an exotic human woman could save our hero, but this argument becomes pedantic. If our hero is a knight, the human woman would have to be increasingly exotic to warrant the same level of attention as a fairy woman. A human queen might warrant the same level of attention as a fairy woman, but if we choose to argue at that level we can also question why either woman is saving the man. The point remains that the purpose of a constructed space is to add an element of exotic desire that does not exist in our reality. The real space might be able to provide a similar desire, but when a foreign queen is suddenly saving a small village hero the story fails to maintain a level of credibility.

Medieval constructed spaces also lend to the experience of this duality of real and metaphorical. The texts discussed in this paper, *Lanval*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *Yonec* all feature spaces that are constructed spaces situated within our world. Avalon is an inaccessible location that only its inhabitants and their guests can access. Bertilak's castle is only accessible when Mary reveals it to Gawain. Yonec's mother only finds her lover's kingdom after she follows the trail of his blood. These constructed spaces then are both important because they have the metaphorical value

attached to them by the reader/author and the real value as a place within the contexts of the story.

In my discussion of fantastic constructed space, I would like to be cautious because the application of modern terminology can be problematic for medieval references. I owe much of the terminology to J.R.R Tolkien who proposed his ideas concerning the theory of fantastic space. J.R.R Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*, proposed a theory of fantasy that is largely foundational for most modern discussions. Tolkien deals primarily with the nature of the constructed space as a separate space rather than one that mingles alongside the real space. He ultimately prefers that we use the terminology of the space to discuss the space itself rather than rely on the terminology of the real space. In a Tolkienian turn of phrase, this is our reliance upon using the human to describe the fantastic. He would rather we stringently only read based on the implications of the constructed space and how any implication it might have on the real space.

While modern fantasy often involves the overlap of the constructed space and the real space, Tolkien describes fantasy, in his essay "On Fairy Stories", as a secondary world separate from the human world. His ideas, while complicated, can be narrowed into four basic points. Tolkien believes that the fantasy relies upon the world, and not the characters that live in it; fantasy can include any narrative elements so long as the story concerns the fantastic world; the fantasy must remove the reader from their world and surround them in the secondary world; and magic can never be used as an excuse to justify the world. While these points seem simplistic, Tolkien often offers lengthy stipulations to each of his arguments. For example, he writes that the story should be

about “the Perilous Realm itself” (“On Fairy Stories” 38, hereafter “OFS”) but later stipulates at length that the story cannot concern the characters that inhabit its pages. His reasoning for this is that *The Lord of the Rings* is not about Frodo, but about the fate of the world itself. To use another example, Harry is unessential to Rowling’s story because anyone could have been the chosen one, it just so happened to be Harry. It is not important who was chosen to lead the fight against Voldemort, because the story is about the fight itself and not its ringleaders.

Similarly, Tolkien argues that fantasy can include any narrative element as long as it “…touches on or uses Faerie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy” (39). Conceptually, Tolkien desires a fantasy that is more concerned about the nature of the world than the characters or thematic tropes that exist within the story. This seems redundant because conceptually speaking any narrative can include these elements, but it bears mentioning especially in today’s market where fantasy is considered a narrative element. The phrase “oh it’s a fantasy” is used as a narrative label rather than a genre feature. It also bears mentioning when applying the theory of fantastic constructed space because medieval texts often deliberately use constructed space in thematic ways and it would be reductive to reduce them to a simple label of fantastic inclusion.

Perhaps the most important belief in Tolkien’s theory is that the fantasy must allow the reader to escape their reality and retreat into the fantasy. Tolkien argues that this is a three-part process of “escape”, “recovery”, and “consolation” (75), a process where the reader willingly escapes their world to recovery in the constructed space and seek consolation in what their world cannot offer. This relies upon the reader’s “willing

state of disbelief" (60). The reader is not choosing to believe in the fantasy; rather, the reader is choosing to acknowledge the supernatural elements, and willingly suspend all disbelief and instead believe.

Much of Tolkien's work on fantasy was closely tied to his own *The Lord of the Rings*. In some ways it serves as a defense of a platonic argument for a pure and untouched world. Many seek to derive secondary meaning out of *The Lord of the Rings* based on Tolkien's war experience. He can be found on record vehemently rejecting this idea, and it is even recorded in some special edition reprints of his books. His anger on the subject seems misplaced, as the point of literary analysis is often to search for the possible implications of a text as various as they might be. However, Tolkien himself preached for the exclusion of human reference in regards to fantastic sources. It centers on the previously mentioned ideal that the fantasy concern the "Perilous Realm itself" ("OFS" 38). Tolkien believes that the fantastic constructed space is one that exists independently of the real space. The constructed world has its own languages, cultures, religions, and that do not inherently rely upon the existing human knowledge the reader possesses. In Tolkien's system, the reader should abandon all human referential material and solely consider the fantastic system that has been offered to them. This is why I suggested it is a largely neo-platonic way of thinking that desires to create a system that functions entirely on its own, separate from the constructions of other systems. He desires that fantasy be unique and untouched.

However, the fantastic constructed space has exceeded Tolkien's definitions by leaps and bounds. Yes, modern fantastic spaces can often rely solely upon the separate constructed space. Many spaces, however, rely upon the commingling of the fantastic

constructed space and the real space. Rowling's ever popular *Harry Potter* is but one example of a story where the constructed space and the real space have intermingled and even married in some cases. Despite Tolkien's fears, stories such as these have largely succeeded despite the inclusion of human referential material. As such, I would suggest that Tolkien's theory places a privileged status on fantastic spaces that remain secluded from real space while citing those spaces that use real space as problematic and in some cases rightfully so. The intermingling of fantastic and real space always presents the risk of causing the reader to judge either the fantastic space based on the conceptions of the real space or the real space based on the conceptions of the fantastic space. The rewards, however, seem to outweigh the risks in benefits the reader obtains from experiencing the fantastic space alongside the real space.

Annette Lucksinger and Timothy Oakes take different approaches to place theory and are not speaking directly to the fantastic constructed space as Tolkien does but both speak to the concept of consolation. Lucksinger believes that, "In some ways, sense of place pertains to our association with locations on the simplest levels. Implicit in the term are our sensory reactions to places" (356). The ways in which we associate with the constructed space and experience them are ultimately key to the process of recovery. Oakes possesses an interesting approach to the constructed space. He argues that, "We—the urban traveler, scholar, writer, or landscape painter—can never know it as a complete place. Indeed, it does not even exist until we arrive to break it open; its very definition depends on its eventual loss" (516). The constructed space, by this definition, is an inaccessible location that we have to force our way into and our only way to experience its wonder is through its eventual loss. This seems opposed to both Tolkien and

Lucksinger, but Tolkien's theory of recovery relies upon escape, recovery, and consolation and Lucksinger argues that the most important experience is our sensory reactions to the constructed space. Oakes' idea works alongside these but in a more forceful wording. He suggests that we must force our way into the space and experience it for ourselves, however, we can only comprehend our reactions to the space by losing it. Only by returning to what is familiar to us, can we understand the awe of the sensory reactions we experienced within the constructed space. While the two definitions seem different, for fantasy, these arguments present similar sides of the same issue. Tolkien argues that the key to fantasy is the willing suspension of disbelief. Oakes claims that place does not exist until the reader breaks it down into its smallest components and understanding of the place only arrives through the loss of that place.

The sense of loss, the idea that the reader has found something wonderful and lost it, plays a key role in the identity of the constructed space. Lucksinger argues, "It is a state of mind, one's perception of where one is rather than the geographical specificity of the location" (357). This concept is especially important in this paper's application of Avalon, which is only vaguely referenced as a location and the reader only ever experiences it through the descriptions of its people or their travels. The entire foundation behind Avalon is established through a sense of lack and longing.

Tolkien is not the only person to have discussed the fantastic from a theoretical approach. Tzveten Todorov articulates a Freudian and Structuralist perspective on fantasy in his book, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Todorov claims that, "psychoanalysis has replaced (and thereby has made useless) the literature of the fantastic" (160), viewing fantasy as a figment of the imagination. Greg Bechtel believes

Todorov's theory "is deeply rooted in Freudian psychoanalysis, and this reliance manifests most explicitly in his exploration of fantasy themes," (143). Todorov, unlike Tolkien, seeks to analyze fantasy as an augmentation of reality. He ultimately seeks to explain reality through a use of the fantastic.

Todorov and Tolkien are by no means the only people to have written on fantasy, but they are among the few who have written about theoretical conceptions of fantasy. Both theories pose problems for medieval references to fantasy as neither considered the period in their development. Tolkien was an Anglo-Saxon professor at Oxford, and even translated *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and while his theory seeks to create an ideal form of fantasy that most medieval texts cannot hope to achieve much of his work in fantasy pulls from his experiences as a linguist and his work with Anglo-Saxon and Medieval literature. While he personally proclaims the need to only apply the fantastic towards fantasy itself, Tolkien created much of his work by pulling themes from medieval and classical contexts making his work transferable. Todorov's theory is applicable in the sense that the fantasy can augment or impact reality. Both theories offer a relevance towards medieval references when Todorov's ideas of fantasy augmenting reality are combined with Tolkien's ideas concerning fantasy as a secondary world.

