

Yuji Nakao, *Philological and Textual Studies of
Sir Thomas Malory's Arthurian*

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Over the past thirty years, the study of Malory's *Arthurian* has continually seen debatable issues raised and scholarly advancement furthered in the process of contestation. The main topics in question are about the identity of the author, the unity or physical division of the whole work, the identification of sources, the order of composition, the scribal and compositorial activities, the stemma of textual derivation, and the textual revision in the 'Roman War episode'. Among these topics, the relationship between the Winchester manuscript and Caxton's edition, triggered by the spectacular discovery of the offsets of Caxton's printing types on the manuscript, has attracted focal attention, entailing a reconsideration of the stemma posited by Vinaver and the role of the manuscript in Caxton's editorial work. The debate on these issues has been conducted across the Atlantic and across the Pacific as well. The articles contributed from the Japanese encampment have, from time to time, helped to sort out the confused discussion and even helped to finalize the contention. The book under review is a collection of such pivotal essays that Yuji Nakao, a renowned philologist, originally published for the forum in some international journals like *Poetica* and *Arthuriana*, and many scholars have been avidly awaiting the publication of this work.

The book has seventeen coherently arranged chapters, each with a self-contained essay written by Nakao during the last thirty years. After the 'Introduction', with its neat overview of Malory scholarship and a total of twenty-two linguistic items worthy of comparison (5-7), come the first three essays, which discuss the textual problems concerning the Winchester and Caxton's Malory on the basis of his meticulous research. Following these initial chapters, another thirteen essays line up, making clear the linguistic properties of each version of Malory's work by interpreting the variants from a historical perspective of the English language, and the last chapter gives a list of desirable textual corrections or emendations, warning the user of T. Kato's *Malory Concordance* (1974) about its advantages and disadvantages. Finally, the book ends with the 'Summary and Conclusion' containing synoptic remarks on the insights Nakao has gained through his extensive research.

It is obvious that Nakao had a clear vision in integrating his research and in developing the coherent structure of this book. He explains the process in which his idea was formed:

My concern about the textual variants of W[inchester] and C[axton] is chiefly linguistic / philological, from viewpoints of diachronic studies of the English

language. [...] I have chosen certain grammatical categories and have collated the two texts exhaustively through all the leaves, trying to accumulate and describe the variants. Throughout the work, I have found that my linguistic data sometimes help to solve the textual problems as well. Thus I have at times incorporated my language studies with textual studies. (9)

The book has therefore come to present a threefold rationale: the first is to present as factual information an exhaustive list of textual variants in the targeted items; the second is to locate and evaluate these variants against the historical and regional varieties in the late Middle English period and, by so doing, characterize the language of the Winchester manuscript and that of Caxton the editor or of the house-style in his print shop; the third is to show the textual relatedness, a relatedness closer than hitherto considered, between W and C to the extent of corroborating the direct lineal derivation proposed by Hellenga (1981) in rejection of Vinaver's collateral textual theory.

Before looking into Nakao's essays, some words are needed about the choice of the edited texts that he used for a collation of the Winchester manuscript and Caxton's *editio princeps*. He used *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, 3 vols., ed. Eugène Vinaver, 3rd ed. revised by P. J. C. Field (Oxford, 1990) for the Winchester MS, and *Le Morte Darthur by Syr Thomas Malory*, 3 vols. in 2, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London: 1889-91) for the Caxton text. These edited texts, especially Sommer's diplomatic one, are not free from blemish. Therefore Nakao set out collating Sommer's text with Vinaver-Field's after confirming its accuracy with the facsimile of Caxton's original copy. He also suggests some textual emendations to Vinaver-Field's edition on the basis of the results of his research.

On the language of the two texts and Caxton's linguistic consciousness as an editor of Malory, Nakao selects and discusses the following topics: 'Vocabulary Alterations in Caxton's Malory' (Chapter 4); 'Does Caxton Dislike Alliteration?' (Chapter 5); 'Distribution of *Many*, *Much* and *Fele*' (Chapter 6); 'Retention and Non-Retention of Final *n*' (Chapter 7); 'Initial Connectives' (Chapter 8); 'Affirmative Disjunctive Connectives' (Chapter 9); 'Negative Disjunctive Connectives' (Chapter 10); 'The Negative Particle *Ne*' (Chapter 11); 'Periphrastic *Do* and Causative *Do*' (Chapter 12); 'The Definite and Indefinite Articles' (Chapter 13); 'Interchangeability of Prefixed and Non-Prefixed Words' (Chapter 14); 'The So-Called *His-Genitive*' (Chapter 15); 'The Demonstrative Pronouns *Tho*, *Those* and *Thise*, *These*, etc.' (Chapter 16). His treatment is elegant. Each topic has an introductory sketch about the relevant language change, and describes the textual differences by providing well-ordered data in such a way as to reveal an image of the possible editing on the side of Caxton or his staff.

