ABSTRACT

Word Choice and Word Concentration in Malory's *Works*

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I shall examine specific instances of Malory's word choice and word repetition in relation to three elements: the king, the knight, and the court. While each word represents a major value in or concept of the text as a whole, the concentration and repetition of the word in certain places within the text makes its use intriguing. I plan first to explore the concepts of *advyce* and *counsel* as applied to Arthur. The words appear in the highest concentration in *The Tale of King Arthur* and *The Tale of the Noble King Arthur that Was Emperor Himself Through Dignity of His Hands* and in *The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* and *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*. These tales deal specifically with Arthur's rise to and fall from power; Malory focuses his audience's attention on various scenes within these books to raise awareness of right and wrong counsel. Also important in Malory's time is the relationship between *shame* and *worship* in relation to the knight. Many of the chivalric manuals of the age contained clear instructions on how to gain worship and avoid shame, concepts just as important to Malory's audience as they were to Arthur's knights. These

two concepts are major values of *The Works*, with notable concentration within *The Tale of Sir Gareth*. Its subject-matter, the development of one of the best knights in Arthur's court, has many ties to the chivalric manuals being published in Malory's time. Consequently, finding similarities between this tale and contemporary texts in regards to *worship* and *shame* reveals its importance to Malory's audience. The third element, the court, is large and unwieldy. As a result, I concentrate on the issue of speech made *openly*. The health and worship of the collective is essential to the health and worship of the individuals within. Therefore, assertions or declarations made *openly* of one's own ability or the triumphs of others raise the worship of the entire group. Unfortunately, however, negative *open* speech also exists and can cause real damage if the accuser is acting for personal self-interest rather than for the health of the collective.

Word Choice and Word Concentration in Malory's *Works*

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For my parents

CHAPTER ONE

Sir Thomas Malory: His World, His Audience, His Work

Introduction

Sir Thomas Malory was writing his *Works* while England was in the midst of great change. Many citizens were involved in the struggle for the throne between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists,[1] they yearned for a stronger national identity,[2] and some felt threatened by the growing complexity of society's upper echelons.[3] *The Works*, then, could have been a way to give Malory's audience a comprehensive history of Arthur in the vernacular as well as to remind them of a time when life in England was simpler and more peaceful. However, a text is not a static entity; according to Bakhtin, "The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers" (254). As Bakhtin suggests, Malory's already complex task of compiling and editing the vast continental and English corpus of Arthuriana was further complicated by his conscious or unconscious desire to comment on his own time, his own situation. While deliberate authorial intrusions in *The Works* do occur—including explicits, various parenthetical comments or evaluations, and direct address[4]—there is a more subtle way in which Malory's time slips into the historical time of Arthur's reign.

The Works presents the creation, zenith, and destruction of Arthur's kingdom. Arthur is one of England's greatest heroes, and his life story is not only a source of

entertainment but a way by which Malory's society could examine itself. In the text, numerous characters enter Arthur's world, interacting with him and others in ways that develop important values, like the significance of good leadership and the development of honor, or *worship*, as Malory called it. These concepts, important in Arthur's time, were just as important in Malory's time.[5] As a result, comparison between the two is now, and would then have been, natural. An audience member, then or now, might read or listen to a description of Arthur's Pentecostal Oath, and, naturally and perhaps unconsciously, relate that Oath to his/her own time, to situations of his/her own experience.[6] However, since the text is set in the past, a clear division between the world of the work and reality remains. According to D. S. Brewer, "Every society has an imaginative need to see itself, not quite as it is, but as it essentially thinks of itself" (The Morte Darthur*: Parts Seven and Eight* 5). That is, Malory's audience members might praise or condemn an action taken in *The Works* and relate it to, though not necessarily equate it with, similar situations in their own experiences. As a result, *The Works*'s audience could discuss contemporary politically- or socially- charged issues under the guise of character analysis and textual debate.[7]

Bakhtin and Malory

Though the time in Malory's text is separated from the time of his audience, the author cannot be separated from his text, nor can he be separated from his time. Bakhtin explains the connections that exist between the writer, the text, and its audience:

> In the completely real-life time-space where the work resonates, where we find the inscription or the book, we find as well a real person—one who originates spoken speech as well as the inscription and the book—and real people who are hearing and reading the text. Of course these real people, the authors and the listeners or readers, may be (and often are) located in

> differing time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances, but nevertheless they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the *represented* world in the text. Therefore we may call this world the world that *creates* the text, for all its aspects—the reality reflected in the text, the authors creating the text, the performers of the text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or readers who recreate and in so doing renew the text—participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text. (253)

All of these factors must be taken into consideration when one studies a text. In the case of Malory's *Works*, these include:

> 1) Malory's attitudes about the Arthurian tradition as well as about his own time period
>
> 2) The time period itself in which Malory is writing (the Wars of the Roses)
>
> 3) The audience to which Malory is writing—the gentry and nobility in England, and
>
> 4) The audience's own drives and desires (for much of the gentry—to improve their station; for the nobility—to keep their power and wealth)

All of these elements—author, audience, and time period—directly affects one's reading of the text.

In terms of Malory's existence in and effect upon the work, Bakhtin makes an observation that is certainly applicable, despite *The Works's* having been finished hundreds of years before the concept of the novel was clearly defined: "The novelist is drawn toward everything that is not yet completed. He may turn up on the field of representation in any authorial pose, he may depict real moments in his own life or make allusions to them, he may interfere in the conversations of his heroes, he may openly

polemicize with his literary enemies and so forth" (27). While Malory does not speak openly to other compilers or authors of the Arthurian tradition, such as Chrétien de Troyes, Malory does interfere with his subject-matter.[8] He does not simply transcribe the Arthurian story as it existed thus far; he sifts through the huge existing corpus to choose his desired elements—characters, adventures, versions of events, etc. But he goes further: he also reorders and unravels events, he adds details of his own, and he relates the stories in his own words, all of which affect the text as well as the audience's absorption of that text.[9] As P. J. C. Field notes, "The world which any story presents to its readers is as constantly affected by the words the author chooses as by the relationships between them" (*Romance and Chronicle* 57). Because Malory was changing so much of his source texts, by unraveling, adding or deleting details, reordering or re-visioning, he was bound to assert his views and interfere with the text; however, this interference need not be direct and intrusive. Simply by having a character ask for *advice* or make an accusation *openly*, Malory guides interpretation and invites discussion.

Therefore, Malory as author or compiler cannot be separated from his text; he appears in altered plot lines, in new dialogue, in the narration. And, since we have little knowledge of and even less proof regarding Sir Thomas Malory, the knight and author, we can only turn to the text. A careful examination of Malory's text, then, reveals much about his concerns. Specifically, by studying his word choice and word concentration of specific concepts—*counsel/advice* as tied to the king, *shame/worship* as related to the knight, and *open* speech within the court collective—I shall show that Malory was a

much more deliberate author than some critics contend and that his text was as much educational tool as entertainment.

The History of Arthurian Criticism

The broader authorial decisions made by Malory were the early focus of Arthurian criticism; that is, the first wave of criticism was devoted to identifying what texts Malory borrowed from. Eugène Vinaver identified many of Malory's source texts in his critical edition of Malory's *Works*, including the English alliterative *Morte Arthure* and the stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur*, as well as the French *Vulgate Cycle* and *La Queste del Saint Graal*, among others. Vinaver's commentary and notes include copious references to and explanations of source text similarities and differences vis-á-vis Malory's text. However, Vinaver, though the first, was certainly not the only critic who studied Malory's use of his source texts. Numerous scholars, including Larry D. Benson, Terence McCarthy, R. M. Lumiansky, and Mark Lambert, explore specific tales or scenes from Malory's texts, not only to see what Malory borrowed, but also to emphasize what Malory changed, omitted, or added.[10]

The second surge in criticism explored the relationship between the author and his time: scholars looked for similarities between the text's reality and Malory's world. There are two distinct factions, however. One side, which includes early critics like Eugène Vinaver, Nellie Aurner, Richard Griffith, and E. D. Kennedy,[11] try to find specific, pointed connections between fiction and reality. They equate Arthur's behavior in a situation, a battle for example, with actions taken by King Henry V or Edward IV. While this direction of criticism is certainly fascinating and enjoyable, most of the evidence is circumstantial. Nevertheless, these critics use this 'evidence,' these

coincidental similarities, to draw conclusions about Malory himself, transposing the actions of his characters into Malory's beliefs. However, since we have few details on Malory's life and even fewer on his beliefs, interests, and concerns, there is no definitive way a critic can show a direct link between a scene in *The Works* and an event from Malory's lifetime.

However, a second group of critics has proved more convincing than the group above. Their focus is not on direct connections between characters and actual people but on ideas and beliefs; they find similarities between Malory's audience in relation to *The Works*. These critics examine abstract concepts rather than concrete events to find similarities within Malory's time. For example, both Elizabeth Pochoda and Raluca Radulescu have written books that look at the attitudes and beliefs of individuals in the late 1400s;[12] they examine non-Malorian texts—treatises, chronicles, compilations—and show the similarities in attitude and perspective to material in Malory's work. This criticism has been much more effective; understanding the historical reality of England in the late 1400s contributes to our modern understanding of the complexity of Malory's text.[13] Furthermore, this complexity is the result of *The Works*'s being a compilation and reduction of various Arthurian tales as well as a text developed from various genres, including the epic, chronicle, and romance traditions. Furthermore, Malory drew from texts of different languages (French and English) and formats (both verse and prose). Therefore, scenes in *The Works* about issues like effective government have been shaped, consciously or unconsciously, by the Arthurian material already being circulated among the upper classes of society. Furthermore, because Malory's audience also is familiar with these other works, its reaction to material in *The Works* is thus colored by them.

Examining concepts like worship and treason outside the text can clarify what occurs within it. Jill Mann's article, "Malory: Knightly Combat in *Le Morte Darthur,*" identifies certain crucial concepts and the importance of examining them thoroughly.[14] D. S. Brewer and Angela Gibson have both examined the concept of a shame culture outside Malory's text before applying their findings to the text itself.[15] Their conclusions regarding fifteenth-century attitudes about shame greatly clarify Malory's text, helping to make connections between characters' voiced intentions and their actual behavior and to show continuity between speech and action. Other critics have explored differing concepts. Karen Cherewatuk has used chivalric manuals to explore Malory's portrayals of worship and gentle behavior.[16] E. Kay Harris studied legal documents like the 1352 statute on treason before examining how *The Works*'s occurrences of treason were handled legally by Malory's characters.[17]

Another group of critics has narrowed its focus even more, concentrating on the stylistic elements of Malory's text, looking at his language and grammatical patterns. Some of these studies have shown the importance of Malory's paratactic style,[18] while Melissa Furrow has written about his "deictic" structure in "Listening Reader and Impotent Speaker: The Role of Deixis in Literature." Helen Cooper has also examined Malory's sentence style; specifically, she points out instances of mutuality, "when two characters share a verb or a simile" ("Malory's Language of Love" 301), to reveal the importance of such communal action to Malory's work as a whole and to specific character development. Ann Dobyns, too, has looked at character portrayal, though she focuses on a comparison of Guinevere's speeches to Isolde's, which " . . . are remarkably similar in diction, formula, and syntax" ("The Rhetoric of Character" 340). Bert Dillon,

in "Formal and Informal Pronouns of Address in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*," has carefully examined Malory's uses of the second person singular pronoun (thee/thou or ye/you) throughout the text in order to highlight the importance of a sudden, though deliberate, shift in usage, while Elizabeth Archibald examines *felyship* in her article "Malory's Ideal of Fellowship" and Laurel J. Brinton studies the definitions of *anon* and their uses in Malory's *Works* in "The Importance of Discourse Types in Grammaticalization: The Case of *Anon*."

The Transmission of Malory's Text

Textual transmission (writing) at Malory's time had increased in popularity and general availability, but England was still very much an aural/oral society. As a result, many elements necessary for the effective oral transmission of a text (alliteration, repetition) appeared in the written text. As Tim William Machan explains, "For popular works like romances, the relevance of orality is well known; alliterative formulas and tag phrases like *herkneth lordinges* have long suggested to scholars that the poems could have been recited aloud" ("Editing, Orality, and Late Middle English Texts" 237). Furthermore, though *The Works* is a written document, Malory's audience gained access to his text both visually by reading and aurally by listening; as a result, they must have mastered the skills necessary for remembering what had come before.[19] Making things more difficult is the sheer volume of the text; Nick Davis argues: "[*The Works*] contains a great deal of story-matter, probably more than any unassisted memory could retain and organize; Malory is very directly using the reference facility of writing to augment the memory's native powers. To remember Arthurian society and its achievements is, for Malory's purposes, to perceive and trace kinds of interconnectedness between stories"

("Narrative Composition and the Spatial Memory" 31). In an aural society, memory is important to connect scenes and concepts and to discover meaning. Written words enable memory and its connections even further.

Joyce Coleman's *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* provides important insights into the abilities and expectations of Malory's audience. First, she clarifies the difference between orality and aurality, establishing Malory's work as one meant for an aural culture rather than an oral one.[20] The written text has an authority that an oral text cannot have; it " . . . would visibly dominate the group experience . . . The audience's awareness of the book before them entailed an increased awareness of the fixity and authority of the text, and of the author's role as mediator of the traditions that text represented" (28). The author is just as aware of this connection, this responsibility. In Malory's case, his direct intrusions into the text (most notably, the *Lo ye all Englysshemen* speech) are rare;[21] however, his presence in the text remains unarguable and unavoidable. He unlaced, edited, and organized the *Works*'s content and, therefore, his place within the text is fixed. Malory is, to borrow Coleman's term, the mediator; the text cannot exist without him and the audience relies upon him for information.

In short, Malory himself is the first element to shape the experience his audience has with the text. The second element that affects the text and its transmission is the audience itself. Age, gender, social class, political affiliation—all play a part in the absorption and enjoyment of the text. Andrew Lynch identifies Malory's audience: "Its value and meaning seem thoroughly appropriated from the outset to the interests of a broad social group, the 'jantylls' . . . those of Caxton's audience who aspired to share the

values of gentility with people actually well above them on the social scale" (*Malory's Book of Arms: The Narrative of Combat in* Le Morte Darthur 32). As Hyonjin Kim explains, the gentry were socially, economically, and politically beneath the nobility; however, they still had power and influence (*The Knight Without the Sword* 8).[22] Furthermore, they had high aspirations. They wanted to improve their situations, to gain entrance to the court, to the king, to real power. Malory's text will have helped them achieve that goal.[23]

The literature being devoured by Malory's audience included " . . . romances, poetry, chronicles, specula principis, etc., as well as 'softer' versions or the less challenging of the professional readers' technical texts, and devotional texts such as saints' lives read in large part for entertainment" (Coleman 92). To be sure, "Any cultured fifteenth century gentleman would have a fair acquaintance with Arthurian matters, in general if not always in detail" (McCarthy, *An Introduction to Malory* 138). However, entertainment was not the only intent. Raluca Radulescu builds from Karen Cherewatuk's excellent research into fifteenth-century chivalric manuals, found in "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes': Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*" and "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'." Radulescu discusses the importance of 'Grete Bokes': " . . . gentry-owned miscellanies which contain similar material, especially historical, political and chivalric texts, alongside literary tracts" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 14). Furthermore, "Whether religious, chivalric, or political, these gentry manuscripts largely emulated the tastes and attitudes of the nobility" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 39). The gentry mimicked those they wished to become, and the education and advice contained within books proved invaluable:

" . . . chivalry, courtesy, governance and history were among the most prominent topics in gentry-owned books, insofar as these addressed the shaping of social identity and of political culture" (Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 48).

Therefore, the third important element that affects an audience's absorption of material is relevance—what could these texts teach their audiences? Though Coleman refers specifically to men discussing specula and chronicles in a relaxed setting, her argument is just as applicable to other types of gatherings and texts:

> While readers must certainly have studied these texts in mute isolation at times, it seems their inherent interest and intent could be realized only when these readers went on to discuss what they had read with others, or shared in a group reading and discussion. Aurality, which is usually associated with deficiency or lack of sophistication, thus emerges as a key means of achieving very sophisticated sociopolitical goals. (97)

The texts devoted to the Matter of Britain, and perhaps especially Malory's text, will have inspired numerous and varied discussions. *The Works* was an amalgamation of existing forms (like chronicle and romance) and content (like the disparate renderings of Gawain or the relatively 'new' addition of the Grail story), but the end result is wholly original. Malory's text was written and circulated in a time of great upheaval—political, economic, and social change which required discreet, even cautious, discussion—but exploring these issues through the safety of the *Works* allowed conversations about them to occur more freely.[24]

For example, Malory's audience members were often witnesses (if not instigators or pawns) in the Wars of the Roses, in which Henry VI and Edward IV both claimed legal right to the throne.[25] Now, discussing in public whose claim was valid could earn individuals prison sentences. However, if these same individuals were exploring young Arthur's right to the throne of England or Mordred's usurpation of Arthur's throne, then

the discussion could occur more freely and openly. The same arguments, the same fears, the same rationalizations could be used to discuss Arthur as to discuss Henry or Edward, but the ramifications of such discussion are vastly different. As Elizabeth Pochoda asserts in *Arthurian Propaganda*, "It is essential to an understanding of Malory to recognize that historical ideals, however remote from reality, are intended to fulfill actual needs for the society which revives them" (30). Though Malory was writing about the long-ago world of Arthur, he was making some very strong points about his own society, a society which had turned to the past as a way to escape the realities of the present, a society that had tried to revive chivalry and knighthood, a society whose refusal to acknowledge the problems of the time could result in the destruction of the entire society.[26]

The Works, then, is "an object lesson for Malory's age" (Pochoda 60), an object lesson about such important concepts as fellowship, leadership, and worship.[27] Therefore, looking at some of Malory's important values can reveal much about his own viewpoints on these issues as well as identify where debate among Malory's audience could occur. For the purposes of this project, I chose three main elements—the king, the knight, and the court—and then further narrowed my focus. First, I chose to study Arthur and concentrate my exploration on the concepts of *counsel* and *advice*. Then—and there are numerous knights to choose from—I decided to study Gareth; his rise to laudable knight is conveniently compacted into a single book, *The Tale of Sir Gareth*, and his struggles to win *worship* and avoid *shame* are much more focused than for other knights, such as Tristram or Lancelot. The third element, the court, is also large and unwieldy. As a result, I narrowed my analysis to concentrate on the issue of *open* speech in the

court. The health and worship of the collective is essential to the health and worship of the individuals within the collective. Therefore, *open* assertions or declarations of one's own ability or the triumphs of others raise the worship of the entire group. Unfortunately, however, negative *open* speech also exists and can cause real damage if the accuser is acting for personal self-interest rather than for the health of the collective.

The King and Counsel/Advice

As Elizabeth Pochoda notes, " . . . the relation of the king to his immediate council and his choice of members for it are central concerns of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century legal thought" (*Arthurian Propaganda* 46).[28] The king's actions and decisions carried great weight and affected his whole kingdom. Trustworthy and reliable advisors acted as safeguards against emotionally- or personally-driven decisions that could damage not only the king but also his subjects, for "In the fifteenth century . . . the 'body politic' was no longer defined simply as the king's person in his official or public capacity, but as a corporation: the actual body had the king for its head and his subjects as members" (Pochoda 39). The Wars of the Roses had significantly damaged the body politic; Henry VI had been replaced by Edward IV in 1461, only to take control again in 1470 before losing the throne for good to Edward in 1471. The body was in a state of constant flux, with loyalties strained or even broken; the result was chaos.

All of the triumphs of Henry V's rule had been squandered or destroyed by the rule of Henry VI. Radulescu describes the body politic as turning against its head: " . . . anxiety and discontent with the king and his counsellors were increasing at all levels of society, but mainly among the nobility and the gentry, who were involved in central and local government" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 6). As anger

and unrest grew, both sides, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians, " . . . appealed to the same notions of good counsellors and concern for the common weal of the realm . . . " (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 6). The gentry were forced to become more involved in issues of state, to choose sides. Furthermore, they became much more aware of the impact their own decisions had on those around them and on those they led. As a result, good counsel and advice became more central in conversations. As Radulescu explains, " . . . the political issues of kingship and governance of the realm were discussed by an ever-growing audience, among which the gentry were very conspicuous" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 71).

Many of the texts being read by Malory's audience dealt specifically with these concepts of counsel and advice. Many of the 'grete bookes' being compiled and drafted at this time included works devoted to " . . . political concepts like good governance, wise kingship and prudent choice of royal counsellors . . . " (Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 52). Though certainly not royals, and not even nobility, the gentry class nevertheless derived lessons from these mirrors for princes, for while works by individuals like Hoccleve were " . . . initially designed to please the king, and were dedicated to him, the vocabulary used by their authors became part of the public domain, and a vehicle for the transmission of political ideas, at all levels of society" (Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 53). Not only did the gentry appropriate the language, they appropriated the lessons, for they could see first-hand the problems resulting from poor counsel.

First, Malory's audience had witnessed the problems with Henry VI, for "In the fifteenth century the problem of counsel became a crucial issue in the context of Henry

VI's incapacity to rule, which resulted in greater power for the king's counsellors" (Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 72). These individuals were not acting in the best interests of the king and his subjects. Henry became isolated behind his counselors, whose poor advice and selfish counsel caused the rift that eventually brought Edward to the throne. Unfortunately, though, Edward made poor decisions of his own in regard to his council. He promoted individuals related to him through marriage, not those related through blood or who had a history of dedicated service. The promoted individuals then advanced their own agendas, improving their own positions and interests while shutting out many of those who had brought Edward to the throne in the first place. In fact, Warwick, the man who had orchestrated Edward's seizure of the throne, actually rebelled and tried to unseat him.

In short, what I am arguing is that because it might have been dangerous to discuss openly either Henry's or Edward's counselors, Malory's text instead allowed the conversation to occur without fear of threat or reprisal. The concepts of *counsel* and *advice* appear throughout *The Works*, but they are most often associated with Arthur in the first two and last two books. The first two books deal with Arthur's rise to and consolidation of power, while the last two books explore the various causes for Arthur's fall from power. Arthur is a much safer object of discussion in relation to counsel than is either Henry or Edward. Like Henry, Arthur comes to power while still a minor. However, Arthur was much more active in decision-making and in the establishment of a united England than Henry ever could have been. Arthur surrounds himself with men who are older and wiser than he and who have his, and the country's, best interests at

hand. Merlin is Arthur's first and most important counselor,[29] but he also has various knights to advise him as well. Unlike Henry VI, Arthur seeks wise counsel.

The Tale of King Arthur introduces different types of counsel to Malory's audience. Numerous scenes show Arthur asking for and receiving advice from Merlin as well as from his barons. Arthur is a young king who has not been exposed to the rigors of the royal crown; he *must* rely on those older and wiser than he. However, Arthur never relinquishes control. He is the one who asks for counsel or advice, and he is the one who makes the final decisions. As the text progresses, Arthur asks for political advice, war counsel, and even administrative advice. But soon he is assured enough that he even begins to provide counsel of his own to his subjects.[30] As a result, Merlin, his first and most influential counselor, is no longer necessary and is removed from the text. Following Merlin's removal, *The Tale of the Noble King Arthur That Was Emperor Himself Through Dignity of His Hands* reveals a worthy king threatened by an outside force—the Roman Emperor Lucius. In this book, Arthur's advisors are numerous, made up of other kings and knights. They are all united to seek one ultimate goal—to rout Lucius's troops and make England a political and military power unmatched in the known world.[31]

At the end of the Arthur and Lucius section, Arthur is at the pinnacle of his power and prestige. His role in *The Works* thus changes. He can achieve no more; he is at the top of Fortune's Wheel. The spotlight then turns to his knights. Arthur is certainly not removed from the text, but his role is greatly reduced. He becomes the anchor for other characters, characters like Lancelot, Gareth, and Tristram. He holds the world of Malory's text together. However, Arthur becomes a major actor again in the last two

books of *The Works*: *The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* and *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*, after his knights return to Camelot following the Grail Quest.

The Grail Quest revealed many of the flaws inherent in Arthur's kingdom. Only a few knights achieve their goal; the rest are found unworthy. They return to Camelot defeated and aware of their own faults and foibles. But rather than inspiring the knights to better themselves in response, the Grail Quest actually results in many knights, Lancelot included, turning their backs on the spiritual knowledge they might have gained. Instead, the secular, the ephemeral, becomes the focus of attention. Lancelot " . . . began to resorte unto quene Gwenivere agayne . . . " (*Works* 1048.10-11) and private hatreds began to burn hotter as well. Aggravain and Mordred's hatred for Lancelot explodes, and Sir Pynell's hatred for Gawain results in the death of the innocent Sir Patryse and the false accusation against Guinevere. Arthur finds himself in the center of a blood feud that has been simmering throughout the whole text.[32] He gives his kin free rein and then, when the court is rent asunder, gives his nephew Gawain the sole power of counsel. Malory furthers the idea of this split by relating the concepts of *counsel* and *advice* more formally to Lancelot than ever before. Lancelot is a king in his own right, and he certainly has advised individuals before these two books. However, Malory shows the true dichotomy between reasonable and emotional counsel by juxtaposing Lancelot's counsel with Arthur's;[33] the end result of poor counsel is the destruction of Arthur and his Round Table and the death of all the major characters—Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, Gawain, and Mordred. The kingdom can only be saved by an 'outsider's' taking the

throne: Sir Constantine, sir Cadore's son, who was "chosen" (*Works* 1259.28). A completely new bloodline is now in charge.

The Knight and Shame/Worship

Knighthood had changed radically by the late 1400s. As Hyonjin Kim explains, "It is a widely accepted view . . . that chivalry as a military and political ideal had already passed its prime by the time Malory wrote the *Morte Darthur*" (*The Knight Without the Sword: A Social Landscape of Malorian Chivalry* 13). Chivalry had become more of a sign of economic status than of military ability or of chivalric talent. However, the title of knighthood still carried the power of its previous incarnations, and, as Radulescu notes, "One of the means by which the gentry advanced socially during Edward IV's reign was knighthood" (*The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur 9). Edward especially tried to revive the former prestige and honor associated with knighthood by reinvigorating the Order of the Garter,[34] and individuals like Richard Beauchamp became real-life heroes and examples for those wishing to improve themselves.[35] Chivalry was again seen as attainable, and for the gentry, developing one's chivalric skills was seen as a way to enter and mingle with the nobility in the rarified air of the court.[36] As a result, chivalric texts and mirrors for princes were circulating regularly and being included in libraries all over England.[37] Sons were sent to court schooled in proper behavior in order to further their political and social educations and thus improve their family's position.[38] Knighthood was the logical starting place. Lessons about improving one's worship and avoiding shame were applicable to the battlefield of war as well as to the minefield that made up the court.[39]

While the nobility had been raised in the court and had a much better grasp on proper behavior, the upstart gentry was learning how to mingle correctly. Felicity Riddy elaborates: "The popularity of writings of this kind in the fifteenth century must have been due in part to the fact that, at a time of social fluidity, many parents were not quite sure of what to teach; they were not wholly confident that they had mastered the social skills of the class to which they aspired for themselves or for their children" (*Sir Thomas Malory* 71).[40] And often, their *worship* was related to their fellowship—whom they associated with and why. Radulescu explains: " . . . gentry worship was obtained, and maintained, through specific action: performance of one's duties to one's family, friends and local magnate, adequate social behaviour, as well as clothing appropriate to one's social position" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 83-84). For Malory's younger audience members, who had not yet earned or inherited property (and thus had fewer work-related duties), *worship* was defined not by businessmen but by knights.

Unfortunately, the public events that displayed one's chivalric prowess were becoming rare:

> . . . despite Burgundian influence, extravagant pageants and tournaments, which induce the Huizingan view of late medieval chivalry, were very rare in fifteenth-century England. Chivalric enthusiasts usually had to go overseas to find the type of spectacles that could satisfy their appetite for pomp and novelty. The only English chivalric event held in Malory's day that was comparable in grandeur to Burgundian archetypes was the joust between Anthony, the Bastard of Burgandy and count de la Roche, and Anthony Woodville, then Lord Scales. (Kim, *The Knight Without the Sword* 13)[41]

There was no real public forum in which aspiring gentry could learn or practice their chivalric skills. As a result, books became the true founts of knowledge. Chivalric manuals could be studied and discussed in order to glean proper behavior. However,

these texts, while they provided excellent advice, did so out of context: the audience could learn the rules but not really see them applied to real-world situations.

Other texts, then, were needed to show the rules of chivalry in action, so audience members could debate and discuss the application of the chivalric rules and consider their own reactions in similar situations. Malory's *Works* was one such text.[42] As Riddy explains, "The book's immediacy and contemporaneity for fifteenth-century readers surely lay in its depiction of a social world which is defined in terms familiar to them, and which seeks to contain but not to idealize or sentimentalize the divisiveness which they knew only too well" (87). In a period of shifting loyalties, one's reputation is constantly in danger. Terence McCarthy notes that "A knight is in search of worship and a reputation; what men will say about him is all that counts" (*An Introduction to Malory* 89). Malory's readers must have felt the same pressure, a pressure increased by the feud raging between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists.[43]

While *The Works* contains innumerable knights, Gareth's story—the majority of which appears in the book *The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney That Was Called Bewmaynes*—may have been the one that best drew Malory's younger audience, the boys and young men aspiring to greatness and to the improvement of their positions. Gareth is a young unknown who earns his place in Arthur's court not though family connections (such as the nobility in Henry's or Edward's court might use) but through earned respect; he wins worship and avoids shame to become a powerful knight in his own name with a retinue of loyal knights and the love (and land) of a beautiful woman.[44]

The concepts of *worship* and *shame* play major roles in this book,[45] and while some of the references are directly tied to scenes of battle, many are coupled to scenes off

the battlefield: scenes that take place within castle walls, in bedchambers or dining halls, or without the walls, in dialogue between Gareth and Lyonet. I also discuss *worship* and *shame* in relation to Gareth but concerning other characters, including those back in Arthur's court. This book, then, reveals just how important good conduct is to all behavior and in all aspects of life. Malory's audience, already familiar with the lessons imparted in chivalric manuals, could heed the lessons Gareth learned and apply them to their own experience; though only a character, Gareth may have influenced behavior as much as a real-life figure like Richard Beauchamp.

Gareth earns worship through his sword as well as with his manners. One by one, he defeats the variously colored knights, and all (excepting the Black Knight, whom Gareth kills) pledge their allegiance to Gareth. He sends them back to Camelot to go before King Arthur, not only to announce their loyalty to him but to share the story of his triumph over them. With each story, Gareth's worship grows. But while the knights test Gareth's physical worship, Lyonet tests Gareth's worship in other ways—by questioning his bravery, his abilities, and his familial background. Gareth overcomes all these threats as well. He even shows mercy in judgment to an individual who might not have deserved mercy; I speak of course of the Red Knight of the Red Lands. By showing worship in all aspects of behavior, Gareth becomes an example for those in Malory's audience who want to improve their own lots in life.

Furthermore, Gareth avoids shame, which can damage or even ruin one's reputation. First, he avoids shame in battle by defending an individual beseiged by brigands rather than continue his original quest. Second, he avoids shame by neither fleeing from nor flinching from battles with the variously colored knights. But he also

avoids shame off the battlefield, by remaining polite in the face of Lyonet's vitrolic verbal attacks on his person and his abilities. In addition, he avoids shame by refusing to bed Sir Persaunte's daughter. As a result, Malory's descriptions of Gareth's knightly behavior helps make knighthood more real and more attainable for Malory's audience. Upon his return to Arthur's court, his reputation is established and his goals change; he is to become a good husband and a good lord.[46]

The Court and Open Speech

During the time Malory was writing, the court was experiencing two very powerful alterations. The first shift had to do with membership. Historically, the court was composed mainly of the nobility, those of the highest ranks and with close ties (through kinship or marriage) to the king. While there were court members who were considered gentry rather than nobility, they still tended to be well-established families who had connections to the nobility (usually through marriage). However, things changed when Edward IV took the throne. In order to solidify his position as rightful king and to develop an assembly of loyal, economically- and militarily-powerful followers, Edward turned specifically to the gentry, supplying them with knighthoods, lands, and coveted positions of power in the court and in the regional administrations. These nouveau-riche, class-conscious members of the gentry, as a result, became much more active members of the court; unfortunately, because they had not grown up in the court, many of the rules of social and political behavior were unknown and unpracticed. As a result, 'grete bookes' were especially popular, with their assorted texts advising readers on such varied material as military procedure, knightly virtues, and court etiquette.

In terms of the latter, advice was plentiful regarding such issues as proper and improper counsel, the gaining of worship for the individual and the group, even the proper way to eat in public. While certainly effective, these texts did not cover everything. For example, though loyalties between individuals were certainly discussed, as well as what behaviors constitute a loss of fellowship and/or a rise in shame, the writers of these chivalric texts could never have imagined the disorder in the English court that stemmed from the shift from the Lancastrian court under Henry VI to the Yorkist court of Edward IV.

The membership shift of the court, because of Edward's usurpation of the throne, resulted not only in a larger gentry contingent but also in a shift in new political and economic ideologies. Personal loyalties were questioned, tested, and threatened. Edward tried to reconcile the two parties by pardoning a number of Henry's Lancastrian followers after he took the throne; unfortunately, many continued to threaten Edward's stability and thus the stability of the new court. One's public countenance could be very different from one's private opinions. This directly affected the members of the court: first, the Yorkist followers and the Lancastrian followers were constantly intermingling, which surely raised political ire; second, to the established court families, the growing number of gentry court members threatened their influence and their social eminence.

The concerns of the individual were genuinely threatening the existence of the collective, and, as Malory probably realized, the crown was nothing without the court to support it. The *Works* could have been Malory's way of guiding his audience, already primed to be both entertained and educated by the literature being circulated at the time, toward more appropriate public behavior. Malory's version of the Arthur story contains

numerous complexities, with characters acting in seemingly contradictory ways. For example, in "Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt," Gawain swears to Pelleas that he will win for Pelleas the love of lady Ettarde: "' . . . leve your mournynge, and I shall promyse you by the feyth of my body to do all that lyeth in my powere to gete you the love of your lady, and thereto I woll plyghte you my trouthe'" (*Works* 167.38-168.3). Malory has Gawain provide a doubly-binding oath, first with *I shall promyse you* and again with *I woll plyghte you my trouthe*. Then, Malory clearly reveals how Gawain immediately goes against that double oath by sleeping with Ettarde. Pelleas arrives to find himself doubly betrayed, by Gawain and by Ettarde. Malory provides no explanation for why Gawain so easily goes against the promise he has made, nor does he provide any insight into Gawain's reaction upon awaking, simply remarking that "And therewith sir Gawayne made hym redy and wente into the foreste" (*Works* 171.15-16).[47] Such behavior would certainly be noted and discussed by Malory's audience; they would want to know why such behavior occurred. And because Malory left out so many details, many scenarios and hypotheses could be advanced.

In short, ambiguity is one of Malory's and thus of the *Works*' greatest strengths. By not making everything so clear-cut, Malory allowed for debate and diversity. But character portrayals are not the only way in which Malory introduced ambiguity; he tackles the delicate issue of *open* speech, which results in both an education for his audience as well as commentary on his own time, his own court. It does not really matter whether Malory had Lancastrian or Yorkist ties; he was first and foremost English, and his *Works* deals mostly with that level of identity.[48] He wanted his audience to see how their discord in the court was causing discord in the country. Therefore, he provides

examples of positive public speech, in which an individual's worship is increased, as is the worship of the group; Malory also, through his inclusion of *open* challenges, shows his audience the correct way in which to deal with potential rivals or opponents. However, Malory also impresses upon his audience the dangers of *open* negative speech, to show how accusations against other individuals threaten the collective.

These lessons were not discussed sufficiently in the other texts being circulated in the court; if *open* speech was discussed at all, it was so rare that it would easily escape notice. Malory, however, deliberately included numerous scenes of *open* declaration and *open* accusation into his *Works*, knowing the repetition of usage would stimulate discussion and debate. While with the other concepts (*counsel*/*advice*, *shame*/*worship*) Malory was continuing a tradition already well-established in the chivalric manuals and 'grete bookes' being commissioned and circulated at the time, with *open* speech, Malory tackles a concept relatively ignored by these other texts. He is not relying on someone else's ideas; he is promoting his own. He has done more than just compile and unlace the existing Arthurian tradition; he not only added his own content, he added his own wisdom and advice, material he thought his audience needed to improve not only themselves as individuals but the collective as a whole. Malory was trying to save England, one court family at a time.

Contemporary Standards of Usage for Counsel *and* Advice, Shame *and* Worship, *and* Openly

Malory's *Works*, written in English, helped designate a clear shift for the British aristocracy. The importance and power of the French language was fading (French was no longer a native language in England), and those in the court began embracing the

English language.[49] Malory's choice to write in English had two clear purposes. First, there was nationalistic spirit: when Edward IV first took the throne, Henry VI and his wife were protected by the Scots and the French, who provided economic and military backing; Edward's French counterpart, Louis XI, became one of his biggest enemies. Therefore, the French language was no longer as revered in the court as it once was. Second, the changing face of the English court necessitated a text in English. The rising gentry, though well-schooled, were not as conversant in the French language as their noble counterparts; furthermore, more and more business was being conducted in English, and French had become, in a way, passé.

However, words of French origin remained in the language. P. J. C. Field notes that "Malory does use many French-derived words, but his prose is much less gallicized in phrasing than that of some of his contemporaries; less than Caxton and Nicholas Love, and less even than Thomas More after him. His diction may have given a distinctive touch to his style for contemporary readers, but it would not have seemed eccentric or adventurous" (*Romance and Chronicle* 62). Malory seems to have wanted two things—for as many people as possible to read his *Works* and for his *Works* to re-ignite a nationalistic spirit in that audience. Therefore, he took material from his French sources and made it decidedly British. He did not completely abandon French, however. A number of words used by Malory were French in origin; however, as P. J. C. Field explains, " . . . even when his phrases exactly translate French ones, and hence syntax is parallel, the diction is English. The few French words he incorporates into the story with any regularity are the names of characters . . . " (*Romance and Chronicle* 62).

What results in Malory's text is true heteroglossia; any word Malory uses, whether a native Germanic or native French word, carries with it the connotations of years of use; if the word has changed dialectical meaning within a short period of time, there could be 'translation' problems between the author's text and the audience (Bakhtin 299-300). However, Malory combats this potential for the words I am studying in two ways: first, he uses repetition of the term in order to help define its use for his audience; second, he uses the most common definitions/meanings of the words in question: he does not apply a new or strange definition or employ an old or archaic definition to his words.

The *OED* and the *MED* both reveal that Malory's uses of the noun *counsel* are well-established definitions of the time,[50] as are his uses of the verb form as well.[51] The word is derived from French, but it had long been in use in the English language; the *OED* establishes the first dated use of the noun[52] at around 1225, with its appearance in *Ancrene Riwle*, while the *MED* establishes the first use of the verb circa 1330 with the *Short Metrical Chronicle of England*. Malory also seems to use the noun form of *advice* interchangeably with that of *counsel*. The *MED* defines Malory's usage as "A spoken judgment, an expressed opinion," "advice, counsel, recommendation," and "advice, directions, orders." As with *counsel*, these definitions of *advice* are well established and common during the time Malory is writing, with the earliest example dating from 1300 (Thomas Becket's *South English Legendary*), the latest from around 1500 (*Merlin*). Malory uses the verb form of *advise* less than he does the noun, but, as before, the usage is standard, as the *MED* establishes; Malory's relevant definition for the past participle *advised*, as in *that is well advised*, is "having taken thought, having foresight, prudent." The word is thus used by other authors such as Chaucer, Gower, and Hoccleve. In short,

for the words *counsel* and *advice*, in both their noun and verb forms, Malory relies on established definitions of the terms in order to clarify usage and understanding for his audience.

Unlike *counsel* and *advice*, *worship* and *shame* are of Germanic, not French, origin. However, as with *counsel* and *advice*, Malory uses well-established definitions in order to ease understanding for his audience. *Worship* is used most often in noun form in *The Tale of Gareth*, though it also appears in its adjectival and adverbial forms. The *OED* defines Malory's general form of *worship* to mean "A source or ground of honour or credit (to a person)," while the *MED* defines it as "Honor, high respect, esteem; worthiness, merit; fame, glory, renown; also, an honor, accolade" and "reputation, repute; a person's good name, respectability . . . prestige, credibility, integrity."[53] As D. S. Brewer explains, Malory's *worship* was synonymous with *honour*;[54] note, as well, that *worship* at this point still has more of a secular than religious overtone. Malory also used well established and current definitions of *shame* in his text.[55] While this word appears in various other forms in *The Tale of Gareth*—verb, past participle, adverb, adjective—the definitions are similar enough that Malory's audience should not have had any difficulty in understanding the context of their uses.

Finally, I wish to examine the adverb *openly*[56] to establish its familiarity to Malory's audience. While many of the educational texts that I examine do not use *openly* in direct reference to public speech, the concept is certainly not original to Malory. The *MED* defines the term as "In public, publicly, openly, without concealment." Works that incorporate such usage in reference to speech include Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* and *Legend of Good Women* and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Most of the usage at the time

refers to action or behavior rather than to speech; however, this fact would not cause confusion in Malory's audience. Instead, Malory's almost complete reliance on the adverb in relation to speech in the *Works* would have been comprehended by his audience members; they would be able to define a pattern of usage and thus discern significance in the relevant scenes.

For all of the words above, the audience would not have been confused by Malory's use of them; furthermore, his reliance on standard definitions of these words establishes the *Works* clearly in its time period.[57] Malory seems to be doing all he can to facilitate transmission of his ideas to his audience. However, simple word usage is not enough; therefore, Malory uses repetition of these words—*counsel* and *advice*, *worship* and *shame*, and *openly*—to signify not only their general importance but their importance to the scene and thus to the meaning of the scene.

The Importance of Repetition

To aid memory, many authors use repetition,[58] and various types of repetition exist in *The Works*. One type, thematic repetition, helps connect the various tales within *The Works* to each other. For example, Murray J. Evans notes the explicit at the end of "The Weddyng of Kyng Arthur" and then shows how the next tale refers back to Gawain, Tor, and Pellinore, thus connecting the two tales into a chronological unit (266). Other critics study thematic repetition in structure, as with the similarities in the tales of the four 'fair unknowns': Gareth, Alisaunder, Tor, and La Cote Male Tayle.[59] Still others see thematic repetition within specific tales, with a character fighting three similar battles that have no direct effect on the character's development or progress in the tale,[60] or when Lancelot must defend Guinevere's innocence three times, with clear development or

progress of the charges brought against her.[61] Andrew Lynch points out " . . . in the *Tristram* a marked tendency towards repetition and recapitulation of the same incidents, as if the text were regretful that the time for narrating them had gone. Lamerok's death, the great crime of the book, is recounted many times in conversation, and with additional details, fixing Gawain's 'name' henceforth" (*Malory's Book of Arms* 89). Therefore, Malory's uses of thematic repetition aids in cohesion of the text; his continuity ties the numerous books together, while other types of repetition, syntactical and lexical, helps develop various themes throughout the *Works*.

Repetition can also occur on a narrower scale. It begins at the syntactical level. Felicity Riddy develops this idea, stating, "We are introduced from the start to a mode in which connections between events are not always made explicit at the level of theme, but are maintained at the level of syntax" (*Sir Thomas Malory* 37). Malory's use of paratactic phrasing is the most notable example of syntactic repetition. Other critics, however, narrow even more, examining lexical repetition. As Terence McCarthy notes, "The accumulation and repetition of loaded words arouse a massive response and achieve an effect logical structures would miss" (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 134). Though he certainly does have some stock phrases, like *As the Frenssh booke sayeth*,[62] repetition also seems to occur to identify key concepts or scenes. For example, in the very beginning of *The Works,* the word *desyre* is used seven times in twenty lines. This concentration of one word in such a small space would certainly be noted by listeners as well as by readers.[63] Malory's audience, familiar with other contemporary works, could recall other uses of this word and thus could discuss whether Malory's usage is similar to

or different from the other contemporary usage. Therefore, the short scene that relies so much on the word *desyre* can be given greater complexity and greater power in the text.[64]

P. J. C. Field elaborates on this idea in *Romance and Chronicle*:

> It is the habit of meaning which matters: the higher the frequency with which a feature of style occurs in a work, the more significant it is. Moreover, since a language is the possession of all its users, whose uses of it define its possible meanings, and amongst whom any single author, however able, is negligible, a feature of style is significant in a work not only in direct proportion to its frequency there, but also in inverse proportion to its frequency in other contexts. (3-4)

I wish to relate this argument directly to Malory's word usage and word concentration to show both its weaknesses and its strengths. For the concepts of *counsel*/*advice* and *shame*/*worship*, Malory draws on a rich tradition from other contemporary works, in which clear lessons about these issues abound. Therefore, both Malory and the other authors have similarly high frequencies of usage. Rather than be reduced in importance, however, Malory's use of repetition gains importance, as these concepts carry the weight of years of literary and educational use into Malory's work. In this case, I believe Field overhasty in his assertion that "a feature of style," in this case the stylistic repetition of specific words, "is significant only . . . in inverse proportion to its frequency in other contexts."

