

RESEARCH SEMINAR – British Literature

*Man's Love to God's Love – An exploration
about love in Le Morte de Arthur and Beowulf*

Semester –I

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This is to certify that **Sumeeta Chanda** has successfully completed the Research Paper titled **Man's Love to God's Love** in the course of M.A 1st semester for the year 2022.

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-Sumeeta Chanda

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Abstract

*How did the medieval world look at love, lust, and adultery? How do we look at love today? What did the medieval people believe to be love? My main research question is, "Did brotherly love become God's love over the period of human history?" If so, then what is the trace? The main focus of my research is on the book *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory, and secondary focus is on the book, *Beowulf* by J.R.R. Tolkien. While researching the answers to these questions, I came across six books, five journal articles, and six online articles. My goal in this paper is to combine the books and articles, and answer if brotherly love became God's love over the period of human history.*

INTRODUCTION

Le Morta d'Arthur or "The Death of Arthur," is a collection of the tales about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and it was first published in the year 1485. It is attributed to Sir Malory Thomas. The central themes are destiny, identity, and the ideal quest that narrate tales of the formation of Arthur's England and its tragic demise.

Sir Thomas Malory translated the book, *Le Morte d'Arthur* from the French. Scholars have said that Malory had been unacquainted with all the stories in the original French version, therefore he did not translate all the tales onto the English version. Eugene Vinaver, the author of *The Works of Sir Malory Thomas*, explains that the text of *Le Morte d'Arthur* was either written from a source different from the French original, or that Malory interpolated into the text, his own versions of the tales. Vinaver, later on, partially withdrew from his findings, and stated that it appears that Malory had considerable knowledge about the Arthurian legend, and his knowledge played an important part in the stories that were translated into the English version. (Wilson, 33 – 34)

Beowulf is considered to be the first great narrative poem and heroic tale in the English language. The author is anonymous but is considered to be somebody who was a Christian with a considerable knowledge of Christian-Latin culture. It is about a man and his tribe in Northern Europe, when Germanic tribes were still migrating to Britain. (Godden, 142) “The Kingdom of England was created by Anglo-Saxon politicians, soldiers, and churchmen in the ninth and tenth centuries.” The story of *Beowulf* itself belongs to the period c. 440 A.D. – c. 495 A. D. (Godden, 1) It was brought to England by the Anglo-Saxons during the sixth century, and the poem was created after 700 A.D. The manuscript of *Beowulf* was written down c. 1000 A.D. (Klaber, xxx)

These two books are reflective of the Medieval times in Europe.

Love, during the Middle Ages was viewed differently than how we view it today. There were different categories for love, and each fit into neat compartments, unlike today wherein it is difficult to categorize different forms of love as distinct from the other. In a marriage, the wife was considered to be the property of the husband, and she did not have the authority to take important decisions, and she was jealously guarded by the males in her family – by her father before marriage, and by her husband after marriage. Adultery committed by a woman was a crime with harsh punishments.

Le Morte d' Arthur comprises of tales that pertain to eros, whereas there are no such references in *Beowulf*. The only kind of love that has been mentioned in *Beowulf* is that of brotherly love amongst tribesmen who take care of each other in times of need, and who celebrate with each other in times of joy.

LOVE, LUST, AND ADULTERY IN MEDIEVAL TIMES.

The middle world looked on love as a spiritual activity rather than physical. Love of God was considered as the highest form of love. Love was seen as an abstract noun. To some, it meant a word detached from things real and sensible. To others, it was a means by which ourselves, and our very beings, were affected if love happened to us. The materialistic view of love is that it is a physical thing. It is a base lust that manipulates and controls our behaviour. The spiritual view of love is that it is a spiritual thing that helps us to experience God.

There were three types of love, namely Eros, Philia and Agape. Eros is sexual love or desire combined with passion. Philia is the love of something, especially connected with sexual attraction that is not considered normal, or a liking and valuing of the other. Agape refers to the paternal love of God for man, of man for God, and brotherly love for all humanity.

