

SAINTLY SIR GALAHAD: FRIENDSHIP IN *THE WORKS OF*
SIR THOMAS MALORY

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my two daughters Madison and Autumn for their support and acceptance that mom was “in school” for what seemed like forever.

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CHAPTER I

CHIVALRIC AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

What is friendship and what constitutes a friend? Definitions of friendship, whether ancient or postmodern, are subjective and could include an acquaintance that is pleasant and welcoming or a husband and wife's bond in marriage. If the most common definition of a friend in Roman history was a political acquaintance, then is a modern-day politician considered a friend? The focus of this thesis is the late medieval period, specifically the Arthurian romance written by Sir Thomas Malory, and the territory of friendship within Malory's chivalric society. Malory's book is bursting with Christian references. What role does Christianity play in Malory's construction of friendship? Reginald Hyatte argues that chivalric friends "subordinate their friendships to passionate male-female love, to a life of intermittent joy, prolonged sorrow, and even madness that could not be further from Christian conceptions of *amicitia* as a haven of peace and security" (87). How does chivalric friendship fall short of Christian ideals of friendship? In attempting to discuss the nature of chivalric and Christian friendship and the connection two people experience in Malory's book, one must study the history of friendship from ancient writings through the medieval period.

Plato's dialogue, *Lysis*, exists as one of the earliest recorded discussions on friendship. In the dialogue, Socrates attempts to define what the attraction is between two individuals that constitutes friendship. Socrates states that "God always draws the

like unto the like and makes them acquainted” (Plato 15). For Plato, good men are drawn to each other and their goodness is a necessary ingredient for this attraction and the maintenance of the friendship. In the same respect, “the closer a wicked man comes to a wicked man and the more he associates with him, the more he becomes his enemy. Because he does him an injustice. And it’s impossible for those who do an injustice and those who suffer it to be friends” (Plato 15). For Plato, the moral character of the friend must be pure and honest, and each friend needs to engage in sincere criticism of the other in order to keep the friendship modest.

Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* references Plato’s ideas of friendship, but it is a distinct treatise on the subject that goes beyond Plato’s initial discussion. Aristotle defines three types of friends and introduces the idea that a friendship is a form of “self-love” (Aristotle 28-9). Aristotle’s definition of friendship includes “two ‘secondary’ forms of friendship, namely friendships based either on usefulness or on pleasure” (Bostock 168). The third type of friendship, for Aristotle “is essential to the good life, the ‘complete’ or ‘perfect’ friendship” (Bostock 167-8). Friends of utility, or political friends, are friends whom you know and associate with for the sole purpose of gain. Aristotle believes that political friends are necessary but may become harmful because the goal of this friendship is selfish. Companionable friends exist, for Aristotle, as multiple acquaintances with whom an individual may experience common interests and engage in similar activities. These friends satisfy a social need but do not form enduring friendships. The complete friend, however, represents the recognition of goodness in another and similar social status. This friendship must ordinarily be limited to one or two individuals throughout a lifetime.

For Aristotle, the basis for all friendships begins with a love of self and an unselfish treatment of others. Aristotle believes

that the friend wishes good to his friend for his own sake, and does good to him for his own sake; that he wishes his friend to live, again for his own sake; that he spends time with his friend; makes the same choices as his friend, and shares his joy and his sorrow. (Bostock 172)

When a person performs good deeds for others, he is praised, and the community becomes involved in working “for the common good” (Aristotle 62). For example, if a person works to gain wealth and then unselfishly works to help his neighbor, then other neighbors may observe this kindness and begin to help one another. The community will benefit from the combined efforts of the individuals, and the person who began the good deed must love himself. The person who has love of self strives to do good, and his good deeds benefit the community (Aristotle 61-3).

Cicero’s treatise *De Amicitia* emerges in the history of friendship philosophy in 44 B.C.E. Cicero discusses the goodness of friendships, the foundations of friendship, and threats to friendships. However, the main idea of Cicero’s friendship is that, though an individual should be somewhat self-sufficient and has no real need of a friend, “nature spurs us to friendship, through an innate principle which causes us to love anyone who manifests virtue, without regard for our own benefit” (Cicero 78). For Cicero, as with Plato, good men are drawn to each other, and the resulting friendship makes life worthwhile: “Now friendship possesses many splendid advantages, but of course the finest thing of all about it is that it sends a ray of good hope into the future and keeps our hearts from faltering and falling by the wayside” (Cicero 88-92).

Saint Augustine (354 – 386 C.E.), theologian and philosopher, believed in the concept of community in reference to the worship of God and the goal of understanding the soul, following the society described in Acts 4:32: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (*The Holy Bible*). Community, for Augustine, represents an aspect of friendship among men. A need to learn from the community is prevalent as

when asked by Reason in the *Soliloquies*, ‘why... do you want those people you love either to live or to live with you?’ Augustine replied, ‘In order that we can, together and in unison, inquire after our souls and God. For in this way the one who discovers something first can easily lead the others to it without difficulty.’ (Alexander 53)

Knowledge, for Augustine, is to be sought and shared with other, like-minded individuals (friends) for the purpose of gaining a true spiritual connection to and understanding of God (Alexander 52-5). Augustine’s *The City of God* portrays the monastic community as an ideal of a “friendly society” where bonds of friendship are based on charity (Hyatte 45). Monastic friends experience *vera amicitia*, or true friendship, through God. He offers “humans charity and grace” through the Holy Spirit (Hyatte 46). Christian communities mirror God’s friendship by extending charity and grace to other humans.

Written in 1148 C.E., Aelred of Rievaulx’s theory of friendship in *De Spirituali Amicitia*, emphasizes Christ as the model for all friendship and maintains that friends should love one another unreservedly (Aelred 129-30). Aelred based his idea of friendship, in part, on Cicero’s pre-Christian dialogue-treatise on friendship which

introduces the theory that true friendship “occurs when we find someone with whose character and nature we feel ourselves in sympathy” (Cicero 90). Aelred accepts Cicero’s idea that “the fundamental nature of friendship is a chosen going-out of oneself into the heart and self of the other” (Carabine 31-2). In addition, friendship is a source of safety for a person to find relief from the world and confirmation of self in another. For Aelred, two kinds of friendship exist: friendships of corruption and sin and spiritual friendships. Aristotle’s idea that friendships for utility and pleasure are allowable is denied by Aelred, based on Christian doctrine. Aelred values benevolence and charity as the ingredients to a true and successful friendship. Aelred also notes that he “should like also to be instructed more fully as to how the friendship which ought to exist among us begins in Christ, is preserved according to the Spirit of Christ, and how its end and fruition are referred to Christ” (Aelred 133). Aelred’s theological beliefs are the basis for spiritual friendship, making his theory of Christian friendship an ideal that is “unattainable” in this world. Nonetheless, the model of spiritual friendship is “accessible” to every person (Aelred 129).

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 C.E.) also discusses community and charity as friendship between human beings and God. For Aquinas, “the essence of Christian friendship within the community resides in the double bond between God and the person and between persons brought together by God’s love” (Hyatte 45). Aquinas believes fraternal monastic communities of friends participate in an exchange of love covenant with God when they extend charity to one another (Hyatte 43-5). Reciprocity of charity occurs when “the Holy Spirit, Who is Uncreated Charity, exists in man who has created charity,” or when “He moves man’s soul to the act of love, as God moves all things to

their own actions to which they are inclined by their own proper forms” (Hyatte 49). Hyatte creates the phrase, “fraternal charity,” and stresses that this ideal of friendship exemplifies “Christ’s two divine commandments...to love God and to love one’s neighbor as oneself” (Hyatte 56). How can these ideals of pre-Christian and Christian friendship be applied to the friendships in Malory’s book? Chivalric friendships in the Arthurian legend reflect many of the philosophies of friendship. Knights are “like” individuals (Plato and Aristotle) who, supposedly, embody the ideals of virtue and community and provide protection to the kingdom. Additionally, Christian, monastic communities are a parallel to chivalric communities as males live in close proximity to one another and form bonds of intimacy.

Richard C. McCoy states that chivalry “began as an early medieval warrior code, whose essential values were strength, conquest, and renown...”(16). The French *chevalrie* initially meant “skill on horseback, an accomplishment only the well-born could afford” (16). The Crusades of the twelfth century introduced a religious justification for violent, militaristic, aristocratic authority. Chivalry also “became aligned with ideas of courtly love and service” during the twelfth century (16-7). Georges Duby in *The Chivalrous Society* argues that entry into knighthood begins when a young man is “received into the company of warriors...” (112). Acceptance into knighthood involves a willingness to “take up arms” and prove one’s worthiness to the other knights of the kingdom. Once the young initiate was accepted into the community, he found himself “caught up in a band of ‘friends’ who ‘loved each other like brothers’” (114). The association of family—fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters—is replaced by men living in close proximity with other men and engaging in bloody battles to secure and protect their

kingdom. The idea of friendship among knights then becomes a bond of family for the men.

Duby also notes that a band of knights pursues pleasure and squanders money, yet the group allows their “emotions” to remain “at a pitch of warlike frenzy” (115). Young knights are “instruments of aggression” and are expected to wander, behave brutally, engage in fierce battle, and face death bravely (115). However, the function of a brotherhood of knights is not solely a perpetration of violence completely devoid of any spiritual element. Christianity is apparent in Malory’s chivalric society. Holy days are observed, clergymen are consulted, and the Holy Grail becomes the quest of all quests for Arthur’s knights.

Chivalric friends enjoy many of the virtues of friendship, including physical aptitude, kindness, charity, fidelity, love of honor, and religious devotion. These virtues are countered by the vices of violence, adultery, and treason. In a comparison of Marion Zimmer Bradley’s *The Mists of Avalon* and Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*, Susan Morrison argues that “the phenomenon of male bonding as interfaced with the patriarchal Christian religion leads to and in fact causes the ultimate downfall of this male-centered political structure” (141). The idea that the Christian brotherhood of knights who engage in maliciously violent acts and the pursuit of pleasure leads to their destruction is supported by the theory that friendships in Malory’s book are usually lacking a spiritual element that could, in fact, glorify and deliver the characters from sinful pursuits. Conflict arises because Christian morality is unattainable within chivalric society: “The ideal of superhuman love that guides Christian friendships is not simply absent. It is in fact impossible in these romance fictions – impossible because the

knightly friends act foolishly, sin, and hold nothing dearer than their earthly love”

(Hyatte 87). The unnaturalness of the chivalric bonds of friendship leads to the eventual downfall of the kingdom and is the main argument of this thesis—sinful friendships in *Morte d'Arthur* must be replaced by spiritual friendships. I propose that in this work Sir Galahad is an exception to chivalric friendship in that he represents the ideals of Augustine’s *vera amicitia*, Aelred’s spiritual friendship, and Aquinas’s reciprocity of charity.

CHAPTER II

O BROTHER, LET'S BE FRIENDS: MALE HOMO-SOCIAL FRIENDSHIPS

Male homo-social friendships in Malory's book build upon Plato's, and later Aristotle's, idea that God attracts similar people to each other. This attraction allows "like" individuals to come to know one another and build a friendship. Chivalric society is defined in Malory's work as a body of warriors who are distinguished as a group and not individuals and are identified as courageous, dominant combatants (Kaeuper 109-10). Malory's male homo-social friendships consist of friendships between royalty and the knights, friendships involving only knights, and the friendship of King Arthur and the magician, Merlyn. Male homo-social friendships in the book are defined and constructed by military and social rank within the chivalric community. Friendship among King Arthur's knights includes confirmation of noble birthright and proof of physical prowess. Once these attributes are established, the knight goes through an initiation process and gains full acceptance into this group of Christian warriors. The community of male knights becomes more than a group of men who are friends to one another; it becomes a representation of family.

