

TWO LEGENDS ONE STORY: A COMPARISON OF ARTHURIAN LEGEND
AND THE LEGEND OF ZELDA FRANCHISE

by

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King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table have been a staple story in many children's lives. Tales of knights and dragons, witches and warlocks, princes and princesses have fascinated children and adults alike, leading to a combined experience of wonder shared by multiple generations. However, this isn't just a western phenomenon. Japanese society has been influenced by the *bushi*, or the Samurai, an ancient sect of Japanese warriors. The *bushi* followed Bushido, or "the way of the warrior". This ideology of Bushido is very similar to the ideology of chivalry and can be a direct comparison to chivalry. Due to the idea of bushido, children in Japan grow up with stories of ancient warriors, very similar to those of western children, which is why the *Legend of Zelda* franchise is so popular throughout the world. The impact this has is very important for society today.

King Arthur, while not always depicted as a perfectly moral man, is seen as picturesque leader. Western leaders strive to follow his lead, and become not just a chivalrous leader, but a strong and righteous leader. Chivalry is a founding principal of today's Western society, just like Bushido is for Japanese society. However, by purposefully reflecting Arthurian legend into the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, Nintendo, the company which created the *Legend of Zelda*, is showing the players of these games two things; the fact that Western and Japanese cultures, while different, have very many similarities and that the founding principles of both cultures are extremely similar. Children and adults alike are able to interact with the characters in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, and by creating parallels between an ancient literary source, ancient mythology and modern art, society today is able to appreciate the works of the past in an even more vivid way. In this essay, I am going to argue that the *Legend of Zelda* franchise purposely reflects Arthurian legend, due to the fact that Japan's society is fundamentally built on the idea of bushido, or "the way of the warrior".

Bushido and Chivalry:

Bushido, or “the way of the warrior,” is a fundamental societal belief held in Japan. Bushido was the main “code” for the samurai warriors of Japan’s past, and the moral code for Japan’s present. Inazō Nitobe, the author of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, writes “Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history. It is still a living object of power and beauty among us; and if it assumes no tangible shape or form, it not the less scents the moral atmosphere, and makes us aware that we are still under its potent spell” (Nitobe 13). Nitobe goes on to write “I would likewise invite the Western historical and ethical student to the study of chivalry in the Japan of the present” (Nitobe 14). Bushido itself doesn’t have an exact “creation date”. Rather, Bushido “...attains consciousness in the feudal age, its origin, in respect to time, may be identified with feudalism” (Nitobe, 16). Likewise, the chivalric code was created during the Middle Ages, a time where feudalism was the main form of government in England and the surrounding countries. Nitobe is linking the western idea of “chivalry” with the Japanese idea of Bushido, with good reason. Tim Clark, a professor at Hitotsubashi University, explains the main principles of Bushido are as follows: Rectitude or Justice, Courage, Benevolence or Mercy, Politeness, Honesty and Sincerity, Honor, Loyalty, Character and Self-Control (Clark, 3-6).

The chivalric code, however, isn’t as “set in stone” as the Bushido belief. Rather, multiple rulers during the Middle Ages created their own “chivalric code”. However, for this essay I will be referring to the Duke of Burgundy’s code, found in the Order of the Golden Fleece. Emily Gosden, a journalist for *The Telegraph*, writes “The Duke of Burgundy (1422-

1477) defined the twelve chivalric virtues for his Order of the Golden Fleece as Faith, Charity, Justice, Sagacity, Prudence, Temperance, Resolution, Truth, Liberality, Diligence, Hope and Valour” (Gosden). Though these two codes/belief systems are different in that they don’t share the same language, they share multiple virtues. For example, both codes rely on justice as a core principle. Mercy and Charity are also the same core value in each of these codes, however this is an example of the different word choices. However, these codes aren’t the exact same. These codes are shaped by the religion of the culture of the day they were created. Bushido’s creation was heavily influenced by Shintoism and Buddhism. Nitobe writes, “In Europe, Christianity, interpreted with concessions convenient to chivalry, infused it nevertheless with spiritual data. "Religion, war and glory were the three [aspects] of a perfect Christian knight," says [Alphonse de Lamartine]. In Japan there were several, of which I may begin with Buddhism.” (Nitobe, 19-20). Nitobe goes on to write “What Buddhism failed to give, Shintoism offered in abundance ... Shinto theology has no place for the dogma of "original sin." On the contrary, it believes in the innate goodness and God-like purity of the human soul, adoring it as the adytum [“The innermost or most sacred part of a temple or other place of worship” (“Adytum”)] from which divine oracles are proclaimed.” (Nitobe, 21). Buddhism is a religion with no deity; a non-theistic religion. Rather, Buddhism is a religion reliant on Fate itself. Buddhism, too, doesn’t believe in the dogma of “original sin”. But, Buddhism goes further than Shintoism in believing that there is no sin. With the idea of no sin, warriors would be able to do whatever they wanted with no consequences. While Buddhism laid the groundwork for the Bushido code, that warriors must fight with Fate by their side, Shintoism provides the moral compass for these warriors. The belief of an innate goodness of the human soul is the primary focus for the morality of Shintoism;

however, Shintoism does believe in sin. Shinto followers believe that all humans are born good and pure, however as they grow older, they will experience sin and wrongdoings.

While the Bushido code was founded on the principles of Shintoism and Buddhism, the chivalric code was based on the foundation of the Catholic Church. Edgar Prestage, author of *Chivalry*, writes, “He [the knight] was brought up in the use of [the church’s] sacraments, and in obedience to her precepts and reverence for her ministers. The Crusader, the Templar, the Hospitaller, and the Knight of Santiago were champions of the Church against the infidel. The knight's consecration to chivalry was after the form of a sacrament, and to defend Holy Church was part of his vow of initiation” (Prestage, 15). Words such as ‘charity’, ‘prudence’ and ‘temperance’ are all related with the idea of the Catholic Church and the culture surrounding it. Due to these similarities, the literature and legends of these two time periods can be seen as similar. The idea of a King Arthur-esque figure and the legends surrounding him are actually present in ancient Japanese literature and folklore.

