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Plurivocality in Medieval Narrative

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Abstract

Plurivocality in Medieval Romance

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Mikhail Bakhtin's view that the novel embodies the multiplicity of society's specialized languages and rebels against older genres that work towards ordering the world under the single official language of the established order gives his theory a revolutionary tone. His enthusiasm for the innovative novelistic achievements of Cervantes and Rabelais in the early Renaissance lead to a cursory treatment of their antecedents in the medieval romance.

In breaking down his theories into their components, this study finds that Bakhtin's polemic definition of the First and Second Stylistic Lines of the novel by their particular use of heteroglossia limits the acknowledgement of the novelistic achievements of certain works. In order to make his theories more sensitive to the novelistic accomplishments of the medieval romance, this thesis uses Bakhtinian plurivocality to determine the position of works between the two stylistic lines.

To illustrate this elaborated method of measuring the medieval romances novelistic accomplishment, the thesis explores the developing plurivocality in Hartmann von Aue's Erec, Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan, and Geoffrey Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. This study of plurivocality helps identify the course medieval romances take in bridging classical epic genre and the Bakhtinian novel.

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I. Introduction

In the same way the Middle Ages historically mark the end of classical antiquity and the beginning of the modern world, the medieval romance is the transitional literary genre between the heroic epic and renaissance novel. The cultural phenomena that factor into this restructuring of narrative are central to sociologically-oriented literary theories of Mikhail Bakhtin. The alliance of the novel with the cultural pandemonium of lower class society makes the novel a hostile literary form to the traditional genres which reinforce the values of governing powers. His study of the novel's origins focuses on those historical periods in which folk culture is able to penetrate the official censor under which it usually lives. His theories develop effective tools and terminology for a useful consideration of the literary antecedents to the novel.

Using his theoretical framework, this study expands Bakhtin's cursory treatment of the medieval romance. Rather than give an accounting of the whole genre[1], this study looks at three transitional romances that do not comply with Bakhtin's rather hurried classification of the form. These works are used to clarify further the role of the medieval romance in the development of the Bakhtinian novel.

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[1] For a Bakhtinian study of the medieval romance genre as a whole, see S. Cesare.

Bakhtin's theories are a reaction to Russian Formalism, which like later Structuralism, initiated much of its theoretical portfolio with Ferdinand de Saussure's cardinal linguistic distinction of "langue" and "parole". Saussure distinguishes "langue" as a stable, describable system of rules stored in a collective consciousness that enables language to signify, from "parole" which is the individual use of language wherein the extra-grammatical components surrounding speech are factors that make scientific precision impossible. Bakhtin reacted to the Formalists' dismissal of historical and cultural development as factors in the evolution of genres by reconsidering Saussurian "parole" in terms of speech utterances. This view took into account the unique historical, social and cultural contexts of utterance and discourse, as well as their relations to previous and future utterances. As the phonemes and morphemes of language are building blocks of linguistics, so utterances are the components of discourse whose study is called Translinguistics (metalingvistika).[2]

For Bakhtin language is foremost a social phenomenon. All words carry with them a contextual social history which is either consciously or unconsciously evoked and further modified with each new utterance. Words are not neutral, but rather "give off the scent of a profession, a genre, a

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[2] This translation of the word is Todorov's, who also notes that it corresponds to the discipline of pragmatics (24)

current, party, a particular work, a particular man, a generation, an era, a day and an hour" ("Discourse in the Novel" 293). These unique aromas are the bases for language differentiation by profession, by genre, by social stratum, by age, by gender, and by region. Underlying the principle of the utterance is its orientation to response. "The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly oriented towards a future answer-word. It provokes an answer, anticipates it, and structures itself in the answer's direction" ("Discourse" 280). "Even the baby's crying is 'oriented' towards the mother" ("Marxism and the Philosophy of Language" 104). This orientation is supported by Bakhtin's view of the tone of an utterance. "The tone is defined not by the objective content of the utterance, nor by the experiences of the speaker, but by the relationship of the speaker to the person of his partner (i.e. rank, importance, etc.)" (The Aesthetic of Verbal Creation 359).

By combining the distinction of languages, which recognizes the natural plurality of society with the socially interactive role of the utterance, one has the basic premises of heterology (raznorečie); the association of dissociated parts. Heterology is broken down into two parallel forms; one is heteroglossia, the diversity of social language, and the other is polyphony or what I am here calling plurivocality. This may be defined as the existence of variance in characters who express their

divergent voices free from control of the authorial figure who would qualify or disqualify them. The combination of these two elements of heterology form the basis of what Bakhtin defines as dialogism.

The principles of dialogism find themselves in opposition to the persistent desire of the social establishment to centralize and linguistically unify itself under a common monological language. Here one sees the distinction Bakhtin makes between official, monolithic and hierarchical society and unofficial, heterogenous, carnivalesque culture. Literary high genres, which Bakhtin equates with the literature of ruling social groups, form a superstructure supporting the hierarchy and its elite by using a monological "common" language. In art historian Wölfflin's terms, these genres use a linear form, defining themselves through dissociation.[3] The literary form which Bakhtin feels most resists the self-imposed isolation of such official genres from the hubbub of society is the novel, which regains the natural interaction of social heterology with an appreciation of the whole picture and the energy of its mosaic.

Because novelistic discourse is a natural communicative form in society, its "prehistory" is concurrent with the

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[3] Bakhtin uses H. Wölfflin's opposition of linear versus pictorial in his essay "Marxism and the Philosophy of Language". Wölfflin's definition begins with the concept that "linear style sees in lines, painterly in masses." (18).

monological literary genres that dominated much of the extant materials in the history of literature. Official society's imposition of a common language propagated monological genres, while repressing novelistic forms, or as Bakhtin contends, "wherever the novel gained ground, official genres were in decline" ("Epic and Novel" 4). Moreover, the antagonism official order shows to society's inherent plurality leads to the parodying/travestying of the hierarchy's efforts to control. "It is our conviction that there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of discourse--artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary everyday--that did not have its own parodying and travestying double, its own comic-ironic 'contre-partie'" ("Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" 53). Such a reaction to strict order reflects the laughing spirit of carnival, which Bakhtin feels is the fullest expression of society's dialogical element.

In his survey of the prehistory of novelistic discourse, Bakhtin focuses on the parodic forms of classical Greek and medieval folk culture. Although these forms share the spirit of laughter, their intrinsic function is to show "that a given straightforward generic word--epic or tragic--is one-sided, bounded, incapable of exhausting the object: the process of parodying forces us to experience those sides of the object that are not otherwise included in a given genre or a given style" ("Prehistory" 55). The struggle and

success of breaking from the constraints of official genres using heteroglossia and plurivocality are what constitute novelistic and pre-novelistic discourse.

Bakhtin further distinguishes between two types of novels, the First and Second Stylistic Lines. "Novels of the First Stylistic Line aspire to organize and stylistically order the heteroglossia of everyday conversational language, as well as of written everyday and semi-literate genres" ("Discourse" 383). Bakhtin describes this type of novel as one that descends upon heteroglossia. Todorov identifies this style as a dialogue that takes place "in absentia", that is, "between the homogeneous style of the work and the other dominant styles of the period (external heterology)" (The Dialogical Principle 77). The novels of the Second Stylistic Line fully engage heteroglossia and create dialogism through the interanimation of this diversity. They transform "this already organized and ennobled everyday and literary language into essential material for its orchestration, and into people for whom this language is appropriate--that is, such a novel transforms them into authentic characters" ("Discourse 323). Todorov calls it a dialogue "in praesentia", wherein the heterology is contained within the work itself. Although both styles recognize heteroglossia, the First Line approaches it using the traditional linear

method, while the Second Line implements the pictorial style (The Dialogic Principle 77).

My interest in Bakhtin's theory comes from the rather hurried view he takes of the medieval romance. In part he relies on the popular oversimplification of the Middle Ages as an age of dogmatic faith and uses it as a foil to the cultural blossoming of the Renaissance. Bakhtin saw the Renaissance as the era that broke open the narrow world vision of the Middle Ages. He asserts that "only a Galilean language consciousness...could be adequate to an era...which destroyed the verbal and ideological centralization of the Middle Ages" ("Discourse" 415). He elsewhere defines the Middle Ages as a period of "authoritarian dogmatism, characterized by a linear and impersonal monumental style in the transmission of diegesis" ("Philosophy of Language" 121). Yet Bakhtin states that "the classic chivalric romance in verse actually lies on the boundary between epic and novel, but it clearly tends more toward the novel's pole" ("Discourse" 377). This statement clearly indicates the progressive nature of the romance in its struggle between classical genre and novel forms.

The romance as a "boundary genre" calls back to mind Bakhtin's distinction of the two Stylistic Lines of the novel. In his essay "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin associates the chivalric romance with the First Stylistic Line of the novel. He realizes that this literary form was

not inherited from the traditional genres from which it broke but was the product of the assimilation, revision, and re-accentuation of a variety of sources into a new consciousness. In turn this consciousness was adopted by the imaginations of an international feudal system which translated and reworked it to fit individual cultures. "Such a consciousness lived in a world of alien languages and alien cultures" ("Discourse" 376). But despite the heteroglossia of its origin, the chivalric romance did come to have a "highly centralized consciousness".

As forms that attempted to "organize and stylistically order" heteroglossia, novels of the First Line recognize and interact with the discourse of life, but seek also to distinguish their own values from this heteroglossia. "The chivalric romance in prose sets itself against the 'low', 'vulgar' heteroglossia of all areas of life and counterbalances to it its own specifically idealized, 'ennobled' language" ("Discourse" 384). Although romances became encyclopedias of language and genre, they used a linear vision, to "eliminate their brute heteroglossia (by) replacing it everywhere with a single-minded, 'ennobled' language" ("Discourse" 410).

In the Second Line of Stylistics, the novel regenerates the multiplicity of heteroglossia only recognized by the First Line to dull "languages that have any claim to being significant." "Out of the heteroglot depths they rise to

the highest spheres of literary language and overwhelm them" ("Discourse" 400). By dismissing dominant voices, this line of novels becomes a "microcosm of heteroglossia", where characters make choices based on a consciousness no longer guided by a centralizing force. It is in the Second Stylistic Line that Bakhtin finds the novel's highest achievements, exemplary of which are the works of Cervantes and, of course, Rabelais.

Between the First and Second Stylistic Lines, it is my conviction that there exists a transitional stage that uses encyclopedic social strata as a backdrop, but questions the absolute nature of the system within which it exists. Transitional romances do not yet openly parody the romance genre, nor does it give heteroglossic voice to different linguistic systems, as occurs later when the romance is released to the critical, unchecked power of popular culture. Instead it distinguishes language groups within the society's upper classes, such as those divided by age, gender and influence, who discuss positive, negative and ambiguous facets of romance consciousness. This division combined with a desire in authors to keep up the energy of debate by leaving questions unresolved created a plurivocality that differentiated transitional romances from those that only sought to glorify their heroes and ennoble the romance genre.

This study focuses on the development of such plurivocality in three medieval romances, concentrating on the independence of the characters' voices within them. Autonomy of voice implies that authorial presence does not intrude to indicate the correct view, but rather keeps the polyphony balanced by not allowing any one voice to dominate the others. The distinction allows various approaches to the issues and themes of a tale, each carrying the features that promote and obstruct it. The final analysis of these voices is left to the audience whose conclusions is based on opinion, rather than absolute truth. With a range of disparate voices, a narrative is capable of taking on a dialogical disposition, wherein "the life experience of the characters and their discourse may be resolved as far as plot is concerned, but internally they remain incomplete and unresolved" ("Discourse in the Novel" 349). Thus, in the spirit of the Bildungsroman, the dialogue is never finished, even though the plot is over.

This investigation into the plurivocality of medieval narratives studies three works that successively broaden its use in medieval romance. In particular it focuses on the individualization of characters and how their unrestricted voices are presented. By surveying the plurivocality of these romances, I show that the Bakhtinian novels of the early renaissance were not only influenced by the encyclopaedic use of heteroglossia in First Line novels, but

that they also had antecedents to full dialogism in the growing plurivocality of certain transitional medieval romances. This work demonstrates that the medieval romance, while still in the solitude of its centralized consciousness, acknowledged ambiguities and ironies even before being subsumed and exposed by popular culture. I claim that certain medieval romances merit credit in the development of the Bakhtin novel for having distinguished themselves from the monologic of the First Stylistic Line with their increasing use of plurivocality.

In order to understand the position of the romance within the historical structure of Bakhtin's principles, it is useful to look at his distinction between the epic and the novel. Although the subtitle of the essay, "Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel" suggests his hostile opinion of the epic, his views of the polarity of the two literary forms are useful. One could generalize Bakhtin's distinction by saying that the epic is dead genre, while the novel is a living, growing form. The epic involves a world of the absolute past that demands unquestioned reverence. It deals with a time of founders, ancestors and fathers that tells its subordinate audience of an illustrious past that is inaccessible to the present. It is a literature of memory and superlatives. Its heroes are as clearly good as its enemies are bad. Ultimately it

portrays the past as the peak period that was the home of everything that was once pure and just. The epic stands unapproachable by the present, bound in glorious antiquity.

Opposite the statuesque obsolescence of the epic is the contemporaneity of the novel. It represents the familiar, unauthorized, unsanctioned world of popular humanity. Bakhtin explains that this world is most identifiable by its ability to laugh at itself and at others. Parody and travesty are the novel's strongest components as they signal an intimacy with all that had once been sacrosanct. One way in which consecrated forms are brought to earth is their interaction with novelistic heteroglossia. Mixing pedestalled genres with extra-literary sources allows a variety of perspectives where before there had only been the solemnity of the correct view. For Bakhtin any era in which the novel gained literary dominance signified the decline of older genres. The novel's link with the teeming populace unites it with a continual state of process and inconclusiveness. No longer "carved in stone", the novel is a metamorphosing holograph of life always open to dialogue with its audience.

Somewhere between these diametric opposites is the flower of the medieval literary world, the romance. Although the Middle Ages retained a reverence for classical antiquity, the period marks Western Europe's emergence out of the shadow of Roman and Greek culture as a vibrant and

autonomous civilization. This energetic social development is reflected in the evolution of the romance genre.

Following the turmoil and fluctuation of the early Middle Ages, Western Europe, guided by the unifying power of the Church, developed a new cultural identity. The monastic reform movement begun by the Cluniac houses of the ninth century and later carried on by Carthusian and Cistercian monks helped knit a unified spiritual fabric from the factional, tribal and nationistic feudalism that fragmented the continent. Although their efforts did not eradicate regional differences, they helped bring much of Europe under the banner of Christianity.

Secular literature appropriated the universal landscape of a Christian Europe and turned away from the "national identity building" of epic heroes, to an interest in the warrior's efforts to realize his Christian potential within a contemporary setting. The trials of such an individual combined Christian ethics with the raw power of Nordic epic tradition in a world embellished by Celtic myth and lore and enriched by Arabic love lyrics and musical instruments. With the emphasis on the individual's struggles in the world, writers looked to love as the guiding spiritual force for their heroes' secular endeavours. Political differences were laid aside as the warrior with virtuous morals, strength, and persistence sought to achieve his destiny.

One early example of the new interest in the contemporary international Christian world is in the early Latin romance, Ruodlieb, written by an unknown German clerical writer in the middle of the eleventh century. It remains an enigma of early medieval romance, as it incorporates many liberal and original features into its verse. Although it focuses on the noble class, the work also incorporates heroic legend, folklore, fairy-tale, realistic description of festivities, daily activity at the village level and the interaction among different levels of society. The characters are highly individualized by means of dialogue that not only accentuates their positive attributes but also reveals their faults. The King, Rex Major, may be viewed as an example of wisdom and chivalric virtue, but his gnomic advice on love is stagnant when seen in comparison to the inspirational love affair of Ruodlieb's nephew and his new bride. Such shortcomings are also seen in Ruodlieb, who, despite his chivalric sensitivity, retains a streak of boorishness.

The unconventional nature of his Latin has led to the conclusion that the author of the Ruodlieb was uneducated in classical Latin poetry and that this work represents a failed attempt to imitate classical diction (Brunholzl 506-22). Such a criticism falsely assumes the author's intent to be purely imitative, while it may be more valid to speak of his use of vernacular Latin to adapt to his audience.

The poet's honest uncensored characterizations support the notion that his audience knew this style of Latin. Peter Dronke's excellent discussion of the work best summarizes the plasticity of the language in the Ruodlieb.

> Out of the Latin that was the spoken "lingua franca" of a sophisticated set of people--of the lawyers and doctors, diplomats and civil servants, scholars and chaplains attached to the imperial court, and of the higher nobility--this poet created a poetic diction of flexible mercurial power. To adapt to such a spoken language, which is naturally unclassical and almost devoid of ancient echoes, to poetic purposes, demanded an individuality of technique that is as startling in its own way as the individuality of this poet's vision of the "comedie humaine". (63)

The crystallization of the French romance came about in the work of Chrétien de Troyes. His romances helped to stabilize the social status of a knightly aristocracy by giving knighthood a raison d'etre. Chrétien de Troyes' work today remains the crowning achievement of medieval romance. His consolidation of the Authurian cycle made him an extremely influential figure for those who followed him.

In terms of Bakhtinian thought though, Chrétien's formation of the various influences into code and convention constitutes the development of a lofty genre. It is important to note that Chrétien's effort to advance the romance's vision of the world was begun in part as a reaction to both monarchical and Church efforts to create and maintain a "unified philosophical system" (Nichols 51). The juggling of loyalties necessary to harmonize the hero's social standing and the often illegitimate love for his lady

in Chrétien's romances conflicts with the monologic ideal of a unified political and religious power structure, supported by socially advantageous marriages. However, the French romance lost some its alternative edge when it was embraced as an assertion of the supremacy of the aristocracy. The conflicts between society and lovers were forgotten in favour of the resolution that love should be subservient to courtly society's demands. Chrétien's work created an ideal for the aristocracy, which transformed the romance from a venue in which life's pluralities could be investigated into a social manifesto for the French nobility.[4]

Yet the romance was immensely popular outside France and its self-protective provincial courts, spreading to audiences all over western Europe. The Arthurian cycle caught the imagination of all social groups, as writers in the different countries translated and modified each others' narratives. Although writers understood the languages of their sources, their social and cultural differences saw aspects of those sources as inappropriate. Since writers were no longer exclusively under the patronage of a court, and hence presented their material to a more socially diverse audience, they were in a position to inform audiences of the chivalric code and question the discrepancies among its tenets and followers. Distanced

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[4] For more on the intricacy with which literary texts interacted with historical social conditions, see R. Howard Bloch, G.M. Spiegel, and Lee Paterson.

from the aristocratic buttressing of the French courts, the authors of translated romances were able to refocus Chrétien's desire to present the difficulties and conflicts of a knight's divided loyalties to his lord and his lady. The estrangement of authors and their audiences from the initiated courtly audiences of France gave birth to what I call third generation romances.

