AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE
AND OF ITS EFFECTS ON CHIVALRY AND HONOR IN
MALORY'S NORTHERN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the effects of certain relationships between Malory's characters on those ideas of honour and chivalry which are both implicit and explicit in the Morte Darthur.

The first chapter is an analysis and description of the general structure of these relationships. The consistency of this structure in some directions is shown to be such that we are justified in referring to Malory's "Arthurian society". This society is shown to be fraternal and heroic in social bonds, form and behaviour, its fundamental value being loyalty among men.

The second chapter discusses honour in relation to this society. Honour is shown to be two-fold; on one side an intrinsic part of character, on the other, social reputation. In the 'earlier' tales of the Morte Darthur, Malory presents honour in fairly straightforward ways; but later there is shown to be a growing divergence between the appearance and reality of honour in Malory's Arthurian society, which eventually has disastrous effects. This divergence is further emphasised by the development of Malory's narrative art in the last two tales, where conflicts between personal loyalty and honour comprise the dramatic motivation of the Round Table's tragedy. The third chapter examines chivalry in the light of social loyalties and honour, and shows how Malory's presentation of chivalry as something heroic and exclusively masculine essentially differs from its general treatment in his French sources. The last chapter concerns the predominant activity of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society, which is fighting.

In its various forms of battles, tournaments, single encounters and judiciary fights, fighting is related to the overall rise and fall of Malory's Arthurian society.

* See introduction
It is shown how as the most successful aspect of Round Table chivalry, the activity of fighting best demonstrates the complex relationship between social loyalties, honour and chivalry in the Morte Darthur.
INTRODUCTORY NOTES

All references to Malory are from Eugène Vinaver's second edition of The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, Oxford 1967. In accordance with this edition, there is continual reference to the eight 'tales' into which Vinaver divides Malory's work; but the older title the "Morte Darthur" has been retained. Where these tales are numbered in the following study, this is with reference to their published order, and is not meant to signify their possible order of composition. However, since it is generally agreed that "The Tale of King Arthur" and 'The Noble Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius' are probably among Malory's earlier (if not earliest) compositions, and 'The Book of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere' and 'The Most Piteous Tale of The Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon' his latest, 'earlier' and 'later' will sometimes be found to suggest literary as well as published order. Individual contexts make this clear.

All footnotes will be found at the back of the study under their respective chapters.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE STRUCTURE OF MALORY'S ARTHURIAN SOCIETY

Introduction

There is no single, omnipresent idea of an Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur to suggest that Malory had a clearly conceived initial intention of creating from the materials of his sources an independent, well-defined fictitious world in which his Arthurian knights might act out their noble and joyous history. It is more the case that any ideas about such a society in the Morte Darthur must be accumulated from analytical reading. However, in the uncertain nature of Malory's composition, these ideas cannot be interpreted as being necessarily conclusive of intentions on his part, particularly since they do not appear consistently at the same narrative levels. These levels can be seen to shift from one part of the Morte Darthur to another, according to the various source influences on Malory's prose and his own stylistic development. Seeing what comprises the ideas of Malory's Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur is therefore a matter of extracting and comparing what is both directly and indirectly said by Malory, and what can be seen possibly to be inferred. However, the repetition of certain key attitudes and responses in Malory's narration ultimately provides a basis for making some positive statements about the nature of this society in the Morte Darthur.

To begin with, Malory himself prompts the idea of an Arthurian society by his many references to the Round Table, which apart from being a traditional social organization in its own right in Arthurian literature,
is explicitly and consistently set apart from the larger Arthurian world in the *Morte Darthur* by his account of its origins and rise to power during the first two tales, and its disintegration in the last. Malory does not invariably present a clear account of the membership of this fellowship in all his tales, but its more remarkable characters are consistently mentioned, together with their customs and beliefs about honour and chivalry. The 'history' of the Round Table's exploits and best knights stands at the heart of Malory's Arthurian re-creation. All other subject matter, such as the Trystram legend and the quest of the Holy Grail, is ruthlessly cut and as far as possible re-allocated in subordination to this central body of heroic material. However, Malory's Arthurian society will be seen to be bigger than the social group of Round Table knights which arises from it and, in the later tales of the *Morte Darthur*, comes to dominate it. This larger society 'exists' in terms of a structure which is capable of fairly detailed analysis. It is not a unit, but an amalgamation of various groups of characters, groups which vary in size and overall dramatic importance. The interrelationship of these groups through bonds of kinship and friendship, and concomitant behaviour and beliefs, constitutes the structure of Malory's Arthurian society.

The general pattern of this whole structure is that of a broad hierarchy of the king, barons, knights and some clergy who ostensibly govern the bodies and souls of those whom Malory characteristically calls poor men, when he mentions them at all. This hierarchy is very unevenly represented in the *Morte Darthur*, and so from the outset any picture of Malory's Arthurian society can be only partly coloured in. Apparently Malory had no interest in imagining the lowest ranks of his Arthurian world, any more than the writers of his sources had had before him, for he gives sparse information about them beyond the aristocratic inference that all cowherds, carters and carles are naturally inferior in character and appearances to his Arthurian
knights and ladies. The incidental clerical characters in the *Morte Darthur* are less important than their French counterparts which comprise a solid ecclesiastical background for the adventures of romance and their safe interpretation by Christian Arthurian knights. To Malory, the conventional bishops, recluses, hermits, monks and nuns are chiefly necessary in the *Morte Darthur* for the healing, refuge and lodgings which they are bound to offer knights errant; and at one point in his narrative he pauses to lament the fact that the real clerics of his England were not so forthcoming in hospitality as those he found in literature. 3

The only sector of Malory's Arthurian society which can be closely observed is that of Arthur's knights, particularly those of the Round Table. On account of this, the idea of an Arthurian society in the *Morte Darthur* presents a limitation for which there is no solution, and which qualifies all judgement and critical interpretation of the central issues of honour and chivalry in Malory's work. The limitation is that whereas the structure of this society can be widely described to include nearly all Malory's characters, its behaviour and ethics are closely defined by its central characters only. Therefore it would be rash to say that ideas of loyalty, honour and chivalry which are certainly implicit, and sometimes explicit, in the *Morte Darthur* represent attempts at social ethics by Malory, even solely in terms of his fiction. To put this another way around, the idea of an Arthurian society does not necessarily explain everything else in the *Morte Darthur*, although it can be shown to be the basis of Malory's presentation of honour and chivalry. Within its limits, however, there is a definite sense of a coherently articulated society in the *Morte Darthur*, particularly in the first two, the fifth, seventh and eighth tales. This sense is generally fostered by Malory's many small alterations and additions of certain details from his English and French sources. Each detail is slight in itself, but their overall internal consistency allows us to isolate and examine them, independent of whether Malory was himself consciously
exploiting the new social structures implicit in his material. This accumulation of new detail constitutes a genuinely original orientation of his material by Malory, and it is hard to believe that such originality was quite unconscious.

These instances of Malory's probable originality can be seen to fall into three categories. First, he builds up the character of Arthur as an authoritative king who has strong emotional reactions and commitments to his men. In conjunction with this, he stresses the close association of Arthur's knights with the king and among themselves, especially by references to the Round Table as a fraternity. Thirdly, as has been noticed by George Stewart, Malory localises some of the traditional places of Arthurian romance in English geography, thus establishing a clear, if rather bare, sketch map of Arthur's realm, with the principal towns and rivers marked. However, very much more weighty than this piecemeal kind of evidence for the existence of a Malorion Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur is the detail in which certain kinds of relationship is presented; and it is the consistent patterning of such detail which justifies the concept-and examination-of social 'structure'.

The social boundaries in Malory's fiction between Arthur's court, his knights generally, and the Round Table seem vague beyond the inference of their existence. But there are certain groups of social relationships among men which seem to be constant in all parts of the Morte Darthur. Whatever may have been the order of Malory's composition, the fundamentals of these relationships will be seen to be such that they appear independent of such considerations as either narrative or compositional chronology. Indeed, the extent to which they occur in the narrative as 'given points' which are unaffected by differences in style in the Morte Darthur reinforces the view that Malory wrote with at least some degree of premeditated idea of creating his own Arthurian fiction and the sense governing it. In some cases, these groups of male characters are interrelated, and other groups and individuals
are allied in various ways which are also observable as constant. The focal point of all groups and individuals in the *Morte Darthur* is Arthur (although it will emerge later that not the king but Launcelot is Malory's central character) and therefore all social relationships must be taken and measured from this fixed point for their coherence to be revealed.

Here the conventional image of the pyramid of power through which historical medieval societies are usually described is abandoned for the concept of a pattern of circles which more nearly describes the state of a society presented in detail at one level only, and imaged by the Round Table itself. Around Malory's King Arthur it may be imagined that there are closely inscribed concentric circles of the men nearest him in blood and power. Overlapping these and one another from the centre outwards are the circles of allied groups, then smaller groups attached to them, and so forth, the outer circumferences touching the remotest characters being increasingly faintly drawn. To understand anything of the whole pattern of relationships, it is necessary to concentrate first on those nearest Arthur at the centre. This can be seen to comprise three groups of characters, all interrelated through the king and the bonds of the Round Table fellowship. The three groups are respectively composed of the royal kinsmen of Arthur, Launcelot and Pellinor; they are described below. Each of these groups traditionally has its own allies and enemies from its native region—Orkney and Logres, France, and Wales—and thus together they appear to dominate a very wide area of action and to have considerable resources in fighting men and territory. In physical terms, their collective might is the mainstay of Arthur's kingdom and the Round Table, and much of their social power is clearly derived from their consciousness of this, both in the early Arthurian battles and in the struggles of the *Morte*, where Launcelot in particular is to be found boasting of it. The men in each of these three groups follow and support their respective leader, who is either the eldest or the most powerful kinsman among them; and through him, the king.
Tangential to these three central groups of men are the various smaller groups of knights who ally themselves with particular princes for reasons to be discussed elsewhere, but who are not themselves related by blood. These 'non-kinship' alliances are reinforced by the individual circles of friends and kinsmen to which members of these smaller groups belong. Beyond the network of circles are satellite individuals, often solitary characters, who draw near the outer peripheries at specific moments (for example, to help Arthur or Launcelot) thus briefly identifying themselves with the major social structure. The king first and last controls the balance of the social structure through his authority and the example of his behaviour and beliefs which act as social codes for the Round Table. The whole complex of interrelated loyalties and overlapping personal interests and inevitable conflicts is thus nominally held in check by one man who, in turn, depends for his power to rule on a very few men who are the leaders of groups and sub-groups with whom he himself has close personal connections. The internal cohesion of Malory's Arthurian society lies in the special bonds of loyalty shared by men which will now be discussed through description and analysis of the kinds of behaviour seen to result from certain given relationships.

KINSMEN IN THE MORT DARTHUR

Standard patterns of behaviour may be observed among kinsmen and, by extension, among their allies in the Morte DARTHUR. These are clearest in the three main groups mentioned above, and reinforced as 'social norms' by the smaller groups of less prominent characters throughout the whole social structure. It is found that certain blood relationships dictate these patterns which in turn imply certain others, so that a character's role in this Arthurian society may be determined from the ways in which Malory shows him relating to other men in groups. Those individuals who apparently do not relate in terms of kinship, (and hence behaviour) to
these groups are really outside that part of Malory's Arthurian society which is capable of clear definition. As will be shown in due course, some kinship relationships in the Morte Darthur are of determining importance in his Arthurian society, while others merely supplement these, and others still are of little active importance at all. The bonds shared by brothers, uncles and nephews and cousins are all vital to the structure and culture of Malory's Arthurian society. The bonds shared by men and women characters, of whatever kind, are secondary to these basic male relationships since they do not affect the social structure and thereby certain influential types of behaviour at all. The only partial exception here are the bonds shared by Launcelot and Guenevere.

The instinctive affections and accepted patterns of behaviour of individuals which characterise Malory's Arthurian society from its centre outwards appear to be matters of traditional habit rooted in inherited group alliances rather than the wills of individual characters. Further, this is a society which is constantly striving for recognition from the king at its centre, and from the leading knights who are related to him and who control the collective might of the Round Table. This competition mostly takes the form of seeking a second accolade from Arthur as entrance to the inner circle of this society, the Round Table, or trying to increase their reputations for honour by fighting. So the centre of Malory's Arthurian society is apparently continually being reinforced by attention from the groups and individuals around it, to whom it gives varying degrees of acknowledgement and thereby public identity. Rivalry among peer groups and their leaders, continual personal oppositions and confrontations with external groups and individual characters keep the whole society in a constant vortex of conflicting but overall cohesive activity. Through this, Malory describes the emergence of his Round Table ideas of honour and chivalry, which will paradoxically become the great glory and the cause of destruction of his Arthurian society.
Coming now to the three royal kinship groups mentioned already, it will be noticed even before specific analysis which are the dominant kinship bonds among them. The group to which Malory always concedes social preference in his narrative is that consisting of Arthur's kinsmen, and in particular, the sons of his half-sisters. Following his source but more briefly, Malory relates in his first tale how Iggyne marries Uther Pendragon, legitimising their unborn son, Arthur. Iggyne already has three daughters by her first husband, the Duke of Tintagil. These are said to be Morgawse, Elayne and Morgan le Fay. Malory marries Morgawse to King Lot of Lothian and Orkney, and their sons are Gawayne, Aggravayne, Geherys and Gareth. By her incestuous union with her half-brother, Arthur, Morgawse has a fifth son, Mordred, who is thus the youngest of the Orkney brothers (although Malory sometimes calls Gareth the youngest in the fourth tale, for example, in which Mordred does not appear). Elayne is a shadowy figure in the Morte Darthur whom Vinaver thinks Malory probably invented himself. One one occasion, Merlin tells Arthur that the latter will be glad to give his sister in marriage to King Pellinor. Malory does not make it clear if he imagines this prophecy ever to be fulfilled, but if it is, it must be his Elayne who eventually marries the Welsh king, since the parts of Morgawse and Morgan are fully accounted for in the action of the whole narrative without any mention of Pellinor. In the beginning, Malory's Elayne marries King Mentreis of Garlot, and is not said to have any children. Technically, therefore, Pellinor's sons could also be those of Elayne, which would make them nephews of Arthur and cousins to the Orkney brothers. There is one possible reference in the Morte Darthur to this being the case. But whereas the Orkney brothers and their cousin Elwayne are continually being referred to as the king's nephews, it seems altogether unlikely that Malory intended to suggest such a relationship between Arthur and the sons of Pellinor, and very probable that he forgot all about Merlin's prophecy. The third sister,
Morgan le Fay, marries King Urience of Gore and Uwayne is their son.\textsuperscript{18} Between Uwayne and Gawayne there appears to exist a particularly friendly relationship, as may be observed in the first and sixth tales.

Arthur himself marries Guenevere, the daughter of King Lodogresunc of Ganelarde.\textsuperscript{19} They do not have any children, and hence the queen maintains no direct blood relationship with any member of Arthur's family. Apart from a very incidental reference to her father and another to two cousins, Gye and Garaunte of Ganelarde,\textsuperscript{20} Guenevere's own kindred are not mentioned by Malory. Arthur has a second illegitimate son older than Mordred, called Borre, whose mother is Lyonore, daughter to a knight, Sanam.\textsuperscript{21} Malory does not give Borre any part in the action of the Morte Darthur beyond mentioning him as a knight of the Round Table.\textsuperscript{22} Thus it may be inferred that it is his role as Arthur's nephew which gives Mordred his social status rather than his filial bond with the king, which after the first tale is not given any prominent mention before the 'Morte'.

Gawayne is said by Malory to have either three or four sons. These are Loevel and Florens,\textsuperscript{23} and more doubtfully, since his parentage is also attributed to Uwayne, Idrus.\textsuperscript{24} On the whole, it seems that Idrus belongs to Gawayne, but Malory has made a mistake one way or the other. The variety of his sources is such that such occasional inconsistencies among minor characters seems inevitable, and it is only surprising that in such a bulky work as the Morte Darthur there are not more of them. Gawayne's fourth son is Gyngalyn,\textsuperscript{25} who has a different mother from Florens and Loevel ('(thes two were begotyn uppon sir Braudeles syster)')\textsuperscript{26} and who usually appears without any mention of his half-brotherhood to the others. None of these sons is at all important in the action of the narrative, and Malory rarely mentions them. However, three of them are listed among the twelve Orkney knights who trap Launcelot with Guenevere in the 'Morte',\textsuperscript{27} which suggests that there is supposed to be some awareness of kinship implication among these characters. Gawayne's attitude to the deaths of Florens and Loevel
on this occasion is a strange contrast to his fury over the even more accidental killing of Gareth and Gaherys. This demonstrates the comparative insignificance of the bonds between fathers and sons to those shared by brothers in the Morte Darthur. Malory makes no mention of the other Orkney brothers having any sons.

Arthur has a kinsman, indefinitely designated 'cousin', Howell the Hende, who is the husband of the murdered Duchess of Brittany, and possibly the father of Trystram's wife, Isode le Blanche Manys. Other relatives of the king are the brothers Edward and Sadok of Orkney, an uncle, Adrawns, and his cousin germane, Bagdemagus. These are very incidental characters, with the occasional exception of Bagdemagus, whose kinship with Arthur Malory only mentions once, so that it can really be discounted. Arthur's foster-father, Ector, and his foster-brother, Kay, are traditionally treated by the king as if they were his genuine kinsmen, and for this reason Kay will be referred to as if he were Arthur's natural brother. The central group of Arthur's kinsmen, of which he is the elder leader and Gawayne the younger, comprises the five Orkney brothers, Gawyne, Aggravayne, Gaherys, Gareth and Mordred.

Launcelot du Lake is the elder son of King Ban of Benwick and Elayne, and Ector de Marys the younger. Both Launcelot and Ector are therefore nephews of their father's brother, King Bors of Gaul, and of at least one anonymous sister of the latter. Ban and Bors have a brother, Gwenbaus, who as a clerk presumably has no offspring; he is only mentioned once by Malory. Launcelot is unmarried, but has one illegitimate son by Elayne, the daughter of Pelles, who takes his own first name of Galahad. The brothers have many kinsmen descended from the previous generation of Ban and Bors. These are generally called cousins, and sometimes more specifically, nephews. Moreover, on occasions of special intimacy, the term 'brother' is used where there is clearly not a fraternal relationship among them. Such examples
are almost unparalleled among kinsmen from other familial groups, and so it seems that Malory wished to emphasise the special closeness which characterises Launcelot’s kinsmen in the Morte Darthur. The younger Bors and his brother Lyonell are nephews to Launcelot and Ector. Malory is often to be found grouping these French knights into sets of brothers, which gives some useful indication of their interrelationship. Examples include Blamour and Bleoberys; Gahalantyne, Galyhod and Galyhodyn, and possibly Galahalm belongs here too. However, the exact relationship shared by the altogether more incidental Meneduke, Hebes le Renowne and the rest are not clear, and probably were not to Malory himself in his concentration on the leading characters in this group. The size and unity of Launcelot’s kinship group will be shown to be of more significance in the Morte Darthur than the identity of all its members. Bors has one illegitimate son, Blayne (or Helyne) le Blanke, whose mother is the daughter of King Brandegoris. Aunserus the Pylgree, father of Alys le Beall Pylgree, is said by Malory to be related to Launcelot. The central group of these kinsman consists of its leader, Launcelot, and Ector, Bors and Lyonell.

Malory’s King Pellinor of Wales is probably meant to be married to the Lady of the Rule, who is the mother of their daughter, Alyne, and her anonymous sister, and probably the king’s sons, Agglovale, Perceval, Dunmor and Lamorak. In addition to these, Pellinor has an illegitimate son, Torre, by the peasant woman who later becomes the wife of a cowherd, Ayres. The Lady of the Rule has a sister, Queen of the Waste Lands, who becomes a recluse and as such gives advice to her nephew, Perceval, during his quest of the Sankgreall. Nanowne le Petyte is a cousin of Pellinor’s sons, in what degree is uncertain; but on one occasion Lamorak feels strongly enough about their connection to propose avenging his grisly death. There are important reservations about kinship bonding in Pellinor’s family, as will be seen shortly; but insofar as there is a central group, it comprises Agglovale, Perceval, Torre and Lamorak, who is the leader.

Apart from these three major kinship groups in the Morte Darthur, there are several smaller but influential groups in this Arthurian society, with
similar bonds. Notable examples include the Saracen brothers, sons of King Ascalabor, Palomydes, Saphir and Segwarydes; the brothers Balin and Balan; and Bedevere and Lucan. Full lists of major kinship groups are appended for reference.*^  

FRATERNAL BONDING

The basic bond in Malory's Arthurian society is fraternal. This functions in two ways: between brother and brother and, by extension, between half- and foster-brothers; and between brothers and the sons of their sisters, or more rarely, the sons of their brothers. The lateral bonding of siblings is thus reinforced lineally through the avuncular relationship, and so the fraternal bond is reinforced diagonally between generations of characters. As a corollary of this, the direct lineal descent from father to son is of little importance in the formation of social bonds among the characters in the Morte Darthur and very few of such relationships are mentioned by Malory, none of any narrative importance apart from that between Arthur and Mordred, and Launcelot and Galahad. Malory's Arthurian society is thus exclusively masculine without being paternalistic. This type of oblique descent has effects on the formation of kinship groups and alliances which will be discussed later in this chapter. Of the two kinds of fraternal bondings, the lateral which holds brother to brother will be examined first, since it is the most significant relationship in Malory's Arthurian society.

BROTHERS

There are forty-three groups of brothers in the Morte Darthur, including the foster-brothers, Kay and Arthur.52 Assuming Gawayne to have four sons, this makes a total of one hundred and seventeen men which includes the
names of nearly all Malory's major characters, and many minor ones, whose single function in the narrative is often just to illustrate some example of fraternal behaviour. The three royal groups of Orkney, Wales and France will be given some separate consideration, since particular characteristics of their respective fraternal relationships distinguish them from brothers in general, and reveal aspects of the Round Table which have an important bearing on Malory's presentation of honour and chivalry in his Arthurian society. The following comments provide a background for these considerations, and are based on a survey of the many other fraternal 'bondings' in the Morte Darthur which by weight of numbers and overall consistency of presentation constitute a 'social norm'. Where especially relevant, however, passing reference will be made to the characters of these three major groups.

Analysis of the ways in which Malory presents these fraternal relationships among men shows that there are certain clearly identifiable ways in which bonds are formed among them. Such is the consistency and repetition of these ways that it is reasonable to speak of them as Malory's code of brotherhood. As is characteristic of Malory, this code is dramatically expressed through the action of his characters rather than through his own direct expression of sentiment on the subject. He makes very few, though significant, remarks about the nature of brotherhood. Brothers in the Morte Darthur mainly appear fighting side by side for some mutual cause, fighting constituting almost all the action of the narrative. In his longer descriptions of such episodes, Malory tends to list the names of brothers in groups, usually in order of their seniority. This is found to be the case even with those brothers who otherwise do not seem to be very closely associated with one another in Malory's story and who more usually appear with characters who are not their kinsmen. During tournaments, many groups of brothers are shown fighting close together in units, watching each other's horses, and defending each other with
similar types of blows against common opponents. They appear to win or lose simultaneously, and to share the same kind of response from the onlookers. Brothers seem to be aware of their group image in such competitions of arms, and try to present themselves, together with their other kinsmen, as well-organised teams. This is suggested in one instance where Malory makes Lornorak warn his brothers to make a better show of managing their horses than they have done: 'Brothers, ye ought to be ashamed to fall so of your horses!'

In the closeness of shared manoeuvres, Malory makes brothers exchange remarks and share what are more monologues in unison than proper dialogues, just as they are occasionally seen to do in his narration of battles. As well as emphasising the chief fraternal duty of defence through ever ready vengeance, which is fundamental to Malory's code of brotherhood and his Arthurian society, this dramatically underlines the public unity of fraternal groups, and the power of the leader who decides tactics and usually takes the initiative for action.

It is usual in Malory's Arthurian society for the character who is represented as being the elder (or eldest) brother of such a group to act as a leader. Thus Launcelot guides Ector and his other kinsmen, and Gamayne his three brothers Aggravayne, Gaherys and Mordred. There is an exception in the case of Pellinor's sons, to be discussed shortly, but generally the leader is the best fighter and the eldest man. When he is incapacitated, the group tends to lose its cohesion from lack of direction and great discouragement. This is well illustrated by the four ominous knights whom Gareth successively encounters in the fourth tale. The eldest and grimtest, the Blak Knight of the Blak Leundis, having been dispatched, his three brothers each in turn appears quite relieved to yield to Gareth after he has put up a decent show of fighting in fraternal revenge. 'Man by man', these brothers abandon their fantastic armour, and shrink from being gigantic threats of power to knights errant to civil-tongued men who are glad to wait at the wedding table as a sign of new amity towards
Arthur and his men. The loss of the eldest brother's apparent invincibility does not diminish the physical threats offered Gareth by the rest; but it altogether banishes the psychological one, to Lynet's astonishment: 'Fy, fy!...that evir suche a stynkyne kychn knave sholde blowe suche a boste!' In general, the united front in fighting presented by knights who are brothers is seen to cause as much consternation among their enemies or sporting opponents, as their actual physical reputation, as it does, for example, when Ban and Bors are suddenly noticed at Bedgrayne: 'for such two brethirme as ye kyngye Ban and kyngye Bors ar nat lyvynge.'

From time to time, Malory's non-Arthurian knights associate in fraternal hostilities against the Round Table, or its individuals. It is particularly the dramatically less important pairs of characters whom Malory shows doing this, with the resulting effect of demonstrating the superior behaviour of Arthurian knights over others. Such characters are to be found at various fords and bridges and crossroads, in which strictly limited areas they offer standing challenges to all comers who have to take them on in turn and sometimes all at once. Examples of non-Arthurian antagonists include Raynolde (or Arnolde), Gauter and Gylmere, and there are smaller fraternal groups who behave with similar unity and provocation. In the case of the four brothers whom Gareth fights, this shared fraternal interest is quite elaborately arranged. As Gareth defeats one and moves on to the next, he appears to be playing out a game in which the moves are initially dictated by the brothers themselves, each of whom seeks revenge for the last. Less sinister in implication, since they are 'internal' members of Malory's Arthurian society, are the fraternal undertakings of characters like Agglovale and Torre, and Saphir and Palomydes. Their respectively combined might enables them to contend against the strongest opponents and such agreements as theirs are shown to be prized beyond the most genuine sworn fellowships they contract.
"...for I shall love you dayes of my lyff afore all other knyghtes excepte my brother sir Saphir."
"I say the same," sayde sir Lameroke, 'excepte my brother sir Torre.'

That characters who do not belong to Arthur's court or the Round Table and who appear entirely incidental to the main trends of the narrative should nevertheless be shown behaving fraternally in ways similar to Malory's major Round Table characters suggests something of the breadth of his realisation and presentation of the code of brotherhood in the Morte Darthur.

Even brothers who are not usually shown together in the narrative are said to fight side by side, and it is not unusual for such characters to be said to die together, or for one to die in the other's company, like Lucan and Bedevere in the 'Morte'. All in all, however famous an individual knight appears to be, he nevertheless fights in support of his brother on every formal occasion, thus putting the reputation and safety of his kinship group before private considerations. The best of Malory's knights, such as Launcelot and Lamorak, belong to the most effective and closely united groups of kinsmen, but the other men in such fraternal groups often appear ineffectual and even inferior on their own, and are easily defeated.

Brothers in Malory's Arthurian society are then, bound to fight on the same side, and avenge one another. This is represented as being so serious a duty that sometimes a character is shown avenging his brother when it is clear he would rather not draw his sword at all against this particular opponent. An enemy therefore expects the brother of a man he has killed or injured to seek revenge for him as a matter of course. This still applies if the injured man was defeated in fair combat, or if he had been the initial aggressor and even if he possibly had been behaving in some unchivalrous way which demanded punishment. However, there should be moderation in Malory's view even in matters of revenge, and sometimes one of these avenging fights ends with the offended brother making a formal truce with his opponent, or yielding to him; and it might even result in a sworn fellowship, and real
friendship, arising from the opponents' mutual respect for their courtesy and prowess. The point is that, whatever the circumstances, once a brother has apparently done his best to avenge his nearest kinsman, honour is satisfied, and the issue is closed. In this way, states of feud and vendetta are avoided in Malory's Arthurian society (which makes the Orkneys' behaviour to Lamorak the more remarkable an exception). A brother is not obliged to go to the extreme of killing his opponent to avenge his brother, if his prowess or circumstances do not make this practicable behaviour. Yet often a brother in the Morte Darthur is himself hurt or killed while exacting fraternal revenge, and on the whole it is more usual for such fights to be fought to a fatal finish. Under very exceptional circumstances, however, a brother may refuse to avenge his kinsman, or even appear not to consider the idea. This happens where there appears to be some other principle of knighthood at stake, as when the offending party is a near kinsman to King Arthur, who may not honourably be offended. This suggests that Malory considered fraternal revenge was not invariably a chivalrous knight's first duty where such revenge was not always in the larger interests of his Arthurian society. This point will be considered further in connection with the sons of Pellinor, for it is only the most chivalrous and in this sense the least typical of Malory's knights who rise above taking kinship revenge, and then only in certain circumstances. For example, at one point in the narrative, Launcelot forbids his kinsmen generally to avenge what in their zeal they consider a slight to his honour. But in general, Malory's knights demand satisfaction for attacks on their brothers, even if they do not go to the lengths Gawayne does for Gareth in the 'Morte'.

Fighting with or for a brother is not presented solely in terms of a painful fraternal duty, however, for Malory makes it clear that this is an outgoing force and a socially creative one. It is usually implied that
there are bonds of affection between his characters which prompt such action, and make it a warmly instinctive response between brave men, not merely a system of reciprocal attacks. Those knights who show the greatest affection for their brothers are significantly among the strongest and most influential men in Malory's Arthurian society, for whom there appears to be little distinction between love and fraternal duty. For example, the most violent knights, as Gawayne usually appears to be, and Tarquin, openly cherish their brothers as fiercely as they hate their enemies. The love between brothers in the Morte Darthur is also expressed by the degree of heroic emotion they customarily display at meeting and parting, especially when some danger seems imminent or has been narrowly averted. Brotherly love is usually shown in states of crisis in the narrative, and often it is in the form of grief; the finest example is Hector's grief for Leuclolot's death. Grief at a brother's death generally far exceeds that shown by Malory's knights for the loss of a lady, a companion or even another kinsman, and usually it is such extreme emotion which naturally prompts revenge.

Then brothers sometimes have the misfortune not to recognise each other in full armour or behind strange shields, and so they fight and maybe even kill one another. Balian and Balian are the great examples of such unnatural and tragically accidental combat, and their history provides the brooding ghost of Malory's Arthurian society. Both characters live long enough after their fatal fight to realise what they have done, and their horror springs from the awful realisation that there can never be any reparation for their crime and loss of honour: 'O! Balian, my brother! Thou hast slayne me and I the, wherfore alle the wyde world alisle speke of us bothe'. Gawayne and his brother Gareth narrowly avoid the same fate in the fourth tale, and the king and his court are shown reacting with a mixture of horror and relief when the situation is averted in time. Malory rarely shows brothers who fight
each other intentionally in the *Morte Darthur*, but when they do, they receive sharp reproof from other characters. Thus Gawayne, most faithful of brothers himself, stops Bryan and Surluse of the Foreyse in their combat for superiority: 'for uncoth men ye sholde debate withal, and no brothir with brothir'.\(^7^8\) Again, in the 'Quest', Lyonell's most uncharacteristic and fiendish belligerence to his brother, Bors, is checked by nothing less than a divine intervention.\(^7^9\) The sin of Cain and Abel is the most deadly any knight in Malory's Arthurian society can commit, even accidentally, and an offence against God and man. Since the fraternal bond is the pattern for all the other social bonds among the Arthurian knights in the *Morte Darthur*, dissension at this basic level is seen to be widely destructive in its overall effects. More than this, it is profoundly disturbing as an unnatural inversion of the creative effects of shared fighting motion, for the energy which Malory represents as normally being directed towards constructive ends among his characters turns back on itself, and eats away at the roots of loyalty and confidence in fellow knights.

That the curse of fratricide is never merely personal in Malory's Arthurian society is suggested by what amount to his original treatment of Balin's fatal sword. This Malory says in his first and sixth tales passes from Balin to Galahad and then to Launcelot, who is eventually to kill Gawayne in the *Morte*\(^8^0\) (although the sword itself is not referred to there).

Where brothers act together it is to be expected that they are in agreement. For example, the Orkney brothers share the hatching of a few dark plots through the patient and protective union of silence. Such is their mutual understanding and customary submission to Gawayne's will that a few words at a feast table are shown to be sufficient to secure the fate of Pellinor and later his son, Lamorak.\(^8^1\) Not all knights are so disposed to use their fraternal unity for destructive and anti-social ends, however. There are examples of brothers in the *Morte Darthur* who offer each other wholesome and apparently altruistic advice which is generally accepted and acted upon.\(^8^2\) Yet it is generally assumed when a man in Malory's Arthurian
society does something that he is in accordance with his brothers. This is apparently why Malory repeatedly makes such a point of Gareth's secession from his brothers' company. His exceptionally chivalrous behaviour is commented upon by other knights who frequently take care to exclude Gareth from comments they make on the Orkneys generally. Malory calls Gareth a good knight, 'of very knyghthod worth all the brethm', and this impression is maintained consistently throughout the Morte Darthur where Gareth is mentioned. Since it is specifically murderous revenge which it is said Gareth dislikes in Gawayne's way of life, it seems that Malory wanted to make it plain through this character that fraternal loyalty should not imply the toleration in kinsmen of unchivalrous behaviour towards other men; and the most disloyal and therefore unchivalrous behaviour Malory says is murder. It is suggested by the example of Gareth's secession that fraternal bonds must needs be partial in this Arthurian society, which is an idea of tragic significance by the eighth tale.

Insofar as brothers in Malory are shown to share decisions and actions, and the resulting honour and shame, so do they the spoils of war. In addition, whatever a man has belongs by natural right to his brother. Malory does not make much of material considerations, or, indeed, say much at all about the physical existence of his Arthurian society. His knights are only occasionally said to eat, drink, and to spend money, and it is simply by inference a man's duty to see that his brother lacks nothing in these respects. It is thus no especial point of honour in Gawayne when he looks after his unrecognised brother, Gareth, 'for he was nere kyn to hym than he wiste off; but that sir Launcelot ded was of his grete jantynesse and curtesy.' This is a great claim for fraternal instinct, that it can bypass ignorance of identity in this way. But this is not something in which Malory is consistent, since, for example, it signally fails to operate between Balin and Balan, and Gawayne and Uwayne.
These exceptions aside, however, the example of Gawayne succouring the unknown Gareth in the fourth tale is a testimony to Malory's belief in what actually should be the unshakeable amity of brotherhood.

Otherwise the attitudes to brotherhood which Malory presents in the Morte Darthur are few, but firmly underline the details already mentioned. Paramount is the duty brothers share in upholding the honour of their kinship group, and hence their individual reputations, and with these goes the related expectation that the eldest brother will act as adviser and judge of the rest when necessary. For example:

"Fayre dere brother," sayde he [Bleoberys] 'remembir of what kynde we be com of, and what a man is sir Leuncelot de Lake, nother farther no more but brothyme chyldirme. And there was never none of our kynde that ever was shamed in Batayle, but rathyr, brothyr, suffir deth than to be shamed!' "Brothr," sayde sir Blamour 'have ye no doute of me, for I shall never shame none of my bloode..."

Lanzeal's round advice to his brothers in a tournament has already been quoted. It is interesting to note that Malory notably puts such comments into the mouths of his socially prominent characters, men with the greatest reputations for honour. Such characters must be assumed to speak from the noblest and most chivalrous experience, and so give the code of brotherhood in Malory's Arthurian society its best expression. Another point which Malory emphasises is that it is a man's right to assume that his brother will send him help without question; for example:

"Go thou faste on horsebak unto my brother, sir Salyvaunte, whyche ye in the castell Blanke, and telle hym of myne adventure, and byd hym bryng wyth hym an horse-litter..."

Above all, however, Malory stresses that the crime of brother fighting brother is heinous in his Arthurian society, because the fraternal bond is the closest of kinship ties.

This is stylistically indicated by the fact that whenever a character in the Morte Darthur is mentioned by or introduced to another, it is almost invariably with reference to his eldest brother.
It does not seem to matter how well a character might be known, or how
often he is referred to in the course of the narrative; he is still given
his fraternal kinship reference. The only knights who appear to be exceptions
to this rule are Arthur, whose crown places him apart from other men, anyway,
and Launcelot, similarly a character apart on account of his super-normal
reputation for chivalry. Yet Malory makes both the king and Launcelot
appear deeply—even disastrously—devoted to their kinsmen, including their
brothers, so the bases of their fraternal relationships are similar to those
of the other Round Table characters. The coupling of fraternal names gives
heroic identity to the men in Malory's Arthurian society in the way that the
declaration of lineage from eminent forefathers initially makes known the
worth and potential fighting abilities of men in much older Germanic
literature such as Beowulf and the Icelandic Sagas. There are few fathers
in the Morte Darthur who are shown to have anything to do with their sons
by deed or reputation. During the first tale, Pellinor shares an adventure
with his eldest son, Torre; and in the sixth, Launcelot spends a brief time
with Galahad on shipboard, as a divine concession to their affection. In
the case of the latter, the son's exceptional chivalry reverses the
conventional filial relationship, and Launcelot paradoxically appears as an
admirering disciple of his son. Elsewhere, Mellyagaunce's father, Bagdemagus,
is twice shown to be very anxious for his son's welfare and tries to
protect him against the superior might of Launcelot through a piece of well-
meaning subterfuge. This indirectly has the dramatic effect of heightening
the contrast in chivalry between Launcelot and Mellyagaunce. Such paternal
care is otherwise most unusual in Malory's Arthurian society, which in many
respects is not a naturalistic piece of fiction at all, for all its apparent
realism in some directions. Gawayne's is perhaps the best example of a typical
attitude for a man in Malory's Arthurian society when he is willing to overlook
the deaths of his sons at the hand of his best friend, Launcelot, but will not
show similar leniency when his brothers Gareth and Galerys are more
accidentally killed in the 'Morte'.

Altogether, it appears that in this society, reference to a living brother is worth more as a claim to recognition than to a dead, if once glorious, father. Although limited, it is a very active, purposeful society—indeed, its activity is its identity. In particular, the first five tales are permeated with a sense of a vigorous present in all the heroic novelty of fellowship and chivalry. And even in the later parts of the Morte Darthur, there is no harking back to former glories in the imagined Arthurian past. Insofar as Malory uses it, the ubi sunt motif in the 'Morte' is for lost friends, not lost ideals, and its expression is limited to a very few significant characters. The general past apparently does not matter to Malory's characters, except insofar as it occasionally provides conventional motives for revenge and hence quests—for example, Brunor and Alexander initially act from such cues. Where a knight's name is mentioned with his father's, there is usually a supporting reference to his brother, too, through which his claim to a place in the narrative present is made. In whatever subterranean ways the imagined Arthurian past is seen to shape the drama in the last stages of Malory's narrative, or the tragic future to be determined through Merlin's prophecies, and whatever chronological confusions in both composition and fiction are to be found in the linking of the eight tales of the modern Morte Darthur, for both stylistic and imaginative reasons Malory's Arthurian society is presented as existing in a continuous present. This partly accounts for the fact that in practically all of what is here accumulatively described as Malory's 'code of brotherhood' all the interaction can be seen as 'cross-referencing' and multiplication of examples, despite the presentation of material at different narrative levels.

The Orkney Brothers

The Orkney brothers (with the general exception of Gareth) comprise
the most influential and one of the largest groups of characters in Malory's Arthurian society. Further, there is no significant action in the *Morte Darthur* involving the Orkneys which does not at least incidentally include their leader, Gawayne, although he very often appears without his brothers. The most significant point about this fraternal group is therefore its coherence through the leadership of Gawayne, for without him there would be little sense of a group at all. Apart from their reported collusion in the last two tales, Malory does not give Gaherys, Aggravayne and Mordred very much to do. They are certainly not as important as Gawayne and Gareth in the *Morte Darthur*. When the Orkney brothers are referred to by other characters, it is clear that they take their social importance from their relationship with Gawayne and the king. They customarily claim immunity for their unchivalrous behaviour by stating their kinship to their eldest brother and Arthur. For example, in the first tale:

'Wyte thou well, sir knyght,' seyde they, 'we feare nat muohe to telle theoure nams, for my name ys sir Aggravayne, and my name is sir Gaherys, brethimeq unto the good knyght sir Gawayne, and we be nevewys unto kynge Arthure.'

Such reliance on their kinsmen angers the more chivalrous knights of the Round Table, but they cannot lift their hands against Arthur, or against his favourite kinsman, Gawayne:

'And yf they were nat the cousyns of my lorde kynge Arthure that slew hym [Lamorak], they sholde dye for hit, all that were consentynge to his deth.'

What is suggested by the Round Table knights' tolerance of the Orkney brothers even while they condemn them is that loyalty to the king outweighs all private notions of revenge, and even the principles of chivalry, two of which Malory consistently presents as the giving of mercy where it is asked, and refusing to take on any quarrel for wrong ends. That these concessions should be made at the very centre of Malory's Arthurian society to the king's kinsmen obviously constitutes a breach of chivalry. On the other
hand, for such a society to function at all, the king must in all senses be kept inviolable, for all loyalties meet in him. There is nothing arbitrary in the Round Table's failure to act against the Orkney brothers when they offend but rather a compromise to social necessity. Even Gareth cannot act against the brothers he openly despises, and has to content himself by declaring his opposition to their ways: 'I meddyll nat of their maters'.

Their acquiescence in Gawayne's schemes for murdering Pellinor and Lamorak and their reputed murder of Dynadan further identifies the Orkneys as a closely united fraternal group, and they have a reputation for being such in the later tales, at least:

...for they were foure daungerous knyghtes that slew hym [Lamorak], that was sir Gawayne, sir Aggravayne, sir Gaherys and sir Morired. But sir Gareth, the five brothir, was awey, the beste knyght of them all.

It is clear from Gawayne's speech to Gaherys in the first tale that it is his jealousy of Pellinor's advancement at the Round Table and not, as he claims, revenge for the death of Lot which inspires his idea to kill Pellinor. Similarly it is Lamorak's popularity with Arthur and all the Round Table in another tale which moves Gawayne to angry jealousy, and plans for the murder of the knight who has offended his sense of kinship pride:

'Fayre brethern, here may ye se whom that we hate kyng Arthure lovyth, and whom that we love he hatyth. And wyte you well, my fayre brethern, that this sir Lamorke wol neyvr love us, because we slew his fadir, kyng Pellynor, for we demed that he slewoure fadir, kyng Lotte of Orkenay, and for the deth of kyng Pellynor sir Lamorke ded us a shame to oure modir. Therefore I wol be revenged.'

'Sir,' seyde sir Gawayne brethren, 'lat se: devyte how ye wol be revenged, and ye shall fynde us redy.'

'Well,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'holde ye styll and we shall aspyeoure tyme.'

This deceptive piece of persuasion is one of the best examples of a character in the Morte Darthur using his influence over his brothers to win support for his own ignoble ends. Gawayne's behaviour is the only example of such fraternal exploitation in Malory's Arthurian society, and his supporters
are the only knights who willingly follow their leader along obviously shady paths. Apart from the close repetition of comments before and after the murder in the 'Book of Sir Trystram de Lyones', there are references in the 'Morte' to this killing of Lamorak as an outrageous piece of work, when Launcelot accuses Gawayne of being a murderer. Apart from anything else, it seems probable that Malory wanted to make an example of the Orkney brothers' more notorious behaviour. In its wilful indiscrimination and confused motives, it represents a threat to the stability and chivalry of his Arthurian society.

There is no greater nor misplaced example of fraternal loyalty in the Morte Darthur than Gawayne's unrelenting attempts in the 'Morte' to avenge the deaths of Gaherys and (more particularly) Gareth. Gawayne's loyalty seems all the more obsessively eccentric in the Morte Darthur since Malory does not consistently make Gareth the affectionate brother he is in his French sources. Gawayne's fanatical opposition of his former great ally, Launcelot, his refusal to accept any reparations in penance or apology, and his inconsistency in demanding blood for Gareth while overtly ignoring the deaths of Florens and Lovel and Aggravayne, comprise the driving force of the war between Arthur and Launcelot, which is only initially and formally over Guenevere's adultery. Gawayne's excessive loyalty to Gareth is the acknowledged obstacle to peace being made between the two great leaders of the Arthurian fellowship. The close alliance between Aggravayne and Mordred precipitates the tragedy, and Gawayne's passion eventually carries it through. The destruction of such a fellowship as the Round Table, and with it, the whole of Arthurian society is thus shown by Malory to arise directly from the distorted fraternal bonds and affections and jealousies of this group of characters. It is suggested by his expression of grief at the senselessness of Gareth's death that Gawayne's vindictiveness towards Launcelot is at least partly the result of jealousy:
...for I dare say my brothir loved hym bettir than me and all hys brothirn
the kyng and the kyng bo the. Also I dare say, an sir Launcelot had dasyred my
brothir sir, Gareth with hym, he wolde have ben with hym ayenste the kyng
and us all. 109

There is other evidence of intimacy between Gawayne and Gareth in the 'Morte'
which appears to support the suggestion that Gawayne's prosecution of
kinship revenge against Launcelot is in fact a devious exploitation of a
traditional duty in this Arthurian society for private emotional ends, 110
to which he willingly sacrifies his uncle, the king, Launcelot and Round
Table he previously warned Aggravayne and Mordred not to betray: 'for I
know ... what well falle of hit'. 111

Of course, Malory was more directly interested in the dramatic
motivation and presentation of tragedy through characters and events in his
last two tales than the working out of a particular kind of 'social bond'.
But in dramatically transcending the fictional patterns comprising the
social structure in the Morte Darthur, Malory does not alter its foundations.
The fact that the four notorious Orkney brothers collectively can be seen to
illustrate the occasionally pernicious effects of fraternal allegiance in
Malory's Arthurian society in no way lessens Malory's faith in the fraternal
bonds themselves from which he creates all the relationships among the male
characters in the Morte Darthur. What is revealed through Gawayne's
distorted loyalty for Gareth and his subsequent disloyalty to the other men
to whom he also owes allegiance of various kinds, is that if a character in
this Arthurian society flings away honour and what he elsewhere admits to be
right behaviour, 112 then he inevitably destroys himself and the whole network
of the Round Table. Unbalanced and exclusive adherence to the code of
brotherhood is therefore seem to be an abuse of society, and selfish
indulgence; as Gawayne admits as much in his dying confession to the king
and his penitent letter to Launcelot. 113 In both of these final testimonies
of loyalty, Gawayne takes the blame for the civil war in the 'Morte' fully
upon himself. Apart from Guenevere's Lament at Amesbury, there is no
mention of the affair between Launcelot and Guenevere being anything to do with the last events. Gawayne's betrayal of Arthur and Launcelot, and Mordred's and Aggravayne's of them both through their refusal to follow the counsel of their three more wary brothers is collectively what brings down Malory's Arthurian society. While men are shown to be loyal to one another, and there is no undue exaggeration of some fraternal loyalties at the expense of chivalry, the queen's adultery, proven or unproven, is not in itself a very important matter. And it is not treated by Malory as such until Aggravayne and Mordred begin to aim at Launcelot and the Orkneys finally quarrel among themselves.

Launcelot du Lake and Ector de Marys

The fraternal bonds shared by Launcelot and Ector in the *Morte Darthur* contrast strongly with those shared by the Orkney brothers. Whereas it may be shown from the latter how socially destructive effects can come from brotherly loyalty which is in some directions fiercely narrow, criminally inclined and inconsistent in its traditional obligations of defence and revenge, Launcelot's bonds with his brother Ector may be regarded as constituting the noblest and most positively developed fraternal relationship in Malory's Arthurian society. Launcelot is the elder brother, and the leader of Ector and all their kinsmen. In addition to this, he is Malory's main character in the *Morte Darthur* and the embodiment of his ideas of Arthurian chivalry, honour and loyalty. As such, Malory gives Launcelot far more independent action than any other Round Table character. Consequently, he sends Launcelot into 'batayles' and adventures in which Ector is not mentioned, or in which, at the most, he is shown following his brother out of fraternal concern for his welfare. Altogether, Ector has very little action of his own in the narrative, and is mostly seen as one of the substantial company of kinsmen, for example, helping Launcelot with
fresh horses and support during the Round Table tournaments.  

Everything Ector does is subordinated to his consideration of Launcelot. In the sixth tale, Ector's sole quest, as he says, is to find his brother, and it is for this reason alone that he demands entrance to the Grail castle: 'for he was the man in the world that he moste dread and loved'.

His being Launcelot's brother, then, appears to be Ector's sole claim to fame in Malory's Arthurian society, and it is a member of a powerful and widely recognised group of well-organised and united kinsmen that he appears to be a worthy knight. For all Ector's apparent dependence on Launcelot, however, Malory rarely refers to him as being Launcelot's brother, which is an unusual omission in the Morte Darthur. It might seem that although the two characters have 'com downe of one ohayre,' yet they are too far apart in chivalric stature for them to be linked by name too often. Still, they are not so far apart as they appear to be in some earlier tales than Malory's. For example, Malory excludes a remark made in his source for the third tale, which Vinaver summarises thus:

'Gareth (Gaheriet) gives an account of a tournament and incidentally remarks that Launcelot is displeased with Hector's habit of effacing himself on all important occasions, as if he were ashamed of being Launcelot's brother. Hector replies blushingly that his shyness should not be mistaken for pride...'

There is no such stress even imagined between Malory's Launcelot and Ector, and he represents the two brothers as being the most affectionate towards each other without at all diminishing Launcelot's chivalric superiority.

For example, he describes their emotional reunion after a parting of a couple of years as follows:

...and whan sir Launcelot had a syght of hym he ran unto hym and toke hym in hys arms; and thane sir Ector kneled downe, and eyther wepte uppon othir, that all men had pite to beholde them.

Launcelot is shown willing to take his brother's advice and return to the court and Guenevere, which shows that their relationship is not just that of leader and follower who cannot meet on equal terms:
Sir,' sayde sir Ector, 'I am youre brothir, and ye ar the man in the worlde that I love moste. And ye I understoode that hyt were youre dysworshyp, ye may understoode that I wolde never councelye you thereto. 

Well, brothir,' sayde sir Launcelot, 'I wol do affir youre councelye and ynde wyth you.'

Whereas some brothers in Malory's Arthurian society are shown to fight each other by accident, or to disagree, there is never any conflict of any kind between Launcelot and Ector.

The culmination of Ector's admiration and affection for his brother comes in his threnody at Dolorous. Gardiner evidently Malory's reworking of the Morte Arthure. This is a complete statement of Ector's ideas about Launcelot, and Malory's final eulogy for his chief character and what he saw as the finest qualities of chivalry and manhood:

'A, Launcelot!' he sayd, 'thou were heede of al Cristen knyghtes! And now I dare say,' sayd syr Ector, 'thou sir Launcelot, there thou lyest, that thou were never matched of ethely knyghtes hande. And thou were the curuest knyght that ever bare sheld! And thou were the truest frende to thy lover that ever bestrade hors, and thou were the truest lover, of a synful man, that ever loved woman, and thou were the kyndest man that ever stroke wyth swerde. And thou were the godeliest personne that ever cam amonge knyghtes, and thou was the makest man and the jentyllest that ever ete in halle amonge ladyes, and thou were the sternest knyght to thy mortal foe that ever put spere in the reeste.'

Apart from it being conventional in heroic literature for the brother of a famous man, perhaps insignificant in himself, to be brought forward to praise the dead man, this passage is the fullest expression of fraternal feeling in the Morte Darthur. It well illustrates that in the case of these two brothers their relationship transcends the importance of each as a character. There is another side to this threnody, however. Ector's speech reveals that he identifies chivalry with his brother, in whom, like most other Round Table knights, he sees the qualities of knighthood carried out to perfection. Ector's bond with Launcelot gives him his vision of chivalry and determines his own behaviour. He admires and follows the best man in
Malory's Arthurian society, and such is his unshakeable loyalty that he and his like-minded kinsmen unquestioningly and naturally move into opposition against Arthur and Gawaine in the 'Morte', and so war becomes inevitable. Although Ector never behaves unchivalrously on his own account, he thus becomes an agent for the demolition of chivalry and honour through his loyalty to his brother which Malory shows precludes all other considerations.

However, Malory in no way condemns Ector for his instinctive action, which is not even presented as a definite decision to put his brother before the king, and all that he represents. In this Arthurian society, Ector can only be seen as a highly laudable and warm-blooded character, whose steadfastness in the final battles of the 'Morte', like his silent acquiescence in his brother's love affair, must be interpreted as a noble testimony to the permanence of human values of loyalty and service (values Malory prized highly) when less stable ideas of honour and chivalry are almost entirely overthrown by other men's treachery. In the end, it seems fitting that Launcelot should give away his birthright to his brother as a reward for his long service, and a mark of honour above all their other kinsmen. However, there remains the inevitable implication that fraternal bonds which ignore the claims of other men, even King Arthur's, must be seen as potentially destructive to Malory's Arthurian society.

Pellinor's Sons

Pellinor's sons may be seen to illustrate another variation on the pattern of fraternal relationships in Malory's Arthurian society. First, although as the appendix to this section shows there are occasions in the Morte Darthur when these characters appear together, as a group of brothers they are not significant in the ways that the Orkneys and Launcelot and Ector are seen to be, for they are not as a group involved in any of the major action presented in the narrative. The eldest of the brothers is Pellinor's illegitimate son, Torre, but although he is apparently a well
enough known character among the Round Table Knights in himself, he does not appear to exert any leadership over his brothers. Neither is the eldest legitimate son, Agglovale, in any sense a leader. Instead, it is Lamorak who sometimes takes on this role on the rare occasions that the brothers appear together in tournaments. Then he urges the other men to fight well, or else forsake his company. They fight for the honour of knighthood and chivalrous reputation rather than to display their might as a kinship group; and Malory praises Lamorak for his chivalrous example more than once as 'the moste nobleste knyght one of them that ever was in kynges Arthurs dayes as for a wordly knyght'. Vinaver finds that Malory has added the comments Trystram makes in outrage at the Orkneys's murder of this son of Pellinor in the fifth tale, thus strengthening his condemnation of such a flagrant breach of chivalry. Altogether Malory creates in Lamorak one of the most loved and praised knights of the Round Table. This suggests that the achievements of a chivalrous man are more important considerations than his role as a brother in Malory's Arthurian society, although this by no means implicate that fraternal bonds are not important in themselves. Apart from making Pellinor's sons fight together in pairs, as is usual for most characters in his relation of tournaments, Malory generally represents the relationships among them as being most amiable. For example, Perceval, is shown distracted with grief when he learns of Lamorak's death; and Lamorak and Torre apparently have a close relationship. Traditionally for brothers in the Morte Darthur, Agglovale and Torre die together, among other pairs of kinsmen cut down in the press at Guenevere's stake. Perceval gains his Round Table knighthood through Arthur's patronage of Pellinor and Lamorak, and the agency of Agglovale. There is no other example in the Morte Darthur of a younger brother's name carrying more weight than that of his senior brother. Altogether, this is an amiable kinship group, but an untypical one in Malory's Arthurian society, since its leader is a younger son, and it contains two outstanding knights in
earthly and celestial chivalry, Lamorak, and Perceval 'pierles, excepte sir Galahad, in holy dedis'.

In one great respect the sons of Pellinor differ from other fraternal groups in Malory's Arthurian society. They do not seek revenge for their murdered father or Lamorak, both killed by the Orkneys. The reasons for this are simple. Revenge is impracticable in both cases, for it would mean indirectly striking at Arthur. Perceval implies his sense of helplessness when he hears of his brother's death: 'And hit is to mache to suffir the deth of oure good brother sir Lamorak!' Gareth and other Round Table knights fume over their impotence to punish the Orkneys for their ignoble behaviour, which suggests that it would by no means be outrageous in any but these circumstances for Lamorak's brothers to take action, prompted both by their own desire and their mother's despair. Lamorak himself gets as near to challenging the Orkneys as he can in uttering an indirect threat to Gaherys when he murders Morgawse. He also tells both Arthur and Launcelot that were it not that he is bound by respect for the king he would deal with the Orkney's malice instead of fleeing it. Charles Moorman speaks of the dissension between the houses of Pellinor and Lot as constituting a 'feud', but this is surely an overstatement. Malory seems to have deliberately weighted the Orkney side of the affair, because this is of structural importance in the development of Round Table life during the later parts of the *Morte Darthur*. The other side of the case is only incidentally represented in terms of personal grief and frustration to individuals, but little is made of it. There is more response from other Round Table characters than the brothers themselves when Lamorak dies, and Pellinor's death is only briefly reported. The whole point about the 'feud' between Lot and Pellinor is that there is not and cannot be any such thing, because in Malory's Arthurian society, although the code of brotherhood is very important, allegiance to King Arthur should outweigh every other
consideration. He is the pivot of all social loyalties, the source of honour and the model of chivalry, and the whole society depends on him for its survival and identity. Such is the king's given role, and Malory does not need to prove its validity in ascribing much action to him.

Collectively, the sons of Pellinor are not very important in the development of the Morte Darthur, and apart from Lamorak's in the fifth tale and Perceval's in the sixth, their roles are largely incidental. But what they show as a group is important when they are compared with the other two fraternal groups discussed already. Whereas it is found that Ector unfailingly puts his brother Launcelot before Arthur (although in a more directly serious matter than the enmity between Lot and Pellinor), and Gawayne (with far less justification) insidiously uses his uncle's power to strike at Launcelot for Gareth, the most chivalrous knights do not put kinship revenge before their duty to the king, even for their father and brother, and so do not threaten their society by compromising their bonds of loyalty with other men. By contrast, the Orkney murder of Morgawse appears all the more savage a transgression, as the King's anger suggests. The fact that Malory shows both Perceval and Lamorak desirous of checking the Orkneys does not alter the fact that neither makes any move against them, even though Arthur and Gareth freely condemn their kinmen for their behaviour. From this it can be inferred that even some of the Round Table characters feel inhibitions which prevent them from doing what appears to be their most traditional duty to their brothers is a measure of the strength and reality of the chivalrous fellowship of the Round Table. It is not a crude choice between kinship loyalty and chivalry which the sons of Pellinor make in holding back from taking revenge, but a recognition of the chief priority in maintaining the balance of loyalties of which their fellowship and civilisation is composed. Chivalry in the Morte Darthur being what it is, a refinement by checks and balances of fraternal instincts,
there could not be such a clash with kinship duties, for loyalty 'man to
man' is the basis of Malory's Round Table chivalry as it is of his
Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur.

UNCLES AND NEPHEWS

Insofar as uncles in the Morte Darthur act as the protective elder
kinsmen of their sisters' sons, their roles might be thought of as paternal.
This would seem especially fitting since the direct father-son relationship
is so rarely shown by Malory. But the relationship between uncles and
uterine nephews is something more particular in Malory's Arthurian society
than a parental substitute. Whereas it is true that in some cases nephews
are treated like sons, their uncles are more like elder brothers in this
Arthurian society than fathers. Social anthropologists have observed that
in some primitive societies in the real world, the uterine uncle enjoys a
special status whereby he protects, tolerates, jokes with and generally
abets his sister's son. This is the case in Malory's fictitious society,
as far as can be observed, for the few characters who are said to be uncles
make favourites of their nephews in ways they apparently do not of their
own sons. They usually do not apply parental sanctions to the younger men,
but indulge and dominate them in the ways that elder brothers do their
younger in this Arthurian society. This, and the oblique line of descent
already noted by which social importance passes from uncle to uterine
nephew although family titles go from father to son, justifies speaking of
the bonds between uncles and nephews as being fraternal in nature.

The following comments therefore offer some additional corroboration
of the points about the bonds of brotherhood in Malory already discussed.
Malory does not present many of these relationships among his characters
but three pairs of kinsmen are prominent characters, and contrast with
each other in ways which collectively show the nature of this particular
bond. There is the additional interesting point that Malory seems to have
been aware of the bonds between uncles and nephews as being rather special,
for in the three relationships discussed, issues of kinship are not
generally quite so subordinated to other dramatic issues in the narrative,
as those among brothers in his Arthurian society have been found to be.
This further suggests that Malory seems to have had some consciousness of
creating an Arthurian society from the material of his sources, even though
this is not evenly manifested in the Morte Darthur.

Arthur and Gawayne

Although it is probable that Malory's characterisation of Gawayne
varied slightly from tale to tale in the Morte Darthur according to the
particular source he was following, the relationship between this
character and Arthur is something which he presents with reasonable
consistency, or at least without any glaring contradictions. The chief
bond between this uncle and his eldest nephew is that Arthur apparently
feels bound to protect Gawayne. In the first tale, the king is made to
explain that because of his kinship with Gawayne he will 'do unto you all
the worship that I may, for I must be reson ye ar my nevew, my sistir son'.
However, it is never suggested that this reason applies to
Arthur's other nephews, although he appears fond of Gareth and admires
his chivalry in more than one tale. Probably Malory was influenced as
a writer by Gawayne's traditionally prominent role in Arthurian literature,
but it still appears that he wanted to create a major character in
alliance with Arthur and Launcelot, for the drama of the later parts of
the Morte Darthur is balanced on these three and their interrelationship.
Arthur's protection of Gawayne is mentioned again in the 'Tale of Launcelot
and Guenevere', where Malory suddenly relates how the king kept his nephew
out of tournaments in which Launcelot was taking part, 'for never had sir
Gawayne the bettir and sir Launcelot were in the fylde'. In the 'Morte'
this is extended by Malory's explanation that Arthur always arranged matters
so that Gawayne's secret gift of morning strength could be used to his advantage in fights:

And for his sake kyng Arthur made an ordynance that all maner off batayles for any quarrels that shulde be done afore kyng Arthur shulde begynne at undern; and all was done for sir Gawaynes love, that by lyklyhode if sir Gawayne were on the tone parte, he shulde have the bettir in batayle whiles hys strengthe endured three owxys.

The passage appears to be retrospective in significance (as are many remarks made in the 'Morte') but does not in fact add anything to what is revealed about this relationship earlier in the Morte Darthur, except in the particulars for the first time given direct expression. For example, Arthur's care of Gawayne is shown fairly dramatically in his relief over the arrest of the fight between Gawayne and Gareth during the fourth tale. In the second tale, the king is represented as being distracted over Gawayne's injuries as he is over those of his foster-brother, Kay.

The king's protection of Gawane is remarkable in the degree of social immunity it appears to give the younger man. This goes beyond the protection the other Orkney brothers claim through their uncle's name. For example, Arthur's kinship not only saves Gawayne from the revenge of other characters- 'my name ys sir Gawayne, the kynges son Lotte of Orkenay, and my modir ym kyngse Arthurs sister' - but from the king's own hand. There is an example in the first tale where Arthur banishes Gwayne from court on grounds of suspected collusion with Morgan le Fay, and another on the fifth where Gaherys is treated in the same way for murdering his mother, Morgawse.

In the 'Morte', Arthur reveals that he knows exactly why Aggravayne and Mordred were so anxious to prove Launcelot Guenevere's lover; and the king has no second thoughts about going to war with Mordred to save his wife and crown. But Gawayne is apparently unchallenged by his uncle for the murder of Lamorak, although Malory makes it clear that Arthur knew beforehand that his eldest nephew was likely to commit this crime. The king promises Lamorak some protection against Gawayne if only he will stay at court; and not so
hardy in sir Gawaynes hede, nothir none of his bretherne, to do the wronge.' 157
What Malory imagined Arthur will do to prevent Gawayne's malice is not clear; but the king's confidence in his power to restrain his eldest nephew is soon shown to be ironically misplaced. That Arthur knows Gawayne unworthy of the favour he shows him is again suggested in the sixth tale, where lamenting the rash vow to seek the Grail which he feels will be the downfall of the Round Table, the king blames Gawayne for the losses to come:
'A, Gawayne, Gawayne! Ye have betrayed me, for never shall my courte be amended by you. But ye well never be so sorry for me as I am for you!' 158
Through his toleration of Gawayne in the Morte, Arthur allows himself to be driven into a war he does not want with Launcelot, and to refuse offers of peace, 'fayre proffers', 159 when it is clear that he would rather accept them and cease quarrelling with his own men.

The reason for Arthur's exploitation by Gawayne through his indulgence of devious and unchivalrous behaviour in his nephew is made clear in the Morte, although it is implicit throughout the Morte Darthur. It is simply that Arthur personally loves Gawayne above every knight except Launcelot; and this affection displaces all other considerations:

Alas! sir Gawayne, my syster son, here now thou lyghest, the man in the worlde that I loved moste. And now ys my joy gone! For now, my nevew, sir Gawayne, I woll discover me unto you, that in youre person and in sir Launcelot I moste had my joy and myne affyaunces. And now have I loste my joy of you nothe, wherefore all myne erthely joy ys gone fro me! 160

On one level, Malory here gives Arthur the lament which a worthy and surviving brother of Gawayne might have made in other circumstances, which underlines the intimacy between the characters. There is a degree of personal agony in Arthur's dual lament which is not to be found in Ector's more conventional heroic threnody for Launcelot, and which suggests more powerfully than anything else in the Morte Darthur the double-edged nature of these fraternal relationships among men. On one hand, the friendship shared by Arthur, Launcelot and Gawayne is the greatest and most stable example of loyalty among men in Malory's Arthurian society, and the
triple pivot on which all other loyalties are balanced. 'My joy and myne a
ffyance' is the king's expression of the positive side of this, the most
chivalrous relationship in the Morte Darthur, according to Malory's own
ideas of chivalry. But on the other hand, the fact that so much of the
Round Table's stability, even its identity, rests with these three
characters, of whom Arthur is necessarily a passive and therefore a
vulnerable central figure, means that any temporary disloyalty between
Launoelot and Gawayne in long-term effects will be socially tragic. The
enmity between Launoelot and Gawayne is the tragic crux of the Morte Darthur.
It is forecast by Merlin in the first tale, and then nothing is heard of
it until it suddenly flares up in the 'Morte'. Meanwhile, Arthur's long
suggested and incidentally revealed tolerance of his favourite nephew paves
the way for this catastrophe just as in another direction his indulgence
of Launoelot does.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Malory wanted to present
Arthur as a man whose private affection 'oute of mesure' compromised his
role as the most excellent of kings. Although he gives moving dramatic
expression to Arthur's personal dilemma in the 'Morte', Malory never fails
to present him as the 'flours of Kyngis' whatever his source in the
various parts of the Morte Darthur. Without attempting any incongruous
moral judgements of the king's character, however, it emerges from Malory's
treatment of his relationship with Gawayne that the fraternal kind of bond
these two characters share is potentially tragic and destructive solely
because it is distorted by an affection which when forced into terms of
action, deliberately ignores the claims of other men and other principles
of behaviour, even though (on the uncle's side at least) these are
recognised and even discussed. This is Malory's constant theme, however
uncertainly this is presented in the earlier tales of the Morte Darthur,
that unbalanced or obsessive loyalties among men who are like natural
brothers must impinge on and eventually destroy honour and chivalry and
other men. In Gawayne's confession to his uncle, Malory implies the tragic
pity of this situation in which so much that is good is wasted through the
irrational caprice of one character whose closest kinsman exercises only
nominal and formal control over him and the brothers who follow Gawayne.
The king's eldest nephew is a great-hearted enough character to admit his
folly and to take the responsibility for his uncle's plight; which reveals
that in this kinship relationship, at least, both characters are in some
degree aware of the implications of their behaviour towards each other for
the rest of their society:

A, myn uncle...now I woll that ye wyte my deth-dayes be com! And all I may
wyte myne owne hastynes and my wylfulnesse, for thorow my wylfulnes I was
causer of myne owne dethe...

And thorow me and my pryde ye have all thy shame and disease...

Mark and Trystram

Malory's presentation of the relationship between the Cornish
characters, Mark and his nephew Trystram, is straightforward and, apart
from a couple of retrospective references at the end of the Morte Darthur, restricted to the fifth tale. This relationship is distinguished by one
characteristic which Malory dramatically emphasises by making other
characters repeatedly exclaim over it and more directly by remarking on it
darkly himself. This is the unnatural malice which Mark bears Trystram.
Traditionally, Mark is the wronged uncle whose opposition of his nephew is
credible and not necessarily undeserving of sympathy. But Malory has
stripped his Mark of any redeeming human qualities and has turned him into
a pantomime villain who always appears in the Morte Darthur as the complete
antithesis of Arthurian chivalry. As such, this uncle's sinister
machinations against Trystram represent the inversion of the kind of
protection and indulgence which Arthur shows Gawayne, and are wholly
culpable. For his part, Trystram is presented as near the equal of Malory’s Leuncelot in chivalry as any character can conceivably be, and the chosen lover of Isode before they drink the famous potion. It is implied that such an excellent knight deserves sympathy in his plight with the uncle to whom he had shown the highest service in honourably bringing him for his wife the woman he loved himself, in spite of her father’s advice and her own expressed inclinations. Trystram’s willing obedience and considerable military service to the tyrant king Mark is proof of a loyalty which is remarkable in its lifelong endurance of ingratitude and persecution. Malory shows that in every respect Trystram as a knight is a deserving claimant on his uncle’s protection, whatever their private conflict over Isode.

