

Zeyu Wang
Professor Huber
ENG 456
19 Mar 2021

Theorising Madness in Malory's *Morte D'arthur*

Literature in medieval England has diverse interests in the phenomena of mental illness, including King Henry VI himself, a few Arthurian knights, and autobiographical texts by Thomas Hoccleve and Margery Kempe, while the medical community's perception of mental illness has significantly changed over time. It is important to keep in mind these historical facts and evolution of discourse, and not to make anachronistic projections. In this present essay I will briefly review the literature of recent interdisciplinary studies on mental illness, or "madness", in the Middle Ages; and - with a new theoretical approach - I will contend that madness is *not* a gender-specific or gender-dependent phenomenon as has been previously assumed. To start with, my theoretical approach is to draw a distinction between *discourse* and *behaviours*,¹ and to distinguish the *non-verbal* and the *verbal* within the domain of *behaviours*. The primary literary text to be investigated in this paper is Thomas Malory's *Morte D'arthur* of the late Middle English Arthurian romance tradition; I shall seek not merely to reject, but to complement previous scholars' consensus that madness is primarily a male phenomenon in Arthurian romances, by revising and expanding the domain of mental illness to include hysteria: the misalignment of one's behaviours and intentions, for which matter I shall later in this paper focus on Guinevere and Gawain.

The issue of mental illness is viewed differently in the Middle Ages than in our modern times. The medieval discourse on mental illness had a synchronical plurality of understandings:

¹ Although being discursive is also a behaviour in itself, for the sake of this essay, I define *behaviour* as something done by a person within the text (fiction or history), and *discourse* as what is being said about the person in the text, such as by an author (through inserting an authorial voice), an editor, a historian, or a literary critic.

to explain the phenomenon, medical practices of the Middle Ages (roughly A.D. 500 to 1500), in general, are a mixture of three distinct origins: 1) the classical - Greek and Roman, 2) Christian, and 3) barbarian [sic] or pagan sources.² Specifically - on the issue of mental illness - there are three reference points in medieval discourse: someone who appeared to be mad could be suffering from 1) sin; 2) illness, via imbalance of humours; or 3) an holy experience.³ That is for a specific, synchronical moment in the Middle Ages. Discourse, however, shall be viewed diachronically, that is, how it has changed over time. Much against the common perceptions in early modern psychiatry, sin was not viewed as the primary cause of mental illness in the medieval discourse, according to a more robust recent textual study.⁴ Foucault's assertion of the sane / insane binary should also be rejected.⁵ Gradually through the 17th century until the 19th century, conceptions of mental illness becomes more homogenised in the medical discourse, coining terms such as "nervous system" to explain and theorise one's behavioural changes that lead to hysteria and/or melancholy; this idea evolves and is re-termed "neurosis" in the 19th century.⁶ I shall use these terms in addressing the issue of Gawain's and Guinevere's behavioural state in *Morte D'arthur*.

Proposing a more robust definition of mental illness, or, used interchangeably, "madness", the scholar Laura Jose identifies Madness as the following:

"Knights, typically, are driven insane by the breakdown of a heterosexual relationship, and spend time as mad men roaming the forest, discarding their armour and clothing, and scavenging for their food. Madness here is characterised by a loss not only of all sense of self, but of all connection to civilisation: the mad knight lives like a beast. The mad knight is typically only restored to health and sanity by outside

² Backreact, Erwin H. *A Short History of Medicine*. John Hopkins UP, 2016. p. 62.

³ Rushton, Cory James. "The King's Stupor: Dealing with Royal Paralysis in Late Medieval England," in Turner, Wendy J. ed., *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2010. p. 149.

⁴ Kroll, Jerome, and Bernard Bachrach. "Sin and Mental Illness in the Middle Ages." *Psychological Medicine*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1984. p. 507.

⁵ Rushton 148-9.