The third generation romance is distinguished by its position beyond the elitism of the high French romances but preceding the popular takeover of their adventures. The three generations of romance may be categorized by the first phase wherein a literary interest in popular tradition and folk culture increases, the second period wherein a new monological literary genre is crystallized, and the third stage in which there is a movement towards a more dialogical treatment of the genre's ambiguous components, leading the way to the true heterological dialogue in the work of Rabelais and Cervantes. The authors of third generation romances still wrote from within the consciousness of romance, but contemplated the incongruities of its tenets. The body of third generation romances are identifiable by their expanding use of plurivocality.

The works in this study share a focus on the role of love in the social milieu. The dialogical problem of integrating love into the heroic lives of knights demands some level of plurivocal discourse. The increasing emphasis

on the transcendent nature of love makes a retreat into the linear and absolute validity of courtly society more and more difficult. These works also contain a developed narrator figure whose role as the "director" of the narrative is increasingly undermined by authors who progressively feel an absolute conclusion to be inappropriate. Bakhtin notes that "all forms involving a narrator or posited author signify in one way or another by their presence the author's freedom from a unitary and singular language" ("Discourse" 314).

The three works are examples of the growing role plurivocality plays within the realm of the medieval romance. An examination of the characters and the plurivocality of their interaction in each narrative will illustrate how third generation romance anticipated the novelization and carnivalization of romance consciousness. The plurivocality of the works and the ambiguities they allow set the stage for the heteroglossia later released in the Second Stylistic Line of the novel.

It is necessary to explain the inclusion of Chaucer's late fourteenth century work in a study with two early thirteenth century German narratives. The German works represent two of the period's finest third generation romances. By the middle of the thirteenth century though, Germans were already enjoying works that portrayed the penetration of social diversity and viewpoint in the romance

genre, such as Meier Helmbrecht, in which a farmboy, wanting to be a knight, joins a band of robber knights, which eventually gets caught and hanged.

Chaucer's work avoids the social tensions between the emerging bourgeoisie and aristocracy and instead uses the medieval romance form to expand the philosophical and emotional scope of his source. Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde uses the romance as a forum for debate on various views on love. Although the narrative could justifiably be classified as "post-romance", its developed plurivocality within the socially isolated world of aristocratic lovers makes it the novelistic climax of pre-heteroglossic romances.

The three romances of this study illustrate the emerging plurivocality in the romance genre that helps it transcend the limitations set on it by Bakhtin's hasty classification. By engaging a limited heterology, the texts modify Bakhtin's sometimes simple opposition between epic and novel by providing a method for identifying transitional modes whose capacity and enthusiasm for innovation already reveal elements of the "dialogic imagination" at work.

II. Plurivocality in Hartmann von Aue's Erec

Chrétien de Troyes' first long poem, Erec et Enide, is probably the first long Arthurian romance written in French. Chrétien's interest in the Celtic legend of Arthur's court is said to have stemmed from a possbile connection he had with Henry of Blois.[1] The guest list at Erec's coronation, along with other data such as the leopards sculpted on Erec's throne, have also lead to the suggestion that Erec et Enide was composed at the request of Henry II of England (Schmolke-Hasselmann 241-246).

The romances of the 1150's, loosely based on classical themes and focused on aspects of love, had already become popular in French-speaking courts. Chrétien's Erec et Enide relates the story of Erec, who, reacting to the court's sentiment that he lay fallow in nuptial bliss, sets out with his wife on a series of adventures in order to reinstate his lost courtly honour. Although she accompanies him, Erec forbids Enide to communicate with him, in part, as punishment for having been the cause of his lost social esteem. The story of Erec et Enide explores the dilemma of how a knight can maintain his prowess and glory after he has

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[1] Henry of Blois, in his service to the court of Henry II, was closely associated with Geoffrey of Monmouth and William of Malmesbury, the two Latin writers who popularized the legend of King Arthur (Holmes 24). For an interesting study of how Henry II and the Angevin rulers used Arthur as an apocryphal ancestor for royal legitimzation, see Patterson.

married the lady his abilities helped win. It is a psychological study of how Erec comes to terms with his loyalties to both honour and love.

The adventures of Erec, adapted for German audiences by Hartmann von Aue, introduces Arthurian romance into Germany. The attitude toward romance differed in Germany due to a variation in the social structure. On the whole Germany had a less developed nobility than France, in large measure because of a poorer agricultural base. The German tradition of bestowing aristocratic titles to families regardless of their land holdings, rather than linking the titles to fiefs over which one was earl, count or baron, meant that many land-poor nobles were in closer contact with lower class society. Audiences for romance recitals were therefore often more varied than in socially isolated French courts.

Germany was nonetheless familiar with courtly extravagance. There were probably few Germans who had not heard of the near mythic festival of Mainz in 1184 when Emperor Frederic Barbarossa knighted his two sons.[2] The composition of Hartmann's Erec in 1185 suggests that it owes some of its popularity to the excitement caused by Barbarossa's Hoftag. Despite the generally unrefined status

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[2] Gislebert of Mons, in the Latin Chronicle of Hennegaus (1196) reported that the festival was attended by 70,000 knights, and hundreds of nces, bishops and dukes (Borst 85-90). Heinrich von V e's Eneit mentions the events when describing Aeneas d Lavinia's wedding: have never heard of such a festival, unless it was that at Mainz, when Kaiser Frederick knighted his sons." (Keen 22).

of knights in Germanic territories, Hartmann works an even more idealized version of knightly behavior into his account.

Hartmann uses Chrétien's version as a source, but changes the emphasis of the story to develop an early form of the Bildungsroman. "His work is clearly an education novel in which the hero learns, through varied experiences, what one needs to know and be in order to rule a country well" (Thomas 9). The expansion of Chrétien's theme is illustrated by Hartmann's focus on Erec as a youthful, impulsive and inexperienced knight whose story only ends when an account of his successful reign as king is given.

Alongside Erec's expanded education is Hartmann's developed interest in Enite. She undergoes a transformation from the nearly mute daughter of an impoverished noble to a knowledgeable woman worthy to be queen. Her education, along with Erec's, focuses the romance on their individual, as well as their joint learning progresses. The special attention Hartmann pays to Enite goes beyond posing the question of how Erec will balance both honour and love by asking what role a woman plays in the life of a knight and a king.

Of particular interest to this study is the evolution of a voice in Enite and the manner in which the progressive strength of her personality becomes an important tool in Erec's development. The intentional development of distinct

voices in the two characters is verified by the new appreciation they have for one another's individual but complementary roles at the end of their adventures.

The two first meet in the house of Enite's parents. Here both are conventional characters in a fairy-tale setting. Erec is a young, unproven knight in a foreign land looking to remedy the insult given him by Iders and his dwarf, while Enite is a beautiful, high born and modest daughter serving her father's impoverished household.

> si enredte im niht vil mite:
> wan daz ir aller site
> daz so zem ersten schamic sint
> unde bluc sam diu kint.
> (1322-25)

> (She spoke scarcely a word to Erec, for this is the custom with them all, that they are at first bashful and timid as children.)[3]

Hartmann breaks the idyllic pace of Erec's adventures, however, by removing the flirtation between Erec and Enite that occurs in Chrétien's version. This allows Koralus to be surprised at Erec's offer not only to champion his daughter at the sparrow-hawk contest the next day but also to marry her.

> er sprach: 'herre, disen spot
> sult ir lazen durch got
> iuwer red ist vil verlazenlich.'
> (532-34)

> ("My lord," he spoke, "refrain from this mockery, for God's sake. Your words are most insolent.")

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[3] All quotations are taken from Leitzmann's edition. English translations, with minor alterations, follow Resler.

This causes the audience to focus on Erec's impulsiveness rather than accept his lofty and heroic perspective. Without any sign of affection for his daughter, or any knowledge of Erec's motives, Koralus' response is realistic. Erec blushes at the confrontational reaction he gets from Koralus and adds the explanation that should have been part of a preamble. Erec's offer is ultimately a politically advantageous arranged marriage that will enable him to challenge a rival without the lost dignity of not marrying the woman he has publicly claimed as the most beautiful. This situation wherein Enite has no part in decisions affecting her life and Erec's treats her as a negoc..able commodity probably more acurately reflects the social reality of marriage at that time, contrasting it to the romance convention of the hero and his lady falling in love.

Erec's victory over Iders and his return to Cardigan with Enite establishes a place for Erec in Arthur's court. Arthur's choice to kiss Enite as part of the tradition of kissing the most beautiful lady in the court after the hunt of the White Stag confirms the fine choice Erec has made in women. Enite's beauty and Erec's success at his wedding tournament wins for the couple an esteemed position in the court. Having gained the renown of the court and the most attractive of ladies, Erec marries and settles in with his bride. As has been noted, this ends the fairy-tale of the first section where the prince's adventures lead to the

glory of regaining lost personal integrity and assertion of the supremacy of Arthur's exemplary court.[4]

Yet the tale continues to focus on Erec.[5] After his marriage he withdraws from courtly life to spend time with his wife. Obviously, he is now profoundly affected by his lady, which upgrades her role in his life from a prize to a lover. Although she still fears her husband's reaction, her new status gives her the strength of character to contemplate his situation in his presence. This leads to Enite's inadvertent vocalization of the courtier's dislike of Erec's verligen.[6]

> si sprach: "wê dir dû vil armer man,
> und mir ellendem wîbe,
> daz ich mînem lîbe
> so manegen vlouch vernemen sol."
> (3029-32)

> ("Woe to you, most wretched man!" she spoke, "and woe to me, miserable woman that I am, for that I should hear such manifold insults cast upon me!")

These are the first words that the audience hears directly spoken by Enite. The answer to Erec's demand for an explanation is reported by the narrator, leaving Enite

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[4] Gies and Kibler, in his introduction to Carroll's translation of Erec et Enite, note the conventionality of the completed circle in the first section.

[5] Green, in "Hartmann's Ironic Praise of Erec", notes that the division between the two sections of the story puts the narrator in an awkward position when Erec finishes the first section as a praiseworthy hero, but begins the next section derelict and lacking in his qualities.

[6] Verligen (or verliegen in Modern German) means 'to deteriorate through inactivity.'

silent again. This contrasts to Chrétien's version where Enide is given the opportunity to contemplate, vocalize, explain, and lament in her own words. Hartmann's modification changes the blame that is placed on Enite concerning Erec's situation. Chrétien's Enide dramatizes her explanation in such a way as to be excessive, so that one could understand a dominant husband's anger with her words. In Hartmann's version, Enite's broken silence is being stressed, making the exact nature of her guilt unclear. Does Erec react to her audacious act of speaking, to the content of her utterance, or to the silence of not having spoken earlier?

Erec reacts harshly by withdrawing from their intimacy, causing Enite to be silently fearful. He orders her to make preparations to travel in her best dress. Once on the road Erec orders her not to speak at risk to her life. This command has problematic psychological significance that varies from Erec's realization of his folly, to his intention not to let Enite get in the way of his endeavour to prove his prowess, to a punishment of Enite for giving him the news the way she did. Although Erec does later justify his command, its significance has a dialogical multiplicity for the couple as it is repeatedly challenged and redefined by circumstances during their adventure.

The command not to speak is repeatedly tested by dangers along the way which Enite is aware of before Erec.

Her struggle to decide between keeping her promise and warning her husband is given in direct speech, allowing the audience to know her mind. Enite breaks from herself from being viewed as a conventional courtly figurine when the audience is made aware of the conflict in her mind. This awareness helps the audience understand the troubled but virtuous nature of Enite's decision to break her silence. The conventional cloak that the narrative has laid on Enite up to this point begins to lift. Enite's hyperbolic silence is finally broken, and she begins to understand the value of her voice. In finding her voice Enite's character is given the opportunity to interact and communicate her understanding of her social position. This breaks the conventional silence of women in epic and romance and identifies women as having a distinct and valid language within the court. This development identifies an avenue by which plurivocality enters the romance.

The type of language Enite uses to warn Erec is a special blend which caters to Erec's need to interact in a publicly formal manner, and yet still carries some residue of their intimacy. Enite's speech has been broken down into sociolinguistically differentiated parts.[7] This mix includes the face-threatening language of direct commands, the use of both the formal and informal address of ir and

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[7] Patrick M. McConeghy uses the terminology from P. Brown and S. Levinson's study on language.

du, and the negative politeness strategies used among strangers to stress the speaker's inferior position to the other, along with politeness strategies used between people who have close relationships.[8]

Aware that she risks punishment for breaking her silence, Enite decides to speak out and warn Erec.

> "sich ûf, lieber herre,
> ûf genâde verre
> wil ich dir durch triuwe sagen
> (dînen schaden enmac ich niht verdagen):
> dir sint ritter nâhen bî
> die dir schadent, mugen sî
> unser herre ensî der dich ner."
> (3182-88)
>
> ("Look up, my dear lord! With your permission, I wish in all faithfulness to tell you this, for I cannot keep silent about something which might injure you: there are knights closeby who will, if they can, bring harm to you unless our Lord protects you.")

Her outburst uses the informal du address, and face-threatening direct speech, combined with the negative politeness strategies of a request for permission and a general appeal to God. She makes it clear that she knows she is breaching her husband's command and is willing to accept the consequences.

Erec's reaction differs from Chrétien's Erec. In Hartmann's version Erec immediately turns his attention on

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[8] Politeness strategy is the use of attentiveness, approval, flattery, support and affirmation of a common goal. Negative-politeness strategy uses hedging, indirectness, honorifics, appeals to a higher law, generalization, and excuses of difficulty. Brown and Levinson stress that the use of these strategies is typical for women in patriarchal societies wherein women owe their social status to men.

the danger and confronts it before addressing Enite, while Chrétien's Erec first castigates Enide for having spoken. Such a shift in order suggests that Hartmann's Erec listens to the content of his wife's utterance, while Chrétien's Erec is first concerned with the existence of her speech-act. This shift in emphasis gives Hartmann's version a dialogical edge as the couple seeks to work through the ambiguity of the bedroom scene with discourse that uses the circumstances of their worldly environment as a medium to address the problem of the strained communication between them.

The chiding Erec gives Enite also differs between the two versions of the story. While Chrétien's Erec's verbal attack is directed at Enide, Hartmann's Erec turns to a generalization about women's inability to keep from what they are forbidden. This allows Enite to briefly explain and ask forgiveness, using the formal ir. Her "punishment" is to tend the horses of the vanquished robbers.

As they continue on their journey, Enite is faced with a parallel situation, where she is aware of a danger before her husband. The scene plays out in a similar fashion, but is clearly influenced by the exchange and outcome of the preceding event. Once again Enite's thoughts are presented in direct discourse before she verbally warns Erec.

> 'Herre, durch got vernim mich:
> bewar ez oder man sleht dich.
> ich sihe vünf gesellen

die dich slahen wellen.'
(3380-83)

("By God, sir, hear me: guard yourself or you will be slain. I have spotted five men who would slay you.")

This time her warning is much more direct, which McConeghy feels is a result of the greater danger presented by five, rather than three knights (776). Although this may be a factor, it is the experience of the first event that allows Enite to adapt her warning to be short, non-apologetic, and informative.

Again unlike Chrétien's version, Erec immediately prepares for the threat. Once the danger is past, he turns to Enite, this time turning up his threats by telling her he would kill her if it would not impede the restoration of his honour. Enite uses the same submissive approach as before, explaining how her concern for him outranked her fear of his punishment, and using the formal ir to ask for forgiveness. But her recognition of Erec's pattern is confirmed by her spirited comment.

"ir sult mich des geniezen lân
daz ichz durch triuwe hân getân."
(3414-15)

("You should not make me pay for acting out of faithfulness.")

As before, she is given the robbers' horses to tend which have become a symbol of Enite's evolving ability to tend to

her husband's greater domestic affairs.[9] She is again ordered to keep silent.

The development of Enite's voice continues in the next episodes. Although the command to keep silent is still imposed on her, the pattern of the robber incidents diminishes the threat of punishment. In the following adventures Enite uses her voice to influence others unrestricted by Erec's presence, but still faithful to him. This begins with the Treacherous Count episode.

The Count, hearing of Enite's beauty, visits the couple at the inn where they are staying. Confused by their separation at the dinner table, and Erec's curt "I desire it that way" explanation, the Count asks to speak with Enite. When she learns of the Count's intention to take her from Erec at any cost, the resourceful Enite fabricates a tale of her oppression by Erec, and using politeness strategies, flatters the Count into believing that they might have a common purpose together. She then uses his trust to suggest that he refrain from acting until morning. He takes her advice and leaves. That night Enite again weighs her silence against her need to warn Erec before she tells him of the danger. Her warning is reported to the audience in summary as it is now familiar with her pattern. Keeping to

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[9] The horse is a symbol of Enite's growing domestic strength, beginning with her simple care of Erec's horse at her father's house, moving through her struggle to guide the eight horses Erec wins and ending with the gift of the second palfrey. For more discussion, see G.J. Lewis.

the model, Erec first acts and then threatens her with punishment.

The significance of this episode is again Enite's understanding of the danger facing them, and her ability to use her voice to avert it. It is the experience of the Robber Encounters that enables her to rely on Erec's immediate reaction to her warning. This time he has no immediate physical proof of the danger, and must act on her word alone. Evi lence of the truth of her alarm comes only after they have left the inn and the Count chases them.

The adventure trail Erec and his wife have taken has begun to season them both. Erec's thirst for glory is tempered by the fatigue of the journey. This is shown in his response to Guivreiz' challenge to a duel.

> "ir sult ez durch got tuon
> und mich mit gemache lân
> wan ich enhabe iu niht getân."
> (4359-61)
>
> ("You should, for God's sake, leave me in peace, for I have done you no harm.")

The knight goads Erec, who finally responds to a threat to Enite. Erec beats the fame-seeking knight and, after Guivreiz submits himself to becoming Erec's vassal, the two become friends. In another scene Erec unknowingly meets up with Keii, who is also interested in gaining glory, even by deceit. Erec's reaction to this is to knock the unarmed Keii off his horse with the butt of his lance. The two encounters reveal how Erec no longer desires to prove his

worth by defeating knights in jousts and mock battles, as he had done earlier during his wedding tournament. He is looking for a higher level of honour.