Tolkien's theories of a secondary and secluded space, while largely neo-platonic in his original thinking, coincides nicely with Jeff Rider's conceptions of the "dream worlds". Rider claims that the purpose of these spaces is to "disrupt the order of a peaceful, stable aristocratic world, bring about the hero's departure from that world, and launch the narrative" (118). Tolkien's and Todorov's ideas both certainly coincide with this. Tolkien claims that the constructed space should concern the nature of the space

itself. Rider's claim here is that the space is used to directly interfere with the peace of a space and drive the character into the action of the narrative. This thesis will go into detail concerning the constructed spaces of three stories, but all of them mirror this idea of shattering the peace and driving the character into the narrative which almost always leads into the constructed space itself. For example, Morgan la Fey and Lanval's Lady are both inhabitants of Avalon, a mysterious constructed space synonymous with magic, and both are directly involved in driving the main characters to traveling to a constructed space in their respective stories. Rider also describes a physical border between worlds (120). This border is often distinct but can at times be intangible. This thesis will discuss this at length later, but two examples of this border are the hole in the hill that leads to Mulduramec's kingdom in *Yonec* and the intangible border of the body of water that separates Avalon from the rest of the world in Lanval. These borders can be a specific hole in a hill for example or even an intangible and massive stretch of ocean separating a small island from the world.

Despite a lengthy discussion of constructed space, this thesis is ultimately concerned not with the constructed spaces, but how the inhabitants of the constructed space inhabit the qualities of the constructed space. More specifically, I am concerned with how the characters who call the constructed spaces home often reflect the qualities of the constructed space. This argument relies upon the interaction of characters and the various spaces with which they interact. In real space, we often notice various influences. There are various linguistic, personal, and social interactions that are influenced by the spaces that are influential to our upbringing.

The concept of the space reflecting its qualities onto its inhabitants extends to constructed spaces as well. However, in real space the only qualities that can be transferred are behavioral, linguistic, matters of fashion and other real traits. However, the constructed space often operates under differing rules of law than our real space. In a space where magic exists, it stands to reason that magic is one of the qualities that can be reflected upon its inhabitants. As a brief example, I will walk through a scene found in the first branch of *The Mabinogion*.

The first branch follows the story of Pryderi's parents and how he was conceived and eventually lost. Pwyll, father of Pryderi, is out hunting one day and chases off dogs so that his dogs can eat from a corpse of a stag. This action brings him into contact with Arawn, lord of Annwfn, which is described as otherworldly (Davies 228). In an explanatory note, Davies describes how Annwfn is another name for the "Celtic otherworld" which is typically located on an island but in this story is located in the realm of Dyfed, which is comprised of Pembrokeshire and part of Carmarthenshire (228). This otherworld is synonymous with hell according to Davies (229). This connection, along with the otherworld dogs Arawn keeps, establishes his kingdom as a place of magic or otherness. Though there are associations of the kingdom with hell, the first branch does not seem to indicate that it is a terrifying place. As Arawn is a ruler of the otherworld and Pwyll is a prince of Dyfed and so the text follows courtly protocol in which Pwyll is properly shamed for his actions and in recompense agrees to help Arawn with a problem. Arawn uses magic in order to switch their appearances for a year and a day. Pwyll returns to Annwn and rules in Arawn's stead until he enters in a contest with Hafgan, Arawn's rival. Pwyll is able to defeat Hafgan with one mighty blow and later meets with Arawn

again where they switch places. As a reward for chastely sleeping beside Arawn's wife, Pwyll is greatly rewarded and finds that Arawn has won him much success and favor. Obviously, *The Mabinogion* demonstrates the movement that Rider discusses forcing the main character to leave the peace of his home space and travel to the constructed space.

Arawn's kingdom is described as grand beyond belief through various references. "Then he caught sight of the colour of the pack, barely noticing the stag itself. Of all the hunting dogs he had seen in this world, he had never seen dogs the same colour as those. The colouring they had was a dazzling bright white and with red ears. As bright was the dazzling whiteness as the brightness of the red," (Davies 3). The dogs here are clearly meant to awe Pwyll if the discussion of the dazzling colors is any indication. However, Will Parker suggests in a footnote of his translation that, "These were the hallmarks of the Otherworldly origins, according to a deeply rooted tradition found throughout the British Isles…The Wild Hunt motif, an expression of the turbulent aspect of the animistic faery world, was itself a deeply rooted and perennial feature of North European folklore," (footnote 5). It is clear that the audiece of this tale would be aware of the tradition and recognize that Arawn might have otherworldly connections due to his hounds.

The exotic dogs belonging to Arawn are but one example of his connection to a grand place. When Pwyll encounters Arawn's kingdom the story remarks that "…he saw the household and hostings coming inside – the most exalted and refined host anyone had ever seen. And behind them the queen – the most beautiful woman anyone had ever seen – a garment of shining gold brocaded silk was around her," (Davies 5). The language here suggests that the court is somehow better than any Pwyll has experienced through use of "exalted and refined" and the description of the queen's garments. The significant

point, however, is the reoccurring theme of grandeur and appearance. Arawn's kingdom and dogs both have pointed references to appearance. The color of the dogs and the awe inspiring view of the kingdom are the first qualities Pwyll notices. Our attention is directed at the appearance of the two. Arawn also possesses the magical ability to change the appearance of himself and others. Appearance is a key factor of the kingdom's identity, and Arawn possesses the ability to shift his appearance to match his need. This is an example of how Arawn has come to adopt a key feature of his kingdom as a magical quirk or ability.

The example of *The Mabinogion* is but a brief illustration of how characters from constructed spaces come to reflect the qualities of the space. This thesis will examine characters from Marie de France's *Lanval* and *Yonec* as well as characters from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and how they reflect the qualities of the constructed spaces from which they hail.

CHAPTER TWO

LANVAL AND *YONEC*

Lanval

Avalon is often described as mystical and as such it seems that it is a place accessible only to those with a privileged agency. King Arthur is said to travel there, but only when he is in great need of Avalon's services. In its various contexts, the island seems almost impossible to access. Avalon in Marie de France's *Lanval* is a faraway place that can be accessed through travel by certain humans, and yet it is not open to everyone indiscriminately. Only those who possess the proper agency are allowed to visit its shores, and the Lady possesses an inherent power and agency as a citizen of Avalon and can subsequently allow others to access Avalon. Her power reflects the nature of Avalon itself, taking on its intrinsic qualities.

While the entirety of the tale is important, this paper is focused on the references of Avalon as a place and the power it might provide. For that reason, this paper will discuss larger events in general and Avalon in more specific detail in order to tease out its nature as a place within the story. The introduction suggests the importance of place, specifically our willingness as readers to accept places as true. There are infinite options open to readers when they approach a text, but typically, a reader will buy into one of two options. Either the reader will assume that the constructed place is simply a metaphor the author is using to discuss some element of importance and how it relates to our world, or the reader will willingly suspend their disbelief and accept the constructed space as real. This is not through the delusional belief that the reader will one day get to go to the place,

but rather we suspend our disbelief so that for just one moment we can believe that something quantifiably better exists in our world. Avalon is one such place. We know very little about it as readers other than that it is the home of the Fae, and most likely a place of great wealth and magic. The joy of Avalon lies within this mystery of unattainability. We as readers want to go there, but it always eludes us. It escapes our grasp even in that moment when we think it is within reach. These qualities should frustrate the reader and make them want to refuse to believe in Avalon as a place, but instead many readers continue to suspend their disbelief in hopes that they will one day reach Avalon. In this case, the pursuit of Avalon is more important that actually discovering it. *Lanval* similarly adds to this frustration as the reader never discovers if the Lady and Lanval make it to Avalon. The text seems to indicate that they escaped there, but there is no proof that they make it. This moment is an example of why it is important to have the ability to willingly suspend your disbelief. As a reader, you face two options in this scenario. The Lady and Lanval never make it to Avalon and she simply flees with him from Arthur's court never fulfilling the promise of taking him to a better place. The second option is that the Lady does fulfill her promise and they arrive at Avalon where Lanval will be allowed to live with his new lord and reap the rewards he has always craved. Both options offer significant interpretations, but one is inherently depressing and the other happy. Outside of rare occasions, we as readers typically read stories to find fulfillment and so why would we not willingly choose to suspend our disbelief?

Avalon's enticing qualities are also made manifest in the Lady. If we agree that Avalon is a place of magic and mystery and is seemingly unattainable, then we can examine the Lady in a new light. Despite her being an important figure in the story, we

know very little about her. We know that she is exceedingly wealthy and powerful as represented by her possessions and the number of beautiful servants she employs. She herself is resplendently beautiful beyond all compare, which is partly why Lanval gets into so much trouble when he is unable to keep her secret and bluntly tells Guinevere that she is not the most beautiful woman he knows. The Lady also possesses an interesting magic to appear and disappear. She tells Lanval that if he ever desires to meet her, he simply need think of her and she will come. This implies that she is obtainable, but she will only come to him in secret, meaning that she is obtainable because she is allowing Lanval to meet with her. She refuses to meet with him in public. This mirrors the unobtainable quality of Avalon. Lanval might wish to meet her, but he cannot unless she is willing.