What about friendships between knights and other men? What is the nature of the friendship between Merlyn the magician and Arthur and his knights? Does Merlyn serve the friendship as a quasi-divine benefactor to the king and his warriors? As the knights

become a family to one another, Merlyn remains on the outskirts of the familial bond; his role in the book is not that of equal friend. Merlyn's friendship with Arthur is similar to Aristotle's idea of friends for utility or political friendship. For Aristotle, the political friendship exists when two men associate with one another mainly for the purpose of gain. One could argue that every friendship contains an element of exchange or reciprocity. However, the relationship between Merlyn and Arthur represents more than a selfish exchange of political influence. Thomas Aquinas believed that communities of Christians should engage in reciprocity of charity in an attempt to become closer to God. Merlyn shares his insight and provides instruction, advice, and direction to Arthur and his kingdom. Although the friendship among the brotherhood of knights is defined by rules and traditions of knighthood, the friendship between Merlyn and the knights is much more complex.

Noble Birth, Prowess, and Initiation

Hugh E. L. Collins, when discussing the nature of "prowess in the field of knightly endeavor" and "gentility of birth" as evinced in England's The Order of the Garter (1348 – 1461), notes that the medieval knight was a part of an "elite fellowship...comprising the most distinguished soldiers and peers in the realm...the brethren of the fraternity stood at the apex of the English chivalric hierarchy" (1-5). Additionally, Constance Brittain Bouchard, in *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble:* "Chivalry and Society in Medieval France", notes that "medieval aristocrats prided themselves on their prowess, their courage, and their noble birth" (ix). Bouchard defines

“nobility” as a complex idea that incorporates lineage from either the “noble senatorial class of Rome or (alternately) from the noble Germanic warlords who had settled in the Roman Empire” and/or that “he or she was distinguished and from a distinguished family” (1-3). The idea of an elite community of warriors working together to secure the kingdom is reflected in Malory’s work. King Arthur’s knights are all of “noble” birth or exhibit noble qualities.

King Arthur must prove his nobility to gain the throne. As William Henry Schofield observes, the *Morte D’Arthur* is concerned with “the established order of things, the ascendancy of the nobles” and the drive to “exhibit the noble qualities” associated with knighthood (122-23). The magician Merlyn explains Arthur’s noble lineage (from King Uther Pendragon and Lady Igrayne) in an attempt to convince the church (represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury) as well as the nobility of Arthur’s right to rule the kingdom (Vinaver 12-19). Because Merlyn is the only witness to Arthur’s noble lineage and given the fact that Arthur was conceived illegitimately, through the use of witchcraft, Arthur must further prove his nobility to others through physical prowess to secure the throne. Noble birth is the beginning of the process of inclusion into knighthood.

Similarly, Launcelot arrives in Arthur’s life with his own army of twenty thousand warriors during the battle against Emperor Lucius (Vinaver 16-7). Launcelot’s command of an army establishes his position as a knight who is both noble and one of the military elite. Launcelot’s son, Galahad, is also admitted into knighthood based on his noble birth. Additionally, Galahad is recognized immediately by Gwenyvere as a man of noble lineage. Gwenyvere sees his face and recognizes that he is Launcelot’s son

(Vinaver 865). She also proclaims that it is no wonder Galahad is of noble lineage, based on his abilities on the tournament field (Vinaver 865). The acknowledgment of birthright is in this instance followed by the demonstration of physical ability as a warrior. But what of the young man who is not identified as a noble?

Malory integrates the theme that the noble man is sometimes disguised as a peasant; in this case, the noble qualities are the identifier and not the pedigree. The young man La Cote Male Tayle arrives in Arthur's kingdom dressed in a misshapen coat of gold cloth. He announces that he is Br[e]wnor le Noyre, but Sir Kay names him La Cote Male Tayle instead, a mockery of his "Evyll-Shapyn Cote" (Vinaver 459). La Cote Male Tayle expresses his interest in becoming one of Arthur's knights. Sir Lamerok and Sir Gaheris point out that the young man's appearance and countenance seem to be that of a knight. The two knights also argue that "evyn suche one was sir Launcelot whan he cam first into this courte, and full fewe of us knew from whens he came" (Vinaver 459). The next day, La Cote Male Tayle saves Queen Gwenyvere from a rogue lion. Arthur then exclaims that "...he shall preve a noble man and feythefull and trewe of his promyse!" (Vinaver 460). Indeed, La Cote Male Tayle does prove his noble qualities as he endures ridicule from Sir Kay and then from his future bride, Maledysaunte, and also demonstrates his physical prowess in battle (Vinaver 461-474). Malory's narrator concludes that La Cote Male Tayle "preved a passyng noble knyght and a myghty, and many worshipfull dedys he ded aftir in hys lyff" (Vinaver 476).

Lineage or the ability to prove noble qualities is integral to acceptance into the community of knights in King Arthur's court. As Plato and Aristotle theorize, God draws similar individuals to one another. A society of warriors is formed as each person

approaches the court and proves his worthiness to be accepted into the brotherhood based on his noble birth or noble qualities. The idea that Malory's young noblemen possess the necessary training and ability to become knights simply from their lineage is unrealistic. However, historically, life for the son of a noble surely included education in military preparedness or at least exposure to knighthood within the chivalric community. Simon Pepper argues that "senior nobility planned strategy" and that "nobility was of course the traditional feeder for the profession of arms" (122-23). The son of a noble was celebrated within the militaristic ranks of his country. Logically, protecting the interests of the noble family would have been an important aspect of education. Collins, when researching the origins of the Order of the Garter, discusses King Edward III's plan to launch a "Round Table Project" (6-7). In January 1344, Edward III hosted an elaborate tournament (at Windsor) that included the "leading lords and ladies of England...even the formost London burgesses and their wives..." (7). The inclusion of commoners such as London merchants and their wives in this event suggests that tournaments were a part of society, and knowledge of the knight's role in the tournament would have been public. Noble birth or the attributes of nobility were just the beginning of the knight's acceptance; ability in battle was also necessary to become a knight of The Round Table.

With physical prowess and skill in battle the recognized and celebrated attributes of entry into knighthood, bonds of friendship were formed during battle as knights proved their abilities and merit through violence (Kelly 58). Despite divine intervention in the appointment of Arthur to the monarchy, he had to prove his courage and physical merit to win and maintain his superior position. Soon after the "boye Arthur" pulls the sword from the stone and assumes the monarchy (with the help of Merlyn), Arthur is challenged

in battle. The young king rides into battle with his knights and “alweyes kynge Arthur on horsback leyd on with a swerd and dyd merveillous dedes of armes, that many of the kynges had grete joye of his dedes and hardynesse” (Vinaver 19). King Arthur is unhorsed by King Lot, but Arthur pulls his magical sword, Excalibur, and proves his physical superiority by defeating his enemies. This is the first of many physical acts of prowess that King Arthur engages in to prove his courage and ability as a knight.

Launcelot also proves his physical capabilities and develops a reputation as one of the worthiest knights in the world. A few years after Arthur ascends to the throne and wins “the North, Scotland....also Walys” by proving “the noble prowesse of himself and his knyghtes of the Round Table,” Launcelot joins Arthur’s court (Vinaver 16-7). While Arthur is discussing the upcoming battle against Emperor Lucius, the “yong sir Launcelot de Laake” vows to bring twenty thousand men to fight for Arthur. The oath of allegiance to Arthur, from a man who is promising to provide and lead twenty thousand warriors on Arthur’s behalf, is the first step to becoming one of Arthur’s knights. The new initiate into the court, in addition to proving his physical merit, must also volunteer to embark on dangerous, and potentially deadly, errands in service to the king of the court.

When the battle is complete and Arthur and his allies have defeated “the Romaines and the Sarezens,” Arthur’s other knights praise Sir Launcelot’s physical prowess in battle (Vinaver 216). Sir Cador tells Arthur that “there was none of us that fayled other, but of the knyghthode of sir Launcelot hit were mervayle to telle. And of his bolde cosyns ar proved full noble knyghtes, but of wyse wytte and of grete strengthe of his ayge sir Launcelot hath no felowe” (Vinaver 217). After Arthur and his knights return to England, the men celebrate their victory over Rome by hosting and participating

in tournaments. Once again, Launcelot proves his physical superiority to the other knights as Malory notes that “hit was prevyed on sir Launcelot de Lake, for in all turnementes, justys, and dedys of armys, both for lyff and deth, he passed all other knyghtes, and at no tyme was he ovircom but yf hit were by treson other inchauntement” (Vinaver 254). Apparently, Launcelot’s physical merit is so pronounced that only acts of treason or enchantment could lead to his defeat.

Georges Duby concludes that initiation into knighthood involves the young man’s eagerness to engage in battle and prove a physical capability (112). As an initiate into the brotherhood of the knights of the Round Table, La Cote Male Tayle must earn Sir Launcelot’s friendship and his position as a knight of King Arthur’s court. La Cote Male Tayle achieves his inclusion into knightly friendship by accepting a challenge that the other knights of the Round Table declined. In this passage, Sir Launcelot states, ““Hit was shame to all the good noble knyghtes to suffir suche a yonge knyght to take so hyghe adventure on hym for his distruccion...I caste me to ryde aftir hym”” (Vinaver 467). Later, La Cote Male Tayle fights beside Launcelot and Launcelot pronounces, ““that knyght ys my fellow, and hym shall I rescowe and borrow, or ellis lose my lyff therefore”” (Vinaver 469). La Cote Male Tayle establishes his merit, as a potential friend, by accepting the challenge and then earns the friendship of Sir Launcelot by proving his physical prowess in battle.

The same rules of acceptance apply to all men who enter into the brotherhood of courtly life as a knight of the Round Table. After Sir Galahad is accepted into King Arthur’s court, his first tournament proves his worthiness to be a member of this elite group of warriors:

Than sir Galahad dressed hym in myddys of the medow and began to breke spearys mervaylously, that all men had wonder of hym, for he there surmownted all other knyghtes. For within a whyle he had defowed many good knyghtes of the Table Rounde sauff all only tweyne, that was sir Launcelot and sir Persyvale. (Vinaver 864)

Queen Gwenyvere, after witnessing Galahad's marvelous performance in the tournament, asks to see his face and, recognizing that he is Sir Launcelot's child, proclaims that "hit ys no mervayle thoughe he be of grete proues" (Vinaver 865). Proof of physical prowess is clearly integral to acceptance into the world of knightly friendship. But for a world that is so entrenched in Christian tradition and dialogue, the characters must move beyond just the physical, earthly existence and strive to reach a higher, spiritual life. Although Sir Galahad is readily accepted and celebrated as a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, Galahad also represents a model of a saintly knight who is worthy of transcending Aelred's ideas of sinful and corrupt friendships and attaining spiritual friendships.