However, Field's argument can apply to the third concept I explore—*openly*. When tied to speech, this adverb carries great weight and power in Malory's *Works*, especially when the audience discovers the pattern and sees the various results of both positive and negative *open* speech. In this case, though, Malory's proportion of usage is in "inverse proportion to its frequency in other contexts." Specifically, chivalric manuals of Malory's day, with all of their advice on varying issues, rarely, if ever, even undertake

the issue of *open* speech; furthermore, though *openly* is a common word of the period, it is not applied to speech even in other written genres. Therefore, Malory's uses of *openly* vastly outnumber those uses by his contemporaries, thus making Malory's uses more noticeable and thus more effective. In this case, Field's point is valid.

I shall examine specific instances of Malory's word repetition. Each word represents a major value of or concept in the text as a whole. However, while the word may be used throughout the text, the concentration and repetition of the word in certain places within the text makes its use especially intriguing. I plan first to explore the concepts of *advyce* and *counsel* as applied to Arthur. The words appear in the highest concentration in the first two books, *The Tale of King Arthur* and *The Tale of the Noble King Arthur that was Emperor Himself Through Dignity of His Hands*, and in the last two books, *The Tale of Lancelot and Guinevere* and The *Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*. These tales deal specifically with Arthur's rise to and fall from power; Malory focuses his audience's attention on various scenes within these books to raise awareness of right and wrong counsel. His audience would certainly note these scenes of Arthur's development and deterioration with regard to counsel, and they could without doubt find comparable material from their own time, in the figures of both kings, Henry VI and Edward IV. This comparison would be furthered by an audience member's knowledge of other texts, like chivalric texts, that refer to the importance of wise counsel and sage advice.

Also important in Malory's time is the relationship between *shame* and *worship*. In many of the chivalric manuals of the age, there were clear instructions on how to gain worship; this was a concept just as important to Malory's audience as it was to Arthur's

knights. Avoiding shame was also a primary concern. Furthermore, these two values establish major themes of *The Works*, with the words appearing countless times throughout the text.[65] However, there is a notable concentration of each word within *The Tale of Sir Gareth*, with *shame* appearing forty times and *worship* forty-four. Therefore, this tale, which has no known source, is special. Its subject-matter, the development of one of the best knights in Arthur's court, has many ties to the chivalric manuals being published in Malory's time. Finding similarities between this tale and contemporary texts with regard to the avoidance of shame and increase of worship reveals its importance to the audience being exposed to Malory's work.

Finally, I will explore the concept of *open* speech within a group setting. These scenes are not concentrated in one section of Malory's *Works*; instead, the scenes are scattered throughout the text in order to establish an overarching purpose. Malory provides examples of positive *open* speech, speech intended to improve the collective's worship and to strengthen the group socially and emotionally through fellowship.[66] Unfortunately, however, where there is positive *open* speech, one will find negative *open* speech. Malory uses public accusations by individuals against other individuals within the collective to show how easily internal strife can cause damage to the collective. Sometimes the negative accusation can be overcome, either through physical combat or *open* declarations of innocence; by the end, however, Aggravain's *open* speech against Lancelot and Guinevere helps split the collective into the same type of small kin-based groups that Arthur had deliberately tried to suppress in the first place with his Round Table fellowship.

In all three sections, I will refer to other texts available during the time Malory was writing his *Works*. I do not wish to show direct connections, but instead to show trends of thought and thus reveal the complexity of these concepts in Malory's time; in addition, I will explain how such complexity affects a reader's or listener's perception not only of his own world, but of Arthur's world as well. As Bakhtin asserts, "A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for a social significance" (333). By choosing the concepts that he does, by using the words that he does, Malory both entertains his readers and educates them; he compels them to explore their understanding of a word, of a concept, and to relate that understanding to their own lives. For critics, then, the word should be a natural starting point. Such a word study can only enrich our understanding of Malory's potential expectations regarding his text, as well as his audience's absorption of and enjoyment of that text.

Notes

[1]Including Malory himself; according to Felicity Riddy, "Malory, a follower of [Richard Neville, Earl of] Warwick's and also a former supporter of Edward IV, had already deserted the latter's cause; a year earlier he seems to have been implicated in a Lancastrian plot for which he was sent to prison . . . " (*Sir Thomas Malory* 2). P. J. C. Field also notes the political machinations surrounding Malory in the sparring between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians:

> . . . on 19 October [1457], Malory was bailed until the morrow of St John (28 December) to William Neville Lord Fauconberg . . . Fauconberg was Warwick's uncle and principal lieutenant . . . There is no direct evidence of what Fauconberg wanted with Malory, but at some time . . . a number of senior members of Warwick's affinity became feoffees for Malory . . . What Malory was expected to do in return is unknown, but it presumably included putting whatever influence he might have in Warwickshire and elsewhere behind the Yorkist cause. (*The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory* 120)

[2]As Terence McCarthy writes, "The royal leadership of Henry V may have inspired [Malory's] youth, but Henry died in 1422 and the English inheritance in France, and with it England's prestige, sadly dwindled away during the minority of Henry VI" (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 167-68).

[3]Even though Raluca Radulescu asserts that "While the fifteenth-century gentry did share some of the political and social advantages of the nobility, and the two classes depended upon one another, noble and gentle political interests were distinct . . . in accordance with their different degree of participation in political power" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 3), a power shift was occurring. The land and wealth of the nobility was often threatened with attainder by the control of the crown shifting between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists, while the growing wealth of the gentry was often used to buy titles, including those of knighthood, originally reserved only for nobles.

[4]See Stephen H. A. Shepherd's edition of *Le Morte Darthur*, p. 680, n. 6 for the location of several authorial intrusions.

[5]Raluca Radulescu explains that "The concepts of worship, friendship, lordship and fellowship informed fifteenth-century gentry attitudes, irrespective of the area the gentry lived in, as these concepts formed the basis of their relationships and interaction with one another and with their magnates" (*The Gentry Context in Malory's* Morte Darthur 13).

[6]Malory's description of the Pentecostal Oath is as follows:

> . . . the kynge stablysshed all the knyghtes and gaff them rychesse and londys; and charged them never to do outerage nothir mourthir, and allwayes to fle treson, and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon payne of forfiture [of their] worship and lordship of kynge Arthure for evirmore; and allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes [socour:] strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no worldis goodis. (*Works* 120.15-24)

[7]As Robert Lance Snyder notes in "Malory and 'Historical' Adaptation," "Working 'historically,' he removes from the Arthurian legend its sacred implications and transforms it into a self-critical ideal of life. A revised past is thus made to serve the needs of the present, without being committed to a particular future" (138).

[8]Malory's interference with the text even occurs at the textual level. When Malory uses French material, for example, Michael W. Twomey notes that "[c]omparison with Malory's French sources has shown that Malory does *not* engage in 'stencil translation,' which is when an author carries over the vocabulary and syntax of the original directly into the target language" ("The Voice of Aurality in the *Morte Darthur*" 104, emphasis added). By not even allowing himself to use direct translation, Malory is making powerful statements about both his attitude toward the Arthurian tradition and his expectations for his completed text.

[9]Larry D. Benson elaborates: "The fact that the *Morte Darthur* is Malory's own invention shows that he had learned from Robert de Boron the most significant lessons his predecessors could offer—the freedom of an author to control his materials, to select or omit as he chooses in accord with his own ideas of relevance and proportion while remaining true to the 'history'" (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 28).

[10]Larry D. Benson's *Malory's* Morte Darthur, Terence McCarthy's *An Introduction to Malory* and his *Reading the* Morte Darthur, R. M. Lumiansky's *Malory's Originality: A Critical Study of* Le Morte Darthur, and Mark Lambert's *Style and Vision in the* Morte Darthur have all become influential texts in the world of Malory criticism. A more recent wave of criticism, devoted to Malory's signature style, also includes much discussion of his adaptation of source texts, including changing or even adding his own details to the narrative, cutting out episodes altogether, or simply changing the focus of a scene. Some of these critics will be named below. However, for the most part, critics agree with Terence McCarthy: "Although Malory borrows material extensively, the book he has produced . . . is quite unlike his sources. The *Morte Darthur* is not just a translation into English; it has survived because it is a version of the Arthurian tales with an identity of its own" (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 146). He elaborates in *An Introduction to Malory*:

> The work of reduction and unravelling must be seen as one aspect of Malory's independence. As he reduces and unwinds, he is unable to rely on his text verbally and must reshape. He gives expression to borrowed tales but the expression is his own—and not only at the verbal level. He changes words but he also changes worlds. By comparing Malory with his sources we see how different he has made them. (McCarthy 147-48)

In this study, I will not do a line-by-line comparison of Malory's source texts to the *Works*. The section of the *Works* that is most similar to Malory's sources *is The Tale of the Noble King Arthur That Was Emperor Himself Through Dignity of His Hands,* to which I refer very little.

[11]Eugène Vinaver, ed., *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory,* 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 1649, n.1233; Nellie Slayton Aurner's "Sir Thomas Malory—Historian?", Richard Griffith's "The Political Bias of Malory's *Morte Darthur,*" and E. D. Kennedy's "Malory and the Marriage of Edward IV."

[12]Pochoda's *Arthurian Propaganda* and Radulescu's *The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur have both highly influenced my own critical path.

[13]Roberta Davidson has even explored how the realities of imprisonment in fifteenth-century England may have affected Malory's text in "Prison and Knightly Identity in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*."

[14]Mann specifically mentions *worship*, *body*, *departe, hole, togidir,* and *felyship* before focusing her attention on *aventure*.

[15]D. S. Brewer begins the discussion in his introduction to *The Morte Darthur*: *Parts Seven and Eight*, while Angela Gibson's "Malory's Reformulation of Shame," revisits the issues and the effect on both characters and audience.

[16]I speak specifically of her articles "'Gentyl Audiences' and 'Grete Bookes': Chivlaric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*" and "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'."

[17]"Evidence Against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Treason by Imagination."

[18]See D. Thomas Hanks, Jr. and Jennifer Fish's "Beside the Point: Medieval Meanings and Modern Impositions in Editing Malory's *Morte Darthur,*" or Bonnie Wheeler, "Romance and Parataxis and Malory: The Case of Sir Gawain's Reputation."

[19]Joyce Coleman elaborates on this idea: "What one finds in later medieval England, at least, is a state of acute mixedness, manifested both in the voiced texuality of the read-aloud manuscript and in the interactions of that mode of reception with private reading as ascribed by authors to themselves or to their audiences" (*Public Reading and the Reading Public* 27). Modern critics have been focusing their attention on this

element of Malory's day. In fact, *Arthuriana* 13.4 (Winter 2003), "Reading Malory Aloud, Then and Now," is dedicated to the aurality of Malory's *Morte Darthur*.

[20]Aurality, Coleman defines, is " . . . the reading of books aloud to one or more people . . . " (xi), while orality is " . . . a tradition based on the oral performance of bards of minstrels . . . " (28).

[21]This speech appears in "The Day of Destiny," within *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*. Malory seems unable to contain himself any longer, adding it in direct response to the people of England turning their backs on Arthur and siding with Mordred, who had usurped the throne.

[22]Karen Cherewatuk furthers this definition, writing that "As Malory wrote, he probably had in mind an audience very much like the Paston family, householders most eager to learn about and practise knighthood and to have their own non-noble social status validated" ("'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes': Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*" 215-16).

[23]In fact, A. S. G. Edwards explains just how popular Malory's text was: "The *Morte Darthur* was one of the very few of the works first printed by Caxton (in 1485) that retained its hold on the reading public in the following centuries. It was reprinted five times after its first publication. Such reprintings testify in various ways to an unusually sustained audience for Malory" ("The Reception of Malory's *Morte Darthur"* 241). The text had to offer more than entertainment alone for it to have been printed, reprinted, and circulated as much as it was. Thomas H. Crofts seconds this opinion: "If Malory's book does not seem to offer self-evidently 'good' exempla, Caxton must encode the narrative so as to make them evident. He does so by appealing to the reading habits of his fifteenth-century audience, suggesting that Malory's book is legible in the same way Lydgate's books are, and reminding them that 'al is wryton for our doctryne'" ("'thynges foresayd aledged': *Historia* and *argumentum* in *Caxton's Preface* to the *Morte Darthur*" 52).

[24]Robert L. Kelly furthers this idea: " . . . [Malory] requires his readers to recognize that the geographical and political features of his narrative correspond, but not exactly, to fifteenth-century realities . . . The reader is led, thus, simultaneously to recognize contemporaneity in the geo-political resemblances to the present and ancientness in the differences. The Arthurian past is only visible through the lens of the present" ("Malory's 'Tale of King Arthur' and the Political Geography of Fifteenth-Century England" 88). Though speaking specifically of Arthur's war with the five kings, this belief is certainly applicable to other elements of Malory's work.

[25]Radulescu says that "In the fifteenth century . . . these political issues [kingship and governance] acquired even greater importance, and, due to the monarchical crisis, were increasingly addressed in contemporary chronicles. For Malory's readers the

similarity between these issues and those expressed in Arthur's story would not have passed unnoticed" (*The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur 4).

[26]As Jerome Mandel asserts, "Malory saw all too clearly and all too much of the moral and religious deficiencies, the personal and political enmities, the fundamental human perversities, the violence, greed, hatred, dishonor, lying, and ordinary human lust which eat at the vital parts of any utopian ideal and corrode it and lead to its ultimate demolition" ("The Dark Side of Camelot: Arthurian Ideal and Medieval Practice in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" 93). Malory's own time was chaotic, with in-fighting, betrayal, and shameful behavior. Malory could use Arthur's story not only to bring awareness to both positive and negative behaviors of his characters; he could also make his audience aware of such behaviors in their own court and thus perhaps motivate change.

[27]Karen Cherewatuk, in "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'," asserts that "If [Malory's] tales reflect ideas about knighthood like those found in chivalric anthologies, it is more because the great books reflect Malory's world than because Malory consciously set out to teach chivalric lessons" (52-53). I plan to assert the opposite viewpoint, however: I believe Malory consciously intended both entertainment and edification, that he used the stories of Arthur and his knights to encourage discussion about his own time and to educate his readers on proper as well as incorrect behavior.

[28]Raluca Radulescu elaborates in "*John Vale's Book* and Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*: A Political Agenda:" "The idea of bad counsellors was at the forefront of fifteenth-century political debate. While the misfortunes of the reign of Henry VI were blamed almost entirely on his counsellors, Edward IV's advisers, mostly drawn from his greedy new relatives acquired through his unwelcome marriage (from his contemporaries' point of view) to Elizabeth Woodville, had not brought any prosperity to the realm either" (73).

[29]There are definite similarities to Warwick and Edward here.

[30]As Radulescu notes, "Arthur's kingship is described in terms of good and just lordship of the territories he inherited and his wise governance of the realm is presented as a positive example for fifteenth-century kings" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 116).

[31]Radulescu continues: "Through his seeking of advice from his council made up of his knights and allies, King Arthur achieves agreement for his military campaign to Rome. This conveys an image of the concord of the king's council reminiscent of the unity fifteenth-century chroniclers desired for England" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 121).

[32]Particularly, he validates and allows Aggravain's personal enmity against Lancelot to color his counsel to his uncle and king. As Radulescu explains, "[Aggravain]

is a counsellor, therefore, who displays no wisdom or care for peace and harmony at the court, yet who presents his intentions under the cloak of interest for the king's reputation . . . " (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 122).

[33]Beverly Kennedy notes similarities between Arthur and Edward: "Both are devoted to doing justice, but have difficulty doing justice upon their relatives (Arthur openly favours his nephews, and Edward was overly generous to his wife's kinsmen) and in both cases their nepotism angers other factions in the court and creates political problems for them" (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 55). This favoritism was also related to counsel in both cases; Arthur's nephews use their relationship to counsel Arthur to act emotionally rather than reasonably, with Arthur permitting them to do so. Edward, on the other hand, who had married secretly beneath him, furthered rumours and concern by elevating members of his in-law's family to positions of great power, even to his inner circle of advisors.

[34]He also, as Radulescu explains, " . . . saw the desirability of reviving the institution of knighthood, and seized the opportunity to gain the support of both the gentry and the London citizens" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 9). An individual knighted by Edward owed his allegiance to Edward, which helped consolidate power for Edward and expanded his military strength. The gentry were such a large group, amassing numbers and wealth, and Edward took advantage of their aspirations in a way that Henry never did: "During the Lancastrian regime knights were made by lords, and rarely if ever by the king, always before battles" (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 10). Therefore, the loyalties forged were to the lords first, the king second, and the timing was questionable. Edward's tactic resulted in stronger loyalties.

[35]In fact, Roger Sherman Loomis, in "Malory's Beaumains," argues that " . . . some parts of the book of Beaumains were written in remembrance of Beauchamp's gallant deeds" (656). While some of Loomis's points are intriguing, I think he comes close to forcing Malory's text to fit his assertion. Instead, I argue that while there are valid similarities that may trigger a memory in his audience between Gareth and Beauchamp, the likelihood is that the references, even if deliberate on Malory's part, were not intended to assert a direct connection (Gareth is Beauchamp) but to welcome discussion of right or proper behavior in Arthur's day.

[36]In *The Knight Without the Sword*, Hyonjin Kim explains that "Flamboyance, ceremony, and theatricality were some of the most noticeable leitmotifs of late medieval chivalry. Hero worship was another overarching theme. All over Europe, nobles aspired to chivalric perfection and, in so doing, labored to imitate heroes of the past" (9). In other words, it was not only the gentry who aspired to improve themselves; even the nobility tried to recreate history and reinvigorate the power of chivalric knighthood. Felicity Riddy notes the

> . . . extent to which fifteenth-century readers sought guidance from books on how to conduct themselves in a variety of social situations. There are,

> broadly speaking, two different sorts of texts dealing with polite conduct which were preserved by readers of romances. One group is intended for people living in a milieu with aspirations to the noble style of life. They include handbooks, sometimes very short—no more than a paragraph or two—which contain lists of hunting and hawking terms, terms relating to the carving of game, and instructions on how to serve a nobleman's table . . . The second group of texts is made up of educational manuals for the instruction of the young; they give advice on different aspects of social morality and polite conduct. (*Sir Thomas Malory* 69-70, 71)

Karen Cherewatuk has examined a number of these latter texts, these "grete bookes," and compared content and applicability to a "gentle" readership. This readership was also the readership of Malory's *Works*, and "The upward movement of members of the gentry explains why Malory places so much emphasis on 'worshypful' behaviour and 'jantyl' action" ("'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes': Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur"* 207).

[37]As Joyce Coleman explains, "The social mobility, the increasing bureaucratization of government, and the growing power of the middle classes were combining to create an articulate, interested audience for literature that expressed their social and political concerns" (*Public Reading and the Reading Public* 96).

[38]Kurtis B. Haas notes that "Young men receiving a chivalric education in the fifteenth century usually were sent to a lord's castle, where several of the young men were educated by a single master in matters of 'curteyse:' emphasizing proper manners, some languages, and 'communications,' which no doubt varied quite a lot depending on the particular master" ("Ciceronian Rhetorical Principles in Malory's Last Book: *The Exoneration of Sir Lancelot*" 174).

[39]Raluca Radulescu identifies how important *worship* is to Malory's audience, noting that "Worship involved 'steadfastness' and 'faithfulness' to one's 'freely given word' . . . " (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 17-18) and was tied to one's relationships with friends, neighbors, and landowners. Furthermore, *worship* could be won or lost with actions within the home, through, for example, " . . . good financial arrangements in the family and hospitality . . . " (*The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur 19).

[40]Andrew Lynch cites Du Boulay, who " . . . stresses the psychological and practical need to be of 'worship', of good name and fame, in a society where class-consciousness had grown as a result of the actual blurring of class-divisions in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (*Malory's Book of Arms* 9). Some of the texts that this audience would refer to included " . . . the well-known treatises by Ramon Lull and Christine de Pisan, both of which were published by William Caxton as *Book of the Ordre of Chyualry* and *Book of Fayttes of Armes and Chyvalrye* in 1484 and 1489

respectively" (Radulescu, "'Oute of mesure': Violence and Knighthood in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" 128).

[41]Richard Barber argues that "Between 1462 and 1467, tournaments were very much on the court agenda. Edward regarded them as the ultimate knightly pastime . . . " ("Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture Under Edward IV" 143). However, the number was still relatively low compared to the Spanish and Burgundian courts.

[42]Terence McCarthy explains that "Malory writes, of course, for an audience familiar with the conventions of knighthood, and so we should not look to the *Morte Darthur* for precise details of chivalric procedure or documentary descriptions of the typical tournament. Malory takes all this for granted . . . " (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 85). I assert, however, that Malory does not take "all this for granted." Instead, he continues the lessons begun in the chivalric manuals; in some cases, he even instructs his readers on concepts *not* discussed in other chivalric manuals.

[43]As Joseph R. Ruff notes, "The adverse circumstances of the day encouraged the countervailing interest in the ideals of chivalry and knighthood" ("Malory's Gareth and Fifteenth-Century Chivalry" 107).

[44]Beverly Kennedy explains that "Gareth's knightly prowess thus becomes a kind of romance equivalent for the immense political power of a great magnate in fifteenth-century England. And his relationship to his retainers reflects that new type of contractual relationship to be found by Edward IV's time, when peers would agree to be a 'good and favourable lord' to less powerful men who were neither their tenants nor their fee'd retainers" (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 51-52). Malory's audience could have easily been seduced by Gareth's epic rise from youngest son to great magnate.

D. Thomas Hanks, Jr. also identifies the type of response Gareth's story would have evoked from Malory's audience; however, he cites Malory's folk fairy tale pattern: " . . . the rhetorical patterns of the folk fairy tale, patterns which appear in *Gareth* as well, present to Malory's audience a powerful but subtly persuasive paradigm: that of the successfully maturing knight" ("The Rhetoric of the Folk Fairy Tale in Sir Thomas Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth*" 60).

[45]as well as in the entire work, for P. J. C. Field notes that "Some of the best work on Malory has been put into the elucidation of precisely what those terms [*worship* and *chivalry*] mean in the *Morte Darthur*, and the investigators have not been unanimous in their conclusions, although there have been considerable areas of agreement" (*Romance and Chronicle: A Study of Malory's Prose Style* 86). However, due to the nature of my study, I will not examine *worship* in relation to other characters (most notably Lancelot) for two reasons. First, Gareth's story is mostly limited to one book, while Lancelot's is developed through much of the entire *Works*; this causes greater complications and complexity than my focus allows. Second, Gareth is a young man, a man whose goal is to become a knight, to become worthy by action not through family connections.

Lancelot is a knight, but he is also a king, and therefore he is less of a role model for fifteenth-century members of the socially mobile gentry.

[46]Such a result is more applicable to Malory's audience than is that of a career fighter like Lancelot. Terence McCarthy elaborates:

> It is the role of the knightly class to guarantee peace, unity and a stable government, and to defend the lands and authority of the king, who, in turn, bestows land and authority upon his men in gratitude. Once the kingdom is established, we are shown the values and conventions of the system, chivalry in action: how a knight should behave to friends and foes. We see the workings of what is also a legal system, to which they are all fully committed . . . (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 76)

Gareth's story takes place in Arthur's established kingdom; it shows how a knight becomes a knight, earns a reputation, and applies his knowledge off of a battlefield.

At the end of his tale, Gareth is no longer a knight-errant. He has become a landowner and lord. Beverly Kennedy explains:

> Malory eliminates almost all of Gareth's appearances from the Tale of Tristram which follows, because, as a married knight, Gareth must 'couche' with his wife . . . He will attend only one tournament in the Tale of Tristram, the great tournament at Lonezep, and there he will joust with the younger, unproved knights, indicating that his life as a married lord of great lands has not provided him with much opportunity to keep up his martial skills. (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 144-45)

Gareth is the epitome of what fifteenth-century knighthood has become—not a professional warrior class but glorified landlords.

[47]Ettarde, however, realizes her error. As Bonnie Wheeler elaborates:

> From the moment that Ettarde realizes that a quite quick Sir Pelleas has discovered them in bed, the public dimension of dishonour engages her attention. While Pelleas and Ettarde and Nineve make noise, Sir Gawain keeps silence—a silence as provocative as that of Chaucer's Pandarus or his Pardoner. That absence of speech is one of Malory's most remarkable changes to his source; through the vehicle of that silence, Sir Gawain's intentions are shrouded while much is 'noysed' about him. ("Romance and Parataxis and Malory: The Case of Sir Gawain's Reputation" 127)

Perhaps Gawain's silence is due to his knowledge that gossip is less destructive than *open* accusation or *open* justification; or perhaps his silence is shame-based, the internal knowledge of misdeed.

[48]Malory's *Lo ye all Englysshemen* speech asserts this nationalistic attitude:

> . . . se ye nat what a myschyff here was? For he that was the moste kynge and nobelyst knyght of the worlde, and moste loved the felyshyp of noble knyghtes, and by hym they all were upholdyn, and yet myght nat thes Englyshemen holde them contente with hym. Lo thus was the olde custom and usayges of thys londe, and men say that we of thys londe have nat yet loste that custom. Alas! thys ys a greate defaughte of us Englysshemen, for there may no thynge us please no terme. (*Works* 1229.6-14)

Malory's assertion is clear: the citizens of England can unite or destroy the country. They destroyed the England of Arthur's day when they sided with Mordred against the good of the kingdom. Malory's contemporaries are doing the same thing. I do not believe he is promoting a Yorkist or a Lancastrian agenda; I think he is above political agendas and speaking for the good of the nation: put aside personal concerns for the greater good of the collective.

[49]The belief that French was a more sophisticated, noble language while English was lowly and common was fading away. As David Crystal explains in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, "During the 12th century, English became more widely used among the upper classes, and there was an enormous amount of intermarriage with English people . . . By the end of the 12th century, contemporary accounts suggest that some children of the nobility spoke English as a mother tongue, and had to be taught French in school" (31). in fact, "By about 1425 it appears that English was widely used in England, in writing as well as in speech" (31).

[50]The relevant *OED* definition for Malory's use is "Opinion as to what ought to be done given as the result of consultation; aid or instruction for directing the judgement; advice, direction." The *MED* also provides the standard definitions of *council*, which Malory uses often as well: "A body of advisers to a ruler" and of *counselor*, defined as "An adviser, a counselor."

[51]The *MED*'s definition of the verb *counsel* is standard usage of Malory's time, as authors such as Lydgate and the Pastons invoke the word to mean "to advise."

[52]which shares Malory's basic definition of the term

[53]The one verb form of *worship* is defined by the *MED* to mean "to bring honor to, enhance the reputation of, be a credit to."

[54]Brewer writes in The Morte Darthur: *Parts Seven and Eight* that "Honour, which Malory calls by its Old English name, 'worship,' still the usual word in his time, may be said to be the strongest single motivating force in the society in which Malory creates" (25).

[55]The *OED* defines *shame* (noun) as "Disgrace, ignominy, loss of esteem or reputation." *Shame* can be reflected secularly or spiritually with this definition, as the earliest usage comes from the Lindisfarne Gospels. The *MED*'s definition is similar: "a disgraceful act, an injury; something disgraceful or humiliating . . . " and its use appears in Layamon's *Brut* as well as Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

[56]This word, too, has a Germanic origin.

[57]This point is important for there to be true interaction between author, text, and audience. Since Malory and his audience have generally the same backgrounds, the same belief systems, the same concerns, they doubtless interpreted words in a similar manner, which Felicia Nimue Ackerman defines as essential to understanding: " . . . the effect of an author's language on a reader is a matter not just of the language itself, but also of what the reader takes account of" ("Late in the Quest: The Study of Malory's *Morte Darthur* as a New Direction in Philosophy" 332).

[58]According to Ann Dobyns in *The Voices of Romance: Studies in Dialogue and Character*, this repetition may also be due to the oral "rhetoric of romance" (18), which certainly affected Malory, whose text is developed in part from existing romances.

[59]See Donald L. Hoffman, "Malory's 'Cinderella Knights' and the Notion of Adventure."

[60]Elizabeth Pochoda, *Arthurian Propaganda* (Chapel Hill: U of NC P, 1971) 66. Pochoda specifically mentions the similarities of Lancelot's and Gareth's episodes in Tales III and IV, with "Each major episode . . . conclud[ing] with the offender's promise to present himself to the Round Table at a future date, usually Pentecost" and "outsiders" accepting the safety and stability of community (66).

[61]See chapter 6 of Beverly Kennedy's *Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985) 276-327, or Elizabeth Edwards, *The Genesis of Narrative in Malory's* Morte Darthur (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001) 153 and following.

[62]P. J. C. Field explains that "The recurrence of these and many other words and phrases suggests that Malory is putting ordinary words and phrases to powerful use, rather than inventing or adapting words" (*Romance and Chronicle* 59). The phrase *As the Frenssh booke sayeth* acts as more than just a stock phrase, however. Malory was writing in the tradition of the compiler, when one's reliance on an existing work was accepted and often expected. Therefore, placing the phrase *As the Frenssh booke sayeth* before certain content would add weight and power to that material.

[63]Terence McCarthy insists that "Repetition always runs the risk of appearing artless, but the simple, emphatic style of Malory's prose owes a lot to it" (*An Introduction to Malory* 129).

[64]Bakhtin discusses how words can have unseen or untapped depths: " . . . there are no 'neutral' words and forms—words and forms that can belong to 'no one'; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents" (293). An author can have one expectation or intention through the use of a specific word; he has a certain definition in mind, or a certain referential memory that causes his choice of word. However, audience members, too, have expectations and memories that can affect the absorption of a word. But if a reader's knowledge and understanding of a word differs from the author's, two negative things can happen: One, confusion is generated when a reader's assumption does not match that of the author; or, two, a misreading can occur that stifles the reader's connection to the text. However, a positive reaction can also be found: the audience accepts the author's definition or intention and the text gains greater complexity. Furthermore, readers then have a foundation for discussion and evaluation; they can explore their own expectations in tandem with the author's and thus enrich their own opinions. The word then belongs to both the author and the readers.

[65]Actually, not countless. Kato identifies *worship* as being used 98 times, *shame* 192 times.

[66]As Bonnie Wheeler mentions in "Romance and Parataxis and Malory," " . . . the functional importance of speech, of how one speaks and of how one is spoken about—reputation or one's 'name' in society—is as crucial for readers as for actors" (117). Malory's audience could see echoes of their own court's behavior in Arthur's court, could learn from Malory's characters' correct and incorrect actions.

CHAPTER TWO

Counsel, Advice, and the Rise and Fall of a King

Introduction

During the time in which Malory was writing *The Works*, England was in the midst of a fight for the throne. Both sides employed both physical force and legal maneuverings in their quest for power and control. Henry VI was only an infant when his father died, and it was not until he was sixteen, in 1437, that he took the reins of power. Regrettably, Henry had neither the strength of personality nor the iron-will of control that his father had, and his reign was plagued with problems from the beginning. As Charles Ross explains in *The Wars of the Roses: A Concise History*, "Unfortunately, comments on Henry's character by people writing before the Yorkist usurpation of 1461 are few and meagre, but they lend some support to the notion that he was indeed a man of limited mental capacity who was too much influenced by those around him" (21). The result was a divided court; by the 1450s, Henry had " . . . become for most purposes a political cipher, more and more under the control of his counsellors and of his French wife, the high-spirited, autocratic and ruthless Margaret of Anjou" (Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* 24). He no longer controlled; he was controlled.

The time was ripe for a challenge to the throne, and in 1460, the Yorkists, led by Warwick, physically routed the Lancastrians at Northampton and captured Henry VI. For three months the Yorkists controlled the throne. But in 1461 Henry VI was rescued by Queen Margaret's troops, and the Yorkists " . . . needed their own king, and, more than

anything else, this explains Edward's assumption of the throne in March 1461" (Ross, *Edward IV* 33). England was well and truly divided between supporters of Henry, the Lancastrians, and supporters of Edward, the Yorkists. A legal battle began, as Edward had "himself proclaimed and installed as king" on March 4, 1461 (Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* 54). He promptly sent troops to battle the Lancastrians at Towton and soundly defeated them. Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland, " . . . many nobles [realized] that it was no more than prudent and sensible to make peace with the new king" (Ross, *The Wars* 55), and Edward IV settled into his reign. In November of 1461, Edward " . . . set forth in the form of a petition from the commons in his first parliament . . . " (Ross, *Edward IV* 33) the argument that the Lancastrians had no claim to the throne and were actually usurpers, in order to legally authenticate his own claim to the throne.

But Edward had problems of his own during his rule, many of which began with his secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. He angered those who helped get him into power, " . . . Warwick and the lords in general, not only for his choice of wife but also for his having married without consultation and advice, as would have been normal practice in an affair of such public concern" (Ross, *Edward IV* 90). Furthermore, he favored his wife's family with powerful political appointments and advantageous marriages, making them close confidantes and advisors, and shutting out those who truly had his best interests at hand.[1] This alienation of such powerful allies, Warwick especially, would prove disastrous. Warwick and his followers rebelled against Edward, the Lancastrians began sorties from the north of England, and by October 1470, Henry was restored to power and Edward had fled to Holland.

For Malory, regardless of who he personally supported, both kings lacked long-term, reliable counselors. Henry meekly allowed himself to be controlled by power-hungry individuals, while Edward isolated himself by appointing power-hungry individuals to act as counselors. As Felicity Riddy attests, "Movement from the lower to the higher ranks was possible by way of marriage—as with the Woodvilles—or by service; Edward IV, for example, sought his most trusted councillors from among the knightly class and frequently raised them from the gentry to the peerage" (*Sir Thomas Malory* 73), ignoring already established nobles, including those who held positions of council with Henry. Unfortunately, many of those he trusted actually drove away the one person Edward would most regret—Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the man who helped win Edward the throne in the first place (and who, with help from the French king, Louis XI, returned to England in November 1470 with the deposed Henry VI and restored him to the throne, if only until May 1471) (Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* 85-92). Not surprisingly, according to Elizabeth Pochoda, in *Arthurian Propaganda*, " . . . the relation of the king to his immediate council and his choice of members for it are central concerns of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century legal thought" (46).

But legal scholars are not the only ones who examine the concepts of *counsel* and *advice* in relation to kingship; Malory gives them special attention in *The Works*. The story of Arthur's rise to and fall from power contains many scenes that tackle the same issues experienced by both kings during the Wars of the Roses—the importance of good advice to a young, naive and untried king; the benefits of a wise king receiving rational advice from his trustworthy knights and barons; the tragedy of an emotional king relying on emotional counsel from a familial source.

Other authors, not just Malory, had these same concerns. A number of the texts circulating during the time in which Malory was writing also explore the relationship between a king and his counselors. Many of these texts were intended for members of the court, nobles and gentry, but they were read by royals as well. By examining how these other texts reference *counsel* and *advice*, I hope to prove that Malory's usage conveys these same lessons.

Christine de Pisan's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* was translated from the French by Caxton in 1489, and both A. T. P. Byles, in "Caxton's Book of the Ordre of Chyualry: A French Manuscript in Brussels," and Karen Cherewatuk, in "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'," agree that Caxton likely had access to the edition held in the royal library, to which both Henry and Edward had access.[2] While there seems to be no definitive proof that Malory ever had access to this work, its circulation among those of Malory's sphere has been established. Christine's work, an "ethical manua[l] of chivalry" (Cherewatuk, "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 49), is a compilation of material taken from both " . . . Vegetius and Bouvet (and hence a very practical treatise on warfare, the first part giving actual battle plans and the second the laws of Christian warfare) . . . " (Cherewatuk, "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes' 213-14). This work is straightforward, the practical advice clearly given and substantiated by historical examples.

Caxton's translation of Christine's work uses *counsel* 58 times[3] and *advice* 57 times.[4] Many times, the position of king or prince is directly referenced. For example, in Book I, Christine recommends that a prince " . . . shall assemble grete *counseyl* of wysemen in his parliament / or in the *counseil* of his souerayn yf he be subgette . . . "

(*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 13.9-11, emphasis added). Christine even discusses various types of councils, from a king's council to a captain's council in time of war. She explains what type of individuals should make up a council, what kinds of advice this council should dispense, whether or not this advice should be taken, and so on.

Many times, Christine concentrates her uses of *counsel* or *advice* in order to provide weight and validity to the material given, and perhaps to aid in memorization and retention of the material in the mind of the reader or listener. In one such notable example, Christine uses variances of *counsel* three times in one sentence: "For an vntrue *counseiller* wyl neuer gyue gode *counseil* but yf it be to his singuler proffyt / but a true *counseiller* seeth more to the comyn weele / than to his owne parcyall proffit" (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 73.16-19, emphasis added). For an audience familiar with both Henry's and Edward's weaknesses in this area, this suggestion is especially compelling.

Much of Christine's advice is mirrored in the early books of Malory's *Works*. Her work is not directly referenced or cited; however, as Malory's first book deals specifically with Arthur's rise to power, many of the same situations regarding counsel discussed in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes* occur in the *Works*. Arthur is an inexperienced king, and much of his early reign is guided by Merlin. As Arthur grows into adulthood, Merlin is replaced by Arthur's Round Table knights as advisors; there are also times when outsiders, like the Lady of the Lake, dispense advice. Malory's audience was probably rather familiar with Christine's work, and likely they made connections between material in Christine's book and scenes from Malory's *Works*. Add to the mix the recent events of Henry VI's reliance on unworthy counselors and his recent removal from the throne, and readers probably comprehended Malory's inherent moral—that a

king's strength was directly tied to the type of counsel he received and his application of that counsel.[5]

But *The Book of Fayttes of Armes* was not the only work of Christine's being shared between members of the English court. Her work, *The Epistle of Othea*, translated from the French by Stephen Scrope in the mid-1400s, was one of the more popular works of the time, as reflected in the number of surviving manuscripts containing the work.[6] According to Karen Cherewatuk in "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'," this work was identified for inclusion in Sir John Paston's great book[7] and was contained in Sir John Astley's great book, as well as in British Library Royal MS14 E II, a manuscript "Executed by Bruges artisans for Edward IV between 1473 and 1483" (Cherewatuk, "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 49). This "treatise on knightly ethics" (Cherewatuk, "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes'" 213) compiles material from various sources, including *Ovide moralisé*, *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, Thomas de Hibernia's *Manipulus florum*, *Dits moraulx des philosophes*, and *Flores Bibliorum.*[8]

Christine's *The Epistle of Othea* contains 100 sections, with each section containing a verse *Texte*, which introduces the lesson or instruction, usually " . . . 'wrapped up in an allusion to some story from mythology, from the history of Troy or, very rarely, from other sources' . . . " (Bühler xiii); a prose *Glose*, which expounds on the lesson, usually incorporating musings from ancient philosophers; and an *Allegorie*, which incorporates a Christian spiritual element, usually through a biblical reference (Bühler xiii). *Counsel* and *advice* play a great part in this text. Though variants of *advice* only occur six times, *counsel* and its variants occur 45 times in Scrope's translation, the clear majority appearing in the Gloses. Like in *The Book of Fayettes of Armes*, Christine

(or her translator) often relies on repetition to convey the message clearly, to imprint the lesson into the minds of the audience. A prime example occurs in the 77th section or chapter. The *Texte* contains two uses of *counsel*:

> Dispreise not of Helene þe *conceill*;
> I *conceill* þe so, wiþ-outyn faill,
> For ofte many hurtys falliþ then,
> Be-cause [þat] we beleue not wise men. (*The Epistle of Othea* 94.10-14, emphasis added)

The allusion should be clear to the audience, but the *Glose* explains the reference and expounds upon the importance of the lesson just introduced:

> Helene was broþir to Hector & king Priantis son of Troye. He was a ful wise clerk & ful of kunnyng. As myche as he my3t, he *counceilid* þat Paris schuld not go in-to Grece to rauysch Helayne; but þei wold not do aftir him, for þe which þe Troyens were hurte. Therfore it is seide to þe good kny3t þat he schuld beleue wise men & þere *counceill*. And Hermes seiþ: Who-so worschipiþ wise men & vsith theire *counceill*, þei be euerlasting pepill. (*The Epistle of Othea* 94.15-22, emphasis added)

Many of Malory's audience were likely familiar with this work, and because of the repetition of pertinent words, I am sure many of the lessons were remembered and able to be applied both to real-life situations as well as fictional situations in narratives and romances. Malory, too, though no definitive proof exists, was probably familiar with Christine's work. And again, Malory's own repetition of *counsel* and *advice* in important scenes centered on Arthur likely drew his audience's attention to that scene and helped them make connections with lessons conveyed in *The Epistle of Othea*.

Another work that was circulating as the Wars of the Roses raged on and as Malory was writing was Lydgate's and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres*. Sir John Paston's 'grete booke,' which contains this translation, was, as Cherewatuk notes, " . . . assembled for Paston between 1468 and 1469, that is, the year before Malory

completed the *Morte Darthur*" ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 45). But, as Cherewatuk continues, Paston's scribe William Ebesham likely copied Lansdowne 285, Sir John Astley's great book, which contained, among other works, "Lyd[g]ate and Burgh's 'Book of Governance'" ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 45).[9] Again, though there is no evidence that Malory had access to this text, he likely was familiar with it. These instructionals, these chivalric manuals, were especially coveted during the reign of Edward IV, as advantageous marriages of members of the Woodvilles and gifts of attainder from the king created more mobile gentry and " . . . allowed certain members of the gentry to rise on the social scale and perhaps even allowed him to enter the circle of the King" (Cherewatuk, "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Grete Bookes'" 207). These individuals needed instruction on proper behavior, both in the court and on the battlefield. Lydgate's and Burgh's work provides that instruction.

The Secrees of old Philisoffres, like Christine's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*, contains plenty of instruction on *counsel* and *advice*. In this text, too, *counsel* seems to be of greater concern.[10] There is information for the counselor, usually a knight or noble, and for the counseled, the king. Often, the word used (whether *counsel*, *councilor*, or *avise*) is then repeated in close proximity, thus focusing a reader's or listener's attention to the idea or advice being conveyed. In fact, this work contains an entire section entitled "On the Rightwisnesse of a Kyng and of his Counseil" that is 293 lines long and uses *counsel* and its variants seventeen times.[11] But this section is not the only one that contains numerous uses of *counsel*. Again, the advice given by Lydgate and Burgh is supposed to be applied to one's own life, for one's own betterment. But readers likely

saw lessons that applied to real-life situations occurring in the court, as loyalties and relationships were tested for both the Lancastrians and the Yorkists.

Lydgate and Burgh provide general advice:

> Be gynne no thyng / with oute greet *Avys*,
> A ground of trouthe / first that it be possyble,
> And I *Counsayle* / yif that thou be wys
> fforeyn Empryses / which that be terryble,
> Attempte hem nat / but yif it be Credyble
> lykly on nature / by dysposicyoun
> ffully taccomplysshe / thyn entencyoun. (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 6.177-82, emphasis added)

as well as more specific advice, such as testing the loyalty of an officer:

> Make compleynt / shewe greet hevynesse,
> ffeyne the nedy / take hym to the neer
> By sotil meenys / thy conceyt to expresse,
> As to thy freend / touche thyn officeer,
> And yif he *counseyl* / to chevyssh sylveer
> Of thy Iowellys / or thyn tresours,
> he is trewe / and louyth thyn honours. (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 70.2206-12, emphasis added)

They give the officer special consideration if he offers his own money to cover the imagined debts. Such knowledge was surely appreciated by members of the gentry who wished to develop closer relationships with their king as well as by rulers who wished to educate a prince.

Not surprisingly, some of the same situations discussed in *Secrees* also occur in Malory's *Works*. Furthermore, with the struggle for the throne affecting not just London but the entire country, with many in the nobility fighting peers and, in some cases, neighbors, good counsel was more important than ever. Malory's audience was surely able to apply the lessons learned from *Secrees of old Philisoffres* to decisions in their own lives. But scenes and events in Malory involving Arthur and counsel/advice probably

sparked a reaction in the gentry and noble households. How to recognize good counsel, how to recognize a reliable counselor: Malory deals with these issues as well, and readers could discuss whether his characters made the right decisions or not in relation by applying the knowledge gleaned from the *Secrees of old Philisoffres*.

To show the influence chivalric manuals and instructionals had in the time in which Malory was writing, Karen Cherewatuk ventures outside the English court and studies a 'grete booke' from Scotland—The Prose Manuscript of Sir Gilbert of the Haye. Like its English counterparts, this text contains " . . . one chivalric manual on warfare, one on knightly ethics, and the same text on princely behavior" as Paston's and Astley's books ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 48). While the English texts include Vegetius's work *De re militari*,[12] Gilbert of the Haye translated the French *Le Arbre des Batailles* by Honoré Bouvet ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 48). Completed in 1456, the text, as a result of its Scottish origins, probably was not circulated in London during the time in which Malory was writing, but its focus on the same concerns as those English great books make it worthy of examination.