King Arthur and Arthurian Figures in Japanese Mythology

Arthurian legend is very prevalent in today’s society. The mystery of “the true King Arthur” is still talked about today, which helps keep the Arthurian tradition alive. There are two figures in Japanese folklore which correspond to the legend of King Arthur; Susano and Yamato-takeru. The tale of Susano (sometimes referred to as Susano-wo) is one which varies depending on who is telling the legend. Little details are changed between each version, however the basic premise stays the same, just like with Arthurian legend. The basic tale of Susano, according to Michael Ashkanzi, author of *Handbook of Japanese Mythology* is as follows: Susano was born

from Izanami-no-mikoto, the wife of Izanagi-no-mikoto. These were the two creation deities. Izanami gave birth to Susano from her eye, and later she passed away due to the birth of the fire deity. This caused Susano to be very angry, and he started playing tricks on the other deities. Due to these tricks, Susano was banished to Earth. As a result, Susano was forced to wander the Earth (Ashkanzi, 76-77). Once on Earth, Susano's tale starts to take the form of Arthurian legend. While on Earth, Susano comes to a village where an eight-headed and eight-tailed dragon has killed multiple villagers, including seven of the eight daughters of a village family. Susano promises to slay this dragon. In return, he asks for the hand of the last daughter, who is captured by the dragon. The family agrees and Susano tricks the dragon into drinking eight barrels of wine (Ashkanzi, 80). This is one instance of where the legend varies, depending on the source. In another version told by Juliet Piggott, author of *Japanese Mythology*, the dragon becomes drunk on sake, or rice wine, and the sake is poisoned (Piggott, 16). However, that is just a small discrepancy which doesn't change the story. However, both versions of the tale agree that Susano slays this dragon, and in doing so, breaks his sword and finds Kusanagi, the magical sword. In the end, Susano receives the sword and offers it up to Amaterasu, the sun goddess, as an apology for his previous misdeeds (Ashkanazi, 80).

This tale has two very Arthurian motifs associated with it. The first motif is the magical sword, which is ultimately given up to a magical woman (the Lady of the Lake in the case of King Arthur) and the second being the idea of courtly love between the hero and the damsel. C. Scott Littleton, the author of *Some Possible Arthurian Themes in Japanese Mythology and Folklore* writes,

The important thing here is that it was the extraction and possession of this magical sword that transformed Susano from a

callow youth into a full-fledged and responsible warrior.

Essentially the same transformation occurs in the Arthurian traditions about the Sword in the Stone. The essence of that episode seems to be a rite of passage which not only signifies the young Arthur's right to rule, but also his emergence as a full-fledged warrior fit to participate in tournaments. (Littleton, 72).

The second motif in this tale which is found heavily in Arthurian legend is the idea of the helpless maiden. In both Susano's legend and Arthur's legend, there are maidens who have been trapped by either a hideous beast or by an evil king. In both of these cases, the men, Susano and Arthur, must save the maiden and both ultimately take their hand in marriage, either before the capture when Arthur marries Guenever, or after the capture (Susano).

The second instance of Japanese folklore and mythology corresponding to Arthurian legend is the tale of Yamato-takeru. The tale of Yamato-takeru is one which is very Arthurian in nature. According to C. Scott Littleton, "One of the twin sons born to the Emperor Keiko (or Oho-tarashi-hiko-oshiro-wake), Yamato-takeru ("Brave Man of Yamato") did not become the heir apparent, but his 'manly spirit' was evident almost from birth. When he reached maturity, he was sent on several important military expeditions and rapidly gained the reputation of being the best fighter in the realm. He eventually became the leader of a mighty band of warriors" (Littleton, 74). One of the most Arthurian-esque qualities of Yamato-takeru is the fact that when he died (due to illness inflicted upon him by a wrathful god), he was carried to the seashore. When King Arthur died, he was carried to the lake, another body of water. Sir Thomas Malory, author of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, writes "Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back and so went with him to the water's side" (Malory, 213). However, this isn't the main parallel between the

two epic figures. Littleton writes “The Emperor was grief-stricken when he heard the news and ordered the dead hero to be buried in a tumulus near Ise. Yamato-takeru's soul, in the form of a white bird, escaped from the tomb and flew toward Yamato. When the coffin was opened no corpse could be found” (Littleton, 74). This is very Arthurian in nature. Malory writes, “Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross” (Malory 550). Though in the tale we are told that Yamato-takeru has died, the lack of a body suggests that he could in fact still be alive, embodying the very phrase inscribed on King Arthur’s grave; “Rex Quondam Rexque Futurus”, or “Former and Future King”.

Arthurian Legend and *Legend of Zelda*

With the direct parallels between Bushido and chivalry and the parallels between Japanese folklore and Arthurian legend, the modern culture in the West and Japan have in turn followed these traditions, namely in the entertainment industry. Video games are the fastest growing form of entertainment (Wilson and Meyer, 2019), making the video gaming culture a very prevalent presence in modern society. According to Alan Wilson and Nathan Meyer, contributors to “Capital Ideas”, Nintendo, a Japanese gaming company, ranked #6 out of the 10 largest video game companies ranked by global gaming related revenue in 2019. Due to this, Nintendo has become a household name all around the world. Children and adults alike are able to experience the same magic and storytelling from video games. One franchise in particular has remained popular since its debut, the *Legend of Zelda* franchise. Nintendo has created multiple

games which include beautiful graphics, intriguing plots and stories and an expansive, yet concise, timeline which connects twenty two games seamlessly.

Arthurian legend is based off of the legends of King Arthur and all of his knights, such as Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad. The *Legend of Zelda* franchise in turn are based off of the story of Link, a mysterious orphan, and all of the adventures he has to ultimately save Princess Zelda, the ruler of Hyrule, from the clutches of Ganondorf (sometimes referred to as Ganon), the evil incarnation of Demise, the Demon King and the evil of all evil (Miyamoto et al., 71). With this said, I have found that each main character in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise has evidence that relates them back to characters found throughout Arthurian legend. I will be discussing a number of these characters throughout this essay, with those ranging from protagonists to antagonists, main characters to sub characters. Each character is crucial to fully form the understanding of the idea of Arthurian legend inside the mythical world of Hyrule. However, just like Arthurian legend, the *Legend of Zelda* franchise differs in each installment of the game series. Though they all coincide into one canon timeline, the story of each game is distinctly its own, with call backs to previous games. For example, in “Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time,” Link starts out as a child and becomes an adult later on. However, in “Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker”, Link starts out as a child and stays a child and in “Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess”, Link starts out as an adult and stays an adult.

