

21L.012, Arthurian romances

(4 October)

King Arthur:

- 1000 year span (5th century – 15th century) of Arthurian legend developing
- Note “medieval”: much social change during time
- If Arthur did exist, likely in the 4th century as Romans withdrew
- Britain changed significantly after Norman conquest (1066); French was spoken

The Art of Courtly Love

- Why would the book *The Art of Courtly Love* catch on?
- Marie among the most powerful women in France
- Question to reader: was courtly love in “Knight of the Cart” what you expected?
- Author does not explain how Lancelot fell in love, because that was widely known at the time
- Jarring that love was sexual (included adultery); 19th century version of courtly love celibate
- Pg. 291: she intends to continue affair

In “The Knight of the Cart,” what is experience of being in love like?

- Pg. 211: the knight gets into cart, which disgraces him; contaminated
- Purity important: needed noble spirit to be worthy of love; love is noble phenomenon, not among dirty peasants
- There’s battle between love and reason
- Love triumphs over other concerns (disgrace didn’t matter)
- Pg. 225: his reaction to hair almost silly
- Medieval Catholicism developed cult around relics; he treats her hair like a relic; love takes him over as religion does to many; suggests that love is competition to religion

Role of women

- In Bible
 - woman is downfall of man (Eve)
 - Mariolatry: Mary elevated to semi-divine, merciful
- Courtly love: secularizes Mariolatry
- Pg. 207: author acknowledges her power, flatters her
 - Emphasis that she wants him to write distances author from writing
 - Author may not have believed ideas in story

Overarching tale: Lancelot on quest to rescue other