A dense, lengthy work, *The Buke of the Law of Armys* instructs its readers on proper courtly and knightly behavior and probes the reasoning behind that advice. First, a question is posed, such as 'supposing a knight is imprisoned by an enemy. Does he have the right to try to escape?' A developed answer then follows. *Counsel* and *advice* are often examined, both from a king's and from a knight's perspective. In fact, *counsel* is mentioned 123 times, *advice* 25. And, like the authors of the works in the English great books, Gilbert of the Haye uses repetition to legitimize and validate his advice and to help a member of the audience remember that advice. For example, in the fourth part

of the work, Gilbert of the Haye discusses the duties of " . . . the Duk of the bataill, the quhilkis ar callit the grete Constable or Mareschall" (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 114.16-18). In ten lines, Gilbert of the Haye uses *avisit* twice and *counsa(i)le* twice:

> Als it efferis wele till a constable to be wys and verty, and wele *avisit* in all his dedis; and, namely, in the governaunce of weris and bataillis . . . be wele *avisit* quhat folk he takis till his *counsaile*, and quhat folk he may best help him with, as that day. For in sik place may be that folk on fut is better na hors efter the consideracioun of the constable and his *counsale*, the quhilk, in the law civile, is callit the Duk of bataill; and in the bible alssua. (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 115.32-34-116.1-6, emphasis added)

As many of the lessons imparted in *The Buke of the Lawe of Armys* are similar to those from the English great books, ideas and lessons from this work can be found in Malory's *Works*. Furthermore, since Scotland granted amnesty to a fleeing Margaret and Henry after the Battle of Towton, members of the Scottish court were clearly well aware of events surrounding the English monarchy. They must have been aware of the concerns regarding *counsel* and *advice* surrounding both men—Henry and Edward—and their kingships; as a result, they likely were able to find connections between lessons in Gilbert of the Haye's work and actions taken during the Wars of the Roses. And if they read Malory, I am sure they realized that his work, too, dealt with these same concepts, including *counsel* and *advice* as tied to the throne.[13]

Malory's Text

The books opening and closing Malory's work are the ones that deal most specifically with Arthur's rise and fall. While he does appear in the other books, it is usually as a central character in brief scenes, or as one character among many, or simply as mentioned in dialogue by other characters. In the opening book—*The Tale of King*

Arthur—Arthur is guided mainly by Merlin. However, in *Lancelot and Guinevere* and *The Morte Arthure*, Lancelot is the character who receives the beneficial counsel, while Arthur relies on Gawain, whose counsel moves from reasonable to faulty in one moment, ultimately destroying Arthur in the process.[14]

The Tale of King Arthur

This book deals specifically with Arthur's conception, birth, and rise to power. The first uses of the words *counsel* and *advyse* occur on the first page of Malory's work, the section entitled "Merlin," which defines the context in which the words are used throughout the rest of the book. Uther, in his desire for Igrayne, asks for *counsel* on how he may achieve her:

> . . . thenne he called to hym his pryvy *counceille* and told them of the sodeyne departying of the duke and his wyf. Thenne they *avysed* the kynge to send for the duke and his wyf by a grete charge:
> 'And yf he wille not come at your somons, thenne may ye do your best; thenne have ye cause to make myghty werre upon hym.' (*Works* 7.22-28, emphasis added)

This conversation reveals counsel at its least admirable; the king is using his power to further his own selfish desires, making a decision based solely on emotion. Uther campaigns to achieve Igrayne through whatever means necessary, including a siege and a magical disguise. Arthur is thus conceived and born into the world of Malory's work. Ironically, or perhaps not, Arthur will be destroyed by the same type of self-serving and emotionally driven counsel in which he was conceived.

Arthur becomes king of England, not through open bloodline succession or military coup, but through "'Goddes will'" (*Works* 15.8). According to Terence McCarthy, in *An Introduction to Malory*, after Arthur's crowning, "The rest of Book I

therefore describes the series of wars by which Arthur imposes his authority on his neighbours, with the help of wise counsel and loyal support . . . " but he claims these wars are " . . . a wearisome catalogue of military events . . . " (7). Writing for a first-time or casual reader of Malory, McCarthy is too dismissive of the material in this book. Yes, this section is more battle than romance, but it is important material, for it allows readers to see how Arthur uses *counsel* and *advice* to become the renowned and respected king that readers admire. In fact, a connection between the time of Arthur and the time in which Malory's audience is reading is identified by Elizabeth Pochoda: "That Malory has designed the Arthurian ideal along fifteenth-century lines is thus abundantly clear from the first section of Tale I. The ideal, as we should have expected, is devoted to the accomplishment of unity and thereby of peace" (*Arthurian Propaganda* 79). For an audience experiencing daily the chaos associated with the Wars of the Roses, a reminder that unity is possible, that peace can be achieved, must have been comforting.

Arthur, as young king, is untried and unsure; he is not comfortable in a leadership role and understandably relies heavily on counsel from those around him.[15] Central to most of this counsel is Merlin, "…the figure guiding the movement and acting as the obvious unifying principle . . . " in *The Book of King Arthur* (Reiss, *Sir Thomas Malory* 36). In fact, in these first books, as Wendy Tibbetts Greene bluntly asserts, "Merlin appears as leader; Arthur does as he is told" ("Malory's Merlin: An Ambiguous Magician?" 58). Led by Merlin, Arthur's barons help guide Arthur into correct and kingly decisions.[16] The first real 'test' for Arthur comes when King Lot of Orkeney and his followers claim " . . . it was grete shame to all them to see suche a boye to have a rule of soo noble a reaume as this land was" (*Works* 17.28-29). When Arthur goes into

London, " . . . soo by the *counceil* of Merlyn the kyng lete calle his barons to *counceil* . . . wherfor the kyng asked *counceil* at hem al. They coude no *counceil* gyve, but said they were bygge ynough" (*Works* 19.29-30, 32-34, emphasis added).[17]

This repetition (four times in five lines) is note-worthy. Malory uses this technique regularly to focus a reader's (or listener's) attention;[18] in this case, the reader is to take note of Arthur's first counsel and the type of advice he thus receives. While Murial Whitaker writes that "Sometimes, Malory's use of repetition seems unnecessarily complicated from the structural point of view . . . " (*Arthur's Kingdom of Adventure: The World of Malory's* Morte Darthur 50), I agree more with Jeremy Smith's interpretation, that "Perhaps the most subtle handling of vocabulary achieved by Malory is in his use of repeated expressions in close proximity to each other" ("Language and Style in Malory" 111). In this case, repetition forces readers to acknowledge Arthur's political and military weaknesses, not out of any sense of cruelty but to establish one of the purposes of *The Tale of King Arthur*, to show how much he learns, how much he progresses in terms of leadership skills and ability. However, Arthur's asking for counsel does indicate sincere interest in his own education; furthermore, a sign of a good leader is his willingness to accept that counsel. He then decides to get further advice from Merlin: "'Ye saye well,' said Arthur, 'I thanke you for your good courage; but wil ye al that loveth me speke with Merlyn? Ye knowe wel that he hath done moche for me, and he knoweth many thynges. And whan he is afor you I wold that ye prayd hym hertely of his best *avyse*'" (*Works* 19.35-39, emphasis added). The barons agree and Merlin is summoned in order " . . . to gyve them best *conceil*" (*Works* 20.3, emphasis added).

Merlin, too, repeats the words *advys* and *counsel* in his response to Arthur: "'I shal telle you,' said Merlyn, 'myne *advys*…Wherfor this is my *counceil*: that our kyng and soverayne lord sende unto the kynges Ban and Bors by two trusty knyghtes with letters well devysed . . . Now what sey ye unto thys *counceyle*?'" (*Works* 20.12, 21-33, 26-27, emphasis added). As the individual responsible for Arthur's first counsel, the "omniscient strategist" as labeled by Thomas L. Wright ("'The Tale of King Arthur': Beginnings and Foreshadowings" 23), Merlin must speak very clearly to convey his plan. As a result, he reiterates his point through the repetition of the word *counsel*. Arthur then signifies his understanding and acceptance of Merlin's advice by responding, "'Thys ys well *councelde*'" (*Works* 20.28, emphasis added). Malory closes the scene with narrative, describing the actions of the knights as they carry out Merlin's advice.

But while Merlin is the central "military adviser and tactician" (Wright, "'The Tale of King Arthur'" 27) in Malory's early books, certainly he is not the only one; Arthur also receives counsel from his allied kings and knights. Malory guarantees the readers' attentions by again using repetition. Ban and Bors ride into London to show support for Arthur and almost immediately "they wente unto *counceyle*," along with Brastias, a clerk named Gwenbaus, Merlin, and Ulphius (*Works* 24.6, emphasis added). Malory identifies all who attend this council because, as Pochoda asserts, "The strength of the state depended on the king's ability to attract the best councilors" (*Arthurian Propaganda* 83). Providing a list legitimizes the council. Malory's audience can clearly see that Arthur is surrounded by wise men of varying experience—knights, scholars, and Merlin, magician and king-maker.

To provide even more weight for readers, the word *counsel* appears again in the next three lines, the narrative description of the assembly: “And aftir they had [ben] in her *counceyle* they wente unto bedde. And on the morne they harde masse, and to dyner and so to theire *counceyle*, and made many argumentes what were beste to do” (*Works* 24.9-12, emphasis added). Again, Malory wants readers to take special notice of this scene; Arthur is taking part in his first war council,[19] getting advice from not one man but several, from kings, knights, and clerks, men with philosophical, military, and practical experience.[20] Arthur will need all this experience if he is to defeat Lot and his followers. And it is necessary for Arthur to succeed, for, as Reiss notes, these battles “ . . . present concrete proof of the worth of Arthur and his new Order. Arthur is the new king; and with his new allies, King Bors and King Ban, he stands up against the old order, the titanic figures belonging to the older generation” (*Sir Thomas Malory* 40).

Arthur receives advice and counsel four more times in the “Merlin” section alone:

> • “So by Merlyons *advice* there were sente foreryders to skymme the contrey . . . ” (*Works* 26.25-26, emphasis added)
> • “ . . . and by kynge Ban and Bors his *counceile* they lette brenne and destroy all the contrey before them there they sholde ryde” (*Works* 26.28-30, emphasis added)
> • “Than by *counceile* of Merlion, which wey the an [sic] eleven kynges wolde ryde and lodge that nyght, at mydnyght they sette uppon them as they were in their pavilions” (*Works* 27.14-16, emphasis added)
> • “‘Now shall ye do by myne *advice*,’ seyde Merlyon unto the three kyngis, and seyde: ‘I wolde kynge Ban and Bors with hir felyship of ten thousand men were put in a woode here besyde in an inbusshemente . . .’” (*Works* 27.14-16, emphasis added)

Even Arthur’s opponents cannot help but wonder at Arthur’s excellent battle tactics. When Lot sees Bors bearing down upon him from an ambush, he marvels that Bors was able to enter the country and come to Arthur’s aid without his knowledge. A knight informs Lot that “‘Hit was by Merlions *advice* . . . ’” (*Works* 32.12, emphasis added).

This scene is a real moment of recognition for Lot. He is no longer trying to defeat a mere boy; he is battling against a boy guided by distinguished and powerful men.[21] He realizes that Merlin plays a central role to Arthur's success, " . . . to assist the hero in devising a strategy that will unify his kingdom" (Whitaker, *Arthur's Kingdom* 14). This realization is powerful in its simplicity; Lot does not rage against Arthur's counsel. Instead, he continues his attack, even in the face of inevitable defeat.

Arthur receives counsel only one more time in this section, when Merlin convinces him not to seek another battle with King Pellinore: "' . . . therefore hit ys my *counceile*: latte hym passe, for he shall do you good servyse in shorte tyme . . . '" (*Works* 53.27-29, emphasis added). This advice is certainly sound, not only because a few scenes earlier Pellinore had unseated Arthur and Merlin had to rescue him, but because Pellinore plays a large role in the development of the Round Table's fellowship. Thus, Malory uses the word *counceile* to notify readers of the importance of this conversation. Arthur and Merlin have shared other conversations in this section, but this exchange is the only one which includes the word *counsel*. A careful reader would notice such a word choice, since its last use was tied to Arthur's movements in battle. This conversation is Arthur's first real council regarding the future of the Round Table and is, though seemingly a minor scene, quite important to future events in Camelot.

In "Balin or the Knight with the Two Swords," Arthur and *counsel* appear together only once, at the very beginning of the action. In this instance, " . . . the kynge wolde lette make a *counceile* generall and a grete justis" (*Works* 61.19-20, emphasis added); the council, or assemblage, exists to introduce an outside adventure and to bring an unknown knight into the realm of Camelot. And since this knight, Balin, is the focus

of this chapter, rightly the chapter follows his actions. The concept of *counsel* does appear in this chapter, but Merlin counsels Balin, not Arthur. This moment should not in any way be viewed as Merlin switching allegiance, for Merlin counsels other knights often; instead, readers should admire Merlin's willingness to help those associated with the Round Table in any way, whether a Round Table knight or simply a knight from Camelot, former prisoner or not.

In "The Wedding of King Arthur," however, Merlin's counsel is again tied directly to Arthur, and again in quite an important scene. There is first a reiteration of Merlin's role as advisor: " . . . the moste party dayes of [Arthur's] lyff he was ruled by the *counceile* of Merlyon" (*Works* 97.6-7, emphasis added). What follows, however, is the first time where we see Arthur listening to and then choosing not to follow Merlin's advice:

> So hit felle on a tyme kyng Arthur seyde unto Merlion,
> 'My barownes woll let me have no reste but nedis I muste take a wyff, and I wolde none take but by thy *counceile* and *advice*.'
> ' . . . is there ony,' seyde Marlyon, 'that ye love more than another?'
> 'Ye,' seyde kyng Arthure, 'I love Gwenyvere . . . '
> But M[e]rlyon warned the kyng covertly that Gwenyver was not holsom for hym to take to wyff. (*Works* 98.7-11, 14-16, 29-30, emphasis added)[22]

Elise Van-Ten Bensel rightly notes that "The magician's exhortations are on the whole not superfluous, for Arthur does not appear to possess . . . wisdom nor yet sound judgment" (*The Character of King Arthur in English Literature* 143). Merlin, who thus far "has stage-managed events" (Greene 59), does have Arthur's best interests in mind, but the warnings do no good this time; Guinevere comes to Camelot, "And in all haste the kynge lete ordayne for the maryage . . . " (*Works* 98.26). Again, this scene, with Malory's deliberate use of both *counsel* and *advyce*, should be deemed important by

readers. Arthur asks for counsel and receives it, as he has done in the sections before, but this time he chooses to ignore that advice based on emotion, more specifically, on love (both for Guinevere and for the gift of the Round Table). This failure to rely on measured reason will be seen much later in an equally disturbing scene, when Arthur does rely on emotionally driven counsel from Gawain; neither emotion-based decision comes to a good end,[23] a fact the reader already knows and the characters can only experience and realize through hindsight.

Merlin speaks up again in this section to remind the king of his duties when a weeping and wailing damsel is kidnapped out of the court. At first, " . . . whan she was gone the kynge was gladde, for she made such a noyse" (*Works* 103.11-12). Merlin, however, cautions Arthur against such an attitude; he says the "' . . . advenutures muste be brought to an ende, other ellis hit woll be disworshyp to you and to youre feste'" (*Works* 103.14-16). Properly chastened, "'I woll,' seyde the kynge, 'that all be done by your *advice*'" (*Works* 103.17, emphasis added); calling Gawain forward, Arthur sends him for the white hart, Torre for the brachet, and Pellinore for the lady. Merlin's advice is important for it 1) reminds Arthur about his role as king, to be responsible for his subjects' safety, and 2) introduces an adventure to each of the three knights that helps establish his character, details that become important in later books.

One such moment occurs in the section immediately following "The Wedding of King Arthur." There is a final rout of the Five Kings opposing Arthur. Unfortunately, eight Round Table knights are killed. Merlin has just been imprisoned by Nenyve, because, as Reiss believes, "It is necessary that Merlin be removed from the action, for the real function of this section . . . is to show the Order of the Round Table existing as a

human order in its own right, not as one receiving continual and direct supernatural guidance . . . " (*Sir Thomas Malory* 61). Furthermore, it will be impossible for Arthur to become fully self sufficient if Merlin is always available. As Rosemary Morris remarks, "A father and teacher must encourage his protégé to stand on his own two feet"; up until now, however, "There [has been] relatively little sign of Merlin's doing so" (*The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* 116). Malory guides Arthur to "Merlin's human surrogate" (Reiss, *Sir Thomas Malory* 62), Pellinore.[24] In "The Death of Merlin and the War with the Five Kings," Arthur then allows Pellinore to name the new knights, including his own son Torre: "'Sir,' seyde Pellynore, 'I shall *counsayle* you aftir my conceyte the beste wyse . . . And be myne *advyse* ye shall chose half of the olde and half of the yonge'" (*Works* 130.31-32, 33-34, emphasis added). And because readers are already paying close attention to this scene because of its word repetition, they do not overlook sir Bagdmagus's reaction as he departs the court, for he " . . . was wondirly wrothe that sir Tor was avaunced afore hym" (*Works* 132.1-2), swearing he would defeat a Round Table knight before he would return. Another decision made through counsel has revealed the imperfections of Arthur's court. Both Arthur and Pellinore claim Torre was chosen not because of nepotism but because of strength and prowess, but Bagdemagus sees nothing to convince him otherwise. This seeming preference of kin will, too, be seen again, and again tied to Arthur's counsel.

In "Arthur and Accolon," Arthur receives counsel from " . . . all the knyghtes and comons of that contray, and so by all their *advyces* there was chosen twelve good men of the contrey for to wayte uppon the two knyghtes" (*Works* 142.4-6, emphasis added). And in "Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt," the Damsel of the Lake comes to court and warns

Arthur that the gift he has just received from Morgan will kill him. She tells Arthur, "' . . . commaunde the brynger thereof to putt hit upon hir'" (*Works* 157.27-28). Arthur agrees, responding, "' . . . hit shall be as you *counseyle* me'" (*Works* 157.29, emphasis added). In both these examples, Arthur receives his advice from people not directly tied to Camelot—the "comons" and a damsel of the Lake. Malory incorporates these examples purposefully, and he uses the words *counsel* and *advyce* so the reader will compare these scenes of counsel with those that have come before. In this one book—*The Tale of King Arthur*—Arthur has experienced war-counsel and individual counsel about marriage, kingly behavior, and Round Table knights. However, all these conversations have revolved around people closely associated with Camelot. By including these counsels by outsiders, Malory is subtly defining Arthur as rightful king; he is closely tied to his subjects, willing to listen to their advice about his behavior or actions. Arthur has truly become the symbol of England; he represents not only knights and ladies but churls and peasants.[25] It has taken nearly the whole *Tale of King Arthur*, but progress is definitely seen in Arthur's actions and behaviors.

Finally, in "Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt," the reader sees Arthur passing his own judgment on the merit of those around him, deciding who is worthy of his counsel and who is false, even if they may be kin. Arthur's speech is painfully blunt:

> 'My sistir, your wyff, is allway aboute to betray me, and welle I wote other ye or my nevewe, your son, is *accounseyle* with hir to have me distroyed. But as for you,' seyde the kynge unto kynge Uryence, 'I deme nat gretly that ye be of *counseyle*, for Accolon confessed to me his owne mowthe that she wolde have distroyed you as well as me; therefore y holde you excused. But as for your son Uwayne, I holde hym suspecte. Therefore I charge you, putt hym oute of my courte.' (*Works* 158.5-13, emphasis added)

Arthur is not acting unreasonably (even if he is mistaken); he perceives a threat and takes action to reduce that threat, even if that supposed threat has kinship ties. Arthur has become a worthy king, making decisions based on reason rather than emotion and disregarding kinship ties for the good of the court. But perhaps more important than Malory's final proof in this book that Arthur can make measured decisions as king is the response of Arthur's nephew Gawain. Gawain, who has already shown that he reacts emotionally rather than with reason in previous sections, again reveals his tendency to act on pure emotion, storming after Uwayne and vowing not to return. Gaherys mourns his loss but does not follow. By ending the first book with Gawain's hotheadedness juxtaposed with Arthur's deliberate counsel, Malory foreshadows later interactions between these two men, interactions that unfortunately end much more tragically.

The Tale of the Noble King Arthur That Was Emperor Himself Through Dignity of His Hands

The Arthur and Lucius section that follows *The Tale of King Arthur* presents Arthur at his highest point. He is wise and in complete control of his kingdom. His advisor Merlin has been replaced by a host of able and willing men, men who have seen Arthur rise to power and who have his (and the kingdom's) best interests at heart.[26] Arthur, who has matured both physically and mentally, can now hear advice from various individuals and make decisions with little doubt of their legitimacy. Malory highlights Arthur's strengths by moving the Lucius section from the end of Arthur's reign to its position at the beginning. Arthur now uses *counsel* and *advice* to rout the Roman emperor, the only existing power that might threaten Arthur's reign. When confronted by Lucius's senators, sent to Arthur's court to demand truage, Arthur acts rationally and

deliberately: "' . . . for all thy brym wordys I woll nat be to over-hasty, and therfore thou and thy felowys shall abyde here seven dayes; and shall call unto me my *counceyle* of my moste trusty knyghtes and deukes and regeaunte kynges and erlys and barowns and of my moste wyse doctours, and whan we have takyn oure *avysement* ye shall have your answere playnly, such as I shall abyde by'" (*Works* 186.16-23, emphasis added). Arthur clearly has numerous people to turn to, and he uses them all for this most-delicate decision.[27] Arthur's actions now will define not only Arthur's reign but the future existence of a free England.

The seriousness of this discussion is revealed through word repetition: "Than the kynge unto *counsayle* called his noble lordès and knyghtes, and within a towre there they assemble, the moste party of the knyghtes of the Rounde Table. Than the kynge commaunded hem of theire beste *counceyle*" (*Works* 187.14-17, emphasis added). As Terence McCarthy notes, "The king does not merely rush off to Rome in a surge of literary enthusiasm; his counsellors offer military solidarity in precise terms: they say how many soldiers they can provide and who will be paying their wages" (*An Introduction to Malory* 18). Their discussion is punctuated in the beginning by two uses of the word counsel,[28] and their decision is swift; Arthur tells the senators that he is actually going to attack Rome and gives them seven days to get out of his country: "'Now spede you, I *counceyle* you, and spare nat youre horsis . . . '" (*Works* 190.26-27, emphasis added). The senators follow Arthur's advice and return to Lucius.

As the war grows nearer, Arthur again turns to his council for advice. While the war with the five kings was complex and fierce, it was a skirmish compared to what will occur when Arthur goes up against Lucius; Arthur knows he must be present at the war

but worries about the state of the kingdom while he is gone. He states, "' . . . I purpose me to passe many perelles wayes and to ocupye the Empyre that myne elders afore have claymed. Therefore I pray you, *counseyle* me that may be beste and moste worshyp'" (*Works* 194.21-24, emphasis added). His men " . . . gadirde hem unto *counsayle* and were condecended for to make two chyfftaynes, that was sir Baudwen of Bretayne, an auncient and an honorable knyght, for to *counceyle* and comforte . . . " (*Works* 194.25-195.3, emphasis added) and " . . . sir Cadore son of Cornuayle . . . " (*Works* 195.3-4) to act as regents or "chyfftaynes" (*Works* 195.1) during Arthur's absence.

Counsel and *advice* appear very little in the rest of this book; once the war begins, Malory focuses more on the physical strength of Arthur and his knights. Such concentration on the physical allows readers to see that Arthur's defeat of Lucius is the result of more than just clever battle strategy; he is truly the stronger power. He routs Lucius' troops, becoming Emperor of Rome in addition to being King of England. Arthur is at his highest point at the end of this book.

But little space is given for readers to revel in Arthur's triumphs. In the books that follow, the focus is taken off Arthur and placed upon his knights. *Counsel* and *advice* are no longer closely tied to Arthur and will not be again until the end of the work. As a result, he is no longer the central focus of the work, as Ginger Thornton has noted in "The Weakening of the King: Arthur's Disintegration in *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*." He (and his court) become more of a plot device in *The Works*. Even Arthur himself sees how things have changed. At the beginning of the Grail Quest, he laments, "' . . . I have grete doute that my trew felyshyp shall never mete here more agayne'" (*Works* 867.8-9). He is not wrong.

The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

By the time the Grail Quest draws to a close, the mood around Camelot has changed. More strife is visible, as earthly conflicts begin weakening the Round Table's fellowship. Arthur's role, too, as active participant and decision-maker, seems to have changed. Muriel Whitaker explains, " . . . he becomes fixed in the cyclical time of courtly romance, performing strictly ceremonial roles . . . " (*Arthur's Kingdom of Adventure* 107). Again, Malory uses the words *counsel* and *advyce* to communicate this change to his readers. In "The Poisoned Apple," the first section of *Launcelot and Guinevere*, *advyce* and *counsel* are first associated with Lancelot, not Arthur. Guinevere has ordered Lancelot away, and Lancelot tells Bors, Ector, and Lyonell what has transpired. Bors responds, "' . . . ye shall [not] departe oute of thys londe by myne *advyce*, for ye muste remembir you what ye ar, and renomed the moste nobelyst knyght of the worlde . . . And therefore, be myne *advyce*, ye shall take youre horse and ryde to the good ermyte here beside Wyndesore . . . '" (*Works* 1047.15-18, 20-22, emphasis added). Acknowledging the merit of Bors's advice, "'Ye sey well,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'for now woll I do by your *counceyle* . . . '" (*Works* 1047.32-33, emphasis added). By associating the words *counsel* and *advyse* in this book first with Lancelot, Malory is clearly signifying a shift in his narrative. Though it is subtle (Lancelot is obeying the queen's instruction to leave Camelot), a transference of power has occurred. Lancelot, not Arthur, is now the one receiving reasonable counsel. Guinevere's emotionally driven order is completely personal in nature; Arthur was not informed or counseled regarding the decision. His power is already beginning to wane. And Lancelot's power as an individual, as a future leader, is building.

One scene later, Guinevere is accused by Mador of the death of Patryse. As Whitaker explains, this " . . . episode is significant not only because it reveals the continuing weakening of the Round Table by the Lot-Pellinore feud but also because it reveals a diminishment of the court's loyalty to Guenevere, and, by implication, to the king" (*Arthur's Kingdom of Adventure* 95). Arthur's reaction to the charge of treason is worth noting: "' . . . me repentith of thys trouble, but the case ys so I may nat have ado in thys mater, for I muste be a ryghtfull juge. And that repentith me that I may nat do batayle for my wyff . . . '" (*Works* 1050.4-7). Arthur has been trapped by his position as king; he must attempt an objective judgment of his own wife and cannot even fight for her honor. Arthur may be king, but actions have been taken out of his hands. Calling a council for advice would do no good, because the law is clear; he can only accept the actions that follow, not change them. Notably, Thomas L. Wright states, "In Malory's source it is the barons, not Arthur, who condemn the queen to death. Malory's reversal of this procedure forces upon Arthur a delicate choice in which, pointedly enough, the preservation of the Round Table outweighs loyalty to one's queen" ("'The Tale of King Arthur'" 63). Arthur tries to be a king first, and the rights of the many overshadow the rights of one, even if she is the queen. As Morris claims, "Arthur's stern maintenance of the law is not cruel in Malory. It is more impartial, less vindictive than in the source, and in any case Arthur's judicial pronouncements come from his kingly persona, not his human, suffering self" (*The Character of King Arthur* 104). Arthur is reduced to advising his own wife to seek aid elsewhere: "'Well, than I woll *counceyle* you,' seyde the kyng, 'that ye go unto sir Bors and pray hym for to [do] batayle for you for sir Launcelottis sake . . . '" (*Works* 1051.17-20, emphasis added). Bors must take the place

of sir Lancelot, the only individual with the power to rescue her; in fact, everyone expects Lancelot to save Guinevere, and when he does, "all was forgyffyn" (*Works* 1060.5-6).

However, in "The Fair Maid of Ascolat," a change in the dynamics of the court is visible; Lancelot will fight against the king in a tournament at Winchester, and the king will not play a part in the action but will merely watch from the sidelines. While Arthur is still technically a physically strong king, he chooses not to participate here. Lancelot, on the other hand, is still so powerful that none really wants to go up against him. And Arthur is so worried that he " . . . wold nat suffir sir Gawayne to go frome hym, for never had sir Gawayne the bettir and sir Launcelot were in the fylde . . . " (*Works* 1069.10-12). Lancelot's physical prowess, which has always been admired until now, has become more threatening. And Arthur is revealing his kinship loyalties, protecting his nephew from Lancelot. This type of favoritism by Arthur will be seen again, revealing a developing (and disturbing) pattern.

In "The Great Tournament," Arthur "*avysed* togydirs" (*Works* 1103.2, emphasis added) with his knights to have a joust; Arthur is now using the power of *counsel* to devise amusements for the Round Table knights rather than making real political decisions. And again, Lancelot is fighting against Arthur. As C. David Benson claims, "Lancelot's apparently whimsical decision to fight in a tournament . . . " against Arthur " . . . is a preview of more serious divisions. In fact, Lancelot never again fights on Arthur's side" ("The Ending of the *Morte Darthur*" 224). Lancelot proceeds to smite down Gawain, Aggravain, Gaherys, and Mordred (*Works* 645.24). Out of anger, Arthur demands that ten knights attack Lancelot and Lavayne together; Arthur has made a decision based on emotion, a decision that goes against the rules of knighthood and

chivalry. He is breaking his own code. Malory portrays Arthur as wanting to win however he can and being " . . . wrothe out of mesure that he and hys knyghtes myght nat prevayle that day" (*Works* 1112.22-24). Arthur has fallen victim to the same in-fighting, the same angry emotion, that was seen in the knights in "The Poisoned Apple." He seems to have forgotten that Lancelot, like Gawain and Palomedes, is his knight, too. As a result, the divisions based upon kinship are emerging more definitively now than ever before. Elizabeth Archibald explains that "smaller fellowships" or cliques of knights exist and are " . . . permanent—and, towards the end, problematic—fellowships based on kinship and clan loyalties, notably those adhering to Gawain and Lancelot" ("Malory's Ideal of Fellowship" 316).

Then, Malory includes a scene that clearly foreshadows the actions in *The Morte Arthur*. Gawain, who recognizes Lancelot, turns to his uncle to reveal Lancelot's disguise. Arthur is surprised and replies, "'By my hede,' seyde kynge Arthure, 'neveaw, I belyeve you. And therefore now telle me what ys youre best *counceyle*'" (*Works* 1113.7-9, emphasis added). Gawain, repeating the word *counsel*, proceeds to advise Arthur: "' . . . my *counceile* ys to blow unto lodgynge. For and he be sir Launcelot du Lake and my brothir sir Gareth wyth hym, wyth the helpe of that goode yonge knyght, sir Lavayne, truste me truly, hit woll be no boote to stryve wyth them but if we sholde falle ten or twelve uppon one knyght, and that were no worshyp, but shame'" (*Works* 1113.10-15, emphasis added). This scene is extremely important. Malory wants his readers to take special note, so he uses word repetition. We see a definite shift in allegiance—allegiance through kinship. Arthur refers to Gawain as nephew, where he rarely has before. Gawain will later play upon this blood relationship by referring to Arthur not

only as king but as uncle. Second, Gawain is establishing himself as Arthur's new counselor. And while his advice is certainly reasonable now, later it will be emotionally driven. Lancelot is slowly and subtly being separated from the Round Table.

The last two sections of *Launcelot and Guinevere*— "The Knight of the Cart" and "The Healing of Sir Urry"—contain no references connecting Arthur to *counsel* or *advyce*. It is no accident. Malory focuses primarily on Lancelot for a reason; we as readers get to see a much more independent Lancelot, one who acts on his own and makes his own decisions. The sections in this book are important, because they individualize Lancelot; he is no longer one of many knights of the Round Table. He becomes a character in his own right and one who stands successfully beyond the shadow of the Round Table. We can see how he has earned his title as best knight in the world, can experience his physical prowess without the constant and distracting interruptions from other Round Table knights. He is willing to demean himself by riding in a cart like a condemned prisoner, even doing so purposefully because some in the court of Camelot mock him for it. In doing so, he rises above them. He is also still blessed by God, as his healing of sir Urry so clearly demonstrates. Malory places all these sections together to help lay the foundations of Lancelot's final departure from Camelot, because when he goes, he takes with him much of the court's power and much of the best counsel.

The Most Piteous Tale of The Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon

By the time readers enter the section of *The Morte Arthur* entitled "Slander and Strife," they have been well-prepared by Malory regarding the use of and meanings behind *counsel* and *advyce*. Thus, readers should not be surprised to see the word *counsel* being used in the very first scene. What is surprising, however, is who is using it and

where. The section opens with Gawain and his brothers in Arthur's chambers. Malory describes Aggravain in no uncertain terms: "[he] seyde thus opynly, and nat in no *counceyle*, that manye knyghtis myght here . . . " (*Works* 1161.17-18, emphasis added). The Orkeney brothers become divided between those who want to expose Lancelot and Guinevere's affair (Aggravain and Mordred) and those who do not (Gawain, Gaherys, and Gareth). The importance of this counsel is that its intentions are evil. Aggravain and Mordred want Lancelot exposed not for the good of the kingdom but for the detriment of Lancelot. Furthermore, this evil counsel is taking place within Arthur's private chambers. Only if Arthur's power were sufficiently reduced could a plot against his wife and favorite knight occur in his private chambers without his knowledge. Gawain refuses to become involved with Aggravain and Mordred's plan, opposing them reasonably and repeating the word *counsel* three times:

> • "'Brothir, sir Aggravayne, I pray you and charge you, meve no such maters no more afore me, for wyte you well, I woll nat be of youre *counceyle*'" (*Works* 1161.25-27, emphasis added)
> • "'Nat be my *counceyle*,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'for, and there aryse warre and wrake betwyxte sir Launcelot [and us], wyte you well, brothir, there woll many kynges and grete lordis holde with sir Launcelot'" (*Works* 1162.3-6, emphasis added)
> • "'Than God spede you, for I woll nat here of youre talis, nothir be of youre *counceile*'" (*Works* 1162.24-26, emphasis added)

There is a progression in Gawain's language regarding his brothers in these speeches. With his first use of *counsel*, Gawain also uses the word *charge*, defined by Vinaver as "to command; to load; to entrust" (*Works* 1710). Gawain commands his brothers not to act. But in the second response, his admonition is lessened to "wyte you wele" or " know what you wish for" (*Works* 1744-45). The command has been taken away and only a warning remains. By the third speech, the tone has changed again; Gawain remarks

"'Than God spede you,'" a statement that is, in fact, a blessing. Soon after, Gawain exits the room, leaving the scheming brothers alone with Arthur, who has just entered.

This scene is important, not only for its use of *counsel* but also for Gawain's reaction to his kin. He is feeling loyalty to Arthur,[29] but he does not completely abandon his brothers. In fact, as Beverly Kennedy clarifies, "Gawain, Gaheris and Gareth neither affirm nor deny their younger brothers' allegation . . . " (*Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 307). And while "[Gawain] rails at his brothers for being treacherous and ungrateful, [he] does nothing to put an end to their scheming" (Bennett, "Sir Thomas Malory's Gawain: The Noble Villain" 19). Malory's deliberate word choices in this scene, then, establish Gawain's later interactions with his uncle. At first he will act accordingly and reasonably regarding his counsel, because he is not acting directly against his kin; he had warned Aggravain and Mordred that their plan would come to no good end. Thus, though remorseful for their deaths, he remains driven by reason. But when his other brothers, Gaherys and Gareth, are accidentally killed, reason no longer holds sway.[30] Gawain is ruled by his emotions, and those emotions control Gawain's counseling of his uncle. Unfortunately, Arthur, whose power has been slowly weakening, is no match for his grieving nephew. And Gawain's sorrow triggers Arthur's, so now both men are controlled by their emotions. Unfortunately, as Barbara Bartholomew notes, " . . . emotions noble in themselves can be completely misdirected" ("The Thematic Function of Malory's Gawain" 266). Arthur's lapse into emotion wipes away any last shred of control he has. Gawain takes away the rest of Arthur's power, commandeering his speech and using it against the only other character who has any

power—Lancelot. Arthur can only lament, which he does, for " . . . he has nothing and no one else to fall back on" (Archibald, "Malory's Ideal of Fellowship" 324).

After Gawain storms out of Arthur's chambers, leaving Arthur alone with his scheming brothers, Aggravain accuses Lancelot of being a traitor. As David Harrington states, "Malory shows us repeatedly that the King had no personal interest in probing into Sir Lancelot's relationship with Queen Guenevere. The question was imposed upon him by the insistence of Sir Aggravayne and Sir Mordred" ("The Conflicting Passions of Malory's Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot" 65). As McCarthy explains, "The deed that is unrecorded, unspoken, unknown is a deed that does not exist, while on the other hand even the most ludicrously trumped-up accusation requires an answer once it has been publicly voiced" ("Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 4). Forced to respond to Aggravain's accusation, Arthur is surprisingly calm in his response, listing Lancelot's accomplishments and demanding proof before he will act. Aggravain explains how he will trap Lancelot and Arthur replies, "'Than I *counceyle* you to take with you sure felyshyp'" (*Works* 1163.33-34, emphasis added). In this final sentence, Arthur is no longer speaking as a king but as an uncle; he is well aware of Lancelot's strength and skill in battle and wishes as little bloodshed as possible. Still, Arthur's kin has been set upon Lancelot. Furthermore, concerning the knights whom Aggravain and Mordred choose to accompany them in their ambush, " . . . all they were of Scotlonde, other ellis of sir Gawaynes kynne, other [well-] wyllers to hys brothir . . . " (*Works* 1164.16-17). The kinship divisions have become even stronger. But "As his nephews make a public issue of their private hate, the bonds of allegiance that once held the realm together

become a source of blackmail and division" (McCarthy, "Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 14).

Bors, Lancelot's kin, counsels Lancelot both before and after the ambush. First, Bors tries to prevent him from going to Guinevere's chamber:

> 'Sir,' seyde sir Bors, 'ye shall nat go thys nyght be my *conceyle*.'
> 'Why?' seyde sir Launcelot.
> ' . . . I drede me sore of som treason.'
> 'Have ye no drede,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'for I shall go and com agayne and make no taryynge.' (*Works* 1164.20-22, 28-31, emphasis added)

Lancelot chooses to ignore Bors's counsel, dismissing it as unnecessary.[31] He is wrong, however. In the ensuing battle, thirteen knights, including Aggravain, are killed and Mordred is wounded. According to C. David Benson, "His victory against such odds is a measure of his greatness, but the carnage makes reconciliation impossible. The court is split between Arthur and Lancelot, and the knights begin to choose sides" ("The Ending of the *Morte Darthur*" 230). Lancelot is forced to flee from Camelot. But he does not leave alone; Bors and 24 other knights leave as well. These knights are all loyal to Lancelot at the expense of king Arthur.[32] The Round Table has been truly, permanently divided. Once away from Camelot, Bors advises Lancelot again:

> 'My lorde, sir Launcelot,' seyde sir Bors, 'be myne *advyce*, ye shall take the woo with the weall . . . And sytthyn hit ys fallyn as hit ys, I *counceyle* yow to kepe youreselff, for and ye woll youreselffe, there ys no felyshyp of knyghtes crystynde that shall do you wronge. And also I woll *counceyle* you, my lorde, that my lady quene Gwenyver, and she be in ony distres, insomuch as she ys in payne for youre sake, that ye knyghtly rescow her . . . ' (*Works* 1171.21-28, emphasis added)

This advice is well-spoken and well-heeded. But it is also counsel that will, again, widen the rift between Lancelot and Arthur.[33] Lancelot will save the queen (again) but, by

doing so this time, will commit the final act that will destroy the kingdom—kill Gareth and Gaheris.

Furthermore, Lancelot realizes that Arthur is being advised by less-than-honorable men, Gawain's kin. And Lancelot knows what the next action will be, because he recognizes that Arthur's hands have been tied by Aggravain's and Mordred's ill-will: "'Than I put thys case unto you,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that my lorde, kynge Arthure, by evyll *counceile* woll to-morn in hys hete put my lady the quene into the fyre and there to be brente, than, I pray you, *counceile* me what ys beste for me to do'" (*Works* 1172.8-12, emphasis added). Lancelot's kinsman Bors, though a relative, will provide rational and logical counsel, not counsel based on personal emotion. This clear dichotomy between the two men will help accentuate the disparity between Lancelot's and Arthur's counsel. Lancelot will take Bors' and his knights' advice, even though he knows the result will be catastrophic; for if he fails to act, Guinevere will die: "'But and hit be so that ye woll *counceyle* me to rescow her, I must do much harme or I rescow her, and peradventure I shall there destroy som of my beste fryndis . . . '" (*Works* 1172.26-29, emphasis added). Lancelot has received and accepted reasonable advice; he will act upon this advice, even though it will be interpreted by Arthur as treason. Arthur, on the other hand, has been forced into action by evil and ill-minded advice, but he is now trapped by the law.

Gawain tries to undo what his brothers have started, advising Arthur and speaking quite reasonably. As Beverly Kennedy notes, "Gawain tries very hard to convince his uncle to let Lancelot have a trial. This is the first time since Malory's account of the Roman campaign that we have seen Gawain act in the capacity of the king's counselor, and it is the longest speech he ever makes in the *Morte Darthur*" (*Knighthood in* The

Morte Darthur 313), beginning, "'My lorde Arthure, I wolde *counceyle* you nat to be over hasty . . . '" (*Works* 1174.31-32, emphasis added). Gawain is an accepted counselor by this time and, "Although Gawain often proves himself incompetent as a sage in Arthur's court, the king still expects him to perform in this capacity" (Shichtman, "Malory's Gawain Reconsidered" 170). Arthur's response, even in the face of reasonable counsel, is not surprisingly that "' . . . she shall have the law'" (*Works* 1175.22-23). The law is stronger than reason; it is even stronger than emotion. It is certainly stronger than Arthur.

Arthur's next remarks to Gawain, however, reveal that Arthur is not as stoical as he has appeared; emotion has entered into his speech. He actually seems surprised at Gawain's lack of emotion regarding Aggravain's, Floren's, and Lovell's deaths. Gawain, though, refuses to become guided by emotion: "' . . . they wolde nat do be my *counceyle* . . . I am sory of the deth of my brothir and of my two sunnes, but they ar the causars of their owne dethe . . . '" (*Works* 1176.5, 8-9, emphasis added). This speech is vitally important to understand the magnitude of what follows. Arthur becomes more and more emotional, not only because his kinsmen have died, but out of frustration regarding the law. Arthur must obey the law, just like any other member of his kingdom, but doing so sentences his wife to death. He is also frustrated that people, including Gawain and Lancelot, assume he wants Guinevere to die. Furthermore, Gawain is no longer obeying him; Arthur tells Gawain to attend to the sentencing of Guinevere, but Gawain refuses, saying "' . . . hit shall never be seyde that ever I was of youre *counceyle* for her deth'" (*Works* 1176.21-22, emphasis added). Arthur is reduced to ordering Gawain's younger brothers Gaheris and Gareth to accompany Guinevere; they obey but make their displeasure clear: "'Sir, ye may well commaunde us to be there, but wyte you well hit

shall be sore ayenste our wyll'" (*Works* 1176.31-32); they even refuse to wear armor. Malory wants readers to take note of Arthur's lack of control over his knights, his kin, because what happens next seals all their fates.

"The Vengeance of Sir Gawain" opens with Gawain learning of Gaheris's and Gareth's deaths. Arthur's lack of control over his nephew may seem shocking to the casual reader, but close readers have been well-prepared by Malory.[34] Much of the Round Table's (and thus Arthur's) strength has been reduced by Lancelot's leaving; furthermore, Arthur is becoming more emotional in his speech, a clear sign that reason is no longer the only guiding factor. He even says to Gawain, "' . . . lat us shape a remedy for to revenge their dethys'" (*Works* 1185.34-35). Shichtman calls this suggestion "insidious" ("Gawain Reconsidered" 163), but it is not. Arthur, as a kinsman, is genuinely asking about Gawain's plans for revenge; their deaths must be requited somehow, and Gawain, as brother, has more of a right to decide that than their uncle. And his behavior is not completely unwarranted. As C. David Benson explains, " . . . the innocence of Gareth and Gaheris requires a response. Motive is again irrelevant (Arthur correctly reports that Lancelot did not recognize the two). His relatives were wrongly killed and there is only one honourable course of action" ("The Ending of the *Morte Darthur*" 232). It is already painfully obvious that Arthur has little control over his kinsmen, so when Gawain, ruled by his anger, confronts an emotional Arthur, we expect Arthur's deference to Gawain's strength and understandable desire for revenge. Gawain thus " . . . becomes the knight's principal accuser, and he must be regarded from this point as the person most actively responsible for keeping alive the hostilities that result in Mordred's ultimate treachery . . . " (Reiss, *Sir Thomas Malory* 178). Malory signifies

this shift in power, in control, with his word choice; *counsel* and *advice* are noticeably absent. Instead, Malory chooses much stronger words.