⁶ Turner, Wendy J. and Lee, Christina. "Chapter 1: Conceptualizing Trauma for the Middle Ages" pp. 3-13 in *Trauma in Medieval Society*. 2018. p. 5.

intervention, usually provided in the form of supernatural assistance, either magical or religious."⁷

That is, knights, who are invariably male across medieval romances, are only to be engaged in a heterosexual love relationship on the one hand, and in a homosocial relationship on the other hand, with other knights and their lords.⁸ Knighthood, after all, is a masculine construct exclusive to male individuals; in this regard, the chivalric world can be seen as a binary of masculinity and femininity, knights and ladies, the forest and the bedroom.⁹ Jose's point is, therefore, that madness occurs upon a knight's dissociation from his masculine role in the chivalric society.¹⁰

Furthermore, madness is proposed as closely linked to problems of gender and sex. As scholar Sylvia Huot has noted: being "wood" is generally restricted to knights in love,¹¹ in the widely seen phenomenon of lovesickness, or *amor heroicus*; as scholar Judith Neaman argues: madness occurs to a knight "because he fears that he has lost or will lose the love of his lady".¹² In this regard, because love is a virtue not a villainy, madness as result of unfulfillment of love is seen as hyper-masculine, not hypo-masculine or emasculating; as Huot noted: only the most masculine knights are capable of becoming "wood".¹³ And as Jose has argued: in *Morte D'arthur*, madness doesn't undermine masculinity, but complements or completes it,¹⁴ that is, as if the madness episode were an integral part of one's knighthood and heroism, and would not

⁷Jose, Laura. *Madness and Gender in Late-Medieval English Literature*, Durham theses, Durham University. 2010. p. 150.

⁸ Jose 153.

⁹ Jose 165-66 has discussion on the forest as open, masculine space, and the bedroom as private, feminine space.

¹⁰ Jose 178.

¹¹ Huot, Sylvia. *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost*. Oxford UP, 2003. p. 91. Also in Jose 151.

¹² Neaman, Judith S. *The Distracted Knight: A Study of Insanity in the Arthurian Romance*. Diss. U of Columbia, 1967-1968. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1977. "Abstract" 1-3, at 3. Also in Jose 155.

¹³ Jose 151.

¹⁴ Jose 152.

undermine one's masculinity, because everyone in madness will eventually be back to normal after their suffering - Lancelot, Tristan, and Palomydes all attest to this pattern.

According to Jose, Madness can be seen as interlinked with sex in manners that are more literal: nakedness and bleeding. The madness episodes of both Tristan (Malory 305, lines 21-26) and Lancelot (489, 26) involve nakedness,¹⁵ which may be interpreted as an alternative route to fulfil one's unfulfilled sexual desires: by exiling oneself in the wilderness, and letting the sexual desires - instead of reason - prevail. Scholars also expanded the masculine-feminine binary to theorise bleeding: Lancelot's bleeding during madness would fall under the rubric of feminine bleeding - considered meaningless and uncontrolled.¹⁶ In this regard, Lancelot's madness can be seen as an imbalance between his masculine and feminine elements, as if he becomes momentarily susceptible to a mindless unconsciousness, in the likeliness of femininity itself, a chaos in which he is only to be rescued by the sociality of the remaining community that is masculine.

My present thesis is to partially reject this binary which tends to equate masculinity with order and femininity with chaos; these scholars may have chosen a male-centric narrative that ostracises femininity as the archetypal *Other*, and - concurring with the medical community (up to its recent) - have likely also related maladies such as hysteria (or neurosis, in 19th century terms) solely to female subjects. As I will argue, this is not the case in *Morte D'arthur*. For the sake of this paper, I shall first propose a definition of *hysteria*: it is a condition in which one's language does not serve his/her best interests (regardless of whether or when these interests are reasonably taken into mind); it is the disorder of language that bursts out words with intense and uncontrolled emotions. It is easier to see if one has had hysteria if he or she later shows regret (in

¹⁵ Jose 158.

