Chretien de Troyes: his 'Rhetoric of Love'

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Gillian Knight
University of Reading

It is tempting to 'dismiss' the rhetoric of Chrétien de Troyes as 'art for Art's sake', a piece of self-indulgence. In fact, close study shows that not only are the conceits he employs remarkably consistent from one romance to another, they also form a sub-text which serves to underpin the narrative. They perform a variety of functions: on one level they parallel, and can even replace the narrative; they give a psychological depth to the portrayal of character; they allow the addition of a philosophical dimension for the investigation of concepts such as friendship, enmity, love and hate; most significantly, they enable an authorial distancing which permits the writer to comment critically on the mores of society by divorcing himself from the behaviour and attitudes of his characters. As such, they form part of an overall irony which manifests itself in the selection and juxtaposition of subject-matter.

The aim of this study is to examine the threads which run through Chrétien's imagery of love, considering where relevant their provenance, to see what ideas they enshrine and to assess their importance in the evaluation of his attitudes as a whole, by looking wherever possible at the immediate context in which they occur. Since all but one of his romances have love as a primary concern (and even in that one it forms an important ingredient), all the rhetorical language could to some extent be classified under the heading of 'love rhetoric'. However, since it is clearly necessary to limit the scope, I propose to confine my attention to two aspects: to utterances in which 'Amors' is specifically invoked by name, and to the recurrent metaphors which serve to emphasise the manifestations of love. Equally, I intend to exclude the Grail romance, on the grounds that it was written for a different patron and signals a different direction,

away from earthly love.

A detailed study of Chrétien's imagery reveals that the references and devices are not evenly distributed among all four works. By far the least rhetorical is *Erec et Enide*. One reason for this is surely that here Chrétien is not concerned with exploring the inception or development of love but with charting the progress of the relationship within marriage, in terms of right behaviour and social responsibility. *Cligés*, on the other hand, clearly the most rhetorical, is almost wholly concerned with depicting the process of 'Falling in love' and with the effects of this on the individuals concerned and on society as a whole. *Yvain* lies mid-way between the two. It has its fair share of 'love-rhetoric' but is also concerned with wider issues. More puzzling, perhaps, is *La Charrete*: since this is generally considered to be the representation of courtly love 'par excellence', one might expect to find a commensurate use of rhetoric. This is not in fact the case. While it is more rhetorical than *Erec et Enide*, Chrétien does not seem to have been particularly concerned to embellish the action with elaborate imagery. This is due, perhaps, to several factors: in the first place, the fact that the existence of the courtly relationship is taken for granted means that Chrétien is not concerned to depict either its inception or its resolution but simply to show it in action; secondly, the events are in themselves highly symbolic and capable of being interpreted as having several layers of meaning;[1] thirdly, one is led towards the view that Chrétien was at the least less interested in, and at most, positively disapproving of the phenomenon of courtly love and more concerned to investigate the growth of love between hitherto immature and sexually unawakened individuals with at least some possibility of the relationship being resolved by and contained within marriage.

The unevenness of spread in love-imagery can therefore be accounted for in a number of ways. The fact that both *Erec et Enide* and *La Charrete* share the attribute of being less rhetorical show us that what we are not entitled to do is to equate 'simplicity' of language with naivety or sophistication with cynicism.

It should be clear by this point that I accept the view of Chrétien which sees him, far from being a proponent of courtly love or even of love in general, as putting forward a view of love and its place within a responsible society which is in opposition both to the so-called courtly ideal of servitude within an adulterous relationship and to the concept of fatal passion enshrined in the contemporary versions of the

story of Tristan and Iseut. This view is, I believe, conveyed both by his manipulation of characters and events and by the sub-text built up by his rhetorical imagery.

This imagery can be broken down into three distinct areas, each of which performs a different function. Briefly, the first area can be identified as consisting of several groups of inter-related metaphors which depict the inception of love and its effect on the individual; the second area uses the basic conceit of the dichotomy between heart and body to chart the development of love at a more mature and conscious level; the third area centres round certain paradoxical oppositions - Love/Hate; Friendship/Enmity which serve to reinforce the sense of the narrative as a whole.