When Trystram first arrives at his uncle’s court, he is well-received for his generous intentions, although not at first known to be Mark’s nephew. The king’s delight in this young champion is increased when he learns of their kinship: ‘A, Jesu!...ye ar welcom, fayre nevew, to me.’ He knights his sister’s son, which office Trystram has sought of his uncle rather than his father, and adopts him as his most important liegeman. When Trystram is hurt in the fight with Marchalt, Mark is shown to be distracted as Arthur is elsewhere in the Morte Darthur for Gawaine: ‘So God me helpe...I wolde nat for all my londys that my nevew dyed.’ The shabby affair over Segwarydes’s wife establishes the conflict between these kinsmen whose relationship is so conventionally amiable in its beginnings: ‘there befelle a jolesy and an unkyndenesse betwyxte kyng Mark and sir Trystrames’, and from this point onwards Mark is his nephew’s constant and implacable enemy. The king takes pains to conceal his unnatural feelings, however, since it is in his interests to keep this knight by him, and in this lies Trystram’s danger: ‘though there were fayre speche, love was ther no.’ Segwarydes’s wife, a notorious Cornish lady, is an
 incidental character, and her love affair with Trystram and Mark merely pave the way for the more important conflict over Isode by establishing Mark as a jealous, cowardly and underhanded rival who seeks revenge by ambushes. The depths of Mark's iniquity as a kinsman are further emphasised by his murder of his own brother, the worthy Bodwyne, and his equally chivalrous nephew, Alexander as well as Trystram himself. These former two characters are minor figures in the Morte Darthur, and it seems that Malory has only one object in mind in introducing their deaths, the exposure of an incredibly wicked disloyalty in their uncle. The comment with which Malory ends his story of Alexander in the fifth tale is not in his French source and, as Vinaver says, it shows that he had some idea of making a neat dramatic dénouement out of the situation by having Mark killed in his turn in revenge for Alexander. This is merely referred to in the seventh tale, however, for Malory limits his dealing with Mark to his relationship with Trystram.

The Cornish king's designs on his nephew do not escape the notice of the Round Table. Malory shows that Arthur twice tries to make peace between the kinsmen, to Launcelot's horrified mistrust; and Perceval on one occasion attempts to reform the Cornish king's attitude to Trystram by scorning Mark's allegations against him:

A, fy, for shame!...Say ye never so more! For ar nat ye uncle unto sir Trystram? And by yore nevew ye sholde never thynke that so noble a knyght as Trystram is, that he wolde do hymself so grete a vylany to holde his unelys wyff.

Perceval, purer than all the Round Table knights except Galahad, abhors what the worldly Launcelot and Arthur are shown to openly condone in Trystram and Isode when they retreat to Joyous Gard, romantic adultery. Malory does not make a moral issue of this, any more than he does of the rather similar affair between Launcelot and Guenevere. But his inclusion of Perceval's comment indicates that he was aware that Trystram's private
disloyalty to his uncle was really wrong, even though he considered it to be outweighed by his chivalrous service and character, and so did not present it as an actual source of dishonour in Trystram. Women characters are not as significant as men in Malory's Arthurian society, as will be discussed shortly, and their love relationships with men are seen as potentially destructive to knighthood and the bonds of loyalty shared by men. However inevitable it seems in naturalistic terms, that such a situation as illicit romantic love should destroy the good relationship between Mark and his nephew is presented by Malory as being grossly unnatural. In view of the close fraternal nature of their kinship bond, there is something incestuous about Trystram's love of Isode. But this appears in the narrative as something deserving a reaction of indignation and pity, not moral judgement; for were it not for their shared interests in the same women, it is clear that Trystram and Mark might have continued great allies, as Malory shows they began.

What is unhealthy about their relationship as king and knight is the way their conflict is never brought into the open. It works in the rebellious Cornish court like some unspeakable curse, and spreads abroad as one of the ugliest rumours that ever comes to Arthur's court. But such is the conventional loyalty between kinsmen in Malory's Arthurian society that men try to keep up the pretence—or hope—of amity even while Mark is repeatedly trying to murder his nephew. Mark, too, is shown to be aware of the power such a pretence of amity gives him, for he openly exploits Trystram's chivalry for his own ends, on one occasion taunting and making him fight against his will, and at the risk of his honour, when he takes on a tired man, 'as ye love me and my lady the queene La Beale Isode'. For his part, it seems that Trystram deliberately ignores the matter of Isode, and rhetorically blames his uncle for his gross ingratitude in banishing him, claiming private immunity on public grounds, as Launcelot
rather similarly does in the 'Morte'. It is not suggested that Trystram is hypocritical in this, for he clearly has reasons to expect some generosity from Mark, since in this society the bonds between men come before all other considerations, and since he has been shown to do a lot of fighting on his uncle's behalf. Mark is shown and said not to be like Arthur, however, and he shows none of the latter's tactful oversight of a love he could not prevent. He has no Round Table to think of, and merely indulges his jealousy in every spiteful way he can think of, heedless of the consequences even when his men turn against him. Malory blames Mark for this lack of chivalry in his treatment of Trystram, and chiefly for his deceit in his closest kinship bond from which (for whatever reason) all the complications arise between Trystram and his uncle. Mark's distortion of his role as chief protector of the younger man draws on him the scorn of the best of the Round Table knights throughout the fifth tale and later, when it is remembered; and it is for this that Trystram himself despises the enemy he can neither fight nor make peace with: 'A, kynge Mark! False hast thou ever bene, and so wolt thou ende!'

Launcelot and Bors

The relationship between Launcelot and his nephew Bors shows that although the uncle acts as a leader whose protection and reputation embraces all his kinsmen, in practical terms of fighting and plotting it is often the younger kinsman who here protects the elder. In a study of Malory's development of this relationship, Lumiansky has made the point that in the *Morte Darthur* Bors's whole career as a knight of the Round Table is dedicated to serving his uncle as 'the patient bearer of protective responsibility for Launcelot'. It is shown that Bors comes to assume this responsibility through his great quality of steadfastness, in which he is distinguished from Launcelot who in the later tales is said by Malory to be unstable in one important respect. Lumiansky mentions...
the 'blood bonds' which these two characters share as being the basis of this bond of service, but does not develop the point. From what has been mentioned of the very different relationship between Mark and Trystram, however, it is obvious that shared blood in Malory's Arthurian society is not always the guarantee of loyalty between men, although it is clear that Malory thinks that it ought to be. For example, Arthur and Mordred have the closest blood relationship of any of Malory's characters, and there is no intimacy of any kind suggested between them before Mordred starts his disloyal activities in the seventh tale. As has been mentioned already, bonds of kinship in this Arthurian society depend on the kind of action which kinsmen share as a result of their blood. In special terms of action, Launcelot and Bors are like brothers, and the point is emphasised by the way in which Launcelot sometimes addresses this favourite nephew, and his nearest kinsmen, as 'brothir'.

Launcelot apparently regards Bors as his closest kinsman and shares more action with him than it seems he does with his own brother, Ector; and Malory often lists Bors's name before Ector's, which underlines this special regard. For example, in addition to relying on Bors's support in tournaments, which like any other elder kinsman he takes for granted, Launcelot trusts him to take care of Guenevera when the trouble he has feared comes, and in the 'Morte' he resigns himself to Bors's direction. Yet Bors never shows any tendency to exploit his uncle's favour and dependence on him as Gawayne does Arthur's. But then Gawayne is a more complex character altogether, and Malory gives him adventures and interests of his own. Apart from the 'Quest', Bors has no interest except Launcelot, and he does all he can to save his uncle's reputation by acting as intermediary between him and Guenevera. More than once in the seventh tale, Malory makes Bors appear angry with the queen in a way which shows how the nephew single-mindedly respects and cherishes his uncle: 'For now have ye
loose the beste knyght ofoure blood, and he that was all oure leder and oure succours.  

There is never any animosity between these kinsmen, but once they fight inadvertently because Bors fails to penetrate his uncle's disguise: 'Alas, that ever such a caytyff knyght as I am sholde have power by unhappines to hurte the moste noblyst knyght of the world!'  

Launcelot more than forgives his nephew, and reminds him how easy it is for the closest friends to strike each other down in battle, and tells him how he had wittingly attacked his own kinsmen in the same melee and so deserves his injury.  

Launcelot's injury is the worst he ever receives in the Morte Darthur, but he says that he cannot believe that for all his pain he will die at his kinsman's hands. What is suggested here is that blood bonds give kinsmen final immunity from each other, in the way that anointment is said to protect kings from death in battle. But this is not something Malory has presented elsewhere, since several kinsmen in the Morte Darthur accidentally kill each other, and so Launcelot's remark must be treated as incidental and an indication of what he feels ideally exists in his intimacy with Bors rather than a general comment from Malory.

The great affection between this uncle and nephew is always evident when Malory introduces them together, but its finest expression comes at the close of the sixth tale, when they are reunited in the world they knew:

Than sir Launcelot toke sir Bors in his armes and seyde, 'Cousyn, ye ar ryght welcom to me! For all that ever I may do for you and for yours, ye shall fynde my poure body redy atte all tymes whyle the spyryte is in hit, and that I promyse you feythfully, and never to fayle. And wete ye well, gentyl cousyn sir Bors, ye and I shall never departe in sundir whylis our lyvys may las te!  

'Sir' seyde he, 'as ye woll, so well I.'  

This is a passage apparently original to Malory and may be seen as his preparation for the close alliance between Launcelot and Bors in the last two tales of the Morte Darthur, especially in the Siege of Benwick which
constitutes the final opposition of Arthur and Launcelot. Although Malory does not make the point, Bors's loyalty to Launcelot in the 'Morte' is as instrumental in the bringing down of the Round Table on one hand as Gawayne's manipulation of his uncle is on the other. In Bors's direction of the Siege and the events which lead up to it, his sole concern is for Launcelot's honour, which happens to necessitate his defence of the queen and opposition of the king. There is no suggestion of a stand against the Round Table itself, or against Arthur as king, and the only real enemy of Bors and his supporters is Gawayne, who does his best to make the war a personal issue between himself and Launcelot. It so happens that honour and chivalry are destroyed through Bors's loyalty, and that is a tragic pity; but there is no breath of blame for Bors's partiality from Malory.

The clear-sightedness and humble religiosity Bors displays in the 'Quest' and the experience he has in Sarras as the result of his chivalry have little if any connection with his usual life as Launcelot's nephew in Malory's Arthurian society. Bors chooses not to exchange his armour for a religious habit but to come back to the world when his fellow Grail knights are dead and to renew his bonds with Launcelot, with all that this implies in terms of loyalty. His reunion with Launcelot is presented as an entirely laudable action. There is no conscious turning his back on higher things and no suggestion from Malory that had this character who in some respects is a finer knight than Launcelot remembered his quest, he might have acted differently in the 'Morte', and tried to prevent the war he there urges. Rather, Bors is to be seen as the victim of unhappy circumstances in which he consistently does his best and remains a loyal kinsman to the end of his uncle's days. It nevertheless remains true by implication that even the best of kinship bonds in this Arthurian society may become a threat to society's existence, other factors being unequal.
KINSHIP GROUPS

By extension of the bonds of brotherhood, kinship groups which are exclusively masculine are observable in Malory’s Arthurian society. These comprise brothers and the sons of brothers, and thus uncles, nephews and cousins germane. Illegitimate sons of worthy knights join their fathers’ kinship groups, and so do legitimate sons, although, as has been mentioned already, Malory does not present many characters in this filial relationship. Relationships with women characters, kinship or otherwise, are found to be subsidiary to the male bonds which hold kinship groups together, even though Malory’s knights honour their sisters for the sons they bear. The best example of such a kinship group in the Morte Darthur is Launcelot’s, for it is undistorted by any form of disloyalty or obsession and also includes enough identifiable characters to offer some variety of discussion, and is consistently presented by Malory with regard to dramatic function.

Launcelot’s Kinship Group

Malory consistently presents Launcelot as the leader of many kinsmen. As the elder son of King Ban, himself the eldest of the three brothers Ban, Bors and Gwenbaus whom Malory mentions in his first tale, Launcelot is supposedly the overlord of much territory and many men. At the end of the second tale, there is a reference to this political power when Arthur is rewarding Launcelot and the younger Bors for their service in the war against Lucius:

Loke that ye take saynge in all your brode londis, and cause youre lyse men to know you as for their kynde lorde, and suffer never your soveraynte to be allledged with your subjectes, nether the soveraygne of your persone and londys. Also the myghty kyng Claudas I gyff you for to parte betwyxte you evyn, for to myntene your kynrede, that be noble knyghtes, so that ye and they to the Rounde Table make your repayre. 205
This leadership is referred to again in the 'Morte', when Launcelot is seen dividing his inheritance among his kinsmen to reward their long service 'I truste to God to maynteyne you on my londys as well as ever ye were maynteyned.' Elsewhere, other characters mark out these kinsmen for their leadership by Launcelot, as for example Trystram in the following comment from the fifth tale:

'Now, Jesu...well may he be called valyaunte and full of prowess that hath such a sorte of noble knyghtes unto hys kynne. And full lyke ys he to be a nobleman that ys their leder and governours.' He mente hit by sir Launcelot du Lake.

In another passage from the same tale, two rascally brothers express their reluctance to fight any of Launcelot's kinsmen, which suggests their joint reputation for invincibility: 'for none of the bloode of sir Launcelot we kepe nat to have ado wythall'.

The kinsmen themselves appear proud of their connection with Launcelot, 'oure leder and oure succours', and remind one another of their duty with regard to it: 'Fayre dere brother...remembir of what kynne we be com of, and what a man is sir Launcelot de Lake'. They boast this kinship as their introduction to strangers as other men mention their brothers: 'we be sistyrns chyldym unto my lorde sir Launcelot de Lake'. In addition, they automatically adopt Launcelot's friends as their allies, in particular, Trystram, but on another occasion when they are said to fear their leader's reputation is becoming second to Trystram's, they immediately plan to destroy the Cornish knight, and only subside under Launcelot's threats.

He puts considerations of honour above blind loyalty which leads to rash deeds since he is a noble man. In all, it seems that the kinsmen of Launcelot have no function in the Morte Darthur except to demonstrate the greatness of the chief knight of the Round Table. It is to his credit that he can maintain and direct such a large body of devoted followers who hold together so loyally and single-heartedly in his support. Malory
characterises just enough under their lieutenant, Bors, to suggest that these are in themselves worthy fighters who usually comprise the hardest fighting force in the great Round Table tournaments as they are shown to do in the Roman battles in the *Morte Darthur.*\(^{214}\) As such, Launcelot's kinsmen are not mere followers, but knights who choose to serve in this way, and in so doing exemplify the best kind of alliance Malory imagines.

'All the bloode of sir Launcelott'\(^{215}\) are a formidable group of men, in more than a military sense and in the seventh tale, Malory says that Guenevere bears all with 'a proude countenaunce'\(^{216}\) before them, since they do not spare her feelings when they discover how she brings Launcelot into danger by her jealous fancies.\(^{217}\) Malory makes it clear in the fifth tale that Launcelot's men are quite aware of the true state of affairs between their leader and the queen,\(^{218}\) and it is implied that it is to their credit that they keep silent and put their loyalty to him before anything else. Nevertheless, the events of the "Morte" show that Launcelot's love of Guenevere and his relationship with his kinsmen are in the end incompatible interests in such a society.

Launcelot for his part is proud of his kinsmen, as well as fond of individuals in the group. He acts as their spokesman to the king when necessary,\(^{219}\) and in the "Morte" boasts of the service they have given Arthur and their companions: '...be me and myne all the hole Rounde Table hath bene encreesd more in worship, by me and myne, than ever hit was by ony of you all.'\(^{220}\) This is a just claim, for Malory has made Launcelot the most visibly active of his characters in all parts of the *Morte Darthur* after the first tale, and so by implication his kinsmen are what he says, the upholders of the Round Table. Launcelot reminds them of this: 'And well I am sure I knew many rebellions in my dayes that by me and myne were peased'.\(^{221}\) Arthur knows that once he loses the support of this group, the Round Table is finished;
I have loste mygh forty knyghtes and also the noble felysympf of sir Launcelot and hiss blood, for now I may nevermore holde hem with my worshyp. Now, alas, that ever thys warre began!

On the other hand, when Launcelot makes his plea before Arthur and Gawayne, calling his Orkney accusers liars, the king reminds him of the debt he and his men owe him:

'I have gyvyn you no cause to do to me as ye have done, for I have worshipt you and yours more than any othir knyghtes.'

This, too, is apparently true, but Launcelot's kinsmen make no choice in their allegiance to him rather than Arthur in their final opposition. To a man, they await Launcelot's return from his last visit to Guenevere, haunted by a common premonition of his danger. From this point, they stand by him and urge him to defend his honour, while Bors is even ready to kill Arthur to 'make an ende of thys warre'. This sacreligious stroke Launcelot will not allow, however, for he loves and respects the king who is the source of chivalry, putting him before even his closest kinsman, and once more revealing his own superiority as a chivalrous knight. Beyond this, however, Launcelot has no choice, for he is bound to his kinsmen, and finally has to yield to them: 'My fayre lordia, wyte you well I wolde be lothe to do that thynge that shulde dishonour you or my bloode.' In this surrender to what his kinsmen see as the natural first claims upon him, Launcelot in effect becomes as helpless as Arthur is in Gawayne's hands. In the 'Morte', Malory shows that the real power of Launcelot's kinship group is something far greater than their outstanding fighting abilities which have won them their reputation of invincibility. It is clear that such loyalty is felt to be a more permanently rooted quality of his Arthurian society than the ideas of honour and chivalry which grow from it. There is no clash in the Morte Darthur between loyalty in this sense and chivalry, for chivalry is an off-shoot of loyalty itself for Malory. But loyalty among men at last overwhelms chivalry—and, ironically
it is the Orkneys's disloyalty which enables it to do so. No group of characters illustrates this paradox better than that of Launcelot's kinsmen.

'NON-KINSMEN' IN THE MORTÉ DARThUR

NON-KINSHIP BONDING

A further development of the basic fraternal bond to be found in Malory's Arthurian society is seen in the ways characters who are not kinsmen form alliances. This is called non-kinship bonding in the following discussion. As references to practically every male character in the Morte Darthur comprise the examples, they are merely summarised here, and fully appended in tabular form under appropriate headings.

Bonding among non-kinsmen in Malory's Arthurian society occurs in several ways. As in the case of brothers and near kinsmen, the fundamental bond is made by characters coming together in shared fighting action against a common enemy. In battles, tournaments or single combats it is clearly a man's first duty to defend his ally. This builds up a situation of mutual obligations from which reliable and permanent bonds of loyalty are forged. This being so, fighting is seen to be the chief means of consolidating and expanding Malory's Arthurian society. New bonds of friendship are allied to kinship groups and existing bonds are put to the test as occasions for fighting continually arise in various contexts.

Secondly, Malory suggests that non-kinship bonds are formed by a knight (or knights) voluntarily taking on an adventure in which another character is involved, and perhaps lost, or in some kind of difficulty. This is done with the intention of rescue and may extend to revenge, particularly if the man in trouble is a fellow knight of the Round Table. A knight who acts as rescuer in this way can do no more for his own brother. The knight who receives such aid often appears to feel morally bound to return it whenever he can, either directly to his deliverer or to the next man he meets in difficulties. It is this sense of permanent and interchanging
chivalrous obligations which keeps Malory’s Arthurian society in existence, with knights continually passing to and fro in each other’s service as they go on their adventures. The least chivalrous knights, such as Aggravayne and Mordred, appear the least willing to take on fights of any kind for men other than their brothers; and by implication it seems that not to make bonds with non-kinsmen in this way is not to be chivalrous. Conversely, the noblest of Malory’s knights appear to form the most alliances with other men to whom they are not related by blood.

Another way in which non-kinship loyalty develops is seen when men fight each other, either as real enemies or sporting opponents, and then substitute peace for victory. This is admittedly unusual, and again only the most chivalrous of Malory’s characters are to be found doing it. The appendix shows that most references are to Launcelot, Trystram, and Lamorak. As well as bonds being made by some form of fighting action, there are a few instances of non-kinsmen forming alliances of sympathy which may either demonstrate or lead to stronger bonds of loyalty and mutual service. These examples often appear quite trivial in isolation, but collectively they reveal that the superstructure of the major action in Malory’s narrative at least appears to rest on a mundane underpinning, and that this underpinning consists of the same kinds of fictional relationships already noted. For example, instances of knights taking messages to each other, of sending pardons and greetings as well as challenges, strengthen the suggestion of a wider social context in the Morte Darthur, and the numerous jokes, warnings, lamentations and valedictions and praise of mutual friends to be found in the whole book incidentally show that it is initially a vigorous and warm-blooded society Malory has re-created in his vast work of reduction, for all the grimness of the overpowering themes of betrayal and tragedy in its last parts. Another effect of these incidental exchanges among non-kinsmen as well as kinsmen is the way they appear to offset the sustained ceremonies of battles, tournaments and Pentecostal assemblies presented
and related in Malory's Arthurian society. Such reassuring trivialities in a way of life which is dominantly public and serious shows that the bonds made among characters truly constitute a whole social structure and are not just aspects of certain limited kinds of behaviour. This type of bonding among non-kinsmen has the most varied and numerous examples of any, and as well as illustrating the background of the dramatic action in Malory's narrative, it incidentally reveals his powers of narrative control 'off-stage'.

Characters in the *Morte Darthur* are drawn together by their shared allegiance to another man—perhaps he who knighted them both, or championed them or their kinsmen on some occasion. For example, it is in this way that Malory shows Launcelot and Trystram becoming the heroes of many men, each leader gathering his protégés as his fame increases.231 In addition some non-kinsmen are shown to form alliances by sharing plans which usually relate to some forthcoming fighting action. A few are jointly recognised for something they have done, or else they may unite in praising another man (although it is usually only kinsmen who can be shown to share such recognition). Men commonly encounter friends as they ride on adventures and so groups of kinsmen and non-kinsmen are built up. By adopting each other's leaders, Malory's knights form new nuclei of characters who are to be found travelling together. The main groups Malory presents with consistency are as follows: Ulphuns and Brastias; Lucan, Kay, Gawayne and Gryfflet; Dynas, Sadok and Fergus; Sagramour, Osanna, Dodynas; Gawayne and Launcelot; Launcelot and Arthur; Gawayne and Ector de Marys; Trystram, Dynadan and Palomydes; Launcelot, Lamorak and Urzy; the Kings of North Wales, The Hundred Knights and Ireland; Trystram, Bleoberys and Gareth; and Kay and Bedevere. Launcelot and Trystram appear to form more bonds with non-kinsmen than do any other characters, but this is probably the incidental result of the considerable amount of narrative attention Malory gives these two knights above most others.
On the negative side, there is very little evidence for the breaking of bonds among characters who are not kinsmen. This suggests something of the social importance of such alliances, for the few clashes of friendship are either mistakes, like the combat between Launcelot and Trystram in the fifth tale, or else the result of some larger issue than mere disagreement, as in the case of the tragic quarrel between Launcelot and Gawayne in the 'Morte'. Most examples of treachery are to be found within groups of kinsmen, where they might least be expected, and where they prove most dangerous to Malory's Arthurian society as a whole. Between non-kinsmen, there is always the unspoken proviso that loyalty need not oblige them to support each other at the risk of more important principles, such as loyalty to the king. Otherwise, in general it is found that bonds of alliance among non-kinsmen are fraternal in the same ways those shared by kinsmen have been found to be. This is not surprising, since non-kinship groups are extensions of kinship groups. Thus the whole structure of Malory's Arthurian society is seen to be fraternal. This is particularly important in the relationships of the three characters at the centre of the Morte Darthur: Arthur, Launcelot and Gawayne; and some discussion of their respective bonds as men who are not kinsmen now follows.

Arthur and Launcelot

The main characteristic of the relationship between Arthur and Launcelot in the Morte Darthur is the mutual loyalty between a powerful king and his most chivalrous knight. Malory represents the relationship as being at once personal and political, as his Launcelot and Arthur are the chief knights of the Round Table and two of the best companions in the fellowship. It is a general characteristic of his Arthurian society that there is no real division between the public and private aspects of relationships among the male characters. However, it has been found that
Malory increased the traditional importance of Launcelot and emphasised his bond of service to the king during his reworking of the 'Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius'. This he did by giving some of Gawayne's original preeminence to Launcelot and his supporter Bors. This brings the English Launcelot into line with the French character as the hero of the Round Table; and it is as Arthur's principal knight that he is re-introduced in Malory's third tale. From this point onwards, Launcelot retains this role, and is shown to be aware of his position: 'Sir, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake that ought to helpe you of ryght for kynge Arthurs sake'. Other characters comment on the chief rescuer of Arthur's people: 'all your courte and Rounde Table is by sir Launcelot worshypped and amended, more than by any knyght lyvyng'. The debt the Round Table owes Launcelot and his kinsmen has already been mentioned.

In these ways, Launcelot gains a power in Malory's Arthurian society which is second in effect only to the king's own, and in military prowess greater. But there is never the slightest sign of his challenging the king's leadership, and even when he is most hard-pressed, Launcelot shows his readiness to put Arthur's wishes before his own concern for honour. For example:

'Sir,' sayde sir Launcelot, 'wyte you well that there ar two passyng good knyghtes, and grete worship were hit nat to us now to have ado with them, for they ar gretly travayled.'

'As for that,' sayde kynge Arthure, 'I woll be avenged. And therefore take with you sir Bleoberys and sir Ector de Marys, and I woll be the fourth,' sayde kynge Arthure.

'Well, sir,' sayde sir Launcelot, 'ye shall fynde me redy, and my brother sir Ector and my cousyn sir Bleoberys.'

On another occasion when he is faced by a difficult choice between supporting Arthur whom he believes has acted rashly, and offending his close companion, Trystram, Launcelot reminds himself of his first duty in any contingency:

'Mawythstondynge, whethir I lyve or dye, nedye muste I revenge my lorde Arthure, and so I woll, whatsoever befalle me.'
Vinaver points out in his commentary on this whole episode that in Malory's source no reason is given for Launcelot's refusal to joust with Trystan. Malory's addition of Launcelot's expression of his obligations to Arthur may therefore be seen as a summary of the most significant attitude in his Arthurian society. This is in effect restated in the 'Morte' in Launcelot's repeated declarations of his loyalty to the king: 'God defende me...that ever I shulde encounter wyth the moste noble kyng that made me knyght.'

Arthur acknowledges Launcelot's service by openly praising him above all his other knights: 'I am sure ye be the beste knyght of the worlde.' He has great faith in Launcelot's fighting ability and reliability in the most difficult situations, and expects him to achieve what other men cannot: 'who that hathe sir Launcelot uppon his party hath the moste man of worship in thys worlde uppon hys syde.' In the seventh tale, the more Launcelot does to save Guenevere, the more the king cherishes him and acknowledges his debt: 'I shall acuyte your goodenesse.' In general, Arthur allows Launcelot to play the hero and shows him an indulgence which is otherwise only shared by Gawayne in the Morte Darthur. For example, when Launcelot fights in disguise, as Malory often has him do, the king keeps his secret and allows him to unhorse other Round Table knights and treat them roughly, without any censorship. Even when Launcelot says that in order to avoid being recognised by his fellows he 'seyde no worshyp be youre house' there is no question of reproval by Arthur. The implication is that such a knight as Launcelot must be allowed to choose his own methods of proving his superiority.

This bond of trust is eventually strained by Arthur's 'demyng' that Launcelot is indeed Guenevere's lover. It is plain that the king's suspicions begin to grow in the course of the fifth tale, where they are fed by the spiteful warnings he receives from Marke and Morgan le Fay. However, Arthur puts the matter out of his mind, since neither informer is
known for telling the truth. There is no evidence that Malory later recalled what he had written in his first tale, 'that Gwenyver was nat holsom,' for Arthur to marry since she would commit adultery with Launcelot. Merlin's prophecy stands for Malory's reader of course, but inferences may not be drawn from it as to the king's state of knowledge in the fifth tale. This appears to be carried over to the seventh, and it is in the seventh tale, that Arthur first begins to show signs of conflict with Launcelot who stays behind the Round Table when the fellowship goes to Winchester for a tournament:

And many drank the quene wolde nat be there because of sir Launcelot, for he wolde nat ryde with the kynge; for he seyde he was nat hole of 248 play of sir Madore. Wherefore the kynge was hevy and passynge wroth...

However, the king's face is saved by Launcelot's eventual appearance in time to take part in the tournament, for he recognises the disguised knight who arrives after the fellowship, and smiles to himself. Malory thus does not imply that the king is deeply vexed with Launcelot for giving the slanderers opportunity to talk, and Arthur's secret amusement must be at the expense of his knights who do not share his own intimacy with Launcelot. It seems that as long as appearances are kept up, the king does not mind ignoring facts, or the suspicion of them, since there are more important factors in his relationship with Launcelot. Guenevere may or may not be meant to realise this much when she hastily sends Launcelot after her husband in fear of what people will say; her motives are of limited importance in Malory's view, for it is the preservation of loyalty among men on which his Arthurian society rests. Whether or not Arthur thinks Launcelot truly guilty of having an affair with Guenevere at this point, he can afford to smile since Launcelot has demonstrated his loyalty in coming to Winchester after all, when rumour has it that the king is second in his affections.

Not until the 'Morte' does Malory at last admit the state of Arthur's
knowledge of Guenevere's adultery, and then his attitude is plainly what he had implied previously: it is unimportant compared with his bond with Launcelot and all that depends on this:

...for the kynge had a demyng of hit, but he wold nat here thereof, for sir Leuncelot had done so much for hym and for the queene so many tymes that wyte you well the kynge loved hym passyngly well. 252

Throughout the 'Morte', Arthur makes it clear enough that he grieves more for his lost knights, and in particular, Launcelot, than for his lost wife. 252 Aggravayne's officious insistence that the Orkney ambush be laid at Guenevere's door to trap her with Launcelot is a gamble Arthur has no alternative but to accept, lest he lose face; but he demands irrefutable proof. 253 Malory heightens the dramatic irony of the situation by making Launcelot's kinsmen suspect that something is afoot and try to dissuade him from visiting the queen on the very night when the trap is to be sprung. 254 In effect, both Launcelot and Arthur are caught by the Orknays and their potential conflict over the queen is forcibly made into a public issue of the king's honour over which some judiciary and penal action must be seen to be taken. In desperation, Launcelot bids the king and Gawayne remember all that he has done for them. 255 In effect, his reminder is a plea for mercy on the grounds of what has always been presented by Malory as being most important in their relationship. Malory is not making Launcelot a hypocrite in this ambiguous demand for clemency, for Arthur ought 'of ryght' to grant him this as he presumably has been doing for some time before the events of the 'Morte'. The king having refused him the usual means of honourable exoneration through combat, 256 Launcelot can now do no more than verbally deny the charge against his and Guenevere's honour, and warn Arthur that Gawayne is acting out of spite for Gareth's death, not justice. 257 Frightened and stung by his public loss of face, and initially angry at Launcelot's blunder which has betrayed them both, Arthur has no obvious choice but to insist on war. 258 The tangle of Gawayne's loyalties and
motives prolong the matter until it is too late for Arthur or Launcelot to do anything but what their respective kinsmen tell them.

What Malory reveals of his Arthurian society through the dilemma of its chief characters in the 'Morte' is that while loyalty between knights is a noble thing, and more important than love affairs with women, it is impossible for men to keep up a fiction of honesty and chivalry when it is increasingly obvious to other characters that it is a fiction. Also, it is not possible for them to separate their interests with other men and women characters and so to avoid the appearance of treachery. It is too great a strain on the loyalties of the other characters, for Launcelot and Arthur are vulnerable to the malicious efforts of such inferior knights as Aggravayne and Mordred are generally represented as being by Malory. Without any sinister intentions being suggested by their behaviour, the king and Launcelot have in effect used their relationship to cover what neither can help in an effort to save themselves, the queen, and most of all, the Round Table. This intention is clearer on the king's side, for he has the power to excuse or condemn his wife and friend. From what he says to his kinsmen in the 'Morte' as he returns from Guenevere, Launcelot realises that Arthur must assume complete control of the situation as it now appears: 'for now wyll kyng Arthur ever be my foo'. It is the change in their situation alone which decides this switch from amity to enmity. Yet part of the complexity of Malory's characterisation and dramatic motivation in the 'Morte' is the fact that for all this and his 'demyng', Arthur is really hurt and angered by Launcelot's shaming him publicly beyond all reasonable doubts; and Launcelot, although from the seventh tale onwards he is represented as being worried about the dénouement he begins to see as inevitable, even knowing which knights will betray him and Guenevere, still appears genuinely shocked and aggrieved by the king's treatment of him in the 'Morte'. So when the catastrophe comes, its shock is new and
undiminished by the premonitions of the chief characters. Malory shows how these noble characters have played themselves and each other into completely false positions, and by their human folly have wasted all the fine qualities on which their relationship as non-kinsmen but brothers has been built up throughout the Morte Darthur; and the pity of it.

Launcelot and Gawayne

The relationship between Launcelot and Gawayne, once introduced, is consistently though usually incidentally presented as being one of the most amiable between characters who are not kinsmen in Malory's Arthurian society. Launcelot and Gawayne do not share much action, apart from fighting in the war against Lucius in Malory's second tale, but there appear to be strong bonds of respect and loyalty between them. There is a passing indication of their intimacy in the third tale, when Launcelot rescues Gaherys from Tarquin's prison. Launcelot calls Gaherys 'a fellow of mine, and brother he is unto sir Gawayne', and replies to his thanks by referring to his duty as a Round Table knight and a companion of Gawayne, its most socially distinguished member:

Sir, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake that ought to helpe you of ryght for Kynges Arthurs sake, and in especiall for my lorde sir Gawayne his sake, youre owne brother.

Gawayne, on his side, is among the knights of the Round Table whom Launcelot in Kay's armour unhorses in passing in return for their challenges. When they discover his identity, 'there was lawghyng and smylyng amongst them.' Again, this is only an incidental reference, for Malory is not concerned with Gawayne at all in this tale of Launcelot; but it suggests the kind of intimacy these characters share. Notably, it is characterised by generosity, good humour, and much admiration on Gawayne's side for the man whom he openly acknowledges to be his superior in prowess.

In the 'Gareth', Malory shows Launcelot and Gawayne as the fellow
palions of 'Bewmaynee' and as the two foremost knights in Arthur's court. It is out of respect for Gawayne's 'grete bloode'\textsuperscript{266} that Launcelot knights Gareth, who sends his various hostages back to his champion and brother to yield to them jointly.\textsuperscript{267} Elsewhere, Launcelot rescues the bound Gawayne from the saddle of the terrible Garados,\textsuperscript{268} while Gawayne shows himself willing to defend Launcelot from an ambush by the unchivalrous hirelings of Morgan le Fay.\textsuperscript{269} Their dialogue on the former occasion suggests a joking and laconic intimacy, and generally it is such a bond of mutual understanding which they appear to share rather than the interplay of combats which characterises the relationships other non-kinsmen share in Malory's Arthurian society.

Through the alliances they make with each other's kinsmen, Launcelot and Gawayne strengthen their own alliance. For example, after his knighting of Gareth in the fourth tale, Launcelot is shown with this, the best of the Orknays, in various tournaments in the fifth and seventh tales.\textsuperscript{270} It is at the end of the Great Tournament in the latter that Gareth's preference for serving Launcelot rather than his own kinsmen becomes first an issue of debate and then congratulation by the king.\textsuperscript{271} Obviously, Malory was preparing the ground for Gareth's ill-fated death in the 'Morte' by this earlier passage on the honourable necessity of supporting companions in their need, strengthening the motivation for Gawayne's later outrage against Launcelot. In the sixth tale, Launcelot's brother, Ector, is presented as being Gawayne's companion,\textsuperscript{272} and they travel together in search of the famous man they both venerate beyond any Grail. It is chiefly through their relationship with Arthur that Gawayne and Launcelot are held together, however. Again, the sixth tale suggests this by showing the king turning to Launcelot to appeal against the quest he blames his nephew for initiating.\textsuperscript{273}

In the 'Morte' Arthur openly confesses his love for these two knights above all others,\textsuperscript{274} as has been mentioned, and in the events of this last
tale Malory reveals the power over the king and each other which Launcelot and Gawayne have through their relationship. The beginning of the ‘Morte’ shows the extent to which Gawayne is prepared to ignore the current suspicions about Launcelot and Guenevere. He condemns his brothers Aggravayne and Mordred for their proposed interference and turns his back on them when they refuse to heed his warnings for the sake of preserving the peace of the Round Table. When Aggravayne, Florel and Lovel are killed in their attempt to take Launcelot with Guenevere, Gawayne refuses to make an issue of it on the grounds that he had warned them not to interfere with Launcelot. Arthur is astonished at his nephew’s defence of the obviously guilty Launcelot here: ‘For, perde, ye have no cause to love hym!’ Gawayne tries to dissuade Arthur from proceeding against Launcelot for Guenevere at first, counselling him not to be ‘over hasty’ in judging the matter. Altogether, from Gawayne’s advice to his brothers to remember their debt to Launcelot for his long service to them and all knights of the Round Table, without which ‘the beste of us all had bene full colde at the harte-roote’, and from his admonitory refusal to accept Guenevere’s guilt or to attend her burning, it is plain that Malory is here presenting Gawayne as one of the most loyal of Arthur’s knights. More than any other character, Gawayne tries to save the fellowship of the Round Table, and for the most chivalrous of reasons, his devotion to its chief member: ‘methynkis suche noble dedis and kyndnes shulde be remembirde.’

In these ways Malory leads up to the great quarrel between Launcelot and Gawayne over the accidental death of Gareth. This is violent and savage in expression, particularly on Gawayne’s side, as it is in effect. Both characters appear to feel betrayed by the other, Gawayne in his jealous love of Gareth and Launcelot for his long toleration of Gawayne’s more outrageous deeds, like the murder of Lamorak and Bagdemagus, which he let pass unavenged at the time. They hurl their senseless counter-
accusations at each other before the assembled Round Table in the court and on the battle-field, and this conflict between characters who have always appeared closer than kinsmen is shown to supersede the initial conflict between Launcelot and Arthur over Guenevere. In all respects, the conflict between Launcelot and Gawayne is the most terrible outrage Malory reveals in his Arthurian society, and the result of his most careful and complex dramatic writing. In the very nature of his fraternal society, such a violation of fellowship has to be final, and the restoration of affection and goodwill between the two characters themselves (although they never meet again) is too late and ineffectual to mend the Round Table. Launcelot and Gawayne in the 'Morte' become like Balan and Balin in the first tale of the Morte Darthur, but however helpless their conflict is in some senses, the deliberation with which Gawayne pursues it in vengeance for Gareth makes it more than a personal tragedy in its results. Whatever the order of Malory's composition of the Morte Darthur, he clearly had this idea of fraternal destruction in mind from the outset, and it is surely not accidental that the prophecy Merlin utters over Balin's sword is fulfilled in the 'Morte' as the dramatic culmination of the most important issues in the long, uneven narrative: 'And Launcelot with thys sward shall ale the man in the worlde that he lovith beste; that shall be sir Gawayne.' The prophecies about Mordred's destruction of Arthur are of secondary importance to this concerning Launcelot and Gawayne, for it is their unnatural and ironic opposition which destroys Malory's Arthurian society, while Mordred's rebellion merely finishes off the drama, and could not have begun to be effectual had not Gawayne and Launcelot been divided.

What Malory shows most of all through this relationship between the two chief knights of the Round Table is that while it is possible for men to sustain a relationship in which affection, respect, shared interests and companions, and some toleration make them appear like brothers, the sometimes irrational claims of real fraternal loyalty are deeper and
dangerously partisan. Gawayne (in the later tales of the *Morte Darthur* at least) is represented as being a thoroughly unchivalrous character and it is because of this imbalance in his loyalty to his brothers that he compromises his relationships with other knights. Launcelot's toleration of Gawayne (like Arthur's) is the laudable result of affection and respect for his position as the king's nephew, and a mark of Launcelot's own nobility of character and chivalry. Gawayne returns this friendship in admiration, freely praising Launcelot as 'the moste honorablist knight of the worlde and the men of moste worship', and he returns to this effusive admiration before he dies. The mutual reconciliation in attitude of Launcelot and Gawayne reveals something else of the fraternal nature of Malory's Arthurian society. It is that lasting opposition between men who are like brothers in their companionship and in whom there is a genuine respect for the qualities of chivalry (however unequally they practice them) is impossible. This supports what has already been found in the bonds the male characters share in Malory's Arthurian society and will become increasingly evident in the later discussions on chivalry and honour in the *Morte Darthur*, that fraternal loyalty which is not 'oute of mesure' is seen by Malory in the end to be more permanent than isolated aspects of knighthood. It is in this, the foundation of his Arthurian re-creation, that he most significantly differs from the French tales of romantic chivalry from which he largely worked.

**WOMEN IN THE *MORTE DARThUR***

So far, social bonds in Malory's Arthurian society have been considered solely with regard to the male characters in the *Morte Darthur*. These are found to be more important than those shared by men and women, and in order to see why this is so, there follows a discussion on the role of Malory's women characters. It may be said straight away that these are domestic or romantic only, and that women in Malory's Arthurian society do not
form bonds of loyalty among themselves. They have interesting effects on the relationships of Malory's male characters, however, and by implication on Arthurian honour and chivalry. The following observations are based on a survey of all Malory's women characters in the *Morte Darthur*. Unlike those for many of the male characters, however, these are usually incidental in nature and often appear to be made at a very subsidiary level of the narrative.

**Mothers, Sisters and Daughters**

All Malory's famous knights have royal mothers, although not all the queens in the *Morte Darthur* are mothers. Those who are include Igrayne, Morgan, Morgan le Fay, Ban's wife Elayne, Pelles's daughter Elayne, probably the Lady of the Rule, and Melyodas's wife, Elizabeth. Their sons are respectively Arthur; Gawayne, Aggravayne, Gaberys, Gareth and Mordred; Uwayne; Launcelot and Ector de Marys; Galahad; Aggloval, Lamorak, Damor and Perceval; and Trystram. Motherhood itself is more important in this society than the characters who are mothers. Significantly, Malory does not mention Igrayne, Elizabeth or either Elayne once their sons are born and established as famous men. Women characters of lesser renown who become mothers are scarcely mentioned at all, and the many knights who appear as background figures throughout the *Morte Darthur* are of quite unknown descent, even if Malory names their brothers.

A mother's behaviour is seen to impinge on her son's honour as a knight in important ways. For example, it is essential to a man that he is nobly born and that his parentage is established if not legitimate, so that his kinmen may be known and hence his claim to honour and a place within Malory's Arthurian society ratified. Malory puts Merlin to some pains in the first tale to establish (somewhat dubiously) Arthur's legitimacy,
for upon this rests his claim to Uther's kingdom. Accordingly, Igrayne
is suddenly brought forward as a witness before being dropped from the
narrative altogether. Similarly, Torre's mother, the cowherd Ayres's wife,
is fetched before the court by Merlin so that by her confession of her first
lover's royal name she can justify Torre's demand for knighthood. However, Elayne's son, Galahad, needs no such witness, for rumour is wide-
spread that his father is Launcelot, and so his social position is
unequalled, even though he is illegitimate. Other characters have no
hesitation in threatening their mothers if they compromise their honour and
that of their kinmen by illicit sexual behaviour, or some outrage against
men. Thus Uwayne's only memorable action in the Morte Darthur is his move
to kill Morgan le Fay for her attempted murder of her husband, while
Gaherys forgets Gawayne's specific injunction against Lamorak and instead
kills their mother, Morgawse, for her shameful love affair with him. In
so doing, Gaherys goes beyond the bounds of kinship duty and his conduct is
condemned by Morgawse's brother, the king, and the Round Table generally,
while the murderer himself is exiled. In the case of Trystram's step-
mother, far greater chivalry is shown when the young man forgives her for
the murderous ways which her husband, Melyodas, will not. As a result of
Trystram's leniency, however, Melyodas treats him as an unnatural son for
a while.

While it is not expected to be cold-hearted, a son's behaviour towards
his mother in Malory's Arthurian society (insofar as it may be observed) is
very far from being sentimental. For example, the best of Malory's knights
do not heed their mothers' grief but turn away to follow chivalry. In the
sixth tale, Perceval traditionally learns that his departure from home was
too much for his mother to bear in addition to her loss of Pellinor and
Lamorak, and that she died shortly afterwards. He is sorry, and confesses
that his mother had haunted his dreams, making him wonder if she still
lived; but any delay in his quest for the Grail is unthinkable. In
Malory's Arthurian society there is simply no place for the private woes of women or domestic claims upon men. Morgawse's querulous and uncomprehending complaints over the treatment her son, Gareth, has received at Arthur's court are brushed aside by the king, whose only concern is for his young nephew's chivalry. 'Sistir...lat this langage now be stylls'. Elsewhere, Anglydes, mother of Alexander who is called an orphan because his father is dead, waits for him to arrive at manhood to carry out revenge for her husband's murder. But she has no power to ensure that Alexander will do this, and her function ends with his boyhood. Palomydes's mother, like Perceval's, laments the loss of her sons to a life she cannot share or know, and only Launcelot's mother is said to be cheerful over the promised prospect of his future manhood and chivalry. All in all, mothers in Malory's Arthurian society are not unsympathetically presented, but can be seen as the incidental victims of a fraternally structured world which unavoidably brings them loss and grief and obscurity. Relationships between mothers and daughters are not mentioned at all by Malory, and so a woman's only maternal significance in his Arthurian society is through her son; and for the majority of such characters, reference is limited to a passing mention of his origins.

From this comes the point that there is little evidence that Malory imagined his characters in conventional familial groups with married parents at the centre. Most women in his Arthurian society apparently live apart from their husbands as they do from their adult sons, in some subsidiary domestic world which has no place in the Morte Darthur. Reference to a part of the Round Table's creed in the sixth tale endorses that this is felt to be a natural and proper result of the chivalrous fellowship at Arthur's court. Men are said to forsake their parents, wives and children in order to be at the Round Table, and that is upheld as the greatest honour a knight may achieve. The double system of kinship in Malory's Arthurian society (that of fathers with their sons and uncles with their uterine nephews) is
The nature of the Round Table brotherhood and the consequent position of women characters in this fictional world. The mothers provide the link between the two lines of descent, and it is clear why relationships through mothers rather than fathers is stressed. All kinsmen holding together as they have been seen to do, it is the offspring of a man's siblings which he values, not kin by his own marriage. Thus the sons of men's sisters in Malory's Arthurian society appear socially more important in their kinship groups than the sons of sons, who will naturally have mothers of alien blood. So Arthur prizes Gawayne above Mordred and perhaps more significantly, the innocuous Borre.

From the few and very incidental examples of sisters in the Morte Darthur it appears that Malory thought such kinswomen's chief role was to support their brothers by giving them verbal encouragement against their opponents, healing them of their injuries gained in fighting and not bringing trouble upon them through forming inconvenient romantic attachments to other men. Elayne of Astwrat causes her brothers some embarrassment by her outspoken love for Launcelot, their hero, but since it is made clear that she is in Lavanye's company all the time, the relationship between the knights is not jeopardised by any doubts of her chastity. Meliot de Logres's sister is less intrusive, for her single appearance is when she seeks Launcelot's help in gaining the means of healing Meliot's wounds. Perceval's sister in the sixth tale is shown to be even more dedicated to ideals of chivalry than he is as an initiate in the Grail who makes no bonds with men or woman in Malory's Arthurian society, and threatens none. As the inspirer of Perceval's journey to Sarras, she represents a noble influence on her brother's chivalry, if a highly unusual one. Arthur's sisters Morgawse, and Morgan le Fay, are more directly presented in the narrative and both have bad effects on their brother. Morgawse in the first tale betrays her husband's trust by having an affair with the king she was sent by him to watch, and it seems to be implied that she knows her
relationship with Arthur before she conceives Mordred by him. Malory does not make much structural use of the conception of the traditional Arthurian villain, beyond recording it and Merlin's prophecies concerning it. Morgan le Fey is a much more sinister character, for she deliberately conspires to destroy Arthur, and her efforts are not limited to one tale, but represent continued if sporadic malicious campaigns to bring him down through Leuncelot and Guenevere. Malory does not use all the material on Morgan which he might, but there is enough in the Morte Darthur to make her the most unnatural kinswoman in his Arthurian society; and Arthur justifiably recoils from her in horror:

God knowyth I have honoured hir and worshipped hir more than all my kyn, and more have I trusted hir than wyff and all my kyn aftir.

Morgan's attempts at fratricide, so strangely reversed by her role of mystic healer in the 'Morte' when by some literary accident on Malory's part she apparently gains her long sought domination over her brother at last, are equalled in intention by the damsel who brings Balin's second sword to court. Her treachery to her anonymous brother, whom Merlin reports has killed her lover, is what sets the curse on this sword in the first place; although sisters are not important except as the mothers of knights, for in this society they are expected to be as faithful to their brothers as men would be.

For their part, brothers are apparently expected to protect their sisters' chastity and arrange their alliances for them. Examples here include the paternalistic Grygamour, brother of the wayward sorceress Lynet and Lyones; and one of Blayne of Astolat's brothers, Lavaye. Since men in this Arthurian society are honoured by their sisters, or otherwise, and usually protect their sons, such a relationship is natural. Mark, ignoble in himself, is at least indirectly honoured by his sister Elizabeth through his alliance with her son, Trystram. Morgawse, not an honourable sister in herself, nevertheless provides her brother with
his closest and most cherished kinsman, Gawayne. Through these reciprocal sibling relationships, unimportant women characters gain some recognition within Malory's Arthurian society, even if they take little or no part in the action of the narrative. Apart from the briefly sketched relationship between Lynet and Lyoness, sisters do not appear to have any communication in the Morte Darthur. All in all, Malory was clearly not interested in presenting naturalistic relationships at a domestic level in the Morte Darthur and women characters are only introduced at all where they reveal something of the relationships among male characters.

Daughters are occasionally mentioned in connection with their fathers in the Morte Darthur. Pelles and Persaunte are examples of fathers who apparently expect and receive complete obedience from their daughters with regard to other men, and Barnard one who loses his daughter by not keeping her at home against her will. A father's chief concern for his daughter in Malory's Arthurian society is to make an honourable alliance by her marriage with a creditable husband. Lodegreaunce is therefore shown to be delighted at Arthur's request for Guenevere, and gives her the Round Table itself as her dowry. Inode's father, on the other hand, says that he is sorry that Trystram insists on keeping his word to his uncle Mark and will not marry her himself. Pelles is glad to further the predicted alliance between his daughter Elayne and Launcelot, although by usual standards it is illicit. These are passing revelations, however, for marriage is not an important subject in the Morte Darthur. Daughters are sometimes shown helping their fathers, as for example, Bagdemagus's daughter helps him by fetching Launcelot to take his part in a tournament. In general, however, daughters in Malory's Arthurian society can be seen merely as projections of their fathers' claims to social prominence. Since Malory does not imagine that romantic love is the basis of chivalry, daughters are not fought over and their place in Round Table society is quite incidental.
Other Kinswomen

As for other female kinship roles in the *Morte Darthur*, there are even fewer examples of nieces, aunts and cousins than of mothers, sisters and daughters. Uncles are important, as continual references to Arthur by the Orkneys show; but no man calls Guenevere aunt. Perceval’s aunt, the recluse, is the single example of her kind. Nevertheless, a few of Malory’s male characters speak of female relatives for whom they feel some responsibility as cousins. For example, Meliot resigns his cousin Nenyve to Pelligor’s chivalrous care after his trouble in rescuing her from his sworn brother, *Bryam of the Leles*. Another knight is shown to be less careful of his kinswoman, whom he unpredictably attempts to violate, and in so doing endangers the whole of his kinship group: ‘for and I had loste my maydynhode fyve hondred men sholde have dyed therefore’. The preservation of sexual taboos between men and women who are their kin is presented in this example as something vital to the stability and continuance of a male orientated society, not as a matter of female honour. The woman character who tells Bors what trouble he has averted for her cousin in rescuing her is obviously aware of this and is as concerned about it, as in another tale Morgawse is not when she endangers all Malory’s Arthurian society by her incestuous relationship with her ignorant brother. But however conflicts may be seen to arise between some men and women characters in the *Morte Darthur*, there is no general sexual role conflict suggested; and it would be surprising if there were by a medieval writer as conservative as Malory apparently was. It is only by observation and deduction that his women characters appear as the victims of the system of interrelated male loyalties in Malory’s Arthurian society.

Wives

Wives play little part in the dramatic presentation of this Arthurian society. No Malorian knight is shown to have a married life of any
prominence, although it is incidentally revealed that many Round Table men are married, including Kay and the brothers Aggravayne, Gaherys and Garth, who marry kinswomen all on the same day. Of all Malory's male characters, only Pelleas manages to win much chivalrous fame and it is made clear that this is only because his wife, the enchantress Nenyve, helps him by her magic. Generally, marriage is a state irrelevant or even inimical to Malory's ideas of chivalry, as Launcelot declares to a hopeful damsel on one occasion. In this original passage in the third tale, it is made clear that a knight needs his freedom from any sort of ties with women in order to get on with the very active business of chivalry. There are surprisingly few love relationships in the Morte Darthur, and very few married ones. Ector's wife, Arthur's foster-mother, is not seen at all, although she plays some part in Malory's source. She is evidently obedient to her husband's command to supplant Kay by Arthur, for the latter remarks on the excellence of her care: 'as well as her own[she]hath fostred me and kepte'. Ban's wife, Elayne, is shown briefly as she grieves for her husband's political troubles, but Malory uses the instance to prophesy Launcelot's future fame through Merlin. A nameless character savours the violent retribution she sees tormenting her husband's murderer: 'for he that did that deed is sore wounded and is never likely to be hole, that shall I ensure hym'. Her prophecy turns out to be wrong, since Launcelot eventually heals Meliot; but that does not diminish her conjugal savagery. Phelot's wife obeys him, apparently without scruple, and succeeds in trapping Launcelot, only to mourn the result of her trickery, her sudden widowhood: 'Alas!....why haste thou slayne my husband? Yet another woman mourns her equally unchivalrous husband Garladonne, claiming in her partiality that he 'wolde have provyd a good knight'. Anglydes achieves little in setting her son to avenge his father on King Mark; but she shows her obsessive conjugal loyalty in bringing Alexander up with this single aim.
There are said to be many weeping widows in the *Morte Darthur* and the conventional prisons of Arthurian romance are full of unavenged women characters. Malory only shows one man mourning his wife, however, and that is Melyodas, Trystram's father. Such is the naturalistic tenderness of Melyodas's grief for his Elizabeth (Isabel in Malory's probable source) that a possible reference to Malory's own wife has been suggested here. Whatever the issue of that might be, the point for the present discussion is that conjugal loyalty as presented in the *Morte Darthur* is something suffering wives are shown offering their husbands, and not the other way round. It is shown to be a fierce and undiscriminating loyalty, and is usually totally ineffectual against the realities of this masculine society.

More often, the bond between husbands and wives in his Arthurian society is shown by Malory to be something which is deliberately destructive on the female side. Morgause, for example, is unfaithful to Lot while he lives and apparently a licentious widow afterwards. Morgan le Fay tries to murder Uryens because he is unconsciously in the way of her amours; while Segwarydes's wife is a notorious 'lyght lady' and one of the most attractive of many in Mark's court, where she causes much trouble. However, Segwarydes is an admirably prudent man, for he will not allow his wife's provocative behaviour to force him into oppositions with knights he admires for their chivalry; and he tells Trystram: 'I well never hate a noble knyght for a lyght lady'. Significantly, wives who are not bad are hardly mentioned by Malory, for they have nothing to do in the action, since they do not complicate relationships among male characters. Hence Gareth, Brunor and Alexander who all win their wives in reward for their chivalry are presumably to be imagined living in uninteresting harmony with them, quite apart from their chivalrous careers as Arthurian knights.
Mistresses

Few of the love relationships in the Morte Darthur appear to result in marriage. Guenevere, Isode, Morgan le Fay and Morgawse are all more famous as mistresses than as wives, and many less important women characters in Malory's Arthurian society have love affairs which bring them more social regard in some respects than do their marriages. This is not meant to suggest that Malory was extolling romantic adultery, or courtly love, for this element in his French sources is something he has almost entirely removed by substituting the qualities of his heroic fraternal society as the basis of Arthurian chivalry. Nevertheless, he treats romance and adultery with realism and, where his lovers are particularly noble characters, with sympathy. Love between men and women is presented from a worldly and tolerant point of view and quite without the brooding sentimentality and complexity which characterises earlier and more courtly Arthurian literature. Despite this sympathetic treatment, however, there are no concessions made in Malory's subordination of love to male loyalty in the Morte Darthur, and it is not seen as either the most important or necessarily the best influence in a knight's life. Lovers have to take the often tragic and usually pathetic consequences of love in the fraternal society in which they are shown to exist. For example, Launceor and Coluane die violent deaths through the former's interference with Balin in order to win fame at Arthur's court.\textsuperscript{340} These two characters incidentally become the Romeo and Juliet of Malory's Arthurian society, for their tomb is referred to as a landmark in the fifth tale where friends fight each other for false causes.\textsuperscript{341} In another passage, a knight, Abellus, fights to the death over his lady's dog,\textsuperscript{342} not from any romantic extremism but because he takes on a stronger man than himself. Nevertheless, there are odd romantics in this Arthurian society and Malory appears to poke sly fun
at them for their folly. For example, there is the brooding Eynogrya, who affords Dynadan some laughter, and poor Matto le Breune, reported to have run mad after losing his mistress to another man. Palomydes stares into a well and finds himself waxing pale and thin for his pointless love for his friend’s mistress, and shortly afterwards he pulls himself together and settles the matter realistically by fighting Trystram and then restoring his friendship with him. In so doing, honour, peace and normality return to the Paynim knight, who turns Christian to mark the best battle of his career. This, it is suggested, is the best way of dealing with disruptive romantic passions. But these are all very much the background figures of the Morte Darthur, and have almost nothing to do with the major parts of the action which relates to the building up and destruction of the Round Table. However, they serve to illustrate that Malory’s treatment of romantic love is not restricted to Launcelot and Guenevere. Although usually painful, love is not invariably tragic, and occasionally it is comic, to the beholder at least.

The saddest and in some ways most sympathetically portrayed of the lovers in the Morte Darthur are Elayne of Astolat and Pelles’s daughter, Elyan. The first falls in love with Launcelot before she learns his name, and then devotes herself to winning his love by nursing him. But Elyan’s passion is doomed from the beginning by Launcelot’s fidelity to Guenevere and he refuses her on any terms. Though far from wishing to hurt Elyan, as he explains later to Arthur and Guenevere, Launcelot destroys his preserver. It is a hopeless situation, but not to be condemned because of that. The priest who chides Elyan for her excessive love is chidden in turn: ‘Why sholde I leve such thoughtes? Am I nat an erthely woman?’ Vinaver says of this death scene that it is ‘probably Malory’s most important addition to the episode of the Fair Maid of Astolat’. Apart from being a fine example of Malory’s structural powers as a dramatic writer, it gives an important insight into the mentality of this
writer who subordinated love to chivalry, contrary to the example of his source. That love comes second does not imply that Malory cannot present it as being something in itself important and inevitable. Elayne's outcry testifies that in an honourable society where men largely keep faith with their mistresses, some men and women will love in vain; for where there is loyalty in love, either in or outside marriage, then honour is the general rule, not promiscuity. It is for this that Malory later pauses to make 'a lytyll mention' of Guenevere, who kept faith with Launcelot whatever she did to Arthur: 'whyle she lyved she was a trew lover, and therefor she had a good ende.' The sheer fervour and honesty of Elayne's unrequited love is noble, although in its lack of measure it is uncivilised, uncourtly, perhaps irreligious, and certainly pathetic. Her death is virtually a suicide; the extremity of her fatal devotion moves the court to honour her funeral, and even chastens the capricious and worldly Guenevere for a while. In his handling of the whole episode, Malory reveals a surer grasp of dramatic and psychological realism than he did in the earlier romantic story of Pelleas and Ettard, where the wrongs of love resulted in thoroughgoing and unlikely poetic justice for the wronged lover.

Generally, romantic love in the Morte Darthur is portrayed as something violent in its expression and consequences, largely because it is presented as being inevitably ancillary to the various bonds of loyalty shared by the male characters. Protected by the Round Table code of chivalry, which ensures women fair treatment in matters of property and succour, but conventionally forced to secrecy, mistresses in Malory's Arthurian society are more the victims of men than they might be without any 'legal' protection. Many of them have to seek their own lovers, for there is little time for wooing in the life of a Malorian knight. Altogether, it seems that damsels and wives among Malory's women characters ask for love rather more than they are asked for it, and few complain of those who are forcibly
and unchivalrously abducted. On the rare occasions when a Round Table knight is their abductor, however, women become the prizes of a complicated game: their abduction is a standing challenge, and usually Malory makes it clear that the abductor is looking for a fight rather than a mistress.\textsuperscript{357}

The most violent love affairs in the \textit{Morte Darthur} are those involving infidelity between men and their mistresses. For example, Garnyssh kills himself when he discovers his mistress's true worth,\textsuperscript{358} and the Lady of Avylion helps a damsel kill her own brother to avenge a lover.\textsuperscript{359} Merlin himself is betrayed by his own misplaced passion for Menyve.\textsuperscript{360} As this society is charmed and saddened by romantic love which is innocent, so is it outraged by infidelity in more complex love affairs which it secretly tolerates. Launcelot scorns Trystram for his thoughtless marriage to the second Isode and promises to be his enemy on account of it.\textsuperscript{361} Some knights protect themselves against similar losses of honour through their women's infidelity simply by refusing to take love very seriously. Dynas is one character who is shown to do this. He loses his mistress, who runs away and takes his dogs with her, but 'than was he the more wrother for hya brachettis, more than for hys lady.'\textsuperscript{362} Dynadan is the chief example of the man who will not call himself a lover. He flatly denies that love has anything to do with chivalry, and calls all knights who take women seriously fools. As he sees it, lovers quarrel, and men lose their honour and their friends for something that is not very permanent after all: 'God defende me!...for the joy of love is to shorte, and the sorrow thereof and what cometh thereof is dures over longe.'\textsuperscript{363} Isode is made to laugh at Dynadan for his uncourtly bluntness. But her history in the \textit{Morte Darthur} cannot disprove the gist of what he says. On the other hand, what Dynadan does not see, and Malory shows that Launcelot and Trystram do, is that the suffering in love which the hardy cynic despises is a sign of nobility in a man, even though his chivalry does arise from other factors than love.

In the seventh tale, Malory openly condemns hastiness and
immoderation in love 'nowadays',\textsuperscript{364} as well as showing the disasters it leads to among his many characters. He praises its more rational and stable qualities of fidelity, gratitude and endurance. The implication is that while a knight in his Arthurian society has more to do than think about his lady, this need not imply that all men should be like either Dynadan or Galahad: 'firste reserve the honours to God, and secundely thy quarrel waste com of thy lady. And such love I calle vertuouse love.'\textsuperscript{365} Presumably it is through chivalry that a man is to honour God, since his 'quarrels' in the \textit{Morte Darthur} are battles to prove what he claims is right. Chivalry in the \textit{Morte Darthur} is no abstract ideal (as will be discussed in a later chapter)\textsuperscript{366} but involves the proper relationship of man to man, or what is more briefly called loyalty. The love of women is always presented by Malory as something which intrudes on this first duty, and potentially threatens it with destruction or at least imbalance. But Malory's Arthurian society is not, like its creator, rational in temper. There is no simple separation of interests possible, however, or at any rate, none of Malory's characters more than temporarily achieves it. Iseode explicitly fears that she will be blamed for distracting Trystram from the business of chivalry,\textsuperscript{367} but although she urges her lover to attend Round Table tournaments, she cannot save him from the conflict he has over her with Mark. Launcelot's fear of any kind of love relationship with a woman is that it would keep him from 'armys, and turnementis, batallys and adventures',\textsuperscript{368} which is a significantly Malorion addition suggesting, as Vinaver says, that he was trying to 'ignore the traditional courtly background of the Launcelot story and to dismiss Launcelot's literary past'.\textsuperscript{369} Launcelot's love for Guenevere is shown to do the opposite, in fact, for it does not make him (in a manner) uxorious, and he is never shown dallying with Guenevere when he could be fighting. His frequent absences from court are what inspire Guenevere's jealous attacks on Launcelot, and it is these semi-public conflicts which bring both lovers into the danger they fear. The success
of Launcelot’s fighting activity itself is initially attributed to his desire to impress Guenevere.\textsuperscript{370} This is not harped upon, but clearly Launcelot’s growing entanglement with Guenevere in the later tales shows its implications. Her accusations and persecution of Launcelot in the later tales is what brings Guenevere into opposition with his chivalrous life, and his kinmen.\textsuperscript{371} Bors in particular is shown to be careful of his uncle’s honour in the hands of the queen, and he tries to cover up the dangerous exposure. In this way, love is shown to be anti-chivalrous and dangerous folly.

Launcelot’s prophecy (as it becomes) that ‘so who that usyth peramours shall be unhappy’\textsuperscript{372} is something Malory consistently shows to be true in his Arthurian society. The noblest love relationships he presents are adulterous on the woman’s side, and all his unfaithful lovers are woman characters, married or not. This society is structured from male kinship bonds which undermine the possible importance of female kinship roles, so this is not surprising. As has been mentioned already, the conjugal role for Malory’s women characters is most important for providing knights with mothers and identities. All love and all women apart from this are incidental. There are no great wives or courtly mistresses in this Arthurian society.

It is more than once said to be Arthur’s creed and Launcelot’s that love cannot be compelled.\textsuperscript{373} Certainly Malory shows that fidelity in love cannot be compelled in marriage any more than men can make women love them, as Eynegrys and Palomydes lament.\textsuperscript{374} But it is unusual for his knights to languish by wells, as these two characters tend to do. Malory’s men are worldly figures, and if Dynadan overstates the case when he refuses to fight for Isode in an artificial cause,\textsuperscript{375} he errs on the right side. Elsewhere, through the examples of Trystram, Lamorak and Launcelot Malory shows the folly of men risking their friendship and strength to fight romantic battles in imaginary and futile causes.\textsuperscript{376} Launcelot’s fights for Guenevere in
the seventh tale are as much to save himself and the Round Table as her; and when the issue becomes too real, Arthur forbids the lover to fight for his lady at all, for that is not felt to be a reliable way of dealing with all the issues of male loyalty and honour which have been raised by the love affair. Apart from this, on the few occasions in the Morte Darthur when fights are held for women, it is the most famous knights (who are the best fighters) who win the most prized women (which means the most physically attractive) from their weaker brethren. Often they do not have to fight at all, but simply take their mistresses from their husbands, or in turn are chosen by women whose husbands are inferior knights. Languish as he does, therefore, since it is shown that Palomydes cannot rival Trystram as a fighter, he therefore cannot have Isode, even if she would have him. Similarly, Mark can claim Segwarydes's wife, but he cannot keep her when Trystram arrives to rival his claim.

In this way, women characters in the Morte Darthur are seen to influence Malory's Arthurian society by their effects on the social ranking of some knights. Creatively used, through such loving encouragement as Guenevere and Isode give their knights, this influence is a great spur to chivalry. The two queens inspire Launcelot and Trystram to fight harder and so to win more honour, which establishes them as the chief knights in Malory's Arthurian society. It is when women try to use this power over knights' chivalrous careers selfishly that they destroy them. Such selfishness Malory portrays as over possessiveness, and it is his inordinate fear of such fettering which makes Launcelot refuse the damsel in the third tale. Female love which seeks only to possess and even flaunt possessio| of a great knight is seen by Malory as a horrible and unnatural passion, ignoble in origin and perilous in effect. Significantly, his women characters who display such tendencies are larger than life, being malignant sorceresses. With the exception of Nenyve, who is benevolent to Arthur, Malory invariably portrays these characters as forever lying in wait for the most eminent and therefore the most desirable
On one literary level, these sorceresses are the traditional witches of myth, fairy-tale and romance. and it is almost inevitable in the nature of his material that at least a few should have survived in Malory's Arthurian re-creation. Their marvellous attributes of bewitching and healing, already exposed to the sophisticated rationalistic French prose in which they reached Malory, are further reduced to a mundane matter-of-factness in the Morte Darthur. However, sorceresses they remain, and their supernatural ways flourish enough for them to set traps for the knights of the Round Table, and at times bring them into great danger, although men's fear of them seems to be greater than their deeds warrant. These largely incidental characters may be seen as providing tests of a knight's chivalry by challenging his loyalty to his own given word or his mistress. Malory makes nothing of the moral possibilities of such tests (as, for example, the author of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight did) and they are to be seen simply as corroborative demonstrations of the given worthiness of his knights.

Only the most outstanding men in Malory's Arthurian society are troubled by sorceresses, namely Arthur, Leuncelot, Gawayne and Trystram. Their encounters usually occur when they are far away from their usual companions, and thus exposed as uncharacteristically solitary and therefore vulnerable individuals. The threat offered the knights is invariably sexual in form. Usually a sorceress seeks to hold a knight by force or by tricking a promise from him to make him her thrall and keep him from the powerful male world at the Arthurian court. As the knights themselves are shown to interpret such a threat, it is a twofold attempt on chivalry. First, a man cannot get on with adventures and battles if he is locked away in some symbolically perilous tower; and secondly, if he breaks faith in
any way with his existing principles of loyalty, then he is dishonoured. Over and above this, a sexual surrender to women seems to be an unnatural inversion of the fundamental principle of absolute male domination in Malory's Arthurian society. In effect, the sorceresses like Morgan le Fay, Hallewes, Brusen and Aunowre try to unmake a knight through the dishonourable power of destructive female sexuality.

The love sorceresses offer his knights is presented by Malory at its worst extreme as something diseased and horrible. The necromancer Hallewes is the best example of this Circe aspect of womanhood, and her confession to Launcelot in the Chapel Perilous sums up the aims of the other sorceresses in the *Morte Darthur* who try to ensnare knights of the Round Table: I have loved this seven yere, but there may no woman have thy love but quene Gwenyver; and sythen I myght nat rejoysye the nother thy body on lyve, I had keppe no more joy in this worlde but to have thy body dede. Than wolde I have bawmed hit and sered hit, and so to have keppe hit my lyve dayes; and dayly I sholde have olyphed the and kyssed the, dispyte of quene Gwenyver.