Let us make a brief review of Nakao's findings from the standpoint of Caxton's editorship. First, a tendency is identified in the Caxton text to prefer a more advanced

or normative form of language. Under this category lie five obvious cases: C's use of *-s* genitive for W's *his*-genitive; C's preference for *or* over W's *outher* in affirmative disjunctive connectives; C's preference for the contracted *nor* over W's *nother* in negative disjunctives; C's use of *-e(n)* for W's northern dialectal *-s* or southern *-th* in present indicative plural verbal endings; and C's use of *these* for W's southwestern dialectal *thys* as a plural form of the demonstrative. Looking at the variation between *or* in C and *outher* in W, for example, Nakao finds in the Winchester text 290 examples of *other* (63.0%), 166 examples of *or* (36.1%), 3 examples of *outher* (0.7%) and 1 example of *eyther* (0.2%) with the exception of Book 5 the 'Roman War episode', and in the Caxton text 402 examples of *or* (86.6%), 49 examples of *outher* (10.6%), 7 examples of *other* (1.5%), and 6 examples of *eyther* (1.3%). Furthermore, on examination of the mutually corresponding words, he reports the fact that most cases (223) of W's 290 uses of *other* are replaced by its new form *or* in C. Nakao's detailed explanation does not stop here. Considering the regional differences, he states that the Winchester Malory uses a southern form *other* whereas Caxton's Malory adopts *outher*, a corresponding form used chiefly in the North and the North/East Midlands. In terms of this linguistic profile, Caxton's limited use of *other* (7 times) stands out, calling for an explanation. Nakao does not overlook this intricate problem, eliciting an attractive and convincing line of reasoning: these instances 'came into Caxton's Malory from the exemplar having the same feature as those in the Winchester Malory' (162). He opens a new horizon for future study by pointing out the necessity of distinguishing and appreciating some derivational layers in the existing language of the Caxton text; this instance of *other* was probably inherited, in the case of the collateral derivational theory, from Caxton's exemplar or was inherited, in the case of the linear one, from the Winchester MS itself by an intermediary copy prepared on the basis of the Winchester in Caxton's print shop. Here a linguistic study of Malory meets a textual and bibliographical quest of it.

Secondly, an opposite, conservative direction in editing is pointed out in five cases: C's retention of final *n* in verbs (infinitive, present/past plural, past participle); C's fondness of causative *do*; C's frequent use of conjunctive *ne*; C's use of adverbial *ne* in the old negation pattern 'ne + V + not'; and C's use of demonstrative *tho* for W's *that* as the plural form. The late fifteenth century in which Malory and Caxton enjoyed writing was a critical period to the changing usage of *do*. The causative use of *do* was already outdated, while its periphrastic function came into use as a tense marker (present and past) and its function for emphasis was yet to come. This situation is exactly reflected in the Winchester Malory, as Nakao explicates in Chapter 12 of his book, whereas the Caxton text reverses or more precisely delays the development of *do* by reviving an increased use of causative *do*. His favorite singular expression 'did do + V' is the witness for it. Nakao, following Ellegård (1953), construes the verb phrase as a 'reinforced form' of causative *do*, which appears as a result of the polysemic conflict inherent to the verb. The reason for this usage is stated in relation to his old language

habit acquired in Kent during his childhood and to his inability to keep up with the current of his mother tongue during his long sojourn on the continent (216).

There is a puzzling phenomenon of negative expression in the Caxton text. The tendency in Caxton's Malory to substitute W's negative conjunctive *nother* by its advanced, shortened form *nor* is mentioned above. In contrast, an increased use of the old conjunctive *ne*, especially so in Book 5, is reported as a reflection of Caxton's conservative attitude (27-28, 189ff). Indeed, the distribution of negative conjunctives in Caxton's own prose in the prologues and epilogues to his printed works is *ne* (97.01%), *neyther* (2.99%), *nother* (nil) and *nor* (nil). This particular cohabitation of innovative and conservative conjunctives in Caxton's Malory is not explicitly referred to by Nakao, but it can be assumed that, while he regards it as a reflection of the transitional period of the English language, he attributes the phenomenon to the compositors' active involvement in the text production.

