FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

THE STORY OF TRISTAN IN THE WORKS OF MALORY AND TENNYSON

Dr. Dilek Doltaş

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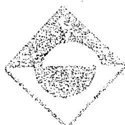

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INTRODUCTION

The love story of Tristan and Isolt has had a powerful hold on the writers and readers of the western world for the last eight centuries. Its enormous appeal lies probably in the realistic view it takes of love between man and woman and the consequences of that love to society. Its presentation of love, as a force strong enough to take control of the lover's mind and senses and prevent him from discharging his social obligations has been rendered in various forms for various reasons. For one author Tristan is a great hero, destroyed by a passion he cannot control; for another, he is an artist inspired by a love that is mostly pain; for another, he is a knight caught between his love for his lady and his loyalty to an unworthy king; and for still another, he is an adulterer obsessed by sensuality and blind to his social and moral obligations as a knight.

Though the story of Tristan and Isolt was not originally part of the Arthurian cycle, the problem it presents, the conflict between the force of secular love and the force of duty, eventually

came to interest the people of the Middle Ages as much as the main theme of the Arthurian romance--the development of the individual towards his proper place in society. In the Arthurian romance the hero's adventures are all steps in his progress towards the ideal state of knighthood, social service and fulfilled love. Our concern with love is only for its effect on the hero. The lady, by withdrawing her love, awakens the knight to his inadequacy, and when he has corrected that she restores her favor.[1] But the psychological realism inherent in the love story of Tristan and Isolt brings into the open the crucial paradox in the Arthurian conventions. In the Arthurian world without honor a man cannot be a perfect lover, but without love a man is not a complete knight. Love between man and woman, on the other hand, cannot be a purely spiritual phenomenon. Therefore there is always the danger of the physical impulse asserting itself and causing man to neglect his duty. The Tristan story, which incarnates this problem, presents it as a tragic one incapable of solution. Love is not just an inspiration to action but also a sensual force, symbolized by the potion, which, if not controlled, can destroy the lover and those around him. Hence

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[1] J. M. Ferrante, The Conflict of Love and Honor (Hague: Mouton and Co., N. V. Publishers, 1973), pp. 13-14.

the writers who treat the Tristan legend as part of the Arthurian material stress the effects of the passion on the society, beyond the individuals involved, even more emphatically than those who treat the legend as an isolated tale.

It is because the Tristan legend presented within the Arthurian frame, not only displays the basic human conflict between love and duty within the individual but also discusses the effects of the individual's problems on the society, the Arthurian world, that the present author intends to take up and analyze the treatment of this story by Malory and Tennyson--the two English authors who narrate the love story as part of the Arthurian romance cycle. Such an analysis aims at pointing out how a well-known story can be used for a variety of purposes. It also hopes to stress how each writer manipulates the story in accordance with the artistic concepts, and social and political ideals of his time.

The legend of Tristan and Isolt is first said to have been written by a late twelfth century French poet. This original version is yet undiscovered. Its earliest adaptors are known to be Béroul and Eilhart.[2] The other surviving major adaptations

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[2]J. Bédier in his reconstruction of the legend published as The Romance of Tristan and Iseult (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1955) indicates that Béroul's version is closer to the archetype, the estoire, as Béroul calls it. But G. Schoepperle in Tristan and Isolt: A Study in the Sources of the Romance, Vol. I

of the archetype are the poems of Thomas, Gottfried, a Norse prose rendering, Tristrams Saga, Italian Tavola Ritonda and a French prose romance, Tristan de Léonis written between 1225 and 1230 and preserved in a large number of manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[3] Until the rediscovery of the poems of Béroul and Thomas by nineteenth-century scholars, the story of Tristan was known to the modern world chiefly through the French prose romance.

All the medieval versions of the story, other than the French prose romance of Tristan portray a story of love and honor. They are concerned with the basic human conflict between an overpowering passion and the demands of morality and honor.[4] They accentuate the disaster caused by the clash of irreconcilable forces both human and supernatural. The prose Tristan, however, shifts the emphasis from the tragic story of love to the protagonist's adventures in the service of the Round Table. It consists of a long series of seemingly disjointed episodes centering upon the figure of a great knight, Tristan, who

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(London: David Nutt, Publisher, 1913) claims that Eilhart's version is closer to the archetype, p. 7.

[3]E. Vinaver, "Foreword" in The Romance of Tristan and Isolt, trans. by N.B. Spector (Evanston: Northwestern University press, 1973), p. xiii.

[4]Ferrante, p. 7.

embodies all the traditional virtues of Arthur's fellowship. The verse romances have little to do with Arthurian history. Béroul passingly refers to King Arthur but even in the few lines where he mentions Arthur's name his court is referred to as being separate from that of Mark's and neither king is a vassal of the other. Arthur appears next to Mark as a just and reliable judge at Isolt's ordeal of the hot iron.[5]

An exact dating of the earliest associations of the Tristan story with the Arthurian material cannot be given. Sigmund Eisner claims that "the story of Tristan and Isolt was attracted to the Arthurian orbit during the period of its insular, precontinental development."[6] He concludes his study in the sources of the romance by stating that the Tristan legend and the other Arthurian tales were derived from early myths, some Welsh, some Irish, and some pan-Celtic; "and it was the Breton _conteurs_, those bilingual story tellers of the twelfth century who carried these old Celtic Arthurian tales to the courts of France, where the final polish of courtly love was given to the now stock characters."[7]

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[5]Béroul, _The Romance of Tristan_, ed. A. Ewert (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), ll. 3365-562, p. 230; ll. 4183-266, p. 251.

[6]S. Eisner, _The Tristan Legend: A Study in Sources_ (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 8.

[7]_Ibid._, pp. 32-33.

Whatever may have been the history of the development of the story, the Tristan legend as Malory found it in his French sources was a story told within the framework of the Arthurian world and the grail quest. Tennyson tailored his Arthuriad with some alterations and additions after Malory's Morte Darthur. The other writers of the legend before Tennyson were Sir Walter Scott and Matthew Arnold. Scott published his Sir Tristrem, an adaptation of a thirteenth century English poem based on the French verse romances in 1804. Arnold's Tristram and Iseult was published in 1852. Although Arnold first encountered the story in a French review article and drastically altered the facts of the tale he also composed his tale basically after the ancient verse versions of the legend. Hence Tennyson is the first and only successor of Malory in blending the Tristan story with the Arthurian romance. "The Last Tournament" first printed in 1871 gives the legend in a greatly reduced form.[8] Here Tennyson alters the facts of the story to suit his overall purpose to such an extent that in 1882 Swinburne publishes his own Tristram of

[7]Throughout the study the term "natural" is used to denote that which is in accordance with or determined by nature, and "naturalism" stands for the doctrine that denies the supernatural significance of any being or object. Moreover this doctrine rejects the possibility of any form of revelation as a means of attaining truth.

[10]J. P. Eggers, King Arthur's Laureate (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 87.

Lyonesse as an answer to Tennyson's degradation of the legend. In his poem Swinburne returns to the archetypal story of passion and death, and once again in his version of the story, the story of Arthur and the Round Table is almost inconsequential. The story of Tristan has also been put into dramatic form by a number of modern poets of the twentieth century. But none of them develop the theme of love and passion alongside the Arthurian world of romance and idealism as do Malory and Tennyson.

The clearest exposition of Tristan's effect on the Arthurian world is given in Tennyson's Idylls of the King. Tennyson's Tristan is a modern man, a "worldling of the world" pretending to be a free, natural spirit[9] and "debasing both the noble savage, which he can never be and the civilized man that he might have been."[10] He embodies the self-deception Tennyson saw in the ethical theories of sensualism, naturalism, pragmatism and materialism of his age, and emerges as the cause that leads the Arthurian Golden World to destruction. In Malory,

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[9]Throughout the study the term "natural" is used to denote that which is in accordance with or determined by nature, and "naturalism" stands for the doctrine that denies the supernatural significance of any being or object. Moreover this doctrine rejects the possibility of any form of revelation as a means of attaining truth.

[10]J. P. Eggers, King Arthur's Laureate (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 87.

however, Tristan is one of the two exemplars of Arthurian knighthood. He also plays the role of the knight lover but in "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones" the paradoxical nature of chivalric love is constantly underplayed, and Tristan is displayed first as a knight then as a lover. Furthermore, in Malory's tale Tristan's actions are justified by Mark's cowardice and treachery. Although the analogy between the Tristan-Isolt-Mark triangle and the Lancelot-Guinevere-Arthur triangle bring out the theme of love as a detriment to other loyalties and duties Malory's Arthurian world is essentially destroyed not by love but by the qualities of treachery, jealousy and revenge that are in the common man. Excessive passion and adultery only become excuses for the evil-intentioned to murder good knights.

The unity of Malory's Morte Darthur and Tennyson's Idylls of the King has been widely questioned. It is because the Tristan story forms one part of these two Arthuriads and would yield different meanings if they were analyzed as isolated tales that the first part of this study concentrates on establishing the unity of the two works. In verifying their respective unity, the views of the main schools of criticism for and against unity are cited, and then the unity of the two works based on their author's appreciation and use of narrative art is confirmed. Therefore the first part of this study is basically centered on the problem

of unity and the structural and stylistic analysis of the Tristan sections of Malory's and Tennyson's works. It aims at pointing out how medieval narrative techniques of analogy, interlacement and episodic presentation of events are used both by the medieval and by the nineteenth-century authors. Although this art form has been traced in Malory's work by a number of medieval scholars[11] it has never been applied in the analysis of Tennyson's poem. The present author tries to prove that Tennyson makes use of the art forms of both the medieval prose narratives and that of the realistic fiction of the post eighteenth century. In so doing he is able to create a structural dualism and tension which accentuate the poem's thematic dualism and tension. Furthermore, it is the contention of this study that Tennyson develops his themes on three levels of experience simultaneously--the idyllic and the subhuman worlds of romance and the ordinary world of realistic fiction. Thus the poet is able to bring into his narrative overtones of meaning otherwise impossible to convey.

In the analysis of Malory's narrative art this study tries to expose how Malory follows the "vertical" development of the

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[11]E. Vinaver, The Rise of Romance (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 128-29; C.S. Lewis, "The English Prose Morte," Essays on Malory, ed. J.A.W. Bennett (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 13-14; D.S. Brewer, "The hoole book," Essays on Malory, p. 56.

action[12] characteristic of prose romance structures and arranges the events of the story in accordance with a thematic structure externally imposed on characterization. But in making his characters act out the demands of a thematic pattern Malory occasionally neglects to supply them with proper emotional motivations hence causes them to emerge as inconsistent and unconvincing human beings.

The second part of the study concentrates on an exposition and discussion of the themes of knighthood, chivalric love and feudal service as they are reflected respectively in the Tristan sections of Malory's and Tennyson's works. The difference in approach of Malory and Tennyson to the concepts of idealism, love and social obligations are analyzed. Malory's interpretation of knighthood is re-evaluated with special emphasis on the theme of reconciliation. In this part of the study the present author claims that Malory's attitude to life, love and knighthood is all based on his approach to and interpretation of the theme of recon-

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[12]In a narrative based on prose romance structure the development of the action is not "horizontal" as in the realistic works of fiction where the characters act in accordance with the scientific laws of causality and control the development of the plot but it is "vertical" where the narrative moves from one episode to another describing things that happen to characters, for the most part, externally. See Part I, p. 19.

ciliation. It is this theme that solves the paradox of rivalry and companionship inherent in the chivalric society of the Arthurian world. An analysis of Tennyson's poem, on the other hand, proves that Tennyson sees knighthood not as a practical way of life in which the theme of reconciliation would be of essential importance but as a guide to a transcending reality. Here knighthood is symbolic of the spiritual development of man. Chivalric love and feudal service emerge not as parallel themes of secondary importance, as they do in Malory's work, but as subsidiary themes which contribute to the development of the main theme--knighthood. Finally in the Conclusion the results of the syntheses arrived at the end of each part are consolidated with the hope of establishing a coherent interpretation of the two Tristan versions.*

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*Since the names of the characters vary between the texts, they vary in this study as well. Whatever name is used in a specific text is adopted when speaking of that work; when speaking of the material in general, the accepted English forms are used.

PART I

The Problem of Unity and the Narrative Art of Malory and Tennyson

The story of Tristram makes sense in the overall narrative pattern of the Morte Darthur[1] and the Idylls of the King[2] only if it is considered as an analogue to the main drama of Arthur's Round Table. It parallels the story of Arthur and the Round Table in its action and characterization as it does in time. The story of Tristram itself is a correlative of, not a sequal to, the story of Arthur's fellowship, therefore acts as a literary counterpoint to the larger theme. But the episodic nature of both

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[1]Henceforth all references to the Morte Darthur will be given in short as, The Morte. All references are from The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, ed. E. Vinaver, 3 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967). Citations will be given in the text next to the quotations.

[2]Hereafter the Idylls of the King will be referred to shortly as, the Idylls. All references are from Tennyson's Poetical Works, ed. W.J. Rolfe (Cambridge Edition, 1898). Citations will be given in the text next to the quotations, followed with the initial letters of each idyll.

The Morte and the Idylls; the critical assessments of Professor Vinaver presented in his edition of the Winchester Manuscript of The Morte, and the pieacemeal publication of the Idylls led a group of critics to question the respective unity of these Arthuriads. Therefore this part of the study intends to establish once more the structural and stylistic unity of the two works by analyzing the narrative techniques used in the Tristram sections of The Morte and the Idylls.

Until the discovery of a different manuscript in the Fellow's Library of Winchester College by Mr. Walter Oakeshott in 1934 Caxton's edition of Malory was the ultimate source of any version. And in Caxton's edition one found a text that was somewhat different from the book that Malory actually wrote. Professor Vinaver has shown in his great 1947 edition of Malory, based primarily on the Winchester text, that Caxton has not edited Malory's text but revised it. First, he divided Malory's work into twenty-one books, each book being further divided into chapters with rubrics prefixed to each. Second, he condensed part of The Morte titled "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" in the Winchester edition. The Winchester manuscript revealed to Professor Vinaver eight apparent divisions each with a beginning, a middle and an end of its own, and each marked by an *explicit.* This discovery led Vinaver to conclude in his introduction to the Winchester edition that the real nature of Malory's Arthuriad was

quite different from the nature of the book as Caxton had presented it to the world. By a number of editorial changes Caxton had, in particular, attempted to create a continuous narrative out of what had originally been a series of romances "all concerned with the High Order of Knighthood."[3] Vinaver went on to say:

> The raison d'être of these romances is precisely that which has been consistently denied them: the distinctive character of each one. Instead of a 'single work' subordinate to an imaginary principle of all-embracing dramatic 'unity', what we have before us is a series of works forming a vast and varied panorama of incident and character. What their 'assemblage' may lose in harmony it gains in diversity and richness of tone, expressive of the author's real design.[4]

According to Vinaver, no inconsistencies exist within the eight tales he finds in Malory. They appear only if one compares material from one tale with material from another. Vinaver realizes that in Malory's works there is "a certain unity of manner and style" but he feels that "there is no unity of structure or design."[5]

According to him, Malory sees the drama of Arthur,

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[3]E. Vinaver, "Introduction," <u>The Works of Sir Thomas Malory</u>, p. xxiv.

[4]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. xli.

[5]Vinaver, "Sir Thomas Malory," in <u>Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages</u>, ed. R.S. Loomis (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 545.

Gawain, Lancelot and Tristram in "stark isolation," not as part of a Medieval cyclic structure where each theme is tied up with every other theme, and the whole is one of a complete "cohesion"[6] productive of further growth. Vinaver claims that Malory tries to unravel the threads of individual themes and present them separately. Hence "Like the nouvelles,[7] where one particular theme or episode is exposed and discussed, Malory's tales are distinct and separate stories." They contain similar characters and share the same earnestness of tone, but they each have a different style and each one concentrates on a different theme.[8]

Opposing Vinaver are the majority of contemporary Malory scholars including R.M. Lumiansky, C. Moorman, P.E. Tucker, C.S. Lewis, D.S. Brewer, E. Pochoda, E. Reiss, P.J.C. Field, M. Lambert, and L. Benson.[9] Whatever their

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[6]Vinaver uses this word to mean "fitting together in such a way that the final outcome cannot be taken apart without damage to the whole." The Works, p. xlvi.

[7]Vinaver must have in mind the Italian nouvelles of the late Middle Ages best known through Boccaccio.

[8]Vinaver, The Works, pp. l-li.

[9]R.M. Lumiansky, in Malory's Originality: A Critical Study of Le Morte Darthur, ed. R.M. Lumiansky (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964); and "The Question of Unity in Malory's Morte Darthur," Tulane Studies in English V (1955), pp. 29-39; Charles Moorman, "Internal Chronology in Malory's

respective differences, each of these scholars maintains that Malory's work has unity of its own. Basic to the argument of the contributors to Malory's Originality,[10] The Morte has both historical and critical unity.[11] These scholars have examined Malory's sources and tried to assess from them just what Malory introduced, omitted or altered. In so doing, they tried to trace the intentional structure of his work. Their research brought into

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Morte Darthur," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LX (1961), 240-40; and The Book of King Arthur (University of Kentucky Press, 1965); P. E. Tucker, "Chivalry in the Morte," in Essays on Malory, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford, 1963), pp. 64-103; C. S. Lewis, "The English Prose Morte," in Essays on Malory, pp. 7-27; D. S. Brewer, "Form in the 'Morte Darthur,'" Medium Aevum, XXI (1952), pp. 14-24; "The hoole book," in Essays on Malory, pp. 41-63; and "The Present Study of Malory," in Arthurian Romance: Seven Essays, ed. D. D. R. Owen (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1971), pp. 83-97; R.S. Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (Hutchinson University Library, 1963), pp. 172-74; R.H. Wilson, "How Many Books Did Malory Write?" University of Texas Studies in English, XXX (1951), pp. 1-23. E. Pochoda, Arthurian Propaganda (University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 16-22; E. Reiss, Sir Thomas Malory (Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966), pp. 30-34; P. J. C. Field, Romance and Chronicle (Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 157-59; M. Lambert, Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur (Yale University Press, 1975), p. 67; L. Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur (Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 4-16. See also the rest of the essays by various scholars in Malory's Originality and Essays on Malory.

[10] The contributors to this volume are: R. M. Lumiansky, T. L. Wright, M. E. Dichmann, W. L. Guerin, T. C. Rumble, and C. Moorman.

[11] R. M. Lumiansky in "The Question of Unity in Malory's Morte Darthur," pp. 32-33; and C. Moorman in the "Prologue" to The Book of King Arthur, pp. xxii-xxv, explain in detail what they mean by these terms.

the open a number of important critical considerations. Viewing the work analytically, they tried to prove that there was "one internal time-scheme for the book as a whole";[12] that there were backward and forward references to important characters and events; that the portrayal of characters was consistent throughout the tales, and that all this created a unity of tone and atmosphere in the book, and "a continual moral concern of a special kind." This "continual moral concern" was a concern for the moral degeneration of the knights of a potentially perfect kingdom. The exposition and the development of this unifying moral sentiment was carried out in "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones."[13] Professor Rumble writes:

> The later parts of Malory's "Tale of Sir Tristram"--those parts which "wander off into Arthur-land at large"--serve in effect as a bridge between the matter of the "Tales" preceding and following the "Tristram." The motif of the civil strife that results from Arthur's incestuous begetting of Mordred develops from episodes in earlier divisions of the work and prepares for the testing of the Round Table that takes place in the "Grail" division, and for the tragic disintegration of the whole institution of Chivalry in the end.[14]

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[12] Lumiansky, "The Question of Unity in Malory's Morte Darthur," p. 39.

[13] Henceforth all references to "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones will be given in short as, "The Book of Sir Tristram."

[14] T. Rumble, "The Tale of Tristram" in Malory's Originality, p. 180.

He later goes on to explain with greater emphasis that the reason for the tragic disintegration of the whole" lies in the nature of the relationship between Tristram and Isode which like the relationship between Lancelot and Guenevere is an adulterous one, and thus "is symbolic of the moral degeneration to which. . . Arthur's realm is inevitably being brought."[15]

The other group of scholars which disagrees with Vinaver but for reasons other than those put forward by the school led by Lumiansky claim that The Morte is held together by thematic unity.[16] Professor Brewer who first obliquely suggests this idea shows that ". . . the tales are structurally connected and fit into a particular order. Thus the Tristram, such a stumbling block to attempts to define the general form of the whole book, is connected with the following tale of the Sankgreal, and by virtue of that connection could occupy no other place in the chain than where it is found."[17] Brewer points out that detailed naturalistic realism in the chronological presentation of events, exposition of

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[15] Ibid., p. 181.

[16] The idea is defined and explained extensively by Professor Benson, p. 73. See also Reiss, p. 40; Brewer, "The Whole Book," p. 56; "The Present Study of Malory," p. 95; Lambert, p. 124. All these critics, other than Professor Benson, just suggest the importance of thematic development and unity in The Morte.

[17] Brewer, "The hoole book," p. 56.

plot, motivation and characterization must not be sought in the analysis and evaluation of the late Medieval prose romances--the genre to which Malory's work belonged. Different laws of thematic development, character presentation and analysis of moral situations must be used in the study of The Morte. Professor Frye develops this idea, and in a recently published book explains how in a narrative based on prose romance structure the development of the action is not "horizontal" but "vertical." That is the progression of the action does not depend on human motivation or on the principles of causality in which the characters are prior to the plot and the development is not based on the problem "given these characters, what will happen?" but on the conformity of the events to the principles of a thematic pattern.[18] In such a narrative the motive is supplied by an abstract pattern outside the work and the romance moves from one episode to another, describing things that happen to characters, for the most part, externally. Therefore it is my contention that any narrative that follows the prose romance structure is bound to appear "formless" and "disunited" to all critics applying the rules

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[18] N. Frye, The Secular Scripture (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 47-51. See also M. W. Bloomfield, Essays and Explanations (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 97-128; Per Nykrog, "Two Creators of Narrative Form in Twelfth Century France: Gautier d'Arras-Chretien de Troyes," Speculum 48 (1973), pp. 258-276; Benson, p. 73.

of realistic criticism in analyzing it.[19] Furthermore, all the apparent contradictions inherent in The Morte and pointed out by the learned critics are really due to Malory's "vertical" development of the action and his occasional negligence in supplying his characters with the necessary human motivation. Hence an appreciation of the narrative technique and the concept of art of the thirteenth century prose romances is essential for the proper evaluation of Malory's narrative art as well as that of Tennyson which is highly influenced by the former. Such a study will prove that The Morte is held together by a number of inextricably interwoven themes, the organizing one being the "proof-of-knighthood" theme.[20] It will also bring to light that when the demands of any other theme conflict with those of the theme of knighthood Malory gives prominence to knighthood and the pattern of the

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[19]Realistic critics look for a kind of unity that depends on "organic" form--a self enclosed plot, coherent motivation, realistic and consistent presentation of character, thematic development and over-all self contained realistic consistency. They see art and literature as the imitation of a life functioning in accordance with the causality principle. Therefore, according to them literature, in imitating life and nature has to emphasize some form of correspondence, the paralleling of mental structures with something in the outer world. Furthermore for realistic critics characterization has to be prior to the plot and direct and develop the plot. The character has to act, think and change in relation to the world in which he lives. See also Frye, pp. 45-47.

[20]Professor Benson argues in detail the presence of such a thematic unity in The Morte, pp. 49, 73, 109, 234.

other themes becomes forced and ambiguous. Therefore in The Morte the Tristan story which was an archetypal legend of love loses its coherence and force as a tale of love and, occasionally, Tristram's love for Isode appears to be sporadic and even insincere.