For this essay, I will be focusing on the game “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time” due to its centrality to the timeline for all of these games. According to Miyamoto et al.,

The chronology begins with the creation of heaven and earth, immediately followed by the events of *Skyward Sword*. It splits after *Ocarina of Time*, with one timeline depicting the events that

follow Link's triumph over Ganon, and the other his defeat. The section of the timeline where Link triumphs is further divided into two separate realities: the Child Era, where Link returns to his original time, and the Adult Era, where the Hero of Time disappears and Ganondorf is free to return unopposed" (Miyamoto et al., 69).

The game "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time" is the core of the *Legend of Zelda* franchise. In each game, there are small details reminding the player to always look back at the "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time". For example, in "Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker", players are able to see six stain glass windows depicting the six sages found in "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time" (Miyamoto et al., 161) and in "The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword", the harp Princess Zelda plays is the same harp that Sheik, a main character in "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time" plays (Miyamoto et al., 11). However, I will incorporate some information from other games from the *Legend of Zelda* franchise if I deem it will be beneficial.

That being said, for the Arthurian legend comparisons, I will mainly be focusing on *Le Morte D'Arthur : King Arthur & the Knights of the Round Table* by Sir Thomas Malory and edited by Andrea Denny-Brown, published in 2017. Malory's work has been adored by millions over hundreds of years, making it an excellent source. Though Malory reworked existing legend from the French and English traditions, he has given these legends a more permanent place in the modern world through his stellar adaptations. Again, I will incorporate information from other Arthurian legend sources if I deem it will be beneficial as well for the comparison. With that knowledge, the very first comparison I will be doing is not on a human character, rather on a

constant throughout the legends and the games. The first comparison will be the Sword and the Stone, and the Master Sword.

The Sword in the Stone and The Master Sword:

Nintendo has created an entirely unique world for the *Legend of Zelda* franchise. By creating this world, Nintendo has been able to create vibrant and interesting characters, history which has been recorded through all the games and is discoverable by gameplay and an ancient religion complete with its own ancient artifacts. However, I would like to argue that though the *Legend of Zelda* franchise is entirely new in this modern era, I believe that the concept was based on an already set fantasy land. The characters, the religion, the land and even the artifacts aren't random figments of the *Legend of Zelda* creator's imagination come to life, rather they are all based on the idea of Arthurian legend. The very first comparison I would like to discuss is the Master Sword, a legendary sword found throughout the *Legend of Zelda* games and Excalibur, the legendary sword of King Arthur. One of the very first phrases ever spoken by Link is "It's dangerous to go alone! Take this." (The Legend of Zelda, 1986). This line has become incredibly popular for fans of the series, and rightfully so. This line first introduces the player to the Master Sword, an ancient sword that aids Link through all of the *Legend of Zelda* games and is a key player in linking all of the games together. This sword is extremely similar the 'Sword in the Stone' found in Arthurian legend. The very first similarity between these two swords is that they represent a coming-of-age artifact, an artifact which shows that these two heroes are meant to save their land, Camelot or Hyrule, from certain demise. The *Hyrule Historia* is the official collector's guide to the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, written by Shigeru Miyamoto, Eiji Aonuma

and Akira Himekawa. In the “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, Rauru, a sage in the game says “The Master Sword is a sacred blade which evil ones may never touch.... Only one worthy of the title of "Hero of Time" can pull it from the Pedestal of Time....” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). While Arthur was born with royal blood and was deemed worthy through his birth, Link must be tested and obtain the necessary skills to lead; power, wisdom and courage. In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, players are able to take Link to the Temple of Time, an ancient temple containing the Master Sword. Once inside this temple, Link, a young boy, walks to the sword and lifts the sword with ease from its resting place, a symbol of his worthiness.

The very first similarity between these two swords is the way both protagonists retrieve these swords. In *Le Morte D'Arthur : King Arthur & the Knights of the Round Table*, we learn of how King Arthur retrieves his sword. Malory writes “Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.” (Malory, 6). Malory goes on to write;

So as they rode to the joustward, Sir Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father’s lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard, and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day. So when he came to the churchyard, Sir Arthur alit and tied his horse to the stile, and so he went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were at jousting; and so he handled the

sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way until he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist well it was the sword of the stone...

(Malory, 6).

In this passage, we learn that King Arthur (formally known as Arthur) pulls the legendary sword from the stone, marking him the rightful king to the throne of Camelot. Likewise, in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, we learn of Link becoming the worthy wielder of the Master Sword. This is very similar to the legendary “Sword in the Stone” in Arthurian legend. Alongside these the mythical swords, each of these tales have certain artifacts which become the catalyst for the strength of those who receive it; the Sangreal (or the Holy Grail) and the Triforce.

The Sangreal and the Triforce

The idea of the “Sangreal” (or the Holy Grail) has remained popular throughout history. From films such as “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” to action films starring Indiana Jones, the Sangreal is a mystical artifact which has fascinated historians and the public alike. Is it real? Has it been found? Will it ever be found? These questions help keep the Sangreal relevant and help keep the idea of wonder alive in the modern world; a world full of absolutes and is lacking mystery. However, the Sangreal wasn’t always in existence. Rather, it was first introduced in a French romance tale published in the 12th century. Chrétien de Troyes, a French poet, introduces one of medieval literature’s most enduring themes, the quest for the Holy Grail” (Wood, 1).

Wood writes,

The grail became the very cup from which Jesus Christ drank at the last Supper when he instituted the eucharist, the sacrament by which, in medieval Christianity, ordinary bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ. By undertaking the grail quest in these romances, Arthur's knights could aspire to the supreme achievement of the code of chivalry, namely physical prowess combined with the Christian ideals of spiritual love and sacrifice (Wood, 1).