Such grotesque love is an exaggeration of the effects of woman's love on knights in Malory's Arthurian society generally, which at its noblest binds and restrains those who should naturally, as knights, be pursuing an active chivalry in the service of kinsmen, friends and king. Malory's male characters are seen to respond with fear and horror to the malignant sorceresses, and when they discover one of their fellowship has been trapped by such a woman, his rescue is immediately put in hand. Morgan is never caught and is inviolable since she is Arthur's sister. But her direct attempts on Launcelot, Gawyne and Arthur are foiled, although lesser men like Hemyson and even Alexander become her victims for a while. Hallewes is outwitted by Launcelot's steadfastness to Guenevere and his care of his honour in not making rash gestures. Aunowre is literally cornered by the quick-wittedness of another sorceress, Nenyve. The beheading of Aunowre is an illustration of the violence such characters arouse, for the usual chivalrous taboo on harming women of any degree whatsoever patently
does not apply to women who purposely harm the knights themselves. They are an affront to chivalry. In this way, the damsels who spit at Pelleas’s shield in the first tale in the *Morte Darthur* horrify as well as anger Gawain; for they appear blasphemous in their disrespect to the symbol of a knight’s chivalry and unnatural in their desire to humiliate him. Altogether, the sorceresses in the *Morte Darthur* represent isolated attacks on what is presented as the natural and best type of noble society, a chivalrous and closely-bonded fraternity in which women must take second place to the demands of male loyalty and honour.

Yet while Malory’s strongest knights seem to defeat these women while they are single-minded in their chivalry, and magic and trickery are powerless in the face of male obstinacy and courage, there are other more subtle effects to be observed. For example, when Leancelot is obviously putting the indulgence of his love for Guenevere before other considerations in the fifth tale, he twice becomes vulnerable to Brusen’s magic and mistakes Elayne for the queen. Here it is plainly his own obsessive love which divides Leancelot’s body from his will and makes him the destined begetter of his own usurper in chivalry. Consciously, however, he does not betray Guenevere, and so is pardoned and allowed by her to continue in his perversion of chivalrous duties for her love. However, what happens to him after the sixth tale, when his prowess ceases to be the proof of his honour is in some respects an illustration of the dangers in Malory’s Arthurian society of the possessiveness of a love which does not reckon with a man’s duty to his fellows. That the healing powers of Malory’s sorceresses comprise a very arbitrary and minor aspect of their action in the *Morte Darthur* is apparently further corroboration of his general treatment of love between men and women in his Arthurian society. This is not necessarily sinister, or wholly bad in its effects on chivalry; but potentially at least, romantic love is seen by Malory as destructive and intrusive in what is first and foremost a society of warriors.
Apart from the sorceresses, the supernatural women characters in the *Morte Darthur* are the female fiends encountered in the sixth tale, the 'Quest'. These figures are not, of course, 'members' of Malory's Arthurian society; but they represent an aspect of it which is a further extension of what has already been remarked of the sorceresses. This is the fact that their means of tempting the purest of the Arthurian knights in their quests is quite blatantly sexual, while the real object of such temptations is to undo an individual's honour and steadfastness in his quest. By some curious psychological inversion, Launcelot, the most sought after of Arthur's knights by good and some very bad women in Logres, does not have a single vision or meeting with one of the black-clothed temptresses. This is a dramatically credible situation, for Malory makes it very plain that Guenevere dominates Launcelot's mind during both the strange chivalry of this quest and the more normal chivalry of his Arthurian society as it is represented in the other tales of the *Morte Darthur*. It is the saintly Borlez and Perceval who are shown stranded in lonely places and beset by the temptations which apparently have little or no power over them in normal waking life at Arthur's court. The Christian writer of the *Queste* traditionally decries female love of any earthly kind as sinful and therefore an obstacle to chivalry. Malory faithfully follows his source in forbidding the ladies of the court to accompany the Round Table knights on their lonely journeys in search of what they know not. In this sixth tale of the *Morte Darthur*, chastity is presented as a correlative of chivalry; and the best knights are those whose virtue is unspotted, while the two most perfect are virgins. However, this is not how Malory presents sexual love elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*; for while it is always potentially dangerous to a man's chivalry, it cannot be seen as sinful in a society which does not operate in terms of Christian virtues and sins per se.
But what is significant in the sixth tale, for all its general oddity, is the way in which it emerges that female love can occasionally be seen as an attack not just on an individual's chastity and all that rests with that, but on the whole male-bonded Arthurian society of the Round Table itself. While the king repeatedly laments the threat to the continuity of his fellowship of knights which the Quest raises, it is not for a moment suggested that he fears for his knights' success in resisting women fiends. But when Bors is faced with the woman in the tower he does not recognise in time, it is specifically through his allegiance to Lyonell and Launcelot that his steadfastness is essayed:

'...for thou woldist nat do hit for to be heldyn chast, for to conquere the loose of the wayne-glory of the worlde; for that shall beseale the now, and thou warne hir, that sir Launcelot, the good knyght, thy cousyn, shall dye. And thon shall men sey that thou art a man-sleer, both of thy brother sir Lyonell and of thy cousyn sir Launcelot, whych thou myght have rescowed easily, but thou wentist to rescow a mayde which perteyned nothyng to the. Now loke thou whethir hit had bene gretter harms of thy brothers dethe, other ellis to have suffirde hir to have loste hir maydynhode.' Then seyde he, 'How hast thou harde the tokyns of thy dreme?'
'Ye,' sayd sir Bors.
'Then ye hit in thy defaughte if sir Launcelot, thy cousyn, dye.' 390

Few knights in the *Morte Darthur* encounter a harder test of chivalry than this blackmail. Bors's response appears rather disappointingly untypical in view of his loyalty to his kinsmen, which is usually presented by Malory as his most characteristic virtue. Bors cannot unravel the subtleties of the threat, but clings single-mindedly to his purpose, which is not to surrender his chastity to force. Not the chastity itself, but Bors's steadfastness (as Luminsey calls it) triumph, and the empty threat dissolves with the vision itself. This test is like the encounters Launcelot and others have elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*, however, where it is shown that a Round Table knight who is true to his purpose cannot be harmed or dishonoured by threats, however horrible, and that Malory's Arthurian society is consequently impregnable while men are loyal to one another and keep their words.

While Bors and other Grail knights behave chivalrously towards the
more natural women who make various demands for help during the Quest, no one and nothing Arthurian is threatened, except for one very striking exception. This is the sudden bitter enmity which Lyonell shows Bors when he thinks that his brother has deserted him to rescue an unimportant (and mortal) damsel in distress. Lyonell apparently sees this as an outrageous breach of fraternal loyalty, for he does not consider the implications of the matter for chivalric honour. The unnatural attack which Lyonell subsequently makes on Bors, who is too horrified to defend himself, results in the doubly sacrificial murder of Collgravonne, himself a Round Table knight, as a hermit. The crime of fratricide is only averted by Divine intervention, and the unnatural conflict is dispelled by a miracle. Malory has followed his source in the whole episode, but it happens to fit his picture of an Arthurian society. The conflict between excessive fraternal demands, natural affection between kinsmen and honour arises elsewhere in the Morte Darthur. Similarly, the opposition between male and female claims upon an individual’s chivalry is generally consistent with what Malory shows of loyalty and chivalry in his Arthurian society. By contrast, Perceval’s sister is a shining example of purity and selflessness, and her martyrdom undoes the wicked effects of female greed and blood-lust by which many men and women are said to have been destroyed at the nameless castle of horrors which is in some respects the opposite of Corbenic. Thus Malory shows in his sixth tale that although they are secondary characters, in both worldly and holy relationships with men, women may occasionally influence the course of Arthurian chivalry favourably. While in many ways the ‘Quest’ is untypical in material and attitudes of the Morte Darthur, this is a normal representation of women in relation to chivalry in Malory’s Arthurian society.

Other Non-Kinswomen

Although women in Malory’s Arthurian society do not form non-kinship bonds of loyalty with one another as men do, they can be seen to have minor
parts to play in this society apart from those of their kinship and love relationships. For example, there are a few incidental women characters who show their sympathy for chivalry by offering benighted men hospitality, one in defiance of her own husband who is an enemy of the Round Table. It is by no means suggested in the *Morte Darthur* that because romantic love is potentially dangerous to knights that all women are therefore antagonistic to chivalry. Even though the majority of Malory's women characters as mothers, wives and mistresses suffer because the chivalric way of the Round Table gives them no hold over their men and no active place in the Arthurian world, there is no suggestion that they should be critical of the fraternity on account of this. It is implied by Malory that it is natural as well as honourable for love between men and women to take second place to chivalry. The male system of winning worship through chivalry and by acting loyally to other men is the only complete way of life presented in the *Morte Darthur*; all other aspects of life - domestic, religious, magic and visionary - are secondary projections of this. Even the 'external' characters whose role it is to oppose Arthurian knights acquiesce in the system of chivalry and can only offer anarchy, which is the denial of this society, in its place. The minor women characters in the *Morte Darthur* (apart from the sorceresses) play supporting roles in every sense.

Some of these figures are women servants to the queens who play more important parts in the action of the narrative. The ladies of Arthur's court are only casually mentioned, but there is the implication of a shadowy fiction of a world in waiting behind the dramatic foreground of the action. A few characters occasionally emerge from this background; examples include Isode's woman, Brangwen, whom Malory briefly presents as a sympathetic and well-treated friend of the Cornish queen, unlike her French original. Another with a similar role is Pelles's daughter's sorceress-confidante, Brusen. Both these women are of very limited dramatic importance and simply serve to further the love intrigues of
their respective mistresses, which they do loyally and cleverly. Morgan's damsels pass to and fro on deceitful errands for the dark queen who is not shown as being a particularly kind mistress to them. But these damsels are colourless enough in themselves, and more important are the independent women who act as guides and initiators of various quests and adventures. These characters are shown carrying messages, pointing out directions to wandering knights, bringing news to Arthur's court and setting men in the way of marvels to be brought to an end. In addition, there is seen to be professional relationships in chivalry between particular damsels and knights which transcends any personal relationship which might otherwise arise between them. Gareth's guide, Lynet, is a good example of this, for it is not she but her sister whom Gareth marries at the end of his adventures. On the other hand, Brunor (La Cote Male Tayle) brings his quest down to the level of a domestic comedy by marrying his impertinent guide, and it is suggested that Alexander has an 'unprofessional' relationship with his damsel before relegating her to his chivalric service when he marries Alys. Apart from these individuals, the damsel guides in the Morte Darthur are some of the solitary characters discussed below shortly, and are important only insofar as they occasionally impinge upon the main structure of Malory's Arthurian society. Generally they make no lasting relationships with Malory's knights and so are not drawn into the network of related loyalties to which the more 'fixed' characters like Guenevere and Isode belong.

Other non-kinswomen, such as recluses, nuns and benevolent widows, show a less active protective care of Arthurian knights, providing points of refuge at the borders of the recognizable chivalric world in the Morte Darthur in which knights may sometimes temporarily retire from play, as it were. As such, these very subsidiary figures comprise a positive counterbalance to the isolated and malignant designs of the sorceresses who are said to haunt uncertain forest regions which are also beyond the court.
Again, since women have nothing to do in Malory's Arthurian society, unless they are characters related in specific ways to some knights or other, they cannot be more than incidental figures in the action of the Morte Darthur. This is why non-kinswomen are altogether much less significant than non-kinsmen in Malory's Arthurian society.

**Women in Malory's Arthurian Society - Summary**

Malory's women characters are sometimes shown in what may be called tragic choruses, which are principally to be heard at the raising of sieges and the opening of dungeons, when widows and damsels by the score are shown denouncing their tormentors, lamenting their dead and praising their deliverers. There seems to be the suggestion of a psychological unity of fear and insecurity among all Malory's women characters. To some extent, this is traditional enough in older European heroic literature, in which men act while women wait and suffer in the background. The fact that Malory's major women characters have shed much of their significance as courtly figures and are presented instead as the victims or destroyers rather than the inspirers of chivalry reflects this inherited tendency of presenting women predominantly as mourners. All Malory's women characters appear to move between the extremes of grief and joy which depends entirely on the men to whom they are related in some way (although as a generalisation, there is very little naturalistic 'middle ground' of emotional experience for any character in the Morte Darthur). Whatever its literary and social derivation, the passivity and acquiescence of Malory's women characters by contrast adds to the pervading illusion of male unity and strength in his Arthurian society, as well as emphasising their own collectivechorie role in the Morte Darthur. Only a few women appear to have any independent action in the narrative, and then it is only for a limited time. The correspondence between Guenevere and Isode, which Malory occasionally mentions, dramatically underlines this, for the mistresses of the two
best Arthurian knights write solely to complain about their respective lovers. Some effects of their subordinate dramatic roles in the Morte Darthur will be discussed in the following chapter on honour.

Many of Malory's male characters are indistinguishable as individuals, but functionally most can be seen to relate to the overall male structure by which men in the Morte Darthur achieve fame and allies. At all levels, this Arthurian society is masculine, from kitchen-boys to kings. But only very beautiful and therefore greatly beloved women are of any dramatic significance, and they are put aside in the tales of war, which is the chief business of the Round Table in three of the eight tales, while the 'quest' makes a fourth from which women characters are almost entirely excluded. Yet concerned as he demonstrably was with the re-creation of an Arthurian world which is masculine and heroic in its chivalry, Malory never betrays any signs of the traditional misogyny which is often to be found in much earlier medieval literature. For a start, there was no trace of anything so uncourtly in his French sources. Secondly, misogynist attitudes of the medieval writers who satirised women, particularly with regard to the effects of their love on men, varied with more or less bitterness according to the nature of the sermon, lyric, fabliau or play they were compiling; but however didactic, one thing which they nearly all appear to have had in common was a sense of comedy. There is no better amplification of these attitudes from a humane and fundamentally comic point of view than Chaucer's treatment of women characters in his Canterbury Tales. But whatever humour and occasional situational comedy it contains, the Morte Darthur is a tragic presentation of life, in which women's dramatic roles, but not their natures, are degraded. In addition, Malory lacked Chaucer's sophisticated grasp of characterisation and dramatic manipulation in his earlier tales of the Morte Darthur, and in the whole work orientates his writing from a less psychologically introspective angle. It is the nature of life imagined in a limited and particular way, as a chivalrous fraternity, rather than the
development of characters in a recognizable world which concerned Malory in the *Morte Darthur*. He apparently was not interested in realistic social themes like marriage or romantic love for their own sake, or with exploring human traits in relations to these, as earlier English and French writers - notably Chaucer and Chrétien de Troyes - had done. But despite all this qualification Malory's presentation of love between men and women in his Arthurian society is generally realistic and sympathetic, even though he subordinates it to other issues most of the time. Women characters are unimportant but they are not discounted by Malory and he was apparently far from imagining that the most masculine society in his Arthurian world could 'exist' in any sense without women and romantic and conjugal love. His re-creation of the story of Launcelot and Guenevere testifies that while on the one hand Malory dismissed romantic love as secondary to Round Table chivalry, on the other he admitted it as the greatest source of joy and nobility in his most heroic knight. The practical opposition of these two forces, romantic love and chivalry, constitutes one of Malory's most original contributions to Arthurian literature, and it reveals some of his most significant attitudes to his material in the *Morte Darthur*.

**Arthur and Guenevere**

Arthur and Guenevere are the chief husband and wife figures in Malory's Arthurian society, but there is little to be learned of their relationship from references in the *Morte Darthur*. Neither character is important in this marriage role, and their relationship only gathers dramatic significance in the last four tales, and only directly in the last two, when Malory begins to develop the theme of Launcelot's love of Guenevere by which he motivates the tragedy of the Round Table in the 'Morte'. While it is possible to speak of a relationship between Arthur and Guenevere in general chronological terms of the fiction itself, it is not possible to treat this as if it were something which may be seen
developing from beginning to end of the *Morte Darthur* because of the uncertainty of its compositional chronology. Most of the references must be taken as self-contained examples of particular points; but still there is enough consistency suggested among them to justify drawing some general implications about the relationship as an illustration of Malory's Arthurian society.

In the first tale, Arthur chooses Guenevere against Merlin's gloomy advice because 'this damesell is the moste valyaunte and fayzyst that I know lyvyng.' It is an affectionate relationship which Malory establishes here between the king and queen, and the marriage, prompted by Arthur's barons and his own love, is presented as a good thing, chiefly because it brings Arthur his inheritance, the Round Table, and a hundred knights to serve him. It is twice suggested that Arthur wants this table as much as he wants Guenevere, and so from the beginning of his writing, Malory establishes the close association between the king, his wife, the Round Table and, through Merlin's prophecy, Launcelot. It is hard not to see the seeds of the 'Morte' being carefully planted here, whatever the order of Malory's composition.

This fayre lady ys passyngly wellcume to me, for I have loved hir longe, and therefore there ys nothynge so leeff to me. And these knyghtes with the Table Rownde please me more than ryght grete ryohesse.'

The king's marriage is the occasion of the inauguration of the fellowship of the Round Table as the centre of Arthurian society and the source of chivalry, and from this point, the relationship between Arthur and Guenevere slips into the background and Malory gets on with the adventures and chivalrous individuals of the fellowship which comprise his main subject matter in the *Morte Darthur*. Apart from one original reference to Guenevere's grief when Arthur goes to war with Lucius and leaves her alone, their relationship is something carried along by inference in the main stream of the narrative.
It is in the later tales that the marriage bond between Arthur and Guenevere suddenly begins to be dramatically significant. In the 'Trystram', Guenevere's infidelity with Launcelot is presented as a fact by Malory, both indirectly through the spiteful warnings Arthur is said to receive from Mark and Morgan le Fay, and directly through Launcelot's confusion of Elayne for Guenevere. It is with a considerable and painful effort that Arthur is shown at one point considering the matter and weighing the credibility of his two enemies against his own love of Launcelot and Guenevere: 'and so he put that all out of his thought'. But he has 'many thynges' to ponder for 'a grete whyle' before he can do so; and so begins the drama of the queen's adultery at the initial level of a 'sub-plot'. Vinaver remarks that the Arthur in Malory's source at this point succeeds in deluding himself over the implications of Mark's letter, attributing them to another man. Malory's Arthur is no such fool, but his doubts are just sufficient to leave room for their development to a more significant climax later. Launcelot and Guenevere themselves are shown to be very worried by Morgan's shield and their own versions of Mark's letter; and so Malory indirectly initiates his readers with the certain knowledge of their guilt. In the sixth tale he writes in the certainty of his readers having this knowledge, and the significance of Launcelot's quest hinges upon this. This tale offers no development of the relationship between the king and queen, however.

It is in the seventh tale that the queen's adultery begins to be spoken of more openly in the court, to the periodic alarm of Guenevere and her lover. When the queen is accused by Mador and later falls captive to Mellygaucone, the whole business of her sexual guilt becomes an open conflict among Arthur's knights, and the 'sub-plot' is moved to the forefront of the drama. The king's position is indirectly revealed as precarious, depending on how well, through Launcelot, he and Guenevere can maintain the appearance of her innocence while, apart from the general
gossips, all Launcelot's kinsmen know of his infatuation with the king's wife.\textsuperscript{419} The temporary split in loyalty among the Round Table knights over Mador's accusation brings Arthur into a position where he can neither deny nor affirm Guenevere's loyalty to him, since he lacks the means until her champion arrives to save the situation:

As for our moste noble kynge Arthure, we love hym and honoure hym as well as ye [Bors] do, but as for quen Gueneyvere, we love hir not, because she ys a destroyer of good knyghtes.\textsuperscript{420}

Arthur's political role as king and head of the Round Table is seen by his knights to be more important than his trouble as a husband, and it is pointed out that he must remember his position and not try to evade its duties or use its powers to settle private matters: 'For though ye be sure kyngye, in that degree ye ar but a knyght as we ar, and sworns unto knyghthode als welle as we be'.\textsuperscript{421}

Arthur is never shown by Malory trying to do anything of the sort in his relationship with Guenevere. Instead, the king declares his first concern is for public honour and justice\textsuperscript{422} and, later, in the 'Morte', for the Round Table fellowship:

And much more I am sorry for my good knyghtes losse than for the losse of my fayre quene; for quevys I myght have inow, but such a felyship of good knyghtes shall never be togydirs in no company.\textsuperscript{423}

Yet it is surely not (as one critic has maintained)\textsuperscript{424} that Malory's Arthur is being presented as a cold-hearted husband, for when he faces Launcelot in the 'Morte' to do battle, he declares his grievance with a warmth which seems to betray as much pain as anger: 'Also, thou haste layne be my quene and holdyn her many wyntirs, and sythyn, lyke a traytoure, taken her away fro me by fers.'\textsuperscript{425} Earlier, the king is said to be 'sore amoved'\textsuperscript{426} that honour requires him to put Guenevere to death. Altogether, there is nothing said or implied in the Morte Darthur to contradict Malory's early comment that
the king loved Guenevere when he first saw her and 'ever aftir'. However, the Round Table is more important than a wife, and for the king to have any other attitude in the 'Morte' would be a misrepresentation of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society.

Guenevere's relationship with her husband is incidentally presented as being affectionate and 'valyaunte' in the first two tales, and guilt-ridden in the later ones. However, her guilt is very much orientated by her concern for Launcelot's safety rather than any pity for Arthur; and the king's noble behaviour, so unlike that of M a r i k in similar circumstances, gives Guenevere no cause to make her husband into an enemy. When Elayne challenges her for loving Launcelot, her words wring no sentiment from Guenevere except a warning to Elayne to hold her tongue if she cares for Launcelot herself; and 'as sone as hit ys daylyght I charge you to avoyde my courtes'. However, Elayne's reproach that 'there ys no quene in this worlde that hath suche another kynge as ye have' is ironically recalled by Guenevere's own lament to Launcelot at Amesbury:

Thorow thys same man and me hath all thys warre be wrought, and the deth of the moste noblest knyghtes of the worlde; for thow sawe love that we have loved togydir is my moste noble lorde slayne. Therefore, sir Launcelot, wyte thou well I am sette in suche a plyght to gets my soul hele

Guenevere's regret is insignificant and comes too late to be effective, although that is no reason to doubt its intended sincerity. Yet Malory utters no blame against Guenevere, and there is no suggestion of condemnation for her adultery from any Round Table character in the 'Morte', even when she stands before the assembled court for the last time. Before this, her public shame at the stake where she waits to be burned for the adultery which in a queen is treason, is a brief spectacle, and Malory passes by the visual dramatic possibilities the situation offers (even reducing original details of Guenevere's costume) in his absorption
with the theme of betrayal which moves the last stages of his Arthurian
"history". Perhaps this almost total exclusion of Guenevere from the final
scenes of the *Morte Darthur* is the clearest evidence that Malory was not
directly concerned with the queen as an individual character or with her
dramatic role as a wife, but simply as the means by which Aggravayne and
Mordred manage to betray Launcelot and Arthur.

**Launcelot and Guenevere**

Although Malory avoids all suggestion in the *Morte Darthur* that
"a knyght may never be of proues but yf he be a lovear", he makes it
quite plain in his introduction of Launcelot in the third tale that
Guenevere becomes the inspiration of his chivalry:

So this sir Launoelot encresed so marvaylously in worship and honoure;
therefore he is the fyreste knyght that the Freynsh booke makyth mencion of
after kyngge Art ure com frome Rome. Wherefore quene Gwenyvere had hym in
grete favoure aboven all other knyghtis, and so he loved the quene agayne
aboven all other ladyes dayes of his lyff, and for hir he dud many dedys
of armys and saved her from the fyre thorow his noble chevalry.

At what point in the *Morte Darthur* (if any) Guenevere's love for Launcelot
technically becomes adultery apparently bothered Malory less than it has
some of his critics. As has been said, it is allowed to emerge as a fact
in the fifth tale that the queen is suspected of disloyalty to her husband,
but Malory does not seem to have been concerned with this but with its
repercussions on his masculine society. This is made quite clear in the
seventh tale by the Round Table's repeated attempts to quell suspicions of
the lovers. The tale opens with Malory pointing out the lovers increased
passion and indiscretion: "many in the courte spake of hit, and in
especiall sir Aggravayne, sir Gawaynes brothir, for he was ever opynne-mowthed".
This is immediately followed by a quarrel between Launcelot and Guenevere,
which raises the matter of dangerous slander again:

Also, madame, wyte you well that there be many men spekith of oure love ir
thys courte and have you and me gretely in awayte, as thes sir Aggravayne
and sir Mordred. .................................................................
 ...........................................................................................
 And wyte you well, madam, the boldenesse of you and me will brynghe us to
 shame and solaundir, and that were me lothe to see you dishonoured.437

Guenevere shortly returns Launcelot's warning when he neglects to ride with
the rest of the Round Table to the tournament at Winchester:

'Sir, ye are greatly to blame thus to holde you behinde my lorde. What well
your eyes and you say and done? "Se how sir Launcelot holdith hym
ever behinde the kynge, and so the quene doth also, for that they wolde
have their pleasure togydis." And thus well they say,' sayde the quene.
'Have ye no doute, madame,' sayde sir Launcelot438 I alow your wittes.
Hit ye of late com ym ye were wexen so wyse!' 439

Launcelot's two duels and Arthur's discretion which Malory mentions
in the 'Morte' serve to maintain the illusion the Round Table needs to
exist, so that the loyalties among Malory's knights are undisturbed by the
unpleasant, sinful but secondary matter of the queen's love affair.
In itself, this affair is noble and faithful, and for that Malory praises
the lovers.440 But that only deepens the pity of the destruction it
motivates in the 'Morte' when the tragedy of the Round Table sweeps all
considerations of single characters away in the loss of chivalry itself.
It is from this double point of view that the relationship between Launcelot
and Guenevere must be seen. Launcelot's early denouncement of both romantic
and married love as a bar to chivalry may be coincidental in its ironic
relationship to the events of the 'Morte', depending on whether or not
Malory had the end of his work in mind while he was writing what now appears
as his third tale. What is more important is the way Launcelot steadily
denies Guenevere's having any love relationship with him from this tale of
the Morte Barthur onwards.442 Only in his confessions to a hermit in the
'Quest' does he indirectly admit his long-standing affair with the queen
and its effects on his chivalry, 443 but this private and exceptional
admission does nothing to disturb Launcelot's main efforts to hide the fact
of his love. This is no more than he should do in consideration of his
mistress's reputation, and (far more important to his kinsmen, especially in the 'Morte') in defence of his own honour in the world's eyes. This creates some sticky moral points for the interpreter of Malory who ignores the fact that Malory himself never suggests that Launcelot is in any sense a hypocrite in his efforts to conceal the queen's adultery, and that he does not necessarily present everything in the Morte Darthur from the same standard of truth and judgement. The chief knight of the Round Table does nothing to mar the chivalry which he embodies, but he is apparently a practical character, like his creator, and therefore takes practical steps. These have moral implications as is made clear in the quest; but Malory is there following his source, and it is not the moral or spiritual effects of adultery which concern him but the inevitable and conventional 'worldly' ones.

The fact that it is gradually shown to be impossible for the Round Table to survive with a code of double truths is again an inevitable and practical effect of plain causes. Yet it is suggested that were it not for two characters, whom Malory repeatedly names as Aggravayne and Mordred before he gets to the 'Morte', this partial separation of Launcelot's private life from his chivalry as a member of the Round Table presumably could have continued indefinitely while he and Arthur controlled the situation. The king is warned in the seventh tale that Launcelot will always take it on himself to defend Guenevere 'in ryght othir in wronge, because he owes her a long-standing debt of honour, and because she is Arthur's wife. This is perfectly acceptable, even if it is not the whole truth, and the king expresses nothing but gratitude for his friend's courage. It appears that Arthur, and Launcelot have their loyalties in due order, and can live and love without compromising what they both uphold, the Round Table. In an original passage Malory says that if men only observe their loyalties in the degree and order they naturally take, then joy will spring like May in their hearts and society will be stable and
honourable:

Therefore, lyke as May moneth flowryth and floryshyth in every mannes
gardyne, so in lyke wyse lat every man of worshyp florysh hys herte in thys
world: first unto God, and next unto the joy of them that he promysed
hys faythe unto; for there was never worshypfull man nor worshypfull woman
but they loved one better than another; and worshyp in armys may never be
fayled. But firste reserve the honours to God, and secondly thy quarrell
muste son of thy lady. And such love I calle vertuouse love. 447

The tragedy of his Arthurian society is disloyalty and ingratitude
which as 'wynter rasure' destroys the summer cancels the bonds of the
Round Table. Yet it clearly would not be possible for this destruction to
occur if Launcelot did not compromise the frankness of his relationship
with Arthur. Although Malory does not say as much, events in the Morte Darthur
show that it is necessary for his characters to be entirely open towards those
with whom they are shown to share bonds of loyalty. The half-truths which
grow between Arthur and Launcelot over Guenevere are inevitably construed as
treachery, and it is in this growth that the king's opposition with Launcelot
lies in the 'Morte' more than in the love affair itself. The relationship
between Launcelot and Guenevere therefore suggests that love not only detacts
from a man's freedom to follow chivalry for its own sake, but that however
good his intentions, it will distort his bonds with other men because of its
attendant secrecy. Ideally, there is no room in Malory's Arthurian society
for love between men and women, however noble; but the realistic fact that
love must inevitably arise between the best men and women (as he says) is one
of the potential and continual threats to the fraternal stability of the
Round Table.

Solitary Characters

There are characters in the Morte Darthur, often obliquely introduced,
who do not appear to form any social relationships with other characters
in the ways so far discussed. Such characters cannot therefore be
considered 'members' of Malory's Arthurian society so much as part of
the moving background of the main drama in all its phases. They tend to appear in the narrative as solitary figures who make some brief and single contribution to the unfolding action. This function is usually quite incidental, in the nature of a narrative link or explanation, and does not develop beyond itself; although in the cases of the damsel guides it is sometimes more prolonged. Altogether, there are many of these solitary characters, some very shadowy, others more firmly drawn. Collectively, they imply the fictitious existence of regions of activity and modes of life behind the foreground of the Arthurian court and battlefields. This is important in that it strengthens the apparently self-contained nature of what, for all its internal complexities, must appear an amorphous society in the *Morte Darthur*. It is in this collective sense of adding a dimension to the narrative from which Malory's Arthurian society may be looked at externally that these oblique characters contribute to a consideration of the structure of this society.

Despite the miscellany of solitary characters in the *Morte Darthur*, they tend to fall into general categories, each with its own limited function. The religious figures who provide homely refuge have already been mentioned. Apart from Nacien in the 'Quest' and the ex-knight who lives in Windsor Forest and heals Launcelot, these figures do not emerge long enough from their suggested backgrounds to be noticed. The Catholic bells and hours pass almost unnoticed in the *Morte Darthur*. Similarly, the doctrinal damsels, old men and demons of the 'Quest' are very isolated phenomena and of no importance once their announcements have been made. The sulphurous thunderclaps and sweet perfumes which usually accompany these figures according to their intentions have the effect of reducing them to stage directions. Some of the sorceresses have already been mentioned, and in general these characters have a more solid existence than the other solitary figures mentioned so far. They serve as landmarks in the vague geography of chivalric journeys which Malory's
knights are forever taking, and Nenyve, the Lady of the Lake, and Breunys Sans Pité and Pelles are all familiar background figures in various parts of the Morte Darthur. These characters form temporary links with the Arthurian world through their benevolent or antagonistic relationships with individual knights of the Round Table. Thus Nenyve puts aside much of her supernatural influence which Malory shows in his earlier tales and marries Pellias whom she helps win battles. In the fifth tale, Breunys is the most antagonistic waylayer of Malory's knights. He unhorses many a man but somehow always escapes into the forest by his more than natural horsemanship. His role as a threatener of the Round Table knights is of more interest in the Morte Darthur than his uncertain supernatural aspects. This is emphasised when Breunys joins Morgan's league of sorceresses and villains to ambush Alexander the Orphan; but apart from this one instance which comes to nothing, the background of unchivalrous threats from outside Malory's Arthurian society is only suggested very occasionally.

As the instigator of the Round Table, Merlin is the most significant of Malory's incidental characters whose nature is more magic than mortal. Yet he is summarily dismissed once it is revealed how he establishes Arthur's reign, and there is almost no further reference to him apart from a recluse's recollection of his founding the Round Table which does not reflect anything from Malory's first tale but is simply included since it occurred in the source for his sixth. Certainly there is no mention of Arthur wishing that his guide were back with him, as was foretold by Merlin himself in the first tale. Malory has greatly reduced Merlin's part in the Morte Darthur from its original length in the French source. There is almost nothing of his strange history, apart from a passing reference by his enemies to his supernatural arts. Malory has made Merlin into a wiser and more secular version of his Archbishop of Canterbury, and more skilled in warfare than demonology. The Archbishop himself is a more solid though incidental figure, whose dramatic role first is to help Merlin
set up and ratify the Arthurian rule of England, and secondly to receive
into loving brotherhood the last refugees of the Round Table whose
inauguration he had blessed. The bell, book and candle with which
Mordred is cursed in the 'Norte' 'in the moste orguluste wyse that myght
be done' serves to make clear to any wavering among Malory's readers
that it is both wrong and damnable of this unnatural kinsman to overthrow
his father's rule; but it is an incidental point.

Some of the damsels on white palfreys whom knights tend to encounter
at the junctures of forest paths during adventures are thought to be of
Celtic supernatural origin. But their function in Malory is mortal
even though they emerge from unguessed backgrounds. They fulfil the
useful narrative task of moving knights from one stage of action to
another by their answers and directions, but otherwise are anonymous
and indistinguishable figures. There are some anonymous groups of solitary
characters in the Morte Darthur, too. These almost entirely comprise the
households of the various castles which loom into view now and again.
Meetings between an adventuring knight and such a group are usually brief
and apparently coincidental, in the same way as his meetings with the
forest damsels tend to be. Such a group will either offer hospitality or
a challenge to attempt its 'custom', which is invariably a fight of some
kind. Some castles become well known among Round Table knights for their
customs; and those which are very unchivalrous draw men after men within
their walls, thus setting up adventures to be brought to an end. The
owners of such castles are either wicked damsels or maybe giants, or benevolent but retired knights, like Vagon or Barnarde of Astolat.

Promises of visits to Arthur's court, the yielding of an unchivalrous
custom to a Round Table conqueror, or some long-standing hospitality to
the Arthurian knights establish links with the Arthurian society which
these people in castles remain outside. Generally, however, castles are
places of neutrality in the complex games of adventures and quests, and
it is unusual to find vendettas being continued within their confines, whatever other action their hospitality may provoke.

Outside the noble perimeters of Malory's Arthurian society move a very few lonely figures, peasants or workmen, who occasionally are seen to emerge from vaguely indicated masses to cheer at tournaments, or set about any passing nobleman or pillage battlefields. Such figures are portrayed as being very rough in appearance and manner, and they are usually hostile to Arthurian knights. When met on bridges or performing some unchivalrous errand for an overlord, they are summarily dealt with by a Round Table knight. They offer their purely physical challenges with clubs, for no lowly character in the Morte Darthur carries a sword or spear. Such solitary characters have no function beyond providing lively narrative links and incidentally illustrating the supremacy of chivalry over the burliest of giants.

Finally among these solitary characters there are a few figures whose role the appended list explains better than fragmentary comments could. Despite the general groupings of all the characters mentioned in this table, their unrelated solitariness and very incidental contributions to the narrative action in the Morte Darthur must be stressed. Only when they are considered all together may they be seen to offer some negative qualifications of the comments already made on Malory's Arthurian society. Collectively, these figures suggest the further fiction of an unexplored background of characters and actions entirely subsidiary to the Arthurian world Malory draws. There are areas of obliquely approached experience, like Gorbenio, where the mysterious Pelleas and Buesen carry out intriguing actions which apparently have nothing to do with the Round Table except for very short periods, when the Grail castle suddenly seems to be a conscious extension of Arthur's court. Such dramatic suggestions are probably no part of any deliberate design by Malory, but simply the residue of the story elements he cut away in compiling the Morte Darthur.
This is probably true for some of the solitary characters, too. For example, Bloyse (as Malory calls Merlin's master, Blaise) appears far more mysterious in the *Morte Darthur* than he was in its source where his identity and relationship to Merlin emerge more coherently. The bondings of kinsmen and non-kinsmen in Malory's Arthurian society seem all the more sharply perceived in comparison with these less clearly drawn figures beyond them. Above all, the meetings Round Table knights are given with such figures provide the dramatic links in the action of the narrative which Malory would have had to supply more directly as commentary. Structurally, this is the most important function of solitary characters in the *Morte Darthur*.

**SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

It remains to summarise the observations made from this examination of Malory's Arthurian society. First, it has been found that insofar as this may be said to exist as a structure, it is predominantly a male society compounded of inter-related groups of noblemen which vary in size from single pairs of brothers to quite elaborate alliances like that of Launcelot's kinsmen and allies. The centre of this society is King Arthur, and the Round Table. The bonds of loyalty holding the male characters together are of a fraternal nature, and are chiefly expressed in forms of defence and revenge during shared fighting action of various kinds. This fraternal relationship is one of the most fully developed and consciously presented features of character presentation and dramatic motivation in the *Morte Darthur*. The relationships some knights are shown to have with women characters are subsidiary to these bonds of male loyalty, even though romantic love is presented sympathetically and with insight by Malory. Yet while women characters in the *Morte Darthur* are found to have very limited dramatic roles, as individuals some are seen to constitute threats to the continuity of male relationships and chivalry because of the claims they
make on the men they love. Sorceresses in particular exert a malignant
influence over the best knights of the Round Table, and may be thought to
personify this indirect female threat which is seen as something despicable
and violent. However, while they are shown to be steadfast in their
loyalties to one another, Malory's Arthurian knights are capable of
withstanding all kinds of external threats. Similarly, internal social
conflicts, such as that set up with the love affair between Launcelot
and Guenevere, only become dangerous when men do not observe their
obligations of loyalty to one another in due order. The basis for chivalrous
behaviour, man to man, lies in the just observance of personal loyalties,
and in this, too, is the stability of Malory's Arthurian society. However,
Malory shows that the central characters of the Round Table variously put
aspects of their personal relationships with each other before principles
of justice, mercy and good fellowship, thus creating a conflict between
loyalty and honour which results in the distortion of ideas about chivalry
and the destruction of individual knights. Malory sees this conflict as
unnatural, ignoble and wrong. Throughout the Morte Darthur he condemns
fraternal division of any kind as the antithesis of knightly behaviour
which has fatal effects on his Arthurian society as a whole.
CHAPTER TWO

HONOUR IN THE MORTÉ DARTHUR

Introduction

There are two initial considerations which affect the interpretation of the Morte Darthur in the discussion of honour and chivalry which comprises the remainder of this study. The first of these (already mentioned) is the unverifiable chronological order of Malory's composition, which makes it impossible to say with real certainty how far inferences drawn from one tale may be fairly related to another. However, this is not on the whole such a difficult matter to negotiate as the second point which arises from the very unequal literary quality of the tales. Such is the variety of Malory's writing in the Morte Darthur both in his narrative ability and his relationship with the style and material of his sources (themselves quite widely varied) that the decision of how much weight to give to his apparent treatment of honour in any one part of his re-creation is basically aesthetic and therefore highly complex.

The implications of this for the present chapter will emerge in due course; but as a generalisation, taking the 'tales' in their printed order it is found that remarks made on honour from the first two do not have the depth of significance of those emerging from the differently orientated third, fourth and fifth tales; while the last parts of the Morte Darthur offer ideas on honour at other levels again.

In addition to these two critical considerations, there is the point that honour in the Morte Darthur is not something which amounts to a philosophical concept and there is nothing in his work to suggest that Malory began writing with distinct ideas of what he wanted to present.
under such a heading (as it were). Rather, several ideas, assumptions
and attitudes of what constitutes and relates to 'honour' can be seen to
emerge from his work, and now and then Malory is to be found making
direct statements about 'worship'. However, these implications, inferences
and comments can be shown eventually to add up to a Malorion point of view,
which, for all its stylistic variations in presentation, is consistent and
coherent in his overall attitude, and comprises one of the central issues
in the *Morte Darthur*. Broadly speaking, these ideas of honour are found
to fall into two general categories of 'honour given' and 'honour won';
and the discussion which follows shortly is orientated from these
preliminary angles, with the proviso that Malory himself makes no such
clear division.

In connection with this double aspect of honour in the *Morte Darthur*
there will be some consideration of the relationship between honour and
reputation, for it is found that in the later tales the partial
divergence between these standards of judgement raises wider implications
which eventually extend beyond questions of honour and chivalry in the
newly complex narrative of the 'Morte'. This raises a point about
Malory's vocabulary concerning honour. It must be made with due reserve
because of the unequal linguistic nature of what is largely a derivative
literary creation anyway and because there is not found to be total
consistency of meaning in Malory's usage. The examples listed \(^2\) comprise
a large selection of Malory's vocabulary for 'honour' throughout the
*Morte Darthur*. Even from this selection, it is clear that certain phrases
are repeated, together with their variations, and this suggests that as
in the case of other topics in the *Morte Darthur*, such as brotherhood,
chivalry and fighting, Malory had what amounts to a linguistic code for
presenting his ideas about honour. A high incidence of repetition of
'key words' is a stylistic characteristic of the *Morte Darthur*, anyway,
and without going into possible linguistic and historical reasons for this, it suggests straight away that where Malory was particularly interested in an aspect of his Arthurian subject, he brought this out simply by repeatedly mentioning it in largely similar terms. More specifically, just gathering these examples of 'honour' words in the *Morte d'Arthur* tells us three important things about Malory's ideas of honour.

First, attitudes to honour are essentially emotional in the *Morte d'Arthur* and Malory's vocabulary here tends to denote approval (or disapproval) of his characters' behaviour in connection with closely-related words like 'good', 'worthy' and 'noble'. Secondly it is really impossible to separate his notions of honour in his work from fundamental pairs of opposites like 'love and hate', 'friend and enemy' and 'right and wrong'. Thirdly, Malory's concern for honour seems greatest in those parts of the *Morte d'Arthur* where he most dramatically presents its opposite - that is, in the various crises of the Round Table when men are suddenly faced with the possibility of shame and dishonour. In the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth tales in particular, it becomes explicitly clear what honour in the *Morte d'Arthur* is through the dramatic exhibition of shame and dishonour in a variety of ways. However, there is a strong enough general bias in his usage to justify making the general comment that when Malory was in any way talking about honour as an intrinsic personal quality of birth and character proved by chivalrous action, he used the word 'worship', which D.S. Brewer has noted was the established and usual term for his time. On the fewer occasions when 'honour' appears instead of 'worship', it is fairly clear that some less critical and more extrinsic notification was intended and the modern 'reputation' usually seems to replace it satisfactorily. When Malory (rarely) places the two words together, it is plain that he was denoting the widest possible concept of honour, including its private and public qualities, the having, achieving and recognition of honour altogether in the more
modern sense of the word. Where 'honour' appears alone, it is not always certain whether the more abstract and moral ideas of 'worship' or simply reputation is intended. Again, this is something which has to be decided in individual contexts and the point can only serve as an indicator of Malory's creative attitude to the topic of honour. More will be said on the subject at the relevant part of the discussion in this chapter.  

A final introductory point is that honour is closely related to chivalry in the Morte Darthur and sometimes it is difficult to divorce one aspect from the other. It has to be understood that to look at one without the other is contrary to Malory's presentation of both. Generally, however, chivalry embraces the whole activity and attitudes of knighthood, of which honour is both the foundation and also what is seen to be achieved as its result. From another angle, honour may be examined as only one, if a very important, aspect of chivalry in the Morte Darthur, others being loyalty, courage in fighting and (to a lesser degree) love. In turn, these last are single but very closely related aspects of honour itself. However, in the following considerations of honour in the Morte Darthur it is discussed as if it were a self-existent though variegated theme in Malory's writing, although in conjunction with its related qualities and in particular, loyalty. In this way, it is proposed to show the fundamental dependence of Malory's ideas about honour (and in later chapters, chivalry) on what has already been shown to constitute the structure of his Arthurian society.
I  HONOUR GIVEN - THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY

Birth and Kinship

In Malory's imagined Arthurian society, the nobility of a character's blood is his first and most essential claim to honour. It is his guarantee of respect and recognition from other knights, even before he achieves any adventures or wins any 'bataylies'. In this sense, honour from birth and kinsmen is 'honour given'. Since this society exists only in terms of the action which constitutes mutual recognition of kinship bonds and which is in itself an acknowledgement of acceptable birth, it is structurally an honourable society. This is a very important point, for while it may be shown that Malory's presentation of other aspects of honour varies from tale to tale with his narrative style, honour from birth and kinship is consistently seen to be a character's first claim to distinction in the *Morte Darthur*. The collected references to brothers noted in the last chapter show that fraternal relationships and expressions of the duties arising from these are direct and repetitive throughout the *Morte Darthur*, whatever subject matter Malory had in hand in any one part of the eight tales.

Apart from Merlin's promotion of Arthur's own legitimate claim to honour, there is an example of noble birth establishing a character's right to honourable recognition in the first tale in a passage where Torre is being knighted by King Arthur:

'Sow Merlion,' sayde Arthure, 'whethir thys Torre shall be a goode man?'
'Ye, hardely, sir he ought to be a good man for he ys com of good kynrede as ony on lyve, and of kynges bloode'.

'Good' here means good at fighting (which is the main business of Malorian chivalry) and by implication, worthy of respect on account of
prowess. It is suggested that Torre's even half-royal blood (since his father was King Pellinor) is not only his initial claim to knighthood, but in addition is the promise of his eventually proving worthy of the second accolade to Round Table knighthood for 'pruue and worthynes'.'^ A noble father (even if one is illegitimate) is a real claim to conventional social distinction, and the recognised guarantee of certain moral qualities of character and therefore certain kinds of behaviour in a man. By and large, Malory shows that this guarantee is ratified in his Arthurian society, for the nobler his knights the more honourable they appear to be, and consequently the more honourably they are treated by other characters. It does not matter at all in Torre's case that his mother is now a cowherd's wife. His obscure childhood just adds to the wonder of the story, and proves what is common in folk tales and inevitable in Malory, that noble blood will make itself known, since a nobleman will naturally turn to the deeds of chivalry, so staking an irrefutable claim in this masculine society of honourable warriors. There is a comparable passage in the fifth tale where Agglovale presents his unknown brother, Perceval, for knighthood 'for the love of sire Lamorak and for his faders love'. Arthur justifies his acquiescence in Agglovale's request without waiting to see what kind of a man Perceval is: 'he muste nedys prove a good knyght, for hys fadir and hys bretherne were noble knyghtes all'.^ The miracle which follows proves that Arthur's faith in Perceval's potentially honourable status is well-founded, however it is doubted at first by some of the less discriminating of the Round Table knights. 12

Again, in the fourth tale Gareth pursues his adventures with Lynet under the anonymity for which Kay made him a kitchen-boy for a year. Even when he is said to be dressed in oloth of gold, Gareth is still treated as a presumptuous servant who, by natural definition,
is outside the pale of honour. However, his mounting success in fighting knights who oppose his progress towards Lyonesse's castle declares his noble blood, and man after man warns Lynet of her folly in rebuking her charge who must be more than he appears.\textsuperscript{15} It is impossible in Malory's Arthurian society for the weed to overgrow the corn, as she fears.\textsuperscript{16} Only when Gareth has at last proved his claim to honour by his chivalrous deeds does he make his identity known, and so receive the dues of his noble birth which his distracted mother, Morgawse, supposed were his from the moment he arrived at Arthur's court to join his brothers. Thus Malory reveals that Gareth's clothes, 'beawy of the grace and talow\textsuperscript{17} of his disguising office, cannot long conceal his inherent nobility from the truly noble, like Launcelot and Arthur. They dramatically heighten his claim to honour by their very novelty and make his story more interesting. Balin's poor attire in the first tale does not nullify his claim to be treated as an honourable man capable of achieving honourable deeds,\textsuperscript{18} although many at Arthur's court are said to despise him.\textsuperscript{19} As in the examples of Perceval and Gareth just mentioned, Malory says that less honourable men are slow to dissociate the conventional trappings of honour from its actual qualities. He makes quite a point of it, and in so doing gives a thumbnail sketch of his idea of natural honour which Vinaver points out is very different from both that of his French source and contemporary historical practice.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{...worthynes and good tecchis and also good dedis is nat only in arraymente, but manhode and worship ys hyd within a mannes person; and many a worshipfull knyght ys nat knownyn unto all peple. And therefore worship and hardynesse ys nat in arraymente.}\textsuperscript{21}
As will be discussed more fully in due course, physical size and strength in fighting in Malory’s original view are more reliable indications of a man’s blood and claim to honour than costume, of which he altogether makes very little in the 

The proof of noble paternity and honour is not in fighting strength alone, however. There is a passage in the fifth tale where Palomides is about to face two brothers who have overthrown their royal benefactor and established their own tyrannical rule over the Red City. These revolutionaries are said to be ‘men of great prowess’, which is enough to earn them an honourable reputation in Malory’s Arthurian society. But being charles by birth, they are naturally unchivalrous: ‘they were false and full of treason, and but poore men born, yet were they noble knyghtys of their handys’. In the 

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And as ever hit in an olde sawe, “Cyeff a chorie rule and thereby he woll not be suffyed”, for whomever he be that is roold by a vylayne borne, and the lord of the soyle be a jantylman born, that same vylayne shall destroy all the jenntylman aboute hym. Therefore all the astatys and Lordys, of what astate ye be, loke ye beware whom ye take about you. 

The power to rule is here seen by Malory to be a natural attribute of the noblemen, and so is a further claim to honour. This passage probably comes from a French source, though very indirectly, and the forthright tone from the quite incidental character, Kbell, is only a thin dramatic disguise for Malory’s own most typical sentiments on the subject of honour related to caste; and it is hard not to hear an appeal
to his contemporary medieval gentlemen coming through the literary monologue.

To some extent, the Morte Darthur in this respect at least, is 'cult literature' written by, for and (by some leaps of imagination) about one particular social caste, to reinforce its traditional values. Malory's sense of belonging to that group of men who are honourable by birth is given even more direct expression in his occasional laudatory remarks about Trystram, who rivals Launcelot himself for honour and chivalry in the Morte Darthur. Trystram's skill at hunting is very incidental in the action of the fifth tale and Malory's sudden paean there is unconnected with anything in his story. However, it underlines his main ideas about honour in his invented Arthurian society in the way he stresses the inevitability and tradition of honour in gentlemen (the real equivalent of his Arthurian knights) 'that beryth olde arrays'. It is a double-edged social philosophy which Malory proclaims (in one place, to the suspected boredom of his scribe in the Winchester MS) that a nobleman will always be known 'frome a vylayne' because of his familiarity with the behaviour and terminology of gentlemen, in this case, that of venery. But only 'he that jantyll is woll drawe hym to jantyll tauchis and to follow the noble customys of jantylmen'. This self-conscious assertiveness suggests something of the initial seriousness with which Malory approached the subjects of honour and chivalry in the Morte Darthur. Such an attitude also serves to strengthen the idea of the Arthurian society in the work by defining its ideological groundwork. To come back to the early example of Balin, a man can only achieve honour if he is naturally honourable for his blood. All gentlemanly skills in war, sport and the arts are seen by Malory to be dependent on this. The whole imaginary edifice of his Arthurian society in structure, behaviour and
beliefs rests on this assumption of honour initially given by a noble-blooded and therefore honourable father. Apart from the direct statements to this effect already cited, this is a constant implication in the *Morte Darthur* which is acknowledged every time a knight's kinsmen are named.

Honour is the currency of Malory's Arthurian society and is passed from man to man in accordance with their bonds of loyalty to one another. It has already been shown how when a character in the *Morte Darthur* defends his brother, or his companion who is in effect his brother, when he fights battles to avenge an injury or a wrong, even at the cost of his own life, then he is felt by Malory to be behaving in the best possible way. Consequently, the more loyal to his kinsmen, fellow knights and King Arthur a knight in the *Morte Darthur* appears to be, the more honourable he is. Fundamentally, honour is synonymous with the bonds of male loyalty described in the previous chapter, and in this way, a character's claim to honour both defines and ratifies his place in Malory's Arthurian society. As a result, no conduct is more dishonourable and therefore unchivalrous in a Malorian character than treachery to others, and no treachery more vilified by Malory than murder. For example, the greatest shame which comes upon the Orkney brothers is through their murder of Lamorak, and it has been shown already how Malory makes other characters speak out against this in horror. The duality of the twin values of honour and loyalty on the one hand and shame and treachery, on the other comprises the paradox of tragic glory in Malory's Arthurian society.

**Honour and Love: Malory's Women Characters**

The position of Malory's women characters which was discussed in the preceding chapter casts more light on the honour system of this
masculine Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur. The main point made about the women characters is that they are subordinated in narrative treatment and dramatic significance to Malory's knights of the Round Table. By implication, they have little place in his Arthurian society. It is further found that whereas the men characters make their initial claims to honourable recognition for their birth and kinship alliances, the women characters on their own are neither honourable nor dishonourable. It is only in relation to men that they may gain such qualities, and then, unlike the men characters, these never become their identity. Neither can the women characters do anything to augment their honour 'given' by their relationships with men, as they are outside the male system of winning honour which is the mainstream of activity in the Morte Darthur. Again unlike the men, women characters do not appear to claim honourable recognition for kinsmen, for Malory rarely names a woman's brother by way of identifying her, as he relates a man to his brother. When women are given any name or introduction in his narrative, it is usually prefaced by their fathers' names, and some of Malory's women characters have no clearer place in his Arthurian society than being said to be the daughter of some knight or other. Examples include the daughters of Bagdemagus, Brandegoris and Perasunte, who all play direct but very brief roles in connection with Round Table knights. No particular respect seems to be attached to a woman character on account of her parentage, however, and it can be inferred that provided this be noble and unsullied by her filial and sexual behaviour, it is outside Malory's consideration.

But while women characters cannot claim honour on the same grounds as the men in the Morte Darthur, the ways in which they are seen to affect their loyalty and therefore honour by their sexual behaviour seem important.
Whereas there is nothing approaching adulation of female virginity by Malory in the *Morte Darthur*, the apparent maintenance of chastity in both unmarried and married women characters is seen to be vital to the stability of the relationships among men and their honour. For example, the unbounded passion Elayne of Astolat is shown to suffer for the unresponsive and embarrassed Launcelot in the seventh tale is her private tragedy. What concerns her father and brothers first is her virginity, for on that depends their own relationship with Launcelot, whom they are shown to greatly admire. Fortunately for this male alliance, Launcelot is able to declare that 'e she ye a clene maydan for me, bothe for de de and wylle', and Elayne's brother, Lavayne, can attest to this. There is therefore no question of Barnarde of Astolat having to seek any reparation for his honour from Launcelot, and Lavayne himself is said to become Launcelot's devoted supporter after his sister's death. In her defiance of the priest's rebuke for her passion 'oute of mesure', Elayne herself declares her virginity together with the honesty of her love, and so the whole matter resolves itself peaceably, although with sorrow. Although Malory has treated the whole episode of Elayne of Astolat with originality, and most of all in his dramatic representation of the woman's anguish at her rejection, Elayne's sexual status is not shown to be of any consequence as an issue of honour to her is important as a potential threat to her kinsmen's honour. Possibly it was to indicate this that Malory makes Barnarde so careful of his daughter when Gawayne visits them (which is before her pursuit of Launcelot starts) forbidding her to take their visitor to her room to show him the shield which Launcelot has left there 'Nat so,' sayde sir Barnarde to his daughter, 'but sende ye for that shylde'.

Guenevere and Isode are the chief examples of the effects on the
honour of men which female unchastity can cause when it is not kept secret in Malory's Arthurian society. In Malory's recreation, Mark has no honour as a king or knight, anyway, since he is a tyrant and a murderer and so his cuckolding by his nephew is ignored as a source of shame by both Cornish and Round Table knights. As the infinitely more honourable of the two kinsmen, both in terms of character and achievements, Trystram's claim to Isode is apparently better than that of her unchivalrous husband. In the case of Guenevere and Launcelot, however, it is made a matter of prime importance (certainly in the last two tales) that the secrecy of their love be preserved, even though Malory indicates that this secrecy is increasingly only an expedient social illusion. Arthur is all that is honourable but in Malory's view the king is not above the honour system and is subject to the law since he is 'sworne unto knyghthode als welle as we be', and therefore cannot honourably evade its penalties. As Arthur himself is made to admit in the 'Morte': 'I may nat with my worship but my quene muste suffir dethe'. Being the great public figure that he is, the king is particularly vulnerable to the shame his wife's adultery inevitably brings him; and his initial reactions to Launcelot on the battlefields of the 'Morte' show the extent to which he feels this shame, although all the while he privately admires the daring and chivalry of his favourite knight. Launcelot, too, is vulnerable to public shame through Guenevere for whose sake he has compromised his bonds with the king. What emerges from a comparison of these two sets of lovers is that in Malory's Arthurian society, only men who are already honourable can feel shame and lose reputation as a result of their alliances with women. Although Guenevere is slandered by certain Round Table knights in the seventh tale of the Morte Darthur because
of the disrepute and danger she has brought Arthur and Launcelot as
'a destroyer of good knyghtes', she herself is apparently not
dishonoured by her failure to maintain the appearance of chastity,
or at least, Malory is not at all interested in showing her to be so. He presents the queen as a bitterly resourceful character in the
monastery at Amesbury, but it is Launcelot who is made to writhe for
shame on the king's tomb, not Guenevere. His complication and
betrayal of his relationship with Arthur is what results in the
tragedy of the Round Table, not the queen's loss of good fame.

There is an incident in the 'Trystram', perhaps half-comic,
certainly at some stage satirical, even if not so in Malory's
treatment, where Morgan le Fay's magic horn from which only the
chaste may drink cleanly arrives at Mark's court. It does so by the
timely interference of Lamorak, who ostensibly takes the opportunity
to provoke Trystram, but who later admits that he realized that it
must not reach its original destination of Arthur's court for the
sake of the king, Launcelot and Guenevere. Among the one hundred
and four ladies of the Cornish court, it is said that only four manage
to drink from the horn successfully, which disastrous consequence
puts the Cornish knights in a painful dilemma. Either they can carry
out the law, and burn the ladies for their unchastity; or more
realistically, dismiss the matter. Because Isoda is numbered among
the unfaithful, King Mark condemns the women to the fire; but his
men override him 'and sayde playnly they wolde nat have the ladys
brente for an hronne made by sorcery'. This is in itself a minor
episdoe, and Malory introduces it primarily to indicate the very
great danger from which Lamorak has saved Guenevere and the ladies
of Arthur's court by his foresight. Apart from being another
example of the difference in standards of judging honour between
Cornwall and the Round Table, however, the horn test suggests that although Malory's male characters are potentially threatened by the sexual behaviour of their women, this need not in the end be very important if there is unanimity of attitude among the knights themselves. There is further support for this interpretation in the 'Morte', where it is clear that if only Gawayne were not so set on paying Launcelot for the death of Gareth, the conflict between Arthur and Launcelot over Guenevere would soon be resolved and the unity of the Round Table restored. Apparently in no attitude was Malory himself an extremist, and the possibility of an entire society being almost totally bereft of its women for merely sexual reasons through some fancy external measure from a dubious source would seem ludicrous to him. Honour in the Morte Arthur is never presented theoretically or in so artificial a light. Since Mark's men apparently have no cause of their own to suspect their women and therefore one another, before the arrival of Morgan's horn their honour is untouched. This is paralleled by the more seriously presented situation at Arthur's court in the fifth and seventh tales, where it is shown that the king is warned by slander and rumour of his wife's affair with Launcelot, and even suspects the truth of the matter himself. In the absence of factual proof of Guenevere's adultery, however, the appearance of his honour is safe and he need not challenge his beloved Launcelot. Only when the queen's unchastity is made an open issue between Arthur and Launcelot in the 'Morte' does it become a direct conflict of honour which demands immediate action. This emphasises the point already made about Malory's women characters, that it is only where they interfere with the male system of honour in his Arthurian society that they are suddenly moved (as it were) to the front of his stage.
Pelle's daughter, Elayne, is an example of a woman character in Malory's Arthurian society who is said to gain honour and to increase her father's honour by her love relationship with a man. Contrived though it is, and a matter of personal shame to Launcelot who is deceived by Brusen and his own desires into breaking faith with Guenevere, the sexual relationship between him and Elayne is a source of pride to the people at Corbenic, and wonder in Arthur's court. This is because Launcelot is such an honourable man in birth and achievements: 'for, daughter, I wole that ye wyte we all be honoured by the blood of sir Launcelot'. Malory adds to the story Elayne's foreknowledge of Launcelot's fathering Galahad, which sanctions an otherwise shady relationship, and stresses Elayne's love for and dedication to her first lover to the point of making her appear a tragic victim and possibly a martyr to fate and her own passion. But as in the case of Elayne of Astolat, the personal story of Galahad's mother is incidental to the main presentation of her involvement with Launcelot. This is paradoxical, for through the circumstances and mixture of trickery and honesty while Elayne only gains honour by her relationship, Launcelot loses honour and temporarily his place in Malory's Arthurian society during the time that he runs mad. His publicly unconfirmed relationship to Galahad brings him credit later in the course of the sixth tale, but this is limited, since the younger knight is never really presented as part of Malory's Arthurian society. On the other hand, Galahad is said to take honour from his father's status in Arthur's court.

Another example of the complications in honour which arise between Malory's men and women characters is the briefly recounted meeting (it cannot be called a relationship) between Gareth and
Persaunte's daughter in the fourth tale. This is by no means so directly presented nor so revealing an episode as those involving the two Blaynes, Guenevere or Isode, and it seems unlikely that Malory was making important implications about chastity and honour in this probably early tale. However, the episode shows how unimportant in the Morte Darthur a woman character is in comparison with an alliance between men. Persaunte sends his daughter to Gareth, his conqueror, as a compliment to his chivalrous triumph and a demonstration of his own courtesy and willingness to make an alliance. Gareth hastily (and with rather comic concern) sends the girl back again, thus proving that his courtesy is a measure for his host's. 'I were a shamefull knyght and I wolde do youre fadir ony disworshyp.' There is no question of the girl's own honour being either compromised or saved in the matter, and Gareth's generosity is in his returning her as a still valuable commodity to her father, not in his sparing her feelings in respect for her apparent reluctance to be treated as her father demands. 'Truly,' seyde sir Persaunte, 'whatsoever he be he is com of full noble bloode.' Malory shows how both Persaunte and Gareth prove their honour and increase their mutual respect; and the girl is only the medium for their courteous gestures of amity.

From another point of view, too, it can be seen that the episode subordinates all interest in the girl to interest in Gareth. Later on, and again with touches of humour, he is shown to be all too anxious to anticipate his marriage with Lyoness (and she with him), though his desires are painfully foiled by Lynet. In these latter passages Gareth's physical desire is shown to be entirely natural, but the episode with Persaunte's daughter also shows that it is, as it were, decent, and linked with
love, not merely the issue of promiscuous lust. He had shown himself to be above lust, although creditably doubtful of his own power of self-restraint, when offered the daughter. The interest is however entirely in Gareth and we are never asked to speculate about, let alone condemn, the honour of either Perseunte or his daughter, which is not in question.

By behaving honestly to men, and not attempting to trick or to distract them from the business of chivalry by too possessive love, women characters in Malory's Arthurian society appear to contribute to the honour system by supporting it. Fidelity in sexual relationships, illicit or otherwise, must be seen as contributive to honour in this sense. The Round Table code which is laid down in the first tale of the Morte Darthur goes some way towards prescribing safe relationships between men and women characters in Malory's Arthurian society for the insurance of stable relations among men, and through this, the maintenance of their honour. Accordingly, Malory says that Round Table knights annually swear 'to do ladyes, damesels, and jantylwomen and wydowes socour; strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them uppon payne of dethe.' Vinaver points out that Malory was conventional enough in stating that knights should always be at the service of ladies; but that the additional clauses 'strengthe hem in hir ryghtes' and 'never to enforce them' seem a strangely unnecessary and incongruous elaboration of a code of chivalrous courtesy. Carton deleted these last remarks from his version, and (to Vinaver's critical admiration) 'substituted the traditional formula alweyes to do ladyes damoyseis and gentylwamen socour upon payne of dethe. Yet in the same passage of his commentary, Vinaver says that this is the 'most complete and authentic record of [Malory's]...
conception of chivalry'. However, while it is certainly true that the code related in this first tale is the longest and most direct commentary on chivalry from Malory, it is not true to imply that there is no fuller expression of his ideas of chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*. This tale is untypical of Malory's writing generally and by no means the best in the *Morte Darthur*; and while the code which appears here is never contradicted by anything else which Malory says or which emerges from the action and comments of his characters elsewhere, there is much more to his overall picture of Arthurian chivalry than this in the *Morte Darthur*. Chivalry is the subject of the following chapter, but it may be said here that Malory's presentation of chivalry shows an exclusive concern with the behaviour of his knights with regard to their shared loyalties to one another and their quests for honour. The women characters are subsidiary to this, and it is entirely in line with this presentation that the clauses in the code of chivalry in the first tale should elaborate the suggestion of their dependence on the maintenance of stable male relationships. Malory's ideas of chivalry do not arise from women's love, as did those in the French books which served as most of his sources for his Arthurian re-creation, and so there is nothing incongruous in his setting up an initial Round Table code which takes care of male loyalties by prescribing the behaviour of men to women characters. No woman character in the *Morte Darthur* is said to be raped or to suffer extortion by a Round Table knight, and so by implication their rights are protected against external attacks only. There is no instance of direct conflict over women through the wrong treatment of them in Malory's Arthurian society, (except, of course, in the special case of Guenevere - the exception which proves the rule). Similarly, the rest of the code in
this first tale is designed to prevent treachery and violent reprisals among Malory's Round Table knights, and so to preserve their loyalty and honour and the stability of his Arthurian society. The right treatment of women is an important point in Arthurian chivalry in Malory's view of this only insofar as it affects the maintenance of male honour. Women characters supposedly benefit by the code, but in a material sense rather than with any idealistic regard to their sexual honour.

II HONOUR WON

The Arthurian Court and the Round Table

In the sense that the Arthurian Court and the Round Table may be seen as the hub of Malory's Arthurian society in the *Morte Darthur*, (and in the later tales appear to be synonymous with it), membership of this 'honour group' in itself could fairly be called 'honour given'. But since the Round Table only comes into existence towards the end of Malory's first tale, which generally describes the emergence of his Arthurian society, and since it seems that a second knighthood is necessary for entrance to this limited and elite inner fellowship, membership is also 'honour won'. The two categories cannot in any case be separated except for the purposes of discussion, for while it is not a unified concept in Malory's writing, honour involves everything in the *Morte Darthur*. It has been shown already through the example of Torre that only men whose fathers are noble and who are therefore of noble promise are elected to the Round Table, so there is competition for a place. These are said to be limited and vacancies only occur when knights die. This alone is sufficient to make a place at the Round Table itself the crown of honour for an individual knight and to establish the reputation of the fellowship.
far and wide. In his first tale, Malory shows some keen dispute over the election of knights whose claim seem equal, and priority is given to those nearest the king in blood, and to the kinsmen of his most prized men. In this way, honour won at the Round Table is directly linked to honour given from paternity. Once a character is made a knight of the Round Table, he is under the permanent obligation to increase his honour through the activities of chivalry, which means by fighting with and on behalf of the best men in Malory’s Arthurian society. Honour won by an individual knight by his prowess of arms therefore stems from the strength of his loyal alliances with other knights in his fellowship. His Round Table knighthood is therefore to be seen as the final acknowledgement of his claim to honour and the confirmation of his eligibility to compete with the most honourable knights for as much further honour as he can win by fighting and all that goes with this.

Apart from specific membership of the Round Table, just to be associated with Arthur’s court is seen as honourable in the Morte Darthur, and characters who are incidental in the drama and ‘outsiders’ to Malory’s Arthurian society are shown striving to gain some recognition from the king by attacking or defending his knights and so establishing alliances with the court. For example, a crafty woman in Malory’s third tale is shown extracting a promise from Leuncelot in reparation for his unprovoked attack on her lover, Belleus. She demands that Belleus be made a Round Table knight as soon as he can come to Arthur’s court, to which Leuncelot agrees with the proviso that ‘he preve hym doughty of his hondis’. The reputation of Arthur’s court draws many characters thither seeking honour, ‘and well-nyghe all the world holdith with Arthure, for there ys the floare of chevalry’. This comment appears in the
first tale, and is substantiated by the introduction of some of Malory's major characters throughout the *Morte Darthur*, who arrive seeking allies, recognition and opportunities for chivalry and winning honour. Gareth, Brunor (Le Cote Male Tayle), Trystram and Perceval are seen coming to the Arthurian court for this specific purpose, and in the fifth tale, it is reported that Launcelot himself first made his appearance there in the same way as a neophyte of chivalry and honour. All in all, Malory always presents his Round Table honour group as the centre of action and the competition for honour and fame through the deeds of chivalry in his Arthurian society. The implications of this are seen to be more complex in the fifth tale onwards from their simpler treatment in the earlier parts of the *Morte Darthur* in which Malory's Arthurian society may be observed coming into being. Apart from the depth of suggestion in his developing powers of narrative, the traditional device of continually comparing the Round Table and the Arthurian court with the unchivalrous court of Cornwall strengthens this idea of a central honour group in Malory's fifth tale, where it is repeatedly remarked in various ways that 'the honour [that is the reputation and integrity] of both the courtes be nat lyke'.