Knightly Friends as Family

The Works of Sir Thomas Malory includes numerous tournaments, battles for fair maidens, beheadings, revenge plots, sieges, and bonds of brotherhood and friendship that are formed between the knights during these life threatening events. Living within that militaristic community and forming bonds of friendship with other knights directly influenced all aspects of life and spirituality. Comparably, the Green Knight of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is "a blend of the amicable and the quarrelsome, the crude

and the civilized, he is a kind of monster, but he embodies the monstrosity of the militarized society that produced him” (Martin 311). The life of Geoffrey Chaucer, poet, member of the medieval court, and precursor to Malory may be examined as a historical lesson in chivalric society and knightly friendship. Chaucer lived within the royal households of Lionel of Antwerp, John of Gaunt, and King Edward III and thus experienced the constant reminder that “a royal household was organized above all for war” (Morgan 116-7). Physical ability is necessary as knights are required to embark on long journeys and engage in battles to the death. Gerald Morgan argues that Chaucer would have been aware of the necessity of reputation within a public arena for a knight as “fine words must in battle be accompanied by fine actions. Knights had to be prepared to die, and often they did indeed die” (Morgan 134). Geoffrey Chaucer, as a member of and witness to courtly life, wrote of knights in his *Canterbury Tales*. “The Knight’s Tale” begins with a description of a knight as a “conquerour” who uses his “wisdom and his chivalrie” to achieve “glorie” and “victorie” in “bataille” (Chaucer p. 37, ll. 862-79). The attributes of the knight represent a coveted ideal of a man who is always ready for war.

The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, as the focus of this thesis and another example of an author who was familiar with knighthood, have been attributed to a man whom most sources believe to be Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revell, Warwickshire. Malory was knighted in 1442 and was rumored to be a notorious criminal, committing crimes such as rape, robbery, and the attempted murder of the Duke of Buckingham. Malory spent the majority of his life in prison, and it is during these years that he supposedly wrote his King Arthur legend (Baines xi). This glimpse of the life of Malory as a knight is quite different from the ideals of knighthood that have been represented by

Chaucer and Malory in their literature. Perhaps the years Malory spent in prison influenced his portrayal of knighthood as an ideal that could never be attained. Violence and criminality seem a part of the young knight's existence, and Malory's work is full of graphic death, murder, and adultery. The reality of imminent violence greatly influenced the fraternal order of knighthood and the community of male warriors. The medieval romance is a "genre rife with parental loss, indifference, neglect, and even outright violence" (Finke 25).

Knightly friends, therefore, share common experiences including preparation and participation in warfare, tournaments, and courtly life. As the young knight joins the court of the Round Table, he loses what fragile bonds he may have previously experienced with family. The knight arrives at the court, proves his physical capabilities, is initiated into the knighthood, and then begins his life as a part of a communal society of warriors. Sir Percivale's aunt, a recluse, suggests that Merlyn created the Round Table to serve as a symbol to the rest of the world, but as the knights became members of the court, their pride and acceptance into King Arthur's Round Table led them away from their families: "And ye have sene that they have loste hir fadirs and hir modirs and all hir kynne, and hir wyves and hir children, for to be of youre felyship" (Vinaver 906). Could love of family be a greater value to the Christian knight than love of God? One of the primary Christian values is that one must love God above all else. Christ advises His disciples, in Luke 14:26, to "hate" their fathers, mothers, children, and brethren, and follow Him only (*The Holy Bible*). Despite Christian influence, Arthur's knights turn from family to embrace chivalric friendships fraught with war, violence, and adulterous relationships.

Related to this theme of a disconnection from family is the absence of a father for many of the characters in Malory's book. "Arthur is raised by Hector, Gawain is raised by Arthur, Gareth is raised by his mother," Galahad is raised by monks, and Mordred is raised by his mother and is later refused legitimacy by his father Arthur (Finke 25).

Laurie Finke and Martin B. Shightman argue that "there seems to be a constant longing for the father: to be one's father, to surpass one's father, to avenge one's father" (25).

The loss of the father is a relevant theme within the greater loss of family for the knights.

The association of family—fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters—is replaced by men living in close proximity with other men and engaging in bloody battles to secure and protect their kingdom. The religious complication for the knight is that he has abandoned familial ties to follow a man, not God.

Arthur and Launcelot enjoy a close bond of knightly friendship that is unrivaled even by Arthur's triangulated bond of marriage to Gwenyvere. When King Arthur and Sir Gawain confront Sir Launcelot about his murder of Sir Gareth and Sir Gaherys, Malory states, "the Freynshe booke seth kynge Arthur wolde have takyn hys queen agayne and to have bene accorded with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawayne wolde nat suffir hym by no maner of meane" (Vinaver 1190). According to the French book, Arthur would have accepted as a friend Launcelot's explanation that he had killed Gareth and Gaherys in self-defense, not knowing their identity, and that he had not been involved in adultery with Gwenyvere for many years.

Although Arthur is the king and Launcelot is therefore his inferior, the fact that Arthur is also a knight creates a complicated friendship for the characters. "'God deffende me,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that ever I shulde encounter wyth the moste noble

kyng that made me knyght” (Vinaver 1187). They experience a true bond of affection, respect, and brotherly love for each other, but Arthur must, in the end, act as the king and seek Launcelot’s death for the affair with Gwenyvere. When Arthur rode against Launcelot on the battlefield, he looked upon his friend and “teerys breaste oute of hys yen, thynkyng of the grete curtesy that was in sir Launcelot more than in ony other man” (Vinaver 1192). Arthur is moved to tears when contemplating the end of his friendship with Launcelot, and he regrets that this war was ever begun between the two men.

Friendship between knights involves a complicated family bond among warriors who are forced to live and die for the love of their king and country. Proof of physical ability and strength on the battlefield begins the acceptance into knighthood. Newly welcomed young knights must go through an initiation process wherein they are challenged to accept dangerous missions and kill for the protection of the kingdom. The constant threat of pain and death combined with the exclusive male community creates a feeling that one’s brother knight has become one’s only family. The knights replace family as they come to represent father, mother, brother, sister, and ultimately friend. Arthur, as both knight and king, develops a sincere friendship with Sir Launcelot. Both men have not only fought alongside each other for years, but also have engaged in numerous celebrations, tournaments, and feasts with one another. The two men remained close, providing one another with a bond of family that is challenged and destroyed by Sir Launcelot’s actions towards Queen Gwenyvere and the interference of Sir Agravayne, Sir Mordred, and Sir Gawayne. The friendship potential between Arthur and Launcelot is never fully realized because Launcelot dishonors Arthur. In the book, examples of friendship between knights, or of male homo-social friendship are flawed because the

entire premise of knightly life focuses on death, destruction, violence, and adultery. The male characters are in need of salvation, and a savior knight must emerge to show the errant, sinful men and women of Camelot the true path to Christian friendship.

Merlyn the Benefactor

The insertion of a magician in a literary work explores man's power over destiny. In William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* the magician Prospero arguably represents "man's aspiration to exercise dominion over the natural world, his fellow human beings, and his own self" (Lucking 297), an aspiration evident when the character says, "...My high charms work/And these mine enemies are all knit up/In their distractions/They now are in my power/And in these fits I leave them..." (3, 1, 88-90). Published and performed in the early seventeenth century, Shakespeare's play concedes a fundamental need of man to exert some sort of control over life. In the play, Prospero chastises Ariel and Caliban "for the symptoms of restiveness that have been manifesting under his authority" (Lucking 299). Prospero then becomes a quasi-benefactor to the characters in the play. In Malory's book, Merlyn also uses magic to become a benefactor to Arthur and his court. Merlyn's friendship with Arthur is quite different from the friendships experienced between the knights of Arthur's court. Merlyn's friendship with Arthur can be viewed as an example of Aristotle's friendships of utility. There exists within friendship a certain gift exchange that creates a friendship based on give and take and lacking a bond or affection. Is Merlyn simply using Arthur to wield his own power and authority over Camelot? Merlyn does attain notoriety and becomes the most important

counselor to Arthur; however, Merlyn never assumes a political position. Merlyn begins and remains a magician and advisor to Arthur until his death. It would appear, then, that Merlyn is a political friend to Arthur, but he behaves as a god-like being because he offers himself as a sincere benefactor – the aid Merlyn gives Arthur is for the greater good of the kingdom.

Merlyn first appears in Malory's book when King Uther falls ill because of his "angre" and "grete love of fayre Igrayne" (Vinaver 8). King Uther's knight, Syre Ulfius, offers to go and find Merlyn in the hopes that the magician can help Uther: "I shal seke Merlyn and he shalle do yow remedy, that youre herte shal be pleasyd" (Vinaver 8). Waiting for the encounter with Ulfius, Merlyn advises Ulfius that "'yf kynge Uther wille wel rewarde me and be sworne unto me to fulfille my desyre, that shall be his honour and profite more than myn, for I shalle cause hym to have all his desyre'" (Vinaver 8). Merlyn is making it clear that he will help King Uther get what he desires, but he will also demand a return for his service. Merlyn's demand for payment consists of Uther's first-born child – Arthur:

‘Syre,’ said Merlyn, ‘this is my desyre: the first nyght that ye shall lye by Igrayne ye shal gete a child on her; and whan that is borne, that it shall be delyverd to me for to nourisshe thereas I wille have it, for it shal be your worship and the childis availle as mykel as the child is worth.’ (Vinaver 9)

Political friendship, then, has been established between King Uther and Merlyn. Merlyn has aided Uther in getting the woman Uther wants and, in exchange, Merlyn gets the child, who incidentally is Arthur. Politically, Uther has been able to defeat Igrayne's husband, who was "a mighty duke in Cornewaill that helde warre ageynst hym long

tyme” and to win the fair Igrayne as his wife (Vinaver 7). Merlyn positions himself to become the benefactor of the future king (Arthur) and therefore begin the process of fulfilling a divine edict—Sir Galahad will be “the good knyght by whom all the forayne cuntrey shulde be brought oute of daunger; and by hym the Holy Grayle sholde be encheved” (Vinaver 794). Without King Arthur, there will be no Launcelot and thus no Galahad, but the existence of these men is necessary for the spiritual salvation of the country through Galahad’s example of Christian friendship.

After King Uther’s death, the kingdom falls into turmoil as many of the nobility covet the monarchy. Merlyn approaches the “Archebisshop of Caunterbury” and advises him to gather all the “lordes” and “gentilmen of armes” to assemble in London by Christmas to observe a miracle of Jesus (Vinaver 12). Merlyn uses his prophetic gifts to serve as a mediator between God and man as he states:

For all the lordes of the reame and alle the gentillmen of armes, that they shold to London come by Cristmas upon payne of cursynge, and for this cause, that Jesu, that was borne on that nyghte, that He wold of His grete mercy shewe some miracle, as He was come to be Kynge of mankynde, for to shewe somme miracle who shold be rightwys kynge of this reame.

(Vinaver 12)

As the lords and gentlemen assemble in the greatest church in London and after the first mass, parishioners notice that a great stone has appeared in the courtyard. A sword is imbedded in the stone with an inscription that reads: “Whoso pulleth oute this swerd of this stone and anyyld is rightwys kynge borne of all En(g)lond” (Vinaver 12). The

Archbishop responds by proclaiming that God has chosen the next king of England and He will “make hym knowen” (Vinaver 13).

