INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/3482

73-23,905

MERZ, Karl Heinz, 1938-

AMOUR COURTOIS IN THE WORKS OF CHRÉTIEN.
[Portions of Text in French].

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1973
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUTATE COLLEGE

AMOUR COURTOIS IN THE WORKS OF CHRÉTIEN

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

KARL HEINZ MERZ

Norman, Oklahoma

1973

AMOUR COURTOIS IN THE WORKS OF CHRÉTIEN

APPROVED BY

Dominique Perrot

James H. Abbott

Melvin B. Tolson, Jr.

Peter F. Hunsel

Besse A. Clement

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Dominique Penot, without whose persistent encouragement and help this dissertation might well have remained only an idea.

To the other members of the Committee at the University of Oklahoma, who have contributed much time and constructive criticism, I offer my sincere appreciation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 1

PART I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMOUR COURTOIS

Chapter
I. TROUBADOUR FIN'AMORS..... 9
II. THE TROUVÈRES..... 31
III. COURTLY IDEOLOGY OF THE NORTH..... 36
IV. EARLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE..... 46
V. THE PRECURSORS OF THE ROMANCE..... 52
VI. THE MATIÈRE DE TRISTAN..... 72
VII. THE LAIS OF MARIE DE FRANCE..... 89

PART II. CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

A NOTE ON CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES AND THE LITERATURE OF HIS TIME..... 109

Chapter
I. EREC ET ENIDE..... 111
II. CLIGÈS..... 131
III. LE CHEVALIER DE LA CHARRETTE..... 152
IV. LE CHEVALIER AU LION..... 166

CONCLUSION..... 177

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 183

AMOUR COURTOIS IN THE WORKS OF CHRÉTIEN

by Karl Heinz Merz

Major Professor: Dominique M. Penot

It is the purpose of this work to demonstrate that the term amour courtois, as it was coined and defined by Gaston Paris in the nineteenth century, is by no means an adequate descriptive term to apply to the love theme in medieval courtly literature, as it is frequently done.

The ideological basis of amour courtois is the fin'amors of the troubadours, who introduced this love conception to western civilization, probably from the Arabs. It then spread to northern France and was adopted by various authors in varying fashions. Its elements and variants are traced through the works of the trouvères, early vernacular literature, the precursors of the romances, the Tristan legend and the lays of Marie de France. Each author, or group of authors, are shown to have treated what is generally called amour courtois according to their own tastes and according to the preferences of their audience. Part I of this study provides the background necessary to an understanding of the treatment of amour courtois by Chrétien de Troyes, the greatest writer of medieval French epics.

Chrétien knew the works of his predecessors and contemporaries and was influenced by them. In his works he reacts to them, particularly to the Tristan. Chrétien's own conception of the love theme evolves in his romances. It is essentially uncourtly in his first romance, Erec et Enide. Chrétien shows himself a good student of troubadour fin'amors in Cligès, where he also strongly and explicitly reacts against the Tristan legend. In his Chevalier de la Charrette he holds back his own ideas on courtly conventions and acts as the literary craftsman for his patroness Marie de Champagne, from whom he has received instructions as to the sentimental orientation as well as the subject matter of the romance. It is this work on which Gaston Paris' term amour courtois is based. In Le Chevalier au Lion Chrétien elaborates his own conception of the love theme, a harmonious balance between love and adventure. The protagonist realizes himself through a series of trials and reaches maturity and equilibrium. Thus he becomes worthy of taking his place in society at the side of fame et amie, both wife and lady-love, not a common concept in the Middle Ages, not in conformity with amour courtois as it is elaborated in the Chevalier de la Charrette, but Chrétien's own idea of amour courtois.

INTRODUCTION

"The trouble with Courtly Love is that it gives its lovers no rest, and the modern critical devotee is hardly less jealous of his favorite theory of its nature and source than was the troubadour."[1] With this pessimistic appraisal a modern scholar characterizes succinctly the efforts in a vast field of study. The difficulty of the matter quite apparently lies in the fact that we are dealing with a sentiment that by its very nature defies scholarly scrutiny and analysis, a sentiment that seems to be as old as mankind and as varied and complex in its forms as are the hearts and souls of men. A certain measure of delicatesse is required if we want to avoid the pitfalls of either being pedantic in our discussion of a subject that allows no pedantry, or of giving way to flights of fancy, for which there is no room in a work of a scholarly nature.

After Gaston Paris had originated the term amour courtois[2] the term was all too often indiscriminately used to label the sentimental contents of troubadour lyrics as well as that of northern French epics of the period, with little or no regard as to the differences in cultural background, social conditions or the idiosyncrasies of individual authors.

---

[1] Theodore Silverstein, "Andreas, Plato, and the Arabs, Remarks on Some Recent Accounts of Courtly Love," Modern Philology 47 (1949-50), p. 117.

[2] Gaston Paris, "Le Conte de la Charrette," Romania 12 (1883), p. 319.

Frequently the critics have been too vague in their distinctions between courtoisie, amour courtois, and fin'amors, or they have made no distinction at all.[3] For Denis de Rougemont[4] amour-passion, cortezia and amour courtois are identical. According to Belperron[5] courtoisie is a necessary product of amour courtois. It must be stated, however, that these two conceptions are not interdependent.[6] Courtoisie is the ethical and social ideal of chivalry. Amour courtois presupposes courtoisie of the lover, but not vice versa. This confusion of the two concepts leads Belperron to the erroneous statement that "courtoisie ennuie Chrétien de Troyes", who in his romances "doit se soumettre à la tyrannie de la mode et de sa protectrice."[7] This statement might be valid only in the case of the Conte de la Charrette. Otherwise, as will be demonstrated, it is neither amour courtois nor courtoisie that "ennuient" Chrétien, but the adulterous fin'amours of the troubadours.

It will be shown in the course of this study that fin'amors of the troubadours must not be held identical with amour courtois as applied to northern French literature. The confusion surrounding the definition of courtoisie and its relationship to amour courtois can also be put into

---

[3] Cf., e.g., Moshé Lazar, Amour Courtois et Fin'Amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), for a detailed discussion of these terms.

[4] Denis de Rougemont, L'Amour et l'Occident (Paris:Plon, 1939), p. 61.

[5] P. Belperron, La Croisade contre les Albigeois et l'union du Languedoc à la France (Paris:Plon, 1942), p. 53.

[6] Lazar, op. cit., p. 21.

[7] Belperron, op. cit., p. 54.

a clearer light by making a distinction between the cortezia of the troubadours and the corteisie of the North.[8]

The meaning of amour courtois is indeed not easily defined, and an indiscriminate use of the term may well lead to confusion. Jean Frappier comments:

> Le sens du mot courtois est complexe: il est employé en effet tantôt avec une valeur large, par exemple lorsqu'il se rapporte d'une façon générale à la morale chevaleresque et aux élégances de la politesse mondaine, tantôt avec une valeur étroite, plus raffinée, plus "pure", lorsqu'il designe un art d'aimer qui n'est pas accessible au commun des mortels, cet embellissement du désir érotique et cette discipline de la passion qui constituent proprement l'amour courtois.[9]

Alexander Denomy is of the same opinion when he writes that, applied to literature, to poetry, to romance,

> courtly has the essential meaning of belonging to, emanating from, for and in a court. It is a literature of courts, a court literature dealing with courtliness and embodying its ethical and social ideals... But applied to love, courtly has quite another meaning. It is the term that designates the species of the love of the troubadours.[10]

Correct as these statements are as a general definition of the term, they cannot satisfy the reader acquainted with the theme of love in medieval French literature, who is likely to agree with Moshe Lazar who maintains that

> ...l'expression amour courtois est impropre pour qualifier l'idéologie amoureuse qui s'épanouit au XIIe siècle dans une grande

---

[8] Cf. Lazar, op. cit., p. 24. Cf. also the excellent article by Alexander Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness," Speculum 28 (1953), pp. 44-63.

[9] Jean Frappier, Le Roman Breton, Des Origines à Chrétien de Troyes, 2nd. ed., (Paris:Centre de documentation universitaire, 1951), p. 88.

[10] Denomy, art. cit., p. 46.

> diversité d'oeuvres littéraires, et est trop étroite pour pouvoir contenir à la fois l'amour exalté par les troubadours et l'amour prôné par un Chrétien de Troyes ou par les trouvères. Si l'amour courtois est un art d'aimer, une certaine manière de vivre et de chanter l'expérience amoureuse, il n'est pas le même pour les poètes du midi, pour Marie de France ou pour Chrétien de Troyes. Et à plus forte raison n'est-il pas le même pour les poètes du XIIIe siècle qui colorent les thèmes amoureux d'un vernis de religiosité et dont le point de départ est la morale chrétienne. Aussi, parler comme on l'a toujours fait, de l'Amour Courtois au Moyen Age, sans distinction de milieu ou d'époque, revient à qualifier d'un même nom des conceptions d'amour radicalement opposées les unes aux autres, tant par leur essence que par leur portée. La fin'amors des troubadours, l'amour conjugal courtois de Chrétien, l'amour passion (enrichi de certains éléments de la fin'amors) du Tristan et Iseut de Thomas et des contes poétiques de Marie de France, ce sont la autant de conceptions qui ne se laissent pas réduire à un denominateur commun, à une seule et même formule.[11]

We shall go one step farther and claim that the term amour courtois will not even adequately portray the love theme in the works of a single author, Chrétien de Troyes. Even the casual student of Chrétien's romances will recognize that the matter is differently treated in the Chevalier de la Charrette than it is in Cligès. A close study of the texts under careful consideration of the ablest international scholarship may well reveal some interesting insights into Chrétien's treatment of the subject. A study of this nature has been made by Myrrha Borodine,[12] but many new aspects have appeared in the prodigious amour courtois and Chrétien studies of the past sixty years. A thorough and comprehensive re-evaluation of the amour courtois theme in Chrétien's work seems warranted.

Chrétien wrote to suit the literary fashions and tastes at the court of Troyes. His patroness was Marie de Champagne, daughter of

---

[11] Lazar, op. cit., p. 23.

[12] Myrrha Lot-Borodine, La Femme et l'amour dansl'oeuvre de Chrétien de Troyes (Paris:Picard, 1909).

Aliénor of Aquitaine and Louis VII, king of France, who married in 1164 Count Henri de Champagne. She brought to his northern French court the poetic tastes of her mother's Poitevin domain. Thus she could furnish Chrêtien with the"matière" and the "san", the sentimental and psychological concept of his Charrette. These concepts were not indigenous to the northern French chivalric culture, whose ideals were primarily prouesse and chevalerie, as depicted in the chansons de geste. It was at the more refined courts of southern France where love was first considered an ennobling force, a source of virtue, and it was there that it was consciously favored to religious and chivalric ideals.[13] A new outlook on life, a new evaluation of man and his world find expression. Once fin amors, this new trait that presents to us the milder side of knighthood, is introduced to the North, the ideal of the hero changes. The hero in the chanson de geste is fighting for an objective cause, for Christianity, for the power of the king, for his country. He submits his individuality to the collective idea. In the courtly epic the hero becomes an individual whose fate is psychologically drawn. His values are more subjective. Not "por chrétienté" or "por France doulce" does he go into battle, but he fights for himself and, as we might suspect, for the love of a lady. Courtly Love becomes his guiding value. A new phase in the evolution of chivalry has begun. It is the ideal of the new generation to serve a lady, to gain her favor, to suffer for her. This brings about a greatly increased respect for noble women with an appreciation

---

[13]Cf. E. Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs (Halle: Niemeyer, 1909).

for literature and esthetics. The different outlook on life, the warlike one of the North and the more serene one of the South, find their expression in literature. The encounter of these two cultures is reflected in the new literary genre, the roman courtois. The fusion, as is to be expected, is not an instantaneous one. The love theme, practically nonexistent in the earlier chansons de geste, is gradually introduced to the northern epic and, as it is avidly received by the courtly audience, undergoes a process of refinement and gains preponderance, finds its most skillful expression towards the end of the twelfth century, until it becomes largely insipid and codified during the following century. All of these courtly romances are influenced by the Provençal love lyrics, but not all to the same extent. Except for the romance of Flamenca they all appear during the second half of the twelfth century. The import of these works lies not in their form nor in their subject matter, but in the description of the inner man, of feeling and emotion, and in their whole new conception of value judgments and ideals, at the center of which stands amour courtois.

Other influences during the course of this development have to be considered. Chrétien is educated by the Church. He is a secular cleric. The clerics are the literate class, as they had been for a long time before. Faral writes:

> Mais il semble que, vers 1150, leur nombre, grâce à la prosperité des écoles, crût considérablement. En outre, il se peut que, à la même date, leur attitude dans les cours ait changé et qu'ils aient paru plus entichés de mondanité que leurs prédécesseurs. Le fait est qu'ils avaient reçu une education littéraire toute différente. Non seulement en étudiant les poètes anciens, ils s'étaient pris d'un goût nouveau pour l'invention artistique... mais de plus, choisissant parmi ces poètes anciens, ils s'étaient attachés à

> quelques-uns de ceux qui avaient obéi à l'inspiration la plus libre ou même la plus licencieuse: ils admiraient, louaient, et imitaient Ovide.[14]

We know that Chrétien is quite familiar with Ovide. He states so in the opening lines of his Cligès:

> Cil qui fist d'Erec et d'Enide,
> Et les commandemanz d'Ovide
> Et l'art d'amors an romans mist.
>
> (Cliges, vv. 1-3)[15]

It seems that he served his literary apprenticeship in translating the Latin author, a widespread practice at his time. The clerics are quite aware of their role as continuators of the Ancients and of the influence that they are thereby exerting on the aristocracy. They are striving for a renaissance of letters. Endowed with spiritual and intellectual acumen they endeavor to "gloser la lettre", to give their personal interpretation to this heritage.[16]

Chrétien's life at the court of Champagne brings him in contact with the literary works and figures of his time. He must have known Andreas Capellanus, the codifier of the type of amour courtois that occupied the fancy of the Champenois court. He knows the Tristan legend and reacting against its morality, refers to it again and again. Frappier calls Chrétien's interest in this legend an "obsession".[17] He is also

---

[14]Edmond Faral, Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du Moyen Age (Paris:Champion, 1913), p. 194.

[15]Chrétien de Troyes, Cligès, ed. A. Micha, Classiques français du Moyen Age (Paris:Champion, 1957),

[16]Cf. W.A. Nitze, "Sans et Matière dans les oeuvres de Chrétien de Troyes," Romania 44 (1915-17), pp. 14-36.

[17]Jean Frappier, Chrétien de Troyes, l'homme et l'oeuvre (Paris: Hatier, 1957), p. 22.

much intrigued by the "matière de Bretagne", a pool of Celtic legend material[18] illustrated by Geoffroy of Monmouth in his Historia regum Britanniae, which appeared in 1136, and makes it the vehicle of his romances.

Before attempting an analysis of Chrétien's work we shall have to review carefully this background. Our presentation will have to be limited to the most significant and most representative works. Then, after having appraised the literary and sentimental climate of the second half of the twelfth century in northern France, we can turn to Chrétien de Troyes. It should then be possible to recognize the building blocks that the medieval author has brought together to create his own enchanting edifices. However, not content with merely pointing out Chrétien's borowings we shall attempt to show also the author's own ideas of and attitudes toward this new concept of amour courtois.

---

[18] Cf. Roger Sherman Loomis, Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes (New York:Columbia University Press, 1949).

Roger Sherman Loomis, the most prominent Chrétien scholar in America, is particularly leaning towards this practice. International scholarship in general is more cognizant of Chrétien's creative genius.

PART I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF *AMOUR COURTOIS*

CHAPTER I

TROUBADOUR FIN'AMORS

The conventions of romantic love, as we know them, had their origins in the lyric poetry of the troubadours in the twelfth century in southern France. Modern etiquette, the precedence of women, courteous and chivalrous behavior are not all as natural as we would like to consider them to be and by no means as old as mankind. In ancient literature, as the British scholar Clives Staple Lewis points out, "love seldom rises above the levels of merry sensuality or domestic comfort, except to be treated as a tragic madness,... which plunges otherwise sane people (usually women) into crime and disgrace."[1] This was the fate of Medea, of Phaedra, of Dido. Ancient man loves his wife as he loves the rest of his home and possessions, and it is Aristotle who recognizes that conjugal relations can, at times, be as satisfying as the friendship between good men.[2] In ancient love poetry woman is the instrument rather than the object of love.

It is not until the early twelfth century that we find a new sentiment, the expression of a new kind of love in the early lyric poems of the

---

[1] C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (Oxford:Clarendon, 1936), p. 4.

[2] Aristotle, Ethics, 1162A (as quoted by C.S. Lewis, op. cit., p. 4).

troubadours in langue d'oc or, more specifically, in the Limousin region from where it spread over the rest of southern France and in its later stage of development was carried to the North. This new kind of love poetry that we find in the cansos d'amor of the troubadours was later termed by the pioneer romanist Gaston Paris amour courtois or courtly love.[3] As the term implies, courtly love is not an affair of the masses. Indeed, its first exponent, Guillaume de Poitiers (1071-1127), duke of Aquitania, is a powerful ruler, who knows no master. This worldly and gay, but also somewhat crude and licentious lord is a poet. Of his work only eleven pieces are extant, which Belperron divides into two categories: the "chansons bachiques" and the "chansons courtoises".[4] The drinking songs are quite in the vein that we would expect of Guillaume. In the best-known one the author compares his two mistresses to two horses which he is unable to "garder tous deux, car l'un ne peut supporter l'autre." What surprises us, however, is the entirely different and new tone of lyricism that we find in the "chansons courtoises". Love is no longer a banality but an art, a serious sentiment with the basic characteristics of what is later to be known as Courtly Love. These songs show a change in psychology as well as in form. The thorough studies of the eminent Arabist A.R. Nykl indicate that Guillaume, during his crusade in 1101-1102, must have become acquainted with the Andalusian-Arabic verse form of the muwassaha, since his songs upon his return reflect their versification as

---

[3] The terms used by the troubadours themselves were "verai amors", "fin'amors", "bon'amors".

[4] Pierre Belperron, Joie d'Amour (Paris:Plon, 1948), p. 35.

well as their spirit. Nykl states:

> Les strophes arabes-andalouses, les muwassahas, furent inventées en Andalousie vers la fin du IXe siècle, probablement non sans appui sur certaines formes nouvelles connues à Bagdad, et, d'après ce que nous disent les auteurs arabes l'art des les composer se répandit bientôt aussi dans l'Orient. Quoique nous ne les trouvions dans aucun manuscrit oriental de cette époque-là, nous pouvons admettre comme sûr que Guillaume put les entendre chanter en Syrie avec assez de fréquence pour se rendre compte, d'après la mélodie, de leur système de versification et, en même temps, acquérir des idées plus raffinées sur l'amour.[5]

This Arabic influence on the formation of the Old Provençal love lyric has by no means remained undisputed. Proponents of other influences, namely those of Classical Latin, Medieval Latin and indigenous popular song, have discounted this influence on the basis of dissimilarities. Furthermore, very few Romanists are also sufficiently qualified Arabists. The opinions of most scholars are therefore for the most part not based on first-hand comparative studies. However, Nykl's careful research strongly supports the Arabic theory, particularly in the case of Guillaume de Poitiers. Nykl concludes:

> Si Guillaume de Poitiers emploie dans ses poésies des images qui coincident entièrement avec celles connues parmi les musulmans espagnols et dans aucun autre milieu européen de l'époque, on peut considérer non seulement comme très probable, mais comme absolument certain, que la connaissance de cette philosophie d'amour a dû pénétrer en Aquitaine par la voie du monde musulman voisin. Il serait assez bizarre de supposer que cette philosophie eût pu se former des deux côtés des Pyrénées d'une manière tout à fait indépendante.[6]

It has been fairly common practice among students of literature to consider medieval love lyrics and courtly epics under the aspect of Courtly

---

[5] A.R. Nykl, "L'influence arabe-andalouse sur les troubadours", Bulletin Hispanique 41 (1939), p. 313.

[6] Ibid., p. 314.

Love. Yet, it is erroneous to define the love sentiment of the troubadours and that found in a thirteenth century prose romance as one and the same. It is further inaccurate to draw on the theories of Andreas Capellanus in order to explain the work of a Bernard de Ventadour or a Marcabru. In order to understand the love conception of the troubadours it is indispensable that one study their works.

As the differences of interpretation among the critics show, such a study is by no means without problems. On the one hand, generalisations have been made that lead to the impression that the concept of fin'amors was identical in all troubadours. On the other hand, arbitrary distinctions have been made in the love conception of the troubadours, distinctions that in reality did not exist. The most common of these distinctions, and one that is still widely held, is the one of the realistic and the idealistic schools among the troubadours. According to these scholars the realistic school in the evolution of the Courtly Love lyric of the troubadours is represented by Marcabru and Bernart Marti. The representatives of the second group are Jaufré Rudel and Bernard de Ventadour. Cercamon takes an intermediate position. The first group are called the realists, because they deplore in an often rude and coarse style the social and moral decadence of the idealists, who in noble and refined expression exalt their new idea of pure love, in reality a sinful and demoralizing conception of love, the illicit and adulterous love for a married lady. A distinction is made concerning the nature of love: the erotic, carnal and worldly love of the idealists versus the conservative realistic school that condemned these new ideas. This theory of the two schools was conceived

by Carl Appel[7] and later developed by Hoepffner,[8] Jeanroy,[9] and Riquer.[10] Thus, Jeanroy equates the "pure love" of Marcabru with divine love and opposes it to the profane love of the courtly poets.[11] Carl Appel, in an article on Marcabru,[12] claims to discern a strong distinction that the latter makes between the two schools.[13]

It is the merit of the eminent troubadour scholar Alexander Denomy to have established that the troubadours, at least as far as their conception of love is concerned, can not be divided into two schools.[14] With philological exactitude he analyzed the works of the prominent representatives of both "schools", Guillaume IX, Marcabru, Cercamon, Bernart Marti, Jaufré Rudel and Bernard de Ventadour, and he reached the conclusion:

> The analysis, based on the texts, reveals that from the very beginning, from Guillaume IX, there has existed among them (the troubadours) a constant tradition and conception of pure love, -

---

[7]Carl Appel, Bernart von Ventador, Seine Lieder, mit Einleitung und Glossar (Halle:Niemeyer, 1915), p. XXIV, LXI, and LXVI.

[8]Ernest Hoepffner, "Le troubadour Bernart Marti," Romania 53 (1928), 103-150.

[9]Alfred Jeanroy, La Poésie lyrique des troubadours (Paris:Didier), vol. I, pp. 14-30.

[10]Martin Riquer, La lirica de los trovadores (Barcelona, 1948), vol. I, pp. XL-XLIII.

[11]Jeanroy, op.cit., p. 17. "Vers la même époque, Marcabru, à la fin d'une pièce ou il exalte le pur amour, c'est à dire l'amour divin, s'élève contre l'amour profane."

[12]Carl Appel, "Zu Marcabru," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 43 (1923), p. 450.

[13]Ibid., p. 450.

[14]Alexander Denomy, "Fin Amors: The Pure Love of the Troubadours, its Amorality and Possible Source," Medieval Studies 7 (1945), pp. 139-179.

> fin'amors. Far from differing in their idea of love, the so-called idealists and realists concurred in teaching and defending a conception of pure love of desire arising from the contemplation of the beauty of the beloved and effecting a union of the minds and hearts of the lovers. It was a love that yearned for and, at times, was rewarded by the solace of every delight of the beloved except the physical possession of her by intercourse. Far from being pure in the accepted sense, or disinterested, it is sensual and carnal in that it allows, approves and encourages the delights of kissing and embracing, the sight of the beloved's nudity and the touching and lying beside her nude body - in short, in all that provokes and fans desire. For it is desire that is the essence of pure love.... Despite all the sensuality that such a love implies in our eyes, for the troubadours this love is pure, good and true, - "fina", "bona", "veraia". It is spiritual in that it teaches the union of hearts and minds and not of bodies, and in its desire for and striving after ever closer union it ennobles him who loves to such an extent that it is the source of all good and all virtue.[15]

In an earlier article[16] Denomy sums up the fundamental notion of Courtly Love:

> What might be called the mechanics of Courtly Love consists in three fundamentals: the exalted position of the beloved, the surge of the lover upward to the beloved, love as desire and yearning.[17]

This theme is fixed in troubadour love lyrics. Creative possibilities for the troubadour lay in the variations of this theme. However, the startling fact is that this troubadour conception of love is new, unlike any sentiment of preceding ages. Love is an ennobling force. Woman is elevated to a place of superiority above the lover. The lover grows more virtuous through his love of the lady. It is love which raises him in the scale of worth and virtue. Schrötter remarks very aptly:

---

[15] Ibid., p. 142.

[16] Alexander Denomy, "An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love," Medieval Studies 6 (1944), pp. 175-260.

[17] Ibid., p. 185.

Ovide says that love debases; the troubadours say that love ennobles.[18] This love is not synonymous with Ovidian divertissement. The lady is of high birth, of singular moral and physical beauty and is not rarely addressed with the masculine title of respect midons. The troubadour, who is not necessarily of noble birth, pays his hommage to the well-born lady by celebrating her beauty and her virtues and claiming to be her humble servant in his service d'amour. The lady's beauté d'âme, her excellent moral and mental attributes are much praised, but it is always her physical aspects on which the poet dwells, and it is this physical beauty, the contemplation of her noble body, the troublesome sweetness of her glance, her fair complexion, her blond hair, and other qualities that kindle fin'amors in the troubadour's heart:

> Bela domna, .l vostre cors gens
> e.lh vostre bel olh m'an conquis
> e.l doutz esgartz e lo clar vis
> e.l vostre bels ensenhamens
> que, can be me.n pren esmansa
> de beutat no.us trob egansa:
> la genser etz c'om posc'el mon chauzir,
> o no i vei clar dels olhs ab que.us remir.[19]

This love transforms the lover. It gives him a new personality. It captivates him. It affects every fiber of his being. It is within the power of this love to render the villain courteous and to turn the evildoer to goodness:

---

[18] Willibald Schrötter, Ovide und die Troubadours (Halle:Niemeyer, 1908), p. 48.

[19] Carl Appel, op. cit., I, vv. 49-56.

Amors non est peciatz;
Ans es vertutz que lo malvatz
Fai bos, el'h bo'n melhor.
E met hom en via
De bon far tota dia.[20]

Indeed, so is the lover in the spell of his lady's charm that he has lost all control for good or bad over his destiny:

Per lieys serai o fals o fis,
o drechuriers o ples d'enjan,
o totz vilas o totz cortes
o trebalhos o de lezer
Qu'en leys es tota la merces
Que.m pot sorcer o decazer.[21]

The position he assumes as her worshipper is modeled on the feudal system and the duties of the vassal towards his superior:

Bona domna, re no'us deman
mas que'm prendatz per servidor,
qu'e'us servirai com bo senhor,
cossi que del gazardo m'an.[22]

The superior lady to whom the troubadour addresses himself is always a married lady, and in spite of the spiritual overtones of his imprecations, the joy and alleged elevation that he derives from his blissful state of servitude, a clearly sensual desire cannot be overlooked. The fin'amors of the troubadours is essentially an adulterous love. Whether it be a purely spiritual adultery, un amour de tête, as is often

---

[20] Guilhem Montanhagol (ed. Coulet), p. 69. ("Love is not a sin; it is rather a virtue which makes the wicked good and the good man better. And it puts man on the way of doing good daily.")

[21] Cercamon (ed. Jeanroy), I, vv. 51-54. ("Through her I shall be false or sincere, loyal or treacherous, villainous or courtly, diligent or slothful. For all mercy rests with her; she can lift me up or debase me.")

[22] Carl Appel, op. cit., p. 191. ("Good lady, I ask nothing of you except that you take me as your servant, for I shall serve you as I would a good lord, however I may fare as regards reward.")

claimed, or a merely literary convention, or simply unadulterated adultery, may depend on the individual poet and also on the individual critic. Gustave Cohen seems little realistic when he considers the amorous relations of the troubadours "un gracieux passe-temps d'un poète et d'une dame" with the indulgent consent of the husband.[23] Equally questionable is the opinion of Jacques Lafitte-Houssat, who writes:

> Les hommages qu'elle pouvait recevoir ne portaient aucunement ombrage au mari, qui en était lui-même flatté et n'aurait pas songé à les empêcher. Au mari la personne et la fidelité matérielle, à l'amant l'âme et la vie spirituelle. Bien mieux, une femme vertueuse non seulement pouvait mais devait presque avoir un mari et un amant. La seule faute grave, eût consisté à avoir deux amants.[24]

This may have been the conception of some troubadours, but it seems most unlikely that the husbands would have accepted it without suspicion.

The fact that the celebrated lady should be a married woman is more easily understood in the light of the status of marriage in the Middle Ages. Feudal marriages are contracted for purely utilitarian purposes, the production of offspring, the consolidation of domains. The woman acquires social standing at the side of her husband. But love, the fin' amors of the troubadours, cannot exist between married persons. Conjugal relations can be affectionate but not amorous, for they lack the constituent of love - desire. The married woman is not unreachable for the husband; the latter obtains the satisfaction of his desires without having

---

[23] Gustave Cohen, Chrétien de Troyes, 2nd ed. (Paris:Boivin, 1949), p. 35.

[24] Jacques Lafitte-Houssat, Troubadours et cours d'amour (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 109.

to court her, to implore her, to suffer for her. He need not fear the losengier, the jealous and envious detractor and rival. Contrary to the courtly lover he does not have to aspire through constant efforts to gain her favor. One does not need to conquer what one possesses. The marriage relationship is a matter of contract, without risk or suspense. It is stable, proper and monotonous. The master owns his woman.

Fin'amors, on the other hand, thrives on the tenuity of the situation, the sweet melancholy of suffering and the ephemeral joy it brings. In order to be worthy of the love of the lady the courtly lover has to be wholly devoted to her and be subject to her every whim with undying patience. Only then can he hope to win her heart, which he considers the proper state of affairs, since the husband has a right only to her physical properties. However, the troubadour's desires do not stop here, as has so often been maintained. Fin'amors is neither a platonic love nor a purely spiritual love. Plainly carnal desires are only thinly disguised in Provençal love lyrics, and often not at all, as will show the following example, which is not atypical:

Las! e viure que'm val,
s'eu no vei a jornal
mo fi joi natural
en leih, sotz fenestral
cors blanc tot atretal
com la neus a nadal,
si c'amdui cominal
mezuressem egal.[25]

---

[25]Carl Appel, op. cit., p. 167, vv. 33-40. ("Alas, what is the use of living for me if I do not ever see my pure sincere joy in her bed under the casement window, her body as white as the snow at Christmas time, so that both of us in like measure may vie with each other.")

The reader cannot but agree with Alexander Denomy, who states:

> The union longed for, sought and envisaged is physical one; the ultimate goal to which love impels the lover is the physical enjoyment of the beloved and in this sense Courtly Love is not disinterested. In truth, the language of the troubadours, even the most spiritual, at times does little to dissipate that general impression.[26]

This expression of desire for physical enjoyment of the beloved is, however, always transfused with a respectful and noble fervor from which the troubadour derives his joyful and exalted state of mind, which sets the true lover apart from the villain, which inspires him to greater virtue. The troubadours make a distinction between fin'amors and fals' amors or amors communaus. The former is aristocratic, spiritual and lasting; the latter common and vulgar, carnal and ephemeral. The poet Marcabru especially makes this distinction, calling the true love "amors" and the false "amars". Marcabru has often been called a misogynist. This reputation he earned by castigating false love and false lovers. But Marcabru said harsh things only of women whose evil life and conduct merited it.

> D'entre dompnas es fugida
> Vergoigna e no sai cor.[27]
>
> Mas de faus amistat me clam
> Qu'anc pos la serps baisset lo ram
> No foron tant enganairiz[28]

---

[26] Alexander Denomy, "An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love," Medieval Studies 6 (1944), p. 180.

[27] Marcabru, Poésies complètes du troubadour Marcabru, ed. J.M.L. Dejeanne (Toulouse:Privat, 1909), p. 157. This and the following translations of Marcabru are by A. Denomy, art. cit., "Shame has fled from amongst women and is not current here."

[28] Ibid., p. 24. "But I lament over false love, for never have there been so many deceitful women since the serpent drew donn the branch."

Eysamens son domnas trichans
E sabon trichar e mentir,
Per que fan los autrus enfans
Als maritz tener e noyrir;
.....

Ja Dieus no'l sia perdonans
Qui las vol onrar ni servir,
Estas putas ardens cremans
Pejors que ieu no'us saubra dir.[29]

But he also hails "fin'amors":

Aicel cui fin'Amors causitz
Viu letz, cortes e sapiens.[30]

Ai! fin'Amors, fons de bontat,
C'as tot lo mon illuminat.[31]

Marcabru frequently criticizes the notion of "amars", and he defines "amors" only through negations: true love does not belong to the villain, the treacherous and the sensuous. His poems give the impression that to him fin'amors is chaste, spiritual, disinterested. Most critics go even further and identify "amors" with divine love, the love of God. The eminent German medievalist Carl Appel notes:

> Hier ist kein Zweifel mehr, was Fin'Amor bedeutet. Jetzt handelt es sich nicht nur um keusche Liebe, im Gegensatz zu sündiger Brunst. Es handelt sich um keine irdische Liebe mehr. Fin'Amor ist zum Himmel aufgestiegen. Es ist die Liebe, die um Gott ist und mit ihm selber eins wird.[32]

---

[29] Ibid., p. 166. "Women likewise are tricksters and know how to cheat and lie; wherefore do they make their husbands maintain and support other men's children. May God never forgive him who wishes to honor and serve these passionate and impassioned whores who are worse than I can tell you."

[30] Ibid., p. 196. "The man whom pure love singles out lives happy, courteous and wise."

[31] Ibid., p. 198. "Ah! Pure love, fount of goodness, through which the whole world is enlightened."

[32] Carl Appel, "Zu Marcabru," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 43 (1923), p. 454.

Scheludko is the same opinion.[33] Wechssler before him had identified fin'amors with the caritas of Christian mysticism, claiming that it had grown out of the spiritual background of a Christian civilization.[34] Errante, more recently, has defined this theory.[35] Yet, all these theses are in no way founded on the original texts. E. Gilson,[36] Alexander Denomy,[37] and Moshé Lazar[38] have clearly shown that there are fundamental differences between divine love and the fin'amors of the troubadours. The love of God is hardly a matter of self-promise and pledge as fin'amors is. Its birth is not confined to the well-born and its growth to a leafy bower protected from the cold and the heat. Divine love does not, as does fin'amors single out or reject an individual, and we need not fear the loss of divine grace once it has been bestowed upon us, if we keep accepting it.

Another erroneous thesis of some troubadour scholars is the claim that the service d'amour is based on the veneration of Notre Dame, the Virgin Mary. The veneration of Mary had not become a common cult until

---

[33]Dimitri Scheludko, "Religiöse Elemente im weltlichen Liebeslied der Trobadors," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur 60 (1937), p. 34.

[34]Eduard Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs (Halle: Niemeyer, 1909), p. 216.

[35]G. Errante, Sulla lirica romanza delle origini (New York:Vanni, 1943), p. 377.

[36]E. Gilson, La Théologie mystique de Saint Bernard (Paris, 1934), pp. 193-216.

[37]Alexander Denomy, Medieval Studies 6, pp. 188-193.

[38]Moshe Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), pp. 81-85.

a time when the troubadour lyrics were already highly developed.[39] The same objections are to be voiced to claims of an influence of Christian mysticism on troubadour lyrics.

Fin'amors is neither caritas, platonic love, nor purely carnal or sensual love, but sensual and erotic desire is its main constituent. The ennobling power of fin'amors is not in contradiction with its carnal aspects, at least not in the Middle Ages. The attempts of more modern critics to separate these aspects, to speak of the "idealistic" or "courtly" elements and the "realistic" or carnal, accounts for much of the confusion surrounding troubadour studies. These aspects complement each other; they give polarity and tension to the system of fin'amors. Lazar sees the relationship of these aspects quite clearly:

> L'amant courtois oscille toujours entre deux pôles: protestations de respect et d'humilité d'une part, attente du rendez-vous secret d'autre part. Et entre ces deux pôles il y a de la place pour toute une casuistique de la passion.[40]

Briffault comments on the carnal character of troubadour love:

> Alors que toutes les subtilités et les vétilleries de la dialectique courtoise sont tirées au claire, l'amour raffiné que les poètes défendent contre la grossièreté vulgaire n'en reste pas moins nettement et franchement charnel. Marcabru s'insurge, et il a la langue affilée, contre les hommes et les femmes dont la conduite dégrade l'amour et qui n'ont cure des émotions élevées. Ce après quoi, il s'abrite auprès de sa "bon'amia", qui, elle, ne tombe pas dans ces grossièretes et mérite partant la dévotion honnête et raffinée d'un "entendedor", et il la caresse tandis qu'il se déshabille.[41]

---

[39] Alexander Denomy, Medieval Studies 6, p. 193.