**Honour from fighting**

Throughout the *Morte Darthur*, the principal means of knights winning honour is through fighting. This is something which Malory invariably describes in vivid physical detail. The point here is that whereas prowess in combat is not honour itself, it is the basis of 'honour won'. In connection with this, Malory continually makes reference to the physical size of his characters, and quite simply, his best knights are physically his largest. In particular, Launcelot
and Trystram have statures which win them daunting reputations among other characters and enable them to win all their fights. For example, in the third tale, Lancelot struggles with and eventually defeats the mighty Tarquin 'worshipfully with his own honours'. Tarquin himself compliments Lancelot: 'Thou art the byggest man that ever I mette withal, and the beste-brotheme'. In the fifth tale, the tragic death of Lacerak, one of the most honoured knights of the Round Table, is summed up in basically physical terms: 'hit was over great pitrie, for I dare say he was the cleenest-sighted man and the best-synsted of his ayge that was on lyve'. Elsewhere, Palomides is said by the grateful people of the Red City to be 'well made and cleenly and blygly, unsayned of his lymyng, and neyther to yonge northern to olde' and Malory endorses this, incidentally giving a picture of his idea of an honourable knight: 'And though he were nat crystynde, yet he beilyved in the beste maner and was full faythyfull and trau of his prose, and well-condyseynde'. Alexander, Trystram's cousin, is reputed to be a similarly worthy man, for 'all knyghtes sayde that knew hym that he was one of the strangest knyghtes that was in kyng Arthure cyuen'. Perceval also 'was called that tyse as of his ayge one of the best knyghtes of the worldde and the best, assured', while others for example are described as 'well-fayrkyng', 'strengyst', 'well-beesynye', 'well-brethed', 'fayghted', 'full lykly', and 'good'.

There is a curious inversion of this customary association between a strong appearance and a knight's promise of honour in the episode at the beginning of the fourth tale when Gareth arrives anonymously and poorly clad at Arthur's court. He looks a likely candidate for knighthood as far as his build goes, for he is...
... the goodlyest yonge man and the fayreste that ever they all sawe. And he was large and longe and broade in the shalys, well-swaged, and the largeste and the fayreste handis that ever man sese. 93

Contrary to possible expectations, however, 'Beamsynes' makes a mystery of himself and enters leaning like a cripple on the shoulders of his men. His first request of three is for food and drink, 94 not knighthood, and he shocks Arthur into reproof. Having easily pulled himself upright and so shown that there is in fact nothing wrong with him and that he is as strong as he appears, it seems that the young stranger is deliberately flaunting chivalric custom and does not care about honourable appearances. With possible unconscious recognition of his young kinsmen, Arthur exclaims:

My fayre son ... ask bettyr, I consayle the, for this is but a symple askynge; for myne herte gyvyth me to the gretyly, that thou art of men of worship, and gretyly my consayte fayleth me but thou shalre a man of ryght grete worship. 95

Gareth's lowly asking and disguise invite churlish treatment by Kay and later Lynet; they are self-imposed difficulties in his quest for honour and true allies. In the end, he overcomes these, banishes mysteries and claims his title and reputation, and so proves that he is after all a serious disciple of honour and chivalry to the king's delighted relief: 'be myry, for he is proved to be a man of worship and that is my joy'. 96

As a contrast, Torre in the first tale is believed by all but Merlin and his mother to be a churl indeed, although he is 'passyngly well swaged and well-made of hys yerns'. 97 Part of the test of his noble blood and the validity of his claim to knighthood is a simple comparison Arthur makes of Torre's stature with that of the esherd Ayres's other sons. Significantly the notion of Torre's superior physique being the proof of his natural nobility appears to
be original to Malory: 'And all were shapyn muche lyke the poor man, but Torce was not lyke his mother in shappe me in countensanne, for he was muche more than ony of these.' Similarly, from his first arrival at Arthur's court, Brunor promises to show his worth and does, despite his 'Evyll-Shapyn Cote', for he is 'a yonge man bygly made'. Allied to these comments Malory makes about the size and strength of his knights are the frequently repeated expressions which pinpoint the fundamental fact that an Arthurian knight's ability to win honour lies in his hands: examples include such phrases as 'hande for hande', 'in hondis wyth', while to achieve 'the bygher hande' is to win the victory and hence honour. A knight offering himself for combat deserves to be 'manna-handled' for his and his opponent's honour. In general, the more honourable knights in Malory's Arthurian society are, the better 'of theire handys' they are shown to be.

Nevertheless, although Malory suggests that there is a direct relationship between a character's physical size and his prospects of achieving honour, he does not go so far as to imply that size alone is sufficient guarantee that a knight will win all his fights. This is a fundamentally realistic view of chivalry where fighting is concerned. 'Olde rooted' knights are said to be likely to defeat beginners like Alexander and Brunor in the fifth tale, and Heridred recalls that even Launcelot had to learn his business before he achieved his great reputation for chivalry. Horsemanship, on which Malory never forgets to show that knighthood depends, is an art to be acquired by 'usage and excercise'. A man's honour may depend on his keeping his saddle in a public combat, for 'what is a knyght but whan he is on horsebacke?' However, Malory concedes that there was never a man born who was not defeated at
some time or other, and that any man can have bad luck, for all his strength and skill. While prowess is the promise of honour, therefore, defeat in combat need not signify disgrace. Only when a knight is a coward like the ludicrous King Mark is he without honour, for then he either refuses to fight at all or fights unfairly. It is the combat itself which makes a man honourable, not the victory alone.

Finally, it has to be remembered that the equation of prowess with winning honour is not presented uncritically by Malory, particularly in the later tales. In the fifth tale, for example, he makes Pelles point out to Bors that in the adventures at Corbenic, a knight needs more than physical strength to win worship: 'there com but few knightes here that goth away wyth any worshippe; be he never so stronge, here he may be proved'. In the seventh tale (as will be examined shortly) the association between prowess and honour is open to question as it never is in the earlier parts of the Morte Darthur; while in the 'Morte' itself, the association is broken in an important respect when Arthur refuses to let Launcelot 'prove' his and Guenevere's innocence and therefore establish his honour by fighting because 'he trustyth so much uppon hys hondis and hys myght that he doulyth no man'. It is in the first two tales, when his Arthurian society is shown to emerge from battle and anarchy, that Malory tends to equate honour in a nationalistic sense with victory and therefore plain strength in arms.

Winning Worship Worshipfully: The Adventures of Launcelot and Gareth in Tales III and IV.

So far, honour has been discussed as something which Malory
generally presents in a straightforward and consistent manner as the combination of noble birth, Round Table knighthood and physical strength. There is a great deal more to the achievement of honour in the Morte Darthur than this, however, and it is not on the whole so directly suggested. The topic may be usefully summed up by Gareth’s words to Lynet in the fourth tale, when she prompts him to take advantage of his enemy’s known weakness to win an otherwise difficult fight:

Al fy for shame, fayre damesell! Sey ye nevr so more to me, for and he were as good a knyght as ever was any I shall never fayle hym in his moste myght, for other I wyll wynne worshyp worshipfully othir dye knyghtly in the felde. 116

Apart from the battle episodes of the first tale, and all of the second, honour in the Morte Darthur is not simply a matter of victory. It is not enough to win a fight, for it is the way in which a knight conducts his combat which determines how honourable he is: worship must be won worshipfully. In accordance with the code of chivalry, a knight’s honour is found to depend on his courtesy, his willingness to show mercy when asked and when it is justified, his reasons for fighting in the first place, his fidelity to his given word and his sense of what is right behaviour in any given instance. In other words, through the motivation and manner of a character’s pursuit of honour, Malory reveals his relationship to his Arthurian society as a whole, and at the same time illustrates in detail the developing nature of chivalrous behaviour and belief in the Morte Darthur.

There is some preliminary consideration of knights pursuing honour in Malory’s first tale in the episodes of Balin, Torre and Pellinor, and Gawayne, Uwayne and Harhalt. 117 For example, it is first and foremost Balin’s determination to regain recognition from
the king (whom he has angered by rashly beheading the Lady of the Lake) and so re-establish his claim to honour which carries him through adventure after grim adventure until his doom overtakes him and he kills his own brother. But Balin achieves his aim, and wins worship as Merlin prophesies he will, for his strength and courage gain him acclaim from Arthur: 'that Balyne passith of prowess off any knyght that ever y founde, for much am I beholdeynge unto hym'. In the same tale, during the triple quest followed by Pellinor, Torre and Gawayne, honour is treated with more insight into the means by which each character brings his part of the adventure to an end. Thus Pellinor is condemned for refusing to help a damsel in his eagerness to follow the lady of his quest; and Gawayne for refusing mercy to an opponent and so inadvertently killing a damsel. Only Torre emerges unscathed but Malory was apparently aware that he could develop his ideas on honour and chivalry much further. Merlin tells the court that there is much more in store for Torre to achieve:

say, say ... thys ys but japis that he hath do, for he shall prove a noble knyght of prowess as few lyvynge, and jantyl and curtaysye and of good tacohys, and passyng trew of hys promye, and never shall he cuterage.

From this passage, it is clear that in the first tale Malory was working towards some larger definition of honour and chivalry than has so far emerged in the Nortie Rounde and the Round Table code is the gradual expression of this which arises directly from this quest. There is some repetition of the points made in the code in the remaining episodes of the first tale and a narrative summary at the end but no longer definition that emerges from this first quest of the Round Table.
In the third and fourth tales Malory most directly and forcefully presents his growing ideas of ‘worship’ in relation to individual knights of his Round Table. He does so in each case through the sustained episodic narration of a series of adventures, which in the ‘Gareth’ amount to quite a large-scale quest. From the point of view of the present discussion, the chief value of these tales is that, while they differ in structure and quality, they reveal two of Malory’s noblest characters in situations which test their honour and chivalry from a variety of angles, and afford Malory the opportunity to comment (either directly or through his other characters) on the nature and implications of the action he unfolds. Nowhere else in the Morte Darthur is it made so clear that the winning of honour requires certain qualities of character which will decide how a knight will fight, as well as physical strength and prowess, and noble blood. First of all, Launcelot and Gareth are both introduced as knights who voluntarily and in their own ways have dissociated themselves from other characters in Malory’s Arthurian society for a time, setting out to prove to themselves and others that they are worthy of honour. This is underlined by Malory’s reintroduction of Launcelot at the beginning of the third tale, where he says that this character achieved so much in deeds of arms that he ‘passed all other knyghtes’ and became the chief knight of the Round Table:

So this sir Launcelot encreased so marvaylously in worship and honoure; therefore he is the fyrest knyght that the Freynsh booke makyth mention of after kynges Arthure com frome Rome. Wherefore quene Gwenyvere had hym in grete favoure aboven all other knyghtis, and so he loved the quene agayne aboven all other ladyes dayes of his lyff, and for hir he dud many dedye of armys and saved her from the fyre thow his noble chevalry.

Thus sir Launcelot rested hym longe with play and game; and than he thought hymself to prove in strange adventures ...
Here it is the validity of his already great reputation which Launcelot seeks to confirm and accordingly he rides away secretly from the security and festivity of the court to encounter whatever perils the forests might yield. In effect he effaces his known identity in order to reassert it more powerfully later. Perils are not long in finding Launcelot and his squire, and before many hours are said to have elapsed, he has begun the series of interdependent episodes of adventures which test his prowess in arms and his courage and fidelity to his sworn word.

Through these adventures Malory builds up a picture of Launcelot's self-assertive courage. It appears that no task is too daunting to him, and he disregards warnings from the prudent with a fine but justified bravado: 'Why shold I not preve?... For for that cause com I hydir'. He assumes the liberty to act even where there are apparently great odds against him, as when, for example, an ugly carle bars his way on a narrow bridge: 'Why sholde I nat ryde this way?'. Unafraid of giants, sorceresses and monstrous threats generally, Launcelot chivalrously braves his way through hard fights and bewildering passages to emerge triumphant in every case. His moral stamina and modesty is the guarantee of his honour as much as his outstanding physical prowess is of his victory in combat. This is also the case with Gareth in the following tale.

Lacking Launcelot's ready-made glorious reputation, and suffering from the initial handicap of a vulgar disguise which necessarily delays the social impact of his noble achievements, Gareth nevertheless steadily proves himself capable of withstanding Lynet's crude taunts as well as the blows of the mighty opponents he encounters on the way to Lyonesse's castle. The gradual unfolding of Gareth's career enables Malory to make more comments on worship in this tale than
anywhere else collectively in the *Morte Darthur*, and the subject is continually in Gareth's mouth. This is important because all the evidence suggests that the 'Gareth' in Malory's own invention, although it has parallels in some respects. The originality of the tale confirms that honour was indeed one of the topics uppermost in Malory's mind in the course of his Arthurian re-creation. Thus Gareth tells Lynet that he will not depart from her for all her discourtesy towards him, 'for than I were worse than a foole and I wolde departe from you all the whyle that I wynne worshyp'.

Like Launcelot in the previous tale, Gareth is made to equate cowardice with folly and valour with wisdom. Honour requires self-restraint as well as physical courage in a knight, and this is incidentally reinforced by a comment Malory's Arthur makes in the second tale for which Vinaver has compared him with Oliver, the opposite to Launcelot's Roland. Gareth's forbearance towards Lynet in this quest is made a point of virtue and manliness in him, the proof of his honourable birth and chivalry. His consciousness of this in the following passage is a fair summary of the place and nature of male honour in Arthurian society as seen by Malory in this tale:

*Damesell... a knyght may lytyll do that may nat suffir a jantyllwoman, for whatsoever ye seyde unto me I toke none hede to your wordys, for the more ye seyde the more ye angered me and my wretthe I wrekid uppon them that I had ado withall. And therefore all the mysseyng that ye mysseyde me in my batayle furthered me much and caused me to thynke to shewe and preve myselffe at the ende what I was, for peraventure, thoughs hit lyst me to be sedde in kynge Arthures courte, I myght have had mete in other placis, but I ded hit for to preve my frendys, and that shall be knowyn another day whether that I be a jantyllman borne or none ... 135*
Something which characterises the behaviour of both Launcelot and Gareth in these two tales is the way they make alliances with the knights they defeat in combat where these are not ignoble men or unrepentant enemies of Arthur's court, like Tarquin. Once a fight is over, Launcelot and Gareth respectively show their courtesy in their willingness to establish good relations with their opponents. Only unchivalrous and therefore by Round Table standards dishonourable knights are shown protracting hostilities. Tarquin, Launcelot's physical equal, is a good example of his opposite in honour, for it is said that his opposition of Round Table knights is an undiscriminating extension of a personal vendetta from an indefinite past. For neither Gareth nor Launcelot, does pursuing honour by fighting mean the wholesale slaughter of their opponents, and their adventures are to be seen as socially creative rather than punitive expeditions, by which the Round Table builds up its alliances outside the Arthurian court.

Defeat by such noble knights as Launcelot and Gareth brings honour, not shame, to weaker men: 'Truly, ... hit were shame to me to say hym any dysworshyp, for he hath previd hymself a better knyght than I am'. Gareth's opponents are in general noble men of prowess, and once fairly beaten, they are quick to offer him their service, even where he has killed their brother. But in the earlier tale, the men Launcelot defeats are not found to be so reasonable and chivalrous. Two of his worst enemies are tricksters. Phelot reduces him to fighting in his shirt: 'Alas,' sayde sir Launcelot, 'that ever a knyght sholde day weyynles !'. By his dexterity, Launcelot escapes Phelot's base designs despite his handicap; but Pedyvere catches him with a lie, and this time Launcelot feels himself beaten by a coward: 'Traytours, thou haste shamed me for evir !'
Malory more than once makes the point that the only man to be feared is a coward, who can be expected to act without scruple for honour or mercy. Honour is not therefore something which can be wholly asserted or defended by fighting. Guenevere condemns Padyvere for his behaviour towards Launcelot, but although it is a great rebuke to her knight's honour, 'matwythestondying his worship is known in many dyverse contrels.' Such is Launcelot's reputation for honour, that it is virtually impossible for any other knight to lessen it. But his actual honour, which in his self-judgement and integrity, is at least temporarily shaken, Launcelot's sense of shame is the result of the same kind of self-criticism and humility which Gareth shows in his adventures in the fourth tale. What can be inferred is that while other characters acclaim them, they both feel permanently obliged to justify their own sense of value by constant activity, and so prove the truth of their honour.

They are shown to have a permanent sense of the obligations this brings, as Launcelot on one occasion tells the grateful Kay whom he has rescued: 'I have no thing done but that me ought for to do.' Gareth is not called upon to help other characters in the way that Launcelot appears to be, and apart from his service to Lyones, he fights his opponents to clear his path. Like Launcelot, he conventionally claims that he would rather die than fail to win honour; but in this tale he has not the opportunity to show himself chivalrous on the scale Launcelot does in the third where he is repeatedly greeted (and throughout the Morte Darthur) as the 'floure of all knyghtes.' Consequently honour is harder for Gareth to win than it is for Launcelot. Malory was not trying to establish Gareth as the main character in his total narrative, however
which explains the apparently narrower scope of his chivalry. Nevertheless, as far as honour is concerned, although he has less mysterious and spectacular adventures than Launcelot, Gareth's sense of worship is openly as keen as that of his champion, and the two tales together yield comparable evidence for the nature of honour in Malory's Arthurian society. The most important overall point to emerge from them in view of developments elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur* is that both Launcelot's and Gareth's reputations for honour are shown to be based squarely on the facts of their deeds as Malory narrates these. Intention, word and deed are repeatedly shown to be one in an honourable man and Gareth and Launcelot strive to prove the integrity of their claims to honour in these respects, not just for the sake of making their reputations.

One more aspect of honour which emerges less directly in these early tales, and particularly in the 'Launcelot', is the way in which obligations to fellow members of the Round Table and kinsmen overtake a knight involved in the business of serving and fighting strangers, and immediately take precedence over his other tasks. This is something Malory presents consistently throughout the *Morte Darthur*. Launcelot's adventures have an interwoven double skein of structurally interdependent tasks interspersed with subsidiary episodes. He has to find and rescue Lyonell, Ector and all Tarquin's Round Table prisoners; but in order to do this, he has among other things to escape from Morgan and her sister queens, help Bagdemagus in consequence and then, promise to help the damsel in the forest who is frightened of Perys. The climax of all these episodes is Launcelot's combat with Tarquin and the release of the Arthurian knights. This duty fulfilled, he is free to travel on his way in search of new and unrelated challenges from the 'outside'.
world. For his part, after his quest, Gareth's task of proving himself as honourable as possible to Lyoness leads him into conflict with his Arthurian fellows, \(^1\text{45}\) in a tournament and a near fatal fight with his brother, Gawaine. \(^1\text{49}\) In this tale, Malory shows that romantic love can be a dangerous stimulus to chivalry. What is suggested by both tales is that adventures are really secondary projections of a character's chivalrous life in Malory's Arthurian society, and that honour comes first from the character's loyalty and concern for the men in his society. Accordingly, outside these two tales, Malory presents adventures at a subsidiary level of his narrative. In the last parts of the Mort Darthur, adventures as such do not appear to exist, and the entire action of the narrative is concerned with the problems of honour and loyalty which bring on the tragedy of the Round Table. From these obligations a knight cannot escape, even when he rides as obscurely as Gareth, or behind a borrowed shield or armour, like Launcelot. \(^1\text{50}\) Consistent with this is the point that all through the Mort Darthur one of the greatest shocks imagined is a character's failure to uphold his obligations to his fellow men, whether this is deliberate or not. Bors expresses this well when he complains of the dilemma in which his brother's unnatural antagonism places him, since he must apparently choose between killing Lyonell or Collgreveunce, a Round Table knight who has intervened to save Bors:

'And so longe dured there the batayle that sir Bors sate up all engepshlye and behyde sir Collgreveunce, the good knight, that fought with his brother for his quarrel. Therof he was ful hevy, and thought if sir Collgreveunce sley his brothir that he sholde never have 'joy', also, and if his brothir sley sir Collgreveunce, 'the same shame sholde ever be ayne'. \(^1\text{51}\)
The basis of honour and chivalry in the *Morte Darthur* is invariably seen to be the maintenance of the fraternal bonds of loyalty which have been found to comprise the structure of Malory's Arthurian society. The relationship between loyalty and honour and chivalry is not something which Malory presents evenly in his writing however. In the first four tales of the *Morte Darthur*, and more particularly in the third and fourth, this relationship is fairly easy to see and infer; but in the later differently written tales, where Malory's perception of the nature and dramatic possibilities of honour and chivalry in comparison visibly deepens, it becomes more complicated. The basis of honour and chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society does not alter, but the relative significance of these ideas changes as the stability of the relationships among Malory's major characters is jarred by treachery and other social concerns than merely winning battles. However, this is stating the case very baldly to indicate the direction in which the discussion of honour will continue. It must be emphasised at the outset that although it is felt that the later four tales have thematic and possibly even some designed structural relationship in some directions, this by no means implies that there is a steady development and presentation of honour running through them. It is more a case of existing ideas of honour being seen to take on new dimensions in a narrative both technically and increasingly sophisticated. One way of seeing how this complication of Malory's ideas of honour emerges is to look at some specific examples of what can be called 'dilemmas of honour' in his fifth tale, the 'Trystram' (although it is not implied that there are no examples of such dilemmas to be found in the earlier parts of the *Morte Darthur*). The following discussion does this by summarising
the first two sections of this chapter and showing some of the
t results arising from the relationship between 'honour given' and
'honour won'.

Dilemmas of Honour: 'The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones'

The main point about the dilemmas of honour in the
Morte Darthur generally is that they appear capable of solution
while Malory's Arthurian society is stable—that is, while Round
Table knights put their loyalty to Arthur and one another above
personal desires to seek revenge or save face at any cost to
other men and honour. Failures to do this by the Orkneys and
Palomydes and King Mark constitute deviant behaviour which is
condemned as shocking betrayals of chivalry in the fifth tale.
This is why the 'Tristram' is especially interesting for the
dramatic examples of dilemmas of honour it offers. After this
tale, the dilemmas in which Launcelot finds himself become
increasingly difficult to resolve, until there is a total
breakdown of honour and loyalty in the 'Morte'. These situations
in the fifth tale lack the seriousness and overshadowing implications
of the dilemmas of honour which comprise the seventh and eighth
tales, and which undoubtedly represent Malory's finest and most
homogeneous writing. Instead of the controlled dramatic
manipulation of the final conflicts of honour and loyalty to be
found there, the dilemmas of honour in the 'Tristram' suggest the
nature of both qualities by the accumulation of similar implications
from short, vividly presented dramatic incidents. The lengthy
episodic nature of the fifth tale, which comprises combat after
combat and presents a large cast of characters, situations are
repeatedly arising in which knights suddenly have to choose how to
act in the fact of apparently equal but conflicting claims. In a society where existence is portrayed as a many-sided competition for supremacy, the honour system is most observable in situations of crisis where the fear of dishonour drives characters to reveal their concern over its opposite value.

For example, a knight's permanent obligation to defend his Round Table companion may cause him to interrupt a fair fight and so appear both to give and receive dishonour. This is seen to happen on one occasion when Gareth and Dynadan fell upon Launcelot in order to save their companion, Trystram, who 'hath had overmuch travayle this day'. Trystram is angry at his friends' well-meaning interference, and takes it as an embarrassing demonstration of their misunderstanding of what is due to his honour:

*Now, fye for shame! ... why ded ye so to-sayte adowne soo good a knight as he ye, and namely shan I had ado wyth hym? A, Jesu! ye do yourseleff grate shame and hym no disworshyp, for I yilde hym resonably hote, though ye had nat holypyn me. 153.*

He apparently does not realize the service Gareth and Dynadan do him in checking his misguided opposition of his friend and hero, Launcelot, who has not recognised him. But when Launcelot overhears his opponent's name from a squire, he is shown to be horrified at the compromise to his honour he has unwittingly incurred in fighting Trystram: 'A, Jesu! what have I done?... for now am I dishonoured.' 154 Keeping faith with a sworn companion and not fighting against him, even accidentally as here, is thus shown to be more vital to a knight's sense of his own honour than winning a combat.

This particular fight was started in the first place, through the disloyal agency of Palomyden's envy of Trystram, and so the whole episode can be seen as the result of the disruption of male
alliances. The example shows that in Malory's Arthurian society, personal loyalties sometimes are brought into a false relationship of opposition to honour, and appear to threaten the standards of chivalry. That this can happen when most of the characters involved have no dishonourable intentions towards one another, as here, is a potential source of the tragedy which is developed in the seventh and eighth tales. Further, Launcelot's exclamation 'for now am I dishonoured' (which has grim parallels elsewhere) suggests that this is the very kind of dilemma which the knights in Malory's Arthurian society continually dread and expect. There seems to be a sense of impending threat to the social structure and honour hinted at in such episodes in the 'Trystram', although it is not until the seventh tale that this comes to the forefront in Malory's narrative and tragedy becomes inevitable. Launcelot's 'now' suggests a swift, half-realised but premature fear that this final state has at last come with the loss of his honour. That it appears to have come in such an indirect way is a foreshadowing of the conflicts among friends in the 'Morte', which as Malory may well have remembered from Merlin's prophecy in his first tale (if nothing else) results in Launcelot's fall from fame. Apart from the repeated dishonourable attempts of Palmydes to discredit Trystram and so increase his own reputation in Isode's sight, there is no other example in the Morte D Parthur before the final tale of a Round Table knight failing in his loyalty to a friend in order to preserve his own reputation for fighting, although there are earlier examples of betrayals. The terrible reversals of loyalty and honour in the 'Morte' are all the more powerfully dramatic for the interdependent relationship between these aspects of Malory's Arthurian society he presents in
the earlier parts of his work.

Another example of a dilemma of honour in this fifth tale is to be found in the episode where Palomides, resentful of the unrecognised Arthur's attention of Isode, suddenly attacks and strikes him down.\textsuperscript{158} To begin with, that any knight should even unwittingly attack the king is a monstrous thing in the 

Morte Darthur, for in so doing he attacks the stable centre of his society. Launcelot evidently feared such a situation might arise, for Malory shows how he warned Arthur beforehand that his insistence on visiting Isode was not wise.\textsuperscript{159} Now Launcelot faces a dilemma, whether to defend the king and so risk offending Trystram, whose knight Palomides is; or to keep the peace with Trystram, his own ally, and so fail Arthur. Malory gives Launcelot a speech of some length in which he is made to argue out the matter with himself, although he has no real choice, as it appears; and this alone suggests the complication of the situation:

\begin{quote}
'I am lothe to have ado wyth yondir knyght, and nat for his owne sake, but for sir Trystrams. And of ony thynge I am sure of hym: ye I sayte downe sir Palomides I muste have ado wyth sir Trystram, and that were to muche to mauche then bothe for me alone, for they ar tow noble knyghtes. Natwythoutwyne, whethir I lyve or dye, nedy manyt revenge my lorde Arthure, and so I wolle, whatsoever befallen me.'
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
As for to justo wyth me, sayde sir Launcelot, I wolle nat fayle you for no drade that I have of you. But I am lothe to have ado wyth you and I myght choose, for I wolle that ye wyte that I muste revenge my speciall lorde and my moste bedrady fynede that was unhorsed unwaryly and unknyghtly. And therefore, sir, though I revenge that falle, take ye no displeasure, for he is to me suche a fynede that I may nat se hym shamed.'\textsuperscript{160}
\end{quote}
Fortunately for Launcelot, Trystram is quick to realise from his appeal both who he is and the identity of the unarmoured knight, and he rounds on Palomydes instead of defending him as in other circumstances he might be expected to do: 'Ye ded nat worshipfully when ye smote downe that knyght so suddeynly as ye ded.' Any possible offence to Isode herself is unconsidered, and Palomydes's laconic response to Trystram's panegyric of praise for Launcelot's sense of honour and his chivalry is unanswerable: 'And a thynge, sir, be done, hit can nat be undone.' In this fifth tale, Malory shows that even in his highly practical Arthurian society, action can be dismissed in special circumstances—and, indeed, must be, if the society is to continue. Apart from being a refinement of the kind of society presented in the earlier four tales, where almost every act has its counter-part in a return blow, Launcelot's and Trystram's handling of this very awkward situation shows something of the tragedy to come in the 'Morte'. Gawayne's insistence on strict retribution from very mixed personal motives appears all the more wilfully decadent in a society which Malory shows has advanced in its notions of honour, chivalry and justice far beyond the crude military code of its earliest stages.

To return to the example in the fifth tale, what Malory seems to be saying here is that between the most honourable of his characters, it is recognised that while an individual's sense of his own honour is important, bonds of loyalty to the king are inviolable and must not be affronted unnecessarily. As there is no real cause for animosity, both Launcelot and Trystram draw back from a combat which could become more dangerous than it is worth.
Their mutual respect and the presence of the king whose wilfulness instigated the episode act as checks on the situation, and so resolve Lancelot's and Trystram's dilemma. Clearly the preservation of loyalties among men takes precedence over the question of whether or not Arthur's behaviour to Isode is discourteous, even in the eyes of her lover, who manages to interpret the matter to his own satisfaction by denigrating the hot-headed Palomydes.

There is another example of a dilemma of honour which involves the opposition between what is felt to be expedient and loyalty between men earlier in this tale. It occurs when the Irish king, Angwsyes, discovers through his wife's cleverness that 'Tramtryste', the winner of a tournament and 'a full noble knyght as ever I saw in fylde', is in fact Trystram, the slayer of the king's brother-in-law, Marhelt. The dilemma here is the king's, and there seems to be no satisfactory solution to it. On the other hand, social custom and his wife demand that he should avenge his kinsman Marhelt on Trystram, although Malory has shown earlier that he was killed in a fair fight. On the other hand, Angwsyes's growing affection for the man to whom he later is willing to offer his daughter, Isode, in marriage forbids any such inhospitable and dishonourable move. As a compromise, Angwsyes insists that Trystram takes an honourable departure from his court, with none to offer him shame:

So God me helpe I ... I may nat say but ye dud as a knyght sholde do and as hit was youre parte to do for your quarrell, and to encrise your worship as a knyght sholde do. Howbehit I may nat mayntayne you in this contrey with my worship but that I sholde displese many of my barownes and my wyff and my kynne. 167.
The unspoken ground of this speech is that the bonds made between Trystram and Angayshe are felt to be more congenial and permanent than the considerations he mentions, but that honour demands that conventional kinship obligations must be carried out. And Trystram not realised that such a dilemma could arise he would not have gone disguised to the Irish Court for healing. 168 What happens between Trystram and Angayshe in this episode is of incidental interest, since it is 'outside' Malory's Arthurian society centred in Arthur's court; but it corroborates the point already made that in Malory's view, the relationships among kinsmen provide the foundation for the behaviour of knights, and that in certain circumstances these may conflict with what is necessary or desirable in the relationships between men who choose to become allies. When this happens, withdrawal without loss of face seems to be the only acceptable course. It is therefore principally the obligations of kinship which must decide these dilemmas of honour, even where this places other issues of honour and alliance in abeyance. However, there are occasions in this tale when Malory's knights are shown to be unable to resolve some dilemma of honour, even by withdrawing from it, and to behave abnormally in consequence. For example, when the trickery of Elayne and the jealous possessiveness of Guenavere combine to bring Launcelot into the false position of appearing to betray his love and his sworn word, he leaps out of the window and runs mad for more than two years, 167 'a mazed man, cleane oute of your wyttte.' 169 There is a double issue of honour for Launcelot involved in this love tangle. First, Launcelot feels such dismay and 'an hartely sorow' 170 at the queen's construction of his behaviour with Elayne that he literally becomes a lost man who can make no defence of his honour, suddenly finding that he has apparently lost it.
This is another instance of this character feeling that the basis of his honourable existence has treacherously collapsed. Secondly, as Malory makes Guenevere and Bors anxiously try to hide from the king, Leuncelot's unexplained departure from the court leads to rumours, and by implication his reputation, though never really threatened, is at least glanced at. The king's comments to Leuncelot when he eventually returns are proof of this protracted speculation. While Arthur apparently means no dishonour to Leuncelot when he curiously inquires about Galahad, Leuncelot's evasive reply suggests that he is too shame-faced to answer the king directly, and yet too honourable to invent an excuse: 'My lorde ... yf I ded any folly I have that I sought.' Malory imputes no dishonour to his hero; but Leuncelot's earlier entanglement with Blayne at Corbene is presented as something which, for all its inevitability, is a matter of deep shame to the knight himself who apparently knows nothing of the redeeming supernatural side of the affair:

"Alas ! he sayde, 'that I have lyved so longe; for now eke I am ashamed.' And anon he gate his awerde in his honde and sayde, 'Thou traytoure !'"

When Blayne is said to come to Arthur's court later, Leuncelot remembers his rough behaviour to her, and is doubly ashamed of his loss of honour in his own eyes: 'he wolde not salwe her nother spake with her'. Malory indirectly shows how very fine a sense of honour is Leuncelot's. Were he a less fine character, he would not have run mad, knowing himself really innocent in will of the treachery of which Guenevere believes him guilty and therefore not in fact dishonoured. It is Leuncelot's honour which creates a great dilemma of shame here when it might
only have been a lovers' quarrel.

The striking thing about Launcelot's madness is not so much its dramatic causes, or its conventional romance form, but its implications for the place of honour in an exclusively chivalric existence. From being the most honourable and civilized knight of the Round Table, Launcelot becomes at a stroke a savage (like Tristram earlier in the fifth tale), a wild man of the forest, 'a naked man in his shurtys wyth a swerde in his honde.' 176

A completely disorientated outcast, he ceases to seek adventures or to have any chivalric concern for honour. Now he is shown fighting like a beast at bay, attacking without ceremony or discrimination anyone who crosses his path. In his gross behaviour and appearance, Launcelot is no longer recognizable as a knight, and his former noble existence is narrowed to survival in a physically hard and crude natural world.

He suffred and endured many sharpe showres, that ever ran wyde woode frome place to place, and lyved by frayte and suche as he myght gete and dranke watir two yere. And other clothynghe had he but lytyll, but his shurtys and his broke. 177.

Even when Launcelot is finally brought to his senses, he still avoids Arthur's court out of shame and hurt pride, 178 and it takes his brother's powers of persuasion to induce him to end his self-imposed exile. 179 When Launcelot returns at last, there is nothing but joy throughout the court, for the Round Table is complete again and the honourable way of life is restored with its hero. 180 The reunion of Launcelot and Guenesvere is quite subsidiary to this re-establishment of good relations among men, although a necessary conclusion to this melodramatic episode in their love story.
In another episode of the fifth tale in the *Norte Darthur*, Falomydes's unhappy love of Isode and competition with Trystram brings him to the verge of despair from which at one point he tries to drown himself.\(^{161}\) He eventually wastes away to a pale reflection of himself.\(^{162}\) Like the episode of Launcelot's madness, only more incidentally, this is primarily a story of unrequited love. But apart from its romance conventions, it is Falomydes's shame at his treatment of his friend, Trystram, and not Isode's rejection which is said to reduce him to an overwhelming sense of frustration and dishonour. There is no doubt that the bitterness of his sense of dishonour and loss of fame moves Falomydes more than the pangs of disprised love. The following passage makes this clear:

And I have many tymes enforced my self to do many dedis of armes for her sake, and ever she was the causser of my worship-synnynges. And alas! now have I lost all the worshyp that ever I wass, for never shall befall me such proues as I had in the felyshyp of sir Trystram.\(^{163}\)

When at last, after some false starts during which their animosity is shown to fester further, Falomydes and Trystram face each other in a battle to settle their differences, both put up a fair show in fighting. Then Falomydes suddenly speaks out (very cleverly) to save his honour and friendship with Trystram at this late hour. His sense of value as an Arthurian knight is suddenly restored and the torment of Isode fades into its real perspective:

As for to do thys batayle... I dare ryght well ende hyt. But I have no grete luste to fght no more, and for thys cause...: synne offfence ye to you nat so grete but that we may be frendys, for all that I have offended ye and was for the love of Ly Beall Isode. And as for her, I dare say she ye myrcles of all othir ladys, and also I profyrd her never no maner of dyshonour, and by her I have getyn the moste parte of my worship. And sythyn I had offended never as to her ome persone, and as for the offfence that I have done, hyt was aye to youre ome persone,
and for that offence ye have gyvyn me thys day many sad strokys (and som I have gyffyn you agayne, and now I dare say I felte never man of youre myght nothir so well-breathed but yf hit were sir Launcelot du Laske), wherefore I require you, my lorde, forgiff me all that I have offended unto you : And thys same day have me to the nexte churche, and fyrate let me be cleane confessed, and afther that se youreselff that I be truly baptyssed ... 184.

Here is as full a statement as Malory ever gives of the essential qualities of chivalric honour in his Arthurian society; and once again it is clear that loyal and stable relationships among noble knights are the source of honour in this society, women and love being secondary and sometimes even adverse considerations, even where they are said to inspire the deeds of chivalry. Palomydes's offer of a sensible solution to the dilemma of honour he has created for himself and for Trystram comes at the right moment and in the right way. And once more Malory shows how superior a knight Trystram is in his courteous acceptance of Palomydes's honourable terms.

Enough has been said to show that in this fifth tale Malory presents honour in a more complex light than in the earlier parts of the *Morte Darthur*. It is no longer seen just as something which is a nobleman's natural right and which may be won by the single-hearted and courageous pursuit of adventures and victories. In the episodes referred to honour has little directly to do with victory in combat, for although that is an ever-present consideration in the *Morte Darthur*, it is increasingly seen to be subordinated to the balance of safe and honourable relationships between Round Table men. Malory's Arthurian society is consequently newly complex and sharply visible in his fifth tale. It is as if the dramatic foreground and background, sharply distinguished in what was surely Malory's earlier and very different writing, are now merged in a closely observed 'middleground' which is packed with
characters and inter-related action. No longer is one knight detached from his background and followed with undivided narrative attention on his journeys, as in the first, third and fourth tales in the *Morte Darthur*. The overall basis of honour in Malory's Arthurian society has not changed, but the dilemmas it occasions in the 'Trystram' confirm this new complexity and reveal the close relationship between loyalty and chivalry in this imaginary society of honourable men.

During the earlier four tales of the *Morte Darthur*, characters tend to be presented as either honourable or dishonourable, as friends or enemies of the Arthurian fellowship. In the Roman War, for example, this division is quite crudely made at times. The third and fourth tales together comprise a great advance in Malory's writing, but still respectively describe the achievements in honour and chivalry of two prominent Round Table knights. In the 'Trystram' Malory begins to present characters on a less than heroic scale side by side with the unmatchable Launcelot and Trystram, and the whole question of honour in his Arthurian society assumes an apparently more realistic breadth of significance. These unheroic characters still compete for fame through fighting and good relationships with the great knights they admire. In particular, Palomydes is praised for his physical prowess, and at the same time it is made quite obvious that this quality sometimes has little to do with honour. Malory's recreation of this character and the carefully built-up tension between his ability on the one hand and his unchivalrous inclinations on the other is one of the master-strokes of the *Morte Darthur*.

Together with the dissenting Dynadan and the brutal coward, King Mark, such 'middleground' characters as Palomydes, Gareth, Alexander and
Lemorak contribute to the illusion of a society in which a wide range of chivalrous ability and honourable worth is dramatically portrayed. One effect of this is that while honour emerges as something apparently capable of varied interpretation, it seems to become an increasingly tangible body of coherent ideas. The 'Trystram' on the whole lacks the narrative concentration of the third tale, in which Malory builds up the heroic character of Launcelot, and in general its sophisticated cohesion of parts. But it offers a dramatic grasp of honour as something which cannot be separated from the other aspects of loyalty and chivalry at any level in Malory's Arthurian society.

Perhaps an episode which illustrates this point well is the story of 'La Cote Male Tayle', in which the knight's original quest of revenge for his father is soon put aside for something more demanding and unknown, but in which La Cote would not survive, despite his chivalry, were it not for the anxious guidance of Launcelot. It is with great difficulty that La Cote wins honour in his experiences during this episode, not through any fault of his but because of the sheer difficulty of surviving in very demanding circumstances, and Malory does not make him into a hero as he might have done earlier in his writing. Unlike Gareth in the fourth tale, for example, La Cote does not find his damsel's bitter remarks any stimulus to persevere, but a positive discouragement, and less attractive than death. It is only by implication that it appears Maledyseunte sets La Cote a standard of behaviour, so that he stays to fight the grimest combats, and somehow wins them. But his victories are neither single-handed nor as apparently inevitable as Gareth's, and altogether it seems that honour is no longer a matter of heroic
simplicity. Knights need more than courage and prowess to survive and win honour. To put this another way around, at this stage in the Morte Darthur, winning honour and fame by doing great deeds is apparently only possible for the heroic few. More ordinary Round Table knights need time and experience to build up their 'worship' as Malory's conclusion to the story of La Cote suggests. It is altogether a more mature view of his Arthurian society which makes Malory present the quest for honour as something in which the effort, rather than the achievement, establishes the honourable worth of a Round Table knight. In the 'Trystram', Malory does not so much show his characters proving their claims to honour as fighting to assert them in the first place. Accordingly, their adversaries are usually not strange beings from the world beyond Arthur's court whose intentions are plainly 'wrong' because they are un-chivalrous and un-Arthurian and who are largely seen as physically huge predators on Round Table knights. Instead, Round Table characters are increasingly shown in conflict with one another, by accident and design, directly or indirectly. They win honour despite conflicting claims on them through their loyalties to their companions and the king. In this type of writing, Malory may be seen to be preparing the ground for the tragedy of the Round Table in the last two tales.

III 'WORSHIP AND HONOUR':

The Difference Between Honour and Reputation in 'Trystram'

In the introduction to this chapter, it was pointed out that there seems to be a general distinction between Malory's use of the words 'worship' and 'honour' and that the former indicates what in modern terms would be implied by 'honour'.
that is, the qualities of a man's character and behaviour which are considered worthy and good; whereas the latter, (far less frequent in occurrence in the *Morte Darthur*) is generally equivalent to 'fame' or 'reputation'. A few examples will make this clear. There is one at the beginning of the story of 'Alexander the Orphan', where it is said that Mark is 'wondirly wrothe that his brother sholde wynne such worship and honour'.

A few lines later Malory laments that such a character should be murdered: 'for the goodnes and for bys good dedis this jantyll prynce Bodwyne was slayne'.

This indicates that 'worship' and 'goodness' are mutual attributes in Bodwyne's character while 'honour' and 'good dedis' are the acknowledgement and manifestations of this. This is an important point, and corroborates Malory's general presentation of worship in all his tales as something which is not only eminently desirable and praiseworthy but morally good. In Bodwyn's case, his fame was the result of his goodness as much as his practical achievements; but it will be found later in this discussion that such is not always the case.

There is another example of the term 'honour' being used in the sense of respect being shown to characters on the assumption of their worship when Launcelot installs Trystram and Isode in Joyous Gard and instructs all his people 'to honours them and love them as they wolde do hymself'. Malory also used 'worship' in this sense of paying respect and so increasing a character's claim to honour: for example, Arthur's reminder to Launcelot in the 'Morte', 'I have worshiped you and youres more than ony othir knyghtes.' But even where Malory's vocabulary is not consistent, the fundamental difference in concept between honour as an innate quality of an individual and honour as the respect which is
offered on the strength or reputation of this quality is found to be persistent in the *Morte Darthur*. A more concrete example of this occurs where Gareth warns Trystram that Palomydes is out 'to wynne all the honour frome you' in the Tournament at Lonesop, and that Dynadan's rudeness comes from his selfless concern for Trystram's worship. Honour here clearly means fame, in the specific sense of a sporting reputation whereas worship is the much greater personal quality (or, rather, qualities) which enable Trystram to win this in the first place. Another example to make this clearer occurs where Malory relates how during Leancelot's long absence from court,

'sir Trystram bare the brewe and renowne thorow all the realms of Logryse, and many stronge adventures befelle hym, and full well and manely and worshipfully he brought hom to an ende.'

This comment underlines the difference between honour as a quality of character (in the sense in which this was discussed with reference to Leancelot and Gareth in the third and fourth tales) and honour achieved.

One reason why there is no positive distinction between the twin aspects of honour as 'given' and 'won' in the *Morte Darthur* is that there exists no independent standard of excellence for judging. Honour and fame together are chiefly what make Malory's Arthurian knights 'good'. In relation to 'good', the term 'manly' in the *Morte Darthur* (which is one of Malory's favourite words of approbation) is an example illustrating what D.S. Brewer in another context has called the 'Janus-faced' nature of honour:

On the one side honour looks towards goodness, virtue, an inner personal quality; on the other looks towards social or external reputation, to marks of dignity, like giving generous feasts, or making honourific gestures like kneeling.
It is because he is 'manly', owing to his 'inner personal quality', that Trystram is worthy of being reputed such; and the word itself further suggests the means by which he wins this recognition, by manly deeds of arms. To be 'manly' in the *Morte Darthur* is therefore to be wholly honourable. Another kind of example where Malory's vocabulary reveals this unavoidable ambiguous nature of honour occurs when a character wishes Trystram well in his fighting: 'My lorde, sir Trystram... your renowne and worship ye well knowyn thorow many realays, and God save you this day from senshyn and shame!'.

Interesting here is the way Malory's syntax seems to link 'renowne' with 'senshyn', and 'worship' with 'shame'. The external and more private sides of honour are clearly distinguished, though it is suggested that they are really indivisible. There seems to be the further important implication that 'worship' and 'shame' are of greater personal consequence to a chivalrous knight than 'renowne' and 'senshyn'.

Onlookers might censur Trystram for his performance, so that he loses face; but by implication, shame is the sense of dishonour he will feel in himself if he does not fight well. This cannot be as arbitrary as either good or bad fame, since it is based on what is the inescapable truth about a man's total quality. Malory incidentally makes it quite clear in the fifth tale that reputation comes and goes according to the irrational phases of popular judgement when he shows Trystram as the darling of Logres on moment, and Launcelot the next.

Actually neither character is seen by Malory to diminish in his real worth, either in deed or intention; and their respective reputations merely prompt their followers to promote them as one another's rivals.
It can be inferred that it is a mark of their true honour that neither Trystram nor Launcelot accepts this public labelling, for despite the conflicts among their supporters, they refuse to jeopardise their alliance to increase their statuses as winners.

But again it must be stressed that whatever his intentions of indicating the double nature of honour might appear to have been, Malory's vocabulary is not a certain guide to these. There are plenty of exceptions to the rule. Mark is therefore found blaming his brother in the following way: 'thou art ever aboute to wynne worship from me and put me to dishonoure'.

'Worship' is not something which can be taken from one man and given to another; but fame is, and that is what Mark here implies, good fame turning to bad. Whether Mark has any good fame is immaterial, since Malory presents him here as choosing to think that he does. Another instance where the word 'worship' serves in the sense of fame and possibly with a subsidiary sense of honour is found in a generous remark Trystram makes to Palomydes: 'ye ar nat so fayne to have worship but I wolde as fayne encrease youre worship'. The fight Trystram here allows Palomydes to take on for Isode's sake will increase his reputation, if he wins it, and also enable him to develop his value in his own eyes. The earlier part of this discussion of honour it was noticed in connection with Launcelot and Gareth that a character's critical self-regard is a significant mark of true honour in him, just as the qualities of humility and courtesy are. What is suggested by this reference to worship by Trystram is that by performing the actions of honour, Palomydes will have the opportunity to sharpen his perception of honour itself, as well as increasing his fame by winning a fight.
This double aspect of honour and fame is not something which is limited to Malory's writing in the 'Tristram' although all the examples mentioned in this discussion have been taken from this section. But in the earlier tales, the duality is not so apparent. For example, in the first two tales honour is much the same as reputation, and that is largely based on Arthurian military victories. These by definition, must be 'right' since Arthur's enemies are wrong in opposing a king elected by God and fate. Therefore honour and reputation are aspects of Arthurian emergence, and inevitable as invincible. There is some preliminary searching into the nature of honour applied to individual characters in the early adventures of the Round Table, but this is done in a straightforward, limited and almost didactic way, with Merlin's interpretations of the knights' behaviour and its value.

In the 'Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake', Malory first begins to make a clear distinction between 'worship and honour', and this is maintained throughout the fourth tale in implication and verbal expression. But even in both these tales, superior in quality though they are to the first two in the Morte Darthur in both literary and aesthetic senses, honour and reputation are seen in a simple complementary relationship. To summarise this, a character is presented as being worthy of his claim to honour on account of his birth, his kinship and other alliances, and by the ways in which he sets himself to win worship through the relationships he has which stem from fighting. It is an indication of his honour if he is seen to be physically strong and of impressive stature, and if he wins his fights. Honour for Launcelot and Gareth was additionally found to arise from their qualities of character.
However, no possible divorce between their honour and their reputation was suggested, and significantly, both aspects were assessed by the same criterion, success in fighting. Launcelot's survival from the traps and threats offered him by Morgan, Hallowes, Mholot and the rest and his defeat of Tarquin in combat, are consequently both the proof of his inward honour and the verification of his fame. Similarly, Gareth's endurance of Lynet and his successive victories establish his nobility of blood and honour before he abandons his disguise. In both cases, reputation is firmly based on what Malory presents as the facts about these two characters' respective careers in chivalry.

In the 'Trystram', however, the possibility of conflict in this dual nature of honour begins to become apparent, and there are instances where a knight's reputation begins to be dissociated from his true honour. This is one of the most significant developments in the Morte Darthur. The results of this divorce of honour from reputation (although this is stating it more simply than it actually appears in Malory's writing) culminate in the tragedy of Launcelot during the seventh and eighth tales.

The discussion now turns to a consideration of this divorce, the ways in which it becomes apparent and its effects on Malory's Arthurian society. This will necessarily include some reference to the relationships between honour and virtue; shame, dishonour and sin; honour, love and loyalty; and the eventual ambiguity of judgement among Malory's characters as a result of appearances finally overshadowing the reality of honour in his Arthurian society.
Dynadan, 'Scoffer and Japer'

The possibility of incongruity between honour and reputation is rather curiously suggested by Malory's treatment of Dynadan. Without suggesting that this is always totally consistent, Malory seems to present Dynadan as a paradoxical character who is both typical and untypical of his Arthurian society. For example, in his unashamed and heavily aghast refusals to behave as knights of the Round Table are expected to do, Dynadan can be seen to challenge the whole chivalric structure of winning honour (in the sense of reputation) by fighting. However, he does not do this in the same way that his French original does, that is, by satirising the whole institution of chivalry as a kind of comic mouthpiece for the writer. Vinaver says in his Commentary that in the Morte Darthur Dynadan's satirical function is cut down to the odd clownish outburst; and in none of these can it be supposed that Malory was implying his own criticism of the Arthurian society he had re-created. Nevertheless, while making him a figure of fun, the behaviour and dialogue Malory gives to Dynadan still constitutes an eccentric dissenting voice which questions the importance of a knight's devotion to winning a reputation. In this it is impossible to see the implication that this sometimes has little to do with real honour ('worship').

In his ambiguous handling of this character's occasional appearances in the fifth tale of the Morte Darthur, it is hard not to conclude that Malory intended to present him in just this way and for the purpose of exposing the misunderstanding about honour among some of the Round Table fellowship, although his criticisms are not to be taken as final, just as he also projects his original view of the relationship of romantic love to chivalry through Dynadan's remarks on the subject. Yet although Dynadan
appears to be a dissenter, in some important ways he is a thoroughly typical character in Malory's Arthurian society. It is precisely because of these aspects that his criticisms seem to carry weight and cannot be dismissed altogether as the babblings of the fool. For example, it is made very clear on more than one occasion that Dynadan is to be imagined as a beloved member of the Round Table fellowship. This alone is a mark of honour in him by Malory's usual standards. He is a great admirer of Tristan and Launcelot, who in turn protect, respect and even cherish this cheerful knight whose wit is wont to set the table on a roar. Such harmonious relationships again suggest that Dynadan is an honourable man. Malory speaks out directly of the good qualities of Dynadan, and deprecates his death at the unchivalrous hands of the Orkneys:

For sir Dynadan had suche a custom that he loved all good knyghtes that were valyant, and he hated all tho that were destroyers of good knyghtes. And there was none that hated sir Dynadan but tho that ever were called disturkers. 209

He is a 'trustye knyght', 210 a character of wit and discernment (especially where Tristan's welfare is concerned) 211 and tact (as his behaviour when he gains Launcelot's confidence over Guenevere shows). 212 Altogether, Malory's Dynadan is a loyal and valued knight in his Arthurian society; and 'hit was his maner to be preye with all good knyghtes'. 213

Yet in other ways Dynadan is presented as an eccentric and a deliberate anti-hero. His own words introduce the point best, for in effect he announces that he is quite content to be second best in this society of winners:
There is more than creditable modesty here. Dynadan usually mocks the customary attitudes and what he sees as the posturings of those who seek honour, but never honour itself. This incidentally is mainly why it cannot be thought that Malory himself was satirising the Round Table through Dynadan's remarks, for the fellowship is invariably seriously presented, as honourable, whatever its occasional lapses. Dynadan is no physical coward like Mark, of whom he is downright scornful in one episode, and when Trystram or another character really appears to be in need of help Malory shows that Dynadan will fight for him, and even for a stranger on occasion. But he does not feel it his duty, honour bound as a knight of the Round Table, to look for fights or to accept every challenge made him in passing. In this, Dynadan least resembles other Round Table knights. To one knight who challenges him for the sake of it, he replies that, since there is no personal quarrel between them, there is no point in engaging in such a painful business: 'ye proffyr me harde love when ye wolde juste with me wyth an harde speare.' On another occasion, Dynadan parodies the system of winning reputation by himself offering a challenge with exaggerated seriousness to one who is obviously unwilling to accept it and who appears to know Dynadan's real attitude to such matters:

'Sir knyght, make the redy to juste wyth me, for juste ye maste make, for hit is the custom of knyghtes arraunte for to make a knyght to juste, well he other noll he.'

'Sir', sayde sir Dynogrye, 'ys that the rule and custom of you? '. 'As for that', sayde sir Dynadan, 'make redy, for here is for me ! ' Trystram turns the joke against Dynadan, however, and refuses
to avenge him for the fall Spynogrys gives him. His words recall some of Dynadan's typical replies when he declines to become involved in Trystram's continual and very violent embroglios:

'I woll nat juste as at this tyme, but take youre horse and let us go hens.' In his confessed fear of being hurt in a fight Dynadan is presented as the oddest of Malory's knights. Round Table characters generally do not contemplate the pain and death which inevitably attend a way of life which consists of continual fighting. It would hardly be in the conventional spirit of Arthurian romance if they did. Honour and reputation are implicitly more important than life and death throughout the Morte Darthur, and so Dynadan's outbursts are the more striking and comic in their anti-social and mundane tone. So while they are admissible factors from a practical point of view, they are certainly not to be taken seriously as Malory's final word.

One example of such an outburst occurs when Dynadan is asked by Trystram for his help:

I woll nat... for I am sore wounded of the thirty knyghtes that we had ado withall. But ye fare... as a man that were oute of his mynde that wold caste hymself away. And I may curse the tyme that ever I sye you, for in all the worlde ar nat such two knyghtes that ar so wood as ye sir Launcelot and ye, sir Trystram! For onys I felle in the felyshyp of sir Launcelot as I have done now with you, and he sette me so a worke that a quarter of a yere I kept my bede. Jesus defende me... frome such two knyghetes, and specially frome youre felyshyp.

There are several similar passages to this one, in which as well as wanting to avoid troubles, Dynadan poses as a circumspect coward in his sly parodying of the great knights' furious quests for reputations. More generally, however, his refusals to fight suggest criticism of the lesser Arthurian knights,
like Aggravayne and Mordred, who are to be found simply
journeying 'on their adventures' with no particular purpose
and to no honourable effect. It can be safely inferred that
(as a writer, at least) Malory despised mere brawling for the
sake of it. Like Dynadan, he inclined to the sensible point
of view that a knight can only do what he can, and it is therefore
no point of shame in him if he does not try to do more. From this point of view the extravaganza of fighting quite
unnecessarily and getting hurt is not chivalrous but merely silly.
No other character takes any notice of Dynadan, but the point
stands, and elsewhere in the Morte Darthur the folly of equating
pain with honour and chivalry is more seriously scorned in
Gawayne, when he tells a hermit that if a man fights a great deal
and is wounded often enough, that is all that is required of him.
This is given more emphasis when it is seen that in fact
Dynadan is not afraid of fighting at all. For example, on one
occasion he notices a knight on a bridge who is waiting to fight;
Mark is reluctant to accept the challenge, but 'sir Dynadan knew the
knyght for a noble knyght, and sayne he wolde have justyd... He jeers at the real coward, Mark, and tries to make him fight as
other Round Table characters sometimes are shown trying to
involve Dynadan himself in a combat:

Than sir Seywardes asked,
'Who shall juste wyth me?'
'I pray you,' sayde sir Gareth unto sir Dynadan,
'let me have this justys.' 'Sir,' sayde sir Dynadan,
'I pray you hertely take hit as for me!' 'That is no
reason,' sayde sir Trystram, 'for this justys shalde have
bene yourys.'
'At a worde,' sayde sir Dynadan, 'I wold nat thereof.'

In this superb piece of comic dialogue, Malory exposes the possible
incongruity between honour and reputation which is founded in
fighting as much and as often as possible. Of course, if all his
characters were exaggerated like Dynadan, there would be no
Arthuriun society of the type Malory imagines in the *Norte Darthur*. In such a society he could present the winning of honour in no other way but by fighting; as Vineaver says, the 'chivalry' is an incidental example of how little sympathy Malory had with mystic ideas of chivalry. In making Dynadan a comic critic of continual fighting as a self-sufficient definition of honour, Malory in effect may be seen to be forestalling even sympathetic readers of the *Norte Darthur* who have seen in it a haphazard series of meaningless combats. More important from another point of view, Dynadan's attitudes and behaviour by contrast make Trystram and Launcelot seen all the more courageous and honourable for the lack of attention they pay him. In their horseplay with Dynadan, the best knights of the Round Table both accept and refute his parody of themselves, and pay him in kind after the serious business of winning honour in tournaments is over. In this way, Malory reveals that although Dynadan makes a valid point, his is after all a narrow and eccentric point of view, and there is a great deal more to honour than he sees or exposes. For all the follies of the competition, honour from fighting is the life-force of his Arthurian society, the greatest source of joy and glory in the *Norte Darthur*. It is because of this that the dissonance between honour and reputation in some areas is a source of tragedy in the later tales.

The Separation of Honour from Goodness in Tales V and VII

It is when Malory begins to show that honour is not necessarily always associated with goodness, as it is in his earlier tales, that honour and reputation become conflicting values in his Arthurian society. At the heart of this problem in the *Norte Darthur* is the love of Launcelot and Guenevere,
and Launcelot's consequent treacherous relationship to Arthur, which becomes the central motif in Malory's narrative in the last tale. If not before, it becomes apparent in the 'Trystram' that the reader at least is meant to recognise that Launcelot is betraying Arthur's confidence in him by his love of Guenevere.  

This comes to the forefront of the drama in the seventh tale, 'Launcelot and Guenevere' and brings on the tragedy of the Round Table in the 'Morte'. At the beginning of this chapter, it was shown how the basis of honour in Malory's Arthurian society is the structure of loyalties which has been found to comprise this. By honouring his obligations of defence of kinmen and companions, a knight in the Morte Arthur initially makes his claim to identity and honour by proving his worthiness. Before the fifth tale, this initial relationship between loyalty and personal honour is largely implicit, although it is plain enough that characters increase their reputations for chivalry and hence the outward aspects of their honour by the ways in which they are shown to behave to their fellows. The secrecy of the adulterous affair between the queen and Launcelot may be seen to impose a choice on those knights of the Round Table who are shown to know of it including the kinmen of Launcelot, Bynadan, Trystram, Gawyne and probably Arthur himself. This appears to be a choice between remaining silent and so permitting the affair to prosper at Arthur's expense; or exposing the lovers, and presumably rescuing the integrity of the Round Table's honour.

However, while the first is a realistic course, since it implies the recognition of preserving male loyalties which are most important in this Arthurian society, the second is not a viable proposition at all. When this course is eventually taken
by Aggravayne and Mordred, in the name of honesty, the exposure of the facts about Launcelot and Guenevere does not repair the Round Table's honour at all but tears the whole fellowship apart in its forced recognition of disloyalty, which is apparently the real intention of Gawayne's malicious brothers. In any case, this is only a hypothetical choice, for there is no suggestion before the 'Morte' that any of the characters feels a responsibility to do anything but hold his tongue about the love affair and so preserve the status quo. Indeed, at one point in the fifth tale, a very worried Bors is shown taking care to distract the king's attention from Launcelot's suspicious behaviour;\textsuperscript{233} so the possibility of an active choice is avoided. Aggravayne's and Mordred's behaviour in the 'Morte' does not constitute a decision, but the outbreak of an obsession, as the king later reveals that he knows.\textsuperscript{234} Gawayne's remonstrance with his trouble-making brothers and then with Arthur\textsuperscript{235} are the only examples of a Round Table knight openly and forcibly arguing for continued support of Launcelot and the Round Table in the face of factual evidence of his disloyalty. What emerges from this otherwise unanimous public silence from the Round Table is that despite the isolated malicious attacks of Morgan le Fay and Mark, and the growing whispers in the court (which in itself indicates that there is certainly no approval for the behaviour of Launcelot and his mistress) loyalty and the appearance of honour in this case are more vital social concerns in Malory's Arthurian society than cold facts.

There is more to this than the desire to keep peace in the Round Table fellowship which is such a marked element in the seventh tale. The incongruity between Launcelot's honour and his
reputation is by no means a simple opposition. To some extent, it seems that honour can survive independent of the truth, particularly since Launcelot goes on achieving the great deeds from which his reputation for honour springs. Launcelot only fails Arthur through his relationship with Guenevere; and while this is undeniably treacherous in him, it does not alter the other, more important aspects of his service and friendship with the king. Again, love between men and women in Malory's presentation of chivalry is a secondary matter to the relationships among men, however it must affect these. Although the morality of Launcelot's reputation is inevitably slanted by his love of Guenevere if he is to be judged, the facts of his achievements in chivalry are unquestionable. Malory concentrates on the latter and points out in the fifth and seventh tales how Launcelot is increasingly the powerful hero of the Round Table, for he wins more and more 'bataylles' and builds up alliances with some outstandingly chivalrous knights like Trystan, Lamorak and Gareth. In the end, it is only Launcelot who can heal Ury. The undeniable achievements and influence of Launcelot's reputation, coupled with the nobility of his blood and position in Arthurian society, matter first and foremost to Malory. He cannot dismiss the partial moral failure of Launcelot's loyalty to the king, the story of Launcelot and Guenevere being what it is; but he avoids making too big an issue of it. Thus the tragedy of the Round Table is shown as the result of a complex failure in the relationship between honour and loyalty, not as the direct result of either Arthur's or Launcelot's sins.

Another way of putting this is that goodness in the *Morte Darthur* may be viewed in two ways. By the internal standard of the *Morte Darthur,* a knight is said to be good because he is loyal to his lord.
knights and fights chivalrously. But he is also good for certain
virtuous traits in his character judged by an 'external' moral
system which Malory explicitly touches on in the 'Quest'. Chief
among these virtues is truth, and loyalty hinges on truth, even if
it is not always entirely the same thing. So the two standards
of goodness in the Morte Darthur are inextricably related,
and Malory presents this relationship of qualities of character
and achievements as something entirely natural in a nobly-born
man who is an Arthurian knight. He judges his characters almost
solely by the 'internal' standard, when he judges them at all.
But since great importance is seen to be attached to a man's
spoken word in his Arthurian society, absolute verbal truth is
necessarily a significant concomitant of loyalty among men.
This is conversely illustrated by the way in which King Mark is
condemned for his lies as much as for his murderous ways. 239
It can be seen that, strictly speaking, Launcelot is a liar, too,
whenever after the fourth tale, he swears that Guenevere is true to
Arthur; 240 but Malory presents him in quite a different way from
Mark, and we are not invited to judge him as we are the Cornish
King. By the internal standard of goodness, Launcelot is the best
knight in the world to the end of the Morte Darthur, where his
excellence is summed up in Ector's threnody and that is what was
most important to Malory. 241

The denouement of the 'Morte' is followed by a crisis in
Malory's Arthurian society when the Round Table knights suddenly
have to choose between two standards of judgement which have now
become mutually exclusive. The insoluble paradox is that while
Launcelot is unimpeachable by one standard, because of his
achievements and nobility, he is culpable by the standard of
absolute truth. From this angle, the best knight is indeed a liar and a traitor, just as the Ockneys and Gawyne claim. But the latter standard is less relevant than the former in Malory's Arthurian society (though Malory could hardly say so) and when Launcelot pleads for peace in the teeth of the evidence against him and Guenevere, he does so for the sake of restoring what is most valuable in the Round Table fellowship, loyalty and honour, not just to escape the personal consequences of his actions or to deny unpleasant facts. Malory could not dismiss the facts of his story but he nearly succeeds in evading them in the slanting of his presentation of Launcelot's case in the 'Morte'. Arthur at first demands vengeance for Launcelot's infringement of absolute truth and loyalty, and scorns his refusal to fight by bluntly confronting him with the facts of the case:

Now, fye upon thy fayre langage!... for wyte thou well and trust hit, I am thy mortall foo and ever well to my deth-day; for thou haste slayne my good knyghtes and full noble men of my blood, that shall I never recover agayne. Also thou haste layne be my quene and holdyn her many wynters, and sytthyn, lyke a traytoure, taken her away fro me by forse. 243

However, when his anger dies down Arthur soon reverts to judging Launcelot by the nobler standards of honour and chivalry which have long applied despite the facts of the queen's adultery. In doing this, he does not dismiss the truth but puts it in perspective, and recognises with sorrow the greater qualities in Launcelot which have suddenly become powerless in the fatal battles of the 'Morte'. However, the less noble Gawyne tries to prolong the king's enmity to Launcelot by sticking to the facts in hand, and jeering at his old friend's offers of peace and honour. 244

But he distorts the case by insisting that Launcelot is a complete traitor, and unrelentingly demanding vengeance for the deaths of
Gareth and Gaheiys. The crudeness of Gawyne's verbal attacks on
Launcelot and the obsessive nature of his need for revenge carry
through the war no one really wants, and successfully destroy all
that is good along with avenging his particular personal quarrel.
Gawyne's recognition of what he has done and his sorrowful
reversion to judging Launcelot humbly and affectionately by the
standards of honour and chivalry, is further evidence of the un-
importance of absolute truth compared with loyalty in Malory's
Arthurian society. As well as being tragic proof that its effects
are inescapable in an honour-system which is inevitably related to
truth as well as love, it is one of the most ironic paradoxes
in the Morte Darthur that Malory could not finally separate
artistic from real standards of judgement, for all the dramatic
brilliance of the last tale. While Malory never even indirectly
suggests that Launcelot is a hypocrite, and it would consequently
be a misreading of the Morte Darthur to see him as such, there is
no escaping the fact that this character's behaviour towards Arthur
in the later tales goes against the grain of his society. If it
did not, there would be no tragedy in the 'Morte'. How conscious
before the 'Morte' Malory was of the incompatible standards of
goodness (and hence judgement) which are so bound up with honour
and chivalry in his Arthurian society is hard to say. The conflict
is something which emerges piecemeal in the fifth tale and only
grows into a theme in the seventh. His development of dramatic
motivation and characterization in the seventh and eighth tales
and the sheer complexity of the events related there preclude
the solution of his tragedy by any single formula such as the
abandoning of facts or personal loyalty. Besides, the realistic
temper of Malory's work and his down-to-earth attitudes to honour
and chivalry in the Morte Darthur generally would make highly
unlikely any simple idealistic solution to a baffling paradox which seems to have been for him a permanent, inevitable and yet heroic characteristic of men and society, even at their most noble. Once it becomes evident that honour is not the only concern of the Round Table knights, and that its most important criterion in the fifth and seventh tales is loyalty which is even partially false (by implication rather than any direct intention of treachery from Launcelot) then both honour and loyalty are doomed. The false and complex opposition of the ambiguous standards of truth and loyalty in the seventh tale is what creates the predominant dramatic state of threat in Malory's Arthurian society and leads to the catastrophe in the 'Morte'.

Arthur's attempts to save Launcelot, Launcelot's to save Guenevere, and (to a lesser extent) his to save Launcelot comprise the central conflict of loyalty and deceit by which the appearance of honour (in its aspect of loyalty between men, as sworn, and the more private sexual honour of the king and queen) is maintained. While Launcelot is allowed to fight to prove Guenevere's innocence of the charge of treachery by adultery, this appearance of honour can continue. But with each fight Launcelot takes on, Malory shows tension between what is known and what is outwardly accepted as being the facts of the situation mounting. In the seventh tale, Malory brings to the fore the angry surmises of those who oppose the queen and fear her destructive effects on good knights. The dichotomy between the fact and appearance of honour reaches its widest visible gap when Launcelot's splendid achievements against Momalygauge—the demonstration of honour to prove truth—are shown to be contrary to the facts of the case as Malory has revealed them. When physical prowess can assert innocence
in the face of facts like this, then honour through fighting (reputation) is no longer the same as real honour('worship').

Launcelot himself is made to declare as much to Arthur when he says in a phrase apparently original to Malory that he has promised Guenevere that he will be her knight 'in ryght othir in wronge'.

The king's reply is virtually acquiescence in this dangerous but heroic declaration. He thanks Launcelot for rescuing the queen: 'And wete you well... I shall acquyte youre goodnesse.'

'Goodenesse' is here used in the emotional sense of kindness, not as a term of moral judgement, and it is clear from the context of the dialogue that it is the gratitude necessary to loyalty which is being demonstrated here in the particularly Malorian sense that 'olde jantylnes and olde servyse' is being remembered by these three characters. This must be seen as entirely laudable, except possibly in the degree that Launcelot, by contradicting truth, is not putting God before man, as Malory also requires of honourable characters in this tale. However, that again is a matter of inference rather than an interpretation of what is actually said at this point in the Morte Darthur.