The image of the Sangreal is attributed as the qualities and attributes of Jesus Christ, part of the Judeo-Christian Trinity. The ones who receive this grail will embody the virtues of chivalry and the Christian ideals; they become the “perfect knight”. There are many similarities between the Sangreal and the Triforce (found in the *Legend of Zelda*). In earlier versions of Arthurian legend, the Grail Knight isn't Arthur, it's Sir Percival. However, in *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Sir Galahad, went on that quest. The Sangreal can only be received by those who are pure in spirit and those who are pure in body. King Arthur, the protagonist of these tales, sends other knights to retrieve the Sangreal and never attempts to do retrieve it himself. One superficial reason is due to the fact that King Arthur has married Guenever and is now considered “impure” because of his sexual encounter. However, in Lord Tennyson's poem *Idylls of the King*, we learn more about Sir Galahad's background and belief. With Arthurian legend, the source material itself can be seen as ‘flat’. The medieval material focusses more on the tale itself and distances itself from character development which modern readers are used to. However, many interpretations of Arthurian legend have not only become canon but have built upon the already established characters and give them more life. Lord Tennyson gives Sir Galahad depth by writing, “My

good blade carves the casques of men,/ My tough lance thrusteth sure,/ My strength is as the strength of ten,/ Because my heart is pure” (Tennyson). Tennyson goes on to write, “But all my heart is drawn above,/ My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;/ I never felt the kiss of love,/ Nor maiden's hand in mine” (Tennyson). With this knowledge, readers are able to understand why Sir Galahad is the receiver of the Sangreal and not King Arthur.

In the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, the Triforce, an ancient artifact of the Hyrulian people, works in a relatively similar way. However, to fully understand the Triforce and why it is important, knowing the history behind its creation is key. In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, the Deku Tree, an ancient tree which is the center of the Kokiri Forest (a forest in Hyrule) explains,

“Before time began, before spirits and life existed... Three golden goddesses descended upon the chaos that was Hyrule... Din, the goddess of power... Nayru, the goddess of wisdom... Farore, the goddess of courage... Din... With her strong flaming arms, she cultivated the land and created the red earth. Nayru... Poured her wisdom onto the earth and gave the spirit of law to the world. Farore... With her rich soul, produced all life forms who would uphold the law. The three great goddesses, their labors completed, departed for the heavens. And golden sacred triangles remained at the point where the goddesses left the world. Since then, the sacred triangles have become the basis for our world's providence. And, the resting place of the triangles has become the Sacred Realm.”

(The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998)

The creation of the Triforce not only reflects the ideals of chivalry and Bushido, but also the culture from which it came, very similar to the Sangreal. The religions encompassing Bushido are Shintoism and Buddhism. According to Mark Cartwright, a contributor to “Ancient History Encyclopedia”, Shintoism is a religion which believes in multiple *かみ* (kami) or gods which govern over nature in all forms (*Shinto*, Cartwright). With this belief, Shintoism is considered a polytheistic religion, or a religion with multiple gods. Because of this, the *Legend of Zelda* franchise embodies this societal belief of multiple gods with the creation of Din, Nayru and Farore. However, these goddesses don’t follow the Bushido code as much as they follow the chivalric code. Though these two codes are similar, each code has different elements. With this in mind, the three goddesses follow the ideals of valour (Din), sagacity (Nayru) and resolution (Farore). By embodying these beliefs, the Triforce is seen as not only an artifact relevant to the Hyrulian people, but as a direct connection to the chivalric code, which in turn connects it to the Sangreal.

The Triforce is also similar to the Sangreal with not only its meaning, but its properties as well. According to the Miyamoto et al., “A strong heart, innate ability, and a balance of the three virtues (power, wisdom, and courage) are required to be granted a wish. If one who does not possess the balance of the three virtues touches the Triforce, its three pieces split apart” (Miyamoto et al., 70). Though the Sangreal won’t break apart if someone unworthy touches it, the fact that both these elements must be sought by someone worthy is exceptional. The Sangreal, as a powerful object, has shown that if those who pursue it are considered unworthy, they won’t only be denied, but sorely wounded and left for dead. Malory writes,

Then Lancelot kneeled down tofore the chamber, for well wist he
that there was the Sangreal within that chamber. Then said he, Fair

sweet Father Jesu Christ, if ever I did thing that pleased thee, Lord for thy pity never have me not in despite for my sins done aforetime, and that thou show me some thing of that I seek. And with that he saw the chamber door open, and there came out a great clereness, that the house was as bright as all the torches of the world had been there. So came he to the chamber door, and would have entered. And anon a voice said to him, Flee Lancelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to do it; and if thou enter thou shalt forethink it. Then he withdrew him aback right heavy. (Malory, 456)

Later on in the same chapter, Malory explains,

And when he saw none about him that would help him, then came he to the door a great pace and said, Fair Father Jesu Christ, ne take it for no sin though I help the good man which hath great need of help. Right so entered he into the chamber and came toward the table of silver; and when he came nigh he felt a breath, that him thought it was intermeddled with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage that him thought it brent his visage; and therewith he fell to the earth, and had no power to arise, as he that was so araged, that had lost the power of his body and his hearing and his seeing. Then felt he many hands about him, which took him up and bare him out of the chamber door, without any amending of his swoon, and left him there, seeming dead to all people (Malory, 457)

While in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, the pursuer of the Triforce won't receive bodily harm for trying to retrieve it, however the Triforce will break into three parts, leaving the pursuer devastated.

A strong heart, innate ability, and a balance of the three virtues (power, wisdom, and courage) are required to be granted a wish. If one who does not possess the balance of the three virtues touches the Triforce, its three pieces split apart. The finder is left with the piece that personifies what he or she values most. The other two pieces will appear on the hands of two individuals, chosen by the will of the goddess. One must reunite the three pieces in order to obtain true power. (Miyamoto et al., 70)

If someone unworthy of the Triforce tries to obtain it, they can unwittingly give power to their enemy. In the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, when Ganondorf, the antagonist, tries to take the Triforce, it splits into three pieces. Each piece was gifted to Link (courage), Zelda (wisdom) and Ganondorf (power). These three characters become the center of the *Legend of Zelda* games because of this split, which allows for the heroic tale of Link to begin.