Within the first area the most extensive group of metaphors clusters around the concept of the lover as the victim of love. This attitude is most cogently expressed in the fate which overtakes the previously disdainful Soredamors:

> Or la fera Amors dolante,
> Et molt se cuide bien vangier
> Del grant orguel et del dangier
> Qu'ele li a toz jorz mené. (*Cl.* 450-53)[2]

The metaphor is developed in terms of Love as a hunter, tracking down its prey:

> qui par sa terre a fet un cors;
> s'a tote sa proie acoillie (*Yv.* 1362-63)

The certainty of Love's aim is stressed:

> Bien a Amors droit assené:
> El cuer l'a de son dart ferue. (*Cl.* 454-55)

The weapon used by Love is depicted, following convention, as a dart and both the dart itself and the deadly nature of the wound it inflicts are stressed:

> et cist cos a plus grant duree
> que cos de lance ne d'espee: (*Yv.* 1373-74)

and

> del dart don la plaie ne sainne. (*Yv.* 5377)

As in the case of Virgil's Dido the dart remains in the wound:[3]

> Que jusqu'au cuer m'a son dart trait,
> Mes ne l'a pas a lui retrait. (*Cl.* 685-86)

The dart enters through the eyes:

> qui si dolcemant le requiert
> que par les ialz el cuer le fiert. (*Yv.* 1371-72)[4]

One feature of Chrétien's writing which raises it beyond the level of mere rhetorical utterance to that of poetry is the flexibility with which the language and images are handled. It is a logical development for the dart of love to become the ray of light which travels from the eye of the inspirer of love through the eyes into the heart of the smitten lover. This extension of the original images becomes the focal point of the monologue of Alixandre (*Cl.* 618-864). This shift away from the invocation of an outside agency to a concentration on the individual involved underlines Chrétien's implication that (at least initially) love is a direct result of strong physical attraction and surely casts a somewhat sardonic light on the devastation that follows.

This wound can only be cured by the person who inflicted it:

> Des que primes cest mal santi,
> Se l'osasse mostrer et dire,
> Poïsse je parler au mire,
> Qui de tot me porroit eidier. (*Cl.* 646-49)

and

> Se de la ne vient la santez
> Dont est venue l'anfertez. (*Cl.* 863-64)

Pardoxically, however, the wound also gets worse when it is in the presence of the loved one:

et la plaie d'Amors anpire
quant ele est plus pres de son mire. (*Yv.* 1377-78)

This concept of wound and healer merges smoothly into two other conceits - love as an illness:

Je sant le mien mal si grevain,
Que ja n'an avrai garison ...
A chascun mal n'a pas mecine.
Li miens est si anracinez,
Qu'il ne puet estre mecinez. (*Cl.* 638-44)[5]

and as a madness:

Mes Amors m'a si anhaïe
Que fole an sui et esbahie. (*Cl.* 924-25)[6]

Both of these concepts furnish us with good examples of Chrétien's approach to imagery: once he has established the basic conceit he proceeds to 'milk' it to advantage. So Alixandres, for example, musing about his excessive timidity, is made to exclaim:

Por fol, fet il, me puis tenir. (*Cl.* 618)

Then, by a play on words, Chrétien makes him realise the true nature of his affliction and, at the same time, indicates his own view of it:

Por fol? Voiremant sui ge fos... (*Cl.* 619)

Similarly, Fenice is made to admit that she does not really want to be cured of her 'illness':

Mes sachiez bien que je n'ai cure
De garir an nule meniere,
Car je ai molt la dolor chiere. (*Cl.* 3052-54)

- surely Chrétien's view of lovers in general!

