

Florida Southern College

How the Mighty Have Fallen:
An Examination of the Luciferian Arc in Arthurian Legend

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Rationale:

Western society has long obsessed over and even fetishized Arthurian legend. Countless literary retellings and film adaptations of every genre clutter search engines and library shelves alike. Scholars are not exempt from the masses' love of all things Arthurian. A search of "King Arthur" pulls up 99,983 articles on JSTOR, and Arthurian scholarship even has an entire scholarly journal, *Arthuriana*, devoted to the once and future king of Britain. So, why write another scholarly thesis on a topic that has been discussed to and past the point of boredom? While a plethora of texts exist on Arthur, and a lesser but still impressive number on his most famous knight, Lancelot, the religious connections between Christianity and Arthuriana only discuss the similarities between Arthur and Christ. Lucifer is conspicuously absent from the conversation. Considering the parallels between the stories of Lancelot – and by extension Lanval – and Lucifer, leaving the topic unaddressed would be an act of literary negligence.

Before analyzing the Arthurian legend, it must be defined. Arthurian legends are set in the Middle Ages, either during or just before the reign of King Arthur. At times the legends detail the meeting of Arthur's parents, Uther Pendragon and Lady Igraine, and his conception, much like the Christian Gospels begin before the birth of Christ. After his birth, Arthur is given to Merlin, the druid-prophet of Arthuriana, to be raised by peasants. Some of the more recent legends, such as *The Once and Future King*, a fantasy novel written by Terrance Hanbury White and published in 1958, detail Arthur's youth and the process of his grooming to become king. These stories fill the gaps of more traditional Arthurian works, which usually skip over the years

between Arthur's birth and his ascension to the throne, similar again to the Gospels' portrayal of Christ. Arthur, unaware of his noble origins, bests the trial meant to determine who will be king of Britain after Uther Pendragon's death: he pulls a sword from a stone. After this event, Arthur defends his kingdom from those who would claim it. The challengers vary from legend to legend, but Arthur's elder sister Morgan – also known as Morgana, Morgaine, and Morgan le Fay – is his most consistent mortal foe. Arthur also builds Camelot, capital city and chivalric utopia, to which knights travel from all around to contend for a place at the Round Table. Arthur marries Guinevere, who falls in love with Arthur's right hand knight, Lancelot. Lancelot reciprocates Guinevere's affections, and the two conduct an affair for the better part of Arthur's reign. Towards the end of Arthur's rule, a knight stumbles upon the Holy Grail. Supposedly, the Grail was the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper. Arthur sends his knights on a quest to seek the Grail; many find it, but none can bring it back to Camelot. Civil war, sparked by the affair of Lancelot and Guinevere and ended by Arthur's betrayal at the hand of his treasonous son Mordred, ends the life of Arthur and many of his knights. Just before his death, Arthur's sister Morgan and other queens of nearby lands come to spirit Arthur away to Avalon, the realm of the faeries. In many tales, it is prophesied that Arthur will return, making him the Once and Future king, further tying him to Christ.

Arthur's knights, usually of great honor and renown, often star in their own tales. Such examples are *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a late fourteenth-century chivalric romance written by an unnamed writer known as either the Pearl Poet or the Gawain poet; *Tristan and Isolde*, made popular in the twelfth century but solidified by Sir Thomas Malory in 1469 in the collection known as *Le Mort d'Arthur*; and *Lanval*, written by Marie de France in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. These tales, featuring Arthur as a side character or not at all, still

adhere to the basic recipe of Arthurian legends: knights, damsels, chivalry, and action. The knights, usually members of the Round Table, embark on some sort of quest. If the knight is not one of Arthur's chosen, he will be by the end of the text. Love and chivalry play into the tale, almost always bound up in one another. The chivalric code presides over every aspect of Arthurian legend, detailing how a knight was to act in matters of court and combat. The list of chivalric commandments stated that knights were:

- To fear God and maintain His Church
- To serve the liege lord in valour and faith
- To protect the weak and defenceless
- To give succour to widows and orphans
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To live by honour and for glory
- To despise pecuniary reward
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To obey those placed in authority
- To guard the honour of fellow knights
- To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit
- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise begun
- To respect the honour of women
- Never to refuse a challenge from an equal
- Never to turn the back upon a foe

(“Knights Code of Chivalry”)

The chivalric code plays an important role in Arthurian legend. Knights lived, died, and loved by the code, despite its impossible standards. Without the chivalric code, Arthurian myths lose not only their authenticity, but also their character.

Arthurian scholarship, like Arthurian myth, varies greatly. While some outlying topics exist, the main categories of Arthurian scholarship focus on determining the origins of Arthurian myth, searching for a real historical person that may have inspired the tale of Arthur, conducting character studies on Arthur and his knights, analyzing the issues within the chivalric code, discussing the differences and similarities between Arthuriana or translations of Arthuriana and source materials (either older Arthurian myths or Pictish/Celtic myths), and debating the significance of the Holy Grail¹. As pertains to my thesis, character studies on Arthur and his knights, especially those comparing king and court to religious figures, and studies on the origins of Arthur will be important. Luciferian studies bring the essay together, as scholars debate on the reasoning behind reimagined characterizations of Lucifer.

One of the most popular avenues of Arthurian study involve character analyses of Arthur and his knights. These articles overlap with discussion of differing translations or reinterpretations of source material, as a knight's personality in one text may clash with that of another. For example, Albert E. Hartung's article "Narrative Technique, Characterization, and the Sources in Malory's 'Tale of Sir Lancelot'" discusses the differences between *Le Mort*

¹ For example, Douglas J. Bruce in his article "The Development of Arthurian Romance in Mediæval France," and Roger Sherman Loomis in his articles "Geoffrey of Monmouth and Arthurian Origins" and "Medieval Iconography and the Question of Arthurian Origins" explore the origins of Arthurian myth and try to uncover whether or not Arthur really existed. Character studies on Arthur's knights include David C. Benson's "Gawain's Defence of Lancelot in Malory's 'Death of Arthur'" and Elizabeth Scala's "Disarming Lancelot." Issues within the chivalric code are addressed by R. M. Lumiansky in "The Relationship of Lancelot and Guenevere in Malory's 'Table of Lancelot,'" while comparisons of source materials appear in Tom Pete Cross's "The Celtic Elements in the Lays of 'Lanval' and 'Graelent.'" P. E. Tucker discusses the significance of the Holy Grail in his article "The Place of the 'Quest of the Holy Grail' in the 'Morte Darthur.'"

d'Arthur's Lancelot and previous, more violent incarnations of the same knight. In the same manner, I will examine the differences in Lancelot and Lucifer, as I argue that one is an incarnation of the other. Malory wished to create in Lancelot "a model of perfection," and so sanitized some of his more Luciferian traits, into which I shall delve further in later sections of this thesis (Hartung 253).

In Arthur's case, the comparisons are loftier. Historian Mary Williams calls Arthur "a real person, not a euhemerized god" in her article "King Arthur in History and Legend" (73). Williams' mentioning of the split between God and man harkens to High Christology: the idea that Jesus Christ himself was both fully god and fully man. Further, the fact that Williams specifically states that Arthur was not a god proves in itself that he has often been compared to one.

The origins of Arthurian myth, chronologically and culturally, still mystify scholars. According to historian Robert J. Bruce, the first indication of King Arthur that scholars have found so far is by Nennius, a Welsh clergyman, "between the years 796 and 822" (319). Arthur was mentioned as defeating the Saxons "in twelve different battles, one of which, the Battle of Mount Badon, can be dated back to "the beginning of the sixth century" (Bruce 319). But, as scholars delve deeper into history, the answers they seek become more elusive. The historian that recorded the Battle of Mount Badon makes no mention of an Arthur, and so the trail grows cold again. Arthur, a name "of Roman origin" appears perhaps in a line "of Welsh princes... in the sixth century," and once again the tangled loom of history foils us (Bruce 319). No definite answers as to where or when the Arthur myth was conceived nor whether it circles a real historical figure have been found. Perhaps scholars will keep digging forever, lured by the mystery that is the real Arthur.

Luciferian scholarship follows a far different track than that of Arthuriana. While Arthur's reputation has seldom been sullied in the twelve hundred or so years of his existence, Lucifer constantly faces the aftershocks of his origin. Both literary and spiritual incarnations of Lucifer face immediate stereotyping, but more recent incarnations of Lucifer have pushed against the stereotype of pure evil, beginning with John Milton's Lucifer from *Paradise Lost*. Milton's Lucifer possesses the "psychological depth and dramatic autonomy" fitting of a hero, as Andrew Escobedo notes in his article "Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels" (787). Lucifer is the most highly developed character in *Paradise Lost*, just as Lancelot is in Arthurian myth, and as Escobedo says, "personification... is energy" (788). If Escobedo is correct, then scholar Frank S. Kastor's description of Lucifer as an "immense and multifarious accretion of many ages and imaginations" gives him tremendous power (374). Writers have tapped into that power for centuries as they write new characterizations of Lucifer, sanitizing and shaping him to their will to create a new entity. Lancelot, the perfect knight and yet the reason for Arthur's destruction, is one of those new entities. Most vital to my thesis is the connection between Lucifer and Lancelot.