Enite also reveals her new strength when she is taken to Guinevere's tent and "in the manner of women" tells of her strenuous voyage. The interlude at Arthur's hunting camp gives the couple a chance to regain some of their strength and tend to Erec's wounds. The bandage Guinevere applies to Erec's wounds, leads to the narrator's digression on the magical healing powers of Famurgan, who had long ago made the bandage. The description links the powerful sorceress and her control over the natural world with the respite in the hunting camp (ie. base, home) which the strength and control of the queen makes comforting to travellers, hunters and men. The ninety line digression on Famurgan's magical powers is Hartmann's contribution which furthers the case that Hartmann is interested in establishing an honourable place for women in courtly society.

After the short sojourn at Arthur's camp, Erec and Enite again set out. While still in the woods, Erec encounters two giants who are torturing a knight. Rather than fighting, he tries to dissuade them from their actions by speaking to them.

> dannoch redetę er mit listen
> und wândę in sô gevristen:
> (5458-59)

(With cunning he persisted in his talk, in the hope of thereby saving the knight.)

This effort, not found in Chrétien, is an example of Erec's endeavour to resolve the situation mit güete überwunden (through friendly means). It modifies Bakhtin's First Line of Stylistics by having Erec first try to negotiate an understanding between chivalric code and the giant's belief system, rather than immediately show his superiority by subduing them. His efforts to arbitrate fail and the conflict between them is settled by force, but not without the memory of Erec's experiment.

The wounds he has accumulated up to this point cause Erec to fall off of his horse as though he were dead. Enite's perception that his unconsciousness is death occasions expressive lamenting. Hartmann expands Chrétien's fifty line lament to a soliloquy of over three hundred lines. It is by far Enite's longest verbal discourse, wherein she curses Death, God, Erec's sword, and the beasts of the forest for not having taken her life. The lament makes it clear that the thought of Erec's death dissipates any lingering fears Enite has in voicing herself.

Enite's strength of voice is displayed soon after at Count Oringles' castle. Having also concluded that Erec is dead, Oringles' intoxication with Enite's beauty drives him to arrange their marriage that day so that he may lie with her the same night. In her misery Enite defies the Count by swearing not to eat or become his wife. Her "insolence" is

punished by brutal blows from the outraged Oringles, that do not discourage Enite's resolve.

Although Enite is overcome with a desire to end her life, her defiance in the face of physical punishment signifies her new ability to express herself. In the earlier encounter with the treacherous Count, she used conventional women's politeness strategies to sway the Count's plans and to create a later opportunity for escape. One could also conclude that she was sensitive enough to understand how the Count may have honestly misread Erec and Enite's estrangement, This could have been a factor in her delicate and polite handling of the situation. On the other hand Oringles' blinding lust breaks the code of courtly propriety that allows women to mourn their dead. Regardless of the consequences, Enite fearlessly asserts herself and her desire to mourn.

Enite's confrontational attitude demonstrates her strength to stand firm in her belief in the courtly code. This marks a distinct change from her meek verbalization of Erec's <u>verligen</u>. Her powerful voice wakes Erec 'from the dead', and in the panic, they escape,

> nâch vrouwen Enîten râte
> (wan si in den wec lêrte)
> (6745-46)
>
> (following Lady Enite's counsel [for she instructed him as to the path])

Once they enter the forest, Erec asks her to recount how they had ended up at Castle Limors. Erec then formally

ends their estrangement, satisfied with Enite's behavior. The narrative states that Erec had resolved all of the questions which had lead him to assume his alienation. The text does not specify the exact nature of those questions, but alludes to Erec's test as having found Enite constant and loyal. In essence Erec now understands that Enite's resolve is a product of her strength of character, rather than just a desire to impress her husband. In private she loves him unconditionally, while in public she is now strong enough to verbally advocate the courtly ystem by which he measures his worth.

Enite's new status in Erec's life is evident throughout the rest of the romance. Soon after this reconciliation Enite speaks out when Erec is about to be mistakenly killed by Guivreiz.

> Guivreiz vrouwen Enîten
> bî der stimme erkande,
> (6957-58)

(Guivreiz recognised Lady Enite by her voice.)

Later at Guivreiz' castle she is given a palfrey which the narrator describes for more than five hundred lines. In Chrétien's version Enide is given a horse by a countess after Erec's defeat of Yders. Hartmann does not include this earlier scene, but uses the concept of a noble woman's gift of a horse after Erec and Enite's reconciliation. It is King Guivreiz' two sisters who now give Enite this wondrous palfrey, which completes the horse symbolism. The

expanded description of the saddle's embroidery, with the four classical elements, brings to mind Hartmann's earlier description of Famurgan's powers. Enide is now symbolically honoured as a woman who has gained the queenly strength to embellish and maintain her husband's kingdom.

In the episode where Erec defeats Mabonagrin, and finally exercises the verligen-demon'[10], Enite, who had once been the reason for Erec's courtly deterioration, has become the source of his inspiration and strength to fight against it in Mabonagrin.

> der gedanc ab sîn schoenne wîp
> der kreftigetę im dem lîp,
> (9230-31)
>
> (The thought of his fair wife breathed vigour into his muscles.)

It could be argued that it is a courtly convention to look to one's lady for strength, but one should also note that both men use it. Erec's love of Enite combined with the knowledge of Enite's own powers give Erec an edge over Mabonagrin who only has the love of his lady to inspire him. Enite's intelligent understanding of the courtly system and support for her husband therein redefines the convention of a lady giving strength to her knight as being based on the lady's desire to see her knight succeed publicly.

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[10] The structural parallel between "La Joi de la Court" and Erec's own verligen makes this episode the resolution to Erec's dereliction. See Resler's introduction to his translation of Erec.

After Mabonagrin's defeat, Enite shows his lady a kindness that leads to the discovery of their blood relationship. In turn Erec's sensitivity to social justice, particularly for women, is demonstrated in his concern for the eighty widows Mabonagrin's prowess created. His offer to escort the ladies to Arthur's court to improve their lives, is the kind of statesmanship that exhibits his capacity to be a king. The "Joi de la Court" episode not only helps Erec regain his esteem, but crowns the extension of his renown to many lands. His exploits have made him friends with Duke Imain, the lord of Tulmein, Guivreiz le Petit, King of Ireland, and King Ivriens of Brandigan, as well as others. He has gained political ties with the leaders of many countries, along with being highly regarded in Arthur's court, the paragon of courtly virtue. The couple is ready to return to Karnant and the land of Destrigales where Erec can assume his father's throne with a worthy woman and wife by his side as queen. The delicate balance that is struck between social duty and devotion in love is not a permanent resolution. Although he has come to understand the validity and needs of both his commitments, Erec must continue to be alert to the ever-changing circumstances that may threaten to unbalance discourse between them. Unlike Chrétien who ends his romance with celebarations at Arthur's court, Hartmann feels it necessary to give an account of their reign, where,

der künec selbe huoter
ir willen swâ er mohte,
und doch als im tohte,
niht sam er ê phlac,
dô er sich durch si verlac,
wan er nâch êren lebete
(10119-24)

(The king took care to fulfill her desire whenever he could, but his devotion was governed by propriety and not as it was formerly when he became indolent because of her. For he lived as honour demanded).

Although his narrative has a stronger moral base than does Chrétien's, Hartmann's ending shows that the continual need to reassess one's standing keeps the work from presenting ultimate resolutions. Hartmann conveys to his audience that the story is finished, but not its challenges.

On the whole Erec's central role in the romance cannot be denied. The narrative maintains the idea that the courtly world is one whose dominant figures are male. Hartmann does not try to alter the woman's subservient role in courtly society. Hartmann's focus on Enite's evolving womanly strength is instead used as a sub-plot to further unify the romance's primary concern with Erec's Bildung.

Enite's development in the romance can be viewed as the realistic assertion of her personality on the over-conventionalized ideal world of courtly women. Yet she is ultimately is a product of the courtly system and does not try to rebel against it. From the onset one could not doubt her integrity, faithfulness or patience. By learning to assert and defend herself, Enite is able to affirm her belief in the values of courtly conduct.

Her strength helps to dispel some of the unrealistic conventions and misogynist myths carried into romance. Her refusal to bow to Oringles exemplifies her willingness to suffer for her beliefs. This strength suggests that her disclosure of Erec's verligen to him was the result of a personal concern for his conduct and honour, rather than his reputation at the court. Her resolve contradicts misogynist literature's conviction that women are most preoccupied with the opinions and gossip of others. Enite's development of an assertive personality within the courtly system is an expression of her belief in the court's ability to cultivate the virtuous nature of both men and women, opposing the convention of the observational status of ladies in the activities of the court.

For Erec Enite's example helps him develop out of the pursuit of honour in tests of physical strength, and into an appreciation of the wisdom of social justice. His experience also looks realistically at some of the courtly conventions of romance, such as jousting and tournaments. The couple's deeper understanding of the theory and social purpose behind the conventions of courtly conduct qualifies them to assume the throne at a court of their own.

Another perspective in the Erec from which one can view Hartmann's desire to introduce a measure of realism and plurivocality to the closed and over-idealized world of the

courtly romance is through the role of his narrator. The narrator's capacity is more accurately defined by the understanding that Hartmann's adaptation of the romance streamlines and focuses the work's moral fibre.[11] The improved cohesion of the work thereby frees the narrator from constantly having to intercede for the story. It allows the narrator-figure to remove himself from the work as a whole and approach it in an episodic manner, wherein he may jump in to comment without concern for the direct significance of his role in the work. He may appear as the omniscient figure that attempts either to give advice, knit the material together, or castigate certain characters, but he may also be the focus of blunder himself.

The narrator's sense of humour points out inconsistencies in the world between the realities and the ideals of courtly society. This is not done to parody courtly values, but to give his hero an opportunity to show his superior understanding and expression of knightly virtues to those he confronts in his travels. The humour has the audience laughing at the foolishness of Keii and the panic at Castle Limors, which allows one to question the

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[11] This point is made by Kramer when he explains: "Mit wenigen Leitbegriffen und -ideen('truiwe', 'tugent', 'ere', usw.) baut Hartmann ein Gerüst, das dem Romangeschehen seinen Rahmen gibt. Von den Randproblemen der einzelnen Episoden her wird eine ethische Werkskala aufgestellt und so ein idealtypisches Bezugssystem geschaffen. Die an den Situationen gewonnen Verhaltensweisen werden abstrahiert und integrieren sich auf einer allgemeinen moralischen Ebene" (130).

existence of idealistic courtliness in the conventions of a mutable world. The ambiguities and the laughter this sense of humour creates help the narrator reveal the plurivocality that exists in courtly society.

The narrator in Hartmann's Erec has a very strong presence. Nearly one quarter of the romance does not directly further the plot, but in one way or another is connected with the story-teller and his relationship to the tale and listeners. There have been several studies done that have isolated the Erzählerbemerkungen (narrator's commentary) in the Erec.[12] These works catalogue the different types of narrational commentary into classical compartments, such as references to sources, feigned ignorance, foreshadowing, changing tense to heighten anticipation, etc. Even though Hartmann's narrator uses nearly the full spectrum of narratational techniques, this study will only survey those examples that point out the incongruity between the ideal of courtly conduct and the realistic, perverted, and humorous application of the code.

As already mentioned earlier, Erec's stay at Koralus' hovel proved to be a significant point in young Erec's early formation. This poverty-stricken family's hospitality and social refinement make Erec blush at their perception of his brashness. The narrator develops the opportunity to offer contrasts that test courtly conventions.

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[12] Some examples include P.H. Arndt and Kramer.

Unlike his source, Hartmann credits Enite's family as having a more noble family heritage, that has fallen on bad times, supporting the tradition of German aristocratic titles belonging to families, rather than fiefs. In describing their poverty, Hartmann's narrator intensifies Chrétien's genteel portrayal with a reversal of expectations. When reporting on the setting of the room, Hartmann gives an elaborate description of conventional luxury, including velvet, taffeta, and gold thread, but adds,

> diu wâren bî dem viure
> des âbendes vil tiure.
> (379-80)
>
> (such things as these were quite lacking that evening by the fire.)

He uses the same techniques to describe the full and overabundant menu that was not served for supper. This reversal of expectations directly contrasts wealth with the conditions facing this family, making their situation appear to be destitute. The narrator commends Koralus by impressing on the audience,

> daz er den gast sô wol emphie
> und erz durch armuot niht enlie.
> (397-98)
>
> (that despite poverty he did not fail to welcome the stranger with warmth.)

The narrator's comment refers to the convention that dignified hospitality is found more readily among the affluent than with the poor. His ability to link the family

to earlier prosperity is an attempt to explain the source of their integrity and hospitality again following convention. But portraying this family's dignity in the face of extreme poverty identifies courtly honour as an element independent of worldly splendour, which in turn makes it accessible to everyone, regardless of social class. Distinguishing honour and wealth from one another also acknowledges the possible existence of an unprincipled and corrupt nobility, whose members no longer feel bound by courtly behavior.

One such figure is encountered in Count Oringles, ruler of Castle Limors. But his title does not put him above his court's criticism for his abuse of Lady Enite. To defend himself he invokes a convention concerning the sanctity of marriage.

> 'dâ bestât doch nieman zuo
> se redenne übel noch guot,
> swaz ein man sînem wîbe tuo.'
> (6543-45)
>
> ("It is indeed no one's privilege to speak either ill or well of what a man does to his wife.")

This silences the court. Yet the public physical abuse of Enite exposes the contrast between a man's control over his wife and the courtly convention of fighting equals and defending the weak. Oringles' utterance takes on a double-voicedness by incorporating Erec's familiar language to justify the abuse of a wife. Erec is suddenly aware of Enite's unjust punishment. He revives himself from his

lengthy stupor and relieves Enite from her victimization, both by Oringles and himself.

Although the romance focuses on the exploits of a single knight, the narrator's commentary also emphasizes the importance of good leadership. Count Oringles' questionable righteousness is reflected in his court's unheroic response to Erec's sudden attack. The panic in the castle is seized upon by the narrator who pursues the humour of the scene with comments such as,

> dâ warte niemen deheiner zuht:
> man sach dâ niemen hôher stân:
> 'herre, welt ir vür gân,'
> (6625-27)
>
> (No one present heeded the dictates of good breeding, for not a one of them there could be seen stepping aside and saying: "After you, my lord.")

Although the narrator states that the turmoil was caused by the belief that Erec was a ghost, the absolute lack of heroes in the court coincides with the unrespectable leadership in Oringles shortly before.

The lack of leadership is also noted by the knights at Erec's court when Erec shirks his social obligation to lead his courtiers in chivalry.

> des begunde mit rehte
> ritter und knehte
> dâ ze hove betragen.
> (2974-76)
>
> (Thus the knights and men at the court began--with good reason--to languish with boredom.)

Including <u>mit rehte</u> identifies the narrator's compliance with the need to have a leader to act as a role model. This

attention on the necessity of leadership complicates the conceit of the single warrior's honour winning over an unjust world. A knight needs more than his arms and a lady to ennoble him; he must also have a social fabric from which to work, even if it is only the island of the court. In turn the court needs the defense of its knights to survive. The narrator's focus on leadership stresses that courtly society needs Erec to succeed in winning his honour as much as Erec feels it necessary to reestablish his name in the court.

By following Erec back to Karnant, the narrative emphasizes a need to face each situation and set of circumstances separately, avoiding Erec's earlier mistake of relying on past success to carry him in the present and future. Erec is now aware of the possibility of another fall from courtly conduct. Erec's reign does not simply run its course. The narrator states that Erec lived and ruled in accordance with honour. Unlike fame, which is a product of the epic past, honour can only be maintained by a constant vigilance of the present. Only by giving an account of Erec's life and ascension into Heaven can the narrator confirm Erec's lasting honour. Although Green sees the narrator's shift from praising Erec's excellence to questioning his weakness in the first section as ironic ("Ironic Praise" 800), the change of emphasis indicates the narrator's awareness of the vulnerability of honour. This

point is again brought up in the Treacherous Count episode, when the Count is credited with suddenly forgetting himself.

> wande wir haben vernomen
> von dem grâven mære
> daz er benamen wære
> beide biderbę und guot,
> an sînen triuwen wol behuot
> unz an die selben stunt.
> (3685-90)
>
> (For we have heard tell of this Count that he was in fact both upright and good, and up until that moment, well-confirmed in his integrity.)

The constant challenge of honour breaks chivalry from its application solely to regarded members of the court, by restoring its spiritual nature. Honour is a title that may be conferred onto anyone who is able to maintain a virtuous lifestyle, and be considerate of others. The transcendant nature of chivalry is seen in the servant of the Treacherous Count who, upon seeing Erec and Enite, offers food and drink to the exhausted couple. For the most part though, the narrative identifies the spiritual nature of honour by confronting any convention that would automatically associate aristocracy with courtly behavior.

An episode questioning the automatic correlation of nobility and honour is Guivreiz's acquisition of the palfrey that is given to Enite. The narrator tells of Guivreiz's discovery of the horse in the mountains, well secured by its owner, a wild dwarf. Guivreiz simply takes the mare, with no regard for the dwarf's obvious grief.

The view that this scene is meant only to evoke laughter from the audience is difficult to accept.[13] An exchange shortly afterwards again brings up the social awkwardness hinted at in Guivreiz's action. Some fifty lines later, still in the description of Enite's second palfrey, the narrator engages an audience member about the quality of the horse's saddle. This person gives his opinion of the magnificence of the saddle and its blanket, which the narrator ridicules as simplistic. When the audience member complains about this mockery, the narrator simply replies,

'ich lache gerne zaller stunt.' (7515)

(I always like to laugh.)

Not only does this exchange shows off the narrator's superior story-telling experience at the expense of the intruding audience member, but the tone of the narrator's dismissal of the unexperienced audience member echoes an aristocratic contempt over less informed views of lower classes.

iuch hât sus betrogen
iuwer kintlîcher wan
(7523-24)

(You have been deceived by your childish imagination.)

Whatever the reaction of the audience, the belittled audience member, even if only a fabricated character, feels

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[13] That Guivreiz is also Little does have its irony. Relser describes the scene as "grotesquely funny" (43).

helplessly snubbed, much like the dwarf whose horse was taken.