Gawain first addresses Arthur with a three-fold title—"'My kynge, my lorde, and myne uncle'" (*Works* 1186.1)—effectively closing any loophole Arthur may find to refuse Gawain. Furthermore, Gawain asks nothing of his uncle; instead, he literally orders him: "' . . . I requyre you, my lorde and kynge, dresse you unto the warres . . . '" (*Works* 1186.5-6). Arthur obeys, as any good kinsman would, and a fifteen-week siege on Lancelot begins. Arthur, still emotional, cries out against Lancelot, "' . . . I am thy mortall foo and ever woll to my deth-day; for thou haste slayne my good knyghtes and full noble men of my blood, that shall I never recover agayne'" (*Works* 1187.29-32).[35] But Lancelot, appealing to Arthur as "'My moste noble lorde and kynge . . . '" (*Works* 1187.35), speaks quite rationally, explaining his actions, his side of events, in clear detail.

As a result, "Arthur, after hearing Launcelot's explanation for his conduct, is willing to lift the siege and be reconciled with his queen, [but] Gawain will hear no talk of peace" (Bennett, "Sir Thomas Malory's Gawain" 20). Unfortunately, Arthur is not given any chance to respond, for Gawain, without Arthur's counsel, states his decision, "' . . . my lorde, myne uncle kynge Arthur shall have hys quene and the bothe magré thy vysayge, and sle you bothe and save you whether hit please hym'" (*Works* 1189.2-4). In fact, Arthur speaks out loud only once more in "The Vengeance of Sir Gawain," one sentence in 440 lines. That one sentence, however, is quite important. Arthur says, "' . . . I have gyvyn you no cause to do to me as ye have done, for I have worshipt you and youres more than ony othir knyghtes'" (*Works* 1197.32-34). It identifies Arthur's return to rationality; and he separates himself verbally from Gawain.[36] As Edward D.

Kennedy notes, "Malory follows his source here in presenting an Arthur whose momentary vengefulness is replaced by affection for Lancelot and sorrow over the dissension between them" ("Malory's King Mark and King Arthur" 153). Unfortunately, this return to reason comes too late; Gawain, still ruled by emotion, is the one making the decisions and speaking for Arthur, even though Arthur no longer shares Gawain's mindset. Gawain does not even attempt to confer with Arthur regarding decisions; counsel and advice have no place anymore. Gawain has usurped Arthur's crown as well as his voice. In fact, " . . . Gawain loses not only his calm and his counseling ways but all patience with language itself" (Plummer, "*Tunc se Coeperunt non Intelligere*: The Image of Language in Malory's Last Books" 162).

Even Lancelot realizes Gawain no longer speaks for Arthur, observing rightly, "' . . . well I undirstonde hit boteneth me nat to seke none accordemente whyle ye, sir Gawayne, ar so myschevously sett. And if ye were nat, I wolde nat doute to have the good grace of my lorde kynge Arthure'" (*Works* 1189.26-30). In order to verify this remark, Malory's narrator intrudes to reiterate that " . . . the Freynsh booke seyth kynge Arthur wolde have takyn hys quene agayne and to have bene accorded with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawayne wolde nat suffir hym by no maner of meane'" (*Works* 1190.17-20).[37] And again, after Lancelot places the fallen Arthur upon his horse, the narrator makes clear how Arthur's feelings have changed: "So whan kynge Arthur was on horsebak he loked on sir Launcelot; than the teerys braste oute of hys yen, thynkyng of the grete curtesy that was in sir Launcelot more than in ony other man" (*Works* 1192.28-31). But while he has regained his reason, Arthur has not regained the power of his title; Gawain continues to use Arthur's name when confronting Lancelot.[38] Gawain uses his own

voice, his own " . . . language, but only as a weapon, spurring on Arthur in his moments of weakening resolve—in obvious opposition to his earlier counselling of restraint—and goading Lancelot to fight . . . " (Plummer, "*Tunc se Coeperunt non Intelligere*" 163).

Furthermore, in "The Siege of Benwick," Arthur hands over his lands and his wife to Mordred for safe-keeping during the Gawain-led siege of Lancelot's castle. Arthur is now completely powerless; Gawain has taken his voice and Mordred has taken his title, his lands, and his wife. As Beverly Kennedy rightly notes:

> Just as Arthur refused initially to be accorded with Lancelot, despite the counsel of Lucan the Butler and all the other knights 'aboute the kynge' except for Gawain (1213.3-7:XX.19), so now the king continues to let his nephew govern him. In effect, Arthur is no longer either King of England or Holy Roman Emperor, for Mordred rules England as his regent and Gawain rules his knights in France. (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 326)

Arthur has in effect ceased to exist. This reality is verified when a woman is sent by Lancelot to speak to Arthur and Gawain. Arthur begins weeping when he hears the woman, "And all the lordys were full glad for to *advyce* the kynge to be accorded with sir Launcelot, save all only sir Gawayne" (*Works* 1213.11-13, emphasis added). Gawain, who is sitting beside Arthur, threatens him with "'vylany and shame'" (*Works* 1213.16-17) if he relents. Arthur speaks more rationally, orally weighing the options, "'I woll do as ye *advyse* me; and yet mesemyth . . . hys fayre proffers were nat good to be reffused'" (*Works* 1213.19-20, emphasis added). Unfortunately, Arthur allows Gawain to make the final decision and to voice that decision to the damsel. Gawain does not acknowledge his uncle's concerns: "' . . . sey ye to sir Launcelot, that hyt ys waste laboure now to sew to myne uncle'" (*Works* 1213.24-26). He then renews his vow to kill Lancelot or die trying.

Only with Gawain's death can Arthur try to regain his former strength and power. Unfortunately, that power has now been usurped by Mordred. Even the people of England side with Mordred, believing " . . . that with kynge Arthur was never other lyff but warre and stryff, and with sir Mordrede was grete joy and blysse" (*Works* 1228.35-1229.2). Arthur must battle Mordred for his crown, but ultimately both men are destroyed. Arthur has lost his physical strength, just as he has lost his voice and his lands. This was foreshadowed earlier, when Bors unseated Arthur and could easily have killed him; it took the intervention of Lancelot to save his life. In "The Day of Destiny," however, Lancelot is not there to save Arthur. And the warnings Arthur receives, both from Gawain's ghost and from sir Lucan, are not heeded, perhaps because they are worded incorrectly (no use of *counsel* or *advyce*) or perhaps because Arthur assumed that just as he had regained his voice, he had also regained his former strength. He is horribly wrong. He does " . . . [smite] sir Mordred undir the shylde, with a foyne of hys spere, thorowoute the body more than a fadom" (*Works* 1237.14-15), but Mordred is still able to strike through Arthur's helmet and deal him a mortal blow.

Conclusion

With Arthur's departure/death, the kingdom is set to rights again, and Constantine becomes king. And it is for the best; Arthur had been weakened so greatly in *The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* and *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon* that he could never have achieved his former glory. A new king was necessary for the survival of England. So, in a way, all has come full circle. The counsel that an emotional Uther relied upon created Arthur, whose rule united England in a way Uther never could have. But emotionality resurfaced through one of Arthur's kinsman,

Gawain, which ultimately destroyed both Arthur and his Round Table. Lancelot, the character in *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon* who is receiving the reasonable counsel, survives the war against Gawain and Arthur, only dying later. He listens to and accepts reason-based counsel from his knights and kin, making him the strongest and most powerful character in *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*. But he cannot become king of England either, which makes his death tragic but necessary.

Arthur's power, built up so powerfully in the beginning of the *Works*, has been slowly undermined by emotion, by misguided kinship, and by his own self-doubt. Arthur becomes a king reliant not on reason-based counsel but on the kin-centered emotional counsel of Gawain, and Malory's readers should recognize that such a shift helps cause the fall of the Round Table. Good counsel is extremely powerful and should be actively sought out, but bad counsel has just as much power: the power to destroy. Malory's gentry readership would have been wise to recognize the difference between the two.[39] However, one's status cannot be improved by good counsel alone; he must make sure that his *worship* is improved as well; this concept, as well as the concept of *shame*, will be examined in the next chapter.

Notes

[1]As Felicity Riddy details, Elizabeth's " . . . father was raised to an earldom; five of her sisters married into the higher nobility; a brother—at the age of twenty—married the dowager duchess of Norfolk who was more than three times his age, while one of Elizabeth's detestable sons married the daughter of the duke of Exeter" (*Sir Thomas Malory* 73).

[2]John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, presented a copy of Christine's work to Margaret of Anjou and Henry as a wedding present in 1445 (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* xvi). Edward, upon ascension to the throne, also took possession of Henry's library.

[3]Part I has 22 uses, Part II only 3, Part III 19, and Part IV 14.

[4]Part 1 has 22 uses, Part II 18, Part III 11, and Part IV 6.

[5]As a result, Malory's audience, *The Works,* Christine's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye*, and reality all coalesce: what they experience, they read about; what they read about, they experience. As Bakhtin expresses:

> The [artistic] image acquires a specific actual existence. It acquires a relationship—in one form or another, to one degree or another—to the ongoing event of current life in which we, the author and readers, are intimately participating. This creates the radically new zone for structuring images in the novel, a zone of maximally close contact between the represented object and contemporary reality in all its inconclusiveness—and consequently a similarly close contact between the object and the future. (30-31)

This belief does not just translate to Christine's *The Book of the Fayttes of Armes*; all of the texts that I will mention in the following pages reflect Bakhtin's assertions.

[6]As Curt F. Bühler notes, at least 43 French copies exist today (*The Epistle of Othea* xii).

[7]The work, though bound separately, was found in Paston's library (45 and n. 9).

[8]As noted by Bühler in the EETS *The Epistle of Othea* (xxvii).

[9]Cherewatuk also asserts that "Despite the obvious dependence of Paston's volume on Astley's, it is likely that similar books were in circulation by 1450" ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 45).

[10]*Advice* is used only 7 times, but *counsel* appears 26 times.

[11]This section can be found on pp. 64-73.

[12]Because this Latin treatise is more focused on military strategy, how to set up camp and how to ambush an enemy, I have excluded a study of this text from my dissertation. The concepts of *counsel* and *advice* do exist in the work, but rarely. Since I am concerned more with knightly and courtly behavior rather than physical prowess, the military element is superfluous to my argument.

[13]The first Part of Gilbert of the Haye's work is ten "chapters" long and contains seven uses of *counsel* and its variants. However, since this chapter is focused largely on the Church and not on kings or knights, its examples of *counsel* will not be cited during the Malory discussion. Additionally, many of the scenes that use repetition of *counsel* or *advice* are aimed more towards a knight than a king, so those examples, by virtue of this chapter discussion, will not appear here. I will focus on those instances in which the subject-matter includes a king and repetition.

[14]And, as my study will show, there are clear connections between Malory's reality, the reality of *The Works*, and the reality established in other contemporary works, fulfilling Bakhtin's assertion that " . . . we get a mutual interaction between the world represented in the work and the world outside the work" (255).

[15]Peter Korrel, in *An Arthurian Triangle: A Study of the Origin, Development and Characterization of Arthur, Guinevere and Mordred*, makes special note of Arthur's reliance on others: "As in the *Vulgate Cycle*, at the beginning of his career, Arthur is totally governed by Merlin; at the end by Gawain. During the civil war Merlin is always the true field-marshall, who tells the king exactly what to do" (259).

[16]As Christine states in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye*, "Thenne it is necessarye that the prynce be wyse / or at the lest wylle vse the *counseyl* of wyse men / for plato saith that the royame or contre is blyssed & wel happy where the wyse men gouuerne . . . " (14.28-31, emphasis added). Since Arthur is not yet wise, he must rely on Merlin and others if his kingship is to succeed.

[17]Mark Lambert examines this scene in his *Malory: Style and Vision in* The Morte Darthur:

> Consider the term 'counceil.' The first time we come upon the word it is clearly the narrator who chooses it. The same is true of the second occurrence: although here it is being used in a somewhat more technical sense. But what of its third appearance? Is this indirect discourse in which it is understood that what the king actually said was 'I ask counceil at you all?' or is it a freer kind of summary? What of the next occurrence? Did the barons actually say 'we can no counceil gyve' or is this the narrator's expression? (13)

Lambert then negates his insightful commentary by stating baldly that "Such questions are unanswerable and seem virtually meaningless: repetition of terms, both in true confirmation and by the narrator himself, so lulls us into unawareness of differences in points of view and of differences between various voices that we are not moved to sort them out more exactly than the syntax of the narrative does" (13). I believe that the repetition of the term *counsel* is important *because* the narrator cannot be removed from the text; Malory's repetitive use labels the scene important. Therefore, so does Malory's audience. If audience members supply their own biases and beliefs regarding *counsel* onto this scene, then they surely have been "moved to sort [the points of view] out more exactly."

[18]For example, Malory uses the word *desyre* seven times in the conversation between Uther and Merlin regarding the bedding of Igrayne (*Works* 8.18-9.5).

[19]Gilbert of the Haye discusses the importance of good war-councils in *The Buke of the Law of Armys*: " . . . for gude curage makis gude ordinaunce in bataill, and takis gude *counsele*, and chesis men that can wele fecht, and ordanis gude habilliamentis for weris, and takis placis avantageous; and dois all with *avys* of wys men of were . . . " (81.3-8, emphasis added).

[20]Some of these advisors are more battle-hardened than Arthur, while the clerks have a more philosophical background, and such diverse experiences are important, especially when discussing war-tactics, as Christine espouses in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*:

> And herupoon he shal take *thaduis* and oppinion of dyuers chyualrous wyse and gode captaynes that shalbe of his *counseil* / olde and gode true men of gode & sadde *counseyl* and expert in faytis of armes / Nor he shal not do nothing onely by his owne heed but shal make his entrepryse after *thaduys* of many men / by whos regarde and direction he wyth them shall conclude by gode delyberacyon that whiche is best for to be doon . . . (51.6-14, emphasis added)

[21]Lot respects Arthur's advisors, which demonstrates an important part of the advisor/advisee relationship as explained by Lydgate and Burgh in *Secrees of old Philisoffres*:

> First that the fame / of Royal Sapience,
> So that Repoort / of his notable ffame
> Be voyde of vices / that Cleer intelligence
> In his Empyre / be cleer from al diffame,
> That no Repoort / blott not his name,
> Nor no fals *Counsayl* / of folkys that be double
> The Cleer shyning / of his good name trouble. (33.1051-57, emphasis added)

The reputation of Arthur's advisors precedes them, and their power, especially Merlin's, increases Arthur's own reputation. These men have Arthur's best interests in mind, fighting this battle with Lot for Arthur's glory and to establish his kingdom.

[22]Obviously, readers know what Arthur's response is going to be: to marry Guinevere, despite the dangers alluded to by Merlin. And readers also know that Merlin's predictions will prove true. Scrope's translation of Christine's *The Epistle of Othea* warns against refusal of wise counsel. Section 50 introduces Amphoras and discusses the dangers of ignoring sage advice. The *Texte* reads, "Ayens Amphoras sadde *counsell*, y seye, / Go not to distroye, for than thou shalte deye, / To Thebes ne the cite of Arges . . . " (*The Epistle of Othea* 62.19-21, emphasis added). The *Glose* expounds upon the *Texte*, mentioning *counsel* three times:

> And whan king Adrastus wolde goo vppon Thebes for to distroye the cite, Amphoras . . . *counceylled* the king not to goo; for, if he wente, all scholde be deed and distroyed . . . [Wherfore it is seyde] to the good [knyght] that ayens the *councell* of wise men he schulde take no grete emprice. But as Salamon seith: The wise mannys *councell* availith litill to him that will not do there-aftir. (*The Epistle of Othea* 62.25-26, 27-29, 63.1-4, emphasis added)

The *Allegorie* uses *counsel* once to verify the lesson was received and understood and applicable to spiritual matters as well: "Be Amphoras councell, ayens the which noon scholde goo to bataill, we may take þat the good spirite scholde folowe holi prechinges" (*The Epistle of Othea* 63.6-8).

[23]Gilbert of the Haye establishes the need for strong and reasoned counsel rather than emotional, self-serving counsel in *The Buke of the Law of Armys*: a king " . . . suld efter that be till here wis *counsale* wele enclynit, sobir, temperit, and gracious of his prelatis and barouns, and othir wis and vertuous men. For as we rede in haly scripture, the king Roboam tynt his realme be caus he wald nocht tak *counsale*, na trow *counsale* of the prestis of the lawis" (296.23-28, emphasis added).

[24]Wendy Tibbetts Greene claims that " . . . Pellinore usurps the role of adviser" and that "Merlin, as is clear from the beginning of this book, has lost control of Arthur's world" (61). I disagree, however. Merlin actually brings Pellinore to Arthur's court and announces his importance to all present: "And therewith Merlyon toke kynge Pellinor by the honde, and in that one hande nexte the two segis, and the Sege Perelous, he seyde in opyn audiens, 'Thys [is] your place, for beste ar ye worthy to sitte thereinne of ony that here ys'" (*Works* 102.8-9). How can usurpation occur when an individual is invited into a place of power? In fact, I might venture to say that Merlin was preparing for his eminent departure by establishing Pellinore so publicly to the Round Table.

[25]Christine establishes the need for varied council membership: " . . . to thende that he be not deceyued he [the prince] shal assemble to *counseil* the foure estates of his

contree whiche ought to be called . . . ” (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 16.4-7, emphasis added), which include nobles, clerks, commons, and craftsmen. While this advice is tied to war and the specific example of Uriacus, it is excellent advice that may apply in any situation. She reiterates this same point later in her work, explaining, “As it may hap somtyme that som of lowe degre may be of good *aduys* and of good *counseyll* / For why / god Imparteth hys gyftes of grace where he wyl” (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 77.10-13, emphasis added), and then a third time: “ . . . that fortune enhaunceth men att her owne plaisire / that they that be of ryght lowe degree comen to highe astate whiche thynge som tyme happeth : by the suffisaunce of the persones / other in fayt of armes / or in scyence / wysedom / or *counseyll* / or by som other vertue that they haue . . . ” (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 286.28-33, emphasis added).

[26]Malory’s readers at this point in the work might make some comparisons of Arthur’s kingship with one of their own experience: “The role which the Round Table fellowship plays in King Arthur’s Roman campaign, both as counsellors of war and as commanders in the field, greatly strengthens the likeness between King Arthur’s Round Table fellowship and Edward III’s Order of the Garter” (B. Kennedy, *Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 35). Such a comparison is natural, as Bakhtin explains: “After all, the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, between literature and nonliterature and so forth are not laid up in heaven. Every specific situation is historical” (33).

[27]In this scene, Malory devotes valuable manuscript space to specific statements provided by numerous individuals. King Angwysshaunce, the king of Little Britain, the Duke of West Wales, Sir Ewayne and his son Ider, the young Sir Lancelot, and Sir Bawdwin of Brittany all detail the number of men they will commit to a war with the Roman Emperor, and some even expound on why they hold such hatred for Lucius. This careful description of the king’s counsel, as opposed to a brief narrative aside referring to the council’s occurrence, demonstrates a lesson supplied in Lydgate’s and Burgh’s *Secrees of old Philisoffres*:

> It is to the / also greet avaylle,
> And accordyng / to thy magnificence,
> Oppynyouns to here / of thy *counsaylle*,
> And benygly / to gyff audience,
> To ther *counsayl* / giff advertence,
> Intitle and rolle / ech Oppynyoun,
> In thy remembraunce / but lerne this conclusyoun.
>
> Thyn entent / do nat expresse,
> Which thou hast / at the begynnyng,
> ffor thou owyst / of verray ryghtwysnesse
> Therof be blamyd / as witnessith wrytyng.
> keep tounge in mewe / be cloos in werkyng,
> Tyl tyme thou be / in purpoos for avayl,
> In effect to folwe / ther *counsayl*. (65.2052-66.2065, emphasis added)

Arthur fulfills this advice by waiting until everyone has spoken, then issuing this response: "'Now I thanke you,' seyde the kynge, 'with all my trew herte. I suppose by the ende be done and dalte the Romaynes had bene bettir to have leffte their proude message'" (*Works* 190.10-12). Malory then makes his readers wait until Arthur is again in audience with the Roman senators to hear his proclamation to invade Rome.

[28]Arthur asserts, "'That truage to Roome woll I never pay. Therefore *counceyle* me, my knyghtes, for Crystes love of Hevyn'" (*Works* 188.3-5, emphasis added). King Angwysshaunce answers respectfully, "'Sir, thou oughte to be aboven all othir Crysten kynges for of knyghthode and of noble *counceyle* that is allway in the'" (*Works* 188.15-17, emphasis added).

[29]Barbara Gay Bartholomew, in "The Thematic Function of Malory's Gawain," notes that Gawain is " . . . always fiercely loyal to Arthur," and this loyalty can be either a blessing or a curse (265).

[30]As Felicity Riddy notes, " . . . the Gawain of the book's opening (who fulfills the traditional role of the king's loyal kinsman and is contrasted with the evil counsellors, Mordred and Aggravaine) forbears to seek revenge for the death of one brother, but later cannot be restrained from avenging the death of another" (*Sir Thomas Malory* 154).

[31]Beverly Kennedy claims that Lancelot's refusal is based on his being a Worshipful knight:

> . . . Lancelot refuses to take Bors' counsel for two reasons. The first is one which Gawain would appreciate for it is equally part of the Heroic knight's code of ethics: to disobey the queen for fear of Aggravayne would be to show cowardice and he 'woll nat' ever be a 'cowarde'. The second is one which Tristram, the Worshipful knight, is more likely to appreciate. Lancelot has promised 'ever' to be Guinevere's knight 'in ryght othir in wronge' (1058.30-32:XVIII.7) and to renege on that promise would be shameful. (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 310)

[32]They are fulfilling one of the lessons taught in Christine's *The Epistle of Othea*, though at the same time breaking another. By standing next to their kinsman, they are breaking their oath to their king:

> And Seint Bernarde seith in a sermon that iustice is not ellis but to yeue euery man that is his. Yeue than, seith he, to iij maner of pepil that the which is theires, that is to sey, to thi souereyne, to thi felawe and to thi subiecte: to thi souereyne, reuerence and obeisaunce, reuerence in herte and obeisaunce of bodi; to thi felawe, thou scholdist yeue *councell* and helpe, *councell* in teching hym where he is ignoraunt and helpe him in confortyng his novn-power . . . (14.6-14, emphasis added)

Bors gave advice to Lancelot, told him not to go to Guinevere's chamber, that a trap had been set. But Lancelot ignored his counsel and now is in even greater danger. Bors' advice this time? Leave Camelot, at least until things calm down. But by leaving with Lancelot, Bors is not showing "reuerence and obeisaunce, reuerence in herte and obeisaunce of bodi" to his king. This is just one of many scenes in *The Works* that likely stimulated conversation and debate from audience members, which included both those born into the court life and who understood the rules, the "old-school," and those who have just bought their way in and have trouble navigating the complex world of the court, the "new-school." In addition, these audience members have the problem of conflicting loyalties in relation to the throne—which king do they support? Henry VI or Edward IV? Does one switch loyalties or just provide lip service? As a result, Bakhtin's assertion, that " . . . every literary work *faces outward away from itself*, toward the listener-reader, and to a certain extent thus anticipates possible reactions to itself" (257), comes true.

[33]And unfortunately for Lancelot, as Beverly Kennedy notes, "Gawain's loyalty to Arthur is subsumed under his loyalty to his clan" (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 177). Lancelot might have had a chance getting back in Arthur's good graces, but his manslaughter of Gareth especially will destroy any kind of fealty bond Lancelot and Arthur had once held. Arthur's grief allows the emotional and clan-oriented Gawain to take control.

[34]Arthur's lack of control over all of his nephews has been well documented. He fails to admonish Gawain for tricking Ettarde, Pelleas's lady, into sleeping with him; he fails to punish his nephews for their ambush and murder of Lamerok; he fails to prevent and to punish their murder of Pellinore. According to Beverly Kennedy, again a resemblance exists between Arthur and Edward IV: "Both Arthur and Edward are commanding figures who generate powerful loyalty in their knights and are successful with the ladies. Both are devoted to doing justice, but have difficulty doing justice upon their relatives (Arthur openly favours his nephews, and Edward was overly generous to his wife's kinsmen) and in both cases their nepotism angers other factions in the court and creates political problems for them" (*Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 55). Arthur's power is weakening as the work progresses, but when he allows Gawain to take the role of sole counselor he guarantees his, and his kingdom's, destruction.

[35]Such emotional reaction, however, goes against advice described in Gilbert of the Haye's *The Buke of the Law of Armys*, that a king " . . . suld be temperit in his word, that nane unfittand word part fra his mouth, and be mesurit that he think alwayis before or he speke, with gude deliberacioun, and namely in his *counsaile* and in his perlement" (300.21-25, emphasis added). Arthur's behavior is especially sad, as Launcelot is his most loyal knight.

[36]Unfortunately, Arthur has allowed himself to be closed off from other, more rational individuals whose advice might have prevented the final demise of Arthur's kingdom. A king's reliance on one individual, in this case Arthur's reliance on Gawain, fulfills a warning set forth in Lydgate's and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres*:

> Be sad of cheer / pley nat the Enfaunt,
> In answere prudent / wys nat chaungable,
> Oon singuler man / to make thy leyf tenaunt,
> To the ne thyne / is not a-vayllable;
> ffor yif he be wood / and vntretable,
> He may in his / furyous Cruelte
> Thy pepil, thy Reem / destroye, and also the. (69.2192-70.2198)

[37]Though some critics would just label this sentence as narration, as Bakhtin has established, the author cannot be separated from his text; therefore, this narrative detail is Malory's interpretation, whether provided deliberately or unconsciously. Furthermore, that narrative detail would have been noted by Malory's audience and could have been used in a discussion of the propriety of Gawain's, Lancelot's, and/or Arthur's behavior.

[38]By not speaking up against his nephew, Arthur is validating Gawain's place next to Arthur, his usurpation of Arthur's voice, his refusal to act rationally. Gawain has been blinded by envy and rage, and if Arthur cannot bring him to his senses, Lancelot certainly has no chance. Sadly, this is despite the history that Lancelot and Arthur shared, that Lancelot was once Arthur's primary counselor, as described by Beverly Kennedy:

> During the second part of the Tale of Tristram . . . Lancelot is continuously in residence at court . . . we see him constantly in the company of the king. Indeed, Malory gives us good reason to conclude that Lancelot has become Arthur's chief counsellor and courtier.
> Already in the Tale of Gareth we have had evidence to indicate that Arthur relied upon Lancelot as one of his chief counsellors. (*Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur 195-96).

[39]Raluca Radalescu identifies likely reader reaction to Arthur's fate in the *Works*:

> Malory's readers would have found that King Arthur's governance was not a political ideal to be recommended to fifteenth-century kings. The resulting image of King Arthur in the *Morte* is more complex than a 'political morality': it was influenced by the current political debate expressed in romances, chronicles and political tracts, in short, by what the political classes thought and felt about kingship and governance. (*The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur 2)

I certainly agree that the last chapters of the *Works* will cause this reaction in readers; however, the early chapters should cause a more positive reaction in readers, as they become aware of not only what good counsel is, but what good counsel can create.

CHAPTER THREE

Gareth: The Development of a Worshipful Knight

Introduction

Knighthood was alive and well during the time in which Malory was writing his *Works*. A number of Orders of knighthood already had been established by Henry VI's and Edward IV's days. These orders had grown directly out of the literature of the time, namely the romance, and thus were mainly "decorative from the start" (Morton, "The Matter of Britain: The Arthurian Cycle and the Development of Feudal Society" 21). Helen Cooper identifies Edward I as the likely creator of the Winchester Round Table; she also mentions Edward III, who began the Order of the Garter in 1348 ("Romance After 1400" 701).[1] However, the role of the knight had changed by Malory's day; what had once been a figure at home on the battlefield had become more of a symbolic entity. The battlefield had evolved with the growing use of archers and foot soldiers, so the expertise of the knights with one-on-one combat became relegated mostly to the tournament or pas d'armes; knights had become, in essence, entertainment. However, much of the chivalric code established with the Order of Knighthood continued to guide behavior. Knighthood was still something to be aspired to and admired, and chivalry was certainly very serious business.

Unfortunately, during Henry's time on the throne, the exclusivity of knighthood was challenged by the "Distraint of knighthood, which was applied to all who were believed to be worth at least £40 annually in land or rent over a three-year period,

[which] evoked a storm of protest in parliament in 1439. To the well-off who deemed the accolade of knighthood less valuable than their rentals, this device seemed like an attempt to soak the modestly rich by resurrecting an antique custom" (Griffiths 384-85). Henry's, and the country's, coffers were running low, because of the Wars of the Roses and a number of poor economic decisions made under Henry's rule. It was used again between 1457 and 1459 (Griffiths 787). In this case, knighthood was used solely to measure one's economic standing.

However, during Edward's rule, knighthood again regained some of its more customary dignity. During the rule of Edward IV, " . . . election to the Order [of the Garter] remained very much a mark of Edward's personal favour. Neither high birth nor even kinship with the king automatically gained a man entry into this charmed circle" (Ross, *Edward IV* 274). In fact, Sheila Lindenbaum notes that "After the accession of Edward IV, mayors and sheriffs were knighted in unprecedented numbers . . . " ("London Texts and Literate Practice" 301).[2] This opening up of the knighthood to those of worth, not just those worthy by birth, further blurred the lines between the nobility and the gentry. Edward knighted individuals who could not only provide economic and defensive aid, both to the crown and to his person, but to those whom he deemed worthy. Furthermore, the knighting ritual was seen as an honor, not as a means to simply obtain money for the royal treasury. In fact, the number of men knighted to provide personal protection to the king himself grew. As Ross notes, "In 1468 there were ten knights of the body, in 1471 about twenty, and probably thirty by 1483 . . . " (*Edward IV* 323). While most of Edward's knights were "Rarely of sufficient importance to sit on the king's council, they nevertheless served Edward as constables of royal castles, stewards

or officials in royal lordships, and commissioners to deal with a wide variety of business within their own areas of local influence" (Ross, *Edward IV* 328). These men helped in the day-to-day management of the kingdom. Edward retained them because they were loyal and thus could be relied upon to make decisions in his best interests.

However, knighthood also reflects on a person's moral and ethical standing, not just on his physical prowess and his economic rank. Knights were admired as embodiments of chivalry, and "The Late Middle Ages, moreover, took chivalry very seriously" (Cooper, "Romance After 1400" 700). In combat and in life a knight had to follow a strict code of conduct. *Worship* or *shame* was the end result of one's behavior. Individuals like Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, were the heroes of their day. Their actions on and off the tournament field made them role models for younger men who had aspirations of knighthood.[3] To further their educations, chivalric manuals were available for study, and a number of these texts deal specifically with knightly concepts such as *worship* and *shame*.

Christine de Pisan's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* examines the concepts of *shame* and *worship*, just as it does *counsel* and *advice*. *Worship* appears 29 times and *shame* appears 14 times. Though their numbers may seem much smaller than the occurrences of *counsel* and *advice*, the two sets of words cannot be compared. Much of the advice given in Christine's book is meant primarily for kings or princes, not their knights. However, the lessons imparted regarding these concepts, *shame* and *worship*, are important not only to kings but to those who serve the kings.

Much of the advice is practical, meaning that an individual can adjust his behavior in order to win worship or to avoid shame. For example, in Book One, Christine takes a

hypothetical situation and walks her reader through the proper action. If a captain is told by his prince to leave a field of battle without engaging the enemy, the captain should not just blindly obey but ponder the potential effect of his response. *Shame* should play a role in his decision: "For vegece saith that noon so grete *shame* ther nys than to departe the felde in presence of hys enemyes or euere they medle togider / wythout that it be by accorde made betwyx bothe partyes" (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 66.7-10, emphasis added), for the behavior could be dishonorable; he could be seen as cowardly, that he has no faith in his men's fighting abilities, or no loyalty to his men. Either way, his reputation will suffer.

This idea of leaving the battlefield is further analyzed, as Christine discusses what strategies are acceptable and which are not. She states bluntly that "Some other haue departed by nyght whyche is the moost *shamefull* manere / by cause it is called a rennyng awaye" (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 67.8-10, emphasis added). If one finds that a draw is the only solution, that a treaty is the only way in which to end a siege or battle, a prince should " . . . graunte a part of the wylle of the other wythout thy *worshyp* be hurt therby / and to lete go som what of thy ryght yf noo bettre thou canst doo" (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 71.31-34, emphasis added).

Christine's *The Epistle of Othea*, too, explores the concepts of *worship* and *shame*. However, while *shame* is only mentioned twice, *worship* is used 28 times, not including religious connotations.[4] For example, in the *Glose* of Chapter XXVIII, Christine identifies wise individuals that a knight should keep around him: "So Othea wolde sey that a good knyghte shulde loue and *wurschip* clerkes that be lettred, the which be grounded in connynge. To this purpos Aristotill seide to Alexander: *Wurschip*

wisedome and fortefie it with good maistres" (*The Epistle of Othea* 40.4-8, emphasis added). However, much of Christine's advice is more general. She introduces in Chapter II's *Texte* the purpose of her work:

> And to the entent that knowen may be
> What thou sholdest doo, draw vnto the
> Thoo vertues that moost may the restore,
> The bettir to come to that seid afore
> Of the *wurschipfull* cheualerous. (*The Epistle of Othea* 8.26-30, emphasis added).

Despite her occasional generality, however, Christine's advice is certainly applicable.

For example, Christine discusses Hercules in the *Texte* of Chapter III, finishing the verse with a discussion of the comparison between oneself and Hercules:

> As for thi bodi the to defende,
> If that such bestis wolde the offende,
> Than diffence if assailed thou be,
> With-oute doute it is *wurschip* to the.
> If thou ouercome them and the saue,
> Bothe grete laude and *wurschip* thou shalte haue. (*The Epistle of Othea* 11.13-18, emphasis added)

The first four lines are direct comparison with the reader and Hercules: if he is assailed by wild animals, then he should defend himself. However, the last two lines open up the lesson to other worthy tests and threats against one's worship, and the *Glose* confirms this point, that a man should comport himself in the best way possible: "[Hercules] wente in-to helle to fighte with the princes of helle and that he faughte with serpentis and fers beestis, be the which is to vnderstande the grete and strong entirprises that he dide. And therefore it is seide to a good knyghte that he schulde loke in this, that is to seie, in his *wurschip* and wurthynes aftir his possibilite" (*The Epistle of Othea* 12.5-10, emphasis added).

Lydgate's and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres* contains no uses of *shame* and only four uses of *worship*. I surmise that because of the intended audience (in the original text, Aristotle was writing to Alexander; in this translation, Lydgate and Burgh are probably addressing Henry VI), the concept of *worship* is inherent to the crown. The crown is supposed to be invulnerable to outside influences and, thus, to *shame*. Furthermore, for an outsider to either assert that the king needs to gain *worship* or needs to avoid *shame* is rather presumptuous. The king's council members are generally the only individuals who can advise the king regarding *shame* or *worship*.[5] Knights, however, are worthy of instruction by outsiders. But since this text was not intended for the knightly class, it should come as no surprise that these concepts are either not discussed at all (*shame*) or are discussed perfunctorily (*worship*).

Lydgate's and Burgh's four uses of *worship* occur within twenty verses of each other, in sections devoted to "Of the Rightwisnesse of a Kyng and of his Counseil" and "Of a kynges Secretary." Of the four uses, only two directly relate to the text's audience—the king. The first example occurs in verse 315:

> . . . / tak hed to my doctryne
> To haue officers / is profitable to the,
> Thy *worshippe* and profight / for to mayntyne: (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 70.2199-2201, emphasis added)

However, the king's worship is not his own to lose or win; his officers are the ones who validate the worth of the king. The same can be said of the use of *worship* in verse 334; in this case, however, the subject who can reflect upon the king's worship is his secretary:

> Thy hihnesse also / for to enhaunce,
> And thy magnificence / lerne this of me;
> With greet rewardys / doo them avaunce
> Afftir here merytis / and ther degree,
> Which aldayes / besy and wakyng be

> In thy nedys / for in them stant the warysoun [protection]
> Of thy *worshepe* / thy lyf or thy destruccioun. (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 74.2332-38, emphasis added)

In both of these examples, the king's servants are the ones who can reflect upon the king's *worship*. While their actions may reflect upon the king, the king's own *worship* is not immediately threatened; only his own actions can damage his own *worship*.

The other two uses of *worship* relate directly to a king's servants, more specifically, his counselors. Verse 324 identifies that a good counselor should " . . . love *worshepe* / and encresse [growth]" (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 72.2262, emphasis added), while Verse 325 asserts that a good counselor should "Men of *worshepe* / put to reuerence" (*Secrees of old Philisoffres* 72.2270, emphasis added). Since my chapter is dealing specifically with the knight Gareth, whose main goal is to win worship through his actions, rather than with another knight who acts regularly as a counselor to Arthur (such as Pellinore), Lydgate's and Burgh's text is not applicable and I will not include it in this chapter.

Gilbert of the Haye's *The Buke of the Law of Armys* does not use shame and worship very much—shame a total of 9 times and worship a total of 10 times; furthermore, most uses appear in Book 4. In addition, some of the advice provided is not intended for knights but clearly for a certain individual; for example, a situation is posed: " . . . gif the doctouris opynioun be suthe that sais commonly that, gif a man of kirk be assailit, he suld flee out of the felde, and leve the king" (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 143.10-12), and then an answer is provided: "Bot certaynly I say, nay, for he suld understand that he aw to do all that he may gudely but *schame* do; for we say that we may wele and detfully do it that we may do" (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 143.14-17,

emphasis added). However, much of the advice is applicable to both kings or princes and their knights. In fact, much of the same advice appears in this text as appears in Christine's works, which verifies that these ideas about *shame* and *worship* are widespread in scope, not limited to only one country or Order of Knighthood; therefore, even if Malory's *Works* are being read outside of England, the lessons imparted still have meaning.

Malory's Text

Malory's *Works* does more than explore the relationship between the kingship of Arthur and the role of counsel or advice; the text also closely examines the role of the knight—to his king, to his court, and to his title. While there are numerous knights one can examine, I focus on Gareth. *The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney that Was Called Bewmaynes* centers on the young, untried boy who, through numerous adventures, earns the title of knighthood, the respect of his peers, and the admiration of his king.[6] While he certainly does make appearances in Malory's text outside of this specific chapter, he is not the central character to the narrative elsewhere as he is here.[7]

Malory's Gareth is an aspiring young man; he wishes to become part of Arthur's court and to follow in the footsteps of Lancelot, the most famous and worthy knight. While I agree with Elizabeth Pochoda, who claims that "The goal of Gareth's acts is the glorification of Arthur and his Round Table" (*Arthurian Propaganda* 96), I also believe that *The Tale of Gareth* acts in essence as a fictional chivalric manual, showing the step-by-step progress Gareth makes to earn knighthood and become chivalrous.[8] Malory's *Tale of Gareth* is organized around the concepts of *worship* and *shame*; specifically, Gareth's objective is to both gain *worship* and avoid *shame*.[9] Malory uses repetition of

these two words and concepts in tandem with scenes that exemplify chivalric lessons make *The Tale of Gareth* both entertainment and instruction.[10]

The Tale of Gareth

In *The Tale of Gareth*, the word *worship* is used 44 times and *shame* appears 41 times. This concentration and repetition would be noted by the audience. Malory relies upon their highly developed listening skills, with word repetition tying scenes together and furthering his purpose. Specifically, an audience will follow Gareth's individual knightly progress while learning general knowledge, like the different types of worship and the varying pitfalls of shame that any individual must overcome if he is to become a chivalrous knight and worthy of admiration.

The concept of worship is very complex; according to Vinaver, the noun means "honour, glory; praise; repute, standing" (*Works* 1745).[11] All of these meanings are used in *The Tale of Gareth*. Malory focuses on Gareth's winning physical glory through fights with other knights, both unknown (the Black knight, for example) and known (as with Sirs Kay and Lancelot). Gareth also receives verbal praise, as the defeated knights travel to Camelot and share their stories of vanquishment with the court. Vinaver's last definition revolves around one's familial name and occupational reputation. Gareth enters the text unknown and untested; he must earn his reputation. Through trial and error, he wins worship. Then, his familial ties to proven knights like Gawain and to his uncle King Arthur as well as his association with Lancelot, the man who knighted him, give him additional status once his identity is finally revealed.[12]

However, Gareth must do more than just win *worship*; he must also avoid *shame*. Shame is especially destructive and potential pitfalls abound: unworthy behavior can

bring shame, poor judgment can cause shame, and even an act misconstrued or misinterpreted can elicit shame, both from the individual and from those who may witness or hear about the event. Once earned, shame is hard to escape; winning worship can certainly help elevate the individual again, but the taint of shame always remains. As a result, avoiding shame is just as important as winning worship.[13] For Gareth, a young, untried knight at the beginning of his career, this fact is especially important. For Malory's audience, too, such lessons are important. Already well-acquainted with the content of chivalric manuals, *The Tale of Gareth* becomes for these individuals another collection of advice; however, these lessons are conveyed in such a way that they do not only educate but entertain. Gareth, the young unknown, becomes a role model for these men. He earns his worship through his actions, not through his family name, something Malory's audience must have appreciated. Female audience members are not completely left out, however, for some scenes centering on shame and worship relate to them as well, as appears below.

The Tale of Gareth begins with the fair unknown entering the court and engaging in conversation with King Arthur.[14] Right away, the word *worship* is used to set the precedent of behavior. Gareth speaks reverently and humbly, as a young man should to a king.[15] He respectfully addresses his "'moste noble kynge, kynge Arthure'" (*Works* 294.3) and praises the fellowship of the Round Table before making his humble request: "' . . . for this cause I come hydir, to pray you and requyre you to gyff me three gyftys. And they shall nat be unresenablé asked but that ye may *worshypfully* graunte hem me, and to you no grete hurte nother losse'" (*Works* 294.5-8, emphasis added). After Gareth makes his request for a year's worth of food and drink, Arthur, surprised, agrees, but

advises Gareth to reconsider his request, using *worship* twice: "'My fayre son . . . aske bettyr, I counseyle the, for this is but a symple askyng; for myne herte gyvyth me to the gretly, that thou arte com of men of *worshyp*, and gretly my conceyte fayleth me but thou shalt preve a man of ryght grete *worshyp*'" (*Works* 294.17-21, emphasis added). Arthur introduces two different definitions of *worship* here—the importance of family name and history and the glory and praise of earned reputation. Though Gareth is unknown, his physical countenance identifies him as upper-class, as coming from a good family, from "'men of worshyp'." This form of *worship* ties into the second; Arthur can see that the young man before him, tall and strong and confident, will become a man worthy of respect and admiration.

Lancelot echoes Arthur's supposition, chiding Kay for insulting the young man: " . . . 'for I dare ley my hede he shall preve a man of grete *worshyp*'" (*Works* 295.11-120, emphasis added). Kay refuses to retreat, even when Lancelot brings up La Cote Mal Tayle, the other young man mocked by Kay for his appearance. Kay, ironically, uses *worship* to establish the difference between the two young men: "' . . . sir Brunor desyred ever *worshyp*, and this desyryth ever mete and drynke and brotthe'" (*Works* 295.20-21, emphasis added).[16] Kay concludes that Gareth must be from some poor abbey that did not feed him enough and he has come begging to Camelot. Therefore, in Kay's eyes, Gareth's familial worship is non-existent; he is nothing more than an orphan, a beggar. To cement Gareth's 'place' in court, Kay calls him Bewmaynes, meaning "Fair Hands," effectively renaming him, removing any sense of person that Gareth may have continued to hold.[17] Gareth's journey to improve himself in Kay's eyes will be great, for he must not only earn his reputation but a name as well.[18]

Malory then has a second fair unknown enter the court, this time in the form of a damsel who, like Gareth, refuses to give her name, expecting Arthur to help her nonetheless. *Worship* is used twice to cement the similarities between Gareth and Lyonet to Malory's audience. Both times, Lyonet uses *worship* to identify her sister, and thus herself, as worthy: "'Sir . . . I have a lady of grete *worshyp* to my sustir, and she is beseged with a tirraunte, that she may nat oute of hir castell'" (*Works* 296.20-22, emphasis added). When pressed for more information by Arthur, she again uses *worship* but refuses to provide her name: "' . . . as for my ladyes name that shall nat ye know for me as at thys tyme, but I lette you wete she is a lady of grete *worshyp* and of grete londys; and as for that tyrraunte that besegyth her and destroyeth hir londys, he is kallyd the Rede Kn[y]ght of the Rede Laundys'" (*Works* 296.26-30, emphasis added). In a nice piece of irony, Arthur refuses to allow any knights to rescue the unnamed, trapped lady, despite knowing the name of the besieger. This scene is an encapsulation of the 'old' way of doing things in Malory's time—that name and rank is more important at times than skill and worthiness. The exclusionary behavior of King Arthur is about to be threatened by Gareth, who, with great grace and maturity in the face of obvious bias, will prove himself worthier, more *worshipful*, in his behavior with Lyonet than King Arthur and his knights do.[19]

Gareth requests his other two gifts, that he be given the adventure with Lyonet[20] and that Lancelot knight him[21] when Gareth requires it. He is promptly granted both by Arthur.[22] Lyonet reacts angrily, leaving in a huff. Her reaction to being saddled with a "kychyn knave" (*Works* 297.22) not only reveals more of her own familial status but of the class bias that exists in the court. This viewpoint is verified by Lancelot a scene later.