The two texts represented in this thesis have vastly different views, as both showcase the influences of their times on their authors. However, both Marie de France's *Lanval* and Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Mort d'Arthur* contain a Lancelot character who follows the Luciferian Arc. While Lancelot's first appearance in Chretien de Troyes' *Knight of the Cart*, written in the late twelfth century, does not follow a Luciferian Arc, Lancelot soon strays from his original storyline. Besides their similar narrative arc and the shared presence of a Lancelot figure, *Lanval* and *Le Mort d'Arthur* were chosen for their differing portrayals of the chivalric code and Arthurian court. *Lanval* reveals the flaws of courtly love and even describes Arthur as "evil",

while *Le Mort d'Arthur* lauds courtly love and the chivalric codes to the point of improbability (de France 48). The contrasting materials within *Lanval* and *Le Mort d'Arthur* provide a solid basis for a thorough examination of Lancelot's trek along the Luciferian Narrative Arc.

Despite the existence of older source material, the canon of Arthurian obsession revolves around a single text: Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Mort d'Arthur*. Malory, a knight himself, obsessed over the ideals of Arthurian chivalry, and created the most comprehensive and linear collection of Arthurian myth of his time by combining French and English source material into a unified narrative. While the comprehensive nature of *Le Mort d'Arthur* makes it a prime candidate for an encyclopedia of the Arthurian, Malory took liberties with his source materials. Lancelot, highly sanitized from the original source material, became "a type of the ideal knight" (Hartung 252). Though the title of the work translates to "The Death of Arthur", much of the narrative revolves around the adventures and achievements of the Knights of the Round Table. The foremost of these knights, Lancelot, figures as the protagonist. Though the tale begins with the events surrounding Arthur's birth, it ends with Lancelot's death.

While *Le Mort d'Arthur* covers the greatest amount of Arthurian material, Marie de France's *Lanval* boasts the most interesting origins. The only Arthurian text of the Middle Ages to be written by a woman, *Lanval* challenges the toxic structures of chivalry and courtly love. In fact, the text even goes so far as to challenge gender roles. As *Lanval* was written closer to the inception of Arthurian myth, and because of its blatant rebellion against the very values for which Arthuriana is known, the text complements *Le Mort d'Arthur*. *Lanval*, seen by some as a renamed Lancelot, maintains the distinction of being one of the few Luciferian characters to secure a happy ending despite his fall.

Arthurian myth and Christianity interweave inextricably, and with the timeline of Christianity's establishment in the British Isles, it's not hard to see why. Though Christianity came to Britain in the first century with the Romans, the cult had little to no success drawing in converts. In fact, until Emperor Constantine's conversion in 313 C.E., the Christian church was viewed as a threat to Rome and was therefore persecuted. The public execution of Christians would have been a healthy deterrent for curious pagans, British and Roman alike. Even after the acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, no organized attempts of Christianizing Britain were made until 597 C.E. when Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, "created a strong alliance between Christianity and Kingship" with the Anglo-Saxon kings under the direction of Pope Gregory the Great ("Christianity in Britain"). Under the rule of the Anglo-Saxons, "the earliest mention of Arthur occurs in the 'Historia Brittonum' compiled by an ecclesiastic of South Wales, named Nennius, somewhere between the years 796 and 822, according to the most recent authority" (Bruce 319). The Anglo-Saxon kings, freshly Christianized and fighting off Viking invaders, needed a hero. Who better to tell stories of than Arthur, the perfect Christian warrior-king, to inspire troops to charge into battle against the pagan horde? Douglas J. Bruce, author of "The Development of Arthurian Romance in Mediæval France," agrees that Arthurian origins predate the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth, which with their publishing in 1136, coincide closely with the Norman invasion of the British Isle by William the Conqueror in 1066. Bruce theorizes that the Arthurian legend only gained strength and popularity in the break between the works of Nennius and Geoffrey, further enforcing the idea that Arthur and Christianity in Britain grew together, and are therefore entwined.

Because of Arthurian myth's dependency on Christianity, it makes sense that the characters within would follow an allegorical pattern. However, some tend to forget that allegories have multiple narrative arcs, and instead focus on the Christ Arc; a character from humble origins creates a radical ideal, thus attracting follower-zealots who betray the Christ-character to their death. I argue that another highly important character arc exists within the allegorical genre: the Luciferian Narrative Arc. I created the term "Luciferian Arc" to refer to the narrative progression of the Judeo-Christian archangel Lucifer, the precursor to Satan or the Devil.

Those unfamiliar with the strange intricacies of the Satan-Lucifer duality, especially uneducated Christians, use the names interchangeably. Lucifer means "Morning Star" and refers to the archangel who, before his rebellion, served as the right hand of Yahweh, or capital-G Judeo-Christian God ("Lucifer"). Satan means "adversary" and refers to post-rebellion Lucifer ("Satan"). Lucifer rebelled against God; Satan tempts mankind and works toward the destruction of Christ and his church.

With that distinction established, we can move forward to defining the stages of the Luciferian Arc. It has four stages: Right Hand of the Sovereign, Temptation, Rebellion, and the Fall. Though I will give the definitions of the four stages below, imperfect adherence to all four stages of the Arc would be fairly common among Luciferian characters. Some characters fit into the Luciferian Arc in more abstract ways, as I will detail later. While the Arc has its origins mainly in the Old Testament version of Lucifer's tale, the narrative arc can be explained as it applies to other characters, such as Anna Karenina of Leo Tolstoy's 1877 novel *Anna Karenina*.

The first stage, Right Hand of the Sovereign, is where the Luciferian character begins in the story. The sovereign can be a god or a king, or someone less lofty who still rules over the

Luciferian character. In a setting such as Victorian England, or the in strict caste systems of India, the sovereign may be society instead of a person or entity. The position of right hand is a place of honor and service for the Luciferian character, usually a place of second-in-command. The proximity to power usually provides the Luciferian character with the boldness to proceed through the entire Luciferian Arc. Lucifer, as heaven's most perfect angel, metes out God's will to the other angels both in battle and in civil matters. Anna Karenina, for a literary example, shines bright in the social circles of Russia's elite, taken in and mentored by the most powerful women in the land: wives of the nobility. Additionally, Anna aids her husband, a revered statesman, in his every endeavor. In essence, she is the golden child of society and the right hand of her husband.

Second comes Temptation. The Luciferian character fights the lure of an outside source that would lead to the betrayal of the Sovereign. Because of the Luciferian character's proximity to the power of the sovereign, pride, jealousy, or the notion that their power makes them untouchable may fuel the temptation of the character. Lucifer's pride in both his looks and his power makes him think that he is God's equal and tempt him to take the place of God on heaven's throne. Anna Karenina meets the dashing Count Vronsky, who attempts to seduce her despite the knowledge that she is a married woman.

In the third step, Rebellion, the Luciferian character takes steps to acquire the entity that so tempted them. While the rebellion phase of the Luciferian Arc is often violent, the pain the Luciferian character causes the sovereign is not always physical. Non-violent rebellions are equally common. Lucifer wages civil war on Heaven with a third of the angelic host in an attempted military coup. Anna participates in a long-lasting affair with Count Vronsky that not

only causes her to eventually separate from her husband, but also sets her at odds with social expectations of affairs' brevity, secrecy, and romantic detachment.

Lastly, for a character to be truly Luciferian, he must fail and Fall. The Luciferian character may, on rare occasion, receive a happy ending, but their rebellion must cost him something dear to his heart. After his army fails to take Heaven, Lucifer is cast out by his brother the archangel Michael and falls, in some translations literally, to the depths of Hell. Not only is Lucifer cut off from Heaven, he also must endure suffering in Hell. Anna's fall removes her from all she holds dear. Her husband denies her any access to their son. Society shuns her any time she tries to make a public appearance, and Anna's former friends will not visit or speak to her. Anna and Vronsky's relationship become strained when Vronsky mother tries to wed him to an heiress. Finally, Anna throws herself under a train when the full weight of her position as a "fallen woman" and her rocky relationship with Vronsky drive her to desperation.

