The Comic Image of the Courtly Love Ideals in Le Morte D’Arthur by Sir Thomas Malory

The Arthurian legends have fascinated and inspired people for ages. Le Morte D’Arthur by Sir Thomas Malory is one of the best compilations of the stories about King Arthur and his peers. This romance deals with the enchanting world of knightly rituals and the ideals of the chivalric code. It is not a typical romance blindly glorifying the medieval world, though. Written in the time when these ideals are passing, the prose is dominated on the one hand, by melancholy and sentiment, but on the other, by irony and ambiguity. Malory seems to question the chivalric code through inconsistencies of his characters' behaviour, and absurdity of some situations they are involved in. The paper will focus on the ambivalent and comic picture of the courtly love ideals in Malory’s prose. The main source of failure of some of the Arthurian knights in this aspect of knightly life is the clash between the real chivalric practice and the imagined ideals they pursue.