The thirteenth century romance writers interwove a number of individual themes all distinct yet inseparable from one another. Development was not a building up of a certain theme but an unrolling of a number of interlocking themes which by analogy brought to light or explained different aspects of the themes under discussion. This form of narration was based on the belief that "the universe formed an ordered structure of such a kind that the pattern of the whole was reproduced in the pattern of the parts, and that inferences from one category of phenomena to the other were therefore valid methods of approach for the understanding of either."[21] Thus the medieval concept of art was centered on the techniques of analogy and interlacement.

In "The Book of Sir Tristram"[22] the themes of knighthood, chivalric love and feudal obligations are inter-

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[21]Vinaver, The Rise of Romance (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 100.

[22]A discussion of these themes is made in Part Two.

laced and developed within the general outline of Tristram's birth, education and attainment of full knighthood. Each theme is exposed numerous times in similar or contrasting events throughout the course of the tale. Tristram begins his career as a "fair unknown," an aspect of the knighthood theme. He is from Lyoness, hence a foreigner in Cornwall and later starts carrying a Cornish shield which is generally considered to be a sign of cowardice and poor knighthood. He has to prove himself a worthy knight both to the people of Cornwall and to the rest of the Arthurian world. This theme is emphasized and further elaborated in the story of La Cote Male Tayle at the beginning of which we are told that Lancelot too was such a fair unknown.[23] The adventures of La Cote are constantly juxtaposed with those of Lancelot and Tristram and the narrator repeatedly mentions their names and compares his prowess with theirs in order to make the analogy even more direct.[24] The deeds and behavior of Palomides are implicitly or explicitly compared with those of Tristram. Palomides appears to be his eternal rival in love and knighthood. The parody quest of Mark is certainly meant to contrast with the honorable quest of Tristram. Tristram's love for Isode has its parallels in the love affairs of Lancelot and Guenevere and

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[23] See ll. 31-33, p. 459.

[24] See ll. 35, p. 466; ll. 23-25, p. 466; ll. 5-15, p. 467; ll. 30-35, p. 470; ll. 24-37, p. 437.

Lamerok and the Queen of Orkney. His evaluation of feudal relations are compared and contrasted with those of Lancelot, Lamerok, Galahad and Gawain. The feudal and kinship ties between Tristram and Mark are similar to the ties of Gawain and Arthur, and Mark and Alexander. Therefore their behavior towards one another throws light on the relationship between Mark and Tristram. Furthermore, Tristram's fatal end and the gloomy ends of Lamerok and Alexander are the same. Hence they act as commentaries on Tristram's death and expose the treacheries of the chivalric world. Even the death of Alexander's father, Prince Bodwyne,[25] parallels that of Tristram and helps to stress Mark's evil nature. The most obvious parallels are drawn in the treatment of the lives and behavior of Lancelot and Tristram, and Arthur and Mark. Malory takes great pains in juxtaposing the two sets of protagonists and in so doing illuminates the similarities and differences between them and shows how they must be evaluated within the thematic development of events.

"The Book of Sir Tristram" is itself only a section of the "hoole book." The themes exposed in this section are repeated

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[25]Bodwyne is Mark's brother. Like Tristram he saves Cornwall by defeating the Sarezynes (ll. 1-17, p. 633), and again as in the case of Tristram's knightly achievements Mark is jealous of his brother's deeds and popularity and kills him treacherously.

and developed in various episodes throughout The Morte. The "fair unknown" and the "proof-of-knighthood," aspects of knighthood, are the topics on which "The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney" is built. "Proof-of-knighthood" is also the primary theme of the Arthur and Accolon episode and the episodes exposing the quests of Lancelot and Galahad. The chivalric love theme is discussed in "The Tale of Sir Gareth or Orkney," "The Tale of the Sankgreal," "The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenevere" and "The Death of Arthur." Feudal obligations are analyzed and discussed in "The Tale of King Arthur," "King Arthur and Emperor Lucius" and the last two tales of the book.

Thus Malory, in line with the thirteenth century prose romancers, believes that the events and the situations he describes will appear more credible and more significant if he leads up to them in a variety of situations. As professor Vinaver points out "in the art of literary composition different approaches to the understanding of any given subject were allowed and sometimes even required."[26] This method of illustration and assertion of an idea by enumeration of similar or contrasting incidents is used in all disciplines of thought and art of the Middle Ages. In a famous passage of his Summa Contra Gentiles, Thomas Aquinas explains that "since we cannot, in speaking of God and the creatures, use

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[26]Vinaver, The Rise of Romance, p. 76.

the same terms either in an identical or in a totally different sense, we must use them analogically."[27]

Furthermore, no single theme is self-contained in one section of medieval cyclic romance. Each theme is intertwined with a number of other themes, and they "alternate like threads in a woven fabric, one theme interrupting another and again another, and yet all remaining constantly present in the author's and the reader's mind."[28] And as C.S. Lewis points out because,

> The (improbable) adventure which we are following is liable at any moment to be interrupted by some quite different (improbable) adventures, there steals upon us unawares the conviction that adventures of this sort are going on all around us, that in this vast forest (we are nearly always in a forest) this is the sort of thing that goes on all the time, that it was going on before we arrived and will continue after we have left.[29]

Malory does not use this technique of interweaving as elaborately as his French sources. Some of the tales in The Morte, especially the tale that gives an account of Arthur's war with Emperor Lucius, and those dealing with the love of Lancelot and Guinevere, the death of Arthur and the disintegration of the Round Table, generally follow a chronological sequence of events where

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[27]Summarized in The Rise of Romance, p. 100.

[28]Vinaver, The Rise of Romance, p. 76.

[29]C.S. Lewis, Major British Writers quoted in The Rise of Romance, p. 76.

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development is based on "causality" rather than the unrolling of interlocked themes. But this does not mean that Malory was trying to reduce "the entire narrative to relatively small self-contained units."[30] He was trying to combine, condense and re-order the materials of several older volumes in order to produce a series of well-circumscribed episodes which would be parts of a larger whole, a single volume. "The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney," "The Noble Tale of Sir Lancelot" and "The Tale of Sankgreal" can each be read separately in its own right and would be complete by itself; however, when read as such, they would give an unbalanced, incomplete picture of the sort of world Malory wanted to portray in The Morte. Furthermore since each episode develops the major themes of the book by the use of the analogical method an omission of one from the series would also upset or even distort Malory's overall argument.

In "The Book of Sir Tristram" section of The Morte, Malory uses the interlaced narrative pattern more elaborately than in the rest of the work. Although he makes no effort to indicate simultaneity of events, he uses the technique of interlacement both within each episode as he alternates his themes in the course of a single story and within the larger structure of the tale as he

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[30] Vinaver, The Works, p. xlvi.

alternately weaves his different episodes to create the feeling that there is no single beginning and no single end, that each initial adventure can be extended into the past and each final adventure into the future by a duplication of themes or events. In the episode where Tristram is to go and fetch Isode from Ireland, Malory discusses the themes of proof-of-knighthood, friendship between Lancelot and Tristram, reconciliation--all aspects of the theme of knighthood, and the theme of chivalric love. The sequence of events is as follows:

- Departure from Cornwall. Tristram is hit by a storm.
- Upon taking refuge near Camelot he is challenged by two knights to fight for the sake of adventure (proof-of-knighthood).
- He meets a lady from whom a child is stolen and helps her for the love of Lancelot. In so doing he fights with Breunyz Sans Pyté (proof-of-knighthood, friendship between Lancelot and Tristram).
- He happens to come across King Angwishe who is in need of a champion, fights for him (reconciliation, proof-of-knighthood) and spares the life of Sir Blamour, Lancelot's kin (knighthood, friendship between Lancelot and Tristram).
- Isode is taken from her parents and is accompanied by Brongwayne.
- Tristram and Isode drink the love potion (chivalric love).

- They stop by at the castle of Sir Brewnor where Tristram fights with Brewnor and abolishes an evil custom (proof-of-knighthood).
- Tristram then fights with Sir Galahalte to a draw (reconciliation).
- Gawain's fight with King Corados and Lancelot's saving of Gawain is reported (proof-of-knighthood).
- Tristram is sorry not to be able to join Lancelot (friendship between Tristram and Lancelot).
- Arrival in Cornwall.

This episode extends to sixteen pages and within that space three subsidiary themes and two main themes are simultaneously developed.

"The Book of Sir Tristram" begins with the birth of Tristram and continues chronologically with the events relating his 'enfance' and his initiation into knighthood. When he begins his quests to prove himself a noble knight, the reader is exposed at the same time to the quests of Palomides and Lamerok. Therefore the adventures of Tristram are expanded in a "polyphonic"[31] structure along with those of Lamerok and Palomides. In the episode dealing with the quests of Lamerok, Lamerok meets and

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[31]C. S. Lewis, "The English Prose Morte" in Essays on Malory, p. 7.

fights with Tristram, the two knights are reconciled, then Lamerok parts from Tristram and continues his adventures alone. "The Tale of Lamerok" ends with Lamerok's reconciliation with Sir Belleaunce which by analogy expands the reconciliation theme exposed in the previous sections. From Lamerok's adventures Malory moves on to narrate the adventures of La Cote Male Tayle. The explicit at the end of the tale of Lamerok links the two stories.[32] They are similar not in terms of characters but in terms of themes. La Cote Male Tayle is also trying to prove himself a noble knight. This time he is helped not by Tristram but by Lancelot. In spite of Malory's tendency to re-order the material of his sources into well-circumscribed separate episodes, the story of La Cote is interrupted in the middle by the interposition of Lancelot's receipt of Tristram's letter and his provision of an answer to the same. The section following the quests of La Cote returns to the adventures of Tristram. 'Tristram's Madness and Exile' picks up the narration from exactly the same place at which it was interrupted. But again the adventures of Tristram are suspended when the adventures of Palomides, Lamerok and Lancelot are inserted, developing by analogy to their quests, the proof-of-knighthood theme. This section

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[32]See footnotes 3 and 34.

ends with the reconciliation of Lancelot and Tristram and Tristram's initiation into the Round Table fellowship. Malory then begins to narrate the parody quest of Mark, juxtaposing his evil deeds with the noble behavior of Arthur. 'The King Mark' section gives a loosely historical account of events, tells the deeds of Gawain and Lamerok, the murder of Queen Morgause and ends with the superficial reconciliation of Mark and Tristram and Tristram's fight with Sir Elyas. The evil nature of Mark is further expanded in the following episode of 'Alexander the Orphan.' It describes the treacherous murder of both Bowdyn and his son Alexander, and by giving an account of Alexander's enfance and "proof-of-knighthood," also contributes to the development of these themes. 'The Tournament at Surluse,' the next tale, exposes the adventures of Palomides, Lancelot, Lamerok, Dinadan, and Galahalte. From this tournament where the theme of knighthood is expanded and the qualities of knightliness are discussed we turn to a different tournament founded on treachery and jealousy. The episode 'Joyous Garde' begins with this false tournament, continues with the arrival of Isode and Tristram in the Joyous Garde, and the adventures of Tristram, Palomides, and ends at the start of a new adventure--the vengeance of King Hermaunce which is to be taken by Palomides. The following tale 'The Red

City,' then discusses the way Palomides revenges the death of King Hermaunce. It is again an expansion of the proof-of-knighthood theme where Palomides goes on a quest and abolishes an evil custom. 'The Tournament of Lonezep' takes up the adventures of Tristram at the point where they were left off in the 'Joyous Garde' episode. Here the deeds of all the major knights are narrated. Themes of proof-of-knighthood, fellowship between Tristram and Lancelot, reconciliation of noble knights and chivalric love are all simultaneously exposed and expanded. Palomides' inner struggles are brought to the foreground and Palomides is denounced as a treacherous knight. In the following tale of 'Sir Palomides' Malory gives an account of Palomides' further adventures developing the events towards the fulfillment of the reconciliation between Palomides and Tristram. But at this point in the story Malory delays the fight that is to occur between the two protagonists and inserts the episode of 'Lancelot and Elaine.' This tale is important in expanding the chivalric love theme. The adventures of Lancelot cited here are almost similar to the adventures of Tristram given in the episode titled 'Tristram's Madness and Exile.' This is the only section of "The Book of Sir Tristram" where no direct mention of Tristram is made. But thematically it is so analogous to the themes on which Tristram's career is based that the reader is able to see its obvious place in

the larger tale. "The Book of Sir Tristram" ends with a battle to a draw between Tristram and Palomides, and Palomides' christening. Thus the two knights are reconciled and Palomides' proof-of-knighthood which had begun in the tournament in Ireland is completed. The end verifies, emphasizes and glorifies knighthood.

"The Book of Sir Tristram" therefore does not follow a chronological sequence of events. Even though from time to time Malory chooses to arrange his episodes in a chronological pattern his tales are basically ordered to fit a thematic structure. The theme of knighthood supplies the overall pattern of the Tristram section. The themes of chivalric love and feudal service come out as the other two main themes. But none of the three main themes support one another and one theme does not lead naturally into the other. Structurally they remain apart and are for the most part simultaneously developed. When the same character has to carry out the demands of two or more themes Malory occasionally fails to supply him with proper human motivations. Tristram is always equipped with continuous emotional motivation in following the sequence of events arranged in accordance with the demands of the proof-of-knighthood theme. But when he has to follow the demands of the chivalric love theme or the theme of feudal service along with the proof-of-knighthood theme, his actions and emotions appear to be insincere and unconvincing.

Almost right after Tristram and Isode drink the love potion and fall in love, Tristram hears of Lancelot's adventures and yearns to join him:

> "Alas!" seyde sir Trystrames, "and I had nat this messayge in hande with this fayre lady, truly I wolde never stynte or I had founde sir Launcelot" (ll. 14-16, p. 419).

It is correct for Tristram, the knight, to wish to join another fellow knight and seek adventure, but it is absurd for Tristram, the lover, to feel sorry for having to be with his lady. Later in the story when Mark takes Isode back from their place of shelter in the forest, and Tristram finds her gone on his return, we read: "And then sir Trystrames toke grete sorow and endured with grete sorrow and payne long tyme, for the arow that he was hurte wythall was envenomed." Tristram's physical pain caused by the wound seems to be almost as strong as his sorrow for the loss of his beloved, whereas physical hurt can hardly compare with the emotions a knight feels at the loss of his beloved. Hence when Lancelot cuts his hand to the bone in trying to approach his lady, he takes "no force of hys hurte" and enjoys the presence of his lady fully (ll. 21-23, p. 1131).

Upon the instructions of Isode Tristram goes to Brittany to be cured by Princess Isode le Blaunche Maynes. He is not only cured of his wound but he also seems to have been cured once again of his love for La Beale Isode. Malory writes:

> . . . there grewe grete love betwyxte Isode and sir Trystrames, for that lady was bothe goode and fayre, and a woman of noble bloode and fame. And for because that sir Trystrames had suche chere and ryches and all other plesaunce that he had allmoste forsakyn La Beale Isode (ll. 25-29, p. 434).

The function of the Brittany episode in "The Book of Sir Tristram" is to prove once again Tristram's valor and skill in combat. In line with the principles of the proof-of-knighthood theme Tristram journeys to another kingdom where he succeeds in an adventure and wins the hand of the king's daughter. Only after Tristram and Isode le Blaunche Maynes are married and go to bed does Malory seem to recall Tristram's love for La Beale Isode and makes his protagonist suddenly think of his beloved and feel dismay (ll. 33-35, p. 434). But nothing more of this sorrow or longing for La Beale Isode is mentioned. Tristram appears to be much more interested in finding out what Lancelot will think of his faithlessness than what La Beale Isode feels or says. His "grete mone" at the end of this episode is due to Lancelot's reprobation of him as a false knight. He is sorry for having "defamed (himself) for the sake of his lady" (l. 32, p. 435) and for having lost Lancelot's friendship (ll. 29-30, p. 435).

Malory then shifts back to the theme of love. The pattern of faithlessness, madness and proof-of-worthiness common to themes of courtship underlies the progression of events that follow.

The proof-of-worthiness is important in establishing the protagonist as a true lover, therefore, eligible for the level of knighthood to which he aspires.

During his temporary return to Cornwall Tristram comes together again with Isode. Given his earlier behavior we do not expect him to feel the ecstatic joy we are told he experiences when he is with her. Nor do we expect him to love her deeply enough to go mad when he doubts her loyalty. But the structure of the theme of courtship requires him to go mad as punishment for his faithlessness and then prove his "worthiness" of her once again before he can be reconciled with her. Because of the lack of proper emotional motivation, thematic sequence and logical sequence of events do not coincide; thematic pattern supersedes characterization and the love theme of Tristram and Isode seems to be superimposed on the adventures of Tristram, the perfect knight. Therefore Tristram, whose legendary role is one of an archetypal lover, comes out in "The Book of Sir Tristram" as an unstable and even selfish knight to his lady.

The theme of feudal obligation rarely conflicts with that of knighthood. Tristram sees knighthood more as a mode of living than as a form of feudal service. Since Mark is also a wicked overlord undeserving of service, in the few cases where the pattern of feudal service conflicts with that of knighthood Tristram

naturally follows that of knightliness without damaging the logical consistency of the overall narrative pattern.

Hence, Malory unifies his divergent episodes by patterning them all after his all-important theme of knighthood, or after his secondary themes of love and service. Furthermore he also supplies connective links in between his episodes in the form of explicits at the end of episodes or introductory sentences at the beginning of them. The explicits[33] tell the reader what has just ended and announce what is to follow implying that what is finished is only the necessary part of a larger work. The introductory sentences serve the same purpose.

In "The Book of Sir Tristram" section 'The Tale of Lamerok' is not preceded by an explicit therefore it begins with the introductory sentence "So leve we sir Trystrames in

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[33]The most recent study of the use of explicits in Malory's The Morte and similar explicits in other late Medieval French and English works is done by Professor Benson. Benson points out that in the French and English prose cycles, explicits not only establish relationships between tales, but they also serve as notifiers to the reader that more is to follow and that what is finished is just the necessary first part of a whole. The tradition on which Malory drew was a tradition of cyclic narrative in which the romances were not distinct and independent tales, as the twelfth century verse romances were, but each romance was a part of a larger coherent "history" that comprehended all stories of Arthur and his knights. Therefore it would have been inconceivable for Malory, a fifteenth century English author, to write an Arthurian prose romance that would not be part of a "whole book."

Bretayne, and speke we of sir Lameroke de Galys. . ." (ll. 1-2, p. 441). Thus the reader is reminded of the analogy between the quests of Sir Tristram and those of Sir Lamerok. The end of this episode is marked by an explicit which fulfills the same function. "Here levyth of the tale of sir Lamerok and of syr Trystramys, and here begynnyth 'The Tale of Syr La Cote Male Tayle' that was a good knyght" (ll. 29-31, p. 451). Therefore no further links are necessary and the tale of 'La Cote Male Tayle' has a straight beginning: "To the courte of kynge Arthür there cam a yonge man bygly made. . ." (ll. 1-2, p. 459).[34]

This type of links also enables Malory to expand his material as much as he wants and thus to fulfill the requirements of the medieval art concept based on the illustration or assertion of an idea by an enumeration of similar or contrasting incidents. Furthermore this sort of expansion causes the reader to lose every sense of limitation of time and space, hence allows Malory to center his reader's attention on the themes of the story.

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[34]Professor Vinaver claims that the explicits clearly point to the lack of unity in The Morte, they divide the work into several separate sections, Works, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. But as we see in "The Book of Sir Tristram" explicits, similar in kind to the ones Vinaver cites as dividents between eight separate tales, work not as dividing lines but as connective links between minor episodes. What is more, as D.S. Brewer points out in "The Present Study of Malory," within the separate tales there are plenty of inconsistencies of the kind that Vinaver has maintained destroy the unity of the whole, p. 95.

Malory ignores the physical boundaries of time and space as much as possible. He neither pays attention to dates, times, and ages of his characters nor do the episodes, as stated earlier, follow a chronological sequence. Tristram, who is supposed to be a contemporary of Gawain, fights with Sir Gyngalyn, Gawain's son (ll. 27-30, p. 494). Queen Morgause of Orkney, older than Arthur and the grandmother of Gyngalyn, is the beloved of Lamerok, a contemporary of Tristram and Lancelot. The battle with Emperor Lucius which must have taken place after the beginning of the love affair of Tristram and Isode is narrated much before an account of Tristram's birth is given. Space is also very vaguely realized. The action of the story is related to us with no more of the physical surroundings than are needed to explain the action. Most of the important events take place in forests. People encounter each other and make appointments to meet there. The final impression is that similar events happen at all times in all places and what is important is not where and when it happens but the nature of the event, the moral or the theme it contains.

In order to convey even more emphatically the message the theme exposes and render it more lifelike, Malory frequently reduces the supernatural elements of his sources and assumes the role of a chronicler. Even the magical power of the love potion, so important in the Tristan legend, is fleetingly mentioned and

does not become an integral part of the story. The alternating phrases "at that time" (l. 14, p. 1121) and "nowadays" (l. 31, p. 119; (l. 7, p. 1120) distinguish the time of Arthur from the time of Malory and the frequent use of "as the Freynsh book saythe" (l. 1, p. 1130) emphasizes the inability of Malory to change the facts of his story. In short, Malory wants to convince the reader that he is a recorder of Arthurian history not a writer of fiction. The introduction of practical and mundane details as in the citations of exact numbers in discussing the amount of money spent by Guenevere in search of Lancelot,[35] the narrations of facts without explanations, and the assumed appearance of the narrator to have no more knowledge and power than his characters[36] all contribute to the building up of a sense of realism in

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[35] C. S. Lewis lists most of the mundane details given in The Morte in "The English Prose Morte," Essays on Malory, p. 12.

[36] In describing the life of Tristram and Isode in the Joyous Garde Malory writes:

> And every day sir Trystram wolde go ryde an-huntynge for he was called that tyme the chyeff chacer of the worlde and the noblyst blower of an horne of all maner of measures. For, as bookis reporte, of sir Trystram cam all the good termys of venery and of huntynge, and all the syses and mesures of all blowyng wyth an horne; and of hym we had fyrst all the termys of hawkynge, and whyche were bestis of chace and bestis of venery, and whyche were vermyns; and all the blastis that longed to all maner of game: fyrste to the uncoupelynge, to the sekynge, to the fyndynge, to the rechase, to the flyght, to the deth, and to strake; and many other blastis and termys, that all maner jantylmen hath cause to the worldes ende to prayse sir Trystram and

The Morte. But this does not mean that Malory's style is realistic or objective. It is paradoxical that the sense of realism and objectivity he seems to be creating in the book helps to accentuate his subjective and "emotive" approach to his material. Professor Field in discussing Malory's style says:

> Malory calls forth the strongest degree of evoked emotional response to be found in any English author of major literary status, and this response is largely produced by the cumulative effect of description in moral and emotive terms. His characters cannot be separated from the responses he builds into them. In the action, the reader apprehends the indivisible unit of the "noble king" or the "good knight."[37]

Hence Malory's descriptions are not pictorial or physical but moral. They impose a certain response on the reader. Sir Dynadan is a "jantyll, wyse and a good knyght" (ll. 19-20, p. 605); Mark is "the falsyst knyght and kynge of the world" (l. 10, p. 592); Mordred and Aggravayne murder Dinadan "cowardly and felonsly" (l. 6, p. 615); Tristram is "one of the beste knyghtes and the jentyllyst of the world" (ll. 27-28, p. 571); Lancelot is "pereles of curtesy and of knyghthode" (l. 19, p. 401).

Moreover Malory's description of character and action is simple and highly stylized. The reader does not know what his

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> to pray for his soule. AMEN, SAYDE SIR THOMAS MALLEORRE (ll. 25-34, p. 682; ll. 1-4, p. 683).

Thus he even expects prayers for a character as much as he asks them for himself.