After watching Bewmaynes defeat sir Kay,[23] Lancelot himself crosses swords with Bewmaynes. However, Bewmaynes does such a striking job that Lancelot is impressed and not a little worried. Malory introduces the first uses of *shame* in this book, both coming from Lancelot's point of view.

Lancelot is worried about his own reputation, his own name, as he fights the surprisingly able Bewmaynes. Lancelot is so concerned that " . . . he dred hymself to be *shamed* . . . " (*Works* 299.4, emphasis added) and he actually stops the fight. Bewmaynes complies, but remarks that it felt good to fight Lancelot. Lancelot repeats his reason for ending the fight out loud and validates it with an oath: "' . . . for I promyse you be the fayth of my body I had as muche to do as I myght have to save myself fro you *unshamed*, and therefore have ye no dought of none erthely knyght'" (*Works* 299.11-14, emphasis added). He even is willing to immediately knight Bewmaynes as a worshipful knight; and once Lancelot discovers Bewmaynes's true identity, he is relieved, stating, "' . . . for evir me thought ye sholde be of grete bloode, and that ye cam nat to the courte nother for mete nother drynke'" (*Works* 299.29-31).[24]

Malory provides another lesson about *worship* and *shame* in the next scene. Gareth and Lyonet are traveling along, Lyonet upbraiding Gareth, as is her custom, when a man runs into the scene and asks Gareth for help in rescuing his lord. Gareth reacts as a worthy knight should, wading into the fight and defeating the six attackers.[25] The rescued knight then invites Gareth to his castle, to " . . . *worshypfully* rewarde hym for his good dedis" (*Works* 301.6, emphasis added). Gareth refuses politely, explaining that he follows the lady on an adventure, only coming to the castle when the knight convinces Lyonet to stay the night. Once there, the knight tries to seat Gareth at the same table as

Lyonet, but she refuses. Not surprisingly, "Than the knyght was *ashamed* at hir wordys, and toke [Bewmaynes] up and sette hym at a sydebourde and sate hymself before hym" (*Works* 301.24-26, emphasis added).[26] Malory's audience, upon reading or hearing this scene, should feel shame as well; Lyonet's actions should be seen as offensive, while the host knight's behavior should be seen as admirable. He lowered himself by sitting at a side table, but the nobility of his action actually increases his own and Gareth's worship while lowering Lyonet's; one's familial worship, or status, is becoming less important than one's worshipful reputation, earned through action.

The next day Lyonet and Gareth leave, but Lyonet's attitude toward Gareth has not changed. Though he defeats two knights defending a bridge, Lyonet disputes his victory, claiming mischance rather than Gareth's ability; in fact, she uses *worship* to claim that Gareth will give up soon: "'I sey hit for thyne avayle, for yett mayste thou turne ayen with thy *worshyp*; for and thou folow [me] thou arte but slayne, for I se all that evir thou doste is by mysseadventure and nat by preues of thy hondys'" (*Works* 302.28-31, emphasis added). Such a claim sets up the next scene, when Gareth comes up against his first real threat—the Black Knight. Up until now, Gareth has battled friendly knights (Kay and Lancelot), minor knights (the two guarding the bridge), and brigands (those assaulting the unnamed knight). This knight, the Black Knight, will be a real test for Gareth's worthiness, his worship. In order to establish the importance of this scene, Malory uses repetition of both *worship* and *shame*.

The Black Knight questions Gareth's accompanying Lyonet, using the apparent difference in their social standings: "'Why commyth he in such aray? For hit is *shame* that he beryth you company'" (*Works* 303.16-17, emphasis added). Lyonet asks that the

Black Knight defeat him, since Gareth had only won battles thus far through "myssehappe" (*Works* 303.22). The Black Knight again calls Gareth's status into question, surprised "' . . . that ony man of *worshyp* woll have ado with hym'" (*Works* 303.25-26, emphasis added). Lyonet agrees, claiming that "' . . . for bycause he rydyth with me they wene that he be som man of *worshyp* borne'" (*Works* 303.27-29, emphasis added). The Black Knight then measures the physical form of Gareth and tries to reconcile the seeming disparity: " . . . 'howbehit as ye say that he is no man of *worshyp* borne, he is a full lykly persone, and full lyke to be a stronge man'" (*Works* 303.30-32, emphasis added).[27] He then explains that he will defeat Gareth but only take his horse and harness, "' . . . for hit were *shame* to me to do hym ony more harme'" (*Works* 303.35, emphasis added). In other words, it will lower the knight's status to fight with Gareth because of his standing, and his status will be lowered further if he actually causes him physical harm. Gareth is not a worthy opponent, and no worship can come from their altercation.

Gareth, who has been silent during this whole conversation between Lyonet and the Black Knight, finally speaks, taking offense at the Black Knight's words. He even introduces his own familial background, boasting, "'I am a jantyllman borne, and of more hyghe lynage than thou, and that woll I preve on thy body!'" (*Works* 304.10-12).[28] The Black Knight's baiting has worked; Gareth is more than ready to fight. The battle is over quickly in the narrative sense (Malory only devotes eight lines to it) and the physical sense (the battle takes ninety minutes). Gareth kills the Black Knight, takes his armor, and he and Lyonet continue their journey; despite Gareth's victory, Lyonet continues to

insult his smell and his prowess, again claiming mischance rather than true ability as the reason for Gareth's victory.

Almost immediately the two come across the Green Knight. Lyonet causes problems again by reducing Gareth's triumph to luck or chance. The Green Knight is angered that the Black Knight Perarde died unhappily at the hands of a knave. Gareth's response is swift: "'I defye the,' seyde sir Bewmaynes, 'for I lette the wete, I slew hym knyghtly and *nat shamfully*'" (*Works* 305.19-20, emphasis added). To Gareth, who is actively trying to win worship, the idea that he defeated Perarde falsely or *unworshipfully* is unacceptable.[29] At this point, both men are ready to do battle, the Green Knight for revenge on his brother's death, Gareth to prove his worship yet again.

Lyonet again shouts insults during the battle between these two knights, spurring both men on with the threat of *shame*: "'My lorde the Grene Knyght, why for *shame* stonde ye so longe fyghtynge with that kychyn knave? Alas! hit is *shame* that evir ye were made knyght to se suche a lad to macche you as the wede growyth over the corne'" (*Works* 305.37-306.2, emphasis added). Not surprisingly, her words do have an effect on both men: "Therewith the Grene Knyght was *ashamed*, and therewithall he gaff a grete stroke of myght and clave his shylde thorow. Whan Beawmaynes saw his shylde clovyn asundir he was a lytyll *ashamed* of that stroke and of hir langage" (*Works* 306.3-6, emphasis added). However, Gareth is the better and he defeats the Green Knight, threatening to slay him unless Lyonet spares his life. Gareth has won another battle with a worthy knight and his *worship* has increased exponentially;[30] however, he is still not worshipful enough.

At the Green Knight's castle, Lyonet again refuses to eat at the same table as Gareth; like the knight Gareth had rescued earlier, the Green Knight takes Gareth to a side table and sits with him there. This time, however, the Green Knight holds a conversation with Lyonet regarding Gareth, which reveals to readers Gareth's growing worship, both in his developing reputation and in his occupational abilities. The Green Knight opens the conversation with the observation that Gareth is not worthy of rebuke, for he has provided faithful service to Lyonet and will prove to be of "'full noble blood'" (*Works* 307.22). Lyonet replies disdainfully, introducing the concepts of *shame* and *worship*: "'Fy, fy! hit is *shame* for you to sey hym suche *worshyp*'" (*Works* 307.24-25, emphasis added). The Green Knight immediately responds in kind, "'Truly,' seyde the Grene Knyght, 'hit were *shame* to me to sey hym ony *dysworshyp*, for he hath previd hymself a bettir knyght than I am; and many is the noble knyght that I have mette withall in my dayes, and never or this tyme founde I no knyght his macche'" (*Works* 307.26-30, emphasis added).[31] The knight has realized that this young man is better than he is, that he will prove to be a greater knight than he had ever hoped to be. This admiration results in the Green Knight's placing thirty knights outside Gareth's room to protect him from any harm.[32]

The next day, Gareth and Lyonet leave the Green Knight, who pledges to go to King Arthur's court and yield himself in Bewmaynes's name. Lyonet resumes her carping, again trying to find fault with Gareth's behavior thus far. She makes dire predictions about their next destination, the Pace Perilous, claiming that he has no chance and advising him to run away. Gareth refuses, claiming, "'Damesell . . . who is aferde let hym fle, for hit were *shame* to turne agayne syth I have ryddyn so longe with you'"

(*Works* 308.22-24, emphasis added).[33] Gareth understands that, while he has made great progress thus far, earning worship by defeating numerous powerful knights, he has not yet finished his original adventure.[34] Quitting the adventure is not allowable, and running away out of fear is even more unacceptable.

The lord of the castle, the Red Knight, spies Lyonet and Gareth and immediately goes out to confront them. After Lyonet summarizes their journey thus far, making sure to mention the Black Knight's death and the Green Knight's defeat, the two men begin to battle. After two hours pass, Lyonet uses *worship* to spur on the Red Knight: "'Thynke what *worshyp* hath evermore folowed the! Lette never a kychyn knave endure the so longe as he doth!'" (*Works* 309.29-31, emphasis added). Both men react to her words, with the Red Knight briefly getting the upper hand before Gareth soundly defeats him. Again, Gareth forces Lyonet to plead for mercy for the defeated knight. They all return to the Red Knight's castle, but this time there is no scene in which Lyonet banishes Gareth to a side table. Instead, Malory provides a summary narration of Lyonet's chiding of Gareth and the Red Knight's amazement at such treatment. However, Malory makes sure to note that, like the Green Knight, during the night, the Red Knight " . . . made three score knyghtes to wacche Bewmaynes, that he sholde have no *shame* nother vylony" (*Works* 310.18-20, emphasis added). This repeated detail should provide several lessons to Malory's audience. First, if vanquished in a fight, the loser should welcome the victor into his home. He must also guarantee the safety of his guest, both from vengeance-seekers in his own home and from potential outside dangers. These lessons are subtle: they do not occur during major action scenes in the narrative, but their importance is obvious with Malory's uses of *worship* and/or *shame* to focus one's attention.

As usual, when the two leave the Red Knight's castle the next day, Lyonet begins her harangue about Gareth's mental and physical strength. The two have a *worship*-filled exchange. It begins with Gareth finally making a speech to Lyonet about her awful treatment of him: "'And therefore y pray you, rebuke me no more, and whan ye se me betyn or yoldyn as recreaunte, than may you bydde me go from you *shamefully*, but erste, I let you wete, I woll nat departe from you; for than I were worse than a foole and I wolde departe from you all the whyle that I wynne *worshyp*'" (*Works* 311.2-7, emphasis added). Lyonet does not back down, claiming that the next knight they encounter will put Gareth in his proper place: " . . . 'ryght sone shall mete the a knyght that shall pay the all thy wagys, for he is the moste man of *worshyp* of the worlde excepte kyng Arthure'" (*Works* 311.8-10, emphasis added). This is a shocking claim, since, to most individuals in the text and to most of Malory's audience, Lancelot is the most worshipful man—in blood, status, and ability—next to Arthur. Furthermore, this knight is not even the object of the original quest; he is just another test in Gareth's road to worship.

However, Gareth shows no concern over Lyonet's boast; his response is simply, "'I woll well,' seyde Bewmaynes, 'the more he is of *worshyp* the more shall be my *worshyp* to have ado with hym'" (*Works* 311.11-13, emphasis added). After Lyonet describes the scene before them, pointing out Sir Persaunte's numerous knights and fighting men and entreats Gareth again to flee, she then begins to speak earnestly, not deridingly, about Gareth's safety. Gareth stoutly refuses to turn away, claiming matter-of-factly, "' . . . sytthen I am com so nye this knyght I woll preve his myght or I departe frome hym, and ellis I shall be *shamed* and I now withdrawe fro hym'" (*Works* 312.22-25, emphasis added).[35]

With this vow from Gareth, Lyonet finally concedes that Gareth's worship, in all its forms, is strong enough now to take on this knight, as well as the knight who is holding her sister captive. Her apology begins with an acknowledgment of Gareth's worshipful lineage and of her own uncalled-for treatment: " . . . 'what maner a man ye be, for hit may never be other but that ye be com of jantyll bloode, for so fowle and *shamfully* dud never woman revyle a knyght as I have done you, and ever curtsysly ye have suffryde me, and that com never but of jantyll bloode'" (*Works* 312.29-34, emphasis added). Gareth acknowledges her behavior and his responses, but claims that her words strengthened him so he will be able to overcome the knight at the end of their adventure, the knight who began this whole journey. He then goes into battle with Sir Persaunte, the Blue Knight, and soundly defeats him. After welcoming Gareth and Lyonet into his home, Persaunte waits until evening and sends his daughter to Gareth's room. This scene introduces another element of *worship* to Malory's audience. While so far Gareth has been winning worship through physical prowess and winning Lyonet's respect with his infinite patience, now his *worship* is about to be tested by feminine beauty.

While critics differ on the reasoning behind Persaunte's actions, Gareth's reaction to her when she appears in his bed is both amusing and educational. After ascertaining her identity and her sexual status, Gareth responds to her overtures with conviction: "'God deffende me . . . than that ever I sholde defoyle you to do sir Persuante such a *shame*! Therefore I pray you, fayre damesell, aryse oute of this bedde, other ellys I woll'" (*Works* 315.9-12, emphasis added). Undaunted, the maiden then announces that it was her father who sent her to Gareth in the first place. Gareth reacts emotionally: "'Alas . . . I were a *shamefull* knyght and I wolde do youre fadir ony *dysworshyp*'"

(*Works* 315.15-16, emphasis added). However, he kisses her before he sends her away. This scene is important for two reasons: first, it sets up Gareth's completely different reaction to Lyones a few scenes later, but second, and perhaps more importantly, it establishes a new angle to the *shame*/*worship* lessons conveyed thus far. Before now, most of Gareth's lessons have involved physical prowess and mental strength. He has had to put up with disparaging comments about his origins and social standing that question his worthiness, his worshipfulness, as a knight, but he has also had to prove his abilities physically. Though he soundly defeated Kay and came to a draw with Lancelot, these two knights were not real threats. Kay is simply not a very good knight; Lancelot, though the best knight living, knew he was getting into a battle with a young, untried individual and, though pleasantly surprised, did not want either of them to come to physical harm. However, Gareth's victories over the Black, Green, Red, and Blue knights were hard-earned and hard-won. Now that he is physically and mentally prepared to take on his original foe, the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Gareth must earn *worship* of a different sort, the worship of knightly action outside of battle. Thus, by refusing Persaunte's daughter swiftly yet gently, Gareth has proven himself even more worshipful. He has avoided certain shame by not consorting with her and has revealed his gentle nature in the meantime.[36]

Before Gareth and Lyonet leave Persaunte's castle, a revealing of names takes place. Though Gareth had identified himself to Lancelot, he has informed neither Lyonet nor anyone else of his true name. Now, however, Persaunte shares information about the Red Knight of the Red Land after confirming Lyonet's identity. She asks him to knight Bewmaynes, who promptly reveals that he has been knighted already, and by Sir

Lancelot. Persaunte is suitably impressed, since a knight's worth, his *worship*, can also be tied to the worth of the man who knighted him. Therefore, Lancelot's worship has increased Gareth's. Only after revealing who knighted him does Gareth provide his true name. And by doing so, Gareth earns even more respect from his host, for whom one has been knighted by is almost as important as one's own abilities. The fact that Lancelot had knighted one so obviously young and relatively untried shows his great faith in Gareth. And such faith by Lancelot makes it easier for others to accept Gareth as well.

The narrative then switches to the trapped Lyones, a character who still does not know Gareth's identity. His *worship*, his knightly prowess, however, is not unknown, for Lyones' dwarf carefully details all of Gareth's exploits thus far. The dwarf, who knows Gareth's real name, does not reveal it to Lyones, only telling her he "' . . . was kynges son of Orkeney . . . '" (*Works* 317.20). The fact that Gareth's reputation has preceded him is important. He is drawing near the purpose of his adventure, the Red Knight of the Red Lands, who believes that only Lancelot, Tristram, Lamerok, or Gawain are noteworthy opponents. The Red Knight also wants to know Gareth's identity, but Lyones's dwarf again refuses to reveal it. Another important scene then unfolds, as the concept of *shame* is explored by various characters.

First, the Red Knight vows that Gareth will suffer a humiliating death: "'I care nat . . . whatsomevir he be, for I shall sone delyver hym, and yf I overmaccche hym he shall have a *shamfull* deth as many othir have had'" (*Works* 319.22-24, emphasis added). Gareth has been threatened with shameful death before, but Malory's audience will soon see how dangerous the Red Knight is. Lyones's dwarf responds and provides a small lesson in knightly, thus worshipful, behavior: "'That were pyté,' seyde the dwarff, 'and

hit is pyté that ye make suche *shamfull* warre uppon noble knyghtes'" (*Works* 319.25-26, emphasis added). The fact that the Red Knight is waiting specifically for the best knights in the world, has basically laid a trap for them, is deplorable and, thus, unknightly.

However, the sinfulness of the Red Knight's trap is exacerbated by his treatment of those other knights who have come up against him and lost. Malory uses the word *shame* to convey the true horror of what Gareth sees: "And whan they com nere the sege sir Bewmaynes aspyed on grete trees, as he rode, how there hynge full goodly armed knyghtes by the necke, and their shyldis about their neckys with their swerdis and gylte sporys uppon their helys. And so there hynge nyghe a fourty knyghtes *shamfully* with full ryche armys" (*Works* 319.34-320.2, emphasis added). Lyonet immediately tries to strengthen Gareth's resolve by evoking potential *shame*:

> 'Fayre sir . . . abate nat youre chere for all this syght, for ye muste corrage youreself, other ellys ye bene all shente. For all these knyghtes com hydir to this sege to rescow my sistir dame Lyones, and whan the Rede Knyght of the Rede Launde had overcom hem he put them to this *shamefull* deth withoute mercy and pyté. And in the same wyse he woll serve you but yf ye quyte you the bettir.' (*Works* 320.4-10, emphasis added)

Gareth is horrified by Lyonet's description of the Red Knight's actions. However, she continues to emphasize just what a shameful individual the knight is, showing the dichotomy between worshipful knightly virtues and the knight's own behavior: " . . . 'for trust nat, in hym is no curtesy, but all goth to the deth other *shamfull* mourthur. And that is pyté,' seyde the damesell, 'for he is a full lykly man and a noble knyght of proues, and a lorde of grete londis and of grete possessions'" (*Works* 320.15-19, emphasis added). Such description demonstrates to Malory's audience that one's monetary worth, his physical prowess, his high birth, does not necessarily mean that he is a worshipful man. Shameful behavior can undo any and all *worship* earned or inherited.[37] Furthermore, if

one must fight such a wicked individual, sometimes one must be prepared for trickery in the battle, for an unfair fight, as the shameful knight is no longer bound by the rules of honor, of worshipful knighthood.

Gareth confirms this realization, stating, "'Truly . . . he may be well a good knyght, but he usyth *shamefull* customys, and hit is mervayle that he enduryth so longe, that none of the noble knyghtes of my lorde Arthurs have nat dalte with hym'" (*Works* 320.20-23, emphasis added).[38] As he prepares to do battle with the Red Knight by blowing the horn that calls him forth, Lyonet encourages him to wait until noon, for the Red Knight's strength is at its highest in the morning. Gareth refuses, stating emphatically, "'A! fy for *shame*, fayre damesell! Sey ye nevir so more to me, for and he were as good a knyght as ever was ony I shall never fayle hym in his moste myght, for other I woll wynne *worshyp worshypfully* othir dye knyghtly in the felde'" (*Works* 321.4-8, emphasis added).[39] Gareth's own worship increases as a result of this stance; though he could, and was encouraged to, make the battle easier for himself, Gareth understands that such action threatens one's worship—taking the easier path now, after working so diligently thus far, could only have negative repercussions.[40]

The two men come face to face, trading words before they cross swords. Gareth makes sure to censure the Red Knight for his unknightly behavior, using *shame* three times in one speech:

> 'Fy for *shame*!' seyde Bewmaynes, 'that ever thou sholdyst sey so or do so evyll, for in that thou *shamest* thyself and all knyghthode, and thou mayste be sure there woll no lady love the that knowyth the and thy wykked customs. And now thou wenyste that the syght of tho honged knyghtes shulde feare me? Nay, truly, nat so! That *shamefull* syght cawsyth me to have courrage and hardynesse ayenst th[e] muche more than I wolde have agaynste the and thou were a well-ruled knyght.' (*Works* 322.13-21, emphasis added)

The Red Knight of the Red Lands does not try to justify his actions; he just brushes off Gareth's comments and orders him to make ready.

This battle, unlike all the ones that have come before, takes much longer and takes up much more narrative space. However, like the battles that came before, it is Lyonet's voice that drives Gareth to make the final assault and defeat his opponent. Instead of mocking or insulting Gareth this time, however, Lyonet calls Gareth's attention to Lyones. Gareth no longer needs Lyonet's negative conditioning in order to win worship; he can see what, or more specifically whom, he is fighting for, and that sight is motivation enough. After Gareth defeats the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Malory again uses repetition to impress upon his audience the shamefulness of the knight's behavior.[41] Malory writes, "Than sir Bewmaynes bethought hym on his knyghtes that he had made to be honged *shamfully*, and than he seyde, 'I may nat with my *worship* to save thy lyff for the *shamefull* de[the]s that thou haste caused many full good knyghtes to dye'" (*Works* 324.29-31, emphasis added). Gareth is bound by the knightly code to punish the Red Knight; letting him go free would damage his own reputation, his own standing, as one of Arthur's knights. The Red Knight understands Gareth's position, so he respectfully asks to explain his actions: "'Sir . . . holde youre hande and ye shall knowe the causis why I putte hem to so *shamefull* a deth'" (*Works* 324.32-33, emphasis added).

Gareth listens to the Red Knight's excuse—that his lady had desired the death of Lancelot or Gawain, one of whom had killed her kinsman—and then he listens to the appeals by many lords and ladies to save the knight's life. Gareth then passes his judgment: " . . . 'wete you well I am full loth to sle this knyght, neverthelesse he hath done passynge ylle and *shamefully*. But insomuche all that he dud was at a ladyes

requeste I blame hym the lesse, and so for your sake I woll relece hym . . . '" (*Works* 325.22-26, emphasis added), though the knight must perform numerous acts of penitence. Such rational behavior furthers Gareth's *worship* even more; by listening to all sides before making his decision, Gareth has now proven himself a trustworthy arbitrator, another important skill of a worshipful knight.

With this pronouncement, Gareth believes that he will finally get to see Lyonet's sister. He rides to the castle, but the entrance is protected by armed men. Lyones, in a window above, speaks to Gareth, telling him his journey is not yet complete. He may have freed the lady, but he has not yet won her. She twice refers to Gareth's *worship*. First, she does so matter-of-factly: "'Go thy way, sir Bewmaynes, for as yet thou shalt nat have holy my love unto the tyme that thou be called one of the numbir of the worthy knyghtes. And therefore go and laboure in *worshyp* this twelve-monthe, and than ye shall hyre newe tydyngis'" (*Works* 327.7-11, emphasis added). Not surprisingly, Gareth is taken aback, claiming he has earned her thanks and "'bought [her] love'" (*Works* 327.16). Lyones does not falter, however. She understands that one adventure does not a knight make; Gareth may have battled numerous knights to get to Lyones, but he has still only succeeded on one quest. To be a truly worthy, worshipful knight, on a par with individuals like Lamerok and Lancelot, Gareth must continue to prove himself.[42] Therefore, she encourages him and assures him her love is true: "' . . . therefore go on youre way and loke that ye be of good comforte, for all shall be for your *worshyp* and for the best; and, pardé, a twelve-monthe woll sone be done'" (*Works* 327.22-25, emphasis added). To prevent further discussion, Lyones simply disappears from the window, and Gareth leaves the castle lamenting.[43]

Lyones quickly regrets sending Gareth away, however, so she has her brother steal Gareth's dwarf. With little prompting, the dwarf reveals Gareth's true identity. When Gareth comes to the rescue, Gringamour apologizes and welcomes Gareth as his guest. A disguised Lyones meets Gareth and he is snared by her beauty. Gringamour sees how the two react to each other, and, after confirming Lyones's feelings, goes to Gareth, stating, "'Sir, make ye good chere, for ye shall have none other cause, for this lady my sistir is youres at all tymes, hir *worshyp* saved, for wete you well she lovyth you as well as ye do hir and bettir, yf bettir may be'" (*Works* 332.7-10, emphasis added). In this instance, *worship* is used to denote Lyones's chastity,[44] but Gringamour continues to speak and uses *worship* again, but with a different connotation: "'Uppon my *worshyp* . . . trust unto my promyse'" (*Works* 332.13-14, emphasis added). Gringamour is not only citing his own worship, his own name and position, to validate Lyones's chastity, but he is also ensuring through his own worship that Lyones's feelings for him are true and thus her behavior more acceptable.

Unfortunately, once Lyones and Gareth are alone together, their individual worship is threatened by lust and love. They make a pledge to each other and plan to "abate their lustys secretly" (*Works* 332.37-333.1).[45] However, since their pledge has not been recognized either by the Church or by Lyones's guardian, their physical union cannot be allowed to occur.[46] Lyonet realizes this fact: that the couple's physical fulfilling of their love would result in the loss of *worship* for both of them. Having overheard the couple's plan to meet together later, "Wherefore the damesell Lyonett was a lytyll dysplesed; and she thought hir sister dame Lyonesse was a lytyll overhasty that she myght nat abyde hir tyme of maryage, and for savyng of hir *worshyp* she thought to

abate their hoote lustis" (*Works* 333.6-10, emphasis added).[47] In order to protect both individuals, for, as Karen Cherewatuk states, " . . . this right [to choose each other] must be checked by female chastity and familial supervision of the couple" ("Pledging Troth in Malory's 'Tale of Sir Gareth'" 21), Lyonet sends a knight to interrupt them. In doing so, the knight stabs Gareth in his thigh. Gareth is wounded and, more importantly, visibly marked for his *shameful* behavior.[48] In the ensuing chaos, as Gringamour comes down and the siblings discuss the event, the words *shame* and *worship* are used to impart the lesson.

Malory, through these speeches, introduces varying levels of *shame*, not only to further the narrative but possibly to open discussion with his audience members. The first level is intimated by Gringamour, who, " . . . whan he saw sir Gareth so *shamfully* wounded he was sore dyspleased and seyde, 'I am *shamed* that this noble knyght is thus dishonoured'" (*Works* 334.5-7, emphasis added).[49] Gringamour's worship has suffered, since a guest in his castle has been attacked and wounded. As a host, he is responsible for all those within his castle; they are under his protection, and any shame that they receive is also received upon the host. He asks Lyones how Gareth had become injured, and she is sure to clear her own name (as well as Gareth's) with her response: "'Brothir . . . I can nat telle you, for hit was nat done by me nother be myne assente, for he is my lorde and I am his, and he muste be myne husbonde. Therefore, brothir, I woll that ye wete I *shame nat* to be with hym nor to do hym all the plesure that I can'" (*Works* 334.10-14, emphasis added). Gareth had not attacked her and caused her to wound him. Nor had she lured Gareth into a trap. The mystery is solved as all gathered watch Lyonet heal the interfering knight, reattaching his severed head to his body. When Gareth

realizes that it has been Lyonet who has put him in danger, he is confused and wants an explanation. Lyonet feels no shame for her actions and defends herself thus: "'My lorde sir Gareth . . . all that I have done I woll avowe hit, and all shall be for your *worshyp* and us all'" (*Works* 334.32-34, emphasis added).[50]

As time passes, Gareth is healed of his wound. And while Cherewatuk believes that " . . . the narrator forgives the eager couple by virtue of their youth and naivete . . . [and that] Malory thus disposes the audience to a sympathetic view of actions a 'lytel overhasty'" ("Pledging Troth in Malory's 'Tale of Gareth'" 31), I believe Malory's intent was more complex. Yes, the audience was likely to have been amused by this scene and to have felt sorry for the thwarted couple; however, they should also have realized how close Gareth came to losing the *worship* he had struggled so carefully to develop. To clarify his objective, Malory has Gareth, who has not yet learned how to balance *worship* and love, make the same mistake again. Lyones, too, has not yet realized how dangerous their behavior is in terms of worship, for the two make plans again to meet in Gareth's bed. Better prepared this time, Gareth has his armor and sword close at hand when the enchanted knight interrupts the couple's pleasure.[51] He again cuts off the knight's head, but this time he cuts the head into a hundred pieces and scatters them outside the castle. Unfortunately, however, his old thigh wound reopens—again acting as a symbolic reminder of Gareth's shameful behavior. Lyonet repairs the knight a second time and reminds Gareth that "' . . . all that I have done shall be to your *worshyp* and to us all'" (*Works* 336.2-3, emphasis added). Malory does not have Gareth heal quickly this time; instead, he immediately shifts the audience's attention by turning the narrative to Arthur's court. Therefore, Gareth has time to get his lust under control, to

allow Lyonet's lesson to sink in. However, his *worship* is still the center of attention: in Carlyon, the knights Gareth vanquished arrive and share their stories with the court.

The Green, Red, and Blue knights all pledge their fealty to Arthur and tell him how Bewmaynes has overcome them.[52] Arthur's response is emotional: "'Here he was with me a twelve-monthe and poorely and *shamefully* he was fostred. And sir Kay i[n] scorne named hym Bewmaynes'" (*Works* 336.23-25, emphasis added). Though Arthur has fulfilled Bewmaynes's humble request, he now realizes that in doing so he has damaged his own reputation, for allowing such a worthy knight to be housed so far beneath his station. This realization is furthered as the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Sir Ironside, enters court with his 500 knights and yields to Arthur in Bewmaynes's name. Arthur regains his composure and uses *worship* to praise Gareth and cement his new relationship with Sir Ironside: " . . . 'I am muche beholdyng unto that knyght that hath so put his body in devoure to *worshyp* me and my courte. And as to the, sir Ironsyde, that is called the Rede Knyght of the Rede Laundys, thou arte called a perelouse knyght, and yf thou wolte holde of me I shall *worshyp* the and make the knyght of the Table Rounde, but than thou muste be no man-murtherer'" (*Works* 337.15-21, emphasis added). He acknowledges Gareth's bravery and his worship in serving Arthur, but he also welcomes Ironside into the court with no prejudice, pledging his own worship and loyalty to Ironside if he does the same.

Ironside does not simply accept Arthur's pledge but fulfills his promise to Gareth to seek forgiveness. He explains, "'Sir, as to that, I have made my promyse unto sir Bewmaynes never-more to use such customs, for all the *shamefull* customs that I used I ded hit at the requeste of a lady that I loved'" (*Works* 337.22-25, emphasis added). He

then asks forgiveness of Lancelot and Gawain, the two knights he had originally wanted to defeat. They accept his apology and are amazed at " . . . the *worshyp* that the Rede Knyght of the Rede Laundys and sir Persuante and his bretherne seyde by [Bewmaynes] . . . " (*Works* 338.4-5, emphasis added). As Larry D. Benson notes in *Malory's* Morte Darthur, it is only "When the last of the captives surrenders to Arthur and the whole Dame Lyones adventure is successfully ended, [that] the court can now know who Beaumains is" (104).

Having Malory reiterate the worship that Gareth has earned through the retelling and praise of his exploits sets up the next element of worship introduced when his mother enters the hall. Larry D. Benson asserts that "Usually the mother appears at the end [of a fair unknown story] to reveal the father and son to one another. Here the mother's appearance is part of a series of continuing revelations of Gareth's name, with each revelation marking the end of an important stage of the action as a kind of signal that one set of tests had been successfully passed and that the hero is ready for the next" (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 101-02). Morgause first calls her brother to task for his treatment of Gareth: "'Where have ye done my yonge son, sir Gareth? For he was here amongyst you a twelve-monthe, and ye made a kychyn knave of hym, the whyche is *shame* to you all!'" (*Works* 339.6-8, emphasis added). Despite Gawain's excuse that he did not recognize his brother and Arthur's contriteness and admiration of Gareth, " . . . 'now me repentys, but, thanked be God, he is previd a *worshypfull* knyght as ony that is now lyvyng of his yerys . . . '" (*Works* 339.12-14, emphasis added), Gareth's mother continues to criticize Arthur's behavior. She denounces them all again: "'A, brothir! . . . ye dud yourself grete

shame whan ye amongyst you kepte my son in the kychyn and fedde hym lyke an hogge'" (*Works* 339.16-18, emphasis added).

Arthur, in order to regain his worship and reduce the shame of his and his court's behavior, tries explaining himself again in more detail, but Gareth's mother immediately focuses on Arthur's description of her son's entrance: "'Sir,' seyde the quene of Orkenay unto kynge Arthure her brother, 'wete you well that I sente hym unto you ryght well armed and horsed and *worshypfully* besene of his body, and golde and sylver plenté to spende'" (*Works* 340.3-6, emphasis added). Arthur concedes that she may be correct, but Gareth only revealed his riches *after* he had taken Lyonet's adventure and "'Than we demed all that he was com of men of *worshyp*'" (*Works* 340.12-13, emphasis added).[53] Morgause relents, but then wonders why Kay had acted so poorly toward Gareth. Arthur finally calls an end to his sister's complaints, announcing, "'Sister . . . lat this langage now be stylle, and by the grace of God he shall be founde and he be within this seven realmys. And lette all this passe and be myrry, for he is proved to [be] a man of *worshyp*, and that is my joy'" (*Works* 340.22-25, emphasis added). Arthur's pronouncement of Gareth's worth, of his worship, includes all the definitions of the concept of worship. He is proven to be of good blood, he has proven himself physically capable, and he has earned an excellent reputation both outside Arthur's court and within it. In Arthur's mind, Gareth is now a knight worthy of inclusion into Camelot.[54]

In order to entice Gareth back, Lancelot and Bawdin convince Arthur to send for Lyones. Before she goes, Gareth asks that she not reveal his whereabouts. She should also ask that a tournament be organized, with the winner receiving Lyones's hand in marriage. Arthur agrees and Lyones returns to her castle on the Isle of Avalon. Gareth

laments that he will not be able to fight, but Lyonet assures him that he will be healed within fifteen days. Now that Gareth's mind is no longer focused on bedding Lyones but on again winning *worship*, Lyonet no longer withholds treatment of Gareth's wound. He is healed quickly and prepares himself for the tournament.[55] He first verifies that knights like Sir Ironside and Persaunte will side with him during the tournament. He then warns them that they will need more knights to go up against Arthur. To Gareth's advice, Persaunte replies, "'Ye sey well . . . and *worshypfully*'" (*Works* 343.9, emphasis added). Malory then moves the narrative away from worship, providing extensive lists of the knights who come to the tournament and for whom they fight. *Worship* and *shame* are given no more room for discussion; lessons are suspended as the individual battles commence.[56]

Malory only provides one more scene in which the repetition of *worship* occurs. Gareth has proven himself worthy in various ways. He has earned the respect of Arthur and his knights, the love of Lyones, and the title of knight. However, there is one more trial that he must pass; he must take on one of his brothers. Larry D. Benson explains that " . . . Gareth has yet to prove himself in the physical presence of Arthur and, most important, of Gawain. The identity theme remains incomplete until Gareth meets and fights to a draw a member of his own family" (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 104).[57] The challenge occurs when Gareth and Gawain meet and begin to fight without exchanging words. They fight valiantly for two hours until Lyonet comes along and ends the fight, calling, "'Sir Gawayne! leve thy fyghtynge with thy brothir, sir Gareth!'" (*Works* 357.8-9). Gawain is the first to act, throwing away his sword and shield and running to embrace Gareth. The two praise each other, with Gawain repeating *worship* three times:

" . . . 'I ought of ryght to *worshyp* you, and ye were nat my brother, for ye have *worshipte* kynge Arthure and all his courte, for ye have sent mo *worshypfull* knyghtes this twelve-monthe than fyve the beste of the Rounde Table hath done excepte sir Launcelot'" (*Works* 357.23-28, emphasis added). Such a comparison is important; Gawain does not compare Gareth to himself or another relative. Instead, Gawain equates Gareth in ability to Lancelot, the best knight in the world and the man who knighted Gareth. Gareth has aspired to be something better than his brother, and he has succeeded. In fact, Malory makes sure to note that as Gareth is returning to Arthur's court and is reunited with Lancelot, "Lorde, the grete chere that sir Launcelot made of sir Gareth and he of hym! For there was no knyght that sir Gareth loved so well as he dud sir Launcelot; and ever for the moste party he wolde ever be in sir Launcelottis company" (*Works* 360.28-31).[58]

To further illustrate the gulf between Gareth and his family, Malory's next narrative detail is especially important: "For evir aftir sir Gareth had aspyed sir Gawaynes conducions, he wythdrewe hymself fro his brother sir Gawaynes felyshyp, for he was evir vengeable, and where he hated he wolde be avenged with murther: and that hated sir Gareth" (*Works* 360.32-36). Though Gawain is family, the oldest brother and thus the strongest voice, Gareth plainly aligns himself with his king and his king's best knight. Arthur may be Gareth's uncle, but first and foremost he is Gareth's king. Unlike Gawain, Gareth does not use his familial connection to better his position; he relies on his earned *worship*. And in order to keep his *worship*, he must avoid the *shame* associated with Gawain's unknightly actions. To reinforce the separation, Malory does not mention Gawain again in *The Tale of Gareth*. Though there are only 78 lines left in the tale, it cannot be mere oversight; the book ends with Gareth's wedding,[59] a three-day celebratory

joust, and the marriages of Gaheris and Aggravayne, but Gawain is conspicuously absent. He wins no renown at the joust (in fact, he is not even present). The first day goes to Lamerok, the second day to Tristram, the third day to Lancelot. Gawain eventually will help kill Lamerok and thus lose the friendship and respect of Tristram, and he will wage war against Lancelot. Gareth can only improve his status by avoiding his brother.

Conclusion

For Malory's audience, Gareth's rise from lowly kitchen knave to admirable knight must have been very encouraging indeed.[60] While none has to rise as high as Gareth had to, the knowledge imparted through Gareth's story can help those members of the gentry wishing to improve their positions. As Larry D. Benson observes, "Probably Malory's early readers found Gareth's more modest form of knighthood the most congenial of all. Riches, a noble wife, and a mighty retinue of the sort so necessary to the great households of Malory's time are an almost possible dream for fifteenth-century gentlemen who could never hope to see the Grail or love a Guenevere" (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 108). But the lessons laid out in this text apply not only to gentry but to nobility as well. Joseph R. Ruff states that "The 'Tale of Sir Gareth' shows what might be accomplished by a man of high lineage who followed the precepts of knighthood with fortitude, humility, and loyalty" ("Malory's Gareth and Fifteenth-Century Chivalry" 111).[61] By the end of this chapter, Arthur is at his highest status; and, with individuals like Gareth pledging their fealty, his court is at its highest status as well.

However, all is not right with Arthur's world; the ending of *The Tale of Sir Gareth*, though overwhelmingly positive, still introduces the flaw that will in the end destroy Arthur and his world. Gareth has separated himself from his brothers, most

specifically Gawain, for his actions have proven to be unknightly. Gareth's brothers, with their refusal to let go of blood feuds and their insistence on acting secretly against others in the court, will bring about the end of Camelot. How these knights fit into the court, interact with others within the court, will be examined in the next chapter.

Notes

[1]Also created were " . . . the Annunciation in 1392, [and] the Golden Fleece in 1429" (Morton 21).

[2]One such individual was Sir John Howard, of Suffolk, who was "Knighted after the battle of Towton, [and] he became the first Yorkist sheriff of Norfolk on 6 March 1461, and in July was appointed to the privileged position of king's carver, with a salary of £40 a year, as well as being made constable of Norwich and Colchester Castles . . . " (Ross, *Edward IV* 324).

[3]In fact, Lynn S. Martin tries to establish Richard Beauchamp's life and exploits as being the model for Malory's Gareth. While I disagree with her premise, her description of Beauchamp's three-day tournament includes some elements that may seem familiar to readers of Malory. Whether a literary connection exists or not, Beauchamp's insistence on living the chivalric life must have been seen as admirable and replicable. According to Martin, "Nearly a fortnight before Christmas . . . he had a pavilion set up in the *parclos* of Guines, and issued three challenges for jousts to knights of the realm of France born gentlemen of name and arms without reproach, who were assured that they would find an English knight born gentleman of name and of arms without reproach ready to joust with them" ("Was Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, the Model for Sir Gareth?" 519). He then met with a Red knight, a White knight, and a Black knight (obviously, knights in disguise), on three successive days and defeated them all.

Furthermore, as Lin Yiu describes, this *pas d'armes* fulfilled many of the expectations of chivalric literature:

> The apparatus of the Guînes *pas d'armes* was in keeping with the genre: the deployment of disguise, the pavilion set up in the field, the insistence that the challengers be of noble birth, the painted shields that the challengers were required to touch, the elaborate terms of combat under which each match was conducted. The *pas d'armes* was probably the type of hastilude most closely associated with literary romance, and often more spectacle than military contest.
>
> The Guînes event was, then, a deliberate appeal to a specific literary genre, as well as to a tourneying genre. ("Richard Beauchamp and the Uses of Romance" 276)

[4]*Honor* and *worthiness* seem to be more the words of focus in this text. However, while these words can be considered synonyms to *worship*, I have chosen not to examine their uses in Christine's text; instead, I will continue to focus on uses of the words *shame* and *worship*.

[5]Otherwise, the person's assertions could be interpreted as treasonous for questioning the king's abilities or wisdom.

[6]Terence McCarthy observes, perhaps rightly, that

> Gareth is not a hero we are expecting to find a whole book devoted to. In Malory there is a triumvirate of knightly achievement regularly referred to as a touchstone of excellence, and Gareth is not one: Lancelot, Tristram and Lamorak. Malory devotes whole books to Lancelot and Tristram; in all logic we might have expected a book of Lamorak, but there is not one. Instead, surprisingly, there is a whole book for Gareth. (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 27)

If one of Malory's goals with the *Works* is to educate as well as entertain, Gareth becomes a logical focus: he is trying to find his place in the Arthurian court, like some in Malory's audience who are trying to find their place in Edward's court. These people can never dream of being a Lancelot (if they even should), so Gareth is a safer and more reliable character to which to aspire.

[7]Some might say that other knights like Tristram or Lancelot are much more worthy of study than Gareth, whose appearances are much fewer than these two knights. I agree that these two knights are much more complex and that Malory gives these two men much more physical room in the text; however, their portrayal is *so* complex that an entire study could be devoted to each. Since my focus is on the entity of king, knight, and court, I have decided to concentrate on the more compact, focused portrayal of Gareth. Furthermore, since my exploration centers on word concentration, in this case *shame* and *worship*, I believe the impact of Malory's word usage is much more apparent in this compact chapter than if I were to examine Lancelot, whose actions are spread throughout the entire *Works*. Additionally, as Terence McCarthy notes in *An Introduction to Malory*, "Even Gareth is given a longer book than Lancelot" (148).

[8]Larry D. Benson agrees, stating in *Malory's* Morte Darthur, "Even Malory's Arthurian tales, more fantastic than many original fifteenth-century romances, reflect the real chivalry of the time, heightened and idealized but based firmly enough on reality that the gentlemen for whom Malory wrote could recognize the contours and many of the actual details of the chivalric life of their own day" (139). And though Malory's *Works* is not designated as a novel, it still fulfills one of Bakhtin's goals, that " . . . it is the novel's special relationship with extraliterary genres, with the genres of everyday life and with ideological genres" (33), that makes it so powerful. In this case, *The Works*, especially the section entitled *The Tale of Sir Gareth*, clearly connects to the educational chivalric manuals and thus to the reality inhabited by Malory's audience (and Malory himself).