King Arthur, Sir Galahad and Link

Though his name isn't in the title, Link is the protagonist of all *Legend of Zelda* games and is one of the most wellknown video game characters of all time. According to Lisa Eadicicco, Alex Fitzpatrick and Matt Peckham, all journalists for "Time.com", Link ranks #5 out of 15 for "The 15 Most Influential Video Game Characters of All Time" (Eadicicco et al., 2017).

Like most video game characters, Link is given one outfit to wear, at least in the very beginning of the game. Link is identified by his green tunic, green cap, tan trousers and dark brown boots, something that remains constant throughout all the installments of the *Legend of Zelda* franchise. According to Cartwright, “Both sexes wore long-sleeved tunics which had either a low-cut neck or a slit down the front so they could be put on over the head and then tied at the neck, sometimes with a brooch. The tunic might go down to the knee or even the ankles in the case of more formal wear for the nobility” (*Clothes in Medieval England*, Cartwright). Cartwright goes on to write, “The taste for colours was the brighter the better, with crimson, blue, yellow, green and purple being the most popular choices in all types of clothes” (*Clothes in Medieval England*, Cartwright). Link, with his green tunic that stops at the knee, is shown wearing typical clothing for a man during medieval times. However, Link isn’t royalty, so he isn’t wearing a tunic longer than his knee. The knights of the Round Table also wore green. Malory writes,

“O it befell in the month of May, Queen Guenever called unto her, knights of the Table Round; and she gave them warning that early upon the morrow she would ride on Maying into woods and fields beside West-minster. And I warn you that there be none of you but that he be well horsed, and that ye all be clothed in green, either in silk outhere in cloth; and I shall bring with me ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind him, and every knight shall have a squire and two yeomen; and I will that ye all be well horsed.” (Malory, 497).

However, though Link eventually becomes a knight and receives honor, he doesn’t start out that way. According to the Deku Sprout, the sprout which takes the place of the Deku Tree seven years later,

“Some time ago, before the King of Hyrule unified this country, there was a fierce war in our world. One day, to escape from the fires of the war, a Hylian mother and her baby boy entered this forbidden forest. The mother was gravely injured... Her only choice was to entrust the child to the Deku Tree, the guardian spirit of the forest. The Deku Tree could sense that this was a child of destiny, whose fate would affect the entire world, so he took him into the forest. After the mother passed away, the baby was raised as a Kokiri. And now, finally, the day of destiny has come! You are a Hylian, and were always bound to leave this forest. And now... You have learned your own destiny... So you know what you must do... That's right... You must save the land of Hyrule!” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998)

With this knowledge, Link is automatically linked to King Arthur, a baby who was raised by someone else. King Arthur was born from King Uther Pendragon and Dame Igraine. However, Igraine wasn't Uther's wife. Uther lusted after Igraine, and Merlin, the wizard, aided Uther in this endeavor, for a price. This price is that Merlin may take the child conceived from Igraine and Uther, and Uther agreed. Malory writes,

And when the child is born let it be delivered to [Merlin] at yonder privy postern unchristened. So like as Merlin devised it was done. And when Sir Ector was come he made faunce to the king for to nourish the child like as the king desired; and there the king granted Sir Ector great rewards. Then when the lady was delivered,

the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take the child, bound in a cloth of gold, and that ye deliver him to what poor man ye meet at the postern gate of the castle. So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and so he bare it forth unto Sir Ector, and made an holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur; and so Sir Ector's wife nourished him with her own pappe." (Malory, 4).

Though Arthur was given to Sir Ector and his wife as payment for helping with Uther's rape of Dame Igraine (Malory, 3), the idea of being raised by different people other than their parents is extremely similar in both of these cases. Arthur was raised as the son of a nobleman and knight, not a king. Link, too, was raised as someone he isn't. Link was raised as a Koriki, when he was in fact a Hylian. These two characters both are raised in different cultures, and then suddenly are thrown into a world they aren't used too.

Each character grew up in a society that wasn't theirs. Link, as a Hylian, was constantly questioning his true heritage. According to the Deku Tree, "The children of the forest, the Kokiri, live here with me. Each Kokiri has his or her own guardian fairy. However, there is one boy who does not have a fairy..." (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). The boy being referenced is Link. Soon after, Link receives Navi, a fairy which aids him during his quest. Saria, Link's friend in the Koriki Village, states, "Wow! A fairy!! Finally, a fairy came to you, Link! Wow! That's great news! I'm so happy for you! Now you're a true Kokiri, Link!" (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). By being called a true Koriki, Link is now fully accepted into the Koriki society. However, not everyone is ready to accept Link as a true Koriki, and with good reason.

Mido, another Koriki, sees Link trying to see the Deku Tree. Mido states "Hey you! "Mr. No Fairy!" What's your business with the Great Deku Tree? Without a fairy, you're not even a real man!" (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). The accusation of not being a 'real man' is a verbal acknowledgement of what Link had always feared, that he wasn't a true Koriki. Seven years, once Link accepts his status as a Koriki, he is told from the Deku Sprout that he is actually a Hylian. "You must be wondering why only you have grown up! Well, as you might have already guessed, you are not a Kokiri! You are actually a Hylian! I am happy to finally reveal this secret to you!" (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). Link experienced a shift in his identity, something Arthur too faces.

As mentioned above, Arthur was raised with Sir Ector and his household. While Sir Ector was a nobleman, and Arthur didn't have a terrible childhood, he did question his identity. The next mention of Arthur in Ector's household is during the joust. Sir Kay, Arthur's adoptive brother, is meant to joust but has left his sword. Malory writes,

So as they rode to the jousts-ward, Sir Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting (Malory 6).

While readers understand that Arthur is actually of royal blood, he is being treated as a squire to Kay, and is meant to eventually become a knight himself. Once Arthur pulls the sword from the stone, he brings the sword to Kay, in which Kay immediately takes the sword to Ector. During this exchange, Kay exclaims,

Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone, wherefore I must be king of this land. When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there

they alit all three, and went into the church. And anon he made Sir Kay to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. Sir, said Sir Kay, by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me. How gat ye this sword? said Sir Ector to Arthur. Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain (Malory 6).