Through their staunch association with Launcelot whom they are early shown to know to be Guenevere's lover, Bors, Ector, Lyonell and their kinsmen in effect contribute to the dissociation of honour from truth in the fifth and, more directly, the seventh tales. The relationship between Launcelot and his followers has already been described in the first chapter of this study, where it was mentioned that they make no real choice between loyalty and honour. Such a choice would be impossible in the nature of Malory's Arthurian society, and contrary to his ideas. It is largely from Malory's presentation of this group of kinmen that it is possible to say
That he was more concerned with honour from loyalty, than honour
as an abstract virtue. However, not all virtues are dissociated
from honour, only truth. Where other principles like mercy and
moderation are floated by Round Table knights in any part of the
Morte Darthur, even out of loyalty to kinsmen, this is directly
and instantly condemned, particularly when it leads to murder.
Yet in other areas which involve sexual behaviour, what is openly
condemned is secretly tolerated for the sake of preserving male
loyalties, with the result that honour and chivalry shift their
grounds for judgement. The honour which is kept up in particular
by this moral shift in the seventh tale is really only reputation.
It is not only the queen’s name and his love for her, consideration
for Arthur and the preservation of the Round Table as a stable
masculine society which Launcelot’s efforts uphold in the face
of the facts, but his own reputation for honour. This is beyond
questions of right and wrong (whether it should be is another and
not very relevant question at this point) and becomes his and his
kinsmen’s chief concern to the end of the Siege of Benwick in the
‘Morte’. In order to examine this growing influence of
reputation further, there follows some consideration of Malory’s
sixth tale, the ‘Quest of the Sangreal’.

The Quest: The Substitution of ‘Vayne-Glory’ for Honour

In his generally very faithful re-working of the French
geste, Malory reproduces the judgements of his Round Table
knights by doctrinal standards of behaviour he found there,
although he cuts out much of the exegesis of biblical example
through which the French writer unrelentingly hammered these home.
Because of this, the failures in chivalry are presented as
small, and not merely dishonourable as they are in the other.
parts of the *Morte Darthur*. This tends to make the 'Quest' an isolated tale, for it is difficult to extend its religious implications and moral interpretations to the rest of Malory's writing, in which honour is not judged by religious or consistently moral standards. On the other hand, it is surely a mistake to dismiss the 'Quest' on account of its singularity. Structurally, there are good reasons for considering the contribution it makes to an understanding of Malory's presentation of honour in the *Morte Darthur*. First, Malory's sixth tale is not really about the Grail at all; it is about Launcelot. The fiction of solitary journeys enables Malory to extract his chief character from his usual setting and consider his honour and chivalry from a new angle, in order to show yet again how outstanding a knight 'of a synful man' Launcelot is.\(^{251}\) He prepares for this in his adaptation of the story of 'Launcelot and Blayme' in the fifth tale in the course of which Felles declares to Bors that because 'aynne ys so foule',\(^{252}\) in Launcelot, he cannot achieve holy deeds: 'of all worldly adventures he passyth in manhode and proues all othir, but in this sprytnall matters he shall have many his bettyrs.'\(^{253}\) After the 'Quest', the moral failure in Launcelot's honour is referred to by himself at the beginning of 'The Poised Apple' when he tells Guenever that it is through his sin with her that he has failed to achieve as much as Galahad - although he has still seen 'as much as ever saw any synfull man lyvinge'.\(^{254}\) This refrain is repeated when Launcelot and Guenever part at Amesbury in the 'Morte'.\(^{255}\) While a structural link in his narrative is not the same as a casual link in Malory's ideas on the partial failure of Launcelot's honour between the 'Quest' and the 'Morte', and cannot be interpreted as such, there is some
parallel if not explanatory relationship between the treatment of Launcelot's honour in the 'Quest' and the dissociation between honour and truth in the seventh and eighth tales already mentioned.

The key passage here is a prelude for an already quoted remark of Launcelot's in the seventh tale. Accused of failing through sin to fulfill the promise born in him Launcelot confesses to a hermit that this chivalry is not based on truth. He has loved 'a quene' immeasurably, and has sacrificed his integrity to this illicit love which has inspired his deeds rather than the altruistic desire for honour and righteousness:

And all my grete dede of armes that I have done for the same party was for the quenys sake, and for hir sake wolde I do batayle were hit ryght other wronge. And never dud I batayle all only for Goddes sake, but for to wynne worship and to cause me the bettir to be beloved, and litil or nought I thanked never God of hit. 257

Obviously, this confession cannot be seen as valid for the Launcelot Malory presents in the third and fourth tales, where honour alone is the object of his chivalry. The hermit's reply shows no direct concern for the penitent's chastity, but a very Malorian bias towards saying Launcelot's real honour: 'Sir, loke that your harte and youre mouth accorde... and I shall ensure you ye shall have the more worship than ever ye had.' 258

The test of the sword in the floating stone 259 exposes Launcelot, and Nacien's damsel tells him that he is now no longer the best knight in the world: 'who sholde say so now, he sholde by a lyer'. 260 But this is a religious condemnation, and has nothing to do with the Round Table's continued estimation of Launcelot as the best knight among them and the most likely to achieve adventures.

This is a point to be discussed during the next chapter in connection with chivalry; but it establishes the new dimension
in which Launcelot's honour and reputation are seen in this sixth
tale. Whatever the world thinks, his status as the chief knight
of the Round Table is based on a lie. Nor is it only his love
of the queen which has reduced Launcelot's honour to an empty
show, for according to another spokesman for the truth in this
tale, his chief failing is not lechery but the deadliest sin of
pride. It is said that his readiness to join the apparently
weaker side during a tournament he encounters during his quest
is proof of vanity, for he is ever trying to show himself better
than others and more than equal to anything.261 Never before has
this been represented by Malory as a fault in Leuncelot, and
certainly this judgement cannot be extended beyond its immediate
context in the Morte Darthur: 'thou sholde know good from
vayne glory of the worlde; hit ys nat worth a pear.'262 But by
the implications of his own confessions in the sixth, seventh
and eighth tales,263 Leuncelot's honour is morally condemned
and that stands, even though it does not in itself bring on the
catastrophe of the 'Morte'.

There is another related aspect in which the 'quest' is
interesting in this discussion of honour. This is Malory's
presentation of dishonour through the character of Gawayne and
by implication those said to resemble him.264 For it is apparent
that although honour and virtue are not altogether synonymous in
Leuncelot, despite repute to the contrary, dishonour and sin are
the same in Gawayne, both by Malory's standards elsewhere in the
Morte Darthur and Christian exposition here in the sixth tale.
For example, a hermit tells Gawayne that the chief failure of his
chivalry lies in the fact that he is 'an untrew knyght and a
grote murtherer'.265
This is in line with Malory's presentation of Gawayne in his first, fourth and fifth tales, and later in the 'Morte', while treachery and murder are repeatedly said to be the opposite of chivalry in his Arthurian society. The threatened payment for Launcelot's concern for preserving his reputation (in this tale) is damnation although his chief fear is that he will 'never have worship more'. The punishment for Gawayne and his fellow sinners against virtue and chivalry is not specifically religious at all, but worldly: 'there ben an hondred such as ye bene shall never prevayle but to have shame'. To a character who is largely presented as being without real honour or reputation for it, such a threat is pointless, and Gawayne merely turns away from the hermit to follow Ector down the hill. While shame is not promised Launcelot, according to the Grail exponents he already has this in a false reputation even though none but he himself believes it. Malory shows his best knight wrung by the experiences he has in the 'Quest' 'a verru wrecoh and moste unhappye of all knyghtes'. It is through his acceptance of shame and his resultant willingness to repent for his sinful love and to confess his 'vayne-gloxy' that Launcelot again reveals his greatness. 

Malory's handling of honour may be ambiguous or just plainly confused here; but his regard for Launcelot as the best knight in the world is undiminished. He follows his source in revealing this character as a sinner, and exposes the fragility of reputation as a substitution for real honour which comes from truth; but he continues to present Launcelot as a hero for what he does and for
his noble qualities of character. In the seventh and eighth tales it is clear that neither the imagined attitudes of Arthur and the Round Table nor Malory's own to Launcelot have changed, whatever the 'quest' raises: he is, as Botor declares, 'hede of al Crysten knyghtes', and the most honourable of the Round Table. That it is possible to divorce Launcelot's sinful love of Guenevere and inevitable betrayal of Arthur from this unshakeable attitude is illogical but all to the good of Malory's story (whatever incidental awkwardness it makes in an argument) for his hero is undiminished—indeed magnified—by failure. Neither damnation nor shame can be Launcelot's, and in the end he has to be seen just as Malory presents him, and not judged by other standards extrinsic to the Morte Darthur.

**Loyalty and Reputation: The Catastrophe of Honour in the 'Morte'**

To summarise, two things primarily matter to the knights in Malory's Arthurian society during the final tale of the Morte Darthur: loyalty and saving face. Launcelot and Arthur each attempt to preserve their loyalty to their kinsmen and the friends they still have without appearing to sacrifice their respective reputations for honour as a warrior and a king. Gawayne is for the most part concerned only with Gareth and his private revenge on Launcelot, and in this respect, his role is easy to play, but the compromises Launcelot and Arthur eventually seek to make peace are found to be impossible to implement.

For his part, Launcelot has to protest Guenevere's innocence and save her from 'the law' which decrees she be burned, and in the teeth of evidence provided by Aggravayne and Mordred and thereby Arthur's now certain knowledge of his real betrayal, convince the Round Table that he is honourable still.
Significantly, Launcelot's kinsmen urge him to take the queen's part, not out of sympathy for her, but for the preservation of his own honourable reputation:

...for and ye ded any other wyse all the world wolde speke you shame to the worldis ende. Insomach as ye were takyn with her, whether ye ded ryght othir wronge, hit ye now yores partes to holde wyth the quene, that she be nat slayyne and put to a myscheuous deth. For and she so dye, the shame shall be evermore youres. 272

This Launcelot has already decided to do, and accordingly he rescues Guenever from the stake and carries her off to the safety of Joyous Gard, soon to be renamed Dolorous Gard. 273

But his great dilemma is that whereas this behaviour may save his reputation in some directions, in others his honour as Arthur's best knight is further endangered by it:

My fayre lordis, wyte you well I wold be lothe to do that thinge that shulde dishonour you or my bloode; and wyte you well I wolde be full lothe that my lady the quene shulde dye such a shameful deth. But and hit be so that ye wol concayle me to rescow her, I must do much barmo or I rescow her, and peradventure I shall there destroy som of my beste fryndis, and that shold mocbe repente me. 274

His unwilling but apparently inevitable breaking faith with his fellow knights of the Round Table, and in particular Gareth, Gaherys and so Gawayne, is the means by which Launcelot in effect ensures the end of the Round Table. But his greatest betrayal is to the king, and it is by striving to maintain his honour with words while refusing to assert it against Arthur's person with the sword and prevented from fighting with a formal champion that Launcelot finds himself trapped between two now irreconcilable standards of judgement. Launcelot is shown to be aware of the hopelessness of settling the dilemma and warns his opponents to still off the siege of Joyous Gard and abandon the state of war, since he will not retaliate. He sees the situation as
shamefully degrading in its pointlessness:

My lordis bothe, wyte you well all thyg ye in vayne that ye make at thyg sygne, for here synne ye no worhype, but slarghe and dishonoure. For and hit lyete me to com myselfe oute and my good knyghtes, I shalde full sone make an end of thyg warre. 275

Launcelot will not come forth, however, and later when Dors sees the chance to end the war by killing Arthur, he refuses to allow it. 276 He would even sacrifice this, his favourite kinsman, to preserve the integrity of his relationship with the king. His refrain throughout the 'Morte' is that he cannot honourably attack the men who made him a knight and who has been the cause of his winning honour ever since: 'God deffende me ... that ever I shalde encounter wyth the most noble kynges that made me knyght'. 277 Gawayne chooses to construe this as cowardice, and Launcelot's men are weary of his delays in going into battle. 278 But Malory shows how through these delays Arthur comes to recognise the real worth of Launcelot's honourable fidelity to the principal point of loyalty in this society, and to realise that what he tells him is true; 'Alas, alas, that ever yet thyg warre begun'. 279

The stalesmate is caught by these two laments. This is the first time in the Morte Darthur when a question of asserting something as right is shown to be quite incapable of being settled by fighting action of some kind. The confusions of honour and truth, in the 'Morte' represent more starkly than anything else the paralysis of Malory's Arthurian society through disloyalty.

Launcelot tries to do so by talking what he will not and cannot do by fighting, and Malory presents him putting up two long defences in reply to Gawayne's accusations.
In the first of these, he points out to Arthur that

I had lost a great part of my worship in my knaythhood
and I had suffred my lady, your queene, to have been brente,
and insomuch as she shalde have been brente for my sake. 280

and rightly accuses Gawayne of turning the king against him in
spite. Launcelot's second appeal to the king is longer, and into
it Malory retrospectively packs references to all his principal
deeds in honour of Arthur and the Round Table. 281 It is here that
the shift in the ground of judgement from 'worship' to what is
achieved and reputation is most plain. Malory shows Launcelot
demanding indemnity for his affair with Guenevere, which is only
a partial betrayal of his relationship with Arthur, in consideration
of his much greater loyal service. He begins his speech by
pointing out Arthur's very real debt to him and his kinsmen, and
apparently almost incidentally reminds the king and his party of
the odds they are risking in pursuing the state of war:

My lord, ... so ye be nat displeased, ye shall understand
that I and myne have done you oftentimes better servyse
than any other knyghtes have done...! 282

What is suggested very forcibly here is that gratitude for this
and the remembrance of their long loyalty should make plain
the reality of Launcelot's honour, and the extent of his
achievements make his opponents realise that his reputation is
no empty boast, however dubious his integrity might be in a
limited area. For Arthur to judge Launcelot on any other grounds
but these would be more honest but would constitute a denial of
the very foundations of the Round Table as these exist in
practical terms. There can be no doubt that Malory's full
sympathies are behind Launcelot here: 'measmyth ye ought of
right to remember this'. 283
Malory shows that Arthur would very willingly accept Leanselot's offers of peace were it not for Gawayne's influence over him, which is deplored by more than one character. As was discussed in the last chapter, Gawayne uses the king's affection for him and his customary indulgence to force hostilities for his own jealous revenge against his brother's accidental slayer who 'hath many longe dajes overlaid me and us all'. It is the way Gawayne puts this to Arthur which reveals how pernicious the judgement of honour by any but its own intrinsic standards has become in this Arthurian society. Arthur's concern for his own reputation is what makes his act against his own expressed inclinations:

My lord, myne uncle, what wold ye do? Will ye now turne agayne, now ye or pasth this farre upon you're journey?. All the worlde well speake of you wyllay and chaste. 286.

Arthur disregards the fact that much of 'the world' including the Pope (who appears more interested in honour and nobility than moral rectitude) has tried to promote a reconciliation between himself and Leanselot. Even while apparently realizing Gawayne's true motives, the king is persuaded to take his nephew's advice. This is the turning point in the action of the 'Morte', for with Arthur's decision to go on to Benwick, his own kingdom is left undefended to Mordred and the backsliders; and so Gawayne is eventually given his fatal wound by Leanselot, as prophesied. Arthur's failure to disregard reputation and his inability in the circumstances to publicly forgive and join with Leanselot in the reconstitution of the chief values of his society - loyalty and 'worship' based on truth and courage - make him and the Round Table vulnerable to the treacheries of dishonourable and cowardly men in ways it signally was not shown to be in earlier
Nowhere else does Malory make it so evident that the abuse of male bonds of loyalty in his Arthurian society inevitably means the divorce of real honour from its outward show. Most important for the present discussion, the events of the 'Morte' reveal that whereas honour in Malory's Arthurian society is not based on moral goodness, it requires this in his characters, and cannot be divorced from it. When the reputation for honour is even partly different from the facts or concern for appearances outweighs considerations of the whole truth, there is inevitably social disaster. Such is the final complexity of Malory's presentation of an Arthurian society in the 'Morte' that it is impossible to divorce any single aspect of its existence and attribute its downfall to a failure or weakness in that alone. It is just because of the close association between loyalty and honour that they become mutually destructive when in some directions Malory's Arthurian society becomes unbalanced in the last two tales. Honour and loyalty are never presented by Malory as being separable even in the last tale of the Morte Darthur when they plainly have become incompatible, and considered rightly they are twin aspects of the Round Table's social structure and chivalry which comprises the subject of the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

CHIVALRY IN THE MORTÉ DARTHUR

Introduction

In the French Arthurian romances which at various stages of remove comprise the literary background for much of the Morte Darthur, chivalry by and large appears in association with courtly love, and, broadly speaking, concerns the lover's service of his lady. This is in itself a vast literary topic, and can only be touched on here very generally as a means of introducing Malory's most significant departure from his sources with regard to the ideas of chivalry directly and indirectly present in the Morte Darthur. The great prose cycle of Arthurian romances which arose in the thirteenth century retained the close association between love and chivalry which had had some of its finest expression in the work of Chrétien de Troyes, in particular in one of the most famous medieval love stories, that of Launcelot and Guenevere. Echoes of this courtly tradition are to be found in the Morte Darthur. For example, Vinaver shows how Malory's sources for his seventh tale reflect this relationship between courtly love and chivalry, especially in the version of 'La Conte de la Charrette' from which he wrote 'The knight of the Cart'.

It has already been indicated that Malory's treatment of chivalry in the whole of the Morte Darthur is most original in the way that he does not present it as being in the service of love and women. But even if he had wanted to, Malory could not have dissociated love from chivalry entirely in the well-known story of Launcelot.
and Guenevere, and he allows that 'for hir he durd many dedys of armys' while continually revealing that there is a great deal more to Launcelot's chivalrous career in his Arthurian society than that. But much more significantly, Launcelot is the most chivalrous knight of Malory's Round Table because of the ways he relates to his fellow knights. Chivalry for Malory first and foremost concerns the relationships of men to men, not men to women; and it has been shown that this primarily involves loyalty and fighting. In spirit, Malory's chivalry therefore seems nearer to the old chansons de geste and the Arthurian chronicles than his French romance sources. Accordingly, it will be shown in the course of this chapter that chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society is rooted in the ideas of brotherhood discussed earlier. Whatever its occasional similarities in some details to conventional ideas (such as the giving of mercy, protection of women, and so forth) chivalry for Malory is emphatically not a code of abstract external ideals, but an aspect of the structure of his Arthurian society.

However, to say that chivalry in the Morte Darthur is not a code of ideals, is not to imply that there was no idealism in Malory's presentation of it. His whole concern with chivalry in the creation of his Arthurian society is serious and enthusiastic, and he unmistakably regarded it as comprising the best and most noble attitudes and behaviour among men. Nor was Malory alone in this kind of approach to chivalry, and Arthur B. Ferguson points out in his book The Indian Summer of English Chivalry that many writers of Malory's times apparently saw in the resurgence of chivalric idealism a solution to the national problems created by the wars at home and in France. To modern historians with the
inevitable wisdom of hindsight, such a view might seem just so much outdated romantic folly. But Ferguson explains how there is really every reason to regard the extensive and serious chivalric literature which came off Caxton's press as 'a quite honest response to the upsetting events of the fifteenth century'. It was noticed in the last chapter of this study that Malory is occasionally to be found addressing his contemporary English gentlemen, through his fiction and that in particular he deplored the upsetting of the aristocracy's traditional right to rule, and what he saw as the natural instability of the English character. Malory's idealistic commitment to chivalry as revealed by such remarks is plain enough, and it is this commitment which initially slants his attitude to chivalry in his Arthurian re-creation.

In this re-creation, Malory was first and foremost a storyteller, however, and the Morte Darthur is far from being a political or social allegory, or its chivalry the kind of detailed Arthurian propaganda which Elizabeth Pochoda in particular claims it is. Of course, this is not to say that Malory did not sometimes make the kind of allusions to well-known historical events and persons such as Vinaver and the less moderate critics of the Morte Darthur have identified. However, these allusions are entirely incidental in the course of Malory's total narrative, and are not served by it, but serve it. The values of honour and loyalty among men which emerge from Malory's sustained fiction of Arthurian chivalry far transcend whatever relevance they apparently may have had to isolated political problems and wishful thinking in reality; and it will be shown how it is Malory's expression of these chivalric values in the finest parts of the Morte Darthur which must be seen as
largely establishing the artistic stature and permanence of his
work.

Again allowing for the stylistic variety in the *Morte Darthur*
and the consequent fact that (as in the case of honour) chivalry
is not presented at a continuous narrative level or from a single
dramatic angle, there is nevertheless enough repetition and
accumulation of ideas directly and indirectly through statement
and implication to constitute an overall picture of chivalry
in Malory's Arthurian society. This picture can be considered
from two main angles. First, Malory presents chivalry at a
direct narrative level as the practical attainment of honour
by Arthurian knights through victory in battles and adventures.
This is characteristic of the whole *Morte Darthur* but is predom-
inantly how chivalry appears in the 'Tale of King Arthur', 'Arthur
and the Emperor Lucius', the 'Launcelot' and the 'Gareth',
(which in the following discussion are for convenience called
the first four tales of the *Morte Darthur*). Secondly, at less
direct levels chivalry can be seen to comprise a body of ideas
which apparently represent the Round Table's characteristic
attitudes to itself. From this two-fold consideration of chivalry
in Malory's Arthurian society in relation to the eventual
separation of honour from goodness in the later tales (discussed
in the previous chapter), three main things can be shown.
The first is that what Malory presents as most characteristic and
permanent in Round Table attitudes to chivalry (that is, a regard
for honour, the inviolability of Round Table fellowship and belief in
the invincibility of its chosen heroes) comes to disaster in the
crises of the 'Morte'. However, the second point is that the
actual activity of chivalry (fighting) continues to be only too
successful to the end of the Round Table's days. Third, and most significant of all in an overall consideration of chivalry in the *Morte Darthur* is that while Malory presents his Arthurian society's emergence and rise to fame as essential aspects of the Round Table's many-sided chivalry, so that the first five or six tales apparently comprise an Arthurian 'history' (not necessarily chronologically written or presented) for stylistic reasons be was writing quite a different kind of book in the later tales. During the mounting drama of 'Lancelot and Guinevere' and the 'Morte', the survival of his Arthurian society involves a variety of considerations of which chivalry is only one aspect. One effect of this for Malory's readers is that his Round Table suddenly seems to have outgrown its early single-minded quest for honour through chivalry in a new and complex psychological and social maturity. This dramatic illusion of progress and decline is strengthened by the way the 'Morte' in particular seems retrospectively to cast new light on everything which precedes it, although this is largely another dramatic illusion. Yet such is the paradoxical nature of nearly everything in Malory's Arthurian society that what appears on the one hand to be a re-assessment of chivalry in his last two tales is on the other a clear restatement of what are shown to be its most important aspects elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*, in particular, loyalty among men.

This chapter is a consideration of the two-fold nature of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society along these introductory lines. It begins with some discussion of the Round Table's achievements and the heroic nature of its chivalry, and continues by looking at the growing ambiguity in the presentation of
chivalry in Malory's Arthurian Society, and the ways in which chivalry eventually appears to fail.

I Chivalry in the first four tales of the Morte Darthur

The word 'chivalry' appears in Malory's 'Tale of King Arthur' in the strictly limited sense of a band of mounted soldiers in a passage where Merlin remarks on the deficiency of Arthur's forces:

... onlesse that our kyng have more chivalry with hym than he may make within the boundys of his own reams, and he fyghte with hem in batail, he shal be overcome and slayn. 12

Later in the same tale, the word 'chivalry' appears again, this time in a wider sense denoting both the actual body of mounted men and their behaviour in action:

When kynges Arthure and kynges Ban and Bors behelde them and all hir knyghtes, they preysed them much for t[i]e i[i]r noble chere of chevalry, for the hardyeats fyghters that ever they herde other saw. 13

Additionally, this example includes the expression of admiration for the way the Arthurian side conducts itself in battle. Admiration for fighting is again a significant slant in Malory's presentation of chivalry in this first tale in phrases like the description of Arthur's allies, Ban and Bors, as 'the beste fyghtynge men and knyghtes of m[ost]e prouesse'. 14 Similarly, Merlin praises Arthur and his army for their chivalry in the Battle of Bedgrayne: 'never men dud more worshipfully in proues than ye have done to-day: for ye have m[ach]ed thys day with the beste fyghters of the worlde.' 15 After the victory of the Arthurian knights in this decisive battle, their reputation for chivalry and general excellence apparently begins to be widely established, and the word 'chivalry' accordingly takes on even wider connotations:
'What tydynges at Camelot?' sayde that on knyght.
'Be my hede,' sayde the other, 'there have I bene and
aspyed the courtes of kyng Arthure, and there ys such a
felyshyp that they may never be brokyn, and well-kyngs all
the world holdith with Arthure, for there ys the floure
of chevalry...'

Elsewhere in the same tale, another comment made by enemies of
Arthure echoes this example, and again it is clear that 'chivalry'
is used as a term of appraisal and respect as well as a description
of actual fighting, and a body of soldiers; 'ye knowe well that
sir Arthure hath the floure of chevalry of the worlde with hym,
and hit proved by the grete batayle he did with the eleven kynges...

So it is clear from the outset that the purely physical nature
and activities of chivalry are really indivisible from their
assessment by Malory in the Morte Darthur. Further, this assessment
is very much a matter of emotional commitment to the Arthurian
'side' in fighting.

Altogether, chivalry in the battle episodes of the first
tale of the Morte Darthur is presented by Malory in a straight-
forward, military sense. There is no speculation about the
particular chivalric qualities of individual characters. Instead,
there is a rapidly established picture of action, presented from
a single narrative angle. As such, 'chivalry' generally is the
equivalent of 'Arthurean' and it will be found that this simple
heroic equation of identity is something Malory makes at all
levels throughout the Morte Darthur, although never quite so
explicitly as in the first and second tales.

Apart from Arthurs personal adventure fighting the monster
on Saint Michael's Mount, the whole of the second tale is a
narration of the Round Table's war with the Roman Emperor, Lucius.
Here again Malory paints a broad and stylised picture of English
chivalry and one Arthurian figure is really indistinguishable
from another, although we are assured by the Romans that 'this day one of Arthure knightes was worth in batayle an hundred of ours'. Malory concentrates on the total effect of the combination of Round Table fighting power, and the unity, loyalty, endurance and initiative of this army which is unsaveringly presented as being wholly admirable while the enemy is wholly despicable. They are just so many mishapen, unruly savages, mere 'bare-legged knayys' who stand no chance against the English knights. In two particular episodes only is there any indication that there is more to chivalry than the actual blows struck in the battle for victory and worship. The first comes at the opening of the tale, where the Roman ambassadors report to Lucius what they have seen in Arthur's court. The 'wysedome' and 'fayre speeche and all royalté and rychesse' of the Round Table are obviously as impressive to the Romans as its potential military power and important aspects for Malory of the civillised 'righteousness' of Arthurian chivalry as against the Roman barbarity. The second episode is Arthur's noble behaviour to the women of a besieged city, to whom he promises courteous treatment, so showing that he is not as savage a victor as he is fighter. In this second tale Malory shows that his discrimination in the treatment of his enemies as well as his friends is something which distinguishes his King Arthur, and visibly acts as a control over the more hot-headed Round Table knights. Even through such limited examples, chivalry is seen to take on a broader significance in the early tales of the Morte Darthur.
However, it is particularly through his narration of Round Table adventures that Malory builds up a picture of Arthurian chivalry in the first four tales. With his concentration now more on single characters Malory's narrative method inevitably differs from the broader style in the chronicling of battles. An important consequence of this shift to a more intimate narrative style is that Malory ceases simply to present all Arthurian knights as 'given' figures who are naturally right and chivalrous, and begins to reveal more of the apparent motivation and implications of their actions to establish why they are so. The characters themselves are increasingly made to question what they do, and to judge one another with regard to more than physical victory. Apart from the extended quest of the sixth tale, long adventures are peculiar to Malory's tales of 'King Arthur', 'Launcelot' and 'Gareth'. As reference to the appropriate appendix will show these adventures are often of quite complicated narrative construction, and occasionally amount to some sophisticated writing by Malory. The main result of this more detailed and controlled workmanship with regard to the present discussion is that chivalry appears at the main level in the narrative, and is presented (always in conjunction with honour and loyalty) with an undivided concentration which is generally absent in the more disseminated treatment of adventures in the other tales.

There are some rudimentary adventures in the 'Tale of King Arthur', after the king has established his claim to the throne through his early battles. By and large, these adventures emphasise the heroic qualities of fighting which have already been discussed in detail during the previous chapter about honour.
The short encounters Arthur is said to have with Pellinor are found to add little to the picture of chivalry which emerges from Malory's relation of Bedgrayne. But the triple quest which marks the inauguration of the Round Table as a chivalric fellowship makes it clear that Malory was increasingly interested in specific attitudes and beliefs about chivalry as much as in describing efficient fighting action. Pellinor and Gawayne are accordingly presented as physically courageous but fallible men, whose intentions are clearly good but who easily make mistakes with very disastrous consequence through not being sure how a chivalrous Arthurian knight is expected to behave. Merlin acts as the interpreter of their adventures and mishaps when they return to the court and through his explanations and reprimands, and the reactions of Arthur and Guenevere, Malory in effect indicates that there has to be a great levelling up of this so far purely military fellowship to fit its new and preconceived status as the most chivalrous society in the world. Even though Torre is more successful in his part of the quest, and avoids the unchivalrous rash behaviour which spoils Gawayne and Pellinor, Merlin points out that there is still a long way for this young man—and by implication all the Round Table knights—to go:

'thys ye but jape that he hath do...'

The result of this first quest is Malory's announcement of the Round Table's code of chivalry. This is far from being an idealistic credo, however. Instead, Malory welds together the traditional terms of Arthurian chivalry (with some variations, noted in the last chapter) and the material and 'political' contrast which binds the Round Table knights to Arthur, and so establishes his Arthurian society as a recognizable and realistic
seeming entity. Whereas this code, and in particular the penalties it describes, is never again directly referred to in the *Morte Darthur*, by implication its tenets are consistent aspects of the overall picture of chivalry Malory presents in his total narrative. The initial relationship between these tenets and the identity and survival of Malory's Arthurian society is one of the most significantly Malorican aspects of the *Morte Darthur*. Chivalry is thus a refinement of what is continually presented as being most important in and characteristic of his Arthurian society:

...then the kyng stablished all the kynghtes and gaf them rycheesse and londys; and charged them never to caterage nothir sortier, and allwyses to flie reason, and to gaf mercy unto hym that askith mercy, upon paynes of forfite of their worship and lordship of kyng Arthure for evymore; and allwyses to do ladies, damoels, and jantilwomen and wydowes socour; strengthen hem in hir kynghtes, and never to enforce them, upon payne of deathe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrungefull quarrell for no love me for no worldis goddes. So unto thys were all kynghtis sworne of the Table Rounde, both side and young, and every yer so were they sworne at the hyghe fest of Pentecoste. 29.

Another aspect of Malory's presentation of chivalry after the battle episodes in the first tale is the apparently growing self-consciousness displayed by his Round Table knights. For example, they are to be found referring to the Order of Knighthood, 30 or 'God and knyghthode', 31 In their vows to accept challenges or take up adventures. Such expressions convey both individual characters' sense of responsibility to follow chivalry, and the implicit respect for chivalry as an institution which characterises the *Morte Darthur*. The new adventures of the Round Table present chivalry as the dominant issue in the Round Table's life. For example, there is a difference between the adventures of Salien and the specifically
Round Table quest followed by Gawayne, Uwayne and Marhale.
The former are dramatically far more exciting than the quest, and apparently not without some significance in the overall drama of the Morte Darthur. But points about chivalry only emerge generally from Balin's adventures, and negatively at that, whereas they are explicitly made in the quest which follows Uwayne's banishment. Her the narrative is visibly schematic and even mechanical, and the successes and misfortunes of the three main characters are like text-book examples illustrating the main points about chivalry which Malory had already established in this tale.
The points principally illustrated by this second quest of the Round Table are the fundamental importance of loyalty among men, of keeping promises and treating honourable women well while scorning sorceresses as the natural enemies of chivalry.
In both quests, Malory teaches through opposites, and it is Gawayne's scurrilous behaviour towards Felleas which reveals most about what Malory believes chivalrous behaviour among noble men should be. While the other two questers are unremarkably successful, 'the damesell that sir Gawayne had coude sey but lytyll worship of hym'.

Malory's selectivity of material and the patchiness of his narrative style in 'The Tale of King Arthur' probably largely accounts for the unevenness of his presentation of chivalry and the dogged repetition of the same aspects through these early adventures of the Round Table knights. All he really does is to go on adding episodes illustrating the code quoted above. However, when he came to the 'Launcelot' (surely a later composition than 'Arthur' and 'Arthur and the Emperor Lucius'), Malory's narrative control had increased and he seems to have had his character and
his ideas about chivalry clearly in mind at the outset, and to have written with the strength of this initial direction. He established at the beginning of this third tale exactly what it is going to relate:

Some aftir that kynges Arthure was com from Rome into Ingelonde, then all the knyghtys of the Rounde Table resorted unto the kynges and made many joustys and turnaments. And some there were that were bat knyghtes enenced in armys and worshyp that passed all other of her felowys in prouesse and noble deedys, and that was well proved on many. 58

Here immediately a new slant on chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society becomes visible the internal competition for personal supremacy in fighting and honour among the Round Table knights. But in especiall hit was prevyd on sir Launcelot de Lake, for in all turnaments, justys, and deedys of armys, both for lyff and deth, he passed all other knyghtes, and at no tyme was he overcom but ye hit were by treason other inchauntment... 59

With the re-introductIon of Launcelot as the best Round Table knight, 40 the heroic perspective of Malory's Arthurian society is immediately established for the rest of the Morte Darthur, and with it, the pattern for chivalry. There are no growing pains for Malory's Launcelot. He is said to be invincible from the start, discounting the attacks of the unchivalrous who, since they are not honourably motivated cannot be said to lessen his achievement according to the rules of fair play. One of Malory's main concerns in the Morte Darthur is in effect to demonstrate how true his introductory peasan of Launcelot is. He subsequently emerges as the main character in the Morte Darthur, not in his traditional role as a courtly lover, but as the most typical and best knight in Malory's very masculine and heroic Arthurian society.

There will be shown to be several aspects of chivalry in the Morte Darthur, but they can all be seen converging in Launcelot,
and are included in this third tale, even though Malory expands on them elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*.

Altogether Launcelot's adventures in this tale comprise the best and most straightforward picture of chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*, with nothing in Malory's swiftly moving narration to distract attention from the magnificent quality of the hero. The combination of daring, courtesy and hard fighting which characterises this picture of Launcelot is narrated with a zest and directness which suggests that Malory thoroughly enjoyed this part of his composition. His method is again that of dramatic demonstration, but it is controlled, and includes regular pauses between incidents for dialogue which reveals the nature of the hero's chivalry. Launcelot goes from one adventure to the next, all the time moving through a complicated sequence of interrelated actions which are apparently only revealed to him stage by stage, so that the dramatic illusion of chance, essential to this kind of fiction, is sustained. There is no doubt as to what Launcelot's chivalry is in Malory's mind. He is shown accepting all challenges, he keeps his promises, helps women in need, defies tricksters, and wins every fight he has, even against an opponent as mighty in arms as himself. All the while he is doing this, Launcelot acts with humility and refuses to stay for praise when he helps Bagdemagus and later saves Tarquin's prisoners from their dungeon; and defends the honour and lives of the knights of the Round Table. In all this, Launcelot appears the worthy leader of his devoted kinsmen, and the hero of his fellowship; and by the end of the tale his reputation for chivalry establishes him as the chief character in Malory's Arthurian society and the *Morte Darthur*.
'And so at that tyme sir Launcelot had the grettyste name of any knyght of the worlde, and most he was honoured of hyghe and lowe.' 41

During the course of his comments on Malory's treatment of Dynadan in the fifth tale, Winaver includes the following remarks about chivalry in the Morte Darthur:

... where the High Order of Knighthood is concerned Malory's aim is not to entertain the reader, but to express his own simple faith in actual and serious personages. He upholds knighthood, not as an ideal remote from reality, nor as a moral doctrine in Caxton's sense, but as an issue of immediate interest, related to memories of a recent past. And so his work has neither the light-heartedness of romance nor the doctrinal poise of a moral treatise; its dominating feature is the kind of earnestness one usually associates with early epic... 42

This might serve as an excellent summary of Malory's tone in his narration of Launcelot's adventures in this third tale. His success is presented by Malory with a mixture of apparent awe and delight. It is shown to bring Launcelot admiration and popularity from other characters, and their acclaim is a testimony that chivalry not only demonstrates a knight's personal goodness and honour, but that it is felt to be for the general good and reputation of his society. Among his friends Gaherys accordingly hails Launcelot as 'the beste knyght in the worlde', 43 while a damsel Launcelot saves from Perys wonders why he is not married, 'for the courtlyest knyght thou ars, and mekyste unto all ladyes and jantlywomem that now lyvyth'. 44 The women Launcelot rescues from Tarquin and interminable silk works bless the time he was born, 'for thou haste done the moste worship that ever ded knyght in this worlde; that woll we beare recorder'. 45 People in the Morte Darthur appear to know Launcelot wherever he goes, and Selleus's mistress warns him, 'I have sene you oftyn or this, and I know you bettir
than ye were'. His opponents recognise Launcelot's worth before they feel its effects in defeat: 'thou art a strong man', and 'I se be his grete strengthe hit woll be harde to manche hym'. Tarquin is overcome with admiration before he learns Launcelot's identity: 'thou art the byggyst man that ever I mette withall, and the beste-breathed'. Phelot's wife tries to catch Launcelot by a confidence trick, showing her familiarity with his chivalry and claiming his help 'as thou arte the floure of all knyghtes'; while Pedyvere's wife more genuinely relies on his reputation in begging him to save her from death 'as thou arte called the worshypfullyste knyght of the worlde'. Altogether, Launcelot's chivalry is recognised as being the best and most useful way of life by friend and enemy alike.

Without making him a self-conscious crusader against wrong-doing, Malory shows through Launcelot's prowess and courtesy in this tale that chivalry is a certain check to those who murder, wrongfully imprison, haphazardly attack, rape and generally terrify other characters in or attached to his Arthurian society. Chivalry therefore emerges as a great social quality for civilization which crushes isolated outbursts of anarchy and stabilises Arthurian society through the assertion of naturally noble might and fellowship. Accordingly, at the end of this tale, Launcelot's new allies arrive at Arthur's court to yield to the queen, and the hero himself is joyfully received back into the Round Table fellowship he has so brilliantly represented. As Gaherys remarks in another tale, ...
And now is he preved the man of moste worshyp in the woride, and all youre courte and Rounde Table is by sir Launcelot worshepped and amended, more than by any knyght lyvynges'. 52

What Malory has done in this third tale is to broaden and highlight the areas of meaning for chivalry. From his narration of Launcelot's adventures, chivalry is shown to include not only the activity of fighting itself, but a wide range of social attitudes which prompt, accompany and arise from this activity. Launcelot is shown to be outstandingly chivalrous because he fights well and fairly and with a governing sense of honour which distinguishes him from the merely might Tarquin. In addition, he puts his strength at the service of others, even while accomplishing his own ends of rescuing his kinsmen. The advancement of the individual knight therefore seems to go hand in hand with the advancement of Malory's Arthurian society. Launcelot appears as the heroic embodiment of all that is best in Round Table knighthood, and the plain opposite of the unchivalrous individuals he encounters in his journeying. This simple dramatic devise of illustrating true chivalry by contrasting Arthurian knights with obvious villains is something Malory develops further in the 'Trystram', and is a narrative method Malory employs in his earlier tales generally, moving his fully-fledged characters from one challenging scene to the next. Not until the last parts of the Morte Darthur did he move away from this simplicity of presentation and show chivalry and loyalty and honour more novelistically as aspects of character and psychological interplay rather than the results of pre-constructed dramatic situations between heroes and villains.
The 'Tale of Sir Gareth' represents a step in this direction of a narrative technique which reveals its subjects through the internal motivation of a character. It is because Gareth is presented as the type of character he is—a man who keeps his counsel and dedicates himself to arduous deeds of chivalry—that his adventures sharply reveal new aspects of chivalry and honour in the *Morte Darthur*. Again, Malory's narrative method is to move from one tableau of action to the next, and this type of sequential story-telling is heightened by the fact that Gareth's adventures in this tale largely comprise a quest which falls into the successive stages of a journey. It was noticed in the last chapter that Malory talks more about honour in this probably original tale than he does in any comparable length of narrative elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*. Honour and chivalry are right in the foreground in the 'Garéth', but with a different kind of prominence from that Malory assigns them in the 'Launcelot'.

To begin with, it has already been noted that Gareth is not the chief character of the Round Table, or heroic before he sets out on his adventures, and so Malory is not bent on demonstrating how invincible he is to Arthurian and non-Arturian knights alike. Accordingly, Gareth's adventures tend to take the form of increasinglymighty combats against the outlandish braggarts he encounters with Lynet, and little else. He does not become entangled with wicked queens, necromancers, and pugnacious churls and is never in danger of imprisonment and losing his quest, as Launcelot is in the third tale. In addition, despite the mystery of his identity, Gareth at least knows who he is from the start of his journey, and what he is going for. All in all, the 'Garéth' is not so much pure adventure story as the 'Launcelot',
and chivalry is more simply associated with winning fights and discovering dilemmas than overcoming magic obstacles.

But while the fourth tale is in altogether lower tones than the third, Malory's 'Gareth' is still a remarkable example of Arthurian chivalry. Nowhere else in the Morte Darthur is it apparent in such plain detail that a knight needs certain qualities of character in order to be chivalrous and win worship, as well as great physical prowess, and that all these qualities depend initially on his parentage. The nearest parallel to Gareth in the Morte Darthur is Malory's Balin; but unlike Balin, Gareth is not foredoomed to failure. He shows his quality in his tenacity and lonely endurance of Lynet's false judgements of him, and his self-control in provoking and dismal situations may be seen to illustrate the kind of moral courage required in a Malorian knight better than anything else in the Morte Darthur. This, and Gareth's courtesy to his opponents once they are beaten and his willingness to give mercy where asked, distinguish him as a chivalrous knight to all who meet him, despite Lynet's abuse of him. Yet if the relationship between Gareth and Lynet reveals a wider moral dimension of chivalry in this tale, its origins are the same as in the previously discussed three parts of the Morte Darthur, strength and skill in fighting. Not until he has fairly beaten Launcelot himself in a friendly but surprisingly tough combat does Gareth prove himself worthy of knighthood by his hero. Gareth's successful opposition of mighty strangers after this incident is the more credible for Launcelot having expressed his amazement at this neophyte's strength.53 Gareth's determination to fight and 'wynne worshipfully'54 makes him appear the type of chivalrous hero Arthur was more briefly shown to be in the first tale, when he
fought Pellinor and Acolon. This kind of chivalry is chiefly characterised by daring.' Defy the, Gareth tells one opponent; and he answers Lynet's slurs on his courage with a quiet defiance rooted in well-founded self-confidence: 'Howsomewer hit happenyth I escape and they lye on the grounde.'

The difference between Gareth's hardiness and the brazen courage of the Red Knight of the Red Laundis, who is his fiercest opponent, lies in his recognition that even in the toughest fighting there must be fair play, and that something more than strength is needed to win honourably, (as discussed in the last chapter). Thus while the Red Knight makes the following vaunt, 'For though she had brought with her sir Launcelot, sir Trystram, sir Lameroke othir sir Gawyn, I wolde thinke myselfe good inowe for them al', Malory makes lyonesse point out where the two knights differ. Simply, one is chivalrous and the other is not:

...commande me unto that jantyll knyght, and pray hym to ete and drynke and make hym stronge, and say hym I thanke hym of his certesey and goodnesse that he wolde take upon hym suche labur for me that never ded hym boute certesey. Also pray hym that he be of good herte and corgage hymself, for he shall mete with a full noble knyght, but he is nother of certesey, boke, nother jantylnesse; for he attayneth unto nothyng but to murther, and that is the cause I can nat prayse hym nother love hym.

Gareth is shown to be aware of the responsibility to strive and excel which his devotion to chivalry as a way of life inevitably lays upon him, and it is inferred that this is a further point of honour in him. For example, it is his chivalrous discrimination later which makes him avoid the company of his affectionate but often unchivalrous brother, Gawayne:

For evir aftir sir Gareth had aspyed sir Gawynes conductions, he wythdrew hymself fro his brother sir Gawynes felyship, for he was evir vengeable, and
where he hated he wolde be avenged with murthery.
and that hated sir Gareth. 60

Whatever Malory’s sources for his presentation of Gawayne in
the Morte Darthur, Gareth’s ‘withdrawal’ seems to be a consistent
feature of the relationship between the Orkney brothers, the
younger of whom always appears as a thoroughly admirable knight
and loyal fellow of the Round Table in Malory’s Arthurian society,
and one of Malory’s favourite characters. The fact that chivalry
might force a man to avoid his ignoble brother is evidence that
where kinship obligations cannot be carried out honourably in
Malory’s Arthurian society, they must be abandoned as far as
possible. Only when this happens is there seen to be a cleavage
between kinship, loyalty and the duties of chivalry in the
Morte Darthur, and it is presented as a sad and highly unusual
state of affairs.

During the third tale, Leuncelot makes his very
unconventional comments about the detrimental effects of
romantic or married love on a man’s chivalry, which have already
been referred to:

I may nat warne peple to spokethe of what hit plasyth hem.
But for to be a weddyd man, I thinke hit nat, for than
I meste couche with hir and love armes and turnamentis,
batellys and adventures. And as for to say to take my
pleassance with perseouns, that well I refuse: in
principall for drede of God, for knyghtes that han
adventures sholde nat be adountriers nothir lecherous,
for than they be nat happy nether fortunate unto the
warves; for other they shall be overom with a sympler
knyght than they be hemself, other ellys they shall sle
by unhappe and hir curcosse bettir men than they be
hemself. And so who that usyth perseouns shall be unhappy,
and all thynge unhappy that is aboutethem. 61

This amounts to an original statement by Malory to the effect that
ture chivalry has nothing to do with women. 62 When in the fourth
tale Gareth is shown to become romantically involved with Lyoness:
after his battle with the Red Knight, Malory shows that love
Indeed brings him some trouble—although nothing on the desperate scale described by Launcelot. As Guenevere is said to stimulate Launcelot's courage, so Lyoness's beauty inspires Gareth to make a final effort in his hardest combat to defeat the Red Knight. It is only after this that his fortunes take a complicated turn, which incidentally suggests that Malory may have intended parodying the conventional courtly romance situation. Gareth falls in love with Lyoness but is at once dismissed by her for a year 'unto the tyme that thou be called one of the membir of the worthy knyghtes'. Garath's reaction to his dismissal is one of comic dismay which has nothing in it of the courtly lover's conventional self-abasement before his chosen idol but (like all the lovers' complaints in the *Morte Darthur*) shows more indignation than tenderness:

> Alas! fayre lady... I have nat deserved that ye sholde shaw me this straungeresse. And I hadde wente I sholde have had nyght good chere with you, and unto my power I have deserved thanke. And well I am sure I have bought your love with parte of the beste bloode within my body. 65

Such unabashed bargaining would have been unthinkable in a courtly romance; but Malory seems to be making Gareth's claims quite seriously. His fight for Lyoness is indeed described as being exceptionally painful and vigorous, and all in all, the lady's love seems a small enough reward to ask for his mighty efforts. Lyoness's conventional affectations seem ridiculous in Malory's very down-to-earth Arthurian society, and it seems only sensible that when she finally comes down from her tower and meets her champion at table, (where he falls in love with her again, thinking her another) her lofty reserve should vanish (be it a pose or serious). 67 She is shown to be as eager as her Garath to straighten out the mystery of her identity and congeuate their sudden passion—to her sister's amusing disapproval:
'She thought her sister Dame Lyoness was a lyttell overhastly'.

For twelve months, Gareth is forced to remain with Lyoness, bound by his promise, although conveniently enough with her brother's open approval of their love. But Lynet has him wounded twice for his hastiness towards her sister, and so he is virtually marooned in the Castle Perilous on the Isle of AvyIon, an invalid until his wily tormentor chooses to cure him. All this while, Gareth is apparently idle, and looking forward to his rescue by one of the Round Table knights: 'for I shall be sought and founden yf that I be on lyve'. When at last Gareth is healed and released, Lyoness gives him a magic ring to help him prove his worth in a tournament which she has meanwhile arranged with Arthur, who is said to be anxious to draw his now famous nephew out of obscurity. This ring enables Gareth to fight in various guises without being recognised or losing blood and consequently he soon wins a great reputation in the field among the Round Table knights who are really his fellows. At last the magic disappears with Gareth's ring, his identity is immediately proclaimed throughout the field, and he is automatically drawn back into his society almost against his will. Gareth's love difficulties are conventionally resolved by his marriage with Lyoness. Such a conclusion does not seem consistent with the views on love and chivalry expressed by Launcelot in the third tale. But while Malory presents Gareth's marriage as the inevitable climax of his adventures, it is never referred to again in the Morte Darthur and consequently has no bearing at all on Gareth's chivalrous career as a Round Table knight and the particular devotee of Launcelot.
Probably Malory forgot all about Lyoness in the other tales; but one thing is clear. While both Lynet and Lyoness withhold Gareth from Arthur’s court and so delay his career for a year, so that Malory has to switch his narrative to the court to supply the supposed gap in the action, they provide him with the stimulus and reason to succeed in his quest, and so act as positive influences on his chivalry. As soon as this quest is said to be over, however, Malory’s chief concern seems to be to get his hero back to court, and the ‘normal’ chivalric life for a man in his Arthurian society. Gareth’s return to the Round Table is not effected in one move, however, and it can be inferred from this that since he has been so far removed in experience and physical distance from Arthur’s court, and has been shown progressing stage by stage from his role as a kitchen boy to that of a widely acclaimed royal knight, his reinstatement as an undisguised member of Malory’s Arthurian society must also be in stages. Thus Gareth has to win the tournament held for him not once, but in effect several times over as his colours change; defeat de la Rouse, and Bendalyne; and finally endure a traumatic fight with his own brother. Finally he is reconciled with the king who arrives on the scene to welcome him and celebrate his re-entry into the fellowship on proper terms. Gareth’s wedding celebrations mark this return to normality and banish the mystery of his lonely self-alienation from his society and his own real identity as the king’s nephew.

II Round Table Attitudes to Chivalry

The second part of this discussion draws largely on the last four tales in the Morte Darthur. While it is certainly not suggested that there is a line of demarcation between the ‘Gareth’
and the 'Trystram', or that the two are compositionally linked, the latter with its discursive and episodic narrative represents an overall change in Malory's presentation of his Arthurian society. Broadly speaking, chivalry continues to be the winning of honour by fighting, but instead of the straightforward chronicling of events in the first two tales, or the controlled introspective 'close-ups' of the third and fourth, Malory seems in the 'Trystram' to be looking at his fictitious society from an established narrative standpoint somewhere in the middle-distance. The result is an accumulation of episodes seen (as it were) from 'outside' the Round Table, but reported with detailed knowledge of their 'inside' motivation in characters. Vinaver remarks of this fifth tale that Malory shows a preference in his narration for 'emotional' motivation, and that in some of his re-handling of episodes from such a direction he makes some of his 'finest contributions' to the tale. It is partly because of this, and partly the way Malory continually compares Camelot with the 'external' standard of Cornwall, that the 'Trystram' yields a number of suggestions about the Round Table's apparent attitudes towards itself and chivalry. The implications of these attitudes are seen to be carried forward into the seventh and eighth tales, and are obliquely corroborated by the sixth. However, it has to be borne in mind while these are being examined that the basis of chivalry in the *Morte Darthur* is unchanged in the later tales from what it has been shown to be in the first four. Vinaver's description of Malory's High Order of Knighthood is an apposite introduction to a consideration of these Round Table attitudes:
The fairest specimens of what may be called Malory's 'morality' in the widest sense of the term are the remarks he occasionally inserts to describe the practice and ideals of chivalry. Some of these remarks refer to principles of chivalric behaviour as distinct from the mere art of fighting. A knight, he says, should be courteous and gentle; for then 'he has favour in every place'. Nor should he indulge in useless fighting; his bravery and skill are to be subordinate to a higher purpose, and those who abuse their physical superiority forfeit their claim to perfect knighthood...

**Heroes in Malory's Arthurian Society**

One of the most interesting aspects of Malory's fifth tale is the way in which chivalry is felt by the Round Table fellowship to be embodied in two the behaviour and fighting of its two most famous knights. Launcelot and Trystram represent life in Malory's Arthurian society at its best and fullest, and from the attitudes and reactions to them apparently shared by the other characters, it emerges that there is a complete hierarchy of knighthood in the *Morte Darthur*, since although all Round Table knights are brothers, some are clearly more chivalrous and more successful than others. The Round Table's reputation for chivalry appears to be largely established through these two characters' exploits and there is some considerable evidence that this was Malory's intention. For example, it has been shown how he builds up the character of Launcelot in his 'Tale of Arthur and the Emperor Lucius' by attributing some of Gawayne's traditional prominence in the English poem to the French character.

It has already been noticed in this chapter how Launcelot is reintroduced as the best Round Table knight in the third tale, and how he retains this status when he is presented as Gareth's champion in the fourth. In addition to a few isolated references in earlier tales, Malory repeatedly makes what appear to be deliberately anticipatory remarks about Trystram in connection
with Launcelot during the 'Gareth'; and there is an implied link (not necessarily structural, of course) between the fourth tale and the 'Trystram' in the following comment about the Cornish knight: 'he was nat at that tyme knyght of the Rounde Table; but he was at that tyme one of the beste knyghtes of the worlde'. This strongly suggests that Malory intended eventually broadening his picture of a chivalrous society by introducing a hero comparable in some respects to Launcelot. From the spread of references to Launcelot and Trystram in the fifth tale, there emerges a very concrete body of Malory's ideas of chivalry in his Arthurian society. Most of these comments occur in dialogue, (Malory's most characteristic means of narrative expression) in which the various characters reinforce each other's attitudes to Launcelot and Trystram, so that this body of ideas is continually being restated and itemised. There now follows extensive quotations of these references, and it will incidentally be noticed that there is a surprising degree of correlation in these remarks, so that both characters emerge as distinct figures.

First, as noted in the last chapter, Trystram and Launcelot are primarily famous in the Morte Darthur on account of their physical size and prowess, which always constitutes the promise of honour and chivalry among the noble men in Malory's Arthurian society:

Than was sir Trystrames called the strengyst knyght of the worlde, for he was called bygger than sir Launoelotte, but sir Launcelot was bettir brethid. 81

(Trystram to Lamorak): 'In all my lyff mette I never with such a knyght that was so bygge and so well-brethed. Therefore', seyde sir Trystram, 'hit were pité that ony of us bothe sholde here be myscheved'. 'Syr,' seyde sir Lamorak, 'for youre renome and your name I woll that ye have the worship, and therefore I woll yelde me unto you'. 82
(Palomymes): 'Be my hede,... sir Trystram ys farre bygger than is sir Launcelot, and the hardyer knyght.' 83

'For as the bookes seyth, sir Trystram was never so mauched but yf hit were of sir Launcelot'. 84

'And of the death of sir Lamerak,' sayde sir Trystram, 'hit was over grete pite, for I dare sey he was the cleynyst-knyghted man and the best-synded of his syge that was on lyve. For I knew hym that he was one of the best knyghtes that ever I mete wythall but yf hit were sir Launcelot'. 85

(Palomymes to Trystram) '... and now I dare sey I felte never man of youre myght nothir so well-breathed but yf hit were sir Launcelot du Lake'. 86

Again, it was discussed in the chapter on honour how it is initially noble blood which promises prowess and established fame in Malory’s Arthurian society. There are several references to this concerning Launcelot, but none for Trystram. The Cornish knight is nobly born, although shamefully connected with King Mark. Still it is Launcelot Malory wished to establish as the socially predominant of the two heroes.

'As for sir Launcelot, he is called the noblyst of the worlde of knyghtes, and wete you well that the knyghtes of hys bloode ar noble men and drede shame...'. 87

(Trystram fighting Clamour, Launcelot’s cousin) 'Hememoryng hym of bothe partyes, of what bloode he was commyn of, and for sir Launcelottis sake, he wolde be loth to sle hym...'. 88

(Dynadan of disguised Launcelot) 'I warraunte he ys of kyng Bannys blode, wych bene knyghtes of the nobelyst prowess in the worlde, for to accompte so many for so many.' 89

(Trystram) 'Now, Jesu,... well may he be called valyaunte and full of prowess that hath suche a sorte of noble knyghtes unto hym lyne. And full lyke ys he to be a nobleman that ys their leader and governour.' He mente hit by sir Launcelot du Lake. 90

The great prowess of Trystram and Launcelot wins them their reputation in the first place, and causes other characters to praise them and sometimes to couple their names in a twin apogee.
of chivalrous achievements:

'Sir Palomydes,' sayde sir Ector, 'wyte thou well there
is nother thou not knihte that beryth the lyff
that slayth any of our blood but he shall dye for hit.
Therefore, and thou lyst to ryght, go and syke sir
Launcelot othir ellys sir Trystram, and there shalt
thou fynde thy matches.'  91

(Lamorak to Trystram): 'And therefore, and thou be suche
a knihte as men calle the, I requyre the alyght and
fight with me.'  92

(Nabon to Trystram): 'A, thou arte welcom! .... for of all
knihtes I have mooste desyred to ryght with the othir
ellys wyth sir Launcelot'.  93

(Lamorak to some men waiting to ambush Launcelot): 'Ye take
upon you a grete charge, .... for sir Launcelot ys a noble
proved knihte.'  94

(Braundless to Trystram): 'And wyte you well that we be
ryght glad that we have founde you, and we be of a felyship
that wolde be ryght glad of youre company, for ye ar the
knihte in the worlde that the felyship of the Rounde Table
desyrth moste to have the company off.'

'God thank them all,' sayde sir Trystram, 'of hir grete
goodnes, but as yet I fele well that I am not able to be
of their felyship, for I was never yet of such dedys of
worthynes to be in the comparyse of suche a felyship.'

'A,' sayde sir Kay, 'and ye be sir Trystram, ye ar the man
called now mooste of proues exepte sir Launcelot, for he
beryth nat the lyff crystylene nother hethylene that cane
fynde such anothir knihte, to speke of hys proues and of
hys honis and hys trouth withall. For yet cowde there
never creature sey hys dishonoure and make hit good'.  95

(Persydes): 'I know well that sir Trystram ys a noble knihte and
a suche bettier knihte than I ar, yet I shall nat owghe hym
my good wyll.'  96

(Palomydes to Mark): 'Fy, for shame,... for he is none of
the worthy knihtes. And yf he were sir Launcelot othir
sir Trystram I shall nat doute to mete the bettyr of
them bothe.'  97

(Trystram): 'And there is no knihte in the worlde exepte
sir Launcelot that I wolde ded so well as sir Lamorak.'  98

'And when he [Palomydes] was thus redy he sente to the
Haute Frync to gyff hym love to juste with othir knyhtes,
but he was adopte of sir Launcelot. Then the Haute
Frync sente hym wordys agayns that he sholde be welcom,
and that sir Launcelot sholde nat juste wyth hym.'  99
(Trystram of Launcelot): 'And of all knyghtes—I outtake none, say what men will say—he beareth the figure: assay hym whomsoever will, and he be well angered and that hym lust to do his utterance wythoute any favoure, I know hym nat on lyve but sir Launcelot ys over hrerde for hym, take hym bothe on horsbacke and on foote.' 100

'And wyte you well there was never seynme in kynges Arthures dayes one knyght that ded so muche dedys of armes as sir Launcelot ded the three dayes taggyndes. For, as the boke makeyth truly menyon, he had the better of all the fyve hundred knyghtes, and there was nat one alayne of them.' 101

'When sir Trystram was com home unto Joyous Garde from hyse adventures—and all thys whyle that sir Launcelot was thys mysto, two yere and more, sir Trystram bare the browte and renome thorow all the realmes of Logyre, and many stronge adventures befelle hym, and ful well and manly and worshipfully he brought him to an ende—so when he cam home...'. 102

Yet while their heroic reputation springs primarily from their prowess, Trystram and Launcelot are equally well renowned for their qualities of courtesy and gentleness:

'Than all the astatis and degrees, hyghe and lowe, seyde of sir Launcelot grete worship for the honoure that he ded to sir Trystram, and for the honour dayng by sir Launcelot he was at that tyme more praeyed and renowned then and he had overthrown fyve hundred knyghtes.' 103

(Artur to Trystram): 'Welcom... for one of the bestes knyghtes and the jentyllyst of the worlde and the man of moste worship...'. 104

'Well, sir Dynadan,' seyde sir Trystram, 'I was never called coward or now of earthehy knyght in my lyff. And wyte thou well, sir Dynadan, I calle myseyn selfe the Kore coward though sir Launcelot gasf me a falde, for I coute to hym of all knyghtes. And doute ye nat, sir Dynadan, and sir Launcelot have a quarrell good, he is to over good for any knyght that now ye lyvynge, and yet of his sufferance, larges, bounte, and curtesy I calle hym a knyght gyverles.' 105

(Bors to Guenevere): '... now have ye loste the beste knyght of oure blood, and he that was oure leder and oure suocoure. And I dare say and make hit good that all kynges crenynde tother heptynde say nat fynde suche a knyght for to speke of his noblenes and curtesy, wyth hym beute and hym jantylnes.' 106

Altogether, Round Table characters always speak of the reputations of these two heroes in superlative terms. Yet it is not forgotten
by the practical minded Malory that such fame invariably comes from modest beginnings, and accordingly Lamorak and Galerys remind Arthur of this on one occasion:

'For, sir, and ye be rememberd, evyn suche one was sir Launcelot whan he cam fyrest into this courte, and full fewe of us knew from whens he cam. And now is he proved the man of moste worship in the worlde, and all your courte and Rounde Table is by sir Launcelot worshypped and amended, more than by ony knyght lyvynge.' 107

Elsewhere, Mordred is found telling a damsels the same thing:

'For in lyke wyse syr Launcelot du Lake, whan he was fyreste made knyght, he was oftyne put to the worse on horsebacke, but ever upon foote he recoverde his renowne and slew and defowled many knyghtes of the Rounde Table...' 108

Malory shows nothing of Launcelot's alleged early obscurity or his gradual rise to fame; he is always a hero in chivalry in the Morte Darthur. But the point serves to make him a credible hero and it is typical of Malory's realistic attitude that he wanted to make it.

Maledysaunte is apparently well acquainted with Launcelot's reputation, and so takes Mordred's point: 'For now I know ye ar the flour of all knyghtode of the worlde, and sir Trystram departe hit even betwene you' 109

Other characters elsewhere echo this acclaim:

'So whan the messyngers were com home they tolde the trouthe as they herde, and how he [Trystram] passed all other knyghtes but yf hit were sir Launcelot.' 110

(Lamorak of Mark): '... he hath chased out of that contrey sir Trystram that is the worshypfullyst knyght that now is lyvynge, and all knyghtes spekyth of hym worship.' 111

(Bynadan to Mark): '... for ye knyghtis of Carnwayle ar no men of worship as other knyghtes ar, and bycause ye ar nat of worship ye hate all men of worship, for never in your contrey was bredde such a knyght as sir Trystram.' 112

(Faomydes & Iode): '... the beste knyght of the worlde lovyth the and ye hym agayne, that is sir Trystram de Lyonos.' 113
(Perceval to Mark): '... for he is now the knyght of mooste reverence in the worlde lyvyng, and wyte you well that the nobelyste knyghtes of the worlde lovyth sir Trystram.' 114

'Wellcom, sir Launcelot, the floure of knygthode! For by the we shall be holpyn oute of daungere.' 115

(Elayne to Launcelot): 'And as thou arte renowned the mooste noble knyght of the worlde, ald me nat....' 116

(Elayne to Bromell): 'Wyte you well, sir knyght, I woll nat love you; for my love ys sette uppon the beste knyght of the worlde.' 117

Such reputations are sometimes shown to bring Launcelot and Trystram trouble. Once a tournament is called by jealous rivals for the unchivalrous purpose of getting rid of Launcelot, or at least shaming him, 'bycause sir Launcelot had evermore the hygher degre'. 118 Trystram is aimed at, too, but he 'was nat so behated as was sir Launcelot, nat wythin the realms of Ingelonde.' 119 It has already been mentioned how Launcelot's own kinsmen band together to kill Trystram in his turn, for he appears to be outstripping their leader in fame. 120 But generally both Trystram and Launcelot are presented as being the most beloved characters in Malory's Arthurian society, and their fame is warmly given. Arthur's reliance on Launcelot has already been discussed. From the following remark, he apparently feels almost as possessive about Trystram:

'God deffende', [sic] seyde kyng Arthure, 'that I sholde lese sir Lamerok or sir Trystram, for than tweyne of my chief knyghtes of the Table Rounte were gone.' 121

As Isode says to Trystram, 'there ar ye beloved.' 122 Honours are even between the two knights in tournaments, and generally Malory shows the onlookers prepared to divide opinion over them:

'So all the peple of that one syde gaff sir Launcelot the honoure and the gre, and all the peple on the othir
Either hero is looked upon as the most likely saviour when a man is in dire need of help:

'... yff I be there slayne go ye unto my lorde sir Leaucelot other elys to my lorde sir Trystram, and pray them to revenge my dethe...'

As Leaucelot is shown by Malory in the 'Morte' to be very conscious of his reputation for chivalry and the responsibility for the welfare of the Round Table and his own honour, so to a lesser extent is Trystram presented as being fully aware that he has a duty to society as a feted hero. Accordingly, on one occasion he tells Palomydes that he cannot take on the adventure in the Red City:

'For well I wote for my sake in especial all my lorde kyng Arthure made this justis and turnemente in this contrey, and well I wote that many worshipfull people woll be hyre at this turnemente for to se me...'

Elsewhere Iseode reminds her by not very famous lover that it behoves him to leave her and attend Arthur's court, for the sake of both their reputations for honour: 'for ye that ar called one of the nobelyse kynghtys of the worlde and a kynght of the Rounde Table, how may ye be myssed at that feste?' Trystram is shown to be aware of his influence in Arthur's kingdom, and that, for example, he has indirectly saved Cornish knights from rough handling by the Round Table: 'telle kynge Marke than many noble kynghites of the Rounde Table have spared the barownes of thy contrey for my sake'. The intimacy between Leaucelot and Trystram is seen by Malory as an alliance of 'two the beste kynghites that ever were in kynge Arthure dayes, and two of the beste lovers', which recalls Merlin's earlier prophecy about them. This remark deus ex machina really sums up the Joint power of Trystram and Leaucelot in Melory's Arthurian
society. As the leaders of chivalry, which for Malory first and foremost means the strongest and most victorious fighting men, and the most loyal allies, they embody the chief qualities of knighthood in the *Morte Darthur*. Their respective retinues of kinsmen and protégés includes the best knights of the Round Table, and it is from these characters that most is heard of their reputations. But Launcelot remains Malory's overall chief knight, for he is the leader of the best kinsmen in his Arthurian society, and as dear as Gawaine to Arthur; while Tristram does not appear outside this fifth tale, and only then rather grudgingly promises Arthur to remain at his court, preferring the freer life of errantry, 'for I have to do in many contrays.' Moreover, Tristram brings no alliance of kinsmen to Arthur, for the noble Alexander, apparently his one worthy relative, never arrives at court. Tristram's role as a chivalrous hero in Malory's Arthurian society must therefore be seen as supplementing Launcelot's.

In the references quoted above, one character is often compared with the other. But this usually has the effect of building up Launcelot, although it is reciprocally flattering to Tristram. The following comment from Dynadan is an example of how unobtrusively Malory does this: 'for in all the world are not such two knyghtes that ar so wood as ye sir Launcelot and ye, sir Tristram!' Malory's Arthurian society being structured as it is in terms of male loyalties and interrelated groups of warriors, the role of leader is seen to be of the utmost importance. All the action in Malory's narrative is shown to circulate around the leaders of his Arthurian society: Arthur, Launcelot, Gawayne,
and to a lesser degree, Lamorak and Trystram. It seems only natural for Malory's knights to see their eldest brothers as heroes, and their heroes as brothers. In effect, Leuncelot becomes the chief kinsman of his fellows. In no way is he remote from the other Round Table Knights as a hero, even though Malory consistently maintains that his chivalry is beyond what any other man can achieve. On account of this, the Round Table's apparent identification of chivalry with its two best knights is apparently as socially inevitable as it is shown to be happy. Within the terms of knighthood as Malory presents these, this identification is wholly good and laudable. Altogether, as the collected references to Leuncelot and Trystram show, the fifth tale is a forceful dramatic restatement and amplification of the qualities of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society which were noticed in the first four parts of the Morte Darthur.

What the 'Trystram' presents first of all is a view of chivalry which is essentially heroic and fraternal, and this is further found to corroborate the Round Table's view of itself as a brotherhood of like-minded men.

The Round Table as a Brotherhood

Deeply entrenched in their apparent attitudes to themselves throughout the Morte Darthur is the Round Table knights' sense of mutual obligations to defend one another against outsiders. One way in which this becomes apparent is through what can be called the heroic boast which members of the fellowship are occasionally found making before engaging in combat with 'non-Arthurian' characters. There are a few striking examples of this boasting in the 'Trystram', although the following are not restricted to these:
"I am a knyght of kynge Arthurs and a knyght of the Table Rounde..." 133

"Is there any knyght, kyng, other caiser, that dare for his lordis love that he servyth recountir with a knyght of the Rounde Table?" 134

"I am sir Launoelot du Lake, kynge Banny's son of Bannyke, and verry knyght of the Table Rounde. And now I defyge the, and do thy beste!" 135

"Sir, telle youre lorde that my name ys sir Lucan de Butler, a knyght of the Rounde Table." 136

"I am of the courte of kynge Arthurs, and a knyght of the Table Rounde, and my name is sir Dynadan." 137

"Sir, my name is sir Palomydes, a knyght of kynge Arthurs and of the Table Rounde..." 138

"And now shall thou wyte that I am a knyght of the Table Rounde, and my name ys sir Ector de Marye, brother unto the good knyght sir Launoelot du Lake." 139

The fights which follow these boasts are invariably shown to be triumphant for the Round Table boaster, and so his assumption of superiority is always vindicated. It is noticeable how membership of the Round Table is coupled in some of these boasts with a reference to a character's lineage. This endorses the point already made, that the Round Table is felt to be a fraternity in a very real sense. In effect, its members augment their personal identity by their allusion to the larger and reputedly invincible fraternal honour group led by the king. The Round Table boast is, therefore, an invocation of great power, and significantly no character is to be found making it twice in the Morte Darthur, or on any minor occasion.

