

The tale of Sir Gareth is the archetypal tale of honour

Guinevere:

- Knights prove their honour through addresses to women

Women often aligned with magic

- e.g. Lancelot being recovered by Maid of Astolat, Book VII

Guinevere is imperious, impulsive and also jealous in her love of Lancelot

- Follows the archetypal capriciousness and fickleness
 - o Keeps switching sides
 - Behaves in the tradition of Fin'amor (courtly love)
- The woman's absolute power is to reject Lancelot, as she often does
 - o Lancelot verbalises answering duty (642 8-9, XVIII. 21)
- Lancelot is Guinevere's means of defence in the court
 - o She is vulnerable without Lancelot
 - 615, 35-40 her role is to maintain the bonds between men
 - Guinevere is a peace-keeper (archetypal role)
 - 616, Sir Bors levels criticism to Guinevere's failure in the role
 - ◆ Guinevere's private role as beloved conflicts with public as queen
 - ◇ In banishing Lancelot, she succeeds as Beloved but fails as Queen

Lancelot, as a lover, has conflicting duties, just as Guinevere does

- Stresses the private and public roles again
 - o R.L. Kelly: wounds show Lancelot's failings and downturn in status

Lancelot's defence of Guinevere is honourable

- Says he acts on honour of Jesus, not ladies

The Poisoned Apple sees Lancelot as honourable at first, though ready to fall

- But while he is honourable, he may not be moral
 - o Suffers a wound in the thigh in this passage: judgement?

The Fair Maid of Astolat sees a whimsical Lancelot

- Judged in another wound by Sir Bors
 - o Had Lancelot not been disguised and against the Round Table, he would not nearly have been slain
 - Lancelot admits being led by pride

The Great Tournament

- Wounded in the arse by a woman pursuing a barren land
 - o Judgement call and a warning
- Gareth also prized at the end of this book
 - o 648, Arthur presents the perfect knight through Gareth
 - Contains implicit judgement of Lancelot

The Knight of the Cart

- Appropriated narrative from French on Lancelot's decline from Knighthood
- Charges of disapproval for Mellyagaunt also applicable to Lancelot (traitor)
- Blood on hands shows the fallen knight's guilt
- Guinevere's description of Lancelot as most noble knight of the world rings hollow in the cart scene through his casual manslaughter

The Healing of Sir Urry reinstates the double view of Lancelot

Arthur laments loss of round table and of Lancelot on hearing