¹⁶ Jose 162-63.

a more sensible, controlled language) over what was being said or done by him/herself, as in the case of Guinevere and Gawain. A patient of hysteria is also subject to loss of perceptive senses of other people's feelings. In the next two paragraphs I shall briefly examine Lancelot's and Tristan's madness and draw the distinction between the non-verbal and the verbal in neurotic pathology.

A qualitative look at Lancelot's and Tristan's verbal and non-verbal behaviours shows that their episodes of madness are primarily non-verbal. Upon certain misunderstanding of their circumstances,¹⁷ they go straight into madness without excessive compulsivity in the act of speaking. Lancelot leaps out of the window from the queen's chamber (487, 35), upon being discovered in bed with Elaine by Guinevere in wrath, as a result of a series of misunderstandings: by Lady Brusen's enchantment, he is led to believe that he would be sleeping with Guinevere, whereas Guinevere - coming here later - assumes Lancelot would have slept with Elaine *intentionally*. Upon being reproached by the swooning Guinevere, Lancelot only says "Alas", and then collapses into a swoon, and - upon waking - starts his exile:

"And therewyth he toke suche an hartely sorow at her wordys that he felle downe to the floure in a sowne. And therewythall quene Gwenyver departed.

And whan sir Launcelot awooke oute of hys swoghe, he lepte oute at a bay-wyndow into a gardyne, and there wyth thornys he was all tocracched of his vysage and hys body, and so he ranne furth he knew nat whothir, and was as wylde woode as ever was man. And so he ran two yere, and never man had grace to know hym."
(487, 31-38)

While other scholars, as we have seen, argue about the patterns and implications of Lancelot's madness *in its duration*, here I focus on the moment - the turning point that changes him from sane to insane. I categorise his behaviours as non-verbal, as - unlike Gawain and Guinevere -

¹⁷ See Jose 156 for a discussion on Lancelot's and Tristans's misunderstandings and Palomydes's understandings; Jose has discussed these three knights' madness in greater detail.

there's no verbal message that Lancelot would like to convey to others; he simply leaves the human world into the wilderness, upon a sigh, without further comment or complaint.

Tristan's madness, however, falls in-between on the theoretical spectrum of verbal and non-verbal, with more verbal content than Lancelot, and thus is hysteric (because hysteria is the excessive compulsive emission of mad language), though not to the extent of Guinevere and Gawain. Consider the following passage, when Tristan discovers the love letters that Isode was exchanging with Keyhydyns and misunderstands their affair entirely:

'Alas! madame, the good love that I have lovyd you, and many londis and grete rychesse have I forsakyn for youre love! And now ye ar a traytouras unto me, whych dothe me of grete payne.' (303, 11-15)

At this moment, in my opinion, Tristan is merely behaving unknighly, and not as highly hysteric as we shall see with Gawain and Guinevere. Tristan accuses Isode as "traytouras" (303, 14), and accuses sir Keyhydyns of "falshed and treson" (303, 20), and also threatens to kill him; he is being uncourteous to both his heterosexual lover and his homosocial love-rival knight;¹⁸ invoking his imprudent reason to make accusations on them, here Tristan also falls under pride, the top of seven deadly sins of Catholicism. Thus, unlike Lancelot, Tristan fails to adhere to the order of knighthood in this difficult situation. His ensuing madness - as many scholars have closely studied - is to be analysed in themes of wilderness and knightly love, not so much of hysteria or malfunctioning of language.

¹⁸ It is not uncommon in Arthurian romances to have conflicts for love of the same person. There is much debate as to what extent one is entitled for violent revenge on his or her love-rival, with many such instances (e.g., Morgan le Fay imprisoning Lancelot, Palomydes challenging Tristan, King Mark plotting against Tristan). However, Lancelot's treatment of this issue can be seen as exemplary: one should only revenge by violence after being attacked first: e.g., revenging for Guinevere when she is about to be burnt for an unjust cause, and when abducted by Melleagant; all other forms of violence (as does Tristan here to Keyhydyns) shall be avoided.