[37] Field, pp. 86-87.

knights or ladies look like or even how they feel but he is fully informed of their moral values. All his knights think, speak and act alike. Their dialogue and their action is formal and knightly. A comparison of the battles to a draw between Tristram and Lamerok and Tristram and Lancelot reveals the simplicity, repetitiveness, forcefulness and formality of their speech and their courageous, ceremonial and conventionalized action. Tristram's encounter with Lamerok is described as:

> And so he alyght uppon foote and avoyded hys horse and kest hys shylde uppon hys shulder and drew oute hys swerde, and there they fought a longe batayle togydirs, nyghe two owrys.
> Than sir Trystramys seyde,
> "Fayre knyght, holde thyne honde a lytyll whyle and telle me of whens thou arte and what is thy name."
> "As for that," seyde the knyght, "I woll be avysed; but and ye woll telle me youre name, peradventure I woll telle you myne."
> "Now, fayre knyght," he seyde, "my name ys sir Trystram de Lyones."
> "Sir, and my name ys sir Lamerok de Galys." . . .
> Than sir Trystrams seyde unto sir Lamerok,
> "In all my lyff mette I never with such a knyght that was so bygge and so well-brethed. . . ."
> "Sir," seyde sir Lamerok, "for youre renowne and your name I woll that ye have the worship, and therefore I woll yelde me unto you." And therewith he toke the poynte of hys swerde in hys honde to yelde hym.
> "Nay," seyde sir Trystrames, "ye shall not do so, for well I know youre profirs (are) more of your jantilnes than for ony feare or drede ye have of me."
> And therewithall sir Trystramys profferde hym hys swerde and seyde,
> "Sir Lamerak, as an overcom knyght I yelde me to you as a man of most noble proues that I ever mette!"
> "Nay," seyde sir Lamerok, "I woll do you jantylnes: I requyre you, lat us be sworne togydirs that never none

> of us shall aftir thys day have ado with other" (ll. 28-37, p. 482; ll. 1-32, p. 483).

The words of the two knights are not individualized. Instead they are stylized and balanced. They both put the emphasis on ability to fight well, "jantilnes," "prowess" and "renown." Each knight admires and respects the other because of these virtues. The description of the combat is vivid, detailed and concrete but, as will also be seen in the following battle, a cliché. Tristram's duel with Lancelot is given in the following lines,

> . . . and as faste as they myght avoyde there horsys and put their shyldis afore them, and they strake togedyrs wyth bryght swerdys as men that were of myght, and aythir woundid othir wondirly sore, that the bloode ran oute uppon the grasse. And thus they fought the space of four owres, that never one wolde speke to other. . . . Than at the laste sir Launcelot spake and seyde,
>
> "Knyght, thou fyghtyst wondir well as ever I sawe knyghte. Therefore, and hit please you, tell me your name."
>
> "Sir," seyde sir Trystram, "that is me loth to telle ony man my name."
>
> "Truly," seyde sir Launcelot, "and I were requyred, I was never loth to tell my name."
>
> "Ye say well," seyde sir Trystram, "than I requyre you to tell me your name."
>
> "Fayre knyght, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake."
>
> "Alas!" seyde sir Trystram, "what have I done! For ye ar the man in the worlde that I love beste."
>
> "Now, fayre knyght," seyde sir Launcelot, "telle me your name."
>
> "Truly, sir, I hyght sir Trystram de Lyones."
>
> "A, Jesu!" seyde sir Launcelot, "what aventure is befall me!"
>
> And therewyth sir Launcelott kneled adowne and yeldid hym up his swerde. And therewithall sir Trystram kneled adowne and yeldid hym up his swerde, and so aythir gaff other the gre (ll. 31-35, p. 568; ll. 1-35, p. 569).

Action and dialogue repeat and complement one another in these duels in emphasizing cumulatively the morality of knighthood. Professor Lambert has acutely observed that "Malory wants to draw the reader's attention not to '<u>this</u> chivalric combat,' but to 'this <u>chivalric</u> combat.'"[38] Hence Malory's impersonal narrative tone together with these stylized acts and ideas create an impression of their unquestionable correctness. It also leads to the assumption that the moral qualities and values so exposed have absolute and objective existences. In the battles and fights against odds, it is always the moral aspect which is of most interest to Malory. When he has one of his characters praise others, we feel that the praise is given more to chivalrous unselfishness than to physical courage, or cavalry tactics.

Therefore Malory's book is not simply built on a thematic structure but it also has a unity of style and tone. Malory does not try to convince us of the validity of his vision by means of presenting a logical and "horizontal" development of events in an ordinary world of experience. The world of experience displayed in his romance is not similar to the ordinary world of reality. His knights do not live and act in a world where everything is a mixture of good or bad. They either meet with exceptionally good

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[38]Lambert, p. 45.

people, are helped by them, are honored and loved, or are tricked by treacherous knights or ladies, are wounded, imprisoned and threatened with death. Hence by scrambling over a series of logically disconnected episodes which reveal an unrealistic concept of the world Malory seems to be trying to make us experience his emotions and see his vision through his eyes.

Tennyson's Idylls is also criticized for its episodic structure. It is also called "disunited" and serial like The Morte. But it is my contention that Tennyson, like Malory, also makes use of the medieval prose romance structure; therefore his narrative also has to be episodic. But again like Malory he does not see the drama of his various knights in "stark isolation." Each episode has a different style and concentrates on a different theme but each one still contributes to the development of one primary subject matter. The individual concerns of each idyll work as subsidiary themes expanding, commenting on and evolving the main theme. Hence Tennyson's Idylls certainly has thematic unity. Furthermore the Idylls make use of certain images which contribute to thematic development and unity the work in terms of imagery as well as tone. But a knowledge of the piecemeal publications of the Idylls[39] and the recognition of

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[39]"Morte d'Arthur" which later was revised and published as "The Passing of Arthur" first appeared in an 1842 volume. "Enid" which again was later re-edited and subdivided into "The

obvious differences in treatment among the idylls have given rise to a presumption that they were a collection of independent narratives. The argument of the scholars who claim that the Idylls is a series of detached poems yoked by their common source of theme in the Arthurian material is put into words by Professor Ricks. He says that ". . . the composition and publication of Idylls of the King, extending over more than fifty years, are not a record of firm creative decision or of an organic responsiveness."[40] He also states that "the style of the Idylls (is) extraordinarily uneven in quality."[41] Professor Tillotson gives the title "Tennyson's Serial Poem" to her detailed study of the Idylls[42] and Professor Gurteen says:

Marriage of Geraint," and "Geraint and Enid" was published along with "Vivien," later called "Merlin and Vivien," "Elaine," then called "Lancelot and Elaine," and "Guinevere" in 1859. "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre" and "The Passing of Arthur" were given to the world in 1869. "The Last Tournament," first printed privately in 1871 was republished with "Gareth and Lynette" in 1872. And all of these were published together with "Balin and Balan" as twelve books under the title Idylls of the King in 1885.

[40]C. Ricks, Tennyson (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1972), p. 267.

[41]Quoted in Ricks, p. 265.

[42]K. Tillotson, quoted in Ricks, p. 264. See also H. H. Wilson, "Tennyson: Unscholarly Arthurian," The Victorian Newsletter (Fall 1967), pp. 6-10.

> . . . the chronological order in which he produced his Idylls would show that he had never grasped the Arthurian tales as a whole, ... Judging Tennyson, therefore, in accordance with the title which he himself prefixed to his tales of chivalry, we are bound to regard them as so many short, detached poems, forming collectively a series similar to that of Map, and while superior to Map's in point of Pre-Raphaelite touch, yet strangely inferior to his breadth of grasp, in grandeur of simplicity, and in powers of artistic construction.[43]

Opposed to this view are the majority of the contemporary Tennyson[44] scholars. They agree with Hallam Tennyson who

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[43]H. Gurteen, The Arthurian Epic (New York: Haskell House, 1965), p. 89. R.H. Hutton deplored the title for that very reason, and he himself stepped up the claims within the title by giving it, not as Idylls of the King but as The Idylls of the King. "The title misled the public," he said, "and the fragmentary mode in which the poem appeared misled it the more."

[44]F.E.L. Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1973), pp. 223-26; and "Tennyson's Idylls in Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. J. Killham (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. 240-41; J.R. Kinciad, Tennyson's Major Poems: The Comic and Ironic Patterns (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 151-52; J.H. Buckley, Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), pp. 172-73; C. de Ryals, From the Great Deep (Ohio University Press, 1967), pp. 31, 54; J.D. Rosenberg, The Fall of Camelot (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 20-22; J.P. Eggers, King Arthur's Laureate (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 25-26; J.R. Reed, Perception and Design in Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King' (Ohio University Press, 1969), pp. 230-34; W.R. Brashear, "Tennyson's Tragic Vitalism: Idylls of the King," Victorian Poetry 6 (1968), pp. 30-31; J. Kissane, Alfred Tennyson (New York: Twayne Publisher's, Inc., 1970), p. 102; S.J. Solomon, "Tennyson's Paradoxical King," Victorian Poetry (1963), pp. 269-71; M. Miyoshi, The Divided-Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians (London: University of London Press, 1969), p. 235; E.W. Slinn, "Deception and Artifice in Idylls of the King," Victorian Poetry

tells us that his father had determined the final shape of the poems in 1855, and since then he carried in his head a more or less perfected scheme.[45] Though each scholar gives his specific argument in support of the work's unity all emphasize its unity of tone, imagery and theme. None of them, however, discuss the structural and s listic unity of the Idylls in terms of the medieval narrative technique by which Tennyson was highly influenced. It is my contention that Tennyson makes use of a number of the tools of both the medieval and the naturalistic concepts of art in the composition of his poem, and it is this structurally and stylistically dualistic and dubious approach of the poet that creates a tension in the poem and confuses most of its readers.[46]

In the Idylls, Tennyson uses the technique of interlacement, analogy and episodic presentation of a single theme--aspects of the medieval form of narration. He also draws realistic and

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1 (1973), p. 1; H. Kozicki, "Tennyson's Idylls of the King as Tragic Drama," Victorian Poetry 1 (1966), p. 16.

[45] H. Tennyson, Tennyson: A Memoir, Vol. II (1897 rpt. London: Macmillan and Co., 1924), pp. 125-28.

[46] Professor Miyoshi in "Narrative Sequence and the Moral System: Three Tristram Poems," The Victorian Newsletter (Spring 1969), argues that "The Last Tournament" is highly fragmented and this fragmentation cannot be explained from a structural point of view, pp. 6-7. But an analysis of this poem in terms of medieval narrative art proves it to be structurally unified.

consistent characters who seem to be coherently motivated and who appear to control the course of events like in post-eighteenth century realistic narratives. Again, as in realistic fiction, action in life and literature appears to evolve in accordance with a causality principle and characters seem to act, think and develop in relation to the world in which they live.[47] But a close analysis of the characters, their motives and actions also prove the opposite of all these principles until life in the Idylls appears to be a fusion of illusion and reality and no commonsense assumption can be made that what is said or seen is real, and what is not seen or heard unreal. This causes the conception of reality to shift back once again to a medieval view of life and art where no distinction can be made between "falling asleep" and "waking up," and narrative movement follows an up-and-down perspective.[48] Hence the Idylls displays with equal force the art concepts and narrative techniques of the medieval and naturalistic fictions, and Tennyson does not allow one to supersede the other. "The Last Tournament," in which the Tristan legend is set forth and expanded, analogically, reflects clearly the narrative art of Tennyson's poem.

In this idyll five episodes with similar or related themes are simultaneously developed. We are given an account of the

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[47]See footnote 19.

[48]Frye, p. 46.

story of Tristram, Isolt and Mark, we learn of the conflict between the Red Knight and Arthur, the story of the ruby carcanet, the clash between Dagonet and Tristram, and by implication the outcome of the story of Lancelot. Each episode is intertwined with a number of other episodes, and they "alternate like threads in a woven fabric, one (episode) interrupting another and again another, and yet all remaining constantly present in the author's and the reader's mind."[49] The structural outline of the idyll is as follows:

- The meeting of Dagonet and Tristram (conflict between idealism[50] and naturalism, exposing of the two philosophies).
- The story of the ruby carcanet (hope for idealism).
- The Red Knight's challenge of Arthur (exposition of avowed naturalism, effects of naturalism).
- Description of the Last Tournament (death of chivalry, effects of naturalism).
- Discussion between Dagonet and Tristram (idealistic and naturalistic philosophies contrasted).
- Journey of Tristram to Cornwall interceded by Tristram's dream of a quarrel between Isolt of Brittany and Isolt of Ireland (conflict between idealism and naturalism).

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[49]Vinaver, The Rise of Romance, p. 76.

[50]Throughout the study "idealism" stands for the doctrine which regards reality as essentially spiritual or the embodiment of mind.

- Arthur's dubious victory over the Red Knight (effects of naturalism).
- Discussion between Tristram and Isolt and Mark's murder of Tristram (exposition of naturalism, effects of naturalism, success of naturalism).
- Arrival of Arthur in Camelot and his discovery of the affair between Lancelot and Guinevere (effects of naturalism, defeat of idealism).

Tennyson unites these separate episodes by means of characterization, theme, and imagery. Tristram plays an active role in three of the episodes and his presence is felt in the other two. His role as an adulterous knight by analogy ties him with Lancelot, the adulterous lover of Guinevere, and his defense of naturalism links him with Pelleas, the Red Knight, the avowed militant of the same philosophy.

The main theme of this idyll as it is deduced from these various episodes is the effects of naturalism, pragmatism and materialism on idealism. The exposition of the naturalistic philosophy and the conflict between naturalism and idealism are the two secondary themes. The secondary themes always support and develop the main theme. Tennyson never discusses the effects of naturalism without comparing or contrasting that philosophy with idealism. Idealism is never expanded without the

deterministic presence of naturalism felt as a counterpoint in the background. Therefore his themes do not develop in a polyphonic structure[51] as do Malory's, but in an interrelated pattern. The argument between Dagonet and Tristram which states the contrasting attitudes to life and presents the theme of conflict between naturalism and idealism is developed in the description of the parallel stories of the Tournament and the Battle in the North which displays the effects of naturalism on the society. Further on, the effects of naturalism on individuals are portrayed in the desperate conversation between Isolt and Tristram and in the regret and confusion expressed by the behavior of Guinevere and Lancelot. The conversation between Isolt and Tristram also serves to expound once again the principles of the naturalistic and the pragmatic theories and in a way attempts to justify their destructive effects. But Tristram's murder by Mark, the embodiment of the naturalistic philosophy, immediately follows this conversation and works as a commentary on the previous defense of this theory. The final loss and pain felt at the defeat of idealism by the decadent, beast-like forces of naturalism accentuates the main theme of the poem.

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[51] Miyoshi claims the reverse of this statement in "Narrative Sequence and the Moral System: Three Tristram Poems," p. 6.

Tennyson develops his themes on three levels of experience --as opposed to the two levels of experience in romance,[52] and one level of experience in realistic fiction. By reflecting the effects of the workings of the action on all the three worlds simultaneously he creates a tension between the romantic and the realistic concepts of art and life. There is first a world associated with happiness, security and peace, the emphasis is on an innocent period of youth and the images are those of spring, summer and sunshine. This is the world of idealism, it is the world Arthur wants to establish, it is his vision and his ideal. It is in this world that Gareth lives and acts. This world is brought to the reader's and Tristram's memory by the "snow white dresses of the maidens" worn in honor of the lost innocence, and by the words of Tristram describing Arthur's early days. The seasons associated with this level of experience are summer and spring and the color is predominantly white. The second level of experience portrays a world of exciting adventures, but these adventures involve separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain and the threat of more pain. This world is the world of naturalism, and all those effected by this philosophy experience it. They feel it in their frustrations, despair and see it in their dreams. The colors asso-

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[52] Frye, p. 58.

ciated with it are black and red, and the seasons autumn and winter. The third is the ordinary world of experience where everything is a mixture of good and bad and action does not take place in the polarized worlds of idyllic and subhuman experiences. The perspective of reality displays a "horizontal" continuity of action and reaction development, not the up-and-down movement of romance. In this third world everything is based on the causality principle and human motivation. Lancelot, Guinevere, Tristram and Isolt, as well as a number of other characters, feel and experience the development of events in accordance with a cause and effect principle of this kind.

Here the characters' actions can always be explained in terms of an emotional or logical motivation. A reason can be given for every "why." Isolt says she loves Tristram because she hates Mark (L. T. ll. 535-36) and would rather bestow her favor on anyone other than him. Tristram breaks away from Arthur's fellowship because he says Arthur's vows are unnaturally strict (L. T. l. 652) and because Arthur is a "doubtful lord" (L. T. l. 682). Dagonet decides to follow Arthur because he claims he has been brought up by the "dirty nurse Experience" and realizes the importance of Arthur's vision in ennobling manking (L. T. l. 317). But because these themes are also developed in the other two worlds of experience, one above and the other below the ordinary

world of causality, they attain different levels of meaning and frequently contradict the validity of the given cause. Isolt does not really love Tristram. Her hatred for Mark cannot be the cause of her love for Tristram. Tristram admits the power of the vows in ennobling mankind and "making a realm." He accepts Arthur's lordship, sees him as "Michael trampling Satan" (L. T. l. 668) when he swears to serve and obey him, so there is no logical reason for him to call Arthur a "doubtful lord" at this moment and consequently be forsworn. Dagonet's decision to follow Arthur also cannot be explained rationally. Vivien like Dagonet has been raised by the "dirty nurse Experience" but she does not choose to serve the King. No absolute logical or emotional explanations can be given for the specific flow of events. Furthermore the same events developed simultaneously in the other two worlds of experience yield different interpretations. Viewed from the sensual level of naturalism Isolt desires Tristram. Tristram would rather follow his instinctive drives than put himself under an unnaturally strict discipline in order to follow the king. Dagonet has become "vain" for having been made Arthur's fool (L. T. l. 306) and in glorifying his world he glorifies himself. On the other hand, an idealistic interpretation of their actions shows that Isolt would rather have Tristram for a lover, the lesser of the two evils, than be completely left alone in this sensual world

of decadence and decay (L. T. ll. 595, 607-10). Tristram loses faith in Arthur's vision of the idyllic world because he sees the growing decadence in it reflected in the behavior of Lancelot and Guinevere (L. T. l. 677). Dagonet seeks refuge from the corruption of the sensual world and hopes to find peace and harmony in Arthur's world. The final outcome of this triple approach is that the reader's attention is centered not on causes and results but on themes.

In this, Tennyson follows Malory. What is important is not the logical development of the specific stories of Arthur, Lancelot and Tristram but what their stories reveal about human life and human society. The poet tries to make his readers become aware of a variety of approaches to life and show them the presence of the tragic and comic irony[53] in their tales as well as in life. Therefore the main theme of the Idylls which is also the main theme of "The Last Tournament" does not really evolve and develop as do the themes of realistic narratives. It is set forth and exposed in the words and deeds of the characters the majority of which are types therefore they also neither develop nor change. Hence, like the writers of medieval prose narrative, Tennyson

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[53]Kinciad, pp. 158-206. See also N. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton University Press, 1971, rpt. 1957), p. 285.

uses a variety of episodes and a variety of characters to expose and explain by means of analogy the different aspects of his themes.

Tristram, the follower and defender of the naturalistic and utalitarian philosophy, is analogous to Kay in "Gareth and Lynette," to Geraint in "Geraint and Enid," to Vivien in "Balin and Balan" and in "Merlin and Vivien," to Gawain in "Lancelot and Elaine," in "The Holy Grail," and in "Pelleas and Ettarre," and also to Pelleas in the same idyll. His materialistic and naturalistic arguments resemble the arguments of Guinevere in the "Lancelot and Elaine" idyll and at the beginning of the "Guinevere" idyll. Thus each of these characters enact or defend one or more principles of this philosophy and by analogy expand and comment on both the character and the behavior of Tristram, and the ideas he upholds. Tristram's story and words in turn throw light on their acts and characters. Tristram's affair with Isolt is analogous to the affair of Lancelot with Guinevere. Mark's role of a cuckolded husband parallels that of Arthur, and the Tristram-Isolt-Mark triangle acts as a commentary on the Lancelot-Guinevere-Arthur triangle and vice versa. Furthermore Lancelot, the winner of the diamond crown in nine tournaments parallels Tristram, the winner of the ruby carcanet in the Tournament of the Dead Innocence. The analogy between the two prizes develops

even further the theme of sensuality versus purity, and materialism versus idealism. The Red Knight and his Round Table parodies Arthur and his Round Table and by contrast exposes the effects of naturalism on society. Finally Dagonet, the defender of idealism, in effect parallels Tristram, the defender of naturalism and by contrast throws light on the theme of true and false knighthood.

Because the exposition of the theme takes place for the most part analogically all characters seem to be entangled in it and have no power to control it. Mark, the villain, does not cause the development of the naturalistic philosophy in Arthur's court. He was present before Arthur established his kingdom and has been in the background all along. Arthur, the hero, had established his Round Table when men were "worse than beasts," and there is no reason for him not to be able to do so once again. The visionary world of Arthur based on the reality of the ideals and the hope of materializing them in the physical world of experience gives in to the physical and sensual reality of Tristram and Mark for no intrinsic or logical reason.[54] Tennyson suggests so many reasons which are all inadequate that the real cause remains undiscovered.

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[54] J. Korg, "The Pattern of Fatality in Tennyson's Poetry," The Victorian Newsletter (1958), pp. 9-11. See also Kinciad, p. 154.

Tennyson, like Malory, centers his attention on creating certain emotions in his readers. His language, therefore, is also "emotive." Throughout the Idylls we are made to think of Arthur as "the blameless King" and "stainless man" (M.V. l. 777). He is "the selfless man and stainless gentleman" (M.V. l. 790). Lancelot is the "greatest knight" (L.E. l. 403), the "mightiest" (H.G. l. 792). Tristram is the "woodman of the woods" (L.T. l. 694), he has grown a "wild beast," through ever chasing them (L.T. ll. 630-32), and like the beasts he makes "dull his inner keen his outer eye" (L.T. l. 366). Mark is "catlike" (L.T. l. 514), he is filled with "cravan shifts" (L.T. l. 723). He is he "who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!" (G.L. l. 426), and finally Isolt is all desire (L.T. l. 623).

Tennyson's poetry is highly visual. His attitude for his themes is best displayed in his images. Each episode is given in an appropriate seasonal setting and the colors of the background accentuate the prevailing theme, the temper of the characters in the foreground and symbolize the moral condition of the realm itself. The sequence accordingly follows the cycle of the year from the spring time of Arthur's marriage, to the winter, wasteland of Arthur's defeat.[55] "The Last Tournament" is given in an

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[55] Buckley, p. 173.

autumnal setting, in the "death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom" (L. T. l. 750). In this idyll Tennyson depicts the lost glory of the past and the decadence of the present. Society, like the wine fountain in Camelot, seems to have "run itself/ All out like a long life to a sour end" (L. T. ll. 287-88). As Dagonet finds out, the cup is still "gold" like golden Camelot, but the "draught" is mud (L. T. l. 298). The sequence of the images in the idyll moves from mellowing colors to darker ones. With the darkening colors the gloom intensifies and finally the hope is totally lost. The idyll starts with the image of Dagonet dancing to "Arthur's music" before Arthur's hall, then shifts back in time to the image of the churl beaten and lamed by the Red Knight.

> ". . . his visage ribb'd
> From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose
> Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand off,
> And one with shatter'd fingers dangling lame,"
> (L. T. ll. 57-60)

The savagery of the anti-Arthur figure and his philosophy is exposed and condemned in this image. The next image is the description of Camelot on the day of the Tournament of the Dead Innocence. All the women are dressed in white, the color of purity, in "honour of the stainless child" (L. T. l. 147), but as soon as the Tournament is over they

> ". . . cast the simple white,
> And glowing in all colours, the live grass,

> Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced
> About the revels," (L. T. ll. 233-36).