Contextually, it is also important to note that Morgan le Fey is regarded as an important figure of Avalon. *The Arthurian Handbook* remarks that she is "the Lady of Avalon" referencing Geoffrey of Monmouth's poem *Vita Merlini* which introduces Morgan in this context (Lacy, Ashe, Mancoff 337). Morgan is described as ruling as the head of a sisterhood of nine women who all possess magical powers and live on the island (337). These are important distinctions because they establish Morgan not only as a magical resident of Avalon, but as its leader as well. The women are described as healers and its lore is rooted in Celtic traditions (337). A later chapter will go into more detail about Morgan as an agent of power, but this demonstrates a precedence for her as a "lord" figure. This background information also implies that Lanval's Lady is potentially one of the nine women in the sisterhood who possess power and authority over Avalon, which offers insight as to how she is able to skillfully maneuver around Arthur.

This chapter will more closely analyze the Lady's qualities, but it is important that for the context of this discussion we consider Avalon a constructed space. Remember that a constructed space possesses qualities of both a real and metaphorical space in that within the context of its story the constructed space is real but within the contexts of reality it is simply a metaphor. It is our jobs as readers then to suspend our disbelief in Avalon as a metaphorical space so that we can discuss it in terms of a real space constructed by Marie.

Geoffrey of Monmouth discusses Avalon when he features the Arthurian legend in his pseudohistorical *Historia Regum Britanniae,* "The History of the Kings of Britain", recorded in 1136. Geoffrey states that, "[Arthur] was carried away to be healed of his wounds on the isle of Avalon…" (Black 178). This is in reference to the aftermath of Arthur's battle with Mordred. Avalon, according to Geoffrey's embellished history, is a place of healing. This could reference a place where doctors and healers gather, or it could reference the potentially mystical properties of this mythical island. Geoffrey does not indicate which, but as the island is associated with the Arthurian mythos it is likely that it possesses in itself some of the magical qualities associated with the legends.

Cassidy Leventhal discusses the idea of place in regards to Avalon and the story of Lanval. She states that, "*Lanval* and its main character abscond the faded realm of reality for a seemingly irrelevant 'happily ever after'; Avalon remains the utopic 'no place' accessed only through rejection of and by the real (Leventhal 193). Leventhal believes that Lanval's choice to remove himself from "reality", Arthur's court, actually removes him to a non-existent utopia that can only be achieved by both rejecting reality and being rejected by reality. Lanval swears to keep his relationship with the Lady secret

or risk losing her (Marie 145-147). However, Lanval fails to uphold this promise "when his masculinity is questioned, [and] he forgets that the Otherworld must be primary. He betrays his commitment to privileging his 'love' over the petty appearances demanded by Arthurian reality, and loses both worlds." (Leventhal 202). Lanval's devotion to the Lady and to Avalon was supposed to be his primary focus, but once the Queen challenges his Arthurian sensibilities he forgets his promise and reveals his love for the Lady. Now he does not actually lose the Lady as she eventually returns to save him from the court and take him to Avalon. His actions should have cost him his love, but by her grace, she returns to offer him a second chance and save him from the wrath of the Queen he rejected. It is not by his actions then that he is able to gain access to Avalon, because his actions went against his promises and would have denied him all hope of reaching the island. It is instead by the actions of the Lady that Lanval is redeemed and allowed to go to Avalon. Lanval has no hope of obtaining access to Avalon on his own. Much like the reader it will be forever beyond his reach, but because the Lady chooses to save and forgive him, Lanval will be allowed to access Avalon through her. Leventhal, however, does not entirely believe Avalon is a physical place. Instead she believes that "[the Lady] is, simply, the knowledge that intangible ideal is somehow tangible and wholly real" and Lanval is able to reach Avalon by coming to understand and possess this "ideal" (204). However, her attempt to define Avalon as a "no place" is limited because the story directly references the characters' ability to travel there.

While I appear critical of Leventhal's idea of a "no place," her idea does somewhat agree with my notions of Avalon as an ethereal quasi-place. There is very little textual evidence that Avalon actually exists. Readers essentially have to accept that the

Lady is truthful about her home and that she actually takes Lanval to Avalon. I will later analyze the text, but essentially the Lady and Lanval simply disappear. Marie de France does not suggest that they make it to Avalon, though she does not write that they do not. It is for this reason that I describe it as a quasi-place. For the Lady, Avalon is indeed a real and accessible location. She claims to be a resident of Avalon, and is allowed to access it. Unlike Morgan le Fey, it is not immediately obvious that the Lady possesses any divine or magical qualities. At least in the sense that unlike Morgan, the Lady does not openly weave magic and craft spells. However, the Lady does possess the ability to appear and disappear at will. The Lady states, "You go on, I will remain;/ but one thing I will tell you:/ when you want to talk with me,/ there is no place you can think of/ where one could have his beloved/ without reproach or base behavior,/ that I will not be with you at once/ to do all you will;/ no man but you will see me/ or hear my words" (161-170). These lines indicate that the Lady possesses at least three magical powers. The ability to know when Lanval wishes to meet with her, the ability to appear in that location, and the ability to hide herself so that none other than Lanval can see her. These powers are remarkably similar to the inherent qualities of Avalon. Avalon is a constructed space that is inaccessible to anyone other than its inhabitants. It is extremely difficult to find and it is in some ways hidden from the world. The Lady mirrors Avalon in that Lanval has access to her whenever he wishes, but under the assumption that she is willing to meet with him. We know that after he reveals the Lady to the world that she refuses to come to him because he broke his oath, and he rightly assumes that he has lost her forever. So, while I agree in the sense that for most people that Avalon is a "no

place", I disagree that it is only a no place because for the Lady, and eventually Lanval, it is a real place within Marie's constructed realm.

Other scholars choose to examine the role of women within *Lanval*. Pam Whitfield states that, "The assertive power of Lanval's fantasy lover lies in her beauty, wealth and autonomy, yet she is not of this world; she moves outside its confines and rules, suggesting a power that may be available to women in future" (243). Whitfield here is claiming that the Lady's power and wealth exceeds the capabilities of a woman in Arthur's court. I do not think this suggests that there are not powerful and wealthy women, but instead that the Lady's power comes from a place outside the court. She is wealthy despite having no known family or husband. She is wealthy in her own right, which Whitfield views a possible metaphor for future women who might find power and wealth outside of what is considered traditional means. Similarly, Cary Howie expresses that, "[she can] credibly be considered a fairy by virtue of her access to Avalon, that indeterminate realm beyond both the Arthurian court and its accustomed outside, the forest; she is distinguished by a mode of disclosure that defies what courtly society expects of its objects of desire" (828). Howie also feels that the Lady has power because she is not tied to the workings of Arthur's court, but in this case her power arises from her origins in another realm rather than Arthur having no power over her. The Lady is loyal even after Lanval fails her, a quality not found in many courtly women. Guinevere, in *Lanval*, attempts to seduce Lanval "[taking] love where [she] can find it" (McCash 104). According to June Hall McCash, Guinevere here is not an example of loyalty because she attempts to seduce Lanval (98). Guinevere belongs to Arthur's court and is

bound by the laws and ugliness of its politics whereas the Lady is unbound by those same laws and can remain pure.

Fors de la sale aveient mis

Un grant perrun de marbre bis,

U li pesant humme muntoënt,

Que de la curt le rei aloent:

Lanval esteit munté dessus.

Quant la pucele ist fors a l'us,

Sur le palefrei detriers li

De plain eslais Lanval sailli.

Od li s'en vait en Avalun,

Ceo nus recuntent li Bretun,

En un isle que mut est beaus;

La fu ravi li dameiseaus.

Nul hum n'en oï plus parler,

Ne jeo n'en sai avant cunter.

There was set, outside the hall

A great dark marble mounting-stone,

For an armed knight to climb on his horse,

When from the castle he set his course.

Lanval had climbed up there to wait.

When the maiden came out the gate,

Lanval made his leap, at full speed,

Up behind her, onto her steed.

With her he's gone to Avalon--

Or so say the poets in Breton--

To the fair island far away

She ravished that noble youth;

No-one can say any more with truth,

And I have no more to tell of this lay

(Shoaf, Passage 3)

Unfortunately, only a small section of the text, found above, focuses on the specific mention of Avalon as a place, but this small reference still supplies enough discussion for it as a physical place. Much of this only offers what a play would refer to as plot movement and character action. However, “Od li s'en vait en Avalun…En un isle que mut est beaus” offers a direct reference to Avalon as a place just as Geoffrey does in his pseudohistory. “Vait” in this case most likely means “to see, discover, find out” (“Veer” 5). In this case they are quite literally discovering Avalon. The translator claims that it means, “with her he’s gone to Avalon”, which could be an indication of some loss in translation. Similarly, “est” seems to mean “to be situated; to dwell, reside; to stand, be parked; to take up one’s position” (“Ester” 2). In this case “en un isle que mu est beaus” translates to say “an island that resides far away”.

