Dynadan in Thomas Malory’s *Morte Darthur*

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要約

Thomas Malory 著「アーサー王の死」における Dynadan の役割

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物事の外面と内面が一致していることは、極めて稀である。Don Quixote には Sancho, Prince Hal には Falstaff を配置して、作家達は、人間性の複雑さの全貌を伝えようとした。宗教と愛の対立を内包する、Gaston Paris の所謂、“l’amour courtois”について、Andreas Capellanus, Chrétien de Troyes, Jean de Meun, Chaucer の解釈を通じ、その伝統下、Thomas Malory は、その "excellent absurdity" を直視し、宮廷恋愛の理想的具現者、Launcelot に対し、その矛盾に笑いをもって対処する。理性の knight, Dynadan を配置したと考える。Dynadan の言動を分析することにより、Malory の "l’amour courtois" の解釈、その悲劇的終結につながる Dynadan の意義につき考察した。
Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When everything seems double.'

Appearance and reality are rarely the same. To illustrate the double-faced complication of human nature, surely Hal and Falstaff or Quixote and Sancho are paired, that the reader might see appearance and reality as one whole and yet in conflict, namely, that the reader might take the proper view of the whole matter. Launcelot and Dynadan are such a pair in the *Morte Darthur* by Thomas Malory so as to illustrate the author’s view of the social code of love, termed courtly love.

In human affairs, especially, love is so inscrutable and problematical that even the Church has difficulty in dealing with the passion of love. In spite of the Church’s explicit commandment for chastity and that against adultery, St. Paul says, “it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion” (*1 Corinthians* vii. 9). In Christian iconography, as if to visualize man’s ambivalent sentiment about woman, there are the polar antitheses of Eve and the Virgin Mary. Sin came into the world through Eve, while redemption became possible because Mary was God’s Mother on earth. As carnal desire was taken as an unfortunate consequence of the Fall, Eve-baiting has never been seriously counteracted by the cult of the Virgin Mary, which began in the early centuries and reached its peak in the twelfth,² and fused into what Gaston Paris calls “l’amour courttois,”³ and what Wechsler describes as “a feudalisation of love.”⁴ It was a conception of love, in which desire itself became essential and, without giving up all connection with sexual love, cultural perfection flowered. Its characteristics “may be enumerated as Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and Religion of Love,”⁵ in direct contradiction with the Christian doctrine. It, in fact, signalled the final division between the heroic and the chivalric age.

Though the problem of how and why courtly love developed still remains to be solved,⁶ it suddenly found literary expression among the twelfth–century troubadours of southern France, spread into neighboring countries, and has been coloring the literature of most of western Europe for centuries. When it reached Italy, a noble fusion of sexual and religious experiences was achieved in *The Divine Comedy*. It went northward largely through the influence of Eleanor of Aquitaine who married Louis VII and later Henry II of England. Under the direction of Marie, Countess of Champagne, her daughter and an ardent devotee of courtly love, Andreas Capellanus, late in the twelfth century, codified this erotic sentiment in his *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, following the scheme of Ovid. It takes the form of his instruction in the *ars amandi* to a certain Walter, in which the Chaplain defines love as “an inordinate desire to receive passionately a furtive and hidden embrace” and extols adultery, declaring that “love can have no place between husband and wife” and that “it does not seem at all proper to class as a sin [love] from which the highest good in this life takes its origin and without which no man in the world could be considered worthy of praise.”⁷