[9]He is, in effect, fulfilling the Pentecostal Oath that Malory established in "The Wedding of King Arthur," which includes the following declarations:

> . . . never to do outerage nothir mourthir, and allwayes to fle treson, and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon payne of forfiture [of their] worship and lordship of kynge Arthure for evirmore; and allwayes

> to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes [socour:] strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no worldis goodis. (*Works* 120.17-24)

As Terence McCarthy notes in *An Introduction to Malory*, "Failure to follow the code results in the loss of one's honour and, even worse, of one's membership of the group" (73). However, following this oath in practice is difficult. Most knights fail in some way or another. Maureen Fries, in "Tragic Pattern in Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Medieval Narrative as Literary Myth," notes that " . . . instability in maintaining the Pentecostal code appears in Gawain and his brethren, with the exception of Gareth, depicted as Lancelot's best friend and imitator" (88). According to Wilfred L. Guerin, in "The Tale of Gareth': The Chivalric Flowering," Malory intended *The Tale of Gareth* to be the oath's "clearest manifestation," for "Once the rise of [Arthur's newly organized] society is sufficiently clear, Malory is ready to show the arrival of young Gareth . . . to exemplify the spirit and the letter of the oath . . . " (108).

[10]According to Elizabeth Edwards, in *The Genesis of Narrative*, "'Gareth' is 'about' its verbal realization, 'about' words and style, as much as anything" (46). This is another main reason why I chose to examine this work as opposed to "Alexander the Orphan" or *A Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake*.

[11]Terence McCarthy, in *Reading the* Morte Darthur, reiterates: "The word 'worship' these days has predominantly religious overtones; for Malory it is an essential part of this world. He is not interested in the contrast innocence/guilt in reference to another world, but in the contrast honour/shame in reference to this world" (94).

[12]Stephen J. Miko asserts that "Certain other words, like 'mercy' and 'worship' seem borrowed from religion, by a similar process of abstraction. They tend to lose their specific religious content and become terms of sanction for knights' behaviour, which has almost invariably to do, of course, with fighting" ("Malory and the Chivalric Order" 213). I disagree with Miko's point; the religious connotation of *worship*, though present in Malory's day, is much more fundamental to the modern definition. As I hope to prove with this chapter, Gareth must earn worship in *more* than just his physical prowess, his ability to fight. I do not think that Malory intended for a concept like *worship* to be understood so simply. I do, however, agree with another of Miko's points, that a word's " . . . repeated use gives them a content based on the psychological realities they reflect" (213).

[13]Terence McCarthy notes that " . . . a knight must not tolerate shame. It contradicts his whole existence as a knight; it contradicts knighthood itself. Sin can blacken the soul, but the blackest soul can find forgiveness; shame can destroy the realm for a knight and knighthood without honour cease to exist" (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 89).

[14]Hyonjin Kim claims that "Malory's frequent recourse to the Fair Unknown motif, which presupposes the presence of an untested stranger in one way or another, is most likely a reaction to such social mobility—that is to say, an effort to reject the claims of the low-born lay careerists who chose the profession as the stepping stone to gentility" (*The Knight Without the Sword* 123); I would not go so far. While Malory does use the Fair Unknown formula often, none of the Fair Unknowns is unworthy; in fact, they all prove themselves and thus earn their positions. Gareth's Fair Unknown tale is given the most space and the most detail in part, I believe, because he is so accessible. Additionally, Edward's appeal to the gentry actually encourages upward social mobility, and since Malory himself was a lesser court member, I believe his *Tale of Sir Gareth* actually encourages rather than discourages people to earn their places in court rather than rely on bloodline.

[15]Gareth's youth is an important element of this story; though he has experienced knightly customs and behavior due to his older brothers, he has not experienced them first-hand. Therefore, he is like Malory's gentry audience—aware of court custom but not necessarily well-versed in it.

[16]"La Cote Male Tayle," another fair unknown story, is much less fleshed-out and powerful than *The Tale of Gareth*. Additionally, *shame* and *worship* are not the distinctive words that they are in *Gareth*. *Worship* only appears six times, and *shame* is used only three times. Instead, the idea of fellowship and the importance of nobility are much more the focus of this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter falls in the Tristram section of the *Works* and is more an interlude than a stand-alone story like *Gareth*.

[17]As Daniel F. Pigg notes, " . . . Kay's labeling is a linguistic weapon designed to demean Gareth in this class-conscious society" ("Language As Weapon: The Poetics of Plot in Malory's 'Tale of Sir Gareth'" 23). But as Malory's audience will learn, Gareth's actions and worshipful behavior will allow him to overcome the negative association with 'Bewmaynes' and embrace only the positive. He follows the course identified by Bakhtin for the chivalric romance: "A testing of the identity of heroes (and things)—basically, their fidelity in love and their faithfulness to the demands of the chivalric code—plays the same organizing role. Inevitably there also appear moments crucial to identity: presumed deaths, recognition/nonrecognition, a change of names and the like . . . " (151). However, as Gareth progresses, so, too, may the audience progress and see the same result as Gareth: positive recognition and admiration for one's triumph over societal 'norms.'

[18]However, as Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman assert in "No Pain, No Gain: Violence as Symbolic Capital in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*":

> Disguising his identity in this way, however, frees Gareth from a system of genealogical relationships which favor the eldest son and produce rigid class differences between 'jantyllman' and 'vylayne.' It frees him to participate in a parallel system of patronage relations which open up

> spaces through which those disinherited and disadvantaged by birth—younger sons—might advance through the judicious application of violence. (121)

Though their study is in regards to violence rather than the gaining of worship, they make a good point: with no name, Gareth can only improve his standing, his *worship*, and therefore become the exception to Andrew Lynch's rule: "In Malory, to be of worship is to be named, and therefore to be named is (usually) to be worshipful; there is some prestige in being mentioned as a participant, even as a loser" (*Malory's Book of Arms* 39).

[19]In fact, as Miriam Rheingold Fuller points out, "Arthur should grant Lynet a knight because of his oath to protect ladies, not because of her lady's status. In refusing to aid her, Arthur breaks his own oath. He and his knights fail this test of their chivalry and courtesy" ("Method in Her Malice: A Reconsideration of Lynet in Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth*" 261). This scene should also have been noted by Malory's audience, who was reading this text during a time in which one's status at birth did not necessarily label his status in adulthood.

[20]By asking for this adventure, Gareth begins his quest for *worship*. Christine discusses how to pursue the 'laurel of victory' in Chapter LXXXVII's *Glose* of *The Epistle of Othea*: "And also þe laurere may be take for golde, þe which betokenyth *worship*. It is seid to þe good kny$_3$t þat he moste pursuwe Damee, yif he wull haue a crowne of laurere, þat is to seie, peine & trauaile, yif he wull come to *worship*" (106.18-22, emphasis added).

[21]Gareth's choice is not surprising; as Beverly Kennedy notes in *Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur, " . . . a special grace is conferred upon the new knight by means of the ritual of ordination, and that those who receive the order from a less worthy knight, will receive correspondingly less of this grace . . . " (131).

[22]The only physical gift Gareth had requested was food and drink; now, these two requests are actions, not items, so Arthur has little cause to refuse Gareth. However, a king, like a knight, must worry about his personal worship in order for his reputation to carry much weight. One of the expectations of a king is to treat his knights well, to reward them for their worshipful behavior. In this case, Gareth is not yet a knight, so he has no right to ask for worldly goods, like money or land; however, Arthur must grant Gareth his two requests in order to keep his own *worship*—not to default on a promise (for he had made the promise before hearing Gareth's requests). It will only be at Gareth's triumphant return that Arthur can reward him as a king should reward his knight, as described by Gilbert of the Haye: "And to do and geve honoure, *worschip* and glore till worthy and noble men, efter that he had provit thame and knawin thair worthynes, to mak thame gift and rewarde, and warldly honour and *worschip* tharfore . . . " (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 215.11-15, emphasis added).

[23]Sir Kay follows Gareth out of the court and attacks him out of anger and spite, just to prove to Gareth that he is the better knight. However, such behavior is unknightly and shameful, as Christine elaborates: " . . . for lesse *worship* shuld be after ryght to him that shuld gyue or accepte a gage of bataylle for a litel cause or ocasyon or for folishe and nyce moeuynge . . . " (*The Book of Fayttes of Armes* 278.20-23, emphasis added).

[24]According to Wilfred L. Guerin, "Lancelot's dubbing of Gareth, an episode unique with Malory, is one of the most important. The five allusions to the dubbing which are made late in *Le Morte Darthur* indicate that Malory intended the episode to be instrumental in the unification of the entire book, making the last two 'Tales' in a sense dependent upon the interpolated 'Tale of Gareth,' and stressing Gareth's sense of fealty to Lancelot" ("'The Tale of Gareth': The Chivalric Flowering" 115). In addition, Andrew Lynch, in *Malory's Book of Arms*, notes that "Gareth chooses to build his identity on knighthood from Lancelot before he claims nobility from kinship to Arthur" (10) or to Gawain. This choice is important, Gareth's aligning himself with an outsider of Arthur's court rather than with his blood, for it will explain Gareth's actions later in the text (namely, siding with Tristram and Lancelot at Lonezep and going unarmed to Guinevere's burning). In both instances, Gareth makes the correct, *worshipful* decision, for, as Beverly Kennedy notes, " . . . [Malory] would have expected a knight to 'keep the faith' with the person who made him knight rather than with the institution of the monarchy as such, regardless of who wore the crown" (*Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 30).

[25]Gareth is only performing an important element of knighthood, as Beverly Kennedy explains, " . . . knights who are truly humble are never so concerned to win worship that they cannot stop to help someone in need" (*Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 136). Gareth did not think about whether the fight would yield him anything; he simply acted as a worthy knight should and, by doing so, earned worship with his behavior.

[26]The knight is acting the same way as Fabrycyus does in Christine's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*, who, when tempted by Kyng Pyrrus with gold and silver, " But he reffused them / and ansuered that he loued bettre to ete hys mete in treen dysshes wyth *worship* / than in dysshes of gold wyth reproche and *shame*" (76.34-36, emphasis added).

[27]This remark echoes an idea set forth in Christine's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*, which argues that " . . . but as to me I hold þ^{t} in his none othre rewle ought to be kept / but for to chese thoo men that moost haue seen / and that take moost delyte & haue plesure in thexersice of armes / in whiche labour is theyre glorye & theyre Ioye sette / and that none othre felicite nor *worship* they requyre / but onely that / that may com to theym by meane of theyre cheualrouse dedes . . . " (38.11-18, emphasis added).

[28]Fuller, in "Method in Her Malice," discovered a pattern about Lyonet's behavior. She tends to insult his class position when a third party is about, but not just to goad him into winning battles; as Fuller explains, "[Gareth] cannot simply tell her who he

really is, for that would defeat the purpose of his masquerade, which is to prove himself by his conduct alone. Lynet solves this problem by disparaging Gareth in front of other knights in order to discover his lineage" (257). It works, to a degree, as Gareth's response above reveals.

[29]Terence McCarthy, in *An Introduction to Malory*, elaborates: " . . . for the individual in a shame culture, public opinion counts for more than conscience, because one *is* what the world says one is. As the world recognizes you, so it identifies you" (90). Therefore, even though Gareth will not reveal his name, he still feels he deserves respect for his actions, for winning a fight fairly. To be accused of cheating or winning falsely is unbearable. Furthermore, by questioning Gareth's true abilities, the Green Knight is, in fact, disparaging the court from which Gareth came, the court of King Arthur. According to Christine in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*, " . . . the *worship* or the *dysworship* of the lorde of the knyghthode and of all the nobles" (75.6-7, emphasis added) is being ascertained by the Green Knight, and Gareth must act for his own worship and for his king's.

[30]His worship has increased because he has defeated a strong foe; furthermore, his triumph is validated by witnesses—Lyonet and the Green Knight himself. The Green Knight will acknowledge Gareth's worship by inviting Gareth into his castle and acting as a good host should—welcoming Gareth into the great hall, eating at Gareth's table, protecting Gareth as he sleeps by placing guards at his door.

[31]Fuller notes that Lyonet's behavior causes her to suffer, " . . . for she risks her own name in order to help her sister, since, in being so abusive to Gareth, she herself is discourteous" to the point that others, like the Green Knight, admonish her for her words ("Method in Her Malice" 260).

[32]Such worshipful behavior from a host is important. As Faith Lyons explains, "Traditionally in Arthurian literature a host occupies a position of trust . . . Such hospitality from a defeated foe is acceptable to the Arthurian hero. It promotes mutual trust and advances reconciliation between former enemies. It belongs to the moral climate of a literary tradition in which justice is maintained through pardon and restitution" ("Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth* and French Arthurian Tradition" 139). Improper behavior from a host would result in a loss of worship against not only the host but against the entire collective to which the host is connected (for an example of a bad host, see Mador's behavior against both Guinevere and Lancelot in chapter 4).

[33]If Gareth were to run away from the battle out of fear, he would be going against the rules of knighthood and his *worship* would be reduced and his *shame* increased exponentially; a knight cannot be a coward. Gilbert of the Haye speaks of this idea in his *The Buke of the Law of Armys*: "And it is wele clere till understand that to flee of the bataill is bathe dishoneste and *schamefull* thing" (86.13-15, emphasis added).

In addition, according to Christine's *The Epistle of Othea*, in the *Glose* of Chapter XII, Gareth's continued polite behavior and speech in the face of Lyonet's poor speech is

an important sign of *worship*: “Therfore it is seide to the good knyghte that he scholde be arayed theire-with, for *wurschipful* behauyng and faire langage is full behouely to all nobill pepill desirynge the hiȝ price of *wurschip*, soo that they kepe theim from to mych langage. For Diogenes seith that of all vertues the more the bettir, save of speche” (22.29-23.4, emphasis added).

[34]Such single-mindedness is important, for one of Christine’s topics in her *The Epistle of Othea* is Perseus, who rescued Andromeda and “Brought hir ayen to hir kyn ful ryghte” (14.30). She elaborates that “*Wurschip*, which is myche better than rychesse” (*The Epistle of Othea* 15.2, emphasis added), because “ . . . it is acording thing for a good knyghte to haue *wurschip* and reuerence . . . ” (*The Epistle of Othea* 15.7-8, emphasis added). To earn worship, Gareth must complete his adventure. Furthermore, according to Christine, Perseus is a good role model, for “ . . . alle knyghtis scholde socoure wommen that hadde nede of theire socoure” (*The Epistle of Othea* 15.20-21). Gareth has met this requirement first by taking on the adventure in Camelot; Lyonet asked for help and only Gareth accepted. Second, at the end of the journey is a second woman “in need of succour,” the besieged lady.

[35]Gilbert of the Haye reiterates Gareth’s viewpoint on shameful behavior: “Quharfor better war tak dede with honour, na dee with *schame*” (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 86.26-27, emphasis added). There is no shame in dying in a worthy battle; there is shame, however, in turning away from a battle out of fear or cowardice. By stating this idea so clearly, Gareth has finally convinced Lyonet that he is worthy and worshipful in all its definitions and incarnations.

[36]According to Cherewatuk, “ . . . sexual self-control in a man is, if not proof of, at least proper use of noble blood” (“Pledging Troth in Malory’s ‘Tale of Sir Gareth’” 35).

[37]Christine in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes* describes unknightly, and thus *shameful* behaviors of knights, including the primary fault of the Red Knight of the Red Lands—imprisoning Lyones: “Thus abusen with the right of armes they that now doo excersice them by þ^{e} grete coueytyse that ouercometh them / soo ought to tourne them to a grete *shame* for to emprisone wymen or children & impotent & olde / & thys custome that they haue brought vp ought to be reproued to theire grete deshonour & blame” (232.38-233.5, emphasis added).

[38]The knight is going against the Order of Knighthood with his behavior, acting directly against its expectations and rules, as confirmed by Gilbert of the Haye in *The Buke of the Law of Armys*: “Here speris the doctour, gif it be lefull thing and *worschipfull* in the weris, that a king or a prince ourthrawe ane othir with cautele and subtilitee in weris, quhilk is his inymy. And as to that poynt I preve ȝou first that nay, it suld nocht be” (162.33-163.2, emphasis added). Though the text uses a king in the example, the advice is just as applicable to knights. Therefore, the Red Knight of the Red Lands has

defied one of the rules of knighthood and Gareth must defeat him, whether he uses 'subtilitee' or not.

[39]This argument echoes advice given by Christine in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*: "For a lesse *shame* it were to receyue a dommayge in fightyng openly wyth hys enemye / than to haue *eny* [sic] combraunce & lettyng by som awaytyng sette . . . " (69.1-4, emphasis added).

[40]As Terence McCarthy notes in *An Introduction to Malory*, " . . . in Malory worldly success is a knight's highest aim, and the only way he can compromise his honour is by winning worship cheaply" (89).

[41]Joseph R. Ruff, in "Malory's Gareth and Fifteenth-Century Chivalry," notes that "Gareth proves himself superior to the Red Knight in prowess as well as in courtesy, gentleness, and goodness . . . " (110). He has successfully overcome his strongest foe, the least worshipful individual in the *Tale*. He has therefore reached the pinnacle of his physical worship. However, Gareth's journey is not finished; there are still lessons to be learned regarding *worship* and *shame*.

[42]Such a sentiment is important, for a knight cannot rest on his past successes and remain a worshipful knight-errant. Christine also warns against sloth in *The Epistle of Othea*, Chapter XIX, when she states in the Glose: "This is to vnderstande that the good knyght schulde be-ware that slouth ouertooke him not with deceytis and wiles of malicious pepill, so that his y$_3$e be not taken awey, that is to seye, the y$_3$e of his vnderstandynge in his *wurschip*, in his getynge or in that the which is derere to hym, as many inconueniencis falleth ofte throu$_3$ slouth and lacchesse" (31.1-7, emphasis added).

[43]Karen Cherewatuk claims that "The thematic need for doubling the adventures lies in three brief intermediary scenes: the first ends with Gareth and Lyonesse's betrothal; the next two follow their frustrated sexual encounters. These three scenes are rich in both the language of betrothal and marriage and in sexual symbolism" ("Pledging Troth in Malory's 'Tale of Sir Gareth'" 23). I agree with her assessment regarding marriage, but I believe there is more: Gareth must learn worship in love, in courtly behavior, before he can truly be called a worthy knight; physical prowess and a good reputation outside the court is not enough. To become well-rounded, worshipful in all senses, Gareth's libido must be tested as well.

[44]Hyonjin Kim makes a compelling argument regarding Lyones. He claims that she is likely a widow, not a virginal maiden. The fact that she owns land and has her own castle is one piece of evidence: "Otherwise, it was inconceivable for a single woman with her *brother* alive to enjoy a substantial amount of landed property" (*The Knight Without the Sword* 41). In addition, Kim notes, Malory refers to her as *dame*, a title that is reserved to " . . . women with marital experience, such as Guinevere, La Beale Isode, Igraine, Morgause, and Morgan le Fay" (41).

[45]As Karen Cherewatuk asserts in “Pledging Troth in Malory’s ‘Tale of Sir Gareth’,” “Following canon law, Malory asserts the couple’s right to choose each other based on mutual affection and consent . . . Through their private betrothal and sexual activity, [however,] Gareth and Lyonesse try to circumvent social convention” (21).

However, such desire goes against one of the rules of knighthood and worship. As Christine relates in Chapter VII’s *Texte* of *The Epistle of Othea*:

> Of Venus in no wise make thi goddesse,
> And for nothing set store be her promys.
> To folowe here it is rauenous,
> Both *vnwurshipful* and perlous. (17.23-26, emphasis added)

The *Glose* further explains that “The vice of lecherie steyneth alle vertues” (*The Epistle of Othea* 18.7-8). By forgetting his worship so quickly and lusting for Lyones, first by claiming he had won her with his blood and then by planning to take her body, Gareth is in danger of both losing *worship* and acquiring *shame*.

[46]Fuller also explains that “Her brother has already approved the marriage, but Morgawse and Arthur have not” (262).

[47]Worship, earned or inherited, can be easily lost through a shameful action; following one’s lusts is one such shameful action, not only for Gareth but for Lyones as well. Lyonet realizes that all of Gareth’s hard work thus far is about to be squandered, and that her sister’s reputation is about to be ruined as well. She must act.

[48]As Terence McCarthy notes in *Reading the* Morte Darthur: “But although Gareth is technically innocent after the test of his virtue, the wound becomes a reminder of his moral infirmity and a hindrance in his desire to win future renown” (26).

[49]Cherewatuk defines ‘dishonor’ thus: “For a man in a knightly context, dishonor involves being vanquished and wounded in battle. For a woman in a social context, dishonor involves losing one’s chastity and hence marriageability. Gareth, a feminized hero, seems to have compromised both his knightly honor and his newly won social status” (“Pledging Troth in Malory’s ‘Tale of Sir Gareth’” 33).

[50]Lyonet is proven correct when, near the end of *The Tale of Gareth*, Arthur questions Gareth’s choice in wife. He even gives Gareth the option of taking Lyones as a lover rather than a wife. Cherewatuk explains: “One reason [Lynette] prevents the couple from having intercourse may be to mark Lyonesse as the kind of woman a prince of royal blood marries rather than merely sleeps with” (“Pledging Troth in Malory’s ‘Tale of Gareth’” 32).

[51]While Gareth’s action certainly denotes common sense, he is also following a simple rule of knighthood: never to be without one’s armor and shield. Christine covers

this issue in her *The Epistle of Othea*, when she relates the story of Ajax in Chapter XCIV's *Glose*:

> Ayaux was a ful proude kny3t of þe Grekis & trustid to myche on him-silf, but yit he was a good kny3t of his hande. And for pride & sollennes he vndirtook to do armes with his arme nakid discouerid wiþout a shelde, so he was borne thorugh & ouer-þrowen deed. Therfore it is seide to þe good kny3t þat, to do such armes, þei be neiþer profitabill ne *worshipfull*, but rathir þei be named lewde & proude, and þei be to perlious. (113.27-14.6, emphasis added)

Lancelot makes this mistake later in Malory's *Works*, when, against the advice of Bors, he visits Queen Guinevere without his armor, shield, and sword, only to be trapped in her bedchamber by Aggravain, Mordred, and others.

[52]This behavior fulfills one of Christine's rules in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes*, which declares that public declaration of one's *worship* is expected, for both the knight and the lord will benefit: " . . . that to oure said good prince we may reporte and bere the vyctorye of thys bataylle / so that he may haue bothe *worship* and goode fame therby and we euermore to be preysed and *worshypped* with hym for thesame / and that hys good grace we may please therby" (75.30-35, emphasis added).

[53]Gareth had wanted to win worship through body, not worship through name, and money and riches should play no part in one's desire for worship. Worship itself is the prize, not the material reward received at the end of one's worshipful behavior. Christine in the *The Book of Fayttes of Armes* verifies this belief: that those who introduced the Order of Knighthood " . . . that fyrst made & and stablyshed thees lawes prayse & sette moche more by *worship* than they dede of golde nor of syluer . . . " (264.22-24, emphasis added). She then expands upon this concept in Chapter XLIX of *The Epistle of Othea*, in both the *Texte*:

> Be Juno gretly thou ne set ne telle,
> Though that the note be better than the schell;
> Desire to haue *wurschip* and wurthynes,
> For it is mychell bettir than riches. (61.16-20, emphasis added)

as well as in the subsequent *Glose*:

> And because that to gete goodes and richesses longith mych bisines and trauayle, and that such besinesses may torne a man fro the geting of *worschip*, and standing *worschip* and worthines is more to preise than riches, in as mych as the note is better than the schelle, it is seide to the good knyghte that he schulde not sette so his thoughte in felicite that the pursuyng of *wurschip* be lefte ther-fore. (*The Epistle of Othea* 61.21-29, emphasis added)

[54]Sir Gilbert of the Haye's text *The Buke of the Law of Armys* provides a long list of what makes a good or 'hardy' knight, and he begins with the two big signifiers—honor and *worship*: "And in the first, a knycht is hardy to wyn the vayne glore of this warld and the honoure. For quhy, he seis that all men dois honoure and *worschip* till a hardy man, and dishonour till a coward" (84.25-29, emphasis added), and then provides details, including being good in the saddle, having great courage, and so on. Gareth fulfills the definition of *worshipful* and can return to court having convinced everyone of his worth.

[55]Larry D. Benson elaborates:

> This episode provides the link between the first and second parts of the tale. Gareth is left wounded in Lyones' castle while the scene shifts to Camelot for the queen of Orkney's arrival. Then the narrative moves back to Lyones' castle, where Gareth, still wounded, but now knowing the value of patience, asks his lady to offer her hand as the prize at Arthur's tournament. The tournament thus functions not only as part of both the themes of courtship and proof-of-knighthood but also as a sort of necessary penance for Gareth and Lyones' 'overhasty' behavior, and the attempted sin itself thus serves as a symbolic lowly position from which Gareth will rise by means of the proof-of-knighthood theme that informs the second half of the tale. (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 106)

Only after Gareth has earned worship in both levels of his life, physical and romantic, can he return to court. He may have earned his reputation while away from court, but he is going to have to prove himself in person to Arthur and his court if he is to be truly welcomed to the Round Table.

[56]In fact, *worship* and *shame* appear very little in the rest of the text. The other examples appear only in passing. First, Lancelot, after being urged by Arthur to fight with a disguised Gareth, refuses, stating that he had seen enough battle already that day, "'And whan a good knyght doth so well uppon som day, hit is no good knyghtes parte to lette hym of his *worshyp*, and namely whan he seyth a good knyghte hath done so grete labur'" (*Works* 348.34-349.2 emphasis added). Though a lesson of sorts, Malory does not provide repetition of the term *worship* nor does he discuss the *shame* that Lancelot would incur if he chooses to go up against Gareth anyway.

The second use of *worship* during the tournament does not even relate to Gareth; instead, Lancelot receives the descriptor: "Than com in sir Launcelot, and he smote sir Terquyn, and he hym. And than cam therein sir Carados, his brother, and bothe at onys they assayled hym, and he as the moste noblyst knyght of the worlde *worshypfully* fought with hem bothe and helde them hote, that all men wondred of the nobles of sir Launcelot" (*Works* 349.18-23, emphasis added). Again, there is no repetition or incorporation of *shame* to set this scene apart, to draw an audience member's attention. It may merely act to connect the two knights, Lancelot and Gareth, through worship.

The next word used is *shame*, and the focus is again on Gareth. After Gareth's disguise is found out, he leaves the tournament and finds shelter at the castle of the Duke

de la Rouse, vowing to the Duke, " . . . 'I shall promyse you in what place I mete youre lorde I shall yelde me unto hym and to his good grace, with that I undirstonde that he woll do me no *shame*'" (*Works* 353.25-28, emphasis added). Since Malory has already dealt with the importance of worship for a visiting knight from his host (at Gringamour's castle), there is no real need to expand this scene and repeat the lesson.

The last mention of *worship* occurs as Gareth and Gawain are recovering from their fight. Lyonet fetches Gringamour and Lyones. When Gareth and Lyones are reunited, " . . . there was many a goodly loke and goodly wordys, that all men of *worshyp* had joy to beholde them" (*Works* 359.20-22, emphasis added). It is at this time that Arthur questions Gareth about his intentions for Lyones. He " . . . asked his nevew, sir Gareth, whether he wolde have this lady as peramour, other ellys to have hir to his wyff" (*Works* 359.25-27). Malory shows his audience Arthur questioning Lyones's social status. Gareth is a king's nephew, while Lyones is the sister of a lesser lord, not a true equal. Gareth clearly states his love, and then Lyones declares her love, her faithfulness. This latter element is important, for "The higher up the social ladder, the more concern families gave to pre-marital chastity on the part of the woman and to parental approval" (Cherewatuk, "Pledging Troth in Malory's 'Tale of Gareth'" 26). To guarantee " . . . purity and continuity of the family line . . . " (30-31), that the betrothed was not already pregnant with another's child, her chastity was essential to her *worship*.

[57]Elizabeth Edwards notes, in *The Genesis of Narrative*, that:

> . . . there is a conjunction of identity and the resolution of hostility. Hostility in this tale is unusually anonymous; Kay is hostile because Gareth is unknown, while when Lynet's hostility ends, she coincidentally reveals her identity. Gawain fights his brother because he doesn't know who he is, and stops when he does. As more and more comes to be known in this tale, there is less and less hostility. (The one exception is the Duke de la Rowse, who does know who Gareth is, but even this conundrum has a happy outcome.) The dissipation and displacement of hostility is the point of the tale . . . (50-51)

[58]Beverly Kennedy, in *Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur, expounds upon the relationship between Lancelot and Gareth: " . . . there is less reason to suppose that all Round Table knights will feel as much reverence for the man who made them knight as Lancelot and Gareth do. For these two knights, the giving of knighthood creates a bond of loyalty which is stronger than kinship" (33). And by giving Gareth his own *Tale* rather than merely a chapter, Malory thus defines the importance of these men's relationship.

[59]Hyonjin Kim observes in *The Knight Without the Sword* that "The wedding feast, where all [Gareth's] five vassals participate to renew their homage to him, celebrates not only his formal admission to landed society but also his acquisition of lordship over men" (41). Gareth has become a true lord, rising from the weak position of fourth son to landowner, lord, and knight.

Beverly Kennedy elaborates:

> The King held the most powerful local lords responsible for keeping the peace in their localities, and they, in turn, relied upon their affinities or retinues of knights and squires. Gareth's marriage to the great heiress, the Lady Lyones, and his near kinship to the king make him the greatest lord in his locality. But even before the fortunate event of his marriage, Gareth has acquired an immense retinue simply through the exercise of his knightly prowess. Gareth does not offer to pay them a fee of any kind, but all of the knights he defeats in single combat, including one of the baronial rank (Sir Persaunte de l'Inde) and one duke (the Duke de la Rowse), are eager to attach themselves to him by offering 'homage and feaute.' (*Knighthood in* The Morte Darthur 51)

Gareth has become one of the most powerful men in Arthur's court; however, since his power is now tied to his property and his retinue, he cannot be a knight-errant anymore. Leaving to go on adventures or quests will threaten his holdings. He must protect his lands and his followers from harm rather than pursuing danger. This is why Gareth essentially disappears from the rest of Malory's *Works*, for all the other knights Malory follows carefully (Tristram, Lancelot, Gawain) remain unmarried and thus under no obligation to remain at court.

[60]As Bakhtin asserts, " . . . every work has a *beginning* and an *end*, the event represented in it likewise has a beginning and an end, but these beginnings and ends lie in different worlds, in different chronotopes that can never fuse with each other or be identical to each other but that are, at the same time, interrelated and indissolubly tied up with each other" (255). Malory's audience is well aware that Malory is writing of times 'long ago.' However, the messages, the lessons, are still applicable in the present. Malory connects the past to the present, literature to reality, character to reader.

[61]There is no difference between the lessons learned by Malory's original audience and ourselves; because Malory's authorial voice comes through the text's language, his audience experiences and relates to it, whether a fifteenth-century audience or a twenty-first-century audience: "We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life" (Bakhtin 271).

CHAPTER FOUR

‘He spake hit opynly’: Public Declarations and Accusations in the Court

Introduction

While kingship is concerned with *counsel* and *advice* and knighthood with *worship* and *shame*, these entities actually share a larger concern—the health of the collective. The king and the knight are both members of the court, and the court must thrive before the king and the knight can. It is a clear symbiotic relationship: the court promotes the health of the crown (the king) and the spear (the knight), and the health of the king and the knight bolster the health of the court. Therefore, triumphs of the individual are regularly shared with the court, for the worship of one translates into the worship of all.[1] We have seen this pattern already in *The Tale of Gareth*; as Gareth becomes a great knight, the court’s reputation, too, is improved upon. And when Gareth finally returns to Camelot, he is welcomed loudly and affectionately. A celebration occurs in his honor and the court publicly affirms its strength and cohesion.

Unfortunately, however, the celebration is marred by one narrative comment by Malory: “For evir aftir sir Gareth had aspyed sir Gawaynes conducions, he wythdrewe hymself fro his brother sir Gawaynes felyshyp, for he was evir vengeable, and where he hated he wolde be avenged with murther: and that hated sir Gareth” (*Works* 360.32-36).[2] This statement reveals the weakness inherent in the court system: though a collective, the court is composed of individuals, and an individual’s actions or words may (and often do) go against the wishes or expectations of the collective. Loyalties can be numerous and

may be tested in an honorable society, as D. S. Brewer explains.[3] Angela Gibson furthers this discussion in "Malory's Reformulation of Shame." She evaluates the importance of privacy and the destructive potential of secret acts made public: "What you don't know won't hurt you: this might be said to be a fitting maxim for Malory's *Morte Darthur* since it demonstrates a preoccupation with the dangers that private relationships pose to fellowship" (64). Though she refers mainly to secret actions of a sexual nature, her points are valid in a much broader sense. Open accusation to the collective can be much more damaging than the secret hurt of an individual, for once something is made public, it cannot be ignored, suppressed, or dismissed.

Unfortunately, *open* declaration or *open* accusation did not receive much attention in many of the texts of Malory's day. While Malory's audience was avidly gathering a vast corpus of instructive material to help them navigate the confusing world of the court collective, able to turn to authors like Christine de Pisan and Lydgate and Burgh for education on such diverse topics as giving and receiving wise *counsel* and avoiding *shame* to gain *worship*,[4] there is an important set of lessons that Malory's contemporaries seem to have ignored: in what way and for what reason an individual should speak publicly to the collective. Generally, one can make a declaration or make an accusation: a positive assertion or a negative allegation. The assertions can be about the self, another individual, or the collective. The allegations can be about an individual or the group.

Once made, the assertions or allegations cannot be recalled. Something made public cannot ever again be secret or private. Therefore, one must be very careful about the information being revealed and be aware of the motivations for the *open* speech. Positive assertions or declarations can improve one's own worship or the worship of

another. In addition, unmeasured praise of another may anger other members of the collective whose individual concerns have become stronger than the concerns of the group. In fact, individual concerns can threaten the power and the strength of the group if the individual becomes too powerful.

The same imperative applies to allegations. An allegation cannot be recalled once publicly made; it can only be disproved or proved and handled. Therefore, allegations should only be made when one has ample proof. If the allegation is proved true, punishment can be meted out and the collective can return to its normal function. Unfortunately, as with public declarations, individual interests can cause problems when *open* accusation is employed. If one is motivated by hatred or jealousy of another individual, the public allegation is for his own benefit, not for the benefit of the group. If the accusation then is found true, the accuser gains individual power, which can endanger the collective power. If the accusation is found false, a fracturing of the collective can still occur if individuals side with the accuser or the accused.

As a result, the court, with its public nature and focus, can be a dangerous place to navigate, especially for those untutored in protocol. Malory's audience was made up primarily of the nouveau riche gentry class, many of them first-generation court members, and there were just not a lot of primary texts devoted to this aspect of court behavior. In fact, the texts contained within the "grete bookes," the texts that have examined the same concepts that Malory explores—*counsel* and *advice*, *shame* and *worship*—use *openly* only rarely. Furthermore, if they do incorporate *openly*, it either is not related to public speeches in the court or the word is used so rarely as to have negligible impact. For example, Lydgate's and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres* does

not use *openly* at all. Additionally, Christine de Pisan's *The Epistle of Othea* only uses *open* once, and that use is not relevant.[5] Moreover, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* only includes two uses of the adverbial *openly*: "For a lesse shame it were to receyue a dommayge in fightyng *openly* wyth hys enemye / than to haue eny combraunce & lettyng by som awaytyng sette / wherof men had take noo kepe vnto it thorughe negligence" (69.1-5, emphasis added) and " . . . yf manyfeste or *openly* knowen it were / yf the kynnesmen wyl there were no remedye . . . " (264.5-7, emphasis added).

The text that uses *openly* the most is Gilbert of the Haye's prose manuscript, *The Buke of the Law of Armys*. *Openly* appears a number of times, but only a few relate to the issue of public declaration or accusation.[6] The first relevant declarative usage occurs in Book 4 and is related to Jesus: "Bot all thing that he did he did *opinly*, in playne audience" (163.15-16, emphasis added). The first accusatory usage, too, is related to a religious topic: "And sa byndis the pape all Cristyn creature be his law canoun, in his decretalis, alwayis to kepe that privilege to the labouraris; or, gif thai do nocht, thai ar cursit of the dede, and may be cursit *opinly* be thair bischopis in haly kirk . . . " (241.15-19, emphasis added). Another assertion occurs in the narrator's voice: " . . . I will first prove *opynly* that gage of bataille be all lawis is forbedyn expressely, bathe in Goddis law and mannis lawe, in commoun lawe and canoun lawe . . . " (256.7-10, emphasis added). Another potentially relevant usage (adjectival in this instance) appears a few pages later: " . . . gif a lord has a bonde man that is accusit of thift the quhilk may nocht be provit be *opyn* pruf, gif the bonde man wald, or his lorde for him, defend his innocence and ignoraunce, he may be tholit be the lawis of armes . . . " (260.27-31, emphasis added).

Unfortunately, however, such uses are few and far between, certainly too few to establish a true pattern such as with the other concepts—*counsel* and *advice*, *shame* and *worship*.

However, the important lessons of how and how not to speak publicly about the self or other individuals must still be conveyed. As C. A. J. Armstrong explains in "Some Examples of the Distribution and Speed of News in England at the Time of the Wars of the Roses," the unrest surrounding the crown caused "heightened public nervousness" throughout England (429). Rumors abounded and tensions were high. In fact, the king (at the time, Edward IV) was so concerned about false reports and incomplete news that free and public speech was controlled, as much as it could be. Armstrong notes how repressive rulers became as both Henry and Edward used the law to penalize those whose *open* speech was deemed biased or untrue:

> The alarm of successive governments, reflected in the severe penalties uttered against rumour-mongers, leaves no doubt that in a society relying on oral information whispering could be a dangerous weapon in the hands of subversive elements. On the government side there is consistency extending over centuries, alike in the charges brought against purveyors of false news and in the measures to bring them to account, while the same tone of alarm rings through the pronouncements at times of recurrent civil tension. Under the Statute of Westminster, prim. c. xxxiv, anyone spreading falsehoods might be put in prison until he could produce his informant, and in the Gloucester Parliament of 1378 that penalty was enacted against the contrivers of false news bent on stirring up discord between the lords or between them and the commons. (433-34)

False reports resulted in a negative reaction from the collective; therefore, the king deemed open speech worthy of censorship. Both positive and negative news fell under the control of the crown. As Armstrong explains, "In England, while public interest was solicited and public opinion was canvassed through hand-bills, domestic news, in particular casualties on the battlefield, or the conduct of sieges and campaigns, was distributed in bills and schedules" (432). This way, even if conveyed orally, the facts

appeared in writing and thus had the added validation of reliability.[7] Other forms of open speech were labeled rumors or slander and their reliability questioned. For new court families, the fear of speaking the wrong thing publicly was real. They had to be taught the nuances of *open* speech and the potential result of such speech.

Unfortunately, many of the texts of Malory's day did not include these lessons, so individuals had to turn to other means; for the Pastons, those means included their private correspondence. Husbands advised wives on proper *open* behavior and speech, parents advised children, siblings advised each other. *Open* declarations were recommended to establish one's own position on issues or one's allegiances; *open* accusations were made against those who had wronged them in some way. The Pastons understood the basic importance of *open*ness in relation to the health of the collective. They knew that the *open* behavior of one individual could have great impact on the group; therefore, some of their advice to each other involved public distribution of information.

For example, in an indenture dated 3 July 1470, commissioned by John Paston II, *open* is used to convey the legality and the fairness of a business transaction:

> This indenture witnessith that Sir John Paston, knyght, being possessed of xx disshes and a sawser of siluer weying by Troy weight xxvij lb. ix vncis and di. *in playn and open market* in the Citee of London, hathe bargayned, sold, and deliuered the day of the date of thise indentures to Edmund Shaa, citezein and goldsmyth of London, the saide xx disshes and sawser for l li. sterlinges by the said Edmund to the forsaid Sir John Paston aforehand paid, wherof the same Sir John Paston knowlachith him-self truly contented and satisfied by thise presentes, to haue and to hold the forsaid xx disshes and sawser to the said Edmund, his executours and assignees as theire propre godes foreuermore . . . (*Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* 417-18, emphasis added)

The written contract describes the transaction's details and verifies the quality of the merchandise. Furthermore, the sale is doubly validated by being conducted in an open

market: not in an open-air market, outside, but in a public exchange with witnesses and written verification. An overt sale is an *open* sale, a trustworthy and legal one.

Open transactions were important to an individual's worship, as well as to the worship of the collective. On 7 Aug. 1465, Margaret Paston wrote to John I, incorporating *openly* to convey the legitimacy of events: "And as for the writtes of replevyn they were delyuerd *openly* be-for the juges to the scheryf, and also other writtes wech Jamys Gresham brought, and aftre that Richard Calle spake wyth the high scheref for the servyng of hem, and so he promysed to serue it and to send men of hes owne to serue it" (*Paston Letters* 313, emphasis added). By having the letters delivered *openly* to the sheriff, the Pastons were overtly legitimizing the content within as well as publicly announcing their intentions to the rest of the collective. The group could then back the Pastons, increasing their authority and influence.

In another example, on 7 Aug. 1465, John Paston I wrote to his wife Margaret: "I recomaund me to you, and as for the letter that I send yow touchyng John Russe, I woll that ye and your counsell see it *openly*, and kepe this bille to your-self or to some secret frend of your" (*Paston Letters* 138, emphasis added). This advice is interesting because it involves both openness and secrecy. John wants Margaret to share one letter and thus his advice with her close counsel; however, he also wants her to hide another letter or leave it in the safe-keeping of another individual.[8] The advice he provides is simple: Russe, one of Paston's counselors, is acting on Paston's behalf and must complete the deal agreed upon; if he falters, Margaret is to show him " . . . the writyng that he hath of that bargeyn . . . " (*Paston Letters* 138), that " . . . he in no maner wise aske the mony of me and kepe his bargeyn . . . " (*Paston Letters* 138), and, if worse comes to worse,

" . . . make due serche with fermours at Akthorp what mony Russe hath reseyvid there in my tyme . . . " (*Paston Letters* 139). *Open* action is necessary in order to inform the collective, in this case a small group, of the potentially improper actions of an individual. Secrecy is then invoked, probably to protect everyone's reputations. If Russe fulfills his bargain, Margaret need not publicly accuse him of misbehavior or misdeed, and all can return to normal. However, if Russe misbehaves, the group can accuse him publicly, shaming him and damaging his individual standing within the collective.

However, advice passed from family member to family member, though valuable, was not enough to adequately prepare them for the court. They were not members of the inner court circle; they were peripherally involved and thus did not have the knowledge that even a second- or third-generation court family would. The Pastons were not the only family in this situation; many of the richer gentry families were becoming more involved in the court, thanks to Edward IV, and the royal court was certainly different from the regional collectives to which these families belonged.[9] They needed to be educated regarding *open* speech, and Sir Thomas Malory became the individual who would teach them. Malory's *Works*, therefore, takes the tradition of chivalric education begun by such texts as the *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* and *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* and fills in a significant gap. His characters incorporate both positive *open* declaration and negative *open* accusation with varying results. Malory's audience, already primed by Malory's contemporaries and the *Works* itself to find educational importance in the text, cannot help but learn from what they read.

Malory's Text

Malory uses the adverb *openly* or the adjective *open* many times, 42 in fact. Most of these instances occur in speeches or involve public speech.[10] There are two clear reasons for use of *openly* in Malory's *Works*; the first is inherently positive. Numerous characters *openly* provide information that validates an individual, whether it be his parentage, his abilities, his innocence, or the worth of his word.[11] As Terence McCarthy explains, "One thing which is vital to the public world, as the word itself suggests, is publicity. There is room for humility in the kingdom of Arthur but little room for modesty and none for false modesty" ("Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 4). This publicly shared information then reflects positively upon the members of the court, as members accept the truth of the open declaration and thus verify an individual's worth to the collective. The result is additional individual and group worship. However, sometimes the positive information provided comes as a response to an accusation or a threat (verbal or physical), where an individual's innocence must be publicly declared in order for the shame of the allegation to be negated. Related to this use of *openly* is the third type of positive declaration—the challenge. The challenge is usually publicly made by a knight whose worship is being threatened directly by other individuals or indirectly by rumor and *sclaundir*; his public challenge often results in the silencing of the individuals who incited the rumors.

However, public or *open* speech can also have negative intent; *open* accusation happens in Malory's *Works*, and it happens often. *Open* accusation is a direct threat to the health of the collective—the court.[12] Only a court with a strong king, strong knights, and strong court members can deflect public accusations. Therefore, accusations made

by outsiders tend to have little negative impact on the court. But when the threat comes from within, from a member of the court, it carries more potentially destructive power. If the accusation is made with the court's health in mind, the court is improved by having the weak link exposed and removed. But if an individual makes an accusation rashly or egoistically, the court as an entity can be damaged.