Mental illness, however, can take place in different forms outside Jose's definition. A broader investigation by Beatrice Mameli in her monograph "Wylde and Wode"¹⁹ expands the domain of mental illness to include, for instance, Lancelot's amnesia and existential anxiety.²⁰ In the next paragraphs, I shall examine Gawain's and Guinevere's behaviours, primarily the verbal, under a broader scope of mental illness.

Guinevere's behaviours throughout Malory's *Morte D'arthur* are wide-ranged, yet a conclusion may be drawn that these behaviours fall under the rubrics of hysteria. Let us first examine Guinevere's non-verbal neurotic behaviours. She falls down in a swoon on multiple occasions, such as when confronting Bors, who claims she is accountable for Lancelot's madness:

'Now fye on youre wpynges! ... Alas! that ever sir Launcelot or ony of hys blood ever saw you, you now have ye loste the beste knyght of oure blood, and he that was all oure leder and oure succoure. And I dare say and make hit good that all kynges crystynde nother hethynde may nat finde such a knyght, for to speke of his noblenes and curtesy, wyth hys beauté and hys jantylnes. Alas! ... what shall we do that ben of hys bloode?' (489, 6-13)

Hearing such remarks, Guinevere "felle to the erthe in a dede sowne" (489, 15). She's recalling the knightly qualities of her lover Lancelot, and she is drawn to realise - and vexed in - the fact that she might have herself caused his leaving. Such fainting happens likewise in other circumstances, when one is overwhelmed by a certain stressor - what one sees, hears, or realises in mind. A different kind of response to such stressor is wrath: when Guinevere hears Lancelot sleep-talking in her chamber - "all undir one rooff" (486, 18) - and lying in bed with Elaine, "she was wrothe oute of mesure, and for anger and payne wist not what to do" (487, 20-22). She could only, in this instance, shout very loudly (487, 22), in and because of anger. These kinds of

¹⁹ Mameli, Beatrice. *Wylde and Wode, Wild Madness in Middle English Literature*. Ph.D. thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova, 2014.

²⁰ See Mameli 31 and 189; Lancelot's amnesia is more expressly seen in Chretien's *Le chevalier a la charrette*.

response - fainting and wrath - from Guinevere's mind to reality shall be pathologised, because they do not work in her favour (to align with her wish of continuing her genuine love of Lancelot), but rather work to impede her perception of a reality - the process of which Malory direly conveys to his readers, using this dramatic irony. Readers sympathise with Guinevere's concerns, but still realise that her assumptions are wrong and indeed detrimental to her mental and physical health.

A closer look at Guinevere's verbal behaviours shows that her utterances, when "wrothe", become compulsory and repetitive and work against her own interest - precisely the definition of hysteria. She accuses Lancelot with highly uncontrolled, exaggerating language:

'A, thou false traytoure knyght, Loke thou never abyde in my courte, and lyghtly that thou voyde my chambir! And nat so hardy, thou false trytoure knyght, that evermore thou com in my syght!' (487, 27-29)

On a different occasion, she has a similar response:

'Sir Lancelot, now I well understond that thou arte a false, recrayed knyght and a comon lechourere, and lovyste and holdiste othir ladyes, and of me thou haste dysdayne and scorne. For wyte thou well, now I undirstonde thy falsehede I shall never love the more, and loke thou be never so hardy to com in my syght. And ryght here I dyscharge the thys courte, that thou never com within hit, and I forfende the my felyship, and uppon payne of thy hede that thou se me nevermore!' (612, 19-25)

Clearly, as a "trew lover" "whyle she lyved" (649, 34), her charging of Lancelot with "falsehood" and "lechery", "disdain" and "scorn", is against the flourishing of their love relationship, which should in principle be teleologically progressing toward the good. Claiming that Lancelot "loves and holds other ladies" is also contradicting the fact, as Lancelot is genuinely confused as to what to do with heterosexual love right after his return from the grail quest; he understands that he should devote more to God than to Guinevere, but is still unable to make a definitive choice (611); Guinevere's accusations, therefore, are based on no understanding of Lancelot's circumstances, despite his endeavours at explaining (611-612). Finally, the decision to dismiss

him from the court - "thou se me nevermore" - is to soon make herself great sorrow and regret.