Despite the discussion of Avalon as a faraway place, this might not be the best translation of this passage. Judy Shoaf claims that, “Nul hum n'en oï plus parler” translates as “No-one can say any more with truth” but this makes the passage slightly confusing. “Nul” here signifies “any” (“Nul” 1), “plus” indicates “more” (“Plus” 1), and

"parler" means "to speak" ("Parler" 1). Whereas, "ne" can mean "not" ("Ne" 1) and "oï" could translate as "(sense of) hearing" ("Oie" 1). Assuming that n'en is a variation of "ne" then it is possible that this passage roughly translates to "no one heard from him any more". This corresponds more closely to the *Broadview Anthology of British Literature's* translation, which says, "No one ever heard another word of him" (Marie 645). The inability to speak the truth because of a lack of knowledge does not indicate the existence of a place. It simply indicates that no one knows anything other than what existing sources of knowledge can provide. However, in the translation where no one ever heard from him again implies that he never returned. This could mean that Lanval never made it to Avalon due to death or disease, or it could imply that he made it to Avalon and never bothered to contact those he left behind. The existence of the place is more likely in "never heard from again" translation because the lack of knowledge stems from his inability to communicate with those in Arthur's court.

While there are some possible misinterpretations in the translation, this passage indicates the potential physicality of Avalon as a place. The accessibility of this place is not mentioned, and the only method described is that the Lady takes Lanval on horseback. But the text itself does reference Avalon as a physical place to which travel is possible.

Since travel to Avalon is possible this changes the context of some of the literary discussion surrounding Lanval as a character. Early this paper mentioned how some argue that he escapes to Avalon in order to free himself from his failure to succeed in Arthur's court, but he is not unsuccessful in Arthur's court. He is simply unrewarded within Arthur's court (Marie 19-20). This is a possible complication in the story. We

know from the narration that Lanval feels that he is successful, but he is obviously unrewarded. However, the lord, Arthur, would only provide rewards to those he deems worthy. So either Lanval is simply complaining about a lack of reward when he is in fact unsuccessful, or Arthur is behaving badly as a lord and not rewarding a deserving knight. There is not enough evidence to prove either point, but the text seems to suggest that it is the latter of the two options, though this could be biased as it follows Lanval's viewpoint. However, assuming that it is the latter scenario, the Lady is more than willing to reward Lanval. She offers him a boon that he will never want again so long as he never speaks of her or their love to anyone (136-143). She is able to grant this request as Marie reveals her to be incredibly rich, through the lavish tent that no emperor could afford, the expensive clothing, and her numerous possessions (84-85). In addition, a great deal of time is spent on her beauty, as well as the beauty of her female servants.

The critical context section of this paper offers several examples of the various ideas of how the Lady came to obtain this power. There is an argument that she has power because of her beauty, but this seems too reductive as an attempt to assign her importance based on mere petty physical attributes. I would instead suggest that her beauty is another aspect of Avalon. She does not derive her power from beauty, but instead she is beautiful because she has power and comes from Avalon. What little we know of Avalon indicates that it is a wealthy place of magic and beauty, and the Lady already mirrors several aspects of Avalon in her magical abilities and wealth. It would not be a stretch to assume that she also mirrors the beauty of Avalon in her physical beauty. Leventhal makes the argument that she might have power because of her belonging to Avalon, an idea with which I agree. There is almost no evidence, but the

Lady escapes with Lanval to Avalon which suggests that it is a place. Avalon could be the name of her castle or land that she simply refers to as a mystical place. There is just not enough proof to substantiate Avalon as the island the Lady claims it to be. However, Marie de France clearly writes, “With her he's gone to Avalon/--Or so say the poets in Breton--/To the fair island far away,” which suggests that they are traveling to someplace referred to as Avalon (Shoaf) and that it is an island. It is not clear how Lanval and the Lady make the journey, as travel to an island by horse is seemingly impossible, but they are certainly journeying to Avalon.

If we refuse to believe that the Lady has power because she is beautiful and choose to accept that she has power and beauty because she is from Avalon, then we are left with the view that she has power because she is a quintessential other. She is not of Arthur’s court, or any human court for that matter. Assuming she was bound by the same social standards as those in the Arthurian social circle, she would at most have the same power as a powerful noblewoman or the queen Guinevere. Though, we know relatively little about the Lady’s past and so we cannot assume she would have the same level of nobility to assign her an equivalent role to that of Guinevere. Guinevere receives her power from her noble roots and her relation to Arthur and his queen. This gives her power over the knights who report to her as well as to Arthur. The Lady, however, establishes a lord/knight relationship with Lanval in that she grants him wealth so long as he is her lover and he does not reveal their relationship. This suggests that she possesses power equivalent to Arthur himself as a lord. Without knowing the Lady’s background, one of the possible solutions for her having this power is the fact that she exists outside of

the Arthurian social circle. She is not bound by their rules and laws. She comes from Avalon.

Whitfield makes a similar claim, but hers suggests that women of Avalon are representative of how women will be in the future. While I will not refute this claim, because I agree that the Lady possibly represents a symbol of modern feminism and power, it seems reductive to assume that Avalon is simply a symbolic representation of future accomplishment that women will achieve. Whitfield's argument, as I understand it, is that the Lady is a metaphorical representation of power and wealth possible for women outside of the social expectations hindering them. I hesitate to say that the Lady is not an example of symbolic power women can achieve, but it seems to undermine the power she has in the moment by reducing her to a symbol. This is not to suggest that she does not function as this symbol, but she is an accomplished woman within the context of Marie's story. The Lady is successful and powerful at that moment, and while she might be representative of future accomplishment, she is accomplishing her feats in the moment Marie created. Rather, Avalon seems to be a place of fantastic otherness that might possess a social system very unlike that of Arthur's court. Earlier, I suggest that the Lady possesses a power similar to Arthur, but her power is different because she is a woman but seems to hold the same level of power as a king. If the Lady was subject to Arthur's rule, she would likely only possess power equivalent to Guinevere, or a similar woman of power in Arthurian social circles. There is also the possibility that it is a land of extreme wealth that the Lady has escaped and is using her stolen wealth to achieve power in a different land. However, this seems unlikely because she remains hidden throughout the

tale and only reveals herself to Lanval. It also seems unlikely because she eventually returns to Avalon, which she would be unable to do if she was an outcast.

The Lady's power is also revealed through the number of servants she employs. There are the two beautiful woman who first bring Lanval to her (56-65), and the four women who arrive to help prolong the trial so that the Lady can arrive at the last minute (472-483). All of the women are described with progressing stages of beauty, and the Lady's beauty outshines them all. It stands to reason why some might argue that she has power because she is beautiful, though the argument still seems needlessly reductive to limit her power to physical attributes. Her physical beauty could be an outward representation of her power, but I would argue that it is another aspect of her power that she derives from Avalon. Lanval is in trouble because he angrily claimed he was in love with someone more beautiful than Guinevere, and not only is the Lady more beautiful than her but so also are her servants. In some ways, it is her beauty that gets Lanval off the hook. He was simply tasked with proving that the beautiful woman he claims to love existed. If he could bring her forth then his statement would be proven true. Therefore, her appearance is what provides her the ability to rescue Lanval. However, she refuses to stay in Arthur's court even at his request. This suggests that she also has the courage and authority to refuse the request of a king. If the Lady were simply beautiful, she would not have the power to refuse Arthur. However, she is powerful, wealthy, mysterious, and beautiful. She is an amalgamation of the traits that define Avalon. She is able to rescue Lanval with her beauty, provide for him with her wealth, refuse Arthur because she belongs to an outside power, and hide from Arthur's court with her magic. It is all of

these traits that allow her to rescue Lanval and remain free from Arthur's influence, and not simply one of them.

Leventhal and I define Avalon as a type of "no place", though my definition differs because her Avalon is an actual "no place" and I define mine as a quasi-place that exists for some and not for others. Its existence depends on whether you possess the ability to access Avalon. I also argue that the Lady draws her power from this quasi-place. She is mysterious because Avalon is mysterious. I also argue that the Lady is similar to Arthur in that she serves as a lord to Lanval, but she serves in a different capacity. To prove this, I argue that Arthur's power derives from a present and concrete kingdom while the Lady derives her power from an absent and mysterious kingdom.