Chrétien de Troyes is the greatest representative of medieval French romances, in
whose works the developed theory of courtly love is put in action in the course of narratives. However, though under the command of the Countess of Champagne, unlike Andreas the Chaplain, he was not unaware of the dangers and the schism between religion and love involved in the theories. He introduced Lancelot into the Matter of Britain, either by his own choice or by that of his patroness, as the proper and perfect courtly lover. The most famous incident of his career is that of the cart, told in *La Conte de la Charettet*. In pursuit of the abducted queen he lost his horse and hesitated for a couple of steps before mounting the cart of disgrace. Reason and love fought within him: he was “prompted by love’s commands,”8 and jumped in. When he rescued the queen after he had undergone many adventures, crossed the sword-bridge, and overcome the abductor, Guenièvre gave him a cold look because of his few steps’ delay. When they were reconciled, he came to the queen by night: as in a religious devotion, before her he kneels, holding her more dear than the relic of any saint and in the morning “his body goes and his heart remains.” He “bows and acts precisely as if he were before a shrine,” when he leaves the room (p. 329). As Chrétien does not forget to present his Lancelot as a man of courtesy, wisdom, and piety—when he passed a church, he dismounted a horse and entered on foot to make a prayer (p. 293)—the parallelism of religious worship with mock religious genuflection of Love in one man is too forced, imposing upon the author some struggle of conscience. His prologue to *Lancelot* sounds apologetic. He states explicitly that the Countess provided him with the subject matter and the manner of treatment and that he simply carried out “her concern and intention” (p. 270). Thus in the form of a compliment to his patroness he excuses himself for writing a story with which he is not wholly in sympathy. As a matter of fact, he left the work unfinished and its conclusion was written by Godefroi de Leigni (p. 359).

Courtly love, though it certainly testifies to the medieval interest in the mysteries and irrationalities of love—psychology, did not, from the outset, go without giving its theorist and poet some reluctance in disseminating its antagonism against religion. Even Andreas devotes the last section of his book to “the Rejection of Love,” if only nominally, while Chrétien, in presenting his Lancelot as an illustration of the perfect courtly lover, insists that the Countess alone was responsible for the *matière* and the *sens* of his work.9 The *Roman de la Rose*, begun before 1280 by Guillaume de Lorris, one of Chrétien’s successors, was finished by Jean Chupinel or de Meun before 1280, who, “for the veneration of idealized womanhood, ... substituted a cruel contempt for its feebleness,”10 believing neither in faithful love nor in the chastity of women. Some one hundred years later, Chaucer tried to provide his *Troilus and Cressida* with a double vision of courtly love—in Troilus a new Lancelot of Chrétien’s formula and in Pandarus a complacent instructor in Love’s law with Jean Chupinel’s insight into its reality with his contempt for it tempered by humour. At the courtly lover’s fear, Pandarus teases,” What are you so afraid of—that she’ll bite you?” and yet when Troilus kneels down at Cressida’s bedside, he runs to get a cushion for him to kneel on.11 The fatal discrepancy between love and religion in courtly love or what Charles Williams describes, by *oxymoron*, as its “excellent absurdity”12 is realized by Troilus only when he is slain by
Achilles and when he looks down from heaven where he was killed and laughs, condemning all the games of "blind lusts" (p. 578). Here courtly love is reduced to "blind lusts" yet his nobleness is remembered without denouncing "false" Cressida in Henryson's manner because Chaucer declares that he speaks "most/ for women whom false men betray" (p. 576).

Thomas Malory was aware of the alarming discrepancy between courtly love and Christianity and even between courtly love and chivalry. Before he started his role as a compiler of the Arthurian legends into a coherent whole around 1469–70, again nearly one hundred years after Chaucer’s Troilus and Cressida, he must have felt that he would provide the reader with a double vision in his Morte Darthur of the tragic schism or "the excellent absurdity" existing in the social code of love in his day. He presents two ways how to deal with it: one is the way that Launcelot takes, he suffers from it and at the same time he takes joy in it. The other is that Dynadan takes; he accepts courtly love and chivalry with their merits and demerits as they are with his merriest laughter. Whereas Troilus understands this "excellent absurdity" after he has left this earth, Dynadan’s interest is in this world. Launcelot and Dynadan, though the latter’s part in the whole work is small, are the two sides of the shield, named courtly love.