Chrétien's skill lies in the fact that the images are not used in isolation but skilfully interwoven in a complex web: they gain their

force from their application in a particular context. It is not possible to look at every context in detail but the following passage from *Yvain* should suffice to make the point:

> Mes de son çucre et de ses bresches
> li radolcist novele amors
> qui par sa terre a fet un cors;
> s'a tote sa proie acoillie;
> son cuer a o soi s'anemie,
> s'aimme la rien qui plus le het.
> Bien a vangiee, et si nel set,
> la dame la mort son seignor;
> vangence en a feite greignor,
> que ele panre n'an seüst,
> s'Amors vangiee ne l'eüst,
> qui si dolcemant le requiert
> que par les ialz el cuer le fiert (*Yv.* 1360-72)

Here we find the metaphors of hunting, vengeance, wound and eyes combined together and infused with a paradoxicality which emphasises the essentially ironic presentation of the scene. Apart from the opposition of friend and enemy, love and hatred (to be discussed in detail later), the hunting-metaphor is tempered by the introduction of the idea of 'bait' (*çucre* and *bresches*) - we have the 'gentle hunter', the 'tender trap'. Similarly, Laudine's weakness is shown, paradoxically, to be a source of strength. The irony, of course, comes from the fact that having just killed her husband, Yvain apparently feels no remose from the grief it has caused her - simply lust at her beauty enhanced by grief.

So far, then, Chrétien has built up a consistent picture of the lover overcome, against his better judgement, by a desire over which he has no control (and which, by implication, he would not necessarily wish to control in any case), and which has a deleterious effect on his health and sanity.

Another group of metaphors continues the same idea by depicting the actions of Love in military terms: as laying siege, taking by assault, making captive and imprisoning the helpless lover. For example, Soredamors' struggle to resist Love is expressed as follows:

> Einsi me porrai bien garder

D'Amor, qui justisier me vialt (*Cl.* 481-82)

This is picked up later:

Vers Amors se cuide desfandre,
Mes ne li a mestier desfanse. (*Cl.* 520-21)

and again:

Amors les deus amanz travaille
Vers cui il a prise bataille. (*Cl.* 565-66)

Moreover, having once established this conceit, Chrétien rings the changes by neatly reversing it at a later point when Guenevere encourages the lovers not to resist Love as follows:

D'Amors omecide serez. (*Cl.* 2263)[7]

Chrétien makes great play with the idea of captivity and imprisonment in *Yvain*. Lunete teases Yvain by her ambiguous summons to Laudine:

qu'avoir vos vialt en sa prison,
et si i vialt avoir le cors
que nes li cuers n'an soit defors. (*Yv.* 1924-26)

Yvain romantically replies that:

Que ce ne me grevera rien,
qu'an sa prison voel je molt estre. (*Yv.* 1928-29)

Chrétien, however, has the last word, with his sardonic comment:

que sanz prison n'est nus qui ainme. (*Yv.* 1944)

Just as the lover cherishes his illness, so he creates his own prison.

The destructive effects of passion are also represented in terms of a raging fire:

Et l'amors acroist et alume (*Cl.* 583)

Once again, the metaphor is later developed to make an additional sardonic point:

> Tot ausi con cil plus se cuist,
> Qui au feu s'approche et acoste
> Que cil qui arrieres s'an oste. (*Cl.* 590-92)

The next development of the theme gives elegant treatment to the commonplace that hidden fire burns up stronger:

> Si que n'an pert flame ne funs
> Del charbon qui est soz la cendre.
> Por ce n'est pas la chalors mandre,
> Einçois dure la chalors plus
> Desoz la cendre que desus. (*Cl.* 596-600)

The image reappears with a twist in *Yvain*, where the hero is persuaded by Gauvain to leave Laudine by the argument that love improves by delay:

> Joie d'amors qui vient a tart
> samble la vert busche qui art,
> qui dedanz rant plus grant chalor
> et plus se tient en sa valor,
> quant plus demore a alumer. (*Yv.* 2521-25)

Gauvain is scarcely the example of the faithful lover, as his later failure to help Lunete in her hour of need makes abundantly clear. Another variant merits a mention for its uncharacteristic simplicity and ensuing charm. We are told of Soredamors that:

> Amors li a chaufé un baing
> Qui molt l'eschaufe et molt li nuist. (*Cl.* 464-65)

The nature of passion has now been firmly established: irresistible in its force, its nature is essentially secret and it works as a hidden, potentially destructive, torment.