When, the young Arthur pulls the sword from the stone, speculations and doubts erupt amongst the lords and gentlemen over whether the young boy is really the next king of England (Vinaver 12-14). Finally, the men gather again and all attempt to pull the sword from the stone but “none myghte prevaille but Arthur” (Vinaver 16). While some of the men accept that Arthur is the true king of England, a few rebel and call Merlyn a “dreme-reder” (Vinaver 18). Merlyn then advises Arthur that he must prepare to fight for the monarchy. Arthur is able to defeat his enemies, with the help of Merlyn and his newly acquired, God-given weapon, the sword Excalibur.

Because of Merlyn’s maneuvering in the political realm of England (Uther and Arthur’s reigns) and the idea that Arthur has been appointed to the throne by God, the friendship between Arthur and Merlyn is a combination of divine intervention and guidance. The idea of a sacerdotal or divinely “empowered monarch” can be traced back to Constantine in Roman history. The empowered monarch is appointed to rule a kingdom by God (Zaller 758). The friendship between Arthur and Merlyn is viewed as a part of God’s plan because monarchies were believed to be chosen by God, and the portrayal of Arthur’s rise to the throne, in Malory’s book, is clearly orchestrated by God. The friendship that Merlyn provides Arthur is mainly that of a benefactor or god-like being who is acting for the ultimate greater good of England.

Male homo-social friendships in Malory’s book include the bonds of brotherhood among knights and the benefactor relationship between Merlyn the magician and Arthur and his knights. Knightly friendships begin with adherence to rules of “like” individuals,

as knights must be of noble birth. Knights must then prove physical ability in battle to gain acceptance into the chivalric community. Once the knight is accepted, he embarks on an initiation process wherein he must engage in quests, battles, and tournaments to protect the kingdom and gain glory for his knight-brothers. The young initiate then becomes a part of a family of warriors. In contrast, Merlyn serves his knight-friends as a guide and political ally. Merlyn's role is to orchestrate events in an effort to protect the kingdom. The tragedy of the book is that despite Merlyn's quasi-divine intervention, the kingdom eventually falls. The true reward for the characters is to embrace Christianity and Christian friendships and gain eternal life with the Creator.

CHAPTER III

LOVE TRIANGLES, EARNED FRIENDSHIPS, AND THE SCHEMING FRIEND

The concept of a man and woman enjoying a friendship rarely exists within Malory's chivalric society. The closest example of hetero-social friendship would be marriage; however, the few married knights in the story do not experience the close emotional bond in marriage that they experience in their male-male bond of knighthood. As King Arthur states in the book, "And much more I am sorry for my good knyghtes losse than for the losse of my fayre queen; for quenys I myght have inow, but such felyship of good knyghtes shall never be togydirs in no company" (Vinaver 1184). King Arthur regrets the loss of his friendship with Sir Launcelot and the knights of the Round Table more than the loss of his wife Queen Gwenyvere suggesting how male-male bonds are ultimately more meaningful for male characters than intimate relationships with women.

When attempting to create a model for the female's role in friendship, I found that I had little to work with from the philosophers I noted in the introduction. One could argue that the female as a friend is not clearly represented by any of those philosophers because women were not considered viable participants in friendship in misogynist pagan and patristic writings. A medieval man is often identified by his social status: noble, townsman and peasant. A medieval woman, in contrast, is identified by her marital

status: virgin, wife or widow (Bardsley 91). From this simple example, one apparent conclusion maintains that women are not considered an equal to men but an extension of men and therefore not suited to friendship. Following this same social concept, women were problematically included or outright excluded from many dominant ancient to medieval philosophical ideas of friendship.

In Plato's *Lysis*, the adult male love interest is not a woman, but a young boy. Intelligent, young boys not women are the worthy emotional and physical recipients of male love and, ultimately, friendship. In the anthology, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, Alcuin Blamires provides an extensive, chronological examination of the medieval woman's nature. Blamires notes that in Aristotle's influential *De Generatione Animalium*, the philosopher conjectures that a "woman is the prime matter awaiting the forming or moving agency of the man's semen" (39). For Aristotle, the female is only the vessel for procreation or a "place for generation to occur" (39). Without contemplating the social status of women in this period, pre-Christian philosophy was adamantly ignorant of the female's potential as a friend to her husband in that she was essentially unlike the male. Plato's characters turn to young boys for love and friendship, while Aristotle believes that the female body as a source of seed for procreation is the main, and only important, value of women.

Blamires also discusses Juvenal's 2nd century A.D. "misogynistic" ideals of the female as "lustful," animalistic and cynical (25). In Juvenal's sixth satire, death is preferable to marriage, a "decent and modest woman" is nonexistent, and an "august wife" moonlights as a street whore (25-7). St. Augustine's emphasis upon man made in God's image also reveals that women were not valued as recipients of friendship. For

Augustine, a woman is “an inferior, sense-oriented dimension of humankind” (78). Eve’s original sin forced God to give power over women to men. Only at the resurrection will women “be free of the necessity of intercourse and childbirth,” with the sin of the female removed and there being no lust (79-82). In addition, in *The Summa Theologica*, Aquinas introduced the idea that the child should love the father more than the mother because the father is the “active partner and a principle higher than the mother” (47).

All medieval friendship philosophy may not be strictly misogynistic. St. Augustine attributes his conversion to Christianity to his mother. Augustine notes that his mother, Monnica, prayed for him for many years and her influence was vital to his conversion (Asiedu 276-7). Additionally, many of the Christian philosophers I have noted wrote their treatises on friendship for monastic audiences. Reginald Hyatte notes that *vera amicitia* within Augustine’s *The City of God* is based on the ideal monastic community (45-46). Aelred of Rievaulx’s treatise, *De Spiritualis Amicitia*, uses Christ as a model for all friendships (133). Aelred, a theologian of the 12th century would, presumably, have been writing of monastic male friendships as well. Thomas Aquinas also wrote of friendship within fraternal monastic communities (Hyatte 43-5). The female as a participant in friendship philosophy may have been excluded because the topic was friendship among monastic men and not because the female was considered unworthy of friendship.

The absence of ideas of the female as a source of friendship portrays medieval women socially, religiously and philosophically as little more than a source of male sexual pleasure and of procreation. Consideration of a woman as a worthy participant in a friendship is not immediately apparent in Malory’s text. Do the women in Malory’s

book possess a source of power? If so, then how do women use their power to shape their destinies, and how do those actions affect friendship involving females? A distinction between female authority and female power must be considered in any discussion of female friendships. Authority for the medieval, noble woman could exist in the form of a temporary guardianship; a queen could assume authority in either her husband or son's absence or death. Power, on the other hand, could best be described as the influence a woman may be able to use on her husband or children. Because a medieval woman's social status was dependent upon her marital status, her access to power was also based on her marital status. The maiden or widow possesses no husband upon whom to exert influence. A married woman or a widow with children, in contrast, possessed a source of power. The wife could exercise her power over her husband by stating her opinions and beliefs and attempt to persuade her husband to act upon her advice. The mother could influence her children by instilling lessons and values that she believes to be important (Bardsley 193-9). Do the female characters in Malory's book engage in friendships with males, and, if so, do those relationships then prove that women are capable of friendship?

Malory explores the full extent of the chivalric triangle and its implication for friendship in the male and female characters Gwenyvere, Arthur, and Launcelot. A close bond between Queen Gwenyvere and Sir Launcelot emerges that is stronger than the bond of marriage between Gwenyvere and Arthur. Additionally, friendships between men and women that are based on false assumptions and abuse (by the female) and forgiveness and acceptance (by the male) emerge to solidify Malory's diminution of the potential for female-male friendships. Nynyve, the sorceress who is represented as a

friend to Arthur and his knights, has questionable motives and is, after all, a witch. I propose that Malory's women problematize traditional philosophical ideals of friendship. By portraying females as sexual, marital-status objects or as women who have done wrong but have repented and gained forgiveness, Malory's representations fail to establish the female as a source of friendship for male characters.

Love Triangles

Love triangles are hardly new to Western literature, starting with Menelaus, Paris, and Helen of Troy. Closer to Malory's time, we hear the woman's point of view in an anonymous poem, written by a female troubadour, or a female French court poet, in the mid- to late-twelfth century:

Friend, I know well enough how skilled
you are in amorous affairs, and I find you rather changed
from the chivalrous knight you used to be. I might as well be clear,
for your mind seems quite distracted: do you still find me attractive?
(Bogin 146)

In this poem, the female (queen) is involved in a chivalric love triangle and fears that her knight has lost interest in her as a lover. The knight has earlier stated that he is keeping his distance because "our spiteful enemies...they've set a deadly trap,/for thanks to their infernal noise,/we can't enjoy our daily joy" (Bogin 147). A pattern of deceiving the woman's husband (and fear of retaliation by the husband) in this poem is paralleled in Malory's marriage relationship between Arthur and Gwenyvere.

The female as an object is repeatedly represented throughout Malory's book and is related to the absence of female-male friendships within chivalric society. Arthur's conception is based on a battle over a woman who is passive and whose voice is silenced in the grand scheme of the men who are fighting to possess her. King Arthur's mother, Lady Igrayne, is first married to the Duke of Tyntagil. King Uther Pendragon invites the duke and his wife to his castle, but the married couple are warned that Uther "liked and loved this lady wel...and he desired to have lyen by her" (Vinaver 7). Later, Merlyn intercedes and helps Uther deceive the woman into copulating with him and therefore conceiving Arthur. Merlyn next orchestrates the death of the duke, making Igrayne free to marry Uther. Igrayne's response to this trickery and the death of her husband is to mourn her husband's death "pryvely" and to hold "her pees" (Vinaver 9). Although Igrayne does take a moment to remember her husband, she never asserts her own will against Uther; she simply accepts him as her new husband.

The objectified female is portrayed again as Gwenyvere is married to King Arthur. Arthur desires Gwenyvere after his "firste syght" of her and professes his intentions to Merlyn (Vinaver 39). Arthur proclaims that "this damesell is the moste valyaunte and fayryst that I know lyvyng, or yet that ever I coude fynde" (Vinaver 97). Arthur's infatuation with the ideal of a beautiful woman is later echoed in the marriage of King Mark to La Beall Isode. Sir Trystram inadvertently sparks his uncle's (King Mark's) interest in La Beall Isode when he "so preysed her fir hir beaute and hir goodnesse that kynge Marke seyde he would wedde her" (Vinaver 403). King Mark is ready to marry Isode based on Trystram's description of her beauty and kindness, having

never met Isode and taking no interest in her besides possessing the most beautiful woman he believes is available to him.

If King Arthur views his wife as nothing more than a possession, can a friendship exist within his/their marriage? As the wife engages in a chivalric love affair with the most powerful knight under her husband (Sir Launcelot), does a friendship emerge out of the affair or is the love triangle simply a competition between the men? Is the woman ever viewed by the men who supposedly love her as a friend and not a possession? I propose that a greater intimacy, and therefore something that approaches friendship, emerges between the woman and her knight than between the woman and her husband, but a genuine bond of friendship is still sorely lacking in the love affair.

Launcelot and Gwenyvere's friendship runs deeper than the intimacy King Arthur feels for his wife. When Launcelot is tricked into sleeping with Lady Elayne, the second time and under Gwenyvere's nose, Queen Gwenyvere accuses Launcelot of being a "false traytoure knight" and demands that he remove himself and never come near her again (Vinaver 805-6). Launcelot is so disturbed by the loss of his love that he faints, and when he awakens, he jumps out of a window, clothed only in his nightshirt, and runs away (Vinaver 806). Launcelot later returns to Camelot and resumes his fellowship with the knights of the Round Table and with Queen Gwenyvere, but his friendship with her is tested again.