Arthur as a King is expected to give gifts to his various knights, as task which he readily participates but he does not gift Lanval. Marie writes, "[Arthur] gave many rich gifts/both to counts and to noblemen./ To the members of the Round Table—/they had no equal in all the world—/he shared out wives and land/among all except one who served him: that was Lanval, whom he does not remember," (14-19). Lanval is a worthy knight, but he simply goes unnoticed in Arthur's kingdom. The Lady is quite willing, however, to notice and reward him with riches and gifts. The Lady's wealth is measured against Queen Semiramis and the emperor Octavian, these comparisons indicate the level of power that the Lady has. Queen Semiramis has a level of myth and lore surrounding her, but she was the Queen regent of the Neo Assyrian Empire from 811-806 B.C.E. Stories are told about her because of the various successful campaigns she waged during her regency after her husband's death and based on the novelty of a woman ruling an empire. Octavian is similarly known for largely expanding the Roman Empire and for his rule.

However, both of these extremely wealthy and accomplished individuals could not have afforded a fraction of the Lady's tent but both are extremely powerful and wealthy according to the text (83-85). The Lady is more than able to provide for Lanval, but the context of her ability to provide is interesting because of these comparisons. Semiramis and Octavian were both wealthy as rulers of their particular kingdoms and known for their ability to succeed in difficult campaigns. This suggests that the Lady either comes from a place of larger wealth or has the ability to obtain great amounts of wealth through various means. Her wealth and power are demonstrated when Lanval returns home to find his men dressed in riches the way the lady described (202). These passages and examples show how the Lady possesses the wealth and power necessary to provide for Lanval as Arthur provides for his other knights. In this capacity, the Lady is similar to Arthur in her ability to give gifts. However, Arthur's gift giving is tied to merit whereas the Lady's gift giving is tied to Lanval's silence. She will continue to be his lover and provide for him so long as he does not reveal her secret. Arthur's power is tied to the concrete nature of his kingdom. He assigns power and gifts based on static measurements of merit. The Lady's power, however, is derived from the mysterious Avalon and so her gift giving is tied to a secret contract between her and Lanval.

Lanval's disagreement with Queen Guinevere reveals how the Lady is able to execute her power and rescue Lanval without being beholden to Arthur. Marie writes, "King, I have fallen in love with one of your vassals:/ you see him here it is Lanval!/He was accused in your court./ I do not wish it to be held against him,/ concerning what he said; you should know/ that the queen was wrong:/he never asked for her love./ And concerning the boast he made,/ if he can be acquitted by me, have your nobles set him

free!" (615-624). There are several textual moments here that suggest she has power. The Lady is quick to separate Arthur's court and her own her. She claims that Lanval is accused in Arthur's court (617) but notes how she has acquitted him (623). This suggests that while he is on trial in Arthur's court that her power somehow supersedes Arthur's. All Lanval needed to do to earn his freedom was to present the beautiful woman he claimed was more beautiful than Guinevere. However, the line seems to more likely suggest that she has forgiven him for breaking his promise to her, and that because she has forgiven him, Lanval should be found innocent in Arthur's court. It should also be noted that Marie writes, "The King could not keep her" (631). This was Arthur's attempt to keep Lanval and the Lady within is court, but she promptly rides off into the unknown with Lanval at her side. Arthur's inability to keep her suggests that she is not beholden to him.

Arthur's power is derived from the kingdom in which he lives. It is a static place that has a set of existing rules and regulations. His knights obey and serve him and he gives them gifts and wives. People visiting his kingdom defer to his rule based on the system described above. These customs and rules are known because Camelot is a defined place. Avalon on the other hand is a mysterious island that we know relatively little about. Therefore, the Lady's power is mysterious and unchecked. She is allowed to do what she wants because she is not bound to the power of Arthur's kingdom. Avalon exists outside of the social and legal parameters of the known society. The Lady does not possess power greater than Arthur, her power is simply defined differently. She is able to escape the rules and regulations of the static world, because her power comes from a

mysterious and formless place. This is part of the reason she can appear and disappear as she chooses. She is not bound by the social regulations of a static kingdom.

Yonec

If we accept that the Lady is able to dodge the rules of Arthur's court because her power derives from Avalon which is a formless and mysterious place, we must then question the importance of the constructed space as it relates to the intersection of powers. Marie de France writes a similar tale to *Lanval* where a mysterious man comes to save a woman trapped under a lord's rule. *Yonec* similarly features a mysterious land and a character with a similarly mysterious constructed place. *Yonec* is the tale of how Yonec's mother met his father Muldumarec and came to be born. Yonec's mother, referred to as the woman or lady, is married to a rich man who wants her to have his children but locks her away in a tower from fear she will be unfaithful. Muldumarec first appears to the woman in the form of a dark bird and they fall in love. It is a delightful tale riddled with magic and strange occurrences, to convince the woman he is not a demon he takes her form and eats the Eucharist, but its similarities to *Lanval* lie in that a mysterious power comes to a land in order to rescue a lover. The genders are reversed in *Yonec* with the lady representing Lanval and Muldumarec taking the place of the Lady. Muldumarec is fatally wounded and escapes the tower to return to his kingdom, but the woman follows (90). *Yonec* also possesses a "no place"; which is described as, "In this hill there was an opening, all covered in his blood, but she could see nothing beyond and therefore assumed that her beloved had entered there. She hurriedly went in, but finding no light, followed the straight path until she emerged on the other side of the hill, in a beautiful

meadow" (90). The woman is only able to find Muldumarec's kingdom because of the blood he left on the entrance. Had she not followed the blood trail, she would not have been able to access Muldumarec's kingdom. Muldumarec's blood gives the woman the ability to cross over and find him. Had there been no blood she very likely would have overlooked the hole in the hill.

The introduction briefly discusses the idea of the constructed space requiring a bridge of sorts to access. *Yonec* especially represents this because the only known entrance is through a cave. It is bridge in function, but not in shape. The cave is important in this context because it is the way by which Muldumarec's lover can access his kingdom. The entrance is marked in his blood and she is able to follow it until she discovers his body. In a morbid sense, the blood and the cave acts as the bridge by which she obtains her own freedom. She has to lose her lover and experience that loss, but he has ultimately given her a child who will eventually win her the freedom that she craves. Muldumarec and his kingdom both represent freedom, and the cave in this story works as Yonec's mother's bridge to freedom. It comes attached with significant pain and loss, but she does ultimately obtain the freedom that Muldumarec represents.

The cave is also important because it marks a kind of journey. The Gawain chapter will go into more detail about Gawain's journey through space, but *Yonec* also features a journey across constructed spaces. Yonec's mother lives in a confined tower that she cannot leave, a prison space. Her character is very reserved and unwilling to accept Muldumarec as a person at first. These characteristics resemble the nature of a prison space in that it keeps its inhabitant passive and often is associated with a lack of freedom. Yonec's mother does not possess the ability to believe in a magical man

because she only knows the truth of the prison that surrounds her. Muldumarec, however, represents a free space and is able to shatter the bonds that tie her down. Muldumarec's interference in her life is what provides her with the ability to free herself from her preconceived notions. Of course, Muldumarec dies and she returns to her prison and her son is the one who later frees her by killing her husband. Muldumarec in death is unable to free her completely, but he gives her the gift of their son who will eventually free her from her prison.

Yonec's mother's journey to Muldumarec's kingdom reveals several important points. The first being that it was marked with danger, though it the danger seems self-imposed. Marie writes, "The lady pursued the bird with many shrill cries. In her desire to follow him she sprang forth from the window. Marvellous it was that she was not killed outright, for the window was fully twenty feet from the ground. When the lady made her perilous leap she was clad only in her shift" (141). With no other way out of the tower, Yonec's mother voluntarily throws herself from a tower and towards possible death in order to chase after her lover. The journey also reveals a little about the kingdom itself. Marie writes, "She went so far that at the last the lady came to a very fair meadow. She followed the track of blood across this meadow, till she saw a city near at hand. This fair city was altogether shut in with high walls. There was no house, nor hall, nor tower, but shone bright as silver, so rich were the folk who dwelt therein. Before the town lay a still water. To the right spread a leafy wood, and on the left hand, near by the keep, ran a clear river. By this broad stream the ships drew to their anchorage, for there were above three hundred lying in the haven" (149-150). Though this reveals little, we do know that the city is by no means normal. It is surrounded by various landscapes that are incongruous

to the land with which Yonec's mother is familiar. And finally, Marie reveals the wealth that is stored within the city. She writes, "But when the lady entered in the third chamber she saw a stately bed, that well she knew to be her friend's. This bed was of inwrought gold, and was spread with silken cloths beyond price. The furniture was worth the ransom of a city, and waxen torches in sconces of silver lighted the chamber, burning night and day" (150). These descriptions mirror those found in *The Mabinogion* depicting places and riches that go beyond what the viewpoint character is capable of knowing.

Similarly to Avalon, we know very little about Muldumarec's kingdom. It is described as beautiful, but our experiences with it are marked with loss. His lover only discovers the kingdom when she discovers that he is dead. Despite this tragic notion of loss, Muldumarec does mirror his kingdom in similar ways to how the Lady mirrors Avalon. Muldumarec possesses the ability to shapeshift. His kingdom is a hidden one shrouded in mystery and he represents that by being able to hide his form with the other appearances. Unlike the Lady who possesses several distinctive powers, Muldumarec's only powers seem to be the allure his lover holds for him and his ability to change forms. His lover fears at first that he is a demon, but once she discovers that he is able to consume the Eucharist without suffering she falls for him. This could be because she is locked away and Muldumarec represents freedom. His kingdom is outside the rule of others and he can flit from place to place in the form he chooses. Yonec's mother is unable to do this because she is captive in her tower, and the freedom that Muldumarec represents would be intoxicating to her.