One other metaphor used by Chrétien to illustrate the alien and intrusive nature of love is interesting for its peculiarly non-classical,

contemporary flavour. Love is depicted as a guest seeking a lodging-place within the heart of the selected human:

> ne vialt avoir ostel ne oste
> se cestui non ... (*Yv.* 1384-85)[8]

On this occasion, comments Chrétien, Love is to be congratulated for having chosen a noble breast: it is a pity that it so often chooses to inhabit *malvés leu*. In *La Charrete*, however, this statement is completely contradicted:

> Amors, qui toz les cuers justise.
> Toz? Nel fet, fors cez qu'ele prise.
> Et cil s'an redoit plus prisier
> cui ele daigne justisier. (*Ch.* 1233-36)

Is it not possible that Chrétien, normally so consistent, has his earlier statement in mind and intends us to take the implied glorification of Lancelot with a pinch of salt?

So much, then, for the first area of love-rhetoric: Chrétien has painted a picture of 'love at first sight' - surely in no very flattering terms. It is physical in origin, sudden and unpredictable in its manifestation and potentially destructive, not only to the individual but to society in general. Against this, it could be argued that Chrétien is simply taking over conventional rhetorical conceits and extending them without an ulterior motive. This is, however, belied by the element of consistency in his handling of them and by the selectivity which becomes clear when we consider their origins. F. Guyer has convincingly demonstrated that most of the metaphors have an Ovidian origin:[9] this is indeed suggested by Chrétien's own claim at the beginning of *Cligés* that:

> Cil qui fist d'Erec et d'Enide,
> et les comandemanz d'Ovide
> Et l'art d'amors an romans mist (*Cl.* 103)

Moreover, the beginning of his disquisition on the duty of a lover towards Love, his master, inserted into the middle of *Cligés* is surely an echo of the beginning of the *Ars Amatoria*, with its invocation to:

Vos qui d'Amors vos feites sage,
Et les costumes et l'usage
De sa cort maintenez a foi (*Cl.*. 3819-21)

A few examples from the writing of Ovid will serve to indicate the parallel. The power of Love is depicted as follows:

... tua sum nova praeda, Cupido. (*Am.*I.ii. 19)

The lover is shown to be enslaved to Love:

acrius invitos multoque ferocius urget
quam qui servitium ferre fatentur Amor. (*Am.*I.ii. 17-18)

When Love shoots his arrow, his aim is sure:

me miserum, certas habuit puer ille sagittas. (*Am.*I.i. 25)

The onset of Love is commonly pictured in military terms:

nil opus est bello; veniam pacemque rogamus,
nec tibi laus armis victus inermis ero. (*Am.*I.ii. 12-22)

while passion is shown as a raging fire throughout the *Remedia Amoris*:

Omnia fecisti, ne te ferus ureret ignis:
Longus et invito pectore sedit amor, (*Rem. Am.* 267-68)

Insanity is a likely outcome for the lover:

Quid tibi mentis erat, cum sic male sana lateres
(*Ars. Am.* 713)

Love as a disease, with its attendant symptons of paleness, trembling, weeping, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, is well-documented and only the object of the affection can effect a cure:

nec deus, auxilium tu mihi ferre potes (*Her.* V. 154)

There are even a few verbal conceits which would appear to have directly inspired passages in Chrétien:

> Quoque magis tegitur, tectus magis aestuat ignis
> (*Met.* IV. 63) (cf. *Cl.* 599-600)

or the similar passage in *Remedia Amoris*:

> Ut paene extinctum cinerem si sulphure tangas,
> Vivet et e minimo maximus ignis erit,
> Sic, nisi vitaris quidquid renovabit amorem,
> Flamma redardescet, quae modo nulla fuit.
> (*Rem. Am.* 731-34)

which finds its echo in the description applied to Laudine:

> et par li meïsmes s'alume
> ensi come li feus qui fume
> tant que la flame s'i est mise,
> que nus ne la soufle n'atise. (*Yv.* 1779-82)

It is significant that the original is in the context of how to avoid the rekindling of love, while Chrétien is using it to insinuate that Laudine is wilfully fanning her own flames.