Today, 'Personal Love' is the love directed towards a person or individual, such as the love of one's spouse, parent, child, or friend. One harbours care and concern for their love object, and this kind of love cannot be neatly categorized into Eros, Philia or Agape. It is a love and concern for the other person, for their own sake. One desires to form a bond or union with the other, as a "we." One confers significant value on the other, and expresses love in acknowledging and responding in a way to the beloved which is different from how one expresses the same emotions towards others. When one values another, one projects intrinsic values into them.

In the Middle Ages, lust was viewed as a sin that hampers reason. The young were expected to behave lustfully, and punishments were harsher for older people, in cases of adultery. Adultery by wives was a greater offence than adultery by husbands, due to possibilities of illegitimate children. Kings were free to do whatever they wanted.

In the Middle Ages, romance did not always translate into a material. Bards sang about their desires, but their true love almost never materialised into something tangible. The upper class was not free to marry whom they chose, and they resorted to express their emotions in songs. Love during the Middle Ages was a quest the gentlemen constantly pursued, but they almost never attained their love object. Love was not only about sex or idealization of the lady, but also about how God could be found. The poet wrote for the wife of his lord. She was someone superior, and unattainable. Court marriages were a social and economic bond, and theorists describe erotic love as existing outside marriage.

Among the surviving Old English and Middle English literatures, most of what survives to date are those that were stored in monasteries. They had a better chance at preservation. The secular written works did not survive, and therefore the objects of our study are based on books that were written and preserved in monasteries.

Eleanor of Aquitaine (1124-1204), wife of King Henry II of England, introduced the idea of Courtly Love to early medieval England which was then ruled by a patriarchal Church. They viewed Courtly Love as a reaction against the strict moral attitudes of the Catholic Church, which disapproved of Courtly Love in the 13th century.

The Church considered spirituality as the main vocation of man, although sex was considered legitimate and useful for procreation in a marriage. Sexual desire was viewed as less desirable, and celibacy and virginity were considered the best way of living life. Thomas Aquinas believed that lust undermined reason, and corrupted morals and judgement.

The law punished fornicators, those who engaged in premarital sex. Clergy were required to report known fornicators to the law authorities, who punished them with either fines or by coaxing the couple to marry.

Peasant women were considered to be easily available. If a nobleman desired a peasant woman, one who couldn't feel love, then he was free to rape her on the spot, without any penalties, even when violence was involved.

(Bullough, 6) Adultery (sex between married people who were not married to each other) was seen as a more serious sin. If a man committed adultery as a result of passion, his actions were acceptable as long as his emotions did not involve love. Female adulterers were punished more harshly, because adultery could result in illegitimate children, and it broke marriage vows. The Court would be hesitant to punish a man who murdered his wife's lover. Chastity was more important for a woman than a man.

The Raptus Law was a rape law. A man could be charged with abduction and rape of the woman, even if she eloped with him willingly. A wife was property of husband, and needed the husband's permission to take a lover. Wives, if found guilty of adultery, could have their nose and ears cut off.

Sex within marriage was considered a venial sin, but necessary for procreation. Adultery was a mortal sin. If one seduced the master's wife or daughters, the punishment was death. A king that did not take a mistress was considered effeminate. In love, the central idea was that the woman was unobtainable. Knights and nobles were encouraged to put an unobtainable woman on a pedestal, then wander around in a lovestruck or even, lovesick state.

ADULTERY AS VIOLATION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

The groom would pay the bride money during the marriage, and therefore the wife was considered to be the property of the husband, because he had bought her. There are two traditions under which the marital laws fell, the Germanic tradition and the Roman tradition. Biblical references were also used in interpreting the laws. (Bullough, 5) "Medieval society responded to adultery based on Germanic and Roman law codes." It was more liberal than either of the two. Unlike earlier times, medieval canon and secular law recognised the responsibilities of both the parties, rather than just the woman as the sole offender. St. Thomas Aquinas argued that it was a breach of trust.

Medieval concepts about adultery derived from German, Roman and biblical sources, where Roman and biblical sources ultimately proved more influential than the official ideology. All three sources showed traditional male-oriented attitudes. The Christian scriptures modified the traditional male-oriented attitudes to a certain extent.