For the world presented in Malory's *Works*, the threat of internal strife is real. Arthur's court, especially, is based on fellowship rather than kinship ties, where earned worship is supposed to be more important than inherited worship.[13] However, Arthur's system goes against centuries of accepted codes of belief, in which the family has been the strongest unit.[14] The danger inherent in Arthur's system is that the old code can weaken or destroy the new code. Once individuals make decisions based on kinship, or individual, ties rather than for the health of the collective, the collective is scarred permanently, if not outright destroyed.[15]

During Henry's and Edward's reigns, *open* declarations and accusations were regular occurrences. Both men publicly asserted their right to the throne and *openly* praised their loyal retainers and followers. However, they also *openly* accused people of treason and cast doubt on their abilities and their loyalties. But the kings were not the only court members who employed public speeches to the court; every court member has the potential to increase the court's worship through public declaration or to weaken the court's worship through public accusation. For members of the court trapped between the Yorkist and the Lancastrian regimes, public speech was a dangerous minefield to traverse; loyalties were tested daily and one's standing in the court was constantly threatened.[16] Malory saw what the court had become, how the collective had been

damaged from without and within, and he used the various courts in Arthur's day to convey his lessons to his audience: that the collective is more important than the individual[17] and that one should not only measure his words carefully but also consider the ramifications of his public speech, both positive and negative.[18]

Open Declaration

Individual worship results in collective worship, so the *open* declaration of one's prowess is expected and welcomed. Malory makes Pellinore the first receiver of an *open* declaration of ability. A young Torre is brought to court, his parentage revealed to all; when his biological father, Pellinore, comes to court, Arthur makes Torre, then Gawain, knights. Merlin then pulls Pellinore aside and makes a public declaration: "And therewith Merlyon toke kynge Pellinor by the honde, and in that one hande nexte the two segis, and the Sege Perelous, he seyde in *opyn* audiens, 'Thys [is] your place, for beste ar ye worthy to sitte thereinne of ony that here ys'" (*Works* 102.5-9, emphasis added). Pellinore has been publicly labeled by Merlin, which is important; Merlin will soon leave the text and thus leave his role as Arthur's primary advisor. However, Arthur will still be in need of counselors; Pellinore will step nicely into that void. In essence, Merlin has named his successor. By doing so *openly*, he has precluded any individuals from taking the position for personal gain. Merlin has made the health of the collective more important than the prestige of an individual. Pellinore is an excellent choice for several reasons. First, he is a king, and older than the norm; therefore, he already knows what knowledge and skills Arthur needs to develop and he has the wisdom that will add weight to his advice. Second, he did not ask for the responsibility; he did not come to Arthur's court hoping to be given a place at the Round Table. And, third, he is, in a sense, an

outsider. He is not a kinsman of Arthur, so he might be expected to provide reasonable counsel that is not kin-based and perhaps kin-focused. He can act in the best interests of the collective rather than for the glory or benefit of a family member.[19]

Malory includes other scenes in which an individual's prowess is *openly* declared in public. *The Tale of Gareth* includes one such scene. While Gareth is away from court, fulfilling his quest and improving upon his worship, those back at court wonder at his progress. Only Lancelot knows Gareth's true identity, and he has sworn not to reveal it.[20] Therefore, when the Red Knight comes to Arthur's court and explains *openly* how Gareth has defeated him, Arthur is amazed and pleased at Gareth's progress. Malory writes: "And than [the Red Knight] departed unto the courte of kynge Arthure, and there *opynly* the Rede Knyght putt hymself in the mercy of sir Launcelot and of sir Gawayne; and there he tolde *opynly* how he was overcom and by whom, and also he tolde all the batayles frome the begynnyng to the endynge" (*Works* 326.13-18, emphasis added).[21] The worship is higher because a third party is the one relaying the message; it is not Gareth telling the story, but the one Gareth defeated. Additionally, because the news of Gareth's worship is being relayed by outsiders, it is spreading beyond the court collective into the kingdom collective. Gareth's worth (and thus the worth of the court from whence he came) is validated further; outsiders, not insiders, are labeling him worthy.

Open declarations also occur to Tristram and Lamerok. In "Lamerok de Galys," Tristram defeats sir Nabone and kills him. The people first offer their service and the land of Servage to Tristram; he refuses and presents Lamerok as a worthy lord. Lamerok, too, refuses, and all agree that Segwarides should govern them. Segwarides then frees all of Nabone's prisoners and " . . . sette good governaunce in that valey" (*Works* 446.20).

But Malory has a greater purpose for Segwarides. Immediately after securing Servage, Segwarides travels to Mark's court, "And so he turned into Cornwayle and tolde kynge Marke and La Beale Isode how sir Trystrames had avaunced hym in the Ile of Servayge. And there he proclaymed in all Cornwayle of all the aventures of thes two knyghtes, and so was hit *opynly* knowyn" (*Works* 446.21-25, emphasis added). These two knights—Tristram and Lamerok—are the greatest knights of Mark's court, so open declarations of their abilities and skills should please the king and bring glory to the kingdom. Malory does not allow Mark to reveal his own jealously and plan treason against Tristram; instead, the narrative moves straight into another scene with Lamerok. Malory's intention may have been to draw attention to the collective benefit of open declaration of prowess rather than to the private and individual hatred of Mark for his nephew Tristram.

The final use of the *open* declaration of one's abilities involves Lancelot. However, this time the public revelation of Lancelot's skills angers those in Arthur's court instead of bringing joy. In "The Fair Maid of Ascolat," Arthur calls for a joust and tournament at Winchester. Lancelot attends in disguise and fights against Arthur; however, he is sorely wounded by his nephew sir Bors. Gawain takes it upon himself to find the unknown knight and inquire of his health and his name. He arrives at Astolat and meets Elaine and discovers that the knight wearing her sleeve was none other than Lancelot. Upon his return to Camelot, " . . . there Gawayne all *opynly* disclosed hit to all the courte that hit was sir Launcelot that justed beste" (*Works* 1080.16-18, emphasis added). However, Lancelot's skills do not become the focus of conversation. While Bors is heartbroken for having wounded Lancelot, perhaps fatally, Guinevere is enraged at his betrayal of her. She interprets Lancelot's actions, disguising himself by carrying

Elaine's sleeve, as disloyal and traitorous. Her personal feelings burst forth and she confronts Bors, who admits that "' . . . [Lancelot] hath betrayed hymselff and us all'" (*Works* 1080.27-28) but refuses to call him a traitor. Guinevere cannot be mollified, however. Her personal unhappiness with her relationship with Lancelot is growing stronger. Just a section before, in "The Poisoned Apple," she and Lancelot argued and she sent him away. Now, in "The Fair Maid of Ascolat," he seems to have replaced Guinevere in his heart, and Guinevere reacts as a spurned lover would—wrathfully. It is only with Elaine's death and Lancelot's return that Guinevere's anger is appeased, but the price is high; cracks appear in the foundation of the private relationship that will eventually allow in public and open accusation that will cause irreversible damage.

Another type of *open* declaration that occurs in Malory's *Works* involves an affirmation of sentiment. Two women receive this declaration. The first is Guinevere, in "The Wedding of King Arthur." The young king Arthur, searching for a wife, casts his eye upon Guinevere: "'I love Gwenyvere, the kynges doughtir of Lodegrean, of the londe of Camelerde, the whyche holdyth in his house the Table Rounde that ye tolde me he had hit of my fadir Uther. And this damesell is the moste valyaunte and fayryst that I know lyvyng, or yet that ever I coude fynde'" (*Works* 97.16-21). Despite Merlin's warnings, Arthur brings her to Camelot, announcing her arrival in court:

> Whan kynge Arthure herde of the commynge of quene Gwenyver and the hondred knyghtes with the Table Rounde, than kynge Arthure made grete joy for hir commyng and that ryche presente, and seyde *opynly*,
> 'Thys fayre lady ys passyngly wellcom to me, for I have loved hir longe, and therefore there ys nothynge so leeff to me. And thes knyghtes with the Table Rownde pleasith me more than ryght grete rychesse.' (*Works* 98.18-25, emphasis added)

Such an open declaration of emotion cements Guinevere's place in Arthur's court. Though an outsider, upon their marriage she is another member of the collective; she brings worship to the collective through her gift of the Round Table, and she can now earn worship through the behavior and actions of Arthur's knights.

The second woman is Ettarde. In "Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt," Gawain comes across sir Carados, who tells him the story of Pelleas and Ettarde. Pelleas enters a tournament, whose prize is a circlet of gold to be given to the fairest lady present at the joust. There, "' . . . every day of three dayes he strake downe twenty knyghtes. And therefore they gaff hym the pryce. And furthewithall he wente thereas the lady Ettarde was and gaff her the cerclet and seyde *opynly* she was the fayreste lady that there was, and that wolde he preve uppon ony knyght that wolde sey nay'" (*Works* 166.23-28, emphasis added).[22] Unfortunately, Carados continues, the lady was proud and scorned Pelleas; in response, the court spurned Ettarde. She thus left the court and now tests Pelleas weekly by sending her knights to fight him and humiliate him if he loses. The lesson to Malory's audience seems clear: an *open* and public declaration of feeling must be acknowledged. Ettarde's scorn, perhaps brought about by an overenthusiastic view of courtly love, is surpassed by the response of the court; as Carados details, "' . . . all ladyes and jantyllwomen had scorne of hir that she was so prowde, for there were fayrer than she, and there was none that was there but and sir Pelleas wolde have profyrde hem love they wolde have shewed hym the same for his noble prouesse'" (*Works* 166.32-167.2). An open declaration carries great weight and power; ignoring or ridiculing that public vow can turn the collective against an individual swiftly.[23]

The final basic type of *open* declaration involves the challenge. Sometimes the challenge is straightforward, where the challenge is made without any other information being relayed. The first challenge comes in "Alexander the Orphan." Alexander has challenged knights to fight him for the castle Le Beale Regarde in a year's time. Alys le Beall Pylgryme, daughter of Aunserus the Pilgrim, " . . . anone as she harde of this crye, she wente unto kynge Arthurs [courte] and seyde *opynly*, in hyrynge of many knyghtes, that what knyght may overcom that knyght that kepyth the pyce of erthe 'shall have me and all my londis'" (*Works* 644.34-645.2, emphasis added). Malory adds weight to her open challenge by reiterating the idea of *open*ness with *in hryrnge of many knyghtes*. Her challenge was made in open court, but in an open court containing numerous knights; thus, her challenge is further legitimized by the number of listeners present. Moreover, the information will be disseminated even more quickly throughout the kingdom, for the collective is much more effective than an individual in passing on knowledge or information.

A second straightforward challenge occurs in *The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*. "The Healing of Sir Urry" begins with the narrative of Urry's wounding and turns quickly to his mother's attempts to have him healed. After seven years of fruitless wandering, " . . . she cam unto Scotlonde and into the bondes of Inglonde. And by fortune she com [nyghe] the feste of Pentecoste untyll kynge Arthurs courte that at that tyme was holdyn at Carlehylle. And whan she cam there she made hit to be *opynly* knowyn how that she was com into that londe for to hele her sonne" (*Works* 1145.31-1146.3, emphasis added). King Arthur immediately responds, and he and his knights come forward one by one to attempt Urry's healing. This challenge to heal Urry

occurs after the Grail quest, when knights have reverted to their worldly lifestyles and concerns. This *open* declaration, *open* challenge, to heal Urry acts as a reminder of what had been searched for and lost. The fact that Malory lists everyone who tries shows, first, the power of the *open* challenge to rouse the collective into action; second, it shows the importance of the individual within the collective. All fail until Lancelot arrives and reluctantly lays hands on Urry. For a brief, shining moment, Arthur's court regains the glory it had achieved before the Grail Quest.

But while simple *open* challenges like the above do occur, more often in Malory the challenges also contain assertions; in essence, the individuals making the challenge either dare others to take up the challenge or apply self-imposed restrictions. The first such challenge occurs in *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*. In "Isode the Fair," Tristram prepares to leave, for his true identity has been discovered. After explaining himself to Isode's father, the king explains that Tristram cannot remain at his court, because it would "' . . . displese many of my barownes and my wyff and my kynne'" (*Works* 391.21-22). Tristram agrees and then announces his exit to the court:

> . . . there he toke his leve at moste and leste, and *opynly* he seyde amonge them all,
> 'Fayre lordys, now hit is so that I muste departe. If there be ony man here that I have offended unto, or that ony man be with me greved, lette hym complayne hym here afore me or that ever y departe, and I shall amende hit unto my power. And yf there be ony man that woll proffir me wronge other sey me wronge, other shame me behynde my backe, sey hit now or ellys never, and here is my body to make hit good, body ayenste body!' (*Works* 392.19-28, emphasis added)

Tristram had already explained to the king his innocence in the death of Marhalte, the queen's brother. However, that explanation was private. Now, the king knows the truth and has no cause to hate Tristram; his court, on the other hand, has different ideas.

Therefore, Tristram's *open* speech to the collective is a direct challenge: if an individual has a problem, he should act knightly and speak up now so it can be redressed; otherwise, any act taken against Tristram will be seen as treasonous and unknightly.[24] Not surprisingly, those who still harbor a grudge against Tristram keep quiet and Tristram leaves unmolested. This scene is important; Tristram is behaving worshipfully—he is willing to heal individual hurts for the good of the collective. But he is also showing that individual hurts can harm the collective;[25] speaking here about the evils of treasonous attacks and personal grudges makes his later death at the hands of his uncle more tragic and wasteful. Isode's court, in which Tristram is an outsider, obeys the collective rules of behavior better than Tristram's own court, led by a kinsman.

A second asserting challenge involves Lancelot and Gawain. In "The Vengeance of Sir Gawain," Gawain and Arthur have besieged Joyous Garde. Lancelot speaks with Gawain from the castle wall. Gawain accuses Lancelot of various crimes, calls him a traitor, and vows Lancelot's death. However, Gawain makes one accusation that Lancelot cannot ignore: "' . . . thou haste many longe dayes overlad me and us all, and destroyed many of oure good knyghtes'" (*Works* 1189.31-33). Lancelot's response is swift and assertive: "'Sir, ye say as hit pleasith you . . . yet may hit never be seyde on me and *opynly* preved that ever I be forecaste of treson slew no goode knyght as ye, my lorde sir Gawayne, have done; and so ded I never but in my deffence, that I was dryven thereto in savyng of my lyff'" (*Works* 1189.34-1190.4, emphasis added). While Gawain tries to claim collective knowledge of Lancelot's bad behavior, Lancelot turns the statement around onto Gawain. Lancelot has never willingly acted in a way that has been *openly* proven to be damaging to the collective.[26] Gawain, however, killed Lamerok, a fellow

Round-Table knight and great man. Gawain immediately catches the slight and responds angrily. Interestingly enough, it is at this point that Malory has Arthur come to his senses, so that he " . . . wolde have takyn hys quene agayne and to have bene accorded with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawayne wolde nat suffir hym by no maner of meane" (*Works* 1190.17-20). Certainly, a number of the points Lancelot made in the speeches immediately preceding this last speech could have turned Arthur back to Lancelot's side; however, the last conversation revolved around *open* knowledge and collective behavior, and asserts that Lancelot has proven himself a better member of the collective than Gawain: this juxtaposition is intriguing. While Arthur may not yet acknowledge that he has let individual, private interests usurp the interests of the collective, he seems to have realized that he has spurned the collective[27] with his behavior.

But Lancelot makes another *open* challenge in "The Vengeance of Sir Gawain." After another round of threats by Gawain and explanation by Lancelot, finally Gawain relents and allows Guinevere to be returned to Arthur. First, Lancelot speaks to Guinevere, " . . . in hyryng of the kyng and hem all, 'Madame, now I muste departe from you and thys noble felyshyp for ever. And sytthyn hit ys so, I besech you to pray for me, and I shall pray for you. And telle ye me, and if ye be harde bestad by ony false tunges; but lyghtly, my good lady, sende me worde; and if ony knyghtes hondys undir the hevyn may delyver you by batayle, I shall delyver you'" (*Works* 1202.9-16). While Lancelot does speak *in hyryng of the kynge and hem all*, Malory does not use *open* for this speech. The reason to reserve *open* may be this: while the content of this speech is important, it is not as important as what directly follows—a clear challenge from Lancelot to everyone else regarding Guinevere's innocence. The earlier speech does let everyone know that

Lancelot will continue to champion the queen in future; however, his *open* challenge is meant for the present:

> And therewithall sir Launcelot kyssed the quene, and than he seyde all *opynly*,
> "Now lat se whatsomever he be in thys place that dare sey the quene ys nat trew unto my lorde Arthur, lat se who woll speke and he dare speke."
> And therewith he brought the quene to the kynge, and than sir Launcelot toke hys leve and departed. And there was nother kynge, duke, erle, barowne, nor knyght, lady nor jantyllwoman, but all they wepte as people oute of mynde, excepte sir Gawayne. And whan thys noble knyght sir Launcelot toke his horse to ryde oute of Carlehyll, there was sobbyng and wepyng for pure dole of hys departynge. (*Works* 1202.17-28, emphasis added)

No one answers Lancelot's *open* challenge; the queen returns to Arthur and the collective, excepting Gawain, mourns. Even Arthur is included in this list of the collective (*nother kynge*). Only Gawain is singled out by Malory: *all they wepte as people oute of mynde, excepte sir Gawayne*. His meaning is clear; Gawain is allowing his individual and personal hurts precedence over the health of the collective. The collective, in which Malory includes kings, dukes, earls, barons, knights, ladies, and gentlewomen, are all in one mind and act as one body—*sobbyng and wepyng for pure dole*. Lancelot does not want the splintering of the collective; he tries consistently in this section to reconcile himself with both Arthur and Gawain. However, Arthur has been silenced by Gawain, who is controlled by personal vengeance to act in blatant disregard to the survival of the collective.

A number of challenges involving the concept of *open*ness occur during the quest for the Grail. However, *open* appears not only in the narrative but in some of the statements themselves. In other words, while a challenge may not be made *openly* to a large group, the result of the challenge is *open* in nature. Gawain is the first to assert

himself. After the image of the Grail passes through the court, Gawain makes his announcement:

> 'Wherefore I woll make here a vow that to-morne, withoute longer abydynge, I shall laboure in the queste of the Sankgreall, and that I shall holde me oute a twelve-month and a day or more if nede be, and never shall I returne unto the courte agayne tylle I have sene hit more *opynly* than hit hath bene shewed here. And iff I may nat spede I shall returne agayne as he that may nat be ayesnt the wylle of God.' (*Works* 866.6-13, emphasis added)[28]

Though the challenge was made within hearing of many others, Malory does not identify Gawain's challenge as *openly* asserted; instead, Malory uses *openly* in reference to the Grail. This usage establishes a pattern unique to *The Tale of the Sankgreal*. The quest, though certainly external in nature, is also much more internal than other quests that the knights have experienced. Most of the knights will have to examine their individual faults and recognize why they will be unable to achieve the Grail; for many, it is an unwillingness to *open* their eyes fully.[29]

Another scene regarding one's *open*ness appears in "Sir Percival." Percival sees a wounded old man in a monastery as he receives Mass. He asks one of the priests the story of the man. In the ensuing tale, *openly* is used twice. The man is named Evelake, and he was a king of Sarras. During his quest for the Grail, he was almost blinded by God. Evelake cried out to his Lord: "'Fayre Lorde, lat me never dye tyll the good knyght of my blood of the nyneth degré be com, that I may se hym *opynly* that shall encheve the Sankgreall, and that I myght kysse hym'" (*Works* 908.25-28, emphasis added). In this case, the man wants to be able to see his descendant before his own death. Evelake gets a response; a voice says, "'Herde ys thy prayers, for thou shalt nat dye tylle he hath kyssed the. And whan that knyght shall com the clerenes of youre yen shall come agayne, and

thou shalt se *opynly*, and thy woundes shall be heled, and arst shall they never close'" (*Works* 908.30-34, emphasis added). The man has been alive for four hundred years as he waits through his punishment for the day in which he will achieve his salvation.

But Evelake is not the only one made aware of his shortcomings, of his blindness. Lancelot, too, uses *openly* to signify his desire to see the Grail and his sorrow at being denied. In "The Castle of Corbenic," Lancelot is struck down for entering a chamber from which he was banned. He lay comatose for 24 days. Upon his awakening, however, he makes a sorrowful speech, lamenting his inability to see the Grail: "'Why have ye awaked me? For I was more at ease than I am now. A, Jesu Cryste, who myght be so blyssed that myght se *opynly* Thy grete mervayles of secretnesse there where no synner may be?'" (*Works* 1017.6-9, emphasis added). Soon, however, Lancelot realizes that his comatose state was punishment for his presumption and that he had no right to declare himself worthy of the Grail. He then states his thankfulness for achieving as much as he had.[30]

The very next knight to which *openly* is coupled is Galahad. In "The Miracle of Galahad," Galahad is visited by one " . . . that had all the sygnes of the Passion of Jesu Cryste bledynge all *opynly* . . . " (*Works* 1030.3-5, emphasis added). Christ speaks to Galahad, revealing how special Galahad is; he is the only one who has come so far and will be able to achieve his goal: "'Thys ys,' seyde He, 'the holy dysshe wherein I ete the lambe on Estir Day, and now hast thou sene that thou moste desired to se. But yet hast thou nat sene hit so *opynly* as thou shalt se hit in the cité of Sarras, in the spirituall paleyse'" (*Works* 1030.19-22, emphasis added). However, Galahad must travel to Corbenic to fulfill his destiny.

After Percival's and Galahad's deaths, all the surviving knights return to Arthur's court changed; they are much more aware of their internal selves, their spiritual selves. Many, including Lancelot, have been made aware of the flaws they possess that prevented them from achieving their goal. Unfortunately, however, the collective allows itself to revert to old ways—to secular concerns, but even more dangerous, to individual concerns. Arthur's original collective, never strong to begin with, has been irrevocably damaged by the public revelation of spiritual weakness; the knights begin arguing amongst themselves, rumors start to circulate, and *open* accusations are allowed to thrive. Though always present, their numbers increase exponentially after the Grail Quest, as the next section will demonstrate.

Open Accusation

Negative information shared openly can threaten the power and strength of the collective, and Malory shows the origins and the results of such negative uses. Almost immediately after Arthur gains the throne, open accusations threaten its existence. In the first section of *The Tale of King Arthur*, entitled "Merlin," an individual comes to Arthur's court and makes an *open* accusation against Igrayne: "And the kynge welcommed Igrayne in the beste maner. Ryght so com in Ulphuns and seyde *opynly*, that the kynge and all myght hyre that were fested that day, 'Ye ar the falsyst lady of the wor[l]de, and the moste traytoures unto the kynges person'" (*Works* 45.6-11, emphasis added). Though Arthur warns him of the dangers inherent in his public speech, "'Beware,' seyde kynge Arthure, 'what thou seyeste: thou spekiste a grete worde'" (*Works* 45.12-13), Ulphuns continues, accusing Igrayne of being the cause of the war with the five kings:

> 'Sir, I am well ware,' seyde Ulphuns, 'what I speke, and here ys my gloove to preve hit uppon ony man that woll sey the contrary: that thys quene Igrayne ys the causer of youre grete damage and of youre grete warre, for and she wolde have uttirde hit in the lyff of Uther of the birth of you, and how ye were begotyn, than had ye never had the mortall warrys that ye have had. For the moste party of your barownes of youre realme knewe never whos sonne ye were, ne of whom ye were begotyn; and she that bare you of hir body sholde have made hit knowyn *opynly*, in excusynge of hir worship and youres, and in lyke [wyse] to all the realme. Wherefore I preve hir false to God and to you and to all youre realme. And who woll sey the contrary, I woll preve hit on hys body.' (*Works* 45.14-27, emphasis added)[31]

This speech is fascinating for its reliance on the dichotomous use of the concept of *open* speech; Ulphuns makes an *open* accusation against an individual, the queen, in order to promote the *open* declaration of Arthur's parentage.[32] Igrayne turns the focus onto Merlin, who reveals to Arthur that Igrayne is, in fact, his mother. However, while the truth may be known now within the court, it is still not known in the wider kingdom.

Therefore, Malory uses *open* again within *The Tale of King Arthur* in relation to Arthur's parentage. At the beginning of "The Wedding of King Arthur," Malory reminds his audience that not everyone knows yet that Arthur comes from royalty: "In the begynnyng of Arthure, aftir he was chosyn kynge by adventure and by grace, for the moste party of the barowns knew nat he was Uther Pendragon son but as Merlyon made hit *opynly* knowyn, but yet many kyngis and lordis hylde hym grete werre for that cause. But well Arthur overcom hem all . . . " (*Works* 97.1-6, emphasis added). This use is declarative in nature rather than accusatory; however, it reveals that open accusation may be stronger and have deeper ramifications than open declaration. Though Merlin had immediately responded to Ulphuns' accusation and proved Arthur's royal parentage, a number of other individuals also held the same viewpoint of Ulphuns; however, they had not yet heard Merlin's explanation and thus continued to fight against Arthur.

This use of open speech both to accuse and to declare appears again in Malory's *Works*. This time, however, it has tragic results. In "Balin or the Knight with the Two Swords," Balin uses public speech to accuse a knight of a crime and to declare his revenge upon that knight. Sir Garlon, king Pellam's brother, accosts Balin, who immediately reacts: "' . . . thys ys nat the firste spite that thou haste done me. And therefore I woll do that I come fore'" (*Works* 84.6-8). He immediately cuts Garlon's head in two and, in symbolic revenge, thrusts the fragment of the spear Garlon used to kill a fellow of Balin's into Garlon's body; he then " . . . seyde *opynly* [in Pellam's court] 'With that troncheon thou slewyste a good knyght, and now hit stykith in thy body'" (*Works* 84.14-16, emphasis added). Balin's announcement to the collective that he has a legitimate reason for his attack of Garlon makes the *open* accusation necessary. Otherwise, Balin has acted unworshipfully, as he is a guest in this court and has attacked Garlon for no apparent reason. Publicizing the reason provides Balin with some protection against those who will want to avenge Garlon's death.[33] Notably, King Pellam is the only one who reacts, and he reacts as Garlon's brother, not as Garlon's king. Unfortunately, in the battle between the two men, Balin delivers the 'Dolorous stroke,' which lays waste the castle and countryside.

Malory provides a third case in which an individual simultaneously accuses and declares openly. In this case, however, the result is more humorous. The scene occurs in *The Tale of Sir Gareth*, after Gareth has left the court on his quest with the yet unnamed lady. Sir Kay, Gareth's tormentor in the court, is upset with what he defines as Bewmaynes's impudence and vows to teach him a lesson: "Than sir Kay seyde all *opynly* in the hall, 'I woll ryde aftir my boy of the kychyn to wete whether he woll know me for

his bettir'" (*Works* 298.1-4, emphasis added). Kay is making both a declaration of his own ability to defeat Bewmaynes, but he is also accusing Bewmaynes of discourtesy, of acting better than his established rank of kitchen knave. In an amusing scene, Kay gets his comeuppance for his public accusation by being soundly defeated by Bewmaynes. The battle lasts one sentence: "Therewith sir Kay put his spere in the reest and ran streyght uppon hym, and Beaumaynes com as faste uppon hym with his swerde in his hand, and soo he putte awey his spere with his swerde, and with a foyne threste hym thorow the syde, that sir Kay felle downe as he had bene dede" (*Works* 298.16-21). Kay is " . . . borne home uppon [Launcelot's] shylde . . . " (*Works* 299.35-36) and mocked resoundingly by all in the court. His rash *open* accusation of another individual has resulted in his public humiliation by the collective.

A fourth scene of simultaneous accusation and declaration occurs in *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*. This time, however, the ending is not so humorous; instead, it reveals the delicate balance between individual desire and collective strength. Tristram has been roaming "frome contrey to contrey" (*Works* 784.27-28), having adventures and participating in battles. During this time his reputation, his worship, has grown. He has become a worthy knight; unfortunately, Lancelot's reputation suffers, for everyone talks of Tristram rather than Lancelot. The gossip is so powerful that " . . . sir Launcelottis bretherne and his kynnysmen wolde have slayne sir Trystram bycause of his fame" (*Works* 785.2-4). Tristram's supposed 'slights' of Lancelot are enough for some to vow vengeance; they see the reputation of an individual, Lancelot, as more important than the health of the collective, and it is up to Lancelot to set his kinsmen straight:

> But whan sir Launcelot wyste how hys kynnysmen were sette, he seyde to them *opynly*,

> 'Wyte you well that and ony of you all be so hardy to wayte my lorde sir Trystram wyth ony hurte, shame, or vylany, as I am trew knyght, I shall sle the beste of you all myne owne hondis. Alas, fye for shame, sholde ye for his noble dedys awayte to sle hym! Jesu defende,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that ever ony noble knyght as sir Trystram ys sholde be destroyed wyth treson.' (*Works* 785.4-13, emphasis added)

Lancelot first accuses his kinsmen of acting unknightly and does so *openly*, so all are aware not only of their guilt but of the seriousness of their shameful behavior. Lancelot is promoting collective internal shame to avoid the collective external shame that would arise from their murder of Tristram. Then, to further clarify his position, he publicly declares Tristram's worth, validating his abilities as a knight and thus his worth to the collective.[34]

Unfortunately, though, most of the accusations that occur are direct attempts to bring shame or humiliation to another individual and thus to the collective.[35] Morgan le Fay attempts to humiliate Arthur and thus doom his kingdom by tricking Tristram into carrying to a tournament involving Arthur and his knights a shield depicting a knight standing upon a king and queen. Arthur sees the shield and wonders at its meaning, while Guinevere, troubled, understands its purpose. However, Morgan guarantees that her pictorial accusation is not to be ignored by sending in a damsel to make a *open* accusation: "Than was there a damesell of quene Morgan in a chambir by kynge Arthure, and whan she harde kynge Arthure speke of that shylde, than she spake *opynly* unto kynge Arthure: 'Sir kynge, wyte you well thys shylde was ordayned for you, to warn you of youre shame and dishonoure that longith to you and youre quene'" (*Works* 557.30-35, emphasis added). Then, Morgan's emissary "pycked her away *pryvayly*" (*Works* 557.36, emphasis added) to avoid any negative repercussions for her public accusation. Arthur finally confronts Tristram and picks a fight when Tristram refuses to give his name, even

though Tristram does reveal that he carries the shield not by choice but by Morgan's decree. The prideful Arthur is defeated and wounded by Tristram, but instead of furthering his anger, Arthur's wound makes him realize that "'We have now as we have deservyd, for thorowe oure owne orgulyté we demaunded batayle of you, and yet youre name we know nat'" (*Works* 560.15-17). Morgan's attempt to destroy Arthur fails, but he does learn a powerful lesson: he is no longer that young, strong knight who defeated the Emperor Lucius; he can be defeated in a fight. Malory's audience also learns that there is still a great deal of brashness in Arthur, an emotional side that can take control of his rational side, with negative consequences. This time, the consequence was a wound to the left side; by the end of the text, the consequence is much more dire—the destruction of the collective and the death of Arthur at the hands of Mordred.

The rest of the open accusations that occur in Malory's *Works* fall in the last two sections of the work—*The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* and *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*. They seem to occur much more freely and more frequently than anywhere else in the text. Furthermore, the objects of accusation vary. One likely cause is the cessation of the Grail quest. The knights have returned empty-handed from their sacred quest and, because of their inner shame, have begun jockeying for position and reputation on the secular level again. Another sure cause involves one individual—Lancelot. He is the only knight returning from the Grail quest who had any real contact with the holy object. For some knights, his individual worth has grown too much; with both Tristram and Lamerok dead (both, interestingly enough, through treasonous attacks), Lancelot now poses the greatest threat. He, like Arthur, is a king, with great and powerful allies; however, Lancelot is also still a knight, a

knight whose prowess eclipses Arthur's. But perhaps even worse than his worshipful knightly reputation is his behavior with Guinevere; where before the Grail quest his interactions with Guinevere appeared more innocent and acceptable to the collective, after the Grail quest there is a clear change. Malory makes sure that his audience understands the seriousness of Lancelot's and Guinevere's private behavior.[36] Their relationship is not as private as they think it is, and gossip begins to intensify.[37]

Malory uses *prevy* three times in five lines but ends the description with *opyn* to show how the collective is being threatened by everyone's behavior and reactions:

> . . . sir Launcelot began to resorte unto quene Gwenivere agayne and forgate the promyse and the perfeccion that he made in the queste; for, as the book seyth, had nat sir Launcelot bene in his *prevy* thoughtes and in hys myndis so sette inwardly to the quene as he was in semynge outewarde to God, there had no knyght passed hym in the queste of the Sankgreall. But ever his thoughtis *prevyly* were on the quene, and so they loved togydirs more hotter than they dud toforehonde, and had many such *prevy* draughtis togydir that many in the courte spake of hit, and in especiall sir Aggravayne, sir Gawaynes brothir, for he was ever *opynne-mowthed*. (*Works* 1045.10-21, emphasis added)[38]

Malory juxtaposes the religious and the worldly, the private and the *open*, the desires of the individual with the greater interests of the collective. Though his audience already knows how the story ends, he makes sure to include additional scenes of *open* accusation to show how fragmented the kingdom and the court have become.

The first such accusation occurs in "The Poisoned Apple," right after Lancelot, aware of the gossip, leaves the court and Guinevere behind. Guinevere, in a fit of pique, commissions a "*prevy* dynere" (*Works* 1048.12, emphasis added) for the Round Table knights "in a *prevy* place by themselff" (*Works* 1048.28, emphasis added). Unfortunately, all this privacy allows Pyonell, with his own private grudge, to make an attempt on Gawain's life. An innocent knight, Patryse, is killed instead.[39] The members

of the court, the collective, already on edge, immediately focus their attention on their hostess, Guinevere. One of Patryse's kinsmen, sir Mador, announces to the group: "' . . . here have I loste a full noble knyght of my bloode, and therefore uppon thys shame and dispite I woll be revenged to the utterance!'" (*Works* 1049.25-27). Malory narrates then that " . . . *opynly* sir Mador appeled the quene of the deth of hys cousyn sir Patryse" (*Works* 1049.28-29, emphasis added).[40] Mador does act understandably, seeking revenge for the death of his kinsman; however, he also acts hastily, *openly* accusing the queen of the act. Only a court already in disarray, already torn between private wants and public need, would, first, allow that accusation to be pronounced publicly, and, second, tolerate Guinevere's going unchampioned.[41]

Bors, speaking to his fellow knights, finally accuses them of unknightly behavior: "'Wete you well, my fayre lordis, hit were shame to us all and we suffird to se the moste noble quene of the worlde to be shamed *opynly*, consyderyng her lorde and oure lorde ys the man of moste worship crystynde, and he hath ever worshipped us all in all placis'" (*Works* 1053.32-36, emphasis added). The knights' response reveals just how fractured the court has become: "'As for oure moste noble kynge Arthure, we love hym and honoure hym as well as ye do, but as for quene Guenyver, we love hir nat, because she ys a destroyer of good knyghtes'" (*Works* 1054.1-4). Bors counters with an impassioned speech that only convinces a few knights of Guinevere's goodness as a queen and of her innocence in Patryse's death. Only when Lancelot returns to court and defeats sir Mador in battle and then Nenyve relates the true culprit is Guinevere's name fully cleared.

Malory has Nenyve's narrative incorporate *openly* three times to counterbalance the *open* accusation Mador had made: " . . . than she tolde hit *opynly* that [Guinevere]

was never gylty, and there she disclosed by whom hit was done, and named hym sir Pynel, and for what cause he ded hit. There hit was *opynly* knowyn and disclosed, and so the quene was [excused]. And thys knyght sir Pynell fledde unto hys contrey, and was *opynly* knowyn that he enpoysynde the appyls at that feste . . . " (*Works* 1059.16-22, emphasis added).[42] Malory then describes what was written upon Patryse's tomb; again, Pyonell's guilt is described, as is Guinevere's innocence. Malory may then end this section with "all was forgyffyn" (*Works* 1060.5-6), but the strength of the collective has been permanently damaged by this event. The downward spiral has already begun; it can only gain speed and more victims.[43]

Lancelot is the next victim of open accusation; this time, however, Arthur has become the accuser, though unwittingly. Elaine, the fair maid of Astolat, is placed in a barge upon her death and sails down the Thames to Arthur's court in Westminster. Both Arthur and Guinevere board the barge and find Elaine's letter. However, Arthur makes an interesting choice: "And so whan the kynge was com to hys chambir he called many knyghtes aboute hym and seyde that he wolde wete *opynly* what was wryten within that lettir" (*Works* 1096.23-25, emphasis added). The letter is addressed to Lancelot, but everyone is read the contents before Lancelot is even aware of the letter's existence; Lancelot's private business is made painfully public:[44]

> 'Moste noble knyght, my lorde sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two at debate for youre love. And I was youre lover, that men called the Fayre Maydyn of Ascolate. Therefore unto all ladyes I make my mone, yet for my soule ye pray and bury me at the leste, and offir ye my masse-peny: thys ys my laste requeste. And a clene maydyn I dyed, I take God to wytnesse. And pray for my soule, sir Launcelot, as thou arte pereles.' (*Works* 1096.28-35)

Guinevere chastises Lancelot for his callous treatment of Elaine, claiming he could have saved her life. Lancelot defends himself, and Arthur immediately supports him. Guinevere later apologizes for her earlier anger (both before and after Elaine's death), but the damage has already been done. By having Elaine's letter read aloud to the collective, Arthur has made a private issue an *open* one, potentially shaming Lancelot. Guinevere, in an already established pattern, judges Lancelot unfairly and then asks for forgiveness. The ultimate result? Lancelot fights against Arthur in "The Great Tournament" and actually never fights for Arthur again.[45]

In "The Knight of the Cart," Lancelot makes an accusation of his own, against Mellyagaunte. Guinevere has already been kidnapped and 'rescued' by Lancelot, though he was wounded while breaking into Guinevere's chamber to " . . . t[a]ke hys plesaunce and hys lykynge . . . " (*Works* 1131.30). When Mellyagaunte sees Guinevere's blood-stained bed, he accuses her of treason. Lancelot comes to her defense and the two knights agree to battle in eight days. Mellyagaunte entraps Lancelot, but he is freed by a lady for the price of a kiss. Lancelot then rides triumphantly into court and makes his accusation against Mellyagaunte *openly*:

> And than was sir Launcelot called tofore kynge Arthur, and there he tolde *opynly* tofor the kynge all how that sir Mellyagaunce had served hym firste and laste. And whan the kynge and quene and all the lordis knew off the treson of sir Mellyagaunte, they were all ashamed on hys behalffe. Than was the quene sente fore and sette by the kynge in the grete truste of hir champion. (*Works* 1138.6-12, emphasis added)[46]

The shame is not on Guinevere; it is on Mellyagaunte. He has made a rash accusation and has acted unknightly in order to prove his accusation correct. It really is only a technicality that Lancelot defeats Mellyagaunte and clears Guinevere's name. He even does so unarmored and armed only with his off-hand. Not surprisingly, Lancelot still kills

Mellyagaunte, who is buried with " . . . mencion made uppon hym who slewe hym and for what cause he was slayne" (*Works* 1140.9-10).[47] Unfortunately, this accusation against Guinevere is not the last. But while Mellyagaunte's behavior makes him an outsider, a knight acting against Arthur's court and the entire collective, her next accuser is an insider, bound by blood to the king, which adds greater weight and thus additional peril to her situation.

The final public accusation occurs in "Slander and Strife" and sets up the ultimate fracturing of the Round Table. As with "The Poisoned Apple," the section begins with narrative comment that ends with Aggravain's response to events. Again, Malory uses *prevy* to identify the dichotomy between public and private actions: "And all was longe uppon two unhappy knyghtis whych were named sir Aggravayne and sir Mordred, that were brethirn unto sir Gawayne. For thys sir Aggravayne and sir Mordred had ever a *prevy* hate unto the quene, dame Gwenyver, and to sir Launcelot; and dayly and nyghtly they ever wacched uppon sir Launcelot" (*Works* 1161.9-14, emphasis added).[48] Unfortunately, two individuals' private hatred is brought into the open, forcing the collective to get involved, by Aggravain:

> So hyt myssefortuned sir Gawayne and all hys brethirne were in kynge Arthurs chambir, and than sir Aggravayne seyde thus *opynly*, and nat in no counceyle, that manye knyghtis myght here:
> 'I mervayle that we all be nat ashamed bothe to se and to know how sir Launcelot lyeth dayly and nyghtly by the quene. And all we know well that hit ys so, and hit ys shamefully suffird of us all that we shulde suffir so noble a kynge as kynge Arthur ys to be shamed.' (*Works* 1161.15-23, emphasis added)

Malory, whether intentionally or not, has revealed his own stance on Aggravain's actions. First, the event was *myssefortuned*, defined simply as "unfortunate" by Vinaver (*Works* 1727), but carrying greater connotations. Then, Malory uses three synonymous phrases

to impress upon his audience the seriousness of Aggravain's accusation: *opynly*, *nat in no counceyle*, and *that manye knyghtis myght here*.[49] Each of these phrases alone would have been effective. Using all three makes a powerful statement.[50]

This scene is the last scene of *open* accusation by an individual to the collective,[51] but it is the most damaging; it is the accusation that directly brings about the final splintering of the court. Lancelot leaves the Round Table, taking with him his kinsmen and loyal followers. He is forced to rescue the queen and in the process accidentally kills Gareth, whose death motivates Gawain to force his uncle's hand and wage war on Lancelot. The health of the collective is no longer even a secondary concern; private enmity has usurped it and essentially terminated it.

Conclusion

Malory's scenes involving both positive and negative public or *open* speech are powerful when studied together. These scenes would have evoked much discussion from Malory's audience, already inclined to examine and talk about their interpretations of events relating to *counsel* or *advice* as well as *shame* or *worship*. Malory has shown a supportive pattern of *open* declaration to his gentry audience and thus instructed them on how to speak well as a member of the collective. However, he has also supplied numerous examples of destructive *open* accusation, which may actually be more applicable to Malory's audience at the time, as loyalties within the court were strained between Lancastrians and Yorkists, between people speaking and acting for the betterment of the country versus those speaking and acting for the betterment of themselves. Arthur's court, a collective of men linked by fellowship, is susceptible to the whims of individuals.[52] Edward's court runs a parallel course. As Stephen Knight

explains, “Malory shows how the system of feudal organisation and public values is itself a major element in its catastrophe, and he amplifies its contradictory destructive mechanisms . . . ” (“The Social Function of the Middle English Romances” 118).

Malory instructs his audience on how to navigate better within the collective and potentially how to improve upon the collective’s identity and focus. By doing so, he was tackling an issue that few other writers of the time addressed; he was not merely examining the system to which he belonged, he was advocating a change—a change for the better. Malory’s political ties need not play a part in this decision: he was speaking for a higher good than that related either to Henry VI or Edward IV. He was hoping the court could improve itself *despite* who was in charge. He was wanting the court to which he and his audience belonged to become great again, to garner respect and admiration from all over; he was wanting his audience to learn from previous mistakes, mistakes made even in the greatest court of all time—Arthur’s.[53]

Notes

[1]As Terence McCarthy notes in *Reading the* Morte Darthur, a knight's duty is to win worship, " . . . and the worship he wins is part of his own individual reputation, but it is also shared by the group, an aspect of their togetherness, for they are fighting for a joint cause" (83).

[2]This narrative detail is centrally important to the final book of *The Works*; its inclusion is by no means accidental. Malory reveals not only his own opinion of Gawain but also his admiration of Gareth, thus relaying these opinions to his audience and affecting their absorption and interpretation of the text. Such connections between author, text, and audience are natural and expected, as Bakhtin asserts and I have sought to establish in previous chapters.

[3]I have already discussed D. S. Brewer's assertions from *The* Morte Darthur: *Parts Seven and Eight* in Chapter 3, "Gareth: The Development of a Worshipful Knight." In short, "Honour demands certain personal loyalties. The first is to the king. The second is to one's 'friends' . . . [which] include a kinship group . . . " (26).

[4]Malory, too, provided many of these same lessons, as I have discussed in my previous chapters.

[5]It is used in its verb form, rather than its adverbial form: "For all that haue thou neuyr the more hate / To his vertu, strengthe and nobles, / Which *opened* the yatis of wurthynes" (*The Epistle of Othea* 10.15-17, emphasis added), and it is not related to public speech.

[6]A number of uses are in relation to *open* war, for example: "Bot now on dayes, sik lawis ar nocht wele kepit, for symple knychtis and baronis that ar na princis will tak *opyn* were and generale, ilkane till othir, but ony leve of prince or othir power hafand, the quhilk is agayne the law of armes" (*The Buke of the Law of Armys* 108.31-35, emphasis added). Other uses are not tied to public speech at all: "And as langand this questioun, the doctoure makis sik a conclusioun that, gif a gentill man or lord had tane ane armes at his plesaunce and borne it lang tyme *opynly*, kend in ded of armes and in weris, or othir wayis in tyme of pes, that it war kyd and knawin till him and his lignage, thare aw nane othir in that contree to tak the samyn to bere" (278.17-23, emphasis added).

[7]Armstrong cites a specific example: "The royal letter in 1453 announcing the birth of a son to Queen Margaret was published at Canterbury in the cathedral nave, and the public stood by while a *Te Deum* was sung . . . Most evidence seems to indicate publication by word of mouth, but copies of official letters may have been posted, for seditious bills certainly were" (442-43).