The imagery of Chrétien, then, would seem to be classical in origin: the question remains, how Ovidian is the picture of the lover which he draws for us in terms of ethos and outlook? Guyer would have us believe that the influence of Ovid extends to the point that whole passages of Chrétien's writing can be shown to be modelled on specific passages of Ovid. Not only are the examples he gives not particularly convincing when examined in detail, but I believe that there are distinct and important differences in Chrétien's love which render this kind of extended reliance unlikely. One example will show how, after an initial similarity, Chrétien's version soon diverges to follow its own course. Guyer compares part of the monologue of Alixandre (*Cligés* 666-84) with *Amores* II., ix.[10] There is an initial similarity: both lovers are complaining of Love's behaviour in attacking one of his own followers:

> quid me qui miles numquam tua signa reliqui
> laedis, et in castris vulneror ipse meis? (*Am.* II.ix. 3-4)

> Fos est qui devers lui se met,
> Qu'il vialt toz jorz grever les suens (*Cl.* 666-67)

However, Ovid goes on to develop at length the specifically military metaphor he has introduced; Chrétien glides smoothly into the metaphor of Love as teacher:

> S'Amors me chastie et menace
> Por aprandre et por anseignier,
> Doi je mon mestre desdaignier? (*Cl.* 674-76)

- a much more medieval concept and in clear distinction to the role that Ovid adopts for himself in the *Ars Amatoria* as representative of Love and teacher of lovers. Ovid's poem is a rhetorical tour-de-force which leads up to the unexpected declaration that the lover has served his time and now deserves a peaceful retirement:

> me quoque, qui totiens merui sub Amore, puella
> defunctum placide vivere tempus erat. (*Am.* II.ix. 23-24)

Chrétien's images form part of a long and complex complaint against unrequited love.

Chrétien has adopted much of the language of Ovid but there are significant differences. The most obvious one is in the actual concept of 'Amors'. In Ovid, many details depict the conventional classical image of the male Cupid, armed with bow and arrow, carrying a flaming torch and riding in his mother's chariot. Little of this remains in Chrétien. The odd reference to 'li deus d'Amors' (e.g. *Yv.* 5371)[11] only serves to emphasise the distinction between this and his normal concept of Amors. Most importantly, although Amors in *Cligés* is still masculine, by *La Charrete* and *Yvain* it has acquired a feminine gender, as in Provençal poetry. Guiraut de Calanson has left us his portrait of this figure: the bow remains, with, indeed, two types of arrow, but this female figure has acquired the attribute of invisibility.[12] The fact that throughout *amors* - 'loving' is feminine in Chrétien, even in *Cligés*, suggests that for him love has already been conceived in terms of an abstract force, emanating from the appearance of the love-object. The concept of the dart has been

retained as a useful expressive device, as has the personification in terms of hunting and warfare but the emphasis is now squarely on the reactions and behaviour of the participants.

More significant, perhaps, is the fact that Chrétien chooses not to adopt another area of Ovidian metaphor - that of the lover as soldier. Humorous and mock-justifying in origin - a defence against the accusation that lover and love-poet waste their time in idle dalliance instead of behaving like proper citizens and serving the state in warfare - it represents the lover as waging a campaign in the camp of Love. Ovid develops this conceit into one of the corner-stones of his rhetorical construction. *Amores* I. ix begins:

> Militat omnis amans et habet sua castra Cupido-
> Attice, crede mihi, militat omnis amans. (*Am.*I.ix. 1-2)

and the rest of the poem is a variation on the theme. The only trace of this idiom in Chrétien is an ironic use in *Cligés*. Alis, deluded by the potion, thinks he is possessing Fenice; in fact -

> De neant est an si grant painne,
> Car por voir cuide, et si s'an prise,
> Qu'il ait la forteresce prise. (*Cl.* 3324-36)