After the quest for the Holy Grail is complete, Launcelot returns to Camelot and resumes his affair with the queen. Malory notes that Queen Gwenyvere seems Launcelot's only weakness as he says, "sir Launcelot began to resorte unto queen Gwenyvere agayne and forgate the promise and the perfeccion that he made in the quest"

(Vinaver 1045). Sir Mordred, King Arthur's illegitimate son by his sister Morgan le Fay, is intent on exposing Launcelot and Gwenyvere's affair to King Arthur. Launcelot, therefore, distances himself from the queen so that she grows angry and accuses him of spending too much time and attention on other women. Queen Gwenyvere again accuses Launcelot of being a false knight and says, "I forfende the my felyship, and uppon payne of thy hede that thou se me nevermore!" (Vinaver 1047).

Not long after Launcelot's departure, Queen Gwenyvere hosts a feast for her knights and one knight, Sir Patryse, eats a poisoned apple and dies (Vinaver 1049). Immediately, all of the knights suspect Gwenyvere of plotting the death of the knights. King Arthur, perhaps faced with the dual responsibilities of being a husband and the king, proposes that one of the knights fight for the queen's honor, allowing the accusation against her to be decided on the battlefield. Arthur then fears that Queen Gwenyvere will be "frendeles" because Sir Launcelot, her most devout and long-standing champion is nowhere to be found and no knight will come forward to fight for her (Vinaver 1050). Arthur convinces Sir Bors to fight for the queen's honor, but Sir Bors is hesitant as he reminds Gwenyvere that she had "drevyn hym [sir Launcelot] oute of thys contrey by whom ye and all we were dayly worshipped by" (Vinaver 1052). Sir Bors chastises Gwenyvere for her mistreatment of Launcelot, and he sends a messenger to find Sir Launcelot for her benefit because he is hesitant to place his life in jeopardy for her sake. Launcelot, however, does return and champions Gwenyvere's cause, proving that his bond with Gwenyvere is strong and can't be broken by her mistreatment.

Later, Queen Gwenyvere, once again, banishes Launcelot from her presence when he wears a sleeve from another woman during a jousting tournament (Vinaver 1080).

Gwenyvere's jealousy leads to Launcelot's separation from King Arthur's court until she, again, needs him to rescue her. This time, Sir Malleyagaunte has kidnapped Queen Gwenyvere, and she sends a child messenger to deliver her ring to Sir Launcelot, therefore notifying him of her predicament and begging his help. Once again, Launcelot proves his devotion and rescues the queen (Vinaver 1124).

A final example of the greater bond between Launcelot and Gwenyvere occurs when the lovers are eventually discovered by King Arthur due to the interference of Sir Agravayne and Sir Mordred. King Arthur decides to forsake his queen and his best knight when he hears that Sir Agravayne and Sir Mordred discovered the couple in the queen's bedchamber: "And therefore for my queen he [Launcelot] shall nevermore fight, for she shall have the law. And if I may gete sir Launcelot, wyte you well he shall have as shamefull a dethe" (Vinaver 1175). Gwenyvere is sentenced to burn at the stake, "dispoyled in her smok and shryvyn," and Launcelot comes to her rescue (Vinaver 1177). Launcelot saves Gwenyvere from the death that her husband was willing to allow and takes her to his castle, the Joyous Guard, where he continues to protect her from certain death if she returns to Arthur (Vinaver 1178).

Despite several rebuttals from Queen Gwynevere, Sir Launcelot's response is to rush to her defense, repeatedly. In contrast, King Arthur has ordered the execution of Sir Launcelot and Queen Gwynevere, but Sir Gawayne admits his great sorrow that the friendship between the knights has come to this. Arthur is surprised that Gawayne is willing to forgive Launcelot, even after Launcelot had fought and killed Gawayne's brother Sir Agravayne and his two sons Sir Florens and Sir Lovell (Vinaver 1175). Arthur demands that Gawayne go and "brynge my quene to the fyre and there to have her

jougement” (Vinaver 1176). Sir Gawayne refuses and claims that “I woll never be in that place where so noble a queen as ys my lady dame Gwentyvere shall take such a shamefull ende. For wyte you well, my harte woll nat serve me for to se her dye” (Vinaver 1176). Sir Gawayne therefore refuses to go along with Gwynevere’s death and insists that “hit shall never be seyde that ever I was of youre councyle for her deth” (Vinaver 1176). A brief glimpse of hetero-social friendship then does exist as Gawayne refuses to deliver Gwentyvere to her death.

Sir Gawayne’s comment regarding the counsel King Arthur received refers to Sir Mordred’s revelation of the lovers (Vinaver 1174). Malory excuses Arthur from the burden of sentencing Gwynevere to death by stating,

And the law was such in tho days that whatsomever they were, of what estate of degree, if they were founden gylty of treson there shuld be none other remedy but deth, and othir the menour other the takynge with the dede shulde be causer of their hasty jougement. And right so was hit ordained for queen Gwentyver: bycause sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the dethe of thirteen knyghtes of the Rounde Table, thes previs and experyenses caused kynge Arthure to commaunde the queen to the fyre and there to be brente. (Vinaver 1174)

Malory explains that Gwentyvere and Launcelot have been found guilty of treason, and treason has several meanings. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “treason” as “the action of betraying...an offense against the king’s majesty or the safety of the commonwealth...and the murder of one to whom the murderer owes allegiance, as of a master by his servant, a husband by his wife....” We could say that the affair between

Gwenyvere and Launcelot is an act of betrayal. But could Arthur have prevented Gwenyvere's death? Couldn't he have investigated the events instead of taking Sir Mordred's accusations to heart? Launcelot turns his back on the kingdom and endeavors to rescue Gwenyvere at any cost, proving that his bond with Gwenyvere is strong. King Arthur, however, regrets the loss of the fellowship of his knights more than the loss of his queen. Launcelot seems to maintain a greater bond of friendship with Queen Gwenyvere than Arthur does with his own wife.

Earned Friendships

Two non-sexual friendships between a man and a woman emerge in the book, yet they affirm a view of women as flawed beings who only reach a level of friendship when a man of exemplary moral value grants a woman that friendship.

After the death of Trystam's mother, Queen Elyzabeth, Trystram's father remarries. Thereafter, Sir Trystam's stepmother attempts to kill her stepson twice. First, "she let poyson be putt in a pees of sylver in the chamber where Trystrames and hir chyldir were togydyrs," but her own child drinks the poison, instead of Trystram, and dies (Vinaver 373). The stepmother remains undeterred and attempts to poison Trystram again; however, this time her husband, the king, is on the verge of drinking the poison when she intervenes and confesses her murder attempt. The stepmother is then found guilty by the "assente of the barrownes" and is sentenced to death by burning (Vinaver 374).

Trystram intervenes and begs his father to spare his stepmother, offering her life and an opportunity for redemption. The stepmother responds with gratitude, and a friendship develops between the two as Malory notes:

And than kyng Melyodas had grete joy of yonge Trystrams, and so had the quene, his wyffe, for ever aftir in hir lyff, because sir Trystrams saved hir frome the fyre; she ded never hate hym more afftir, but ever loved hym and gaff hym many gyfftyes. (Vinaver 375)

A friendship has emerged between Sir Trystram and his stepmother that is based on her evil intentions and his forgiveness of her sins against him. Although the outcome is pleasing to the story, Malory emphasizes the idea that women are unworthy of friendship unless it is offered by a righteous male character. Women like the stepmother behave badly and can only be redeemed and included in a friendship if their male victim allows that inclusion.

The friendship between La Cote Male Tayle and the damsel Maledysaunte is another example of a hetero-social friendship in the book. A damsel (Maledysaunte) arrives in King Arthur's court and charges any knight to take up the shield she is carrying and continue an unspecified quest, remarking that the last knight who carried the shield had died in pursuit of this quest. La Cote Male Tayle, a young adventurer, is the only man in the court to accept the challenge. Maledysaunte then proceeds to treat La Cote Male Tayle horribly as she "mysseseyde hym in the fowlest maner" (Vinaver 462). Maledysaunte continues her verbal harassment of La Cote Male Tayle throughout their adventure, even after he proves his strength and skill in battle. La Cote Male Tayle patiently accepts her mockery and taunts, even in front of other knights. When

Maledysaunte and La Cote Male Tayle encounter Sir Launcelot, Launcelot attempts to quiet the woman's unkindness: "And ever that damesell rebuked sir La Cote Male Tayle, and than sir Launcelot answered for hym" (Vinaver 467).

After Sir Launcelot is separated from La Cote Male Tayle, the latter is taken prisoner. Maledysaunte finds Sir Launcelot and begs his help. Sir Launcelot agrees to assist his fellow knight, but he charges the woman to desist in her mistreatment of the young knight: "'But damesell,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'uppon thys covenante I woll ryde with you, so that ye wyll nat rebuke thys knight sir La Cote Male Tayle no more...'" (Vinaver 471). Maledysaunte responds that she was only mistreating La Cote Male Tayle because she believed him to be too young for the quest and sought to drive him away from his obligation. Sir Launcelot thanks her for her honesty and admires her intentions, thus renaming her "Damesell Beau-Pansaunte" (Vinaver 471).

Launcelot and Maledysaunte find La Cote Male Tayle, and the two men defeat their enemies and return to King Arthur's court, "and at the Pentecoste nexte folowyng...La Cote Male Tayle was called otherwise be right sir Brewne le Noyre...and there sir Breune le Noyre wedded that damesell Maledysaunte" (Vinaver 476). Again, despite the female's apparent bad behavior and due to the patience and forgiveness of the male, a friendship is earned. Maledysaunt earns the friendship of Sir Launcelot and friendship and marriage with Sir La Cote Male Tayle. The friendships between the woman and the two men could not have occurred, however, if it weren't for the men's acceptance, forgiveness, and correction of her insulting behavior.

Nynyve - The Scheming Friend

Nynyve is a new kind of woman within the story in that she transcends the idea that women only exist as figures complementary to men. Typically, male characters compete for the women, creating a dynamic in which females are viewed as objects. In return, women view each other as competition for male attention. Friendships between men and women mainly are disrupted by love triangles. Occasionally, a friendship will emerge after the errant female learns a lesson and is forgiven her bad behavior by the morally superior male character. Nynyve is unique because she “integrates marginalized femininity into society and forces” the characters to recognize “female magic, female power, and female governance” (Kaufman 57). The reign of Nynyve over the lake is superior to Arthur’s reign over Camelot because “Nynyve is able to effect change within Arthur’s court, while the king has no visible effect on hers” (Kaufman 57). Nynyve manages to use her magical powers for “transformation” because magic is created and used for “the effect it should have on the object towards which it is directed. Magic is used to change the current state of a person or thing.... The power to transform one thing into another is so important and so rare that it demands to be treated with the utmost reverence” (Breuer 9). Nynyve’s use of magic and therefore authority, in the story, “though beneficent” to Arthur’s life, “are ultimately part of her own quest to be elevated to the position of the Lake’s ‘chyff,’” and it represents an example of Aristotle’s friendship of utility (Kaufman 57). Nynyve, therefore, is revered as a goddess-like being. She uses her unique abilities to act in her own interests and to maintain a political friendship with Arthur and his knights.