Malory seems to try to describe Launcelot as securely as possible as the ideal hero of chivalry and love in the early parts of the work, so that the reader may not lose sympathy with him toward its end. Launcelot comes into the story in Book IV where Merlyn meets him shortly before his death at the castle of his father, King Ban of Benwyke. Merlyn prophesies that this child, whose first name is Galahad, shall be the "moste man of worship of the worlde." And at the council before Arthur’s war with the Romans, "leepe in yong sir Launcelot de Laake with a lyght herte" (p. 138). During the war he distinguishes himself in prowess and becomes the first knight of the Round Table. In Book VI, after Arthur’s victorious return to England, Gwyenvere holds him in great favour above all others and Launcelot loves her above all other ladies and he does many deeds of arms for her sake and saves her from the fire “thorow his noble chevalry” (p. 180). This statement tells about the ordinary honorable relationship between the Queen and her vassal and there is not yet any hint of sexual liaison between them. When he hears that a knight distresses women, he cries: “What? ... is he a teth and a knighte? And a ravyssher of women? He doth shame unto the Order of Knyghthode, and contrary unto his oth. Hit is pyté that he lyvyth!” (p. 193). When a damsel laments that he loves none but the Queen, he declares that he loves adventures and tournaments better than married happiness and that he refuses paramours for dread of God and because of the unhappy consequences of lechery (p. 777). Malory’s image of an ideal man of chivalry has almost been built up. He must have prowess, high birth, beauty, fortitude against temptation, courtesy, charity, generosity, and kindness to the oppressed, loyalty to his lord and his lady, humility, love of adventures, and above all fear of God, these qualities are summed up in one word—"worship" as used in Merlyn’s prophecy about Launcelot.

All through Trystram’s story, which occupies one-third of the work, Launcelot does not make his appearance very often, but everywhere he is called the noblest knight of the
world, and he is, in fact, the measurement of knightly value. When Trystram marries Isode le Blaunche Maynes, Launcelot censures him for abandoning his adulterous love for Marke's queen in favour of his chaste love for Isode of Brittany. Parallel with Trystram's love story, Launcelot's love for Gwenyvere gradually comes to the foreground. In Book XI Launcelot begets Galahad on Elayne under enchantment and without making himself violate his fidelity to the Queen. With this affair, however, a new light comes to be shed upon Launcelot's love. For the first time Malory charges his hero with foul sin and makes it clear that his sin is prejudicial to his real glory to attain the Grail. If he had not sought Gwenyvere's chamber to commit adultery with her, none of his madness, exile and humiliation would have happened (pp. 593 ff.). His consciousness of his disloyalty to the Queen and consequently to Arthur—this double humiliation drives him mad for two years and he is finally healed by the Grail.

In "The Tale of the Sankgreal" courtly love is judged. Galahad comes in, begotten by Launcelot, the best knight and descendant of Jesus, the eighth degree from him, upon chaste Elayne (p. 634). He is, indeed, worthy to be the achiever of the Grail. In the Quest Launcelot is actually surpassed by three knights: the first is his son, Galahad, symbolical of the spiritual half of himself; the second is Percyevale whose sister has sacrificed herself for another lady: the third is Sir Bors, his cousin. In the light of the holy matters the best of courtly lovers is condemned as a sinner.

Now the Holy Grail which has been destined to break the Round Table is achieved and the love between Launcelot and Gwenyvere is defined as a sin. Their love, therefore, rapidly goes down to its proper catastrophe. After Launcelot returns to Camelot, the worldly city, he forgets his promise never to approach the Queen. "The Knight of the Cart" begins with Malory's statement of virtuous love in comparison to the month of May and also in justification of Gwenyvere's love as constant and true love. The Queen's abduction by Mellyagaunte comes before the Grail in the French Vulgate Cycle but in Malory it is appropriately related before the destruction of the Round Table. Chrétien's Lancelot hesitates before mounting the cart but Malory's kills the cart—driver and haste to rescue the Queen, who appreciates his service. Chivalry and love are now harmonized and the courtly lover seems more respectable than in the Quest. The midnight meeting between the lovers is the first concrete evidence in this romance that their relation is carnal. After the Grail Quest everything must be exposed in its proper light, but Malory tactfully avoids any further mention because he has lost "the very mater of Shevalere de Charyot" (p. 816) and because "me Iyste nat thereof make no mencion, for love that tyme was nat as love ys nowadayes" (p. 821).