The proximity of the two episodes lends weight to the author's intention to evoke, even if only at a modest level, some sympathy from these individuals, maltreated by representatives of the court. Lower class members of Hartmann's audience could not have failed to understand the dwarf's frustration and misery resounding across the mountain. The narrator's haughty treatment of the audience member is another example of double-voicedness, wherein the narrator uses a language not really his own. In the end his use of the aristocratic language is as awkward as the audience member's feeble attempt to use the story-teller's. On one hand it identifies various social languages, while challenging the righteousness of aristocratic superiority. This burlesque of social languages helps break the sanctity of language codes, which in turn allows one to observe the essentials of human interaction without the burden of social etiquette.

Erec and Enite's adventures reveal their Bildung and their rise through the world to become jewels of adaptive courtly conduct. Hartmann's narrator enjoys showing his audience the imperfections of many who revolve in the courtly world. One implication of the couple's rise is that

under them remain many who may try, but do not succeed in achieving the full measure of chivalry.

Hartmann's work does not include as large a sampling of the heteroglot world as does Chrétien's. Hartmann's attention is on the plurivocal dialogue that develops between Erec and Enite, and how their relationship helps distinguish the perversion and true demonstration of courtliness within the courtly system. For Hartmann the true manifestation of chivalry is one based more on the spirit of the code than on its conventions. Although his work indicates right and wrong, Hartmann's attention to the inner shortcomings of courtly society blurs the linear stylistics that seek to separate the homogeny of the knightly class from heteroglot society. Enite's enhanced status in Hartmann's work confronts the marginalization of women with the introduction of a valuable and dialoguing position for her under courtly principles. Romance remains a predominantly male world, but Enite's struggle to have a voice affirms the respectability and dynamic role of women therein. The spiritual nature of the work questions the aristocratic monopoly on chivalry. The narrator's humour allows some measure of carnival into the closed system of the court, while making the guiding principles of courtliness accessible to those beyond the castle's sanctuary.

Hartmann's Erec develops plurivocality in the relationship of Erec and Enite who negociate an understanding between them through their engagement with and discourse about the worldly adventures that face them. Although the work recognizes variation in languages, its tendency to harmonize through spirituality fails to address the possibility of equally valid, but irreconcilable positions. Although more receptive to variation, the narrative's moral underpinning keeps it from breaking free from the linear stylistic of Bakntin's First Line novels. It is the limited plurivocality of its protagonists combined with the narrator's irony and ambiguity that determine Hartmann's Erec as an introduction to a transitional stage in the development of the Bakhtinian novel.

Although Hartmann's Erec does try to impart the benefits of courtly conduct to his audience, his realistic acknowledgement of an imperfect world understands the difficulty of achieving ideals. With a respect for the principles of chivalry and a knowledge of human weaknesses, Hartmann's Erec represents an early form of third generation romance. Acknowledging the interdependence of courtly society and its legendary heroes, he has allowed the couple to modify and fine tune the errors perpetuated through convention. The liberation from courtly conventions in turn gives the audience access to the primary precepts of the courtly conduct.

The identification of general chivalric principles as guidelines for respectable human interaction at all levels of society, alongside a good-natured understanding of the difficulty in attaining and maintaining such principles distinguishes Hartmann's Erec from the social elitism in Bakhtin's First Line of Stylistics. Hartmann's underlying interest in the ethical measurement of nobility and of social interaction make the Erec a quest for this spiritual integrity in a particular stratum of society, rather than an opportunity to delineate the supremacy of the court from the rest of the world.

III. Plurivocality in Gottfried's Tristan

A second romance that finds itself between Bakhtin's First and Second Lines of Stylistic Development is Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan.[1] While Hartmann's Erec uses plurivocality to create a discourse between idealism and its realistic application to purify the courtly relationship of love and chivalry, Gottfried's work bypasses the underlying desire to harmonize and instead, presents the seemingly irreconcilable differences between true Love and the court.

The romance follows a hero who rises above the established codes of the courtly world and the romance genre. Tristan learns, uses, and dismisses the chivalric code as suits his needs. Although Tristan at times seems to be an exemplary knight, most of his adventures depend on his ability to keep appearances while perverting accepted courtly statutes. From the start the narrative suggests that Tristan is above the ritualized vicissitudes of courtly life, hence his proclivity is to subvert them.

Gottfried creates a narrator-figure whose support of Tristan is founded on a profound interest in the narrative's love element. The controversial nature of the adulterous relationship of Tristan and Isolde sets the court and the lovers at contrapuntal odds. The narrator advocates the lovers and their love by contrasting love's transcendence

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[1] All Middle High German references are taken from G. Weber's edition with English translations, with the exception of a few modifications, are those of A.T. Hatto.

with the trivialities of courtly life. This endorsement, which espouses the virtues of true love, is buttressed by the narrator's frequent use of digression.[2] The conflict is further emphasized by the narrator's ridicule of the court's artificiality.

The surface level of the story questions the social conventions that control the court. There are the numerous duplicities suggested by the narrator and the story that are intended to distinguish the varying viewpoints of the lovers and society.[3] The narrator's polemics attempt to strengthen love's case, while weakening the interdependence of the individual and society. The narrative could be understood as a third generation romance examining the closed system of the court from within. Yet its advocacy of Love's supremacy over the world around it is similar to the chivalric romance's linear attempt to impose order on the unrefined heteroglot of humanity. In this light it seems that Gottfried's Tristan simply qualifies as a novel of Bakhtin's first Line of Stylistics. With a closer examination of the text though, one finds a level of

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[2] Lore Peiffer notes that "die drei grossen Exkurze (entwickeln) ein reflektiertes und höchst bewusstes Ideal, dass im Exkurs als distanzierender und reflektierter Darbietungsform seinen angemessenen Ausdrukt findet" (215).

[3] These polemics include, among others, the lovers and the court, individual and society, emotion and reason, innovation and convention, bourgeois and feudal (see Otto Langer), Matriarchy and Patriarchy (see Albrecht Clausen), Welt and Überwelt, love and lust, as well as confusion and understanding.

plurivocality that breaks it from the limitation of this stylistic mode. It is the object of this chapter to show that the Tristan does not limit itself to a pure, propagandist advocacy of Love's excellence, but also allows the inadequacies and ambiguities of love to be seen. In allowing this, the narrative ends up presenting two equally valid, yet flawed sides that struggle with their irreconcilability.

Although the narrator condones the actions of the lovers by giving them his unconditional support and by attempting to create a unified vision of their relationship, this chapter looks at how the problems with the supremacy of the lovers over society arise in the text. In doing so it shows that the narrator's viewpoint is not only to convince his audience of the superiority of love, but also to portray his model of love without hiding the difficulties such love can present. The narrative readily points out shortcomings of Mark's court, and yet it does not censor Love's quandaries. It is the work's presentation of both the merits and the pitfalls of ideal Love that helps Gottfried's work transcend the limits of Bakhtin's First Stylistic Line of the novel.

The story and the narrator's commentary point to the excellence of the heroes and their love. Revealing the challenges to love's mastery over courtly society in the text is done by first looking into the text's distinction of

the protagonists from the world around them and then surveying the ways in which the heroes' actions are ambiguous. By viewing the lovers from the point of view of the court, it becomes clear that although the two sides (i.e., the lovers and society) can probably never be reconciled, they each have valid claims. Thus plurivocality is manifested in the ambiguity of the universal presentation of shortcomings on each side.

In order to find the elements in the heroes' actions that warrant ambiguous interpretation, one should keep from looking directly at the love of the lovers as the love presented in the story is undeniably positive. It is the lovers themselves who chafe those around them with their actions in the name of such perfect love. One learns about the lovers both by observing them outside the relationship, and by seeing what effect their actions have on others around them. The intention of this study is not to (re)define the morality in the work, but to present alternatives that render its interpretations ambiguous.

Gottfried's Tristan is saturated with episodes and vignettes portraying the hero's mastery and transcendence over courtly society and the conventions of the romance genre. The lengthy description of Tristan's life before he meets Isolde attests to the significance of his involvement with the court. His character resists taking on the motives and values of romance heroes, even though he is well versed

in courtly procedure. Tristan's knowledge of hunting protocol wins him great respect, not only from the hunters but also from King Mark's court. The ornate slaughtering ritual is given more credit than the successful hunt itself, symbolically alluding to the court's shallow preference of spectacle over action. Tristan's extensive education and clever use of list (ruse, deceit or ingenuity) makes him the exceptional courtier who eventually becomes the King's heir. His success and the reactions this incites in the court, now positive, now negative, question the courtier's role by focusing on the political and selfish struggle for position among them (Jaeger 44-66). Tristan's successful endearment to King Mark and the jealousies this provokes reveal the courtiers' interest in gaining a station, rather than a concern with the self-actualization and personal refinement that can result from an association with the court. Tristan's spiritual isolation from conventional courtly aspirations along with his superior abilities as a courtier are what allow him to love Isolde, while trying to appease the suspicions of the court.

Tristan's alternative approach to romance heroes' conventional courtly fulfilment is evident in his unique manner. Tristan gains the respect of the court through his artistic abilities as a musician, recognition "that until that point in courtly literature could only be won through

deeds of arms."[4] He maintains his position as the court musician and armour-bearer to the King. It is only when Rual's arrival some years later moves Tristan to avenge his father's death, that Tristan has any interest in becoming a man-of-arms. One could argue that Tristan was not eligible for knighthood without proof of his nobility. But as the King's capable favourite, Tristan could have overcome this if he had wanted. Instead he is only knighted when there is a particular reason to take up arms.

Tristan does not engage in the romance convention of a socially inspired quest to gain glory or prove his knightly merit and prowess. The motives for his battles are usually his own, and gallantry is noticeably absent in his fighting technique. Gentlemanly conventions of the duel are superseded by his functional desire to win. Combat is described in graphic detail emphasizing Tristan's cunning, rather than seeking an honourable way of displaying his refined skills.

In his fight with Morgan and Morold, Tristan takes on his father's and his uncle's political quarrels. Yet his motives are still personal, not social. By settling the feud with Morgan, Tristan symbolically acquaints himself with his father by taking on his exploits, but rejects the opportunity to capitalize upon his victory and introduce

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[4] "Bis dahin in der hofischen Epik nur mit Waffentaten gewonnen werden konnte" (Gnaedinger 23, my translation).

himself as the returned leader of Parmenie. Although Tristan does fight Morold for the greater good of Cornwall, his personal motive for doing so is, in part, to embarrass the court for being too cowardly to fight for their own children.

> 'ir herren,' sprach er, 'alle samet,
> alle mit einem namen genamet,
> die hie ze loze loufent,
> ir edelkeit verkoufent,
> schamet ir iuch der schanden niht,
> die disem lande an iu geschiht?'
> (6063-68)
>
> ("You lords, one and all," he said, "to name you all by one name, who hasten to draw lots and sell your noble blood, are you not ashamed of the disgrace you are bringing on this land?")

The wound he receives from Morold and its ensuing stench retard the conventional joy and celebration of Tristan's victory over Morold and underscore his isolation from the court. The distinction of Tristan's motives from the needs of the court breaks the mutuality between the individual and the court observed in Hartmann's Erec. The hero and the court no longer aim to sustain one another.

Overall Tristan's presence belittles Mark's court. The court's knowledge of ritual is upstaged by an adolescent boy, its riches are undermined by the costly tribute paid to Gurmun, and the greatness of its renown is compromised by the pettiness of its attendants and cowardice of its nobility. Unlike Arthurian romances that find the paragon of courtly virtue at Arthur's Round Table, Mark's court falls short as an inspiration for Tristan.

Tristan's more developed sensibilities spiritually isolate him, while his proficiency in courtly decorum facilitates his manipulation of it. One could conclude that he is bored. Yet Tristan is not a figure who applies himself to the pursuit of either courtly or personal excellence. His abilities show great potential, yet he does very little to expand them once he reaches the limited court of Cornwall. His superiority is made uncertain by his lethargic postures. It takes the magical power of the love potion to inspire him to pursue a higher cause.

The narrator is also a powerful force in presenting the courtly system in an unfavourable light. From the beginning he aligns himself with the edelez herzen (noble hearts) against ir aller werlde (the world of the many).

> dem lebene si min leben ergeben,
> der werlt wil ich gewerldet wesen,
> mit ir verderben oder genesen.
> (64-66)

> (To this life let me be given, of this world let me be part, to be damned or saved with it.)

He distinguishes this life from the world of the many by setting up a duality between them. Although ir aller werlde includes everyone who stands outside the sphere of lovers, the primary setting of the story in the court of Cornwall suggests ir aller werlde is courtly society. This duality admits the rarity of edelez herzen and of an understanding of them in the world, while it initiates the audience into the greatness of this rarefied, select, and elite strata.

Throughout Tristan's upbringing, the narrator seems to manipulate the story to show his protagonist in a commendatory light, while casting shadows on Mark's court. With such commonly used omniscient statements as references to his authentic source, the use of folkloric wisdom, maxims, foreshadowing, personal opinions, explanations and the ever popular nu (now) for transitions in the narrative, the narrator controls the story's progress and the audience's perception of it. The narrator's opposition to the courtly world is highlighted when he directs the text away from conventional courtly panegyric, emphasizing instead Tristan and the ideals he sees him representing.

After the death of Riwalin, the narrator quite consciously steps in to tell the audience that he will not afflict our ears with conventional grief and "wild lamentation, much and overmuch", because he feels that their effects pall with too much repetition. On the other hand, he does dwell upon the grief and sorrow that later arises when the lovers are separated. Rather than simply not mentioning the grief of Parmenie, the narrator's conscious refusal to elaborate upon it distances him from conventional romance techniques and once again calls to mind his privileging of the lovers over courtly writ.

The purposeful dismissal of lengthy descriptions is made a number of times, such as this comment on Morold.

> Mit des gewæfene wil ich
> noch mit siner sterke

mines herzen merke
noch mines sinnes spitze sehe
mit nahe merkende spehe
niht stumpfen noch lesten,
(6502-06)

(I will not blunt or encumber my inner perception or the sharp vision of my poetic faculty with close scrutiny of either Morold's strength or his armour)

The narrator here distinguishes between his herzen merke and the superficiality of a description of Morold's outer qualities. The narrator's dislike of false appearances is suggested when he refuses to describe the pageantry and celebration of Mark and Isolde's wedding.

Lang umberede si hin geleit: (12435)

(Let us not make a long story of it.)

The strongest example of the narrator's distance from the inadequacies he finds in romance conventions comes during the knighting of Tristan, in which the narrator is unwilling to detail the investiture. Instead of elaborating on the "worldly pomp and magnificent trappings" of the occasion, the narrator notes that he could not give a better description than the many poets who have already done so. Conscious that such description would not suitably elaborate Tristan's qualities, he launches instead into a literary excursus, extolling the virtues and criticizing the failings of contemporary poets. Still aware that he had not fulfilled his obligation to describe Tristan's investiture, the narrator appeals to the Muses and finally settles on

using classical references and allegorical terminology to describe it.

On the whole this approach to Tristan's investiture highlights the narrator's distance from courtly riches and norms and links Tristan to poets, divine artistic inspirations and icons of classical mythology. It is evident the narrator's interest in Tristan is based not on his physical manifestation of courtly virtues, but on the hero's individual, spiritual and artistic strength.[5]

> ine mag ir buhurdieren
> niht allez becroieren.
> (5061-62)

(I am no herald to cry all their jousting.)

Although the narrator paints a favourable picture of his hero, the story is not pure in its portrayal of Tristan as an ideal figure. As already noted, Tristan's early life focuses on his superiority over and isolation from the values of the court. It is only when he has fallen in love with Isolde that Tristan becomes the narrator's agent of love. Until that time Tristan's attitude towards the court could be understood as indifferent. It is this very indifference which makes room for ambiguous social

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[5] For more on Tristan's role as an "artist-hero", see W.T. Jackson, "Tristan the Artist in Gottfried's Poem", 364-72. A more recent study of Gottfried's literary views and their significance in Tristan's investiture is found in Jackson's The Challenge of Medieval Texts: Studies in Genre and Interpretation (1984).

interpretation of some of his early exploits. Though Tristan's ambivalence is not directly developed by the narrator, it is also not censored or softened by him. Between the less flattering side of Tristan's personality and the lovers' indifference to both society and the people in it, one finds the avenue into the plurivocality in Gottfried's work.[6]

One observes a diminishing sense of accomplishment and merit in the rivals Tristan faces and in the manner in which he engages them. His most significant early rival is Morold, a formidable foe, who sends fear into the hearts of all in Cornwall. Morold the Strong represents the power of Rome as champion of Gurmun, King of Ireland and scion of the house of Africa. Young Tristan facing such an opponent is reminiscent of the Biblical David and Goliath story. Tristan must call upon every available resource to defeat Morold. Politically the battle and his victory award Tristan much glory in Cornwall. On the whole the encounter with Morold may be described as epic. Killing Morold reflects an epic necessity for death to settle disputes, in contrast to romance knights who save their vanquished opponents if they vow allegiance to the victor. This fight

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[6] Although there are critics who view Tristan's character, as well as his narrator's idealization of him as negative (such as Weber's belief, in Krise, in the demonic nature of the story), there is no discussion of ambivalent interpretation as a counterbalance to the support the narrator gives the protagonists.

also seeks to settle a long standing dispute between two countries, rather than between two men. The same sense of irrefutable conclusion is visible when Tristan kills Duke Morgan to settle the dispute between Parmenie and Brittany.

The episode of the dragon and the Seneschal marks a change in Tristan's adversaries. First Tristan bribes the Royal Marshall of Ireland so that he may land in Ireland and have an opportunity to fight the dragon. The fight with the beast is indeed a valiant one, but ends up being the easiest part of his mission to Ireland. He must contend with the discovery of his identity as the killer of the Queen's brother, and face the challenge for the princess from the Seneschal.

Although Tristan wins easily over the rascally Seneschal, the contest invites some parallels between the two men. One notices that both are disliked in the court. Tristan is the enemy of a court that still smarts from Morold's death, while the Seneschal is disliked for his unwelcome affections for the princess. Both men search for a way to gain the princess' hand and expect her father to keep his promise to the dragon-slayer, regardless of his feelings toward the victor. It is Tristan's luck that his rival is even less appreciated than he is. But in order to make their decision, Queen Isolde and her counsel also compare the two men. Their decision to go with Tristan is

not an easy one and reinforces an interpretation that Tristan is ignoble. King Gurmun must announce,

> ugerne so verkiuse ich
> iedoch verkiusich sisen zorn,
> (13666-67)
>
> ("Loath as I am to do so, I nevertheless renounce this feud.")