As the Damesell of the Lake, Nynyve emerges carrying a new and “powerful message” to the male characters in the book, asserting female empowerment and making it clear that “knights must acknowledge the importance of women” (Hodges 82). Nynyve appears in the story during Arthur and Gwenyvere’s wedding feast as a maiden who is pursuing a brachet that is chasing a hart (Hodges 82). Soon thereafter, Arthur establishes an oath for the Round Table that challenges the knights “never to do outorage nothir morthir...and allwayes to do ladyes, damsels, and jantilwomen and wydowes [sucour:] strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe” (Vinaver 120). Previously, King Arthur merely had received the allegiance of all new knights by commanding a general oath that included, “Be ye a good knight, and so I pray to God ye may be, and if ye be of proues and worthyness ye shall be of the Table Rounde” (Vinaver 100). This new edict from Arthur now includes a charge to protect women, “making relationships with women part of the very definition of knighthood” (Hodges 83). The consideration of a man’s role as protector of women is now a part of the code of honor the knights of the Round Table must uphold. Nynyve’s appearance on the day Arthur is marrying Gwenyvere prompts the new edict that knights must protect women. Nynyve and Gwneyvere hasten the need for Arthur to protect his new wife and to acknowledge the sorceress’s importance to the kingdom. Gwenyvere represents family while Nynyve represents magic and political power.

An element of the supernatural is present in Arthur’s story starting, as noted above, with his conception, orchestrated by the magician Merlyn, who remains a close confidante and counselor to the king. Later, the good sorceress Nynyve surfaces repeatedly to help King Arthur. Malory notes that Nynyve often assists Arthur in

achieving his political goals and remains “allwayes fryndely to kyng Arthure” (Vinaver 490). Arthur’s sister, Morgan le Fay, attempts to kill Arthur by creating a false sword, similar to Arthur’s beloved Excalibur, and charging her lover Accolon to kill the king. Confusion ensues when Arthur loses his false supernatural sword, but Nynyve “intervenes to give Arthur the true Excalibur” (Hodges 78-9). Arthur is then able to defeat his foe and thwart Morgan’s efforts not only to end his life, but also to destroy his reign as king. Nynyve has used her sorcery to aid King Arthur and to secure his political power within the kingdom.

When Arthur’s life is threatened by his sister Morgan le Fay, Nynyve again steps in and counsels Arthur about the evil enchantment that has been placed on a “mantell” that has been delivered to the king by a servant of Morgan. Arthur had naively forgiven Morgan for her earlier attempt to kill him and was about to accept the garment because “when the kyng behelde this mantel hit pleased hym much” (Vinaver 157). Nynyve, however, advises Arthur to have the damsel who has delivered the mantel wear the offering. When the damsel puts the mantel on and instantly dies, Arthur is “wondirly wroth more than he was toforehande” (Vinaver 157-8). Again, Nynyve has used her position in King Arthur’s court to save his life and throne. Later, Nynyve again counsels the king and saves Queen Gwenyvere. Gwenyvere has been charged with adultery against her king, and Nynyve comes forward to proclaim “hit opynly that she [Gwenyvere] was never gylty...and so the quene was [excused]” (Vinaver 1059). Again, in this passage, Malory establishes a friendship between Nynyve and King Arthur as he notes “for ever she ded grete goodnes unto kyng Arthure and to all hys knyghtes thorow her sorsery and enchauntementes” (Vinaver 1059).

Nynyve's role as the advisor and protector of Arthur's kingdom also serves her own purposes. Nynyve, as a goddess-like being and the chyff lady of the lake, has a responsibility to guide her inferiors away from error and sin. The connection between the magical lake and Arthur's kingdom, geographically, creates a benevolence and benefit for Nynyve. By protecting and advising the king whose kingdom is closest to her lake, Nynyve may, in fact, extend friendship to Arthur to protect her own interests.

Friendships between male and female characters do then exist in Malory's book. However, the strongest bond of this type is the friendship between Gwenyvere and Launcelot and that friendship is repeatedly tested by Gwenyvere's negative treatment of Launcelot. It would almost appear that Gwenyvere is treating Launcelot as an object. Launcelot seems to have the stronger attachment as he continuously returns to Gwenyvere and defends her despite her repeated rebuffs. Gwenyvere is represented as a selfish, manipulative adulteress. The friendship between Trystram and his stepmother negatively portrays the stepmother as a murderess. The friendship between La Cote Male Tayle and Maledysaunt begins with the female's ruthless mocking of the young knight despite her honest intentions. Maledysaunt's character seems a more morally superior portrayal than those of Gwenyvere and the stepmother, although her means of attempting to protect the young knight are questionable and negative. Nynyve, on the other hand, is a female who wields power and serves Arthur and his court as an advisor. She is able to use her position as a sorceress to influence Arthur's political life and therefore secure the safety of her realm. Despite the presence of strong female characters in the narrative, Malory's female friends are portrayed negatively overall. We are given an adulteress, a potential murderess, a nag, and finally a supernatural being. Conventional and

established philosophical ideals of friendship remain elusive to the female medieval character. Women are not credible in friendship.

CHAPTER IV
THE MAN OFFERS SALVATION: SAINTLY
SIR GALAHAD

Malory's book reflects his inclusion of the fifteenth century "idea of the human body of Christ...as complex and potentially fraught as it was fascinating to the medieval mind" (Tasioulas 24). The questions surrounding Christ's existence, as God born as man, was a source of both fascination and preoccupation. The idea that God chose to be born in "a slave's prison for the soul...susceptible to all kinds of physical enslavement: to hunger, to illness, to sexual desire, to senescence..." was indeed a sophisticated idea for the man or woman who faced the daily turmoil of medieval existence (Tasioulas 24).

A fascination with Christianity and the life of Christ is apparent in Malory's story of King Arthur. "Medieval preoccupation with the human body of God" struggled with the idea that "Christ was wholly divine and also wholly human" (Tasioulas 24). Although the Christian savior was born of the Virgin Mary, who experienced a sinless conception herself, Malory's savior Sir Galahad was conceived in completely opposite circumstances. Galahad's mother Elayne and her servant use witchcraft to trick his father Sir Launcelot into copulating with Elayne and conceiving Galahad. It is within the nature of Galahad's character, despite the unfavorable circumstances of his conception, that Galahad becomes the accessible example of the redeeming power of Christianity. A savior conceived outside of marriage and through witchcraft is able to become the man

most worthy of obtaining the Holy Grail. Galahad is worthy because he is clean and sinless. Galahad becomes a member of Arthur's knights, thus inserting himself into a Christian community where Galahad can extend charity and grace to others. Augustine's *vera amicitia* can then be achieved. Sir Galahad models his actions after Christ, proving that Aelred's spiritual friendship is accessible. Aquinas's double bond of friendship is realized as Galahad exchanges a love covenant with God when he extends charity to others. Galahad is the example of how an individual can achieve a greater relationship with God through leading a life of Christian example.

Necessary Savior

Malory creates the need for Galahad by referring to the sinfulness of man during the time of Jesus, comparing the moral transgressions of the people then to the medieval period. Malory's world is full of men and women who do not love one another. Their sinfulness and wickedness make them easy prey for demons and fiends. Galahad, however, is protected (untouchable) because he is a friend to God and to man. Galahad is faced with a "fyende" from a graveyard that declares his own evil powers no match because Galahad has "about [him] so many angels" (Vinaver 882). A "good man" then approaches Sir Galahad and tells him that the fiend represented

the duras of the worlde, and the grete synne that oure Lorde founde in the worlde. For there was suche wrecchyndesse that the fadir loved nat the sonne, nother the sonne loved not the fadir. And that was one of the casusys that oure Lorde toke fleysh and bloode of a clene maydyn; for

oure synnes were so grete at that tyme that well-nyghe all was
wyckednesse. (Vinaver 882)

Christ, therefore, came to the world when the people were most sinful and had turned from love of family to love of self. It is also important to note that the Lord took flesh and blood from a “clene maydyn” when coming as savior into the world. Descriptions of cleanliness, virginity, and piety are associated with the Virgin Mary, Jesus, and in Malory’s book, *Sir Galahad*. The sins and transgressions of the people during the time of Jesus is being compared to the sinfulness of Galahad’s time. As God brought Jesus to the world to deliver the people from their sins, Malory brings Galahad (a model of Christ) to Camelot to show Arthur’s kingdom the error of their ways and to offer a source of eternal salvation.

Next, Malory compares the chivalric society of Camelot to the world and subtly chastises King Arthur and his knights for not living up to their moral responsibilities. Related to the idea of a loss of family discussed in chapter one, Sir Percivale’s aunt remarks that as the knights became members of the court, their pride and acceptance into King Arthur’s Round Table led them away from their families: “And ye have sene that they have loste hir fadirs and hir modirs and all hir kynne, and hir wyves and hir children, for to be of youre felyship” (Vinaver 906). St. Augustine believed that communal living could bring like-minded individuals closer to God. Arthur’s knights, within their communal, Christian society, possess the potential to attain a higher state of consciousness, but they squander that potential. As cited above, Christ had commanded his disciples to turn from their families in Luke 14:26: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his

own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (*The Holy Bible*). The knights of the Round Table were meant to set an example to the rest of the Camelot. Their apparent dismissal of family for chivalric friendship, and thus lives in fact spent fighting and engaging in the pursuit of sinful pleasure, creates a world of wickedness. The wickedness of the life of the Round Table knights echoes the sinful time when Christ became flesh and died. Sir Galahad is inserted into the story as the savior of the Round Table just as Christ was the savior of the world. Galahad leads by example, setting the tone of sinlessness and piety for the other knights to follow.

Prophecy

Galahad’s introduction into the story is full of Christian reference and prophecy. Sir Launcelot, being briefly exiled from King Arthur’s court (and Lady Gwenyvere), is wounded by a wild boar and taken to the castle of King Pellles, Elayne’s father. Sir Launcelot first sees the Holy Grail while at King Pellles’s castle. The appearance of the Holy Grail, immediately prior to Galahad’s conception, foreshadows Galahad’s quasi-divine function in the book. We are to realize that King Pellles, his daughter, Lady Elayne, and her maidservant Dame Brusen have been instructed that Galahad will be “the good knyght by whom all the forayne cuntrey shulde be brought oute of daunger; and by hym the Holy Grayle sholde be encheved” (Vinaver 794). Sir Galahad is the savior of the story. Because he is the example of a virginal, sinless Christian existence that is sent by God, he performs miracles that will reach the populace and inspire belief, and his

sacrifices lead the knights of the Round Table to turn from sin and become devoted, pious Christians.