Malory's knights customarily show their sense of chivalry by their unwillingness to fight one another. It has already been said that fraternal opposition is one of the worst crimes in Malory's Arthurian society, and in the Morte Darthur, what is disloyal is also by Malory's definition unchivalrous.
There is an example of this unwillingness at the beginning of the 'Trystram', where Malory relates that the Cornish barons remind Mark that he will not be able to find a Round Table knight to oppose Harhalt for him —

'bycause sir Harhalte was a knyght of the Rounde Table; therefore ane of hem wolde be lothe to have ado with other, but yf hit were so that any knyght at his owne rekynge wolde fyght disgyesed and unknowyn.' 140

This reputed solidarity among Round Table knights is apparently based on a clause of the Round Table oath which Malory does not mention outside the 'Trystram', although its implications can be seen to be always present in the Morte Darthur. There is a reference to this clause in a passage where Owaine expresses his shock upon being challenged by a knight with whom he should be doubly secure, his fellow and cousin, Gaherys:

'Sir, ye do nat youre parte, for the firste tyme that ever ye were made knyght of the Rounde Table ye sware that ye shuld nat have ado with none of youre felyship wyttyngly. And, pardé, sir Gaherys, ye know me well inow by my shylde, and so do I know you by youre shylde. And thaughe ye wolde breke youre othe, I woll nat breke myne. For there ys nat one here nother ye that shall thynk I am aferde of you, but that I durst ryght well have ado with you. And yet we be syster somys !'

Then was sir Gaherys ashamed. 141

There are further examples in the Morte Darthur of this identification by characters between Round Table membership and kinship, and of the mutual duties of loyalty being of a fraternal nature. In the third tale, for instance, Launcelot is shown as eager to help Melyot once he learns his identity, 'for he is a fellow of the Table Rownde'. 142 Generally, Malory's Launcelot and other adventuring knights in the Morte Darthur appear more concerned to help their fellows than strangers; and the exchange of names generally preludes or interrupts any serious action between Round Table knights.
Membership of the Round Table is shown to inspire loyalty and courage where it might otherwise be lacking. For example, on one occasion, Ector stands 'in a dwele' whether or not to fight, and then remembers his duty: 'I am a knyght of the Table Rounde, and rathir than I sholde shame myne othe and my bloode I woll holde my way whatsoever falle thereoff.' Other characters still are shown by Malory to feel similarly heavy obligations to protect the upholders of their fellowship at all personal cost:

'And hit woll be shame unto us that bene knyghtes of the Rounde Table to seoure lorde kyngge Arthure and that noble knyght, sir Launcelot, to be dishonoure.' Conversely, there is no greater shame felt by a Round Table knight than when he discovers that he has been fighting a man who is naturally his ally. For example, Launcelot exclaims when he finds that his opponent is Perceval: 'what have I done to fyght wyth you whiche ar a knyght of the Table Rounde!' Elsewhere, Launcelot and Trystram recoil in horror (like Balin and Balan of old) when they realise one another's identity: 'Alas !... what have I done! For ye ar the man in the worlde that I love beste'. On such occasions, the normal considerations of combat cease to matter, and each man tries to make reparation to the other by forcing him to accept the victory.

This apparent solidarity among Malory's Round Table knights is also suggested by the passing references made by 'external' characters in the Morte Darthur, who traditionally take up arms against all Arthur's knights as a matter of course. (Malory's Arthurian society could not 'exist' as it does in terms of a chivalry which is largely fighting, were there not at least the general fiction of 'the other side'). Examples include Tarquin's
remark in the third tale: 'And thou be of the Rounde Table, I
defy the and all thy felyshyp'. Elsewhere Malory shows
Arthur accepting offers of amity from knights Gareth has
defeated and sent to him. The king makes them knights of the
Round Table, but warns the strongest of these brothers that he
must give up his unchivalrous ways, and be 'no man-murtherer' as
hitherto: 'for ye have bene longe a grete foe of owres to me
and to my courte, and now, I truste to God, I shall so entrete
you that ye shall be my frende.' However, not all Arthur's
unchivalrous enemies can cross the board and change their colours,
as it were. Rabon, for example, remains an implacable enemy
to the Round Table, as Malory relates: 'thys sir Rabon hated all
the knyghtes of kynes Arthures, and in no wyse he wolde do hem
no favoure'. The reputation for unanimity of chivalry among
the Round Table kni^ta is shown to attract respectful curiosity
as well as enmity from the world outside Arthur's court. For
example, the fishermen who report finding a shipwrecked knight
admit to Trystram that they do not know exactly who he is,
'but he kepyth hit no counsel that he is a knyght of kynes
Arthurs, and by the myghty lorde of this yle he settyth nought'.
Elsewhere, Neroveus warns Launcelot to beware of the Castle
Pendragon, for a powerful man with a great force of men holds it,

'and thys nyght I harde say that they toke a knyght
presonere that rode with a damesell, and they say he
ys a knyght of the Rounde Table'.

Of course, Launcelot immediately resolves to rescue this unfortunate
character, or die in the attempt, for 'that knyght ys my felow'.
Such immediate loyalty makes non-Arthurian knights wary of engaging
any of the Round Table fellowship. For example, Dynas tells Mark
flatly: 'I am full lothe to have ado with any of the knyghtes of the
Rounde Table.' On the other hand, Harmanc beseeches 'som
worshypfull knyght" to avenge his unjust and imminent death, 
'insomuch as I have bene ever to my power well-wyllynge unto 
kynge Arthurs courte'.

To summarise, it is again clear that Round Table chivalry in 
the Morte Darthur in all aspects appears practical and broadly 
social. Characters are not found exchanging more than brief 
comments on the ideal nature of chivalry, and apart from his 
paragraphs on instability and loyalty in the seventh and eighth 
tales, Malory's direct statements are limited to his (largely 
original) passing remarks about fighting and the psychology of 
warfare. From the Round Table characters' adulation of 
Launcelot and Trystram as heroes of chivalry, and their 
readiness to praise other good knights like Lemorak and Gareth, 
it is implied that for Malory, (unlike other contemporary writers), 
chivalry can only be idealised in what an honourable man is 
actually seen to do. But neither a man nor his chivalry can 
(as it were), exist independent of the rest of the Round Table. 
However much a knight is praised, he never appears to be isolated 
by his superiority, since chivalry in the Morte Darthur is first 
and last fraternal.

Arthur's Attitude to the Round Table.

Arthur's attitude to chivalry as the practical means of 
preserving his personal fellowship of the Round Table is 
something Malory presents with total consistency throughout the 
Morte Darthur, and it appears that this was one of the most 
important aspects of his re-creation for him. Vinaver comments 
on this as follows: 'He was from first to last in earnest about 
knighthood as a fellowship controlled by the authority and 
example of a great king'.
Accordingly, it can be shown that Arthur's attitude to the Round Table corroborates what has just been shown of the Round Table's apparent attitudes to itself - that is, that chivalry is fraternal. During the first two tales of the *Morte Darthur*, the Arthurian fellowship is firmly related to the central and controlling figure of the king it fights to establish on his throne. Malory's narration of the battles in the first tale and the war in the second subordinates all episodes and characters to Arthur, who apparently acts as a focus for attention in the rather loosely assembled episodes. Malory shows that there is an heroic simplicity in the relationship between Arthur and his knights. They fight together and win together, and the king rewards them for their efforts with land and money. Altogether, Arthur's example of personal daring in battle and adventures and his support of his knights make him an inspiring leader: 'all men of worship seyde hit was myrre to be under such a chyfftayne that wolde putte hys person in adventure as other poure knyghtis ded'. The foundation of the Round Table in the 'Tale of King Arthur' cements this early relationship between the king and his men and ensure its continuation along the same lines of an essentially military comitatus: 'aryse and com to kynge Arthure for to do hym omage; he woll the better be in wylle to maynteynes you.' Arthur consolidates this allegiance and is shown willing to grant his knights any request 'excepe hit were unreasone', and to settle all disputes brought to his court as fairly as he can.

The king is apparently not carried away by chivalric idealism, for he puts the practical consideration of safety of his knights before everything, at times, even before victory.
For example, in the war against Lucius, he reprimands Cadoc for unnecessarily risking men's lives: 'for and ye had turned agayne ye had loste no worship, for I calle hit but foly to abyde whan knyghtes bene overmaaoed'. 164 This echoes equally original sentiments Malory expresses elsewhere in the Morte Darthur where it is also made clear that he felt there should be a sense of proportion in chivalry as in everything else in his Arthurian society. As Vinaver points out here, Malory evidently saw his Arthur as a politic king who prizes wisdom above valour. 165 There is yet another comment from Malory in a later tale which supports this point: 'manhode is not worthes but yf hit be medled with wysdome'. 166 Similarly, Malory shows that Arthur will not allow his knights to volunteer for Lynet's quest since she will not tell her sister's name, and it is left to 'Bewaynes', the kitchen boy, to take it on. Elsewhere again, Arthur is shown to be reluctant for his knights to follow a damsel with the shield, and once more it is a stranger to the Round Table, 'La Cote Male Tayle', who steps forward. Even then, the king unromantically cautions him to show more discretion where dangers are unknown: 'Sir, I woll nat... be my will that ye take uppon you this harte adventure. 168

On the other hand, the Round Table knights in the Morte Darthur never appear to take the king's cautious advice very willingly, and so Malory may be seen to imply that while Arthur's wisdom and leadership make him nobler than his men, they, on their part are not cowards. As Arthur is supposedly concerned over the fate of La Cote, so on various occasions Malory shows the king worrying about Trystram and Lamorak and Launcelot. 169
A typical quest in the fifth tale is when the king furnishes some reliable Round Table knights with ample expenses and sends them to find a missing companion.

It is however, in the sixth tale that the King's concern for his knights' welfare is most movingly expressed. He shows no concern whatever for the Grail itself, or even for the honour which Launcelot tells him the quest will bring the Round Table fellowship. Instead, Malory shows Arthur grieving plainly and simply for the loss of his men which he sees as imminent and inevitable, and blaming Gawayne for so carelessly instigating a venture whose effects the king knows his nephew does not understand:

'Alas, ye have nygh slayne me for the avow that ye have made, for thorow you ye have berauffte me the fayryest and the treyst of knyghtnode that ever was sene togydir in ony realme of the worlde. For whan they depart from hense I am sure they all shall never mete more togydir in thys worlde, for they shall dye many in the queste. And so hit forthynkith me nat a litill, for I have loved them as well as my lyff. Wherefore hit shall greve me ryght sore, the departicion of thythes felyshyf, for I have had an olde custom to have hem in my felship. 171

Vinaver notes earlier that Malory prepared for this 'departicion' by inserting a comment that 'when this thynge gothe abrode the Rounde Table shall be brokyn for a season'. From this, he suggests that the realistic threat to the wholeness of the Round Table as a fellowship outweighed all other considerations for Malory in his rewriting of this originally holy tale. The king's second lament in the 'quest' bears the full force of this concern behind it:

A, Launcelot!... the grete love that I have had unto you all the dayes of my lyff makith me to say such dolefull wordis! For there was never Crysten kynge that ever had so many worthy men at hys table as I have had this day at the Table Rounde. And that ys my grete sorrow.' 173
This speech can be seen to echo one Malory gives Arthur in the second tale, where he proudly exclaims at the achievements of his men in battle: 'Be my fayth, there was never kyng sauff myself that walded evir such knyghtes'.\(^{174}\) The comment recurs in the 'Morte', where Arthur again and again mourns for the breaking of the Round Table, the words 'togydires' and 'orokyn' running through his laments as a mounting elegy;\(^{175}\) 'quenys I might have inow, but such a felyship of good knyghtes shall never be togydires in no company'.\(^{176}\)

Apart from Arthur's care for the Round Table generally, it is shown that he cannot bear to see individual men hurt. In the second tale, the injuries Kay and Bedwere receive in battle make the king savage in a way he generally is not in Malory's treatment of the Morte Arthur: 'kylle done alone for love of sir Kay, my foster-brother, and for the love of sir Bedower that longe hath me served'.\(^{177}\) Again in this tale, when Gawayne is 'sore wounded', Arthur makes the following declaration:

But there is no golde undir God that shall save their lyvye; I make myne avow to God, and sir Gawayne be in any parell of deth; for I had levir that the Empereur and all his cliefy lordis were sunkyn into helle than any lorde of the Rounde Table were bytyrly wounded.\(^{178}\) Elsewhere, Arthur is overcome when he finds that his nephews, Gawayne and Garwath, have narrowly avoided killing one another.\(^{179}\) On another occasion, he leaps into action at a tournament, contrary to custom, because Palomydes has struck down his kinsmen: 'A, Jesu... this is a grete despys that suche a Saryson shall smyte downe my blodd!'.\(^{180}\) In the fifth tale again, Arthur tries to keep Lamorak with him and promises that he will see he comes to no harm:
A, sir Lamerok, abyde wyth me! And by my crowne, I shall never fayle the: and ne so hardy in sir Gawaynes hede, nothir none of his bretherne, to do the wronge. Lastly, Arthur's grief for Gayayne's injuries from Launcelot in the 'Morte' shows beyond all doubt that his concern for all his Round Table knights is the same as his concern for his closest kinsmen.

The only extensive comment about chivalry which Malory gives Arthur occurs in the seventh tale, and it corroborates what has already been shown of the king's attitude to the Round Table. Having discovered that Gareth has only opposed his own kinsmen in a tournament in order to support Launoelot, to whom he has long standing obligations of loyalty, Arthur praises his nephew and expounds on what he sees as the chivalrous knight's duty to his fellows:

For ever hit ys... a worshipfull knyghtes dede to help and succour another worshipfull knyght when he seeth hym in daunger. For ever a worshipfull man woll be lothe to se a worshipfull man shamed, and he that ys of no worship and medelyth with cowardise never shall he shew jantilnes nor no maner of goodnes where he seeth a man in daunger, for than woll a coward never shew mercy. And allwayes a good man woll do ever to another man as he wolde be done to hymself. As a statement about Round Table chivalry, this is conclusive; an honourable man is loyal and willing to show mercy, and is therefore 'jantil' and good; but a dishonourable man is likely to be over-violent, cowardly in refusing mercy to an opponent, and unconcerned about other men. Loyalty in fighting is the basis of chivalry, and significantly, Arthur's comments elsewhere about Trystan's opposition of the Round Table (although Dynadan laughs it off), and about Palomydes's envious treachery during Lonezep, reveal the same concern as he shows Gareth that this should be realised among his fellowship.
To summarise, the picture of chivalry as the way of life of an honourable fellowship of fighting men is the most vividly conceived and all-embracing theme in the Morte Darthur. Although its roots are found to be in the activities of warfare, and its normal practice involves killing and injuring both friends and enemies and (as Dynadan is made to point out with what need not be construed as total irony) continual hard labour, Malory continually presents chivalry as the main source of life and joy in his Arthurian society. He never suggests that its identification with the virtues of loyal fellowship is anything but good and right and, for noble men, as natural as 'the fores of knyghthode' itself.

However, the partial dissociation of loyalty from truth and honour from goodness in Malory's Arthurian society can be shown to devitalize the spirit of chivalry for the Round Table. Both the activity and behaviour of chivalry are kept up by the Arthurian knights, and they continue to win reputations for their performances in jousts and tournaments until the eve of disaster in the 'Morte'. But the motivation of this chivalric performance ceases to be simply loyalty among men and the desire to win worship. The point should not be overstressed and it would be wrong to suggest that the Round Table of Malory's last two tales appears completely corrupt, even by inference. Nevertheless, the fact that its chief knight is the cause of the brewing tragedy means that even this single betrayal of Arthur must have far reaching consequences; and Malory establishes well before the 'Morte' that there are some Round Table knights who are directly presented as being far more corrupt than Launcelot can be made to appear. However, even this limited area, the
compromise of truth and loyalty is sufficient to ennervate chivalry as the real life force in Malory's Arthurian society. Consequently, chivalry ceases to be a total representation of the existence of Malory's Arthurian society. In the seventh tale, the spirit of chivalry visibly changes as Launcelot fights his battle against Melyaguns for a morally wrong though socially expeditious cause; and in the eighth, the activity ceases altogether to bear any relevance to what is presented as reality of chivalry. In effect, Malory's Arthurian society can be seen to have outgrown chivalry in its usual sense in the Morte Darthur. Because it does this in such a negative and seemingly indirect way, there is apparently nothing which can replace it to avert the tragedy of the Round Table through the Orkneys's treachery. The third part of this discussion now continues with a consideration of how Malory both directly and indirectly, reveals this state of affairs coming into being during the sixth, seventh and eighth tales of the Morte Darthur.

III The Quest

Some of the peculiarities of Malory's version of the Queste were noticed in the previous chapter in connection with honour. On the subject of chivalry, the greatest ambiguity in the sixth tale of the Morte Darthur is the way in which Malory follows his source in exposing the moral and religious failure of Round Table chivalry on the one hand, and yet doggedly continues to present Launcelot and the Round Table as the most admirable institutions of chivalry on the other. The failure of chivalry to which the Round Table in the Queste is shown to condemn itself by the end of the tale is not a failure at all in Malory's persistent view,
but a marvel for the Arthurian records and the fictitious clerks of Salisbury, and above all, a joyful reinstatement of fellowship life in Arthur's court. In writing the *Morte Darthur*, Malory might have done better from a critical point of view to have omitted the story of the 'Quest' of the Sankgreall altogether. As it is, what he appears to have done is to attempt to present a traditional tale of failure as a tale of success, in which the Grail itself and its significance is really only a peripheral matter (even though Malory is forced to mention it all the time), rather than being the centre of the story as it is in the French original. In this attempt at compromise with his subject matter and his own attitudes to chivalry, Malory has fallen between two stools, and has neither told the tale of the Grail nor really shown how his Arthurian chivalry in Launcelot and the Round Table is better than the celestial chivalry for which he had little sympathy. He reproduces the values of the *Queste* while asserting the validity of his Arthurian society although these are incompatible. The result is that it is impossible to dismiss the statements made by the Grail characters in judgement of Round Table chivalry as transient and irrelevant to the *Morte Darthur* as a whole. Apart from the fact that Malory included them, and that they must therefore be taken into account in any consideration of his whole work, it has been found in the discussion of honour in his Arthurian society that the premise of Launcelot as a flawed hero is built upon in the seventh tale, although without any religious significance. Yet is is even more impossible to escape the sense that Malory was trying to make some points about chivalry which go right against the current of thought arising from the material he had in hand during the
writing of this tale. The sens and matiere of the *Queste* go against the grain of his presentation of chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*, and in particular his presentation of Launcelot; and Malory's management of this tale goes against its own grain, with some considerable friction. If he failed at all in his attempt to rewrite his French source material in accordance with his own dominant ideas of chivalry, it is surely with respect to Launcelot in this tale, for he achieves no balanced compromise. The doctrinally forceful narrative of the *Queste* is not convincingly twisted from its original moral basis, and Malory's Launcelot emerges as a very bruised and bewildered hero of chivalry, although staunchly acclaimed to the last.

The great dramatic turning point in Launcelot's chivalrous career in the *Queste* comes when he refuses to draw the sword from the floating stone and so fails to assume the expected role of the Grail hero. Malory reproduces this passage as follows, commencing with the lettering on the sword:

'NEVER SHALL MAN TAKE ME HENSE BUT ONLY HE BY WHOS SYDE I OUGHT TO HONGE AND HE SHALL BE THE BESTE KNIGHT OF THE WORLDE.'

So when the kyng had sene the lettirs he sayde unto sir Launcelot, 'Fayre sir, thyse swerdes ought to be poures, for I am sure ye be the beste knyght of the worlde.' Than sir Launcelot answerde ful sobirly, 'Sir, hit ys nat my swerde; also, I have no hardines to sette my honde thereto, for hit longith rat to hange be my syde...'

From what follows, it is clear that Malory's Launcelot is meant to have some foreknowledge that it is the Grail sword, and that it is traditionally dangerous for the wrong man to take it. But he says that he will not, since he has not the 'Hardines' required—that is, the boldness, or audacity. This certainly need not be taken to indicate that Malory's Launcelot has any special consciousness of his chivalry being insufficient to make him the
Grail knight on account of his sin with Guenevere. It might more simply be an example of Launcelot's heroic humility, which is one of the most consistently presented and noblest characteristics of his chivalry in the Morte Darthur.

There is some possible support for this interpretation in Malory's alteration of his source at this point. Where he has written 'I have no hardines to sette my bonde thereto, for hit longith nat to hange be my syde' the French version has 'je ne suis mie dignes ne soffissanz que la doie prendre' and Vinaver suggests that Malory merely mistook 'prendre' for 'pende'. This would be a very feasible error; but although the point must remain open to argument, it is equally possible in view of Malory's presentation of Launcelot's humility in the 'Quest' and elsewhere in the Morte Darthur, that he did not mistake his verbs, but deliberately altered them. In so doing, he would have altered the emphasis and the implications of Launcelot's reply to Arthur's complimentary remark. This would mean that instead of recoiling from the test of taking the sword from the stone because of a knowledge of his chivalric unworthiness and possible the fear of exposure, Launcelot merely refuses to appear discourtously oversure of himself, despite his reputation, for he realizes that the sword might well belong to another man. Later, in the 'Quest', Malory makes him show a similar fastidious reluctance to put himself forward as the 'beste knyght of the worlde' when the damsel tells him that he could once claim this title; 'As towchyng unto that,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'I know well I was never none of the beste.' And elsewhere, where Arthur requests him to heal Urry when every other knight of the Round Table has failed to do so, Launcelot is too modest to do anything.
but shrink. At the same time, Malory makes it very plain that it is this very humility coupled with his real greatness which makes his Launcelot the most chivalrous character in the *Morte Darthur*. The very unchivalrous Gawayne reluctantly attempts to take the sword from the stone, and fails;\(^{192}\) and immediately afterwards Perceval, a saint to Gawayne's villain, fails too—which incidentally makes Launcelot's refusal appear all the more innocent. At the crucial moment of Launcelot's exposure in the *Quest*, then, Malory either by accident or design has created a subtle confusion of the grounds on which the French character but not his Launcelot is to be condemned. So when the damsel comes riding along the riverside to announce to the Round Table that from that day forth, Launcelot can no longer honestly be accounted the best knight in the world,\(^{193}\) there is the inevitable suggestion that Malory's readers know better. The ambiguity of the judgements of chivalry made in the sixth tale may be seen to start from this point.

What follows in Malory's presentation of Launcelot in the "Quest" continues this duality of confusing and unresolved thought. Launcelot declares to Arthur that whatever the upshot of the *Quest*, it can only bring the Round Table 'grete honoure, and much more than we dyed in other places',\(^{194}\) which is thoroughly in accordance with the chivalric outlook on fighting and death elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*. Launcelot himself does nothing contrary to his usual chivalrous behaviour during his *Quest*, and in the end it is not his failure in chivalry which is exposed at all but his failure in moral perfection. Malory's Launcelot is a great enough character to sorrow for the alleged loss of goodness, and thereby the compromise of the truth of his honour.
as has been discussed. When he comes before the 'olde chapell' and falls into a symbolic paralysis and hears himself denounced as 'more hard than ye the stone, and more bitter that ye the woode, and more naked and barren than ye the lyeff of the fygge-tre', it is this failure in goodness and honour that he laments.

And so departed sore wepynge and cursed the tyme that he was borne, for than he demed never to have worship more. For the wordis wente to hys herte, tyketh he knew wherefore he was called so.  

Vinasver points out a significant alteration Malory made in the continuation of Launcelot's lament. Whereas in the French Queste Launcelot accepts that he is not truly chivalrous on account of his deadly sin, in the Morte Darthur he clearly separates his spiritual state from the question of chivalry in its usual Malorian sense. Thus Malory makes it clear that sin, although undeniably a matter of pain and remorse and a hindrance to his great character, is not in itself a denunciation of his chivalry, which lies in 'worldly' adventures alone. For the French 'car puis que je fai chavaillier premiersment me fu il heure que je n'euze de tenabres de pechie mortel, car tout adés ay habite en luxure et en la vanité du monde plus que autres homes'  

Malory substitutes the following:

My synne and my wyckednes hath brought me unto grete dishonoure! For when I sought worldly adventures for worldly daesyes I ever encheved them and the bettir in every place, and never was I discomfite in no quarell, were hit ryght were hit wronge. And now I take uppon me the adventures to seke of holy thynge, now I se and undirstonde that myne olde synne hyndryth me and shamyth me ...  

Launcelot willingly confesses his 'olde synne' and swears to abandon it when he returns to Arthur's court; although this Malory shows explicitly says that Launcelot is unable to do
when he sees Guenevere again. In the larger moral context of the 'Quest', Launcelot's chivalry appears less effective, and less all-embracing than it does elsewhere in the Morte Darthur, where Malory presents a self-contained and entirely self-qualifying Arthurian world with recognizable challenges and obstacles. This is a matter for our inference however, and is not presented as a direct judgement of his Launcelot at all. The exposure of Round Table chivalry through the exposure of Launcelot in the French Queste in the direct relationship of chivalry to moral goodness is reduced to an oblique commentary in Malory's tale, although it is a commentary which bulks large in the narrative. But it has already been discussed how it is finally impossible to divorce goodness from chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society; and even though moral goodness is not the root of chivalry as Malory presents it, it is inevitably an aspect of it. Characters like Ector and Gawayne continue to praise their hero, Launcelot, in the 'Quest'; 'And if one thynge were nat in sir Launcelot he had none fellow of an erthely man' and when he comes to Corbenic at last, he sees more than the rest of the Round Table knights, although less than the saints Bors, Perceval and Galahad. Malory emphasises this achievement more than once, so that Launcelot's failure in virtue seems insignificant. When Launcelot awakes from his coma at Corbenic, he assures his hearers that he has seen 'grete marvayles that no tunge may telle, and more than ony herte can thynke', and while that is not everything there is to be learned of the Grail, he has done as much as a man can: 'hit suffisith me. For, as I suppose, no man in thys worlde have lyved bettir that I have done.' This
represents another significant departure by Malory from the religious sentiments of his source, and Vinaver remarks that the French author of the _Queste_ would have seen Malory's version of his tale as sacrilegious in its continual insistence that it is 'virtuous living' and not Christianity which constitutes the chivalry. 205 This is undoubtedly true, but it does not detract from Malory's picture of Leunulet triumphant after his vision at Corbenic. Malory quickly reinstates Leunulet in his own chivalric world, and shows him going from adventure to adventure as he rides away from the Grail Castle, 206 and returns to normality. By comparison, the continuing mystic adventures of Bors, Perceval and Galahad seem even farther removed from Malory's Arthurian society, and less relevant as examples of chivalry.

Either in the sixth tale or any other part of the _Morte Darthur_ Leunulet is far from appearing guilty of the charge of 'vainglory', 207 of which he is accused in his quest. He shows that he is far from vainglorious when he tells Guenevere in a passage which seems to anticipate his prayer in 'The Healing of Sir Ury' at the end of the seventh tale that his triumph at Corbenic was a Divine gift, and more than he feels he had deserved: 'and that I thanke God of his grete mercy, and never of my deservynge, that I saw in that my queste as much as ever saw any synfull man lyvynge, and so was hit tolde me'. 208 In an original passage, Leunulet tells the queen that he wishes to live more virtuously now, remembering 'the hyghe aervyse in whom I dud my dyligente laboure'. 209 So Malory shows Leunulet apparently trying to restore his goodness to match his chivalry and reputation—and inevitably appearing more chivalrous and honourable on account of his humility—while refraining from
judging his character by the standards of the 'Quest' himself. By accident or design, this amounts to a clever transitional reconciliation of two opposed standards of chivalric judgement between the sixth and seventh tales. Launcelot appears entirely chivalrous by Malory's own standards in the sixth tale, a loyal kinsman, fearless warrior and a humble man in the face of praise and blame alike. Yet in the nature of this tale he is given none of the usual scope he has in the *Morte Darthur* to display his prowess and courtesy and loyalty. Because Malory has to show his most active character wandering around 'overthwarte and endelong'S strange and pathless forests, instead of getting on with the usual business of chivalry, the lengthy moral declamations of the hermits and Launcelot's necessary responses of penance cannot help but loom largely in the narrative. This prominence, and the fact that Malory has already established (even incidentally) that Launcelot is guilty of Gaenevere's adultery, and takes up this charge again in the seventh and eighth tales, mean that the hermits' charges must be seen to stack, and that the divorce between loyalty and truth, honour and goodness, and reputation and chivalry revealed in the 'Quest' cannot be ignored. It is here that Malory's failure to wed the material of the *Quest* with his own interpretation of chivalry in his Arthurian society is most evident. As has been said he sets chivalry aside from the spiritual concerns of the Grail Quest, and manages to retain a sense of Launcelot's greatness; but with what is probably accidental insidiousness, he uses what is learned from the judgement of Launcelot in the 'Quest' as a partial explanation of his career in the last two tales.
The ambiguity of chivalry after the sixth tale in the
Morte Darthur is partly the result of this confusion of
thought on Malory's side, and within the terms of the fiction
itself, partly due to the Round Table's demonstrable confusion
of prowess with goodness, and honour with reputation. This
needs to be examined further, but before continuing with the
seventh tale, there is another aspect of Arthurian chivalry
which is raised in the sixth. This concerns the Round Table as
a fraternal fellowship.

During the course of Perceval's quest, a recluse tells
him something of the great moral purpose behind the foundation
of the Round Table as a chivalric fellowship by Merlin:

... Marlyon made the Rounde Table in tokenyng of
roundnes of the worlde, for men sholde by the Rounde
Table undirstonde the roundenes signyfied by ryght.
For all the worlde, crysanyd and hethyn, repayryth unto
the Rounde Table and whan they ar choosyn to be of the
felyshyp of the Rounde Table they thynke hemselff more
blessed and more in worship than they had gotyn halff
the worlde.
And ye have sene that they have losste hir fadirs and hir
modirs and all hir kynne, and hir wyves and hir chyldren,
for to be of youre felyshyp... 211

It is thoroughly in keeping with the alliance between the
Arthurian and the Grail legends that the Round Table should
be seen as just such a righteous fellowship of the best and noblest
man as the recluse describes, and that its chivalry should
be dedicated to the achievement of the Grail, the sovereign
adventure. But Malory had no such notion of the Round Table's
purpose anywhere else in the Morte Darthur, even if he had
earlier knowledge of the *Queste*, as seems likely. 212

The idea of a fraternity of knights with a world-wide
reputation and a single devotion to chivalry corresponds with
his picture of the Round Table in other tales; but heroic
honour, not virtues for its own sake, is the quest his characters make. Similarly, Hacien's allegory of black and white and spotted bulls at a rack in a field is only an incidental illumination of Malory's Round Table fellowship, and not the exposure of the moral failure of its chivalry which it is in the French tale. It is indeed borne out elsewhere in the Morte Darthur that many of Malory's Arthurian knights lack humility, chastity and patience, but only in the 'Quest' is this said to be a vice and a reversal of the very values of chivalry in and for which the Round Table is there said to be founded. On the positive side, Launcelot's and Trystram's personal qualities of endurance and humility are the worldly marks of their courtesy, and as such, important aspects of their chivalry; but the fact that such qualities are also traditionally Christian virtues is incidental. Similarly, while Malory indicates elsewhere in the Morte Darthur that chastity in a knight is a good thing, this is not because it makes him a better man, but because freedom from sexual ties with women enables him to pursue adventures more single-mindedly.

Again, there is an oblique relationship between the chivalric values Malory took from his French source in the sixth tale and the values of Round Table chivalry he reveals in the other parts of the Morte Darthur. Because of this obliquity no implications for chivalry generally can be fairly drawn from the 'Quest' as far as the Round Table is concerned. It is in the loyal association between Ector and Gawayne, their grief over the accidental killing of Usayne, the devotion of Ector to Launcelot, and of Launcelot to Bors and Bors to Lyonell that Malory's Round Table appears at its best.
normal in this otherwise untypical tale. In the presentation of these facets of chivalry, Malory was on safe and familiar ground, and no doubt glad, like Bors returning from Sarraz, to abandon the religious mysticism for which he had no sympathy (as Vinaver remarks) for the worldly Arthurian society and Launcelot which emerge as his main concern in the *Morte Darthur*.

Nevertheless, certain aspects of chivalry in the 'Quest' remain in limbo. For example, it is 'euyll lyvyng' which loses Logres the Grail, as Christ is made to explain, and Malory certainly makes it clear in his fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth tales that lechery in particular 'was that tyme muche used'. This last remark is Malory's own, and therefore can be taken as a significant pointer to the last two tales, for Vinaver shows how the French writer makes the boiling well a more general symbol of man's 'sinful nature' generally. Galahad is superior in the 'Quest' to his father, Launcelot and achieves the adventures of a messianic hero in which the latter fails. Most important of all, Launcelot's instability of character - (though certainly not a feature of Malory's first five tales) which largely means his failure to keep his promise and renounce his love for Guenevere, brings to him and the fellowship of the Round Table the disaster which is several times hinted in the 'Quest', although not in the form of damnation. More generally, in the Round Table's confusion of appearances and reality, discussed in the last chapter, there is a parallel with the confusing black and white visions which bluff and double bluff the knights in their quests until they find it hard to distinguish good from bad. But this is probably as incidental, while the comment that 'in the dayes the sonne spared nat the fadir no
more than a stranger has no significance beyond its immediate context in the Morte Darthur, tempting though it is to see in it a deliberate foreshadowing of the rebellion of Mordred in the 'Morte'. Altogether these comments suggest an overall tenuous relationship between the 'Quest' and Malory's other tales. Otherwise they are the occasional touchings of two completely differently conceived Arthurian worlds whose philosophies of chivalry are both inevitably related to the same medieval Christian standard of moral goodness. But in the case of the Morte Darthur, this is only an incidental relationship, whereas for the Quest it is fundamental.

The Healing of Sir Urry

The change in Launcelot's 'grete doynge' in the miserable journeys of his quest apparently makes no impact at all on the other knights of the Round Table in that tale, and there is no suggestion that any character except Launcelot himself remembers the Quest in the course of the seventh tale. Malory seems to have been in ten tant on presenting his hero in his old light, and so Launcelot describes himself as 'a knyght aventures that laboureth thorowoute many realmys for to wynne worship', while he is greeted as the chief of Arthur's knights whereever he goes: 'Ferdous, I ought to know you of ryght, for ye ar the moest nobelyst knyght of the worlde. For well I know you for sirs Launcelot.' In the same tale, Gawayne assures Elyane of Astolat that she loves 'the moest honorablyst knyght of the worlde and the man of moest worship'. It is as such that Malory continues to present Launcelot throughout the 'Tale of Leunelot and Guinevere', building up the chivalric status of the Round Table through his hero's adventures and journeys.
ready for the tragic precipitation in the 'Morte'. Accordingly, Launcelot is increasingly famed and made much of for his defence of Guenevere against Mador in 'The Poisoned Apple'.232 And when at last he rescues the queen from the more tricky charge of adultery and treason by fighting Mellygaunce, 'than the kyngge and the queene made more of sir Launcelot, and more was he cherysshed than ever he was aforehande.'233

The climax of Malory's presentation of Launcelot and chivalry is 'The Healing of Sir Urry', which is the last episode in the seventh tale, and thought to be of Malory's own composition (although there is a possible source for the episode in the Prose Lancelot).234 Dramatically, this is a complex episode, and it serves a two-fold purpose. First, the Urry story is a monumental climax to everything which precedes it in the Morte Darthur, and Malory's final declaration of the supremacy of Launcelot and the power of chivalry as embodied in this the best knight in the world. Secondly, the whole episode is a prelude to the tragedy in the 'Morte'. In Vinaver's words: 'On the eve of the catastrophe which is to put an end to Arthurian knighthood, Launcelot's greatness is thus emphasised once more.'235 Vinaver thinks that this is really all there is to the episode, and says that attempts to relate 'The Healing of Sir Urry' to other matters before or after it in the Morte Darthur are out of place:

What he [Malory] valued was precisely the episodic nature of the story—its independence, not its relevance to the other things—something which the modern critic finds it difficult to accept as a literary merit. 236

Vinaver goes on to criticise Lumiansky in particular for his involved psychological interpretation of the Urry episode.237
While not agreeing with Lumiansky’s methods of criticism by which he assigns motives to characters with any definite textual evidence, Vinaver’s comments here seem to dismiss the matter too quickly. Certainly the independence of the Urry episode seems to be its essential artistic quality. As a pageant of Round Table chivalry in which Malory summons all the past and present characters in a final display of his Arthurian society, the episode seems to stand apart from the fictitious chronology of his Arthurian history in a narrative dimension of its own. Whatever happens to the Round Table in the *Morte Darthur* 'The Healing of Sir Urry' is a permanent record of Arthurian greatness. But the Urry is also part of the closely written drama of the seventh and eighth tales (in which all episodes are 'independent' in earlier editions of the *Morte Darthur*). The dramatic impact of the Urry depends on our being able to relate it to what Malory has already shown us of his Arthurian society, and to what is inevitably approaching in the 'Morte'. However, a general thematic relationship at the narrative sub-level of implication and inference is by no means the same as the kind of internal structural linking of detailed causes and effects such as Lumiansky details. The Urry episode seems to offer important considerations for a discussion of Malory’s presentation of chivalry in the last stages of his Arthurian society, and it will now be suggested that Malory was not necessarily unaware of this.

The crux of the problem between Vinaver and Lumiansky about interpreting 'The Healing of Sir Urry' is whether or not Launcelot is supposed to be feeling guilty about his sin with Guenevere when he is reluctant to try to close Urry’s wounds,
and so whether or not he weeps with shame as well as natural relief when God grants him the miracle for which he prays. Further, if Launcelot feels guilty, then possibly Arthur is meant to be aware of this, and to regard the healing as a test of his chief knight's innocence of the rumoured charge, and hence his fidelity to himself. To begin with, there is no textual evidence that Arthur feels anything but confidence in his favourite knight's hitherto invincible powers of chivalry, and joy in his success. As usual, Malory assigns the king very little action or dialogue. Secondly, the question of whether or not Launcelot is meant to be feeling guilty over his specific sin with the queen, rather than just insufficient as a mortal man confronted with a supernatural task, does not on analysis seem to be the central problem at all. The main question to ask is surely how far, if at all, was Malory himself aware of possible ambiguity in Launcelot's position in the Urry episode; and then how far he possibly intended his readers to be aware of this. It seems quite feasible that he was aware of the subsidiary ambiguity of presenting a character he had been forced to reveal as a morally flawed hero in the fifth, sixth and seventh tales as the most chivalrous and morally the best knight in the world. And it can be said straight away that Malory does not quite reconcile the oddity (the unevenly ambiguous relationship between honour and goodness in the Morte Darthur was discussed in the previous chapter). But the point is that Malory plainly did not choose to make this ambiguity in Launcelot's chivalry a direct issue in 'The Healing of Sir Urry'. At no time in the Morte Darthur does he judge, or invite judgement of, Launcelot. Whatever ambiguous implications for
chivalry can be found in the episode are there for the reader only. As far as the Round Table is concerned, Launcelot is always the best knight in the world, and there are no two ways about it. So the drama of the Urry operates on a different level from its moral implications, and the two should not be confused in discussion (as Lumiansky, intent on proving a particular kind of 'unity' in the *Morte Darthur*, confuses them in his article here). But this said, the paradox remains at the level of implication.

It has to be remembered that while Malory shows Launcelot morally less than perfect in the 'Quest', he also presents him as a perfectly chivalrous knight (as has been discussed already). The invariable measure of Launcelot's heroic status (and all chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*) is his success. In the case of Melynagounce's defeat, this success is the result of Launcelot's superior prowess, which is in itself the indubitable proof of his devotion to both Arthur and Guenevere, as well as the result of his personal need to quell the rumours of Guenevere's adultery. However, the test of Urry is exceptional in that it has nothing to do with physical prowess; it directly concerns goodness and chivalry. Her, surely, is the centre of the problem; for in making Launcelot the only knight in the world who can heal Urry, Malory seems to be reinstating a simple standard of chivalry which is not observable in the *Morte Darthur* beyond the third and fourth tales. After these, as has been discussed, the unspoken but undeniable relationship between goodness and honour begins to change, though not for Malory as a matter for sermonising. By implication, it appears that the appearance of goodness and honour in chivalry have triumphed over the known facts—even though these facts
are not entirely against the truth, since Launcelot compromises his chivalry in one direction only, after all. It seems unlikely from common sense alone that Malory can have been unaware of what he was doing here; and there are two kinds of 'evidence' which suggest that he not only realised that there was an uncomfortable ambiguity involved in the 'Urry', but that he deliberately contrived to ignore its implications and possibly even to make artistic capital out of it.

The first piece of evidence is the fact that in what is probably an original composition, and certainly stylistically an atypical section of the *Morte Darthur*, he attributed strange healing powers to his most worldly knight. Apart from the medical abilities of the damsels and hermits who conventionally nurse wounded knights, healing in the *Morte Darthur* is a very limited and special aspect of two kinds of characters. The first are the sorceresses. With one notable exception (Brusen), Malory has reduced the magic powers of the sorceresses, but Lynet and Morgan le Fay are among those who retain their mystic powers of healing and use them for a variety of ends on the Arthurian knights who fall into their hands. The other characters who have the power to heal are the Grail knights in the fifth and sixth tales. This power explicitly comes from God, not the knights themselves, and is a divine acknowledgement of their moral goodness as symbolised in this tale by their virginity and spiritual goodness. For example, when in the fifth tale Ector and Perceval wound each other fatally and no mortal help is at hand, Perceval prays for help, and their wounds close as a vision of the Grail drifts by. Malory points out that this miracle occurs because Perceval 'was one of the beste
knyghtes of the worlde at that tyme, in whom the verrey faȝth
stoode most in'. As corroboration of this, elsewhere in the
tale, Perceval manages to free a manacled man through the power
of prayer: 'bycause ye ar a knyght of the Rounde Table as well
as I, I wol truste to God to breke youre bondys'. The great
examples of healing come in the sixth tale, where Galahad heals
Nordraime and the Maimed King through his Christian chivalry
and purity. But in all these examples of the Grail knights,
Malory has merely reproduced traditional parts of the Grail
legend as it wove in and out of his material and it is not to
be supposed that he had any direct concern for the mystic powers
of healing either through spiritual goodness or mythological
traditions. His King Arthur is conspicuously lacking in the
healing touch and has to rely on Excalibur and monastic skill
to cure himself; while he is the first in his fellowship to
fail the test of Urry.

In attributing healing power through prayer to Launcelot
in the seventh tale, therefore, Malory was apparently deliberately
drawing on traditions which he usually treats peripherally in
the Morte Darthur. The Urry episode declares Launcelot the
best knight in the world not by Malory's ignoring the 'facts'
of his sin with Guenevere, but by defying our knowledge of them
and so denying them total relevance. This is its real
'independence' and 'literary merit'. Of course, like any writer,
Malory is in control of his fiction, and if he chooses to
introduce an independent factor to proclaim what he has been
telling us all along about Launcelot's superiority, then he may
do so. But his achievement is that he has done so convincingly.
It does not matter that Launcelot lacks the divine gift of
healing elsewhere in Malory's Round Table 'history'. He has passed the test; and the fact that he alone of all the Round Table has the humility to pray for help is an irrefutable testimony in itself that he deserves to pass it, that he is in fact morally the best knight as well as the most chivalrous, since his humility is the proof of his real greatness. Looked at from this angle, 'The Healing of Sir Urry' can be seen as the most successful of Malory's hat-tricks in the whole ambiguous drama of the Morte Darthur. Nevertheless, Malory betrays his awareness that this is a highly exceptional episode, and that he has to get on with the 'Morte'. Accordingly, he explicitly links the success of the story with the malicious spying of Aggravayne and Mordred, thus reminding us that this is going on all the time245 at the 'normal' level of his Round Table's existence. The glory of the 'Healing' stands; but the hard facts now about Malory's Arthurian society are that it is about to be torn apart by 'slander and strife'. With a show of apparent hesitation marked by the repetition of his intention to 'leave here of this tale', Malory turns away from chivalry and Urry and opens the 'Morte'246 in the cold light of day.

The second piece of evidence for Malory's awareness of creating a paradox at the level of implication while ignoring its effects in the Urry episode is the lofty style in which he has written it. This is quite unlike anything else in the Morte Darthur, and amounts to his most ceremonial presentation of his Arthurian society. Through the almost liturgical tone of the passage with its steady rolling incantation of names, the Urry episode is lifted into the heightened dramatic level of ritual. Man by man and group by group, the whole of Malory's
Arthurian society is summoned before our eyes, as knight after knight kneels by Ury's side in the meadow, and fails to heal him. The history of the Round Table as Malory has related it is recalled as he mentions the most famous men and deeds which have marked its course in the Morte Darthur; in particular, the murders of Trystram and Lamorak, which act as significant pointers to the even greater acts of disloyalty in the coming 'Morte'. When the whole company is assembled except one, there follows the most dramatic pause in the Morte Darthur. The reputation of the Round Table is at stake as never before and at this crucial moment, with Ury still lying on his litter, someone happens to notice Launcelot coming into view: 'Fees', seyde the kynge, 'lat no man say nothynge untill he be com to us'. Malory heightens the suspense further by making Launcelot initially demur at Arthur's request, and only finally agrees to take his turn when the king gives him a direct order: 'And wyte you well,' seyde kynge Arthur, 'and that ye prevayle nat and heale hym, I dare say there ys no knyght in thy8  ionde that may hele hym'. All Arthur's knights add their entreaty to the king's command, and the dramatic climax comes at last when Launcelot is made to kneel by Ury's side, and he lifts his hands in prayer. Undoubtedly Malory saw this passage as the highest point in his overall drama, and the fullest confirmation of his belief in the power and goodness of chivalry. Stylistically, it is a passage which transcends all possible ambiguities. Whatever knowledge of Launcelot's sins Malory and his readers have is temporarily—and in the last analysis permanently—irrelevant beside his triumph here. With a sense of dramatic fitness which says much for his
artistry, Malory presents the climax of his pageant not with the fervour and noise which usually seems to characterise the most dramatic moments of his Arthurian society in battle and tournament, but in the silence of a simple, private prayer:

And than he hylde up hys hondys and loked unto the este, saiynge secretenly unto hymselff, 'Now, Alysse Fadir and Son and Holy Goste, I beseeche The of Thy mercy that my symple worshyp and honeste be saved, and Thou Alysse Trystyné, Thou myste yeff me power to helo thys syke knytte by the grete vertu and grace of The, but, Good Lorde, never of myselff.'

Whether or not Launcelot's expressed fear that his reputation for 'worshyp and honeste' - that is, his honour and truth - will be exposed if he fails to hear Tryst is the result of specific guilt on his part must remain a mystery. If it is meant to be this, then the paradox is deepened; if not, Launcelot appears all the greater for his general heroic modesty. Either way, nothing is detracted from the picture of chivalric splendour which Malory has created in this episode. The last of the whole Round Table, Launcelot has undertaken his trial 'for to beare us felishyp, insomucho as ye be a fellow of the Rounde Table', and emerged as the most loyal and chivalrous of Malory's knights, and also the most lovable in his humanity. His emotional reaction to the miracle which is granted him is surely not meant to be taken as anything but confirmation of this humanity in one who is so far above the best of men and kings in chivalry: 'And ever sir Launcelote wepte as he had bene a chylyde that had bene beatyn' Malory's characters habitually weep in a crisis, and there can be no particular denotation of a sense of guilt of chastisement on Launcelot's part here, especially since the simile of the beaten child is one Malory uses (with a variation) elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*.
As it is, the image in the Urry episode seems fitting as the natural outcome of the emotional strain which has been imposed on Launcelot and the whole of the Round Table by the test of the Healing; and dramatically it relaxes the tension and with an impressive simplicity which is generally characteristic of Malory's finest writing, lets the narrative down from the level of ritual. The quick succession of the celebration of Urry's recovery by a short tournament marks (as it were) the Round Table's return to everyday life, in time for the opening of the 'Morte' in another key altogether.

Instability

What emerges from 'The Healing of Sir Urry' is that by this stage in the Morte Darthur chivalry cannot be discussed as a single topic, for in Malory's increasingly complex vision and presentation of his Arthurian society, chivalry is no longer the most important aspect of its existence. Chivalry is the expression of loyalty among men, and it is loyalty itself which most concerns Malory in the seventh and eighth tales, and in particular its converse aspect of instability. The discussion now turns to a consideration of this. By way of introduction, there is a short description in the seventh tale of Gareth by Launcelot which is thought to be original to Malory and which sums up the by now familiar qualities he prized most among his Arthurian characters:

Be my hede... he ys a noble knyght and a myghty man and well-breathed; and yf he were well assayed... I wolde deme he were good inow for ony knyght that bearyth the lyff. And he ys jantyl, curteys and ryght bownteous, make and mylde, and in hym ys no maner of male engyne, but playne, faythfull an tresw. 255

Launcelot's praise of Gareth here seems to be an instance of Malory's dramatic irony, in view of the forthcoming death of
Gareth in the 'Morte', as well as being the ideal expression of chivalry from the one character who best understands it in the *Morte Darthur*. But apart from this, 'slayne, saythfull an trew' is Malory's own formula for the survival of his Arthurian society in the face of disloyalty, and the most important qualities of chivalry he presents in the *Morte Darthur*. As Malory says elsewhere 'than was love trouthe and saythefullnesse', \(^{256}\) and in this special sense, love is chivalry in his Arthurian society. When Malory comes to describe what he feels are the greatest human qualities (even though he speaks only of noblemen) - loyalty, chivalry and stability - he does so in terms of the naturally related love between man and God, man and man, and man and woman. His philosophy is aristocratic, which for Malory means apparently simple, warm-hearted and down-to-earth. The relationship between the duties of loyalty and what is right and good and therefore chivalrous is something he sees as entirely natural and happy, and accordingly he discusses it through the imagery of summer which merits quoting in full:

Thus, lyke as May moneth flowryth and flowryshyth in every mannes gardyne, so in lyke wyse let every man of worship flowrysh his herte in thys world; firste unto God, and neste unto the joy of them that he promised his feyth unto; for there was never worshipfull man nor worshipfull woman but they loved one better than another; and worship in armes may never be foyled. But firste reserve the honour unto God, and secondely thy quarrell muste com of thy lady. And such love I calle vertuous love. \(^{257}\)

Conversely, disloyalty is like the destructive blasts of winter:

For, lyke as wynter rasure doth allway arase and deface grene summer, so flowryth hit by unstable love in men and woman, for in many persons there ys no stabilitie; for we may se all day, for a lytyll blaste of wyntres rasure anone we shall deface and lay aparts trew love, for lytyll or nought, that coste mauche thynge. Thysys no wysdom nother stabilitie, but hit ys fyeblenes of nature and grete disworshyp, whosomever usyth thys. \(^{258}\)

But winter is the naturally inevitable counterpart of summer;
and in this duality lies the tragic paradox of the Morte Darthur. Thus when Malory comes to the opening of the 'Morte', he
recalls the seasonal imagery of the seventh tale through which
he describes the complementary currents in his Arthurian society:

In May, when every harte flourlyshyth and burgenyth (for, as the season ye lusty to beholde and comfortable, so men and woman rejoysyth and gladeth of sommer comynge with his freyche fleurs, for wynter wyth hys rowghe wyndis and blastis causyth men and women to cowre and to sitt by fyres),
so thys season hit befelle in the moneth of May a grete angur and unhappe that stynted nat tylle the fleure of chyvalry of alle the worlde was destroyed and slayne. 259.

There is an extra twist since the winter of the 'Morte' is all
the more bitter for coming unseasonably in May, and blasting the life of the Round Table when (as the 'Urry' episode had just shown) it was at its finest flowering.

The tragic pity of the instability in Malory's Arthurian society is that it affords little men the chance to strike at the mighty through their 'prey hate'. Malory shows that it is not Guenevere's adultery which directly brings on the catastrophe and causes all this 'grete angur and unhappe' but the cold-blooded, unnatural treachery of two knights to the man in the world who had done most for them: 'And all was longe upon two unhappy knyghtes whych were named sir Aggravayne and sir Mordred, that were brethim unto sir Gawayne'. The envy these habitually unchivalrous characters are said to bear Launcelot in the seventh and eighth tales is at last effective in setting Arthur and Gawayne against Launcelot, and so the tragedy comes about from what are apparently the most unlikely directions, and between the most loyal of friends. All Launcelot can do faced with the facts of the case and the demands of 'the law' is to repeat his innocence of treachery and remind the king of all that he and his kinsmen have done for him and the Round Table.
The fact that so much can be disregarded for so little causes Malory to exclaim bitterly against what he saw as the chief failing in the 'new-fangled' English: 'Alas! this ye a grete defeaughte of us Englischemen, for there may no thyngus us please no terme'. Instability of character in a naturally unstable world is what brings down even the Round Table, the noblest fellowship of men. But it is implied that it need not be so, and Launcelot's impassioned defence in the 'Morte' takes the form of a plea to Arthur to remember what Malory has already said that people should remember above everything: 'olde jantilnes and olde servyse, and many kynde dedes'. This recalls what Guenevere reminds the Round Table knights of in the fifth tale, when Palomydes has tried to destroy his friend Trystram from misplaced envy; and it forms the gist of Gawayne's dramatically ironic plea to his brothers when they first broach the exposure of Launcelot in the 'Morte':

... ye mste remembir how oftentimes sir Launcelot hath rescowed the kyng and queene; and the beste of us all had bene full colde at harte-roots hed nyt sir Launcelot bene bettir than we, and that bathe he proved hymself full ofte.

Such remembering is the only bulwark against the destructive forces of disloyalty and instability; and this, again, is the equivalent of equating love with chivalry in the sense this was described above. This amounts to a very great and humane philosophy, and is why it was said at the beginning of this chapter that the chivalric values in the Morte Darthur transcend any particular system of political thought or idealism such as is sometimes read into Malory's writing.

The fear of instability as the permanent threat to chivalry in his Arthurian society permeates the Morte Darthur, not as
a solidly constructed literary theme built up with conscious artistry from tale to tale, but as a tragic motif which crops up at the great crises of the Round Table. The expression of this motif Malory has simply taken from his source at each particular point; but in the light of his rehandling of his whole material, what they add up to is not a tragic vision of Fate against man, but of human failing (despite great chivalric achievements) which is inevitable in man's unstable nature. Arthur's dream of Fortune's Wheel on the eve of the Battle of Salisbury seems to recapture in the vivid proportions of nightmare all the growing fear of disaster and loss which can be seen to accumulate in the last parts of the Morte Darthur. In addition, the dream recalls Galahad's tragically appropriate message to his father, Launcelot (original to Malory) 'remembr of thy worlde unstable'

So upon Trynites Sunday at nyght kynges Arthure dremed a wonderfull dreame, and in hyse dreme hym seemed that he saw upon a superflit a chayre, and the chayre was faste to a whelle, and thereupon sate kyng Arthure in the rychest clothe of golde that myght be made. And the kyng thought there was undir hym, farre from hym, an hydeous depe blak watir, and therein was all maner of serpentis and工作机制 and wyld bestis fowle and orryble. And suddeynly the kyng thought that the whyle turned up-so-downe, and he felle amoung the serpentis, and every beste toke hym by a lymme.

This vision in turn seems to echo the dream of the forthcoming monstrous conflict between Arthur and Mordred which the king is said to have in the first tale, which is the result of his sin with Morgawse and the occasion of Merlin's darkest and most accurate prophesies in the Morte Darthur. There is no causal link between Arthur's sin and the downfall of the Round Table in Malory's re-creation of the Arthurian story; but the two dreams at the beginning and end of the king's reign nevertheless stand as supernatural dramatic indications of the
seriousness and unnaturalness of his conflict with Mordred who is not only his closest kinsman but a knight of the Round Table. There is a further echo of this monstrous conflict (again, probably quite fortuitous in Malory) in a vision which Bors is shown to have when he visits Corbenic in the fifth tale. This vision is of a battle between a dragon and a leopard, and in it there is a direct reference to the king which suggests leat the embryonic idea of the instability and loss of chivalry which will come about in Malory's Arthurian society as the result of bestial conflict-this time, between the king and Launcelot, it seems:

Ryght so furthywthall he sawe a dragon in the courte, passyng parelous and orryble, and there semyd to hym that there were lettyre off golde wyttyn in his forhede, and sir Bors thought that the lettyrs made a signifyingacion of 'kyngesArthur'. And ryght so there cam an orryble lybarde and an olde, and there they faughte longe and ded grete batayle togydyrs. And at the laste the dragon spytte ou te of hys raowthe as hit had bene an hondred dx-agons; and lyghtiy all the smale dragons slew the olde dragon and tore hym all to pecys.

Without suggesting that Malory was deliberately constructing a symbolic relationship between the first and last parts of the Morte Darthur, the 'smale dragons' in Bors's vision recall the tattered tail which signified the Round Table knights attached to the great dragon, Arthur, during the king's dream which Malory relates in the second tale. The only difference is that in the first dragon dream, Arthur is victorious as he and his knights batter down the Roman bear of the east, while in the second, the king is apparently destroyed by his own men. However, Malory merely relates the incident and draws no conclusions from it. Elsewhere in the 'Trystram', the imagery of the traditionally incontinent leopard is recalled when it is prophesied that Launcelot will beget the lion of chivalry, Galahad.
and which fights with 'an orrible and fyendely dragon' at Corbenice-Arthur's dragon again, perhaps. However, the symbolism of all the heraldic struggles at Corbenice is obscure in the Morte Darthur, and possibly Malory reproduced these parts of his source thinking the lion, leopard and dragons literal beasts who provided his knights with some lively if odd adventures in a castle whose mystery seems largely outside his scope in the Morte Darthur. All that seems certain is the general implication that the civil war of the Round Table is not only tragic, and wrong but unnatural, horrible and monstrous. This is quite in accordance with the whole picture of Malory's Arthurian society which has emerged from the Morte Darthur so far. The disloyalty which sets knight against knight in this fraternal society is continually presented at every level in the narrative as the worst crime imaginable. Consequently, the horror which was related in the drama of Balin and Balian, Malory's Cain and Abel, is recalled in full by the king's nightmare before his tragic fall. This is what instability means for Malory, and conversely it illustrates the importance he attaches to the values of chivalry which in all its various aspects in the Morte Darthur concerns the steadfast relationships of noble men.

Vinaver comments on Malory's treatment of the Wheel of Fortune motif as follows, pointing out how Malory can be seen to have stressed the mortal rather than the supernatural implications of the dream in the overall drama of the Morte Darthur:

The tragedy of the Round Table as he [Malory] saw it was not just an example of the instability of man's destiny, nor simply an illustration of the 'Wheel of Fortune' theme. How indifferent he was to any such interpretation of it and how little he made in particular of the Wheel of Fortune will be seen from his treatment of two of the most important passages in his French source.
Nor did he follow the latter in its attempts to relate the downfall of Arthur's kingdom to the failure of the 'worldly' knights to achieve the quest of the Grail. The final catastrophe was to him less a drama of fate than a human drama determined from first to last by the tragic clash of human loyalties...

It is instability of love and loyalty and the failure to put principles before personal desires which causes and results from these clashes. But in the end, Malory shows that envy, suspicion and treachery are expunged among Arthur, Launcelot and Gawayne, and that their mutual loyalty and affection as the source of honour and chivalry are re-acknowledged by all three characters. The final irony of the Morte Darthur is that this is shown to happen too late, when most of Arthur's knights have killed each other, and there is no possibility of chivalry being continued through the fraternity of the Round Table. Only in this sense, however, may chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society be seen to fail, as the dreaded but incidental effect of unwilling disloyalty and open treachery.

Launcelot's divorce of goodness from honour and the highest virtue in his society brings inescapable though delayed results. Thus Malory depicts him prostrated with grief on the tomb of Arthur and Guenevere, not mourning his lost mistress as the worldly Archbishop suspects, but in remorse for his own wrong-doing. Vinaver shows how carefully Malory worked here, combining invention with some source material to produce 'a denouement which brought out once more the human tragedy underlying the death of Arthur story.' Accordingly, it is his own ingratitude and disloyalty which Launcelot laments, until shrunken out of recognition he dies of grief.
For whan I remembre of hir beaulthe and of hir noblesse, that was bothe wyth hyr kyng and wyth hyr, so whan I sawe his corps and hir corps so lye togyders, truly myn herte wold not serve to susteyne my causeful body. Also whan I remembre me how by my defeute and myn orgule and my pryde that they were bothe layed ful lowe, that were perules that over was lyvyng of Cristen people, wyt you wel-this remembred, of hir kyndenes and myn unkynednes, sanke so to myn herte that I myght not susteyne myself. 280
CHAPTER FOUR

FIGHTING IN THE Morte Darthur

Introduction

The one aspect of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society which flourishes to the end of its days is the activity of fighting, although in significant ways this activity ceases to be a total expression of its existence by the 'Morte'. Descriptions of fighting in its various forms of battles, tournaments, single and judiciary encounters, comprise Malory's most frequent and consistent expression of chivalry in the Morte Darthur. Moreover, while it is not suggested that there are no differences in the ways Malory describes fighting from one tale to another, still less that fighting always appears to serve the same dramatic purposes in his multi-layered narrative, there are nevertheless certain factors of style and presentation common to every fight in the Morte Darthur. In addition, Malory's attitudes to fighting are unambiguous and usually direct in expression. He approaches this aspect of his fiction with unmistakable assurance and firmness, and with the professional air of a gentleman dealing with something which particularly concerns gentlemen. The combination of these points about his descriptions of fighting make up the hard surface of Malory's narrative, through which everything else in his Arthurian society is most convincingly reflected — noble chyvalrye, curtseye, humanye, frendlynese, hardynese, love, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne'.
This chapter continues the discussion on chivalry in the *Morte Darthur* by considering the ways in which fighting (collectively the bulk of Malory's narrative) can be shown to relate to and reflect what has already been said about the social structure, honour and chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*. Each of the main forms of fighting mentioned above is discussed in turn, and the chapter concludes by looking at 'The Dolorous Death and Departing' as Malory's final vision of his Arthurian society.

**Battles: Malory's Establishment and Demolition of his Arthurian Society in Tales I, II, VIII.**

Whatever the arguments about the compositional and fictitious chronology of the *Morte Darthur*, one thing is certain: Malory's Arthurian society comes into being and eventually collapses through the fiction of war, and the battles he presents in the first and last tales chronologically represent the fixed points in his Arthurian drama. Although 'The Tale of King Arthur' comprises more than the battles which lead up to Arthur's establishment on his father's throne, these initial episodes are central to the rise of Malory's Arthurian society from a few supporters of Uther Pendragon to a full fellowship of war under a victorious king. The short adventures and incidents following Bedgrayne confirm and elaborate the ideas of honour and chivalry which are the identity of this society, while the whole of 'Arthur and the Emperor Lucius' (whether it follows the first tale, or not) shows an established Round Table consolidating its achievements abroad, and settling Arthur indisputably on his father's throne. Accordingly like Merlin's master, Blaise, Malory apparently set out to 'wryte all the batayles that every worthy knyght ded of Arthurs courte'\(^\text{2}\) in concrete detail. He cut out all subsidiary detail from his sources
for the first tale, creating something nearer to chronicle than romance in the plain seriousness of his writing and his concentration on showing the step by step advance of Arthurian 'political' power. One result of this is that 'The Tale of King Arthur' appears more self-contained as an Arthurian social record than any other in the Morte Darthur, even while Malory visibly anticipated writing more since he alludes to the great landmarks in his Round Table 'history' (such as the coming of the Grail, and the battle of Salisbury) yet to appear.

In 'The Tale of King Arthur', Malory begins by rapidly establishing that Arthur's accession is both right and inevitable. Accordingly, he makes Uther openly declare that Arthur (yet unknown) is his son and heir, which does away with an initial difficulty in the French Merlin where only Merlin hears Uther's declaration, thus prolonging baronial disputes over Arthur's legitimacy. Through this testimony, the traditional miracle of the sword in the stone, and, finally, the will of the common people (another addition of Malory's) Arthur is quickly brought forward from obscurity for what appears to be a strikingly English coronation. He swears 'unto his lordes and the comyns for to be a true kyng, to stand with true justyce fro them forth the dayes of this lyf', and loses no time in making reparation for the wronges wrought by the rebellious barons of the North during the long, anarchic interregnum, and establishing his best allies as strong governeres in the strategic parts of England (again, details original to Malory). Once the king is said to be properly installed as a monarch legitimate in every sense, Malory largely abandons his political fiction, and sets down to the presentation of Arthur as a heroic battle-leader, whose fellowship develops in
warfare and comprises what he sees as the best and noblest qualities among men.

Fighting is now Malory's predominant dramatic medium and it is presented from two clear points of view. For the Arthurian side, it is constructive, right and chivalrous; and as if to prove this, Malory makes 'the hundred good men of the best' 10 desert the rebel leaders when they hear Arthur speak at Caerleon. In addition, he prophesies twice that Arthur will triumph, no matter how strong his opposition.

But within few yeeres after Arthur wan alle the North, Scotland, and alle that were under their obedience, also Wales. A parte of it helde ayenst Arthur, but he oversom hem al, as he dyd the remenant, thurgh the noble prowess of hymself and his knyghtes of the Round Table. 11.

For the kings and barons who oppose Arthur defeat is inevitable, however admirably they are said to fight, for their cause is destructive and wrong. In practical terms, they apparently lack the kind of precise generalship such as Merlin gives the Arthurian forces, and the prowess of the allies Baudewyn, Brastian, Kay, Ban, and Sore, who serve Arthur. Malory relates these early battles strictly from the Arthurian point of view, and when Arthur goes into action at Caerleon armed with Excalibur, it is clear exactly where his sympathies—and by implication, ours as observers—are supposed to lie:

... thanne he drew his sword Excalibur, but it was so bryght in his eneyes ayen that it gar lyght lyke thirty torchys, and therwith he put hem on bak and slewe moche peple. 12

This division of the battlefields of this first (and the second) tale is fundamental to Malory's development of his Arthurian society in the Morte Arthur. To fight on the king's side it is to be unquestionably right, heroic, chivalrous, loyal.
and ultimately victorious.

However, Malory's presentation of his Arthurian fellowship is never crude even though the simple clash of Arthurian and non-Arthurian underlies the advert and (at least direct levels) the continued existence of his Arthurian society in the *Morte Darthur*. Malory plays down the miraculous side of Arthur's kingship and the force of destiny behind it, (just as at the end of his work it has been shown how he ignores the traditional role of Fortune in the Round Table's downfall). Instead, Arthur's victories in battle are realistically attributed to his superior tactics and strategy, and in connection with this Vinaver notes show Malory has omitted everything which is not strictly relevant to this theme from his account of Bedegraine. But still Malory realises that council is as necessary in war as fighting, and he shows Arthur and Merlin craftily establishing a good alliance with Kings Ben and Bore, welcoming them to England with ceremony and gifts, and then rewarding them for their efforts to ensure their continuing good relations. There is said to be a full council of war before the decisive battle of Bedegraine. This is something Malory repeats more directly before the war with Lucius in the second tale, when despite the eagerness of the Round Table knights to go straight into action, Arthur takes time to deliberate his moves: 'for all thy brym wordyn I well nat be to over-hasty.' So although the early battles of the Arthurian fellowship are characterised by their violence and detail of fighting action, it is already apparent that there is going to be more to its chivalry than this, since in Malory's view 'manhode is nat worthe but yf hit be medled with wyadome.' Similarly, as Merlin warns Arthur after Bedegraine, there has to be moderation, even in victory.
'Thou hast never done, hast thou not done now? Of three score thousand thy day hast thou left to on lye but fifteen thousand! Therefore hit ye time to say 'Who!' for God ye wroth with the for thou will never have done.'

This again is illustrated at the end of the Roman war in the second tale, where Arthur restrains his men and promises the women of the last city he besieges chivalrous treatments: 'Shall none myseede you, wamen, that to me longis...'

It is chiefly through his heightened descriptions of actual fighting in these battles of the first and second tales that we see Malory's Arthurian society for what it is. The main impression of the Arthurian side is one of physical power, and the most characteristic verb in these descriptions (and in Malory's accounts of fighting generally in the Nort Barthur) is 'smote'.

In effect, Malory has devised his own epic formulas for the narration of battles—a surprisingly archaic practice in a fifteenth-century writer which suggests that he was familiar with heroic literary traditions as well as those of French romance. These formulas collectively suggest more detail than they actually contain. In fact, Malory describes very little of his battlefields. He concentrates on the moves of a few men in heroic situations, with much repetition, so that there is the overall dramatic illusion of great vigour, movement and power, and the continual suggestion that the Arthurian side is perpetually on the attack and winning, in their struggle for victory and honour. Malory's characters are never so closely observed (and observable) as when he describes them engaged in the actual cut and thrust of battle, be it war or tournament. In the heat of action they fling, dash, hurl, hurtle, thrust, slice, pull down, carve, drive, break, burst, hew, lash and slay. In the Nort Barthur generally swords and
shields 'breaste in sundir' are all 'to-shyverde', helms are
'raced off' and many a man is sent 'over his horse croupyr'.
Horses 'com togydyre as hit had bene thundir', and 'walop', men
are cleaved 'unto the throte' or 'to the navyl', and blood
bursts from 'eys, nose, and mowthes' and spatters the ground.
Everything is related in sharp concrete detail. For example,
where horses in the French original of Bedgrayne have their knees
'escorchie et lor jambe unies'; Malory substitutes the more
graphic 'theire horse knees braste to the harde bone'. There is
nothing in the rest of the Morte Darthur to equal the violent
carnage of this battle description in the first and second tales,
although in all Malory's narration of fighting there is always
an effect of concrete realism conveyed by the suggested sound
effects of breaking bones and metal and the visual details of
blood flowing freely from shattered limbs and mangled horses.