The young Isolde's continued aversion to Tristan reinforces an interpretation that for Ireland the decision is only the lesser of two evils, since both may compromise the dignity of the court. Unlike his earlier epic-like battles and victories over Morold and Morgan, this episode undermines his heroic fighting abilities by focusing on his skills as a lucky political manipulator.

Gandin, the Knight of the Rote, is the first rival Tristan faces after his return from Ireland with Isolde. The parallel between the two men is marked by the similarity in their performances to attempt to win the Queen. Both ask for a reward for their musical entertainment and both abuse the generosity offered them by the technical wording of the reward. Tristan appears to come out ahead in this war of wits because his is the more crafty ruse and because he also saves the Queen. But Tristan's social accomplishment in this situation is undermined by the narrator's comment at the end of the episode when he innocently speculates:

> obs under wegen under in
> iender ze vröuden kæmen,
> rouwe in den bluomen næmen,
> daz wil ich ane wænen lan:
> (13433-36)

> (Whether they attained happiness anywhere on the way resting among the flowers, I shall leave unguessed: for my part I shall refrain from guesses and surmises.)

One could understand the narrator's desire to distance Tristan from the conventional romance motif of restoring social order by focusing on the continued existence of the lovers' relationship. Yet there is no reason to doubt that Tristan's primary reason for saving Isolde is a personal one. The subtle duality of Tristan's motives (both personal and social) is lost to the intentional bluntness of the narrator's comment which invites a less favourable interpretation of the episode. Tristan's initial indifference to the court seems nearly spiteful as he ironically rebukes Mark for allowing the Queen to become common property by a performance, as this applies to everyone but himself. The social aspect of Tristan saving Cornwall from a knight who sought to avenge Ireland's loss of its princess to a rival nation is lost to the narrator's transformation of the episode into a simple sexual rivalry.

The later encounter with the giant, Urgan li vilus, refers back to the fight Tristan had with Morold. Urgan's direct reference to Morold, the circumstantial parallel of an unjust tribute being fought over and the fact that both foes have a right hand cut off by Tristan prompts a comparison between the two. One difference is that the fight against the giant is undertaken for an intended reward, while in the battle with Morold, Tristan is

satisfied with the social consequences of his victory. Although Tristan believes his efforts to procure Petitcreiu and his magic bell for Isolde may comfort the heartache in his lady, her later destruction of the gift foils Tristan's attempt to follow the romance convention of consoling one's lady with material gifts. Isolde's love for Tristan has no use for such tokens of love.

Tristan's battle technique with Urgan is also quite different from what it is with Morgan. In the encounter with Urgan, Tristan runs away from his opponent, trying to lose him in the forest. He later steals the giant's severed hand and hides it. In the end Tristan completely blinds Urgan and pushes him off the bridge,

> daz der ungehuire last
> an dem velse aller zerbrast.
> (16170-71)

(so that his monstrous bulk shattered on the rocks.) This fight contrasts sharply with the formal challenge of Morold, the careful preparations, the island on which the fight took place, the heroic battle and Tristan's epic victory. Even the narrator's description of the fight with Morold is much more comprehensive. The Morold battle is made to seem more consequential as it demonstrates Tristan's valour and contempt for the court and results in the fateful wound that takes him to Ireland. In contrast Tristan's fight with Urgan is episodic in nature, illustrating Tristan's struggle with his isolation from Isolde. The

episode discredits the romance convention of using combat as a way of showing a lady love. Yet the failure of this motif to bring any consolation to Isolde puts Tristan in an ambiguous light for having tried it, rather than finding some other way to express himself to his lady. The convention's failure to relieve sorrow in the lady is not recognized by Tristan who ends the episode with a happy heart. His deed is finally an exercise in self-solace which further distances him from his social connections and breaks him from his emotional unity with Isolde.

The rivals Tristan faces range the full spectrum. The renown he tentatively establishes for himself as an epic hero with his early victories over Morold and Morgan is countered by the incidental, seemingly petty rivalries and circumstantial victories of later episodes. Tristan's fighting techniques not only rebel against the established warfare codes of epic and romance heroes, but are so varied that one could only conclude that his pattern is the one that works best for Tristan. In this way one sees how Tristan's personality is driven by a strong sense of individualism.

Tristan's strong individualism not only confronts epic and romance conventions of battle, but also runs up against traditional modes of loyalty and friendship. Before falling in love both Tristan and Isolde are <u>höflich</u> (courtly) to everyone. Their popularity in the court is extensive. Once

in love the couple easily forsake any loyalty or friendship they feel may threaten their relationship.

It has been noted that unlike Beroul's version of the tale, where Mark is presented as a malevolent antagonist, Gottfried's King Mark is generally spoken of as a kind, but deceived man (Knoff 132). Gottfried's change in Mark allows for mixed sympathies to exist in the audience concerning the central conflict of the Tristan legend. It is Mark's renown that takes Tristan's father to his court to refine courtly skills. The relationship between Mark and Tristan is a focal point in the opening half of the tale. Once the love between Tristan and Isolde is established, Tristan easily dismisses this bond. Without any sense of misgiving, Mark becomes the object of Tristan's ruses. Tristan continues to seek favour with the King only so he may be in close proximity to the Queen. The narrative's softened stance on Mark invites the audience to view both sides of the situation. On one side Tristan deserves to have Isolde, and yet one cannot fully condone the abuse of this generally kind and simple King. The audience must weigh the higher consciousness of Tristan's love against Mark's kindness and trust in Tristan.

The tension between love and other "lesser" forms of amity is also felt in Isolde when she abuses her personal servant. By using Brangane to dupe the king on his wedding night, Isolde stretches the limits of master/servant

propriety. The narrator attempts to smooth over any objections with the scene by making an ambiguous and bawdy comment.

> ine weiz, wie ir der anevenc
> geviele dirre sache;
> si dolte so gemache,
> daz er ane braht beliep
> (12596-99)
>
> (I do not know how she took to this business at first. She endured it so quietly that it all passed off in silence.)

Brangane's silence leads to a further transgression by Isolde, when, fearing the potential of discovery, she decides to have Brangane murdered. Isolde hopes to accomplish this by feigning she is sick and wants Brangane to dig some medicinal herbs in the forest where Isolde's hired killers could do their work. That Isolde could make such a cold plan contrasts to Isolde's murderous, but checked impulse to kill Tantris/Tristan when she discovers him to be her uncle's killer. In that episode the narrator explains that Isolde is unable to kill because her <u>sueze wipheit</u> (sweet womanhood) intervened. Although Brangane is not murdered, the audience is left to wonder what happened to her underlying <u>wipheit</u>. Isolde is not the same friendly, courtly personality she had been before her involvement with Tristan. The narrator recognises Isolde's awkward malice toward her loyal and trustworthy servant and tries to rationalize her motives.

> diu sorchafte künigen
> diu tet an disen dingen schin,

daz man laster und spot
mere vürhtet danne got:
(12709-12)

(In this the fearful queen showed that people dread scandal and derision more than they fear the Lord.)

One problem this creates is that this reasoning doesn't keep Isolde and her edelez herzen distinguished from the world of the many. Love doesn't seem to have kept Isolde from the pettiness of courtly concerns, but rather immersed her in them.

Another place in which Love, friendship and loyalty find themselves at odds is Tristan's relationship with Marjodoc. Marjodoc's suspicion of Tristan's affair with Isolde tips the balance of the friendship and eventually causes its dissolution. How close a friendship the two had is not that clear, but

si zwene hæten unter in zwein
gemeine herberge in ein
und waren gerne ein ander mite.
(13473-75)

(the pair enjoyed each others' company and shared the same lodgings.)

After Marjodoc follows Tristan's footprints in the snow to the Queen's chamber and discovers the two together, he goes back to his own quarters to which Tristan also eventually returns. Of note here is that before Marjodoc goes to the King with his information, there is a period of silence between the two friends. The narrator notes the alienation and states that Tristan guarded his words to his friend. There is an air of inadequacy in Tristan's handling of the

affair, as only one hundred lines before Tristan and Marjodoc had based their relationship on conversation. Tristan's unresponsive attitude to his friend's sullenness is suggested as a motive for Marjodoc in approaching the King with his information.

> von dirre vremede und hie von
> so sach im Tristan daz wol an,
> daz er eteswaz hie van
> (13626-28)
>
> (From this estrangement Tristan could tell that Marjodoc harboured some suspicions as to what was afoot.)

Tristan's silence is more evidence that love has drastically reduced the role of friendship, loyalty and trust in the lovers.

Like Isolde with Brangane, Tristan suffers from a hypersensitivity to his situation with Isolde and the court. Tristan's awkwardness reveals the restriction that keeps the lovers from developing personal relationships with others in the court. It is ironic that the expansive spiritual nature of their love increases their need to be defensive and guarded. While love has given Tristan and Isolde an avenue wherein they may more earnestly express themselves, yet in order to maintain this forum they must work harder to keep up the societal superficiality against which their love rebels.

The disregard of loyalty and friendship does not stop with those who threaten the lovers' social balance. Tristan's monomaniacal devotion to love takes another step

with his exploitation of the hospitality and friendship he finds in Duke Gilan. After Isolde's trial by ordeal, Tristan visits Duke Gilan, a young, happy lord whose greatest pleasure is his dog, Petitcreiu. It is revealed that Tristan is looking for a way to obtain the dog. The audience knows that he is willing to try about anything to secure the dog, "either by entreaty or artifice." The abused reward system is again used, only now Tristan uses it to take away his young friend's most prized possession. Gilan boldly offers anything he has in return for ridding his land of the giant Urgan li virus.

After killing the giant Tristan returns to Gilan for his reward. Gilan's generosity is made to look foolish when Tristan insists on having Petitcreiu. Gilan reluctantly honours the request, but offers Tristan the dog with a tone that tries to appeal to Tristan's sense of honour, hoping thereby to win Tristan's sympathy.

> 'Nu nemet hin and habet in iu;
> got laze in iu ze vröude kamen.
> ir habet mir zware an ime benomen
> daz beste miner ougen spil
> und mines herzen wunne vil.'
> (16258-62)
>
> ("Now take him and keep him and may God give you joy of him! In him you deprive me of my eyes' rarest pleasure and much delight to my heart.")

But Tristan's ploy is not just to test his friend's virtue; he really does want to take the dog. Tristan does not even acknowledge the pain he may have caused his friend by his selfish act. Gilan disappears from the story and within a

ew lines Tristan's "herze dazn wart nie so vro" (heart never felt so happy). The narrator points out that Tristan acted in the spirit of serving the Queen. Isolde's decision to destroy the bell that makes the dog so magical is also commended by the narrator as an act of,

> diu getriuwe stæte senedærin,
> diu hæte ir vröude und ir leben
> sene unde Tristande ergeben.
> (16400-02)

> (this constant, faithful lover who had surrendered her life and joy to sadness and to Tristan.)

With Gilan's parting words still fresh in the audience's mind, the narrator calls on his audience to voice opinions about honour.

> hie sprechet alle, wie dem si:
> da diu samblanze geschiht,
> weder ist ez ere oder niht?
> (16322-24)

> (State your opinions, all of you, on this point: where you have only the semblance, is that honour or no?)

The narrator lunges ahead with a flurry of rhetoric that ends abruptly with, "waz ist der rede nu mære?" (What more is there to say?). The narrator hedges the consequences of the situation for Gilan with discussion of the love between Tristan and Isolde. It is this defensive stance that the audience experiences a tonality which gives the narrator's words a double-voicedness. The narrator's confidence in the couple's love is mixed with an air of insecurity about the actions of the hero. The audience is left with ambiguity as it must try to fit together its support for Tristan with an

incident that is of no consolation to Isolde and destroys the friendship between Tristan and Gilan.

Tristan's varied chain of rivals and the unique manner in which he encounters and defeats them signals his unconventional originality. His early career as a knight showed his ability to master epic and romance conventions, while his later exploits indicate his freedom from their constraints. Yet in surveying his treatment of those to whom he either owes some loyalty, kindness or friendship, one finds his manner to be, at best, ambiguous.

As stated above, the expansive nature of love in Tristan and Isolde is ironically countered by the need to keep more socially confined. Increasingly it becomes apparent that there is a distinction to be made between the ideal love expounded by the narrator and the individual situations and personalities of the lovers. Tristan's strong individualism is definitely a central factor to the plot and the narrative's central themes, yet there is something lacking in his individualism. It seems that although Tristan is superior to the court, is not himself a successful leader.[7] He does not make the change from gifted boy to contributing nobleman.

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[7] "(Tristan) is from the first superior to all its (Mark's court's) members in the very graces of civilized life in which they claim to excel" (Anatomy 146). Yet unlike Hartmann's Erec, this 'perfection' does not lead to a throne.

Tristan's first effort as a leader of a group nearly ends in disaster. When Tristan learns of his true lineage, he returns to Parmenie to avenge his father's death. He takes a retinue of knights and boldly walks into Morgan's camp. Rather than draw Morgan into battle, he openly murders him. The shocked Bretons give chase, and the 'Chevaliers Parmenie' soon find themselves on a defended hilltop surrounded and outnumbered.

Rual, "haunted by a suspicion of just how Tristan had fared" (5551-54), gathers a hundred knights and helps break the strangle hold the Bretons have on Tristan and his men. Although one could argue that Tristan wisely knew he might not legitimately draw Morgan into a judicial duel, coldly killing Morgan was impulsive. The murder and ensuing battle are acts of unbridled youth.

> Ir aller jehe lit dar an,
> haz der ligę ie dem jungen man
> mit groezerem ernest an
> dan einem stündigen man
> (5099-5102)
>
> (All are agreed that anger besets a young man more relentlessly than a mature one.)

Tristan's ambush nearly cost the lives of the men he was leading. Had Tristan been able to turn the tide of the battle himself, or planned Rual's intervention, one could dismiss his bold act as calculating. But it is only Rual's thinking which saves Tristan from the consequences of his rashness. The favourable outcome increases Tristan's faith

in personal fortune, but also suggests inadequacy in his leadership abilities.

Tristan has the agility to adapt himself to the situations facing him very easily, but he is incapable of organizing and leading others. He admits as much when on the wooing expedition he insists on doing the work himself and having the barons he had brought with him hide on the boat until he had finished.

Once Tristan has won the recognition of his title with his victory over Morgan and the Bretons, he feels very little connection with his people. He renounces the obligation to stay and rule his people so that he may rejoin Mark's court. The narrator rather facilely explains that Tristan divided himself by leaving his wealth in Parmenie with Rual, which allowed his person to go back to Cornwall. Once again the narrator's words ring with a tone that stirs some seed of doubt as to his absolute understanding of the narrative's hero. Why does Tristan abdicate his family seat? Why could he not have left control of it to Rual's family while he was away as his father had done? His action carries with it a suggestion of a dismissal of responsibility.

If Tristan is superior in the ways of the court, why does the narrator tell us that it is Mark "an dem al sin ere stat" (on whom his whole honour depends)? In a sense his affiliation with Mark's court keeps up the tradition of his

father and Arthurian knights who leave their domains for famed courts to expand themselves and develop their chivalric skills. Tristan could be returning to an apprenticeship from which he is actually learning. His leadership skills and political manoeuvres are still those of a young man and could be polished by continued contact with King Mark. Another explanation places Tristan at Mark's court because he enjoys a very privileged position as the King's protégé. Yet in his close association with Mark, Tristan must also contend with jealousies of Cornwall's courtiers. In Parmenie he has a legal seat which would gain him loyalty. As a ruler, his skills would add to the popularity of his reign, rather than be the cause for suspicion as is the case at Mark's court. In Cornwall he is an enigmatic implant, who finds special favour with the King. Tristan states he looks forward to being Mark's heir, yet he undermines this with his unwillingness to rule his own people, and by his readiness to find Mark a wife when there is pressure from the court to do so.

The attachment between Mark and Tristan is a very personal one. While he is addressing his Parmenien court, Tristan states not only that he will be Mark's heir but that,

> (Mark) wil, daz ich im wone bi,
> swa er si oder swar er var.
> nu han ich mich bewegen dar
> und stat mir al min muot dar zuo
> daz ich al sinen sillen tuo

und wider zuo zim kere.
(5790-95)

([Mark] wants me to live with him wherever he is or goes. Therefore I am resolved and all of my heart stands by it, to do his will and again return to him.)

Physical presence is necessary for their relationship to continue. Tristan's reasons for rejoining Mark suggest a somewhat emotionally obsessive temperament in him. He commits himself completely by relinquishing his seat. Tristan already has some qualities of the monomaniacal lover he supposedly only becomes after having drunk the love-potion with Isolde.

One also sees Tristan's individualism contrast itself to Rual's sense of social responsibility. Although Rual is not Tristan's biological father, he is Tristan's paternal influence. Rual's exemplary humanity and sense of social duty runs deep (Anatomy 160-61). He is loyal to his country, is the keeper of the Parmenian house, and is the father of his own family. He is a link in the lineage of his people. But this sense of continuity is lost to Tristan who is the culmination and swan song of his family lineage. Tristan ceremonially dismisses his past and declares his independence when he gives away his noble seat. Yet rather than striking out on his own, Tristan gives up the opportunity to be a leader so that he may continue being a courtier.

Tristan is a very good courtier, and he feels it necessary to continue being associated with the court, even

during his relationship with Isolde. His love for Isolde does not rob him of the desire to keep his position in Mark's court, but it does complicate it. Most of the narrative's account of the love relationship revolves around Tristan's efforts to subdue the court's suspicions about the lovers. These labours and the prominence given them lead one to speculate whether or not the Minnegrotto is indeed the ideal lifestyle for these lovers.

The couple may have a different vision of an ideal situation than the narrator. For instance one sees that in the early part of their relationship, before being suspected by the court, Tristan and Isolde are on the best of terms with everybody, and are both in excellent spirits. Their love knows both joy and sorrow in these days, not the mortal sorrow they later experience, but the sorrow of not being able to spend time together as freely as they like. It is a time when their love and their life in the court are most at ease, and the lovers interact with each other and those around them. For the moment the distinct duality of their lives seems to have found a balance.