While Arthur originally pulled the sword from the stone, as a squire, he gave the recognition to Kay. However, once Ector learned who the true owner of the sword was, he explained that Arthur now was king. This sudden change, very similar to the change from Koriki to Hylian for Link, startled Arthur. "Now, said Sir Ector to Arthur, I understand ye must be king of this land. Wherefore I, said Arthur, and for what cause? Sir, said Ector, for God will have it so, for there should never man have drawn out this sword, but he that shall be rightways king of this land" (Malory 6).

Arthur questions this logic and Ector shows that only the true king may pull the sword from the stone by demonstrating putting the sword back into the stone and being unable to pull it out (Malory 7). Arthur's identity has crumbled, and he has gone from being a squire to a king in a matter of minutes. The thematic significance between both these protagonist's childhoods is that both Link and Arthur, while not knowing their true heritage, grew to be mighty rulers. This feeling of 'otherness' which they both experienced helped shape them into the men they must become to fight the darkness that is threatening both their lands. With the guidance of a fairy and a father, both Link and Arthur respectively take their roles as leaders gracefully, which in turn allows the people around them to respect them greatly.

The second similarity between Arthur and Link is the sword. As mentioned above, Arthur, due to his royal blood, was deemed worthy by the sword in the stone, to become king of England. Link, on the other hand, was deemed the true hero of Hyrule and was able to pull the Master Sword out from the stone in the Temple of Time. These two moments signified an end of an era. For Arthur, it signified the ending of his boyhood as a page and the beginning of his manhood as a king. For Link, it signified the end of his childhood and the beginning of his adulthood. These coming of age elements in each of these two protagonists' stories signify another direct link.

Finally, the last element of these two character's tales is the idea of reincarnation which shrouds them both. According to Malory, "Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic iacet Arthurus Rex, quondam Rexque futurus.*" (Malory, 550). The phrase "*Hic iacet Arthurus Rex, quon-dam Rex que futurus*" translates to "Here lies Arthur, Former and Future King" (Malory, 215). The idea that Arthur may never have died, and in fact is waiting to come again is an example of the possibility of reincarnation. Link, too, is shrouded with the same air of possible reincarnation. According to Miyamoto et al., "The heroes of these chronicles all share the name Link. These Links might have been the same person, a series of familial descendants, or a number of heroes with different names entirely" (Miyamoto et al., 68). The Link every player knows, and loves could in fact be the same Link reincarnated over and over again. The mystery behind these reincarnations helps keep the magic alive throughout the series.

For both of these characters, the idea of a sacred bloodline or a reincarnation helps solidify the narrative of the chosen one, or “the hero of time”.

Link in fact embodies two different characters from Arthurian legend. Though King Arthur and Link share many similarities, there are a couple of key differences. The first difference is that Link isn't a royal. In fact, Link is described as one of the last surviving knights of Hyrule. King Arthur was born a royal, from Uther assaulting Igraine with Merlin arranging the whole ordeal. Another difference between Link and King Arthur is key; King Arthur was chosen as worthy to wield the sword in the stone and wasn't worthy for the Sangreal. Link, on the other hand, is worthy of both the Triforce (the equivalent of the Sangreal) and the Master Sword. There is one other character in Arthurian legend who Link is the embodiment of; one who closes the gaps in the narrative of Link and King Arthur. This character is Sir Galahad, the son of Lancelot du Lake.

Sir Galahad is described as “... the good knight, by whom all the foreign country should be brought out of danger, and by him the Holy Greal should be achieved.” (Malory, 360). Link is a known knight whose one purpose in life is to retrieve the Triforce, the equivalent of the Sangreal. As mentioned above, the Triforce and the Sangreal only go to those who are worthy. Link, as the destined “Hero of Time” is deemed worthy of retrieving the Triforce, while Sir Galahad is deemed worthy because of his goodness and because he is “... a clean virgin above all knights, as the flower of the lily in whom virginity is signified. And thou art the rose which is the flower of all good virtue, and in the colour of fire” (*King Arthur and His Knights: Selected Tales by Sir Thomas Malory*, Malory, 101). Link is also a known virgin throughout the series. In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, Link begins the game as a child. Once he reaches the master sword, Rauru, a sage speaks this to Link; “The Master Sword is a sacred blade which evil ones

may never touch.... Only one worthy of the title of "Hero of Time" can pull it from the Pedestal of Time.... However, you were too young to be the Hero of Time.... Therefore, your spirit was sealed here for seven years. And now that you are old enough, the time has come for you to awaken as the Hero of Time!" (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). Link was forced to sleep for 7 years, resulting in his transformation from child to adult. However, once he becomes an adult, the player sees the rest of Link's life until he must go back to the Master Sword. Link is always on a mission, and never stops, resulting in his virginity remaining intact. With these two characters in mind, Link has now become the "perfect knight" in Arthurian legend, the knight Sir Galahad who is known for his purity and goodness and King Arthur, known for his strength and leadership. Link is the embodiment of two Arthurian figures, not just one. The next character I will discuss embodies the character of Queen Guenever (or Guinevere).

Queen Gwenever and Princess Zelda

Zelda, the princess in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise is not only the namesake of the entire series, but is an important figure as well. Zelda is found in every single game in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, and is always the princess in need of a knight to rescue her. This is very similar to the story of King Arthur and Queen Guenever. According to Malory, King Arthur was meant to choose a wife. When Merlin asked who he would like, King Arthur replied as follows. "I love Guenever the king's daughter, Leodegrance of the land of Cameliard, the which holdeth in his house the Table Round that ye told he had of my father Uther. And this damosel is the most valiant and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find." (Malory, 45). Later on in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Guenever is pursued yet again by another man, Sir Lancelot. Zelda

is also described as a beautiful woman. In “The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword”, players also learn that many men are after Zelda. In fact, Goose, a classmate and potential suitor for Zelda tells Link “I hate to break it to you, but today's the day I bust this adorable little fantasyland you're living in. Zelda's playing the role of the goddess at today's ceremony, and I'm gonna be the one to claim that Sailcloth. When I heard she made it herself, man, no way was I gonna let some scrawny clown snatch that prize from me” (The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword, 2011). Though Zelda ultimately chooses Link, it shows that she is a very desirable woman, just like Queen Guenever. Another similarity between Zelda and Guenever is their royal blood.