[40] Moshé Lazar, op. cit., p. 85.

[41] Robert Briffault, Les Troubadours et le sentiment romanesque (Paris:Les Editions du Chêne, 1945), p. 109.

Jaufré Rudel takes a special position among the troubadours. His "amors de terra lonhdana" is usually advanced as proof by "idealistic" critics that fin'amors was of necessity devoid of any carnal aspects, a purely spiritual longing, an imaginary ideal. The lady of Rudel's dreams has been variously identified: as Aliénor of Aquitaine,[42] the Blessed Virgin,[43] Helen of Troy,[44] a divine being,[45] the Holy Land personified,[46] or simply "un immagine: una visualizzazione intensiva, una somiglianza ... del suo stesso amore".[47] Before we capitulate before so much learning, let us look at the original texts. They will show that the lady was real enough, as the following episode will testify:

> Mielhs mi fora jazer vestitz
> Que despolhatz sotz cobertor
> E puesc vos en traire auctor
> La nueyt quant ieu fuy assalhitz.
> Totz temps n'aurai mon cor dolen,
> Quar aissi.s n'aneron rizen,
> Qu'enquer en sospir e.n pantays.[48]

---

[42] E. Monaci, "Ancora di Jaufré Rudel," Rendiconti de la Reale Academia dei Lincei, serie V, 2 (1893), p. 927.

[43] Carl Appel, "Wiederum zu Jaufré Rudel," Archiv 107 (1901), 558-559.

[44] Karl Vossler, Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1918, p. 133 ff.

[45] A. Jeanroy (ed.) Les Chansons de Jaufré Rudel, 2nd ed. (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. IV-VI.

[46] G. Frank, "The Distant Love of Jaufré Rudel," Modern Language Notes 57 (1942), 528-529.

[47] Mario Casella, "Poesia e Storia. Il Jaufré Rudel," Archivio Storico Italiano 96 (1938), p. 60.

[48] Jaufré Rudel, ed. cit., I, 8-14. The translation is by Moshe Lazar, op. cit., p. 91. "Mieux m'eût valu dormir vêtu que dévêtu sous la couverture, et je puis vous citer à témoin cette nuit ou je fus assailli. J'en aurai toujours le coeur dolent, car ils s'en furent ainsi riant, que j'en soupire encore et suis anxieux."

In his other poems, however, love does have a somewhat less tangible quality. Jaufré Rudel claims that he has unburdened himself of foolish sensuality:

> Adoncs vuelh mos chans si auzitz,
> Et apprendetz lo, chantador!
> E sapchatz tug cominalmen
> Qu'ie'm tenc per ric e per manen
> Car so descargatz de fol fais.[49]

Jaufré Rudel from now on yearns for the perfect woman, a woman he has never seen. This dream fulfills him with joy and happiness. Denomy says of this love:

> Jaufré Rudel's "amour lointain" is an expression of "fin'amors", "bon'amors". Its object is a fair lady. It matters little whether she be real, ficticious, the fancied embodiment of the perfection of womanhood, she is unattainable; his is a love of desire not of possession.[50]

The love of a lady that one has never seen is in reality nothing new in world literature. Olin Moore, in an interesting study, give numerous examples of this theme.[51] In the Tristan legend King Marc falls in love with Iseut la Blonde, whom he has never seen. Lazar concludes:

> Si ce thème est diffusé et illustré par de nombreux poètes, il faut, pour être juste envers Jaufré Rudel, dire que chez lui ce thème est devenu central.[52]

---

[49] Jaufré Rudel, op. cit., p. 12. Translated by A. Denomy: "Therefore do I wish that my song be heard; and learn it, you troubadours. Let all of you know generally that I consider myself wealthy and fortunate because I am relieved of a foolish burden."

[50] Alexander Denomy, op. cit., p. 164.

[51] O.H. Moore, "Jaufré Rudel and the Lady of Dreams," PMLA 29 (1914), 514-536.

[52] Moshé Lazar, op. cit., p. 97.

This is the unique aspect of troubadour love: desire has become a system. An earthly love which does not lose its sensual character remains without its natural fulfillment. This love-desire is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself. It does nor require the hoped-for natural reward. It does require a high degree of renunciation, a relinquishment of the aims of man's lower instinct. As Myrrha Lot-Borodine points out:

> Chose étrange, en vérité! Cette glorification d'une passion adultère, partant immorale, a été pour la société chevaleresque un ferment de moralité; cette poésie, attachée au renouveau des amours naturelles, qui reprend à son compte mainte audace d'Ovide, maître de l'érotique, loin de déborder d'une franche sensualité païenne, respire de plus en plus la volupté chrétienne de la resignation![53]

The idea of valoir, of moral virtue and worth, largely replaces the ends of lesser men's cravings. This severe discipline that they assume to impose upon themselves distinguishes them in their eyes from the vulgar, the uncourtly. Leo Spitzer, however, seems to exaggerate the unselfishness of the troubadours when he claims their resignation to be absolute.[54] Woman is no longer man's prey, but the idealized object of his aspirations. Love is no longer a blind drive for possession, but a bitter-sweet submission to this high ideal. The aim to rise above animal instincts, to recognize love as a superior and elevating value, is already discernible in the otherwise not so ascetic Guillaume IX. Belperron is hardly exaggerating when he remarks of him:

---

[53]Myrrha Lot-Borodine, "Sur les origines et les fins du service d'amour," in: Mélanges offerts à Alfred Jeanroy (Paris, 1928), p. 225.

[54]Leo Spitzer, L'amour lointain de Jaufré Rudel et le sens de la poésie des troubadours (Chapel Hill:University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 1, 10, 12, 35.

> Alors que la satisfaction de l'instinct était une fin en soi, le désir du sentiment d'amour a pris le pas sur l'appétit sexuel. Il ne s'agit pas de chasteté, mais Guillaume, à l'amour de la beauté ou à l'amour uniquement sensuel a substitue l'amour de l'amour, la joie d'amour.[55]

Nevertheless, the appétit sexuel is by no means extinct. The troubadour's praises of the lady are never entirely disinterested, as the critics in the nineteenth century had generally believed. Modern troubadour scholars, especially Denomy and Lazar, have become aware of this fact. Lazar goes as far as stating: "La fin'amors est un amour caché, dominé par l'appétit de la chair."[56] Denomy speaks of the "amorality" of fin' amors, "a code of morality that is peculiarly its own. It is presented as neither immoral nor moral: it is amoral, wholly divorced from any code of morality except its own."[57]

The appearance of unbridled passion, however, is strictly avoided in troubadour lyrics. The courtly lover is dependent upon the acceptance and the approval of society. He supports the ideals of courtly society and is supported by it. What is required of him is the quality of mesure or mezura. He cannot be courtly without keeping mezura in all his actions. Mezura expresses a mode of conduct, a savoir-vivre. It requires a voluntary submission of man to the exigencies of his milieu, domination of his instincts, self-control and refinement. According to Marcabru:

> De cortezia.is pot vanar
> Qui ben sap Mezur'esgardar.
> E qui tot vol auzir quant es,

---

[56] Moshé Lazar, op. cit., p. 136.

[57] Alexander Denomy, "Fin'Amors: the Pure Love of the Troubadours, Its Amorality and Possible Source," Medieval Studies 7 (1945), 139-207.

Ni tot cant ve cuid'amassar,
Del tot l'es ops a mesurar,
O ja non sera trop cortes.[58]

Guillaume IX had already formulated these exigencies of the courtly lover, although without mentioning the word mezura:

Obediensa deu portar
a motas gens qui vol amar,
e coven li que sapcha far,
faigz avinens,
e que.s gart en cort de parlar
vilanamens.[59]

Courtliness, on the other hand, the corteza of the troubadours, is not merely a matter of refined behavoir, nor is it a matter of social standing. It is not the prerogative of the nobility. The corteza of the troubadours is a moral and esthetic value. It is a product of fin'amors, not the cause of it, as he has often been claimed.[60] He who wants to be corteis has to practice fin'amors:

... greu es pros ni cortes
qui ab amor no.s sap tener.[61]

---

[58]Marcabru, ed. cit., XV, 13-18. Lazar, op. cit., p. 29, translates: Peut se vanter de courtoisie celui qui sait bien garder Mesure. Mais qui veut écouter tout ce qui est, et croit amasser tout ce qu'il voit, la mesure lui est fort nécessaire, ou bien il ne sera jamais assez courtois.

[59]Guillaume IX, ed. cit., VII, 31-36. Lazar, op. cit., p. 29, translates: Il doit être obéissant à bien des gens, celui qui veut aimer, et il convient qu'il sache faire des actes avenants, et qu'il se garde parler à la cour vilainement.

[60]Cf., among others, H. Dupin, La Courtoisie au Moyen Age (Paris, 1931), p. 91 ff.

[61]Bernart de Ventadour, op. cit., V, 15-16.

Even the villain can become courtly through love:

> Q'om non es tan mal essenhatz
> si parl'ab lieys un mot o dos
> que totz uitas *non* torn cortes.[62]

A concept that recurs very frequently in the poetic imagery of the troubadour is joi. All troubadours refer to it, especially Bernart de Ventadour, the most original of them, whose warmth and sincerity in the expression of feelings touches the reader as most natural. This joi of which they speak signifies the exalted state of mind that fin'amors brings about. There have been highly mystical and metaphysical interpretations of this concept of joi by certain medievalists. For Casella joi is identical with the delectatio of Augustinian tradition and can only be explained through it.[63] For Denomy it is a source of spiritual regeneration: "To speak in the language of the later scholastics, one might say that joy is to Courtly Love in the natural order as grace is to charity in the supernatural order."[64] The texts of the troubadours do not warrant the mystical and metaphysical values that the critics attribute to them. To be sure, joi is not mere "joyousness" or "happiness". It does seem to have spiritual overtones. Belperron in his very readable book La Joie d'Amour explains joi as a

> ... sentiment nouveau, inconnu des Anciens et de la Chrétienté du Moyen Age qui, au-delà de l'aboutissement sexuel, crée la

---

[62]Peire Rogier, VI, 4-6. Ed. Carl Appel, Das Leben und die Lieder des Trobadors Peire Rogier (Berlin, 1882). "For no man is so badly instructed that, if he speak a word or two with her, the completely base man will not turn courtly."

[63]Casella, op. cit., p. 29-30.

[64]Alexander Denomy, "Jois among the Early Troubadours, its Meaning and Possible Source," Medieval Studies 13 (1951), p. 217.

> joie d'aimer, cette exaltation sentimentale, qui sans être étrangère au désir, le transcende en le spiritualisant et élève son bénéficiaire qu dessus du commun.[65]

The texts show us that joi may be caused by the inspiring beauty of nature, by the presence and contemplation of the beloved. The term is often used as the senhal to designate her. She is joi and joi emanates from her. It is joi that justifies and sustains the troubadours' songs. In the golden age of troubadour poetry, before artifice set in, fin'amors with its resulting joi and in spite of its amorality gave to western civilization an ethos that had nowhere been reached before - and perhaps not since.[66]

Conclusion

The fin'amors of the troubadours, in spite of being adulterous in a spiritual sense, is not immoral but amoral. It is the source of moral virtue to the troubadours. This aspiration towards a superior lady can have an ennobling force. Fin'amors cannot be equated with platonic or divine love. Physical desire is a main constituent of fin' amors. It is not in contradiction with its spiritual values; rather it gives polarity to fin'amors, the ideal-spiritual aspect being the one pole, the realistic-sensual the other. Fin'amors can exist only in this atmosphere. The courtly lover is set apart from the common man, the

---

[65] Belperron, op. cit., p. 49.

[66] The complicated and as yet unresolved questions as to the origins of "fin'amors" are not pertinent to this study. The best authorities on the subject are: Käte Axhausen, Theorien über den Ursprung der provenzalischen Lyrik (Marburg, 1937), and Alexander Denomy, "An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love," Medieval Studies 6 (1944), 175-260.

villain, by his moral virtues which he derives from fin'amors. Mezura, self-discipline and moral refinement, is a cardinal virtue. The troubadour stays within the code of conduct of courtly society. Fin'amors puts him in an exalted state of joi, a heightened awareness of esthetic and moral beauty.

CHAPTER II

THE TROUVÈRES

In the North of France the love lyric develops towards the end of the twelfth century and spreads in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the period that is of concern to our study, namely the early period, we find only very few poets, and they derive the inspiration to the sentimental contents of their poetry from the troubadours of the South. Zumthor refers to them as the "école provençalisante".[1] He states:

> La France propre possède alors sa première génération de trouvères. L'école provençalisante, qui y exista peut-être dès 1160-65, se constitue dès lors en masse dans le Nord et l'Est, puis l'Ouest du pays. Elle est assez servilement attachée aux modèles occitans. En dépit de la diversité des inspirations (les thèmes satiriques et la croisade y occupent une place assez importante) et d'une certaine fraîcheur tenant à une sorte de sentiment de découverte, elle adapte, sans guère créer autrement que sur le plan linguistique... C'est sur l'oeuvre des poètes de 1175-1210 que reposera tout le lyrisme courtois français ultérieur.[2]

The introduction of the courtly lyrics to the North may be ascribed to personal ties of northern courts to those of the South. Of particular note is the court of Marie de Champagne, daughter of Aliénor d'Aquitaine and Louis VII, king of France. Marie had brought to this northern French

---

[1] P. Zumthor, Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1954), p. 216.

[2] Ibid., pp. 216-217.

court the poetic tastes of her mother's Poitevin domain. Also Richard Coeur de Lion, himself a poet in the French language, had often stayed at the Poitiers court. Some of the troubadours, among them Gaucelm Faidit, occasionally used the language of the North in their songs. Other troubadours, such as Peire Vidal and Folquet de Marseille, were known at the courts of the northern regions.

The native poets of the North, the trouvères, were very few in number towards the end of the twelfth century. They are Conon de Béthune, Guiot de Provins, le Châtelain de Coucy and Gace Brulé. Since they all borrowed their themes, their vocabulary and their conventions from the troubadours, we shall only briefly note their idiosyncrasies and then draw some general conclusions.[3]

Conon de Béthune follows closely in his themes the example of the troubadours, but he uses only very little of their terminology. His beloved is the most perfect creature. For her he would give up his place in paradise:

> Bele doce Dame chiere,
> Vostre grans beautez entiere
> M'a si pris
> Ke, si iere em Paradis
> Si revenroie je arriere.[4]

He makes frequent use of the theme of the patiently waiting and disappointed worshipper, whose hopes are frustrated and who then transfers his loyalty:

---

[3]Cf. M. Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), pp. 266-267.

[4]Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune, ed. A. Wallensköld (Paris: Champion, 1921), VII, 1-5.

Mais puis k'il est ensi
K'ele a tort m'i desgaigne
Je li renc son homaige
Et si me part de li.[5]

Guiot de Provins is strongly influenced by the concept of fin' amors and also is very familiar with Provençal terminology. He pushes his idolatry of woman to the brink of heresy:

Je l'aim tant et desir
Por sa fine biaute.
Mielz voldroie a loisir
Un baisier de son gre
(Sel me voloit doner)
Que tot lo remanant
De la crestiente.[6]

He welcomes, in true troubadour fashion, the pains of love:

Car fine amor me semont et avoie
De li servir, dont tant seux desirous
Ke plaixans m'est cist mals et delitous.[7]

The Châtelain de Coucy, even more so than Guiot, is imbued with the troubadour spirit. His model is Bernard de Ventadour. The resemblance in tone is very close indeed, and at times he uses the same phrase. Bernard writes of his love:

Cor e cors e saber e sen
e fors'e poder i ai mes.[8]

and the Châtelain echoes:

Ains ai mis en li servir
Cuer e cors, forche et pooir.[9]

---

[5]Ibid., VI, 29-32.

[6]Les Oeuvres de Guiot de Provins, ed. J. Orr (Manchester University Press), II, 22-28.

[7]Ibid., IV, 19-21.

[8]Bernard de Ventadour, ed. Carl Appel, p. 186, v. 5-6.

[9]Die Lieder des Castelllans von Coucy, ed. F. Fath (Heidelberg, 1883), v. 21-22.

He writes of complete submission to his lady whom he describes in great detail, unlike the other trouveres. Among the trouvères he is also unusual by striking an erotic note:

> Or me laist dius en tel honor monter,
> Ke chele ou j'ai mon cuer et mon penser,
> Tiegne une fois entre mes bras nuete,
> Ains ke voise outre mer![10]

Gace Brulé stresses the melancholy aspect of the courtly lover's fate. Defenselessly he suffers in his predicament, but suffering and patience are necessary virtues to win the lady:

> Mes fin amanz puet par bone atendance
> Et par sofrir conquerre haute amie.[11]

He borrows a line from Tristan to express his passion:

> Qu'en ma dame est ma mort et ma vie.[12]

He beseeches the lady for a reward, a "guerredon", possibly a kiss:

> Ains la ser sens repentir
> De fin cuer loial, entier,
> Bien me devroit otriier
> De ma dame un dous baisier.[13]

His demands show none of the audacities of his southern confreres. Even without expecting reward will he serve his lady:

> Sens atente de guerredon
> M'otroi a ma dame servir.[14]

---

[10] Ibid., IX, 5-8.

[11] Les Chansons de Gace Brulé, ed. G. Huet (Paris:Didot, 1902), VII, 34-35.

[12] Ibid., VII, 54.

[13] Ibid., XXXIV, 3-6.

[14] Ibid., XXX, 1-2.

If we ask ourselves now what differences there are, if any, between the contents of the love lyrics of the troubadours and those of the trouvères, we can point, in spite of the apparent similarities, to various differences.

Above all, there is a difference in outlook and temperament. The despair of the troubadours does not have the plaintive and melancholic quality of the trouvères songs. The elating notion of joy, joie d'amour, finds only a very faint echo in the ethereal yet almost sober delit of the Northerners. Likewise, the trouvères dwell only briefly and in very general terms on the beauty of their lady. There is little of the sensuous exhilaration of the troubadours, who describe, often in detail, the physical beauty of woman as the mainspring of fin'amors. Thus erotic imagery disappears almost completely in trouvère poetry. With the single exception of a line by the Châtelain de Coucy[15] there are no expressions of frankly sensual desire. The adulterous aspect of trouvere fine amour is carefully veiled. The losengier becomes a mere stock character without any apparent justification in reality. Lazar writes:

> La fin'amors du Midi s'est désincarnée en passant dans le Nord, s'est quelque peu spiritualisée si l'on peut dire. Elle est devenue la fine amour, couple de mots emprunté aux provençaux, mais qui n'a plus le même sens ni la même portée.[16]

---

[15] Supra, p. 39.

[16] M. Lazar, op. cit., p. 267.

CHAPTER III

COURTLY IDEOLOGY OF THE NORTH

It is commonly accepted that the superior culture of the southern courts found its way to the less refined and more warlike North towards the middle of the twelfth century and that the nobility readily succumbed to its charms and pretensions. Courtly life acquired a hitherto unknown luster. The social status of the noble lady was greatly enhanced. She became the guardian and propagator of the new culture of refined behavior, of the arts, and especially of that most intriguing of courtly conventions, the Provençal conception of Courtly Love. Courtoisie became the hallmark of the nobility (V.L. cortis, curtis, Classical Latin cohors, -ortis), a refined manner of courtly life. Marc Bloch states:

> Le terme qui, depuis les environs de l'an 1100 sert couramment à désigner le faisceau de qualités nobles par excellence est characteristique: "courtoisie", qui vient de cour... Ce fut en effet, dans les réunions, temporaires ou permanentes, formés autour des principaux barons et des rois que ces lois réussirent à se dégager. L'isolement du chevalier dans sa "tour" ne l'eût point permis. Il y fallait l'émulation et les échanges humains.[1]

And according to the more recent definition by Littré courtoisie is "civilité relevée d'élégance ou de générosite". But courtoisie in the

---

[1]Marc Bloch, La Société féodale. Les Classes et le gouvernement des hommes (Paris:Michel, 1940), p. 135.

Middle Ages implies more than a code of manners, of polite social intercourse. It includes an art d'aimer based on an increasingly intricately and profoundly developed moral and psychological edifice. The Provençal term for courtoisie, cortezia, occurs frequently in troubadour songs. But it does not have the same meaning that it has in the North. According to the troubadours a man of low birth acquires cortezia through fin' amors. Cortezia thus is not the mark of a social class, but a moral virtue. In the North courtoisie is a class ideal and a requisite for becoming a courtly lover. "La courtoisie était essentiellement affaire de classe", writes M. Bloch.[2] The mingling of social classes, of low-born troubadours and the nobility, is peculiar to the Midi. "A cet égard", states Frappier, "même un Chrétien de Troyes ne peut être mis en parallèle avec les troubadours."[3]

Courtly traits appear in the culture of the northern aristocracy in the first half of the twelfth century, and there is no indication or proof that they had been introduced from the South. It must be remembered that the social and cultural conditions of the North were quite different from those of the South, and we may logically expect to find a differently oriented courtoisie with original characteristics. The northern aristocracy is thoroughly imbued with a tradition of chivalric virtues in the manner of Germanic culture. These chivalric virutes become the sine qua

---

[2] Ibid., p. 38.

[3] Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XIIe siècle," Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale II, 2 (1959), p. 138.

non of northern courtoisie and thus of amour courtois.[4] Knightly exploits and fin'amors are not associated in Provençal lyrics, not even by those authors belonging to the noble class. The authors of the North always associate love and chivalry. Love inspires prowess. Thus it appears from the very earliest romances on. It remains the principal cliche from the romances of antiquity over Chrêtien de Troyes until the time of Don Quijote.

The writers of the North are less lyrical and far more interested in psychological analysis than the troubadours. In part, this is due to the differences between the respective genres. The romancers take great pains to present an examen interieur. With a methodology akin to medieval scholarship they note the symptoms of love, especially of its inception. This is a common feature of the courtly romances already before Chretien. To the examen intérieur is also added a quest to surmount the peculiar sentimental situation, to cope with it and to regain an equilibrium. The role of the author is that of a detached observer, frequently interjecting humorous or moralizing remarks.

The morality of northern amour courtois tends to be more in tune with tradition, the laws of a church-dominated society. Thus an attempt

---

[4] On the role of the cleric as a rival Frappier, art.cit., p. 145, writes: Il arrive dans la littérature du Nord que le chevalier rencontre un rival en la personne du clerc, c'est-à-dire de l'auteur. Mais cette rivalité, assez théorique d'ailleurs, ne se manifeste pas dans les romans. Elle se cantonne à peu près dans les oeuvres en latin, les "débats" à demi plaisants du clerc et du chevalier ou un traité didactique comme le De arte honeste amandi d'André le Chapelain.

is made to reconcile love with marriage. For medieval nobility this is not nearly as self-understood as it might be to modern man; marriages were contracted primarily for political reasons, quite possibly without sentimental motivations. Moreover, medieval theological thinking considered procreation the sole aim of marriage. A fair degree of sexual pleasure was deemed salubrious towards this purpose, but passionate love between spouses was condemned as an aberration. "Omnis ardentior amator propriae uxoris adulter est", states Peter Lombard.[5]

The cruder culture of the feudality of the earlier Middle Ages had a less complicated notion of a knight's calling. Military exploits had no apparent relationship with a man's romantic aspirations. (Consider the etymology of "romantic"!). Nor were the aspirations of the troubadours connected in any way with military exploits. Northern feudal society as the carrier of an increasingly courtly way of life began to attach an ethical meaning to knightly conduct. Tournaments became very popular, and they added greatly to the reputation of the hero in the eyes of the ladies, who were everpresent at these events. Chivalric conduct and "amour courtois" became closely associated. A lover worthy of the noble lady had to prove himself as a valorous knight and was in turn ennobled by the lady's graces. Due to his more equal standing in relation to the woman and cast in the cruder mold of a warrior the northern lover could be expected to be less inclined to content himself in the manner of the troubadours. The troubadours'

---

[5]Cf. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1938), p. 15.

yearning was all too often "poetic fiction". The lady saw in him mainly the poet rather than the man. If therefore in the northern epic the knight shows himself satisfied and delighted with the same meager rewards, a smile or perhaps a kiss, the modesty would be surprising because it does not quite fit into the social milieu. Such behavior is therefore only to be found in romances of Provençal provenance, Flamenca and Lancelot. In other northern romances the hoped-for and usually obtained reward is less modest. In any case, the new courtly conventions and attitudes were to be followed and acquired lest one appear to be an uncouth and unenlightened member of court society, but tangible results were expected nevertheless. The state of affairs being thus and adultery not being acceptable as a legitimate outlet in northern society, where the Church held more influence than in the South, the writers had to invent the mariage d'amour, which, as will be seen in Chretien, presented certain problems. Troubadour fin'amors could not possibly be reconciled with marriage.

The alliance of love and chivalry is the main characteristic in the romances of the North. Jean Frappier in an excellent article analyses the causes that lead to this alliance and which shed a clearer light on its nature.

The authors of the courtly romances were cultured clerics, steeped in a humanistic tradition and the study of the Ancients. The troubadours, in spite of all their artistry, were far less learned. These clercs were educated by the Church, but not necessarily members of the Church hierarchy. They often simply had the tonsure and profited

from Church benefices. Some of these clerics were teachers, others belonged to the wandering Goliards, and still others attached themselves to courts, where their clergie, their learning and sophistication, was appreciated by a worldly lord and put to worldly use. Ferdinand Lot remarks:

> Que faut-il entendre par le terme "clerc"? S'imagine-t-on qu'un prêtre séculier ou un moine du XIIe siècle avait les loisirs, la possibilité même, d'écrire une composition profane dans sa cure ou sa cellule? Qui lui aurait fourni pour cette besogne, reputée indigne d'un religieux, le parchemin? Les clercs en mesure de composer des poèmes profanes ont cessé d'être du clergé...[6]

A certain emancipation takes place. These clercs with a worldly literary taste, who admired the hardly austere Ovid and imitated him, formed the intellectual class of the Middle Ages. These were the writers of the early romances, and love acquired a special place in their writings. This conception of love was based upon studious reflection on the Ancients[7] and an analytical spirit. Moral preoccupations play a considerable role in their depiction of love, and at times they cannot conceal a certain "preachiness". Easily discernible in most of the early romances is also an anti-feminist trait, beginning with the romances of Antiquity and including the writings of Chrétien de Troyes. This anti-feminism, however, is usually expressed tongue-in-cheek. It is the "spicy" ingredient in woman's makeup. The "sugar"

---

[6] Ferdinand Lot, Romania 70 (1948/49), 373-374.

[7] It is well to heed here the statement of A. Pauphilet, Le Legs du Moyen Age (Melun:Librairie d'Argences, 1950), p. 92: Toujours l'Antiquité, certes, mais jamais la même.

and "all that's nice" are also described. And after all, the clerc is competing with the chevalier for the favor of the ladies. The author of the thirteenth century chantefable Aucassin et Nicolette, in the passage where Aucassin voices his preference for going to the more interesting hell, mentions the clercs before the chevaliers. But rather than rivaling each other the two types, knight and cleric, merge to become the new type of the cultivated gentleman, the hero of the courtly romance. "Let those who are neither clerics nor knights go away now," say the author of the Roman de Thèbes in his prologue, "for they are as capable of listening to me as the ass to the sound of the harp."

Ovid is another important factor in the development of the northern courtly epic. Ovid was not without influence in the South, but it is among the more learned clerics in the North and in the northern schools that this Latin author enjoyed a preeminent currency. In this climate of humanism and courtoisie the Ovidian themes were exploited and scholastically interpreted, and the spirit of Ovid's writings on love was consciously, and perhaps also unconsciously, transformed. The Latin author had provided in an almost frivolous manner and in the spirit of elegant libertinage advice on "how to" achieve one's aim with the weaker sex. He gives instructions on how to play the part, how to be an accomplished, elegant and successful lover. This Ovidian spirit is overlooked by his French admirers, but they adopt freely his description and analysis of love. They find their models for the monologues in which the love-stricken deliberate on their painful and helpless condition. They follow him in describing the symptoms of this strange fever, this

illness, and they subscribe to his remedies, and they make of him a learned doctor and of his writing a systematic corpus. The personification of Amor and a host of metaphors are created and produce a love-religion not unlike Christianity, in which the lover takes the place of the worshipper and the beloved the place of the Virgin Mary. But it would go too far to condemn this practice as heresy, even in the case of Aucassin et Nicolette, where Aucassin declares that he would rather follow all the sweet ladies and goodly gentlemen to hell than go without them to heaven. The medieval French author of romances, as medieval society in general, considers religion so much a part of his daily life that he thinks nothing of it when he makes it serve very profane ends. A bantering spirit, a lack of seriousness, is implied.

Another aspect that is particular to the development of the courtly ideology in the North is the matière de Tristan. This legend material is of obscure Celtic origin and must have circulated in England and France at least as early as the first half of the twelfth century. Various versions exist; the original ones are probably lost unless they had only been oral accounts. In discussing the ideological contents of the various versions it is impossible to speak of them as of one poem. Beroul's version is different from the courtly adaptation of Thomas. The troubadours, notably Bernard de Ventadour and Raimbaud d'Orange are also acquainted with the Tristan matter. Bernard de Ventadour compares his "pena d'amor" to the one of "Tristan l'amador" for "Izeut la blonda". Raimbaud d'Orange refers to the love-drink and to the "serment ambigu". The vie à trois, the dichotomy of cuer and cors and the intensity of

sentiment appealed to the troubadours. But, as Frappier writes:

> Il est clair notamment que Bernard de Ventadour et Raimbaud d' Orange n'aperçoivent pas la possibilité d'un conflit entre la conception de l'amour fatal et cet élément de volonté et de libre arbitre que cherche à préserver la fine amor. Seuls les romanciers courtois d'oïl ont pris conscience de la contradiction.[8]

Amour courtois as well as fin'amors require a maîtrise de soi in which a total succumbing to passion and to amour fatal have no place. To Béroul, who wrote the first extant version of the romance, passion is sinful and can result only in death. This is in keeping with the northern French ideology of his time. The courtly version of Thomas is a reworking in the troubadour fashion and the protagonists become exponents of fin'amors. In spite of the beauty of Thomas' version, the transformation of the fatality of love into a love religion, the author is not entirely successful in convincing the audience. The basic idea, the inherent ideology of the Tristan matter resists such an interpretation. It is the merit of Chrétien de Troyes of having clearly recognized the uncourtliness of Tristan and Iseult, the fatal passion and of opposing to it true amour courtois based on a reasoned choice, a well motivated conduct reminiscent of Cornelian love. As he expresses it in one of his chansons:

> Je n'ai jamais bu du breuvage dont Tristan fut empoisonné, mais ce qui me fait aimer mieux que lui c'est tendresse profonde du coeur et volonté droite. Je dois consentir à cet amour de mon plein gré,

---

[8] Frappier, art. cit., p. 153.

> car jamais il ne me prit de force, sauf dans la mesure où je me suis fié à mes yeux qui m'ont guidé vers le chemin dont je ne sortirai jamais et que toujours j'ai voulu suivre.[9]

It is clearly evident that the cultural conditions of the North of France created a courtly ideology of its own. The conceptions of fin' amors had a certain impact on this ideology. They did not play, however, a determinating role. These conceptions were a challenge to northern views and met with rejection, attenuation or compromise by northern authors. Only the Tristan of Thomas and the Lancelot of Chrétien are true exponents of troubadour fin'amors.

---

[9]Cf. Wendelin Foerster, Kristian von Troyes, Wörterbuch zu seinen sämtlichen Werken (Halle:Niemeyer, 1914), p. 208, vv. 28-36.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE

Love itself is surely not an invention of the troubadours, "une invention des troubadours compliquee par des vieillards."[1] The Bible tells us of tender love: Isaac "took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."[2] "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."[3] The lyrical beauty of the Song of Solomon with its fine metaphors in its descriptions of physical beauty, imbued with the joys of love, speaks of more than mere concern with procreation. Ancient literature gives us many examples of deep and tender affection. Andromaque and Alceste are immortal. At no time in the history of mankind, it can safely be assumed, has this sentiment been absent. If the earliest literary works of western literature are devoid of it, or nearly so, it is because the authors were unskilled in psychological analysis. They had not yet learned to turn the mirror of life inward on themselves.

What manner of expression, if any, of love can then be found at

---

[1] Jacques Chardonne, Les Romanesques (Paris:Stock, 1937).

[2] Genesis XXIV:67.

[3] Genesis XXIX:20.

the dawn of civilization in western Europe? There existed a primitive lyricism, the danses, which was quite popular and often somewhat bawdy, as is documented by a number of texts dating from the sixth to the ninth century, which forbade ecclesiastics to participate in such divertissements or to tolerate them on the church premises. Unfortunately these rotruenges, serventois, estrabots, these dancing songs, are largely lost to posterity, and only a few refrains are extant. A. Jeanroy has attempted to reconstitute these traces and to analyze their contents.[4] The main theme seems to have been the monologue of an unmarried woman who joyfully speaks of her beloved:

> J'ai trouve qui m'amera...
> J'ai ami cointe et joli, et je suis sa bial ami.

Often she complains of the passing of her youth or of the obstacles that her tyrannical parents put in the way of a desired relationship. She thinks with feminine wile of circumventing these parental restrictions and to catch a glimpse or to exchange a word with the young man on her way to the fountain, at a pilgrimage, during a public gathering. The stratagem, as it usually does, succeeds, often with the complicity of a confidant:

> J'aim Mahelot, mais sa mère n'en set mot.

Sometimes the lover has to go away, and long plaintive monologues are the result. Generally marriage is the desired end and is often achieved. The sentiment of love in these songs issues from the heart of the woman. Her predicament results from the fact that she is normally not consulted

---

[4] A. Jeanroy, Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France au moyen âge, 2nd ed. (Paris:Champion, 1904).

in the choice of her marriage partner. This is solely the responsibility of the parents. The parents of the prospective couple come to terms. The transaction is often quite costly. The custom to offer money or other goods to the girl's parents is of Germanic origin and persisted with the Franks. (Thus, in the "Vair Palefroi", a fabliau of the thirteenth century, the boast of a father: "Ma fille, je viens de la refuser à quelquun qui m'offrait 500 mesures de terre.").

Among the nobility woman is no more the master of her fate than in the lower classes. According to Luchaire

> Le mariage féodal se présente partout avec le même caractère. L'héritière reçoit passivement, de son père ou de son suzerain, le chevalier ou le baron qu'on lui destine. On ne consulte ni sa volonté ni son coeur.[5]

In the case of widowhood the woman often barely has time to dry her tears. The overlord presses for a speedy remarriage and supplies the candidate of his choosing. "Un fief et une femme" are merely pawns in political manoeuverings.

In the vernacular literature the heroic epic is the dominating genre during the first half of the twelfth century. These long poems of historical and legendary subject matter tell with stark simplicity, unimpeded by psychological analysis or authorial intervention, of the martial exploits of valiant knights in pursuit of collective values, the honor and defense of king and country, of Christianity against the infidels. The epic hero vaunts his civilizing mission. In his crusading spirit this

---

[5] A. Luchaire in: Ernest Lavisse, Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la révolution (Paris:Hachette, 1901), p. 376.

legendary hero strives for conquest and glory in the service of a greater cause, for which he unhesitatingly risks his individual existence. There is little room for romance. And yet, these marriages of convenience have produced some interesting female roles in the early epics. There is Aude in the Chanson de Roland, not the figure of the noble lady inspiring to great deeds. Roland fights for sweet France and Christianity. With little delicacy Olivier, in his dispute with Roland, asserts that his sister will never occupy the bed of his friend. And when Aude learns of the death of Roland she faints away and dies, truly a touching gesture by this demure and lovable creature. "De l'épopée ainsi que de la croisade, la femme est la grande sacrifiée," writes Gustave Cohen.[6] There is the stronger character of Guibourc, wife of Guillaume d'Orange. Her beauty is described in a few general terms and there are some fine scenes of marital affection, but she is rather the faithful companion of her husband, "sa pair" as the current expression goes, who shares in his perilous undertakings, who plays her role as guardian of the castle and of the marital honor. Her affections are reasonable, all too reasonable. The sublime tribulations of an Iseult she knows not, and her husband is no Tristan. She is a very Christian woman in a very Christian world. Girart de Roussillon goes to Constantinople to fetch two marriagable princesses, one for himself and one for Charles, his king. Charles brutally declares that he would choose the more beautiful one. Girart protests. The Pope decides for him and against his wish. Girart receives Berthe. He marries her and is consoled. A more resolute character is Belyssant, that royal

---

[6] G. Cohen, Chrétien De Troyes et son oeuvre (Paris:Rodstein, 1938), p. 32.

princess in Amis et Amile, who in defiance of prudence and custom follows her passionate inclination and searches out Amile in his chamber during the night, flouting propriety and paternal chastisement

Car Trop i a bel home.