After the destruction of Arthur's kingdom, the Queen repents and in her repentance she sees that their love is the cause of the dissolution of what the Round Table stands for. But it is not the same with Launcelot, who says to her at the nunnery: but for his love for her he might have achieved the Holy Grail, adding, "I take recorde of God, in you I have had myn erthly joye" (p. 877). While the object of his love is alive, he remains an earthly lover. After her death, however, he lives in repentance. When he dies, in the bishop's dream he is raised by angels to heaven. As Malory has told in "The Tale of the Knight
of the Cart" that love, with its first thought dedicated to God and its second to its lover, is virtuous, perfect love (p. 791), Launcelot has now attained this perfect love through his penance and loyalty. His final ascension scene is described with tragic sublimity that the religion of love cannot possibly embrace. Sir Bors justly calls Launcelot, in his funeral speech, the "hede of al Crysten knyghtes" (p. 882). The romance ends with the establishment of a new kingdom and a new system, and some of Arthur's knights, through their loyalty to Arthur, went to the Holy Land and are recorded to have died in the Crusades (p. 883). Launcelot is, in fact, described as the summation of the medieval knight and lover. In his unchanging love, for all his human weaknesses and vanities, for all the defects of the courtly tradition, he is still one of the ideal lovers in the world of literature.

Malory, in the course of his story, cannot always praise his hero without the help of magic (he is under magic when he had a liaison with Elayne) or without condemning him as a sinful man in the light of the Holy Grail and as the causer of the dissolution of the Round Table, the symbol of chivalry, setting aside Arthur's own adultery. Courtly love ultimately destroys chivalry. Dynadan is what Charles Williams describes as "the only lord without a lady," who "laughs/ but he has not the honour and the irony of the court of culture." He belongs almost exclusively to the "Trystram Tale" except a few places in the "Tale of Gareth" and in the "Book of Launcelot and Queen Gwenyvere." He is first introduced in the Prose Tristan, written in the latter half of the thirteenth century, where he is "noted for his happy and cheerful disposition, and yet determined to call in question the wisdom of the Arthurian world." In spite of Malory's effort to depict the tragic splendour of chivalric love, he seems unable to have ignored the significance of this controversial man.

As Don Quixote is accompanied by Sancho, Dynadan follows Trystram because he loves all good knights and is loved by them all. This combination indicates both sides of courtly love. As it is assumed that Malory used Trystram as the foil to Launcelot in his chivalry, his illicit love for the king's wife, his madness, and his exile, the author must be glad to have the chance to illustrate in Dynadan the negative side of courtly love without impairing his hero and the whole context of his romance. Dynadan is never overcome by passionate emotions. His mind is always balanced. If he has any passion, his ruling passion is rationality. To such a man of reason, the courtly tradition is as much a joke and a game of lust as it is to Troilus in heaven, for he can penetrate into the schism between the court and the church and between chivalry and courtly love. When he is asked by Trystram to fight against thirty knights, he refuses. Two or three are enough, he says. To him Trystram looks like a man out of his mind. He does not mind being called a coward in such an unreasonable situation. But when he sees Trystram wounded and Palomydes, his rival in love, approaching, he pathetically proposes that he will joust with him in place of Trystram. He is by no means a coward. Like Falstaff he only fights as long as he sees reason. He hates murderers and traitors (p. 461). Once he keeps Marke company that Malory may show that Dynadan is not a coward of his kind. Dynadan accuses Marke of his treason against Trystram and sets Dagonant, Arthur's
fool, chasing after him. Nevertheless, his reason can distinguish between private hate and public business: when he learns that Marke is called to the king’s court, he rescues him from his enemies and takes him safely to Camelot.

He understands human weaknesses and psychology. Man is not always perfect. When Trystram is beaten by Palomydes, Dynadan comforts him, saying, “Lo, Sir Trystram, here may a man preve, he be never so good yet may he have a falle” (p. 386). He is curious about the subtle shifts in the human mind. He understands Launcelot’s suffering from the conflicting forces of love and loyalty. He composes a lay on Marke’s treason. He can turn the rigid atmosphere through his wit: he serves fish to the Haught Prince, saying that he is like a wolf because he does not eat fish but flesh. He is presented to the Queen in a damsel’s clothes after Launcelot has struck him down at the tournament. He is not at all ashamed because he has been beaten by the greatest knight of the world in disguise. The Queen falls down from her chair, laughing. Nobody knows what to do with him. Humiliation does not hurt him at all.