This change into various colors reinforces the theme of lost innocence and ironically parallels the title of the Tournament. The third image is a return to the introductory one. It attains clarity from the argument of Dagonet and Tristram and the meaning of Arthur's music and his star becomes the climactic paradox of the idyll. Arthur's music cannot be heard, his star cannot be seen by one's senses. Therefore Tristram, one of the prominent knights of Arthur, can neither see it nor hear it. Tristram's dream of the struggle between the two Isolts emphasizes his preference for the "red" passionate hands of Isolt of Ireland over the "white" pure and innocent hands of Isolt of Brittany (L. T. l. 410-15). The bloody, passionate, sensual red hands of Isolt are then personified in the "blood-red" appearance of the Red Knight (L. T. l. 442). It is further elaborated in the color of the fire set by Arthur's knights in the castle of the Red Knight. As this "Red-pulsing" fire leaps up Arthur feels pain at seeing the brutality and violence of his own knights. The following image is that of Isolt sitting in a casement and "yearning" for the "far-rolling," "westward-smiling seas." Her yearning for stability and eternity in a world where all is temporal and unstable displays the effects of the naturalistic philosophy on the individual's psychology. The

colors of the day grow darker, and as Tristram gives Isolt the ruby carcanet it is "the light's last glimmer." A little later "out of the dark" Mark's hand appears and cleaves Tristram "thro' the brain" (L. T. l. 748). The idyll's last image again displays Dagonet in front of Arthur's palace. But this time it is not day but night, and he is not dancing to Arthur's music but crying after the total collapse of Arthur's world.

Tennyson's images enrich the meaning of the themes and because they are so suggestive they evade any clearcut explanations. The poet himself says, "I hate to be tied down to say, '<u>this</u> means <u>that</u>' because the thought within the image is much more than any one interpretation."[56] It is this flexibility of the interpretations of his images that saves Tennyson from contradicting himself as he displays a whole variety of human experiences, thoughts and emotions within the basic themes of naturalism, sensual reality, and idealism, the spiritual, visionary reality. In fact, the reason why Tennyson calls his episodic poem the <u>Idylls</u> is because an idyll is a "picture of mood, character, or gesture"[57] which presents us with a kind of profoundly significant and animated instant ". . . and into which. . . all the motives, all the

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[56] H. Tennyson, p. 127.

[57] Buckley, p. 172.

interests and effects of a long history have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb past and future in an intense consciousness of the present."[58] Each of the idylls moves through a series of sharply visualized compositions toward its pictured climax, its moment of revelation. As vision yields to vision a sense of being beyond physical time and space is conveyed. This enables the poet to haul back his readers' attention once again to his themes. It also gives him the opportunity to make his readers stop and reflect on these "splendid moments" and regard the themes presented there as eternal and cosmic paradoxes. But beneath this apparent timelessness and sustaining perspective of continuity is the ever-restricting progress, a moving towards decay, dissolution and death. Therefore Tennyson unlike Malory never allows his readers to forget the ages of his characters. Some of his knights are young, some, like Lancelot, have aged. The period from Arthur's coronation to his death is about twelve years. The progression of time always works as a counterpoint to the devel-

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[58]W. Pater, quoted in J.H. Buckley, "Symbols of Eternity: The Victorian Escape from Time," in Victorian Essays: A Symposium, ed. W.D. Anderson and T.D. Clareson (The Kent University Press, 1967), p. 8. See also H.M. McLuhan "Tennyson and the Romantic Epic," in Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, pp. 88-89; Eggers, pp. 58-60, Kinciad, p. 151; Ryals, pp. 3-54; and M. Timko, "Arnold, Tennyson, and the English Idyl: Ancient Criticism and Modern Poetry," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 1 (1971), pp. 141-43.

opment of theme. No one idyll can be replaced by another not only because of the place it occupies in the overall thematic pattern but also because of the specific time period it covers in the growth and decline of the Arthurian society. "The Coming of Arthur" and "The Passing of Arthur," the two frame poems, are exceptions to this cyclic treatment of time. In these poems Tennyson does not create a conception of time bound by seasonal changes but he draws Arthur's time in apocalyptic terms. Therefore the birth and death of Arthur are treated in terms of eternity and revelation.[59] Guinevere in "The Last Tournament" recalls that Arthur is not subjected to death but "From the great deep to the great deep he goes" (L. T. 1. 133). In between these idylls "lies the tableland of life, and its struggles and performances."[60]

Some scholars have looked for epic and mythic[61] unity in the Idylls. Although the two frame poems lend themselves to epic treatment (the national hero who creates a kingdom and dies in a single combat in its defense) and although mythic time and ritualized action are used from time to time, a consistent epical flow or a mythic conception of the universe cannot be seen in the

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[59] Rosenberg, p. 37.

[60] H. Tennyson, p. 47.

[61] Kozicki, p. 16-17; McLuhan, pp. 91-95; Kissane, p. 102.

Idylls. Arthur is the bringer of light. His reign is a kind of golden age, a second creation. Therefore he carries the overtones of a culture-hero, Sky Deity and Christ,[62] but he is also a national hero and a medieval king. Hence as the title of the poem itself reveals, it neither intends to follow the structure of an epic nor should epic or mythic unity be looked for.

In the composition of his poem Tennyson basically adopts the narrative tools of Malory and he improves on them. The idyllic form, like the prose romance structure which Malory uses, enables him to develop his themes analogically in recurrent events or sentiments rather than climactically as in realistic fiction. Both Malory and Tennyson use the technique of interlacement but because Tennyson's themes are expanded in an inter-

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[62]There is an unmistakable analogy between Arthur's birth and that of Christ. In recounting the mystery of his origins as she heard them from Bleys, Merlin's master, Bellicent says that Arthur was brought from heaven on a wave which was all in a flame (C.A. ll. 370-79). Merlin is said to have sworn that "Tho man may wound him. . . he will not die,/ But pass, again to come;" (C.A. ll. 420-21). As God created man in His own image, so the King recreated his knights in his own image. They are all "Stamp'd with the image of the king," (H.G. l. 27). Arthur also has overtones of a sky deity. Guinevere refers to him as "the sun in heaven" (L.E. l. 123). During the fight with the rebellious kings lightnings and thunders, the emblems of Zeus, are sent "by the Powers who walk the world" and daze all eyes till Arthur overcomes them (C.A. ll. 5-7). Professor Rosenberg points out that "underlying the medieval rites of the wedding of Arthur and Guinevere is the more primitive union of Sun and Earth," p. 42.

related manner rather than in a polyphonic manner it is easier to follow their development. The structure of Malory's work is based on a thematic pattern which is externally imposed on characterization. Tennyson's work is also held together by thematic unity but not by an externally imposed thematic pattern. His themes are exposed and expanded through his characters who seem to be emotionally or rationally motivated to action. Therefore Tennyson centers the reader's attention not on the objective world of action, as does Malory, but on characterization. Furthermore most of his characters are presented as acting and thinking on three levels of experience, the objective world of reality, and the nightmarish and idyllic worlds of romance. Hence although his characters, like those of Malory's, are basically types and few of them really undergo a change or development, they seem to be more real and consistent for the twentieth century reader.

PART II

Thematic Analysis of "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones" and "The Last Tournament"

Knighthood

Knighthood is the essential theme of both Malory's tale and Tennyson's idyll, but their approach to and evaluation of this concept are quite different. The chivalric life expounded in "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones" is the sort of life in which Malory himself lived.[1] It is real and complete, with the imperfections, excesses and failures that always exist in any human society. Therefore in this tale Malorian knighthood emerges as a practical way of life. It is inherited from the past and improved by Arthur. It entails nobility of birth, courage, courtesy, justice, individual humility, love of "worship," love of good company, a sense of fellowship, protection of the weak and appreciation of

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[1] L. Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur (Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 148-61. See also R. Barber, The Knight and Chivalry (Rowman and Littlefield, 1975 (rpt. 1970), pp. 38-49.

what is good and "worshipful." It comes out as an ethical code by which good and evil knights are to be judged in life as well as in literature. Its pressure on the knights is as emphatic as that of religion. Requests and charges are almost always made in the name of knighthood. Tristram asks Dinadan "of hys knyghthode," to stay and fight with him (l. 12, p. 507).[2] Lamerok requests Sir Bellyaunce to forgive him "for Goddis sake and for the honour of knyghthode," (ll. 4-5, p. 451).[3] It is true that Dinadan in "The Book of Sir Tristram" does seem to attack the chivalric conception of love, duty and valor. When he is forced to fight with thirty knights along with Tristram, he calls him and Lancelot mad and curses them and "The tyme! That ever he com in theyre felyship" (l. 29, p. 508). But Dinadan's behavior and emotions contradict his speech. He is always seen in the company of these good knights and Malory states emphatically throughout this section that Dinadan himself was a good knight. He is murdered by Mordred and Aggravayne "for he was a grete bourder and a passynge good knyght" (ll. 7-8, p. 615).[4] Therefore

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[2] All references to the text of Malory are from The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, ed. E. Vinaver, 3 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967). Henceforth citations will be given in the text next to the quotations. Moreover "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones" will be given in short as "The Book of Sir Tristram."

[3] See also ll. 21-22, p. 399; ll. 25-26, p. 409; l. 20, p. 431; l. 25, p. 482; l. 13, p. 756; l. 2, p. 813; l. 11, p. 829; l. 28, p. 829.

[4] See also ll. 19-20, p. 605; l. 20, p. 609; ll. 25-31, p. 614; ll. 12-13, p. 618; l. 2, p. 660.

Dinadan's critical comments on the ideals of knighthood is not a breath of critical realism from elsewhere but one of good humored, joking criticism of its excesses. His part in the tale is that of a jester. Malory writes:

> . . . he (Sir Dynadan) was a grete skoffer and a gaper, and the meryste knyght amonge felyship that was that tyme lyvynge: and he loved every good knyght and every good knyght loved hym (ll. 7-10, p. 665).

Professor Lambert says of Malorian knightliness that ". . . (it) is an omnipresent and undefined essence. We know its manifestations but not the thing in itself."[5] My contention is that we know both the manifestations and the thing in itself. We are given first a definition of what knightliness is, and then we are made to experience and analyze its true nature in the light of the endeavours of the Arthurian knights.

When Arthur establishes his Round Table he explains the code he expects his knights to follow.

> . . . never to do outerage nothir morthir, and allwayes to fle treson, and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon payne of forfiture (of their) worship and lordship of kynge Arthure for evirmore; and allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes (socour:) strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of deth. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no worldis goodis (ll. 17-25, p. 120).

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[5]M. Lambert, Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur (Yale University Press, 1975), p. 134.

This definition of the duties of Arthur's knights cannot be found in Malory's sources; it is his own.[6] But it is not made up by Malory. It was first codified as we find it in the above quoted passage by the knights of Bath in the early fifteenth century.[7] Therefore Malory does not invent the concept of knighthood displayed in "The Book of Sir Tristram." He reflects what he finds in life in the deeds of Tristram, Lancelot, Lamerok, Palomides and the many knights who play various parts in his Arthurian world.

"The Book of Sir Tristram" gives an account of knighthood in all its variety. In this same tale Tristram, perhaps even more than Lancelot, comes out as Malory's ideal knight. Everything he does is "through clean knighthood." We are lead to evaluate the behavior of the other knights by analogy with Sir Tristram. Even though the reader is constantly told throughout The Morte that Tristram is the second best knight, next only to Sir Lancelot, "the floure of all knyghtes" (1. 22, p. 282), "the noblest knyght lyvyng" (1. 26, p. 257), it is difficult to place Sir Tristram anywhere below Sir Lancelot in "The Book of Sir Tristram." Here Sir Tristram is always Sir Lancelot's equal in

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[6] Vinaver, p. 1335.

[7] Benson, p. 149.

knighthood. He begins his career as a knight by fighting with a knight of the Round Table who is acknowledged to be a match to Sir Lancelot.[8] All his deeds after that fight are so valiant that people take him first for Sir Lancelot, then talk about him as equal to that great knight. His next fight is in Ireland, right after he is healed of his wound. There, after he smites down Sir Palomides, a damsel comes up to him and asks him "to telle her what he was and whether that he were Sir Lancelot du Lake, for she deemed that there was no knyght in the worlde that myght do suche dedis of armys but if hit were Sir Lancelot" (ll. 29-32, p. 388). Further on in the narrative the damsel whom Sir La Cote Male Tayle accompanies says to Sir Lancelot:

> "For now I know ye ar the floure of all knyghthod of the worlde, and sir Trystram departe hit even betwene you. For God knowith, be my good wyll. . . that I have sought you, my lord sir Launcelot, and sir Trystrams longe, and now I thanke God I have mette with you" (ll. 30-35, p. 470).[9]

Merlin, the wise foreseer, prophesizes that "in that same place (where Balyn had slain Sir Launceor) sholde fyght two the beste

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[8]As Professor Vinaver explains in his notes, the mention of Sir Lancelot here in the story is an innovation of Malory's. His French source does not mention Lancelot as a possible champion to Marholt, p. 1457, footnote 377.

[9]Equal admiration and appreciation of the two knights occur in ll. 25,26, p. 417; ll. 9-11, p. 427; ll. 31-33, p. 445; ll. 3-5, p. 466; ll. 15-18, p. 487; ll. 33-36, p. 489; ll. 4-8, p. 509.

knyghtes that ever were in kynge Arthurs dayes, and two of the beste lovers" (ll. 18-20, p. 568) which of course proves to be Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram. And when the fight actually does take place "no man cowde juge the bettir knyght" (ll. 4-5, p. 596).

Professor Vinaver, in discussing Malory's concept of knightliness, says, "Tristram is, indeed, the very embodiment of the proud virtues of perfect knighthood."[10] He is the only knight besides Arthur an account of whose birth and education is given in great detail.[11] From the time we meet him as a child we are told of his generosity and of the goodness of his heart. He not only forgives his stepmother for trying to poison him but he also tries to bring his father into accord with her. His father, King Meliodas, sends him with his tutor Guvernail to France "to lerne the langage and nurture and dedis of armys" (l. 8, p. 375). Upon his return home he learns "to be an harper passyng all others, that there was none suche called in no contrey" (ll. 12-13, p. 375). Hunting and hawking are his next pursuits which he not only excels but creates ceremonies and the specific

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[10] E. Vinaver, Malory (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1970 (rpt. 1929)), p. 60.

[11] Since throughout the book Malory felt free to omit and alter his sources or add new material to suit his purpose I choose to credit Malory for whatever is found in The Morte. It is also important to note that Arthur's birth and education do not have a particular bearing on his knighthood.

vocabulary for them. "And therefore," writes Malory, "the booke of venery, of hawkynge and huntynge is called the booke of sir Trystrams" (ll. 21-22, p. 375). Malory ends the section of Tristram's enfance by a call for all gentlemen to pay tribute to Sir Tristram.

> Wherefore, as me semyth, all jantyllmen that beryth olde armys ought of ryght to honoure sir Tristrams for the goodly tearmys that jantylmen have and use and shall do unto the Day of Dome (ll. 23-26, p. 375).

The fact that Malory replaces harping with hunting as the hero's special skill is also important in Tristram's development as a knight.[12] Hunting was an important peace time occupation of all knights in the Middle Ages. It helped them to keep themselves in good shape for combat. Therefore Tristram, the Hunter, is bound to be a superior knight.

When Sir Malhalt is sent to ask for the truage of Cornwall Tristram is ready to begin his career. Thus the "proof-of-knighthood" theme begins. The proof-of-knighthood theme

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[12] M. Cosman in The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966) says that "the education of the hero sows no seeds for a second reaping. . . . it merely spares the time between infancy and knighthood," (p. 47). But a close study of Tristram's career as a knight shows that this is not so. The Morte is filled with instances of King Arthur and his knights going hunting. That hunting helped knights to keep themselves in good shape for combat was such an established idea that Machiavelli in his Prince advises his ruler to hunt during peace time. (p.)

is based on a conventional pattern of action in which a knight proves himself worthy of Arthurian knighthood. The knights who are to assert themselves valiant and worthy of fighting for King Arthur generally begin their careers as "fair unknowns." They conceal their identities and try to prove themselves worthy of their names and parentage through their deeds. In the quests they undertake they are generally imprisoned, asked to fight with a number of knights, participate in tournaments, abolish evil customs, free prisoners, always act in a knightly fashion showing humility, mercy, generosity and courtesy to those they encounter, and finally they reconcile themselves with worthy knights as they earn their admiration and approval by their knightly deeds. A knight so proven is generally asked to join the Arthurian fellowship. Tristram's "proof-of-knighthood" theme begins with his being knighted by King Mark, his uncle. In order to earn "worship," to help his uncle and to save Cornwall from truage, he fights Sir Marhalt and mortally wounds him. Then he participates in a tournament in Ireland where he has gone to be healed from the wound Marhalt has given him. In the tournament he overcomes Palomides. Thus the first part of the quest-tournament pattern which is essential in a "proof-of-knighthood" theme is completed.

The sequence of events in Ireland resembles the "fair

unknown" romances. Tristram conceals his identity from the Irish for fear of their revenge for his having killed their champion, Marhalt. Then through his "prowess" in the tournament, and all his knightly bearings he is recognized as a man of "worship." Shortly after, he is forced to reveal his true identity. In disclosing his name and parentage Tristram also explains the reasons why he fought with Marhalt. The Irish king's answer is:

> "So God me helpe! . . . I may nat sey but ye dud as a knyght sholde do and as hit was youre part to do for your quarell, and to encrece your worshyp as a knyght sholde do" (ll. 17-20, p. 391).

The king who is also brought up in the chivalric institution sympathizes with Tristram and approves of his knightly attitude. He does not seek to avenge himself on him as he does in the verse versions.[13] Tristram in turn again acts in a knightly fashion and promises to serve him in his time of need and to serve his daughter La Beale Isode who had cured him of his wound "in all ryght and in wronge . . . as a knyght may do" (ll. 32-33, p. 391). The question of fighting "in wronge" is contrary to the code of

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[13]In all the verse versions of the story, Tristram is saved from death on account of La Beale Isode. In the prose version Mss. 103 Tristram is forgiven by the king for two reasons "one on account of the good chivalry that is in (him), the other is that (he) has been brought back from the point of death in (his) house," The Romance of Tristan and Isolt, trans. N. B. Spector (Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 22. But even in this version the king first decides to kill him and changes his mind only later.

knighthood. But Malory so alters the course of events and the portrayal of his characters that we never see Tristram fighting for a wrong cause.

Since in the Arthurian world a perfect knight must also be a lover on his return to Cornwall we see Tristram again behave in accordance with this knightly principle. He begins having a love affair with Sir Segwarydes's wife. Upon discovering the affair Segwarydes attacks him. Tristram refuses to fight with Segwarydes. "Sir knyght," he says, "I counceyle you smyte no more! Howbeit for the wrongys that I have done you I woll forbere you as longe as I may." When he is too pressed by his opponent he strikes Segwarydes only slightly and rides away. Later on when Sir Bleoberys de Ganys forcefully takes away Segwarydes' wife Tristram again acts in knightly manner and does not interfere. A damsel charges him with cowardice. He defends himself by explaining the cause of his action.

> "Fayre lady, hit is nat my parte to have ado in suche maters whyle her lorde and husbonde ys presente here" (ll. 13-14, p. 397).

Knighthood requires the knight in such cases to give the lead in action to the lady's husband, and so he does. Further in the story when King Mark forces him to fight with Sir Lamerok who had just fought with and beaten thirty knights, Tristram says:

> "Sir, . . . ye bydde me do a thynge that is ayenste knyghthode. And well I can thynke that I shall gyff hym a falle, for hit is no maystry: for my horse and y be freysshe, and so is nat his horse and he. And wete you well that he woll take hit for grete unkyndenes, for ever one good knyght is loth to take anothir at avauntage" (ll. 16-21, p. 428).

Tristram is once again reluctant to do anything against the code of knighthood. The code requires knights to fight on equal terms and forbids them to challenge a tired or hurt knight. This principle of knighthood is repeated many times in the book mainly by Sir Lancelot, Tristram's peer in knighthood.[14]

As a true knight, Tristram's first concern is winning "worship," honor. Whenever a new adventure comes up we are told that Sir Tristram is "glad to go. . . to wyn worship" (l. 21, p. 510). All his journeys are interlaced with knightly adventures. On his way to Ireland where he goes to bring Isode back he is hit by a storm and takes refuge near Camelot. There he is challenged by two knights to fight for the sake of adventure. After having jousted with them he meets a lady from whom a child has been stolen, and he helps her. In so doing he fights with Breunz Sans Pyté. Then he happens to come across King Angwishe from Ireland who is in need of a champion and he helps this king by fighting for him. On his way back from Ireland he and Isode stop by the

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[14]ll. 24-27, p. 535.

castle of Sir Brewnor. He is asked to fight first with Sir Brewnor, and then with Sir Galahalte. All of these quests of course are part of his "proof-of-knighthood" theme. He is learning to help ladies and children, "strengthe hem in hir ryghtes." He is proving his superiority in combat and abolshing evil customs. Thus in fulfilling the necessary steps of his training he proves himself to be an example of knightly conduct.

With each action or speech of Tristram we are given an analysis or an exposition of a different aspect of knightly behavior. Generosity, giving each knight his due "worship," is an important aspect of knighthood. It is a sign of fellowship without envy and spite. Therefore the best knights of Arthur: Tristram, Lancelot and Lamerok, always praise and honor one another, and those other knights who behave in a knightly way.[15] The King of the Hundred Knights puts this into words when he says, "Now I se youre corayge and curtesye, . . . for evermore o good knyght woll favoure another, lyke woll draw to lyke." Tristram is generous enough to praise Palomides's strength and knightliness even after

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[15]Tristram and Lamerok praising one another (ll. 16-18, 19-21, p. 483); Dinadan praising Lancelot and Tristram (ll. 3-4, p. 599); Lancelot and Tristram praising each other (ll. 6-10, 20-23, p. 526); (ll. 31-35, p. 569); Sir Plenoryus praises La Cote Male Tayle (ll. 24-27, p. 473); Lancelot praises La Cote Male Tayle (ll. 15-19, p. 473).

the tournament at the Castle of Maidens where Palomides challenges Tristram in spite of his hurt, and Tristram, though hurt, is able to cause him to fall from his horse (ll. 24-26, p. 536). He shows it in confirming over and over again his love and respect for Lancelot. He checks himself from fighting to the utmost with Sir Bleoberys de Ganys because he is Lancelot's cousin. He refuses to kill Sir Blamour, again because he is Lancelot's kin, and he fights with the Thirty Knights sent by Morgan Le Fay in order to save Lancelot's life. So in line with what the King of the Hundred Knights says, Tristram displays in word and deed the love and respect fellow knights should show towards one another. Malory stresses the importance of this code of friendship among knights in various places in The Morte.[16] Linked with this code of friendship which is an essential aspect of the institution of knighthood is the theme of reconciliation.