"He is too handsome a fellow". There is nothing courtly about that. Belyssant is not the only such resolute woman in the medieval epic. Her behavior is one "que plus de vingt jeunes filles emploient sans rougir en plus de vingt chansons de geste."[7] The methods are not always so direct, but many a pagan damsel forsakes, and even betrays, country and religion and family for the man in shiny armor. J.Bédier draws up a long list[8] of such women who ruthlessly take their fate into their own hands. Their actions become understandable, if not excusable, if one considers their alternative of complete submission to paternal or political authority. Often the woman also requests of these authorities to be properly provided. Thus the widow of the duc de Bourgogne asks Charlemagne: "A quoi sert le deuil? Donnez-moi vite un mari puissant."[9]

The male protagonist is a rather unromantic hero. Love to him is a weakness, a hindrance to his glorious exploits. Frequently he is indifferent to the subtler charms of womanhood. Coppin[10] relates a telling episode:

---

[7] Léon Gautier, Les épopées françaises. Etudes sur les origines et l'histoire de la littérature nationale, 2nd revised ed. (Paris:Welter, 1878).

[8] as quoted in J. Coppin, Amour et mariage dans la littérature française du Nord au moyen âge (Paris:Librairie d'Argences, 1961), p. 20.

[9] Ibid., p. 21.

[10] Ibid.

> A Girbert de Metz, on vante la fille d'Anseis. Gerin lui dit: "Regarde, cousin, quelle belle dame il y a ici.- Dieu, dit Girbert, quel cheval est Flori!" Il ne pense qu'à ce coursier gagné au siège de Cologne. Gerin insiste: "Dieu, qu'elle est belle! Quels yeux! Vilain qui ne la prie d'amour.- Vrai, repond Girbert, il n'est sur terre coursier pareil à Flori."

Such are the men in literature, if not in life: incapable of envisioning a sentimental world, very much occupied with the physical challenges and pleasures of their earthly existence and the eternal life beyond. Woman is their bounty or they are indifferent towards her. Could it be that the writers of this literature are simply not yet capable of representing life's sentimental aspects in their complex nuances, of psychological analysis, or are they presenting a mirror of a society not given to an appreciation of the strange scintillations of the human heart? It could be a little bit of both.

CHAPTER V

THE PRECURSORS OF THE ROMANCE

In the twelfth century a social evolution takes place. The Church had rallied Christendom in the great crusades. Religious orders flourish, and the new spirit of learning, the renaissance of the Ancients, especially Ovid, the building of considerable monastic libraries, dominate the intellectual scene of Europe beyond the sphere of the religious. Not only the philosophers, grammarians and historians are studied, but more and more also the poets. The Ancients are annotated and imitated with increasing sophistication. Eventually they are translated into the vernacular for the edification and delectation of a public that is not capable of reading the original texts, but which nevertheless has had the privilege of an education in the monastery schools. This public consists of a privileged few, the offspring of the higher nobility. Life in the seigneurial mansions had become more amenable to luxurious living, due to the newly gained appreciation of the opulence of the East and to a relatively peaceful condition in the land. The marriage of Aliénor of Aquitaine to Louis VII in 1137 opens the more somber northern courts to the brilliant courtly culture of the Midi, in which women play an active role as the patronesses of literary activity. These developments conspire in bringing about a new courtly culture and a new courtly ideal, which recognizes man's ability of refinement in many facets of life. Women thus are now able to partake in - and

shape - the new social conditions, and they are beginning to enjoy the status of eminence that the new court culture lends to them.

The hero of the chanson de geste no longer satisfies the imagination of refined aristocracy. To be sure, prouesse is still a cardinal virtue, courage, loyalty and sacrifice the mark of a knight, but these values are now integrated into the new type of the courtly hero. As Pierre Le Gentil states:

> Certes, la prouesse, depuis longtemps mise en garde contre le danger de la démesure, conserve sa place dans la hiérarchie des valeurs. Elle exige toujours force, courage, esprit de sacrifice. Mais elle s'entoure d'interdictions et d'exigences qui lui imposent une discipline plus raffinée. Elle ne prétend plus, surtout, se suffire à elle-même. Tout un cortège de qualités sociales et mondaines doit l'entourer. Il lui faut associer à toutes les délicatesses du désinteressement, à tous les scrupules de la loyauté, l'élégance du costume, le charme d'une exquise politesse, la distinction du geste, la prodigalité des bienfaits. Il lui faut davantage encore trouver dans l'amour son principe et sa récompense. Sans lui, elle serait vide de sens, incapable de réaliser toutes ses promesses et de profiter de tous ses avantages: pas de vraie chevalerie qu'une Dame n'inspire, pas de vraie gloire qu'une Dame ne partage.[1]

The courtly epic, the roman, is thus a tale of chivalry and love, the odyssey of a knight who is not so much concerned with France and Christianity as with his own individual quest for finding and asserting his identity as a worthy member of court society through a series of adventure, challenges, obstacles that he has to surmount. His guiding motive and his reward are the graces of a highborn lady. "De cette journée," says the comte de Soissons at the battle of Mansurah, "nous reparlerons plus tard dans la chambre des dames."[2] And Marc Bloch pertinently comments:

---

[1] Pierre Le Gentil, La Littérature française au Moyen Age (Paris: Colin, 1963), pp. 81-82.

[2] as quoted by Marc Bloch, La Société féodale, les classes et les gouvernements des hommes (Paris:Michel, 1940), p. 37.

> Ce mot, dont on chercherait en vain l'équivalent dans les chansons de geste, mais qu'eût prononcer plus d'un héros de roman, dès le XIIe siècle, signale une société où la mondanité a fait son apparition et, avec elle, l'influence feminine.[3]

The courtly romance is clearly a reflection of the evolution in tastes and manners of the aristocracy. It is rich in courtly pageantry, colorful descriptions of courtly activities and paraphernalia. The characters' fate is psychologically drawn. Authorial commentaries are frequent. The romance is written to be read rather than recited to a large crowd. It invites leisurely reflection and appreciation.

One of the earliest authors to take note of the new courtly tastes is maistre Wace, a clerc lisant (lecturer) at Caen, later canon at Bayeux, whose close relationship with the court of the Plantagenets afforded him a good picture of worldly society. Wace is the translator of the Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffroy of Monmouth. Wace makes of it the Geste des Bretons, better known as the Roman de Brut, which he finishes in 1155. Wace's version is far more than a historical treatise. He not only presents for later writers a treasure of motifs, plots and ideas, the matière de Bretagne; he is especially concerned to give certain courtly traits to his work that were not developed in his Latin original. This is obvious in his portraits of women, where he is more elaborate and also more eager to stress courtly virtues. The Latin original merely says of Guenievre "quae ... totius insulae mulieres pulchritudine suberabat".[4] Wace describes:

---

[3] Ibid., p. 37.

[4] Cf. E. Faral, La Légende arthurienne. Etudes et documents (Paris:Champion, 1929), vol. III, p. 273.

Mult fut de grant afaitement
Et de noble contentement;
Mult fu large et bele parliere. (vv. 9890-92)

Similarly embellished is the portrait of Ingerne. Geoffroy writes: "Ingerna, cujus pulchritudo mulieres omnes Britanniae suberabat". Wace mentions her noble birth and the resulting virutes:

Lès lui fust Ygerne sa fenne
Il n'ot si bele en tot le regne;
Cortoise estoit et bele et sage
Et moult estoit de halt parage. (vv. 8799-8802)

The portrait of the courtly lady is particularly well presented in his description of Martia, the queen of England. The Historia states: "Martia omnibus artibus erudita. Haec inter multa et inaudita, quae proprio ingenio repererat, invenit legem quam Britones Martianam appellaverunt."[5] Wace stresses her courtoisie:

Lettrée fu et sage dame,
De bon pris et de bone fame;
Son engin mist tot et sa cure
En savoir lettre et escriture:
Mult sot d'art et s'estudia.
Une loi escrist et trova. (vv. 3387-93)

As in the Provençal lyrics the noble qualities and the reputation of the lady inspire the love of the troubadour, Wace describes the attraction of Uter to Ingerne. Geoffroy writes only: "Cumque inter alias inspexisset eam rex, subito amore ilius incaluit, ita ut, postpositis ceteris, totam intentionem suam circa eam verteret." Wace, however, states:

Brennes parloit cortoisement;
Si ert de grant afeitement,

---

[5] Ibid.

Il sot de bois et de riviere,
Et deduit de mainte maniere,
Gent core avoit et cler visage. (vv. 2705-2709)

Gawain, the hero par excellence, who will go far in later literature, is characterized thus:

Frous fu et de mult grant mesure,
D'orgoil et de forfait n'ot cure. (vv. 10106-10107)

Wace is quite familiar with the Provençal conception of love and its awakening. Unlike the Latin original the version of Wace reveals a solid knowledge of the Provençal theory. Love is born as an inexplicable and troublesome feeling, accompanied by sleeplessness and lack of appetite. The following passage of Wace is typical of the phraseology of later romances:

L'amor Ygerne m'a sopris
Et tot m'a vaincu et conquis.
Ne puis aler, ne puis venir,
Ne puis veillier, ne puis dormir,
Ne puis lever, ne puis colchier,
Ne puis boire, ne puis mangier
Que d'Ygerne ne me soviegne,
Mais ne sai comment je la tiegne.

Another important aspect that becomes current in later romances is the distinction that Wace makes between the wife and the "amie" of the knight. Geoffroy writes: "Mulieres in edito murorum aspicients in curiales amoris flammas more joci irritant." Wace differentiates:

Les dames sor le mur montoient
Qui les jus agarder voloient.
Qui ami avoit en la place
Tost li monstre l'oeil et la face. (vv. 10819-10821)

The point is again emphasized in another passage. Of Arthur's return to Britain Geoffroy remarks merely: "Incipiente vere in Britanniam reversus est." Wace, however, describes:

Les dames baisent lor maris... (v. 10433)
Les amies lor amis baisent
Et quant lius est, de plus s'aaisent. (vv. 10440-10441)

Whenever possible Wace describes the pageantry and elegance of courtly life. He mentions the splendid attire, costly utensils at the table, the largesse of the ruler, brilliant ceremony and decorum.

The king is described as a warrior as well as a courtier. Knighthood comprises courtoisie. Chivalry is motivated by love. The individuality of the knight is stressed: "pris et honor querre" is his aim. The courtly atmosphere is infused with a spirit of "joie de vivre" and the aspiration towards courtly ideals.

The translation of Wace is the first work in which these courtly elements are clearly delineated. This fact has sometimes not been recognized by medievalists. One can hardly agree with E. Hoepffner: "Non seulement la chanson de geste primitive, mais même Wace ignorent encore ces problemes (de l'amour)."[6] Wilmotte also underestimates Wace in this respect.[7] It is the merit of Stefan Hofer to have presented convincingly these courtly aspects in Wace's work.[8]

There is general agreement on the importance of a group of romances in the formation of the genre. They are referred to as the romances of Antiquity. Their subject matter, as the name implies, is taken from

---

[6]Ernest Hoepffner, "La Chanson de geste et les débuts du roman courtois," in: Mélanges Jeanroy (Paris, 1928), pp. 169-170.

[7]Maurice Wilmotte, Origines du roman en France (Paris: Boivin, 1942), p. 204.

[8]Stefan Hofer, Chrétien de Troyes, Leben und Werk (Graz-Köln: Böhlaus, 1954), pp. 15-21.

classical sources. The oldest known romance of this type is the Roman d'Alexandre. Of all the heroes of Antiquity none is quite as successful as Alexander to strike people's imagination during the Middle Ages. There are Greek and Latin versions of Alexander's exotic exploits. In the first half of the twelfth century a French version was composed by Alberic de Briançon. He takes his cue from Latin writers, follows their historical accounts, but he endows the young hero with all the courtly trappings a la mode during twelfth century France. Only a fragment of this work is extant, and it describes Alexander's early years and his upbringing. The Macedonian is raised to become not only a mighty warrior but also a "savant clerc". He learns how to properly approach the ladies (Parler ot dames corteisament d'amors). His education is directed by five learned teachers. He acquires a knowledge of languages, law and music. His physical aspects are portrayed with such detail as is not found in the more general descriptions of the chanson de geste:

> Clar ab lo vult, beyn figurad.
> Saur lo cabeyl recercelad,
> Plen lo collet et colorad,
> Ample lo peyz et aformad,
> Lo bu subtil, non trop descad,
> Lo corps d'aval beyn enforcad.
> Lo poyn el braz avigurad,
> Fer lo talent et apensad.[9]

Of Alberic's version of the matière d'Alexandre only the first 105 lines have survived. Later, towards the end of the twelfth century, a whole cycle of compositions on the subject attests to its popularity.

---

as quoted in Robert Bossuat, Le Moyen Age (Paris:Gigord, 1931), p. 85.

All versions of the Alexander, and significantly even the oldest one, show definite traits of the courtly epic. The young hero is not only valorous, but also sentimental and learned. The conquest of the sword is joined to that of the heart. The scenery is exotic, oriental. The merveilleux, pagan rather than Christian, is introduced in the form of fairies, giants, monsters, and the hero is challenged by them in a most engaging manner.

Generally mentioned as the precursors of Chrétien's works are a group of three romances of Antiquity, the "triade classique" of approximately the middle of the twelfth century. These are the Roman de Thèbes, the Roman d'Enéas, and the Roman de Troie. The gradual refinement of courtly elements in this trilogy is quite noticeable - from the oldest of the three, the Roman de Thèbes, which shows many characteristics of the chansons de geste, to the Roman de Troie, in which courtly motifs are most dominant.

The Roman de Thèbes is based on the Latin version of Stace, dealing with the Oedipus legend. The French text of over 10,000 lines is written by an anonymous western French (Norman or Poitevin) author. He writes for a courtly audience, as he makes unmistakably clear:

> Or s'en voisent de tot mestier
> Se ne sont clerc o chevalier,
> Car aussi pueent escouter
> Come li asnes al harper.[10]

He then proceeds with the story of Eteocles and Polynices. He laces his narratives with some inventions of his own, borrows from Ovid's

---

[10] Le Roman de Thèbes, ed. Constans, vol. I. pp. 1-2, vv. 9-12.

Metamorphoses, and in longwinded descriptions of battle scenes and detailed historical accounts his work reads like a chanson de geste, but there are differences. He indulges in painting a brilliant courtly life in which the presence of women demands courtly behavior. He stresses mesure:

> Fiz, fet ele, mieuz vaut mesure
> Que jugemenz ne que draiture. (vv. 8411-8412)

The author paints the earliest portraits (descriptiones personae) in the vernacular, and he bases them more on psychological traits than on external data. He ventures into the psychology of love and shows a fair knowledge of Provençal fin'amors. Love spurs the hero to great exploits:

> Par ceste enseigne mant m'amie,
> Par li ai fait chevalerie. (vv. 4371-4372)
>
> Il fu mout proz et por s'amie
> Fait mout souvent chevalerie. (vv. 9083-9084)

Love is born from beauty (v. 3933), which in turn is created by "nature". The hero does battle with the aim of "chevalerie requerre" (v. 9563) and also "merci" (v. 8489) from his lady, who stands on a high social level and who knows how to dose her graces in keeping with her standing.

The Roman de Thèbes enjoyed great success. It was imitated several times during the thirteenth century. Love and war go well together. Raynaud de Lage writes of the Roman de Thèbes:

> C'est l'un des charmes du roman de Thèbes; car il a cet autre intérêt d'être à la rencontre de deux courants littéraires, celui qui vient des chansons de geste et celui qui porte les romans, ce privilège ne se retrouvera plus, celui d'une oeuvre agréable, sans les fadeurs ou les prétentieuses surcharges qui sont l'écueil du genre, préservée par ce qu'elle a conservé encore des façons simples et viriles des chansons de geste.[11]

---

[11] Raynaud de Lage in: Dictionnaire des Lettres françaises, Le Moyen Age (Paris:Fayard, 1964), pp. 858-859.

A further step in the direction of the "roman courtois" is the Roman d'Enéas. Again the main interest of the anonymous writer is not so much a faithful rendering of the original, Virgil's Aeneid. He writes a sentimental history of the hero. He describes Eneas' fateful relationship with Dido and goes into great detail in his encounter with Lavinia. It is the psychological and physiological analysis of love in the latter episode, which the author treats with unprecedented insight, that makes the significance of the work.

Lavinia is the daughter of Latinus, king of Latium. Her mother Amata wants her to marry Turnus and advises her to give him her love. Lavinia has never loved and knows nothing of the predicament. The following mother - daughter talk develops:

"Et tu l'apren!" - Dites le mei,
Que est amors? Nel sai par fei.-
"Ge nel te puis neient descrire."
- Qu'en savrai donc, se ne l'oi dire?-
"Tes cuers t'aprendra à amer."
-Se n'en orrai altrui parler?-
"Tu nel savras ja par parole."
- Toz tens en cuit donc estre fole.-
"Ainz en porras tost estre aprise."
- Comfaitement? se n'i sui mise?-
"Comence, asez en savras puis."
Ki me die qui est amors?- (vv. 7898-7901)

The mother then tells her of the throes of love, as she had once felt them:

Ge te dirai de ses dolors,
De sa nature que g'en sai;
Bien me sovient que ge amai.
A peine en puet dire neient,
Ki n'a amé o ki n'en sent.
Se aveies une enferte,
Mielz savraies la verité
Des angoisses que sentireies
Et des dolors que tu avreies;

Ki t'en voldreit donc demander,
Nel savreies mielz aconter,
Ki en seraies bien certaine,
Que ge, qui en sereie saine?
- Oil, mielz le direie asez;
Est donc amors enfermetez?-
"Nenil, mais molt petit en falt,
Une fièvre quartaine valt!" (vv. 7902-7918)

Love is painful, a fever. Its manifestations are most unsettling. The mother continues:

"Pire est amors que fievre aigue
N'est pas retors quant l'en en sue.
D'amor estuet sovent suer
Et refreidir, fremir, trenbler
Et sespirer et baaillier,
Et perdre tot beivre et mangier
Et degeter et tressaillir,
Muer color et espalir,
Giendre, plaindre, palir, penser
Et senglotir, veillier, plorer:
Ce li estuet faire sovent
Ki bien aime et ki s'en sent.
Tels est amors et sa nature.
Se tu i vuels metre ta cure
Sovent t'estovra endurer
Ce que tu m'oz ci aconter
Et asez plus." (vv. 7919-7935)

The girl understandably is not eager to get to know this condition and says so. The mother replies that love is unlike any other illness, indeed that it is also "tant dolce chose" (v. 7942). She urges her again to love Turnus. Lavinia is fearful:

"De quei?" - Del mal, de la dolor
Ki toz tens vait sivant amor.-
"Et ja est ce tels soatume...
Se il a un poi de mal,
Li biens s'en siut tot par igal.
Ris et joie vient de plorer
Et granz deporz vient de pasmer,
Baisier vienent de baaillier,
Embracemenz vient de veillier,

Granz leece vient de sospir,
Fresche color vient de palir.
Encor s'en siut la granz dolçors
Ki tost saine les mals d'amors."

Now, after having been lectured on the joys as well as the sorrows of love, the girl remains unenthused. Apparently she has little trust in the Ovidian figure of Amor who is pictured with arrow and a box of healing ointment. The god of love can wound and also heal:

Li darz mostre qu'il puet navrer
Et la boiste qu'il set saner.

And wound he does, the symptoms are unmistakeable:

Ele comence a tressuer,
A refreidir et a trenbler,
Sovent se pasme et tressalt,
Senglot, fremist, li cuers li falt,
Degete sei, sofle, baaille...
Crie et plore, gient et brait.
Ne sait encor ki ce li fait,
Ki son corage li remuet.
Demente sei, quant parler puet:
"Lasse!" fait-ele, "que ai ge,
Ki m'a sozprise, que est-ce?
Or ainz esteie tote saine,
Or sui tote pasmee et vaine.
Dedenz le cors une ardor sent,
Mais ne sai por ki si m'esprent.
Ke mon corage me remue
Et dont ge sui si esperdue,
Dont mes cuers sent dolors mortal,
Se ce n'en est li cuiverz mals
Dont ma mere m'aconto⁊ ier,
Dont el me voleit enseignier
Ne sai amors o com a nom,
Mais ne me fait se tot mal non.
Ge cuit, mien escient, jo aim... (vv. 8073-8096)

What has caused the sudden affliction? From the height of her tower she has glanced Eneas and "amors l'a de son dart ferue". She feels herself to be grievously wounded and wonders about Amor's remedial ointment.

She questions herself on the appropriateness of her sudden sentiment, but she is certain on one point, namely that love can involve no more than two people:

> Buene amors vait tant seulement
> D'un seul a altre senglement;
> Puis qu'on i vuelt le tierz atraire
> Puis n'i a giens amors que faire,... (vv. 8285-8288)

There remains the delicate matter of communicating her feelings to the unsuspecting Eneas. The direct approach of earlier epics is out of the question. She is in a timeless feminine predicament:

> "mais ge criembroie
> M'en tenissiez por prinsaltiere,
> Se vos mandoe amor premiere." (vv. 8366-8368)

Modesty as well as good sense demand a well considered approach. She spends a restless night. The next morning her condition becomes quite apparent to her mother, who is pleased and advises her again to let Turnus know of her love. When she learns that Eneas is the one she indulges in decidedly uncourtly outbursts, accusing the hero of unnatural sexual practices - and in no uncertain and rather clinical terms. She tries to make her daughter lose interest in Eneas:

> Il n'aime pas poil de conin. (v. 8595)

But Lavinia is unconvinced. She claims defenselessness against love:

> - Quel deffense ai encontre amors?
> N'i valt neient chastels ne tors,
> Ne halz palis ne granz fossé;
> Soz ciel n'a cele fermeté
> Ki se puisse vers lui tenir... (vv. 8633-8637)

She decides to approach the young man in such a way that will not unfavorably reflect upon her dignity of a princess. The uncourtly approach

found in Amis et Amile is not contemplated. She debates with herself:

- Quel mesage porras aveir?-
"Ge ne quier nul altre que mei".
- Iras i tu?- "Oil par fei".
- A grant honte t'iert atorné.-
"Cui chalt? Se faz ma volenté,
Molt m'en iert poi que l'en die."
- Tol, ne dire tel vilenie,
Que ja femme de ton parage
Enpreigne a faire tel viltage,
Qu'a home estrange aille parler
Por sei offrir ne presenter.
Aten un poi, ja t'avra il;
Tu sereies toz tens plus vil,
Et il noalz t'en prisereit
Enz en son cuer, quant il t'avreit.-
"Que ferai donc?" (vv. 8714-8729)

An ingenious method is quickly found. She rolls a little letter around an arrow speedily dispatched from the height of her tower. Eneas receives it with discretion and joy and is at the same time touched by a different arrow, that of Amor. He indulges in anguishes similar to those of Lavinia. The knowledge of her love spurs him to greater prowess:

Molt en sui plus et forz et fiers,
Molt m'en combatrai volentiers. (vv. 9051-9052)

He also shows some surprising psychological insight. A little aloofness, he feels, can only help his position:

Ne deit pas tot son cuer mostrer
A femme, ki la vuelt amer. (vv. 9079-9080)

The following morning Lavinia hopes to see her beloved from the height of her tower. When he does not appear she lapses into a most uncourtly outburst, suspecting that his lengthy stay in his tent is due to unsavory activity with the young boys in his entourage:

Il a asez garçons o soi,
Lo peor aime mialz de mois,
Fandue trove lor chemise;

Maint an i a an son servise,
Lor braies sovant avalées
Issi deservent lor soldées. (vv. 9159-9164)

Norman Susskind comments:

> The courtly pedestal is a flimsy structure. Great cracks appear when the woman on it turns out to be made not of spun sugar but of flesh and blood, and under the weight of such realism as this it collapses.[12]

One might add that this, after all, is one of the earlier romances. As it turns out, Lavinia is wrong. Subsequently Eneas defeats his rival Turnus in single combat and he wins "la ville et la fille".

The Roman d'Enéas is a further step in the direction of the roman courtois. The psychology of love finds a hither-to unknown elaboration. Monologues, self-analysis, le débat intérieur, are presented with finesse. However, the subtleties of amour courtois are not yet achieved. Apart from her lapses into uncourtly sentiments Lavinia shows too much initiative for a courtly lady. As A. Bossuat writes:

> On ne voit point ici l'amant priant sa dame suivant les règles de la pure doctrine et celle-ci lui accordant ses faveurs, après qu'il a bien parlé.[13]

Nevertheless, the Enéas stands monumentally at the beginning of a long and great tradition in French letters, the psychological analysis of love. As Maurice Wilmotte states in his L'Evolution du roman français aux environs de 1150:

> Cette date de 1160, qu'on assigne à Enéas, est peut-être la plus mémorable, à cet égard, de tout le roman français; avec elle nait et

---

[12]Norman Susskind, "Love and Laughter in the Romans Courtois," French Review 37 (1964), 651-657.

[13]Robert Bossuat, Le Moyen Age (Paris:Editions mondiales, 1962), p. 50.

se lève l'aube d'un art nouveau.[14]

The third and most brilliant star in the "triade classique" is the Roman de Troie, composed toward 1165 by one Benoît de Sainte-Maure, a very learned and somewhat pedantic cleric. In over 30,000 octosyllabic lines he retells the story of the Argonauts and of the siege of Troy. His source is not the Iliad of Homer, but the accounts of two alleged witnesses of the Trojan war, the Crete Dictys and the Phrygian Dares. He also utilizes various other sources. However, historical accuracy is not Benoît's concern. The romance is dedicated to Aliénor of Aquitaine, "riche dame de riche roi", protectrice of poets and of the "esprit courtois". The spirit of the work is therefor that of the "second renaissance", of individual and worldly glory, of courtly virtues, of noblesse, largesse, courtoisie, mesure. The nobility is referred to as the "chevalerie" (v. 2073), whose role it is to strive for honor and glory:

> Peine et travail por pris aveir,
> Itel vie devons aveir. (vv. 4011-4012)

The noble ladies are described as "corteise, bien aprise" (v. 1253). This society moves in brilliant courtly surroundings, works of art, rich utensils, fine clothing. The local color is of course that of twelfth century courtly life. Scenes of courtly festivities abound (vv. 1190 ff., 5307, 22305 ff.). The central motif of the work, however, is the psychological analysis of love in all its manifestations. As Cohen writes: "C'est moins en somme le siège de Troie que le siège des dames dont il

---

[14] Wilmotte, op. cit., p. 55.

est l'occasion."[15] Each hero is involved in one or more affairs of the heart, each described in detail. There are the loves of Jason and Medea, of Paris and Helen, of Achilles and Polyxena, of Troilus and Briseida. Chrétien was undoubtedly familiar with this material.

The work lacks continuity. The episodes are rather loosely connected. The individual portraits are done with consummate skill, fusing the physical with the psychological traits. So the appearance of Medea:

> La chiere tint auques en bas,
> Plus fine et fresche et coloree
> Que la rose, quant ele est nee. (vv. 1250-1252)

Helen is described similarly:

> De trestotes beautez la flor,
> De totes dames mireor,
> De totes autres la gençor,
> De trestotes la soveraine,
> Ausi come color de graine
> Est mout plus bele d'autre chose,
> Et tot ausi come la rose
> Sormonte les flors en beautez,
> Trestot ausi, e plus asez,
> Sormonta la beaute Heleine
> Tote rien que nasqui humaine. (vv. 5120-5130)

Briseida's portrait is interesting in its originality. Her less than perfect beauty gives her an individual note:

> Briseida fu avenant,
> Ne fu petite ne trop grant.
> Plus esteit bele e bloie e blanche
> Que flor de lis ne neif sor branche;
> Mais les sorcilles li joigneient,
> Que auques li mesavenaient.

---

[15] G. Cohen, Le Roman courtois au XIIe siècle (Paris:Centre de Documentation Universitaire, n.d.), p. 56.

This does not prevent her from seducing Troilus and then Diomedes in short order. Benoit does not fail to make a misogynic comment, not uncommon in medieval romances: Woman is fickle:

> A femme dure dueus petit,
> A l'un uel plore, a l'autre rit,
> Mout muent tost li lor corage.
> Assez est fole la plus sage:
> Quant qu'ele a en set anzzame
> A ele en treis jorz oblie.
> Onc nule ne sot duel aveir. (vv. 13441-13447)

Chrétien, on occasion, will make similar comments.

Briseida, captive of Diomedes, detains the latter's advances, who offers himself "a chevalier et a ami". Of the woman who gives in too quickly she says:

> Guarder se deit de blasme aveir.
> Celes quil font plus sagement
> En lor chambres celeement
> Ne se pueent pas si guarder
> D'els ne facent sovent parler.

This may be a bit of moralizing by the author. It is also one of the rules of <u>amour courtois</u> - to keep the aspirant aspiring. Diomedes shows all the symptoms. The author sympathizes with him and has some harsh words on the nature of women:

> Mout le conoist bien as sospirs
> Qu'a li est del tot ententis;
> Por co l'en est treis tanz plus dure.
> Toz jors a femme tel nature:
> S'ele apercoit que vos l'ameiz
> Et que por li seiez destreiz,
> Sempres vos fera ses orguieuz,
> Poi vos tornera puis ses ieuz
> Que n'i ait dangier ne fierte
> Mout avreiz ainz chier compare
> Le bien qu'ele vos deint faire.
> C'est une chose mout contraire,
> Amer co dont om n'est amez:
> A merveille deit om tenir
> Com co puet onques avenir. (vv. 15035-15050)

Love engenders prowess in the hero. But what a difference from the prowess of the hero in the chanson de geste! It is no longer based on collective virtues, but on love alone:

> S'en vos n'aveie m'avendance
> Jamais ne cuit qu'escuz ne lance
> Fust par mei portez ne saisiz. (vv. 15159-15161)

The power and the folly of this strange sentiment are asserted by the author in the following lines:

> Qui tres bien est d'amor espris
> Il n'a en sei sen ne reison. (vv. 18458-18459)

This is the author's personal opinion. His voice of sobriety and even sarcasm intervenes repeatedly in the course of the narrative. Nevertheless he takes obvious pleasure in displaying his knowledge of the new courtly ideology. In his preoccupation with love episodes, his indulgence in psychological analyses and his celebration of glittering courtly settingsand customs he appears to endeavor to excel over his predecessor, the author of the Enéas. Indeed, Bossuat sees in Benoît de Sainte-Maure "le premier initiateur du roman d'amour", but this opinion can only be based on the degree of sophistication. The groundwork was laid in the Roman d'Enéas.

With the romances of Antiquity the romance as such comes into being. The love theme acquires central importance. The role of woman is thus enhanced commensurably. The hero's knightly virtues and actions are inspired primarily by amour courtois, this submissive dedication to a noble lady, not unlike the troubadour fin'amors, but adapted to the social conditions of the North, where a more realistic "happy ending" could indeed be achieved and where it acts as a potent stimulus to the knight's valor. The pageantry

of earthly life is increasingly emphasized with a taste for description of luxurious apparel and utensils and festivities, influenced by the splendor of the Orient as witnessed by the crusaders. The cultural heritage of Antiquity, never quite absent in French literature, is introduced in the vernacular and adapted to contemporary tastes. The Christian element recedes in favor of le merveilleux païen, which will find further development in the dreamlike world of the matière de Bretagne. The most striking innovation is the discovery of man's "inner world", the increasingly detailed and skillful attempt at psychological analysis, especially that of love in all its manifestations and complexities.

CHAPTER VI

THE MATIÈRE DE TRISTAN

There are basically two extant versions of the Tristan legend, the one by Béroul and the one by Thomas. Both texts are fragments dating from the twelfth century. The exact dates are unknown. Most scholars believe the decade of 1160 to 1170 to be the approximate date of both texts. There must have been earlier versions. A so-called "Ur-Tristan", or first version, evidently existed at the middle of the century. Carl Appel thought he saw an allusion to it in a poem by Cercamon, which would be the earliest reference.[1] Another reference is in Bernart de Ventadour's "Quant vey la lauzeta mover" and "Tant ai mo cor ple de ioja".[2] Chrétien de Troyes, at the beginning of his Cligès, claims authorship "Del roi Marc et d'Iseut la blonde". Some believe that Chrétien had written the original Tristan. Gertrude Schoepperle traces the tale back to Celtic legend material.[3] The question of origin will never be satisfacorily resolved.

---

[1] Zeitschrift für französische Philologie, XLI, 219-227.

[2] J.L. Deister in Modern Philology, 19, 287-296.

[3] Tristan and Isolt, A Study of the Sources of the Romance (New York University Press, 1913).

To the two extant versions of Béroul are added the two "Folie Tristan" episodes. The "Folie Tristan" of the Berne version follows Béroul's Tristan, that of Oxford is dependent upon the work of Thomas.

The "version commune" of Beroul and the "version courtoise" of Thomas differ markedly in their presentation of the nature of love. Among the Tristan poems only they can give an accurate picture of the various ideological currents of the twelfth century. The Bédier reconstruction, in spite of its merits, can not serve as a basis for the study of the love of Tristan and Iseult. Equally irrelevant for this purpose would be the thirteenth century prose Tristan or any other later version.

The plot of the Tristan theme does not vary widely, and it its general outline the account of Bédier can serve as a point of departure. It is in the attitude of the authors toward the subject, in their conception of the social and sentimental aspects, that their divergence becomes clear.

In the "version commune" of Béroul the passion that ties the two lovers to each other appears to be clearly adulterous. It must, however, be distinguished from the adulterous love of the troubadours. The love of Tristan and Iseult is a passion fatale, a source of suffering, caused by the love potion and not sought in the spirit of Provençal fin'amors. It is a violent passion, free from introspective analysis, scruples or hesitation. It is not controlled by and subject to courtly virtues, and it can never hope to meet the approval of society. It is furtive, dependent upon ruses and lies. It is unlawful and uncourtly in its carnal aspects.

But it is also spiritual and constant. It is tragic. It could well be described by a line of Racine: "C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée."[4] The passion that dominates the protagonists' lives is not of their own choosing. If it is sinful, it is not their fault. The potion is the cause of it. As Tristan explains to the hermit:

> Tristan li dit: Sire, par foi,
> Qu'ele m'aime en bone foi,
> Vos n'entendez pas la raison:
> Qu'ele m'aime, c'est par la poison. (vv. 1381-1384)[5]

Iseult speaks to the hermit of their sin:

> Sire, por Deu omnipotent,
> Il ne m'aime pas, ne je lui,
> Fors par un herbe dont je bui
> Et il en but: ce fu pechiez. (vv. 1412-1415)

The "vin herbé" is given as the reason for their behavior. Does the author want to absolve the lovers of all responsibility and guilt.[6] His treatment of the adulterous relationship, which occupies a central and seemingly sympathetic position in the story, is curiously ambiguous. Although the lovers ostensibly flaunt the feudal and religious beliefs of their society, there seems to be pronounced effort on the part of the author to accommodate the affair, if not be apologetic.

Béroul achieves this feat by not focusing on the love affair and its moral aspects as such, but by putting it within the framework of social conflict and by allowing an appraisal of the lovers' relationship by

---

[4] Phèdre, Act I, scene 3.

[5] Le Roman de Tristan par Béroul (4th ed. rev. Muret, Paris: Champion, 1947).

[6] Cf., Bettina Wind; "Eléments courtois dans Béroul et dans Thomas", Romance Philology, XIV, (1960), p. 8.

circumstancial evidence only. A modern critic writes:

> The poet plays upon the ambiguity of action, the difficulty of interpreting even what we see with our own eyes, to create an atmosphere ofequivocation favorable to the young couple.[7]

The potion has made us sympathetic with their predicament. The attendants at the royal household, the barons and the dwarf, are unsympathetic characters. We are thus quite satisfied with the artificial dialogue between Tristan and Iseult, overheard by the King in the tree:

> Li rois pense que par folie,
> Sire Tristan, vos aie amé;
> Mais Dex plevis ma loiauté,
> Qui sur mon cors mete flaele,
> S'onques fors cil qui m'ot pucele
> Out m'amistie encor nul jor. (vv. 20-25)
>
> N'ai corage de druerie
> Qui tort a nule vilanie. (vv. 33-34)

Tristan likewise plays the game, even invoking the testimony of God:

> Dex! Porquoi est li rois si fol?
> Ainz me laroie par el col
> Pendre a un arbre qu'en ma vie
> O vos preise druerie. (vv. 127-130)

"Druerie" has the meaning of carnal love. In a subsequent dialogue with the King Iseult complains of his suspicions:

> Car tu penses que j'aim Tristrain
> Par puterie et par anjen... (vv. 407-408)

The King has no evidence of any wrongdoing. When Iseult gives an account of the episode under the tree to Brangain and Tristan to Governal, both parties thank God in ambiguous terms. Brangain speaks of God's mercy

---

[7] Stephen C. Nichols, "Ethical Criticism and Medieval Literature" in Medieval Secular Literature (ed. William Matthews, University of California Press, 1967), p. 69.

for having allowed the incident to end in such a way:

> Que li rois n'a chose veue
> Qui ne puise estr'en bien tenue. (vv. 375-376)
> ("Which might be misinterpreted.")