Dynadan, however, scoffs at the idea that a knight may never be of prowess unless he is a lover. He marvels at Sir Trystram and other lovers, wondering “what aylath them to be so madde and so asoted uppon women” (p. 515). He exclaims, “God defend me!... for the joy of love is so shorte, and the sorrow thereof and what cometh thereof is duras over longe” (p. 516). When Isode asks him whether he will fight for her sake, he answers that he will not fight for her against three knights. He is so sensitive as to discover that Isode’s smile at Trystram doubles, taken by mistake, Palomydes’ strength at the tournament. When a damsel is hurt by Sir Breuse Saunz Pité, he declares, “Lat hym com!... And bycause of honour of all women I woll do my parte” (p. 411). He smites the wicked knight.

On the whole, Dynadan is an honourable knight of the Round Table. He has good birth, considerable prowess, courtesy, piety, gentleness and kindness to women and true lovers, antipathy against murderers and traitors, freedom from envy, loyalty to his friends. He has, indeed, most of the qualities which Launcelot is possessed with. The only distinction of him from others is the fact that he is a man of reason in a modern sense. He is the only knight that can tell the private from the public. He is the only knight that never pretends to appear greater than what he really is. He is the only knight that the tragic irony of the courtly tradition cannot exert some power upon, for his reason clearly shows him that the irony has its root in military vanity and sexual vanity. He accepts courtly love and at the same time laughs at its “excellent absurdity.” He is really the only one source of healthy laughter and humour in the romance. His merriment is contagious: he can make others happy too. When Dynadan is slain by Mordred and Aggravayne “cowardly and felonishly” in the Quest of the Holy Grail (p. 461), Arthur’s pseudo-world is totally lost in the tragedy. His death is, as Malory rightly says, “a great damage” (p. 461).

Malory’s Morte Darthur is, in fact, a story of the fall not merely of chivalry but of the whole noble choice of life exemplified by medieval knighthood. The fall is doomed from
the start through the dual nature of chivalry itself—brutality and prowess—and that of
courtly love—love and religion.

The pseudo-history of Arthur actually begins with his father's adultery with his
enemy's wife. King Uther illegally begets Arthur upon Igrayne. After Arthur is
crowned, he conquers King Lott and other rebellious kings with the aid of King Ban,
father of Launcelot. Arthur, in the meanwhile, begets Mordred on his sister, the Queen
of Lott. Merlyn prophesies that Mordred will destroy Arthur's kingdom and that it is
the punishment of his sin of the flesh. The king destroys all the children born on May
Day and his barons are displeased with it. Balyn gives King Pellam the "Dolorous
Stroke," from which he cannot be recovered until Galahad comes. The two brothers,
Balyn and Balan, kill each other in a joust. Merlyn, aware of the coming of the Grail,
puts Balyn's sword into a stone in the Thames and prepares the "Sege Perelous" for
Galahad. Through his own choice Arthur marries Gwenyvere, whose father has the
Round Table, in spite of Merlyn's warning that she is not whole because Launcelot will
love her. The seed of destruction is already born of and growing in Arthur, the point of
departure and return to all the knights: it is of his own choosing.

After Merlyn, Arthur's tutor and go-between of this world and God, is shut up in
the stone through his lust, the earthly chivalry grows prosperous, uninfluenced by divine
messages, when Launcelot, its embodiment in "this unstable world" (p. 736), leaps in.
Instead of directly describing Launcelot's love of Gwenevre, Malory tells about
Trystram's love of Isode as a foil to it. Always Launcelot in mind, the writer re-shapes
his tragedy into a love-story with a happy ending17 because King Marke is, he empha-
sizes, unworthy of Isode's love, who is a coward, recreant, and destroyer of good knights,
contrary to the principles of knighthood, and because Trystram deserves her through his
chivalric virtues and services to his country and his suffering and humiliation for the
sake of his love. Percyvale definitely defends his love, calling it "synless" as she is one
of the fairest ladies of the world (p. 504). Furthermore, the Saracen knight, Palomydes,
who owns that for his love of La Beall Isode he has won his "worship," testifies to his
rival's excellent knightly qualities equal to Launcelot's (p. 622). He recognizes Trystram
as his lord, asks him to witness that he "be truly baptysed" as his godfather (p. 622), and
goes to Arthur's court. Thus, Malory succeed in his vicarious justification of
Launcelot's amour for his king's wife, sublimating earthly love into Christian virtues.