[8]The assumption is that if something bad happens, there is written proof that the Pastons' actions were justified and proper.

[9]Malory himself was one of these peripheral court members. As Richard Barber explains in "Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture under Edward IV":

> Sir Thomas Malory was senior enough to be mentioned by name in the list of knights who went north with the king in 1462, while John Paston III was merely a member of the duke of Norfolk's retinue. Malory would therefore have had some standing among those around the king, and may have come into contact not only with the court itself, but also, during the years of peace which followed, with a wider circle which included the city of London and men familiar with the other courts of Europe . . . I am not arguing that he was actually a member of Edward's household, but that he was one of the throng of minor gentry who came and went around the court, pursuing the king's favour or that of the great magnates who were often to be found there. (135)

Malory, experiencing the movement from nobility-heavy to gentry-heavy courts, witnessed the troubles faced by these new court families. Though not a member of the inner circle, he had been associated with the court longer than some of the members and thus could supply them with his knowledge.

[10]There are a few exceptions. Several scenes involve action taken *openly*; while interesting, they are irrelevant to my concerns in this chapter. The first *open* action involves Tristram: " . . . knyghtly he rode forth oute of the castell *opynly* that was callyd the Castell of Tyntagyll" (*Works* 494.26-27, emphasis added). Lancelot, too, acts *openly*: in his battle with sir Mellyagaunce, Lancelot " . . . shewed hym *opynly* hys bare hede and the bare lyffte syde" (*Works* 1139.31-32, emphasis added). The final *open* action is taken by Guinevere when she is trapped in the Tower of London by Mordred. He begs and bullies her to remove herself from the tower, " . . . but all thys avayled nought, for she answerd hym shortely, *opynly* and pryvayly, that she had levir sle herselff than to be maryed with hym" (*Works* 1228.26-29, emphasis added). The occurrences are so few that no clear pattern is established; furthermore, their use does not damage the legitimacy of my hypothesis at all.

[11]As Terence McCarthy mentions, "For Malory, one's public identity and one's real identity are the same thing: a knight, if not a book, can be judged by his cover . . . For Malory, private identity is of secondary importance; one's role, one's official, public position is what counts" ("Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 3).

[12]As Raluca Radulescu notes in *The Gentry Context for Malory's* Morte Darthur, " . . . damage was done to the worship of people who brought about trouble and slander on others" (24). Though she was speaking of real-life behavior, this point was just as real in Arthur's world.

[13]This focus on fellowship, the "all for one and one for all" mantra, is admirable but, as Malory will show, unrealistic, because "Malory's ideal of fellowship depends on

the knightly characters of the people involved, which can too often turn unstable and bring on a tragedy of personal conflicts" (Ellis 73-74). Too many individuals are unable to set aside their personal and kinship concerns for the betterment of the larger group, the collective. In addition, as McCarthy notes, " . . . the chivalric and amatory adventures of one knight can be an offence to the family honour of another. They can even, in theory, be an offence to the community as a whole . . . " (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 21). Furthermore, once an allegation is made public, it carries power, even if untrue, for "The *appearance* of wrongdoing is as serious an offense as the reality, more so perhaps, if only because the appearance is so humiliatingly public" (B. Kennedy, "Malory's Lancelot: 'Trewest Lover, of a Synful Man'" 443). Though speaking of Arthur after Aggravain's *open* accusation, this statement applies much more generally. If someone has such a problem with an individual that he resorts to making false *open* accusations, the individual's *worship* is seriously threatened, as is the *worship* of the group to which he belongs.

[14]Additionally, explains Elizabeth Pochoda, "Chivalry, the *modus vivendi* of this highly ideal political structure, contains at its heart a self-destructive and an anti-social tendency: the necessity of winning worship for the king often forces one to do so at the expense of one's fellows, at the risk of envy, and at the cost of eliciting revenge. All three consequences place the order and stability of the realm in peril" (91-92). She continues:

> . . . Malory's narrative discloses that the institution has asked more from the individual members of the Round Table in the way of renouncing private interests and of mutual devotion than is either realistic or safe. Conflicting loyalties exist in all societies; they are not in any way peculiar to the Round Table. What is distinctive about this structure is that its chivalric code, in an attempt to keep such conflicts under control, has repressed them almost out of sight by idealizing itself and exaggerating the loyalty of the Round Table knights to each other. (106)

Malory allows his audience to see this dichotomy between Arthur's expectations and the subsequent reality. *Open* speech, whether positive or negative, affects the collective. If the reality is flawed to begin with, the collective cannot succeed. Malory's audience could thus apply these lessons to its own flawed court, with its conflicting loyalties and power plays; the gentry could potentially save Edward's court.

[15]This new court collective, "In short, this new chivalry, in Malory's book, entails a new concept of patriotism and loyalty, loyalty not only to the family or even in the feudal manner to the person of Arthur the king, but also to the Round Table, to the whole order and state. A crime against any knight must be counted not only as a personal outrage against a particular sworn brother, but also as a crime against the order of chivalry and against the whole Round Table" (Moorman, *The Book of Kyng Arthur* 62). However, that concept of loyalty was followed by only a few knights, most notably Arthur, Lamerok, and Lancelot. Unfortunately, as Andrea Clough explains, "Arthur

seemed from the beginning to underestimate the power of personal emotions: he expected his knights to rise above private attachments and antipathies . . . ” (148). In the end, Arthur is betrayed by his own nephews and his model of collective fellowship destroyed.

[16]As Elizabeth Pochoda notes, “ . . . how does the just government mediate between its public responsibilities to the common good and the private interests of its members?” (64-65). Edward IV made this mediation more difficult by causing unrest within the court collective itself, for he “ . . . developed a policy of advancing members of the gentry into the nobility; this brought tensions within the old nobility” (Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory’s* Morte Darthur 8).

[17]Radulsecu notes that “Fifteenth-century political discourse was plagued by private ambitions, while appeals to loyalty to the noble cause of the common weal of the realm were often a political tool for advancing one’s interests” (*The Gentry Context for Malory’s* Morte Darthur 71). Such behavior goes against Malory’s views of a strong collective.

[18]Part of the problem in Edward’s court, McCarthy notes, is that even Edward IV’s family was not reliable: “ . . . Edward IV did not have the confidence of his own brothers; it was the men he had enriched that he could rely on most” (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 168). If even Edward’s family members are making open accusations against him (as did a disgruntled Warwick), the loyalties of the court are extremely damaged and any *open* speech is potentially fatal to the court’s worship.

[19]Unfortunately, Arthur’s decision angers his nephew Gawain, who struggles throughout the text between fellowship and kinship loyalties.

[20]This oath is referred to twice in *The Tale of Gareth*, both in speeches by Lancelot. Notably, both references include the word *openly*. The first use is when the oath is originally sworn; Lancelot states: “‘ . . . and that I promyse you by the feyth of my body, untyll hit be *opynly* knowyn’” (*Works* 299.25-26, emphasis added). The second use comes right after the open declaration of Gareth’s prowess. Arthur questions Lancelot about Gareth’s true identity, and he reveals the oath that he has sworn: “‘I suppose I do so [know hym],’ seyde sir Launcelot, ‘or ellys I wolde not have yeffyn hym the hyghe Order of Knyghthode, but he gaff me suche charge at that tyme that I woll never discover hym untyll he requyre me, or ellis hit be knowyn *opynly* by som other’” (*Works* 326.28-32, emphasis added).

[21]Furthermore, as Elizabeth Pochoda writes, “Not only do Gareth’s actions glorify Arthur, but they win new members for the Round Table. Each of these recruits is presumably stripped of his envy and destructiveness and is thus suited for a fellowship bound together by loyalty” (96).

[22]I find it intriguing that Gawain is receiving this information second-hand, through Carados, but Carados makes sure to explain that Pelleas made an *open*

declaration to Ettarde. Then, he even relays the court's, the collective's, response to Ettarde's unladylike reaction.

[23]And, as I established in the introductory chapter, Ettarde's reaction after being caught sleeping with Gawain is centered around public shame.

[24]As Andrew Lynch asserts in *Malory's Book of Arms*, "[Tristram's] prize of great prowess is the ability to take and defend every action according to the dominant public modes" (95).

[25]John Paston I encourages his wife to make the same kind of public admonition, encouraging the collective to control reckless individuals. In a letter dated 27 June 1465, John writes to Margaret, John Daubeney, and Richard Calle regarding the unrest at Drayton and Hellesdon, two manors entrusted to Paston and threatened by the Duke of Suffolk:

> Item, I am in purpose to take assise ageynse hem at tis tyme, and ell I wold haue sent theder streyt be a letter of atorney to entre in my name. Neuer the les ye be a gentilwoman, and it is worshep for yow to confort yowr tenantis; wherfor I wolde ye myth ryd to Heylisdon and Drayton and Sparh[a]m, and tari at Drayto[n] and speke with hem, and byd hem hold with ther old master til I com, and that ye haue sent me word but late, wherfor ye may haue non answer yet. And informe hem as I ha wrete to yo[w] with-in, and sey *oupinly* it is a shame that any man shuld set anny lord on so ontrwe a mater, and speciall a preste; and lete hem wete as sone as I am com hom I shall see hem. (*Paston Letters* 133, emphasis added)

Such a public reminder to the tenants of their legal lord—John Paston—should convince the group that those few individuals who are turning their attentions to the Lord of Suffolk are doing so in a way to endanger the collective. The collective has the power and the weight of greater numbers and can better control the disaffected in the group than a distant lord or an at-hand gentlewoman.

[26]Namely, treason against another Round Table knight.

[27]In "Slander and Strife," Arthur deliberately mentions the loss of the fellowship, the collective: "' . . . alas,' seyde the kynge, 'me sore repentith that ever sir Launcelot sholde be ayenste me, for now I am sure the noble felyshyp of the Rounde Table ys brokyn for ever, for wyth hym woll many a noble knyght holde'" (*Works* 1174.13-16).

[28]As Elizabeth Pochoda notes, "In Malory Gawain's enthusiasm stems from his curiosity alone; he wants to see what the Grail looks like. In Malory it is Gawain, not Galahad, who sets the tone of the quest" (117). Unfortunately, this tone is distinctly irreligious, which foreshadows the failure of so many of the knights.

[29]As Stephen Knight remarks in "The Social Function of the Middle English Romances," "The impact of the grail story on [Malory's] work, and perhaps on his imagination, is to oppose a Christian system of internalised values to the external values of honour and shame, previously the only, and rather frail set of sanctions available in his Arthurian world" (117). The utter failure of the Round Table collective to achieve the Grail proves the lack of internal *openness* each individual, and thus the group, experiences. Characters will regularly state their desire to see things *openly* but most will be unable to fulfill that desire.

[30]Ironically enough, Gawain also gets to see something *openly*; however, it is not the Grail but his own inability to change. In "Sir Gawain," Gawain, who has botched every step of his quest for the Grail, finally receives a straightforward affirmation of his failure; Nacien the hermit interprets Gawain's vision, ending with these words of Christ: "'Knyghtes of pore fayth and of wycked beleve, thes three thynges fayled: charité, abstinaunce and trouthe. Therefore ye may nat attayne thys adventure of the Sankgreall'" (*Works* 948.7-10). Gawain uses *openly* to convey his understanding: "'Sertes,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'full sothly have ye seyde, that I se hit *opynly*. Now I pray you telle me why we mette nat with so many adventures as we were wonte to do?'" (*Works* 948.11-13, emphasis added). However, the obtuse Gawain immediately leaves and again searches for the adventures that he will not find. The audience probably made jokes at Gawain's expense, but Malory's deliberate use of *open* with three specific knights during the Grail Quest—Lancelot, Gawain, and Galahad (as you will see below)—is noteworthy. Galahad is the knight no one could ever equal; Lancelot and Gawain, on the other hand, are more earthly, more imitatable. However, they are two completely different knights with two completely different agendas. Lancelot is the better of the two role models, which Malory has made obvious throughout the *Works*. His using *open* in relation to these two knights will also remind his audience of their attitudes toward the Grail quest when these two knights come together with such tragic consequences in *The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*.

[31]Parentage is the subject of one other discussion involving *open*, but this time it involves Lancelot. In *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, Lancelot meets a hermit who interprets Lancelot's vision for him. During his description, the hermit then speaks of Lancleot's son Galahad, instructing Lancelot (not accusing him) to announce his existence in public: "' . . . for thou knew the doughter of kyng Pelles fleyshly, and on her thou begatist sir Galahad, and that was he that at the feste of Pentecoste sate in the Syge Perelous. And therefore make thou hit to be knowyn *opynly* that he ys of thy begetynge. And I counceyle the, in no place prees nat uppon hym to have ado with hym, for hit woll nat avayle no knyght to have ado with hym'" (*Works* 930.21-28, emphasis added). By stating publicly that Galahad is his son, Lancelot wins worship for himself (for fathering the only knight who achieved the Grail) and for Arthur's court (for validating Galahad's place at the Sege Perelous), as Mary Hynes-Berry explains: "[Lancelot] is no more of a failure in our eyes because of the degree of success which Galahad enjoys. If anything, he is more a success because he is the father of such a son—and the only knight capable

of being so" ("Malory's Translation of Meaning: *The Tale of the Sankgreal*" 251). Even Guinevere does not punish Lancelot for his infidelity.

[32]Interestingly enough, Igrayne had kept quiet in the first place because she did not even know the father of her child. Malory describes the scene and uses *privately* to show how aware Igrayne was of the necessity for secrecy, not only for her own safety but for the health of her kingdom, now in the hands of her new husband Uther:

> So after the deth of the duke kyng Uther lay with Igrayne, more than thre houres after his deth, and begat on her that nyght Arthur; and or day cam, Merlyn cam to the kyng and bad hym make hym redy, and so he kist the lady Igrayne and departed in all hast. But whan the lady herd telle of the duke her husband, and by all record he was dede or ever kynge Uther came to her, thenne she merveilled who that myghte be that laye with her in lykenes of her lord. So she mourned *pryvely* and held hir pees. (*Works* 9.21-30, emphasis added)

[33]This powerful scene surely incited conversation among Malory's audience members regarding Balin's behavior: has he invoked *shame* or displayed *worship*? Was he acting as a good kinsman or a bad guest? *The Works* includes many such scenes that Malory's audience could use as a foundation for formal instruction or informal debate. Balin's actions being *open* in nature play a great part in the ambiguity of the scene, which Malory's audience would appreciate, for, as Bakhtin notes,

> When we seek to understand a word, what matters is not the direct meaning the word gives to objects and emotions—this is the false front of the word; what matters is rather the actual and always self-interested *use* to which this meaning is put and the way it is expressed by the speaker, a use determined by the speaker's position (profession, social class, etc.) and by the concrete situation. *Who* speaks and under what conditions he speaks: this is what determines the word's actual meaning. (401)

Though Bakhtin is speaking more generally of the concept of the *word*, his point is applicable to actual word-study; the connotations and denotations of *open* speech, the experiences of the audience members (as well as Malory himself) that influence their beliefs, all of the nuances and subtleties of behavior affect the interpretation of the scene and the lessons learned from that scene.

[34]He thus instructs his fellow knights of proper behavior as well as Malory's audience, for "When Lancleot doesn't teach the principles of proper Arthurian behavior explicitly, he does so by example" (Mandel 86).

[35]And, as Julian Pitt-Rivers explains, "To leave an affront unavenged is to leave one's honour in a state of desecration and this is therefore equivalent to cowardice" ("Honour and Social Status" 26). This expectation is a strong element of the chivalric

code; however, it can cause problems when the public/private element is incorporated. The division becomes one of degrees: rumors (*noise* or *slaundir*), though voiced, are not *open*, public allegations. Therefore, only *openly* voiced affronts require one to act. This boundary is clear with the Lancelot/Guinevere affair. It is a well-known truth that everyone gossips about, but it is not publicly or *openly* established until Aggravain and Mordred speak up.

[36]Beverly Kennedy explains in *Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur:

> Of course, frequent arm-in-arm and tête-à-tête strolls by Lancelot and the queen, in full sight of the court, are more than enough evidence to set tongues wagging, malicious tongues especially. At the same time, however, except for their frequency, they offer no more proof of a guilty relationship than the conversations between Lancelot and all those ladies and damsels who daily beseech him to be their champion. (286)

This clear division between unproven rumor and proven fact is important, for rumors can be ignored; they are not part of the public, collective ethos the way *open* speech is.

[37]As Karen Cherewatuk notes in "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'," the chivalric manuals, including Christine's *Epistle of Othea*, do explore the dangers of gossip, especially the type Mordred and Aggravain employ (65); however, since I am not examining Malory's usage of *noise* or *sclaundir* in this project, I will be disregarding those uses both in *The Works* and in the chivalric manuals of the time.

[38]Numerous critics have examined this scene; I wish to focus here only on some of those who speak specifically on the public versus private behavior of the characters. Kenneth Hodges, in "Guinevere's Politics in Malory's *Morte Darthur*," identifies one real problem with Lancelot and Guinevere's relationship, that their " . . . love poses two threats: private adultery, treasonous because of the threat of a bastard heir and the emotional injury to the king; and public favoritism, politically dangerous for those not allied with the lucky lover" (63). For members of the collective who still prefer the family group over the fellowship group, Lancelot's close connection to both Arthur and Guinevere is seen as a clear political threat. For the Orkeney brothers (excepting Gareth), Lancelot is poaching, sexually and politically. However, Terence McCarthy disagrees, stating that "Their relationship itself was not the cause [for the Round Table's collapse]—not even when it was made public—because however much it may have challenged existing loyalties as a private level, it was not one to undermine the unity of the state. Lancelot's devotion in the service of the queen was a relationship everyone knew existed and one which brought public honour to all concerned" ("Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 11).

Furthermore, "When the private nature of the relationship remained unspoken there were no public ill-effects, only honour. And when the relationship was voiced and made public, it appeared sordid and disruptive merely because there was disruption in the

voice of Mordred and Agravain" (McCarthy, "Private Worlds in *Le Morte Darthur*" 12). This shift, McCarthy notes, is important:

> In a public world, where the welfare of the state is of prime importance, private misdemeanours matter only when, through carelessness, they rear their heads in public. Throughout the *Morte Darthur*, but particularly in the final tales, it is not adultery but speaking about adultery, not private sin but public shame, which matters, and its importance can be seen in the shift in emphasis given to language, noise, and the public word. (*Reading the* Morte Darthur 104-05)

Radulescu echoes McCarthy's sentiments: " . . . thus far, the conspiracy of silence has ensured stability and unity in King Arthur's kingdom and within the Round Table fellowship. In this sense keeping silence is politically wise, and the deliberate ignorance of the affair . . . reflects the way the Arthurian society deals with both personal and political issues. Peace is to be maintained at the expense of truth" (*The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur 132).

Julie Nelson Couch, like McCarthy and Radulescu, remarks upon the willingness of the collective to keep quiet to maintain the status quo:

> Malory's court never actually speaks 'of hit' [the relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere] until Aggravain's accusation in the eighth and final book [despite Aggravain's inability to keep his mouth shut in this scene]. In other words, Malory points out the painful common knowledge as book seven opens, but then creates a court that is unwilling to face destructive reality. In respecting its rulers with silence, the court shows a respect for itself and ultimately for the chivalric ideal of the Round Table. In its desire to maintain the ideal knightly society, the court is willing to concede all power, including the momentum of the story itself, to the reigning three. ("With Due Respect: The Royal Court in Malory's 'The Poisoned Apple' and 'The Fair Maid of Astolat'" 72)

All seem able to keep quiet, understanding the threat an *open* revelation of the affair entails, excepting Aggravain and Mordred. Unfortunately, it only takes one voice to undo the entire collective in this instance, due to the king's and queen's involvement.

[39]As Stephen Knight observes in *Arthurian Literature and Society*, Malory's audience may have triggered real concerns, for "Charges of poisoning were well known in the fifteenth century—Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was widely thought to have died of poison in 1447, and five years previously his wife was convicted of trying to kill Henry VI by poison and sorcery" (130).

[40]Kenneth Hodges notes that Guinevere's private picnic, "Instead of bringing the affinities [the kinship groups of Lancelot, Tristram, Gawain, and Lamerok] together, the episode drives them further apart. The attack, obviously aimed at Gawain, casts obvious

suspicion on Launcelot's affinity in general and the queen in particular" ("Guinevere's Politics in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" 66). The private liaisons between Lancelot and Guinevere, already subject to covert discussion among the collective, are not the primary cause for Mador's accusation but they are certainly secondary, according to Hodges. Plummer supports this assertion, claiming that "Though the accusation is misinformed, it is credited by a court already suspicious of its queen" ("*Tunc se Coeperunt non Intelligere*: The Image of Language in Malory's Last Books" 158).

[41]Also problematic is the lack of real evidence in this case; Guinevere is accused because she is the one who organized the meal. For the Pastons, true evidence was necessary for an *open* accusation. Margaret Paston writes to her husband on 29 Dec. 1461 about the unrest visible in the area:

> Ther were no byllys put to the scherryf at hys beyng her, ner non *opyn* playnt mad that I 〈 . . . 〉 of no person be-cawse they had so lyttyll knowlage of hys comeyng in-to thys contré. He demenyd hym full 〈 . . . 〉 and jndeferently, as it was told me, and Yeluerton mad a fayir sermone at the sesschyonys and seyd þat 〈it was〉 so that the Kyng was informyd þat ther was a ryotows felawschep in thys contré, wer-for the Kyng was gretly dysplesyd; and þat the Kyng vndyrstood well þat it was not or ther owne mosyon boot of cownselyng of one or ij þat ben evyll dysposyd folk. (*The Paston Letters* 277)

While the gossip is swirling, no official accusation has been made; therefore, no real action can be taken. Perhaps the same result would have happened in "The Poisoned Apple" if Mador had not been so quick to accuse; he accuses *openly* based on speculation rather than fact, and, as has appeared over and over again, once something is stated *openly*, it cannot be taken back or undone: it can only be dealt with and resolved in some manner.

Stephen Knight asserts that "In Malory's last two tales a complex presentation of the private and public worlds is undertaken, showing that they are not merely opposed, but become dialectically interwoven, as Launcelot, then Arthur, then Gawain (and perhaps even Aggravayne) all act on grounds of honour and seriously exacerbate a matter which was inherently private, and untroublesome while it remained so" ("The Social Function of the Middle English Romances" 117). Lancelot defends himself and Guinevere, killing the party led by Mordred and Aggravain; Arthur allows Guinevere to go to the stake for treason; and Gawain allows vengeance to control him after the death of Gareth.

[42]The power of the *open* declaration of innocence is clear: only *open* declaration can counteract *open* accusation. This fact is true for Malory's audience as well; for example, in a letter written by Margaret Paston to John Paston I on 27 Jan. 1462, Margaret begins her letter with the description of an *open* vindication—a public pardon by the king:

> Ryth worchepfull husbond, I recomand me to yow. Plesyt yow to wet þat Perse was delyueryd owt of preson by the generall pardon that the Kynge hathe grantyd, whyche was *opynly proclamyd in the gyld-hall*. A-none as he was delyueryd he cam hedyr to me, God wote in an evyll plyte, and he desyiryd me wepyng þat I wold be hys good mastres and to be mene to yow to be hys good mastyr, and swore sor þat he was nevyr defawty in þat ye haue thowte hym defawty in. (*Paston Letters* 280, emphasis added)

He then explains his innocence to Margaret and swears that he will obey her edict, even if it involves his returning to prison. Margaret allows Perse to stay until John's return; there is little concern about shame coming to Margaret or her family, because Perse has been publicly exonerated.

[43]Elizabeth Edwards writes: "The narrow focus of knowledge generated by the ordeal battle, which is capable of answering only one limited question ('did the queen do it?' and not 'who did it?'), has been succeeded by a demand for *open* disclosure and general knowledge, even though these are the criteria which will destroy the court" (*The Genesis of Narrative in Malory's* Morte Darthur 164). More and more *open* accusations require more and more *open* responses; it is almost inevitable that an accusation be made that cannot be countered by the sword.

[44]John Michael Walsh raises an interesting issue when he mentions how "[Malory] confidently revises the sequence of events in the early part of the seventh tale, disentangling the stories of the poisoned apple and of the Maid of Astolat, which are interwoven in the sources" ("Malory's Arthur and the Plot of Agravain" 517). Had the two scenes remained interwoven, the power of the *open* speech in each would have been weakened. By separating the two, Malory has allowed each event to receive more focused attention and thus encourages the audience to interact more with each.

[45] He does, however, fight for Guinevere in "The Knight of the Cart" and "Slander and Strife" before finally being forced from Arthur's court for good.

[46]Malory, as Harry E. Cole is clear to note, " . . . made such a point of stopping the action to have Lancelot inform Guinevere and the entire court of what Mellyagaunte had done" ("Forgiveness as Structure: 'The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere'" 40). This stoppage of action by Malory is curious, until one realizes that Malory was focusing his audience's attention on the *open* nature of Lancelot's accusation. His truthful public speech to the group essentially stops the forward momentum, for it is now public knowledge that the forward momentum was caused by falsehood. The entire group (and Malory's audience) must pause to collect itself before action can resume; however, the action now is against Mellyagaunte instead of Guinevere. The collective, now shamed, must be vindicated by Lancelot: "Lancelot removes the grounds for the queen's shame and destroys the court's shame for Mellyagaunt by the simple expedient of destroying Mellyagaunt" (Miko 215).

[47]No one is really upset with Mellyagaunte's fate, for "Melleagaunce is such a villain that fighting against him is generally accepted as supporting a just cause" (Hodges 73). What is interesting, however, is how Mellyagaunte refuses to rescind his accusation: "His readiness to take up the quarrel again when he thinks he can defeat the handicapped Launcelot shows his unwillingness to give up his accusation of treason against the queen" (77). Such obdurancy actually adds weight to his public accusation, which helps explain why his crimes are written upon his tomb—to help invalidate any existing or future rumors (*slaundir* or *noise*).

[48]Also notable in these final sections is the increased use of the words *noise* and *slaundir*. The amount of gossip has increased exponentially. While certainly concepts worth exploring, for the purposes of this chapter I have chosen not to study Malory's uses of *noise* or *slaundir*. These words signify gossip, rumors, information passed at a whisper or behind the individual's back. I, on the other hand, am evaluating the more public speech element—the *open*, public statement, the statement *meant* to be heard by the collective rather than accidentally overheard. Mark Lambert's examination of *noise* in chapter three of *Malory: Style and Vision in the* Morte Darthur is a good foundation for a deeper study of this concept.

[49]As Lynch observes in *Malory's Book of Arms*, "It is Aggravain and Mordred, bringing private and personal observation of events into collision with Lancelot and Guenevere's 'name', who are its trangressors, models for the worshipful reader to avoid" (13).

[50]As Plummer notes, Gawain's response is measured, a warning to his brother about his words, that something publicly stated cannot be recalled: "The quarrel between open-mouthed Agravain and tight-lipped Gawain is not over the facts of the case, whether or not Guenevere is faithful to Arthur, but over whether to speak of it. Gawain would work by 'counceylle,' a word, suggestive of judicious speech informed by thought, which hovers over his debates with Agravain . . . " (161). Radulescu adds: "The resulting image is one of discord within the royal council, since two members, instead of advising the king for the best governance of the realm, appear to be plotting against the king's peace: they want to reveal that which they know might bring about the ruin of the kingdom" (*The Gentry Context of Malory's* Morte Darthur 124).

But Aggravain ignores his brother's words and informs Arthur. Since Aggravain has already *openly* incriminated Lancelot, Arthur is forced to act: "The king, Malory tells us, has been willing to live with the possibility that Lancelot is cuckolding him in order to avoid a disruptive scandal and to keep Lancelot, the chief glory of the Table and his closest friend, in the fellowship . . . [But] Once the adultery erupts into scandal, he cannot tolerate it except at the cost of the respect of his court and his kingdom" (Walsh 524, 525). Up until now, Arthur had been willing to keep quiet, for " . . . indisputable public honour counts for more than hypothetical private shame" (McCarthy, *Reading the* Morte Darthur 71).

[51]I find it fascinating that in "The Vengeance of Sir Gawain" and "The Siege of Benwick," Gawain does not make *open* accusations; while he insults, accuses, and goads Lancelot, he does not do so *openly*. My assertion is that the collective has already been irrevocably destroyed, so Gawain need not speak *openly*. The private is already public; there is nothing else secret or private for Gawain to reveal.

[52]As Charles Moorman explains in *The Book of Kyng Arthur: The Unity of Malory's* Morte Darthur, "There are two Round Tables—the ideal . . . and the real, founded upon lechery, shot though with civil strife, and ending with adultery. It is the tragic instability of the members of the company which makes them fluctuate between the two Round Tables and permits the lechery which brings on the fall of the court" (37-38). While I agree that lechery (mainly, Lancelot's and Guienvere's affair) is one major cause for the destruction of the collective, I believe that the civil strife, the personal hatred and envy of certain individuals, is perhaps even more important. Most of the collective, Arthur included, seemed willing to ignore the adultery, or at least allow it to only be gossiped about (and thus reducing its public power); however, once one individual, Aggravain, *openly* indicted Guinevere and Lancelot, their behavior could no longer be ignored or suppressed.

[53]Therefore, he took upon himself the role of instructor, to educate his audience about behaviors that other authors had not dealt with sufficiently, if at all. His intention was not only to entertain but to edify: this intent is clear when one examines his narrative involvement in the text; not only is Malory incapable of separating himself from the text, he is unwilling. His intrusion is natural, Bakhtin explains (and which I have already discussed), just as the audience cannot help but evaluate and explore the meanings or intentions behind Malory's words.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Malory's Expectations for His Audience

Malory's *Works* continues the tradition of simultaneous edification and amusement that appear in such texts as Christine de Pisan's *The Epistle of Othea* and *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye*, Lydgate's and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres*, and Sir Gilbert of the Haye's *The Buke of the Law of Armys*. Furthermore, Malory clearly shares an audience with these texts. As Karen Cherewatuk notes in "Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'," "The surviving great books also point out their audiences and their values. These chivalric anthologies range from Paston's and Haye's simple paper manuscripts, to Astley's illuminated vellum book, to the sumptuous volumes owned by Edward IV. The knights who produced and read the great books ranged widely on the social scale and in their share of political power . . . " (50). She continues:

> The very program of the great books indicates a view of chivalry both cumulative and syncretic, a view apparently shared by the patrons of the volumes, by the author of the *Morte Darthur*, by his editor, and by his audience. The great books modeled for Malory a single volume, yet a complex view of chivalry. It is this view of chivalry in all its complexity that Malory's great book reflects. ("Sir Thomas Malory's 'Grete Booke'" 67)

Malory's educational background was similar to that of his audience; his expectations of literature were the same; his interests and concerns were akin; even his subject matter was already familiar to his audience. *The Works*, then, is the culmination of all of that

shared knowledge: Malory was writing about what he knew to people he knew (or at least knew of). He expected his work to fit neatly into the existing canon of texts meant both to edify and to amuse.

Caxton, Malory's publisher, also obviously expected his audience to be familiar both with these educational texts and with the Arthurian legend; perhaps more importantly, he expected his audience to learn from Malory's text just as they learned from the "grete bookes." He writes in his Preface to Malory's *Works*:

> And I, accordyng to my copye, have doon sette it in enprynte to the entente that noble men may see and lerne the noble actes of chyvalrye, the jentyl and vertuous dedes that somme knyghtes used in tho dayes, by whyche they came to honour, and how they that were vycious were punysshed and ofte put to shame and rebuke; humbly bysechyng al noble lordes and ladyes wyth al other estates, of what estate or degree they been of, that shal see and rede in this sayd book and werke, that they take the good and honest actes in their remembraunce, and to folowe the same; wherin they shalle fynde many joyous and playsaunt hystoryes and noble and renomed actes of humanyté, frendlynesse, hardynesse, love, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne. Doo after the good and leve the evyl, and it shal brynge you to good fame and renommee. (*Works* cxlv-cxlvi)

Caxton recognizes that Malory's work is not promoting the ideal, the perfect past; Arthur's reign had clear problems of its own.[1] However, both Malory and Caxton expect the audience to learn from Arthur's (and his knights') successes and failures, to improve their own conditions.

An action's intimate tie to its surroundings helps make it important. In Malory's case, his work is both the product of and window into his time. Though Malory was exploring the England of long ago, commentary about his own time could not help but appear in the text.[2] Some of Malory's observations are deliberate, but many of his own biases and beliefs bleed through the text to the audience;[3] similarly, the audience imposes

its own attitudes and viewpoints upon the characters and actions within the work.[4] Though Malory was writing about the long-past reign of Arthur, he was actually providing insight into his own period—the tumultuous late fifteenth century. As Larry D. Benson explains:

> To write about chivalry is not to avoid these problems but to illuminate them . . . Certainly Malory was aware of the evils of his time, and perhaps—since the admirer of chivalry is by definition a moralist—he was more keenly aware of these evils than many of his contemporaries. We can feel . . . some of the agony Malory felt for his own times . . . when the North was already in open rebellion and one king, Edward, ruled in England, while another king, Henry, was exiled in France preparing for the invasion and civil war that came once more in 1470, just a few months after Malory finished the book . . . Malory's book reflects some of the evil of the chivalry of his own time as well as some of its good. That the *Morte Darthur* has seemed to some modern readers an exposure of the weaknesses of the knightly code is due to their idealism rather than to Malory's, for he saw chivalry not as a dream of perfection but as a mode of life, and his book serves both as a measure and as a mirror of his own times. (*Malory's* Morte Darthur 198-99)

Arthur was not the perfect king; his knights were not the epitome of knighthood.[5] Though some of their behaviors were admirable, they were not individuals to be blindly imitated.[6] This was Malory's point, I believe: to identify not only the worthy traits but the unworthy, to instruct his audience not to look back complacently but to evaluate and learn from past mistakes as well as past triumphs, to make their reality better than Arthur's imagined reality.[7]

Furthermore, Malory's lessons may have had more of an impact upon his audience than the lessons conveyed in the chivalric manuals or the educational treatises; they are less removed from his audience than instruction communicated by characters from ancient Rome and Greece or from biblical times. Malory's characters are English (or Scottish or French), residing and interacting in a recognizable English setting.

Additionally, Malory wanted to remind his audience, embroiled in the furor that was the Wars of the Roses, that England was once great and could once again be great. Unfortunately, greatness does not equal perfection; the seeds of destruction were sown with the creation of Arthur's kingdom and were allowed to flourish until they could no longer be ignored or uprooted. The same potential destruction exists in Malory's (and his audience's) time. The *Works*, then, bridges the gap between past and present, providing lessons of both positive and negative behaviors that occurred in Arthur's day, just as they could occur in the audience's own day.

The Lessons Malory Imparted

Because of the sheer volume of *The Works*, a single scene invoking a single lesson could be easily overlooked by Malory's audience. As a result, Malory employs repetition on all levels: he provides numerous scenes of the same type of action (feasts at which something marvelous occurs, for example); he has characters repeat the same action over and over (Gareth's battles with the varied-colored knights, perhaps); or a specific scene or action is referred to frequently (Lamerok's murder, for instance). He also uses symbolic repetition; abstract concepts such as *fellowship*, *honor*, *chivalry*, and *courtly love* are visited and revisited, their benefits explored and limitations revealed. However, there is another way in which repetition can occur—on the textual level. Sometimes stock phrases appear and re-appear (*The Freynshe booke sayeth*, *Now turne we unto* or *so leve we . . . and speke we of*), and descriptors occur with startling regularity (*noble*, *traitoure*, etc).[8] But the most prolific form of textual repetition is word concentration; for example, in *The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney*, Malory uses

commaundemente or *commaunde* four times in 27 lines (*Works* 314.24-315.14), while in "King Mark" *noyse* is used five times in 19 lines (*Works* 591.15-34).

Malory's text was meant for both a reading and a listening audience.[9] However, " . . . aurality offered the basic advantage, as it was perceived, of a shared, enjoyable, social experience" (Coleman 31). Numerous listeners allowed for various interpretations of character actions, behaviors, or speeches. They also could decipher and evaluate any inherent moral that could be gleaned from the text. And when repetition and word concentration focused an audience's attention on specific events, Malory guaranteed that his audience would notice and react to what had been revealed.[10] While lessons and morals are numerous and carry throughout the *Works*, three specific topics of interest: *counsel* and *advice* as tied to the king, *worship* and *shame* as tied to the knight, and *open* speech as tied to the court collective, display most clearly Malory's intentions for his audience.

Malory used the character of King Arthur to convey clear lessons about *counsel* and *advice*.[11] Malory's audience members are able to see which techniques work and which do not when it comes to reliable advice; they see the importance of counsel from various figures ranging from those related to the king to outsiders. Furthermore, they are able to see the positive benefits of reasonable, logical counsel[12] as well as the clear negative repercussions that occur with emotionally based counsel.[13] Most of Malory's lessons can be found in the educational texts that his audience was also reading at this time; however, in the *Works*, the audience gets more than just an isolated lesson: they get to see both short-term and long-term results of characters' behaviors and decisions regarding that counsel.

However, the king is not the only character who can provide instruction to Malory's audience. The knights, bound by fellowship, are supposed to seek *worship*, improving their own reputations and that of the court; furthermore, they are also supposed to avoid *shame*, which can damage their individual reputation as well as that of the court collective. While *worship* and *shame* are concepts that are explored throughout the *Works*, the concentration seems strongest in *The Tale of Gareth*. The journey of the fair unknown from "kitchen knave" to landed, wealthy, and powerful lord must have been very appealing to Malory's gentry audience, aspiring to what Gareth had become. Again, though Malory provides many of the same lessons that contemporary chivalric texts do, Malory's interpretation may have been more effective; his audience got to witness Gareth's entire journey and see how they, too, might be able to win their own worship while avoiding shameful behavior.[14]

Both the king and the knight are part of a larger entity, however—the court. Malory relates Arthur's creation of his court, based on fellowship rather than kinship ties, to show both the admirable qualities[15] and the inherent dangers.[16] He shows the purpose of and result of speeches made *openly* to the court collective; speeches with positive intent increase the worship of the individual and the group, strengthening the collective, while speeches with negative intent harm the worship of both the individual accused and the collective to which the individual belongs. Therefore, Malory encourages his audience to promote positive public speech and curb negative public speech. The rising gentry class, unschooled in proper court behavior, needed outside help to decipher the confusing and challenging world of the royal court; unfortunately, many of the texts they turned to—the chivalric manuals, the mirrors for princes—did not provide the necessary

lessons. Malory, a peripheral court member who had witnessed the power struggle between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists,[17] who had seen personal interests become more important than the health of the court and the country, thus used his *Works* to caution his audience against *open* accusation. Arthur's court had been steadily weakened by private hatreds and personal jealousies that manifested themselves in public negative speech, and Edward's was well on its way to suffering the same fate. Instead, Malory advocate, each individual court member should be focused on the health of the collective, the court, and *open* positive speech is one of the best ways to do so.

Conclusion

For all of these lessons, Malory provides both positive and negative examples, for one cannot learn what to do unless one also learns what *not* to do. Arthur's world is not ideal; Malory realized this fact. His goal was not to hearken back to a golden age of England in order to rebuke the present; it was to use the age of Arthur to show his audience that things have not changed—that those who do not learn from their mistakes are bound to repeat them. Malory does not overtly criticize Henry VI's or Edward IV's reigns, nor does he choose a side in the fight between Yorkist and Lancastrian dominance; he simply reveals the consequences of behaviors that both fictional characters and real individuals can make. By doing so, he connects Arthur's time to his own time, and *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* becomes more than just another version of the Arthur story. It becomes a window through which we can examine Malory as author and instructor and a mirror that reflects Malory's concerns about the reality in which he lived.

Notes

[1]Jerome Mandel asserts the same: "Malory does not look back with nostalgia to a golden past" ("The Dark Side of Camelot" 93), as does Charles Moorman: "Malory's book reflects, below and running counter to its historical, didactic surface, a deeply tragic awareness of chivalry's failure to attain perfection" (*A Knyght There Was* 98). And, as Derek Brewer concludes in "Malory: The Traditional Writer and the Archaic Mind," "To see nostalgia in Malory is to mistake the nature of his entirely legitimate pain in contemplating what the world is actually like" (119).

[2]As A. L. Morton asserts, "Of all the versions of the Arthurian story [Malory's] is the most sustainedly political, almost, one might say, the only political version. This is one of the reasons why his book has a reality and almost a topical quality which neither the pseudo-chroniclers like Geoffrey of Monmouth nor the pure romance writers ever attained" ("The Matter of Britain" 19).

[3]For example, P. J. C. Field, citing Vinaver's commentary that proves that Malory added northern references to his early books, notes in *Malory: Texts and Sources* that "The number of these changes suggests that Malory made them all consciously and in full awareness of the way in which they reflected the recent history of England" (52).

[4]Based upon societal level—gentry or nobility, as well as political affiliation—Yorkist or Lancastrian.

[5]Jerome Mandel agrees; he writes, "Indeed, as defined in *Morte Darthur*, Arthur's world is really *not* better than Malory's world after all . . . For all its apparent excellence and attractiveness, Arthur's world—the utopian principles and courtly ideals taught by Arthur's knights as an expression of Arthurian civilization—simply masks the basic badness of humankind" ("The Dark Side of Camelot" 88). While I think Mandel's conclusion is a bit too pessimistic, I do agree with his assertion.

[6]E. Kay Harris views the inconsistencies as proof that "Rather like chivalric knights, readers are to protect the *Morte Darthur* from its inconsistencies by behaving or reading in a certain way" ("Evidence against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Treason by Imagination" 181). I assert, however, that inconsistencies actually encourage interaction between text and audience. Malory's audience does not need to protect the text from itself; instead, the audience can debate and evaluate the inconsistencies in order to better understand the complexities of the issue as well as to identify similar inconsistencies in their own behaviors or beliefs.

[7]Charles Moorman believes the same:

> . . . it is a mistake to view Malory's *Morte Darthur* simply as a sentimental excursion into a long-dead past. To a degree, it is this, but it is much more. It is also a didactic work, a plea to the fifteenth-century

> English knights to learn a lesson from the past, to see in the internal struggle for power in Arthur's court a meaningful parallel to their own civil conflicts and to avoid the pitfalls of history by reasserting the simple code of conduct implicit in the high ideals of legendary chivalry . . . (*A Knyght There Was* 98)

Raluca Radulescu also believes that "*Le Morte Darthur* displays [Malory's] awareness of the complexities he found both in the Arthurian narrative he inherited, and in fifteenth-century politics" (*The Gentry Context in Malory's* Morte Darthur 2).

[8]As Elizabeth Edwards explains in *The Genesis of Narrative*, " . . . redundancy and repetition: the typical events of the narrative occur over and over again with minimal variations, and sometimes in the same form exactly. Repetition is the way in which this work establishes its narrative typology, and the way in which it gives importance to the repeated content (as opposed to some other methods, such as stress, explanation, causality, foregrounding, subordination, etc.)" (54).

[9]Joyce Coleman asserts a similar viewpoint: "Since Sir Thomas Malory's prose romance, *Le Morte Darthur* (1470), is 1,260 pages long in Vinaver's edition, it must by this argument have been written for a privately reading audience. Malory, however, gives quite a lot of evidence that he is writing for listeners. His standard back-reference is the familiar 'as ye have heard before' . . . " (*Public Reading and the Reading Public* 213).

[10]In this way I am directly opposing P. J. C. Field's point in *Romance and Chronicle*: "Malory's style is the result of a complex of elements too heterogeneous and irregular in their combination to be the results of conscious art . . . " (102).

[11]Though the material applies to the king, Malory's audience could still find the lessons useful for their own lives as well as functional in interpreting and understanding the behaviors of both Henry VI and Edward IV and their councils. As Mark Allen explains, " . . . like many literary reflections of history, Arthur encapsulates more than just the social and political past: he also reflects interpretations of this past, providing means both to survey historical kingship and to epitomize modern understanding of what kingship implies" ("The Image of Arthur and the Idea of King" 1).

[12]Seen mainly in the first two books: *The Tale of King Arthur* and *The Tale of the Noble King Arthur that Was Emperor Himself through Dignity of His Hands*.

[13]Seen in *The Tale of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* and *The Most Piteous Tale of The Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon*.

[14]This is especially useful for the gentry members of Malory's audience, many of whom had already experienced an elevation in status when Edward IV came to the

throne. However, they hoped to cement their place through marriage and additional honors, whether earned or bestowed.

[15]Mainly, strong ties and friendships that extend beyond the family unit, which helps not only to extend Arthur's kingdom but also to increase the worship of those housed within the court. The group becomes more important than the individual, and all is done with the health of the group in mind.

[16]Notably, the unwillingness of some individuals to set aside their personal interests for those of the group; or, similarly, for those envious of another individual to use their kinship ties to enact revenge on a fellow knight.

[17]As P. J. C. Field noted in *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory*, "All over the country private quarrels were polarizing into political ones . . . " (97).

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