

Feb 14 In-class writing

We've encountered a similar love triangle before, in Chrétien's *Knight of the Cart*. How does the situation of and the relationship between Tristan & Yseult (and Mark), here, compare to that of Lancelot & Guinevere (and Arthur) there?

Governal

Morholt of Ireland

Frocin of Tintagel

Brangain

Ogrin

Husdent

Feb 14 class work

1. Tristan & Yseult meeting at fountain where Mark is in tree spying (239-43)
2. New charges from “evil barons” (lower 243-49)
dwarf’s plan for Mark to claim he’ll send T away on task with Arthur—>Tristan & Yseult will need to be together night before (flour, wound, blood on sheet)
3. Tristan & Yseult living in forest briefly; at hermitage with Ogrin; eventually ratted out to Mark, who alone sees them in their bower (249-58)
4. 3 years are up suddenly and magic potion no longer works, attempts to reconcile with Mark (258-66)

added Feb 19:

5. Evil barons insist on oath trial for Yseult
6. Revenge

Feb 21 in-class writing

How are family relations represented in *King Artus* (family relations in the present and/or family relations across time)?

Feb 21 class work

So far in the romance section of the class (which has been selective, not comprehensive), we've encountered texts from what periods and from what language traditions?

	period	language tradition
Marie de France	late 12th	French
Chrétien de Troyes	late 12th	French
<i>Roman de Silence</i>	early 13th	French
Bérroul's <i>Tristan</i>	late 12th	French
Thomas' <i>Tristan</i>	late 12th	French
<i>Saga of the Mantle</i>	1220s	French via Old Norse
<i>King Artus</i>	1279	Hebrew from Italian-Fr.

Feb 28 In-class writing

At the very end of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, we get two different interpretations of Gawain's behavior: the Green Knight's, and Gawain's. Whose do you prefer, and why?

Bertilak

Lady Bertilak

Fitt I

historical framework

Arthur's court

nature of GK's challenge and its reception by Arthur/RT

the contract

the blow

Fitt 2

seasonal framework

Gawain's armor 566-650

quest 715-23

prayers 736-55

Bertilak's castle 765ff

meeting the ladies at church 940-67; 1010-13

contract 1088-1109; 1121-22

Fitt 3

hunts 1-3

Fitt4

seasons

armor

quest

chapel

blow

Feb 28 In-class writing

What seems to motivate the Giant of Mt. St. Michel?

Consider in relation to romances we've been reading:

character and behavior of Arthur:

character and behavior of Round Table knights:

nature of the central events:

character and behavior of the opponents:

style:

purpose:

March 7 In-class writing

Given that most medieval English readers of this text would be generally familiar with the outlines of the story, how does the author encourage the audience to keep reading? How does the author encourage a reader to be invested in this text?

Earl of Africa
Captain of Corneto
Sir Evander, an earl of the Orient
Lord of Milan
Senator of Sutri
King of Libya
King of Syria
Sultan of Syria
Sir Uhtred, Overlord of Turin
Sir Utolf, an earl of the Orient
Viscount of Rome

1377 1387 1397 1399
Hundred Years' War with France (1337-1453)
Black Death (1347-51)
Peasants' Revolt 1381
Richard II
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster
Lords Appellant
Henry Bolingbroke

In-class writing March 13

The Turke and Sir Gawain was our first reading presented in Middle English (very late, Northern Middle English). How did reading it in the original language affect your experience of the narrative?

Turke 1500 1650 Percy Folio

Ragnell 1450 1500

In-class writing March 28

What is something that confused you in the reading for today, or what is a question that the reading raised for you?

The Noble Tale of the Sankgreal

Galahad is established (Siege Perilous, Sword in Stone)

Preparations at Camelot for Grail Quest (Lancelot shamed, Grail unseen)

Grail Quest:

Lancelot's near-encounter with grail and maimed knight

Lancelot's visions and explanations (one of his lineage, one of black/white tourney, one sending him to ship)

Lancelot at Castle of Corbin, arrival of Ector

Galahad's Grail encounter (repaired sword, Host become child, miracle)

Bors, Percival, Galahad with pagan tyrant king

Death of Galahad; retirement and death of Percival; return of Bors

In-class writing April 2

How do you see his encounters with the Fair Maiden of Ascolat, Elaine le Blanc, as reflecting on Lancelot? How do they affect what you think of him?

From Derek Pearsall (2003, p. 103):

In the French prose *Lancelot* [Malory's source], the doom of the Round Table is written into the withholding of the Grail from the body of Arthurian knighthood as a whole. The ideals of secular chivalry are hollow at the core; systems of governance that attach themselves to the desires and ambitions of the fallen material world, however apparently noble in themselves, are inevitably transient. Lancelot's adultery was the trigger but not the cause of the destruction of the Round Table.

Malory struggles not to recognize this clearly, preferring a version of events in which an intrinsically noble ideal world of secular chivalry was compromised and then destroyed by avoidable human weaknesses in its human members. He attempts to articulate a humanly intelligible narrative of the fall of the Round Table in which it will be not a lesson in Christian morality but an exploration of irresolvable human dilemmas of moral conduct.

In-class writing April 4

What kind of ending does this *Tale of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* have? What is its final extended episode, and how, specifically, does that episode end? If you'd like, you can address what you think that way of ending indicates about Malory's goals with this particular tale.

Most of today's reading focuses on events at Meleagaunt's castle. After that, Lancelot heals Sir Urry. Before that, Arthur hosts a tournament where the Round Table knights fight amongst themselves, with Lancelot and Levain disguised as Saracens.

What happens in that tournament and how does it get resolved?

In-class writing April 9

C. David Benson says of this last section of Malory's work that "In contrast to Malory's earlier stories, disasters no longer come unexpectedly or because of disguise; now they are as clear as they are unavoidable." Give some evidence from the reading to support that observation.

Of the Healing of Sir Urry, Benson says:

“Reaffirmed as the greatest of Arthur’s knights, [Lancelot’s] achievement remains of this world. He neither reaches nor attempts any spiritual union with God, and his miracle is purely physical — he cures wounds, not souls. The salvation he offers is bodily. He is a chivalric hero rather than a religious saint.”

In-class writing April 11

You have 10 minutes today.

First put in order the occurrence of the deaths of the following 5:

Arthur
Gawain
Guinevere
Lancelot
Mordred

Then move on to the in-class writing question:

C. David Benson says that when news comes of the attack on Lancelot at Guinevere's bedroom (in what you read for Tuesday), and Gawain tells Arthur not to condemn Guinevere too quickly because she may have asked Lancelot to her room in all innocence,

“Arthur cannot accept that appearances may be deceiving because honor is all about appearance. Goodness and inner motivation have nothing to do with it.”

More generally, of the final book of the *Morte*, Benson says:

“It is not outside enemies or the villainy and vice of the Round Table that cause its fall, but one of its central values: honor. It is a tragedy of virtue.”

You might call that a paradox.

I know this is a lot to consider in an in-class writing, but it's our last! Present your initial thoughts on Benson's interpretation of the final book of Malory's *Morte*, and then we'll discuss together.