This pastoral time contrasts to the isolation of the lovers' cave. One notes that in the Minnegrotto the lovers no longer have any direct discourse or speak to anyone else. They become figurines in the narrator's idealization of their circumstance. Everything about the grotto, everything they do and everything that happens there is full of dreamy

allegorical significance. The two people exiled for their love become the ideological symbols of the narrator's vision of perfection. For the narrator all true lovers are already spiritually isolated from the world of the many. The grotto is an opportunity to present love in all of its purity. Yet Tristan and Isolde do not seem to be in complete accordance about their life in the cave, judging by their response to the first invitation they get to return to the court.

When Tristan and Isolde determine they had been discovered in the grotto, the narrator states that they were afraid and could only hope they had been seen lying apart. At the invitation from the court, the lovers gladly agree to return.

> die vröude haetens aber do
> vil harter und mere
> durch got und durch ir ere
> dan durch iht anders, daz ie wart;
> (17696-699)
>
> (But they were happy far more for the sake of God and their place in society [honour] than for any other reason.)

From this one understands that although they are irresistibly attracted to one another, courtly society and the God who upholds its morality are still influential in their lives. The lovers have show how unsuitable epic, romance and courtly conventions are for them and their spiritual composition. On the other hand their departure from the Minnegrotto unequivocally indicates that the lovers have not created a complete system there which would better

accommodate the full range of their needs. They are as ill-suited for the ideology of the narrator as they are for the conformity expected of them at the court. They must ultimately be allowed to follow their own path, beyond the desire of others to claim or control them in the name of their ideology. It is in the tension between the couple, the narrator, and the court that the narrative itself takes on a quality of plurivocality preventing the work from being classified as monologic.

This study has sought to identify the characters outside of the narrator's exegesis of their actions in the name of love, in order to allow for a fuller understanding of the dynamic energy of the narrative. The narrator's view of love as a noble creed is not lessened by the lovers' shortcomings. Indeed one learns that the physical manifestation of absolute love is vulnerable to the personalities and social setting of those who pursue it. The work is not simply an edict propagating the virtues of love at the expense of courtly society. The narrative's lengthy focus on Tristan's early life, and the unsoftened collision Tristan has with society both before and during his relationship with Isolde indicate a real interest in the inadequacies of courtly society and the conventions of the romance genre, the difficulties of finding and maintaining true love in the face of social obligation, and the conflict

that exists in the interaction of true love and society. The lovers' sometimes ambiguous and most often playful conduct reinstates some of the basic social guidelines that govern interaction in society. In this way the narrative provokes plurivocal discourse between the emotional focus, sincerity and spontanaeity of love and the regulatory necessity of social custom and practice.

For all of his dismissal of social convention, Tristan is aware of his link to society. There are no other options available to accommodate his abilities and skills. Tristan's strength lies in his exceptional abilities as a courtier who can adroitly play with the conventions of the courtly system. The underlying difficulty between Tristan and the court is that he is too courtly. Tristan is really an artist trapped in a system that only responds to the excellence of courtiers. Aware of this he uses the court as a forum in which he can, in part, express himself.

Tristan's role as a nonconformist is to rock the complacency of the court. Love becomes an avenue to question the definition of ethics of the courtly system, but his presence is used to assert the need for energetic play to ward off stagnation. "The critic, in attempting to arrive at a uniform interpretation of the (ethical terminology), finds him/herself thwarted at nearly every turn by contradictory usages of terms or by ambiguities so pervasive that any hope of consistency in meaning seems

lost" (Meyer 406). Although one could argue that, because of love, the lovers look for a deeper meanings for such terms as ere, triuwe and herze (Meyer 415), it is more in keeping with Tristan's character that his presence in the court prompts discourse on the definitions of the terms, while not having any ultimate resolution. The narrative shows that no matter what the universal spirit of such ethical vocabulary may be, its actualization into the language and action of different persons varies.

When one first sees the desire of Gottfried's Tristan to persuade its audience to accept the superiority of the lovers because of their love, one would think to include it in Bakhtin's First Line of Stylistics. Upon deliberation one notes that although the advantages of Love are undeniable, its incomplete status as a social system and its vulnerability to those who take up its flag have kept Love from being a complete substitute for courtly society. Love is rather used as an indicator of the limitations of the romance genre. Tristan finds in love a supplement for the lack of sincere expression in his life as a courtier. Gottfried's complex characterization of Tristan and the range of discourse his various exploits initiates give the work its plurivocal edge. Like Gottfried who uses an inadequate genre to express the range of his originality, Tristan, who is tied to the court but not part of it, remains a part of the courtly system in order to continue

asserting his individuality. His continued attraction to Mark's court and the ongoing debate and discourse he provokes ensures that the court will not lapse into the sterility of monologic righeousness. With Tristan around there will always be laughter.

Keeping this romance from Bakhtin's Second Line of Stylistics is its social limitation to the court. Gottfried's work seeks to confront the inner machinery of the courtly sphere from within and therefore, does not engage the heterology of a multiplicity of social language systems. Gottfried's dismissal of Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival as not being welled-laved, smooth or even (4660), a work which Bakhtin claims to be "a great example of a novel of the Second Line" ("Discourse" 400), is an indication that Gottfried does not value the erratic, interanimated energy of the heteroglossic world.

IV. Plurivocality in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde

The third work examined in this study, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, has its own unique approach to the romance genre. Chaucer's narrative, written 150 years after Gottfried's Tristan, is a reflection on the medieval romance, but by combining the love element of traditional romance with a perceptive observation of humanity, and by blending philosophy and emotional experience, Chaucer elevates the romance from its medieval orthodoxy. This narrative marks the end of the romance's insular monologic status and anticipates the introduction of heteroglossic dialogism into the genre.

In part the work's success comes from its transcendence of romance conventions. The metaphoric qualities of worldly adventure used in Hartmann's Erec, and questioned in Gottfried's Tristan, are almost altogether ignored in Chaucer's narrative. Although the story is set in the besieged city of Troy, this world is primarily used as a metaphoric backdrop for the plot which revolves around the development and destruction of the lovers' relationship. The conflict of the lovers and society is also no longer as central to the theme of the romance as it was for Hartmann and Gottfried. Instead the narrative steps into the enclosed world of the lovers and invites the audience to

explore and entertain the various points of view presented in the central characters.

> Remembreth yow on passed hevynesse
> That ye han felt, and on the adversite
> Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
> Han felt that Love dorst yow displese,
> Or ye han wonne hym with to grete an ese.
> (I. 24-28)[1]

Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde asks its audience to use its own judgement about the issues raised in the work. The invocation of the classical Muses also signals the wider, more universal scope given to the problems presented in Boccaccio's love story.

Chaucer lengthens Boccaccio's Il Filostrato by a third, freely tightening its organization, adding scenes, dialogues, proverbs, soliloquies and apostrophes, and generally gives the whole work a broader implication. Alongside the addition of astrological elements and the development of more sophisticated rhetoric, Chaucer carefully distinguishes his characters from one another. Boccaccio's love-stricken story-teller narrates how Troilo, already an initiated and disillusioned lover, after some hesitation, has Pandaro, his close companion, advocate his love to Criseida, a practical and somewhat arrogant widow. Troilo, Pandaro and the narrator are in essence different aspects of the same character. They are young, somewhat bruised men willing to give love another chance. Criseida's

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[1] All quotations of Chaucer are taken from J.H. Fisher's edition of his complete works.

treachery is in fact a betrayal of all three, making the work a warning to young men of women's fickleness.

In Chaucer's hands the characters are given new and distinct identities. Troilus is a passionately idealistic young warrior, who, unexperienced in the phenomenon of falling in love, laughs at its effects on others. Once stricken, he becomes so profoundly affected by his love that he is physically unable to act upon it. Pandarus becomes Criseyde's worldly-wise uncle and Troilus' concerned friend who is unsuccessful in love but well-versed in its "daunce." Criseyde is a mysterious figure who tries to keep away from the male-dominated public eye. Finally, the narrator has become a more objective story-teller who approaches the work as its "unlikely" chronicler pontifically serving Love's servants.[2]

These four are the central figures to Chaucer's version of the story. Diomede's role is primarily to verify the broken union of this inner circle of characters at the end of the story, adding another level of understanding to the primary characters. The action and its outcome are already fixed. The general plot is already spelled out by line fifty-six.

> ye may the double sorwe here
> of Troylus, in lovynge of Criseyde,

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[2] This is in reference to Chaucer's imitative use of the papal title "servus servorum Dei" meaning "he who serves the servants of God." "I, that God of Loves servauntz serve" (I. 15).

And how that she forsok hym er she deyde.
(I 54-56)

By distinguishing the characters in the work, Chaucer is able to give voices to different "lobby groups", whi h reveal themselves during their engagement in the story. The narrative finds its strength not in the development of the action but in the interanimation of these varied personalities.

One of Chaucer's accomplishments in this narrative is the realism with which he portrays his characters. Both their actions and their psychological processes release them from idealized conventions. The verisimilitude of the characters draws the audience into the narrative and reveals ambiguities and outright follies in their personalities. Any moral and philosophical judgement of particular characters is left to the audience. The energy of their interanimation is the focus of the narrative.

An investigation of these four characters and their interactions will show how their distinct personalities give the work a plurivocal nature, helping it escape the lifeless conventionality or allegorical implications of other medieval secular writing. The lack of concrete resolution in the narrative forces its audience to engage its dialogical edge and continues to challenge critics these many centuries later.

Troilus, above all others, is the central character of a work often referred to as The Book of Troilus.[3] There is a pattern in his personality wherein the rigidity of his idealism is broken and replaced. At the beginning of the narrative, Troilus is an inexperienced lover, haughtily scorning those affected by love. The perception of being superior to and unaffected by love is quickly routed by the God of Love, who afflicts him with the melancholy of love pangs for Criseyde. His intoxication with Criseyde causes him to replace his broken personal canon with the new and immutable ideal he makes of Criseyde. Troilus is said to be ennobled by his relationship, but the ideal Criseyde represents for Troilus crumbles once she is unfaithful to him. Criseyde, his constant and unswerving pillar of Love, does not maintain her immutable and immortal status and her betrayal strips Troilus of his faith in the world.

Troilus' sundered ideals ultimately lead to his death. In death he is taken to the eighth sphere where he looks back at the world, and with his new perception, shows contemptus mundi. Troilus, unable to find much enthusiasm for the mutable world, looks for a philosophical anchor. In a sense Troilus' search for stability signals an innate

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[3] The work's focus on Troilus lead to Robert Henryson's fifteenth century rhyme-royal work titled The Testament of Cresseid, which tells of how Cresseid is eventually rejected by Diomede, and is punished for her blasphemy of Love by the gods. For more discussion on the neglect of Criseyde in Troilus and Criseyde, see C. Kotsonis.

belief in the existence of an all-encompassing immutable force. The difficulty arises when he focuses on temporal objects such as own will or Criseyde as representations of immutability. These objects seem immutable for a time, but inevitably change. His analogy of love and the "stability" of the temporal world in Book Three is an example of his expectations of love, and signals the coming change to the seemingly timeless and stable quality of his relationship with Criseyde.

> "That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
> Dyverseth so his stoundes concordynge,
> That elements that been so discordable
> Holden a bond perpetuely durynge,
> That Phebus mote his rosy day forth brynge,
> And that the mone hath lordshipe over the nyghtes--
> Al this doth Love, ay heryed be his myghtes."
> (III. 1751-57)

In part the search for stability is a need for a divine guiding principle by which he can lead his life.

Ultimately Troilus could be understood as the fatalist his meditation on destiny in Book Four suggests. His monologue on predestination has received some negative commentary[4], but it serves to identify Troilus' modus operandi in the narrative. Troilus' abridged and fragmented use of Boethian philosophy is an attempt to justify his attitude and seeming incapacity for self-motivated action. The hundred and thirty line monologue follows Troilus' mind as he attempts to rationalize the existence of free-will in

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[4] See T.R. Lounsbury, A.W. Ward, and T.R. Price.

the face of destiny. He recalls the arguments of clerics that Man is free to choose, since God gave him the power of self-direction and that God's foreknowledge is not the cause of events. Despite this, Troilus four times returns to his original belief in destiny and the necessity of its fixed existence in God's Providence.

> "Ek right so, whan I wot a thyng comyng,
> So mot it come. And thus the befallyng
> Of thyngs that ben wyst byfore the tide,
> They mowe not ben eschewed on no syde."
> (IV. 1075-78)

Yet Troilus' argument is not true to its source, as Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy is able to reconcile free-will with the necessity of foreknowledge. One element in Boethius not considered by Troilus is how God's Providence is enacted by Destiny, at whose disposal is a variety of forces including "the celestial moewinges of sterres", "the diverse subtylyte of develes", Nature, and "some sowles".[5] This implies that people and their "sowles" are influences in each others' and their own destinies. It follows that an inactive soul chooses to give up its free-will to the influence of others (Curry 62-63).

The monologue is an insight into Troilus' character. The debate he has with himself reveals how Troilus in his dialogue with Boethian philosophy gets caught up in the seemingly paradoxical moments of the argument. His

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[5] Chaucer's translation of Boethius Boece Book IV, Prose VI (882).

disturbed emotional state shows how one is capable of taking a positive rational argument and letting the energy of its fluctuations become their own conclusion. By not following Boethian philosophy to its end, Troilus remains incapable of seeing the role of personal influence on one's own destiny, and thereby validates his conclusion to the argument by giving up his free will. In a sense he emotionally constructs a philosophically rationalized web, rather than making a cognitive search for ways to escape his lethargy.

Troilus' discourse with Boethian philosophy attests to some understanding in Chaucer of the circumstantially charged power of "parole." It is Troilus' experience, rather than his knowledge of Boethius that has left the deepest mark in him. Troilus' emotional disposition has a controlling influence in his perception of his situation and in the course of his actions. Any purely rational view of his own predicament is coloured by his tendency to see things passionately. Troilus' temperamental base signals Chaucer's interest in the extragrammatical components that play a role in the utterances, discourses and interanimation of his characters.

In response to Troilus the narrative introduces Pandarus, whose realism counterpoints Troilus' idealism. As Criseyde's uncle, most readers assume him to be older than the lovers. He admits he is not himself a successful

lover, but that he is familiar with love's "daunce", suggesting his interest in the game, rather than the reward of courtship.

His entrance into the narrative gives the audience closer access to the action as he is the key figure in the development of the courtship. His role as the interlocutor between Troilus and Criseyde gives the audience the opportunity to follow the enactment of his design for the courtship.

> For every wyght that hath an hows to founde
> Ne renneth nought the werk for to bygynne
> With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
> And send his hertes lyne out fro withinne
> Alderfirst his purpos for to wynne.
> Al this Pandare yn his herte thoughte,
> And caste his werk ful wysly or he wroughte.
> (I. 1065-71)

The audience's initial admiration of Pandarus comes from an association to his vitality for life.[6] Pandarus' practicality stems from a belief in the need to acknowledge the reality of the moment and to live for it. Donald Howard believes this to be bound with his pagan outlook in which "the world is in a state of flux, controlled by cheerless forces of destiny, capricious and inscrutable, which shape for everyone certain moments of 'good aventure'" (166). He understands and makes use of situational factors in his attempt to guide verbal and non-verbal discourse. His view

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[6] John Ganim contends that this early enchantment with Pandarus goes to show how the audience is unwilling to join with Troilus in the spiritual and transcendant experience of love (85).

of the world as a fleeting moment has Pandarus actively advocating the proverbial axiom,

> "He which that nothyng undertaketh
> Nothyng n'acheiveth, be hym loth or dere."
> (II. 807-808)

Pandarus' presence in the narrative is what initiates the discourse between the characters. Having seen Troilus' languor, the audience appreciates Pandarus for his desire to stir things up. Pandarus' love of confrontational and persuasive conversation is recognisable from the first moment he finds Troilus suffering from the sting of love's arrow. When he understands that Troilus is in a state of lament, Pandarus' first reaction is to guess the cause of his sorrow. Pandarus' ploy in this is,

> That with swych thing he myght hym angry maken,
> And with an angre don his wo to falle
> As for the tyme, and his corage awaken.
> (I. 562-64)

Troilus' reacts to these inquiries by telling Pandarus to leave him alone, but he also adds that it is not for the reasons guessed that he is suffering. This comment invites Pandarus to pursue the matter. Pandarus reassures Troilus that friends are obligated to share both their happiness and their pain convincing Troilus to tell him the source of his troubles. Pandarus tries to comfort Troilus by saying that he may be able to help.

> Paraunter thow myghte after swych on longe
> That myn avys anoon may helpen us."
> (I. 619-20)

The dialogue continues until Pandarus has convinced Troilus of his abilities to help and Troilus tells Pandarus that he loves Criseyde.

Pandarus is delighted by the invitation to mediate the courtship. By the end of Book One he is "desirous to serve his fulle frend" (I. 1058). From his encounter with Troilus Pandarus moves on to speak with Criseyde. His abilities to be persuasive are challenged by the elaborate variations that exist in both her personal situation and in the relationship they have. In Criseyde he must instill a thought he had only to extract from Troilus. He finds in her a worthy debater who can flow from the tension between the sexes to the communication allowed between family members to the social withdrawal resulting from her father's recent treachery. His conversation with Troilus is only a warm-up to the verbal dance he has with Criseyde.

Pandarus is the animator of the story's action. To push the reluctant lovers, he demands them to defend themeselves against his own arguments to act. His persuasive rhetoric is able to overcome their hesitancy, in part because of his unsuppressible enthusiasm. Through the debate he encourages, he becomes a sounding board for the differing ideas of the two lovers. He is the promoter of the interanimation between characters in the narrative.

Pandarus' positive enthusiasm to incite reaction in others finds its counterpoint in the plasticity of his

opinions. His desire to play the game is so strong that it allows him to say whatever he feels is necessary to keep the discourse alive and moving. One example of his mutability is seen when Pandarus implores Troilus to "save alweys hire name" in Book One in order to emphasize his well-intended collaboration. This counsel is then later abandoned in Book Four when he suggests to Troilus that he should "go ravysshe hire" rather than simply allowing Criseyde to go to the Greek camp.

Pandarus' familiarity with the change of a mutable world and his philosophy of living for the moment are tools that give him the flexibility he needs to adapt to the ever changing nature of discourse and persuasive debate. Yet his developed ability to hustle the lovers into bed together lacks human depth. His failure as a lover underscores his inability to understand the complication of emotional involvement. His dedication to pragmatics keeps him from knowing the emotional scarring that can result from the dissolution and destruction of love.