Nonetheless, Malory is deeply aware that the courtly tradition consists in sexual
vanity and military vanity. The happy ironist, Dynadan, calls Trystram, wounded and
covered with blood, still fighting, a madman (p. 379). To him it seems absurd that a man
of worship should behave like a fool for the sake of his lady. A true knight must have
reason. Marhaus, who represents the medieval misogyny, tells Gawayne:

[women] be sorsseres and inchaunters many of them, and be a knyght never so
good of his body and as full of prouesse as a man may be, they woll make hym
a starke cowerde to have the bettir of hym (p. 117)

In the "Tale of Trystram" the magic horn proves that in Marke's court only four ladies out
of one hundred are true to their husbands. Malory innocently and good-naturedly adds
that all the true lovers swear that they will give “shorte curtesy” to Morgan le Fay (p. 327), the maker of the horn.

After Trystram retires, Launcelot’s courtly love is gradually getting exposed to its real colors. Launcelot begets Galahad, the future achiever of the Grail, on Elayne. The disclosure of this affair to the Queen crushed Launcelot’s vainglory as the first knight of the world: he cannot accept such humiliation with laughter like Dynadan. His mind is confused and his madness and exile occur. Before his knights start on the quest for the Grail, Arthur weeps and prophesies: “never shall my courte be amended,” wishing the quest were at an end (pp. 636–637). In the light of the Grail everything is clearly shown as it is. Human brutality increases. Dynadan is killed by Aggravayne. With his death a small light of reason and laughter are extinct. Launcelot’s amour is condemned as a sin. Malory’s concept of true love applicable to him and the Queen lies in its spontaneity, naturalness, and stability as is explicated in “The Knight of the Cart.” Elayne of Astolat gives expression to it:

Am I nath an erthely woman? And all the whyle the brethe ys in my body I may complayne me, for my belyve ys that I do none offence, thou[gh] I love an erthely man, unto God, for He fourmed me thereto, and all maner of good love comyth of God. (p. 779)

Launcelot refuses her love:

I love nat to be constrainyed to love, for love muste only aryse of the harte selff, and nat by none constrainyte. (p. 781)

This virtuous love is embraced only by an earthly man of worship and a worshipful woman, whose first thought is to God and next to the joy of their love. Malory definitely rejects Chrétien’s mock religious treatment of love. With Launcelot’s ascension to heaven, though he is full of vanity and lust, he has finally assumes something noble, near Dante’s fusion of sexual love and religious ideals through his constancy, loyalty to the Queen and his suffering and repentance. Growing out of courtly love, Launcelot has become an ideal lover at all times and in all places.

Malory saw feudalism based on personal loyalty was crumbling down and with it a noble way of life, too, in the midst of the Wars of the Roses. Englishmen became “so new –fangill” (p. 862). He found in the love of Launcelot and Gwenvyvere the ideal of another form of loyalty in the past, through his “perception not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence,”# subsumed in the tragic irony of the courtly tradition with its self-destructive elements—contending forces of religion and lust, and Mary and Eve. Launcelot and Dynadan represent both sides of its “excellent absurdity” —Launcelot “excellent” and Dynadan “absurdity.” With this double vision provided, Malory shows, baffled in the dichotomy of pleasing appearance and stern reality in human nature, that virtuous love remains “the highest good” in this unstable earthly life at all times and in all place.

NOTES

1  William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream IV. i. 187–188.
5 Ibid., p. 2.
7 Andreas Capellanus, pp. 100 & 111.
9 Ibid., p. 270.
14 Williams, p. 68.
17 Malory, p. 623. He ends the Tristrem tale with his return to Joyous Garde via Camelot. He entirely omits the tragic death scene of the lovers by simply saying: “Here ys no rehersall of the third book” (p. 623).

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