Governal thanks the Lord:

> Quant conter l'ot, Deu en mercie
> Que plus n'i out fait o s'amie. (vv. 383-384)
> ("That he had gone no farther with his lady friend")

The appearance of social propriety is strictly maintained. Compromising evidence is supplied only through the eyes of the "barons felons" and the evil dwarf. Of the barons Béroul writes:

> Et plusors foizzles ont veuz
> El lit roi Marc gesir toz nus. (vv. 593-594)

The dwarf Frocin, that shadowy personification of gratuitous hatred who wants to trap the lovers, spreads flour between the beds of his suspects and watches them from the outside:

> Li nain defors est; a la lune
> Bien vit joste erent ensenble
> Li dui amant. (vv. 736-738)

The testimony of the barons is much weakened by their motivation, which is jealousy of Tristan's prowess:

> Cuelli l'orent cil en haine
> Por sa prooise, et la roine (773-774)

The dwarf being the only witness to so important a scene can hardly be considered an unprejudiced observer. Indeed, as Rita Lejeune states, "les touches de sang sur la farine ne constituent pas, à bien y réfléchir, un véritable 'flagrant délit d'adultère' mais bien une présomption de flagrant délit."[8] The King's sentence thus appears all the more brutal

---

[8] Rita Lejeune, Les Influences contemporaines dans les romans français de Tristan au 12e siècle," Le Moyen Age, LXVI (1960), p. 147.

in view of the fact that it is based on circumstancial evidence and that the Queen's cooperation in the assumed transgression is not at all determined. He turns into an irrational antagonist. The lamentations of the populace show where their sympathies lie. Tristan and Iseult are turned into the aggrieved party.

The discovery by the King of the sleeping lovers in the forest must again be viewed as an ambiguous mise en scène:

> Tristan se couche et trait s'espee,
> Entre les deux chars l'a posee.
> Sa chemise out Yseut vestue.
> Se ele fust icel jor nue,
> Merveiles lor fust meschoiet[9]
> E Tristan ses braies ravoit.
> La roine avoit en son doi
> L'anel d'or des noces le roi. (1805-1812)

The King is duped. He reacts like the typical cuckold of the fabliaux, worthy of ridicule and contempt:

> Bien puis croire, si je ai sens,
> Se il s'amasent folement,
> Ja n'i eussent vestement,
> Entre eus deus n'eust espee,
> Autrement fust cest'asenblee. (2006-2010)

According to Bëroul the magic potion was to keep its effect for three years:

> Li lovendrin, li vin herbez:
> La mere Yseut qui le bolli
> A trois anz d'amistie le fist. (2138-2140)

For three years this passion continues beyond control:

> Tant con durerent li troi an,
> Out li vin si soupris Tristan
> Et la roine ensenble o lui,
> Que chascun disoit: Las n'en sui. (2143-2146)

---

[9]This allusion clearly indicates a "cover-up" in the double sense of the word.

At the end of three years the lovers become conscious of their condition. They show regrets, feelings of guilt. They miss life at Court with its luxuries and its honors. When Tristan considers returning her to the Court Iseult readily accepts the opportunity with a liberal sprinkling of religious vocabulary:

> Sire, Jesu soit graciez
> Quant degerpir volez pechiez! (2263-2264)
>
> Au riche roi celestien
> Puison andui crier merci
> Qu'il ait de nos, Tristran, ami! (2286-2288)

Before the hermit Ogrin in the forest she promises to mend her ways, but not without reservations. She is going to love Tristan "without foolishness":

> Quar ja corage de folie
> N'en avrai je jor de ma vie.
> Ge ne di pas, a vostre entente,
> Que de Tristan jor me repente
> Que je ne l'aim de bone amor. (2323-2327)

She will go on loving him, and she has no regrets. Tristan, likewise, is not aware of having sinned. When Ogrin admonishes him:

> Si longuement l'avon menee,
> Itel fu nostre destinee. (2301-2302)

His lack of scruples also becomes evident in his chivalrous exploits. Although he dispatches his adversaries in the manner of the epic heroes, he is not beyond cunning and questionable conduct, such as the slaying of an enemy by ambush and surprise. When confronted by Marc with the condemning evidence of the flour episode he attempts to override the issue and claim innocence with a challenge of combat to all comers. Pauphilet states:

> Ainsi cette incomparable valeur, qui l'apparente si clairement aux demi-dieux antiques, il s'en sert pour mentir impunément: assez fort pour nier l'évidence. Et c'est le conseil même que lui donne l'ermite Ogrin: Pour éviter la honte et couvrir le mal, il faut savoir mentir un peu.[10]

> Por honte oster et mal covrir
> Doit on un poi par bel mentir. (2353-2354)

He thus hardly represents the ideal knight.

Tristan and Iseult decide to let society have its way, to become again members in good standing, but only for the sake of convenience and not out of inner conviction. They have neither the desire nor the intention to make a clean break. They will continue to see each other and to communicate secretly. Tristan continues to deceive his uncle and suzerain. He remains faithful to his passion for Iseult. Iseult likewise shows no remorse. She desires her lover to be near her. She asks him not to leave the country, but to stay secretly at Orri's lodge in the forest:

> Nos i geumes mainte nuit,
> En nostre lit que nos fist faire... (2820-2821)

Lazar concludes:

> Les amants ne peuvent échapper à leur condition. Et au fond d'eux-mêmes ils ne désirent même pas y échapper. Les mensonges, les ruses, les repentirs et les retours, ajoutent à leur aventure cette intensité dramatique, ce côté si authentiquement humain qui fait que la légende de Tristan et Iseut nous touche infiniment.[11]

One might well ask whether twelfth century society was equally touched by the all too human qualities of the lovers. Certainly, Béroul's treatment is sympathetic. But did he not require a love potion to excuse

---

[10] A. Pauphilet, Le Legs du Moyen Age (Melun:Librairie d'Argences, 1950), p. 126.

[11] Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle, (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), p. 157.

human passion, a folly and a kind of sickness in the tradition of Antiquity? It is significant that even after the spell of the boire has expired the passion of Tristan and Iseult continues. Despite some instances of the miraculous the work progresses on a very realistic note. It is the harshness of adversity that is met by a love in conflict with the socially acceptable. Beroul seems to point out that certain concessions will have to be made to social decorum, but that once this requirement is met true love, however illicit, can and will prevail. The popularity of the tale in the twelfth century is revealing of the moral climate of the time.

The "Folie Tristan" of the Berne manuscript has as its principal source the poem of Beroul, as E. Hoepffner convincingly explains in the introduction to his edition.[12]

Tristan, longing to see the Queen, approaches the Court under the disguise of a madman. He is laughed at and beaten, but it does not matter to him:

> Tot por l'amor Yseut conquerre.
> Mout li ert boen ce qu'il faisoit,
> Nule rien ne li desplaisoit (139-141)

In the presence of Marc and Iseult he alludes to events in the past in order to reveal himself to Iseult. The events of their common past that he recites are very precise. The King only laughs at the funny fool. He is the same dull-witted and naive husband as in the version of Béroul:

> Li rois n'a pas coraige entier
> Sempres est ci et sempres la. (3432-3433)

---

[12] La Folie Tristan de Berne (2nd. ed. E. Hoepffner, Paris:Belles Lettres, 1949), 6-19.

Tristan speaks of the "boire d'amour", of the life in the forest, of the "loge de feuillage" even. Only Iseult is confounded by the revelations of this fool. He addresses her in the style of a troubadour:

> Car m'estorez, dame, ma perte
> En doz baisier de fine amor
> Ou enbracier souz covertor.
> Mout m'avroiez fait grand confort,
> Certes, o autrement sui mort. (227-231)

He uses the vocabulary of Provençal service d'amour:

> Mais li boivres del trosseroil
> M'a si emblee et cuer et sans
> Que je nan ai autre porpans
> Fors tant que en amor servir. (307-310)[13]

As Iseult still does not recognize him Tristan speaks of the patience that is required in the service of love and which will eventually find its reward, the guerredon:

> L'an dit: Qui ainz servi Amor,
> Tot lo guerredone en un jor
> Selonc les ovres que voi
> Est ce granz errors endroit moi. (474-477)

Iseult finally recognizes Tristan and is very eager to grant him the guerredon. When Marc, the good King and husband, goes fishing, his wife hopes that he will stay away for a week:

> Qu'il ne venist devant uit jorz (568)

And without much further ado and a straightforwardness that would have made a troubadour blush Iseult takes her man to bed:

> A ces paroles, sanz grant cri,
> Con vos avez ici oi,
> Entre Tristan soz la cortine:
> Entre ses braz tient la raine. (569-572)

---

[13] Lazar, op. cit., p. 159, comments that these lines "auraient pu être écrits par Bernard de Ventadour".

Iseult is after all not the unreachable lady of the troubadours. She is very human.

Of the same period, but generally considered to be of a slightly later date, is the "version courtoise" of the Tristan poem of Thomas d'Angleterre.

> On ne saurait imaginer, avec les mêmes personnages et à peu près les mêmes épisodes fondamentaux, deux romans esthétiquement plus différents que celui de Béroul et celui de Thomas.

Thus writes Pauphilet in his Le Legs du Moyen Age.[14]

Thomas treats the material according to the conceptions of fin' amors. The illegitimacy of the relationship is not a problem. It is rather a triumph, an exercise in the art of love. The lovers, again, are not "caught in the act". They do not have to flee. There is no violence. The King, suspicious of their comportment, their telling glances, the rumors at the Court, exiles them. They leave happily together. "Jamais ils n'avaient été si joyeux", writes Pauphilet, "Ce départ de fête fixe le ton de tout

> l'épisode. Leur vie dans la forêt était, dit Béroul, 'aspre et dure'; chez Thomas elle est purement délicieuse; plusieurs traits en sont nettement idealisés, comme la grotte qui les accueille, et le joli ruisseau, tout près, qui les abreuve... Volontairement le poète, au tableau pitoyable qu'on voit dans Béroul a substitué cette espèce de féerie amicale que la nature complaisamment déploie autour des amants... Tristan et Iseut étaient des proscrits, Thomas en fait des amoureux en voyage de noces parmi les oiseaux, les fleurs et les parfums.[15]

They have no regrets. They feel none of the sobering effects of a philter losing its power. One wonders why they would want to give up

---

[14] Pauphilet, op. cit., p. 133.

[15] Pauphilet, loc. cit.

their idyllic existence. But they follow the invitation of the King to return to the Court. The King, having discovered them in the forest asleep and in a non-compromising position, is touched by the apparent chastity and purity of his wife's amorous relations with Tristan. They return in triumph. Lazar writes:

> Une fois de plus donc, l'amour triomphe complètement de la société et de la morale chrétienne. La morale de la fin'amors a raison de toutes les objections.[16]

There is no psychological progression as there is in Beroul, no suffering and renunciation of any kind. They resume their former life at the Court. In order to provide the impetus to further action, to effect the separation of the couple, Thomas resorts to "la scène du Verger". The lovers are surprised in a compromising situation. Tristan manages to flee. This separation is merely the result of an accident. "La catastrophe sort d'un hasard et non plus d'une nécessité", writes Pauphilet.

> Les amants sont separés pour toujours sans avoir pu jamais mesurer leur impuissance à vivre librement ensemble. Le roman perd ainsi son caractère le plus âpre, et les épisodes qui suivent, ces tentatives que fera Tristan pour revenir, n'auront plus le même air de lutte désespérée contre l'impossible.[17]

On taking leave they exchange courtly phrases that are more elegant than touching:

> Ma dolce dame, je vos pri
> Ne me metes endbli. (31-32)[18]

---

[16] Lazar, op. cit., p. 161.

[17] Pauphilet, op. cit., p. 134.

[18] Les Fragments du Tristan de Thomas, (ed. B.H. Wind, Leident, 1950).

Iseult: Nos cors partir ore convient
Mais l'amor ne partira nient. (49-50)

Thomas is more interested than Béroul in minute analysis of thought and feeling than outward events. This introspective quality of Thomas' manner is greatly elaborated in Tristan's reflections leading to his marriage with Iseult aux Blanches Mains. He has feelings of doubt and jealousy. He suspects Iseult of sharing the joys of marriage with Marc. He feels that cuers et cors should duly be his, a central theme in Chrétien de Troyes:

Pur vostre cors su jo em paine
Li reis sa joie en vos maine:
Sun deduit maine e sun buen,
Co que mien fu ore est suen. (17-20)

He then states one of the motifs of fin'amors: that one-sided love cannot endure:

Que valt l'amur a maintenir
Dunt nul bien ne put avenir? (41-42)

This state of mind leads him to his marriage with the other Iseult. Can Iseult find happiness with Marc, love and marriage being mutually exclusive according to fin'amors? Can one be married and at the same time truly faithful to one's beloved? Tristan intends to find out by putting himself into an identical position:

....assaier voldrai sa vie.
Jo vol espuser la meschine
Pur saveir l'estre a la reine,
Se l'esspusaille e l'assembler
Me pureient li faire oblier. (172-176)

He marries Iseult aux Blanches Mains "pur le nun et pur la belté" (v. 229). It is to be a mariage blanc, much to the distress of the young wife, but Thomas demonstrates his point. Tristan remains faithful to the

other Iseult. The latter thinks only of him:

> Ysolt en sa chambre suspire
> Pur Tristan que tant desire,
> Ne puet en son cuer el penser
> Fors co seulement: Tristan amer. (649-652)

Tristan, in a flight of sentimental fancy, has statues made of Iseult and her associates at Court. Instead of attending to his wife he frequents his "salle aux Images" and pays his service d'amour to the "real" Iseult. He is gripped by doubts and jealousy. He is afraid of losing her:

> Mes por ce en est li jolus
> Que de li perdre est pourus. (63-64)

Thomas has thus constructed a strange relationship of four persons, all suffering from the situation:

> Entre ces quatre ot estrange amor:
> Tut en ourent painne e dolur
> E un e autre en tristur vit;
> E nul d'ans nen i a deduit. (71-74)

Marc possesses his wife's body, not her heart. Iseult's heart is with Tristan, her body is Marc's. Tristan's heart is with Iseult. His wife's attentions he rejects entirely. The latter has neither his heart nor his body. Thomas poses the difficult question, fit for a high court of love, which of these characters suffers the most. He does not attempt to answer it:

> La parole mettrai avant,
> Le jugement facent amant. (148-149)

A topic much discussed in courtly circles was the question whether a lover should survive the death of his beloved, whether they would be separated in death. Pauphilet writes:

> Cela va jusqu'à l'absurde: ainsi Iseut, sur le navire que la ramène vers Tristan, et que la tempête assaille, débat interminablement cette question: tous deux ne peuvent que mourir ensemble, or elle va être noyée, comment Tristan pourra-t-il l'être aussi?[19]

Tristan is suffering from a poisoned wound that only Iseult can heal. He has sent for her. His wife, who has discovered the true situation, deceives him into believing that the approaching ship is not carrying Iseult. In dark despair Tristan cries out to God as his witness:

Deus salt Ysolt e mei! (1760)

He dies. The stage is set for Iseult to arrive and to die with him like a "vraie amante":

Pur mei avez perdu la vie,
E jo frai cum veraie amie:
Pus vus voil murir ensement.
Embrace le, si s'estent,
Baise la buche e la face
E molt estreit a li l'enbrace,
Cors a cors, buche a buche estent,
Sun espirit a itant rent,
E murt dejuste lui issi
Por la dolur de sun ami.
Tristans murut pur sun desir,
Ysolt qu'a tens n'i pout venir. (806-817)

Tristan and Iseult are portrayed as models of <u>fin'amors</u> for lovers of all time. Thomas addresses himself to a public appreciative of refined sentiment and subtle points of love-casuistry. His farewell to his readers suggests such an audience:

Tumas fine ci sun escrit:
A tuz amanz saluz i dit,
As pensis e as amerus,
As envius, as desirus,
As enveisiez e as purvers,
A tuz cels ki orunt ces vers. (3125-3130)

---

[19]Pauphilet, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 137.

He hopes that they may find "grant confort" in his work:

> Aveir an poissent grant confort,
> Encuntre change, encuntre tort,
> Encuntre paine, encuntre dolur,
> Encuntre tuiz engins d'amur. (3141-3144)

Thomas' contribution to the Tristan legend is an idealization of the characters, intensive psychological analysis and the presentation of a passion that is subject to a greater measure of deliberation and reflection than had been the case in the version of Béroul. Thomas bathes the action in an aura of civilized refinement and restraint in which the precepts of fin'amors are dominant. One can well agree with the conclusion of Pauphilet:

> ...Iseut est devenue une de ces dames courtoises dont les poètes lyriques chantent la difficile conquête; princesse d l'adultère compliqué et de mélancolies savantes. A chaque aventure de leur vie, ils se plaignent et s'admirent d'être de si rares exemples de la tristesse d'aimer. Thomas a adapté au goût de son temps une légende dont les violences, les disparates et les reflets mythiques ne se comprenaient déjà plus. Les défauts, et aussi les mérites de son poème tiennent dans ce contraste de sa matière et de sa manière.[20]

The Oxford version of the Folie Tristan poem contains the same motifs as the Berne version. The author's treatment of the material shows greater emphasis on sentimental analysis and idealisation. As Hoepffner convincingly explains in the introduction to his edition[21] the poet models his version on the work of Thomas:

> Il ne saurait y avoir de doute sur les intentions du poète. Il a voulu baigner son récit dans une atmosphère de courtoisie comme l'avait déjà fait avant lui son modèle principal, Thomas d'Angleterre, pour le roman lui-même.[22]

---

[20] Pauphilet, loc.cit.

[21] La Folie Tristan d'Oxford, (2nd. ed., E. Hoepffner, Paris:Belles Lettres, 1943).

[22] Ibid., p. 7.

In conclusion it can be maintained that neither Béroul nor Thomas have given a true picture of amour courtois. The story does not entirely lend itself to such a treatment. The love of Tristan and Iseult is induced artificially, through the philter. It is not a controlled, deliberate awakening, a "will to love", as C.B. West puts it:

> ...they love in spite of themselves rather than by their own will, whereas in amour courtois, even though its actual beginning may occur as a 'coup de foudre', there is often a preparation for it, a kind of 'will to love', a consciousness of love as something to be sought deliberately, almost as a necessary part of education.[23]

The social aspect of the tale is at variance with that of amour courtois. To have bestowed one's love on a worthy object and to be loved in return (sans démesure, to be sure) is a social asset in courtly society. Tristan and Iseult fall prey to their weakness and place themselves outside of society.

Further, their love is mutual. Iseult is not the dame hautaine. She grants all and suffers all.

It is the achievement of Thomas to give to this fundamentally uncourtly story a courtly tone. His preoccupation with minute analysis of thought and feeling are certainly to the taste of his courtly audience. His poem, however, is not a true courtly romance in "sans e matière".

---

[23] C.B. West, Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature (New York: Haskell, 1966), p. 30.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAIS OF MARIE DE FRANCE

Marie de France is a contemporary of Chrétien de Troyes, but we know very little about her. The only information we possess is made up of scanty details contained in her works. None of them though can give us a clue to her real identity, and the various attempts to identify the authoress with historical figures bearing the same name are inconclusive and sometimes implausible. Arguments in favor of Marie de Champagne are not convincing. Apart from linguistic and historical obstacles, Marie de France was hardly the lady who would have supplied Chrétien with the "matiere et sans" of the Chevalier de la Charrette.

The most likely period of composition of the lays is the decade of 1160-1170.[1] There is no indication that Marie was influenced by the works of Chrétien, whose romances are probably posterior to her lays. Marie de France is an innovator. Not only is she the first femme de lettres in France, she also contributed something new in form and subject matter to the literature of her time, the nouvelle en vers or lai, regularly accompanied by the epithet breton. She was acquainted with Latin literature and could have followed the fashion of the mid-twelfth

---

[1] Cf. the convincing arguments in the introduction of Jean Rychner, Les Lais de Marie de France ("Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age"; Paris: Champion, 1966), p. 10.

century of translating Latin works into the vernacular, a practice that had resulted in the popular "triade classique" and the Ovidiana of Chrétien, but it is possible that the taste of the courtly public was ready for something new. Marie explains in her prologue:

> Pur ceo comencai a penser
> De aukune bone estoire faire
> E de latin en romauns traire;
> Mais ne me fust guaires de pris;
> Itant s'en sunt altre entremis.
> Des lais pensai k'oi aveie; N
> Ne dutai pas, bien le saveie,
> Ke pur remambrance les firent
> Des aventures k'il oirent
> Cil ki primes les comencierent
> E qui avant les enveierent.
> Plusurs en ai oi conter
> Nes voil laisser ne oblier;
> Rimez en ai e fait ditie,
> Soventes fiez en ai veillie
>
> (ed. Ewert, Prologue, 28-42)

In the lay Guigemar she refers again to her source:

> Les contes ke jo sai verrais,
> Dunt li Bretun unt fait les lais,
> Vos conterai assez briefment.
>
> (Ewert, 19-21)

The origin of the genre is somewhat obscure. The word lai is apparently related to the Irish laid, meaning a song. Occurences of the term in early literature refer to vocal as well as instrumental composition. Iseult sings the lay of Guiron in the Thomas version. Wace[2] writes that the jongleurs at the court of Arthur performed lays of vielles, lays of rotes, harps, and flutes. Chrétien de Troyes in Cligès[3] speaks of two

---

[2] J. Arnold (ed.), Le Brut de Wace ("Société des Anciens Textes Français"; vol. II, Paris:Droz, 1938-1940), vv. 10548 ff.

[3] A. Micha (ed.), Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes: Cligès (C.F.M.A. 84; Paris:Champion, 1965).

combatants who "played lays on the helmets" with their swords:

> As espees notent un lai
> Sor les hiaumes qui retantissent.
> (vv. 4024-4026)

According to Ernest Hoepffner[4] the Breton jongleurs sang the song in the Breton tongue "... and a tale would be told in French for the benefit of those who did not understand Breton, explaining the circumstances which were supposed to have inspired the song."[5] This prose narrative, then, was extended to a literary composition in verse.

The treatment of the love theme in the lays of Marie de France is neither that of the Provençal canso with its distant sighs and adulations nor that of the roman courtois with its extensive biographical material. It is rather a short vignette of a specific psychological conflict in a love situation. Each lay is a case in point. The treatment of the love theme in the lays of Marie de France therefore affords an excellent insight into the sentimental tastes of her time.

The lays have variously been grouped under the general characteristics of "féerique", "réaliste", "romanesque", "lais fabliaux".[6] These classifications are often highly ingenious. One suspects that Marie herself would be surprised. For the purpose of studying the love theme in

---

[4] E. Hoepffner, "The Breton Lays", in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, R.S. Loomis (ed.) (Oxford, 1955), p. 113.

[5] Ibid., p. 113.

[6] Cf. Foster Damon; "Marie de France: Psychologist of Courtly Love", P.M.L.A. XLIV (1929), pp. 968-96. Also: Leo Spitzer, "Marie de France, Dichterin von Problemmärchen", Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie L (1930), p. 41 ff.

the lays such groupings are unnecessary. Solely the love conceptions of Marie are of interest. All of the lays are love stories. Marie writes at a time when Provencal fin'amors is showing its influence in the formation of amour courtois in the northern courts.

Guigemar is the first in the collection of lays, although it is doubtful that it is the first to be written by Marie, since it shows the author at the height of her artistic maturity and with clear ideas of sentimental concepts. Troubadour ideology as well as amour-passion (Tristan) are discernible in this story.

Guigemar is a knight who is guilty of the imperfection of being oblivious to love. He goes hunting, wounds a hind and is himself hurt when his arrow rebounds and enters his thigh. The hind is the messenger of destiny: it tells him that he will not recover until he has found the woman who for love of him will suffer great pain, as he will for her. Guigemar, in neglecting his destiny by refusing to seek la joie d'amour, has thus offended it and destiny takes its revenge. The hind speaks:

> Oi, lasse Jo sui ocise!
> E tu, vassal, ki m'as nafree,
> tels seit la tue destinee:
> ja mais n'aies tu medecine!
> Ne par herbe ne par racine,
> ne par mire ne par poisun
> n'avras tu ja mes guarisun
> de la plaie qu'as en la quisse,
> des i que cela te guarisse,
> ke suffera pur tue amur
> si grant peine e si grant dolur
> qu'unkes femmes tant ne suffrir,
> e tu referas tant pur li,
> dunt tuit cil s'esmerveillerunt,
> ki aiment e ame avrunt,
> u ki puis amerunt apres.
>
> (Guigemar, vv. 106-121)

His destiny is furthered by a mysterious boat which takes him to a strange land and by his prompt encounter, upon disembarking, of a beautiful lady, "une dame de halt parage, franche, curteise, bele e sage" (vv. 211-212). This lady is a mal-mariée, locked up by her husband, an old and jealous lord ("gelus esteit a desmesure", v. 213). Guigemar and the lady fall in love with each other, a joy which neither of them has yet experienced. She cares for his wounds in her chamber, adorned with a painting of Venus, the goddess of love, which Marie proceeds to describe in telling detail:

> Venus, la deuesse d'amur,
> Fu tres bien mise en la peinture;
> Les traiz mustre e la nature
> Cument hom deit amur tenir
> E leialment e bien servir.
> Le livre Ovide, u il enseigne
> Coment chascuns s'amur estreigne,
> En un fu ardant le gettout,
> E tuz icels escumenjout,
> Ki ja mais cel livre lirreient
> Ne sun enseignement fereient.
>
> (Guigemar, vv. 234-244)

Marie is obviously not in favor of Ovid's teachings. Love is not to be taken lightly. It causes headache and suffering before it becomes a true source of happiness. She has severe words for those "vilein courteis" who brag about their easy exploits:

> Amur est plaie dedenz cors,
> E si ne piert nient defors.
> Ceo est un mal que lunges tient,
> Pur ceo que de nature vient;
> Plusurs le tienent a gabeis,
> Si cume li vilein curteis,
> Ki jolivent par tut le mund,
> Puis se avantent de ceo que funt;
> N'est pas amur, einz est folie
> E mauveiste e lecherie.
>
> (Guigemar, vv. 483-492)

Marie then elaborates on another point of love casuistry that was much discussed in courtly circles, the point of "fierté en amour", as Hoepffner calls it.[7] Guigemar, prompted by his passion, straightforwardly asks for the favors of the lady:

> Jo vus requeor de druerie;
> Bele, ne me escundiez mie!" (Guigemar, vv. 505-506)

To which a modern heroine might reply: "I am not that kind of a girl." The lady says as much in a friendly manner:

> Tut en riant li dit: 'Amis,
> Cest cunseil sereit trop hastis,
> De otrier vers ceste priere.
> Jeo ne sui mie acustumere. (Guigemar, vv. 509-512)

Guigemar's answer is much more in tune with the more realistic ideology of the North than with troubadour fin'amors. It is the fickle woman, the professional (femme jolive de mestier, v. 515) who plays hard to get, but the lady with good intentions, having found the right man, will be more accommodating:

> Femme jolive de mestier
> Se deit lunc tens faire preier
> Pur sei cherir, que cil ne quit
> Que ele eit use cel deduit:
> Mes la dame de bon purpens,
> Ki en sei eit valur ne sens,
> S'ele treve hume a sa manere,
> Ne se ferat vers lui trop fiere. (Guigemar, vv. 515-522)

Such is the case. Yet, their destiny still has to run its course. Their final satisfaction, the surplus (a term well used by the troubadours) is not yet to be enjoyed:

---

[7] E. Hoepffner, Les Lais de Marie de France (Paris:Nizet, 1966), p. 87.

Ensemble juent e parolent
E sovent baisent e acolent;
Bien lur covienge del surplus
De ceo que li altre unt en us. (Guigemar, vv. 531-534)

Fate will separate them after many happy months. The jealous old husband learns of the affair. Guigemar flees. Before taking leave they endow each other with signs of recognition. She ties a special knot into his shirttail. He puts a girdle "a sa char nue" that only he will be able to unbuckle.

The magic ship has carried Guigemar back to Bretagne. Two years later the lady escapes in the same fashion. The reunion, however, is not yet to take place. They suffer, he "mat et pensif" (v. 644), she "pensive et morne" (v. 718). The lady is sheltered by Meriadus, a Breton noble, who desires to marry her, but she resists. Only he who can undo her girdle will have her. Fate finally leads Guigemar to one of Meriaduc's tournaments. The recognition scene, one of happy surprise, is described in detail and psychological finesse. The resistance of Meriaduc overcome in battle, the ending is a happy one:

A grant joie s'amie en meine;
Ore ad trespasse sa peine. (Guigemar, 881-882)

Marie's conception of the love theme is evident in various aspects in Guigemar. She condones love outside of marriage, provided that it be of a serious nature. She rejects the teachings of Ovid. Love, purified and mellowed by suffering, will lead to a permanent bond. The tragic love of Tristan and Iseult is less to her liking than the final reward of love's pains. Passion need not lead to the defeat of the lovers. True love overcomes all obstacles, social, moral and religious.

The other lays, with the exception of Eliduc, are shorter than Guigemar. All of them, however, treat some aspect of amour courtois.

Two lays, Bisclavret and Equitan, are discussed by Hoepffner under the heading "La femme coupable."[8] Hoepffner sees in these lays a condemnation of Provencal fin'amors: "L'amour idéal à la manière 'provençale, semble-t-elle- vouloir dire, voilà où il mène."[9] Bisclavret is the story of a Breton baron who reveals to his wife the secret of his weekly absences. For three days each week he sheds his clothing and becomes a werewulf roaming the forest. The shocked wife

> De pour fu tute vermeille;
> De l'aventure se es frea.
> En maint endreit se purpensa
> Cum ele s'en puist partir;
> Ne voleit mes lez lui gisir. (Bisclavret, vv. 97-102)

A neighboring noble, who had long been in love with her, gladly comes to her aid. The reward is considerable:

> M'amur e mun cors vus otrei,
> Vostre drue fetes de mei! (Bisclavret, vv. 115-116)

She suggests the securing of the clothing of the werewulf, who now cannot become a man again and has to remain in the forest. After a year he is hunted down by the king's party, begs for mercy and becomes domesticated. One day, seeing the guilty knight, he bites him, and when his wife appears, he bites off her nose (Le neis li esracha del vis. v. 235). They confess their betrayal and he can become a man again.

---

[8] Ibid. p. 144-159.

[9] Ibid. p. 158.

Lazar[10] argues that the woman is not punished for her illicit love, since Marie does not condemn extramarital relations. Rather she is punished for her treason.

Equitan is similar in its theme. Equitan, the king of Nantes, desires the wife of his loyal senechal. They are having an affair, and they plot to eliminate the husband by having a very hot bath prepared for him, in which he would hopefully die:

> Sun bain si chaut e si buillant
> Suz ciel n'en ad humme vivant
> Ne fust escaudez e malmis,
> Einz que dedenz se fust assis.
> Quant mort serat e escaudez,
> Vos hummes e les soens mandez;
> Si leu mustrez cumfeitement
> Est mort al bain sudeinement. (Equitan, vv. 253-260)

The plan miscarries when the husband surprises the lovers playing in his bed:

> Sur le lit al seignur cucherent
> E deduistrent e enveiserent.
> (Equitan, vv. 281-282)

> Le rei e sa femme ad trovez
> U il gisent entr'acolez. (Equitan, vv. 291-292)

The senechal shames the king, who, unclothed and confused, seeks cover in one of the tubs, that with the scalding water. Then the senechal throws his wife in after her lover, and both die. Lazar[11] again disputes Hoepffner's opinion that Marie condemns Provençal theories in this lay. He quotes Marie's own conclusion of the lay:

---

[10] M. Lazar, Amour Courtois et Fin'Amors (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964) p. 194.

[11] Ibid., p. 195.

Ki bien vodreit reisun entendre,
Ici purreit ensample prendre:
Tel purcace le mal d'autrui
Dunt le mals revert sur lui. (Equitan, vv. 307-310)

Lazar writes[12]:

> Comment parler ici d'amour coupable chatié, de théories provençales condamnées, lorsque le texte lui-même affirme qu'il s'agit de l'illustration d'une maxime: celui qui cherche à nuire à autrui, tout le mal retombe sur lui. Si les amants sont tués, ce n'est pas à cause de leur amour, mais pour le crime qu'ils projetaient de commettre. Tout comme dans le Bisclavret ce n'est pas l'amour qui est accusé, c'est le crime qu'est condamné.

Indeed, in both lays the woman is guilty of cruelty and crime and is punished for it. That she is punished for extramarital relations per se does not follow. In these lays Marie does not condemn fin'amors; she condemns the use of treacherous methods to further it.

The lay Lanval illustrates a particular point of courtly love casuistry, that of secrecy, of discretion. Lanval, a vassal of King Arthur, has been overlooked by the King in the distribution of wealth. He finds himself sad and destitute in a foreign land. At a stream in a meadow he encounters a beautiful fairy who promptly offers him her love, a behavior that is certainly not in keeping with courtly customs:

'Lanval, 'fait ele, ' beus amis,
Pur vus vienc jeo fors de ma tere;
De luinz vus sui venue quere.
Se vus estez pruz e curteis
Emperere ne quens ne reis
N'ot unques tant joie ne bien;
Kar jo vus aim sur tute rien. (Lanval, vv. 110-116)

The feeling is immediately mutual. There are no minute descriptions and analyses of awakening love as a courtly romance normally would

---

[12] Ibid.

have. The lady is generous:

S'amour e sun cors li otreie.
(Lanval, v. 133)

He even finds himself suddenly rich. She attaches only one condition to her favors: that he keep their love secret. Not unlike a Provençal lady she declares:

A tuz jurs m'avriez perdue,
Se ceste amur esteit seue;
Jamas ne me purriez veeir
Ne de mun cors seisine aveir. (Lanval, vv. 147-150)

Lanval, again at court, is approached by Queen Guinevere, who finds him equally irresistible and offers him her love. Lanval resists. The Queen is offended and accuses him of being a poor lover, indeed a homosexual:

'Lanval', fet ele, 'bien le quit,
Vuz n'amez gueres cel delit;
Asez le m'ad hum dit sovent
Que des femmes n'avez talent.
Vallez avez bien afeitiez,
Ensemble od eus vus deduiez.
(Lanval, vv. 227-282)

To this grave offense to his honor Lanval replies that he has a lady and that even her servants are superior to the Queen. Guinevere then falsely accuses him before the King of having made improper advances. Lanval is tried before his peers. In this predicament the fairy appears, dazzles the court, proves him innocent, and together they ride off to Avalon. Lanval has suffered for his love and has regained it.

Yonec is the tragic love-story of a mal-mariée, married against her wish to an old lord, and her fairy lover, who appears to her in the form of a bird. Marie's attitudes towards Provençal fin'amors are quite

evident. On the misalliance of the woman to the old man she comments:

Grant pechie fist qui li donna. (Yonec, v. 28)[13]

There is no love between the wedded couple. The lover is attracted by her desires as a realisation of her dreams:

Jeo vus ai lungement ame
E en mun quor mut desire;
Unques femme fors vus n'aimai
Ne jamer[illegible]re ne amerai.
Mes ne poeie a vus venir
Ne fors de mun pais eissir,
Si vus ne me eussez requis. (Yonec, vv. 127-133)

He stretches out on the bed next to her, but he behaves properly:

Delez li s'est culchiez el lit;
Mes il ne vout a li tucher
Ne de acoler ne de baiser. (Yonec, vv. 166-168)

Not until after the lady has called the priest and the bird-knight has taken communion will she engage in that activity from which will spring forth a son named Yonec. The lover comes and goes. He asks her not to call him too often, to keep mesure:

Mes tele mesure esgardez
Que nus ne seium encumbrez. (Yonec, vv. 201-202)

Not only can she not heed this admonition, she also radiates her happy state of mind, so that her old husband becomes suspicious and puts up spikes around her window. The knight is mortally wounded, tells the lady that a son will be born unto them who will avenge his death. He returns to his castle and dies. Yonec, having grown up and having learned of the identity of his real father while standing at his grave, avenges his father's death by killing the old lord:

---

[13]This line is found in Hoepffner's edition of the lays, not in Ewert's, the edition otherwise used for this chapter.