The theme of reconciliation even more than the theme of the "fair-unknown," is an intrinsic part of the "proof-of-knighthood" theme. In a society where one's official identity is one's real idendity, "honour" and "worship" become existential values. But for some "the necessity of winning worship for the

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[16]See ll. 21-23, p. 405; pp. 409-410; ll. 16-23, p. 428; ll. 19-25, p. 483; ll. 25-27, p. 487; ll. 6-7, p. 497; ll. 3-26, p. 505.

king (or yourself) often forces one to do so at the expense of one's fellows, at the risk of envy, and at the cost of eliciting revenge."[17] Elizabeth Pochoda is right in pointing out this central contradiction at the heart of chivalric behavior. But the contradition does not lie in the terms of the code itself, it lies in its application to human nature. Human nature in its primitive, untrained stage cannot live up to the requirements of the institution of knighthood as codified by Arthur. But the very reason why a knight has to undergo various tests of knighthood is to enable him to train himself to check the instinctively aroused emotions of envy, desire for power, blood fueds, and vengeance for individual grievances. All the knights in the Tristram section who follow the "proof-of-knighthood" theme are able to put loyalty and justice above private desires and fears, and associate themselves in that fellowship of peers. Hence the part of the tale where the theme of reconciliation which ends the enmity between all the best knights of Arthurian chivalric world is acted out, and emerges as a prerequisite of the knight's initiation into the higher level of knighthood. Just as not

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[17] E. Pochoda, Arthurian Propaganda (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 91-92. The phrase within the brackets is mine, see p. 13. See also C. Moorman, The Medieval Studies, Vol. 27 (1965), pp. 117-27; R. T. Davies, Malory's Launcelot and the Noble Way of the World," Review of English Studies, Vo. 6 (1955), pp. 356-64.

all Christians can fulfill all the requirements of Christianity, not all knights can live up to the rules of knighthood and act in accordance with the highest ideals of this institution. Therefore in "The Book of Sir Tristram" there are admittedly bad knights as well as good ones. But this does not endanger the value of the institution of chivalry.

The theme of reconciliation begins with an acknowledgement of enmity between two or more knights, continues with a series of adventures which draws the knight's admiration for his foe and either ends with an acknowledgement of admiration or with a battle to a draw between two knights which again leads to the admission of admiration and the pledge to be friends. Tristram first begins his career by killing Marhalt, he therefore defines his relation to the Round Table and to the Irish King as a worthy foe. He reconciles himself first with Kynge Angwishe of Ireland at the beginning of the tale by becoming victorious in a tournament and earning his admiration and then by fighting for him as his champion replacing his earlier champion, Marhalt. His reconciliation with the Round Table knights occurs much later. After Tristram undergoes numerous adventures and finally meets with Lancelot and fights with him a battle to a draw, then he is brough to King Arthur's court and is made a knight of the Round Table

and seated in Marhalt's place.

Tristram's break with Lancelot and his consequent reconciliation with him occur twice in the tale. First when he appears to be the enemy of all the Round Table knights after the battle with Marhalt; and next after he marries Isode le Blaunche Maines. Lancelot, upon hearing of Tristram's marriage, relinquishes him as a true, noble knight and his friend. He has acted discourteously and in an unknightly fashion by deserting her. Lancelot says:

> "Fye uppon hym, untrew knyght to his lady! . . . of all knyghtes in the worlde I have loved hym most and had most joye of hym, and all was for his noble dedys. And lette hym wete that the love betwene hym and me is done for ever, and that. . . I woll be his mortall enemy" (ll. 11-19, p. 435).

The reconciliation between them occurs first when Tristram, time after time helps and saves Lancelot's kin for Lancelot's sake, always behaving nobly and with love and respect towards him. It is verbalized in Tristram's words when he says "as sone as I may I woll se sir Lancelot and infelyshyp me with hym, for of all the knyghts in the worlde I moste desyre his felship" (ll. 9-13, p. 412). The second reconciliation, after Lancelot has announced himself as an enemy of Tristram, comes about after Tristram fights with Thirty Knights in order to save Lancelot's life and Lancelot wears the shield of Corwayle with twenty of his kin as a tribute to Tristram. But their actual meeting does not take

place until the time of the battle to a draw which, as pointed out earlier, also marks Tristram's reconciliation with Arthur and the entire Round Table.

The theme of reconciliation is repeated in a variety of episodes throughout The Morte but all the best knights of the realm become reconciled with each other in the Tristram section. Furthermore almost all the reconciliations between Tristram and the major knights are cited in this tale. Tristram becomes an enemy of Sir Segwarydes after his affair with his wife, but then fights and overcomes him and is reconciled with him through his noble and knightly behavior towards him which culminates in his giving over to Sir Segwarydes the rule of Nabone's land.

The enmity between Tristram and Lamerok begins with the fall Tristram gives Lamerok at Mark's command, continues with Lamerok's sending of the horn of chastity to Mark's court and ends with a battle to a draw which closes with each knight acknowledging the other's worthiness and swearing to be friends. Lamerok says, ". . . lat us be sworne togydirs that never none of us shall aftir thys day have ado with other" (ll. 30-31, p. 483).

Tristram is also established as a foe to Sir Galahalte the Haute Prince for having killed his father, Sir Brewnors, but they too fight together and are reconciled as Sir Galahalte admits that Tristram "is one of the noblyst knyghtes that beryth lyff but yf hit

be sir Launcelot du Lake" (ll. 25-26, p. 417).

The last and most important reconciliation takes place at the close of the tale when Palomides and Tristram are reconciled after a final duel. Then Palomides is not only reconciled with Tristram but also with himself. His love and admiration for Tristram finally overcomes his hate and envy of him which are essential in his training as a good knight.

The enmity between the two knights begins when Tristram learns from La Beale Isode that Palomides "loved hir passyngly well. . . . and (he) was in wyll to be crystynde for hir sake" (ll. 11-16, p. 385). He joins the tournament where Palomides is about to be victorious and overcomes him there, forcing him to promise "in no maner of wyse that ye draw no more to hir;" (ll. 15-16, p. 388). This enmity which has its sources in rivalry in love gradually shifts to rivalry in arms and "worship" and ends in the battle to a draw with Tristram. Only then does Palomides come to a full realization of himself and the meaning of the code of knighthood. He then decides to be baptized. His decision is inspired not by his love for Isode but by his devotion to the code of knighthood. And his baptism, the sacramental symbol of reconciliation reinforces the importance of this theme within the universal ideal of knighthood. Its significance is further accentuated by making it the last episode of the Tristram section.

"The Book of Sir Tristram," being a complete history of knighthood, displays the ideals of this institution, discusses the education of the knights, their achievements and their reconciliation with each other and with themselves within the historical and thematic framework of Tristram's progress as a knight. We begin with Tristram's birth, proceed with his training and from the time we start reading about his quests, each of which test him on an aspect of knighthood, we are brought to the realization that his quests are but one of many quests that occur in chivalric life. The quests of Palomides, Lamerok, Lancelot and the seemingly unconnected quests of La Cote Mal Tayle, Perceval and Alexander all help by parallel and contrast to define the quest in which Tristram is engaged and emphasize his exemplary conduct.[18] Thus in Malory's "The Book of Sir Tristram," Tristram is no longer the tragic hero of a love story. He is the embodiment of "jentyllesse," one of the two best exemplars of "chivalrous conduct," and again one of the two knights who attain the role

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[18] "La Cote Mal Tayle" is another story based on the theme of "The Fair Unknown." Thus it ties up with the lowly status with which Tristram begins his career as a knight--a foreigner and a Cornish knight. Perceval by his own example shows how the rules of the high order of knighthood must overcome all private emotions of anger, vengeance and hatred. Alexander is also a nephew of Mark and provides a historical parallel to Tristram. Mark has similar feelings for Alexander and for Tristram. ~~Mark has~~ He is je[illegible] them, fears them and wants to murder them.

of bestowing knighthood on others. In him Malory personifies "the inner and timeless virtues"[19] of chivalry.

Tennyson's approach to the Tristan legend is different from both its verse versions and from Malory's version based on the thirteenth century prose romance. He employs the Tristram and Isolt story as an ironic reduction of the Arthur-Guinevere-Lancelot triangle. In the Idylls also knighthood is very significant.[20] In fact, it is so important that it becomes symbolic of a transcending moral responsibility. But Tristram is not portrayed as a true chivalrous knight. He is neither the embodiment of "jentylesse" and "the inner and timeless virtues" of chivalry nor is he the protagonist of a tragic love story. He is "Sir Tristram of the Woods" (L. T. 1. 178), the hunter who has become a "wild beast" himself. Unlike Malory's interpretation of knighthood Tennyson does not see hunting a necessary occupation for the knights. Hunters occupy a lower, baser place in the hierarchy of human existence. Hunting teaches man to make "dull his inner, keen his outer eye/ For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,

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[19]P. E. Tucker, "Chivalry in the Morte," Essays on Malory, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford, 1963), p. 103.

[20]All the quotations are from Tennyson's Poetical Works, ed. by W. J. Rolfe (Cambridge Edition, 1898). Henceforth the initial letters of the idyll will be given in the citing of quotations, and the title of the poem will be referred to in short as the Idylls.

or flew" (L.T. ll. 366-67). Knighthood, on the other hand, trains man to transcend his sensory perceptions, to see what is unseen by the eye; what is spiritual and visionary. It enables man to believe in and to obey his spiritual leader and thus to fulfill God's works on earth. Knightly behavior is the outer expression of spiritual virtues. Tennyson's knight has to be humble, meek, outright, loyal, obedient and courageous. He does not force himself to be so in order to attain "worship" and "fame." His definition of the self is not based on the fame he attains but on the deeds he does. Social approval should be of no significance for the Tennysonian knight. Arthur explains this principle to Gareth when he says:

> "But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
> Nay rather for the sake of me, their king
> And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
> Than to be noised of" (G. L. ll. 557-60).

Therefore in the Idylls the emphasis shifts from being motivated by external appraisal to a motivation that must come from within, from one's conscience which should be in keeping with the universal music, the transcending truth. Hence knighthood also ceases to be a practical way of life but becomes a spiritual ideal formulated by Arthur in order to train his warriors to become aware of the transcending reality. Merlin, the Sage, points out the relativity of truth based on the senses, "And truth is this to me, and that to thee" (G. L.

l. 406). But universal truth, though it may take different forms, is one. It is like the light of the sun, white, unbroken, illuminating and clear. As the light of the sun passes through the atmosphere and breaks into the various colors of the spectrum so truth, as it leaves the pure spiritual world of "men with growing wings" (H. G. l. 37) and descends into the world, begins to be "clothed" in different forms. Hence men who have no visionary powers, whose knowledge is based solely on the senses are misled by its appearances. Arthur tries to endow his knights with visionary faculties, he tries to make them see beyond the appearances of things, the truth which is one, immutable and permanent.[21] Therefore in the Idylls action and comprehension is pursued at two distinct levels of reality and in three worlds of experience. The reality of Arthur and his principles is revealed and developed in the spiritual, visionary level, and the reality of Tristram is exposed, expanded in the sensory world of experience. These two polarized perspectives of reality, on the other hand, rise up to the seemingly idyllic world of wish

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[21] J. R. Kinciad, Tennyson's Major Poems The Comic and Ironic Patterns (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 163-67; F. E. L. Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry (London: André Deutsch, Ltd., 1973), pp. 176-77, 182; and W. D. Shaw, "The Idealist's Dilemma in Idylls of the King," Victorian Poetry 5 (1967), pp. 46-47. All develop- the theme of Arthur as an artist who tries to make his knights see the unseen.

fulfillment in the first four Idylls, mainly in "Gareth and Lynette." They fall to the nightmarish world of fear, corruption and pain in the last four Idylls, principally in "The Last Tournament." The world of ordinary experience which is a mixture of the sensual and the spiritual realities is always present beneath or above these two worlds of romance bringing into them different overtones of meaning.

Hence though Tennyson's narrative shares more or less the same plot with Malory's its approach to and evaluation of the theme of knighthood and the story of Tristan are very different. In order to appreciate Tennyson's interpretation of the Tristan legend and understand the place it occupies in the visionary world of Arthur, it is necessary to analyze the "Gareth and Lynette" idyll where the poet exposes the "proof-of-knighthood" and "fair unknown" themes and explains what sort of a knightly society Arthur wants to establish and how he goes about trying to do it. Gareth, the proven knight, who hears Arthur's music in the open forest is represented by Sir Dagonet, the mock knight in "The Last Tournament." Kay, the evil, sensuous, cynical knight of this idyll develops into the sensuous, naturalist, pragmatic knight, Sir Tristram of the latter idyll. Furthermore, both Tristram and Mark are first mentioned in "Gareth and Lynette" and King Mark is made to contrast strongly with King

Arthur. "Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king," (G.L. l. 418). The two idylls published together in 1872 complement each other in exposing and commenting on the themes and ideas discussed in each of them.

In "Gareth and Lynette," as in Malory's "The Tale of Sir Gareth," Gareth is a young man who aspires to knighthood and has to act out the "proof-of-knighthood" theme. Tennyson changes certain facts of the story to make them suit his concept of knightliness.[22] His Gareth has to convince his mother to allow him to go to Arthur's court and is finally given leave on the condition that he disguises his nobility. Tennyson's Arthur being a man who "worships truth" could not allow a "fair unknown" theme based on disguise and deception to be the first premise in the training of his knights. The essence of this theme is for the hero to "spring/ Like flame from ashes" and shine the more for having

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[22] Malory's Gareth does not have to convince his mother to go to Arthur's court. He is not sent to the court in disguise but he chooses to hide his identity. When his term of service in the kitchen is over he is not knighted by Arthur but by Lancelot. Arthur does not learn of his identity until much later. Tennyson combines the two "fair unknown" stories of Malory--"The Tale of Gareth and "La Cote Male Tayle," and changes many details concerning each. The first part of the tale is taken from "The Tale of Gareth," the fight with the four brethren in the second part is, in a very general sense, drawn from "La Cote Male Tayle." But the real warrior of "La Cote Male Tayle" is Lancelot, not even La Cote himself.

started from such a humble position. It is based on the knight's hope and desire to attain social approval, fame and identity as he fulfills the requirements of knighthood. Hence the spirit of the "fair unknown" theme is contrary to Arthur's vision of selfless man and harmonious society. Disguise furthermore confuses man's sight and mind, and is a hindrance to his achievement of the ultimate truth. Merlin, the Seer, explains to Gareth earlier in the tale that any sort of concealment or evasion of reality gives rise to confusion, doubt and anarchy. In riddles he says "confusion, illusion, relation/ Elusion, occasion, and evasion" are all one (G. L. ll. 281-82). Gareth is scared of the King's reaction to his counterfeit. Though he says his is a "white lie" and not he but love should be blamed for it (G. L. ll. 291-94), when he is at the King's court his heart hammers in his ears and he thinks that "'For this half-shadow of a lie/ The truthful King will doom me when I speak" (G. L. ll. 316-17). But both Arthur and Lancelot see through his pretended identity and recognize his "goodlier lineage," his "noble-nature." Lancelot scolds Kay who like Lynette is not able to see through appearances. He says, "A horse thou knowst, a man thou dost not know," (G. L. l. 453).

The theme of reconciliation, the third aspect of knighthood theme is never taken up and discussed in Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette." Like the "fair unknown" theme it is based on the

conviction that the desire for fame and "worship" is the aim of a knight's life. Hence it causes knights to be envious of one another's success. In order for knighthood not to be self destructive the knight must admit the courage, courtesy and "bigness" of another knight and must overcome the sentiments of envy and rivalry and reconcile himself with his fellow knights. This theme which was central to Malory's conception of knighthood since Malorian knights thought of themselves as separate entities working mainly for individual glory is nowhere mentioned or even implied in Tennyson's knighthood theme which aims at training the knights to "uttermost obedience to the King" (G. L. 1. 544). In obeying the king the Tennysonian knight serves the public and fulfills his function in society. The difference between a beast and a man lies in the man's awareness of his social role and social responsibilities. Man in nature seeking to gratify his individual desires becomes an anti-social figure. He is destructive to society and "manhood" which Arthur equates with knighthood (B. B. ll. 151-56). The more a man overcomes his instinctive self, the beast in him, and puts himself under rule and order the more "manhood" and "knighthood" he attains. Therefore Tennyson's knighthood is defined by social use, obedience and selflessness. There is no place in his world for knight-errants. They are "bestial" since they admit "nor law nor king" (G. L.

l. 517). They seek fame, like the Malorian knights, as an end in itself. This sort of fame which brings personal glory is according to Arthur and Merlin "half disfame,/ And counterchanged with darkness" (M. V. ll. 463-64). It is subjected to envy (M. V. l. 465). But fame which is attained as a side product of public use enables its possessor to be more influential in the society and serve mankind more effectively. Since this kind of fame does not have any intrinsic value for its possessor it does not create a feeling of rivalry in him. Therefore he does not have to overcome any feeling of jealousy or pride and be reconciled with other knights. Naturally the loss of such fame is also not disheartening or sad. "I rather dread the loss of use than fame," says Merlin (M. V. l. 517), and points out that he must "work his work" with or without fame (M. V. l. 553). When Arthur asks his knights to perform a deed for its own sake rather than for the sake of glory he tries to teach this new concept of fame. Therefore Gareth who acts out and explains all the principles of Arthurian knighthood refuses to take any reward for saving the life of one of Arthur's Barons. He says " . . . for the deed's sake have I done the deed/ In uttermost obedience to the King" (G. L. ll. 811-12). The baron, too, later treats him as a knight, in accordance with his deeds not in accordance with his title as a kitchen boy. The blank shields on the walls of Arthur's court signify once more the

importance of deeds in defining man's identity.

Gareth, in taking up the quest of Lynette and overcoming various evil knights, proves himself to be a valiant knight and confirms his vow of "utter hardihood" sworn to the king. He also abolishes an evil custom and frees Lady Lyonors who was imprisoned in her own castle. Furthermore, he shows "utter gentleness" and humility by bearing patiently and good naturedly all the scorns of Lynette and Kay. Hence this aspect of his "proof-of-knighthood" theme resembles that of the Malorian knights. But Tennyson creates several levels of awareness in his conception of themes as well as in his portrayal of characters. Gareth is the embodiment of Arthurian knighthood, but he nevertheless acts contrary to the aims of Arthur in insisting on beginning his career as a knight under disguise. Arthur is the exemplar of truthfulness; he is the king "who cannot brook the shadow of any lie" (G. L. 1. 287), but not only does he forgive Gareth for having disguised his true identity at his arrival, he also allows him to continue disguising himself after he is freed of the promise he had made to his mother. Arthur makes Gareth his knight in secret and thus contradicts both his principles and his teaching. He becomes an accomplice of Gareth and the two of them together fool not only Lynette but all the rest of the court as well. Lynette is justified in questioning "where truth should be if not in Arthur's hall, / In

Arthur's presence?" (G. L. 11. 1223-24). He gives Kay, the materialistic and evil knight, an opportunity to call him "crazy" (G. L. 1. 707) and to claim that "the King hath past his time" (G. L. 1. 693). Kay also gives a warning to Lancelot, the exemplar of courtesy, which comes true. ". . . See thou to it/ That thine own finess, Lancelot, some fine day/ Undo thee not," he says (G. L. 11. 465-67). Here "finess" means courtesy as well as beauty, and Kay makes this clear by his previous reference to Lancelot as "fair" and "fine." Lancelot, because of his excessive courtesy, escorts Kay to Camelot after his being overthrown by Gareth and so loses Gareth's track and fails to fulfill Arthur's orders to follow and protect the young knight from harm. His good manners which are supposed to be a sign of his virtues and knighthood[23] cause him to betray his duty to the King and thereby he is proven a discourteous knight. His courtly manners and beauty also inspire Guinevere with love, and she tempts him to betray his friend, his conscience and his King.

Therefore the dualism of the self, one's intentions conflicting with one's actions, is seen in the person of Lancelot, Gareth and even in Arthur. Parallel to this daulism of the self is

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[23] J. Kissane in Alfred Tennyson (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970) develops the importance of manners in creating an atmosphere of virtue and "making a man," p. 100-101.

the dualism of appearance and reality in life. Gareth appears to be a kitchen boy but he is the noble son of King Lot. Lynette pretends to despise Gareth but in truth she is in love with him. The supposedly deathly knight called "Night and Death" is only a "blooming boy." Hence, "Gareth and Lynette" does not portray a "natural Eden."[24] All the conflicts and the complexities of the other idylls are presented in this first idyll of "The Round Table." The paradoxical nature of all deeds, values and the dual nature of mankind shine forth from just beneath its idyllic setting. Even the victories of Gareth over the four evil knights who imitate the allegory of "The war of Time against the soul of man" (G. L. l. 1168) is questionable. His first opponent "The Morning-Star" falls from off the bridge. "The Noonday Sun" dies because his horse's hoof slips in the stream and he is washed away. He is about to lose his third battle when in struggling with "the Star of Even," who is much stronger than he is, he miraculously hurls him down into the river. The fourth brother, "Night and Day," does not even know how to fight. Furthermore, Gareth's conquest of them ironically proves that the soul can overcome Time. But the collapse of Arthur's world is certainly effected by the passing of

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[23]Kinciad claims that "Gareth and Lynette" preserve the picture of a natural Eden and the following two tales seek to recapture it, p. 171.

time, the cyclic history which brings all civilizations to a close.[25]

Therefore, Tennyson exposes in "Gareth and Lynette" what he means by "knightliness," but he also points out in the same idyll how difficult it is to justify its principles rationally in a world where reality is many-fold and nothing is certain. He then shows how easily these principles can be broken with good or bad intentions. In "The Last Tournament" the relation of the knightly ideal to the humanly possible is once again taken up and discussed. But instead of the seemingly affirmative answer conveyed in the first idyll, we have a negative declaration by Tristram asserting the superior reality of the flesh. This time, however, Tristram's free-thinking philosophy "we love but while we may" (L. T. l. 281), his eulogy of the flesh, ironically confirms the virtues of the Arthurian knighthood.

Tristram, like Gareth, comes to the court after the heathen wars (L. T. l. 269). He must have been knighted before the knighting of the latter because in "Gareth and Lynette" Mark sends a messenger to plead with Arthur to knight him since he says "Arthur of his grace/ Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight" (G. L. ll. 385-86). But Tristram, unlike Gareth, is in-

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[25] J. D. Rosenberg in The Fall of Camelot (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) develops the argument of cyclic history to which Arthur and Camelot are subjected, pp. 41-49.

capable of "uttermost obedience to the King." He rejects Arthur's knightly principles, "vows," saying that they do not "conform to the facts of human nature."[26] We are told that he fights well. He had even fought with Lancelot once, and he is the winner of The Tournament of the Dead Innocence. But as opposed to the one battle rule of Gareth's "to dash against (his) enemy and to win" he fights and wins "mainly by use and skill" (L. T. 1. 198). Hence his knighthood does not admit "utter hardihood." It is based on craft, practice and planning. Later on in the tale he also behaves contrary to the code of "utter gentleness" which was such an important aspect of knighthood in "Gareth and Lynette." Instead of helping and consoling the lonely woman crying at her husband's grave in the woods, Tristram rudely mocks at her sorrow and rides away. The image of the old woman crying calls to mind the image of Enid weeping by the side of her "murder'd mate" in "Geraint and Enid." The resemblance inherent in the two images leads to an inevitable resemblance between the reaction of Earl Doorm and his men growling like dogs at Enid's sorrow (G. E. 1. 558) and that of Tristram to the widowed woman. Deprived of the ennobling virtues of Arthurian knighthood,

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[26] F. E. L. Priestley, "Tennyson's Idylls," Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. J. Killham (Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1960), p. 246.

Tristram has in effect become Earl Doorm. Like Earl Doorm who keeps saying that he "compel(s) all creatures to (his) will" (G. E. ll. 628, 672) paying no attention to their sorrows, inclinations and fears, but is killed unexpectedly by one on whom he counted as being dead, so Tristram who sings of "free love, free field" and claims that such is the law of nature is suddenly murdered by Mark, the embodiment of undisciplined, lawless existence.