The interaction of the prison space and the free space within *Yonec* is interesting. Muldamerec represents the magical and mysterious kingdom and is free to come and go

as he pleases. Yonec's mother however represents the prison space and is trapped in both a physical and mental space. Muldamerec is able to free her from the mental prison and they become lovers, but he is unable to free her entirely from the prison space. There is no clear reason for this in the narrative, but one possible interpretation could be tied to Muldamerec's inability to make a lasting impact on the prison space. His kingdom is flexible and intangible which is what he draws the ability to shapeshift from, whereas the prison space is tangible and unmoving. Yonec's mother is deeply entrenched in the prison space and is thus unable to be freed by an outsider. Her husband could free her as her captor, but he narratively will not. Muldamerec tries, but is of course unsuccessful. Yonec then is able to free his mother because he is tied to the prison space through his mother, but he is also the inheritor of the freedom associated with his father's kingdom. Yonec then is able to make the decision to kill his mother's captor and free her from the prison space.

Yonec and *Lanval* both possess locations that are seemingly inaccessible. Lanval can only access Avalon when the Lady rescues him and takes him there. The woman can only find Muldumarec's kingdom after he is dying and reveals the path through his blood. These are both representations of places bestowing qualities upon a person, Muldumarec and the Lady, both of whom draw their power from their respective places. Muldumarec's power is more overtly magical than the Lady's but both possess the similar quality of only being accessible by those who are from the constructed space.

CHAPTER THREE

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Gawain

The place that *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* creates focuses on the kingdom of Camelot, or at least the journey begins in King Arthur's court. The modern reader may not be aware of the place-name references, but the Gawain poet's audience would have known the exact route that Gawain took on his journey to the beheading game. Ralph Elliot writes, "It is not unusual for medieval poets to mention actual place-names, but it is unusual to trace an Arthurian knight's journey along a well-defined route through North Wales, across the estuary of the Dee into Wirral, and then follow him into hilly country until he eventually reaches a remote castle appropriately called 'High Wilderness', with a very peculiar 'chapel' nearby…" (113-115). The Gawain poet's descriptions are highly realistic, so realistic that scholars can track Gawain's journey across the countryside. However, The *Gawain*-poet suggests that Gawain fought dragons, "wormez", and wolves (720). The poet also suggests, "And etaynez that hum anelede of the heghe fell;/ Nade he ben dughty and dryghe, and Dryghtyn has served,/ Douteles he hade ben ded and dreped ful ofte" (723-725)[1]. These are encounters that Gawain would not face in a real-world space. Here, much like in modern fantasy described in the introduction, the Gawain poet combines real and constructed spaces in order to create a progressive story for his audience. We are presented with a trek through real space that the original audience

[1] "And ogres who chased him across the high fells./ Had he not been valiant and resolute, trusting in God,/ He would surely have died or been killed many times." (723-725)

would have been highly aware of and the denizens of the constructed space to make the journey even more perilous. Though, as Elliot reminds us, journeys in the medieval winter were typically reserved for only the most important endeavors and marked by considerable danger (105). The inclusion of dragons and wolves could just be a representation of that acknowledged danger. However, it seems intentional that the Gawain poet is overlapping the real-world space with constructed space creatures.

Elliot spends considerable time explaining how the Gawain poet spends a remarkable amount of time on the details of the landscape. For example, Elliot writes, "The landscape descriptions that follow the knight's journey through the wintry, hoar-frosted forest display the same attention to detail, the same 'poynting', already noted. The sudden appearance of Bertilak's castle provides ample illustration. Our concern here is…with its location in a topographical setting embracing the forest of the three hunting scenes and the Green Chapel itself…" (107). Elliot goes on to describe how the language of the hunting scenes goes from general to specific and how the language is mirrored in the next hunting scene and in Gawain's interactions with Bertilak's wife. The Gawain poet pointedly uses specific language to describe his landscapes and it stands to reason that the creatures of the constructed space have been inserted for a similarly specific reason. I suggest that these creatures and the constructed space have been inserted to raise the stakes of the already dangerous beheading game.

Upon finishing a reading, we as readers know Gawain's life is never at stake, it's his honor and the honor of Arthur's court. However, while reading the poem, we are under the illusion that Gawain is constantly in danger. During his travels through Wirral, whether you consider the consequences of traveling in medieval winter or the

consequences of the constructed space and his conflict with dragons and wolves, Gawain is confronted with challenge after challenge until he is left with no recourse but to beg Mary to deliver him to safety. Then, within the perceived safety of Bertilak's court he is confronted with the challenges of the hunting game and his ultimate choice to cheat and hide the girdle from Bertilak. And finally, the challenge of the beheading game where he realizes the truth of the trick.

Gawain encountered many trials, but it was his "valiant and resolute" faith in God that allowed him to make it to Bertilak's castle and finally the Green Chapel. Without the geographical knowledge that Gawain's trek takes place in real space, there is no clear sense of direction. Gawain is depicted as wandering. As previously stated, we know that Gawain's journey takes place in the wilderness of Wirral, but the unknowing reader would only be aware of the vague and disheartening language as described by the poet. This is done in order to show the hopelessness of Gawain's travels. He wanders without end until he can no longer muster the energy. Remember that Oakes' ideas of an unclear and unstable place certainly fit here, but Lucksinger's belief that a reader's reaction to this unclear journey is important as well. As a reminder, Oakes ultimately claims that the fantastic space needs to be unclear and unstable so that readers will eventually lose access to the space, and by losing access they grow to understand the space and long for access. Similarly, recall that Lucksinger believes that what is most important are the sensory reactions the reader possesses as they encounter the fantastic space. Gawain's journey relies upon the romantic tradition of Arthurian legend as well as the fantastic elements it has utilized to fill the pages of Gawain's trek. The uncertain destination and the reader's reaction to the many wonderful battles helps to promote the sense of mystery and

unfamiliarity that many fantasies rely upon. It is the secular place, of King Arthur's court and Gawain's journey to the Green Chapel, that helps create the collision of secular and religious allusion within the poem.

The introduction and Lanval sections of this paper both speak to a type of journey through space, the journey being important to accessing the constructed space. The Gawain poet creates a much clearer picture of a journey than we see in Lanval, and that is because it is much easier to track Gawain's trek across the real space of Wirral between the constructed spaces of the story, whereas Lanval's journey takes place between the constructed space of Arthur's court and the mysterious and inaccessible Avalon. It is much easier to track Gawain's journey as he moves through real space in order to participate in the beheading game, while Lanval moves only through constructed spaces that are intended to be kept hidden. Lanval's journey is marked with struggle in his home space and he eventually escapes to a hidden space we cannot see. The destination may or may not be better than his previous one, but he is at least escaping a difficult situation. Meanwhile, Gawain's struggle with mythical creatures during his trek can be seen as a metaphor for his journey through lawless territory. Gawain in this case is the metaphorical representation of the lawful figure. He is a knight of Arthur's court and in some ways representative of power and law enforcement. However, he is travelling through a lawless and unfamiliar land where he is a foreign power with no authority. The creatures he faces are abstract notions of foreign lawlessness and unfamiliarity. However, outside of the metaphorical possibilities of the journey there is also the possibility that Gawain actually encounters these creatures in his journey through the overlapping real and constructed spaces that lie between Arthur's court and the Green Chapel.

Much like in *Yonec* where the passageway in the hill is the entrance to that magical kingdom, Gawain's journey through the lawless country marks the passageway to Bertilak's castle which is the first possible constructed space we encounter. Gawain is weary from his journey and prays to Mary to deliver him from the wilderness and he promptly encounters Bertilak's castle (759-765). This passage is possibly problematic. There are two possibilities for this place. Either it always existed in plain view and Gawain was simply too exhausted to notice, or it was hidden from view by magic and Mary used her power to reveal it to Gawain. One answer is that Gawain was simply exhausted but having Bertilak's castle be hidden by a magic that Mary has to unveil ties into Bertilak's identity. He is a trickster character, and having his castle hidden from view works nicely along with that identity of the trickster space. In the case that Bertilak's castle is hidden from view, this constructed space would exemplify a trickster space, a space that defies normal logic and hides in plain sight. Mary is able to reveal it to Gawain through her divine connections and remove the trick. Bertilak himself is similarly veiled through the power of Morgan le Fey. Morgan bestows power onto Bertilak in her attempt to scare Guinevere and shame Arthur's court. Bertilak is both a man and the mystical Green Knight. Much like his castle, he is hiding in plain sight.