When the lovers face their separation in Book Four, Pandarus is quick to commiserate with Troilus, but his sympathy does not stay on an emotional level for long, turning instead to look for practical solutions. The suggestion that Troilus should simply look for another lover indicates that Pandarus sees the relationship between Troilus and Criseyde as little more than the product of a

well-executed plan. He dismisses the lovers' deep emotional dedication in the initial and consummatory phases of the relationship as a complication to be overcome. Troilus point out Pandarus' simplistic view to him.

> "But kanstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
> Nettle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?"
> (IV. 460-61)

> "O, where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
> That kanst so wel and formaly arguwe?"
> (IV. 496-97)

Pandarus fails to take the opportunity at least to understand the sometimes stifling effects of deep emotional energy. Instead he again turns to emotional pragmatics when he sugggests that the couple should announce the relationship, either by making a public claim for one another, or by running away together. Pandarus still lacks the true compassionate nature needed to reach and convince Troilus of the need to act firmly in his emotional distress. Although Troilus agrees to talk with Criseyde about running off, he is unable to plead his case resolutely. Pandarus mistakely believes that Troilus is capable of rational, persuasive argument. Aware of Troilus' emotional vulnerability, Pandarus warns Criseyde that she must transcend her sorrow and not allow her own emotions to weaken Troilus. Yet Criseyde takes Pandarus' advice as a prompt for her to come up with a plan, which spells the demise of Troilus' hopes to assert himself. Troilus' hope to take a rational, assertive stance is also nearly

destroyed when he finds Criseyde in a swoon and believes her to be dead. When Criseyde recovers she easily persuades Troilus to follow her misconceived plan. Pandarus' attempt to arrange the outcome of a discourse in which he would not participate does not account for the emotional intensity between the lovers and its effects on the dialogue.

Pandarus' pragmatic style and rational thought finds its most feeble application in Criseyde's use of it before she yields to Diomede's seduction. Her contemplation of Diomede, her position in the Greek camp, and the unlikelihood of her return to Troy are emotionally driven utilitarian considerations she uses to try to free herself from her emotional bond, commitment and sorrow. The recognition afterwards of her emotional betrayal by both Troilus and Criseyde is the narrative's clearest indication of the shortcomings of Pandarus' pragmatic philosophy.

Pandarus' character is vital to the movement of the plot. His love of debate and persuasive discourse is the catalyst for most of the verbal interanimation of the characters. His confrontational nature shows that even Troilus' reluctance to act is an action. Yet his emotionally incomplete treatment of the mutable world as a game drives the discussion of his role to a deeper level of debate that weighs level-headed pragmatism against emotional commitment. In his character one is made aware that the principles of dialogue and exchange must exceed the

boundaries of eloquent logic and pure rationality to include the unpredictability of emotional drives, distortions and quirks.

Criseyde is the character around which the narrative revolves. Although she is the core of the story's focus, she remains a misunderstood victim of other characters' machinations. Her physical beauty and reactions to the attention such beauty receives move the plot forward, while her emotional life continues to be an unrecognized struggle for social autonomy and independence. Her quest for self-determination is subjugated by the male-dominated world in which she lives. Her struggle against the far-reaching effects of men in her life starts at the beginning of the narrative, when Criseyde must plead before the parliament to retain her place in Trojan society in light of her father's defection to the Greeks. Thereafter Criseyde hopes to withdraw from the public eye where she may live with as little social intervention as possible.

Like Troilus, Criseyde too has a personality pattern that enables one to chart some parallels in her life. She is a reluctant widow who two times gains a suitor whose affections she eventually accepts. With Troilus the young widow is asked to show mercy on a man who is love-stricken with her. Her compassion finally responds to the heartache she has caused in Troilus. In accepting Troilus' love,

Criseyde stops wearing her widow's clothes and puts aside her mourning. Her exchange to the Greeks for Antenor in Book Four robs her of the love she has developed for Troilus and again makes her the victim of the male-dominated world of besieged Troy. Her acceptance of Diomede's affections and her betrayal of Troilus could be understood as her resignation to the unavoidable influence and control of men over her life. It is also likely here that the audience is in something of a quandary as to where sympathies or antipathies should be thrown, on the one hand toward Troilus because of his naive conviction in Criseyde's return, or on the other hand towards Criseyde because of her treachery.

Throughout the narrative she is alone in a male-centred world, beginning with her father who abandons her in a city under siege. Her effect on men is a physical, superficial one, that gives little consideration to her psychological state. The narrative spends very little time developing an understanding of Criseyde. She is introduced as a young widow who has been mourning for an indefinite amount of time. Her surrender to Troilus' affections comes without any sense of violation to her vague past. The narrator's comment that she was "ful well beloved" but that he doesn't know whether or not she had any children (I. 128-133) introduces Criseyde as an object of beauty whose life history is irrelevant. There is a sense that she is given a life with Pandarus and Troilus' courtship of her, rather

than their attention being another episode in her life. The courtship upon which the narrative focuses, the build-up of emotions towards Criseyde in Troilus, Pandarus, the narrator and the audience make her submission to Diomede seem like a betrayal of not only the entire group, but also of her own life.

In order to put things in perspective, one should consider that Criseyde's precarious social situation makes Troilus' untimely unsolicited attention just a further betrayal of her personal dignity.

> "Allas for wo, why nere I ded?
> For of this world the feyth is al agoon.
> Allas, what should straunge to me doon,
> Whan he that for my beste frend y wende
> Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?
> (II. 409-413)

Criseyde's initial reaction to Pandarus' suggestion she return his love is hardly met with a warm embrace. It is Pandarus' rhetorical exploitation of their friendship that sows the possibility of such a situation in her mind, although he achieves this by trivializing her darker concerns. Once Troilus' case has been planted in her imagination, she ponders her situation in her private meditation. It is during this meditation that the audience first observes that Criseyde is a well-grounded person who contemplates her actions carefully. Her rumination weighs the arguments for and against love.

> Now hot, now cold; but thus, bytwyxen tweye,
> She rist hire up and went hire for to pleye.
> (II. 911-12)

She resolves her debate with the decision to investigate her suitor by being receptive to advisement, omens and signs. Her soliloquy gives the audience an opportunity a partial experience of the intricacy of Criseyde's personality and situation. Although the monologue does not spell out all of her influences, it is enough of a glimpse to lift her character above the conventional cardboard female figure the narrative has until now painted of her. Chaucer's addition of Criseyde's monologue to Boccaccio's account and the illumination it offers of her personality indicate the author's interest in seminating the work with clues that may help validate alternative views to the predominate movement and motives of the narrative.

Criseyde's later claim that her submission to Troilus' affection is a result of a decision made earlier is clearly a reference to the initial debate she had in Book Two.

> "Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
> Ben yold, ywys, I were now not here."
> (III. 1210-11)

One also sees that since her private reflection on love, Criseyde has only expressed herself to Pandarus and Troilus. She continually resists Pandarus' arguments that she embrace the relationship, while reassuring the love-stricken Troilus of her good intentions towards him. The two men have replaced the hot and cold of her inner debate. Her initial meditation has become a discourse that is affected by her emotional bond with the two. Her retort to Troilus' comment

that she could no longer resist him suggests that for Criseyde the decision had been whether or not she would allow herself to participate in the discourse of the courtship. The willing exchange of Pandarus and Troilus for the sides of her private argument signals Criseyde's deliberate acceptance of allowing plurivocality to play itself out. The courtship is the game in which the three play off of one another's energy and dialogue and the outcome is never certain.

Criseyde's conscious decision to enter the courtship game is largely unappreciated by Pandarus. In his eagerness to find a key into Criseyde's heart Pandarus assails her with strategic rhetoric and argument, but he does not stop to consider what may have caught her interest. By claiming himself to be a successful persuader, Pandarus does not give Criseyde credit for her own motives in entering the intrigue.

Criseyde's beauty, the attention it draws, and her sympathetic nature are central concerns of the male-oriented narrative. One must remember that unlike Troilus who leans heavily on Pandarus, she does not turn to anyone in her moments of need. The manner of the two men's courtship tries to intimidate Criseyde from having any reservations by besieging her with the possible negative consequences of her withdrawal. She has become prey for their hunt, although she may have been aware of this possibility from the start.

The apology to the ladies in the audience at the end of the work is indeed an acknowledgement to them that Criseyde has been snow-balled, and that her perspective has not been fully engaged or pursued, hence the warning that women should "beth war" of the boorish wiles of men. This "warning" could also be understood as an invitation to the audience not to underestimate Criseyde's position, as she may be quite aware of her situation and the unacknowledged possibilities available to her.

One is able to extract Criseyde's subtle manipulation of the situation from the relationship Troilus and Criseyde have. With Troilus' initiation into the world of love, he is unsure of his role as a lover. After the two have consummated their love and Pandarus' animation of the courtship is no longer needed to control the relationship, Troilus settles on being submissive to his lady, a position in keeping with his sensitive emotional personality. He enters into the conventional female world, a world that stays away from the public eye, outside the path of history. Their relationship becomes timeless. One would have no idea how long it lasts had not the narrator mentioned the three year interval (V. 8-14). The arrangement seems to work for them, until they are threatened by separation in Book Four. At this point they are forced to contend with the linear world of history.

Troilus, being unsure of himself, lets slip an opportunity to speak to the parliament about keeping Criseyde in Troy. He feels that any comment from him may compromise Criseyde, and that he should first get Criseyde's consent to anything he says about her publicly. Yet by saying nothing, he misses an opportunity to support Hector's protest against trading women, an advocacy that may have swayed the decision. Troilus' fearful silence is similar to the conventional role medieval women play in the decision-making world of men.[7]

Once the couple have a chance to discuss the dilemma facing them, Criseyde is left to control the situation. While pleading with the gods to help them, Criseyde is overcome with anxiety and faints. Troilus does not take this signal to be the couple's guiding force in this hour of darkness. Instead he sheepishly confesses to his desire to kill himself. This gives authority to Criseyde who lightly empathizes with the sentiment, but quickly moves on to realistic strategies.

> "But ho, for we han right ynow of this,
> And lat us rise, and streyght to bedde go,
> And there lat us speken of oure wo."
> (IV. 1242-44)

Since Troilus is not taking control of the situation, Criseyde decides to convey her thoughts about the

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[7] The view of sexual role reversal in the relationship is further supported in the "dawn-songs", where Troilus sings the part usually sung by women (Kaske 167-179).

separation. Her plans, either to sneak away from the Greek camp or to wait out the war, which she speculates should be finished shortly, indicate her incomprehension of the historical world. If she is presently unwilling to act publicly on behalf of their relationship, what makes her think she will come knocking on Troy's gates later? How seriously does she take her own plans?

Troilus, feeling uneasy about her plans, suggests that they just run off. She tells him that his proposal is an overreaction as she seems to believe her trade to the Greeks to be a momentary inconvenience in their life. Her desire to roll with the changes may in part be an attempt to try to keep her life secluded from the eye of the public. Her belief that she could easily slip away from the camp and return to Troy suggests that she still mistakenly believes herself capable of being invisible to the tides of male history.

Her reasoning is not adequate to directly control this situation, and her obviously feeble plans may in fact be a more subtle device to ignite some resolve in Troilus. Her ability to persuade Troilus reveals that she is capable of effective discourse.

> "...and thenk that lord is he
> Of Fortune ay, that nought wole of her recche;
> And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche."
> (IV. 1587-89)

This maxim may in fact be meant to evoke a response and thereby spur Troilus to be dauntless in his resolve to keep

them together. Yet Troilus does not take the invitation to stand up for himself. Instead he accepts the reminder of his decided fatalism by replying, "so this be soth." Criseyde is allowed to dominate the conversation, and decide on their strategy. At the end of the Book Four, she is controlling the conversation, the relationship, and their movement in the public eye. Although she may not have planned to determine their strategy, Troilus' spineless submission to her feeble plan leaves her with little choice. Her confidence to be able to return to Troy may even be bolstered by her ability to dominate the discussion with Troilus about their plan of action.

The plan and her confidence in it could as well be a facade that covers the disappointment she feels in not having found Troilus to be passionate in his resolve to keep her with him. In a sense one could view this as a moment of revelation in which Criseyde realizes that all of the unavoidable urgency, the passionate pleading and the strategic intensity of their courtship emanated from Pandarus. Troilus was, and remains the ineffectual lover, incapable of transferring his quick wit and leadership from the battlefield to the relationship.

Troilus refuses to steer the relationship, even when it is thrown into man-made history. His elevated position in the patriarchal world, as a man, as a warrior, and as the King's son, could easily allow him to be the conventional

governing force in their relationship, especially at this time. Instead, his submission forces Criseyde to make a decision she is not in a position to make well. The subtle behind-the-scenes control she may have had over the relationship is compelled to become overt direction.

Criseyde still does love Troilus, and her separation affects her strongly. The first days she spends in the Greek camp are filled with mourning. This is a result of her separation from Troilus, as well as the growing realization of the unliklihood of leaving the camp.

Once again, paralleling the beginning of the narrative, Criseyde finds herself completely at the mercy of the male-centred world around her, and once again her isolated state is marked by the interest of a suitor. The captivating Diomede knows how to cancel any hope in Criseyde of returning to Troy and the lover she has left behind. He continues to plead his case to her, until she admits that if the Greeks win the war, she may yield.

> "Hereafter, whan ye wonnen han the town,
> Peraunter thanne so it happen may
> That whan I se that never yit I say,
> Than wol I werke that I nevere wroughte."
> (V. 990-93)

Under the light of Venus, the goddess of love, Criseyde grieves that the day of her appointed return to Troy has passed, and yet she contemplates the virtues of Diomede. Diomede returns with fresh arguments, and the narrator tells that with his eloquent consolations, "he refte hire of the

grete of al hire peyne" (V. 1036). In the pattern of Criseyde's proclivity toward subtle control over her situation, the relief she find for her pain may simply come from the discourse Diomede's courtship offers. An interesting point here is that the pattern of purging the sorrow of a lost love by taking on a new one was convincingly initiated by Pandarus.

> "What lyst yow thus youreself to disfigure,
> Sith yow is tyd thus faire an aventure?"
> (II. 223-24)

Her initial reaction to Pandarus' suggestion was surprise, yet her love of the engagement of courtship, its persuasive argument and discourse, and the happiness she found with Troilus gave her a psychological tool to combat her sorrow. In applying this pattern to Diomede, Criseyde temporarily corrolates the sorrow caused by the separation of death with the sorrow caused by physical separation. In this way one sees how Pandarus' tactics turn on themselves and how earlier discourse is able to influence a person's position in later interaction.

In all this discusssion of Criseyde has not meant to vindicate her "treachery", but has instead sought to point out the existence of a less evident, but still intentionally placed viewpoint in the narrative. Although Criseyde still suffers the bane of having abandonned Troilus, this alternative viewpoint indicates that Troilus, through his lack of passionate resolve, and Pandarus, in his egoistical

trivialization of Criseyde's perspective are both implicated in the work's tragedy. It is with this viewpoint that one can more fully appreciate the narrative as the tragedy of a plurivocal discourse between three central characters who share responsibility in its outcome.

In order to round out this study of the plurivocality in Troilus and Criseyde, it is necessary to look at the unique way in which Chaucer's narrator links the audience with the story. Through his unconventional attitude, the narrator is able to narrow the distance between the audience and the story in such a way as to make possible a deeper level of communication. Combined with his own involvement with the narrative, the story-teller's approach invites the audience to have mixed feelings about the work, further validating the plurivocality within the text.

The narrator begins the tale of Troilus and Criseyde as a conventional omniscient figure, who knows its complete history, clearly stating that his intention is "the double sorwe of Troylus to tellen" (I.1). During the course of the narration, the narrator gives up his panoramic view of the whole tale by getting himself caught up in the story as it unfolds. In the consummation of Book Three, the narrator tries to regain a more rhetorical distance from the text, but the narrator's intoxication with Criseyde alters the

conventional relationship of the text and its story-teller.[8] The narrator's vulnerability lures the audience. The result is that it too is brought into the story to experience, rather than just observe its emotional range.

One recognises that the narrator works to break the barrier between the audience and the story in a number of ways. His methods include the chastisement of "ye wise, proude, and worthi folkes alle [that] scornen Love" (I. 232-33), and the justification of the possibly foreign manner in which love is pursued.

> For every wight, which that to Rome went
> Halt nat o path, or alweys a manere.
> (II. 36-37)

These story-telling techniques are conventional means by which the narrator empowers himself as the mediator between his story and the audience, as well as creating the "suspended disbelief" necessary for the story's full emotional impact. Chaucer's narrator develops this further by entering the moment of the text, giving these conventions added significance as keys to the experiential realm of the story.

At the end of Book Two, the narrator tests the involvement of the audience when Troilus is about to first speak with Criseyde. In this moment of high anxiety, the

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[8] E.F. Dyck also notes the narrator's captivation with Criseyde, claiming he has fallen in love with her, forsaking the traditional role of the translator/story-teller (169-82).

Book suddenly ends with the narrator enacting the question in Troilus' mind, "O mighti God, what shal he seyn?". (II. 1757) This appeal to God expects no direct answer from the heavens, but does bring the listenership closer to the edge of its seat.

To draw in the audience, the narrator has asked it to disregard the specific details that would keep it from entering the animation of the story. The story-teller pulls in the outsider and seats him on the stage. Such barrier removal continues as the narrator is himself drawn into the story. The audience's lowered defence causes it to follow him into the action of the narrative.

The narrator's subjective relationship to the story is first noted in his defence of Criseyde's character. In Book Two he defends her against any complaints that she falls in love too suddenly.

> Now myghte som envious jangle thus,
> "This was a sodeyn love. How myghte it be
> That she so lightly loved Troylus,
> Right for the first syghte, ye, parde?"
> (II. 666-69)

The narrator's reaction to this self-reflective statement signals his sensitivity both to the inability to account every movement of the budding relationship and to the possibility of a negative feeling about Criseyde at this stage in the story. "Now whoso seith so, mot he nevere the!" (II. 670). This emotional nip at any disputant alerts

one to the narrator's entanglement with the narrative and with Criseyde.[9]

In stating his obligation to turn to the tragic side of the story, the narrator attempts to minimalize the severity of Criseyde's action.

> For how Criseyde Troylus forsook,
> Or at least how that she was unkynde,
> Mot hennesforth ben matere of my book,
> (IV. 15-17)

Although "unkynde," is not a softer judgement of her actions, the narrator's decision to give two interpretations of the incident suggests his willingness to look for different ways of seeing the event. He states that it is historians who have deemed her to be villainous, and that he does not like their ability to find fault with her. At the end of the stanza he curses the possibility of their misinterpretation of Criseyde.