Sun parastre ad li chief tolu. (Yonec, v. 542)

The lawfully wedded husband, the vieux jaloux, is the villain in this lay. In accordance with the courtly code Marie condones this love and describes it with sympathetic sensitivity. The lay ends:

Cil que ceste aventure cirent
Lunc tens apres un lai en firent,
De la pite, de la dolur
Que cil suffrirent pur amur. (Yonec, v. 551-554)

In the lay Chaitivel a lady is courted by four knights and shows good will towards all:

Ne volt les treis perdre pur l'un:
Bel semblant feseit a chescun. (Chaitivel, vv. 55-56)

The four meet in a tournament. Three are killed, the fourth is badly wounded. The lady takes this situation as an occasion to compose a lay dealing with a problem of courtly love casuistry: Who is to be pitied the most, the lady who has lost four suitors in one day or the unfortunate crippled surviving knight? She wants to name the lay Quatre Dols (The Four Sorrows), reflecting upon her own loss. The wounded knight, however, disputes this title, arguing that it should be Chaitivel (The Wretched One, The Unfortunate One), because, though allowed to live, he finds unfulfilled love more bitter than his comrades do the grave. Marie de France evidently agrees with this position, for she names the lay Chaitivel.

Del chevaler vus dirai veir;
Il i entent a sun poeir,
E la dame de l'autre part
E de parler e de regart.
Les nuiz, quant la dame lusseit
E ses sires cuche esteit,

Dejuste lui sovent levot
E de sun mantel se afublot.
A la fenestre ester venoit
Pur sun ami qu'el i saveit
Que antreteu vie demenot,
Que le plus de la nuit veillot.
Delit aveient al veer,
Quant plus ne poeient aver. (Laostic, vv. 65-78)

This is the extent of their communication. Her husband asks her testily why she is gettin nights and where she is going. She replies that whoever fails to hear the nightingale (laostic) enjoys none of the world's pleasure. Angrily the husband has the nightingale caught to ensure everyone's nightly rest. Then, before his wife's eyes, he twists the neck of the bird, throws its body at her and leaves the room. The weeping woman curses all bird-catchers. With an explanatory note she sends the dead bird to her platonic lover, who has a golden casket made for it and carries it about with him forever in remembrance of his love.

Hoepffner[14] sees in this lay an illustration that culpable love must be doomed. It seems, however, that Marie de France does not view this platonic relationship as culpable. Rather she stresses the joy of love represented by the song of the nightingale, a love that cannot be killed by a third party but is treasured and endures.

In Chevrefoil Marie evokes the legend of the immortal lovers of Cornwall. She describes only a short episode, an encounter of Tristan with the Queen. Tristan leaves a marker on the road that she will recognize. It is a hazeltree branch, and on it his name is written. Marie presents the image of the hazel and the honeysuckle:

---

[14] Hoepffner, op. cit., p. 143.

D'euls deus fu il tut autresi
Cume del chevrefoil esteit
Ki a la codre se perneit:
Quant il s'i est laciez e pris
E tut entur le fust s'est mis,
Ensemble poent bien durer
Mes ki puis les volt desevrer,
Li codres muert hastivent
E li chevrefoil ensement.
Bele ami, si est de nus:
Ne vus sanz mei, ne mei sanz vus. (Chevrefoil, vv. 60-70)

A short and happy meeting takes place, sympathetically described by Marie.

The theme of Dous Amanz is a rather common one: a young man, in order to obtain the hand of a girl, has to carry her to the top of a mountain. Having reached the top he dies from exhaustion. The girl dies with him. There are no other obstacles to overcome, only this feat of strength. The girl is not married. The young man even is provided with a potion that would increase miraculously his strength and endurance. In spite of the girl's urging he is too vain to take the remedy. By the power of his love alone he attempts to achieve the feat. He is guilty of démesure. As in the case of the lady in Yonec love prevails over common sense. The ending of this lay is thus brought about, as Spitzer[15] puts it, by "la mort, conséquence du trop d'amour".

In the lay Le Fresne a woman wickedly comments upon the giving birth to twins by her neighbor that twins can only be fathered by two men. Soon the onus is on her when she does likewise. To cover her shame she disposes of one of the two girls by abandoning it in an ash tree outside

---

[15] Spitzer, op. cit., p. 45.

an abbey with only a ring and a silk cloth to indicate its noble birth. The child grows up to become a beautiful girl. A knight seeks her love and takes her to his castle. Eventually the knight is encouraged to take a wife of noble birth. He complies. The bride of his choice is Le Fraisne's twin sister. Le Fraisne, faithful and submissive, prepares the nuptial bed and places her silk cloth on it. The bride's mother recognizes it; the identities are revealed by the repentant mother. The next morning the marriage is dissolved by the archbishop. The knight can now marry Le Fresne, whose noble birth is now recognized.

Most noteworthy in this lay is the role of Le Fresne as a loving woman whose humility and devotion enable her to readily submit to a trying sacrifice. Chrétien paints such a woman in Enide. Love is redeemed through trial and suffering.

Another story of separation is found in Milun. The knight Milun engenders a son. His mistress, not being married, secretly sends the child to her faraway sister. Milun leaves the country. When he returns he finds her married. He sends her as a gift a swan which carries letters back and forth between them for twenty years. The son has grown up meanwhile, becomes a distinguished knight, meets his father, is challenged by him and unhorses him. The father is surprised and inquires:

> 'Amis', fet il, 'a mei entent!
> Pur amur Deu omnipotent,
> Di mei cument ad nun tun pere!
> Cum as tu nun? Ki est ta mere? (Milun, vv. 435-438)

The younger man answers:

> Cil li respunt: 'Jol vus dirai
> De mun pere, tant cum jeo n'sai.
> Jeo quid k'il est de Gales nez
> E si est Milun apelez. (Milun, vv. 439-442)

He continues to tell of his background. The recognition is a happy one. When they return to Wales together they find that Milun's mistress is now a widow. Long separated, the three are now happily united.

Eliduc is the last and longest of Marie's lays. It presents the interesting situation of a man between two women. Eliduc, a Breton knight, has fallen into disgrace with his king and leaves his wife and lands to go abroad where he serves another king with great distinction. The king's daughter admires him and declares him her love. This behavior is not in conformity with the courtly code, as Hoepffner observes.[16] Eliduc does not find the courage to reveal to the king's daughter that he is married because he loves her and is probably afraid that he might lose her by telling the truth, but his silence torments him, because he also wants to remain loyal to his wife.

De sa femme li remembra
E cum il li asseura
Que bone fei li portereit
E leaument se cuntendreit. (Eliduc, vv. 323-326)

Lazar[17] comments: "Ce motif de la fidelité conjugale est fort rare dans la littérature du XIIe siècle."

Kar a sa femme aveit premis
Ainz qu'il turnast de sun pais,
Que il n'amereit si li nun,
Ore est sis quors en grant prisun
Sa leaute voleit garder,
Mes ne s'en peot nient oster
Que il nen eimt la dameisele,
Guilliadun, que tant fu bele. (Eliduc, vv. 463-470)

---

[16]Hoepffner, op. cit., p. 99.

[17]Lazar, op. cit., p. 187.

Nevertheless, they carry on nicely, but without "foolishness", as Marie is sure to point out:

> Mes n'ot entre sus nule folie,
> Joliveté ne vileinie:
> De douneer e de parler
> E de lur beaus aveirs doner
> Esteit tute la druerie
> Par amur en lur cupainie. (Eliduc, vv. 575-580)

They have the blessing of the girl's father, the King, but Eliduc is called back to the service of his former lord. Guilliadun, the young girl, swoons, makes a scene. "If you don't take me along," she says, "I'll kill myself." Eliduc promises to come back, which he does. He carries her off across the sea. A great storm arises. The sailors blame their predicament on the wrath of God. One of them reproaches Eliduc for having another woman instead of his loyal spouse. To appease the Lord the sailor proposes to throw the wench into the sea:

> Femme leale espuse avez
> E sur cele autre en menez
> Cuntre Deu e cuntre la lei,
> Cuntre dreiture e cuntre fei.
> Lessez la nus geter en mer,
> Si poum sempres ariver. (Eliduc, vv. 835-840)

The enraged Eliduc calls him a "fiz a putain" and throws him overboard, but the damage is done: Guilliadun faints and is thought dead. Eliduc is disconsolate. He has her carried to a chapel and laid on a bed before the altar. He goes to see his wife, but he returns often. His wife investigates. Upon seeing the beautiful and lifeless damsel she understands. Guilliadun is revived. The wife's understanding is boundless. The girl tells her the whole story and comes to the not uncommon conclusion:

Mut est fole que humme creit. (Eliduc, v. 1084)

The wife, nevertheless, is happy. She decides on the spot to step aside and take the veil:

> Que vive estes grant joie en ai;
> Ensemble od mei vus merrai
> E a vostre mari vus rendrai.
> Del tut le voil quite clamer,
> E si ferai mun chef veler. (Eliduc, vv. 1098-1112)

So it happens. Eliduc and Guilliadun are married, and later both retire to the religious life.

The solution of this conflict is rather artificial. Lazar[18] writes: "Il faut bien le dire, en choisissant cette solution, la plus facile, Marie a escamoté le problème que posait le conflit entre fin' amors et amour conjugal." The reason for this is that Marie has little inclination for love casuistry per se. The problem situation in Eliduc is an interesting one. It is timeless. The psychology, up to the tempest scene, is realistically and sensitively analyzed. It is noteworthy that Marie does not deem this love a culpable one. Only the sailors do. She has a compassionate attitude. She is inclined to reward true love, even at the price of a contrived ending.

A study of the twelve lays allows the reader to draw certain conclusions as to Marie's conception of love, her moral judgment, her conformity to the ideas of amour courtois that were fashionable at Marie's time. It has been said that Marie was "le champion d'un amour sans règles."[19]

---

[18] Ibid., p. 189.

[19] J. Bédier, "Les Lais de Marie de France", Revue des Deux Mondes (1891), p. 835.

Marie does indeed not observe the conventions of amour courtois. There are no long supplications to gain the favor of a lady and usually no challenges and trials to become worthy of her. Love is spontaneous and it is mutual. Women take an active role in initiating a relationship. Their involvement is total. They suffer to an equal or even greater degree. Love is represented as a fatal power controlled with difficulty. "Es ist eine Welt passiven, zum Verzicht bereiten Menschentums und elegisch-träumerischer Stimmung, eine Welt ganz aus dem Blickwinkel einer Frau gesehen."[20] Love is never culpable. Marie condones adultery in the case of a mal-mariée. It is the insensitive and possessive husband who is deemed guilty and who deserves no better. The woman is the innocent victim of a forced marriage. J. Lods[21] concludes: "La seule morale de l'amour est l'harmonie des couples: les amours valent ce que valent les êtres qui les éprouvent." The morality of Marie's lays can be summed up with this statement.

Marie has little interest in love casuistry. The human element, the psychological factor, is dominant. Love, from the woman's point of view is often tragic, fraught with sacrifices and renunciations, but if it is constant and true it will prevail. Although there are very few authorial comments in Marie's works, her compassion and insight and, above all, her humanity free of artifice are well evident in her plots and characters.

---

[20] P. Schürr, "Komposition und Symbolik in den Lays der Marie de France", Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie L (1930), p. 566.

[21] J. Lods (ed.), Les Lais de Marie de France (C.F.M.A. 87; Paris: Champion, 1959), p. XXVI.

PART II. CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

A NOTE ON CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES AND THE LITERATURE OF HIS TIME

In Chrétien de Troyes French medieval literature finds its first great homme de lettres. He is an author who is conscious of his genius and who takes care to make known the authorship of his works to posterity by naming himself in the introductions to his Cligès and his Chevalier de la Charrette.

Very few biographical data are available on Chrétien. It is generally accepted that he wrote during the period 1165-1190 and that he was associated with the court of Champagne at Troyes. Most of the information that we have of Chrétien is based on comments and evidence gleaned from his works.

His literary training included a rather thorough knowledge of the Ancients, especially Ovid, whom he translated. Several of his earlier works that he mentions in his introductions are lost. Chrétien was well acquainted with the literature of his time, as a reading of his works will show. His main interest lies in the analysis and the portrayal of love. The four romances treated in our study give a clear picture of Chrétien's ideas on the subject.

In the Tristan legend the love theme is treated with a pathos hitherto unknown in medieval literature. Love is shown as a powerful and tragic passion. In the lays of Marie de France love is also experienced as a frequent source of suffering, but true love, purified and mellowed

by the adversities of fate and circumstance, eventually overcomes all obstacles and leads to a permanent bond, often at the price of a rather contrived ending.

Such is the treatment of the theme of love as Chrétien must have found it in the best-known works of literature of his time.

CHAPTER I

EREC ET ENIDE

At the beginning of his first romance Chrétien proposes to tell "un conte d'aventure", the story of Erec the son of Lac, a story which those who earn a living by telling stories are accustomed to mutilate and spoil in the presence of kings and counts. These stories, probably of Celtic origin, are of little interest in an analysis of the sentimental content of Chrétien's romance. The author is to be judged not as a finder but as a user of the common stock of ideas. The sentimental nature of the work, specifically the outlook on love, depends largely upon the fashion of the time and the author's own disposition.

Erec et Enide is Chrétien's first romance. It is not yet as clearly a courtly romance as his later works. Erec is not the perfect courtly hero, and the conventions of amour courtois are not strictly observed. Moreover, the theme of this romance is not very obvious and thus has given rise to varying interpretations by modern scholars. According to some medievalists it is the exaltation of married love, a novel one indeed in the courtly circles of the twelfth century when Andreas Capellanus under the same patroness as Chrétien theorizes: "Amorem non posse suas inter duos conjugales extendere vires."[1] That

---

[1] Andreas Capellanus, De Arte honeste amandi (ed. S. Battaglia, Rome: Perella, 1947), p. 385.

Chrétien does not subscribe to this rule is beyond argument. Gaston Paris[2] and Stefan Hofer[3] interpret the romance as an illustration of courtly ideology, a conflict of the exigencies of service d'amour and chevalerie. Bezzola[4] sees a conflict between love and adventure and deemphasizes the question of married love. In order to draw some concrete conclusions as to the theme of Erec et Enide, the "sens" that Chrétien had intented for his work, a dose reading of the text is in order. Chrétien's ideas of amour courtois at the beginning of his literary development can thus be traced.

King Arthur has assembled his splendid court at Caradigan. He decides to revive an ancient custom, the hunt of the White Stag. He who would bring it down would have the right to kiss the prettiest lady at court. Despite warnings that this might result in quarrels and jealousies the King remains steadfast. The next morning the hunt is in full progress. The Queen also mounts her horse, accompanied by a lady in waiting, but they stay in the rear, listening to horns and hounds drifting away in the distance. They are joined by a handsome young knight, Erec, who belongs to the Round Table. He is not interested in the hunt. He has no lady in whose honor he might try to kill the White Stag. He is luxuriously dressed, but he carries no arms except his sword. The group notices a strange party that is coming their way: a knight with a noble lady, preceded by a dwarf carrying in his hand a knotted scourge.

---

[2]Gaston Paris, Journal des Savants, 1902.

[3]Stefan Hofer, Chrétien de Troyes (Graz-Köln:Böhlau, 1954).

[4]Reto R. Bezzola, Le Sens de l'aventure et de l'amour (Paris:La Jeune Parque, 1947).

The Queen sends her lady toward the knight to bid him to come to her. But the dwarf prevents her, striking her in the face. The Queen then sends Erec who is also struck by the insolent dwarf. Erec is insufficiently armed to immediately reply to this insult by challenging the haughty knight who fails to intervene. Erec decides to follow the unknown knight. The Queen persuades King Arthur, who had taken the Stag, to postpone the ceremony of the Kiss until the return of Erec. Erec follows the knight and arrives in a town where much festivity is going on. A combat would be taking place the next day, an old custom, and the prize would be a fine sparrowhawk. Whoever wishes to gain the hawk must have a mistress who is fair, prudent and courteous. And if there be a knight so bold as to wish to defend the worth and the name of the fairest in his eyes, he will cause his mistress to step forward and lift the hawk from the perch, if no one dares to intervene. This Erec learns from an old vavasor who has bid him welcome and offered him lodging in his house. He also learns that the knight he is pursuing is considered to be a sure winner.

The vavasor has a daughter. Erec notices her beauty in spite of her tattered attire. She is described in glowing detail. Her golden tresses are incomparably more beautiful than those of Iseut the Fair (vv. 424-425). Her complexion, her forehead, her face, her eyes are mentioned. God never formed better nose, mouth and eyes (vv. 435-436).

Que diroie de sa biauté?
Ce fu ele por verité
Qui fu fete por esgarder,

Qu'an se poest an li mirer
Ausi com an un mireor. (vv. 437-441)[5]

At the sight of the strange knight she draws back a little and blushes in her modesty. Then she takes care of his horse and shows him his lodging. After supper Erec asks the host why his beautiful daughter is so poorly and unsuitably attired. He learns that he had fallen on meager days, that he could well have given her to marry a noble, but that he is waiting for yet some better opportunity, for she is his delight and joy. Erec asks the vavasor to give him arms and to give him his daughter in whose behalf he will strive for the hawk. He reveals himself as the son of a rich and powerful king and he promises that he would take her with him to his country if he were victorious and make her a queen. The vavasor gladly gives him the arms as well as the daughter:

Tenez, fet il, je la vos doing. (v. 678)

As is the custom of the time, the girl is not even asked, but she is happy nevertheless, not for any apparent sentimental reasons, but

por ce que preuz ert et cortois,
et bien savoit qu'il seroit rois
et ele meisme encore
riche reine coronee. (vv. 687-690)

Although Erec is well aware of her beauty, there are no descriptions of incipient passion, no trace of Amor's arrows, as would be expected in a courtly romance. Yet, when the combat is under way and the combatants are exhausted the weeping and praying girl is his inspiration:

---

[5]Quotations from the text are taken from the edition by Mario Roques: Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre (Paris:Champion, 1952), vol. III.

Erec regarde vers s'amie,
qui molt dolcemant por lui prie
tot maintenant qu'il l'ot veue,
se li est sa force creue;
por s'amor et por sa biauté
a reprise molt grant fierté. (vv. 907-912)

Love and beauty as an inspiration to valor are courtly traits. The inspiration of the hero in the chansons de geste were of a different nature. But lest the audience (or the reader) forget what the fight is all about, namely vengeance for an insult, the author continues immediately:

Remanbre li de la reine,
qu'il avoit dit an la gaudine
que il sa honte vangeroit
ou il ancore la crestroit. (vv. 913-916)

The knight, now identified as Yder, is defeated by Erec. Even Tristan, when he slew the fierce Morholt, caused no such rejoicing as Erec caused here (vv. 1241-1244).[6] He leaves with his fiancee to join Arthur's Court. The more he looks at her the more she pleases him:

Quant plus l'esgarde et plus li plest. (v. 1467)

His gaze is described in graphic detail:

Molt remire son chief le blont,
ses ialz rianz et son cler front,
le nes et la face et la boche,
don granz dolcors au cuer li toche.
Tot remire jusqu'a la hanche,
le manton et la gorge blanche,
flans et costez et braz et mains. (vv. 1471-1477)

---

6 Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), p. 207. Lazar denies that Chrétien takes position against the Tristan in Erec et Enide, but repeated depreciating references do occur in the text. See also Hofer's comparisons, op. cit., pp. 77-86.

She looks him over likewise "as if they were in competition" (Cf. v. 1481). They are a perfect match, states Chrétien, in courtesy, beauty and gentleness; they are alike in quality, manner and customs. One might conclude that they are well suited for a mariage de raison. But then Chrétien does add that their sentiments, too, are much alike, and that they "steal each other's heart" (li uns a l'autre son cuer anble; v. 1494). Her beauty is much admired at Arthur's Court. The King bestows the kiss upon her according to the custom of the White Stag. Erec states that he wants to marry her for her beauty and for her lineage. Here ends the first part of the story.

Ici fenist li premiers vers. (v. 1796)

It must be noted that up to this point Erec's acquisition of a lady is more or less incidental. He has fulfilled his mission of vindicating an insult. It is for this reason that he has done battle. The girl, as yet unnamed, is a prize that he has yet to earn for her own sake.

The second part of the story opens with the marriage. A panoply of knights dazzles the court. The bride's name is now made known: Enide. She has lost her anonymity and has become a lady through her marriage. She is no longer merely thedaughter of a poor nobleman. She acquires her own identity within society. Concerning the wedding night Chrétien again strikes out at Iseult: No Brangien takes the place of Enide in the nuptial bed (vv. 2021-2023). Their passion is mutual and so is their enjoyment, rather freely described, with a minimum of discretion. Lest there be any doubt Chrétien reports:

Encois qu'ele se relevast,
ot perdu le non de pucele;
au matin fu dame novele. (vv. 2052-2054)

Erec takes his new-made dame to his own country. His love for her is described in more glowing terms than before the wedding. His attention is devoted to her entirely. He makes of her his mistress and his sweetheart:

A sa fame volt dosnoier,
si an fist s'amie et sa drue. (vv. 2434-2436)

He is no longer interested in tournaments. The other knights consider it a great pity and misfortune that Erec is so much taken by love (de ce que trop l'amoit assez; v. 2441) and that he no longer wishes to bear arms (quant armes porter ne voloit tex ber com il estre soloit: vv. 2457-2458). His peers regret his <u>recreantise</u>:

Tant fu blasmez de totes genz,
de chevaliers et de sergenz,
qu'Enyde l'oi antre dire
que recreant aloit ses sire
d'armes et de chevalerie:
molt avoit changiee sa vie. (vv. 2459-2464)

Enide suffers greatly from these murmurs at court. She rightly considers herself the cause of Erec's inattention to his knightly duties. One morning when they lie in bed, Erec still (or again) asleep, she laments audibly the situation:

Lasse, fet ele, con mar fui!
de mon pais que ving ca querre?
Bien me doit essorbir la terre,
quant toz li miaudres chevaliers,
li plus hardiz et li plus fiers,
qui onques fust ne cuens ne rois,
li plus leax, li plus cortois,
a del tot an tot relanquie
par moi tote chevalerie.
Dons l'ai ge honi tot por voir;
ne volsisse por nul avoir. (vv. 2492-2502)

Her exclamation "Con mar fus!" (v. 2503) is translated by Frappier[7] with these words: "Ami, quel dommage ce fut pour toi!" Erec is awakened by her lamentations. He questions her. She is at first evasive, but then she tells him of his reputation of a recreant, her guilt of being the cause, and his need to right the situation:

> Molt me poise, quant l'an dit,
> et por ce m'an poise encor plus
> qu'il m'an metent le blasme sus;
> blasmee an sui, ce poise moi,
> et dient tuit reison por coi,
> car si vos ai lacie et pris
> que vos an perdez vostre pris,
> ne ne querrez a el antandre.
> Or vos an estuet consoil prandre,
> que vos puissiez ce blasme estaindre
> et vostre premier los ataindre. (vv. 2554-2564)

Erec does not take issue with these grave accusations:

> Dame, fet il, droit an eustes,
> et cil qui m'an blasment on droit. (vv. 2572-2573)

He orders his wife to put on her best dress, puts on a fine suit of armor himself, orders two horses to be readied and prepares to leave with no entourage save his wife. He declines all assistance from his father, the king, asking only that, should he die and Enide return widowed, he take good care of her. He then leaves:

> Erec s'an va, sa fame an moinne,
> ne set ou, mes en avanture. (vv. 2762-2763)

The motivation for Erec's behavior has been the topic of much scholarly discussion. The conclusions have been all but clear. The basic causes of the conflict are generally agreed upon: Erec transgresses the courtly code by not fullfilling his role as a knight. He is guilty of recreantise. A perfect knight has no right to give up the life of chivalry

---

[7]Jean Frappier, Chrétien de Troyes (Paris:Hatier-Boivin, 1957), p. 86.

and adventure. His lady is to inspire him to deeds of prowess and courage. Erec, in being immune to such inspiration, is culpable. Enide likewise, unable to generate this inspiration, is degraded in her social standing. But is she guilty? There is nothing within her power to change the situation. He has too easily acquired her and thus considers her primarily his amie rather than his dame. It is understandable then that she laments ever having left her country (vv. 2492-2493). Yet, immediately after having spoken the fateful words she regrets them, blaming herself for excessive pride. The pride of Erec is obviously hurt by her remarks. Enide has spoken the truth, and Erec admits it (vv. 2572-2573). Meyer Lubke[8] suggests that the station of woman in Erec is still the more subordinated one of the chansons de geste. Foerster[9] emphasizes the disappointment of Erec who sees himself accused of recreantise by the woman whom he has elevated to high social position and who now doubts his knighthood. Erec apparently questions the sincerity of his wife's love. But, as E. S. Sheldon puts the question in his probing article: "Why does Chrétien's Erec treat Enide so harshly?".[10] His conclusions are that Erec wants to test Enide's love and at the same time wants to prove to her that the quality of his chivalry is unchanged. Indeed, as Lazar affirms,[11] neither Erec nor Enide is being punished. It is the aim of Chrétien to

---

[8]Meyer Lübke, "Chrestien von Troyes Erec und Enide", Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literature, XLIV (1917): 129-188.

[9]Wendelin Foerster, Kristian von Troyes. Wörterbuch zu seinen sämtlichen Werken (Halle:Niemeyer, 1914), Introduction, p. XLII.

[10]E. S. Sheldon,"Why does Chrétien's Erec treat Enide so harshly?", Romanic Review V (1914): 155ff.

[11]Lazar, op. cit., p. 203.

exalt the qualities of Enide. He will hold her up to his courtly audience not as the highborn lady of the Provencal fashion but as a very human and loving wife, not as the simple daughter of the simple vavasor, who, by beauty and circumstance, has reached high social status, but as a person of courage, intelligence and moral conviction. Chrétien intends to show that with such a woman it is possible to engage not only in the luxuries of the castle but also in the vicissitudes of aventure and of life. If the proposition is an unusual one in the twelfth century, it nevertheless supplies Chrétien with a very interesting matiere.

The structure itself of this romance is an unusual one. As Hofer[12] puts it:

> Während in allen anderen Romanen und Erzählungen die aus dem Minnedienst oder der Werbung um eine edle Frau resultierenden Abenteuer vor der Hochzeit des Paares stattfinden, muß Chrétien, der seinen Helden noch einmal hinausführt, darauf bedacht sein, diese Ausfahrt, die doch jetzt etwas verspätet erscheint, aus der höfischen Auffassung vom Wesen der Liebe zu begründen.

In other words, the "happy ending" is at the beginning of Erec et Enide, and the author sets out to come to grips with the problems that follow. This is out of the ordinary in medieval romances (and in modern ones).

Erec leaves with Enide in search of adventure. He does not explain his motives. He forbids her to warn him of possible danger. He wants to brave the challenges that may (and surely will) arise without any help:

> Et gardez ne soiez tant ose
> que, se vos veez nule chose,
> ne me dites ne ce ne quoi;
> tenez vos de parler a moi,
> se ge ne vos aresne avant. (vv. 2765-2769)

---

[12] Hofer, op. cit. p. 69.

Erec has to be self-sufficient. He cannot accept any help from the lady in whose company he has forgotten chevalerie. He has to fight independently to restore his status as a knight and thus hers as his dame before they can both regain ther place in courtly society. The adventures that follow are increasingly difficult. Of littler importance in themselves they are the agents, the steps of the hero to his perfection as a knight.

Erec defeats in combat three robber knights, then five. Enide breaks the silence each time to warn him of the approaching adversaries. Erec reprimands her severely. She suffers in silence. She is leading the eight horses gained in combat. When they have to spend the night in the open, Erec tells her to sleep. He will keep watch.[13] Enide's handling of the next day's challenge shows that she is not only devoted but also capable of craft and imagination. When the count Gaolain, who has invited them to enjoy his hospitality, casts his eyes desirously upon Enide and threatens her that he would have her husband killed lest she accede to his wishes, she at first rejects his improper advances. The count threatens force, accuses her of excessive pride:

> Ne me deigneriez amer,
> dame? fet il: trop estes fiere.
> Par losange ne par proiere,
> ne feroiez rien que je vuelle?
> Bien est voirs que fame s'orguelle,
> quant l'an plus la prie e losange;
> mes qui la honist et leidange,
> cil la trueve meillor sovant. (vv. 3338-3345)

The sentiment expressed is an extremely anti-courtly one and one

---

[13] In the German version by Hartmannn von Aue Erec orders Enide to keep watch. Chrétien's hero is less rude. It could therefore be said that the French version is "courtlier", but the argument is not a strong one.

that must have sounded very strange to the ears of an audience acquainted with the lyrics of the troubadours.[14] Enide very quickly calms the irate suitor by convincing him that it would be wiser to have Erec overpowered in the morning upon arising and stage her abduction, which would free her from the suspicion of complicity. She feigns dissatisfaction with her life with Erec and makes bold promises, reminiscent of troubadour erotic imagery:

> Trop ai menee ceste vie,
> je n'aim mie la conpaignie
> mon seignor, ja n'an quier mantir.
> Je vos voldroie ja santir
> an un lit certes nu a nu. (vv. 3387-3390)

The next morning the count's hopes are dashed. The couple has left before dawn.

Their next encounter is the valiant figure of Guivret le Petit. As he charges down from his high tower on his great steed, crushing the stones beneath his hoofs, gleaming sparks flying in all directions (Cf. vv. 3695-3700). Enide is again torn between the risks of remaining silent and the risk of displeasing Erec for warning him. She speaks to him. Erec's response is now much attenuated. He threatens her, but

> mes n'a talant que mal li face,
> qu'il aparcoit etconuist bien
> qu'ele l'ainme sor tote rien,
> et il li tant que plus ne puet. (vv. 3752-3755)

This appears to be a turning point in their relationship. Erec is now certain of her love, and he loves her "que plus ne puet". His

---

[14] Norman Susskind, "Love and Laughter in the Roman Courtois.", French Review XXXVII (1964), p. 654. Susskind comments on this passage: Perhaps the best proof that the Gallic spirit was never tamed by the courtly discipline is the existence of such frankly anti-feminine lines as these, inserted by Chrétien as a personal comment on the happenings in Erec et Enide.

mission of proving himself as the valiant knight worthy of her is however not yet accomplished. Having overcome Guivret, gained his lasting friendship and having his wounds cared for at Arthur's Court, Erec finds new adventure. He delivers a maiden's lover from the cruel treatment of two barbarous giant knights, an altogether unselfish feat. Like other heroes of Chrétien he turns from battles fought in his own interest to the rescue of some maiden in distress until, finally, he is liberated from his own position of self-indulgence. This effort leaves him in such an exhausted state that he swoons and falls, as if lifeless, from his horse. Enide is disconsolate and wishes for Death to come and take her, too. She judges herself guilty of his death for having killed him by her speech. She blames herself for all the mishap. Then she is ready to commit suicide, drawing Erec's sword. But she is saved by a count who is attracted by her loud outcry. The count inquires as to her situation. He asks whether she was the knight's wife or his ladylove. The distinction is quite clear in twelfth century courtly society. Her reply is the key statement of the romance:

L'un et l'autre, fe ele, sire. (v. 4651)

The count comforts her and informs her forthwith that he will take her as his wife and make her a countess. Amor courtois plays no rôle in this encounter. Cupid with his arrows is far removed from the scene. As Foster Guyer[15] comments:

> None of these love symptoms are shown by any of those who are attracted by Enide's beauty. There is never a thought of love service. Never is any male afraid or even hesitant about expressing his love or his desire. The males, with the exception of Erec, are, in fact, brutal. Woman has not yet been put on a pedestal to be worshipped and obeyed, even in a romance.

---

[15] Foster Guyer, Romance in the Making (New York: Vanni, 1954), p. 74.

The count, named Oringle de Limors, takes her to his castle, where Erec's body is laid out in the great hall. The count has the marriage ceremony performed perforce. (car ele molt le refusa; v. 4733). He makes her sit down, attempts to persuade her to consider the good fortune that has befallen her and urges her to eat. As she remains adamant he strikes her in the face. The barons present reproach him for this, but he replies:

> Teisiez vos an tuit! fet li cuens;
> la dame est moie et je sui suens,
> si ferai de li mon pleisir. (vv. 4799-4801)

"La dame est moie." is the attitude of the jungle rather than of courtoisie; "et je sui suens" can at best be considered feeble lip service to the latter. "Si ferai de li mon pleisir." attests to his primitive crudeness. Would a Lancelot have spoken thus of Guenièvre? But the first stirrings of woman's liberation in literature manifest themselves when she hurls her defiance at him. He strikes her again. In the din and the commotion Erec recovers from his swoon, draws his sword and without delay beats the count's brains out. The knights, believing that it is the devil who has made his way among them there, flee in panic:

> Fuiez! Fuiez! Veez le mort! (v. 4840)

Erec finds his horse and with Enide on the horse with him he rides through the open town gate. What follows is a tender scene of reconsiliation:

> Et Erec, qui su fame an porte,
> l'acole et beise e reconforte;
> antre ses braz contre son cuer
> l'estraint, et dit: Ma dolce suer,
> bien vos ai de tot essaiee.
> Or ne soiez plus esmaiee,
> c'or vos aim plua qu'ainz mes ne fis,
> et je resui certains et fis

que vos m'amez parfitemant.
Or vol estre d'or en avant,
ausi con j'estoie devant,
tot a vostre comandemant;
et se vos rien m'avez mesdit,
je le vos pardoing tot et quit
del forfet et de la parole.
Adons la rebeise et acole. (vv. 4879-4896)

He calls her "ma dolce suer". He is now certain of her feelings (v. 4882). His statement:

Or vol estre d'or en avant,
ausi con j'estoie devant
tot a vostre comandemant. (vv. 4888-4890)

has been interpreted by Bezzola and Hofer as a concession to Provençal theories. In the total context of their relationship, however, such a submission of the willful Erec to his "douce amie" would seem rather unlikely. Rather, it appears, Erec relinquishes his stern master role and desires at last a return to the more blissful status quo ante (ausi con j'estoie devant; v. 4889). He forgives her for the "forfet" and "la parole". The "forfet" is her fault of having lent an ear to his detractors, la "parole" her audacity of having spoken to him about it. Mario Roques[16] comments:

> La scène est charmante de jeunesse et de tendresse. Elle apporte aussi un trait de psychologie important. Erec pardonne à Enide " la parole", dont le souvenir n'a pas cessé de la hanter jusque-là et pour laquelle il voulu l'éprouver. Le sécret de son attitude étrange et cruelle est là, dans cette "parole", dont la tristesse pouvait comporter le désenchantement d'un doute inavoué sur une valeur jusque-là si certaine.

The romance has not yet come to an end, as one might believe. Gustave Cohen comments: "Nous verrions volontiers finir ici le roman....

---

[16] Roques, op. cit., Introduction, p. XIV.

Le moyen âge est un grand enfant qui demande toujours et puis après?".[17] This is a superficial appreciation of Chrétien's art. Chrétien's boast of "moult bele conjointure" (v. 14) calls for a more accomplished denouement, a crowning finale, an ending that will reveal clearly to the courtly audience the "sen" of the "estoire".

Erec and Enide are still "en aventure". Guivret le Petit has set out for Limors with many warriors to claim the corpse of Erec and to free Enide. They meet in the darkness of night and, not recognizing each other, Guivret unhorses the still weakened Erec. Enide seizes Guivret's horse's reins and scolds him for attacking a wounded and exhausted man. She appeals to his generosity and pride. Guivret, impressed by her courage and loyalty, commends her for it. Their identities are revealed. Erec's wounds are carefully tended to by Guivret's sisters in one of his nearby castles. Soon he is strong and well, cured and recovered. Enide is very happy. Her paleness disappears, and she again radiates beauty. All is well. The marital union is restored in all respects:

> Ansanble jurent an un lit,
> et li uns l'autre acole et beise:
> riens nule n'est qui tant lor pleise.
> Tant ont eu mal et ennui,
> il por li et ele por lui,
> c'or ont feite lor penitance.
> Li uns ancontre l'autre tance
> comant il li puise pleisir:
> del sorplus me doi bien teisir. (vv. 5200-5208)

As usual, Chrétien drops the bed curtain and semi-discreetly leaves the rest to the imagination of the audience. He concludes with psychological insight:

---

[17] Gustave Cohen, Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre (Paris:Boivin, 1931), p. 151.

Or ont lor dolor obliee
et lor grant amor afermee,
que petit meslor an sovient. (5209-5211)

The romance could end at this point. Conjugal harmony has been restored. Yet, the situation is not the same as at the beginning. It is not a return to recreantise. Erec has liberated himself from this condition, and he sets out to prove it in the Mabonagrain episode, the crowning achievement of his quest for his proper role in life and society.