This set of Guinevere's behaviours translates to both her own regret and Lancelot's suffering:

Than the quene sent for sir Launcelot and prayde hym of mercy for why that she had ben wrothe with hym causeles.

'Thys ys nat the firste tyme,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that ye have ben displese with me causeles. But, madame, ever I must suffir you, but what sorow that I endure, ye take no forse.' (642, 6-10)

As this passage shows, one's dissociation from reality is the core of hysteria: Guinevere is dissociated from reality that she cannot *perceive* that she has been wroth with him causelessly - not until much later at this very moment; during this dissociation, she is also unable to perceive the sorrow that Lancelot has to endure. Guinevere's history of episodic hysteria, in this sense, augments and advances the suffering for both lovers, immensely.

Aside from the more apparent forms of hysteria, we shall look at another side of Guinevere's behavioural path-dependence: she puts on a persona when speaking to Lancelot in a public setting, distinctly different from how she speaks to him privately or in accompaniment of her damsels. For example, in front of all her knights that are also imprisoned, Guinevere, with much calmness and unfeeling, responds to Lancelot's justified anger and violent tendency to kill Melleagant: "Sir Launcelot, why be ye so amoved?" (655, 28) Reasonably, she has to keep the formal gesture befitting the dignity of a queen, yet she seems to revel in seeing Lancelot's unease at being rejected for his proposed service. She continues:

'ye say trouthe, but hartely I thanke you... but ye muste com in with me pesyblé, for all thyng ys put in myne honde, and all that ys amysse shall be amended, for the knyght fulll sore repentys hym of thys mysadventure that ys befallyn hym.'
(655, 34-38)

In her abduction by Melleagant, we know for sure that things are not in her hand. She puts forth this speech exaggerating her power and belittling Lancelot's genuine endeavour to rescue her;

she even lies that Melleagant "sorely repents" what he has done. Although she might be trying to avoid escalation of conflicts with her intellect and wise speech, she is also creating this artifact of speech that hurts Lancelot in every manner. In Guinevere, there are two distinct modes of speaking: the public, controlled speech, and the private, uncontrolled speech. This matter is not treated by the scholar Kenneth Hodges in his study of Guinevere's struggling with political *affinities*,²¹ nor is the larger context of Guinevere's pathological state. In Derridean terms, I venture to argue here, once there is a binary constructed - a controlled mode of speech added on to an uncontrolled mode of speech - the two shall no longer be considered opposite to each other, as one side may corrupt and devour the other, so to speak; i.e. in her hysteriac episodes, bursting with uncontrolled speech, Guinevere is dictated by her wrath, and in her seemingly controlled mode of speech, she may be dictated by a more subtle form of wrath: to revenge and revel in the pain that Lancelot has to endure.

After the above discussion on Guinevere's hysteriac behaviours, I shall add that hysteria is not a female-specific construction, because of Malory's extensive narrative attention on Gawain, especially in the last book "The Most Piteous Tale." Gawain has been initially still highly composed (more than Arthur, in many instances): for example, commenting on the issue of the death of his kinsmen Aggravayn, Florens, and Lovell, Gawain makes clear that "they ar the causars of their owne dethe" (683, 18), and he has indeed warned them - in advance - against seeking battle with Lancelot. His clarity of reason as exemplified at this moment is to disintegrate upon learning the death of Gaherys and Gareth, both of whom die in Lancelot's hands. Overwhelmed by rage, Gawain never allows himself to believe that their death is not Lancelot's intention, but rather allows himself to be consumed by rage and unreason. Like Victor