In addition to hiding in plain sight as a trickster, Bertilak also plays a tricky game on Gawain. Gawain is supposed to give anything he earns in Bertilak's castle to Bertilak at the end of the day and Bertilak will give anything he earned in the hunt to Gawain. Gawain ultimately participates in this game until the third day where he falls prey to weakness and hides the girdle that will supposedly protect him from harm. However, this entire game is a trick created by Bertilak and Morgan in order to bring shame to Arthur's

court. Gawain was expecting to participate in a game where he was to receive a deadly blow, but instead he played a part in a secret game where he brings shame onto himself. This ultimate trick further represents Bertilak's nature as a trickster character. His kingdom is not what it appears to be and the game he has constructed is most certainly not what it seems.

The girdle is another example of the trickster space. It is unclear if the item possesses any magical abilities. Gawain's belief, created at the insistence of Bertilak's wife, is that the belt can in fact protect the wearer from harm. Morgan is responsible for bestowing magic on Bertilak and she is certainly capable of bestowing magic on the girdle, but we are incapable of knowing if the girdle holds any real power. Bertilak orchestrated the game and his wife is almost certainly playing a part in the trick and for this reason we cannot be certain that the girdle is in fact magical by only considering her word. In this aspect the girdle also reflects the nature of the trickster space. The girdle is supposed to represent a protective charm, but it could be just a normal object. The girdle is an important piece in the larger trick. Upon completing the poem, we as readers know that had Gawain given the belt to Bertilak then he would have won the game and the trick would have been revealed. However, he gives into temptation and accepts the girdle as magical instead of relying on a protective charm he already possesses: the pentangle.

The secular inclusion of King Arthur's court as a place, and the fantastic elements it provides, offers the intersection of secular and Christian belief within the poem, specifically in regards to the symbols within the poem. Phillipa Hardman explores the intersection of secular magic and the Christian faith behind the pentangle and the girdle within the story. The *Gawain*-poet intends to use the pentangle as a representation of the

five virtues that Gawain is said to represent. Hardman responds to a fellow scholar who speaks against the pentangle as a symbol of power because it represents divination, a subject the scholar denies. Hardman writes that, "William dealt in one place with irrational belief as exemplified in the power of Solomon's pentangle, and in another with the detestable practice of imbuing seals, rings, and so on with astrological magic…" (Hardman 248-249). William, the scholar Hardman quotes, is quite clear on his opinions regarding secular references to Solomon and magic, but these references create an overlap of the secular and the religious concerning the pentangle.

Solomon's pentangle in the poem is supposed to reference five virtues, but the pentangle also has secular references to magic and divination. Solomon, a Christian King known for his wisdom, is often cited as possessing magic. The inclusion of Solomon's pentangle creates a small layer of interconnection between the secular and the religious in that Solomon himself is often referenced in both secular and religious communities. The poem references the pentangles' virtuous connections when the *Gawain*-poet writes, "For ay faithful in five and sere five sythez/ gawan watz for gode knawen, and as golde pured,/ Voyded of uche vylany, wyth vertuez ennourned." (632-635)[2]. The poet goes on to reference Gawain's five virtues: "fautlez in his five wyttez" (perfect senses), the "fyve woundez/ that Cryst caght on the croys…", his "forsnes" (fortitude), "fraunchyse and felaghschyp" (generosity and love), and "pité" (compassion) (640-654)[3]. These virtues are primarily Christian in nature, but the secular knight is often expected to be pure and

[2] "For always faithful in five ways, and five times in each case./ Gawain was reputed as virtuous, like refined gold,/ Devoid of all vice, and with all courtly virtues/adorned." (632-635)
[3] "First he was judged perfect in his five senses/…And all his earthly faith was in the five wounds/ That Christ suffered on the cross…/his fortitude…/generosity and love…/ and compassion…" (640-654)

courteous, courageous, and compassionate. The *Gawain*-poet indicates that Gawain possesses these qualities, and the story is ultimately a test of those qualities.

The pentangle represents a combination of secular and Christian beliefs in the object itself, but the virtues the pentangle represents within the poem are also a combination of chivalric and Christian virtues. Hardman writes that, "…the pentangle cognizance is explicated by the poet to signal Gawain's complete Christian perfection, but for the reader aware of contemporary concerns about magical protective practices, it also hints at his human frailty" through his use of the pentangle as a charm against evil (251). Hardman suggests that the there is an additional layer of secular and religious overlap in that the pentangle is supposed to represent Gawain's place in virtuous perfection. Fitt 2 states, "Forthy hit acordez to this knight and to his cler armez,/ For ay faithful in five and sere five sythez,/ Gawan watz for gode knawen and as golde pured, voided of uche vylany, with vertuez ennourned." (631-634)[4]. The text here indicates that Gawain is virtuous like refined gold and devoid of all vice. The text also states:

"Fyrst he watz funden fautlez in his five wyttez,
and eft fayled never the freke in his five fyngres,
And alle his afyaunce upon folde watz in the five woundez
That Cryst caght on the croys, as the crede tellez;
And quere-so-ever thys mon in melly watz stad,
His thro thought watz in that, thurgh alle other thyngez,

[4] "Therefore it suts this knight and his shining arms/ For always faithful in five ways, and five times in each case,/ Gawain was reputed as virtuous, like refined gold,/ Devoid of all vice, and with all courtly virtues." (631-634)

That alle his forsnes he feng at the five joyez (640-646)[5]

This indicates that to some extent the pentangle also functions as a charm, or at least it possibly functions as one. Gawain's fingers never falter and wherever he finds himself in battle his fortitude should come from the five joys. This could suggest that he is a master combatant, but it also seems to imply that his connection to Mary and the pentangle offer him a measure of protection as long as he remains faithful to the five joys and five wounds which would provide evidence of the pentangle as a charm.

The poet uses the fantastic place in order to present the choice between secular magic and religious faith. The girdle can also be represented as a charm against evil. Hardman suggests that the girdle may be "a variant of the common practice of carrying written amulets bearing the names of God for protection from harm, a 'magical' belief not necessarily at odds with conventional Christian piety" (256). This implies that Gawain's use of the girdle to protect his life is simply a reliance on a type of charm that was not uncommon in Christianity. However, the *Gawain*-poet seems to suggest that the reliance on a magical girdle has a different implication than reliance on a charm. Gawain, who is represented as an almost holy figure, is presented with a challenge to receive a killing blow from the Green Knight. He willingly undertakes his journey, but he ultimately fails when presented with an opportunity to save himself with a magic girdle rather than rely on his faith. The purpose then seems intentional that the *Gawain*-poet weaves secular plot and magic into his religious tale. Bertilak proposes his game to

[5] "First he was judged perfect in his five senses/And next his five fingers never lost their dexterity;/And all his earthly faith was in the five wounds/ That Christ suffered on the cross, as the creed declares./ And wherever this man found himself in battle/ His fixed thought was that, above all things,/ All his fortitude should come from the five joys" (640-646)

Gawain but is ultimately playing a trick on him. Gawain attempts to use a trick to survive his game with the Green Knight, but this is the trap Bertilak set for him. The girdle does not need to possess any magic here. The trick is to convince Gawain that the girdle can protect him, and bring shame on him for not acting as a brave knight should and responding to the challenge without any trickery, Although the game is rigged against Gawain through the plot and magics of Morgan le Fey and Bertilak.

The girdle is not the only test of Gawain's faith and honor. Andreas Jucker implies that, "The narrative in general is an account of a serious test of Sir Gawain's chivalry, loyalty, and honor. First of all, having accepted the Green Knight's challenge, he is faced with a serious dilemma. If he backs out, he loses his honor, and if he does not, he is certain he will lose his life" (9). Jucker seems to rely on a more secular reading of Gawain's story in that it is a test of his knightly virtue more than his Christian faith. This juxtaposition, however, poses an intersection of chivalric and Christian virtue. For example, Lady Bertilak poses a perplexing situation when she tests Gawain. Jucker writes that, "…within the test he is faced with an almost equally serious dilemma, the lady's seductive advances. If he gives in to her seduction, he loses his honour, and if he does not, he is discourteous towards his hostess" (9). He cannot refuse her advances without being discourteous, which is against knightly and Christian values. However, if he participates in the seduction he is both committing a sin and being discourteous towards Bertilak. The Gawain poet writes, "Fo that prynces of pris depressed hym so thikke,/ Nurned hym so neghe the thred, that need hym bihoved/ Other lach there hir luf other

lodly refuse" (1770-1772)[6]; the poet continues with, "And more for his meschef yif he schulde make synne,/ and be traytor to that tolke that that teld aght" (1774-1775)[7]. Gawain is presented with a situation in which it is almost impossible for him to remain loyal to his secular chivalric values and his Christian faith.