Woman was seen as belonging to man. Any interference with her would outrage man's sense of property or ownership, and it would result in intense jealousy. The law's concept of adultery was that adultery was a violation of property rights, and were applicable only to women. The condemnation of female adultery was not the same in all societies. But women who partake in extramarital relationships usually receive greater condemnation than men. If the husband arranged for the extramarital relationship, then such cases are seen as exceptions.

In Germanic society, a woman's chastity and virtue had property value. The women were property of the males. Women were always under the protection of a male, such as father, brother, son or other near male relatives.

Wifely adultery is the most frequently mentioned extra marital sexual-related activity, and it is more a crime of property than that of sex. The husband in most cases had the right to kill the wife, and her accomplices, if he caught her with her lover in an intimate state. A husband was free to fornicate as long as he was not involved with a married woman, which would violate another man's property

rights. Female virtue had property value to husband, brother, father, or a male guardian. The male relatives were allowed to impose physical punishment on a man who had trespassed in carnal intimacy with a female relative, without fear of any retribution.

(Bullough, 6) Roman tradition also regarded women as property. Romulus, the legendary founder and first king of Rome, gave a lecture on the sanctity of marriage tradition, and emphasized that, in the new state, women should always be faithful to their husbands. Married men could have all the extramarital sex they desired. It was considered to be adultery by a man, only when he was involved with another married woman. This violated the property rights of another man. A father was allowed to kill his adulterous daughter if she and her lover were found in an intimate state, in either the father's house, or the husband's house. A husband could kill the wife's lover but not his wife. He also had to seek divorce immediately. (Bullough, 7) "The husband of an adulterous wife was obliged to seek a divorce immediately after finding out about her conduct, or else he would be punished as procurer."

(Bullough, 8) In Biblical references, adultery had economic implications. A husband would pay the bride price at engagement or wedding, and therefore the woman was considered as the man's possession. He had exclusive rights to her. Therefore, adultery was considered to be a violation of his exclusive rights to her. Whereas the man's extramarital sexual relations did not violate the property rights of the woman. The standard punishment for an adulterous woman was stoning.

In the Middle Ages, the Church in Augustinian Christianity considered sexual activity as a sin. (Bullough, 9) This gave the Church official means of interfering with the sexual practices of their parishioners. Unapproved sexual activity, paganism, and homicide were the three capital sins, and those who committed these sins were excluded from the Church community. Their membership could be restored only after submitting to public penance for a predetermined length of time.

The Property laws in Roman Britain said that once a boundary had been set to a property, the boundaries persisted for a long time. It also said that the rich could extend his property by buying out his poorer neighbour's property. The same code applied to adulterous women. While the man was permitted to have all the sex they wanted (extending the scope of their property), the sexual boundaries set on women were fixed and persisted for a long time. (Walthew, 337) "The simplest interpretation of these developments is that one owner more prosperous than the rest had bought out his less successful neighbours and extended his property

across their sites. The objection to this view seems to be that if the buildings had represented original allocations to individual owners along the street-frontage, greater consistency in their widths might have been expected.” (Walthew, 338) “But perhaps the most compelling support comes from Caistor-by-Norwich, the more important since the property-boundaries, once established, seem to have persisted.”

LOVE IN BEOWULF

There are no references to romantic love in Beowulf. There is love and protection towards one's tribe, people. The Danes who travel to the Geats' land ask Hygelac, the Geats' King for his love and protection. (Tolkien 350) “I have learned, too, that this fierce slayer in his savagery to weapons gives no heed. I too then will disdain (so love me Hygelac, my liege lord!) to bear either sword, or wide shield, yellow-bossed, to battle, nay, with my gripe I shall seize upon the foe, and engage in mortal contest with hate against hate – there to the judgement of the Lord shall he resign himself whom death doth take.”

They had the concept of brotherly love, that is love for the warriors who were in their army, or who fought along with them as allies. Did this brotherly love become God's love in the history of man?

A person introduces/identifies the self by stating the name of the father and ancestors. Can it be inferred that children born of sexual promiscuity were illegal? Inter-tribal marriages existed. If they married outside their clan, then what was their view on incest, and what was the situation of children thus borne? Love of mother is reflected in the story of Grendel. However, Grendel is an evil creature, without a father. Were bastards considered as evil, or products of evil acts?

LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

The phrase, ‘Le Morte d'Arthur’ translates to "the death of Arthur." It was first published in 1485, and is attributed to Sir Thomas Malory. It is a collection of Arthurian tales. Malory's work is a translation from French, and contains summaries of various tales of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Through these stories, Malory describes how chivalry and romance was in the medieval times. The establishment of the printing press was the most important event of the fifteenth century. (Evans, 299) It was established by William Caxton, who was a printer and a translator, and was heavily invested in extending the English language. Caxton and the printing press's influence helped to make English a standard language. Le Morte d'Arthur was one of the works that Caxton

printed in 1485. The book was written by Malory in about 1470. *Le Morte d'Arthur* is written in a style of prose that is understood by modern readers.

There are three Sir Thomas Malory who could be the possible author of the work. The best evidence suggests that the Sir Thomas Malory who wrote the work while serving his time in prison for various crimes. The long list of his crimes does not tally with the ideals of honour mentioned in his book. The legend of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table were being told long before Malory wrote his version of the book. Today, his *Le Morte d'Arthur* is the most renowned source for Arthurian legend.

At the heart of the story in *Le Morte d'Arthur*, lies that of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Fate, Lineage, and the quest for the Holy Grail lie at the centre of the book. The story revolves around the formation of the then England during Arthur's time, and its eventual disintegration. The story has myriad characters and tales of many colours, which show us the kingdom's key moments.

In the beginning of the story, Uther Pendragon is the king of England. He is in love and lust with Igraine, the Duchess of Tintagil. After the death of the duke of Tintagil, Uther and Igraine conceive a child, who is named Arthur. Merlin plans that Arthur be raised by a family other than his real parents. He also prophecies that Arthur would become a king and would unite the kingdom. When Uther dies, the throne is empty. This is followed by chaos. Arthur pulls the sword, Excalibur, from the stone and is thereby made the king of England. Other kings disagree with Arthur's kingship, and they wage a war against Arthur. He wins the war and also learns about who his real parents are. He accepts his identity and destiny.

Arthur begets the child Mordred, with his stepsister, Queen Margawse, who he did not know was his stepsister. Mordred is prophesied to kill Arthur and to render his kingdom obsolete. Arthur creates a code for his Knights of the Round Table that maintains peace in the kingdom. In the end, his kingdom becomes divided from within and eventually disintegrates. The book, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, is made up of 21 books. Each book focuses on a particular character or circumstance.

Arthur was conceived, born and he rose to power. Arthur engages in two wars, and wins them both before becoming the king of England. He makes alliances with the kings of France, Ban and Bors. Arthur tries to kill his son and nephew, Mordred. Merlin prophecies the rise and fall of the Round Table. Book II discusses Sir Balin, the Knight with Two Swords, and his brother Balan. King Rience of North Wales, a foe to Arthur, is defeated by Balin and Balan. They help

Arthur to prevail over the twelve kings of the North. The brothers end up killing each other because of a mutual confusion about their identities. Book III discusses Arthur's marriage to Guenever, and his inheritance of the Round Table due to his marriage to Guenever. A series of quests are introduced in this book, along with several important characters such as Sir Gawaine, Pellinore, and Tor.

Merlin is buried alive by Nimue the Damosel of the Lake. Arthur goes to war with the five kings of the North. Margawase, also called Anna and Morgan le Fay is introduced as Arthur's stepsister and foe. Book V discusses how Lucius' delegates demand that Arthur pay the truage for the realm that is owed to Rome. Arthur rejects to pay the taxes and Lucius, the Roman Emperor, decides to make a war against Arthur and England. Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table travel to meet Lucius's forces, and win the war. Arthur moves his army through Europe, surrounding towns and cities, and forcing them to submit to defeat. When he arrives in Rome, he is crowned the new Roman Emperor. Sir Launcelot is introduced as a main character. Book VI discusses the early adventures of Sir Launcelot where he defeats Sir Turquine, a powerful knight, escapes from Queen Margawse, and defeats the two giants. He is the best knight in the world, whose love for Queen Guenever is introduced, and he also tells that he doesn't want to marry as doing so would hinder his chances to meet with new adventures.