> Allas, that they shulde evere cause fynde
> To speke hire harm--and yf they on hire lye,
> Ywys, hemself sholde han the vilonye.
> (IV. 19-21)

The narrator's dissociation from the sources he uses continues in Book Five. While relating Diomede's courtship of Criseyde, the narrator begins three consecutive stanzas with language that separate him from his sources.

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[9] Mehl points out that Chaucer also has much less reason to defend himself against the accusation of 'sodeyn love' than did his source, Boccaccio, as Chaucer's version, through its developed characterizations, has more gradual transitions (211-230).

> And after this the story telleth us
> (V. 1037)
>
> I fynde ek in storyes elleswhere,
> (V. 1044)
>
> But trewly, the story telleth us,
> (V. 1051)

This sequence of quick episodic "romours" preambles a justification for his hurried account of this section describing the events leading to Criseyde's betrayal.

> And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
> (V. 1031)
>
> Men seyn--I not--that she yaf him hire herte.
> (V. 1050)

Overall one sees that the narrator is torn between his function as the translator of the story and his personal feelings and hopes for it. By fighting with his sources, the narrator reveals his emotional involvement with the story. The desire to hold out for some other explanation of Criseyde's actions has the narrator promoting the possible existence of a different viewpoint from which to understand the story. Although he himself does not have an answer, his emotion invites the audience to take more than one look at the situation.

The narrator's emotional experience of the story climaxes in Book Three where he is magnetised to the complete union of the two lovers. His desire to share in their experience abandons the conventional objective control of the story-teller. His emotional involvement answers the question about how to tell the lovers' story.

> How I mot telle anon-right the gladnesse
> Of Troylus, to Venus heriynge?
> (III. 47-48)

In the scene, where Troilus and Criseyde admit their feelings and tenderness for one another, the dialogue leaves no doubt as to the requited devotion between them.

> That nyght, betwixen drede and sikernesse
> Felten (they) in love the grete worthynesse.
> (III. 1315-1316)

The use of "betwixen drede and sikernesse" is interesting as it applies both to the lovers and the narrator. Although the lovers feel the anxiety of anticipation and reservation, "drede" is equally applicable to the narrator. The narrator's inexperience with love and the knowledge that a description of their loving "impossible for myy wyt to seye" (III. 1311), is at odds with his interest to know more. The situation makes him uncomfortable about being at this scene of the story.

His interest in their union digresses into a meditation on how he may know of their joy.

> Why nad I swych on with my soule ybought,
> Ye, or the leeste joye that was there?
> (III. 1319-20)

The following lines are open to ambiguous interpretation as they can be understood as continuing the thought above or responding to it.

> Away, thow fowle daunger and thow fere,
> And let hem in this hevene blysse dwelle,
> That is so heygh that al ne kan I telle.
> (III. 1321-23)

If they continue the thought, the address of "fowle daunger and fere" is a call for these elements in him that prevent him from taking part in such love to leave so that he may for himself experience the type of love the lovers share. If this were to be done, he could leave the lovers alone, rather than trying to leach the experience from them, which the inadequacy of his experience and his language cannot properly convey anyway. On the other hand, this comment can also be understood as a response to the first utterance. It could be read as a reaction by the narrator to his lost omniscience over the text. Having come so close to the story, the narrator now steps, back using the incommensurability topos to distance himself. More specifically, the desire to be a part of this scene seems to have led him to offer his soul in exchange for a true knowledge of their union. Reacting to his blasphemy, he sends away the demons that would come for his soul and tries to replace the wall between himself and the story. Offering his soul reflects the magnitude of his desire to discover the unknown regions of love and symbolizes a residual guilt for his unconventional story-telling approach. The comment also suggests the Christian conceit that links passionate sexuality with the work of the Devil. The narrator backs away from the strong desires of his imagination and tries to return to a more conventional story-telling.

His mind accepts the barrier that still exists between himself and the lovers. He turns to his audience admitting his shortcomings as both a lover and as a conventional story-teller. He calls on anyone experienced and capable, "T'encresse or maken dyminucioun/ of my language" (III. 1335-36), in a sense offering his audience the opportunity to make of this what it can. The openness of this statement again stresses the variety of valid interpretation suggested by the action of the narrator.

More than ever the audience is expected to fill in with their own imagination. The power of this scene is enhanced by the narrator's emotional peak and subsequent withdrawal. The narrator, wanting to participate in the lovers' experience, draws himself further and further into their world, until in the heat of passion, he suddenly pulls back. This movement is analogous to the lovers' physical climax and subsequent relaxation, bringing the audience much closer to the experience. The call for the audience to fill in the untold part of the love scene is thereby given a much more forceful lure by the manifold technique of the narrator.

Soon after the narrator's emotional outburst, he chides those who "blameth love and holt of it despit" (III. 1374). To clarify his point about misers and wretches he uses the example of Midas and Crassus. The narrator states that,

> Nay douteless, for also God me save,
> So perfit joye may no nygard have.
> (III. 1378-79)

Including "God me save" not only acts as a plain emphatic interjection, but may also be an off-handedly appeal to God to forgive him for offering his soul to buy the knowledge of lovers' joy. The narrator again includes himself among the wretched host who stand outside the experience of love, but by cursing those who hold love in contempt, he again becomes the lovers' spokesman.

The narrator's emotional bond with the lovers is partially continued by his efforts to vindicate some of Criseyde's actions. He seems to champion her cause by giving her reasons and excuses. He mentions that in her thoughts that "she was allone and hadde nede/of frendes help." (V. 1026-27) The narrator also points out the relentlessness of "this sodeyn Diomede." He allows Criseyde to vocalize the historical role her betrayal will have in the future, and how she

> shal neyther ben ywriten nor isonge
> No good word, for these bokes wol (her) shende.
> (V. 1059-60)

The narrator does finally admit her guilt, but wants to treat her benevolently. She has gone through enough punishment through the ages and in this narrator she is finding some form of compassion and mercy.

> And yf I myghte excuse hire ony wyse,
> For she so sory was for hire untrouthe,
> Iwys, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.
> (V. 1096-99)

The narrator does seem to have some genuine sympathy for Criseyde, based on an emotional, rather than a rational

response to her situation. Her guilt cannot be simply forgotten, but the emotional bond with Criseyde tries to evoke some understanding of her treachery.

The epilogue seems to mark a disjunction with the rest of the work, but it is the narrator's attempt to conclude the narrative, finding that his unusual role in the story has made conventional endings inappropriate. The epilogue's erratic manner, charted by E.K. Donaldson, moves from epic, "Greet was the sorwe and plainte of Troilus" (V. 1744) to moralization, "Swich is this world, whoso it can biholde" (V. 1748), from objective description to introspection. His emotional bond to the text steps in to undermine these conventional motifs. Rather than successfully excusing his unconventional methods, the strength of the ending rests in its moments of tenderness. When warning of the transience of the world, the narrator delicately mentions "This world that passeth soone as floures fayre" (V. 1841). After mentioning Troilus' epic battles, he compassionately says that "despitously hym slowh the fiers Achille" (V. 1806). The narrator's warning to women to "beth war of men" (V. 1785) is an inversion of Boccaccio's exhortation to young men at the end of Il Filostrato, and generally contrasts to the misogynist attitudes of the Middle Ages.

In all the narrator has tried moralization, comedy, the epic, denial of responsibility, rejection of the worldly, and prayers to God to find some way of giving this work a

meaning before he finishes it. He is torn between the obvious lesson that Troilus learned after his death and the emotional bond he's developed for Criseyde and this world. The narrator's experience of the story has not left him bitter, and yet he does not understand why. Conventional endings are not appropriate for the work's conclusion. Traditional genres all depend on a certain objectivity which the emotional impact of this telling has broken. The book ends with the residual emotion felt so strongly by the narrator. Love finally comes out to be the cure for the woes of love, as his invocation to the Everlasting in the love of the Holy Mother shows. As for the rhetorical side, I believe Dyck put it best in saying:

> The poet's (as opposed to the narrator's) use of Criseyde is to show how easily the rhetorical stance can be destroyed by a complex woman and by love, for the narrator's (human) response to her demonstrates her power over rhetoric (180).

The narrator of the tale is unable to retain traditional "control" of the story in such a way as to use it to impress some set of values on the audience. The narrator's new role is defined in his own experience of the story. For the audience the narrator's humanity and forfeited omniscience help make the work a living body with which interaction is possible. The audience leaves the story with both a knowledge of its plot and a familiarity with its emotional impact. It is on the strength of this that the audience is able to disregard the traditional need for homogeny in its

understanding, but can validly carry with it a mixed feeling and uncertain conclusion of the work. In this spirit it can reflect back on the story and hear plurivocality which gives it its diversity.

This study of the plurivocality in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde has by no means been exhaustive. By looking into the varied personalities of the central characters and some of the discourse in which they engage, this survey has sought to indicate that the narrative does not supply the "final" word on the issues introduced in the narrative. The plot may finish, but the debate over the strengths and weaknesses of the characters and their positions continues.

The characters all fall into uncertainties at the end of the narrative which prevent the audience from choosing the correct voice. Troilus is whisked away to an unknown afterlife, after having made an attempt to explain his latest truth. Criseyde, regretting the historical contempt future generations will have for her, is swept away as another victim of historical circumstance. Pandarus, whose faith rests with the mutability of this world, sees his temporal wisdom fade in the light of emotional tenacity. The narrator, who has swum in the subjectivity of the story, finds himself unable to conclude his narration using conventional authoritative genres. The wild fluctations of

the epilogue, that attempt to "resolve all change in an all-encompassing unity" [10], end in prayer and silence

With the lack of an authoritative voice to control, the audience must rely on the dynamics of the narrative for its understanding of the work. The intimacy of the audience with the narrative is what John Ganim calls "the seduction and betrayal of the reader" (79). C.S. Lewis also concedes that it is not without difficulty that one rereads the separation of the lovers as the audience is "made to live the pain" (Allegory 195-96). With the realism of the characters, the breadth of scope in the text, and the dearth of authorial proclamation, the narrative is left to represent various and contradictory positions and the dialogic exploration they have been able to set forth.

Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde contains the most developed plurivocality of the three works in this study. Heroic deeds have given up their traditional place at the centre of the romance to a plot that concentrates on the interanimation of the characters in the story. An acknowledgement of independent voices and of range of influential components that make up discourse and debate have become the focus of the work.

Troilus and Criseyde is still caught in the middle ground between Bakhtin's First and Second Line of

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[10] Taylor finds that Chaucer's use of proverbs in Troilus is an intentionally "failed attempt to secure stability throu traditional language" (283).

Stylistics. The narrative does allow diverse personalities to discourse with one another without the imposition of concrete conclusions, but the story still only involves a few select people from the courtly milieu. As in the Erec, Chaucer's romance suggests the applicability of themes within the narrative to other social groups, but this still does not allow heteroglossia to voice its concurrence and disagreement with this. The success of plurivocality in Troilus and Criseyde finally comes from an appreciation of the quality of discourse within the work and from the sense of how an expansion of this energy leads to the more complete heteroglossia of the Bahktinian novel.

V. CONCLUSION

The three narratives investigated in this study represent a classification of medieval romances not properly recognized in Bakhtin's theory of the development of the novel. Bakhtin's classification of novels into the First and Second Line of Stylistics leaves little room for works that bridge the gap left between the two lines. His ascription of chivalric romance into the First Line of Stylistics, defined as the form that tries "to organize and stylistically order heteroglossia" with "a single-minded, 'ennobled' language", does not acknowledgment those romances that recognize the narrowness of the genre's vision and examine the sacrosanctity of its conventions and ideals.

Hartmann von Aue's Erec identifies the difference between what defines aristocracy and the concept of nobility. This approach gives the work a universal attitude that offers the benefits of courtliness to anyone of any social class. Keeping this romance from slipping back into Bakhtin's First Line of Stylistic is Hartmann's struggle to distinguish courtliness from courtly conventions. Hartmann's spiritual understanding of chivalry may be manifested in a variety of manners. The narrator's freedom to review each episode separately suggests such an openness to diversity. Erec's thwarted dialogue with the giants reflects his desire to understand other forms of integrity.

Enite's developing voice stresses the need to find one's own footing in the spirit of dignity.

The Erec still remains segregated from a true discourse with the world. The suggestion that the spiritual ideals of chivalry are universal does not give the heterogenous world an opportunity to respond to this claim, as is necessary in Bakhtin's Second Line of Stylistics. Hartmann's Erec attempts to identify and propagate the ennoblement of chivalry, qualifying it as a novel of the first Line of Stylistics. It is raised above this level by its willingness to reveal false chivalry in the aristocracy and by its acknowledgement of true chivalry outside the affluence of the court. This signals a recognition of plurivocality within the nobility and a capacity to accept "courtly" behaviour as it may be defined in a diversity of social languages. The narrative's criticism of rigid conventions keeps chivalry from being confined to the limitations of any single language, while differentiating the individuals within one level of society by the various ways they define chivalry.

Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan takes a different line of approach towards the romance genre. Its hero remains isolated from the values upheld by courtly society. Although Tristan seems to be an excellent courtier, he does not measure his sense of worth by the tenets of conventional romance. Tristan is not so much a romance hero as he is an

artist who cannot find a better forum than the court to express his talents.

The narrator's vision of Tristan seems to be caught up with Tristan's love affair with Isolde which is the catalyst for a presentation of a higher spiritual plane of sincerity and integrity. With some study though one finds that Tristan is not the founder or leader of a new system of social interaction guided by the principles of love. Instead Tristan continues to be directed by his own sense of independence. Love does completely fill a void that society had created, and he does commit himself to it, but he never allows love to take over his drives completely.

Tristan's character is presented in a realistic light that reflect his advanced artistic sensibilities, his human frailties, and his abilities to err. His independence leads the narrative to view the shortcomings of the courtly system and helps the narrator to expound the excellence of true love. In Tristan one is able to recognize a variety of polemics and contradictions in courtly society, but Tristan's own shortcomings have the narrative presenting inconclusive discourse between differing, equally legitimate and imperfect sides of issues.

Tristan's freedom from the restraints of social "Zugehörigkeit" expresses Gottfried's view of the artist as an independent voice in society, a sounding board that reveals the advantages and foibles of society's different

languages. This opinion is finally also the underlying principle of the narrator's advocacy of Tristan. Yet the Tristan cannot be identified as a novel of Bakhtin's Second Stylistic Line because of Gottfried's focus on Tristan's struggle with the courtly world. Gottfried was, in part, restricted by the boundaries of his source of the legend, but, he, like Tristan, also felt that there was enough room to show his originality by contrasting his work with conventional romance and its idealistic focus on the dynamics of the court.

Of the three romances discussed in this study, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde represents the most direct approach to the dialogue of plurivocality. The argument and discourse of Chaucer's work are central to the energy of the narrative. The slow emergence of Enite's voice in the Erec, and the artist's independence from the courtly system found in the Tristan, give way in Troilus and Criseyde to individual characters whose plurivocality and interanimation form the core of the narrative.

This third narrative also represents a step up from the dualities represented in the other works by offering more than two viewpoints to the issues. By having a larger field of viewpoints one is able to give freer expression to the validity of alternative perspectives. The central characters and the innovative story-teller give issues a

complexity that is more resistant than dualities to an audience's categorization of true and false.

The complexity of having more than two central characters in the narrative gives the author an opportunity to explore the interanimation of personalities. The rich dialogues, arguments, apostrophes, soliloquies and meditations examine the influences different personalities have on one another, and how such interaction influences the action of the narrative. There is also the use of extra-literary devices such as letters, songs, proverbs, the alba and contemporary idioms which add other levels of plurivocality to the story. The emotional uncertainty of the work helps prompt reflection of the narrative wherein one finds seeds of alternate viewpoints, interpretations and evaluations planted by the author.

Chaucer's work is the last step in the expanse that lies between the medieval romance of the First Line of Stylistics and the heterogenous breakthrough into the romance of the Second Stylistic Line of the novel. The ability of the narrative to debate the follies and shortcomings of universals in the light of subjective humanity and the mutable world comes close to the novelistic work of Cervantes and Rabelais. What keeps Troilus and Criseyde from the Second Line of Stylistics is its failure to engage heteroglossia's "unsystematic conflict of tongues" (Morson 7). The narrative remains centred around one social

structure. The plurivocality and the interanimation of its characters does diminish the need to identify the characters with the knightly class, but the narrative retains a traditional focus on the upper class in society. The romance cannot engage fully in heterology and dialogism until it gives up its position in the noble camp, and allows individuals from sufficently distinct linguistic systems and social classifications the opportunity both to interact and to carnivalize its perameters and sanctity.

Chaucer, who utilizes the lure of plurivocality and interanimation in Troilus and Criseyde, recognized the barrier of social segregation in romance. He later addressed the issue by making the romance only one component in the collection of popular, socially diversified stories of The Canterbury Tales.[1] The novelistic success of Cervantes and Rabelais is due to their unparalleled ability to have heteroglossia penetrate, parody, hyperbolize, and carnivalize the sanctity of the romance.

Although this study recognizes the limitations that keep these three medieval romances from being true Bakhtinian novels, it has illustrated that their contributions help further bridge the chasm between the epic and the novel. More specifically it has shown that the romance is not limited to Bakhtin's First Line of

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[1] For a Bakhtinian interpretation of The Canterbury Tales, see John Ganim's Chaucerian Theatricality.

Stylistics, transcending his identification of them as "the highly centralized consciousness" of the international feudal system. The ability of these narratives to move past the linear chivalry of romance towards true dialogue about its tenets adds another dimension to the romance.

Bakhtin does identify Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival as the single medieval romance belonging to the Second Line of Stylistics. With Bakhtin's categorization of the romance in the First Stylistic line, and this study's contention that some romances were not restricted to the first line, it is clear that Bakhtin used the polemic lines of stylistic development to advance his ideas about the necessity of heteroglossia in true novels. Bakhtin concedes this point saying that, "it is very difficult to speak of a clear-cut distinction between the two lines" ("Discourse" 400).

This study has looked to define the grey zone that exists between the two stylistic lines by gauging the extent to which plurivocality is found in these three medieval romances. The development of plurivocality in the romance is one more step made by the genre in its role as antecedent in the prehistory of the novel. Although it would be difficult to refute completely Bakhtin's sense of the novel as a revolutionary transformation, the study of plurivocality assists the reader in establishing an important itinerary in the evolution of novelistic discourse.

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