Hence Tristram in "The Last Tournament" is not really a knight. He is referred to as a knight, he participates in the knightly tournaments but he does not behave in accordance with the knightly principles. Like the golden cups which contained mud but were served as cups of wine in the Tournament, he passes for a knight but his deeds prove him a "woodman." In his first appearance to the reader he comes out of the woods dressed in green and carrying the emblems of the beasts, hence acknowledging himself the embodiment of the forces of nature. We read:

> But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest
> And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
> There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
> And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
> A spear, a harp, a bugle--Tristram (L. T. ll. 169-75).

Tristram claims that knighthood mocks Dagonet, the true but false knight (L. T. l. 301), but paradoxically it mocks him, the false but true knight. Dagonet, like Gareth, understands the meaning

and the value of Arthurian knighthood. He is able to see Arthur's star which stands for the vows and the civilized values of Camelot and which Tristram cannot see. He dances to Arthur's music not to Tristram's. The discussion between Dagonet and Tristram exposes the claims of the spirit versus the claims of the flesh. Dagonet who asserts the values of the spirit, the visionary ideals in "washing" mankind from "mud," in saving him from the brutality of the flesh, tactfully points out to Tristram, the defender of the forces of nature, in his reference to the Orpheus myth that his music "New life, new love, to suit the newer day" (L.T. ll. 189, 278) lacks the power to inspire regeneration. Arthur's music, on the other hand, expressed in his knightly vows, tries to teach men to rise beyond their sensual selves, to consider themselves as parts of a larger order and hence to be free of their individual fears, anxieties, and ambitions. In the world of Arthur, the knight attains satisfaction not from getting social approval or gratifying his senses, but from serving the universal order which in turn brings order, freedom, and regeneration to his life. Therefore the value of the knightly vows on which knighthood is founded can never be diminished, as Tristram claims they do. They serve as guides[27] to "Arthur's

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[27]J. D. Reed in Perception and Design in Tennyson's Idylls of the King (Ohio University Press, 1969) discusses the importance of the vows in detail, pp. 119-20.

way." Those who understand "Arthur's way" and follow it become his true knights. Gareth, in spite of his desire to initiate his career in knighthood in disguise, is the only knight in the Idylls who fully comprehends it and lives up to it. He refuses his mother's offer to live a comfortable life and to pass his time as a hunter, in "following the deer." He expresses his purpose in life when he says,

> "Follow the deer? Follow the Christ, the King,
> Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King--
> Else, wherefore born?" (G. L. ll. 116-18).

Tristram, on the other hand, is the hunter, the "follower of the deer." It is true that Gareth underscores the forces of nature and is successful in fulfilling his purpose only because of "luck," and the then morally affirmative climate of the Arthurian realm. But Tristram, who underscores the forces of the spirit and lives a life of indifference and insensitivity to all outside his immediate interest is even exterminated by the same forces he upholds--"Mark's way," the lawless, amoralistic forces of nature. Hence hunting, which emerges as an alternative to knighthood in in the Idylls, proves in "The Last Tournament" a self-destructive, violent code. Tristram, the hunter and the harper, becomes the false knight and the false Orpheus who as Dagonet prophesizes "harps" his beloved and himself down into hell.

The analogy between the Tristram-Isolt-Mark triangle and

the Lancelot-Guinevere-Arthur triangle not only enables Tennyson to accentuate the difference between "Mark's way" and "Arthur's way," but also brings to light the paradox of human reality. Lancelot feels in himself the difficulty of living up to the Arthurian ideals but he is still able to sustain inward perception, and he still gazes at Arthur's star, realizing its power in ennobling mankind. Tristram, however, using Lancelot's sin as an excuse, and taking the Arthurian conception of knighthood not as an ideal by which human behavior is to be guided but as a practical way of life which proves impractical therefore needs to be rejected, declares his own perception of reality and ethical behavior. In this Tristram resembles Pelleas. Pelleas first surrenders himself to the delusion that all the world is pure, then he gives himself up to the opposite delusion that all the world is vile and debased. Tristram also mistakes the nature of the vows and being disillusioned by Lancelot's sin tries to formulate a philosophy of nature, the flesh, which he believes is more realistic than Arthur's knightliness. Hence Tristram in comparison to Lancelot does not come out as another adulterous knight but as the gross exaggerated image of Lancelot's sensual self. Even Lancelot in the Tournament of the Dead Innoncence seems to think of Tristram in such terms when he wishes

". . . to shake
The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram ev'n to death" (L. T. ll. 179-81).

In Lancelot "the noble and knightly" aspect of his self has "twined and clung round" his sinful and sensual self. In Tristram there is no nobility left. Hence Tristram temporarily appears to be "happier as those that welter in their sin,/ Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime," (H.G. ll. 767-68). Isolt compares with Guinevere in a similar manner. Guinevere does not comprehend the nature of "Arthur's way" but she disdains "Mark's way." Isolt scorns Mark but her way is no different. She would rather have Tristram lie to her than face the truth. But unlike Tristram she is tortured by the growing apprehension of chaos, indifference and senselessness inherent in nature. Hence the dualism of appearance and reality is certainly not solved in "The Last Tournament." It is only inverted by Tristram's proclamation of the reality of the sensual perceptions. Tristram, incapable of apprehending the paradoxical nature of human nature and Arthurian knighthood declares the reality of a world of amorality and indifference in which nothing is of any value. There are no aims to pursue, no emotions that deserve any commitment, no glory with which to be inspired. Human life is reduced to bare existence and bewilderment is pervasive.

The difference between "Mark's way" and "Arthur's way" is

juxtaposed once more in "Guinevere." There, Arthur in finding out about the affair between Lancelot and Guinevere, does not wait his hour "devising wretchedness" but wages war on Lancelot and fights with him nobly on an open battlefield. Furthermore, he leaves Guinevere in Almesbury, refusing to take her back thereby allowing her to be a bad example to his people, but at length he forgives her. This "utter hardihood," "utter gentleness," and "utter obedience to conscience" displayed by Arthur reinstates once more the grandeur of the knighthood he tried to establish. In Malory's "The Book of Sir Tristram," Lancelot and Tristram set the example of knightliness by which all other knights are to be judged. In Tennyson's poem, Arthur is the exemplar of knighthood which is not a practical way of life but an ideal, an illusion that guides men in their endeavor to ennoble themselves, to achieve manhood. To deny it, like Tristram, is to be less than man.

Chivalric Love

The theme of chivalric love, a knight's love for a lady, occupies a significant place both in "The Book of Sir Tristram" and in "The Last Tournament." Although in neither of the works Sir Tristram comes out as the archetypal lover, his attachment

to Isode is developed at some length in both of them. The nature of this attachment varies with the writer's conception of knighthood and adultery. Malory, in a passage towards the end of The Morte, defines what he means by chivalric love and explains its importance in the life of a knight. He writes:

> . . . there was never worshypfull man nor worshypfull woman but they loved one bettir than another; and worshyp in armys may never be foyled. But firste reserve the honoure to God, and secundely thy quarell muste com of thy lady. And such love I calle vertuouse love (ll. 26-30, p. 1119).

Hence according to Malory all good knights must be lovers. The aim of this kind of love is the pursuit of honor and virtue, not ~~the delectation of the body~~ sexual pleasure. In "The Book of Sir Tristram," Tristram and Isode are portrayed as the most admirable lovers of the Arthurian world. Their love is basically asexual. It is never reckless or controlled by erotic passion. When Tristram's love seems ~~to be~~ most irresistible, all he tries to do is to be near her: "evir he (Tristram) wolde be thereas La Beale Isode was" (ll. 15-16, p. 626). Even when Andred accuses Tristram of treachery and claims to have got a proof of their affair, he only sees them talking "in a wyndowe" (ll. 12-18, p. 426). Nowhere in the book does Malory expound on the physical aspect of their love. This, of course, does not mean that their love was "pure." But Malory by de-emphasizing its sexual aspect makes their love

affair equal to the most knightly and commendable of those narrated in The Morte. Furthermore both Isode and Tristram feel and act in accordance with the values of a late Medieval chivalric society. They both admit that Tristram's first duty is to knighthood, and his love for Isode is an aspect of his chivalric conduct. Richard Barber in explaining the difference between the conception of knighthood in the early Middle Ages and that of later Middle Ages says, "at the beginning of the Middle Ages 'knighthood' is masculine, aggressive; a battle with rules and limits, in which courtesy is a matter of do as you would be done by."[28] Honor is the shrine at which the knight worships, and "it implies renown, good conduct, and the world's approval."[29] The distinctive touch of chivalry is missing in such a society. Gradually men's attitudes to woman begin to change. They begin to see her as a demi-goddess. She starts to be the source of inspiration behind knightly deeds. From the early twelfth century onwards, chivalry and the worship of fair ladies begin to be so intimately bound up as to become almost indistinguishable. "The Provençal troubadour's idea that a man might grow in moral stature through love becomes simplified in the less subtle schools of northern

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[28]Barber, p. 71.

[29]Ibid., p. 44.

France and Germany into the idea that the thought of his loved one will lend strength to a knight's arm, skill to his riding, and accuracy to his aim."[30] In line with this development Isode of the thirteenth century French prose romances becomes "The Lady" of Tristram rather than his soul mate and partner. Tristram is the central figure and Isode his source of inspiration.

Malory, even more forcefully than his French sources,[31] emphasizes the service of love only as another form of a knight's self-assertion as a champion of the "high order." In fact he is so careful in making Tristram carry out the theme of knighthood both vertically (the thematic structure guiding the character's behavior) and horizontally (the character controlling the thematic development)[32] that when Tristram has to choose between his role as a lover and his role as a knight in following the thematic sequence of events, the code of knighthood always supersedes the code of love and the emotional motivation expected of a true lover in following the theme of love is left incomplete.[33] From time to time

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[30]Ibid., p. 71.

[31]Vinaver, The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, p. 1447.

[32]Frye in The Secular Scripture (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976) explains the difference between horizontal and vertical arrangements of events in narrative fiction, p. 50.

[33]See Part I, pp. 32-35.

Malory inserts pharases which express the great love Tristram feels for Isode. While in Ireland we are told that Tristram "kyste grete love to La Beale Isode," (ll. 6-7, p. 385). In fact, she is the reason for his hatred of Palomides, and his source of inspiration in the tournament he fights with him later on. Before he leaves Ireland he promises to be her "servaunte and knyght in all ryght and in wronge" (l. 31, p. 391). They exchange rings in token of their loyalty (l. 17, p. 392). But Tristram feels no sorrow at their parting and on his arrival in Mark's court "he lyved longe in grete joy longe tyme" (l. 11, p. 393). What upsets his happiness is the rivalry that evolves between him and King Mark for the love of Sir Segwarydes's wife. His love for La Beale Isode appears to be totally forgotten. When Segwarydes's wife invites him to her place, in the message he sends back to her he addresses her as "his lady" (l. 26, p. 393). Later on when Sir Bleoberys takes her away he does not instinctively try to prevent him from carrying her off as a lover would, but in accordance with the knightly code, he waits for the proper time to interfere. Finally, when the lady refuses to return with Tristram, he is not hurt but is "wondirly wroth with that lady and ashamed to come to the courte," (ll. 5-6, p. 402). It is true that the Segwarydes episode has an educational function. It is a stage in his learning to be a chivalrous knight, and teaches him a lesson in the kind of women he must choose on

whom to bestow his love. But to call this episode a stage "in his learning to be a true lover,"[34] as Professor Benson does, seems ~~to me~~ to be discovering in the event emotions which are not there. Tristram never becomes a true lover; he is always a knight who is from time to time inspired by his lady's love to do even nobler deeds of arms. His devotion to her never takes prior place to his devotion to knighthood.

His second love affair with La Beale Isode has its seeds in his conflict with his uncle. Mark, with the hope of finding a means "to dystroy Sir Tristrames" (l. 13, p. 403), asks him to fetch La Beale Isode for him from Ireland to be his queen. Tristram accepts the charge to please his uncle (ll. 19-21, p. 403). On his way back to Cornwall he and Isode drink the love potion and "by that drynke was in their bodyes they loved aythir other so well that never hir love departed, for well nother for woo" (ll. 21-23, p. 412). Thus though the traditional magical power of the potion in uniting the lovers and forcing them to be loyal to each other beyond anything or anyone else is mentioned by Malory its effect is not worked into the story. The archetypal legend of Tristan and Isolt was based on the human conflict between the destructive, overpowering passion in love and the demands of morality and

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[34] Benson, p. 120.

honor. Malory in "The Book of Sir Tristram" neither allows the demands of honor to conflict with the demands of love nor do we see Tristram experience such a strong passion for Isode. Malory makes a distinction between excessive love[35] and restrained love; and Tristram's love for Isode, in spite of the magical quality of the potion[36] referred to here, does not prove excessive. Malory makes Tristram go mad for love after his marriage to Isode le Blaunche Maynes and his subsequent return to Cornwall, but his madness emerges only as a step towards the fulfillment of the theme of courtship externally imposed on the character of Tristram. The story of Tristram and Isode at this point follows the pattern of faithlessness, madness and proof of "worthiness" common to themes of courtship, and Tristram acts in accordance with that pattern.

After his unconsummated but wilful and even happy marriage to Isode le Blaunche Maynes, Tristram temporarily returns to Cornwall and comes together again with Isode. Then he sus-

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[35] Excessive love is portrayed in the love of the Maid of Astolat for Lancelot. It is considered sinful and the Maid herself says that the only offense she has committed against God is that she has "loved thys noble knyght, Sir Launcelot, oute of mesure" (l. 1, p. 1094).

[36] Malory minimizes the role of the magic potion in the lives of Tristram and Isode. He even makes them fall in love with each other before they drink the potion. See p. 107.

pects her loyalty to him and following the theme of courtship, though lacking the necessary emotional[37] motivation, he goes mad as punishment for his previous faithlessness. Therefore, in accordance with the same theme he has to prove his "worthiness" of her once again before he can be cured and be reconciled with her.

Going through various hardships and being successful in a number of quests he proves his "worthiness" of Isode. Tristram is then finally cured of his madness but this time he is formally banished from Cornwall. He leaves Isode behind and sets out for Logres. After a series of adventures, he is brought to the court of Arthur and is made a knight of the Round Table. Mark, consumed by jealousy, sets out in disguise for Arthur's court. He is caught, brought to the court as a disgraced prisoner and is generously forgiven for Tristram's sake. Tristram, then "for the entente to see La Beale Isoud for without the syghte of her syr Tristram myght not endure" (ll. 19-20, p. 610), decides to go back to Cornwall together with Mark. Again Malory supplies no emotional links for this thematic development. Until this sudden decision Tristram seems to be leading a perfectly happy life at Camelot together with the other Round Table knights.

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[37] See Part I, p. 35.

Upon his return to Cornwall he fights with Sir Elyas, and he again saves Cornwall from truage, asserting his right to and "worthiness" of his lady one more time. The significance of Isode in Tristram's life and career is clarified further during this duel. When Tristram is about to lose the combat, he "remembird hym of his lady, La Beale Isode, that loked uppon hym, and how he was never lykly to come in hir presence. Than he pulled up his shylde that before hynge full lowe, and than he dressed hym unto sir Elyas and gaff hym many sad strokys" (ll. 28-31, p. 625). Isode inspires him to surpass his capacities in combat. The lovers are finally united at Lancelot's castle in Joyous Garde (p. 681).

"The Book of Sir Tristram" ends with the lovers living happily at Joyous Garde. But the sad outcome of Tristram's love for Isode is made known to us both by direct statement and by analogy to the doleful story of the love of Lamerok for Queen Morgause.

The love of Lamerok for Morgause and the love of Elaine for Lancelot as well as the love story of Lancelot and Guenevere provide direct analogies to the love story of Tristram and Isode in the same way as the quests of various knights had illuminated and clarified the theme of Tristram's attainment of knighthood. Lamerok, like Tristram, loves a lady who is under the control of his enemies. Both are peerless knights, both suffer for the love

of their ladies, prove their "worthiness" of them, unite with them, but their happiness is short-lived, and they are treacherously murdered: Lamerok by Sir Gawain and his brothers, Tristram by Mark. Malory does not want their adulterous relations to be the sole cause of their tragic end. Gawain and his brothers reveal the envy and hate they feel towards King Pellinor (Lamerok's father) on the day they are made knights. When Merlin honors Pellinor by asking him to sit in the "Sege Perelous," Malory writes:

> And thereat had sir Gawayne grete envy and tolde Gaherys hys brothir,
> "Yondir knyght ys putte to grete worship, whych grevith me sorè, for he slewe oure fadir kynge Lott. Therefore I woll sle hym" (ll. 10-14, p. 102).

But even the death of the king is not enough. Since Lamerok has proven his valour and taken his place among the four best knights in the world, they are jealous of him as well. After a tournament where the Orkenay brothers do well until the arrival of Lamerok, who surpasses them all, Gawain and his brothers become "wondirly wrothe wyth hym that he had put hym to such a dishonoure that day" (ll. 9-10, p. 608). Gawain holds council with his brothers and says, "for the deth of kynge Pellynor, sir Lamerok ded us a shame to oure modir. Therefore I woll be revenged" (ll. 18-19, p. 608). Malory intends us to recognize the true nature of Gawain's motives before Lamerok's murder. Hence

in "The Book of Sir Tristram" Lamerok is killed not because of the adulterous nature of his love but because of the treachery, hate and envy that is in the common man.

The love story of Lancelot and Guenevere, and the love of Elaine for Lancelot as analogies to the love story of Tristram and Isode are brought to the foreground in the story of "Lancelot and Elaine," the last major section of "The Book of Sir Tristram." The narrative organization of events in this episode again follows the structure of the theme of courtship--faithlessness, madness and proof of "worthiness." Lancelot like Tristram goes to a foreign land, the land of King Pelles, where he succeeds in curing a maiden and killing a serpent and is offered as a reward the king's daughter, Elaine. Because everyone knew that Sir Lancelot would not be faithless to Queen Guenevere, Elaine is made by magic to look like the Queen before she lies with Lancelot, and from him she begets Galahad. When Lancelot finds out that it was not Guenevere but Elaine who has been with him in bed, he becomes very angry and ashamed. "'Alas!' he seyde, 'that I have lyved so longe, for now am I shamed'" (ll. 24-25, p. 795). But when Elaine skips out of bed, prays to be forgiven and reveals her name, Lancelot not only forgives her but "therewyth he toke her up in his armys and kyssed her, for she was a fayre lady and thereto lusty and yonge, and wyse as ony was that

tyme lyvynge" (ll. 9-11, p. 796). Here again Lancelot's love for Guenevere appears to be ambiguous. His reluctance to have an affair with Elaine does not seem to be motivated by his love for Guenevere, but by his fear of being called a false knight. Malory intends us to recognize his fascination with her beauty and, in describing Elaine's arrival at Arthur's court to attend a feast, he says: "... sir Launcelot thought that she was the fayrest woman that ever he sye in his lyeff dayes" (ll. 17-18, p. 803). Lancelot's stability in love in this section of The Morte, as the case of Tristram's return to Isode of Ireland, appears to be clearly motivated by the code of knighthood not love. He is the best of all earthly knights, and his superiority to Tristram may lie in his continuous constancy to his lady as opposed to Tristram who fails in this item of the code and has to be reprimanded before he fully realizes his mistake. No matter what Lancelot feels or what the source of his motivation is, he is never wilfully false to Guenevere (ll. 8-9, p. 804).

Like Isode, Guenevere forgives him but a new breach with the Queen causes Lancelot to go mad. His "hartely sorow" (l. 31, p. 805) and his consequent madness appear to be again part of the thematic structure which is superimposed on the characterization. Lancelot who was rebuked and called false by Guenevere before this last breach with her did not go mad at that time. Therefore

there is no logical reason for him to go mad later. Following the sequence of events directed by the thematic structure, however, Lancelot goes mad and then undertakes various quests in disguise to prove his "worthiness" of his lady which ends in a culminating battle fought to a draw with Perceval after which Lancelot resumes his place at the Round Table and in his lady's heart. In this episode no direct mention is made to Tristram but the analogy between their experiences is so apparent that no more illustration is necessary.

In this section of the tale, Isode is analogous to both Guenevere and Elaine. Like Guenevere she is his lady and mistress and as such her love and beauty inspire Tristram to do valiant deeds and increase his "worship." On the other hand, she is not ruled by jealousy and anger as is Guenevere (ll. 1-6, p. 1047) but is ever as patient, generous and sacrificial as Elaine. The accounts of Lancelot's and Tristram's recovery from madness resemble one another and by analogy define their relations with Elaine and Isode respectively.

Tristram is found naked; he is dressed and brought to the garden of Mark's castle to rest (ll. 1-20, p. 501). Lancelot is also dressed and goes to King Pelles's garden to sleep (ll. 11-20, p. 823). On discovering Tristram's identity Isode falls to the ground in a swoon (l. 5, p. 502). Elaine in seeing Lancelot there

sinks to the earth weeping (l. 26, p. 823). Tristram says to Isode:

> "A, madame! . . . go frome me, for much angur and daunger have I assayed for your love" (ll. 20-21, p. 502).

Lancelot's words to Elaine are:

> "Fayre lady Elayne, for youre sake I have had muche care and angwyshe, hit nedyth nat to reherse hit, ye know how" (ll. 21-22, p. 825).

Isode tells her lover she will always be at his command (ll. 13-16, p. 502). We are also told earlier in the story that Isode, in believing Tristram dead, tried to commit suicide but was saved from that fate by Mark (ll. 8-24, p. 499). Parallel to this Elaine says to Lancelot that she will fulfill all his wishes and is even ready to die for his sake. "I woll lyve and dye wyth you, only for youre sake; and yf my lyff myght nat avayle you and my dethe myght avayle you, wyte you well I wolde dye for your sake . . . doute ye nat but I woll be wyth you, wyth all the servyse that I may do" (ll. 34-35, p. 825, ll. 1-5, p. 826).

Isode always thinks of her lover's welfare, honor and "worship." When she is faced with the alternatives of either going to the feast at Pentecoste along with Tristram or having Tristram stay with her in Joyous Garde, she refuses to choose either, even though both are equally desirable to her. She says:

> "Sir, . . . and hyt please you, I woll nat be there, for thorow me ye bene marked of many good knyghtes, and that causyth you for to have much more laboure for my sake than nedyth you to have," (ll. 23-26, p. 839).

The reason she gives in explaining her reluctance to keep Tristram with her in the castle are centered on her concern for his "worship."

> "For what shall be sayde of you amonge all knyghtes? 'A! se how sir Trystram huntyth and hawkyth, and cowryth wythin a castell wyth hys lady, and forsakyth us. . . hyt ys pyté that ever he was knyght, or ever he shulde have the love of a lady.' Also what shall quenys and ladyes say of me? Hyt ys pyté that I have my lyff, that I wolde holde so noble a knyght as ye ar frome hys worshyp," (ll. 33-35, p. 839; ll. 1-5, p. 840).

Upon hearing Tristram's marriage to Isode le Blaunche Maynes, La Beale Isode not only forgives his trespass but she also sends a messenger to Tristram inviting him and his wife to her court to be "kepte (there) als well as herselff" (ll. 8-9, p. 481). Further on in the tale when Tristram recovers from his madness and returns to Mark's court Isode begs him to leave Cornwall and go to Arthur's court where he is loved and can be safe. She says, "And ever whan I may I shall sende unto you, and whan ye lyste ye may com unto me, and at all tymes early and late I woll be at youre commaundement, to lyve as poore a lyff as ever ded quyene or lady" (ll. 16-19, p. 502). Shortly after their arrival at Joyous Garde Tristram sets out to go hunting. Isode thinking of his safety, again warns him:

> "I mervayle me muche that ye remembir nat yourselff how ye be here in a straunge contrey, and here be many perelous knyghtes, and well ye wote that kynge Marke is full of treson. And that ye woll ryde thus to chace and

> to hunte unarmed, ye myght be sone destroyed"
> (ll. 6-10, p. 683).