While the term "Luciferian Arc" and the examination of allegories through the lens of Lucifer rather than Christ are solely mine, the Luciferian Arc appears in a number of texts. Not only Lancelot and Lucifer himself follow the Luciferian Arc. From Faust to Harry Potter, texts old and new feature characters who move along a Luciferian narrative. Shakespeare's Macbeth and Lady Macbeth of the 1606 play *Macbeth* top the list of most famous (or infamous) Luciferian characters. Macbeth, and by extension of medieval property law his wife, begins his tale as the right hand of King Duncan of Scotland. After hearing the prophecy of three witches, Macbeth is tempted to overthrow Duncan, and rebels against the Scottish crown by murdering the King. After a time on the throne, Lady Macbeth falls from grace – and possibly a window – and Macbeth himself falls in battle. Likewise, Dr. Faustus of *Faust*, originally of German legends, but made popular by Christopher Marlowe in 1593, can also be considered a Luciferian

character. Though Faust's story begins with him as the right hand of academia, a master of every field, Faust is tempted by dark magic and rebels against Christian academia by summoning a demon to learn literally everything. When Faust fails to repent from his sinful ways, he is dragged into Hell to complete his fall. Most recently, Peter Pettigrew from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, published between 1997 and 2007, has joined the ranks of Luciferian characters. During his younger adult life, Pettigrew is chosen over Sirius Black, James Potter's best friend and the obvious choice as the protector for Harry's parents' home. Despite acting as the right hand of the Potters, Pettigrew is tempted by the power and recognition granted to him upon joining the evil Lord Voldemort and betrays the Potters to their deaths at Voldemort's hand. After many years of service to Voldemort, Pettigrew is strangled by his own hand, a magical prosthesis gifted to him by Voldemort, and so falls from the good graces of both the good and evil sects of the wizarding world.

As a champion of Christian doctrine, Arthur exemplifies many of the same characteristics as Christianity's founder. Arthur takes for his queen Guinevere, who – like the Christian church – falls in love with a tempting, charismatic underling of her king instead of remaining faithful. However, who does Lancelot, Guinevere's lover, represent? Lancelot and Lucifer's similarities are striking. To clarify, Lucifer and Satan, or the Christian idea of the Devil, are different aspects of the same being. Satan, the Devil, constantly wars with Christianity, working to bring temptation and ruin to followers of the Christ. Lucifer, archangel, becomes Satan after he falls from heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer is the right hand of Yahweh, the most powerful and beautiful archangel. Much like Lancelot is tempted by Guinevere, Lucifer is tempted by his pride and rebels against Yahweh. Because he follows the Luciferian story arc, and because of the

similarities Guinevere and Arthur share with the Christian church and Christ, Lancelot is a representation of Lucifer in Medieval literature.

To prove my thesis, I will analyze the Luciferian arcs of two Arthurian texts: *Le Mort d'Arthur*, written by Sir Thomas Malory in the 1460s, and *Lanval*, written by Marie de France between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. *Lanval* and *Le Mort d'Arthur* feature Lancelot, also known as Lanval, through vastly different frames. *Lanval* was written two to three centuries earlier than *Le Mort d'Arthur*, and the female authorship of the text is evident in both the characterization of Lanval and the progression of the plot. *Le Mort d'Arthur* also bears the marks of time and authorship. Sir Thomas Malory, a failed knight, made Lancelot into the perfect example of chivalry that he himself could never be, while also granting Lancelot the lightest sentence for his crimes against the Church and the Crown. Though the texts seem polar opposites at first blush, excluding the similar characters, the same Luciferian Arc runs through both texts. Using Biblical material on Lucifer, I will proceed through each step of Lancelot's and Lanval's progression through the Luciferian Arc. Any differences between the characters' portrayal and advancement through the steps of the Arc and Lucifer's narrative progression will be noted and discussed accordingly.

To begin, I will detail the social situations of both Lancelot and Lanval during the first stage of the Arc: the right hand of the sovereign. Lancelot, as warrior and chivalrous knight, rises to King Arthur's right hand. Lanval, conversely, holds no favor with the Arthur of his tale and instead is the right hand of the court and the church. Lancelot and Lanval both find their temptation in women of royal status, yet their temptations vary drastically. Lancelot, tempted by his love for Queen Guinevere, will commit treason against Arthur if he acts upon his love. Lanval, on the other hand, is tempted by his love for a Fairy Queen. By loving a pagan creature,

Lanval will betray Christianity and possibly give up his soul. In the third step of the Luciferian Arc, both Lancelot and Lanval rebel against their sovereigns. Lancelot consummates his love for Guinevere, starting a civil war in Camelot when Guinevere's life is threatened. Lanval, too, rebels for the love of a queen, but he rebels against the idea of courtly love being owed to Queen Guinevere and against the Church by loving the Fairy Queen. Lastly, both Lancelot and Lanval fall from their coveted positions as the right hands of their respected sovereigns. Lancelot is exiled and denied Guinevere's love, so he joins a monastery to repent from his sinful life. Lancelot dies alone on his sickbed, no longer a knight or a lover. Lanval's fall is cushioned by his happy ending. Though he loses his knighthood, his religion, and possibly his soul, Lanval gets to live happily ever after in eternal youth with his Fairy Queen in the land of the faeries, known as Avalon.

Part 1: The Right Hand of the Sovereign

Throughout many cultures both ancient and current, the firstborn son has a place of honor within the family. He is considered the heir to his family's fortune, the next in line for the coveted position of patriarch. Often, the firstborn son is the right hand of the father, managing the estate and acting on the father's behalf. Biblical Jewish culture followed the tradition of the firstborn as heir, beginning, surprisingly, with Lucifer. Lucifer, widely accepted as the first archangel and therefore the firstborn of all creation, would be the heir to Yahweh's handiwork if not for Christ. Despite the language of the Trinity, in which God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are three separate beings and yet one entity, an argument can be made for Lucifer as heir because he was the first created being. Either way, the original Lucifer inherited all the perfection of a universe without sin. Ironically, he would be the one to introduce that sin. Ezekiel 28: 12-15 describes Lucifer as:

...the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. (New International Version)

This description of Lucifer – once again the archangel, not the devil – speaks for itself. As the firstborn, Lucifer has inherited both the physical and intellectual perfection of his creator.

Further, the stones that adorn him are also those described in Exodus as the stones decorating the breastplate of the High Priest of the Israelites: “The first row was carnelian, chrysolite and beryl; the second row was turquoise, lapis lazuli and emerald; the third row was jacinth, agate and amethyst; the fourth row was topaz, onyx and jasper. They were mounted in gold filigree settings” (NIV, Exodus 39: 10-13). The similar language suggests that Lucifer, much in the manner of a high priest, led worship among the angels. As the right hand should, Lucifer engendered loyalty in his father’s subjects, the angels. In addition to angelic priesthood, Lucifer was also tasked with guarding humanity in Eden, further proving that he acted on God’s behalf as a trusted servant.

Nevertheless what, other than perfection, gave Lucifer the qualifications to become the guardian of Eden, and therefore humanity? The book of Isaiah adds the role of general to Lucifer’s many inheritances, proclaiming that Lucifer was “the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home” (NIV, 14: 16-17). The general of a kingdom acts as the military hand of the king, solidifying Lucifer’s place as the right hand of God before his fall. No one, not even another angel, would dare to cross a warrior and general such as Lucifer, especially if he were God’s chosen. Such a terrifying conqueror would make a fitting guardian for God’s

new favorite creation, the human race. However, if the world was indeed without sin before Adam and Eve tasted the fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, we must wonder what why humanity needed protection at all.

Arthurian legend has its own Eden, a utopia in which chivalry rather than primordial man flourishes. This Eden, known as Camelot, spawned ideas of equality among men with its Round Table, made so that no man could sit at the head of it and command the rest by position alone. Despite the appearance of equality and democratic intentions in Camelot, Arthur ruled as king simply because he had inherited the throne as his birthright. The empty promise of equality attracted knights who would rise above Arthur, and the promise of Camelot, like Eden, was cut short by betrayal from within.

Like Eden, Camelot too needed a protector. Enter Lancelot, young and eager to prove himself to the new King of Britain: Arthur Pendragon. Arthur, like God, is the sovereign of the tale: king of the realm and every living thing in it. As the enemy forces of Roman Emperor Lucius invade, Lancelot offers his ““army of twenty thousand,”” including himself, willing to ““fight to the death in [Arthur’s] service, although [Lancelot’s] lands would be the first to suffer from an invasion”” (Malory 97). During that first battle, Lancelot distinguishes himself as an accomplished warrior as ““no enemy knight [has] been able to withstand him, and he [strikes] awe in the hearts of his comrades and the enemy alike”” (Malory 106). Much like Lucifer, Lancelot proved that he was the first among his brethren in the art of war. After the battle, Arthur takes Lancelot into his service as a knight of the Round Table, and tales of Lancelot’s prowess continue to traverse the realm.

