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## ***IDENTITY AND SACRED INITIATION SPACE IN THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL***

***Abstract:*** Space in the legend of the Holy Grail coincides with the consecration of unknown territories by the knight-quester. During the exploration of Terre Gaste or of other magical lands the elect must prove himself before the primordial forces that put him to test. Discovering the cosmic harmony inside the human self is the purpose of the knight-quester who is able to unify the interior and the exterior spaces in his own questioning nature.

Identity is a key-concept for the understanding of the deep meaning attached to the legend. During the quest the identity of the knight changes as he undergoes a process of initiation which will lead him to the Grail.

In the quest of the Holy Grail space can be divided into two dimensions, a sacred and a profane one, as they are described by Mircea Eliade. According to Eliade man can transcend the limited sphere of the profane and enter the sacred dimension of the divine revelation. Sacred space identifies itself with the protagonist that comes to Arthur's court in order to redeem it of its sins. Once the rules of the sacred are adopted man can remain in this world only if he proves to be a true homo religiosus.

The knight-quester passes the test by facing the desolation of Terre Gaste and by acknowledging the darkness in his own soul. Initiation takes place on two levels, a horizontal and a vertical one. The horizontal line presupposes his identifying with space by conquering it which is an attitude specific to the protagonists of the adventures in the magical forest. The true quester is the one that adopts the vertical line as this means assuming the labyrinth where the knight arrives, the understanding of his own limits and his final reward.

Once this attitude is adopted Terre Gaste will become again a land of life and the Grail will welcome the knight-quester in its mysterious world.