Despite dire warnings Erec penetrates into the mysterious, beautiful and yet terrifying garden on King Evrain's island, a place that is hermetically sealed off by an invisible wall of air. Marvelous plants and birds abound, but there is also a row of stakes topped with helmets and skulls underneath. Only one stake is vacant. An ivory horn is hung on it. Erec finds a lady seated on a silver couch. As he draws near her he is challenged by her knight and defeats him in an arduous duel. Mabonagrain, the knight, then reveals the secret of his condition: the lady had exacted from him the promise to stay with her in the garden and to defend it against any intruder. Only defeat would free him. His rhetorical question:

Qui veheroit neant s'amie? (v. 6008)

may well betray a sly reference of Chrétien to the exaggerations of the service d'amour.[18] Chivalry must be inspired. It cannot be exacted. Mabonagrain finds relief in defeat. By defeating the captive knight Erec overcomes the former likeness of himself; he too had lost contact with the

---

[18] Cf., Alfred Adler, "Sovereignty as the Principle of Unity in Chrétien's Erec. PMLA 60 (1945): 917-36.

world around him, and he had led a life of useless inactivity. By freeing Mabonagrain he has broken through to reality. Like Mabonagrain Erec is free now to take his place in courtly society. This is symbolically emphasized when he blows the ivory horn. The sound attracts people from all directions. Erec is in their midst. He has established contact with the world around him. The joy over the rectified situation is complete. Only the damsel on the silver couch is saddened by the liberation of her lover. Enide consoles her and finds out that they are cousins. Enide refers to Erec, her husband, with great love and admiration:

> Bele cosine, il m'espousa,
> si que mes peres bien le sot
> et ma mere qui joie en ot.
> Tuit le sorent et lie an furent
> nostre parant, si com il durent;
> liez an fu meismes li cuens,
> car il est chevaliers si buens
> qu'an ne porroit meillor trover;
> ne n'est or pas a esprover.
> de bonte ne de vaselage:
> ne set l'an tel de son aage,
> ne cuit que ses parauz soit nus.
> Il n'ainme molt, et je lui plus,
> tant qu'amors ne puet estre graindre.
> Onques ancor ne me soi faindre
> de lui amer, ne je ne doi:
> voir, mes sires est filz de roi,
> et si me prist et povre et nue;
> par lui m'est tex enors creue
> qu'ainz a nule desconseilliee
> ne fu si granz apareilliee. (vv. 6242-6262)

She speaks of herself as hving been a poor and helpless girl who has come to honor through him. This is quite in contrast to the concept of the dame who bestows modest favors upon a supine aspirant. She also speaks freely of their mutual love.

Erec and Enide return to the Court of Arthur. When his father, King Lac, dies, the couple is crowned in a great ceremony at Nantes. Their

social rehabilitation is complete.

The basic theme of this first romance of Chrétien is the conflict of love and adventure. Erec, as the other heroes of Chrétien, is put to the task of bringing these two essential chivalric virtues into proper balance. What is new in French courtly literature is the reconciliation of love and marriage in the face of Provençal influence represented in the North by Andreas Capellanus (Amorem non posse suas inter duos cojugales extendere vires) and in opposition to the spirit of the Tristan legend. Chrétien poses the question whether love in marriage is possible and proceeds to solve the conflict and answer the question in the affirmative.

Erec et Enide is not yet a courtly romance in the manner of Chrétien's later works. Some aspects of love and marriage are treated in the vein of the chansons de geste, e.g., Erec's acquisition of Enide. The vavasor gives away his daughter: Tenez, fet il, je la vos doing. (v. 678) Erec's brusque behavior in many instances is uncourtly. Enide does not occupy the pedestal of a courtly lady. The description of love is not on a level with that of a courtly romance. There is no detailed analysis of l'amour naissant, of love as an affliction with its attendant flights of joy and despair. In this respect the relationship between Cligès and Fénice will be quite different. Absent is also the confidente, sounding board for the courtly heroine's sentiments.

Erec et Enide is on the other hand not devoid of courtly traits. Erec's courage is inspired by love. The setting of the romance is courtly. A brilliant society given to material luxury, games and festivities, where feminine beauty is celebrated, is described at length. The social role of

the couple, not of the knight alone, within this society is of prime importance and is amplified in the "Joie de la Cour" episode. The basic conflict in this romance is not, as in the chansons de geste, circumstancial; it is psychological. As is stated by Mario Roques:[19]

> L'intérêt du drame d'Erec est cependant surtout psychologique: l'incertitude et l'inquiétude déchirante de chacun des amants-époux sur la pensée et sur l'amour de l'autre en sont la source et en nourrissent les épisodes, et c'est le retour à l'estime et a la confiance réciproques qui le clôt dans un amour sans crainte et sans mélange.

In contradiction to the prevailing literary mode Chrétien establishes his heroine as both fame and amie and thereby announces the courtly ideology of his future romances.

---

[19] Roques, loc. cit.

CHAPTER II

CLIGÈS

The sentimental content of Chrétien's second romance shows a much greater concern of the author for psychological analysis and amour courtois theory. Cligès appears to be an attempt of Chrétien to display his knowledge of the subject and, indeed, in the second part of the romance, to launch a polemic against the Tristan. Cligès, according to Jean Frappier, could have the heading: Pour en finir avec Tristan et Iseut. The manner in which Chrétien proceeds to meet this self-imposed challenge shows more clearly than in any of his other works his skill and his limitations.

The romance clearly consists of two parts. The first part tells the story of Alexander and Soredamors and the second that of Cligès, their son, and Fénice. Both are case histories of love ending in marriage, but the situations and conditions are quite different. Thus all the themes of amour courtois can be brought into play.

The plot begins with an emperor, powerful in wealth and honor, who rules over Greece and Constantinople and who has two sons, Alexander, the elder, and Alis. Alexander wants to gain kinghthood and glory at the court of Arthur. Therefore he sets sail to England. He is accompanied by twelve men. King Arthur takes a liking to the young Greek and invites him to go

---

[1] Jean Frappier, Le roman breton, Chrétien de Troyes. Cligès (Paris:Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1951), p. 26.

with him and the court to Britanny. Queen Guenièvre is on the royal boat and also Arthur's beautiful niece Soredamors of whom the poet tells us:[2]

Qui destaigneuse estoit d'amors:
Soredamors
Onques n'avoit oi parler
D'ome qu'ele deignast amer,
Tant eust biaute, ne proesce,
Ne seigneorie, ne hautesce.
Et ne por quant la dameisele
Estoit tant avenanz et bele
Que bien deust d'amors aprandre,
Se li pleust a ce antandre. (vv. 439-448)

As Marie de France had already illustrated in her lays, not to love is to offend destiny and Amor. This is one of the tenets of amour courtois. The offender will be punished for her pride and is made to suffer:

Or la fera Amors dolante,
Et molt se cuide bien vangier
Del grant orguel et del dangier
Qu'ele li a toz jorz mene.
Bien a Amors droit assene:
El cuer l'a de son dart ferue.
Sovant palist, sovant tressue,
Et maugre suen amer l'estuet. (vv. 450-457)

According to the troubadours love shows the symptoms of an illness. This idea, not brought out in Erec et Enide, is emphasized in Cligès and described in great detail. Soredamors has to love in spite of herself (maugre suen, v. 457). She is astonished at her own passion and engages in a long introspective monologue. Chrétien is no longer content with listing symptoms. The analysis of her sentiments is minute and carried out in scholastic fashion. She vacillates between blaming her eyes and

---

[2]Quotations are taken from the edition of A. Micha, Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes. Cligès (Paris:Champion, 1957).

her heart as the seat of her vexation and remains in a state of helpless confusion:

> Une ore aimme, et autre het.
> Tant se dote qu'ele ne set
> Le quel li vaille mialz a prandre.
> Vers amors se cuide desfandre,
> Mes ne li a mestier desfanse. (vv. 517-521)

Chrétien quite clearly is painting the picture of a young girl in love. Alexander fares no better than Soredamors. The Queen becomes aware of their condition:

> La reine garde s'an prant,
> Qui l'un et l'autre voit sovant
> Descolorer et anpalir;
> Ne set don ce puet avenir. (vv. 533-536)

They sigh and they grow pale. Amor's dart takes its effect. They are plagued by sleeplessness, anguish and trembling. Chrétien introduces another point of Provençal doctrine: silent suffering is a necessary condition for the aspiring lover:

> Alixandres aimme et desirre
> Celi qui por s'amor sopire,
> Mes il ne set ne ne savra
> De si que maint mal en avra
> Et maint enui por li soffert. (vv. 567-571)

He does not dare to speak to her. Soredamors herself is no Belyssante, not one of the more resolute dames of a ruder past, who took little care to conceal their desire. Refined courtly breeding prevents it:

> S'ele osast vers lui desreanier
> Le droit que ele i cuide avoir,
> Volantiers li feist savoir;
> Mes ele n'ose ne ne doit. (vv. 576-579)

The theories of amour courtois are expounded in long observations in the self-analyses of Soredamors and Alexander. Love is caused by beauty.

Chrétien uses the motive of Amor's darts that penetrate the eyes without injuring them, but strike a wound to the heart. This motive is generally ascribed to Ovid. The eye is the gate to the heart. It is also, in a reversible sense, the mirror of the heart. The eye is thus quite innocent in itself.[3] In one of his long monologues Alexander explains:

> De ce sai ge bien reison randre:
> Li lalz n'a soin de rien antandre,
> Ne rien ne puet feire a mul fuer,
> Mes c'est li mereors an cure,
> Et par ce mireor trespasse,
> si qu'il ne blesce ne ne quasse,
> Le san don li cuers est espris. (vv. 701-707)

The same motive is extensively used by the troubadours. Bernart de Ventadour describes his falling in love:

> Anc non aqui de me poder
> ni no fui meus de l'or'en sai
> que.m laisset en sos olhz vezer
> en un miralh que mout me plai.
> miralhs, pus me mirei en te,
> m'an mort li sospir de preon,
> c'aissi.m perdei com perdet se
> lo bels Narcisus en la fon.
> (Bernart de Ventadour XLIII, 17-24)

Northern amour courtois ideology has adopted this motive from Provençal doctrine: the suddenness of the inception of love which bares man of his willpower; the look into the eyes of the lady as a mystical experience; the mirror of the lady's eyes, which attracts him irresistibly and in which he finds himself, for it is the mirror of her heart.

Chrétien is at variance with the troubadours, however, in his position that the pangs of love should not be a permanent state. If they

---

[3] An excellent discussion of this motive is to be found in the work of Herbert Kolb, Der Begriff der Minne (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1958), pp. 18-38.

last too long they can be a nuisance:

> Et cuident, por ce qu'il lor plest
> Ce dont amors acroist et nest,
> Qu'aidier lor doie, si lor nuist. (vv. 587-589)

This negative aspect is original with Chrétien and contrary to Provençal doctrine. It will logically lead to the key statement of Cligès:

> Qui a le cuer, si eit le cors. (v. 3123)

Soredamors tries to remove the dart of Amor, yet she cannot but feel a certain pleasure in spite of her anguish. Chrétien uses the metaphor of the warm bath which brings comfort and discomfort at the same time:

> Amors li a chaufe un baing
> Qui molt l'eschaufe et molt li nuist.
> Or li est bon, et or li nuist,
> Or le vialt, et or le refuse. (vv. 464-467)

She calls Amor therefore a "felon" who plays tricks on her:

> Je cudoie que il eust
> En Amor rien qui boen ne fust,
> Mes je l'ai molt felon trove.
> Nel set qui ne l'a esprove,
> De quex jeus Amors s'antremet. (vv. 661-665)

The remedia amoris can only be achieved by the one who caused it, i.e. either Amor or the lover, otherwise it is incurable. Soredamors is aware of this:

> Je sant le mien mal si grevain,
> Que ja n'an avrai garison
> Par mecine, ne par poison,
> Ne par herbe, ne par racine. (vv. 638-641)

Marie de France in her lay Guigemar states almost the same lines:

> Ja mais n'aies tu medecine!
> Ne par herbe ne par racine,
> ne par mire ne par poisun
> n'avras tu ja mes guarisun.
>
> Guigemar, vv. 109-112)

Soredamors has given in to love. However, courtly conventions will not allow her to disclose her feelings:

> Dex, comant le porra savoir,
> Des que je ne l'an ferai cert?
> Ancor n'ai ge gaires soffert,
> Por coi tant demanter me doive.
> J'atandrai tant qu'il s'aparçoive,
> Car ja ne li ferai savoir. (vv. 1004-1009)

At this point of sentimental development the plot of the romance progresses. The regent king Arthur had left in charge of England revolts against him. Arthur has to return with a large army. Before the departure he knights Alexander and his twelve companions. Arthur arms them and gives them horses, and the Queen presents Alexander with a shirt, a white silk shirt with gold stitching into which a strand of Soredamor's hair had been inserted, but neither Soredamor nor Alexander know it. Had Alexander known it, he would have been lost in ceaseless adoration:

> Mes s'il seust le soreplus,
> Ancor l'amast il assez plus,
> Car an eschange n'an preist
> Tot le monde, qui li meist. (vv. 1183-1186)[4]

Chrétien adopts this idolatry from Provençal doctrine. If the lady's hair is a relic, the lady must be on a truly exalted level. Yet, again Chrétien, the author, intervenes with his wry comment, not without humor:

> Bien fet Amors d'un sage fol,
> Quant cil fet joie d'un chevol. (vv. 1621-1622)

---

[4] Wendelin Förster's edition of Cligès (Halle:Niemeyer, 1901) contains two additional lines (vv. 1195-1196)

> Saintueire, si con je cuit,
> Si l'aorast et jor et nuit.

Alexander follows Arthur to England and distinguishes himself greatly in the subjugation of the rebels, capturing personally their leader. These colorful exploits serve one important purpose as regards Alexander: they establish his fame as a valiant knight, and only after that will he be able to obtain the hand of Soredamor. The initiative of bringing them together is taken by the Queen. Her speech shows her to be a woman experienced in the art of amour courtois:

> D'Amors andoctriner vos vuel,
> Car bien voi qu'Amors vos afole:
> Por ce vos vuel metre a escole. (vv. 2252-2254)

Her idea that love is to be "learned" is very significant. She wants to "metre a escole" Alexander and Soredamors. Amour courtois is an art to be learned. Passion is to be controlled lest it "afole" those involved. Marriage is the logical conclusion of love according to the Queen:

> Par mariage et par enor
> Vos antre acompaigniez ansanble;
> Ensi porra, si com oi sanble,
> Vostre amors longuemant durer. (vv. 2266-2270)

This is far from the conception of fin'amors of the troubadours. These are the views of Chrétien, the reasonable Champenois. The sufferings of love have their purpose, he implies, but they must not be unnecessarily protracted. An honorable marriage will ensure a proper channeling of passion and will afford a lasting love bond. "Qui a le cuer, si eit le cors," Fénice will proclaim later. The Queen unites the willing couple and voices the same idea:

> ... Je t'abandon,
> Alixandre, le cors t'amie;
> Bien sai qu'au cuer ne faus tu mie. (vv. 2304-2306)

The exclusiveness of the marriage union is again underscored with the Queen's words:

> L'un de vos deus a l'autre doing.
> Tien tu le tien, et tu la toe. (vv. 2308-2309)

Chrétien repeats:

> Cele a le suen, et cil la soe,
> Cil li tote, cele lui tot. (vv. 2310-2311)

The wedding is celebrated at Windsor. Chrétien makes only brief mention of it. Arthur bestows upon Alexander a kingdom and gives him a castle, but Alexander's greatest joy is that his lady love is Queen of the chessboard whereof he is King.

The story of Alexander and Soredamors is simple in it development. The interest lies in its psychological aspects, notably the introspective and analytical monologues of Soredamors. No such monologues appear in Erec et Enide. Enide's monologues deal with her feelings of remorse and her emotional reactions to various situations, but they are no conscious attempt at psychological self-analysis. The development of the plot is uncomplicated. Alexander falls in love with beautiful Soredamors. She falls in love with him. He becomes worthy of her through his valor and marries her. They are not tempted by any situation à trois the controlled art of amour courtois will prevail over unrestrained passion, the proper moral stance will overcome tragic fate. Chrétien challenges the moral assumptions of the Tristan. Fénice, the heroine, manages to overcome the role that fate appears to have reserved for her and, not unlike Phenix, her namesake, rises above the conditions that were so unquestionably and tragically final in the romance of Tristan, and she presumes to shape her own destiny

within the bounds of society and under the banner of amour courtois. In order to assess the outcome of such a tour de force it will be necessary to examine the devices that Chrétien uses.

It is therefore in the second part of this romance that Chrétien intends to display his virtuosity in dealing with a complicated situation of love and fate. The name of the hero, Cligès, provides the title for the whole work. Cligès is the son of Alexander and Soredamors and thus the rightful future emperor of Greece. When his grandfather, the Emperor, dies in Constantinople, the barons send a delegation to England to fetch Alexander. The delegation suffers shipwreck and perishes, except for one treacherous follower of Alexander's younger brother Alis who returns to Greece with the claim that the fatal disaster had occured on the return voyage and that Alexander had perished with the rest. Alis then becomes the ruler over Greece. Alexander hears of this and goes to Greece with Soredamors and Cligès. He arranges a compromise with his younger brother: the latter may keep the crown on condition that he never marry in order to assure Cligès of his succession. Soon after Alexander dies, closely followed by Soredamors. Alis is advised by his courtiers to ignore the agreement and to choose a wife. The girl they have in mind is the daughter of the German Emperor, whom the emissaries find in Reneborc (Regensburg) approves of the proposal. However, the girl is already engaged to the Duke of Saxony. Therefore Alis deems it expedient to travel to Germany with a strong force. His nephew Cligès, apparently an unpolitic fellow, accompanies him. The two emperors meet in Cologne. Fénice makes her appearance and is described in the most glowing terms. Her portrait is juxtaposed with that

of the Greek prince. They both are paragons of beauty and courtly demeanor (vv. 2717-2791). They exchange glances and immediately fall in love:

> Mes Clyges par amors conduit
> Vers li ses ialz covertemant
> Et ramainne si sagemant
> Que a l'aler ne an venir
> Ne l'an puet an por fol tenir,
> Mes debonoiremant l'esgarde,
> Et de ce ne se prenent garde
> Que la pucele a droit li change.
> Par boene amor, non par losange,
> Ses ialz li baille et prant les suens.
> Molt li sanble cist changes buens,
> Et miaudres li sanblast a estre,
> S'ele seust point de son estre;
> N'an set plus mes que bel le voit,
> Et s'ele rien amer devoit
> Por biaute qu'an home veist,
> N'est droiz qu'aillors son cuer meist.
> Ses ials et son cuer i a mis,
> Et cil li ra son cuer promis.
> Promis? Qui done quitemant!
> Done? Ne l'a, par foi je mant,
> Que nus son cuer doner ne puet. (vv. 2760-2781)

She does not know Cligès and yet the sight of him produces these changes. In contrast to Soredamors and many another heroine these changes are not troubling her, she welcomes them. (Molt li sanble cist changes buen; v. 2770).

Chrétien then engages in a lengthy, and to the modern reader somewhat pedantic, refutation of the metaphor of two hearts in one person. (vv. 2785-2786). Within approximately forty lines he proposes to disprove the logic of this metaphor. Lazar[5] holds that Chrétien is striking out in jealousy against a beautiful passage in Tristan (Thomas version). Frappier[6]

---

[5]Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), p. 221.

[6]Op. cit., p. 73.

suggests that Chrétien is somewhat less than serious in his scholastic dissection of a beautiful poetic image. Could it be that Chrétien is not aware of the genuine psychological drama in the Tristan?

The narrative continues in swift progression. The Duke of Saxony, to whom Fénice had already been promised in marriage, sends his nephew to Cologne to fetch her. The nephew is challenged and defeated by Cligès in a tournament. Cligès is admired by all. Fénice's feelings for Cligès are intensified. In her predicament she turns to Thessala, her chambermaid, a crafty old woman who offers to help her with her expertise in magic potions, whatever the malady may be:

> Thessala voit tainte et palie
> Celi qu'Amors a en baillie,
> Si l'a a consoil aresniee:
> "Dex, fet ele, estes vos fesniee,
> Ma dolce dameisele chiere,
> Qui si avez tainte la chiere?
> Molt me mervoil que vos avez.
> Dites le moi, qui le savez,
> An quel leu cist max vos tient plus.
> Car se garir vos an doit nus,
> A moi vos an poez antandre,
> Car bien vos savrai sante randre.
> Je sai bien garir d'itropique,
> Si sai garir de l'arcetique,
> De quinancie et de cuerpous;
> Tant sai d'orines et de pous
> Que ja mar avroiz autre mire;
> Et sai, se je l'osoie dire,
> D'anchantemanz et de charaies
> Bien esprovees et veraies. (vv. 2970-2990)

Fénice tells her that her malady is of a different sort, that it is sweet and oppressive at the same time and that, indeed, it is dear to her and she does not want to be cured from it:

De toz max est divers li miens,
Car se voir dire vos an vuel,
Molt m'abelist, et si m'an duel,
Et me delit an ma meseise.
Et se max puet estre qui pleise,
Mes enuiz est ma volantez,
Et ma dolors est ma santez,
Ne ne sai de coi je me plaigne,
Car rien ne sant don max me vaingne,
Se de ma volante ne vient.
Mes voloirs est max, se devient,
Mes tant ai d'aise an mon voloir
Que dolcemant malade sui.
Tessala mestre, car me dites,
Cist max don n'est il ipocrites,
Qui dolz me sanble, et si m'angoisse?
Je ne sai comant jel conoisse,
Se c'est anfermetez ou non.
Mestre, car m'an dites le non,
Et la meniere, et la nature.
Mes sachiez bien que je n'ai cure
De garir an nule meniere,
Car je ai molt la dolor chiere. (vv. 3030-3054)

Thessala diagnoses quickly Fénice's illness:

Donc amez vos, si le vos pruis,
Car an dolcor nul mal ne truis
S'en amor non tant seulemant.
Tuit autre mal comunemant
Sont toz jorz felon et orrible,
Mes amors est dolce et peisible. (vv. 3075-3080)

Fénice confides in Thessala:

Don je sui iriee et dolante,
Por ce que cil qui m'atalante
Est nies celui que prendre doi. (vv. 3099-3101)

Her situation is not unlike that of Iseult, but she scorns such an existence; she will have no part of it. It is shameful and immoral:

Mialz voldroie estre desmanbree
Que de nos deus fust remanbree
L'amors d'Ysolt et de Tristan,
Don mainte folie dit an,
Et honte en est a reconter.
Ja ne m'i porroie acorder

A la vie qu'Isolz mena.
Amors en li trop vilena,
Que ses cuers fu a un entiers,
Et ses cors fu a deus rentiers.
Ensi tote sa vie usa
Nonques les deus ne refusa.
Ceste amors ne fu pas resnable,
Mes la moie iert toz jorz estable,
Car de mon cors et de mon cuer
N'iert ja fet partie a nul fuer.
Ja mes cors n'iert voir garconiers,
N'il n'i avra deus parconiers.
Qui a le cuer, cil a le cors. (vv. 3105-3123)

The last line is a basic tenet of Chrétien's amour courtois conception. But how will he solve the problem? The realities of the situation, as in Tristan, offer no solution. A deus ex machina will have to be invoked. To soften possible doubts as to the morality of such a scheme Fenice refers to the broken promise of celibacy of Alis. She will rather die than bear a child that would despoil Cligès of his legitimate inheritance:

Mes je n'ai pas Cliges si vil
Que mialz ne vueille estre anterree
Que ja par moi perde danree
De l'enor qui soe doit estre.
Ja de moi ne puisse anfes nestre
Par cui il soit desheritez. (vv. 3146-3155)

The wily Thessala concocts a magic potion that will make it possible for Fénice to live up to her intention of undivided virtue. Alis will possess her only in his dreams in the wedding night and thereafter. Chrétien seems to take pleasure in describing the duped husband's fantasy:

Tenir la cuide, n'an tient mie,
Mes de neant est a grant eise,
Car neant tient, et neant beise,
Neant tient, a neant parole,
Neant voit, et neant acole,

A neant tance, a neant luite.
Molt fu la poisons bien confite
Qui si le travaille et demainne.
De neant est an si grant painne,
Car por voir cuide, et si s'an prise,
Qu'il ait la forteresce prise,
Et devient lassez et recroit,
Einsi le cuide, einsi le croit. (vv. 3316-3328)

The repetition of "neant" rings of the joy of witnessing the betrayal of a wicked husband. "C'est presque le ton des fabliaux," comments Lazar.[7] His wickedness consists of breaking his vow of celibacy. The moral value of this trick is nevertheless questionable. Fénice's contempt for adultery, in particular for that of Iseult, rings hollow in view of her easy way out. A magic potion had been Tristan and Iseult's undoing. It represented undying human passion. Fénice's potion glibly avoids the conflict of the vie a trois, the problem of the lovers of Cornwall. Only the external problems of the situation will have to be overcome, questions of proper social demeanor and physical obstacles.

Cligès and Fénice have yet to disclose their feelings to each other. During their return to Greece Cligès further distinguishes himself in skirmishes with the Saxons, who attempt to abduct Fénice. He rescues her in one such attempt. Their eyes speak eloquently, but their tongues are tied:

Et ne por quant des ialz ancuse
Li uns a l'autre son panser,
S'il s'an seussent apanser.
Des ialz parolent par esgart,
Mes des boches sont si coart
Que de l'amor qui les justice
N'osent parler an nule guise.
Se cele comancier ne l'ose,
N'est mervoille, car sinple chose

---

[7] Op. cit., p. 229.

Doit estre pucele et coarde.
Mes il qu'atant, de coi se tarde,
Qui por li est par toz hardiz,
S'est vers li seule acoardiz?
Dex, ceste criemme don li vient,
C'une pucele seule tient,
Sinple et coarde, foible et quoie?
A ce me sanble que je voie
Les chiens foir devant le lievre,
Et la turtre chacier le bievre,
L'aignel le lou, li colons l'aigle,
Et si fuit li vilains sa maigle,
Dom il vit et dom il s'ahane,
Et si fuit li faucons por l'ane. (vv. 3786-3808)

After all, she is his aunt. Chrétien, however, points to the psychology of love and addresses himself directly to the audience:

Vos qui d'Amors vos feites sage,
Et les costumes et l'usage
De sa cort maintenez a foi,
N'onques ne faussastes sa loi,
Que qu'il vos an doie cheoir,
Dites se l'en puet nes veoir
Rien qui por Amor abelisse,
Que l'en n'an tressaille ou palisse. (vv. 3819-3825)

The attitude of Cligès is very much that of a troubadour toward his domna. In his melancholoy he then decides to follow the advice of his late father to go to the Court of Arthur and seek distinction as a knight. He takes leave of the Empress, Fénice, telling her, somewhat ambiguously, that he is "all hers":

Mes droiz est qu'a vos congie praigne
Com a celi cui ge sui toz (vv. 4282-4283)

Cligès goes away, sobbing and sighing secretly. (vv. 4284-4285). Fénice is lost in thought. Her complexion pales. She, too, often weeps and sighs (v. 4315). Her secret longing resembles an amor de lonh:

Einsi travaille Amors Fenice,
Mes cist travauz li est delice,
Qu'ele ne puet estre lassee. (vv. 4527-4529)

She thinks of his farewell, weighs his words, remembers his crest-fallen coutenance:

Com il chanja, com il pali,
Les lermes et la contenance
A toz jorz [illegible] remanbrance,
Com il vint devant li plorer,
Con si'il la deust aorer,
Humbles, et sinples, a genolz. (vv. 4320-4325)

This attitude of Cligès is almost idolatrous, foreign to Erec, quite similar to a situation in Lancelot. Chrétien's romantic hero is clearly evolving, à la mode, catering to the tastes of his patroness Marie de Champagne and her court.

Cligès, having distinguished himself at Arthur's Court, returns to Greece. There is joy in Constantinople. One day he has a talk with Fénice. She makes inquiries concerning his voyage, asks him whether he has loved a lady in Britain. He speaks in metaphors: in Britain his body was without a heart like bark without timber; his heart had been left behind:

Ne ja nus par mon essanplaire
N'aprendra vilenie a faire;
Car quant mes cuers an vos se mist,
Le cors vos dona et promist,
Si qu'autres ja part n'i avra.
Amors por vos si me navra
Que ja mes ne cuidai garir:
Si m'avez fet maint mal sofrir.
Se je vos aim, et vos m'amez,
Ja n'en seroiz Tristanz clamez,
Ne je n'an serai ja Yseuz,
Car puis ne seroit l'amors preuz,
Qu'il i avroit blasme ne vice. (vv. 5191-5203)

Thus she again strikes out in a polemical manner at the romance of Tristan. Her criticism seems severe and selfrighteous. Chrétien appears to be irritated or challenged by the Tristan. Frappier[8] speaks of an "agacement?

> Chrétien, pour des raisons probablement complexes où devaient entrer une inquiétude de moraliste, le point de vue d'un psychologue, et le léger agacement que pouvait lui causer le succès d'un confrère, a senti le besoin d'une réplique, non pas partielle, épisodique ou allusive, mais totale, et il a vers 1175-1176 composé Cligès qu'on pourrait intituler: Pour en finir avec Tristan et Iseut.

Fénice will have no part of a triangle affair, nor does she approve of Cligès' suggestion to elope to Britain, for then they would be no better than Tristan and Iseult. She insists upon social respectability and resorts to trickery to achieve her goal. She will pretend illness and feign death, only to be secretly rescued from her specially made bier and tomb by Cligès. Thessala again proves her usefulness with a magic brew that puts Fénice into a trance. She appears quite dead. The tortures of three suspicious physicians from Salerno are to no avail, and they are abruptly discontinued when "more than a thousand" outraged townswomen, who have been peeking through the keyhole, throw them out of the window. She is bewailed and carried to the tomb from whence Cligès will take her and live with her in secret in a subterranean apartment under a tower outside of town. Fénice has made a respectable exit from the courtly scene.

Fénice has gone "underground". She soon recovers from her nearly fatal, but successful, suspended animation and begins a new and fuller life of amorous bliss, which lasts for over a year:

---

[8] Op. cit., p. 26.

Certes, de rien ne s'avilla
Amors, quant il les mist ansanble;
Car a l'un et a l'autre sanble,
Quant li uns l'autre acole et beise,
Que de lor joie et de lor eise
Soit toz li mondes amandez;
Ne ja plus ne m'an demandez. (vv. 6251-6258)

They continue the idyllic affair in a pleasant garden surrounding the tower until they are one day discovered by accident. The knight Bertrand, recovering his stray sparrow hawk, find them in a compromising position:

L'enpererriz trestote nue,
Avoec Cliges le chevalier,
Desoz une ante, en un vergier. (vv. 6426-6428)

The couple flees to the Court of Arthur, where Cligès, somewhat belatedly, gathers a great army against his uncle. Alis, however, now fully informed of the deceit and of the chimerical nature of his connubial bliss, conveniently dies in raging madness. The scene is now clear for Cligès and Fénice to rule over their empire and live happily to the end of their days. An important doctrine of Chrétien is again emphasized: that amour courtois is possible in marriage. In lines reminiscent of Erec et Enide he writes:

De s'amie a feite sa dame,
Car il l'apele amie et dame,
Et por ce ne pert ele mie
Que il ne l'aint come s'amie,
Et ele lui tot autresi
Con l'en doit amer son ami.
Et chascun jor lor amors crut,
Onques cil de li ne mescrut,
Ne querela de nule chose. (vv. 6633-6641)

The treatment of amour courtois shows a marked development from Chrétien's first romance, Erec et Enide. Psychological problems are

described in much greater detail and are the main interest in this work. It appears that Chrêtien attempts to display his virtuosity in sentimental analysis. He describes various stages of love: its onset, its effect on the characters. Soredamors and Alexander, Fénice and Cligès engage in minute self-analyses which lead to their conclusions that their strange stirrings must be love. Chrétien is now well acquainted with the love psychology of the Provencals. Love is caused by beauty. The eyes are the mirror of the heart. They perceive and reveal feelings. Hearts can be exchanged. The author discusses this phenomenon at length. According to Provençal theory love is an illness and is diagnosed as such by its symptoms: sighs, trembling, pallor, lack of sleep, weeping. Chrétien makes use of all these symptoms. This illness is not without its pleasurable aspects. Fénice prefers not to be healed from it. (vv. 3052-3054). Love is good; it is elevating (v. 953). It leads to the <u>panser</u> of the troubadours, the near-mystical state of being lost in thought of the beloved during the latter's absence. The troubadours' adulatory attitude towards women is clearly expressed in the effect upon Alexander of Soredamor's hair embroidered in his garment and in the leave-taking of Cligès from the Empress. This adulation is not carried as far as in the <u>Charrette</u>. It is, however, quite different from the attitudes and customs in <u>Erec et Enide</u>. Alexander and Cligès are far more delicate than Erec. They dare not speak of love, much less ask for the lady's hand in marriage, until they have ascertained the mutuality of their feelings.

Chrétien is well versed in troubadour lyricism. He employs all of its devices, including that of the adulterous <u>situation à trois</u>.

However, he is a realist, he prefers to bring his fin'amors to a permanent and tangible conclusion: marriage of the lovers. At this point it can no longer properly be called fin'amors. Chrétien achieves this end quite naturally and logically in the Alexander-Soredamors relationship. Soredamors is not a married lady, as troubadour custom would normally require, and the problem of inaccessiblity does not exist. It does exist in Fénice-Cligès, and Chrétien will leave it neither on the lyrical plane of the troubadours, nor will he accept the fatalistic development of the Tristan. He creates a strong character in Fénice, a woman who will shape her destiny and liberate herself from the course of events. She combines love and will and creates an ethic of amour courtois which requires that the power of love be tamed and civilized lest it destroy those afflicted. Such an ethic may well be beyond social and religious laws. Fénice's treatment of her lawful husband clearly violates these laws. She insists on being the arbiter of her destiny. This being impossible under the given circumstances, Chrétien has to resort to the supernatural on several occasions. He employs artifice against reality. Only by these means can Fénice proclaim her superiority over Iseult and can condemn the latter's partage. Chrétien thus avoids the real human conflict, a conflict which in all its fatality is far more real and human in the Tristan legend.

Nevertheless, Chrétien has composed a fine story in its own right. Cligès and Fénice might appear to be more contrived literary characters than Tristan and Iseult, but still the author has shown a high degree of skill as a psychologist of love and as a user of contemporary fancies on the subject. As in Erec et Enide, he again celebrates the role of the

femme-amie in an attempt to integrate the conceptions of amour courtois within the framework of a more moral and normal life. There lies Chrétien's originality.

CHAPTER III

LE CHEVALIER DE LA CHARRETTE

In Erec et Enide as well as in Cligès amour courtois finds its logical conclusion in marriage. Through chevalerie the knight becomes worthy of his dame, who then becomes his amie as well as his fame. This idea is not to be found in the lyric poetry of the troubadours. There, as we have noted, woman is idolized and forever inaccessible, a sublime conception of the feminine, in contrast to which earthly love and the practical aspects of marriage are quite a different matter. Amour courtois in the early romances of Chrétien is far more representative of the tastes of the northern French nobility of which Cohen says:

> Qu'on s'efforce, fort bien, qu'on s'impose mille épreuves, mais tout de même pour qu'un jour sonne l'heure du berger et de la bergère, avec, de préférence, la sanction du prêtre et la présence des témoins qui consacrent la conquête et la rendent publique et durable![1]

Erec's comportment is hardly that of an aspiring courtly lover, and Enide is not the exalted lady who commands a submissive attitude. Erec is quite independent and authoritative. In Cligès, in spite of the troubadour fashion of describing the symptoms and effects of love, the passions terminate in marriages. Fénice intents to be united in marriage with Cligès. The possibility of partage, as in the Tristan legend, is repeatedly and resolutely rejected. Chrétien's position seems evident.

---

[1] Gustave Cohen, Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre (Paris: Boivin, 1931), p. 224.

Chrétien's patroness, Marie de Champagne, was the daughter of Aliénor of Aquitaine and, like her cultured and vivacious mother, Marie must have been well acquainted with the fin'amors conception of the troubadours of her native region. In consideration of her background it seems quite natural that she should suggest to her by now already famous court poet Chrétien to compose a romance in the manner of her own liking. Chrétien is quite explicit:

> Matiere et san li done et livre
> la contesse, et il s'antremet
> de panser, que gueres n'i met
> fors sa painne et s'antancion. (vv. 26-29)[2]

Chrétien tells us with this avis au lecteur that neither the subject matter nor the interpretation are his.[3] Compared with the author's ideas on love and the relationship between the sexes as presented in his other works, the "san" of the Charrette does indeed strike us as different. It is thus Chrétien's task to contribute his "painne" and his "antancion". The meaning of "painne" is clear. "Antancion", according to Wendelin Förster in his Wörterbuch has the meaning of "Zweck, Meinung, Absicht, Sinn".[4] The real meaning is perhaps, as Douglas Kelly states, a combination of these terms.[5] Traditionally Chrétien scholarship has seen in

---

[2] Text quotations are taken from the edition of Mario Roques, Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes, III, Le Chevalier de la Charrette ("C.F.M.A.", Paris:Champion, 1965).