Guenever was born of King Leodegrance, a king of Cameliard (Malory, 45). Zelda was born as the princess of Hyrule, with her father being King Rhoam Bosphoramus Hyrule (The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild), the king of Hyrule. Another similarity between Guenever and Zelda are what they represent in both of their tales. Janet Jesmok writes, “Furthermore, the two major female figures in Arthur's life, his mother Igraine and his queen Guinevere, anchor the text, providing models of wisdom and judgment” (Jesmok, 36). She goes on to write about Guenever “If, for a time, she breaks down in Book Seven, accusing Lancelot of treachery and recreance, this understandable lapse does not diminish her nobility or importance. In Book Eight, she evolves into a spiritual guide, instructing Lancelot, and by extension, his fellow knights in eschatological wisdom.” (Jemok, 40). Zelda is also seen as a symbol of wisdom in the *Legend of Zelda* franchise.

According to Miyamoto et al., “The proof of the complete power of the Triforce appears as marks on the back of the hand. The top triangle represents power, the bottom left represents wisdom, and the bottom right represents courage. Once the bearer of the three triangles attains a perfect balance of the attributes they represent, the true power of the Triforce is revealed.”

(Miyamoto et al., 76). In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, Ganondorf exclaims “No... It was not the kid's [Link's] power I misjudged; it was the power of the Triforce of Courage! But, with the Triforce of Wisdom that Zelda has... When I obtain these two Triforces... Then, I will become the true ruler of the world!” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). This proves that Zelda is the embodiment of wisdom in these games, by explaining why she is deemed worthy of receiving the Triforce of Wisdom by awakening as the seventh sage. Sheik, a mysterious character who later is revealed to be Zelda in disguise, says, “And the other, who holds the Triforce of Wisdom...is the seventh Sage, who is destined to be the leader of them all...” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time: 1998). Zelda is destined to rule all of Hyrule, with Link by her side. Though Guenever isn't destined to rule Camelot for all time, she is seen as a mighty queen who Arthur treats as his equal “... inviting her to accompany him to war and underscoring his belief that men inspired by women fight more valiantly...” (Jesmok, 38). Finally, the last similarity between Zelda and Guenever is the damsel in distress trope they both share. In “Le Morte D'Arthur”, readers learn about Guenever getting captured. Malory writes,

So when the queen saw her knights thus dolefully wounded, and needs must be slain at the last, then for pity and sorrow she cried Sir Meliagrance, Slay not my noble knights, and I will go with thee upon this covenant, that thou save them, and suffer them not to be no more hurt, with this, that they be led with me wheresomever thou leadest me, for I will rather slay myself than I will go with thee, unless that these my noble knights may be in my presence (Malory, 499).

This is when Guenever becomes captured by Sir Meliagrance, a nobleman entranced by her beauty. However, instead of freeing herself, Guenever is saved by her hero, Sir Lancelot Du Lake. Malory writes “When Sir Meliagrance heard that Sir Lancelot was there he ran unto Queen Guenever, and fell upon his knee, and said, Mercy, madam, now I put me wholly into your grace. What aileth you now? said Queen Guenever; forsooth I might well wit some good knight would revenge me though my lord Arthur wist not of this your work.” (Malory, 503).

Zelda, too, becomes captured by an evil lord, and Link becomes her savior. In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, Zelda becomes captured by Ganondorf, the villain throughout all of the *Legend of Zelda* games. Ganondorf states “No... It was not the kid's [Link's] power I misjudged, it was the power of the Triforce of Courage! But, with the Triforce of Wisdom that Zelda has... When I obtain these two Triforces... Then, I will become the true ruler of the world!! If you want to rescue Zelda, come to my castle!” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). This statement is said when Ganondorf has captured Zelda and transports her to Hyrule castle, Zelda's old home which Ganondorf has captured. Later on in the game, Link defeats Ganondorf and Zelda is released. Zelda exclaims “Thank you, Link... Thanks to you, Ganondorf has been sealed inside the Evil Realm! Thus, peace will once again reign in this world...for a time.” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). Though Zelda is shown with part of the Triforce and has been given its power, she is in need of Link to save her due to the ‘damsel in distress’ trope both her and Guenever share. However, there are a couple of differences between Guenever and Zelda.

The final character comparison in this essay is the comparison of King Mordred and Ganondorf (or Ganon).

King Mordred and Ganondorf

King Mordred is a well known enemy in Arthurian legend. One of the reasons that Mordred is the enemy of Arthur is due to his birth. Arthur is his father, and Morgana le Fey, Arthur's sister, is his mother. This makes Mordred both Arthur's son and nephew, causing him to experience a very different world than the other characters. According to Malory,

For she [Morgana] was a passing fair lady, therefore the king cast great love unto her, and desired to lie by her; so they were agreed, and he begat upon her Mordred, and she was his sister, on his mother's side, Igraine. So there she rested her a month, and at the last departed. Then the king dreamed a marvelous dream whereof he was sore adread. But all this time King Arthur knew not that King Lot's wife was his sister." (Malory, 20).

Malory goes on to write, "...the child [Merlin] told you [Arthur] the truth, and more would he have told you an ye would have suffered him; but ye have done a thing late that God is displeased with you, for ye have lain by your sister, and on her ye have gotten a child that shall destroy you and all the knights of your realm." (Malory, 22). Mordred was destined to destroy Arthur since the very beginning; he was assigned a fate he didn't want. When Arthur learned of this, he didn't go back to help raise Mordred. Rather, he left only his sister to raise him. This caused Mordred to become resentful of his father/uncle. Ganondorf too was assigned a fate, the fate of evil.

According to Miyamoto et al., "However, the destruction of Demise was not the end of the battle. It was the beginning of a curse: a never-ending cycle of the reincarnation

of the Demon King, whose hatred for those with the blood of the Goddess and the spirit of the Hero is everlasting.” (Miyamoto et al., 76). As stated above, Demise is the demon king whom the three goddesses defeated, however is doomed to be reincarnated until the end of time.