A young man arrives at King Arthur's court. Sir Kay scorns and mocks at him by naming him as Beaumains, which means fair hands. The young man lives in their court for one year, after which Sir Launcelot knights him before seeking adventure with the damosel Linet. Linet's sister is Dame Lioness. We come to know later that Beaumains is Sir Gareth, the fourth son of King Lot and Queen Margawse. His brothers are Gawaine, Gaheris, Agravaine, and Mordred. Gareth kills the Black Knight and his brothers, enemies of King Arthur. This places him in the position of a noble person. Gareth then rescues Dame Lioness from the attack of Knight of the Red Launds (Sir Ironside). Gareth falls in love with Dame Lioness and wins her hand. They wed each other, after which he is announced to be the fourth most powerful knight in the real. The only ones ahead of him are Sir Launcelot, Sir Tristram, and Sir Lamorak. Sir Tristram was born as the prince of Liones, and was later knighted by his uncle, King Mark. He defeats Sir Marhaus, who is a knight of the Round Table, and an Irish prince. He travels to Ireland to find the cure to a cursed ailment. He ends up falling in love with La Beale Isoud. After his return to Cornwall, we see that King Mark is jealous of Sir Tristram and hates Tristram. Tristram is made to go to Ireland to bring Isoud so that Mark could wed her in Cornwall. Tristram brings Isoud to Cornwall but his attachment to Isoud grows stronger, and they begin their secret relationship. Isoud is married to Mark but they continue to be in a secret relationship. King Mark becomes very

anxious over Sir Tristran's becoming a powerful knight. King Mark, then makes several attempts to have Tristram killed. Eventually, Tristram is accused of treason for his relationship with the Queen, and Tristram escapes. He marries another woman. Sir Lamorak, King Pallimore's son and a powerful knight, is introduced. Tristram becomes famous, therefore Mark makes many futile attempts to kill Tristram in England. Tristram goes to Cornwall, wins a war, and flees from jail. He lives happily with Isoud at Joyous Gard, Sir Launcelot's castle but king Mark kills him by stabbing him in the back.

Sir Launcelot searches for adventure and reaches the city of Corbin where he is exposed to magic, and thereby made to sleep with Elaine, the daughter of the King. They conceive a child together named Galahad who is prophesied to become a better knight than Launcelot, and also the knight who will find the Holy Grail, or the Holy Sangreal. Launcelot returns to Camelot and does not tell anybody about his son. When Guenevere finds out that Launcelot has a son, she feels betrayed but forgives him on account of the child being begotten by witchery. Elaine reaches Camelot and Launcelot is bewitched to sleep with Elaine for the second time. Guinever, however, does not forgive Launcelot this time and banishes him from her court leading to Launclet's madness. He lives in the woods, surviving on fruits and water alone till the time a kind knight gives shelter to Launcelot. In the meantime, Guenevere sends her knights to find Sir Launcelot. They look for him for two years. Launcelot goes to Corbin, and there he is treated by the Holy Grail. He then goes to his castle Joyous Gard with Elaine. Launcelot then goes to Camelot where Sir Percivale and Sir Ector tell him that he Guenever is no longer angry with him.

The quest for the Holy Sangreal or the Holy Grail begins when 151 Knights of the Round Table set out to find the Holy Grail. Galahad, "the haut prince," Launcelot's son, goes to Camelot and is revealed to be the knight who will find the Holy Grail. King Arthur is worried that his knights have set out on a journey to find the Holy Grail. Galahad's actions prove him deserving of the Holy Grail, but Sir Launcelot learns that he should compensate for his faithlessness, despite being the best knight. Sir Percivale overcomes temptation and purifies himself on his quest for the Holy Grail. Sir Launcelot struggles to re-evaluate his faith.