[3] Cf. William Nitze, "'Sans et matiere' dans les oeuvres de Chrétien Troyes," Romania XLIV (1915-1917), p. 15.

[4] Wendelin Förster, Wörterbuch zu Kristian von Troyes Sämtlichen Werken (4th ed.; Tübingen:Niemeyer, 1964), p. 23.

[5] Douglas Kelly, Sens et Conjointure in the Chevalier de la Charrette (Studies in French Literature II, The Hague:Mouton, 1966), p. 37.

these lines a reservation of the author against the subject matter, a reservatio mentalis or, as Hofer states, "eine versteckte Verwahrung"[6] and that therefore he left the completion of the work to Godefroi de Lagny. However, one must not assume that Chrétien worked la mort dans l'amê: "Même s'il n'a pas exprimé ses idées personnelles", writes Frappier, "aucun drame n'a dû se produire dans sa conscience."[7] Even if Chrétien could not give his own san to the Charrette, the comission of the task was a challenge to his skill, a challenge that he accepted willingly.

In addition to Chrétien's probable reservations as to san et matière there existed the difficulty of presenting in epic form what had until then found expression only in the lyric poetry of the troubadours. Frappier writes:

> Comment, sans trop heurter la délicatesse, faire passer d'un genre à l'autre, de la chanson au roman, la conception provençale de l'amour hors mariage ou plutôt contre le mariage? Ce qui gagnait à rester chez les troubadours état d'âme, allusion, thème lyrique, devait être amplifié et circonstancié selon les exigences d'un poème narratif.[8]

The Charrette is indeed the twelfth century romance which is closest to the fin'amors ideology of the troubadours.

Guenièvre, the Queen, is a married lady, inaccessible by the laws of society and the Church and also by her aloof behavior. To overcome these obstacles, nothing less is required of an aspiring lover than his complete

---

[6] Stefan Hofer, Chrétien de Troyes, Leben und Werk (Graz-Köln: Böhlaus, 1954), p. 137.

[7] Jean Frappier, Chrétien de Troyes (Paris:Hatier, 1957), p. 125.

[8] Ibid., p. 126.

submission, including the complete abdication of his dignity as a knight.[9]

The cart episode, from which this romance has its name, is an excellent illustration of this point. Lancelot, in quest of his queen, who has been abducted by the haughty knight Meleagant as a result of his victory over Keu, the senechal, comes upon a cart driven by a dwarf. The dwarf tells the knight that if he will climb into the cart, he will find the Queen. The knight hesitates a moment, because in those times, says Chrétien, carts, like the pillories of later days, were used to parade criminals about town, and it was disgraceful to be found in one. A short struggle takes place in the hero's heart, a struggle between love and reason:

> Mes Reisons, qui d'Amors se part,
> li dit que del monter se gart,
> si lechastie et si l'anseigne
> que rien ne face ne anpreigne
> dom il ait honte ne reproche.
> N'est par el cuer, mes an la boche,
> Reisons qui ce dire li ose;
> mes Amors est el cuer anclose
> qui li comande et semont
> que tost an la charrete mont. (vv. 365-374)

Reason (or common sense) is inconsistent with love (v. 365), but Lancelot is under the dictates of love, and he mounts the cart:

> Amors le vialt et il li saut,
> que de la honte ne li chaut
> puis qu'Amors le comande et vialt. (vv. 375-377)

Gauvain, another of the Queen's knights, is bid to do likewise and refuses (vv. 388 ff.). He is not in the service of love. He is in full control of his mental faculties, which cannot be said of Lancelot.

---

[9] It would be leading us too far afield if we were to follow the complicated and for our study often irrelevant course of the narrative in detail. We will therefore focus on those passages and aspects of the story that illustrate the theme of amour courtois.

Lancelot is habitually immersed in contemplative thought of his beloved, a condition that the troubadours call the penser. He resembles a somnambulist. Thus, when he beholds his Queen the next morning from the tower window of the Castle of the Flaming Lance, he leans out of the window in a trance and would have fallen, had he not been held back by Gauvain. The mysterious cortege with the captive Queen disappears from view. The symptoms of his disorder, his alienation from reality, are described in detail:

> Et ses pansers est de tel guise
> que lui meismes en oblie,
> ne set s'il est, ou s'il n'est mie,
> ne ne li manbre de sonnon
> ne set s'il est armez ou non,
> ne set ou va, ne set don vient;
> de rien nule ne li sovient
> fors d'une seule, et por celi
> a mis les autres en obli;
> a cele seule panse tant
> qu'il n'ot, ne voit, ne rien n'antant. (vv. 714-724)

His state of mind is exemplified in his next adventure. Having learned from a damsel on the road the name and whereabouts of the Queen's abductor, Meleagant, son of King Baudemagu of Gorre, Lancelot and Gauvain decide to split and penetrate into the hostile land by the only two difficult approaches: an underwater bridge, Gauvain's choice, and the sword bridge, consisting of a sharp sword spanning dangerous waters. Lancelot, in entranced pursuit of his destination, is deaf to the challenge of a knight, defender of a ford, and is brought to consciousness only after being unhorsed and thrown into the water. Once aroused he dispatches his challenger with ease.

Challenges to his fidelity, his constancy of his love for the Queen, show him to be the perfect fin'amant who can sleep next to a seductive châtelaine without sleeping with her. Chrêtien explains this chaste behavior:

Lancelot's heart is elsewhere and is really no longer his:

> Bel sanblant feire ne li puet.
> **Por coi? Car del cuer ne li muet,**
> qu'aillors a mis del tot s'antante,
> **mes ne pleist mie n'atalante**
> qu'an qu'est bel, et gent a chascun.
> **Li chevaliers n'a cuer que un**
> et cil n'est mie ancor a lui,
> **einz est comandez a autrui**
> si qu'il ne puet aillors prester.
> **Tot le fet an un leu ester**
> Amors, qui toz les cuers justise.
> **Toz? nel fet, fors cez qu'ele prise.**
> Et cil s'an redoit plus prisier
> **cui ele daigne justisier.**
> Amors le cuer celui prisoit
> **si que sor toz le justisoit**
> et li donoit si grant orguel
> **que de rien blasmer ne le vuel**
> **s'il lait ce qu'Amors li desfant**
> et la ou ele vialt autant. (vv. 1223-1242)

Purely carnal adventures without sentimental involvement have no place in courtly literature. Love is a cult; it isidolatrous. All that has been touched by the beloved becomes an object of adoration. Lancelot nearly swoons when he finds at a fountain Queen Guenièvre's comb with some of her blond hair in it. The hair causes him great joy and he reveres it as a sacred relic and deposits it in his bosom:

> **Ja mes oel d'ome ne verront**
> **nule chose tant enorer,**
> **qu'il les comance a aorer,**
> et bien cant foiz les toche
> et a ses ialz, et a sa boche,
> **et a son front, et a sa face;**
> **n'est joie nule qu'il n'an face:**
> **molt 'san fet liez, molt s'an fet riche,**
> **an son soing, pres del cuer, les fiche**
> **entre sa chemise et sa char. (vv. 1460-1469)**[10]

---

[10] Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et fin'amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle (Paris:Klincksieck, 1964), p. 233, comments: "Il faut noter que Chrétien ne fait pas suivre cette description d'une remarque humoristique sur la folie des amants (comme dans le Cligès), mais se contente de traiter son sujet avec beaucoup de sérieux. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'il ne pouvait se permettre de badiner avec un sujet commandé par sa protectrice Marie."

The author uses the word "aorer" (v. 1762). The spirit expressed is that of religious fervor.

After several more adventures, which are without sentimental interest, Lancelot finally arrives at the Sword Bridge, a bridge consisting of a polished, gleaming sword, two lances in length, with either end fixed in the trunk of a tree. The stream is as fierce and terrible as if it were the devil's stream (v. 3012: con si fust li fluns au deable). Lancelot croses it with great pain and agony, cutting his hands, knees and feet. But even this suffering is sweet to him, because

> Amors qui le conduist et mainne,
> si li estoit a sofrir dolz. (vv. 3114-3115)

From a tower on the other side King Bademagu admires the feat of Lancelot as the boldest deed that ever entered the mind of man (v. 3192-3193) and he suggests to his son Meleagant, who grimly stands beside him, to make peace with him and deliver the Queen into his hands. Meleagant declines. The next day, in presence of the court and the prisoners from the land of Arthur, Meleagant and Arthur engage in a savage combat, in which Lancelot, weakened by his wounds of the previous day, appears to succumb to the blows of Meleagant. Queen Guenièvre is watching the fight at the window of a tower. Lancelot does not know this. A damsel who is with the Queen asks her for the name of the knight. The Queen replies that he is Lancelot du Lac. This is the first time in the romance that Lancelot's name is mentioned. He had always been referred to as the Knight of the Cart. It is by the Queen herself that his name is revealed:

> Lanceloz de Lac a a non
> li chevaliers, mien esciant. (vv. 3660-3661)

Not until now that he has braved many challenges in quest of his Queen, has he received a name - has he "made" for himself a name. And from the lips of the damsel the magic word rings out over the courtyard, and she beckons him to turn around to see who is watching him. Chrétien exploits skillfully the dramatic possibilities of the situation:

> Lors saut avant et si l'apele,
> si haut que toz li pueples l'ot,
> a molt haute voiz: "Lancelot!
> Trestorne toi et si esgarde
> qui est qui de toi se prant garde." (vv. 3664-3668)

Lancelot turns around and beholds

> la chose de trestot le mont
> que plus desirroit a veoir
> as loges de la tor seoir. (3672-3674)

He is so enraptured by the sight of his love that he cannot take his eyes of
off her and wards off the blows of Meleagant behind his back. On the advice of the damsel he forces Meleagant between him and the tower and thus, in view of his lady, the tide of the combat turns rapidly to his favor. Meleagant's life is spared through the intercession of his father with Guenièvre. The Queen expresses the wish that Lancelot stop fighting. Lancelot desists at once, although Meleagant continues to attack him, for

> Molt est qui aimme obeissanz
> et molt fet tort et volentiers,
> la ou il est amis antiers,
> ce qu'a a'amie doie plaire. (vv. 3798-3801)

The happy ending of the adventure appears to be near. But what a surprise, when the victorious Lancelot is brought before the Queen and she receives him coolly:

> Quant la reine voit le roi,
> qui tient Lancelot par le doi,
> si c'est contre le roi dreciee

et fet sanblant de correciee,
si s'anbruncha et ne dist mot.
"Dame, veez ci Lancelot,
fet li rois, qui vos vient veoir;
ce vos doit molt plaire et seoir.
- Moi? Sire, moi ne puet il plaire;
de son veoir n'ai ge que faire. (vv. 3937-3946)

Bademagu reminds her of all the troubles and dangers that Lancelot has faced for her. She answers that he has wasted his time:

Sire, voir, mal l'a enploié;
ja par moi ne sera noié
que je ne l'an sai point de gre. (vv. 3957-3959)

Lancelot, dumbfounded but far from indignant, is the perfect fin' amant:

Ez vos Lancelot trespanse,
se li respont molt belemant
a meniere de fin amant:
"Dame, certes, ce poise moi,
ne je n'os demander por coi." (vv. 3960-3964)

The Queen leaves the room. Saddened Lancelot departs in search of Gauvain. He is waylaid by the people of Meleagant, and the Queen is told that he is dead. She repents her cruelty, speaks of him as "mes amis" (v. 4198); she calls herself "fole" and "felenese", and she assumes:

Nus fors moi ne li a done
le mortel cop, mien esciant. (vv. 4208-4209)

Significantly, for the first time her exclamations of distress reveal her true feelings. She would have loved to embrace him, and she is quite explicit:

Comant? Certes, tot nu a nu,
Por ce que plus an fusse a eise. (vv. 4228-4229)

The rumor of Lancelot's death is a clever device by the author to bring Guenièvre's secret feelings to the surface. According to Provençal doctrine a carnal fulfillment of Lancelot's love is not proper, yet the

matière of this romance requires it. Stefan Hofer elucidates the problem succinctly:

> Entspricht bis jetzt diese Haltung dem in der provenzalischen Doktrin vorgezeichneten Benehmen der "domna", von der Lancelot hofft, daß sie ihm gegenüber "merci eust" (v. 4364), so verlangt der Roman doch eine andere Lösung, als es die in der Lyrik geltenden voraussetzungen vorschreiben, nach denen eine Annäherung der Liebenden nicht erfolgen darf. Chrétien macht den Umschwung in der seelischen Haltung der unnahbaren Herrin dadurch glaubhaft, daß er Lancelot als tot von der Königin betrauern läßt.[11]

Her remorse prepares the reconciliation of the couple. Lancelot at last learns of the reason for her attitude. He had transgressed the code of amour courtois by hesitating a moment between reason and love before mounting the ignominious cart:

> Comant? Don n'eustes vos honte
> de la charrete, et si dotastes?
> Molt a grant enviz i montastes
> quant vos demorastes deus pas.
> Por ce, voir, ne vos vos je pas
> ne aresnier ne esgarder. (vv. 4484-4489)

Bezzola formulates the situation thus: "Lancelot n'a pas été capable du sacrifice de tout son être devant la grande aventure qu'était pour lui l'amour de la plus grande dame qui existait, la reine."[12] Lancelot admits his guilt and receives the pardon of the Queen. He also obtains permission for a rendez-vous at the window of her chamber. This favor that the Provençal fin-amant normally only dreams about, requires psychological delicacy, so as not to impair the elevated condition of the lady. Thus she only indicates with her eyes the meeting place:

---

[11] Hofer, op. cit., p. 143.

[12] Reto Bezzola, Le Sens de l'Aventure et de l'Amour (Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1947), p. 43.

Et la reine une fenestre
li mostre, a l'uel, non mie au doi. (vv. 4506-4507)

Iron grill work will assure the proper distance:

Je serai anz, et vos defors
que ceanz ne porroiz venir. (vv. 4514-4515)

She indicates that she will be able to touch him only with her lips or hand, but she would stay there until morning for love of him (vv. 4516-4519). She rules out more intimate relations, for Keu, the wounded senechal, sleeps in her room:

Asanbler ne porriens nos,
qu'an ma chanbre, devant moi, gist
Kex, li senechax, qui lenguist
des plaies dom li est coverz. (vv. 4520-4523)

However, the author makes clear that the situation will take its inexorable and natural course:

Que molt estoient desirrant
il de li et ele de lui. (vv. 4588-4589)

No iron bars can withstand a courtly lover. Their love is consummated on an earthly plane, but with a perfect overtone of the troubadour love religion, which extends saintly veneration to the beloved object:

Si l'aore et se li ancline,
car an nul cors saint ne croit tant.
Et la reine li estant
ses bras ancontre, si l'anbrace,
estroit pres de son piz le lace
si l'a lez li an son lit tret,
et le plus bel sanblant li fet
que ele onques feire li puet,
que d'Amors et del cuer li muet. (vv. 4652-4660)

The superior position of the <u>domna</u> is maintained at all times. Even upon leaving the site of his amorous exploits he pays his quasi-religious, indeed sacrilegious, hommage:

Au departir a soploie
a la chanbre, et fet tot autel
con si fust devant un autel. (vv. 4716-4718)

The author further emphasizes the preeminence of the lady by stating that this climax was unique and could not be repeated:

Del rasanbler n'est pas pris termes,
ce poise lui, mes ne puet estre. (vv. 5704-5705)

After this infraction of fin'amors theory the further relationship between Lancelot and Guenièvre is again on the level of Provençal lyricism. The Queen returns to her pedestal, and her every whim and wish is inviolate to Lancelot. He again allows his knighthood to be ridiculed when the Queen orders him to do his worst in a tournament (v. 5645) and he complies with her wish "mout volantiers" (v. 5655). Love, as in Provençal doctrine, reigns supreme. It is an ennobling power.

Car, sanz faille, molt en amande
qui fet ce qu'Amors li comande. (vv. 4393-4394)

Anything prompted by love is good:

Qu'an ne porroit dire de boche
riens qui de par Amors venist,
qui a reproche apartenist. (vv.4356-4358)

Love inflames the heart:

Et totevoies s'arestoit,
devant la reine sa dame
qui li a mis el cors la flame. (vv. 3748-3750)

Amor breaks open the wound that he has caused:

Amors molt sovant li escrieve
la plaie que feite li a. (vv. 1336-1337)

To suffer for love is sweet:

Mes tot le rasoage et sainne
Amors qui le conduist et mainne,
si li estoit a sofrir dolz. (vv. 3113-3115)

The remaining adventures of Lancelot and his final defeat of Meleagant are of little relevance to our study.

It is apparent to the reader of this romance that amour courtois and adventure are treated differently from Chrétien's works before and after Le Chevalier de la Charrette. Whereas Chrétien usually modifies amour courtois by putting the couple on a more equal footing than it is customary with the troubadours, he describes in the Charrette the Provençal type of amour courtois with an exacting domna and a submissive and worshipping lover. True, the bedroom episode is an infraction of fin'amors, but it is well incorporated and the former position of lady and worshipper is restored. We find here for the first time in Chrétien de Troyes' work the service d'amour of the troubadours. Guenièvre is neither the amie nor the fame that Chrétien paints in his other romances; she is the dame, because as Myrrha Borodine says, "elle ne vit pas de la tendresse qu'elle donne, mais de l'hommage qu'elle reçoit."[13]

Adventures, as usual, form the steps towards the acceptance of the knight by the courtly lady. They are proof of the knights valor. However, in the Charrette they are a tribute paid to the Queen rather than a positive, constructive experience that the knight undergoes. Lancelot's adventures are frequently humiliating, met in the service of love and overshadowed by it. Lancelot does not reassert his role as a knight, the prime function of adventure. In the cart episode and at the tournament the opposite is the case. Amour courtois and adventure have to complement and augment each other, and mesure has to be applied. Only then will there

---

[13] Myrrha Borodine, La Femme dans l'oeuvre de Chrétien de Troyes (Paris:Picard, 1909), p. 191.

be a perfect knight and a perfect lady and a perfect happiness. The delicate interrelationship of these elements is most lucidly exemplified in Chrétien's next romance. Yvain ou le chevalier au lion.

CHAPTER IV

LE CHEVALIER AU LION

With Yvain ou Le Chevalier au Lion Chrêtien de Troyes returns to the problem that had occupied him in writing Erec et Enide: the conflict between love and adventure in marriage. Yvain resembles Erec et Enide in theme as well as in structure. Again the knight becomes guilty through his recreantise, and again he has to rehabilitate himself in his own eyes, in the eyes of his amie et fame and also in the eyes of society. In this case, however, the hero is recreant in the service of love. The problem is again whether love or adventure should be the main occupation of the knight. Comparing the structure of the two romances we distinguish clearly a division into two parts in both romances of which the first part ("li premerains vers" in Erec et Enide) serves as an introduction leading up to marriage and the ensuing conflict.

We are at the court of Arthur. Calogrenant relates to a small gathering of ladies and fellow-knights the story of an adventure that had occurred to him seven years ago and in which his role as a knight had not been a glorious one. He had been told by a "vilain" who was tending his cattle in the woods of Broceliande of a magic fountain that anyone who would take of the water in the basin and spill it on a stone beside it would raise a storm of torrential rains and gales and thunder. Calogrenant

had unleashed these elements and had promptly been challenged by aknight and had barely escaped with his life.

Yvain, another knight at the court of Arthur and a cousin of Calogrenant, on hearing this story, decides to avenge the defeat of his cousin. He secretly rides to the forest of Broceliande and has the same adventure. But he defeats the defender of the fountain in a bitter combat. The mortally wounded knight flees. Yvain pursues him into his castle, where he is caught between two portcullises. Unexpected help appears in the person of Lunete, the chambermaid of the châtelaine, who gives him a ring that renders him invisible to the people of Esclados le roux, the dying knight, who are searching for him. Under the mantle of the magic ring Yvain sees the grief-stricken and lamenting widow,

> ...une des plus beles dames
> c'onques veist riens terriene. (vv. 1146-1147)[1]

Placed at a small window of the castle by Lunete, Yvain watches the funeral procession. On this inapropriate occasion the darts of Amor strike him:

> Mes de son cucre et de ses bresches
> li radocist novele amors
> qui par sa terre a fet un cors;
> s'a tote sa proie acoillie;
> son cuer a o soi s'anemie,
> s'aimme la rien qui plus le het.
> Bien a vangiee, et si nel set,
> la dame la mort son seignor;
> vangenee en a feite greignor,
> que ele panre n'an seust,
> s'Amors vangiee ne l'eust,
> qui si dolcemant le requiert
> que par les ialz el cuer le fiert; (vv. 1360-1372)

---

[1]The quotations from the text are taken from the edition of Mario Roques. Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes, vol. 4 (Paris:Champion, 1964).

True to fin'amors theory the darts of Amor penetrate "par les ialz" and strike a wound to the heart "dom il ne sera ja mes sains" (v. 1380). The more he looks the more he loves her and is enthralled by her. Then he reasons with himself. He counts on the changing moods of women:

> D'or en droit ai ge dit que sages,
> que fame a plus de cent corages.
> Celui corage qu'ele a ore,
> espoir, changera ele ancore; (vv. 1438-1442)[2]

As a true courtly lover he justifies his love by subjugating himself to its laws:

> Qui Amor en gre ne requialt
> des que ele an tor li l'atret
> felenie et traison fet; (vv. 1448-1450)

Then he muses at length on the lady's beauty, concluding

> Don fust si grant biaute venue?
> Ja la fist Dex, de sa main nue,
> por Nature feire muser. (vv. 1501-1503)

His imprisonment now appears sweet to him, and he confides in Lunete, the clever damsel. In a scene of very fine psychological analysis and of a comic quality approaching that of Marivaux, Lunete suggests in very subtle tones to her lady to cease mourning and to consider taking another husband. She mentions the necessity of defending the fountain and the land.[3] Laudine, the widow, pretends not to want to hear of it, but Lunete cunningly leads her lady through a process of rationalizing

---

[2]Gustave Cohen. Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre, p. 312 believes this passage to be an indication of Chrétien's antifeminist attitude.

[3]In the Middle Ages the defense of the domain was a very real necessity. The law of the stronger prevailed.

until the latter acquits the killer of her husband and is willing to see him. After all, the lady reasons, he had to kill her husband in order to save his own life. This new idea is "smoldering" in her mind:

> Et par li meismes s'alume
> ensi come li feus qui fume
> tant que la flame si est mise,
> que nus ne la souffle n'atise. (vv. 1769-1772)

Her mind is soon made up. She is very eager to know of the knight and shows interest in marrying him:

> Mes dites moi, se vos savez,
> del chevalier don vos m'avez
> tenue a plet si longuemant
> quiex hom est il, et de quel gent.
> Se il est tex qu'a moi ateigne,
> mes que de par lui ne remaigne,
> je le ferai, ce vos otroi,
> seignor de ma terre et de moi. (vv. 1801-1808)

The scene in which Lunete brings Yvain before Laudine finds no parallels in Erec et Enide or Cligès. Yvain plays rather the role of the submissive amoureux as we have found it in Lancelot. We concede that he is in actual physical danger by delivering himself into the widow's hands, but his surrender is more that of a lover than of a knight. When Lunete announces to Yvain that her lady wants to imprison his heart as well as his body (vv. 1925-1926) he answers in the fashion of an idolizing troubadour:

> - Dame, fet il, la force vient
> de mon cuer, qui a vos se tient;
> an ce voloir m'a mes cuers mis.
> - Et qui le cuer, biax dolz amis?
> - Dame, mi oel. - Et les ialz, qui?
> - La granz biautez qu'i a forfet?
> - Dame, tant que amer me fet.
> - Amer? Et cui? - Vos, dame chiere.
> - Moi? - Voire voir. - An quel meniere?

- An tel que graindre estre ne puet;
en tel que de vos ne se muet
mes cuers, n'onques aillors nel truis;
an tel qu'aillors pansser ne puis;
en tel que toz a vos m'otroi;
an tel que plus vos aim que moi;
en tel, s'il vos plest, a delivre
que por vos vuel morir ou vivre. (vv. 2017-2034)

Thus they are quickly reconciled. Yvain agrees to become the defender of the fountain "vers toz homes". She presents him to her council of knights of whom Lunete had said (vv. 1632-1633)"...une chanberiere ne valent tuit". On their advice and also because of "qu'Amors a feire li comande" (v. 2141) the wedding is celebrated.[4] With this state of affairs the first part of the romance can be said to have found its conclusion:

Mes or est mes sire Yvains sire,
et li morz est toz obliez;
cil qui l'ocist est mariez;
sa fame a, et ensanble gisent;
et les genz ainment plus et prisent
le vif c'onques le mort ne firent. (vv. 2166-2171)

The "bele conjointure" is provided by the arrival of Arthur and his knights at the fountain. Yvain fulfills his duty and rushes to defend it. He unhorses the first knight to brave him, the seneschal Keu, and then reveals his identity and invites Arthur and his men to his castle. Several days of festivities follow. When the guests are ready to depart, they beg Yvain to come with them. It is Gauvain, the knight par excellence, who speaks the decisive words that sway Yvain's inclination and determine the course of the romance:

---

[4] The practical aspect of a prompt remarriage is drastically demonstrated in Girard de Viane, where the heroine says to Charlemagne: "A quoi sert le deuil? Donnez-moi un autre mari, donnez-moi un mari bien puissant."

-Comant! seroiz vos or de cax,
ce disoit mes sire Gauvains,
qui por leur fames valent mains?
Honiz soit de sainte Marie
qui por anpirier se marie!
Amander doit de bele dame
qui l'a a amie ou a fame,
que n'est puis droiz que ele l'aint
que ses los et ses pris remaint. (vv. 2486-2494)

The problem is a familiar one. It is the question of the relationship between chivalry and amour courtois, of the functions that these two basic occupations of the knight should fulfill in respect to each other. Again, as in Erec et Enide, the danger of being considered a recreant is faced by the hero. When Gauvain bids Yvain

Ronpez le frain et le chevoistre,
s'irons tornoier moi et vos... (vv. 2502-2503)

Yvain hesitates no longer between love and adventure and asks leave of his wife. He asks her for permission to escort the King and to attend at tournaments, that no one may reproach his indolence. He wants to seek adventure, he tells her, "por vostre enor et por la moie" (v. 2554), thus emphasizing the elevating function of adventure for both lady and knight. This is true even in marriage according to Chretien. Lazar comments:

> Le mariage, s'il couronne un amour sincère, ne peut cependant pas être considéré par les époux comme une fin en soi. Le chevalier doit continuer à se montrer soucieux de sa renommée et améliorer ses vertus chevaleresques. Le mariage doit rendre meilleur, ennoblir. Ce que les troubadours réclament pour la fin'amors (l'amour en dehors du mariage), Chrétien l'exige pour la vie conjugale.[5]

With the humility of a fin amant Yvain asks for a year's leave. She grants it to him, warning him that her love would turn into hatred

---

[5]Lazar, op. cit., p. 248.

if he overstayed the term. She also gives him a magic ring which would preserve him from evils "Tant que de s'amie li sovaigne" (v. 2610), and Yvain parts "en aventure".

Parting is not easy. Chrétien uses the popular theory of the transposition of the heart: Yvain leaves his heart with Laudine:

> Li cuers a boene remenance
> et li cors vit en esperance
> de retorner au cuer arriere; (vv. 3657-2659)

The year passes. Modern critics often cast Laudine as the haughty domna, but the text shows her suffering in the absence of Yvain and counting the days until his return:

> Car qui ainme, il est en espans,
> mes tote nuit conte et asome,
> n'onques ne puet panre boen some,
> les jorz qui vienent et qui vont. (vv. 2758-2761)

Gauvain and Yvain are the heroes of many a tournament, and the life of adventure so captivates Yvain that he forgets to keep his promise to his wife. One day, after returning from a tournament, he remembers suddenly that he has overstayed his leave. He is ashamed and he can barely hold back his tears. At this moment a damsel rides into the camp and extends greetings of her lady Laudine to everyone present, except to Yvain:

> ... Yvain,
> le mancongier, le tricheor,
> le desleal, le guileor,
> qu'il l'a guilee et deceue;
> bien a sa guile aparceue
> qu'il se feisoit verais amerres,
> s'estoit fos, souduianz et lerres; (vv. 2720-2726)

She takes his ring and tells him never to come back. Yvain is in deep distress. He begins to hate himself, and in desperation he flees the

assembly of knights. Madness overcomes him:

> Lors se li monte uns torbeillons
> el chief, si grant que il forsane; (vv. 2806-2807)

Since Laudine has broken her relationship with him he sees the futility of his adventures. They become devoid of meaning. Adventure for adventure's sake is an unworthy occupation for a knight. It does not complement his love nor does it bring about the mental growth process that the adventure in the service of a lady brings. He is therefore no longer a part of society. Naked and out of his senses he wanders in the wilderness. His transgression against courtoisie has thrust him to the very bottom of the social scale. This condition of Yvain is the beginning of his struggle to return to a meaningful place in society.

It is a woman who heals him from his madness, and immediately he embarks upon a new course of adventures. These are seen by some scholars as a series of unrelated episodes that culminate in Yvain's return to Laudine's good graces. Others, however, see in them a very carefully constructed series of episodes each of which adds something to Yvain's character, his self-confidence, and his reputation. They are of a social, charitable nature, and they are an attempt to regain the graces of Laudine. In a forest he encounters a lion fighting with a snake. He kills the snake. The lion becomes attached to Yvain like a good-natured dog. The episode is obviously symbolical. Fierz-Monnier believes:

> Den Kampf zwischen Löwe und Schlange, den der Mensch Yvain zu Gunsten des Löwen entscheidet, könnte man als den Zusammenprall zweier entgegengesetzter Mächte auffassen. Der Löwe würde einen naturhaft-feurigen und vital'männlichen Instinkt, die Schlange aber eine gefährliche dunkle und untergründige Macht darstellen. Es

kommt darauf an, daß die vitale Energie nicht von der untergründigen Macht verschlungen wird.[6]

A more obvious symbolism is the one pointed out by Myrrha Borodine:

Ce lion devient dans notre roman le symbole vivant de la fidelité dans l'attachement. Aussi Yvain qui s'appelle lui-même le Chevalier au lion met en lumière le caractère de son amour pour sa dame. Le lion est donc pour lui en même temps un reproche, un exemple et un encouragement.[7]

With the help of the lion Yvain has several adventures, all of a charitable nature. He is on his way to become again a courtly knight. "Los" and "pris" are important to him. He wants to see his "pris croistre" (v. 2499). Society has to be a witness. Yvain knows it:

> Que por neant prant sa bonte
> qui vialt qu'eb ne soit seue. (vv. 4274-4275)

It is significant that Yvain now becomes known as the "Chevalier au lion". This is his new name that he is "creating" for himself. It signals his new identity.

Yvain's final reconciliation is brought about by a ruse. Laudine meets the Chevalier au lion without recognizing him. She has pity on him because he tells her that he suffers from the wrath of his lady. The comical vein of the romance is again evident in her answer:

> - Certes, fet ele, ce me poise,
> ne tieng mie por tres cortoise
> la dame qui mal cuer vos porte. (vv. 4687-4589)

---

[6] Antoinette Fierz-Monnier. Initiation und Wandlung (Bern: Francke, 1951), p. 57.

[7] Myrrha Borodine. La Femme dans l'oeuvre de Chrétien de Troyes. (Paris: Picard, 1909), p. 224.

Yvain leaves and goes to the court of Arthur where he is engaged in a duel with Gauvain who does not recognize him either. The duel ends in a draw, and the two friends find each other. Happiness and glory reign at the court of Arthur.

But Yvain is still unhappy. The glories of adventure do not satisfy him now without the love of Laudine. In a desperate effort he goes to the fountain in the forest of Broceliande and raises a terrible storm.[8] Lunete, who knows of Yvain, suggests to the lady to ask for the help of the Chevalier au lion and to help him in return in regaining the good graces of his lady. Laudine agrees. When she discovers the truth she cannot break her promise. Her rancor and her hurt pride vent themselves in bitter accusations. Yvain assumes the role of the penitent sinner,

> et dit: Dame, misericorde
> doit an de pecheor avoir.
> Conpare ai mon nonsavoir
> et je le voil bien conparer.
> Folie me mist demorer,
> si m'an rant corpable et forfet,
> et molt grant hardemant ai fet
> quant devant vos osai venir;
> mes s'or me volez retenir,
> ja mes ne vos forferai rien. (vv. 6770-6779)

Laudine speaks the redeeming words:

> - Certes, fet ele, je voel bien,
> por ce que parjure seroie
> se tot mon pooir n'en feisoie,
> la pes feire antre vos et moi;
> s'il vos plest, je la vos otroi. (vv. 6780-6784)

Thus Chrétien concludes his romance. To add anything further, he remarks, would only be lies.

---

[8] Myrrha Borodine, ibid., p. 231 considers this action of Yvain a "deus ex machina".

This romance exemplifies most clearly of all of Chrétien's work his theory concerning the question of how to reconcile love and adventure. The true knight must not forsake one for the other. Yvain, in following the advice of Gauvain, avoids the mistake of Erec. He does not become recreant to society by spending all his time in his wife's bed instead of going out into the world in quest of adventures helpful to mankind in distress. But he commits an error as grievous as that committed by Erec. He becomes a recreant to the love he feels for his wife - by forsaking love for adventure. By his lack of mesure these two basic features of the knight do not complement each other. Yvain is punished, but by his subsequent behavior he reestablishes his reputation as a courtly knight through a conscious effort to raise his valor by various adventures of chivalry, aiding the weak and the oppressed. This type of adventure is different from the aimless jousting games he had enjoyed with Gauvain. It raises him again to the level where he is worthy of amour courtois.

Laudine, unlike Enide or Soredamors, reminds us of Guenièvre by her dominating role. Yvain's position is not unlike that of a lover in troubadour poetry. But in this romance the "service d'amour" is adapted to Chrétien's taste. It is meaningful and it emphasizes the ennobling function of chivalrous adventure within the framework of marriage, which in this work is far more than the tribute paid by Lancelot to the Queen. The two factors of love and adventure are finally brought into proper equilibrium and contribute to the happiness of the married couple. Therefore both love and adventure are constructive forces.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the love theme in twelfth century French literature shows clearly a great diversity, a diversity that cannot be lumped together and described with any pretense of accuracy with a single term, such as "Courtly Love". It would also be inaccurate to state that the fin'amors of the troubadours was adopted and imitated by the poets of the North without stating at the same time that it was generally modified to a degree where it lost its salient characteristics, most notably the inaccessibility of the celebrated object of love with its attendant ethereal qualities. This inaccessibility was overcome in the North by a process of maturation and self-realization through chivalric virtues which elevated the aspirant to a higher plane of consciousness of himself and the world, and on this plane he could expect to join courtly society and attain its radiant center, the courtly lady. This ethic of chivalry, of course, was limited to the relatively educated leisure class, the nobility, but it was to have a decisive impact in the centuries to come on all of western civilization.

The existence of amour courtois as a medieval concept has been contested by D. W. Robertson[1] and others. The term was coined by Gaston Paris

---

[1] D. W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives (Princeton, 1962).

in his article on "Lancelot".[2] But the detailed definition of Gaston Paris, with its emphasis on a furtive and extremely submissive relationship of the lover to a superior and even haughty lady, can be applied accurately only to the Chevalier de la Charrette and not to Chrétien's other romances. We cannot at all speak of amour courtois in the Tristan legend, where the amour passion lacks the quality of control that the courtly lover has over his fate. The early romances lack the psychological insights into the complexities of human sentiment that a Chrétien de Troyes would come to grasp and express. Each author, then as now, impressed his own views on the subject, and variations are evident even within the work of a single author.[3]

The four romances of Chrétien that we have studied in chronological order show a distinct development of the sentiment of love. Love and adventure are complementary forces in the work of Chrétien. Knighthood must constantly be reasserted. But it can never be a sterile occupation; the knight has to dedicate his exploits to a worthy cause. In the chansons de geste this cause is God and Country; in the courtly romance it is the love of a lady. The ideal knight, according to Chrétien, is inspired by his lady's love and seeks glory in adventure, glory that will increase his valor and that will also reflect on the one who loves and inspires him. This is the basis of his amour courtois. It is evident that in such a

---

[2]Gaston Paris, "Lancelot," Romania 12 (1883): 518 ff.