Unlike Lucifer, Lancelot has to prove himself as the best among Arthur’s knights rather than being created for the honored place of right hand. So, Lancelot travels the land taking on

quests to demonstrate his prowess. Among Malory's collection of tales concerning the exploits of the Knights of the Round Table, Lancelot displays superhuman prowess. When facing off against three enemy knights, "Launcelot, with seven tremendous blows, [brings] all three knights to their knees and begging for mercy" (Malory 129). The tale is one of many, part of a litany of Lancelot's praises. As his reputation grows, Lancelot is known as "the most powerful of all [Arthur's knights]" and proceeds to gain the position of Arthur's right hand (Malory 149). After gaining the position of right hand, similar to Lucifer, Lancelot commands tremendous respect among his comrades. In fact, the knights of Camelot are referred to by Malory as "Sir Launcelot and the knights of the round table" as if he were their leader, rather than Arthur (Malory 161). So great is Lancelot's reputation as a warrior "that Lancelot frequently disguises himself" to maintain his status as the greatest knight in the realm because "as Arthur's best knight" he is "continually without peer, and, thus, without opponent" (Scala 385). By referencing Lancelot as the leader of Camelot's armies, Malory sets the stage for Lancelot to challenge Arthur as Lucifer challenged God for the throne of Heaven.

Not only does Lancelot surpass his brethren in the art of war, he also outshines them in matters of chivalry. Malory states that "Of all [King Arthur's] knights one [is] supreme, both in prowess at arms and nobility of bearing, and this [is] Sir Launcelot, who [is] also the favorite of Queen Gwynevere, to whom he [has] sworn oaths of fidelity" (118). Not only does Lancelot act as the right hand of Arthur, but he also serves Guinevere, making him the right hand of both sovereigns of the realm. Because Guinevere represents the Church as Arthur's wife, just as the Church is the metaphorical bride of Christ, service to her and exemplary adherence to the chivalric code makes Lancelot a leader in chivalry just as Lucifer was a leader in matters of worship. Known as the "flower of knighthood," Lancelot not only gains the praises of the

royalty, but his fellow knights as well (Malory 133). Sir Cador remarks to King Arthur that “there is one among us who is surely the finest knight living: I mean Sir Launcelot” and Sir Tristan, the second most famous lover in all of Medieval literature, calls Lancelot “the gentlest and bravest of all knights” (Malory 107, 184). Considering that Sir Gawain once killed a man for breaking the code of chivalry, such heavy compliments certainly carry weight among the other knights. Just as Lucifer commanded the respect of the angelic host as well as God’s favor, Lancelot gains the respect and favor of Arthur’s knights and of Arthur and Guinevere. Because of his renown for chivalry and combat, Lancelot becomes “the most famous knight in Arthur’s court,” making him even more suited for his activities as right hand due to his reputation (Malory 136).

While Lancelot’s talents are many, his faults are few. The only negative trait about Lancelot’s physical talents is that he apparently cannot climb. There is a certain irony to the statement that he is a “very poor climber,” because while Lancelot used his talents as a warrior on the battlefield and as a chivalrous knight in Camelot to climb the social ladder of Arthur’s court to become the king’s right hand man, the physical act of climbing alludes him (Malory 133). Perhaps he could use his metaphorical climbing skills to escape the other hole he digs for himself: his love for Guinevere.

Though Lancelot may have been beloved by knights and royalty alike, de France’s Lanval does not receive the same treatment. Lanval, “beloved by many of the Court, because of his beauty and prowess,” begins his tale not at the right hand of Arthur, but of Arthur’s court and of Christianity (de France 43). As a knight, gaining the favor of the court would aid in Lanval’s rise within the ranks of Arthur’s army, so becoming the right hand of the court would be wise. Just as Lancelot and Lucifer gain the respect of their comrades knightly and angelic, Lanval

works to curry favor in Arthur's court. Further, part of a knight's duty according to the chivalric code is to keep the Christian faith, "[t]o fear God and maintain His Church" ("Knights Code of Chivalry"). Lanval, as a knight, is tasked with the protection of the Church just as Lucifer was tasked with protecting humanity. As Lanval is a knight at the beginning of the tale, we can assume he is in good standing with the Church.

However, Lanval is not in good standing with Arthur. According to de France, Arthur "misliked" and mistreated Lanval by withholding the patronage due from a monarch to his liege (43). Unlike Lucifer and Lancelot, Lanval was bereft of the favor of his king. Feudal systems during the Middle Ages were as complicated economically as they were socially. In addition to the chivalric code, a sort of trickle-down patronage existed as well. In medieval society, "the division between married and unmarried men in the twelfth century... constituted a class division" with married men being "patrons" that took on unmarried men as "clients" (Finke and Shichtman 482). Lanval, likely a patron himself as the son "of a remote king," cannot "support his own retinue of clients" (Finke and Shichtman 488). In denying patronage to Lanval, Arthur not only harms Lanval, but those whom Lanval supports as well. In the article "Magical Mistress Tour: Patronage, Intellectual Property, and the Dissemination of Wealth in the 'Lais' of Marie De France" by scholars Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, Lanval's economic situation is explained thusly: "The love that Lanval would owe Arthur – if the king were a reliable patron – is transferred to a mysterious fairy mistress, and economic issues become issues of courtly love" (Finke and Shichtman 489). So, while Arthur is one of the sovereigns that Lanval serves, Lanval is not at Arthur's right hand. Unlike Lancelot and Lucifer, Lanval finds himself not at the right hand of a king or a god, but of a socio-economic system.

No matter whom the right hand serves, it seems that perfection, or near perfection, is a necessary quality for the position. While Lucifer in his angelic splendor makes a superb candidate for the right hand of God, Lancelot had to be calmed and given a moral conscience before becoming “the ideal knight and the foremost among all of Arthur’s knights” (Hartung 252). The “French source” that Malory used to create *Le Mort d’Arthur* characterized Lancelot as a violent, “out of control,” hot-headed man that made a more historically accurate representation of the feudal mercenaries known as knights than a role model (Hartung 256, 257). Malory, perhaps to rectify the crimes for which he was imprisoned – “assault and robbery... rape, armed assault, conspiracy to commit murder, horse stealing, and extortion” – molded the violent Lancelot from a “brutal... callous” murderer into a “self-control[led]” man who excelled on the battlefield and gained the affection of any woman who looked upon him, even the taboo love of his queen (“Sir Thomas Malory,” Hartung 257). While Lancelot becomes the masculine version of knightly perfection, Lanval’s perfection rests in the feminine eye. Marie de France created the medieval version of a romance novel cover model with her Lanval, making him the ideal knight not for men, but for women. Where Lancelot has a secondary lover, the Lady Elaine, Lanval remains true to his Fairy Queen even when tempted by the forbidden fruit of the Eden known as Camelot: Queen Guinevere. Moreover, Lanval takes direction from the Fairy Queen, and his fate is in the hands of women rather than his own. A male character that listens to his female counterparts may have seemed the most eligible bachelor in the world to a woman in the Middle Ages.

Part 2: Temptation

However, perfection cannot last. No matter how much humanity strives for perfection, attempts at perpetuating it lead to disaster. In the case of Lucifer, being the angelic heir to all

creation leads to a prideful streak. According to the Bible, “[Lucifer’s] heart became proud on account of [his] beauty, and [he] corrupted [his] wisdom because of [his] splendor” (NIV, Ezekiel 28:17). Lucifer suffered from a textbook case of vanity as well: loving himself above all else. Because he was the wisest and most beautiful angel, Lucifer thought that he would be able to rule better even than God. He began coveting God’s throne and his place as king in Heaven.