The negative adverb *ne* may be provided as a good index of Caxton's conservative consciousness towards language. The development of negative construction is generally formulated as: (1) *ne* + V \Rightarrow (2) *ne* + V + not \Rightarrow (3) V + not \Rightarrow (4) do + not + V. Nakao locates Malory's major negative construction in the third stage, and he finds that the construction tends to be shifted back to the second stage in the Caxton text (183-88). Furthermore, Nakao produces a significant fact about the distribution of Malory's minor negative construction '*ne* + V (+ not)'. There are found 15 instances of this old type in the Winchester text, but 14 out of the 15 are exclusively used in the 'Tale of the Sangrail' (184). This irregularity might allow an additional development of discussion: the foregrounded use of the archaic expression may have been Malory's conscious attempt to create a dignified atmosphere for the grail story; Caxton, however, turned out to undermine this stylistic effect unawares by scattering the old negative constructions throughout.

Caxton's English in general has been considered to be 'innovative' in some quarters and 'conservative' in others. The varied estimate of his English may also be approved in Caxton's printed text of Malory, but Nakao's research warns us that the realized text in Caxton's edition is not so straightforward. The text is actually a collective product by Caxton the editor and his staff.

Another peculiar feature Nakao detects in the textual differences and which the reviewer finds interesting is on the treatment of initial connectives *so*, *for*, and *also* in the Caxton text (Chapter 8). About the 'resumptive' connectives, Nakao produces the following results (143, 145, 147): Caxton's edition tends to excise these superfluous, expletive words; the excision of *so* occurs almost exclusively in narration; the textual variants of *for* occur often in dialogue; and *also* is consciously avoided. These alterations are not concerned with the kind of language consciousness of the changing English discussed so far. Nakao, therefore, considers this as evidence to show an image of Caxton who was 'not merely a slavish printer but an editor who was conscious of

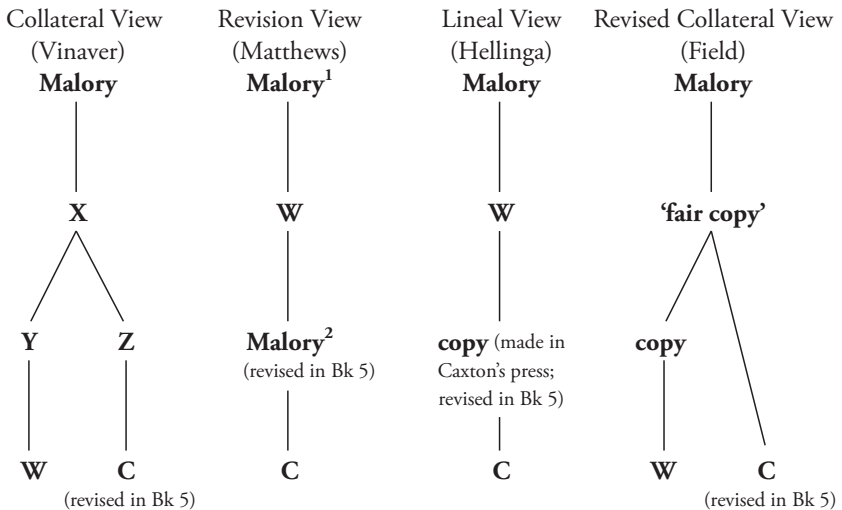
the language of the text he put into print' (151), and he invites further studies. One possible response, if the reviewer tries, might be offered from a different concept of text postulated between the manuscript culture and the print culture. In general terms, a manuscript text in the oral culture was intended to be read aloud either in private or public; the text inevitably tended to wear such elocutionary or functional words for 'performance'. By contrast, a text in the print culture was destined to be made and received for the use of private reading. Thus the performativeness was gradually getting erased from the text, and instead writtenness was gaining ground. The deletion of initial connectives in Caxton's Malory can be considered to have been an embryonic phenomenon signaling such a change of reading act.

The textual variants between the Winchester MS and Caxton's edition, which, by Nakao's experienced hand, could depict successfully a linguistic profile of each text, are now combined and integrated to elucidate their textual relatedness and Caxton's editorship. Nakao addressed the essay questions afresh (Chapters 1 and 2): Which is more tenable, the collateral textual theory or the lineal one?; Who was the reviser of Book 5 the 'Roman War episode'? His arguments and convincing evidence disentangled the confused discussion and made a decisive contribution toward marking the conclusion of these cruxes.