Galahad, Percivale, and Bors go to the Castle Perilous, where they are welcomed by Joseph of Arimathea and Jesus Christ. The Maimed King had been in wait for them, and on their arrival, is healed when they invoke the Holy Grail. Galahad, Percivale and Bors take the Holy Grail to Sarras, the city where Galahad is made King when its tyrant dies. Galahad and Percival, later die, and Bors go to Camelot to narrate the story of the Holy Grail.

The relationship between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever is a long and secretive one. When Launcelot returns to Camelot after searching for the Holy Grail, they resume their secret relationship. But they are unable to maintain the secrecy because people in the court could see that they spent a lot of time together, and the court notices that they are having an affair. Launcelot begins to distance himself from the queen because he fears slander, but the queen does not understand his motives and once again, banishes him from court. Launcelot goes away from the court but returns to save her from being kidnapped. He also participates in a tournament, under disguise, and is wounded, when a young woman named Elaine falls in love with Launcelot. The Fair Maiden of Astolat is also known as Elaine. She falls for Sir Launcelot, and treats him so that his wounds would be healed. She proposes to Launcelot but he rejects her love and her proposal of marriage, because of which she dies of a broken heart.

Sir Agravaire and Sir Mordred find Launcelot and Guenever guilty of treason because of their adultery. They take the help of twelve other knights to trap Launcelot and the Queen in intimacy. Launcelot runs away by killing Sir Agravaire and other knights. He wounds Sir Modred. Arthur decides to take revenge on Launcelot because the Queen is his wife, and Sir Mordred is his nephew and son. Arthur orders for Guenever to be taken prisoner, and then be burnt at the stake for treason. Sir Gawaine, Arthur's favourite nephew, asks Arthur to release the queen, but Arthur does not budge from his decision. Launcelot goes out to save the queen, and kills over forty Knights of the Round Table, his own men. He kills Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, the brothers of Sir Gawaine. Gawaine decides to take revenge on Sir Launcelot. He coaxes Arthur to go to war. After the war, Launcelot seeks peace but is banished to France. Then Sir Gawaine coaxes Arthur to war in France. Launcelot and Gawaine meet at the battlefield, where Gawaine is wounded, and this ends the war. In the meantime, Sir Modred forges documents claiming that Arthur was killed in the battle. Mordred becomes the ruler of England in Arthur's absence. When Arthur comes back from France, he finds soldiers awaiting him. When Sir Gawaine had died, his ghost showed himself to Arthur in a dream as a warning sign. He tells Arthur that he should avoid the upcoming battle of Salisbury Plan because if he faces Mordred in battle, Arthur will die. Arthur then seeks for a treaty to delay the war. Mordred initially agrees with Arthur, but a misunderstanding lead to the war. At the end of the battle, Arthur finds that only Sir Bedivere and his brother Sir Lucan are alive, that the rest of his knights were felled in battle. Arthur kills Mordred but is himself wounded which eventually leads to his own death. His knights take him to the Isle of Avelion to heal his wounds, but Arthur dies there. Bedivere thinks

that Arthur was buried in a hermitage, so he, the knights, and Sir Launcelot retire as hermits. Guenever's body is buried next to Arthur's, Launcelot himself dies, and Sir Constantine, the son of Sir Cadour becomes the King of England.

LOVE IN LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

A common motif in *Le Morte d'Arthur* is that of a love triangle, where the wife takes a lover and the husband is jealous. (Williams, 77) "The situation – the jealous husband, the lady, and her lover is not uncommon."

(Malory, Book 1 Chapter I, II) King Uther Pendragon loved Igraine, the wife of the Duke of Tintagil, and desired to have lain by her. He propositioned to her but she did not accept his proposal. The King then killed the duke, went to Igraine's bed as the duke, and laid with her. On that night, Arthur was conceived. When Igraine heard about the death of her husband, she questioned who it was that laid with her that night, and the King revealed that it was himself.

(Malory, Book II, Chapter VI) Balin looked around him and saw a damosel come riding a horse. When she understood that Lancelot was slain, she made sorrow out of measure, and said to Balin that he had killed one man, but two hearts, and therefore he had lost two souls. She then took out her sword, climbed down the horse, and killed herself with her sword. Balin was filled with remorse, because he had killed Lancelot, and there was much true love between Lancelot and the damosel.