Ascribing words like pride, vanity, and covetous to Lucifer leads to an interesting point. Lucifer, Lanval, and Lancelot all commit many of the Seven Deadly Sins. However, their punishment varies based on which sins their cultures find most acceptable and which sins they shun. Lucifer is punished particularly for his pride, the most hated sin of Jewish and Christian cultures, while medieval society punishes Lancelot and Lanval more harshly for their lust. According to Christian tradition, the Seven Deadly Sins, also called “cardinal sins or capital vices” were those that “could not be forgiven” (“What Are the Seven Deadly Sins?”). Lust, Avarice, Envy, Sloth, Vanity, Gluttony, and Wrath round out the set. According to Adam Shannon, the definitions of the Seven Deadly Sins include the following. Lust, described as “an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body,” usually manifests in sexual sins, such as the infidelity between Lancelot and Guinevere (Shannon). Avarice, also known as Greed, is “the desire for material wealth or gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual” (Shannon). Part of Lanval’s choice to be the Fairy Queen’s consort is driven by his desire to escape poverty, even at the cost of surrendering his soul to a pagan creature, and so he displays Avarice. Envy, or “the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation,” applies to Lancelot’s desire for Guinevere and Lucifer’s desire for God’s throne (Shannon). Wrath, or the “spurn[ing] of love... for fury,” appears in Lancelot’s eagerness to kill his fellow knights (Shannon). Vanity, or Pride, is the “excessive belief in one's own abilities... that interferes with the individual's recognition of the

grace of God” (Shannon). Because Lucifer’s pride led him to rebel against God, it has been deemed “the sin from which all others arise” (Shannon). Sloth and Gluttony, described as “the avoidance of physical or spiritual work” and “an inordinate desire to consume more than that which one requires,” respectively, are the only two of the Seven Deadly Sins that do not apply to Lucifer, Lancelot, or Lanval.

The treatment of sins changes between the writing of the Old Testament and the development of Arthurian myth. Where pride had been the ultimate sin in the Jewish theocracy, the monarchies of Europe cared less about their subjects’ narcissism and more about keeping their thrones. Because of the emphasis on the line of succession and the ideal of the sexless chivalric romance, the cardinal sin shifted from pride to lust. Lancelot and Lanval mirror Lucifer in their temptation by the cardinal sins of their times, sins that led them to rebel against their respective sovereigns.

Lust begins with the desire for another’s body. For Lancelot, that desire comes in the form of Guinevere. Though Malory’s narrative remains ambiguous as to when Lancelot and Guinevere’s affair begins, rumors of their affections for each other appear far before their affair is discovered. Those affections spark in Lancelot the temptation to rebel against Arthur not for the crown, but for the love of the queen.

To be fair, Arthur is warned that his future bride will love another before they were even wed. After Arthur chooses the lovely Guinevere as his bride, Merlin informs him that “Gwynevere is destined to love Sir Launcelot, and he her, and many disasters will result from their love” (Malory 57). Despite Merlin’s counsel, Arthur marries Guinevere and welcomes Lancelot into the ranks of the Knights of the Round Table, as if he wishes to invite disaster upon Camelot. When Lancelot, a knight of renown and an eligible bachelor, refuses to marry, the

citizens of the kingdom turn a critical eye to his position as “the favorite of Queen Gwynevere” and the “oaths of fidelity” he has sworn to her (Malory 118). Gossip soon spreads across the land, and all of Britain knows of their illicit love. While it is neither confirmed nor implied that the couple shares a bed, other dark rumors surface. When an unnamed noblewoman’s attempts to seduce Lancelot fail, she informs him that ““It is whispered, of course, that Queen Gwynevere has cast a spell over you so that you shall love no other”” (Malory 127). The charges of witchcraft and infidelity must be whispered by the common folk, both for their own safety and the safety of the queen. And, as Guinevere and Lancelot are only tempted by each other, the charges are nothing but rumor.

While the gossip seems not to harm Guinevere, as it has not yet reached Arthur, it does affect Lancelot. In addition to the more harmless noblewomen who would marry into Arthur’s favor, Lancelot attracts the wrath of other, more dangerous and powerful women. Morgan le Fay, Arthur’s half-sister and nemesis, captures Lancelot and attempts to use his desire for Guinevere to break his spirit and bind him to her cause in one fell swoop. Morgan gives Lancelot this ultimatum: ““Sir Launcelot, I know that Queen Gwynevere loves you, and you her. But now you are my prisoner, and you will have to choose: either to take one of us [four queens] for your paramour or to die miserably in this cell” (Malory 120). Either way Lancelot chooses, Morgan wins. He will fight as a pawn of Morgan or her underlings, or he will rot in a cell unable to defend Camelot or Arthur from Morgan’s schemes to usurp the throne. However, Lancelot’s lust for Guinevere is stronger even than his instincts for self-preservation. Lancelot spurns Morgan and escapes, following the temptation to return to his queen and lover.

Though the rumors only perpetuate that Lancelot and Guinevere are lovers, and treason is never mentioned, the couple’s public actions have warranted enough suspicion that word of their

indiscretion has reached the far corners of the kingdom. Lancelot at least must have given an outward sign of his desire for Guinevere, a desire that tempts him daily to rebel against his king. As has been proved time and time again in royal circles, rumors of infidelity are the most dangerous kind of rumors for a queen.

While Lancelot's temptation is to rebel against the king for the hand of the queen, Lanval's temptation differs in the method but not from the form of Lancelot's temptation. As the right hand of the church and of Arthur's subjects, Lanval's temptation leads him down the path of blasphemy and counter-culture rather than that of treason. In a similar manner to Lancelot, however, he too is tempted by the sin of Lust.

Like Lucifer, Lanval too is tempted to act against the religious organization to which he is the right hand. However, instead of usurping a position of power within the Church, Lanval's temptation leads him to betray his faith to paganism. Fairies of the Middle Ages and earlier pagan lore, also known as faeries or fey, were not the sweet, winged miniature women that the 2008 franchise of *Tinkerbell* movies portrays. Instead, fairies are powerful tricksters from the Pre-Christian era of Europe. Tales of the fey involved the theft of the beautiful and pure, such as "secretly exchang[ing] their otherworldly children" called changelings "for mortal ones," and often ended in tragedy for any humans involved (Alexander 57). In particular, English fairies were known to "steal children, rob homes, and damage crops" (Alexander, 55). Fey were fickle, dangerous, and not to be trusted. So feared were the fairies that many Medieval homes contained charms and tokens to ward off unwanted feyfolk.

Not only do the feyfolk have deep ties to paganism, their personalities also reflect a good number of the Seven Deadly Sins. Lust, Envy, Wrath, Avarice and Vanity number among the common faults of fairies, and because of their sins and their connection to paganism, a protector

of Christianity such as Laval would know better than to fraternize with fairies. However, Lanval's own lust and avarice tempt him. When the fairy maidens, servants of the queen who eventually takes Lanval as her lover, arrive to escort Lanval to their mistress, Lanval is overwhelmed by their beauty. In fact, "fairer maidens Lanval had never seen" (de France 43). With their otherworldly beauty, the three women, the Fairy Queen and her two servants, make up a sort of pagan Trinity to tempt Lanval away from the Trinity of the Christian church. When Lanval meets the Fairy Queen, he finds her to be "Whiter... than an altar lily, and more sweetly flushed than the new born rose in time of summer heat" (de France 44). De France juxtaposes contradicting images of purity and lust within the depiction of the Fairy Queen. Floral themes appear in both images, representing the femininity of the Fairy Queen. The "altar lily" is a Christian symbol, reminiscent of Easter and Christ. The "sweetly flushed" queen, carries the promise of sexuality, as her blush indicates an arousal that will create a different kind of "summer heat" between herself and Lanval. If Lanval gives in to temptation and acts on his lust for the Fairy Queen, he will betray his sovereign: the Church.

Indeed, Lanval's blossoming relationship with the Fairy Queen develops quickly into a carnal connection. The first romantic encounter between the couple occurs shortly after they meet, and the description of that encounter is one of a man giving in to his desires: "But one dish was more to the knight's relish than any other. Sweeter than the dainties in his mouth, was the lady's kiss upon his lips" (de France 45). While the two profess their love for one another, there seems to be a calculated, almost demon-like effort on the part of the Fairy Queen to seduce Lanval.

Not only does she send two beautiful maidens to fetch him, playing on Lanval's physical desires, the Fairy Queen also uses grand displays of wealth to entice the poverty-stricken Lanval

into becoming her paramour. How can Lanval, “pushed to the geographic margins of Arthur’s kingdom” by his “social, political and economic disenfranchisement as a failed client and patron” afford to refuse her offer of limitless wealth (Finke and Shichtman 489)? The Fairy Queen’s neatly executed seduction of Lanval lead to questions of why she chose Lanval in the first place. Lanval’s confession of love to the Fairy Queen lends insight into her plans. Lanval says to his new paramour, “. . .there is naught that you may bid me do – right or wrong, evil or good – that I will not do to the utmost of my power” (de France 44) Lanval gives himself completely to the fairy, in essence selling his soul to her. She is the embodiment of temptation and the gateway to his ambitions.