After Launcelot has seen the Holy Grail in King Pelles's court, Lady Elayne and her servant Dame Brusen trick Sir Launcelot and impregnate Elayne. The result of Elayne's trickery is the birth of the prophesied savior archetype, Sir Galahad. After Sir Launcelot's return to and reconciliation with King Arthur's court, Galahad's saintly future is introduced:

'A, Jesu!' seyde kynge Arthure, 'I mervayle for what cause ye, sir Launcelot, wente oute of youre mynde. For I and many other deme hyt was for the love of fayre Elayn, the doughtier of kynge Pelles, by whom ye ar noysed that ye have gotyn a chylde, and hys name ys Galahad. And men sey that he shall do many mervaylouse thyngys.' (Vinaver 832)

Many years later, Sir Launcelot meets his illegitimate son and makes him a knight. During the feast of Pentecost, Arthur's knights are gathered in "the felyship of the Table Rownde" when a "fayre jantillwoman on horseback" rides into Camelot and asks for Launcelot. The woman convinces Launcelot to follow her into the forest where he encounters Galahad (Vinaver 853). Sir Launcelot is approached by "twelve nunnes that brought with hem Galahad, the whych was passynge fayre and welle made, that unneth in the worlde men might nat fynde hys macche" (854). Launcelot is unaware that the enchanting young man is his son and makes him a knight during "the reverence of the hyghe feste" (854).

Sir Launcelot tries to convince the newly knighted Sir Galahad to return to King Arthur's court with him, but Galahad refuses, and Launcelot is forced to return on his

own. Upon his arrival the “felyship” of the court notices that the previously vacant seat, referred to as the “Sege Perelous” has newly written letters in gold that read, “Here ought to sitte he, He oughte to sitte hyre. Four hundred wyntir and four and fyffty acomplyvysshed aftir the passion of oure lorde jesu cryst oughte thys siege to be fulfilled” (855). Sir Launcelot then exclaims that the present day is in fact the Pentecost day and the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the day the disciples of Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit from God.

Sir Galahad later joins King Arthur’s court, and we are told that his presence there is a result of divine intervention:

Than all of the knyghtes of the Table Round mervayled gretly of sir Galahad that he durst sitte there and was so tendir of ayge, and wyste nat from whens he com but all only be God. All they seyde, ‘Thys ys he by whom the Sankgreall shall be encheved...’. (Vinaver 861)

Galahad’s quasi-divine presence has been introduced with prophecy and a subtle comparison to Jesus Christ. Malory uses the prophecy of Galahad, drawn from several sources, to develop a sense of knowledge and acceptance of Galahad’s eventual actions and importance within the story. Galahad’s coming is predicted by Merlyn, King Pelles and his daughter, Lady Elayne, King Arthur and Queen Gwenyvere, as well as multiple characters involved in the quest for the Holy Grail. Their anticipation of Galahad is meant to convey the other characters’ need for a savior and the wide-spread acceptance of Galahad as that savior.

A key component of Galahad’s divine appointment is his assemblage of weapons given to him by God. God has informed the world that the worthy Galahad will fulfill a

divine destiny and has given the savior the tools necessary to achieve that destiny.

Galahad receives his first divine implement, a sword, upon his arrival at King Arthur's court. Arthur and his knights have seen a sword in the river that is made of red marble and decorated with precious stones and letters of gold. The sword is inscribed: "Never shall man take me hense but only he by whos syde I ought to honge and he shall be the beste knyght of the worlde" (Vinaver 856). The appearance of this supernatural sword echoes Arthur's pulling of the sword. Arthur was made king by divine intervention just as Galahad is now made savior. Arthur and his knights all fail to retrieve the sword and return to the castle to continue their feast. Galahad then arrives in King Arthur's court, accompanied by "a good olde man and an awnciente, clothed all in whyght," and the old man announces that he is delivering Galahad unto King Arthur to fulfill "mervayles" (Vinaver 859). The reference to the ancient being, clothed all in white, suggests that this person is from God, and we see another angelic figure appear as Galahad receives his next instrument from God. Galahad is taken to the river by King Arthur and easily draws the sword from the rock, saying, "'And for the surete of thys swerde I brought none with me, but here by my side hangith the scawberte'" (Vinaver 862). Galahad puts the sword in his scabbard, and King Arthur then predicts that "a shylde God may sende you" (Vinaver 863).

True to King Arthur's prophecy, God does provide Sir Galahad with a shield and uses an angelic being to aid Galahad in attaining this second gift from the heavens. As Galahad embarks on the quest for the Holy Grail, he rides with his sword but without a shield. Galahad encounters two knights, Sir Bagdemagus and Sir Uwayne, who inform him that they are near the location of a shield "that no man may bere hit aboute his necke

but he be myscheved other dede within three dayes, other maymed for ever” (Vinaver 877). When the two knights tell Galahad that they plan to attempt to get the shield, Galahad agrees to accompany them because he is without one. The three knights then come upon a monk, who advises them that the shield they seek should only be worn by a worthy knight and none other. Sir Bagdemagus decides to attempt the shield and asks Sir Galahad to wait until he has finished. As Sir Bagdemagus approaches the place that contains the shield, the knights see a “whyght knyght” charging him. The white knight easily defeats Sir Bagdemagus and then tells the fallen knight that he “hast done thyselff grete foly, for thys shyld ought nat to be borne but by hym that shall have no pere that lyvith” (Vinaver 878). When Sir Bagdemagus demands to know the white knight’s name, the knight responds that his name is not for any earthly man to know, thus suggesting that he is sent from God to make sure the shield goes to the prophetic savior, the one person who is sinless and has “no pere that lyvith” (Vinaver 878). Next, Sir Galahad approaches the white knight and receives the shield before the white knight vanishes, leaving Sir Galahad with his second gift from God.

Divine Comparison

Sir Galahad next receives an edict from God to deliver a kingdom from oppression by corrupt and sinful knights. Galahad arrives at an abandoned chapel and stops to pray to God for counsel. While praying, he hears a voice that commands, “Go thou now, thou adventurous knyght, to the Castell of Madyns, and there do thou away the wycked customes!” (Vinaver 887). Galahad approaches the castle and is confronted by

seven knights who challenge him to leave or die. Sir Galahad fights and chases the seven men off, using his indestructible sword and shield, then receives the keys to the castle and enters the grounds. He is prompted to blow “an horne of ivery boundyn with golde rychely” that signifies an end to the tyranny of the seven knights over the kingdom. God has given Sir Galahad the weapons necessary to act as a soldier for God and eradicate a kingdom of sin. Galahad’s actions reflect a spiritual friendship that is formed between Galahad and the people of the kingdom. Augustine’s *vera amicitia* is realized when Galahad answers God’s commandment and offers charity and grace to the kingdom. Aquinas’s reciprocity of charity serves Galahad as the means to achieve a spiritual friendship that bridges the gap between other human beings and God, resulting in a bond between the people of the kingdom and their Creator.

Within the quest for the Holy Grail, Malory parallels Galahad to Christ. As discussed earlier, Galahad receives a sword from God, supporting his function as a quasi-divine being. While on the quest for the Holy Grail, Sir Gawayne encounters a hermit who tells him that he will never achieve the Holy Grail because he had chosen to live a life of sin: “For whan ye were made first knight ye sholde have takyn you to knightly dedys and virtuous lyvyng. And you have done the contrary, for ye have lyved myschevously many wyntirs” (Vinaver 891). Sir Galahad, in contrast, will achieve the Holy Grail because he “ys a mayde and [has] synned never” (Vinaver 891). The parallel to Christ is apparent as both are sinless. Where Christ is the savior of mankind, Galahad is the future savior of Malory’s chivalric world.

Sir Galahad is led by a damsel to a castle by the sea “which was called Collybye” and to a ship that came “of Goddis grace” (Vinaver 983-4). While on board the ship,

Galahad is pleased to find his fellow knights, Sir Bors and Sir Percivale. The three travel for many miles on the ship until they come to another which the damsel tells the men to board because it is the Lord's will that they embark on many adventures. On this second ship, the knights find two letters. The first letter warns the adventurers that if they enter the ship without belief in their hearts, they will receive no help. The damsel reveals to the men that she is Sir Percivale's sister, and she warns them that, if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, they should not enter the ship, for they will die (Vinaver 984-5). After the men affirm that they are true believers and enter the ship with Sir Percivale's sister, Sir Galahad explores it and finds "a swerde, ryche and fayre, and hit was drawyn oute of the sheeth half a foote and more" (Vinaver 985). Sir Percivale and Sir Bors try to grip the sword, but cannot. Next, the group discovers the sword's scabbard and a second letter that prophesies the physical strength granted to the bearer of the weapons, and Sir Galahad becomes the owner of these divine gifts (Vinaver 986-7). As the prophesied savior of the story, Galahad has been identified and equipped with weapons from God, again.

Galahad later arrives at an abbey and is received by King Mordrayns, who has been waiting for Galahad for many years. The idea of divine intervention is apparent as we are told that "Now seyth the tale that sir Galahad rode many journeys in vayne, and at the last he com to the abbay where kyng Mordrayns was" (Vinaver 1025). This chapter is the pivotal passage for Galahad because all his journeys, until this point in the story, have been in vain. The beginning of the conclusion to Galahad's destiny is seen here: Galahad is meant to fulfill his destiny as the savior in this story.

King Mordrayns describes Galahad as “a clene virgyne above all knyghtes, as the floure of the lyly in whom virginite is signified. And thou arte the rose which ys the floure of all good vertu, and in colour of fyre. For the fyre of the Holy Goste ys takyn so” (Vinaver 1025). Galahad is clearly identified as a virgin, the person without sin, whose spotlessness can be compared to the lily. Malory’s use of the word “lyly” also has a religious significance as the lily is often called the “white or Madonna lily” because its purity suggests absence of sin. The second metaphor assigned to Galahad, a red rose, can be attributed to the Virgin Mary’s blood gift in the birth of the infant Jesus, who eventually makes his own blood sacrifice. By becoming a vessel of God and bringing Christ into the world, Mary’s purity is the ultimate gift to mankind.

King Mordraynes sees the fire of the Holy Ghost in Galahad’s countenance. This reference to the third member of the Trinity and divine intervention can also be associated with the Virgin Mary’s role in bringing Jesus into the world. In Matthew 1: 20, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him “fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (*The Holy Bible*). The Holy Ghost that conceived the Son of God in the pure Mary and the Holy Ghost, who has now descended upon Sir Galahad, link the two characters as divine or saintly humans. The comparison of the two creates a cross-gendered and biblical parallel in a story that has, until Galahad’s arrival in Malory’s book, mainly consisted of knights engaged in senseless fighting, killing, and adultery.

The added comparison of the mother of the true Christian savior and the story’s savior relates to Cicero’s theory that true friends are each a reflection of the other and, for Aelred, a source of joy and peace (Carabine 32). Additionally, Galahad represents

Aquinas's ideal of reciprocity of charity and Augustine's *vera amicitia*. Aquinas's view that there exists a "double bond between God and the person and between persons brought together by God's love" is reflected in Galahad's willingness to follow God's commands and offer his charity. Sir Galahad is addressed by King Mordrayns as "the servaunte of Jesu Cryste and verry knyght, whose commynge I have abyddyn longe" (Vinaver 1025). The friendship of God is projected, by Galahad, onto the world through Galahad's charity to his fellow knights, the people of the Castell of Madyns, and King Mordrayns. The result is that Augustine's true friendship through God is made apparent to the other characters, which are changed by Galahad's Christian example of piety and charity. As the Virgin Mary became a divine friend to mankind and a vessel of God by becoming the virginal mother of Jesus, Galahad now becomes a vessel of Christ and a friend to man by performing prophesied acts and releasing King Mordrayns. The members of King Arthur's kingdom, the people of the Castell of Madyns, and King Mordrayns all represent people in need of God. The characters await deliverance by their Savior, and as Mary provided the world with Christ, Malory provides his world with Galahad.