To watch these Arthurian knights fighting at Bedgrayne is to
see Malory's Arthurian society coming into existence as blow for
blow, and man for man, horse for horse, they literally hack
out or confirm existing alliances and oppositions among the
generally indicated throng on the battle-field.

For example:

... and than sir Brastias smote one of them on the helme,
that hit wente unto his tethe; and he rode unto another
and smote hym, that hye arme flow into the felde; than he
wente to the thirde and smote hym on the sheldir, that
sheldir and arme flow unto the felde. And whan Gryfflet
saw resowde he smote a knyght on the templis, that hade and
helme wente of to the extre. 24

And whan kyngge Arthure saw that kyngge ryde on sir Ector's
horse he was wroth, and wyth hye swerde he smote the
kyngge on the helme, that a quarter of the helme and shelde
clave downe; and so the swerde carwe downe unto the horse
necke, and so man and horse felte downe to the grounde. 25

And kyngge Arthure was so blydy that by hye shylde there myght
no men know hym, for all was blode and brayne that stake on
his swerde and on hys shylde. And as kyng Arthure loketh
besyde hym he sawe a knyght that was passyngely well
horsed. And therewith kyng Arthure ran to hym and smote
hym on the helme, that hys swerde wente unto his teeth,
and the knyght sank downe to the erthe dede... 26.

As Vinaver remarks, Malory preferred the 'vertical' cut
'characteristic of the epic style of fighting'. In the face of
such determined advance, the enemy quals: 'Jesu defende us
from deth and horrorble maymes'.

The vicious joy of fighting which apparently grips both
sides in battle so arouses Arthur's enemies at Bedgrayne that
they 'shooke and byverd for egirnesse' is to be the hallmark
of chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society throughout the
Morte Darthur, although it is never so directly presented as in
the first two tales. Altogether, there is nothing more typically
' Malorian' than his heroic formulas in battle-descriptions, and no
part of his great web of Arthurian matter so concrete as the
attitudes and actions they convey. Traditionally, such devices
in oral poetry are found to establish a communion of response and
identification between what the poet's audience knows and what it
wants to be told again. This is done by relating the most
essential parts of a familiar story over and over again, through
the repetition of key-phrases, so ringing the changes as far as
the teller's versatility permits, yet never obscuring the essential
form of the motifs. For all his literary methods of composition
in the Morte Darthur, Malory's prose is not entirely adapted to
a readership as distinct from an audience, (a general characteristic
of fifteenth-century prose) although it is a long way from the type
of story-telling which naturally makes use of heroic formulas.
What these convey in the Morte Darthur over and above their
specific notation of blows struck in battle are impressions of
strength, of a very personal kind of active fellowship, of closeness of identity between pairs of men, of courage, a disregard of pain and danger, and above all, of a feeling of invincibility; and these have already been shown to be the essential qualities of Malory's Arthurian society and chivalry in the *Morte Darthur*.

When Malory came at least to the abortive battles of the Round Table in the 'Morte', it is just these qualities which are glaringly absent. Of course, it has to be remembered that this narrative style had changed a great deal by the 'Morte', so that it could be strange to find him reverting to the simple formulaic detailing of blows as a means of presenting large-scale action. But inevitably, there can be no joy in battle when fellowship and a common purpose are lacking, and victory is impossible since the issues in conflict are too complex and intangible to be capable of military settlement. Consequently, Malory shows that after the first outbreak of hostilities neither Arthur nor Launcelot feels justified in fighting the other, and when they are eventually forced into a full-scale military opposition by their respective supporters, he shows them fighting with guilty reluctance, Launcelot carefully avoiding the fatal blows which alone can settle a battle and so win a war. Consequently, Malory's narration of the Round Table's last battles is punctuated by the repeated laments of his principal characters, and these laments seem to convey his own horror that such a state of affairs could come about in his fictitious society of the noblest men. There are almost none of the heroic formulae in Malory's narration of fighting in the 'Morte'. Instead, he gives terse, rather general descriptions of its progress and concentrates on the emotional reactions of the characters through dialogue to expose the tragic pity of their dilemma.
Launcelot best expresses the sense of futility in this civil war which naturally lacks all zest and form: 'I have no harte to fyght ayneste my lorde Arthur, for ever wesemyth I do not as me ought to do'. Accordingly the spilling of blood on the battlefield is no longer related as a mark of triumph and superiority but with despair, because 'there were so many people slayne', who have no right to be fighting at all. For the first time in the *Morte Darthur*, Malory presents wholesale slaughter in battle as a spectacle for arousing our pity and fear; the very length of time which is said to pass before Gawayne and Launcelot are finally forced to fight one another in the Siege of Benwick, and the rapidity with which the war is then switched to England after the news of Mordred's usurpation, shows the enervation of this Arthurian society whose desolation is most evident in its disorientated fighting in the 'Morte'.

The fighting in the 'Morte' can be seen as social suicide where it was formerly the life-force of Malory's Arthurian society. Even where Arthur has an apparently clear-cut and just purpose in fighting the arch-traitor, Mordred, the unnaturalness of this struggle for power between king and knight who are father-uncle and son-nephew inevitably dooms both sides to defeat. In Malory's Arthurian society, such kinship opposition is virtually a denial of existence and so inescapably tragic. The battles of the 'Morte' can be seen to be the result of the accumulation of isolated unnatural conflicts in the *Morte Darthur* such as those between Balin and Balau, Gareth and Gawayne, Trystram and Mark, Palomydes and Trystram, Gawayne and Gaherys, Lyonell and Bors - and this suggests that the activity of fighting in Malory's Arthurian society is ambiguous in implication.
On the one hand, fighting is presented as the creation of this society by the Round Table knights, and the establishment of the king. On the other, such a society carried within its very structure the means of its demolition. Malory's Arthurian society is so mighty that it can only be defeated by itself. The battles in the Morte Darthur make this plain.

Tournaments: Reflections of Malory's Arthurian Society in Tales V & VII

Incidental tournaments appear or are mentioned in every tale of the Morte Darthur except the last, and so can be seen as comprising a conventional romance background to the life in Malory's Arthurian society. It is only in the fifth and seventh tales that he is to be found presenting them at length and in considerable narrative detail. From the tournaments of the Castle of Maidens, Sarluse and Lonesep in the 'Tristram', and the first tournament at Winchester, the Great Tournament and, finally, the one which is held to celebrate the healing of Urry, in 'The Tale of Lancelot and Guinevere' it is possible to show Malory highlighting the characteristic attitudes and behaviour of chivalry in his Arthurian society at this apparently fairly advanced state of its existence. In addition, like battles, tournaments in the Morte Darthur can be related in general to the rise and fall of the Round Table.

To begin with, Malory's tournaments are visually far from being the kind of spectacular displays which are said to have delighted fifteenth-century Englishmen in real life, for there is no description of scene or canopy beyond what is necessary to identify the main characters as they seemingly move about in the packed field.
These tournaments are not just popular sporting events presented only to entertain Malory's readers. In a very real sense, they are the war games of his Arthurian society and the blows said to be struck in them are apparently as violently given as those exchanged in the Round Table's battles. Still, they lack the final seriousness of battles; and in all, there is nothing in the *Morte Darthur* to equal these major tournaments as demonstrations of energetic bellicosity, good-fellowship and hero-worship. They appear to be the regular and most important public occasions in Malory's Arthurian society, held largely on the great feast-days of the Christian year, (contrary to the real tournaments of Malory's times).§

Each tournament in the *Morte Darthur* can be seen as a complete act within the framework of the whole drama, with a full cast of characters 'for' and 'against' the Round Table, who fight in units under their familiar leaders. Yet each example comprises a sequence of events which are related to other larger themes in the narrative at subsidiary levels. There is only peripheral reference made to the overall form of tournaments, and indeed Malory presents each example visually in what is apparently a blow-by-blow narration of the actions of his principal characters. There is the dramatic suggestion of noise and area, but Malory invariably concentrates on the heightened description of a few men fighting in relation to one another; he relates Arthur's battles as in other tales. The material prizes of tournaments interest Malory very little, and he rarely mentions them. What his Arthurian knights strive for is honour, in its fullest sense in the *Morte Darthur*. Inevitably, this involves their loyalty in defending their adopted fellows and kinsmen while fighting, as well as their
individual prowess in arms. For this reason, tournaments are apparently only possible in Malory's Arthurian society while this is whole and stable. When it becomes clear that the Round Table can no longer contain the isolated elements of conflict which eventually erupt into war in the 'Morte', tournaments are found to lose their significance as reflections of Arthurian society in the Morte Darthur.

The tournament of the Castle of Maidens in the 'Tristram' is an example of some sophisticated dramatic writing from Malory. It is divided into three episodes, which are said to occupy three separate days (although Malory has counted them wrongly). There is repeated mention of this tournament by the Round Table knights, through which Malory builds up dramatic expectations and gathers his characters together for its opening in medias res. His main purpose in this tournament is apparently to establish Launcelot and Tristram as the chief heroes of his Arthurian society. Accordingly, before the tournament begins, Malory introduces Launcelot's name with a seemingly incidental remark by a minor character: 'And there sir Launcelot and two and twenty knyghtes of hye blood have ordayne shylde of Cornwayle'. The dramatic point of Launcelot's disguise is to emerge as the episode unfolds. Tristram sees a knight unhorse another as he passes, and wonders who he is 'that bar the shylde of Cornwayle', which, of course, is his own arms. Dynadan supplies a clue to the problem:

Sir, whatsoever he be... I warrante he ys of king Banowy blode, whych bene knyghtes of the nobelyst proues in the worlde, for to accompte so many for so many.

The mystery of the unknown knight's identity is kept up among Malory's characters while he makes it clear to his readers that
this is Launcelot who rides back and forth across the foreground.

The dramatic suspense is heightened by Malory's withholding
Launcelot from the fighting on the first day of the tournament, and concentrating on relating Trystram's achievements. Together with the King of Scotland, Trystram successfully attacks some of Launcelot's kinmen in their adopted Cornish colours and their allies. Malory manipulates his characters as they fight so that each blow and move is apparently returned exactly and with ritualistic neatness. This incidentally is typical of his narration of all tournaments in the Morte Darthur, and has the effect of disengaging the reader's attention from the minute visualizing the minuteness of fighting, over and over again, while also suggesting the close interrelationship of well-matched men in combat. As Trystram wins the prize for his defeat of Launcelot's men and so the Round Table side on the first day, so he nearly loses what he has gained on the second. In this way, Malory maintains the customary status of Launcelot's men, while building up Trystram as a champion.

As in the battles narrated in the first two tales, Malory is consistent in his presentation of Arthur's opponents. These are led by the Kings of Scotland, North Wales, The North, and the King with the Hundred Knights. With the continual desecration of tournaments into these Northern forces and the Round Table,
any disturbance of changes of side on the part of Arthur's knights seems all the more significant, and their opposition by a successful stranger like Trystram at the Castle of Maimien is obviously bound to affect the progress of events, which adds to the dramatic excitement of the story. On account of this double success of Trystram's, Arthur is shown to grow very indignant on the second day of the tournament, and thus his champion, Launcelot, apparently has double reasons to defeat Trystram as the conqueror of his kinsmen and the Round Table. Accordingly, Launcelot hurls about the field striking blows 'as wode as a lyon that faughted hye fylle'; but to no avail. Then, with the field in an uproar of applause, Trystram suddenly rides away, depriving the king of the opportunity of drawing him into his fellowship and so turning the Round Table's defeat to some honourable avail. The matter apparently becomes more serious now, and although Malory says that it is not customary for kings to join in these combats, Arthur proposes to fight with his men on the last day 'and revenge you of your enemies.' There is little now to distinguish this tournament from a real battle.

At this climax, Malory turns aside from the main course of his narration to relate some brief episodes about Trystram and Palomysdes. However, when he resumes the story of the tournament, it suddenly appears that these are not incidental after all, for Launcelot is at last drawn into combat with Trystram over Palomysdes's conflict with the latter in battle. When Trystram yet again defeats Launcelot's men, 'all people cryede upon the knyght with the blanke shylde.' Then at last Launcelot faces his rival, and challenges him: 'Knyght with the blanke shylde, make ye redy to joute with me!'
The victory is now Launcelot's, but in winning it he inadvertently hurts Trystram very seriously, so that he leaves the field with Dynadem who is sure that his hero is going to die. The tournament continues for a while, and in the end Launcelot is awarded the prize for defeating Trystram. But such is his chivalrous sense of honour, that in view of Trystram's performance on two days he declines the victory, and so increased the admiration of all the onlookers: 'Sir Launcelot hath won the gre, whosoever sayth nay!' In this way, Malory indicates that Launcelot is still the most chivalrous as well as the strongest of knights, although in his source it is the knight with the Black Shield who wins. At this point, Arthur reminds Launcelot that victory itself is an arbitrary matter at times: 'And when two noble men encountir, nadis muste the tone have the worse, lyke as God wyll suffir at that tyme'. It is the honour of fighting well which is important. In this respect, Launcelot and Trystram are not eminently worthy of praise, but Palomydes is condemned for his 'unknyghtly delyne' to Trystram. Because Trystram has proved himself so chivalrous in his manner of fighting Arthur grieves that he is apparently lost, for he wants to make him one of his Round Table fellowship. Accordingly, the King names Launcelot for his finishing blow which drove Trystram away (and Malory again reveals that Launcelot is after all the better knight):

Had nat ye bene, we had nat loote sir Trystram, for he was here dayly unto the tyme ye mette with hym. And in an evyll tyme... ye encountred with hym. 53

Malory shows that Launcelot resents this, for his blow was honourably given and he had no intention of driving Trystram away from the Round Table: 'But whan men bene bote in dedis of
array, often hit ye sayne they hurt their frendis as well as their foys is his practical and very Malorion view of the matter. Immediately, a quest for Trystram is arranged, and he is sought for some time by the Round Table knights in order that he might be fetched back to Arthur to take his prize and join the fellowship; and in these ways, Malory relates the immediate events of the tournament to the larger narrative shape of his fifth tale.

What the tournament of the Castle of Maidens shows is how creative within limited circumstances the activity of fighting can be for Malory's Arthurian society. First, it is a mighty test of the Round Table's unity and its ability to withstand repeated and organized attacks from its many alleged opponents, and so to vindicate its reputation for chivalry. Secondly, new champions emerge and new alliances are formed from the competition of arms. The king's control of his fellowship is markedly apparent in his concern for his men's victory and honour, and the solidarity of Launcelot's kinsmen as the principal fighting force of the Round Table fellowship is commended by other characters as a credit to their leader and themselves. Yet in the midst of this dramatic demonstration of Arthurian unity and strength, it is shown that isolated discordant elements in the relationships of two characters, Trystram and Palomides, rebound on the course of the tournament and thereafter the lives and honour of the champions themselves. This, and the initial mystery of both Trystram's and Launcelot's identities, the misunderstandings among Arthur, Launcelot and Trystram and Arthur's pique at his men's defeat are shown temporarily to threaten the stability of good relationships among the Round Table knights. By implication, this kind-of-
threat is a continual possibility in Malory's Arthurian society.

Launcelot's speech in reply to Arthur (quoted above) is a good indication of how fighting in this tournament is apparently felt by the characters themselves to affect the group life of the Arthurian fellowship. With unconscious prophetic irony, he pinpoints the cleavage between the individual and his social group as something which unavoidably arises in the heat of combat. Friends may hurt their fellows as well as their foes in the furious fight for individual honour and victory. This is incidentally borne out by an original remark of Malory's made to the same general effect in the course of the second tale:

'for oftentimes therow envy-grete hardynesse is shewed that hath ben th eth of many yd knyghtes; for though they speke fayre many one unto other, yet when they be in batylle eyle wolde beste be prysed'.

It would appear to be further supported by the similes Malory uses in his description to convey the vigour and noise of the fighting. Well-known Round Table characters appear momentarily to abandon their identities and merge in the 'harlynge and rushynge' like so many competitive beasts in a fray. All the usual Arthurian courtesy and consideration of fellows is lost in the wild and brutal joy of fighting. Launcelot the strongest of knights, is characteristically said to be like a lion, while his kinsmen hold together in a pack 'as wylde swyne', and Sir Tristram rushes in among them 'and there he fared amonche the knyghtis as a grehounte amonche conyes'. It is most notably in the other tournaments in the Morte Darthur that Malory can be observed working through similar imagery. Examples include a 'wood lybarde', 'egir solvis', 'boorys that were chased with doggis', 'ramys', greyhounds among hares, and variations on these.
However, at the main level of description, Malory conveys his admiration for the strength and vitality his characters show in fighting by presenting them in terms of wild animals. It is only by implication and comparison that the imagery suggests a dangerous dichotomy between the competition of aggressive individual knights and the interests of Arthurian society as a whole. Malory’s own admitted zeal as a huntsman is suggested by his choice of beasts in these examples to illustrate the life and death struggles for honour among his Arthurian characters, (although the similes are not all his own). In the sense that tournaments represent the survival of the strongest men and the destruction of the weakest, the idea of a hunt is not altogether inappropriate. So at the very heart of Arthurian combat there is again the suggestion of a sense of ambiguity, for the solidarity of men fighting on the same side is by implication permanently threatened by the aggression of each individual knight which neither recognises friend from foe nor the usually stringent rules of fair play which characterise fighting in Malory’s Arthurian society. This sudden implication of ambiguity in the things which seem most certain is a general characteristic of Malory’s writing, and reveals the speculative nature of his creative mind and the subtlety of his continually developing narrative art.

The dilemma between an individual character’s desires and the action honour behoves him to take with regard to his allies is a central issue in the Tournament of Lonesome. Again, it is through Palomides’s private and half-unwilling resentment of Tristan as the accepted lover of Iseult that Malory reveals the disastrous effects of romantic love on knighted and consequently of those unchivalrous fighting can have on the solidarity of his Arthurian society.
In Palomydes's fury to excel in Isode's eyes, and so to discredit his unsuspecting rival, he attacks and kills Launcelot's horse. This flagrant breach of fair play brings the tournament to a dramatic halt; 'than was the oxy huge and grete... The Saracen knight is condemned out of hand and so loses all the honour he had just been accruing as a knight fighter. Palomydes appears deeply ashamed of his behaviour, and begs for mercy from Launcelot, who, being chivalrous, forgives him, and again appears the model for knightly behaviour. Malory portrays the division between good intentions and dishonourable passions in Palomydes as an example of the mounting theme of social conflict in the later episodes of his fifth tale and thereafter. While he shows this character as a strong and usually loyal and admired knight, he makes it clear that Palomydes is alienating himself from Arthurian society through his obsessive jealousy of Trystram for the mere obimem of love. Altogether, Palomydes is presented in the tournament of the 'Trystram' as a man who pointlessly abuses his exceptional prowess and his alliance with the leading knights of the Round Table to further unmanly ends he himself is shown to despise. Vida Scudde's description of Malory's Launcelot as a 'man of divided will' can aptly be applied to Palomydes. His false behaviour during Lonesep is commented on by Arthur and Guenevere as constituting the antithesis of Round Table chivalry, which rests in loyal and honest relationships among friends. By comparison, Arthur, Trystram and Launcelot appear all the more noble on account of their chivalrous forbearance towards Palomydes. Altogether, Malory presents his Arthurian society through this tournament and its immediate repercussions as an honourable fellowship united in its scorn of cowardice, unfair
violence and lies, yet tolerant enough to leave Palomides to his private woes which make him weep for shame. As such, it is apparently a stable and humane society, and as yet in no visible danger from the destructive passions which occasionally misdirect its fighting, but which seem only natural in such a competitive, warlike way of life.

During the first tournament at Winchester in the seventh tale, Malory reveals that even Launcelot, most chivalrous of all his Arthurian knights, is not proof against such dangerous excesses from personal aggression in the competition of arms. It is with great difficulty that Launcelot restrains himself from killing his own kinmen who have attacked him, not penetrating his disguise 'for, as the books seyth, he myght have slayne them, but when he saw their visages hys herte myght nat serve hym thereto, but lefte hem there'. The very fact that Launcelot so often appears in disguise at tournaments in the Morte Darthur is evidence that he aspires to outdo his fellows by asserting the superior power of his own prowess over his own 'team' as well as his opponents. Later, Launcelot confesses as much to Bors, and forgives his nephew the near-fatal blow which he admits he never would have received had he not concealed his own identity in the first place:

...for I wolde with pryde have overcom you all. And there in my pryde I was nere slayne, and that was in myne owne defaughte; for I myght have giffyn you warnynge of my beynge there, and then had I had no hurte. For hit ys an olde-syre seyne, "there ys harde batayle thares kyme and frendys doth batayle aynt her aynt other", for there may be no mercy, but mortall warre. 69

So serious a threat to his Arthurian society is this kind of role-playing by an influential individual felt to be by Malory that when the Great Tournament (his own composition) takes place,
there is a reference to the tournament at Winchester, and accordingly, a special provision is made that Launcelot should be recognised by his kinsmen and allies. This means the virtual breakdown of the competition.

Malory’s tournaments are by no means unrelievedly grim occasions, however, and the one which is said to take place at Surluse is long and boisterously cheerful. It lasts for seven days, and each day is concluded with a feast at which Dynadan, ‘the sereste knyght among felship that was that tyme lyvynge’,
teases and is teased by the great knights Galahalte and Launcelot, the ‘olde shrew’, until Guenever and the whole company are said to fall down laughing. The fighting in this tournament is shown to be controlled by Galahalte’s timely calls of ‘Whoool!’ to the heralds and consequently it does not get out of hand. While the knights are shown fighting as hard as ever, there are no examples of any individual behaving unfairly. Nevertheless, when the fighting is done, there is a sinister undercurrent to the celebrations, for one knight, Lamorak, is once more singled out for special praise by Arthur (who presumably returns to watch the concluding stages of the tournament). All the Round Table are said to share the king’s admiration for Lamorak, with the exception of the Orkneys. Their envy of his fame has already found an excuse for reviving their old grudge against Pellinor’s sons because of their mother’s love affair with Lamorak, and they have begun to plot the latter’s death. Lamorak’s success at Surluse fans these dangerous flames. The sudden prominent revival of this private conflict and its public consequences among the Round Table knights represents the development of Malory’s narrative powers away
from straightforward reporting or the dramatic presentation of
events through description and dialogue towards the more subtle
revelations through implications of incidents which he only
reports or shows very briefly. Accordingly, unease over the
Orkney's suspected schemes suddenly appear to supersede everything
else which happens during the tournament of Surluse, and the
crisis of Lancelot's death can be seen to comprise one of the
main dramatic climaxes in the *Morte Darthur*. By implication,
doubt is retrospectively cast on the demonstration of good and
stable relationships among the Arthurian knights which the
lengthy course of this tournament seems above all to emphasise.
Further, it suddenly becomes plain that the activity of fighting
even on this large and organised scale no longer wholly represents
life in Malory's Arthurian society, since some of its most
powerful impulses cannot be legitimately expressed by chivalrous
combat. Significantly, Lancelot is said to be stabbed in the
back, nagger nagger, as he leaves the field, (presumably Surluse)
and Malory allows some time to elapse before reporting the fact
through a casually encountered character who relates it as
apparently notorious news.

The later tournaments in the *Morte Darthur* continue to
suggest that there is a divergence between the facts and
appearance life in Malory's Arthurian society. Fighting is
as strong as ever, in fact, there seems to be an increase of
physical prowess in the tournaments of the seventh tale, in
particular. But while these events appear as increasingly
ceremonial and vivid tableaux of Round Table life, they cease
to represent a whole picture of this, until they virtually
become divorced from the most important action Malory narrates.
In Surluse, Lonesep and Winchester, the various episodes which interrupt the narration of the actual fighting grow in dramatic significance, until the tournaments themselves paradoxically appear as background action to the incidents they are shown to motivate. This process appears to be complete by the time of the Winchester tournament in the seventh tale, the action of which is subordinated first to the love conflict of Launcelot and Guenevere, and Elyne of Astolat; and secondly to the accidental conflict between Launcelot and Bors. As a corollary of this, the second tournament held at Winchester in this same part of the seventh tale is merely related in a couple of short paragraphs, and Malory returns to his account of the interrupted visit Bors makes Launcelot.

The Great Tournament is the last the Round Table is said to hold in full force. Together with the short tournament which celebrates 'the Healing of Sir Orry', during which 'there justed none of the daungerous knyghtes', and Arthur makes up two sides 'a hondred knyghtes to be ayenast an hondred', instead of allowing the usual groups to compete with each other, this reveals how life in Malory's Arthurian society has in effect finally separated out onto two levels of significance. Because both these tournaments are thought to be of Malory's own composition, it is fair to infer that this change of presentation was to some extent deliberate. The activity of massed fighting is still the Round Table's public expression of its chivalry, and the only ceremonial demonstration of Arthurian unity and power which Malory describes in any detail. The great knights still appear to dominate their fellows and opponents, and in particular, Launcelot is said to increase his achievements and reputation so
much in the course of this tale that Malory apparently grows weary at last of relating how he does it: "And bycause I have loaste the very mater of Shevalere de Charyot I departe from the tale of sir Launcelot..."\(^{65}\) One reason for Malory's 'departure' could well be that he was fully aware that the description of battles was no longer an adequate presentation of his Arthurian society along the lines he was now developing it. Had he related the forty battles of Launcelot he mentions,\(^{96}\) he could have added nothing to what he had already shown of his hero's career, and his decision to 'go unto the morte Arthur'\(^{87}\) is (for whatever reason) artistically sound.

On the descriptive level of public display, the Great Tournament recalls others which precede it in the 'Trystram'. Arthur's traditional opponents, the Kings of Ireland, North Wales and the Hundred Knights, attend in full force, but 'the most party were knyghtes of the Rounde Table that were all proved noble men'.\(^{88}\) Launcelot chooses to make the competition harder for himself to impress Guensvere and opposes his fellows of the Round Table, in a disguise which only his kinsmen recognise. Hence he is protected from their blows, since, as usual, they fight on the King's side. The rest of the Round Table attacks Launcelot, but his own men holding back, he deals with the others easily enough. Arthur's nephew, Gareth, disguises himself and supports Launcelot, unbeknown to him, and so opposes his kinsmen and fellows, too.\(^{99}\) All the odds thus appear heavily weighted in Launcelot's favour and in terms of strength, this tournament is his biggest triumph in the Mort Arthur. Although the tournament is supposedly a sporting occasion, Arthur is twice said to be 'wrothe'\(^{90}\) at the
unrecognised Launcelot's triumph over the other Round Table knights. This accidental conflict of interests between Arthur and Launcelot is apparently an ironic foreshadowing of their more grimly real conflict in the 'Morte', where Gareth is again to serve as a source of contention. Here in the seventh tale, the king's anger at the uncertain nature of Launcelot's challenge outweighs the real sporting feeling of the tournament, and the enemies from the North, caught in earnest between both Round Table parties, are 'bylde... ryght strayte'. Again with dramatic irony, Malory makes Gawayne advise Arthur to stop the tournament, since the champion (who must be Launcelot) Gareth and Lavayne cannot be checked except dishonourably by outnumbering them. The king agrees, but while he admires the knight with the golden sleeve, he loses no time in sending for him immediately the fighting has stopped to assure himself of his identity: 'A, sir Launcelot... thys day ye have heted me and my knyghtes!' In this fraternal society, an unrecognised man is potentially an enemy.

The tension generated by Launcelot's and Gareth's change of sides is rapidly dissolved in the feast 'and grete revell' which Arthur holds to celebrate the end of the Great Tournament. As usual, Launcelot is awarded the prize, and when he hears Gareth's chivalrous reasons for supporting the champion against his usual allies, the king pardons and praises his independent nephew. Malory concludes the episode with an apposite reminder of the qualities most prized in his Arthurian society: 'he that was curteys, trew, and faythefull to hys frynde was that tyme cheryshed'. The events of the Great Tournament show how quickly dissension arises when Launcelot, the strongest fighter, and most
strongly supported character, challenges the main body of the Round Table. The existence of Malory's Arthurian society by implication depends upon the identification of the individual's interests with those of his fellows, and so by his following traditional and recognizable lines in the matter of taking sides. Even this very temporary deviation on Launcelot's part is seen by Arthur and Gawaine as a threat and sets kinsmen fighting kinsmen. The fear of such dispersion is shown to be greater at this stage than the actual conflict proves to be; and the readiness with which Arthur stops the tournament and restores his good relationships with Launcelot and Gareth after the Great Tournament suggests the king's and Gawaine's awareness that civil conflicts must not be tolerated while they can be explained away, as well as making the explicit point that to the chivalrous, honour is more important than victory.

In a sense, the events of the Great Tournament may be seen as a safety valve, whereby transitory tensions among the leading characters in Malory's Arthurian society find expression and are dispelled. At the same time, it is a powerful expression of Round Table chivalry. From this point onwards in the episodes of Meliagrance and Urry, Launcelot apparently identifies himself with the rest of the Round Table even more closely than he was shown to do in the third tale. His forced opposition of Arthur in the 'Morte' appears the more tragic for this reaffirmation of loyalty and concern for honour.

From the story of the Tournament at Lonesep in the fifth tale onwards, Malory devotes less and less space to detailing the blows struck in the course of the fighting he presents. This is probably the natural result of his developing narrative skill and his awareness that the simple, chronicle-style of relating 'batayles' left no room for an internal manipulation of dramatic
complexities arising from the interplay of his by now more fully realized characters. However, this stylistic development also marks Malory’s general move away from presenting his Arthurian society at its most significant through detailed descriptions of its fighting alone. At Surluse, there is a vigorous description of the Round Table’s horsemanship, and an overall impression of close and violent combat, man for man and group for group. Next, Lionesep makes even more violent an impression but there is little mention of single blows. Instead, the general effect of massed power in groups points to the internal competition among the Round Table knights which this tournament demonstrates above everything else. This is stressed by the way in which the combatants are said to swear allegiance to one another and generally debate which side to be on, and are then shown in increasingly testing situations. It is chiefly this loyalty among the fellows of the Round Table and, conversely, occasional disloyalty, with which Malory is predominantly concerned in the narration of Lionesep, and not the demonstration of a single hero winning the prize and proving his chivalry as in previous examples. Lionesep is the longest and most confused of the tournaments in the Morte Darthur, for nowhere else do the Arthurian knights show such indecision in personal dilemmas of honour. This sense of confusion is dramatically suggested by the sound effects of chaotic noise in fighting and the spectators’ shouts. Yet the great show of loyalty and power is continually shown to be undermined by the subterfuges of Palomides and all the trouble which arises from these. In the sense that the strongest currents of the Round Table life appear to be increasingly divorced from the tournaments,
there can be said to be a degeneration of tournaments in the
Morte Darthur from Lonesap onwards, although there is no
decline in fighting itself. This divorce is never quite
complete in the action of the narrative, however it seems
so in dramatic effect. The Great Tournament is a good example
of this state of ambiguity in Malory's Arthurian society, and
the tournament held for Urry carries this apparent ambiguity
to its final stage of dramatic complexity underlying an
apparently simple presentation.

Such degeneration might suggest a return on Malory's part
to the simplicity of tournaments in the other tales of the Morte
Darthur, where they were briefly presented as little more than
the incidental amusements in which knights found scope to prove
their chivalry and win worship. But such an assumption would
be wrong, for it would belie the situation of internal threat
to the existence of his Arthurian society in its original terms
of loyalty which Malory may be seen to have carefully built up
from the end of his 'Trystram' through to the beginning of the
'Morde' (whether or not the 'Quest' belongs between 'Trystram'
and 'Lancelot and Guinevere'). The reason why Round Table
tournaments essentially appear to degenerate in the seventh tale
is that the single-minded quest for honour no longer characterises
Malory's Arthurian society, although honour is still outwardly
its chief criterion. The fact that the insidious efforts of
one single knight are shown to have such a startling impact
on the rest of Malory's Arthurian society is another indication
of just how tightly structured this society is. Palomydes's
treachery towards Trystram is only half-hearted; but it clearly
undermines the Round Table's confidence about who is on which
side, just as Launcelot's performance in the Great Tournament does. This suggests that the outbreak of the kind of tragedy which happens in the 'Morte' is always possible even without the special case of Launcelot and Guenevere to trigger it off. Instead, the maintenance of good appearances which has been shown to result from the partial separation of truth from loyalty (and therefore chivalry) are shown to involve Launcelot and the leading characters so that fighting is reorientated in directions which have little to do with the honest and whole-hearted competition of tournaments. Accordingly, victory in itself becomes more essential, for so much comes to depend upon it. The very identity of the Round Table is seen to be subtly changing in three later tales, and to some degree it seems inevitable that tournaments and formal adventures of its earlier and simpler military existence should apparently fail to represent all its new complexity, and so indicate this change.

**Single Encounters and the 'Book of Sir Yvostre de Lyonnes'**

The two forms of fighting in the *Morte Darthur* so far considered show Malory's Arthurian society as a whole in large-scale public demonstrations of power. In the examples of battles and tournaments discussed, Malory's narrative emphasis has been found to be on the dramatic presentation of military sides comprising groups of allies for and against Arthur and the Round Table. In addition to these major episodes, there are very many descriptions of short single encounters in the *Morte Darthur*, and Viney's Commentary indicates how Malory handles many of these with some originality. Reference to the appendix here will show that these encounters do not appear to be distributed arbitrarily through the eight tales, but are related to the
overall rise and fall of Malory’s Arthurian society, just as the battles and tournaments have been shown to be. For example, there are no single encounters in Malory’s first tale before the establishment of Arthur through his early battles, and only a few in the adventures marking the initiation of the Round Table. In the second tale, the story is of uninterrupted war, with the exception of Arthur’s personal combat with the warlaw on Saint Michael’s Mount (which is very untypical of single combats in general in the Morte Darthur) and Gawyne’s encounter with Friar. Similarly, when Malory’s Arthurian society collapses into war in the ‘Morte’, there are no examples of single encounters to be found. Rather, such encounters are found in what appears to be the ‘middle period’ of Malory’s ‘history’ of the Round Table, which (in whatever order) spans the tales of ‘Launcelot’, ‘Gareth’, and ‘Trystran’.

These three tales collectively present a view of Malory’s Arthurian society free from the public demands of warfare with external enemies, except in the war games of the tournaments and the briefly recounted war against Claudas in the ‘Trystran’. During this middle period, the individual heroes of Round Table chivalry come to the fore, and Malory’s narrative may be seen to revolve around their personal exploits, as they apparently establish the Round Table’s reputation for chivalry. The ‘Trystran’ contains many examples of single combats undertaken by a large cast of characters. By and large, while these single encounters often reveal the tight interrelationship of episodes which characterise the adventures of Launcelot and Gareth in other tales, they are not presented as adventures in the same way. The effect of the single encounters in the ‘Trystran’ is an accumulative one
which suggests continual errantry, with many knights travelling on many journeys and forever meeting and crossing lances for the sake of honour. Few of these journeys are given specific destinations, and altogether it seems that Malory was not interested in outlining self-contained quests in this part of the *Morte D'Arthur*. Instead, what he appears to do is to give sudden revelations of their most crucial stages in order to say something about the nature of chivalry in his Arthurian society. One reason for this effect is no doubt the fact that he had to pick and choose episodes from a bulky source which in sentiment was dominantly opposed to his own views of chivalry. Consequently (as Vinaver's Commentary generally indicates) Malory was constantly having to reconstruct the dramatic framework of motivation and characterization for pieces taken from their context, and fitted into a new and not entirely tidy episodic sequence.

As far as the single combats in the 'Trystram' are concerned, Malory seems to be switching a spotlight onto a crowded stage of indeterminate forest area, bringing an isolated group of characters into sudden focus. But it is not so much the visual presentation which matters in these combats (as it did to some extent in the third and fourth tales, for example) but the motives which prompt the fighting in the first place, and the ways the issues raised by them are resolved in relation to honour and chivalry. These single combats can be seen as the means by which Malory's Arthurian society continually appears to renew and consolidate itself. For this reason, the 'Trystram' for all its length and unevenness, seems to represent the most stable period of this society's existence, for it contains more successful single combats than any other part of the *Morte D'Arthur*. 
These combats are found to be consistently related to the larger themes in the tale. These are the love affairs between Trystram and Isode, and Launy-lot and Guenevere; less dominantly, the coming of the Grail; and the brewing trouble between the Orkneys and their appointed enemy, Lamorak. Compared with the overall significance of these themes in the *Morte Darthur*, the single encounters in the fifth tale are very incidental, and their dramatic importance is only local. However, by looking at them as a sequence of action at a subsidiary narrative level and comparing examples, they reveal important implications for the relationship of the social structure and chivalry in Malory's Arthurian society.

It has to be remembered that this is to some extent an artificial process, for by and large Malory himself has not presented these single encounters with the narrative emphasis he gives to battles and tournaments. They generally comprise (as it were) the "normal" background of life in his Arthurian society, and whatever their contributive and corroborative nature, must be seen as being secondary to the descriptions of the great public occasions in Malory's narrative when the Round Table fights en masse.

The single encounters in the 'Trystram' (and elsewhere in the *Morte Darthur*) are seen to illustrate closely two related ways in which bonds of loyalty are made among men in Malory's Arthurian society. The first of these is when characters who are initially presented as enemies or opponents are shown to become allies through fighting each other; and the second, when existing allies test and confirm their relationship through a combat which often arises from their failure to recognise one another. Fighting in whatever form is apparently the only significant means of
communication among Malory's characters, whom he rarely shows talking at any length. The general syntactic barring of
dialogue with narrative is a characteristic of Malory's writing,
especially in the earlier tales of the Morte Darthur, and it
incidentally adds to the sense of continual activity in his
Arthurian society. His readers primarily are required to watch
the knights in the Morte Darthur, and so to gather their story;
and they are nowhere so capable of close observation as social
individuals as in these single encounters. The first example
chosen for discussion is the fight between Lamorak and
Bellysance, which Malory has re-worked considerably with the
result of tightening its structure and presenting it as a
single important episode. The stages of Malory's narration
of this encounter between characters who are initially enemies
shows something of the rapid accumulation of dramatic cause and
effect which makes such incidental encounters lively parts of
Malory's narrative. To begin with, Froll has a fall when at
his own insistence he fights with a white knight, who is really
Launcelot in disguise. Lamorak advises Froll not to pursue
the matter, since he is obviously quite outmatched by his
unknown opponent. When Lamorak discovers who the white knight is,
he flatly refuses to tell Froll or to take on a return fight to
avenge him since Launcelot is his particular friend. The
conceited and insignificant Froll therefore leaves Lamorak in
disgust, for no relationship is possible between two Malorian
knights who will not defend one another at need. Then it is said
that Gasayne discovers Froll asleep a few days later, and takes
the opportunity of attempting to abduct his lady. Froll awakens
in time to avenge himself, attacks Gasayne for this provocation,
and strikes him down. However, Lamorak is obliged to side with Gawayne, the aggressor, since he, too, is a knight of the Round Table: 'but I revenge my fellow he well say me dishonour in kynge Arthurs courte'. Accordingly, Lamorak attacks Froll and kills him in combat. This would appear to conclude the episode, for Gawayne makes no further move. But now Froll's lady, the indirect cause of his death, goes to his brother Bellyaunce, to seek help. Bellyaunce is bound to avenge his brother, and he at once takes up the matter, comes to Lamorak and challenges him: 'thow haste slayne my brother sir Froll that was a bettir knyght than ever was thou.' Lamorak quite reasonably questions this conventional assertion, but in turn is bound for his own honour's sake to accept Bellyaunce's challenge, and he and Bellyaunce are said to do battle for more than two hours.

After a while, Bellyaunce pauses to ask his opponent's name, and on learning that it is Lamorak, he is freshly incensed. It seems that in Malorion terms Bellyaunce could scarcely have greater cause for enmity towards Lamorak:

*...thou arte the man in the worlde that I moste hate, for I slew my sunnye for the sake where I saved thy lyff, and now thou haste slayne my brothir sir Froll. Alas, how sholde I be accorded with the? Therefore defende the! Thou shalt dye! There is none other way nor remedy.*

Bellyaunce's words suggest that he is to be imagined wishing there were another way, for leaving aside the great sacrifice he claims he has already made for Lamorak (unmentioned before by Malory) it is plain that he respects his opponent's fighting powers, and would wish such a man his ally. Lamorak apparently recognises the problem, and out of his great courtesy shows that he is willing to abandon the combat in order to make such an alliance. Accordingly, he kneels to Bellyaunce and begs his
forgiveness. Such an apology would enable Beliyaunce to withdraw from the situation with dignity; but he says that he cannot accept even the most sincere apology, either for God's sake or the honour of knighthood, when the claims on him to exact the ultimate reparation for his kinsmen's deaths are so strong. Therefore he twice refuses Lamorak mercy, which automatically marks him as the less chivalrous knight of the two by Round Table standards, and reasserts that he will kill him. Now Beliyaunce appears in the wrong, for his immoderate aggression. Thus the fight continues, until Beliyaunce is said to lose so much blood that he has to sit down, so yielding Lamorak the victory through weakness. The position between the two characters is now completely reversed, and Lamorak is able to offer Beliyaunce the mercy he himself was refused. Thus Malory reveals how much more chivalrous a man is Lamorak, the Round Table knight, since he realises that some considerations of fair play and justice outweigh the importance of victory. Beliyaunce cannot fight any more, and has avenged his kinsmen as far as he is able, which is all that honour requires of a knight in Malory's Arthurian society; so he accepts Lamorak's offer of peace. Again, he shows his lesser quality by wondering at him for making it, but appears a better man for the fight, since it has forced him at least to acknowledge the superiority of chivalry over unceasing violence:

\[\text{thou art a fool, for and I had the at such avantage as thou haste me, I sholde eie the. But thy jantynesse is so good and so large that I muste nedys forgiff the myne eyll wyll.}\]

It is a great claim for the civilising nature and social constructiveness of chivalry that it can combat and overcome kinship prejudice, which Malory presents so strongly.
Where formerly the widest of rifts apparently existed between these two characters, they are now shown to become sworn brothers: 'they were sworne togadyre that none of hem sholde never lyght ayenste other'.

Not until they have fought for some time does Bellyaunce ask Lamorak his name. By then, identity has become a decisive factor in the continuation of their battle. As the issue between them grows more personal, so does their physical knowledge of one another as they fight, and they reach a state of intimacy in opposition. Their subsequent union is all the more enthusiastic: 'than aythir kyssed othir with wepyng tearys'. This is indeed the conventional way in which knights are reconciled in Malory's Arthurian society, and represents another example of his ritualistic treatment of fighting as a process of heightened social communion. Having shared a very painful experience in which each character has tested himself and the other to the bounds of physical endurance, these two opponents at last find some common ground. In so doing, the causes of their conflict are superseded by Bellyaunce's need to recognise his chivalric superior in Lamorak. Their relationship is reinterpreted in a socially acceptable way, and they make peace with honour. No face is lost on either side, and by implication Malory's Arthurian society is strengthened by the permanent alliance of two strong knights. The whole episode of Lamorak and Bellyaunce illustrates that the claims of kinship, personal honour and chivalry are compatible through fighting which is conducted in an honest way. In view of the way in which Malory elsewhere shows the Orkney brothers putting kinship revenge and personal reputation for power above all other claims of knighthood in this and other tales, this is
a significant point. Honourable fighting is shown to be good and ultimately socially creative, whereas uncontrolled aggression is not.

An example of a single encounter strengthening existing bonds of friendship between two knights is the one accidentally fought by Launcelot and Trystram in the fifth tale, and prophesied by Merlin in 'The Tale of King Arthur'. In this powerfully presented episode, Launcelot happens to be riding disguised in white armour near the tomb of Launcer and Columbe, on the day appointed by Trystram and Falomydes for settling their differences over Isode. By this apparent accident, two of the closest allies in Malory's Arthurian society engage in a hard fight which could easily prove fatal, thus echoing the history of Galin and Salan whose memory is linked with the tomb. Launcelot does not query Trystram's challenge and conventionally does not reveal his identity, and what follows is one of the most savage fights Malory describes in the Morte Darthur.

And than they dressid their shylidis and spearys, and cam togedyrs with all her myghtes of their horys. And they mette so ferously that bothe the horys and knyghtes felle to the erthe, and as faste as they myght aoyde there horys and put their shylidis afore them, and they strake togedyrs wyth bryght swerdys as men that were of myght, and aythir woundid othir wondirly sore, that the blood ran cutes uppon the grassse. And thus they fought the space of four owres, that never one wolde spoke to other. And of their harnays they had hevyn of many pecis.

As Malory says elsewhere, the best friends make the worst enemies, and the fight between Launcelot and Trystram bears this out, and incidentally reveals how loyalty between men paradoxically contains the seeds of tragedy in Malory's Arthurian society. So either fortuitously or by design, Malory shows that Merlin's prophecy is fulfilled.
The reluctance Launcelot and Trystram show to reveal their identities suspends the action of their combat for a long dramatic moment, while they debate the point between them. Once names are eventually disclosed between combatants in Malory's Arthurian society, traditionally they either fight on to the death (as happens in the third tale between Launcelot and Tarquin, for example) or call a truce, whichever course appears the more necessary or the more honourable. The implication seems to be that once a character knows his opponent's name, he has power over him, since he may judge him by his reputation, and possibly add or detract from this when one of them returns to Arthur's court. Until he is fairly sure of being the victor, or when the situation has evidently reached deadlock, a Round Table knight therefore withholds his identity. In the present example, Launcelot eventually takes the initiative and announces his name, which Malory shows he is always sure of being able to defend in the Morte Darthur. Trystram is immediately overcome with horror: 'Alas!....what have I done! For you are the man in the world that I love beste! His revelation of his name in turn appals Launcelot: 'A, Jesus!... what adventure is befall me!' Having nearly committed the worst crime in Malory's Arthurian society, both characters strive to yield the other the victory of their fight, and so try to expunge the effects of their conflict.

And thernyth sir Launcelot knealde adowne and yeldid hym up his swerde. And thernyth sir Trystram knealde adowne and yeldid hym up his swerde, and so aythir gaff othir the gre. And than they bothe forthwithall went to the stone and set hem downe uppon hit and toke of their helmes to keele them, and aythir kyste othir an hundred tymes.
Arthur's alarm at hearing of the incident (reminiscent of his reactions to Balin and Balan, and Gawayne and Gareth elsewhere) excepts him to draw Trystram into his Round Table fellowship once and for all, and accordingly Trystram is knighted and bludgeoned into promising that he will remain in Arthur's court. In this way, Malory shows how an alliance is made between his two strongest knights. This alliance represents Malory's most consistently contrived attempt to show how even what would normally be considered capable fighting between men can be a socially constructive activity where both are exceptionally chivalrous characters. Once they have fought, Launcelot and Trystram know each other's abilities, and are in no danger of seeing themselves as rivals, although Malory shows that other characters try to make them such during tournaments. When situations of threat are removed between Malory's knights, it seems inevitable that they become allies, to the advantage of the Round Table as a united fellowship. Here, where the opponents are in reality friends, it can be inferred that existing bonds of loyalty are proved and stabilised. The private encounter between Launcelot and Trystram ratifies the comradeship which their earlier accidental combat during the tournament of the Castle of Maidens initiated.

Common in the Morte Darthur, particularly in the 'Trystram', is the series of short fights which lead swiftly into one another, so involving several characters in the expanding ramifications of attack and revenge. Apart from what such incidents incidentally may be seen to reveal of the various characters of Malory's Round Table knights, such examples illustrate the complicated system of honour and obligations to fight which consistently
appears to operate among them. It repeatedly emerges from
such fights that the men in Malory's Arthurian society are bend

to defend their kinsmen and friends, and in addition, characters
who are apparently perfect strangers, for the sake of honour
and the reputation of the Round Table. Such a fight which
Malory has reshaped and which shows this interdependence of
loyalty and chivalry involves the Orkney brothers and Dynadan
in this fifth tale.¹²⁷

Aggravayne and Mordred are said to be riding 'on their
adventures'¹²⁸ when by chance they encounter a knight 'flyyng
sore wounded'.¹²⁹ Asked what the matter is, this character
replies that he is being pursued by another knight who will
kill him if he can. Dynadan rides up at this point, but
(characteristically) 'he wolde promise them none help'.¹³⁰
although Malory refrains from making him defend the rights of a
coward as the character in the French source does. However, no
sooner have Aggravayne and Mordred assured the pursued man of
their support, than his pursuer arrives on the scene, and
challenges the Orkney brothers. Mordred is sent over his
horse's tail at one blow, and so Aggravayne attacks the
aggressor in revenge for his brother, as custom in Malory's
Arthurian society demands. He, too, is unhorsed, and the victor
reveals his identity and vaunts his success in a most unchivalrous
way:

'Wyte you well, sayrys bothe, that I am sir Breunys
Seunze Pite that hath done thus to you.'
And yet he rode over sir Aggravayne fyve or six tymes.¹³¹

In this fifth tale, Breunys is presented as a persistent enemy
of all Round Table knights, and ladies whom he usually attacks
at unlikely moments, tramples and deserts.¹³²
As such, he offers a standing challenge to Arthur's men, and it appears that even the wary Dynadan cannot ignore such an obligation to act. Despite his previous refusal to become involved in Dalan's trouble, which now involves two fellows of the Round Table, Dynadan prepares to fight Brunyas: 'he muste nodis juste with hym for shame'. \(^\text{135}\) This time Brunyas is unhorsed and runs away. Obviously Aggravayne, Mordred and Dalan all now appear to be in Dynadan's debt, and it might be expected that some acknowledgement of this and an alliance would be made. But Malory develops the matter further, to produce a stark contrast of chivalrous and unchivalrous behaviour. When the Orkneys ask their saviour's name, Dynadan's reply elicits an angry response instead of what would be the customary vows of friendship and service: 'When they understood that hit was sir Dynadan they were more worse than they were before, for they hated hym cute of mesure bycause of sir Iameroke.' \(^\text{134}\)

This response can be seen to condemn the Orkneys out of hand as ungenerous and disloyal to a fellow of the Round Table. Malory immediately goes on to testify that 'there was none that hated sir Dynadan but tho that ever were called martherers'. \(^\text{135}\) The Orkneys' murder of Eamorak later in this fifth tale, and Malory's anticipatory condemnation of their murder of Dynadan in the sixth, \(^\text{136}\) confirms that he was trying to present them as the most unchivalrous characters in his Arthurian society at least in this, the middle period, of his Round Table 'history'.

Having established this, Malory goes on to draw Dalan into the unchivalrous network. He, too, apparently takes exception to owing Dynadan any gratitude; even where he has saved his life:

'If thou be sir Dynadan, thou slowe my fadir'.

'Hit myght well be so,' sayde sir Dynadan, 'but than hit was to my defence and at his requests.'

'Be my hede,' sayde Dalyn, 'thou shalt dye therefore!' \(^\text{137}\)
Dalan's charge is unsupported by any narrative comment, and unimportant anyway in the circumstances. Dynadan repays his ingratitude by felling him, nearly breaking his neck, and unhorsing both Aggravayne and Mordred, passes on his way. The Orkney grudge against Lamorak's friend, Dynadan, has yet to be paid; but for the time being, Dynadan has won, and showed himself a more truly chivalrous knight than he is usually reputed to be. The kind of disloyalty to fellow Round Table knights and the lack of humility and gratitude which Aggravayne and Mordred show in this episode is clearly felt by Malory to constitute a greater threat to the stability of his Arthurian society than the random though violent attacks of external figures like Breunys and Dalan, who do not degrade Arthurian standards of chivalry. In addition, it is once again revealed that kinship obligations mercilessly pursued 'oute of mesure' can be detrimental to chivalry, and individuals' lives, while it is equally if not more dangerous to fight for obscure motives. As Malory makes Arthur remark elsewhere, 'he that ys of no worship and medelyth with cowardise never shall he shew jantilnes'.

Unfortunately for Dynadan, while he recognises his enemies he cannot ultimately escape from the Orkneys by riding away from them and the threats they offer behind men's backs. This is something which Malory reveals the rest of his Arthurian society discovers by the time of the 'Morte', however it manages to contain such elements of disloyalty until they reach the final point of total crisis.

How a knight in the Morte Darthur is shown to react to the challenges of repeated fighting in this way may be seen to indicate how far he is apparently aware of having obligations
to his fellow knights, friends and enemies alike. As in the 'Launcelot' and the 'Gareth,' single combats do not occur in a social limbo, however far they are reputed to be from the Arthurian court, and relate to more than an individual's chivalry. Those knights who take on the most fights by implication admit the most obligations and emerge as the most chivalrous characters in Malory's Arthurian society. The appendix to this chapter\textsuperscript{139} shows that these predominantly include Launcelot, Trystram, Lamorak, Bleoberys, and Ector de Marys. As far as small, private fights are concerned, these are the most active and generally successful of Malory's Round Table knights. This would in turn appear to support what has already been stated as an invariable relationship of chivalrous qualities in the \textit{Morte Darthur}, that physical prowess, success in fighting, loyalty and a sense of honour are corollaries in a 'natural knyght'\textsuperscript{140} for Malory. There is no conflict between the aspects of chivalry 'hyd within a mannes person',\textsuperscript{141} and the visible use he makes of these in fighting unless kinship loyalty becomes aggressive 'out of mesure', or romantic love unbalances a man's relationship to other men, with the effect of forcing chivalry and prowess, fact and appearance, and honour and reputation into antithetical relationships. When this happens, in the 'Morte', it is inevitably found to be 'assns guerdon', since fighting ceases to be a fully meaningful or possible communication between the men in Malory's Arthurian society.

Malory shows that the overt fear of causing such an unnecessary and dangerous conflict between characters who are otherwise represented as being loyal allies on one occasion
makes Bleoberys anxiously try to dissuade his kinsman, Launcelot, from fighting Lamorak through the jealous motivation of Melygaunce. The cause of the quarrel among these characters, elaborately posed romantic love, is artificial for Malory; and he exposes it as such.

Melygaunce begins by asserting that he loves Guenevere and that she is the fairest of ladies a conventional enough statement for a character in Arthurian romance. Equally predictable is Lamorak's counter-claim for Guenevere, since he loves Morgawse and will admit none her superior in beauty.

The two knights then begin to fight 'in grete wrathe' to settle the matter of which both women are, of course, quite ignorant. Before the fight is finished, however, Malory brings Launcelot and Bleoberys on the scene, and Launcelot hastily parts the adversaries who have no right to be fighting at all. Since they 'ar bothe of the courte of kyng Arthure.'

Malory does not leave the issue here. Launcelot discovers the cause of the quarrel, and is in his turn incensed, and ready to attack his fellows: 'Hit ys nat thy parte to dispayse thy prynees that thou arte undir obeasaunce and we all'. His jealousy of Melygaunce's avowed love of Guenevere would account for Launcelot's fury here, although his readiness to fight Lamorak rather than Melygaunce might be explained by simple outrage that the names of greater people than themselves should be taken in vain so presumptuously. Whatever the motivation, such a fight would cause a breach of fellowship more serious than that already occasioned by Melygaunce and Lamorak, since any serious fight Launcelot has is likely to be fatal to his opponent—and all for nothing, as Bleoberys points out:
My lorde, sir Launcelot, I wiste you never so mynsa-advised
as ye be at this tym, for sir Lamerok sayth to you but
reason and knightly. For I warne you, I have a lady, and
methinks that she ye the fairest lady of the worlde.
Were this a grete reason that ye sholde be wrothe with me for
such langage? And well ye note that sir Lamerok ys a
noble knight as I know any lyvyng, and he hath ought ye
all us ever good wyll. Therefore I pray you, be fryndis! 147

Vinaver remarks in his commentary on Malory's highly
original treatment of this episode that Bleoberys's argument
's if used consistently by knights-errant, would have saved them
many a battle and destroyed the whole fabric of courtly chivalry.' 148
This is the very part of that fabric absent in the *Morte Darthur,
however, and Bleoberys's speech is quite in accordance with
Malory's usual treatment of romantic love as a potential threat to
loyal relationships among men in his Arthurian society.

Fortuitously or by design, Launcelot's readiness to attack his
best friends in defence of Euenevere is a significant though
incidental foreshadowing of the events in the seventh and eighth
tales when he repeatedly does battle for her, 'ryght other
wronge'. 149 Yet, also as in the later instances, his readiness
to make peace with his fellow knights is equal to his indignation
on the queen's behalf, and Launcelot apologises courteously for
his anger. 'Sir,' sayde sir Lamerok, 'the amendis ye sone made
betwyxte you and me.' 150 This is a very rare example of
good intentions between Round Table fellows being expressed in
words only, and accepted in recognition that fighting could not
solve the conflict between Launcelot and Lamerak. The inference
here is that between very chivalrous characters in Malory's
Arthurian society, fighting is not always the final means of
settlement, and that chivalry sometimes requires higher
considerations the satisfaction of personal grudges by
individuals, even where these are apparently honourable enough
in themselves. The settlement of the quarrel between
Trystram and Darras is another example of chivalry taking
precedence over the most pressing of personal claims, the death
of a kinsmen.¹⁵¹ Such considerations act as safety measures
(as here), for the maintenance of steady relationships among
Malory's knights. It has already been suggested that
throughout the 'Book of Sir Trystram' and the Morte Darthur,
as a whole there is the illusion of a shadow world peopled by
unchivalrous figures like Branys Sans Pite who have to be kept
at bay by the Round Table knights. This inversion of the united
and honourable Arthurian society can be seen as representing
an external measure of chivalry by occasionally providing
Arthur's knights with opportunities to avenge the weak, restore
lands to wronged women, and generally harry their attackers
back into the forests.¹⁵² Such 'external' conflicts are seen
to have stimulating effects on chivalry; it is only the 'internal'
conflicts of the Round Table, such as the ones between Palomydes
and Trystram, Trystram and Launcelot, Launcelot and Lesorak,
and the Orkneys and Dysaden which constitute a real threat to
the stability of Malory's Arthurian society.

The fact that such conflicts usually seem to come about
by accident in no way lessens the seriousness of their tragic
potential. To diverge from this point for a moment, Vinaver is
surely right in what he says of the structure of the tragic
action in the 'Morte':

...at no point does it appear fortuitous; it arises
not from the accidents of human life, nor from the
momentary weaknesses of the protagonists, but from
the depths of their noblest passions, from the
uncomprising sincerity of their devotion to a chosen
aim. ¹⁵³
But the impact of the tragedy comes from the dramatic illusion of 'the accidents of human life', just as in the isolated examples in the 'Trystan' referred to above. As readers can see how the events which lead to tragedy in the *Morte Darthur* have apparently been constructed by Malory; but within the fiction itself, his characters are continually shown to be in states of shock and fear at what they have done, or nearly done, to one another. The balance between the reciprocal qualities of loyalty and betrayal is central to Malory's presentation of his Arthurian society, and it is in the single combats he narrates in such numbers that this balance is most clearly visible.

Taken all together, these combats are very significant episodes in their dramatic and thematic implications for the major action in the *Morte Darthur* and the chivalry of Malory's Arthurian society.

To see the Round Table knights as 'the inspired monomaniacs in Malory's pages who fight their way with a sort of aimless obstinacy through a political vacuum'¹⁵⁴ as Arthur Ferguson has described them is to approach the *Morte Darthur* from an angle so literal as to ignore this significance which comprises a major aspect of Malory's writing.

**Judicial Fights in the Morte Darthur and the Subversion of Chivalry in Malory's Arthurian Society.**

In his article 'The Duel of Chivalry in Malory's Book XIX',¹⁵⁵ Ernest York discusses the judicial fights in the *Morte Darthur* as reflections of historical legal practices. He finds nine examples eight of which concern pleas of land and murder, and are similar to 'duels of law' in medieval reality. In the case of the combat between Launcelot and Melyagaine however, York
suggests that this is nearer in form and terminology to a historical 'duel of chivalry', and that Malory's reference to the 'Frenyshe bookes' is misleading since he was obviously recalling an old English legal tradition. The special interest of the duel of chivalry is that it concerned charges of treason, and in the *Morte Darthur* this is what Malory points out Guenevere has committed by her adultery. Apart from the intrinsic interest of this article, it serves to highlight the very close identification between the activity of fighting and Malory's presentation of truth and justice in the *Morte Darthur*. All fighting in Malory's Arthurian society can be shown to be of a generally judicial nature, whether it takes the public form of battle, tournament or joust, or the initially more private form of single combat. However, such validity for Malory does not depend directly on a moral standard of absolute truth, but on the Round Table's own relative standard of chivalry. So although what is asserted by prowess as being 'right' in Malory's Arthurian society is generally shown to be supported by other kinds of 'evidence', judgement is by this relative standard. For example, in Arthur's early battles Malory shows how the king's cause is supported by the Church, tradition and destiny as being 'right'; and in Leuncelot's encounters with unchivalrous characters in his adventures of the third tale, Malory makes it plain that his hero's prowess is directly linked with his goodness so that his victories are 'right' morally as well as chivalrously.

But when this has been said, although trials by combat are decided from the visible standard of prowess in the *Morte Darthur*, the results of such combats are not by implication necessarily
divorced from truth. When Launcelot manages to establish a verdict of Guenever's innocence in his duel with Mellygansonce in the seventh tale, the dramatic point of the episode depends on the knowledge of her real guilt Malory previously has given his readers. No such point could be made unless judiciary fights earlier in the Morte Darthur were shown to accord with the facts of the situations undergoing such tests. Some discussion of this point now follows.

With the rapid development during the 'Launcelot' and 'Gareth' of a wider awareness of Round Table chivalry as something more than the physical activity of fighting, Malory suggests that the relationship between truth and prowess is very close in his Arthurian society. The qualities of character embodies in Malory's Launcelot, and summarised eventually in Ector's threnody in the 'Morte', have been found to be largely reproduced in the Gareth of Malory's fourth tale. During the fifth tale, the main opposition between the Round Table and the unchivalrous world of Cornwall, whose knights are reputed to fight so badly, is that 'the honour of bothe courtes be nat lyke'. This is chiefly illustrated by the fact that Malory's King Mark is shown to be a liar and a traitor, whereas his Arthur is always 'the fleure of kyngis'.

The 'Quest' obliquely confirms that from a Christian viewpoint, truth is a fundamental aspect of the Round Table's chivalry. Bors's judiciary fight to restore a lady's lands to her in this sixth tale is a good example of what is shown to be right and true being borne out by superior prowess, and there are similar, although less directly presented cases in other parts of the Morte Darthur. Altogether, there is no instance in
Malory's first six tales of a character who is shown to be right and chivalrous being defeated by one who is plainly wrong and simply, unchivalrous: 'right is might' and 'might is right', as far as Malory's Round Table characters are concerned.

The situations Malory shows arising from the illicit love affair between Launcelot and Guenevere in the seventh tale project the relationship between truth and its expression in fighting in a different light, as has been discussed already. It becomes apparent that what is best is not necessarily what is right or true. Early on, Bors tells Guenevere that he expects Launcelot would defend her whatever the facts of a situation: 'For he wolde nat a fayled you in your ryght nether in yours wronge'. He restates this opinion in the 'Morte', where he is found urging his uncle for the sake of his honour, to defend the queen whatever the facts of the case, 'whether ye ded ryght othir wronge'. There is, then, the admitted possibility that prowess can (and in this emergency, must) be used to contradict the truth for other ends which are felt for several reasons of honour and chivalry and social expediency to be more important and hence 'right'. Yet not all the Round Table characters appear to realise this. In the charge of murder, Mador brings against Guenevere, of which Malory makes it clear from the start that she really is innocent, circumstances appear to weigh heavily against her at first, and many knights are said to have 'grote suspesion unto the quene'. Malory shows that Bors is openly reluctant to defend Guenevere in Launcelot's absence, fearing that the Round Table will be further incensed at the apparent abuse of justice his championing her will suggest. But when Launcelot eventually arrives and fights Mador, and defeats him, 'the air is cleared, and there is no further alarm cast on
the queen. Justice has been seen to be done, and its verdict is soon verified by Senyea's making known the facts of the case.

This is a dramatic episode with rapidly mounting tensions, and Guenever's vindication by Launcelot's superior prowess is the final climactic testimony Malory offers that in his Arthurian society, what is proved true by fighting should be true in fact. While Round Table prowess is a true reflection of all the qualities of honest chivalry, such judiciary fights are infallible. The flaw in the system is that when prowess does not demonstrate actual truth, there is no way in which the Round Table characters can know this. This suspicion has room to grow, as Malory says in the seventh tale. The only active alternative to a judiciary fight is the one Arthur takes in the 'Morte', when he brushes aside the conventional formalities of proof, satisfied by his nephews' report, and declares war on Launcelot. When Launcelot repeats his performance with his more violent opponent, Melyaguna, his prowess is known by readers and some of the Round Table characters to establish what is false as true. From now on, fighting in Malory's Arthurian society by implication represents a subversion of what he has consistently presented as Round Table chivalry, even though kinsmen continue to support one another. Since she is technically innocent of the charge Melyaguna brings, Launcelot is not wholly wrong in defending the queen and it is a laudable mark of his loyalty to her that he would have done so in any circumstances. Chivalry requires Launcelot to behave as he does, and it is to his credit that he does so. This is the angle from which Malory consistently presents the matter.
Mellyagaunce himself is a shabby character rather than a villainous one, clearly a traitor to Arthur and Launcelot, (as the queen tells him) since he, too, is a knight of the Round Table in Malory's version of the story. By comparison, Launcelot appears blameless; even though his personal betrayal of the king is presented by Malory as a fact, it is implied that this is less serious a matter than the public strife among the fellowship Mellyagaunce causes. Launcelot's warning to his opponent that 'God well have a stroke in every battle', need not be interpreted as dramatic irony on Malory's part in view of the battles which eventually go against Launcelot himself, since Mellyagaunce gets what he deserves for his shockingly anti-social behaviour. Although his death is expedient it is clearly not necessary, for Launcelot has already defeated him. Yet it is presented by Malory as a just death. Mellyagaunce is a traitor and is proved a weaker fighter than Launcelot, although the latter fights severely handicapped as a chivalrously 'large proffir'. to his opponent. As it is, the queen is handsomely vindicated, and the private quarrel between Launcelot and Mellyagaunce over her is thus finally ended. But while Malory certainly cannot be seen to imply any criticism of Launcelot through this episode, whatever he implies about Guenevere, it emerges from his treatment of it that he has in effect divorced truth from justice, and so made judiciary fighting into an anti-social weapon in his Arthurian society.

Now it no longer is a straightforward activity to defend and assert what is right and chivalrous, but to maintain the appearances of this in a state of social threat, despite contrary evidence. Significantly, fighting becomes increasingly
aggressive and ambiguous in the seventh and eighth tales.

The uneasy state of affairs in Arthur's court comes to a sudden head in the 'Morte' when, the facts being out at last, the king declares his intention of punishing Launcelot and Guenevere on his nephew's evidence, without the formality of a trial by combat. This makes it plain that the division between truth and justice through combat is now openly recognised within Malory's Arthurian society, and regarded as intolerable. Arthur accordingly ignores appearances of loyalty and truth which Malory shows he had gratefully encouraged Launcelot to make in the queen's two previous trials. Fighting in the 'Morte' is an inversion of all the chivalrous values it represents earlier in the Morte Darthur, and becomes the means of asserting self-interest, treachery, lies and vengeance. The central conflict between Launcelot and Gawayne illustrates the disintegration of the Round Table and rapidly supersedes the legal issues of the queen's adultery and treason. It has been shown how honour and truth have nothing to do with this personal struggle which eventually results in two single combats between the former friends while the assembled forces look on. Gawayne's frantic obsession to fight Launcelot to the death is the final expression of all that is unchivalrous in Malory's Arthurian society. By comparison, Launcelot's own reluctance to fight at all seems all the more amazing in circumstances which are presented as being increasingly provoking to him; for in first refusing to take up arms and then only using them strongly enough to defend himself, he is shown to bewilder his followers and opponents alike. Malory shows that the king realises the true chivalric worth of his best knight.
through this forbearance who (as he tells the king) could sweep
his remaining knights from the field if he chose to go against
his principles. 172

What Malory presents in the 'Morte' is an ironic situation
in which the defendant who has done wrong, appears as a better
man than his accusers in every chivalrous sense. Although
fighting is seen to be divorced from truth in the 'Morte', the
qualities of Round Table chivalry embodied in Launcelot, and he
alone, paradoxically appear all the greater in the face of
Gawayne's over violent vengeance for Gareth. These qualities-
loyalty to the king and fellow knights, humility, courage,
endurance and an unflinching sense of honour - are evidently felt
by Malory to be far greater human achievements and more
significant considerations than merely legal technicalities of
right and wrong. By the end of the 'Morte', Launcelot virtually
appears as a martyr to the social disorder he cannot combat, since
chivalrous fighting is no longer the measure of justice and
government in Malory's Arthurian society. Neither can Launcelot
assert his innocence verbally, since without the supporting
power of the sword, his sworn word carries no weight in what
Malory shows in these final scenes is the total breakdown of
the honour system and hence the social contract in his Arthurian
society through the subdivision of chivalry. Yet paradoxically,
Launcelot appears more chivalrous than ever and seems to set
a standard of conduct higher than ever before. His own men
remark on this with anxiety, their leader's scruples apparently
threaten them all with destruction:

'Sir, your courteous will shende us all, and your courteous hath waked all thys sorrow; for and they thus overrynedeoure londis, they shall by proces brynge us all to noacht whyle we thus in holyss us hyde'. 173
Malory makes Arthur comment on this, and lament anew the loss of his fellowship through his conflict with this the best of his knights. It emerges from the last struggles in the 'Morte' that the activity of fighting suddenly has nothing to do with the real values of chivalry, any more than loyalty among men has much to do with the law and absolute truth. It is the ambiguous relationship of fighting to the other aspects of chivalry which results in this insidious process of disintegration and the final freeing of what is best from what is merely right.