While the themes of lust and betraying the sovereign for the love of a woman appear in both *Mort d’Arthur* and *Lanval*, *Lanval* contains two themes unique to Arthurian legend: the betrayal of Christianity to paganism and the appearance of the Lilith character. Lanval’s betrayal of Christianity by loving the Fairy Queen is tied up in the idea of Lilith. In the Christian Bible, Lilith has only a brief mention in the Old Testament “as a wilderness demon shunned by the prophet Isaiah” (Gaines). However, Jewish tradition states that Lilith was “the dreadful first wife of Adam” (Gaines). Because she was created from the same earth as Adam, Lilith was an independent and strong-willed woman who would not bend to Adam’s will. When Lilith left Eden and Adam behind, some tales say that she joined Lucifer and became the first demon. Lilith is often portrayed as a harlot and is the model for the succubus, representative of “chaos, seduction, and ungodliness” (Gaines). When the Lilith archetype is applied to the Fairy Queen, her motivations for seducing Lanval become clearer. The Fairy Queen, like the crossroads demons of lore, tempts Lanval with his greatest desire, an end to his poverty and loneliness, in

exchange for his mortal soul and earthly obedience. The temptation is too great, and Lanval relinquishes his soul, and therefore his religion, to be with the Fairy Queen.

Part 3: Rebellion

Once the temptation becomes too great, the Luciferian character rebels against the sovereign. The rebellion first begins when Lucifer finally decides to take action to claim leadership of heaven. The prophet Isaiah says of Lucifer, “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’” (NIV, Isaiah 14:13-14). Lucifer, in order to gain the throne of heaven that has so tempted him, gathered an army of angels to wage civil war.

Revelation succinctly describes the whole affair:

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.
(NIV, Revelation 12:7-9)

Not only did Lucifer wage war against his angelic brethren, he also abandoned his place as a perfect being by committing war crimes against his own people. While the act of war itself is not considered a sin in the Old Testament, seeing as the Israelites often waged war on their pagan neighbors at God’s behest, Lucifer is accused of taking war past what the Old Testament considered honorable and acceptable: “Through [his] widespread trade [he was] filled with violence, and [he] sinned.” (NIV, Ezekiel 28:26). For an Old Testament prophet to refer to a warrior as being “filled with violence” during a battle indicates incredible bloodlust on the part of Lucifer during his rebellion.

Civil war among the chosen warriors of the sovereign is not, unfortunately, limited to Lucifer. Lancelot, too, leads his fellow knights against each other, but for a far less selfish reason: to save the life of Queen Guinevere. To be fair, Lancelot helped set Guinevere on the path to her imminent demise. Lancelot's seduction of Guinevere, and therefore his rebellion against his sovereign, Arthur, begins long before Guinevere is led to the stake for her treasonous act of adultery. To win Guinevere's favor, Lancelot sends enemy knights on multiple occasions to "yield to Queen Gwynevere" instead of to Arthur, simultaneously undercutting Arthur and elevating Guinevere from queen consort to the primary authority of the realm (Malory 129 & 131). Not only would such an act disrespect Arthur, the sovereign, it might also tempt Guinevere with ideas of rebellion against Arthur. Perhaps because of Arthur's weakened image, Lancelot also rebels by committing adultery with Queen Guinevere "for fourteen years" before they are discovered. (Malory 378). Even when denied the Holy Grail due to his sins, Lancelot only takes a short break from his beloved Guinevere. Despite repenting from his sinful life of lust during the quest for the Holy Grail, when Lancelot returns to Camelot, he returns "to the queen with increased ardor" and he and Guinevere "[spend] many hours together as lovers do, both day and night," rebelling against their king and the social expectations of a medieval court (Malory 432).

Just as Lucifer's counterpart Satan entices Eve to eat the fruit in an act that becomes the first sin, Lancelot woos Guinevere into allowing him into her bed. The correlation between Lancelot as Lucifer and Guinevere as the Church is never as strong as in the scene just before they are discovered. Lancelot leads Guinevere to the bedchamber, knowing it will mean her death if they are discovered, and Guinevere, ever passive, gives in to the temptation and betrays her husband and Christ-figure by bedding his right-hand knight. And yes, they do commit

adultery. In her article “Disarming Lancelot,” scholar Elizabeth Scala describes Malory’s characterization of Lancelot’s affair with Guinevere thusly:

Malory’s depiction of their relationship is infamous for the way in which it defies his own attempts at explanation. Malory goes to great lengths to rationalize the events that make his hero cuckold his king and his heroine commit adultery. Oaths, trials, and ordeals continually ‘prove’ the lovers’ innocence in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. More importantly, Malory attempts to keep the relationship outside of physical terms. (387)

Despite Malory’s attempts to treat his favorite lovers’ affair with kid gloves, he does admit, if only once, that “Sir Lancelot lay down with the queen and they made love” (Malory 463).

When the lovers are caught, their rebellious actions set in motion a chain of events that end in the destruction of the monarchy and the realm. The first time Sir Lancelot takes up arms against his fellow Knights of the Round Table, effectively announcing his rebellion against Arthur, Lancelot kills “every one of the thirteen knights” that come to apprehend him except for Mordred as he flees Guinevere’s bedchamber (Malory 475). In true Luciferian style, Lancelot raises an army to rescue Guinevere from “burning at the stake” for treason (Malory 476). Lancelot’s knights engage in combat with Arthur’s knights, mimicking the civil war between the angels both in their rescue attempt and in Arthur’s later attempts to reclaim Guinevere.

While the element of civil war binds the tales of Lancelot and Lucifer, many aspects of their tales differ. Lucifer had only one attempt at rebellion, while Lancelot’s first two attempts at rebellion by bedding Guinevere are foiled by the Lady Elaine. Instead of sleeping with Guinevere, Lancelot has relations with Elaine by mistake. As can be expected, Guinevere is none too pleased with the situation, “furiously jealous of Elaine, and terribly angry with Sir Launcelot. However, when she heard of his enchantment, she forgave him” (Malory 341). Perhaps to reclaim Lancelot for herself, Gwynevere asked Lancelot to “come to [her] chambers” when she

called, but under enchantment again he spent the night with Elaine, who called him to her bed by a summons using “a ring... belonging to Queen Gwynevere” (Malory 337, 342). While the emotional fallout between Lancelot and Guinevere resolves quickly, the Lady Elaine never abandons her love for Lancelot or the child they conceive. Galahad, their son, is prophesied to be the perfect knight due to “the virtue of chastity” that is “exemplified in him,” and is the only heir to Lancelot’s legacy (Tucker 392). It is Galahad, the chaste foil to his father’s lustful rebelliousness, who takes up the mantle of perfect knight upon coming of age and joining the Knights of the Round Table in Camelot.

In addition to his multiple attempts at rebellion, Lancelot also differs from Lucifer in the outcome of their rebellions. Arthur loses every battle against Lancelot, both on his home ground in Britain and overseas when attempting to retrieve Guinevere. Lancelot, unlike Lucifer, refuses to kill his king or make any attempts to usurp his throne. In fact, Lancelot rescues Arthur from Sir Bors, who is “about to behead the king” and sends him away from the battlefield because he fears Arthur “will suffer an ignominious defeat” (Malory 484). Lancelot never waivers in his devotion to his sovereign Arthur unless it is to give even greater devotion to Arthur’s wife.

Lanval, too, rebels for the love of a queen, but in a less treasonous manner than Lancelot. With his mortal soul squirreled away in the Fairy Queen’s back pocket, Lanval’s devotion to his pagan paramour is understandably unwavering. He follows all of her instructions to the letter, except when Guinevere approaches him to cuckold Arthur saying, ““You may receive a queen’s whole love, if such be your care. Be content: he to whom my heart is given, has small reason to complain him of the alms”” (de France 46). When Lanval refuses to “break his troth” to honor both the fairy’s love and his king’s trust, Guinevere’s rage sets her on a course to ensure

Lanval's fall, and "in a fit of rage [she] attempts the Egyptian trick" that Potiphar's wife used to frame Joseph in the Old Testament, "though without the evidence" (Damon 973).

The love of a queen is the only thing that unites Lancelot and Lanval in their rebellion. Lanval's rebellion is more complex by far than that of Lancelot's, and even Lucifer's. First, Lanval rebels against gender norms by becoming the passive character. Lancelot and Lucifer are actors in their tales, but Lanval is only a reactor. S Foster Damon says in "Marie De France: Psychologist of Courtly Love" that de France "having observed [Lanval's] personality, equipped him with an appropriate heroine" and that "[de France] might reverse the sexes" (974). The women of *Lanval* control the title character's life, taking the active role usually reserved for men. Guinevere and the Fairy Queen approach Lanval and proposition him, further transferring the traditionally masculine roles to the female characters. Not only is Lanval bound by his promise to the Fairy Queen that their relationship is to "never be known," his fate is bound up in the testimony of Guinevere after he rejects her advances (de France 45).