She loves him enough to die for him but her love is also generous enough to place his safety and honor before her pleasure and satisfaction. Therefore in "The Book of Sir Tristram" Isode loves Tristram truly and she also comprehends the values of the chivalric society fully. She is exceedingly careful in playing her role in Tristram's life as an inspiration to knightly deeds. She controls her passion for him and directs him and herself to act in line with the chivalric virtues of generosity, courtesy, mercy and justice (ll. 18-20, p. 425; ll. 8-9, p. 481). Even her apprehension of the concept of "shame" is based on the values of the knightly institution, not on those of marriage and religion (ll. 1-5, p. 840).

Throughout the Tristram section of The Morte the love affair of Tristram and Isode comes out as an exemplary relationship. Its adulterous nature does not degrade it.[38] In fact as we

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[38]Professor Rumble in "'The Tale of Tristram' Development by Analogy" in Malory's Originality: A Critical Study of Le Morte Darthur, ed. R. M. Lumiansky (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964) claims that adultery is one of the most important causes of the fall of Arthur's realm. He says "the relationship between Tristram and Isoud. . . is after all an adulterous one and like the relationship between Lancelot and Guenevere, it is symbolic of the moral degeneration to which the potentially perfect world of Arthur's realm is so inevitably being brought," p. 181. But it is difficult to agree with Professor Rumble when one analyzes the nature of their relationship in "The Book of Sir Tristram."

can deduce from the analogy between the love affair of Lamerok and Morgause and Tristram and Isode, Mark's murder of Tristram is not due to the vengeance Mark rightfully wants to take from his victim for being cuckolded. Malory stresses this point still further when, after having given an account of Tristram's and Mark's relations with Sir Segwarydes's wife he says that Mark grew jealous of Sir Tristram (l. 18, p. 398), and "as long as kynge Marke lyved he loved never aftir Sir Trystramys" (ll. 8-9, p. 396). The reason for wanting to wed La Beale Isode is part of his treacherous plan. Malory writes:

> So whan this was done kynge Marke caste all the wayes that he myght to dystroy sir Trystrames, and than imagened in hymselff to sende sir Trystrams into Irelonde for La Beale Isode; . . . whereuppon he prayde sir Trystramys to take his way into Irelonde for hym on message. And all this was done to the entente to sle sir Trystramys (ll. 12-19, p. 403).

Mark is not only jealous of Tristram's popularity with women but he is also jealous of his knightliness. Even after he sends Tristram into exile and has his queen all to himself, he sends men

> . . . to aspye what dedis he ded, and. . . whan the messyngers. . . tolde the trouthe as they herde, and how he passed all other knyghtes but yf hit were sir Launcelot . . . . Than grete dispyte kynge Marke had at hym, and so he toke wyth hym two knyghtes and two squyers, and disgysed hymself, and toke his way into Ingelonde to the entente to sle Sir Trystram (ll. 9-19, p. 577).

Thus the adultery of Tristram, like that of Lamerok, is

only an excuse for Mark to kill his nephew.

In "The book of Sir Tristram," Malory makes a distinction between adultery and lechery, between love which is stable and true like the loves of Tristram and Isode, Lancelot and Guenevere and Lamerok and Morgause, and love which has "no stabylyté" (l. 2, p. 1120). Adultery which admits stable and true love is not considered as a sin in itself. The adulterer does not experience guilt or shame. Adultery only becomes disastrous when it is discovered by men of evil will, and it is then used by them as an excuse for condemning and persecuting the adulterers. All those who betray the true lovers in "The Book of Sir Tristram" are evil knights and enemies to all good knights. Hence the sin of adulterous lovers, if there is any, lies not in the act of committing adultery but in risking disaster and shame.[39]

The relationship of Tristram and Isode, which is an exemplar of "vertuouse love" in Malory's tale becomes "symbolic of moral degeneration to which the potentially perfect world of Arthur's realm is so inevitably being brought" in Tennyson's "The Last Tournament."[40] In the epilogue to the Idylls, Tennyson himself states that he wanted to give an interpretation of the

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[39]Lambert, p. 198.

[40]Rumble, p. 181.

Arthuriad different from "Malleor's one/ Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time/ That hover'd between war and wantonness" (To the Queen, ll. 41-43). Tennyson emphasizes the importance of chivalric love in ennobling mankind. His concept of secular, chivalric love even more than that of Malory's resembles in one sense the love theories of the Provençal troubadours. According to him love does not only inspire a knight to surpass himself in combat, as it does in the case of Malory's knighs, but it also makes him grow in moral stature. There is a fundamental opposition between Malory's knights who are supposed to be gentle, humble, courteous, merciful and generous because they are knights[41] and who, in order to exceed themselves in combat, look for inspiration in love, and Tennyson's knights who can only learn the knightly virtues of gentleness, generosity, compassion and courtesy through love. Hence in Tennyson's poem a warrior cannot be a knight if he does not or cannot love. Therefore in Tennyson much more than in Malory the theme of chivalric love comes out as an intrinsic part of the theme of knighthood. Tennyson's Arthur requires his knights to swear

> "'To love one maiden only, cleave to her
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her;'" (G. ll. 472-74).

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[41] In "The Book of Sir Tristram" Sir Dinadan embodies all the virtues of Arthurian knighthood but he is not a lover.

He later tells Guinevere that he knows of no more subtle master under heaven

> "'Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and aimable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man'"
> (G. ll. 476-80).

Therefore, according to Tennysonian knighthood love is an active part of knightliness. It is differentiated from lechery and lust which aims at sensual gratification and is not controlled by the will but by the senses. True, knightly, virtuous love is based on free choice and should be bestowed on "maidens," not on married men or women. Tennyson does not believe that love can be an overpowering passion. Elaine, in "Lancelot and Elaine," like Lancelot later on in the same idyll, says that love cannot be controlled (L. E. ll. 1067-68), and that she dies of love. But Tennyson artfully develops her wilful and passionate nature alongside the pure and sacrificial aspects of her character, and it is clearly suggested to the reader that she dies not because of love but because of her wilfulness. At the end of the same idyll Arthur in answering Lancelot's statement that "free love will not be bound," says, "Free love, so bound, were freest" (L. E. l. 1369). Hence the love a man feels for a woman or vice versa is good and commendable if, like all emotions and sensual drives, it is kept

under the control of the will. When the will, the rational aspect of man which admits law and morality, loses control over the senses man becomes a slave to his senses, incapable of making choices, hence unable to practice his free will. After explaining the power of the will in directing man's emotions Tennyson is able to expose the real nature of the "love" affair of Tristram and Isolt.

Tristram's love for Isolt is not motivated by an irresistable magical love potion. As stated earlier Tennyson does not believe in fatality in falling in love,[42] therefore, even if true love had existed between Tristram and Isolt, it could not have been caused by magic or chance. Their love affair does not follow the pattern of the theme of courtship both because true love does not admit faithlessness in Tennyson's Idylls and because Tristram never really loves Isolt and never tries to prove his worthiness of her. The affair of Tristram and Isolt, like all adulterous affairs, is based on sensual attraction and sensual gratification. The conversation between the lovers reveal their

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[42] A number of critics claim that Guinevere falls in love with Lancelot by chance or fate. But a close reading of the poem shows that Guinevere does not start loving Lancelot by chance, before she even sees Arthur, but as we learn at the end of the "Guinevere" idyll her preference for Lancelot is based on her preference for what is more sensual and natural over what is spiritual.

true feelings for each other. Tristram says he loves Isolt because she is beautiful, "Soft, gracious, kind" to him and yields him her love (L. T. ll. 557-59). When other beautiful women, like Segwarydes's wife or Isolt of Brittany grant him similar graces, he makes love to them as well. Tristram's instability in love is stated over and over again by Isolt. After their short greeting Isolt's first words to him are "'What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?'" (L. T. l. 548). Later on, talking about his marriage to Isolt of Brittany she says,

> "'Well--can I wish her any huger wrong
> Than having known thee? her too hast thou left
> To pine and waste in those sweet memories'"
> (L. T. ll. 591-93).

Tristram feels no responsibility either towards Isolt of Britain or towards Isolt of Brittany. He weds Isolt of the White Hands easily and "leaves her all as easily" (L. T. l. 402). His preference for Isolt of Britain is purely sensual, "The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes/ Had drawn him home" (L. T. ll. 403-4). When Isolt is concerned with her namesake's sorrow he tells her not to worry about her. She will yield herself to God, (L. T. l. 603), he says. In Tristram's indifference and insensitivity to anything that is not himself, in his practice of free love Isolt sees only her own eventual loss. She realizes that Tristram comes to her and makes love to her only as long as she is young and is pleasing to

him (L. T. ll. 624-25). In his wanton morality and wanton behavior[43] he admits no law, no emotion other than that of the senses. Hence happiness for him becomes nothing other than sensual satisfaction, which in itself becomes the cause and reason for all his acts. He explains this to Isolt who wonders about the justification of their sinful relationship when he says,

> ". . . O my soul, be comforted!
> If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,
> If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
> Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin
> That made us happy" (L. T. ll. 569-73).

In his view neither the institution of marriage nor the institution of knighthood can compare with one's pursuit of sensuality.

Isolt yearns for a more stable and gentler world. During his absence she seems to be more overwhelmed with the permanence of the seas than with "memories of him" (L. T. ll. 581-84). She realizes the difference between Lancelot and Tristram. She also knows that Tristram was a different man when he followed Arthur (L. T. l. 629), but she lacks the self-knowledge and the willpower to direct Tristram to the right course of action. She is neither capable of feeling as strong and generous emotions as Enid and Elaine with whom she compares as the beloved of an

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[43] W. E. Slinn, "Deception and Artifice in Idylls of the King," Victorian Poetry, 2 (1973), p. 12.

Arthurian knight, nor does she have an adequate conception of chivalric life. Enid and Elaine love their knights strongly and generously enough to put the welfare of the man they love above their own individual hopes, desires and fears. Furthermore, they both comprehend the nature of knightly behavior and try to guide the misled knights around them within its principles--Enid, Geraint, Elaine, Gawain. Isolt does not love Tristram but she does not even know that. She says "'The measure of my hate for Mark/ Is as the measure of my love for thee'" (L. T. ll. 535-36). Hence she looks upon "love" as an escape from Mark. Tristram is the means of that escape. She neither worries about Tristram's welfare, nor cares to increase his honor. He is in effect no more to her than an object which can lift her above an uncongenial reality.

The whole scene between Tristram and Isolt is an analysis of how the two "lovers" exploit each other's emotions. Isolt, like Tristram, perceives the world in terms of the senses and looks after a sensual means of escape and safety. When she hears of Tristram's marriage and loses the hope of putting it into effect through him, she considers becoming a nun (L. T. l. 619). But because she lacks the strength of will she lets it pass. Her sympathy with Isolt of the White Hands lies in her identification of herself with the Princess. Seeing her deserted and fearing her-

self to be deserted by Tristram she pities her. Unaware of the parallelism between her breaking of the vow of marriage to Mark, and Tristram's breaking of the vows of knighthood sworn to Arthur, she accuses Tristram of deserting the King. Tristram, on the other hand, reminds her of this similarity between their respective situations and tries to convince her of the superior worth of his own philosophy of free love, and unrestrained choice in love. He does not realize within the principles of his own ethics the possibility of losing Isolt to someone else (L. T. ll. 700-8). Isolt's threat to bestow her love on Lancelot acts as a reminder to Tristram of this fact. But Tristram in turn can only threaten Isolt with murder (L. T. l. 712).

In the world of naturalism, materialism and utilitarianism everything is sensual and selfish. People are engulfed in their own small worlds of sensual experience and are incapable of experiencing true, generous love. Lacking this ability to love, to sympathize, and to communicate with others, man cannot attain self-knowledge. One's true knowledge of the self is possible only when he sees himself acting with and for others. That is why Tennyson stresses the importance of the deed in defining one's identity. A man like Tristram who can only act to attain sensual gratification has no more identity than a beast who does the same.

Therefore the love legend of Tristan and Isolt is stripped

of all its grandeur and force in Tennyson's Idylls. Tristram sees Isolt as an object of sensual pleasure. Isolt look on Tristram as a means of escape from Mark and reality. Incapable of seeing through the deception of the senses, they are isolated both from themselves and from each other. Tristram does not understand why Isolt greets him with "fear/ And fault and doubt" (L. T. ll. 573-74), instead of expressing her joy at seeing him and telling him of her heart-yearnings during his absence. He does not realize that Isolt does not really yearn for him, and if it were not for that "fear, fault and doubt" she would not even be gracious to him. Furthermore he says she is "'--soft, gracious, kind--/ Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips" (L. T. ll. 557-58). But again she is gracious to him because of her fears and hatred for Mark. Isolt, on the other hand, tells him all these facts about herself though she herself does not understand why she so feels. Her fears are not based on logical, conscious causes, they appear to be instinctive. She repeatedly says she is "Broken with Mark, and hate and solitude," but instead of trying to explain to herself its reasons, or asking Tristram to help her to explain them, she tells Tristram to lie to her in order to sooth her: "'. . . I should suck/ Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I believe/ Will ye not lie?'" (L. T. ll. 639-41). Tristram too is equally strange both to her and to himself. He also does not know what he feels for Isolt.

On the way to Lyonnesse he tries to predict her possible reactions to his marriage.

> "What, if she hate me now? I would not this.
> What, if she love me still? I would not that.
> I know not what I would" (L. T. ll. 495-97).

Unable to concentrate on his inner self and understand himself and Isolt, he dismisses all spiritual and psychological reality as irrelevant and unreal and concentrates on the gratification of the outward senses. It is noteworthy that Tennyson emphasizes the comfort Tristram gets from eating and drinking almost as much as the comfort he gets from being with Isolt (L. T. ll. 717-20). Moreover, in line with this debased characterization of the protagonist, Tristram is killed not while harping in Isolt's presence, as is the case in the prose romances and in Malory, but at dinner table while kissing Isolt's throat.

The Tristram-Isolt-Mark triangle ironically comments on the Lancelot-Guinevere-Arthur triangle and vice versa. The two adulterous lovers, Tristram and Isolt, are gross reductions of the other two adulterous lovers, Lancelot and Guinevere. The analogy between them is drawn both in words and in situations. Tristram addresses Lancelot as "'Great brother. . ./ Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine'" (L. T. ll. 203-4). Isolt referring to an earlier conversation with Tristram, explains how they had compared their sin with the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere (L. T.

ll. 565-69). Furthermore, the meeting between the two couples reveal the similarities and the differences between them very clearly. The encounter of Isolt with Tristram occurs in Isolt's castle (L. T. l. 506); Lancelot goes to see Guinevere in the Queen's palace (L. E. l. 1155); Lancelot kneels to greet the Queen (L. E. l. 1165); Tristram also after their first embrace kneels to Isolt (L. T. l. 549); Lancelot praises the Queen's beauty and hands her the diamond jewels (L. E. ll. 1174-75); Tristram echoes almost the very words of Lancelot[44] in telling Isolt what her beauty means to him (L. T. ll. 556-58); and before the end of the idyll gives her the ruby carcanet. Guinevere accuses Lancelot of instability and compares herself with Elaine (L. E. ll. 1217-21); Isolt refers to Tristram's faithlessness in love and points out the similarity between her situation and that of Isolt of Brittany (L. T. ll. 504-6).

As opposed to the above stated similarities the approach to and the tone of the two situations are very different. Isolt jumps up to meet Tristram and at seeing him, "Belted his body with her white embrace" (L. T. l. 511). Guinevere gives "audience" to Lancelot after a long lapse of time and is seemingly so "unmoved"

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[44] Lancelot says to Guinevere, "Your beauty is your beauty" (L. E. l. 1178), and Tristram later says, "Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine," (L. T. l. 557).

by him that she resembles "her statue" (L. E. ll. 1163-64). In "The Last Tournament" Isolt is the first to speak, and she expresses in broken and fleeting words her hatred of Mark, Mark's violence, and Tristram's instability and faithlessness in love and in friendship[45] (L. T. ll. 543-48). In "Lancelot and Elaine" Lancelot uses a courtly language and begs the Queen's pardon for the false remours about himself and Elaine (L. E. ll. 1183-89). Guinevere's language in answering Lancelot is also highly magestical and poetic. She compares him with Arthur at Lancelot's expense, tells him of her desire to break their bond and throws his gift into the stream (L. E. ll. 1226-28). Isolt, on the other hand, stresses her fear of being deserted by Tristram, prays him to flatter her since she is so weak, and when given the ruby necklace, is overjoyed to receive it (L. T. ll. 734-37). Tristram "fondles" her hands (l. 596), mocks her fears, and takes full joy in eating, drinking and in being physically with her.

In spite of this great difference in tone and perspective the nature of the two meetings reveal similar emotions. Lancelot's attraction to Guinevere is as sensual as that of

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[45] Tennyson uses the Segwarydes episode as another example of Tristram's sensuality. He introduces into the story a fact which is absent in Malory that Segwarydes was Tristram's friend, and Tristram seduced his friend's wife breaking the bond of friendship as well as the bond of marriage.

Tristram to Isolt. He praises the roundness of her arms and the whiteness of her neck and says nothing about the Queen's spiritual beauty. Guinevere also is as emotional and weak as is Isolt. She throws away the jewels in anger and jealousy and "bursts away/ To weep and wail in secret;" (L. E. ll. 1236-37). Therefore the sin of adultery which appears to be excusable because it is committed by courtly and faithful lovers in the case of Lancelot and Guinevere, is stripped of all its courtly and spiritual deception in the relation of Tristram and Isolt. The vulgarity of their affair reveal the baseness and sensuality inherent in all adulterous and sensual relations. Lancelot and Guinevere realize the grossness of their sin only after they see it in the carnal affair of the other couple.

According to Arthur true and virtuous love for a woman teaches the knights the knightly virtues of generosity, mercy, sympathy, endurance and patience. This sort of love as Merlin explains to Vivien has "rest and pleasure in himself" (M. V. l. 483).[46] It is not used as a means of sensual delight or escape

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[46] C. de L. Ryals in From the Great Deep: Essays on Idylls of the King (Ohio University Press, 1967), argues that Merlin also gives in to Vivien's sensual temptation at the end of the idyll, p. 141. But I agree with Professor Kinciad who says that Merlin is never really fooled; he simply gives in, without making any choice at all. There is no conflict of spiritual and sensual values, in Merlin's mind, pp. 184-85.

from reality. It enables man to learn to check his own desires in order to please the beloved, to think of the world not only in his own terms but in terms of the beloved as well, and thus leads the lover to attain a wider vision of the world and his place in it. True communication, care and sympathy among people can be achieved only then.

Therefore in Tennyson's _Idylls_ the theme of chivalric love is as important as the theme of knighthood--one complements the other. It also links the theme of knighthood with the theme of feudal service. A warrior, like Tristram, who is incapable of experiencing love cannot comprehend his own spiritual self, he cannot learn and practice Arthurian knighthood based on the transcendence of the self, and he cannot serve a society or an authority whose reality is not concrete, therefore, not real to him.

Feudal Service

The theme of feudal service which is so significant an aspect of Tennyson's conception of knighthood is almost as strongly stressed in Malory's work. Malory's Arthurian society does not conceive of feudal service as an intrinsic part of knightliness, but as the differentiating characteristic of the Round Table

knights. Charles Moorman says that the knighthood of Malory's Round Table is "an attempt to create a new kind of chivalry, . . . a chivalry based on corporate values in which the virtues of the romance tradition--the sense of honor and integrity, courage and prowess--would remain but would be diverted into socially useful standards."[47]

This is true but the attempt was neither Malory's alone nor was it first made by him. In fact, as Professor Trevelyan explains, the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 was a clear sign to the English nobility of the growing social awareness among the English Commoners.[48] Therefore, in order for the office of knighthood to continue to exert its force on the people it had to be revised to suit the demands of the age, emphasizing the knight's role as the protector and the guardian of the weak. Richard Barber and Larry Benson also cite numerous instances from life before and during Malory's time where the contention that knight-

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[47] C. Moorman, Kings and Captains (University of Kentucky Press, 1971), pp. 163-64.

[48] G.M. Trevelyan in England in the Age of Wycliff (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946, rpt. 1899) says that as early as in 1381, the time of the Peasants' Revolt there was in England a continuous spirit of resistance to tyranny, which secured the early abolition of serfdom and feudalism. The Rising was a sign of national energy, it was a sign of independence and self-respect which had begun to develop in the medieval English peasants, p. 255.

hood served the common good was taken as the basis of knightly action.[49] Barber explains in great detail the symbolic meaning of a knight's outfit as cited in the twelfth and thirteenth century manuscripts, and in discussing the social and ethical connotations of a knight's sword and horse he writes:

> The two edges of the sword show that the knight serves both God and the people, and its point shows that all people must obey him. The horse that carries him represents the people, whom the knight must lead, but who must support him and give him the wherewithal for an honourable life.[50]

The idea of knighthood as the defense of society against disorder had been partly the reason for the Church's sanctification of the feudal warrior. The knight was morally obliged to safeguard the Church and the society which supported him. Therefore justice, mercy, protection of the weak, generosity and humility, all the items of the chivalric code which Arthur's knights swear to follow, began to develop in the early twelfth century. They became an essential part of knighthood in fifteenth century England, the period when landed feudalism had been abolished, when the government was not yet centralized and the king's and the noblemen's personalities and ethics played important roles in

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[49] Barber, pp. 43-48; Benson, pp. 149-53.

[50] Barber, p. 48.

bringing order and peace to the realm.

Hence Malory's book reflects the ideals and the problems of the chivalric society as he found them in life. He does not try to "recreate a model society" as a possible means of solving the social grievances[51] of his age. It would be wrong, therefore, to attribute the failures of the Round Table knights to Malory's intention of exposing the weaknesses of the knightly code.

In "The Book of Sir Tristram" Malory depicts a feudal society where knights no longer appear to be landed aristocrats responsible for the welfare of the people living on their land, and tied with close feudal bonds to their seigneur. They all emerge as knight-errants. Tristram, Lancelot, Lamerok and Gawain are all kings' sons and have estates of their own but none of them ever go and live in their own land or ever consider paying service or money for the possession of their land. In their society feudal relations are no longer defined by land. The bond between a king and his nobles is either stabilized by force or by good will. But the use of mere force and craft never yields lasting results. In such cases the kingdom is always threatened by internal strife,

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[51]Pochoda argues that Malory wants to prove in The Morte that the "recreation of Arthurian society as a cultural model or historical ideal must be at best an illusory and dangerous comfort," p. 140.

disintegration and anarchy. Malory points this out clearly in narrating the events during the reign of King Uther. Therefore Arthur, who succeeds him, learns through his example. He tries to unite his barons not only by force of arms but also by a sense of fellowship founded on an ethical code of behavior sworn to and exemplified by a group of military caste to whom greater "worship" and honor is paid by all. As long as Arthur rewards them with renown and wealth in return for the proper knightly and feudal services he has them solemnly swear to fulfill, and as long as the knights are able to check their individual drives and inclinations with the hope of attaining the king's approval and public praise, the kingdom is strong and prospers in wealth and happiness. Hence Malory's Arthur tries to develop an ideal guide to conduct which also acts as a means of training barbaric, self-centered warriors to be responsible, just and generous fellows of an aristocratic community.

