



Understanding Genre and Medieval Romance

K.S. Whetter

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Unique in combining a comprehensive and comparative study of genre with a study of romance, this book constitutes a significant contribution to ongoing critical debates over the definition of romance and the genre and artistry of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. K.S. Whetter offers an original approach to these issues by prefacing a comprehensive study of romance with a wide-ranging and historically diverse study of genre and genre theory. In doing so Whetter addresses the questions of why and how romance might usefully be defined and how such an awareness of genre-and the expectations that come with such awareness-impact upon both our understanding of the texts themselves and of how they may have been received by their contemporary medieval audiences. As an integral part the study Whetter offers a detailed examination of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, a text usually considered a straightforward romance but which Whetter argues should be re-classified and reconsidered as a generic mixture best termed tragic-romance. This new classification is important in helping to explain a number of so-called inconsistencies or puzzles in Malory's text and further elucidates Malory's artistry. Whetter offers a powerful meditation upon genre, romance and the *Morte* which will be of interest to faculty, graduate students and undergraduates alike.

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