Lanval's rebuffing of Guinevere represents not only a change in gender roles, but a cultural rebellion. Marie de France consistently rebels against the idea of courtly love and women's roles in her works. "Courtly love could interest her only for its actual results, not for its theoretical possibilities" (Damon 968). De France does, however, realize that the rejection of courtly love in her tales would realistically cause an amount of shock in her characters and writes their reactions convincingly. Lanval gives reasoning for his refusal of Guinevere, stating, "' I am the King's man, and dare not break my troth. Not for the highest lady in the world, not even for her love, will I set this reproach upon my lord.'" (de France 46). While *Le Mort d' Arthur*, the most widely accepted version of Arthurian myth, always pairs Guinevere with the ever-willing Lancelot, de France subverts the original tale, creating a little rebellion herself.

In fact, the idea of Lanval rejecting the norms of courtly love is so foreign to Guinevere that she simultaneously accuses Lanval of treason and homosexuality: “Launfal, she cried, ‘well I know that you think little of woman and her love. There are sins more black that a man may have upon his soul. Traitor you are, and false. Right evil counsel gave they to my lord, who prayed him to suffer you about his person. You remain only for his harm and loss’” (de France 46). Evidence of Lanval participating in homosexual acts or possibly even the rumor of his being gay would have dire consequences to his reputation and even his life. At this point, Guinevere is grasping at straws to get what she wants, hoping that Lanval will bed her just to remove the stain of rumored homosexuality from his social record. Instead, he responds to Guinevere with “I am not of that despised guild of which you speak. Neither am I a despiser of woman...” (de France 46). Lanval denies homosexuality and treachery in the same breath, putting them on the same level of taboo. Though Lanval has given himself over to the pagan Fairy Queen, he still follows the Biblical tradition of viewing homosexuality as a negative trait. Even in his betrayal of the Church, he cannot cast off the traditions and prejudices instilled in him by the Church from his youth.

Part 4: The Fall

The end of a Luciferian character’s arc at best is bittersweet and at worst tragic. In the case of Lucifer, the fall is indeed hellish. After his rebellion fails, Lucifer and the angels that joined his coup were banished from heaven. Lucifer is “[driven] in disgrace from the mount of God, and... expelled... from among the fiery stones.” (NIV, Ezekiel 28:16). A good number of verses describe Lucifer’s shame in being cast out when he once was the right hand of God. In fact, the prophet Isaiah emphasizes Lucifer’s former positions as “morning star” and “son of the

dawn” to illustrate the disgrace of his social and physical descent “from heaven” (NIV, Isaiah 14:12).

There is some disparity as to where Lucifer and his comrades were sent in their post rebellion failure. Isaiah states that Lucifer has “fallen from heaven” and has “been cast down to the earth, [he] who once laid low the nations!” (NIV, Isaiah 14:12). Isaiah also has an additional opinion on the final location of Lucifer and his minions, claiming that Lucifer was “brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit” (NIV, Isaiah 14:15). The confusion does not end with Isaiah. Revelation indicates that Lucifer and company arrived at a final destination that bears resemblance to the modern idea of Hell. The images of fire and torment appear in the prophetic book when discussing the fate of Lucifer: “And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (NIV, Revelation 20:10)

Most interesting of all, however, is the single verse that describes the formation of Hell. Because sin and imperfection did not enter into creation until Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, the universe would not have been created with a realm dedicated to punishing sin. Ezekiel describes, through God’s point of view, the creation of Hell thusly:

So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more. (NIV, 28:17-19)

According to Ezekiel, God used the angelic power within Lucifer to create Hell. Considering Lucifer’s status as firstborn and most powerful among all the angels, it’s no surprise that the fires

of Hell are eternal. Lucifer is literally trapped within a prison of his own making, creating an effective metaphor for the Luciferian characters to come.

To follow the trope, Lancelot's fall is entirely of his own making. One might even argue that Lancelot's fall is even more complete than Lucifer's. After the ascent of Lancelot's son Galahad to knighthood, Lancelot's title changes. Instead of being called "the finest knight living" Lancelot is informed that "of sinful knights, [he is] still the greatest" (Malory 107, 364). Because of his sin, Lancelot is also denied the Holy Grail, and so is further disgraced. "Launcelot wished that he too could rise up and kiss the Holy Grail, but because he was in mortal sin he was powerless to do so"; the mortal sin Malory refers to is, of course, Lancelot and Guinevere's affair (Malory 377). In essence, Malory implies that "Guinevere mars the perfection of [Lancelot's] knighthood," though she and Lancelot are equally at fault for Camelot's destruction (Tucker 393). Mortal sin, as discussed in Part Two of this thesis, is another term for the Seven Deadly Sins or the sins that could not be forgiven. Because of his unforgivable sin of Lust for Queen Guinevere, Lancelot cannot touch the Holy Grail or its metaphorical counterpart: God's glory.

Most devastating of all to Lancelot is neither the loss of his knightly status nor the denial of the Holy Grail, but the loss of Guinevere. When the Pope hears of the scandal in Britain, he sets out immediately to restore order to the monarchy. Upon the order of a papal bull, Lancelot returns Guinevere to Arthur, but is "banished" from Arthur's court by Gawain (Malory 487). Fallen from the favor of his sovereign and his peers, Lancelot, like Lucifer, cannot return to his home post-rebellion and so resigns himself to displacement. However, even with his former right hand banished, Arthur still finds the need for vengeance and excuses to raid Lancelot's lands. Exiled to France, Lancelot, who built an entire career on his love for fighting, allows Arthur "to ravage [his] lands" rather than "shed Christian blood in a war against [his] own liege" (Malory

490, 491). As seen in the first battle between Arthur and Lancelot, during the rescue of Guinevere, Lancelot still respects and cares for his former king. Even though Arthur's death would mean Guinevere could freely marry Lancelot, the knight refuses to go against chivalry and harm his liege.

By Lancelot's hand or nay, King Arthur is doomed. Arthur, when called back to Britain to defend Camelot from his bastard son Mordred, suffers a mortal wound in battle and is taken to Avalon, which Lancelot takes as his cue to return for Guinevere. When he returns to his homeland, Lancelot finds that Guinevere will not have him. She has retreated to a nunnery to atone for her decades of adultery, and will not even grant Lancelot's request for a parting kiss. Having lost everything he held dear, his knighthood, his homeland, his king, and his lover, Lancelot "retreat[s] to a monastery" (Malory 504). Lancelot's days are spent in prayer to atone for what he sees as a lifetime of sin and selfishness. When Guinevere dies, she is buried "next to King Arthur," keeping her separate from Lancelot for all time (Malory 505). Lancelot is buried alone.

Lancelot's punishment for his rebellion and his fallen state do not last for eternity as Lucifer's does. Perhaps due to his change of heart and unwillingness to strike down his king to take the crown, Lancelot is not sent to join the founder of his archetype in the afterlife. "Malory does not completely condemn Lancelot" despite his "destruction of true chivalric ideals for the sake of love" (Tucker 393, 395). Instead, he dies peacefully in his sleep and ascends to heaven. As such, Lancelot receives the bitterest of bittersweet ending to his fall, as we can assume Malory intended for him to join his two sovereigns in Heaven.

While Lucifer and Lancelot's fallen states are nothing short of depressing, Lanval remains as an example that the fall in a Luciferian character's arc can still end somewhat

happily. The beginning of Lanval's fall, however, is certainly painful. After Lanval rejects Guinevere in favor of the Fairy Queen, Guinevere tells Arthur that Lanval "very foully... had reviled her" after she "put him by" in response to his attempts to seduce her (de France 47). Without evidence, Arthur believes Guinevere's tale, even though she is "notorious as an adulteress" (Damon 973). Arthur is just as unaware of his queen's deception as he was in *Le Mort d'Arthur*, cementing the idea that Arthurian legend revolves around a total dunce. Instead of questioning his queen, Arthur imprisons Lanval and sentences him to die if the Fairy Queen will not appear.

In addition to receiving Arthur's ire, other similarities exist between Lancelot's fall and Lanval's. The knights, while not split in a civil war, are divided over whether or not they "grieved for the peril of a good knight in a strange land" or "held that it were well for Launfal to suffer, because of the wish and malice of their lord" and his dishonest lady (de France 48). Like the angels in Lucifer's war for heaven, the subjects of Camelot represent those faithful to Heaven's sovereign – who want Lanval to die for crossing Arthur – and those who sympathize with Lucifer, who are "Right sorrowful... because of [Launfal's] plight" (de France 48). Also, Lanval atones for his sins as Lancelot does. Instead of apologizing to God, Lanval apologizes to the keeper of his soul: the Fairy Queen. The language of Lanval's plea even mirrors that of the Lord's Prayer when Lanval begs the Fairy Queen "to forgive his trespass" (de France 47). Like Lancelot, Lanval's deity grants mercy on him and allows him eternity in paradise, for "only in Avalon [is the Fairy Queen's lover] made happy" (Damon 978).