Ganondorf is that reincarnation. In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, the players learn that Ganondorf, the king of the Gerudos, is deemed king because he is the only male Gerudo born into their kingdom. Every 100 years, a male heir is born and then is designated king. (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time). However, Ganondorf wasn’t raised in Gerudo society. Rather, he was treated as an outsider and was raised by outsiders. Just like Mordred, Ganondorf was left in the care of women only. According to Miyamoto et al., “Ganondorf was raised by Kotake and Koume, a pair of twin witches called Twinrova. Twinrova worships Ganondorf as the Demon King. It could be said that the sisters, who have lived for over four hundred years, rule the tribe from behind the scenes.” (Miyamoto et al., 90).

Another similarity between Mordred and Ganondorf is the way the kingdoms were taken over or destroyed. In *Le Morte D’Arthur*, Mordred takes over Camelot from the inside. Malory writes “And then Sir Arthur asked them what noise they made. My lord, said Agravaire, I shall tell you that I may keep no longer. Here is I and my brother Sir Mordred, brake unto my brother Sir Gawaine, Sir Gaheris, and to Sir Gareth, how this we know all, that Sir Lancelot holdeth your queen, and hath done long; and we be your sister’s sons, and we may suffer it no longer, and all we wot that ye should be above Sir Lancelot; and ye are the king that made him knight, and therefore we will prove it, that he is a traitor to your person.” (Malory, 516). Mordred, with the help of his brothers, has infiltrated King Arthur’s trust and have caused a rift between Arthur and one of his closest confidantes. Later, Malory writes of King Arthur and Sir Lancelot’s battle, and

showing the distancing of Arthur and his kingdom. Malory then writes of how Mordred forged a letter speaking of Arthur's death, which in turn allows him to become king (Malory, 541).

Ganondorf, too, obtained the kingdom of Hyrule through trickery. In "The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time", Zelda says to Link, "Can you see the man with the evil eyes? That is Ganondorf, the leader of the Gerudos. They hail from the desert far to the west. Though he swears allegiance to my father, I am sure he is not sincere. The dark clouds that covered Hyrule in my dream... They must symbolize that man!" (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). Later on, the player learns of how Ganondorf gains power through the seven years Link was sleeping. Rauru, a sage in the game, explains "But, remember... Though you opened the Door of Time in the name of peace... Ganondorf, the Gerudo King of Thieves, used it to enter this forbidden Sacred Realm! He obtained the Triforce from the Temple of Light, and with its power, he became the King of Evil... His evil power radiated from the temples of Hyrule, and in seven short years, it transformed Hyrule into a world of monsters. My power now has only little influence, even in this Sacred Realm... Namely, this Chamber of Sages." (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998). This parallels greatly with how Mordred, while King Arthur was preoccupied with Lancelot, took over the kingdom. While Link was asleep for seven years, Ganondorf took over Hyrule. These two villains preyed on the powerful when they were weak, and won, for the time being.

The last similarity between both of these villains is their death and the ultimate death of their enemy. Malory writes

"Now give me my spear ... for yonder I have espied the traitor that
all this woe hath wrought....Then the king gat his spear in both his
hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor now is thy

death day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftentimes (Malory, 547).

Though Mordred was killed, in his final act, he mortally wound Arthur. Ganondorf, too, ends Link, the legendary "Hero of Time" as his final living movement, though Link doesn't necessarily dies.

In the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, the canon timeline of the video games is different than most. According to Miyamoto et al.,

The chronology begins with the creation of heaven and earth, immediately followed by the events of Skyward Sword. It splits after Ocarina of Time, with one timeline depicting the events that follow Link's triumph over Ganon, and the other his defeat. The section of the timeline where Link triumphs is further divided into two separate realities: the Child Era, where Link returns to his original time, and the Adult Era, where the Hero of Time

disappears and Ganondorf is free to return unopposed.” (Miyamoto et al., 69).

With these three different timelines, and the main split happening during “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”, these two battles are extremely similar. In *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Arthur is handed a spear to slay Mordred, instead of a mighty sword. Similarly, during the last battle, Link is given the light arrows from Zelda to defeat Ganondorf. Zelda exclaims “Link... In order to do this, I need your courage again. Please protect me while I do my part. And here is a weapon that can penetrate the Evil King's defenses... The power given to the chosen ones... The sacred Arrow of Light!!!” (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, 1998).

Conclusion

Players of the *Legend of Zelda* franchise are immersed not only in a vivid and entertaining world of legendary figures, they are reminded of the characters who came before them, the Knights of the Round Table and their fearless leader, King Arthur. The idea of a chivalrous hero, who also follows the Bushido code, is Nintendo’s way of bridging the gap between cultures. Link represents courage, an aspect of Bushido and chivalry, while Arthur and Sir Galahad combined make the perfect “chivalric knight” and exalt the characteristics of Bushido. Zelda is the embodiment of wisdom, which is a key belief in both codes, and Guenever embodies the idea of wisdom as well. Ganondorf is the enemy of Link, while Mordred is the enemy of Arthur. These two characters both don’t embody either code, to show that they are not honorable warriors.

Finally, the Sangreal and the Triforce both are physical representations of both codes. The Sangreal is only available and obtainable by the one knight who is show as a follower of the

chivalric code, Sir Galahad. The Triforce is only obtainable by those who embody the principles of the goddesses who created the artifact, Link. The Master Sword and the sword in the stone are both artifacts which are physical embodiments of both the Bushido code and the chivalric code, due to their unwillingness to be bestowed upon anyone who isn't deemed worthy. Only those who are worthy and follow the aspects of both codes may pull the swords, and Link and Arthur both follow these codes and embody their properties. Chivalry and Bushido, Arthurian legend and Japanese mythology are two seemingly opposite ideas to the naked eye, but by diving deeper, readers will find that while these two codes and literature appeared on two different sides of the world, they all have very similar aspects.

Nintendo, noticing these trends, decided to create the *Legend of Zelda* series to help unify cultures and bring the past back to life. The characters, as mentioned above, exemplify the characters of old, and create a link back to the past which shows that we as a society can always learn from the past. While extremely modernized, Nintendo used their platform as a video game company to bring these characters to life and to inspire the children and adults today to act chivalrous and follow the Bushido code, to live a life of greatness and to overall appreciate the texts from the past.

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