²¹ See Hodges, Kenneth. "Guinevere's Politics in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 1104, No. 1 (Jan 2005), pp. 54-79.

and the Monster near the end of Mary Shelly's novel *Frankenstein*, Gawain has now declared a fatal war in a vow that he cannot take back:

'now I shall make you a promyse whych I shall holde be my knyghthode, that frome thys day forewarde I shall never fayle sir Launcelot untyll that one of us have slayne that other...' (689, 1-3)

From this point until his turning of mind hours before his death, readers can sense a great quantitative increase of frequency and length across Gawain's speech (687-712), which also becomes more revengeful at Lancelot. Since this moment, Gawain has become verbally hysteriac. He confronts Lancelot in this mode of speaking:

'thou lyest, recrayed knyght ... thou slewyste hem in the despite of me ... I shall make warre upon the, and all the whyle that I may lyve be thyne enemy.' (689, 19-22)

Like Guinevere in my earlier discussion, here Gawain also accuses Lancelot with charges that are based on no solid ground. This utterance becomes repetitive and compulsive, to consume him in this affliction. Formerly a man of reason and virtue - as seen in his reluctance to help Arthur burn Guinevere (683, 25-30) - Gawain's faith is now subsumed in rage and revenge:

[Lancelot addressing Arthur:] 'I was nat so sone within the [queen's] chmabir dore but anone sir Aggravayne and sir Mordred called me traytoure and false recrayed knyght.'

'Be my fayth, they called the ryght!' seyde sir Gawayne. (694, 38-41)

Gawain explicitly aligns his lasting faith with his present hatred of Lancelot. Elevating the matter to faith, he aims this conflict to be mortal: "thou and I shall never be accorded whyle we lyve" (695, 36-37). Note that Gawain, hysteriac, is consumed by his language, whereas Lancelot takes control in what he says and recalls others' language on him (694, 40), without being affected.

Having one's language working against one's later and more prudent intent is precisely what hysteria does, as here with Gawain: after all the hatred and war, he is filled with immense regret:

'Unto the, sir Launcelot, floure of all noble knyghtes that ever I harde of or saw be my dayes, I, sir Gawayne ... send the gretynge ... I soughte my dethe, and nat thorow thy deservynge, but myne owne sekyng.' (710, 4-12)

'I requyre the, moste famous knyght of the worlde, that thou wolte se my tumber.' And than he wepte and kynge Arthur both, and sowned. And whan they were awaked bothe, the kynge made sir Gawayne to resceyve hys sacrament, and than sir Gawayne prayde the kynge for to sende for sir Launcelot and to cherysshe hym aboven all othir knyghtes. (710, 32-36)

Why I have included Gawain's final episode into the domain of mental illness is because - as we have seen - his suffering, as a result of his own will to misunderstand and to revenge, is beyond comprehension and wreaks havoc on his community, officially collapsing King Arthur's court. Gawain's mental state in this episode is extremely problematic in his outward, strong pursuit of revenge, and his speech acts are also out of his control, becoming repetitive and compulsive, thus falling under the rubrics of hysteria. I have thus argued that hysteria is not a female-specific phenomenon, and that hysteria should be included in the study of mental illness(es), or madness, because of the sheer toll it takes on the patient him/herself, the victim of the patient's hysteriac speech (in both cases here: Lancelot), and the wider community.

Guinevere's and Gawain's hysteria, to varying degrees, traumatise their wider community.

Unlike the "masculine-forest" model of madness:²² a masculine knight, Gawain's outcome from his madness episode is quite different from other knights:

"After recovery from insanity, both Launcelot and Tristram are restored to their original positions; their madness is never again mentioned, and their identities as the world's best knights remain unchanged."²³

Gawain, unfortunately at this point in the narrative, does not have a chance to be restored to his original position, nor to have his knightly status unchanged. The scope and extent of his madness has gone so far that he - while on his powerful position dictating his uncle Arthur, the puppet-

²² Jose 165-166.