Lanval's happy ending sets him apart from most other Luciferian characters. While he does suffer through his imprisonment and loss of knighthood after his departure into Avalon, Lanval's fall seems a cakewalk compared to Lancelot's and Lucifer's. First, the Fairy Queen

returns for Lanval despite her promise to abandon him if he were to reveal “to any man the secret of [their] love” (de France 45). Lanval is blessed for the rest of his days with the company of a woman whose least attractive maids “All men, old and young, looked willingly upon... for fair they were to see” (de France 49). Not only Lanval is tempted by the beauty of the pagan fairies, but he alone bears the favor of a woman so exquisite that Lanval’s comrades describe her as “neither black nor golden, mean nor tall. She is only the most lovely thing in the world” (de France 50). And, most fortunate of all, Lanval will live forever, young and preserved in Avalon, the land of the fairies.

While Lanval and his happy ending mark one difference between his tale and those of Lancelot and Lucifer, Lanval does bear a unique feature in all of Arthuriana. Arthur and Guinevere are the villains. Lanval himself admits that the work’s conflict began with a “quarrel between the Queen and me” (de France 51). Guinevere escalates the drama by telling Arthur her fabricated version of the events, “Thereat the King waxed marvellously wrathful, and swore a great oath that he would set Launfal within a fire...” (de France 47). The fire with which Arthur threatens Lanval is similar to the hellfire that greets Lucifer after his fall from heaven; both are created by former sovereigns as the ultimate punishment for the wrongdoings of their once-loyal servants. Arthur even takes on the characteristics of a villain to defend the honor of his corrupted queen, even adopting one of the Seven Deadly Sins: Wrath. The king’s adoption of such sinful behavior even credits a second mention, as de France explains “Right wrathful was the King at Launfal’s words. He conjured his barons to give him such wise council herein, that wrong might be done to none. The lords did the King’s bidding, whether good came of the matter, or evil” (de France 48).

While Arthur is bent on restoring his queen's honor at any cost, his underlings care more for their place in the king's favor than the possibility of their complicity in committing murder by putting an innocent man to death. It's no wonder that the knights loyal to Lanval fear for his safety when "Arthur look[s] upon his captive very evilly." (de France 47). In spite of the extreme character changes between *Lanval* and *Le Mort d'Arthur*, Arthur frees his captive and Lanval rides off to an eternity of bliss with the Fairy Queen.

Conclusion

As we have seen with the differences between *Lanval* and *Le Mort d'Arthur*, changes in era and audience have a powerful effect on the shaping of literature. For Lancelot and Lucifer, these changes are particularly drastic. Lancelot's portrayal over the ages has devolved from near-perfect knight and faithful lover to a flawed and sometimes entirely unlikeable character. Lucifer's transformation follows the exact opposite path of Lancelot's. While Lancelot has spent the last few centuries suffering the effects of a literary smear campaign, Lucifer has risen on newly restored wings.

With the publication of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* in 1667, a new kind of Lucifer was born. When he created the ultimate Byronic hero a century before Byron's birth, Milton dared to give Lucifer heroic qualities and charisma. While the fallout from the church seemed unending and even melodramatic, the damage was already done. Milton began a revolution. The being once seen as ultimate evil had sympathetic qualities. Unlike the Church's micromanagement of its parishioners, "there is the unusual nature of Milton's heaven, which gives evil desires considerable range before they incur divine wrath" (Escobedo 792). Perhaps in creating the lenience he wished to see in the Church, Milton connected to other repressed members of Christianity, and the idea of the sympathetic Lucifer spread.

As we progress forward in time from Milton to the contemporary Lucifer, the portrayals of Lucifer become more and more sympathetic. More recently, film and television have been saturated with Lucifers. *The Prophecy* (1995) features Viggo Mortenson as a Lucifer who, while still terrifying and evil, helps save humanity from impending doom. Will Smith plays a more reserved and by-the-book version of Lucifer who follows a strict set of rules to gain the upper hand over goodness in *Winter's Tale* (2014), yet he restrains the film's main villain during the protagonists' most vulnerable moments.

While the aforementioned Lucifers are minor characters at best, television utilizes the sympathetic Lucifer more heavily. In *Supernatural* (2005-present), the longest running science-fiction and fantasy television show in history, Lucifer's character follows a complex arc. Though he almost always features as a villain, he has likeable qualities such as humor and intelligence, and he even throws off the mantle of antagonist to help the protagonists on rare occasion. In true Luciferian style, however, *Supernatural's* Lucifer never loses the intimidating darkness that sets him apart from other antagonists. Most heroic of the television Lucifers is the protagonist of his own show, also named *Lucifer* (2015-present), which is based on the DC Comics comic book series of the same name. In the show, a comical take on the procedural crime drama, Lucifer abandons Hell and joins forces with a Los Angeles Police Department detective with whom he falls in love and often rescues.

While Lucifer's artistic path has been on the rise to popularity, Lancelot's has taken a nosedive. In literary works, Lancelot's version of *Paradise Lost* would be *Mists of Avalon*, written by Marion Zimmer Bradley and published in 1983. Not only does the text focus on Morgaine and the other women of Arthuriana instead of Lancelot, but Lancelot's portrayal is indeed negative. While he still maintains his handsome looks and battle prowess from earlier

legend, Lancelot's inability to elope with Guinevere or come to terms with his bisexuality and love for Arthur are seen as consequences of his indecisiveness. Lancelot's selfish nature and his inability to choose one of his two loves leads to tragedy.

In film and television, Lancelot's portrayals range from lackluster to downright damning. The 2004 film *King Arthur* starring Clive Owen as Arthur and Kiera Knightley as Guinevere features Lancelot, played by Ioan Gruffudd, as a side character. Lancelot's position as Arthur's second in command did little for his screen time, as the film is dominated by Arthur. This version of Lancelot is so weak that he doesn't even tempt Guinevere. She barely gives him a second glance on her way to Arthur. BBC's *Merlin* (2008-2012) makes Lancelot seem even less competent than the 2004 version. He appears in only six episodes out of four seasons, and for half of those he works towards his knighthood. He is neither accomplished in war nor love, as Guinevere once again falls for Arthur after a brief stint with Lancelot. Lancelot does not even fulfill the role of Arthur's right hand; that position is filled by Merlin. Lastly and most unlikeable of all is Lancelot's characterization in *Shrek the Third* (2007). Shrek, the ogre protagonist and title character of the *Shrek* franchise, meets teenaged Lancelot while searching for Arthur. Lancelot's prowess in battle is replaced with his prowess in sports, as he is the captain of the jousting team. He's also Arthur's bully and the typical "mean jock" stock character. Lancelot's inflated sense of importance and athletic cronies not only serve to make him entirely unlikeable, but turn the once admired Lancelot into a plot device.

What has changed since the Middle Ages that caused such a shift in Lancelot and Lucifer's portrayals? Since the beginning of the Post-Modern era, Western literature and media have turned traditional values on their head. As a society, we display less reverence for the value of the past and seek to rewrite biased, one-sided evaluations of popular characters. This rewriting

has expanded on Lancelot's flaws, turning him into an object of ridicule, while Lucifer has enjoyed a fair amount of sympathy for the Devil.

Lancelot and Lucifer's changes mark the next step in scholarly research. Where do we, as scholars go from here? What do we do with this research? Many topics await in the sea of academia that surrounds this thesis. For example, with the comparison between Lancelot and Lucifer already made, one could provide an in-depth discussion of the allegorical elements of Arthuriana. With Lancelot as Lucifer, and Arthur and Guinevere as Christ or God and the Church, respectively, arguments can be made that Morgan represents a Lilith character as a strong female character in opposition to the Christ figure. And, if Arthur is Christ, the guiding hand of Merlin must indeed be that of God the Father.

The character of Merlin in Arthurian legend leads to another point of potential research: the mixture of pagan and Christian elements. Arthuriana draws from Celtic myths such as "Graelent," druidic traditions, and fairy lore. Merlin, a druid himself, practices his magic without reproach while Morgan le Fay is considered Arthur's greatest enemy and a witch. The contradicting elements of paganism and Christianity would make for another interesting avenue of study.

What we take away from the examination of the Luciferian Arc is that new scholarship can be created at any time. Society is constantly changing and evolving, and with those evolutions, we create new points of view for the examination of older texts. The adherence to old scholarship is not only hindering, but at times it can blind us to paths to the future. With a new generation of fresh eyes contributing to the pool of academia, even over-analyzed texts like *Le Mort d'Arthur* and the Bible can seem new again.

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