(Malory Book II, Chapter XVI, XVII) Balin rode for eight days, and then he saw a fair knight on the ground, mourning. When Balin asked him why he was mourning? The knight said that because a lady had promised to meet him there in the noon. The knight was about to kill himself because the lady broke her promise. Balin offered to help the knight (Garnish of the Mount) with the lady, so the two rode to her castle. Balin searched for her from chamber to chamber, and at last found her in the garden laying with another knight. Balin said this to Garnish, and brought him there. When Balin saw the two, he was filled with sorrow, and he bled from his nose and mouth. He smote off both their heads with his sword, and said to Balin that he had brought much sorrow to him.

(Malory, Book III Chapter I) King Arthur tells Merlin that he loves Guenever the princess, the daughter of Leodegrance of Cameliant. He tells Merlin that they hold the Round Table in their house. He says that Guenever is the most valiant and fair damosel. Merlin told him that she was the most beautiful and fairest damosel alive, but Lancelot loved her, and she loved him in return. Merlin went to Leodegrance's castle and said that King Arthur wished to marry Guenever. The

Leodegrance said that it was the best news he had ever heard that someone as worthy as Arthur himself showed interest in marrying his daughter. He gifted Arthur land, and The Round Table with a hundred knights.

(Malory, Book IV Chapter XIX) Sir Uwayne said that each of the three will choose a damosel. He being the youngest and the weakest will choose the eldest damosel for she has seen much, and she can help him when he has need. Sir Marhaus said he will have the damosel thirty winter of age for she falleth best to him. Sir Gawaine said 'thank you' for they left him the youngest and the fairest, and she was the most liefest to him. Then every damosel took her knight by the reins of his bridle, and brought him to the three ways, and they made their oath to meet at the fountain after one year if they were living. They kissed and departed.

BROTHERLY LOVE IN BEOWULF

The poet of Beowulf leaves a lot unsaid, for the reader to interpret. (Kightley 407) "Beowulf has long been recognised as a poem marked as much by what it does not say as by what it says."

The poem's style is understated and indirect. The poet uses allusions, obliquity and does not directly tell us many things but leaves it for the reader to make their own interpretations. Semantically, the poet's choice of words and motifs, tells us all the verbal action and relationships his subject requires. The poet avoids preaching to the reader, and only reveals certain cultural anxieties present in the text through absences or silences. Silences and absences are means through which cultural anxieties are made visible. For example, the relationship between biological brothers. There are several references to brothers in Beowulf. This motif could be a minor theme within the poem. But these brotherly relationships receive only little attention. They are given a cursory glance to draw attention to the matter, and then the poem shifts the narrative to another direction or character.

(Kightley 408) "The list of fraternal brothers in Beowulf is lengthy." The Danish brothers are Hrothgar and his brothers, Heorogar and Halga. The sons of Hrothgar, Hretic and Hrothmund. Unferth and his unnamed brothers. Aeschere and his brother Yrmenlaf. The Geats brothers are Hygelac and his brothers Herebeald and Haethcyn. The two heroes from the Swedish war, Eofor and Wulf. The Swedes, Ohthere and Onela, and Ohthere's sons Eanmund and Eadgils. There also are the biblical Cain and Abel.

Was Haethcyn's killing of his brother accidental or intentional? This is an important question in the poem, and it is left unanswered. The poet, here, uses uncommunicative means such as silences and delays, in order to create a tantalizing effect. Once the question has been posed, there are delays to unanswered questions. The reader is invited to interpret the answers on their own. We, as human beings, have an innate need to make meaning out of things. When one reads Beowulf's unanswered questions, they make their own assumptions about pagan Germanic society, and create their own answers. It becomes the reader's responsibility to fill the silences the poet has created.

(Kightley, 412) Unferth's "heroic qualities were highly esteemed despite his fratricide," in part because Unferth may not have tried to hide the killing, and so would not have been considered guilty of murder, which in those days meant a killing in secret. Unferth killed his brothers "at the swordplay," indicating that they were at a battlefield, and the brothers' deaths were the result of a battle that Unferth won. Unferth's brothers may have been at war with Hrothgar, making Unferth's killing of his brothers a service to his lord. (Kightley 413) "Unferth is all but impossible to characterize. It identifies the silences and uncertainties around Unferth as an intrinsic element of the text's mode of characterization."