²³ Jose 152.

king - is not given a remedy for himself and his community, as much as Lancelot is given one by his community during his exile in the wilderness. Gawain's obsessive-compulsive utterances, behaviours, and emotions have put the entirety of the Arthurian court into war with Lancelot's France, marking the end of the Round Table's merry and glorious past.

Themes of madness and wilderness have occupied a significant role in literature since the Nebuchadnezzar tradition, when the Babylonian king supposedly went mad in the wilderness.²⁴ Scholars have proposed that depiction of the personal madness in literature may be seen in a metaphorical relation to the political governance, religious matter, and such matters of different aspects of life. Beatrice Mameli, for example, has noted how Lancelot's madness in *Morte D'arthur* is "strongly linked to the conception of Galahad",²⁵ thus deemed to have a profound religious message. She also noted that in Chrétien's romance in Old French, the depiction of Lancelot features more attentively his madness in terms of amnesia and his ecstatic day-dreaming,²⁶ showing existential anxiety - a different matter from those treated by Malory. Cory James Rushton, on the other hand, has noted a parallel between Uther and Henry VI, with ample correspondence in Malory to reflect on events in the Wars of the Roses.²⁷

I have now widened the scope of investigation in mental illness in medieval literary texts to include hysteria, and argued that neither hysteria nor mental illness in general has a gender-dependent implication. Due to the strict limit of length in this essay, I have not covered Arthur's compromising character during his kingship - his neurosis - which is also part of the wider discourse on mental illness, especially seen in light of his nephew Gawain's uncompromising revenge on Lancelot, together to bring the court to an end and to literalise Malory's book title -

²⁴ Mameli 146-148,

²⁵ Mameli 28.

²⁶ Mameli 31.

²⁷ Rushton 172 - 173.

the death of Arthur. With different metaphors that work in various ways to serve various scholars' convenience, one shall still be mindful of the manners by which texts are written and are interpreted; even as the feminine is more associated with the private bedroom, and the masculine more associated with the wilderness, we shall still reject absolute binaries and see - as I have proposed - a common structure of pathology of madness across genders, with the theoretical perspective distinguishing verbal and non-verbal behaviours. As much as there is diversity of the medical and psychiatrist narratives on mental illnesses across time and traditions, there is also the plurality of individual mental conditions that deserve closer attention.

Bibliography:**Primary Source:**

Malory, Thomas. *Complete Works* (ed. Vinaver). Oxford University Press, 1971.

Secondary Sources Post-2000:

Huot, Sylvia. *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost*. Oxford UP, 2003.

Jose, Laura. *Madness and Gender in Late-Medieval English Literature*, Durham theses, Durham University. 2010. url: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/217/>

Mameli, Beatrice. *Wylde and Wode, Wild Madness in Middle English Literature*. Ph.D. thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova, 2014. url: <http://paduaresearch.cab.unipd.it/6865/>

Rushton, Cory James. "The King's Stupor: Dealing with Royal Paralysis in Late Medieval England," in Turner, Wendy J. ed., *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2010, pp. 147-176. ISBN 9789004187498.

All Other Sources:

Ackerknecht, Erwin H. *A Short History of Medicine*. First published 1955. John Hopkins University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9781421419541.

Hodges, Kenneth. "Guinevere's Politics in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 1104, No. 1, Jan 2005, pp. 54-79.

Kroll, Jerome, and Bernard Bachrach. "Sin and Mental Illness in the Middle Ages." *Psychological Medicine*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1984, pp. 507-514., doi:10.1017/S0033291700015105.

Neaman, Judith S. *The Distracted Knight: A Study of Insanity in the Arthurian Romance*. Diss. U of Columbia, 1967-1968. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1977.

Turner, Wendy J. and Lee, Christina. "Chapter 1: Conceptualizing Trauma for the Middle Ages" in Turner and Lee ed., *Trauma in Medieval Society*, Vol 7. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2018, pp. 3-13. ISBN: 9789004363786.