The Dolorous Death and Departing: Malory's Final Vision of his Arthurian Society.

To the end of his work, Malory not only continued to assert loyalty among men as the first and most valuable value in his Arthurian society, but as the only one which can withstand the destructive forces of tragedy and outlast the institution of chivalry, if only by implication. It is the final episode of the 'Morte', the 'Dolorous Death and Departing', which contains this assertion, and finally corroborates the ideas on honour and chivalry which have been shown to permeate the Morte Darthur. It has been continually suggested in this study that Malory is never to be found putting forward ideas as if they were in any sense separable from the characters who dramatically embody them in his Arthurian re-creation. There is no 'philosophy' of loyalty, honour and chivalry as distinct from the action presented and related in the Morte Darthur. Malory was a vigorous, at times wryly ironic writer, and above all, an optimist who without inflating human nature or ignoring
its frequent pettiness and contradictions, could imagine glory as well as tragedy among men. However bad Aggravayne and Mordred appear to be in the 'Morte', they are quickly forgotten once they have served their turn in setting the tragedy in motion, and it is Gawayne, Arthur, Launcelot and Guenevere we remember as Malory finally shows them rising above their personal failings and the loss of the Round Table. While the effects of the tragedy cannot be undone or sweetened for the few characters who are left after Salisbury, and, (as Constantine is said to find,) it is impossible to re-form the Arthurian fellowship, the primary value of fraternal loyalty reappears through the confessions of Gawayne, Arthur and Launcelot, and in the devotion to their leader which bring Launcelot's kinmen together in their shattered world to serve him until his death. Malory's last (and original) glimpse of his Arthurian knights is of them riding away to do battle for the only noble cause left to them, against 'the auxcreantes, of Turkes'. Uncharacteristically, they die martyrs in the East 'upon a Good Pryday for Goddes sake', but as respectable warriors.

A view of life which sees love, loyalty and the desire for honour through chivalry as more enduring aspects of human nature than treachery, instability and jealousy cannot be thought of as solely tragic. The great truth asserted in the final episode of the 'Morte' is that while these forces destroy, they cannot finally deny the noblest aspects of human nature. It is the crown of Malory's achievement in the 'Morte' that he manages to present the pain and loss inherent in fall of the Round Table and the death of Arthur in ways which (as Vinaver points out)
makes his two sources complementary rather than models, and to rise above the story he was telling to reveal implications for his Arthurian society positively greater than those he found in his material. Vinaver explains how Malory did this in his attribution of the events in the 'Dolorous Departing' to the emotions of Leuncelot, whose character still epitomizes the noblest possibilities of his Arthurian society:

Having transferred the tragedy of Arthurian knighthood to this essentially human plane, Malory could only make it convincing by emphasizing those emotions which, in his conception, had brought it about—the passionate feudal loyalty of man to man, and the self-denying devotion of the knight-lover to his lady... 180

The two burials in this episode and the description of Leuncelot's own death comprise Malory's most original writing, and are the most emotionally significant scenes in the Morte Darthur in revealing the poignancy of this Arthurian society which, in the terms of its creation, cannot be great without also being tragic. This is the central conflict implicit in all the Morte Darthur and at last fully exposed in 'The Dolorous Death and Departing'. As Vinaver expresses this, 'the tragic complex... depends upon the contrast between the possible good and the inevitable evil: between the harmony that might have been and the human fatality that works against it'. 182 In his final vision of his Arthurian society, Malory separated loyalty from the action of fighting by showing its continuing validity in Leuncelot, who abandons the chivalric life after the death of the king. In so doing, he suggests that the institution of chivalry, physically characterised by the horses and armour the last Round Table knights forsake, 183 is indeed transient; but that the ideas of fraternal loyalty and respect for an honourable leader which give rise to chivalry in his
Arthuriar society are not. But since there is no separate idealistic existence for Round Table chivalry without the knights themselves here or earlier in the Morte Darthur the continuation of the fellowship by others is impossible. Such another heroic fraternity could not arise without Arthur, from whose establishment as king Malory began his drama, and with whose decease he must end it. Paradoxically, it finally appears that the Arthuriar society which gives rise to Round Table chivalry cannot survive without it, although in itself it is by nature more permanent. Malory draws no such overt conclusion, however. For him, 'The Dolorous Death and Departing' is the saddest part of his narrative, because of the death of Launcelot. Ector's threnody more than conventionally expresses this sense of irreparable loss of a character without whom Malory can imagine no lasting honour or loyalty or chivalry.
FOOTNOTES

NB: Throughout, underlined page numbers refer to Vinaver’s Commentary (pp.1345–1663)

CHAPTER I

1. J. Terence McCarthy, 'Order of Composition in the Nortli Earl'ban',

   YES (1971), pp.18–23.

   v. J. A. Bennett, review of The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, RSB,

   25(1949), 161.20; and G. S. Lewis, Studies in Medieval and

   Renaissance Literature, Oxford, 1966, p.106; and E. Vinaver, 'Sir

   Thomas Malory’ in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages,


2. The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, ed. Eugene Vinaver, Oxford,

   and ed. 1967 (hereafter referred to as Nortli Earl’ban), eg. p. 97.4, 99.15,

   102.7.


4. Ibid., pp. 1297.16.20–23; 1297.16.25–30; 1299.34.12–19; 1299.45.16–27;

   1300.46.22–24; 1301.51.6–15; 1302.54.17–20; 1302.54.33–40.

   1302.55.10; 1304.61.1–5; 1304.61.10; 1308.70.21–32; 1310.77.5–7;

   1314.98.5–9; 1315.127.1–8; 1339.128.12–15; 1341.131.15–16;

   1347.144.19–23; 1349.146.17–18; 1351.150.22; 1355.157.35–36;

   1355.158.2–13; 1375.191.20–21; 1376.194.8–10; 1376.199.7;

   1376.201.6–7; 1382.206.13–14; 1388.217.23–24; 1388.221.26–29;

   1392.222.15; 1403.242.13–14; 1405.244.17–19; 1454.661.32–33;

   1518.745.20–21; 1519.854.20–21; 1545.235.50–53; 1546.237.20–21;

   1601.1202.20–34; 1604.1203.1–4; 1605.1183.27–1284.11;

   1938.1192.22–27; 1939.1194.27–28; 1954.1217.1–9; 1957.1228.2–4;


5. Ibid., pp. 1288.13–56; 1297.16.25–30; 1297.17.1–2; 1299.16.6–8;

   1300.54.17–20; 1301.97.1–7; 1325.99.23–31; 1325.99.29–39;

   1332.114.7–9; 1332.118.15–16; 1349.146.17–18; 1349.147.1;

   1362.173.34–1759.179.18–19; 1393.209.10; 1407.216.17–18;

   1408.218.3–4; 1430.215.10–11; 1392.27.24–25; 1398.228.5;

   1398.228.16–17; 1391.139.1–4; 1417.231.26–262.19; 1484.573.1–13;

   1574.793.32–36; 1585.893.10; 1587.966.11–12; 1599.1230.20–34;

   1426.1185.27–1184; 1614.1192.27–19; 1636.1192.22–27; 1636.1202.

   52–1203.15.

6. J. George R. Stewart, 'English Geography in Malory’s Nortli Earl’ban',


   1286.12.12; 1304.12.5–6; 1298.16.6–8; 1236.15.1–4; 1309.35–36;

   23.22; 1297.17.21; 1304.61.6–7; 1327.102.23–24; 1327.116.9;

   1337.126.16–171.127.23; 1310.139.31–39; 1653.140.65–84;

   1658.166.25; 1658.166.35–168; 1693.109.6; 1509.109.14–15;

   1604.1093.3–13; 1636.1121.6–7; 1607.1124.27; 1608.1125.16–17;

   1646.1236.17–20; 1647.1238.22; 1612.233.6–8; 1652.1255.26–27;


10. Ibid. p. 185.9.31-10.4.
11. Ibid. p. 10.5-10; 1285-10.5-7, 6-10.
12. Ibid. p. 41.12-16.
14. Ibid. p. 1285.10.5-7
15. Ibid. p. 55.29-32. v. Lyly (Ophel), 'Chronology, Factual Consistency, and the Problem of Unity in Malory's, JEGP, LVII (1969), 57-75, in this and other apparently unfulfilled prophecies are noted.
17. Ibid. p. 344.7-11.
18. Ibid. p. 10.11-12.
21. Ibid. pp. 38.27-34. cf. 1296.38.27-34.
23. Ibid. pp. 224.6-10, 1147.30-32, 1175.31-33.
27. Ibid. p. 1164.8-17.
28. Ibid. p. 1175.25-1176.11.
29. Ibid. p. 1186,ff.
30. Mrs. Sehk discusses this use of the word 'cousin' in Malory; op. cit. When Malory indicates definite consanguinity in a modern sense he generally appends 'germane', eg. Werke, pp. 79.7, 148.15.
33. Ibid., p. 735:8-12.
34. Ibid., p. 662:29-31.
35. Ibid., p. 79:6-8.
37. Ibid., p. 125:32-34.
41. An exception occurs Ibid., p. 344:7-11, but there seems to be no particular narrative intention implied here.
42. v. Appendix I.
44. Ibid., p. 644:26-27.
47. Ibid., p. 149:4-11.
49. Ibid., p. 905:26-32, ff.
50. Ibid., p. 441:17-19, ff.
51. v. Appendices 1-VII.
52. v. Appendix I.
54. Ibid., p. 760.
55. Ibid., pp. 347-348.
56. Ibid., eg. p. 734:30-32.
60. Ibid., eg. p. 667:21, ff; infra pp. 31-35.
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<td>63</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Ibid, eg, p.1186.1-5.</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Ibid, eg, pp.266.25-267.23.</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Ibid, p.785.2-13 (NB. lines wrongly numbered in text).</td>
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<td>Ibid, eg, pp.773.16-19, 775.9-18, 830.6-10.</td>
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<td>Ibid, p.1259.3-22.</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Ibid, pp.90.9-10, cf, 973.18-20,ff.</td>
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<td>77</td>
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<td>79</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>Ibid, eg, p.831.20,ff.</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>Ibid, eg, pp.700.1-6, 716.9-13.</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>Ibid, eg, pp.337.18-20; 585.1-5; 1488.585.1-7.</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Ibid, pp.89-91, 944-945.20.</td>
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91. v. Appendices II, III & IV esp.
93. Ibid, pp.1012-1014.2.
95. Ibid, pp.459.16-25, 476.24-25; 636.24-637, 648.4-10.
97. Works, p.691.20-23.
106. Ibid, pp.1441.360.32-35; 34-35; cf.1621, 'It is Lancelot's loyalty to Guenevere...'.
108. Ibid, pp.1046.15-17, 1153.32-34, 1161-1165.
111. Ibid, p.1161.35-34.
113. Ibid, pp.1230.18-1232.10.
114. v. Appendix III.
117. Ibid., p. 943. 5-6.
118. Ibid., p. 1019. 22-23.
119. Ibid., p. 947. 5.
120. Ibid., p. 1420. 269-7-16.
121. Ibid., p. 830. 6-10.
122. Ibid., pp. 831. 20-832. 2.
123. Ibid., p. 1662. 1259. 9-21.
125. Ibid., p. 1204. 29-32.
126. V. Appendix IV.
128. Ibid., p. 1149. 8-9.
129. Ibid., pp. 151. 698. 22-700. 8.
130. Ibid., eg. p. 346. 25-32.
131. Ibid., p. 688. 11-19.
132. Ibid., eg. p. 603. 6-10.
134. Ibid., pp. 610. 31-611. 11.
135. Ibid., p. 1149. 10.
137. Ibid., eg. pp. 691. 27-34, 698-700, 716. 2-13.
138. Ibid., pp. 809. 30-810. 20.
139. Ibid., pp. 612. 28-30.
140. Ibid., pp. 663. 26-664. 9, 670. 13-25.
143. Exceptions include Pellinor and Torre, \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 101. 28, ff.; Bagdemagus and Nellyguaunce, 344. 22-23, 345. 16-19, 653. 1-6, 668. 30-32; Gawyne and Florens, 235-240; Launcelot and Galahad 1012-1013; the Duke of the South Marches and 6 sons, 174-175.

145. v. Appendix VII.

146. Works, eg. p. 144. 360. 32-35.


148. Ibid. eg. pp. 140. 24-25, 1114, 16-20.

149. Ibid. p. 1069. 11-12.


152. Ibid. pp. 211. 25-26, 223. 22-224. 1.


154. Ibid. p. 158. 11-13.

155. Ibid. p. 613. 7-9.

156. Ibid. p. 1104. 8-11.

157. Ibid. p. 663. 31-35.

158. Ibid. p. 670. 12-14.

159. Ibid. p. 1215. 20.

160. Ibid. p. 1239. 11-17.

161. Ibid. p. 91. 18-25.

162. Ibid. eg. p. 1252. 25.

163. Ibid. p. 1213, ff.

164. Ibid. p. 1230. 10-25, ff.

165. v. Appendix VIII.


170. Ibid, p. 392-6-16.
171. Ibid, eg. pp. 653-626.7.
175. Ibid, p. 385. 33-34.
177. Ibid, p. 396. 9-10.
181. Ibid, v.n. 166, supra.
183. Ibid, pp. 594. 32-599. 5; 608. 28-609. 12.
188. Ibid, pp. 503. 25-504. 15.
190. Ibid, p. 678. 22-23.
194. Ibid, eg. pp. 1071. 22, 1112. 15 (exception, 557. 34.)
196. Ibid, 1170.3-10.
197. Ibid, pp. 808.8-9, cf. 1083.22.
200. Ibid, eg. Salien and Balan, pp. 89-91; Gawyne and Uwayne, 944-945.18; Arthur and Mordred, 1237-1240.
204. Ibid, pp. 1249.30-1250.4, 1254.22-35, ff.
205. Ibid, p. 245.16-23.
208. Ibid, p. 716.34-36.
212. Ibid, p. 411.6-8.
213. Ibid, p. 784.32-785.13 (NB. lines wrongly numbered in text).
218. Ibid, eg. p. 833.3-5.
221. Ibid, p. 1204.5-7.
223. Ibid, p. 1197.11, ff.
224. Ibid, p. 1197.32-34.
225. Ibid., p.1169-9, ff.
227. Ibid., p.1192.16-19
228. Ibid., p.1172.23-24.
229. v. Appendix IX
230. v. chapter 4 of this study.

232. v.Appendix XII.

234. Works, p.268.4-5.
235. Ibid., p.460.1-3.
236. Ibid., p.735.8-15.
237. Ibid., p.744.11-13
238. Ibid., p.744.22-30.
239. Ibid., pp.1187.26-27; 1191.30-31; 1192.9-11.16-19; 1197.6-10; 1214.10-13; 1215.30-35.
240. Ibid., pp.856.18-19, cf.1152.1-3.
241. Ibid., p.1051.31-33.
242. Ibid., p.1056.33-35.
244. Ibid., p.571.16.
245. Ibid., p.1163.22.
246. Ibid., pp.557.24-559, 617.6-16.
247. Ibid., p.97.29-30.
248. Ibid., p.1065.22-25.
249. Ibid., p.1066.24-1067.2.
250. Ibid., p.1069.31-1066.4.
251. Ibid., p.1163.22-25.
252. Ibid., eg pp. 1185-1184.5, ff.
255. Ibid, pp.1187.35-1188.36, 1198-1199.4.
257. Ibid, p.1199.11-25.
258. Ibid, p.1187.28-34.
259. Ibid, p.1169.27.
260. Ibid, p.1046.15-31
262. v-Appendix X.
264. Ibid, p.268.4-6.
266. Ibid, p.299.30.
267. Ibid, p.337.3.3-35.
270. Ibid, eg., pp.761.26, ff., 1110.32, ff.
274. Ibid, p.1250.11-17.
276. Ibid, p.1176.1-11
278. Ibid, p.1174.32.
284. Ibid, p.91.24-25.
285. Ibid, pp.44.16-19, 52.1-3, 79.3-6.
287. v.Appendices XIII & XIV.
288. v.Appendix XV.
289. Works, pp. 1286.12.1-7, 1288.17.37, 1292.45.16-27.
293. Ibid, p.613.7-9.
297. Ibid, pp.635.10-14, 636.31-637.5.
299. Ibid, p.126.5-14.
307. Ibid, pp.1240.12-25, 1242.6-18. v. also R.M. Lamiansky,
'Arthur's Final Companions in Malory's Morte Darthur'; Tulane Studies in English, XI; (1961), 5-19; also R.Grady Morgan,
'The Role of Morgan le Fay', Southern Quarterly,II (1963-64), 150-168.
V. Myra Olstead, 'Morgan le Fay in Malory's Morte Darthur',
BBIAS, XX (1967), 126-138; Roger Sherman Loomis,
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<td>309.</td>
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<td>310.</td>
<td>Ibid., p. 1081.23, ff.</td>
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<td>311.</td>
<td>Ibid., pp. 333, passim, 336.</td>
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<td>312.</td>
<td>Ibid., pp. 794.314.29-315.20.</td>
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<td>313.</td>
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<td>314.</td>
<td>Ibid., p. 38.3-9, ff.</td>
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<td>315.</td>
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<td>316.</td>
<td>Ibid., eg. p. 826.14-16.</td>
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<td>317.</td>
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<td>318.</td>
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<td>324.</td>
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<td>325.</td>
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<td>326.</td>
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<td>331.</td>
<td>Ibid., eg. pp. 271.24-272.11, 688.20, ff.</td>
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<td>332.</td>
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<td>Ibid., pp. 148.33-149.7, ff.</td>
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337. Ibid, eg., p. 396.26-32, ff.
340. Ibid, pp. 67.7-18, 68.16-69.36.
341. Ibid, pp. 362.9-11, 568.10-20
342. Ibid, p. 112.4-10, ff.
345. Ibid, pp. 779.25-780.9.
347. Ibid, pp. 1067.30-1068.5.
352. Ibid, p. 1120.11-12.
355. Ibid, pp. 166-172.31; 1360.169.16-24, ff; 1361.170.18-32,
      1362.171.7-172.31.
356. Ibid, p. 120.20-23.
357. Ibid, eg. pp. 396.27, ff; 421.17, ff; 449.20, ff.
364. Ibid, p.1119.31-1120.9.
366. v. Chapter 3 of this study.
368. Ibid., p.270.31-32.
369. Ibid., pp.1408; 1420; 270.15-271.4.
371. Ibid, eg., pp.804.3-806.8, 1045.26-1047.11, 1090.20-1091.21, 1098.3-8.
376. Ibid, pp.743.6-745; 486-487; 412.29-415.35.
380. Ibid, v. Appendix XIV.
382. Ibid, pp.555-6, 639.11-641.
387. Ibid, pp.915.31-919.17.
389. Ibid, pp.942.5-18, 946.4-947.3; 1025.9-17, ff.
390. Ibid, pp.963.34-964.12, ff.
392. v. Janiansky, 'Malory's Steadfast Bore' (op.cit.)
402. *Infr.,* p.106.


449. v. *Appendix XV*


456. Ibid, p.125.16.
458. Ibid, eg.pp.16.11-12, 35; 76.12, 116.25-26, 149.24-25.
461. Ibid, p.98.34-37.
462. Ibid, p.1226.16-17.
466. Ibid, pp.872.22-26, 1067.3-5, ff.
468. Ibid, pp.1125.20-1126.2.
469. Ibid, pp.1237.29-1238.4.
470. Ibid, pp.271.8-9, 432.30-32, 1126.12-34.
472. Ibid, pp.37.29-38.2.
CHAPTER 2

1. v.n.1, chapter 1.

2. Works, seq.pp.8.21(honour and profit); 68.12(honour and kyndness); 101.28(dishonour for your worship); 107.19(without mercy ye dishonoured); 129.14-15(I shall honour the); 131.13(does full worshipfully); 131.14(for your worship); 149.28(and save my worshop); 159.16-17(a kyghte shalte be so dishonoured); 164.7(God sende you honour and worship); 179.7(comede say but lydest in worship of hym); 187.11(remember our couse worship); 187.21(we shall have warre and worship); 214.14(worship to hym); 219.19(honour and worship); 253.5(armes and worship); 253.13(worship and honour); 287.24-25(had the gretteseste name of any kyghte of the worlde, and moste he was honoured); 301.6(worshipfully rewarde hym); 334.7(I am shased that this noble kyght is thus dishonoured); 334.8-9(for your worship); 334.9-5(to say the worship that the heede kyght sayde by hym); 350.6(I shall do you honour); 349.6-7(he shall have the honour); 376.36(one of the fastest kyghtenes); 381.22(one of the soote renoues kyghtes); 381.23-24(whyne and name that thou haste); 381.27(to me moste worship); 381.29-31(to gret worship on thy body...to be worshipfully proved upon thy body); 393.20(shame to say unto dishonour); 425.16-19(well ye have me shamed...I wolde nat your dysonour); 443.35-34(there is no gentle courtes); 450.2(we say me dishonoured); 451.4-5(honourable); 460.2-25(kende kyght is worshiped); 466.25(recoverde his remoue); 465.7(slayme or dishonourd my lady); 490.2(eve hym dishonoure); 534.4-5(sayde kyght worship for the honour that he daed); 554.7(whyne and renoued); 555.3(they was kyght dishonoued to); 555.50(sayde all the worship that was right be); 557.34(whyne and dishonoure); 578.29(ye ar disponed shamefully); 578.19(kyght of worship moste); 590.3(shamefulliest kyght); 590.12-13(off hym speketh shame, and of her grete worship); 591.29-30(ye ar nat of worship.......ye hate all men of worship); 594.7(honorable kyght); 606.29(gave sir desayme the honoure); 606.10(put hym to such a dishonoure); 633.20(wynne suche worship and honoure); 634.8-9(wynne worship from me and put me to dishonoure); 651.26(honoure the and love them); 728.2-3(a man of grete counte and honoure); 728.23-24(ye ar nat so fynye to have worship but I wolde se fynye encrease youre worship); 752.12-13(tho men of worship that they be, the more worship shall we wynne); 741.5-6(the honour and the gret); 747.21(all that he seyde was for your worship); 747.24(wynne all the honoure from you); 753.24-25(now am I dishonoured); 753.32754.1(tho honour and the gret); 761.16-18(hit well be shame unto us...to be dishonoured); 762.4(loste all the worship that I wane); 762.12-13(I thank you of your honoure that ye wolde gret me); 764.21(Trystram had there lest disonour), 764.26-26(then shall he
never wynee worship; he shall be dishonoured twice); 806.16(grete synne and yourself grete dishonoure); 839.4-6 (bare the breaute and renowne...manly and worshipfully); 841.11-12(the dishonoure shall be synne); 867.10-11(hit shall be unto us a grete honoure); 896.1-2(brongue me unto grete dishonoure); 965.34(say you dishonoure); 1012.25(sayde grete worship of hir); 1052.15(by whom we were up borne and honoured); 1064.2(we love hym and honoure hym); 1056.35(thys ye dishonoure to you); 1073.16(reselve the honour and the prye); 1073.24-25(I take no forse of none honoure); 1079.1-5(the moste honorablyst knight of the world and the man of moste worship); 1114.17-28(worshipfully have ye done;...done to hymselff); 1119.20-21(fyelenes of naturer and grete dishonor); 1119.23-28(men of worship...worshipfull men...worship in arraye...reserve the honoure); 1122.11-13(dishonoure the noble kyng...shameste all knyghte and thyselffe and me); 1122.22(joustete thy worship to dishonoure); 1124.30-31(now am I shamed for ever...rescue that noble lady from dishonour); 1128.26(ye have the hurte and the dishonour); 1129.10(shamefull noyse); 1129.15(shamefull salandir); 1172.20(more youre worship that); 1172.24(thynge that shalde dishonoure you or my bloode); 1187.20(magre and dishonoure); 1232.9(moste famous knyght of the worlde).

v. also A Concordance to the Works of Sir Thomas Malory, compiled by Tomomi Kato, Tokyo, 1974.


6. v. Appendix I

7. Works, pp.100.35-101.2.

8. Ibid, p.100.31-32.


10. Ibid, p.615.3-11.


17. Ibid, p.300.8, ff.

19. Ibid, p. 65.6-9
27. Ibid, p.375.23-24
33. Ibid, p.1091.7-8
34. Ibid, pp.1091.2-5, 11-12
35. Ibid, pp.1098.16,ff; 1103.24-26; 1137.14,ff; 1153.25-26.
37. Ibid, p.1093.9-11, ff.
38. Ibid, pp.1600, passim 1605.
39. Ibid, pp.1079.24-25; 1602.1077.24-1081, 1078.5-6
41. Works, p.1050.18-20, 1597.1049.24-1051.6.
44. Ibid, p.1054.4.
45. Ibid, pp.1243.4-10, 1252.8-29, ff.
46. Ibid, pp.1256.21-1257.11.
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<td>53</td>
<td>Ibid, p.1187.28-34.</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>Ibid, p.826.14-16.</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Ibid, p.808.3-8,ff.</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Ibid, p.315.15-16.</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>Ibid, p.315.10-12.</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>v. chapter 3, of this study, p.188, ff.</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>74</td>
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78. v. chapter 4, of this study.
81. Ibid., p. 698.23-25.
82. Ibid., p. 717.8-10.
83. Ibid., p. 717.11-13.
85. Ibid., p. 685.7-9.
86. Ibid., eg. pp. 254.6-7.
87. Ibid., eg. p. 47.4.
88. Ibid., eg. p. 729.9.
89. Ibid., eg. p. 1088.35.
90. Ibid., eg. p. 698.24.
91. Ibid., eg. p. 320.18.
92. Ibid., eg. p. 132.27.
94. Works, p. 294.5-16.
95. Ibid., p. 294.17-21.
96. Ibid., p. 340.24-25.
97. Ibid., p. 100.13-14.
98. Ibid., p. 100.17-20; 1326.100.13-20.
99. Ibid., p. 459.15.
100. Ibid., p. 459.1-2.
101. Ibid., eg. p. 357.3-4.
102. Ibid., eg. p. 518.13.
103. Ibid., eg.p.969.25.
104. Ibid., eg.p.428.4.
106. Ibid., p.640.28.
110. Ibid., p.667.22, ff.
111. Ibid., p.516.5-8.
112. Ibid., p.446.27-30, 484.18-22, 1469.484.18-22.
113. Ibid., eg.p.594.4-12.
114. Ibid., p.799.2-4.
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<td>249</td>
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<td>230</td>
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   ‘rased of’ eg. pp. 656.3, 661.31, 666.9-10, 667.17, 737.7*, 1072.28, 1111.35.
   ‘com taryurs as hit had bene thorndir’, eg. pp. 304.13-14, 531.32*, 555.20, 556.6, 1103.11.
   ‘clyve hym to the navyll’, etc., eg. pp. 29.21, 84.8-9, 106.9, 129.12, 208.23, 270.5-6, 271.17, 34.37; 302.9-10.
   ‘the bloode com coute at his erys, nose, and mouth’, etc., eg. pp. 145.6-7, 263.16-17, 659.21-22, 616.28-29; blood on the ground, eg. pp. 36.19-20, 89.28-29, 142.30, 267.15-17, 382.19, 409.19-20, 1193.33-34.
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   550.21, 568.23-24, 563.17-18; also ‘dressed hys skylede’ and ‘his speare’, eg. 753.21, ‘femurrd his speare’, 238.18-19; ‘gaff hym suche a buffette’, eg. 306.7, 208.22-23, 323.2-3, 355.2, 469.33-34, 494.31-32, 647.17, 659.3; ‘horse and man wente to the arthe’, eg. 277.22-23, 666.34, 727.27-28, 731.20-21, 736.2-3, 752.28-29, ‘walop’, eg. 115.4, 238.6, 275.24, 277.20, 563.22; ‘ad storedys’, eg. 305.28-29, 409.14, 416.17, 775.1, 1215.29, 1217.18.

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### APPENDIX I

#### BROTHERS IN THE Morte Darthur

(mentioned or present together, or related in Glossary)

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<td>40.6-8, 70-75, 11, 76.29-31, 78.15-25, 89.7-21, 77, 32.6-15, 855.3-9.</td>
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<td>Black, Green, Red, Blue Knights (Gararde, Perimones/Fertholoepe, Ironsye, Farnaunte of India)</td>
<td>305.4-307.7, 309.6-310.5, 314.16-21, 317.32-37, 319.11-14, 336.10-20, 338.4-23, 342.22-343.5, 345.7-10, 347.11-17, 350.13, 361-62, 1120.29-30, 1123.5, 1150.29-32, 1177.29-30.</td>
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Brenyse Saunse Pité, Bartelot
Bryan of the Foreste, Sourlace
of the Foreste
Garados of the Dolowres Towre,
Tarquin
Dames, Ogthlakes
Duke of South Marches' six sons
Dynadan, Brunor (La Cote Male
Tayle)
Edwarde, New of the Rede Castell
Edwarde of Carnarvan, Priamus,
Dynas
Edward, Sadok of Orkney
Elyas de Gomeret, Car de Gomeret
Frol, Bellysunce le Orgulus
Garaunte, Gye (?)
Galchayd, Galyhoddyn
Gawayne's sons
Goodwayne, Gawdelyne
Harmanse, Hermynde of the Red City
Helyus, Helake
Hernor's three sons
Launcelot du Lake, Ector de Marys
Lucan, Bedverre
Mark, Bodwyne
Maurel, Moren
Nero, Reveyn
Orkney Brothers
Perceval, Aggloval, Turnor, Lamerak, Torre

Palesmydes, Segsarydes, Saphir

Fellam, Garlon

Playne de Fora and Five Brothers

Salyvaunte, Blyaunte

Seven Brothers of North Wales

Seven Brothers of Maiden Castle

Taulari, Taulas

Tirry, Lavayne

v. Appendix IV


82.22–23, 84.22–26.


819.20, 830.14–17.

1212.9–15.

889.9–900.

175.21–23.

1067.13–18, 1078.13–16, 1089.9–11.
APPENDIX II

THE ORKNEY BROTHERS

A) GAWAYNE AND AGGRAVAYNE

41.15-16, 339.1-2, 340.2-6, 344.7-8, 585.31-32, 606.23-608.24,
691.20-23, 716.10-11, 1045.20-21, 1092.3-4, 1108.14-15, 1110.7-24,
1161.15-1163.5, 1175.20-1176.11, 1199.7-10, 1200.15-17.

NB. On no occasion is Gawayne alone with his brother Aggravayne and they only converse directly once, 1161.24-1162.26.

B) GAWAYNE AND GAHERYS

41.15-16, 102.10-103.25, 265.10-12, 339.1-2, 340.26, 344.7-8, 363.13,
386.17-18, 570.4-7, 579.23-24, 611.34-35, 613.9-11, 659.13-16,
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1198.27-29, 1199.7-10, 1200.16.

C) GAWAYNE AND GAERETH

41.15-16, 295.31-34, 296-298.6, 299.27-28, 317.6-11, 325.30-33,
329.25-29, 339.-340, 344.349.29-35, 351.21-25, 352.1-5, 356.31-358.32,
360.32-36, 606-608, 699.1-9, 1088.6-19, 1109-1113.15, 1162.28-33,
1176.23, ff., 1186.10-12, 1189.11-15, 1191.12-15, 1199.8-10,
1200.16-17, 1215.13-14.

D) GAWAYNE AND MORRED

463.31-32, 536.9-14, 585.31-32, 606-608, 716.9-11, 1092.3-4,
1108.14-1111, 1161-1163.5, 1175.30, 1231.27-1232.4, 1234.18,
1250.10-16.

NB. On no occasion are Gawayne and Mordred alone and they converse directly once only, 1161-1162.
APPENDIX III

LAUNCELOT DU LAKE AND HECTOR DE MARYS

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831.14-832.28, 941.15-17, 942.20-943.6, 947.4-55, 1019.17-31,
1047.12-14, 1071.21-1072.33, 1112.14-19, 1148.4-11, 1170.11-12,
1190.23, ff., 1204.29-32, 1254.23-26, 1259.3-21.
APPENDIX IV

PENNINOR'S SONS

NB. Because these brothers do not come together very much examples are listed chronologically instead of by groups.

Perceval, Lamerak  51.30-52.1
Aggloval, Tor, Perceval, Lamerak  344.10-11, 346.25-32.
Lamerak, Tor  488.25-26, 582.27-30, 602.19-603.10.
Lamerak, Tor, Aggloval, Dornar, Perceval  610.21-611.14.
Lamerak, Dornar, Aggloval  667.8-28.
Lamerak, Perceval  688.11-19.
Aggloval, Perceval (Lamerak)  809-812.19.
Perceval, Aggloval  814.15-815.11.
Perceval, (Lamerak,) Aggloval  829.16-19.
Aggloval, Dornar, Tor, Lamerak, Perceval  1149.4-11.
Aggloval, Tor  1177.26.
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GAWAYNE AND HIS OTHER KINDRED

GAWAYNE AND HIS SONS:
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Levell: 224.8-9, 1164.14, 1147.30-32, 1175.31-33, 1176.1-11.
Gyngalyn: 494.28-30, 1147.30-32, 1164.11.

GAWAYNE AND HIS COUSINS:
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Sadok, Edward: 753-38-34.

GAWAYNE AND LOT:
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GAWAYNE AND HIS KINSMEN:
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Morgan le 510.25-512.7.
Fay:
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LAURICELT'S KINSMEN

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APPENDIX VII

ARTHUR AND GAWAIN

APPENDIX VIII

MARK AND TRYSTRAM

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APPENDIX IX

HOW BONDS ARE FORMED AMONG NON-KINSMEN IN THE NORTHERN KING ARTHUR

including all major references to alliances formed with kinship groups (recorded in sections A-N for cross-reference)

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384-390.  
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Aggraveyne, Gaherys, Gawayne,  
Uwayne; Aggloval, Tor, Percival,  
Lamorak; Launcelot, Lyonell, Ector,  
Bors, Beloberys, Blanour, Galuyhodyne,  
Caluyhod, etc.; Trystram, Dynas, Saduk;  
Dynamidon, La Cote Male Talyse, Sagramoure,  
Dodynas; King of Ireland, King  
Angwyouns, King of Scotland, King  
Carados, King Uryens, King Bagdemagus,  
Mellyagyouns, Galahalte, etc., Braundyles,  
Melyot, Uwayne les Avoutres, Petypees,  
Golake; Malegryne, Bryan de les Iles;  
Cruscer, Crumwerson; Carados, Tarquin;  
Arnolde, Gaueter; Kay, Bedvere Paresante,  
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Palomydes, Gaherys  
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Triystram, Persides; Bleobers, Gaherys  
Brandiles, Dagonet  
Newgen, Harleuse; Hervis, Vaynes,  
Peryne  
Ector, Perceval, Hary  
Trystram, Palomydes, Dynamidon; Galuyhodyne,  
Gawayne, Uwayne, Sagramoure, Dodynas  
Uwayne, Luycan  
Trystram, Gareth, Dynamidon  
Perceval, Launcelot, King of North  
Wales, King with 100 Knights, Galahalte  
Aggraveyne, Mordred, Collgrevaunce,  
Mador, Gyngalyne, Melyot, Petipees,  
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Carresalyne, Florence, Lovell.  
22 allies of Launcelot  
Bellyas, Segrwydes, Gryfflet, Braundiles,  
Aggloval, Tor; Gaueter, Gyllmer; Dames,  
Raynolde; Frisamus, Kay, Drymunt; Lambegus,  
Herynede; Pertolyp, Perymoynes.
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162, ff  Gawayne, Uwayne, Karhalt  F
199, ff  Arthur, Redvere, Kay  F
463, ff  Le Cote, Mordred  F
467, ff  Le Cote, Launcelet, Horveaus  F
497  Tristram, Keyhydneys, Governayle  F,N
505, ff  Palomydes, Keyhydneys  F
585, ff  Uwayne, Brandiles, Osanna, Uwayne les Adventuryes, Aggravayne, Mordred: Dynadan.
704  Berriaunte, Segmarydes  A
720, ff  Trystram, Palomydes, Dynadan, Garoth  F
809  Gawayne, Uwayne, Sagamoure, Agglovale, Percosval and 18 knights.
816-817  Percosval, Ector  N
892  Gawayne, Agglovale, Gryffiet  F
941-942, ff  Gawayne, Ector.
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<td>Arthur, etc., Launcelot: Palomydes</td>
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<td>607-608</td>
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<td>696</td>
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<td>698-700</td>
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745.16-26  Launcelot, Arthur
745.4-55  Trystram Palomydes
775.26-776  a knight, Palomydes.
826  Launcelot, Castor.
832.18-833  Arthur, Guenevere, etc., Launcelot
855.2-4  Arthur, Guenevere, etc., Bors Lyonell
867-871  Launcelot, Arthur
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941.6-9, ff.  Botor, Gawayne
1020.7-14  Launcelot, Bagdemagus
1036.11, ff.  Arthur, etc., Bors
1058  Arthur, Launcelot
1092  Arthur, Launcelot
1097-1098  Arthur, Launcelot
1140.11-13  Arthur, Launcelot
1153  Arthur, Urry, Lavayne, Launcelot
1162  Gawayne, Launcelot, the Orkneys
1163  Arthur, Launcelot
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1230-1232.10  Gawayne, Launcelot
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<td>1163.20-25</td>
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<td>Arthur, Gawyne, Launcelot</td>
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<td>434-17, ff</td>
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298. 5-6, 299. 27-31, 316. 4-7, 326. 19-25, 337. 30-35, 340. 26-34,
416. 14-419. 10, 511. 4-16, 557. 6-10, 670. 13-15, 700. 1-8, 809. 15-19,
941. 15-25, 1020. 7-11, 1071. 9-17, 1077. 8-1080. 18, 1081. 33-34,
1082. 17-27, 1084. 19-18, 1092. 1-3, 1110. 7-9, 1111. 16-23, 1112. 32-1113. 15,
1161. 19-1162, 1162. 1174. 30-1176. 11, 1185. 19-31, 1184. 33-1186. 12,
1187.-1202 passim, 1213. 24-31, 1214. 20-1221, 1230. 18-1232. 15, passim,
1234. 16-19, 1249-1251. 7;

GAWAYNE AND ECTOR DE MARLY:

277-278, 286. 21-27, 556. 34-557. 6, 941-949, 981. 17-982. 17, 1020. 22.

GAWAYNE AND GALAHAD: (mostly very indirect)

862. 10-15, 890. 12-892. 16, 941. 17-25, 946. 948. 24-29, 981-982,
1020. 20-25.

GAWAYNE AND LYONHEIL AND BORS:

206, passim-241, 556. 34-557. 10, 1020. 20-23, 1193. 6-17,
1214. 20-1215. 2. (1249. 30-1250. 2, Bors and Gawayne only).
APPENDIX XI

GAWAYNE AND PELLINOR'S KINDRED

MB. There is no occasion when Gawayne meets all Pellinor's five
sons together.

GAWAYNE AND PELLINOR:
77.18-22, 81.16-18, 102.12-13, 810.8-12.

GAWAYNE AND AGGLOVALE:
809.15-22.

GAWAYNE AND PERCEVAL

GAWAYNE AND LAMESAK:
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670.13-23, 688.8-10, 698.22-699.9. 716.2-11, 810.12-16,
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101.32-34, 120.11-13.
APPENDIX XII

LANCELOT AND ARTHUR

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274.7-8, 286.19-21, 297.15-20, 326.19-32, 336.29-28, 357.27-29,
340.26-341.1, 344, 346.28-349.8, 404.22-23, 410.5-6, 459.31-460.5,
470.3-6, 475.14-26, 476.7-8, 490.14-16, 504.32-35, 518.21-27
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571.9-18, 593.23-594.21, 606.16-24, 607.32-34, 609.27-610.1
613.15-25, 615.20-32, 616.35-617.9, 618.15-19, 732.26-31
735.4-29, 741.19-25, 745.3-745.15, 746.16-21, 748.7-16, 748.25-28,
749.3-20, 756.20-758.25, 759.30-761.8, 829.32-33
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1150.35-1152.18, 1161.19-23, 1163-1164.4, 1166.1170.30-1171
1172.8-12.ffi., 1174.12-1175.33, 1183.11-1184.11, ff., 1186.13-31,
1187.23-1190.20, 1191.30-32, 1192.3-33, passim, 1202.28, 1213.8-23,
1215.26-1216.6, 1218.12-24, 1230.11-1232.15, 1234.16-19
1236.10-14, 1250.1-2, 1252.24-29, 1256.26-38.
### APPENDIX XIII

**WOMEN IN THE MORTÉ DANTHIR**

#### KIN WOMEN

**Mothers:**

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<td>9.1-24, 17.38-18.5, 44.33-36.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morgawsee</td>
<td>10.5-6, 55.19-26, 77.26-28, 317.6-8, 338.35-340.25, 611.25-615.11, 614.1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ector's wife</td>
<td>11.1-16, 15.5-8</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trystram's step-mother</td>
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<td>Queen Elayne of Benwyke</td>
<td>125.32-126.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pellinor's Queen</td>
<td>119.29-31(?) , 809.30-810.25, 905.33-906.8</td>
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<td>Palomydes's Mother</td>
<td>603.25-32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayes's wife</td>
<td>101.4-27, 610.22-24, 1149.4-6</td>
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<td>Sanam's daughter, Lyonors</td>
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#### Wives:

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Lynet: 361.8-363
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Segwarydes’s wife: 393.11-396.16, 396.27-403.11, 442.4-10
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Anglydes: 633.31-637.10.
Alys: 648.1-8
La Beale Isode: 419.19, passim.
Menyve: 172.16-31, 180.9-14, 1150.19-23, 1242.9-14.
Kay's wife: 222.11-13.
Queen of Ireland: 390.9-391.22.

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Queen of Ireland: 389.21-391.22.
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Morgan's cousin: 643.19-644.16.
Alys, cousin of Launcelot: 644.26-646.27.
### APPENDIX XIV

#### NON-KINGSWOMEN

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<td>Dynas's paramour:</td>
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<td>King of North Wales's daughter:</td>
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<td>Pelles's daughter, Klayne:</td>
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<td>Braundele's sister:</td>
<td>1147.31-32.</td>
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<td>Blamoure of the Maryse's mistress:</td>
<td>106.18-107.8.</td>
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<td>a damsel:</td>
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<td>Guenevere:</td>
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<td>Isode:</td>
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### Sorceresses:

<p>| damsels defiling a shield: | 158.23-161.36. |</p>
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<td>Ghosts accompanying Gawayne:</td>
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<td>Brangwyne:</td>
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<td>3 gentlewomens:</td>
<td>727.1-3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 ladies:</td>
<td>1120,1135.</td>
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Damsels who serve as messengers, guides, advisers, who are in need of rescue, etc., (v Appendix XV Solitary characters).

61.22-68.15, 80.26-85.20, 88.35-89.4, 102.28-103.12, 112.13-113.26, 139.16-17, 142.7-15, 162.27, passim, 179.6, 238.13-254.5, 264.6-271.5, 278.31-279.11, 279.12-281.32, 296.14, passim-521, 368.23-369.5, 405.12-406.4, 449.20-34, 461-476, 495.15-496.16, 504.12-505.19, 524.28-525.6, 526.8-26, 591.25-29, 557.30-558.4, 592.30-593.18, 615.29-616.34, 629.11-33, 642.3-28, 644.6-648, 659.13-660.6, 664.14-666, 791.31-792.29, 855-854, 865.10-864.4, 888.28-869.4, 956.17-960.15, 960.33-962.23, 1212.27-1214.2.

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Women making very incidental appearances or merely referred to by other characters (v Appendix XV Solitary characters).

REFERENCES TO APPEARANCES OF SOLITARY CHARACTERS

RELIGIOUS FIGURES:

111.15-27, 119.7-13, 447.1-15, 774.11-13, 791.5-21, 821.21-822.18,
859.4-861.4, 868.15-869.4, 885.26-31, 887.20-22, 889.6-890.3,
896.13-899, 905-907.18, 907.27-909.7, 925-927.31, 929.18-931.13,
943.25-30, 945.23-949, 955-956.4, 970.22-971.5, 982.18-30,
997.12-998.9, 1074.20-1076.17, 1085.17-20, 1086.19-1087.7,
1092.12-1093.1, 1103.26-1106.3, (1288.18-23), 1241.5-1242.2,
1250.31-1251.1.

SUPERNATURAL FIGURES: (apart from sorceresses, v.Appendix XIV and supernatural women,)

88.5-9, 801.8-15, 801.21-33, 878.5-881.22, 884.13-23, 911.19-34,
911.30-912.11, 913.16-914.15, 914.23-915.28, 919.24-920.15, 932.25-932.30,
934.50-935.2, 962.27-966.12, 1015.14-31, 1029.1-1030.1, 1030.3-1031.20,
1034.12-1035.3.

NB. references to Merlin are not included above since Malory treats
him, like Pelles, as a mortal character.

WANDERING KNIGHTS AND DAMSELS: (v.Appendix XIV Incidental women)

38.27-29, 69.17-31, 80.9, ff., 87.4-38, 118.7-27, 152.1-23, 165.4-37,
177.4, ff., 260. 264.6-265, 269.17-271.5, 296.14, ff., 300.25-301.6,
301.29-302.11, 303.4, ff., 305.6, ff., 309.1, ff., 311.31, ff., 405.12-
406.4, 423.1-16, 461, ff., 512.14 (Breunys sans Fite, passim),
550.17-35, 563.8-25, 664.15-666.16, 771.26-772.2, 813.29-33,
853.4, ff., 894.9-895.21, 960.33-962.16, 1004.19-35, 1016.25-30,
1135.26-1137.4.

ALL REFERENCES TO MERLIN v. glossary, p.1691
MESSAGERS AND GIVERS OF INFORMATION (v. Appendix XIV)

54.21-55.11, 139.16-37, 257.5, ff., 355.10-20, 378.11-20, 435.5-10, 467.27-466.5, 481.1-9, 493.15-26, 517.16, 524.25-525.6, 592.30-593.15, 615.25-615.34, 677.25-678.25, 688.20-24, 716.16-22, 810.21-25, 812.11-24, 855.36-856.5, 1124.3-1125.7, 1194.8-1196.7, 1212.24-1213.2.

ANONYMOUS SOLITARY GROUPS:

90.24-25, 107.29-33, 175.15, 293.14-295.8, 301.32-302.11, 322.30-35, 414.4 (passim), 471.31, 600.5, ff., 719.18, ff., 791.25, 819.21, 1237.29-1238.4.

HOSTS: (v. Appendix XIV Hostesses) (v. Appendix XIV Religious figures)

163.30-34, 173-174, 533.14-18, 536.8-537.7, 538.27-539.31.


LOWLY FIGURES:


There are also some figures in the Morte Darthur which defy any useful categories; examples are giants, eg. Taules, p. 500.
APPENDIX XVI

INTERNAL CONFLICTS OF THE ROUND TABLE-

INDIVIDUALS WHO BY DEED OR IMPLICATION OPPOSE THE ROUND TABLE

NB. There are no references to the 'Tale of Arthur and the Emperor Lucius', since it does not contain examples of any internal conflicts. Trystram's name does not appear as a Round Table knight before p.572, when he is received into the fellowship. Where some individual knight of the Round Table opposes it in company with non-Round Table characters, his name will be found underlined for easy reference. Round Table conflicts which happen to be among kinsmen are marked thus * and any conflicts which have an important bearing on the Round Table thus **. Guenevere and Morgan le Fay are included below, since they are members of Arthurian society and have important influences on the Round Table. All references number from the official foundation of the Round Table, p.98.34.

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<td>294.31-296.8.</td>
<td>Kay attacks 'Bewewaynes', Launcelot &amp; Gawayne against Kay.</td>
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<td>Morgan blames Arthur over neglect of Gareth.</td>
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<td>339.6-340*</td>
<td>Blamour, Galyhud, Galyhuddyn attack Gareth.</td>
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<td>347.30,ff.</td>
<td>Gareth attacks Gawyne</td>
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</table>
Gawyne mistakenly fights Gareth.

Morgan sends horn to Arthur to put him against Launcelot & Guenevere.

Lamerak challenges Gawyne.

Mordred leaves when Launcelot joins company.

Launcelot quarrels with Lamerak.

Arthur unhorses Lamerak who does not know him.

Torre defeats Kay.

Ector unhorses Dynadan.

Morgan plots for Launcelot.

Dynadan against Gaherys & Palomysdes.

Gawyne against Morgan for Launcelot.

Palomysdes fights Launcelot.

Palomysdes against Bors and Ector.

Arthur against Launcelot.

Gawyne injures Lucan.

Uw&yne refuses Gaherys's challenge.

Morgan sends shield to betray Arthur, Launcelot & Guenevere.

Launcelot, unknown, attacks Tristram, Palomysdes, Gawyne, Blacherie, Kay.

Tristram unhorses Sagramoure & Dodynes.

Morgan plots against Arthur.

Palomysdes fights Lamerak, not knowing him.

Orkney plot against Lamerak.

Launcelot against Arthur.

Gaherys kills Morganse & warns Lamerak.

Arthur & Gawyne against Gaherys; Gawyne against Lamerak.
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614.25, ff. Mordred & Aggravayne against Dynadan.

653.29-654.9* Launcelot attacks Motor & Bleoberys.

658.30-32 Bagdemagus against Launcelot.

660.30-32 ** Orkney against Lamerak.

663 Palomydes against Orkney, Arthur against Palomydes.

664.1-13* ** Lamerak against Orkney; Arthur against Orkney.

685-687.10* Perceval, Motor & Harry attack Bleoberys.

687.25, ff. Motor against Palomydes.

698.8-19 ** Orkney murder Lamerak; Perceval against Orkney.

691.24-692 ** Trystram against Orkney for Lamerak.

695.33-696.11. Dynadan against Gareth

696.23-697 Palomydes against Dynadan; Trystram against Palomydes.

698-700 ** Gareth, Trystram, Dynadan against Orkney for Lamerak.

727-728.31 Gelyhod, etc., against Trystram & Palomydes.

740.22-23 Leuncelot defeats Dynadan

741-742. Dynadan provokes Trystram against Palomydes.

743.6-26 Launcelot against Arthur

743.31-745 Palomydes against Arthur & Launcelot; Trystram against Palomydes.

746.13-14 Trystram defeats Uwayne and Lucan

746.25-758.35 Palomydes against Trystram.

752.1-14 Leuncelot fights Trystram not knowing him.

757-758 Arthur questions opposition of Trystram & Gareth.
Trystram unhorses Arthur not knowing him.

Ector attacks Palomydes

Arthur attacks Palomydes.

Launcelot's kinsmen against Trystram, Launcelot against his kinsmen.

Bedware against Bors.

Guenevere against Blayne; Bors against both; Guenevere against Launcelot.

Bors, Lyonell, & Ector against Guenevere

Perceval fights Ector, neither knowing the other.

Perceval fights Launcelot.

Arthur against Gawayne, for his vow.

Launcelot & Perceval attack Galahad, not knowing him.

Gawayne & Ector kill Uwayne not knowing him.

Lyonel fights Bors.

Galahad wounds Gawayne

Launcelot against Gawayne for death of Bagdemagus.

Aggravayne & Mordred Against Launcelot & Guenevere; Guenevere quarrels with Launcelot.

Gawayne against Guenevere; & Mador, etc., accuse her.

Bors against Arthur & Guenevere

Bors against many knights to please king and Launcelot.

Bors against Mador, for Guenevere

Launcelot, defeats Mador.

Arthur against Launcelot & Guenevere
Lavayne defeats Lucan, Bedvere, Ozanna, Blanour, Bellyngere, Alisaunder.

1080.-1081.21. Guenevere against Launcelot; Bors against Guenevere.

1110-1113 Launcelot defeats Gawayne, Aggravayne, Gaherys, Palomydes, Mordred; Lavayne defeats Palomydes, Arthur, Lucan, Bedvere; Gareth defeats Palomydes, Kay, Gryfflet, Saffir.

1113.24-33 Arthur against Launcelot, in jest.

1114.8-9* Arthur against Gareth by mistake

1121-1140. Mellyagnance against Queen's Knights & Launcelot.

1153.32-34** Aggravayne against Launcelot & Guenevere

1161-1163.2* ** Gawayne, Gaherys & Gareth against Aggravayne & Mordred; Aggravayne & Mordred against Launcelot.

1164-1168 ** Aggravayne, Mordred, 12 knights of their alliance against Launcelot.

1168.27,ff.** Arthur against Launcelot.

1174.30-1177* ** Gawayne against Arthur & Orkneys.

1184,ff. ** Gawayne against Launcelot

1214.25-1219.2 Gawayne defeats Bors & Lyonell.

1227-1228 ** Archbishop against Mordred; Guenevere against Mordred.

1229-1237 ** * Mordred against Arthur

1239 Bedvere against Arthur.

1253 Guenevere against Launcelot
APPENDIX XVIII

GROUPS WITHIN THE ROUND TABLE WHICH OPPOSE IT BY DEED OR IMPLICATION

NB. By 'group' is signified any combination of characters from two upwards. Kinsmen opposing kinsmen are marked thus * and oppositions of special importance to the Round Table **. There are no examples in the 'Quest of the Holy Grail', or 'Arthur and the Emperor Lucius'.

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<td>670-13-25 **</td>
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510.6-17 Trystram against Kay & Sagramore.
512 Breunys sans Pité against Gawayne & Trystram
546.13-19 Dynas against Uwayne.
572, et passim Mark against Trystram & Round Table allies.
579-586 Dynadan against Mark
609.-610 Launcelot against Mark
613.29-615.4. Breunys against Aggravayne & Mordred
684-687 Breunys creates conflict among Ector, Perceval, Harry, Bleoberys.
720-721.19 Breunys against Palomydes & Trystram.
794-796 Breusen against Launcelot.
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Breunys sans Pite & Bartliot against Blysante & Launcelot.

20 knights against Perceval & Galahad.

Kings of North Wales, 100 Knights, & Haute Prynce against Arthur and Round Table.

Kings of North Wales, Northumberland, Ireland, 100 knights, Galahalte, against Arthur & Round Table.

Kings of North Wales, 100 Knights, Haute Prynce of Surluse against Arthur & Round Table.

30 archers against Launcelot.

North Wales & Cornwall against Arthur.


robbers against Arthur's knights.

Launcelot's enemies against Lyonell & kinsmen.
## APPENDIX XX
### ADVENTURES (EPISODIC ADVENTURES AND QUESTS)

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Launcelot defeats carls & giants & frees prisoners of Tyntegil castle.

Launcelot rescues Kay.

Launcelot defeats Raynolde, Geuter & Gylmere, who think him Kay.

Launcelot, in Kay's armour, defeats Sagramour, Ector, Gawayne & Uwayne.

Launcelot meets Gylberd's widow.

Launcelot deals Meiyot with shroud from Chapel Perilous.

Launcelot deceived by Phelot & wife.

Launcelot tricked by Pedyvere.

Launcelot returns to court at Pentecost.

Lynet announces her quest at court.

Gareth sets out on quest, fights & is knighted by Launcelot.

Gareth rescues a knight from thieves.

Gareth defeats knights at a river crossing.

Gareth defeats the Black Knight.

Gareth defeats the Green Knight.

Gareth defeats the Red Knight.

Gareth defeats the Blue Knight.

Gareth defeats Red Knight of the Red Lands, and so fulfils quest.

Gareth lodges at castle & has to fight Duke.
| 11. | 355.5-356.5. | Gareth defeats Branys Sans Plis & releases prisoners. |
| 12. | 397.25-399.35. | Trystram encounters Sagramesur & Bodynas. |
| 13. | 399.56-403.2. | Trystram encounters Bleoberys & Segwerydes's wife. |
| 15. | 418.14-419.10. | Launcelot rescues Gawayne from Carados. |
| 16. | 419.26-425 | Trystram & Adtherpe rescue Isode from Palomydes. |
| 17. | 441-446.20 | Trystram & Lamerak fight giant Nabon. |
| 18. | 447.1-449.20 | Lamerak defends Froll. |
| 20. | 461.-462.25. | Maleysaunte proclaims quest, La Cote sets out. |
|  | 462.26-463.30. | La Cote defeated by Dagonet, Bleoberys & Palomydes. |
|  | 465.34-466.9. | La Cote at the Castle Orgulous. |
|  | 469-470.24 | La Cote & Maleysaunte captured & saved by Launcelot. |
|  | 471.27-475.30 | Launcelot & La Cote fight at bridges. |
| 21. | 481.17-484.34 | Trystram & Keyhdydns encounter Lamerak & Palomydes in Forest Perilous. |
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22. 490.5-492.19 Arthur lured into Forest Perilous & rescued by Trystram.

23. 496.25-501.9 Dagonet beaten by Trystram.

24. 499.32-500.21 Trystram rescues Dynaute from giant Tauleas.

25. 500.30-502 Mark rescues the "wood man", Trystram, who slew Tauleas.

26. 504.32-506.18 Trystram & Dynadan fight 30 of Morgan's knights for Launcelot.

27. 506.29-508.35 Trystram & Dynadan fight for their lodging.

28. 510.18-512.7 Trystram & Gawayne defy Morgan.

29. 518 Launcelot rescues Brangwyn from Breunys.

30. 518-520.1 Lucan fights at Castle of Gens.


32. 523-526 Trystram, Falomydes & Dynadan in prison.

33. 526-528.1 Mark & Andred ambush Kay & Gaherys near Perilous Lake.

34. 528.5-530.16 Dynadan rescues lady from Breunys Sans Peña.

35. 531.3-532.7 Trystram lodges with Morgan & defeats Haunyson.

36. 535.3-27 Trystram rescues Falomydes from Breunys.

37. 535.28-556.14 Trystram follows Launcelot, without knowing who he is, they fight, recognise one another and so end the quest of 10 knights, some of whom Trystram has already encountered.
29. 579.11-580
- Mark encounters Lamerak.
- Mark fights Lamerak.

- 580.22-561.19
- Mark fights Tryan & Berlase;
- Dynadan defends him.

- 581.32-582.
- 582-583.32
- Dynadan fights Torre at a bridge;
- Mark refuses.

- 584.1-24
- Round Table knights set Dagonet on
- Mark, who is saved by Palomydes.

- 587.27-590.9.
- Dynadan & Palomydes at Morgan’s
- castle, Palomydes jousts with
- Lamerak, and they swear friendship.

30. 597.5-603.10
- Dynadan, Aggravayne & Mordred
- conflict over Dahan & Breunys
- Sans Pite.

31. 613.26-615.5.
- Alexander sets out in quest of Mark,
  via Launcelot in London.

- 639.6-642.3.
- Alexander fights in joust, & tackles
  Malegryne for Morgan.

- 642.29-643
- Alexander Morgan’s prisoner.

- 643.26-644.25
- Alexander delivers castle for damsel.

- 644.4-648
- Alexander jousts on site of castle
  for twelve months and wins Alys la
  Beall Pillaron. Their son, Bellengerus
  le Beuse completes Alexander’s original
  quest.

32. 683.14-685.2.
- Trystram encounters Breunys, Palomydes;
- Bleoberys fights Palomydes & chases
  Breunys.

- 685.3-687.13
- Breunys tricks Round Table knights
  into attacking Bleoberys, & so escapes.

34. 688.25-690.26
- Dynadan fights Epynogrys the lover.
35. 690.27-692.19. Trystram encounters Aggravayne & Geherys, & they retaliate.

36. 694.29-697 Trystram tricks Dynadan; they fight Gareth and Palomydes.

37. 703.23-702.7. Palomydes takes on the revenge of Harmansuce.

711-719 Palomydes carries out revenge of Harmansuce in the Red City.

38. 702.21-703.34. Trystram lodges at a castle and is attacked by his host next day.

39. 704-705.33. Dynadan & Trystram attacked by Berisant le Apres, Segwarydes & Garath.


41. 771.20-773. Palomydes promises to help Eynogryae, & gets his lady back from Saphir for him.

42. 774.5-777.33. Palomydes & Saphir taken prisoner Saphir held but rescued by Launcelot.

43. 791.22-792.28. Launcelot rescues damsel at Corbenic.

792.31-793.11. Launcelot kills dragon at Corbenic.

44. 797-798.5. Bromell jousts with Bors for Elayne.


800.1-23 Bors defeats Bedyvere of the Strayte Marchys.

800.28-802.10. Bors kills a lion in Corbenic, and has visions of the Grail.
23 knights set out to find Launcelot.

Agglovale & Perceval fight Goodwyne & men.

Perceval rescues Perseydes.

Perceval meets & fights Ector; they are healed by the Grail.

Blyaunte & Selyvaunte rescue Launcelot.

Launcelot rescues Blyaunte from Braunys & Bartelot.

Perceval fights Launcelot; quest for him ended with their recognition.

Launcelot rides to knight Galahad.

Galahad draws sword from floating stone, after others have failed.

Bagdemagus wounded trying to take red cross shield.

Galahad quells fiend in tomb.

Galahad & Melyas set out together.

Melyas attacked twice & Galahad avenges him.

Galahad finishes the wicked customs of the Castle of Maidens.

Gawaine, Gareth, Uwayne les Avowtres kill the 7 knights Galahad defeated at Maiden Castle.

Launcelot & Grail visions in chapel

Perceval attacked, & rescued by Galahad.

Perceval pursues a black horse for a yeoman.

Perceval carried away by fiend black horse.

Perceval saves lion cub from serpent.
old man in white ship comes to island and advises him.
woman in black ship tempts him.
old man returns, and takes Perceval off island.

Launcelot and hermit conjure a fiend.

Launcelot defeated in tournament between Eliazar and Argusius, in which he interferes.

Ector & Gawayne have visions in the old chapel.

Gawayne jousts with Uwayne & kills him.

Bors defends a lady's lands.

Bors rescues a maiden from her cousin

Bors led by a fiend to an illusory chapel & tower, wherein he is tempted by women fiends.

Lyonell fights Bors, & a miracle parts them.

Galahad led from Corbenic & voyage to Sarras begins.

Grail voyage continues in Solomon's Ship.

The Grail Knights fight at the Castle Carteloysse.

The Grail Knights have visions in chapel in waste forest, following a white hart there.

Perceval's sister gives her blood to heal a lady after the Grail Knights have fought.

Launcelot & Galahad on ship with Perceval's dead sister.
Launcelot at Corbenic, his visions of the Grail.
47. con.
1025.5-25
1025.26-1026.2.
1026.3-31.
1027.11-1031.
1032.1-32
1033-1036

Galahad heals Mordrain & buries him.
Galahad cools the boiling well.
Galahad staunches fire in tomb.
The Grail Knights at Corbenic;
Galahad heals the Maimed King;
the achievement of the quest.
The Grail Knights voyage to Sarras.
the departure of Galahad & Perceval
for heaven & Bors for Logres; the
relation of the quest at court.

48. 1056.10-1059.10.

Launcelot defeats Mador in trial
by combat & saves Guenevere.

49. 1120.14-1124.23
1125.15-1127.
1130.-1134.23
1134.24-1137.4.
1138.5-1140.

Mellyagaunce sieges Guenevere & her
knights & keeps them prisoners.
Launcelot defeats 30 archers &
salignant carter to reach Guenevere.
Launcelot breaks bars to come to
Guenevere, and she is accused of
adultery as result.
Launcelot in prison, & tempted by
a damsel.
Launcelot defeats Mellyagaunce in
trial by combat & rescues Guenevere.

50. 1165.5-1168.35
1177.15-1178

Launcelot takes with Guenevere.
Launcelot rescues Guenevere from
the stake.
## APPENDIX XXI

### BATTLES AND SIEGES IN THE MONTE DARThUR

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<td>War</td>
<td>Arthur v. Lucius</td>
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<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>(Arthur kills Lucius)</td>
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<td>Arthur lays siege to it</td>
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# APPENDIX XXII

## TOURNAMENTS IN THE NORTHE BARTHE

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<td>a new mown field, Pasauntinge of Inde</td>
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<td>a priory near his court, Arthur.</td>
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653-670  Surlyse, Galahalte  (?)  
675.1-33  Cornwall, Galahalte & Bagdemagus  (?)  
681.2-19  (?), Arthur  (?)  
681.36-682.21  Lonesep, Arthur  May Day  
827.15-31  Castle of Blysants, Joyous Ile, Launcelot  (?)  
864.9-865.14  Camelot, Arthur  Pentecost (Tuesday)  
931.14-932  in a forest, Eliazar & Argustus  (?)  
968.31-969.6.  (?), Earl of Playne, Nevwyn  (?)  
981.6-982.4.  near the sea, (?)  (?)  
1065, 1069-1073.  Winchester (Camelot)  Assumption Day  
1086.31-34  The court, Arthur  Allhallows  
1087.31-1088.20  
1105.1-13,  The Great Tournament  Candlesmas  
1106.-1114  at Westminster, Arthur.  
1153.14-21  Carlyle, Arthur  Pentecost.  

* Here is an echo of late fourteenth and early fifteenth century tournaments, which usually took place on Mondays and Tuesdays, and lasted until Thursday. The remaining days of the week were subject to the truce of the priests. Barber, B. The Knight and Chivalry, London, 1970, esp. pp.170-171.
APPENDIX XXIII

SINGLE ENCOUNTERS IN THE NORTHE DARThUR, INCLUDING
JUDICIAL FIGHTS.

Judiciary combats are marked thus *

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160.14-161.23 Uwayne, Marhau; Gawayne, Marhau
164.10-23 10 knights, Pelleas
165.24-166.2 Carados, Gawayne
174.17-175.8 Duke of South Marches, Marhaute
175.36-176.12 Marhaute, the giant Taulurd
176.24-29 Marhaute; Sagramour, Ozanna, Bodynas; Felotte
177.18-178.28* Uwayne; Edwarde and Hew of the Red Castle
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228.20-231 Gawayne, Friaus
254 Tarquin; 3 knights & Lyonell
255.17-256.6 Ector, Tarquin
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298.26-299.14 Gareth (Bewmaynes), Launcelot.
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Black Knight, Gareth
Green Knight, Gareth
Red Knight, Gareth
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a knight, Gareth
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Bendalyne's knights, Gareth.
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Trystram, Palomydes

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Andret, 10 knights; Trystram

Trystram, Grype and 100 knights.

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gawayne, a knight

Lamerak, a knight

Bellysunce le Orgulus, Lamerak

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Bleoberys, La Cote Male Tayle

Palomydes, La Cote Male Tayle

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6 knights, La Cote Male Tayle

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598.4=603.10  Lamerak; 4 knights from Morgan's castle; Lamerak, Falomydes.

613.31-615.5  Breunys sans Pits, Dalan; Breunys, Mordred; Aggravayne, Breunys; Dynadan, Breunys; Dalan, Dynadan; Dynadan, Mordred; Dynadan, Aggravayne

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665.27-666.13  Falomydes, Corsabryne

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<tr>
<td>774.34-772.13</td>
<td>Saphir, Helyor</td>
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<tr>
<td>777.26-773.19</td>
<td>Palomydes, Saphir</td>
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<tr>
<td>774.27-775.6.</td>
<td>men of a castle; Palomydes, Saphir</td>
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<tr>
<td>777.2-33</td>
<td>Launcelot, 12 knights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>782.25-783.2.</td>
<td>an archer, Trystram.</td>
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<tr>
<td>797.23-798.5.</td>
<td>Bresell, Bors.</td>
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<td>800.1-21</td>
<td>Bedyvere of the Strayte Marchys, Bors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>811.4-7</td>
<td>Goodwyne, Agglovale's squire.</td>
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<td>812.9-17</td>
<td>Agglovale, Goodwyne; Fersval, Goodwyne's men</td>
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a knight, Perceval
Perceval, Ector
Launcelot, a dwarf
Elyasunte, Launcelot
Breunys sans Pite, Bertelot; Elysunte
Leuncelot; Breunys, Bertelot
boys of Gorbenic, Launcelot
Perceval, Launcelot
Tristram, Palomyses
White Knight, Bagderagus
a knight, Melyas
2 knights, Galahad
7 knights of Maiden Castle, Galahad
7 knights; lord & people of Maiden Castle (reported)
Gawayne, Gareth, Uwayne; 7 brothers of Maiden Castle.
Leuncelot, Galahad; Galahad, Perceval
20 men, Perceval; Galahad, 20 men
a black knight, Launcelot
Uwayne, Gawayne
Bors, Fridam le Noyre.
2 knights, Lyonell
23-32
Bors, damsel's cousin
Lyonell, Bors; Lyonell, Collgrevaunce; Lyonell, a hermit-priest
Galahad, Perceval, Bors; people of Carteloyse.
997.28-998.9. Hernox's 3 sons; Hernox, & people (reported)
1001.1-28 knights of a castle; Perceval, Bors, Galahad.
1004.19-26 knight & dwarf; a wounded knight
1020.7-8 Gawayne, Bagdemagus (reported)
1057.8-1058.7* Mador, Launcelot.
1122.1-1123.20 Mellyagance, the Queen's Knights.
1125.20-1126.6. 30 archers, Launcelot.
1126.25-36 Launcelot, a carter
1136.15-1140.5* Mellyagance, Launcelot
1167.18-1168.24 Aggrewayne, Mordred, 12 knights; Launcelot
1177.21-1178.5. Launcelot; Gareth, Gaherys, etc.,
1216.21-1218.6. Gawayne, Launcelot) Siege of Benwick
1219.20-1221.7 Gawayne, Launcelot)
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List of Abbreviations used in footnotes.

BBIAS. Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society, Nottingham.
CE. College English, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.
CP. Classical Philology, University of Chicago, Illinois.
DA. Dissertation Abstracts, University Microfilms Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan.
EETS. Early English Texts Society, London.
JHLA. Journal of English Literary History, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.
ELN. English Language Notes, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.
MP. Modern Philology, University of Chicago, Illinois.
MS. Medieval Studies, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, Canada.
NAG. Notes and Queries, Oxford.
PQ  Philological Quarterly, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.
SoQ.  The Southern Quarterly, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
SP.  Studies in Philology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
TSE.  Tulane Studies in English.
TSLL.  Texas Studies in Language and Literature.
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