The story, Beowulf, describes how the middle of his three maternal uncles, Haethcyn, killed his eldest, Herebeald by "missing his mark" with an arrow. Haethcyn committed a wicked deed or crime by engaging with his eldest brother in a fight. The crime that he committed was one without compensation. The death of Herebeald resulted in Haethcyn's direct succession to the Geatish throne.

There is a third fratricide in the poem, the biblical Cain's murder of his brother, Abel. This passage describes the apparent genesis of the race of monsters. It states that Grendel and his mother are descendants of Cain. It says that Cain's murder of Abel leads to his exile, and by extension implies that Grendel and his mother lived as outcasts of society because they were descendants of Cain destined to live in exile.

Scyld's successor is Hrothgar, who is not kin to Scyld. Hrothgar gives his family heirloom as gifts to Beowulf, who again, is not kin. This also implies that Beowulf was a successor to the Danes. This is brotherly love where the man in question might not be kin, but through his deeds earns the respect and trust of another man, resulting in brotherly love.

CONCLUSION

From the Medieval romance, such as *Le Morte d'Arthur*, we gather that the code of chivalry states that the love between a man and woman is expected to culminate in a monogamous marriage. Any form of adultery was frowned upon, and the adultery by the wife was a punishable crime. The institution of marriage seemed to have been more of a social contract, in which laws of property ownership were applicable to the woman. Due to the discrimination of woman, there seemed to have been resentment on her part, and the love between a man and woman in a marriage mutated into forms other than what it had been at the beginning of their courtship. That is, the love between a man and a woman did not last forever. On the other hand, the love between warriors and knights was a kind of love that was based on mutual respect and trust, and this kind of love lasted for a long time. Therefore, it can be said that brotherly love, or love for one's non-biological brother was true, and these lasted for a long time without having to set any social contract or laws to make the relationship binding.

In *La Morte d'Arthur*, the codes of chivalry and romance during the Middle Ages is described. These legends about King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table were told long before Sir Malory Thomas wrote them down, and before the book was printed. There are several stories about the love between a man and woman, their marriages, and how the codes of inheritance apply to their children. There also are stories about the brotherhood of knights, and how their love for each other translates into the existence of the Round Table, and the quest for the Holy Grail. It is a book about power, love and faith.

Beowulf, which is an older story when compared with *La Morte d'Arthur*, implies that brotherly love in non-kinship relationship is stronger than that in kinship. There are stories indicating brothers having killed each other over property and seat of power. Hrothgar and *Beowulf* receive inheritance from men who were not their kin. Their bond and trust for each other was a direct result of them having worked together towards the protection of their tribe and land.

When *La Morte d'Arthur* and *Beowulf* are compared for their stance on love, it can be inferred that the older story *Beowulf*, only spoke of brotherly love and reverence of Nature, and the newer story, *La Morte d'Arthur* spoke of chivalry, romance, love between man and woman, and love of God. Over the course of the telling and writing of these two stories, society had undergone changes and people had developed faith in organised religion. During the time of *Beowulf*, Christianity was being introduced to Europe, but the people had faith in Nature and they were mostly pagans. During the time of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Christianity

had already been established as a major and dominant religion. In both the times, it can be inferred that people had faith in a superior power, either in the form of Nature or Christianity.

However, during the time of the writing of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, that is, during the Middle Ages, the love for God was viewed as the highest form of love. There seems to be a gradual evolution of nature in the beliefs about love over the course of human history, but there is no definitive answer to the question whether brotherly love did indeed evolve into the love of God over the ages. This primarily is due to the lack of evidence in history, but from the evidence of preserved literature such as *Beowulf* and *La Morte d'Arthur*, it can be inferred that there was an evolution about the concept of love over the ages. This requires further study in the fields of history and literature, in order to understand in greater depth, the ideas about love, and how it evolved in the history of mankind.

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