Galahad next travels to the country of Gore and discovers that his father, Launcelot, is a descendant of Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph of Arimathea is "a character of biblical origin who features mainly in Arthurian romances connected with the Grail" (Gerritsen 152). Several legends surround the Joseph of Arimathea figure, including one wherein he was thought the Virgin "Mary's uncle, who on one occasion brought the child Jesus with him to Britain" and is the founder of Glastonbury Abbey (Gerritsen 154). Other theories conclude that Joseph of Arimathea was a respected "member of the Jewish

High Council” and that he was given special permission, by Pilate, to assist in the removal and burial of Jesus Christ (Gerritsen 152). Thus, in Malory’s book Galahad is a descendant not only of a prospective sympathizer and possible disciple of Christ but also a possible blood relation to the Virgin Mary and, through her, to Christ himself. Joseph of Arimathea’s kinship with the mother of Christ and to Galahad creates a subtext of theological allegory that enhances the Christian morality of the book.

Sir Galahad also parallels Christ as he emerges from a ship with Sir Percivale, Sir Bors, and the body of Sir Percivale’s sister. When the three men approach a city, they encounter an old man, whom Galahad asks to help carry the body of Sir Percivale’s sister. The man replies that he has been crippled for the past ten years. Sir Galahad performs a miracle by telling the man, “aryse up and shew thy good wyll!” (Vinaver 1033). The city becomes excited as they learn that the cripple has been healed by the “knyghtes merveyulous that entird into the cite” (Vinaver 1033). Yet the king of the city, after hearing of the arrival of the knights and listening to their account of the quest for the Sankgreall, puts the three knights into prison. As soon as Sir Percivale, Sir Bors, and Sir Galahad are imprisoned, however, the “Lord sente them the Sankgreall, thorow whos grace they were allwey fullfyllled whyle they were in preson” (Vinaver 1033). At the end of the year, the king realizes that he is going to die and sends for the knights, begging them for forgiveness, “and they forgave hym goodly, and he dyed anone” (Vinaver 1033). Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Percivale’s compassion towards their jailer and enemy marks them as models of Christ.

The death of the tyrant king leads the people to proclaim Sir Galahad as their king, and he is forced to accept the throne upon threat of death. Galahad serves the

kingdom for a year, and on the anniversary of the Sunday he was crowned, Galahad and his two knights come to the palace and see a figure, surrounded by angels, who asks Galahad to come forward. Galahad immediately understands that he is being taken from an earthly existence to be with God in heaven. He gladly embraces the figure and proclaims, “I wold nat lyve in this wrecched worlde no lenger, if hit might please The, Lorde” (Vinaver 1034). Galahad is told that the figure is “Joseph, sonne of Joseph of Aramathy, which oure Lorde hath sente to the to bere the felyship” (Vinaver 1035). True spiritual friendship, or “felyship,” has been extended to Sir Galahad by God. Galahad, as the double bond of friendship between God and men, selflessly extends charity to the characters in the book. Even Galahad’s persecutor, the tyrant king, is shown Christian charity. Saint Augustine, Aelred of Rievaulx, and Saint Thomas Aquinas all wrote of Christian community and charity as a means of developing a relationship with God and with other Christians. Galahad has not only proved himself a friend to the other characters but has also modeled his life after Christ and been rewarded with spiritual friendship with God. Galahad is told that he is being honored with ascension to heaven and deliverance from earthly existence because he has seen the marvels of the Holy Grail and because he has remained sinless.

Galahad as the Model of Christian Friendship

After Sir Galahad’s death, the influence of his life as an example of a sinless man and therefore a spiritual friend has both temporary and permanent effects on the other characters in the book. Immediately, Sir Bors and Sir Percivale bury his body, and Sir

Percivale retreats to a hermitage, dresses in religious clothing, and assumes a pious life. Sir Bors remains with Percivale in the hermitage for a year and two months until Percivale's death (Vinaver 1035-6). Sir Bors then buries Percivale by his sister and Sir Galahad and returns to Camelot. After the return of Sir Bors, Sir Launcelot discusses Galahad's wish that Launcelot remember the things learned while on the search for the Sankgreal, and Launcelot promises Bors that he will do so (Vinaver 1036). However, as noted previously, Sir Launcelot soon resorts to his old sinful ways and continues his adulterous affair with Queen Gwynevere: "Than, as the booke seyth, sir Launcelot began to resorte unto queen Gwenivere agayne and forgate the promise and the perfeccion that he made in the queste..." (Vinaver 1045). Immediately following Galahad's death, only his two companions, Sir Bors and Sir Percivale truly embrace the sinless, pious life that Sir Galahad represents.

The far-reaching effects of Sir Galahad's example are only revealed after Arthur's death. Gwynevere retreats to Amysbyry and "there she lete make herselff a nunne, and wered whyght clothys and blak, and grete penaunce she toke upon her, as ever ded synfull woman in thys londe...but ever she lyved in fastynge, prayers, and almesdedis..." (Vinaver 1243). The adulterous life Gwynevere has lived resulted in the downfall of her husband and king. Her knowledge of her own sins and the example of purity she witnessed in Sir Galahad leads her to choose a path of repentance in order to make amends for her past transgressions.

Thorow thys same man [Launcelot] and me hath all thys warre be wrought, and the deth of the moste nobelest knyghtes of the worlde; for thorow oure love that we have loved togydir is my moste noble lorde

slayne...I am sette in suche a plyght to gete my soule hele. And yet I
 truste, thorow Goddis grace and thorow Hys Passion of Hys woundis
 wyde, that aftir my deth I may have a syght of the blyss[ed] face of Cryste
 Jesu... (Vinaver 1252)

Gwenyvere tells Launcelot to turn away from her and go and marry and live a happy life,
 but Launcelot promises Gwenyvere that he will follow her and lead a repentant life.

Launcelot admits that it was his love for her that kept him from achieving the Sankgreall:

For in the queste of the Sankgreall I had that tyme forsakyn the vanytees
 of the worlde, had nat youre love bene. And if I had done so at that tyme
 with my harte, wyllle, and thought, I had passed all the knyghtes that ever
 were in the Sankgreal excepte syr Galahad, my sone...(Vinaver 1253)

After Gwenyvere dies, Launcelot remains near her tomb and dedicates himself to prayer
 and fasting. Launcelot dies during the night, at the same time a bishop attending him
 dreams that “here was syr Launcelot with me, with mo angellis than ever I sawe men in
 one day. And I sawe the angellys heve up syr Launcelot unto heven, and the yates of
 heven opened ayenst hym” (Vinaver 1258). The bishop’s dream turns out to foretell the
 end of Sir Launcelot. Malory leads us to believe that he achieves eternal life because he
 repents of his sins, asks God for forgiveness, and lives his final days in piety and sincere
 worship of God.

Sir Galahad’s *vera amicitia*, his spiritual friendship, and reciprocity of charity,
 influences the other characters in the book. Galahad’s willingness to extend charity,
 which Thomas Aquinas believed would lead to reciprocity between God and man, and his
 exemplary character within the chivalric community result in his inclusion in spiritual

friendship with God. The sinful and corrupt nature of chivalric or knightly friendship is apparent throughout the book as male and female characters mistreat each other and engage in selfish acts, turning away from family bonds to embrace chivalric bonds of strife. In the same manner that God has appointed King Arthur to the monarchy, God provides Camelot with a savior in Sir Galahad. Galahad's purpose in the book was prophesied. God gave him guidance and weapons to achieve his divine goal. God uses Galahad to perform miracles and protects him in the face of numerous adversities. Ultimately, he emerges unscathed and finally ascends to heaven in spiritual friendship, or fellowship, with divine beings. The result is a lesson in Christian morality similar to Aelred's original theory of spiritual friendship. True participation in spiritual friendship is unattainable, and the ideal of spiritual friendship is not accessible in this life, even though every man may choose to model actions and friendship after the example of Christ.

CHAPTER V

CAMELOT IS LOST: THE FAILURE OF CHIVALRIC FRIENDSHIP AND THE PROMISE OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

In his dialogue *Lysis* Plato notes that friendship must include two men whose moral character is pure and honest and whose sincere criticism of one another is necessary to keep the friendship humble. Aristotle defines three types of friendships -- those of utility, companionship, and complete friendship -- and imposes the ideas of ethical responsibility and the need for self-love because a friend is “another self.” Cicero proposes that human nature creates a need, among men, to develop friendships and that God attracts similar people to each other to form a friendship. Saint Augustine conjectures that a true understanding of the soul and of God can only be attained through community among men. Aelred of Rievaulx proposes that Christ’s sinless existence is the model for all friendship so that a friendship can be defined as going out of oneself into the heart of another. Aelred also notes that there are two kinds of friendships: those that are corrupt and sinful and those that are spiritual. For Aelred, Christ’s friendship with humanity is the model of a true spiritual friendship and all friendships should strive to imitate it. Aelred’s theory of perfect spiritual friendship is unattainable in this life; it is only an ideal, a model that is yet partially accessible insofar as every person achieves some proportion of the life of Christ as the perfect example. Thomas Aquinas provides a means for accessing Aelred’s theory of spiritual friendship through the reciprocity of

charity. For Aquinas, community and charity can be used to build a friendship between human beings and God. Although Aquinas was writing his treatise about monastic communities, his theory that friends exchange a love covenant with God when extending charity opens the door to true charitable friendship among human beings.

In Sir Thomas Malory's book, examples of chivalric society and friendships are depicted as corrupt and sinful despite the Christian references within the story. Friendships between men are based on physical merit and ability within a militaristic community. Friendships between the knights and the magician Merlyn mirror a benefactor/benefactee relationship. Male-female friendships are mainly represented as love triangle bonds between the married woman and her adulterous suitor. In a few instances a woman has mistreated a man, repents of her behavior, and is granted forgiveness and friendship by the affronted male. Additionally, Arthur gains a female benefactor in Nynyve, but her intentions may be less than virtuous.

Malory portrays a knightly world in need of salvation. Galahad is introduced into the story as the prophetic man who will deliver the country from danger and achieve the Holy Grail. After the need for a savior is established, the virginal, sinless, and quasi-divine Galahad performs miracles and serves as an example to others. He follows the Christian model of spiritual friendship. Augustine's *vera amicitia*, or true friendship, through God begins with communities of Christians who extend charity to one another. Galahad extends Christian charity to his fellow knights, the people of the Castell of Madyns, and King Mordrayns. Aelred's idealistic concept of spiritual friendship is unattainable in this world; however, Galahad is able to use Christ as a model of morality and offer friendship to the other characters in the book. Galahad's sense of community

and charity fosters an exchange of love covenant with God where Christ's two commandments are achieved. These commandments are "to love God and to love one's neighbor as oneself" (Hyatt 49). Galahad's example then effects the other characters in the book by offering an example of Christian salvation. Ultimately, Malory's work concludes with Galahad's father, Sir Launcelot, turning from his life of sin to embrace a pious, repentant existence. Aelred's vision of spiritual friendship is achieved by Galahad. Galahad leads a life that is comparable to Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. He is rewarded with an ascension to heaven. Sir Galahad leaves us with the hopeful idea that there exists, within a society, a need for and possibility of attaining a purity of the flesh and the spirit.

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