Nakao's greatest accomplishment is the one made about the textual revising in Caxton's Book 5. In his earlier version 'Does Malory Really Revise his Vocabulary?—Some Negative Evidence' (*Poetica*, 1987), which, revised and expanded, appears in Chapter 2 of the present book, he advanced against William Matthews' argument that Malory himself revised the Roman War episode. The estimate of his article was split among Malory scholars. It was praised as a 'mathematically elegant essay', while it was criticized as the 'abacuses and the grapeshot' coming out 'from the edge' (topographically from Japan and bibliographically from accidentals). In the original paper, he developed his argument on the linguistic basis (the negative particle *ne*, the idiosyncratic 'did do + V', the disjunctive connectives *other/or* and *nother/nor*, the present indicative plural forms of 'to be' *ar/ben*). Furthermore, he tried to seek out 'substantive' evidence in his revised essay, so that he could find a crucial fact to settle this vexed issue. As was pointed out by Matthews (*Arthuriana*, 1997: 118) it was agreed that the qualified reviser of Book 5 was 'aware of and had access to the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the French prose *Merlin*, and Hardyng's *Chronicle*'. However, Nakao discovered that the phrases and descriptions which were assumed to have derived in the process of revision from these sources could be found in Caxton's own 1482 edition of the *Chronicles of England*. The only exception was 'a branch of olive'. But the description of the young knights who responded indignantly to the Romans' request, King Arthur's courtesy to the Roman ambassadors, the reference to Julius Caesar, the phrase 'xij aũncyen men', and the appellation 'procurour' of Lucius, all these were surely in the text of the *Chronicles* (39-42). Nakao writes:

To me, it has become almost certain, [...] that the theory that the reviser was Caxton is correct. It was not necessary for Caxton to consult the prose *Merlin* and Hardyng's *Chronicle*. He was able to rewrite Book V on the basis of his exemplar(s) and chiefly the *Chronicles of England* which he had printed a few years before publishing *Le Morte Darthur*. (47)

It has now become obvious that Caxton himself prepared the text for Book 5. What about the text of the other tales, then? Did he have someone make a copy for himself and write in editorial marks on it? Or did he mark an existent copy which he had acquired? And how related was the copy to the Winchester MS or to Malory's holograph? The issue of textual derivation is another thematic concern of this book. To sum up its history, there was an almost unanimously accepted theory by Vinaver that the two extant texts are collateral versions of a common original. It was first questioned by Matthews who argued that the Caxton text is Malory's final authorial version. Then Hellinga's discovery of Caxton's types 2 and 4 on the Winchester MS opened up a possibility that Caxton's text derived directly or through an intermediary copy from the Winchester MS. Field suggested a revised collateral hypothesis that Caxton's edition contains the text copied directly from the 'fair copy' or 'the author's own master manuscript'. For a better understanding, the following stemmas can be drawn from their arguments:



Nakao restricts himself to the relatedness of the Winchester and the Caxton text – how far the Caxton's edition is removed from the manuscript. His approach is

morphological, and his implicit premise is that the degree of the morphological agreement changes in proportion to the number of stages of copying. He picks up some words having variant forms, and examines their correspondence between the two texts. The words selected for comparison are: {betwixt, betwix, between}, {sithen, sith, sin, sins}, {afore, before, tofore, aforne, beforne, toforne}, {much, mickle}, and {nother, nouter, nor, ne, neyther}. As for the variants of {betwixt, betwix, between}, for example, Nakao reports that 75 of the 91 instances of {betwixt} found in W (except for Book 5) correspond to {betwix} in C, and that 26 of the 29 instances of {between} found in W correspond to {between} in C. Likewise, a similar high correlation can be observed in {sithen, sith, sin, sins}: 77 {sithen} in W correspond with 76 {sithen} in C; 29 {sith} in W to 21 {sith} in C; 25 {sin} in W to 23 {sin} in C; 7 {sins} in W to 4 {sins} in C. Taking into account that these variants were interchangeable with one another in those days, the high degree of correspondence, as Nakao says, cannot be regarded as haphazard occurrence (12, 13). The rare word form {mickle}, which was palatalized into the modern form {much}, does not escape his notice, either. He finds four instances with this archaic spelling in C, and finds that all the four cases can be traced back to W (15, 105-06). Combining these findings with similar evidence, Nakao deduces the following conclusive words: ‘These intricate correspondences would not have been preserved if C were collateral to W (16); ‘C cannot be regarded as independent of W’ (17). If this discreet conclusion is placed onto the stemmas above, it follows that Nakao supports Hellinga’s lineal view. Nakao, who has seen what happened to the Malory text, now asserts in the ‘Summary and Conclusion’ that ‘as regards the problem of stemmata, the direct derivation from W to C, with one intervened MS. (C’s now lost exemplar) between them, seems plausible on the linguistic evidence shown here’ (295).

All in all, here is a masterly artifact by an experienced philologist. For old hands, there is no better study that expounds on the forefront of Malory’s language and text; for newcomers, this book serves as a useful starting guide for philology and Arthurian study. The readers should be all convinced that the most professional and academic book is the best educational textbook. The book is prefaced with an attractive forward by Ján Šimko, who, quoting Caesar’s Latin phrase, praises Nakao’s contribution. The prospective Malorians are encouraged to share with Nakao the same sense of accomplishment “*Veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered).”