Gawain, according to these various readings, is a layered character in a complicated situation. He is struggling with notions of chivalric honor and religious piety. He cannot refuse the Lady Bertilak because it is both dishonorable in a chivalric sense, to the Lady Bertilak and her husband, but to comply with her seduction would be to give into sin and deny his faith. He is also a Knight of the Virgin Mary, but she cannot intervene on his behalf because to do so would be to nullify his choice and the test of faith that lies before him. Gawain also has to choose between what he believes to be certain death, and a magical means of escaping his death. However, to obey Lady Bertilak's request and keep the girdle a secret is to betray Lord Bertilak in their agreed upon game. The character of Gawain is a combination of secular and religious beliefs, and his position within the test, as well the combination of his beliefs, creates an impossible decision. While these readings are important, I am less concerned with the secular and religious connotations and more concerned with the constructed spaces (trickster spaces) and the games that occur with them as well as how the characters that belong to those spaces reflect the tricks.

[6] "For that noble lady so constantly pressed,/ Pushed him so close to the verge, that either he must/Take her love there and then or churlishly reject it" (1770-1772)
[7] "And still more lest he shame himself by an of act of sin,/ And treacherously betray the lord of the castle." (1774-1775)

The religious metaphor in this poem are incredibly important, as Gawain is listed as Mary's knight, but the pentangle also offers a counter example to the girdle. The pentangle functions as a charm against evil, and reflects the religious connotations of Arthur's court, much as the girdle reflects Bertilak's castle and the trickster space. Gawain is described as Mary's knight and as representing certain religious and virtuous qualities portrayed by the pentangle.

The girdle and the pentangle represent combating images and spaces. Arthur's court and Bertilak's court are both constructed spaces within real-world spaces, and both have been assigned these symbols of either magical or divine protection. The pentangle represents the holiness and divinity of Arthur's court just as Gawain is supposed to be a lawful knight. The girdle represents the magical trickery of Bertilak's castle. It either possesses Morgan le Fey's magic and can protect Gawain, or it is simply another trick to bring shame to Gawain and Arthur's court. Gawain travels between these two spaces and relies upon both images for protection. He relies on the pentangle and his connection to Mary in order to arrive safely, but he fears that that protection will not be enough when offered the temptation of the girdle. He then relies upon the girdle's protection to survive the beheading game. However, as the girdle is a part of Bertilak's trick it offers no real protection. This seems to suggest that by not relying upon the protection of the religious space, Mary, and the pentangle, Gawain is not worthy of that protection. However, part of the reason Bertilak initiates the game is because he feels that Gawain and Arthur's court is not worthy of the authority and reputation they possess. His trick reveals this when none of the knights are willing to immediately participate in the beheading game, and when Gawain ultimately shames himself. Bertilak remains true to the nature of his

trickster identity and the trickster space, but Gawain fails to live up to the expectations of the religious space he hails from. He cannot contest the dangers of the wild and lawless space and must be saved by Mary. He cannot weather the hunting games and falls prey to Bertilak's trap. And finally, he cannot bravely face the beheading without goading from Bertilak. This seems to suggest that Gawain, and by extension the other knights of the court, are not worthy of the reputation that their constructed space gave them which is why Gawain takes up the mantle of the girdle as a reminder.

Morgan, though a background character in this poem, is very important in regards to the constructed space. Morgan hails from Avalon (Lacy, Ashe, and Mancoff 337). We have previously examined Avalon in the *Lanval* section, but to recap Avalon is a mysterious space hidden from the world and inaccessible to those who are not from Avalon. Morgan is a character layered in mystery in this story. As readers, we do not discover her connection to Bertilak or the game until he reveals it to us at the end of poem. We come to discover that Morgan is his master and has given him the powers of the Green Knight and hidden herself amongst the residents of his castle. Much like Lanval's Lady, Morgan possesses magical abilities to control the world around her. Unlike the Lady, Morgan appears to have more overtly magical abilities. While the Lady can hide herself from the perception of others and come and go as she pleased, Morgan can bestow magical abilities onto others and change her own shape. These qualities reflect the mysterious and magical nature of Avalon. Morgan's identity is a mystery until Bertilak reveals the trick of his game. Similarly to the Lady, Morgan is able to care for those she has taken under her wing. There is no sexual relationship between Morgan and Bertilak, but as the Lady provides for Lanval's financial needs, Morgan provides Bertilak

with the power to play his games. The ladies of Avalon are giving, but both seem to have their own goals in mind. Morgan uses Bertilak to attack Guinevere, and he is all too happy to participate because it allows him to play his trickster games.

Morgan is the magical agent of the trickster space, and alongside the mystery of the trick she is also hiding in plain sight, represented as the old hag. Morgan reflects the mysterious and magical nature of Avalon, but she also presents qualities that appear in Bertilak's trickster space. This suggests that Morgan has influenced the space itself as the agent fueling the power of the trick. She is capable of using magic to disguise herself, and the trickster space is difficult to discern. This is because Morgan hails from Avalon and reflects its mysterious and elusive qualities and influenced Bertilak and his space by bestowing Bertilak with the power to enact his game. As readers we are not aware of her identity until the final moments, and even then we only know her by name and the form that she took in Bertilak's castle. We are never exposed to her true form just as we are never exposed to Avalon's true form. The Gawain poet is only interested in Bertilak's trickster space, and not the mysterious space of Avalon. Morgan is meant to be the driving power of the trick, but not the agent that delivers the trick itself. Bertilak is the face of the game, but Morgan is the power, much like the way Lanval is the face of the relationship but the Lady holds the power. Bertilak and Lanval interact with the world while the ladies of Avalon work behind the scenes until their direct attention is necessary. This too is a direct mirroring of Avalon, which is a kingdom that exists behind the scenes and so the ladies of Avalon appropriately act without others being aware of their existence.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Much as how personal linguistic patterns can be influenced by the linguistic nature of the real space, characters from constructed spaces often reflect the qualities of their home space. The ladies of Avalon, Gawain, and Bertilak are all examples of characters that have come to reflect the qualities of their home space. The Lady and Morgan are both powerful agents of change in their own right. The Lady functions as a silent agent of change and power in *Lanval* as a source of wealth for Lanval as well as the agent that ultimately saves his life. Morgan is the silent agent of power that drives the trickster game that runs behind the scenes of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Both women possess some form of magical power, but both are often unseen and choose to operate in the background. Both assume roles of power over those around them indicating that they are outside of the normal framework of power. These qualities are all derived from the constructed space of Avalon. Avalon is a mysterious island that remains unseen by the world and both women possess the power to cloak their forms in one way or another. Avalon lies outside of the power structure of real space, and both women are outside the power structures of the real spaces they are visiting operating with power in situations they might not normally have any.

Gawain's home space is meant to be a quasi-religious space in that Arthur's court normally is not heavily associated with the Christian religion, but in this poem there are several religious references making it a sort of religious space, though I would not attempt to argue it is wholly a religious space. Gawain is supposed to reflect those

qualities and the knights of the court are meant to be braver and more holy than other knights. The point of Bertilak's game is to prove that Gawain, and by extension the other knights, are not what they claim to be. Gawain and his brother knights in this case reflect degraded qualities of the space under the belief that there is no degradation. Upon the end of the poem, their lack is revealed and the knights strive to more closely reflect the qualities of their constructed space by taking up the image of the girdle as a form of penance and memento. Bertilak closely reflects the nature of his trickster space. His entire identity is built around the fabricated game and his plot to undermine the reputation of the knights. His power itself is a trick in some ways. He is using borrowed power and authority to target Gawain and the other knights, and without Morgan's aid he would not be able to perform the trick. He is both the Green Knight and Bertilak, his castle is both there and not there, and the girdle is both a magical charm against harm and possibly a normal useless girdle. Bertilak, his castle, and the items within reflect the nature of the trickster space appearing to be one thing and really existing as another.

Mulduramec, Yonec's mother, and Yonec similarly embody the nature of imprisonment and freedom that their respective spaces represent. Mulduramec is a free agent able to fly between spaces, but ultimately dies due to the influence of the prison space where he is tied down by his love to Yonec's mother. Yonec's mother is unable to escape her prison space except to witness her lover's dead body and remains in the prison space until Yonec eventually frees her. Yonec himself is the embodiment of the two spaces possessing both the freedom to travel between spaces as well as access and break the prison space more fully than his father could.

The spaces we originate from or the spaces that we live in often have an impact on us. Characters from constructed spaces face similar effects from their home spaces. This thesis has demonstrated how the different constructed spaces of Avalon, Bertilak's castle, Arthur's court, Mulduramec's kingdom, and the prison of Yonec's mother all demonstrate an effect on the characters that inhabit those spaces. The characters of a constructed space demonstrate qualities and powers similar to the nature of the space itself and the very identity of the character is shaped by the nature of the space they come from. Morgan and Lanval's Lady are both powerful sorceresses who work behind the scenes to drive the events of their respective stories. Bertilak is a trickster who reveals one image of himself but is hiding his true self behind a trick or game. Mulduramec is a free agent unable to access the confines of a prison space without being metaphorically tied down whereas Yonec's mother is unable to access the freedom her lover represents because she is trapped by the nature of the prison space. These characters, in some cases, come from relatively different spaces but each of them somehow mirror the qualities of their home space demonstrating that space has an impact on its inhabitants.

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