Opposed to the Arthurian code of behavior and kingship is the kingship and behavior of Mark. In "The Book of Sir Tristram" the courts of Arthur and Mark are portrayed as two extremes in their approach to feudal service and knighthood. Arthur is a proven knight, he is a good, generous overlord; he is referred to as "the floure of chevalry that is Crystyn othir hethyn" (l. 27, p. 597), peerless in "goodnes and. . . larges" (l. 19, p. 757), the

lover and protector of all good knights. He is able to put the interests of his knights and his realm above his individual emotions and interests. His reaction to the adulterous love of Lancelot and Guenevere points out clearly his ability to rise beyond his private self. Mark, on the other hand, is portrayed as an anti-Arthur figure. He is moved by envy, treachery and passion. He never proves himself as a knight. Throughout "The Book of Sir Tristram" he is described as "a destroyer of all worshipfull knyghts" (ll. 26-27, p. 497), "full of treason" (l. 35, p. 547),[52] "a kynge anoynted with creyme" (l. 16, p. 549), "the shamfullist knyght of a kynge that is now lyvynge, for he is a grete enemy to all good knyghtes" (ll. 3-4, p. 580). Arthur by his own example is able to incite his knights to nobler deeds and to unite them under his rule. They all pay fealty to him but knightliness appears to be the real bond between his knights and himself rather than an inviolable feudal bond. Mark, on the contrary, uses his kingship as a means of fulfilling his own desires and carrying out his treacherous plans. He destroys the best knights of his kingdom either because he is jealous of their courage and knightliness or because he sees them as potential rivals to his power. Hence he

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[52]See also l. 7, p. 548; l. 19, p. 578; ll. 32-35, p. 582; ll. 26-32, p. 583; ll. 1-7, p. 585; ll. 10-12, p. 592; ll. 32-35, p. 594.

endangers the safety of his kingdom both by bringing in anarchy and lawlessness to the realm himself and by causing all good knights, protectors of Cornwall, to desert the country. Fear, treachery and envy appear to underlie the behavior of the majority of the Cornish knights serving Mark. Hence in a society where the king's personality plays such an important part in defining his knights' conduct towards him and towards the kingdom, one does not wonder why a perfect knight like Tristram does not feel any feudal obligations to Cornwall or to Mark.

Tristram's education in knighthood begins at Mark's court. Mark does not inspire him with reverence and worship, as a result although Tristram proves to be a perfect knight, equal in stature to Lancelot, because his knighthood is not directed towards a purpose larger than itself, it does not parallel Lancelot's in its service to his seigneur and to the kingdom. Hence an analysis of Tristram's and Lancelot's respective attitudes to feudal obligations displays the importance of Arthur's personality and ethics in establishing inviolable moral bonds between himself and his knights thus securing order and peace in the realm.

Tristram swears homage to both Mark and Arthur but he remains free from feudal loyalties extended to matters concerning the two courts. At the time of war with the Emperor Lucius,

Tristram stays in Cornwall and prefers to be close to his lady instead of helping Arthur along with other Round Table knights (ll. 8-10, p. 195). Lancelot, on the other hand, joins Arthur in his war with the Emperor and fights with the Romans as a member of the Round Table (ll. 22-23, p. 220). Success in that war is achieved through the prowess of all the Round Table knights united under the leadership of Arthur. In this episode the Round Table is spoken of somewhat like the army of a nation and Lancelot experiences and appreciates this feeling of unity, membership and duty (ll. 24-30, p. 227). He saves the lives of his follow knights (ll. 28-36, p. 215) and uses his knighthood to promote prosperity and the welfare of King Arthur (ll. 5-9, p. 217).

Tristram's first assistance to Cornwall is motivated both by his desire to win "worship" and by his willingness to save his uncle and Cornwall from truage. He does not see the battle with Marhalt as a duty owed to the sovereign lord or the people of Cornwall. He fights not because he is obliged to but because he chooses to do so (ll. 11-16, p. 391). When a comparison of his speech with that of Lancelot's in explaining the reasons why they take part in their respective overlords' quarrels is made, the difference in their attitude can be clearly seen. Tristram says:

> "I dud the batayle for the love of myne uncle kynge Marke and for the love of the contrey of Cornwayle, and for to encrece myne honoure: for that same day that I fought with sir Marhalte I was made knyght" (ll. 11-14, p. 391).

Lancelot in answer to the thanks that Arthur gives him for his help says:

> "My lorde. . . wytte you well y ought of ryght ever to be in youre quarell and in my ladyes the quenys quarrell to do batayle, for ye ar the man that gaff me the hygh Order of Knyghthode, and that day my lady, youre quene, ded me worshyp" (ll. 21-25, p. 1058).

Both of them are made knights by their overlords. But Tristram does not regard that act as entailing service. He acts out of knightly love and generosity. Lancelot sees the knighting ceremony more as a feudal duty. Therefore he acts out of a sense of obligation as well as love. When Mark asks Tristram to fight a duel with Sir Elyas to save Cornwall from truage for the second time his answer is again knightly but uncommitted:

> "'Sir,' seyde sir Trystram, '. . . reson wolde that I sholde do all thay lyyth in me to do, savynge my worshyp and my lyff, howbehit that I am sore brused and hurte. And sytthyn sir Elyas proferyth so largely, I shall fyght with hym'" (ll. 5-9, p. 624).

Tristram's obligations to Mark, or rather his desire to help Mark, depends on Mark's good conduct. He leaves Mark's service when he thinks Mark has behaved badly. Nevertheless, his loyalty to Arthur is no different than his loyalty to Mark. It is also based primarily on Arthur's knightliness. As a distinguished knight he excels in knighthood and admires that quality in all good knights. When he is asked to join the Round Table and abide in Arthur's court, he says, "Thereto me is loth, for I have

to do in many contreys" (ll. 5-6, p. 572). He consents to be a member only after Arthur insists on his membership. But even after admitting Arthur's lordship, he neither sees himself as a part of the Round Table fellowship nor does he realize the ideal harmony and order Arthur wants to establish in the realm. In "The Book of Sir Tristram," Tristram always emerges as a knight who follows the code of knighthood wholeheartedly but considers himself a free agent, a knight adventurous, not a knight vassal. Professor Schueler in comparing the characters and the roles of Tristram and Lancelot writes:

> Lancelot is not a greater knight than Tristram because he has greater prowess; on the level of action and adventure there is little to choose between the two. But Tristram has no significance larger than himself; he is ever the aimlessly wandering knight-errant of chivalry in its decline. Lancelot, on the other hand, is the archetype of Arthur's ideal fellowship, the heroic right arm of a heroic king.[53]

This is a very perceptive statement illuminating the similarities and the differences in Lancelot's and Tristram's approach to knighthood. But it would be a mistake to consider Tristram a representative member of "chivalry in its decline." Malory in the person of Tristram portrays one more way of practicing and interpreting knighthood. Tristram is a perfect knight

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[53] D. G. Schueler, "The Tristram Section of Malory's Morte D'Arthur," Studies in Philology, Vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 65-66.

and he is worthy of all the praise he gets. His knighthood is as self-sacrificial and motivated by disinterested goodness as Lancelot's. Therefore as he lives he is "one of the beste knyghtes and the jentyllyst of the worlde and the man of moste worship" (ll. 27-28, p. 571).

Tennyson, like Malory, portrays Tristram as a knight whose most distinctive characteristic is his detachment from any feudal loyalty. But this detachment which can be allowed in Malory's human society where a whole spectrum of knightliness is portrayed and where knightly ideals rather than social unity is emphasized cannot be accepted in Tennyson's where the reason for the foundation of knighthood is based on the establishment of unity, harmony and morality in the society.

The social and political problems of Tennyson's age were quite different from those of the age of Malory. As opposed to the significance of the aristocracy in the political life of the fifteenth century England the aristocracy of nineteenth century England had little power. The nobility of Malory's time was able to dethrone kings, to force the king to enter foreign wars, and the King was able to keep the country under control and administer the lower classes mainly by means of them. Moreover the medieval middle classes were comparatively small in number and hardly had any political power. Hence the goodwill and the tactful

approach of the medieval kings to their feudal vassals were important in establishing unity and harmony in the realm.

The political and economic power of the nobility of Tennyson's era, however, had begun to wane. With the rapid advance of science, and its application to industry the middle classes had grown in wealth and power, and the urban working classes had started to increase in number.[54] Consequently the kingdom began to suffer from a variety of social and political problems. The middle classes strove to acquire more control over the administration of the country and some of their members even tried to extend the right for the ballot and the franchise to the working classes as well. The Reform Bills of 1832, 1867 and 1884-85 brought radical changes to the political organization of the kingdom. They extended the right to vote and to be elected to the majority of the male population.[55] Hence the prime minister, who until then tended to be dependent on the goodwill of the Crown,

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[54] The background of the nineteenth century British politics is drawn mainly from The Making of Victorian England by G. K. Clark (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1962), pp. 28-82; The British Politics in the Nineteenth Century by E.C. Black (Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 59-75, 94-103, 119-136, 198-202, and A Short History of 19th Century England: 1793-1868 by J.W. Derny (A Mentor Book, 1963), pp. 114-38, 195-220.

[55] The Reform Bill of 1867 gave the vote to labourers in the towns, that of 1884 extended the same boon to rural areas. But even the Reform Act of 1884 denied the vote to sons living at home and to servants--approximately 15-20 per cent of the adult male population. The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. XI, ed. F.H. Hinsley, 1967, p. 390.

came to be the agent of party opinion. The House of Commons which used to be an assembly of those people nominated by the noblemen of the House of Lords became the rightful gathering of the representatives of the people. Consequently England moved through various stages of constitutional monarchy towards what is commonly understood as being a modern democracy.

Besides all these political changes, the move from the rural areas of the country to factory towns created social and economic problems of adjustment for the urban working classes and for the wealthier townspeople. The lower classes were forced to live and work under inhuman conditions, and the upper classes were faced with the problem of living in cities with inadequate amenities that were also disrupted by Chartist strife. Therefore the majority of the people were affected by the economic, political and social changes that the kingdom was going through, and a number of intellectuals produced radical solutions to these problems.[56] John Stuart Mill demonstrated in his essay on Bentham and Coleridge the different stands the Utilitarian and the Conservatives took on the institutions of government,

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[56]The intellectual movements in the nineteenth century are derived mainly from A History of Philosophy by F. Thilly revised by L. Wood (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957), pp. 524-27, 529-44, 634-55, 507-8, 594-96, 518-24; The Victorian Temper by J.H. Buckley (Vintage Books, 1964), pp. 1-14, 109-23, 143-60, 207-25, 226-46.

church and judicature. The Utilitarians claimed that the usefulness of all institutions should be tested and determined in the light of human reason and common sense. They shared some of the principles of the Pragmatists who argued that the worth or "truth" of any theory should be judged by its success or failure in practice. These two doctrines together tried to destroy the dogmatic claims of all abstract theories stating that theories are made by men for men's use, and no theory can have any intrinsic value. This mode of evaluation proved to be an effective method of correcting inefficiencies in government administration. However when it was applied to the church, or to religion and spiritual belief in general it could have and did have disruptive effects.

Opponents of Utilitarianism and Pragmatism, including Coleridge, argued that such an approach to human nature was unrealistically narrow. Man always needed a faith, and if reason seemed to demonstrate the irrelevance of religion, then reason must be an inadequate way of arriving at truth. The members of the Oxford Movement, the Tractarians, adhered to this idea much more fanatically than the secular conservatists like Carlyle. The Tractarians argued that only a powerful, dogmatic and traditional religious institution could guide man and bring him peace and happiness. The leaders of science, in particular, Thomas Henry Huxley, who popularized the theories of Charles Darwin,

however, expounded to the world that not only the concept of creation derived from the Bible was incorrect but also the long-established assumptions of the values attached to man's special role in the world were unfounded. Biology and geology reduced mankind into "nothingness." They led the way to a materialistic conception of man and the universe. The Materialists and the nineteenth century Positivists claimed that only the knowledge that is based on the results of observation and perception could have any validity. Hence man could define himself and his universe only through his sense perceptions.

On the political level the Chartists struggled in 1830's and 1840's for the ballot and the franchise for all adults. Trade Unionists asked for increased rights for the working classes, and the Conservatives in general fought a losing battle.

Tennyson sides with the Conservatives of his day. He opposes the radical social, ethical and political reformers. In "The Last Tournament" he warns his readers of the dangers of materialism, naturalism, utilitarianism, individualism and hedonism.[57] He asserts the validity and the necessity of social service, social unity and idealism in the stability of the realm and in the growth of the individual beings. He also stresses the

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[57]Bentham's utilitarian outlook was basically hedonistic while Mill's utilitarianism was essentially intellectual and individualistic.

importance of unification under one leader, although he does not discuss the possible problems to be faced if that leader proves evil and incompetent. He points out, in the person of Tristram, that an attitude of detachment and concern with personal gratification can only lead to an increase of the existing problems. All the people in power, the knights who have sworn to serve the King, must have full awareness of their social responsibilities and serve the king with full obedience in spite of their varied ideas, concerns or approaches to life.

Tennyson makes Arthur create a code of values at a time before which barbarism had existed. In "The Coming of Arthur" the poet devotes fifty-eight lines to the explanation of the state of the land before Arthur's reign:

> For many a petty king ere Arthur came
> Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
> Each upon other, wasted all the land;
> And still from time to time the heathen host
> Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
> And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
> Wherein the beast was ever more and more
> But man was less and less, (C.A. ll. 5-12).

Arthur drives the heathen away, "slew the beast, and fell'd/ The forest, letting in the sun," (C.A. ll. 59-60). After his death and the disintegration of the Round Table anarchy and civil war once again break and the kingdom "reels back into the beast" (P.A. l. 26). Hence the code of knighthood which Arthur formulates and

expects his knights to follow cannot be considered like Malory's conception of knighthood as a commendable set of ethical principles which can be fulfilled by individual knights without paying heed to feudal duties. Tennyson interprets feudal duties as the inviolable duties of a knight to his king. They are not reciprocal, like Malory's; they do not depend on the good conduct of the king; they are absolute and indisputable. The knights are sworn to "uttermost obedience to the King," and as Gareth explains to Lynette, who was in fact right in doubting the King's attitude to her sister and herself, that anyone who mistrusts the King is to be blamed (G. L. ll. 1142-45). But Tennyson's King is portrayed as more than a real man. He seems to have the authority of Christ and man's conscience behind him. Mark, too, is not only portrayed as an alternative to Arthur as is Malory's evil king, but he also carries the overtones of Satan, absolute evil. Hence Tennyson's Arthur emerges both as the real king of a nation and as man's spiritual being or as his conscience. But whatever he stands for in relation to man his power over his knights has to be accepted as absolute and obedience to him has to be taken as imperative. The codes he makes them swear to in knighting them put equal force on feudal obedience, chivalric love and the knightly virtues of humility, generosity, endurance, mercy and courage. As stated earlier they are not taken as separate themes

but as interdependent ideals. Hence a knight cannot be a knight without admitting and fulfilling his feudal responsibilities. Knighthood is formulated not only to ennoble people and to save them from becoming "beasts" but also to save a realm from becoming a wasteland. Men like Galahad and Percival are compassionate and virtuous but according to Arthur's principles they are not true knights. Knighthood requires active participation in the community, feudal service, and the "uttermost obedience to the king." Tristram also cannot be called a knight since he does not follow the king and serve the realm. Furthermore, by negating the knightly ideals of the king and defending the philosophy of individualism and naturalism he becomes a destructive force both to knighthood and to the kingdom.

Throughout the poem Tennyson tries to show that knighthood is not a set of facts to be argued about as a system of principles to be lived by; that the proof of these principles is to establish not by external empirical evidence, but by the power with which they unify and give stability and meaning to the life of man and of societies.[58] Devoid of the unifying power of the knightly ideal and the saving force of the knightly deeds the kingdom disintegrates and men become sensual creatures lost in despair and

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[58]See also Priestley, "Tennyson's Idylls," pp. 254-55.

pessimism. Lancelot, who fights with Arthur in his wars, believes in his ideals, admits his absolute authority but cannot save himself from the attraction of the senses, resembles in "The Last Tournament" a modern Everyman.[59] The words of Arthur, reminding him of the danger the nation faces lacking the support of "the noble deeds" and "noble vows," do not let him sleep all night (L. T. ll. 138-39). When he ascends Arthur's chair to arbitrate the Tournament, he cannot look at the galleries filled with damsels white-robed in honor of the dead child (L. T. l. 150). They remind him of the glory of what is lost. When he sees "The laws that ruled the tournament/ Broken" he does not interfere, does not speak (L. T. ll. 160-61). He is like a man grown impotent with pain, shame and the growing awareness of the coming danger. He detests Tristram because he reminds him of the truest and basest form of his own sin. He "groans for wrath" to see Tristram enter the Tournament (L. T. l. 183) and is thoroughly tormented at realizing how he, in not being utterly obedient to the king, and in giving way to his senses, has led the way to the spread of disobedience and sensuality in the kingdom. Tristram, on the other hand, does not even realize the importance of the

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[59]Miyoshi, The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians (London: University of London Press, 1969), p. 237.

knightly ideal, he does not comprehend the meaning of the codes, and he experiences no sense of social responsibility. Hence in "The Last Tournament," Tennyson, in the person of Tristram, tries to prove that social responsibility and obedience to authority can develop with self knowledge. Tristram does not look inward, he does not experience the duality of human nature within his own being, therefore, he admits no law, no responsibility, no duty.

Guinevere like Lancelot is also tormented by the dual forces of human nature working within her being. Like Lancelot she too is "wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts," (L. T. l. 237) and the outright sensuality of the damsels during the feast. They remind her of her own guilt. But even the sense of guilt is a proof of an acknowledged standard of moral values by which people regard themselves and define their roles in society. Isolt, like Tristram, experiences no shame, no guilt, and no social responsibility. Hence at the end of "The Last Tournament" when her fears of being left "alone with Mark and hell" (L. T. l. 534), materialize she has nowhere to turn for help, whereas Guinevere, in the following idyll through suffering attains true knowledge of herself and is saved.

The overall impression left on the reader at the end of "The Last Tournament" is that feudal and social responsibilities lead men to become aware of their true nature. They enable men

to differentiate themselves from beasts and guide them to learn more about their spiritual and visionary capacities. Self knowledge which is so attained causes human beings to admit and appreciate the significance of law, authority and knightly virtues in the establishment of the proper harmony in the realm. Furthermore it makes them become aware that without social harmony and stability people can neither have individual security nor individual growth. Hence Tristram, the individualistic sensualist, who admits neither law, nor service nor authority naturally becomes Mark's victim--another lawless sensualist who proves craftier than himself.

CONCLUSION

Aristotle says that "man is a social being and disposed to live with others, . . . (he) can realize his true self only in society and state."[1] Both Malory and Tennyson seem to be endorsing this statement of the Greek philosopher in their respective works. Malory's world of chivalry presents knighthood as a way of life which enables man to define his identity through honor and glory, to learn about his capacities through participation in various quests, and to reconcile himself with the world by overcoming his sentiments of envy and jealousy. It requires good breeding, gentleness and loyalty. Tennyson's knighthood, on the other hand, is a dynamic concept the reality of which is like the reality of music, fluid and unfixed. It becomes concrete and permanent only in so far as it is embodied in actions. Hence in Tennyson's poem knighthood emerges as the abstract motivating force behind all knightly

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[1]Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. II, Ch. 6, quoted in A History of Philosophy, eds. F. Thilly and L. Wood (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 115-17.

deeds. The codes of knighthood, the vows to which Arthur makes his knights swear, therefore, cannot "serve their use, their time," as Tristram claims. They are undefined and timeless guides to teach man the relaity of his inner life, his place in the world, and his responsibilities to the society of which he is a part. Without this guiding principle of knighthood, man is left subjected to the reality of the senses which is deceptive and inconsistant. As Merlin indicates to Bellicent, truth, as it is seen by the senses, is "This to me and that to thee." According to Tennyson, since people have to live in society and since no order, harmony and peace can be established in a community where there is no agreement about factual truth, knighthood is of existential importance both for the individual and for the community.

Love, according to Tennyson, teaches man to break down the selfish wall alienating him from the other human beings. It causes him to become generous, humble, sacrificial and compassionate--all the qualities to be found in Tennyson's knights. Hence love, like "utter obedience" to the visionary king, teaches man the way to knighthood. Through feudal service to the king man sees the effects of knightly deeds on the community and is rationally convinced of the high morality of knightliness. Through chivalric love man emotionally experiences the virtuous qualities of knighthood. Therefore Tennyson's themes of knighthood,

chivalric love and feudal service cannot be disentangled from one another. In fact, in the characters of Tennyson's knights, love and service emerge as the two subsidiary themes which complement and support the main theme of knighthood.

For Malory, on the other hand, the principal theme is knighthood. The themes of chivalric love and feudal service are developed alongside the theme of knightliness. But they are neither equally emphasized, nor do they become intrinsic parts of the theme of knighthood as they do in Tennyson's story. Malory's protagonists are not described as true or false lovers, or as good or bad vassals but as noble or treacherous knights. Humility, generosity, selflessness, mercy and fellowship, all the qualities of knighthood, are almost fixed and palpable in his work. He does not allow them to emerge from the action, because for him they are the very essence of the action and consequently the narrative. The theme of reconciliation which is an intrinsic part of the theme of knighthood is presented as the positive proof of a knight's attainment of these chivalric virtues. In short Malory's vision of the world is tinctured by his emotional reactions, principally by his passion for chivalry. Therefore, Tristram the knight, who emerges as being inconsistent and lacking adequate motivation in his love affairs, and who, moreover, is not a committed vassal is

nevertheless portrayed as one of the two most admirable characters in "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones."

Structurally Malory's themes are developed in a polyphonic and interlaced form. They are always present in the reader's mind as parallel themes, yet they interrupt one another without any apparent reason. Their development takes place by means of similar or contrasting episodes which by analogy comment on and expand the given theme. Furthermore, the characters, in acting out the thematic sequence of events, do not follow the principles of causality, and are not supplied with emotional motivations. Only in exposing the theme of knighthood does Malory's style resemble the styles of the realistic writers. Then Malory allows his characters to be continuously motivated by the ideals of knighthood. In such episodes the characters are not merely controlled by an externally imposed thematic structure but they also appear to give form to the seemingly evolving plot. In the exposition of the other themes, however, as stated earlier, Malory generally neglects to provide his characters with proper human motivations.

Tennyson, on the other hand, makes use of the narrative art concepts of both his own century and that of the medieval writers. He never allows his characters to be controlled externally by a thematic structure as does Malory. His Tristram,

Lancelot, Isolt and Guinevere always act in accordance with an emotional motivation and their actions are for the most part logically consistent. Moreover Tennyson's themes are not developed in a polyphonic manner but, as expained earlier, are interdependent. Besides, the nineteenth-century poet uses the art of interlacement not in the presentation of his themes as does Malory, but in the presentation of events. Consequently, in "The Last Tournament" several events all held together by the same theme are discussed simultaneously, one interrupting another. However, Tennyson like Malory basically makes use of the technique of analogy in the development of his themes. Each major idea, character or image is expanded and developed by way of comparison or contrast with another idea, character or image. Hence Tennyson's narrative is also episodic, and the events and situations of the whole work also appear to have been arranged "vertically" rather than "horizontally." In short, in spite of their wide difference in the interpretation of the Tristan legend and its significance within the Arthurian frame, in spite of their varied styles and narrative forms, in spite of their various political, social and literary backgrounds, and in spite of their different concerns in and approaches to the individual and the society both Malory and Tennyson emphasize knighthood, chivalric love and feudal service as the outstanding themes of their works. Moreover

they are fundamentally concerned with the significance of knighthood in ennobling mankind and making it "most human." Finally in both the episodic prose work of Malory and the episodic poem of Tennyson development of the themes is carried out not through a process of building up and evolving but through the techniques of exposition and expansion where each author, by scrambling over a series of logically disconnected episodes, tries to make the reader experience his emotions and see his vision through his eyes.

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