[3]In contrast to the modern writer, who consciously seeks originality, the medieval author generally likes to refer to some source or scriptural authority for his story. He nevertheless leaves his imprint in style and views.

relationship between knight and lady both love and adventure are positive values.

This concept does not conform to the stark realities of twelfth century social customs. Yet it appealed to a taste of préciosité in an aristocratic audience, who saw itself idealized. Robert Guiette writes:[4]

> Certes, l'amour courtois est un jeu. Il est plus ou moins orthodoxe, plus ou moins hérétique. Mais il ne saurait correspondre à la réalite d'une époque qui fut brutale. Il vise au contraire à affiner une société qui semblait le désirer.

The characters of Chrétien's narrative move in a setting of fairy-tale and magic, although we are often given precise descriptive data on time and place. "Réalisme magique", Anthime Fourrier calls it.[5] The psychology of his characters, however, is very realistic. Laudine, alone, could be the subject of an interesting psychological study. The lengthy self-examinations of the protagonists, especially in Cligès, may seem overdone to some modern readers, but medieval audiences may well have found them delectable. Chrétien's frequent and witty authorial interventions and the sparkling elegance and light spirit in many of his passages, rarely tire the reader.

Chrétien also shows himself as a realist in his aim to reconcile love and marriage. He disapproves of the ethereal inaccessibility of the domna of troubadour poetry and does not accpet the contemporary principle of incompatibility between love and marriage. He replaces the "domna" with the ideal double role of fame et amie. He condemns illicit passion,

---

[4]Robert Guiette, "Sur quelques vers de Cligès," Romania 91 (1970), p. 175.

[5]Anthime Fourrier, Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge (Paris:Nizet, 1960), p. 111.

as in the Tristan, and celebrates married love as the guarantor of happiness and harmony. It is significant that this idea of Chrétien was not within the mainstream of twelfth century social consciousness. "Qui a le coeur, si ait le corps", says Fénice in Cligès. This choice, according to Chrétien, must be a matter of will, not of fate or fatality. The inception of love is spontaneous, but if this amour is to be courtois, it must be controlled within the context of chivalric virtues. Thus becomes "Amor fons et origo omnium bonorum". It must not be a passion that the lovers do not want, nor must it remove them from society any more than marriage should (as in Erec).

Various criticism have been leveled at the work of Chrétien. Perhaps one of the most severe is the one by Jessie Weston in her study of Lancelot:[6]

> Nor is Chrétien really successful in depicting lovers as lovers: they are little more than lay figures; they talk at great length, and indulge in analysis of their feelings, expressed in the most graceful and ingenious language; but one
>
> 'Iseut ma drue, Iseut ma vie,
> En vous ma mort, en vous ma vie!'
>
> is worth all Chrétien ever wrote on the subject; the breath of the God is not in it.

She further speaks of a lack of intensity of emotion and criticises the artificial setting at court, rather than the natural one of the woodlands. Her claims are convincingly countered by Douglas Kelly in his excellent

---

[6] Jessie L. Weston, The Legend of Sir Lancelot du Lac (London: Nutt, 1901), p. 54.

study of Lancelot.[7] Kelly points out that courtly conventions give meaning and form to amour courtois:

> It must be remembered that the Middle Ages believed in pageantry and convention, in ceremony as the only suitable way to express emotion; one held elaborate tournaments for enjoyment, one followed the rules of courtliness to express love. The very constraining effect of these conventions freely entered into gave to their emotions sharpness, an intensity, and a depth that have been lost on those who, like Miss Weston, suppose that to be sincere emotion must come forth unhindered by the trappings of conventions, no matter how old or venerable those conventions may be. The conceive love only as a release from constraint rather than a cause of constraint, and thereby expect the lovers to expend their emotions in less distinct and more stormy outbursts of passion. This type of love is not characteristic of the figures in the writings of Chrétien de Troyes. The courtly poets of Chrétien's time used intricate forms and and elevated style to translate their emotions; in a similar spirit Chrétien has Lancelot and Guenevere conform to the idealized patterns of courtly behavior. For him, this was the only suitable way to express the beauty and worth of their experience. From such a conception of love and the lover's conduct there results a tension between convention and emotion that gives meaning to the former and depth and durability to the latter; the lover's passion is anchored in his heart by its prolonged intensity and isrenderedmore beautiful by the care with which it is borne and expressed.[8]

W. W. Comfort in the preface to his translation of Chrétien's work accuses the author of lack of proportion, vain repetitions, insufficient motivation, wearisome subtleties, and indelicacy.[9] Comfort does not go beyond a mere statement of these accusations, and one suspects that they are merely his personal impressions. Other readers may find the subtleties not at all wearisome, nor the repetitions vain. As for the indelicacies, a Chrétien would have been shocked, could he have read the writings of his colleagues of some eight hundred years later.

---

[7] Douglas Kelly, Sens and Conjointure in the Chevalier de la Charrette (The Hague, Paris:Mouton, 1966).

[8] Ibid., pp. 240-241.

[9] Chrétien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances, translated and edited by W. W. Comfort (London and New York:Dutton, 1914, reprinted 1958), p. V.

The use of the miraculous in Chrétien's work must also be regarded in the light of the predilections of his medieval audience. The modern reader, accustomed to a well designed and realistic plot, does not care to see the deus ex machina come to the rescue. This, however, should not distract the modern reader from his appreciation of Chrétien, the psychologist of love. In his romances Chrétien is able to present variations of the theme love. Even when the "san et matière" are not his, he is capable of virtuosity. In his Yvain his own ideas on amour courtois are expressed in their full maturity. In the same work Chrétien's conception of love is crystallized in these lines (6045-6046):

> Amors qui n'est ni fausse ne fainte
> Est precieuse chose et sainte.

The Ovidain views on the subject were too earthy for Chrétien, troubadour fin'amors a vain dream. He was the first author in European literature who could conceive of a shudder that was not madness, an embrace that was not a dream, a marriage union that was not merely convenience or an ending, but balance and harmony within society and within the self.

The cynics would have it that all these romantic notions be banned, never to return, along with King Arthur, to a distant Avalon. But let us hope that this world will always be populated by some knights in shining armor - and some ladies who wish it to be so.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliographical Sources:

"A Bibliography of Critical Arthurian Literature," Modern Language Quarterly, 1940 to date. (For the period 1936 to date).

Boesuat, Robert. Manuel bibliographique de la littérature française du Moyen Age. Melun: Librairie d'Argences, 1951. (Supplement I: 1949-1953; suppl. II: 1954-1960).

Bulletin bibliographique de la société internationale arthurienne. Paris, 1949 to date. (French, Belgian, English, German and Austrian coverage from 1939; American scholarship since 1948).

Fisher, John Hunt. The Medieval Literature of Western Europe, A Review of Research, Mainly 1930-1960. Syracuse: New York University Press, 1966.

Holmes, Urban Tigner. A Critical Bibliography of French Literature, I. The Mediaeval Period. Revised ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952.

Klapp, Otto. Bibliographie der französischen Literaturwissenschaft. Frankfurt am Main, 1960. Since then biannually.

Marx, Jean. Nouvelles recherches sur la littérature arthurienne. Paris: Klincksieck, 1965.

"French Literature, Including Provençal," PMLA, 1926 to date, annually.

Williams, Harry F. "French Arthurian Scholarship Since Bruce," Symposium 10 (1956): 112-118.

Primary Texts:

Bernard de Ventadour. Bernard von Ventadorn, Seine Lieder, mit Einleitung und Glossar. Ed. Carl Appel. Halle: Niemeyer, 1915.

Cercamon. Les Poésies de Cercamon. Ed. Alfred Jeanroy. Paris: Champion, 1922. (Classiques Français du Moyen Age 27).

Châtelain de Coucy. Die Lieder des Castellans von Coucy. Ed. F. Fath. Heidelberg: Horning, 1833.

Chrétien de Troyes. Le Chevalier au lion. Ed. Mario Roques. Paris: Champion, 1960. (C.F.M.A. 89).

Chrétien de Troyes. Le chevalier de la charrete. Ed. Mario Roques. Paris: Champion, 1958. (C.F.M.A. 86).

Chrétien de Troyes. Cligès. Ed. Mario Roques. Paris: Champion, 1956. (C.F.M.A. 84).

Chrétien de Troyes. Erec et Enide. Ed. Mario Roques. Paris: Champion, 1952. (C.F.M.A. 80).

Conon de Béthune. Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune. Ed. A. Wallenskold. Paris: Champion, 1921. (C.F.M.A. 24).

Enéas. Ed. Salverda de Grave. Paris: Champion, 1925. (C.F.M.A.).

Gace Brulé. Gace Brulé. Ed. Petersen Dyggve. Helsinki, 1951.

Guillaume IX. Les Chansons de Guillaume IX, duc d'Aquitaine. 2nd. ed. Ed. Alfred Jeanroy. Paris: Champion, 1927. (C.F.M.A. 9).

Guiot de Provins. Les Oeuvres de Guiot de Provins. Ed. J. Orr. Manchester University Press, 1915.

Marcabru. Poésies complètes du troubadour Marcabru. Ed. J.M.L. Dejanne. Toulouse: Privat, 1909.

Marie de France. Lais. Ed. A. Ewert. Oxford: Blackwell, 1944.

Le Roman de Thèbes. Ed. L. Constans. Paris: Didot, 1890. (S.A.T.F.).

Le Roman de Tristan (Béroul). Ed. Ed. Muret. 4th revised edition by L.M. Defourques. Paris: Champion, 1947. (C.F.M.A. 12)

Le Roman de Tristan (Thomas), Poème du XIIe siècle. 2 vols. Ed. J. Bedier. Paris: Bidot, 1902-1905. ("Société des Anciens Textes Français" 46).

Le Roman de Troie. Ed. L. Constans. Paris: Didot, 1904-1912. (S.A.T.F.)

Translations:

Chrétien de Troyes. Arthurian Romances. Translated and edited by W. W. Comfort. London and New York, 1914; latest printing 1958.

Chrétien de Troyes. Yvain. Bilingual edition (German), translation and introduction by Ilse Nolting-Hauff. München: Eidos Verlag, 1962. ("Klassische Texte des Romanischen Mittelalters").

Medieval Literature (General):

Bédier, Joseph and Hazard, Paul. Littérature Française. Vol. I. Ed. Pierre Martino. Paris: Larousse, 1948.

Bethurum, Dorothy (ed.). Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Borst, Arno. "Das Rittertum im Hochmittelalter", Saeculum 10 (1959): 213-231.

Bossuat, Robert. "Le Moyen Age" in Histoire de la littérature française. Vol. I. Series published under the direction of Joseph Calvet. Paris: Fayard, 1931.

Cohen, Gustave. Histoire de la chevalerie au moyen âge. Paris: Dalandier, 1949.

_____. La Vie littéraire en France au Moyen Age. Paris: Dalandier, 1949.

Haskins, Charles H.. The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927.

Heer, Friedrich. The Medieval World. New York: World Publishing Company, 1961. (Mentor Book).

Holmes, Urban T., Jr. A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300. New York: F.S. Crofts, 1937.

Jackson, W.T.H. The Literature of the Middle Ages. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Kelly, Amy. Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Kukenheim, Louis and Roussel, Henri. Guide de la littérature française du Moyen Age. Leiden (Netherlands): Leiden University Press, 1959.

Le Gentil, Pierre. La littérature française du Moyen Age. Paris: Colin, 1963.

Martin, A. "Das Problem der mittelalterlichen Weltanschauung," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift 3 (1925): 448f.

Painter, Sidney. French Chivalry, Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1951.

Pauphilet, Albert. Le Legs du Moyen Age. Melun: Librairie d'Argences, 1950.

Pernoud, Régine. Lumière du Moyen Age. Paris: Grasset, 1944.

Robertson, D. W., Jr. "Some Medieval Literary Terminology," Studies in Philology 48 (1951): 669-692.

Rocher, Daniel. "Tradition latine et morale chevaleresque," Etudes Germaniques 19 (1964): 127-141.

Rohr, Rupprecht. "Zur Skala der ritterlichen Tugenden in der altprovenzalischen und altfranzösischen Dichtung, Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 78 (1962): 292-325.

Schrobler, Ingeborg. "Von den Grenzen des Verstehens Mittelalterlicher Dichtung," Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift 13 (1963): 1-14.

Tatlock, J.S.P. "Interpreting Literature by History," Speculum 12 (1937): 390-395.

Vignaux, Paul. La Pensée au Moyen Age. Paris: Colin, 1938.

Vinaver, Eugene. "A la recherche d'une poétique médiévale," Cahiers de Civilisation médiévale 2 (1959): 1-16.

Voretzsch, Carl. Altfranzösische Literatur. Halle: Niemeyer, 1925.

Zumthor, Paul. Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954.

Lyric Poetry:

Anglade, Joseph. Les Troubadours, leurs vies, leurs oeuvres, leur influence. 3rd ed. Paris: Colin, 1922.

_____. Histoire sommaire de la littérature méridionale au moyen âge, des origines à la fin du 15e siècle. Paris: Boccard, 1921.

Appel, Carl. "Zu Marcabru," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 43 (1923): 403-469.

Axhausen, Käte, Theorien über den Ursprung der provenzalischen Minne. Marburg: Nolte, 1937.

Belperron, Pierre. Joie d'Amour. Contribution à l'étude des troubadours et l'amour courtois. Paris: Plon, 1948.

_____. La Croisade contre les Albigeois et l'union du Languedoc à la France (1209-1249). Paris: Plon, 1942.

Bezzola, Reto. "Guillaume IX et les origines de l'amour courtois," Romania 66 (1940): 145-237.

_____. Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200). 3 vols. Paris: Champion, 1944-1963.

Boutière, J. and Schutz, A. Biographie des Troubadours. Paris: Didier, 1950.

Briffault, Robert. Les Troubadours et le sentiment romanesque. Paris: Les Editions du Chêne, 1945.

Chabaneau, Camille, Biographie des troubadours. Toulouse: Privat, 1885.

Cluzel, J. "Jaufré Rudel et l'Amor de lonh," Romania 78 (1957): 86-97.

_____ and Pressouyre, L. Les Origines de la Poésie lyrique d'oïl et les premiers trouvères. Paris: Nizet, 1962.

Davenson, Henri. Les Troubadours. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1961.

Denomy, Alexander. "Fin'Amors: The Pure Love of the Troubadours, its Amorality and Possible Source," Medieval Studies 7 (1945): 139-207.

_____. The Heresy of Courtly Love. New York: Candlemass, 1947.

_____. "Joie among the early Troubadours: its Meaning and Possible Source," Medieval Studies 8 (1951): 177-217.

Diez, Friedrich. Leben und Werke der Troubadours: Ein Beitrag zur näheren Kenntnis des Mittelalters. 2nd enlarged edition by Karl Bartsch. Hildesheim: Olms, 1965. (Reprint).

Ecker, L. Arabischer, provenzalischer und deutscher Minnesang. (Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung). Bern: Francke, 1934.

Errante, Guido. Sulla lirica romanza delle origini. New York: Vanni, 1943.

Frank, Donald. "On the Troubadour fin'amors," Romance Notes 7 (1966): 209-217.

Frank, G. "The Distant Love of Jaufré Rudel," Modern Language Notes 57 (1942): 528-534.

Frappier, Jean. La Poésie lyrique en France au 12e et 13e siècle. Paris: Les Cours de Sorbonne, 1954.

Gennrich, Friedrich. "Zu den Liedern des Conon de Béthune," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 42 (1922): 231ff.

Hoepffner, Ernst. Les Troubadours dans leurs vies et dans leurs oeuvres. Paris: Colin, 1955.

Jeanroy, Alfred. Bibliographie sommaire des chansonniers français du moyen âge. Paris: Champion, 1918. (C.F.M.A. 18).

_____. Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France qu moyen âge. 4th ed. Paris: Champion, 1965.

_____. La Poésie lyrique des troubadours. Paris: Didier, 1934.

Köhler, Erich. Trobadorlyrik und höfischer Roman. Berlin: Lösing, 1962.

Lafitte-Houssat, Jacques. Troubadours et cours d'amour. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

Menendez Pidal, Ramon. España, Eslabon entre la Cristiandad y el Islam. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1956.

_____. España y su Historia. Madrid: Ediciones Minotauro, 1957.

Moore, O. H. "Jaufré Rudel and the Lady of Dreams," P.M.L.A. 29 (1914): 517-536.

Müller, G. "Ergebnisse und Aufgaben der Minnesangforschung," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift (1937): 106ff.

Nelli, Renée. L'Erotique des Troubadours. Toulouse: Privat, 1963.

_____. "La fin de l'amour provençal (1277-1350)," Table Ronde 97 (1956): 70-81.

Nykl, A. R. Hispano-Arabic Poetry and its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours. Baltimore: Furst, 1946.

_____. "L'Influence arabe-andalouse sur les troubadours," Bulletin Hispanique XLI (1939): 305-315.

Nykl, A. R. Troubadour Studies: A Critical Survey of Recent Books Published in this Field. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944.

Poiron, Daniel. Le Poète et le prince: L'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965.

Riquer, Martin de. Resumen de litteratura Provenzal Trovadoresca. Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1948.

Scheludko, Dimitri. "Über die Theorien der Liebe bei den Trobadors," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 60 (1940): 191-234.

Schrötter, W. Ovid und die Troubadours. Halle: Niemeyer, 1918.

Smythe, Barbara. Trobador Poets; selections from the trobadors. (translations, introduction, notes). New York: Cooper Square, 1966.

Spitzer, Leo. "L'amour lointain de Jaufré Rudel et le sens de la poésie des troubadours," Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

Stronski, Stanislaw. La Poésie et la réalité au temps des troubadours. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943.

Vinaver, Eugene. "A la recherche d'une poétique médiévale," Cahiers de Civilisation Medievale 1 (1959): 1-16.

Zumthor, Paul. "Au Berceau du lyrisme europeen," Cahiers du Sud 40 (1954)

The Theme of Amour Courtois:

Andreas Capellanus. The Art of Courtly Love. Translated and edited by John Jay Parry. 2nd. ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Coppin, Joseph. Amour et mariage dans la littérature française du nord au Moyen Age. Paris: Librairie d'Argences, 1961.

Collas, J. P. "The Romantic Hero of the 12th Century," in Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver, pp. 80-96. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1965.

Dawson, Christopher. "The Origins of the Romantic Tradition," Criterion 11 (1931-1932): 222-248.

Denomy, Alexander. "An Inquiry into the Origins of Courtly Love," Medieval Studies 6 (1944): 175-260.

_____. "Courtly Love and Courtliness," Speculum 28 (1953): 44-63.

Frappier, Jean. "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XIIe siècle," Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale II, 2 (1959): 135-156.

Fürstner, Hans. Studien zur Wesensbestimmung der Höfischen Minne. Proefschrift (Dr. Litt.) Groningen: Wolters, 1956.

Heyl, Karl. Die Theorie der Minne in den ältesten Minneromanen Frankreichs. Marburg: Ebel, 1911.

Lawlor, John (ed.). Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C.S. Lewis. London: Edward Arnold, 1966.

Lazar, Moshé. Amour courtois et "fin'amors" dans la littérature du XIIe siècle. (Bibliothèque française et romane. Serie C: Etudes littéraires, 8). Paris: Klincksieck, 1964.

_____. Idéologie et Casuistique de l'amour courtois dans la littérature du XIIe siècle. Paris: Klincksieck, 1957.

Lewis, C. S. The Allegory of Love: A study in Medieval Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon, 1936.

Lot-Borodine, Myrrha. De l'Amour profane à l'amour sacré. Etudes de psychologie sentimentale au Moyen Age. Paris: Nizet, 1961.

Kolb, Herbert. Der Begriffe der Minne und das Entstehen der Höfischen Lyrik. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1958.

Marrou, H. J. "Au dossier de l'amour courtois," Revue du moyen âge latin 3 (1947): 82ff.

Newman, F. X. (ed.) The Meaning of Courtly Love. (Papers of the first annual conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, March 17-18, 1967). Albany: State University of New York Press, 1968.

Nolting-Hauff, Ilse. Die Stellung der Liebeskasuistik im höfischen Roman. Heidelberger Forschungen 6, Heidelberg, 1959.

Paris, Gaston. "Amour courtois," Romania 12 (1883), p. 529.

Pillement, Georges. Anthologie de la Poésie amoureuse. Rennes: Le Bélier, 1954.

Schlösser, Felix. Andreas Capellanus, Seine Minnelehre und das christliche Weltbild um 1200. 2nd ed. Bonn: Bouvier, 1960.

Susskind, Norman. "Love and Laughter in the Romans Courtois," French Review 37 (1964): 651-657.

Wechssler, Eduard. Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs. Halle: Niemeyer, 1907.

Weigand, H. J. "Three Chapters on Courtly Love in Arthurian France and Germany," University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures (1956): 18-25.

Wilcox, J. "Defining Courtly Love," Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Literature. 12 (1930): 313-325.

Wind, Bartina. "Ce jeu subtil, l'Amour courtois," in Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune. Gembloux: Duculot, 1969; pp. 1257-1261.

The Development of the Romance:

Bezzola, Reto. Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200). Vol. I. Paris: Champion, 1944.

Fierz-Monnier, Antoinette. Initiation und Wandlung. Zur Geschichte des altfranzösischen Romans im zwölften Jahrhundert von Chrétien de Troyes zu Renaut de Beaujeu. Bern: Francke, 1951.

Fourrier, A. Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge. Paris: Nizet, 1960.

Frappier, Jean. Le Roman breton. Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1958.

Frappier, Jean. Les Romans courtois. Etudes et notes. Paris: Larousse, 1943.

Guiette, Robert. "Li conte de Bretaigne sont si vain et plaisant," Romania 88 (1967): 1-12.

Hofer, Stefan. "Studien zum höfischen Roman," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur 47 (1928-1929): 193-207; 267-306.

Kohler, Erich. Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der höfischen Epik. Studien zur Form der frühen Artus- und Graldichtung. Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, Beiheft 97, Tubingen, 1956.

_____. Trobadorlyrik und höfischer Roman. Berlin: Rutten & Loening, 1962.

Wilmotte, Maurice. Origines du roman en France. L'évolution du sentiment romanesque jusqu'en 1240. Paris: Boivin, 1942.

The Development of Arthurian Literature:

Brogsitter, Karl Otto. Artusepik. (Realienbücher für Germanisten) Stuttgart: Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965.

Bruce, James Douglas. The Evolution of Arthurian Romance from the Beginning down to the Year 1300. Baltimore & Göttingen, 1923. 2nd edition: Gloucester, Massachusetts: P. Smith, 1958.

Faral, Edmond. La Légende arthurienne. Etudes et documents. 3 vols. Paris: Champion, 1929.

Loomis, Roger Sherman. (ed.). Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History. Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.

_____. Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance. New York: Columbia University Press, 1927.

Marx, Jean. Nouvelles recherches sur le cycle arthurien. Paris: Klincksieck, 1965.

Williams, Harry F. "French Arthurian Scholarship since Bruce," Symposium 10 (1956): 112-118.

Marie de France:

Cargo, Robert T. "Marie de France's Le Laustic and Ovid's Metamorphoses," Comparative Literature 18 (1966): 162-166.

Conigliani, Camilla. "L'amore e l'avventura nei 'Lais' di Maria di Francia," Archivum romanicum 2 (1918): 281-295.

Damon, S. Foster. "Marie de France. Psychologist of Courtly Love," PMLA 44 (1928): 968-996.

Donovan, Mortimer J. The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969.

_____. "Lai du Lecheur. A Reinterpretation," Romanic Review 43 (1952): 81-86.

Foulet, Lucien, "Marie de France et les lais bretons," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 29 (1905): 19-56; 293-322.

Francis, E. A. "Marie de France et son temps," Romania 72 (1951): 78-99.

Hatcher, Anna G. "Le lai du Chievrefueil, 61-78, 107-113," Romania 71 (1950): 330-344.

Hofer, Stefan. "Der Tristanroman und der 'Lai du Chievrefueil' der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 69 (1953): 129-131.

_____. "Zur Beurteilung der Lais der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 66 (1950): 409-421.

Holmes, Urban Tigner. "New Thoughts on Marie de France," Speculum 29 (1932): 1-10.

Robertson, D. W. "Love Conventions in Marie's Equitain," Romanic Review 44 (1953): 241-247.

Schürr, Friedrich. "Komposition und Symbolik in den Lais der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 50 (1930): 556-582.

Spitzer, Leo. "Marie de France, Dichterin von Problemmärchen," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 50 (1930): 29-67.

Wathelet-Willem, Jeanne. "Un lai de Marie de France: Les deux amants," in Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune. Gembloux: Ducolot, 1969.

Wind, Bartina. "L'idéologie courtoise dans les lais de Marie de France," in Mélanges Delbouille, vol. II. Gembloux (Belgium): Ducolot, 1964.

The "Matiere de Tristan":

Bertin, Gerald A. "The Oedipus Complex in 'Tristan et Iseut," Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly 5 (1957): 60-65.

Fisher, John H. "Tristan and Courtly Love," Comparative Literature 9 (1957): 150-164.

Frappier, Jean. "Structure et sens du Tristan: Version commune, version courtoise," Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale 6 (1963): 255-279; 441-454.

Hofer, Stefan. "Streitfragen zur altfranzösischen Literatur: Die Komposition des Tristan-Romans," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 56 (1936): 257ff.

Jodogne, Omer. "Comment Thomas d'Angleterre a compris l'amour de Tristan et d'Iseut," Les Lettres Romanes 19 (1965): 103-119.

Le Gentil, Pierre. "La légende de Tristan vue par Béroul et par Thomas. Essai d'interpretation," Romance Philology 7 (1953/1954): 111-129.

Marx, Jean. "La naissance de l'amour de Tristan et d'Iseut dans les formes les plus anciennes de la légende," Romanische Forschungen 9 (1955): 167-173.

Newstead, Helaine. "Isolt of the White Hands and Tristan's Marriage," Romance Philology 19 (1965): 155-166.

Pauphilet, Albert. Le Legs du Moyen Age. Melun: Librairie d'Argences, 1950. (Cf. pp. 107-142).

Rougemont, Denis de. L'Amour et l'Occident. Paris: Plon, 1939. (Cf. pp. 1-154).

Van Dam, Jan. "Tristanprobleme," Neophilologus 15 (1929/1930): 18-34; 88-105; 183-201.

West, C. B. Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature. New York: Haskell House, 1966.

Chrétien de Troyes (General):

Benton, John. "The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center," Speculum 36 (1961): 551-591.

Bezzola, Reto Roberto. Le sens de l'aventure et de l'amour, Chrétien de Troyes. Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1947.

_____. "Zur künstlerischen Persönlichkeit Chrétiens," Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen 176 (1935): 42-54.

Cohen, Gustave. Un grand romancier d'amour et d'aventure au XIIe siècle, Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre. Paris: Boivin, 1931; 2nd edition 1949.

Cohn, Robert G. "From Chrétien to Camus: Plumes and Prisons," Modern Language Notes 80 (1965): 601-609.

Colby, Alice M. The Portrait in 12th Century French Literature: An Example of the Stylistic Originality of Chrétien de Troyes. Genève: Droz, 1965.

Foerster, Wendelin. Wörterbuch zu Kristian von Troyes sämtlichen Werken. Revised edition by Hermann Breuer. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1964.

Frappier, Jean. Chrétien de Troyes, l'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1957. ("Connaissance des lettres")

Grimm, Charles. "Chrétien de Troyes' attitude towards woman," Romanic Review 16 (1925): 236-243.

Guyer, Foster, Erwin. Chrétien de Troyes: Inventor of the Modern Novel. New York: Bookman Associates, 1957.

_____. "The Influence of Ovid on Chrétien de Troyes," Romanic Review 11 (1921): 97-134; 216-247.

_____. Romance in the Making - Chrétien de Troyes and the Earliest French Romances. New York: S.F. Vanni, 1954.

Hofer, Stefan. "Beiträge zu Kristians Werken," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 48 (1922): 343-350.

Hofer, Stefan. Chrétien de Troyes, Leben und Werke des altfranzösischen Epikers. Graz: Böhlaus, 1954.

Kellermann, Wilhelm. "Wege und Ziele der neuen Chrétien de Troyes Forschung," Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift 23 (1935): 204-228.

Klenke, Sister M. Amelia. "Chrétien de Troyes and 12th Century Tradition," Speculum 62 (1965): 635-646.

Köhler, Erich, "Le role de la coutume dans les romans de Chrétien," Romania 81 (1960): 386-397.

Loomis, Roger Sherman. Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949.

Lot-Borodine, Myrrha. La femme et l'amour au XIIe siècle, d'après les poèmes de Chrétien de Troyes. Paris: Picard, 1909.

Micha, Alexandre. La Tradition manuscrite des romans de Chrétien de Troyes. Paris: Droz, 1939.

Nitze, William A. "Sans et Matière dans les oeuvres de Chrétien de Troyes," Romania 44 (1915-1917): 14-36.

Payen, Jean Charles. "Les valeurs humaines chez Chrétien de Troyes," in Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune. Gembloux: Duculot, 1969; pp. 1087-1101.

Reinhard, J. R. Chrétien de Troyes. A Bibliographical Essay. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1932.

Titchener, F. H. "The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes," Romanic Review 16 (1925)

Tyssens, Madeleine. "Une si granz clartez," Medium Aevum 69 (1963): 229-313.

Vigneras, Louis-Andre. "Chrétien de Troyes rediscovered," Modern Philology 32 (1934-1935): 341-342.

Woods, William S. "The Plot Structure in Four Romances of Chrétien de Troyes," Studies in Philology 50 (1953): 1-15.

Chrétien de Troyes: Erec et Enide:

Adler, Alfred. "Sovereignty as the Principle of Unity in Chrétien's Erec," PMLA 60 (1945): 917-936.

Bang, Carol. "Emotions and Attitudes in Chrétien de Troyes' Erec et Enide and Hartmann von Aue's Erec der Wunderaere," PMLA 57 (1942): 297-326.

Frappier, Jean. "La brieure du couplet dans Erec et Enide," Romania 86 (1965): 1-21.

Hoepffner, Ernst. "'Matière et sens' dans le roman d'Erec et Enide," Archivum romanicum 18 (1934): 433-450.

Hofer, Stefan. "Alexanderroman Erec und die späteren Werke Christans," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 60 (1940): 241-269.

_____. "Erec Studien," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 62 (1942): 19-32.

_____. "Die Problemstellung im Erec," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 48 (1928): 123-128.

Hruby, Antonin. "Die Problemstellung in Chrétiens und Hartmanns Erec," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift 38 (1964): 337-360.

Kolz, W. "Erecs und Enidens Läuterungsfahrt. Eine Untersuchung über den Aufbau des Erec des Chrétien de Troyes," Germanisch-Romanische Monatasschrift 18 290-308.

Küchler, Walter. "Über den sentimentalen Gehalt der Haupthandlung in Crestiens 'Erec' und 'Yvain'," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 40 (1921): 83-99.

Lot, Ferdinsnd. "L'Episode des larmes d'Enide dans Erec," Romania 28 (1899): 1-48; 341-347.

_____. "Les Noces d'Erec et d'Enide," Romania 46 (1920): 39-45.

Meyer-Lübke, Wilhelm. "Chrestien von Troyes, Erec und Enide," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur 44 (1916): 129-188.

Newstead, Helaine. "The 'Joie de la Cort' Episode in Erec and the Horn of Bran," PMLA 51 (1936): 13-25.

Nitze, William. "Conjointure in Erec vs. 14," Modern Language Notes 69 (1954): 180-181.

_____. "Erec and the Joy of the Court," Speculum 29 (1954): 691-701.

_____. "Yvain and the Myth of the Fountain," Speculum 30 (1955): 170-179.

Sheldon, E. S. "Why Does Chrestien's Erec Treat Enide so Harshly?" Romanic Review 5 (1914): 115-126.

Woodbridge. "Chrétien's Erec as a Cornelian Hero," Romanic Review 6 (1915).

Zaddy, Z. P. "Pourquoi Erec se décide-t-il à partir en voyage avec Enide?" Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale 7 (1964): 179-185.

Chrétien de Troyes: Cligès:

Franz, A. "Die reflektierte Handlung im Cligès," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 47 (1927): 61-68.

Frappier, Jean. Cligès. Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1952.

Hammel, A. G. van, "Cligès et Tristan," Romania 33 (1904): 465-489.

Micha, Alexandre. Prolegomènes à une édition de Cligès. Paris: Société d'Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1938.

_____. "Tristan et Cligès," Neophilologus 36 (1952): 1-10.

Paris, Gaston. "Cligès," in his Mélanges de la littérature française du Moyen Age. Paris: Champion, 1912, pp. 229-327.

Robertson, D. W. "Chrétien's Cligès and the Ovidian Spirit," Comparative Literature 7 (1955): 32-42.

Chrétien de Troyes: Le Chevalier de la Charrette:

Adler, Alfred. "A Note on the Composition of Chrétien's Charrette," Modern Language Review 45 (1950): 33-39.

Cross, Tom P. Lancelot and Guenevere: a Study in the Origins of Courtly Love. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.

Foulon, Charles. "Les deux humiliations de Lancelot," Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne 8 (1956): 79-80.

Fowler, David C. "L'amour dans le Lancelot de Chrétien," Romania 91 (1970): 378-391

Jonin, Pierre. "Le Vasselage de Lancelot dans le 'Conte de la Charrette'," Le Moyen Age 58 (1952): 281-298.

Kelly, Douglas. "Two Problems in Chrétien's Charrette: The Boundary of Gorre and the Use of Novele," Neophilologus 48 (1964): 115-121.

_____. Sens and Conjointure in the Chevalier de la Charrette. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1966.

Lyons, Nathan. "Chrétien's Lancelot and Perceval: Some Contrasts in Method, Style, and the Nature of Love," University Review (Kansas City) 31 (1965): 313-318.

Maranini, Lorenza. "Queste e amore cortese nel Chevalier de la charete," Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate 2 (1951): 204-223.

Micha, Alexandre. "Sur les sources de la Charrette," Romania 71 (1950): 348-358.

Roques, Mario. "Pour l'interpretation du Chevalier de la Charrette de Chrétien de Troyes," Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale 2 (1957): 141-152.

Rychner, Jean. "Le Prologue du Chevalier de la Charrette et l'interprétation du roman," in Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune. Gembloux: Duculot, 1969; pp. 1121-1136.

_____. "Le Sujet et la signification du Chevalier de la Charrette," Vox Romanica 27 (1968): 50-76.

Southword, Elaine. "The Unity of Chrétien's Lancelot," in Mélanges Mario Roques, vol. 2 Paris, 1953; pp. 281-290.

Weigand, Herman. Three Chapters on Courtly Love in Arthurian France and Germany: Lancelot, Andreas Capellanus, Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzifal. (University of North Carolina Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, 17) Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956.

Chrétien de Troyes: Le Chevalier au Lion:

Auerbach, Erich. "Der Auszug des höfischen Ritters," in Mimesis. Bern: Francke, 1946; pp. 123-140.

Babilas, Wolfgang. "Chrétien de Troyes: Yvain, Verse 1-6," Archiv 196 (1960): 296-315.

Brown, A. C. L. "Chrétien's Yvain," Modern Philology 9 (1912): 109-128.

Foulon, Charles. "Le Rou de Wace, l'Yvain de Chrétien de Troyes et Eou de l'Etoile," Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne 17 (1965): 93-102.

Hall, R. A. "The Silk Factory in Chrestien de Troyes Yvain," Modern Language Notes 56 (1941): 418-422.

Harris, Julian. "The Role of the Lion in Chrétien de Troyes Yvain," PMLA 65 (1949): 1143-1163.

Jeschke, Hans. "Ist Chrétiens Yvain ein Unterhaltungs- oder ein Thesenroman?" Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 55 (1935): 673-681.

Jonin, Pierre. "Aspects de la vie sociale au XIIe siècle dans Yvain," Lettere Italiane 16 (1964): 47-54.

Küchler, Water. "Über den sentimentalen Gehalt der Haupthandlung in Chrétiens Erec und Yvain," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 40 (1920): 83-99.

Lewis, Charles B. Classical Mythology and Arthurian Romance; a study of the sources of Chrétien de Troyes' Yvain and other Arthurian romances. London, 1932.

Richter, Elise. "Die künstlerische Stoffgestaltung in Chrétiens Yvain," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 39 (1918): 385-397.

Roesler, Margarete. "Die 'Fontaine périlleuse' in Chrétiens Yvain," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur 58 (1934)

Whitehead, F. "Yvain's Wooing," in Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver. New York: Barnes and Noble. 1965: pp. 321-336.

Zenker, Rudolf. "Yvain im TorverlieB," Zeitschrift für das deutsche Altertum 62 (1925): 49-66.