That it should be applied only to the ineffective and essentially ridiculous figure of the Emperor, particularly in this context, surely indicates that the omission is deliberate. Chrétien's lovers are essentially men of action. When a conflict does arise between the two spheres, as in *Erec* and *Yvain*, the conflict is resolved by the lover taking an appropriate attitude towards his responsibilities. This sense of responsibility is the heart of the difference between Chrétien's ethos and that of Ovid. The approach to love set out in the *Ars Amatoria* is essentially a cynical one. It is treated as an elaborate game, with rules to be learnt and mistakes to be avoided. The more a lover learns to play this game, conceived in terms of a series of short-lived sexual relationships, the more praise and glory he will earn:

> Illic invenies quod ames, quod ludere possis,
> Quodque semel tangas, quodque tenere velis.
> (*Ars Am.*I. 90-91)

The best game of all is to make advances under the very nose of the husband:

> Et bene dic dominae, bene, cum quo dormiat illa;
> Sed, male sit, tacita mente precare, viro.
> (*Ars Am.*I. 601-02)

This amorality is allied to a rhetorically brilliant but superficial and somewhat mechanistic use of language. Just as more serious attitudes underlie the irony and gentle humour of Chrétien, so a more subtle and flexible use of imagery is apparent. It can best be paralleled from another classical author - Virgil. Book IV of the *Aeneid* employs much of the same imagery but in a manner more subtle and psychologically complex. It opens as follows:

> at regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura
> vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni (*Aen.* IV. 1-2)

The commonplace of the wound of love is intensified by the idea that she is nourishing it with her life-blood. This image merges into the image of the fire of passion, but highlighted by a striking choice of vocabulary: the unusual usage of *carpitur*, the adjective *saucia* and the metaphorical application of *caeco* - blind - to mean 'hidden'. The image is picked up later by an extended simile describing Dido in terms of a wounded deer carrying in her side the fatal shaft (referred to earlier in this essay):

> uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur
> urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,
> quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit
> pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum
> nescius: illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat. (*Aen.* IV. 68-72)

Every detail of this simile counts: the hunter Aeneas is ignorant (*nescius*) of what he has done; the victim was struck down unexpectedly (*incautam*); the shaft will be fatal (*letalis*); the deer in its agony roams the glades as Dido the city. This use of an image to suggest by implication the innocence and helplessness of one of the protagonists and to highlight her mental agony is not within the scope of Ovidian self-indulgence. It is, however, very similar to the

way in which Chrétien extends and echoes his own use of imagery. Like Virgil, he does not need to make everything explicit, but leaves the reader to work out the clues for himself. Virgil's descriptions are infused with an awareness of the tragic outcome which will result. Chrétien chooses to eschew fatal passion and to resolve his romances with a 'happy' (even if, as in *Cligés*, ironic) ending, but Cligés and Fenice are certainly not engaged in the casual love-game advocated by Ovid. The depiction of his earlier couples (Erec and Enide; Alixandre and Soredamors) shows an interest, however lightly treated, in the psychological foundations of a developing relationship, while through Cligés and Fenice he reminds us of the social effects of uncontrolled passion.

To summarise so far: while much of Chrétien's vocabulary and rhetorical treatment of the initial effects of love are classical in origin, the spirit with which they are infused is of a very different nature. He is not merely slavishly following a rhetorical tradition but picking out and highlighting those elements which suit the composite picture being built up.

I suggested at the beginning that the use of imagery fulfills a number of purposes. This can best be seen by examining its use in one particular context. One of the clearest examples is furnished by the complementary monologues of Alixandre and Soredamors in *Cligés*. The imagery is used to develop the romance in a lateral as opposed to a narrative sense. The development of their love-affair is largely internal: such narrative as there is is concerned with extraneous but parallel deeds of warfare. Rather than being treated to a detailed study of their emotions, these are delicately explored by means of imagery. The heart of Alixandre's soliloquy concerns an 'investigation' of the nature of the dart which has wounded him and starts with speculation as to how it passed through his eye without doing any damage. The premise of the eye as mirror of the heart:

> Li ialz n'a soin de rien antandre,
> Ne rien ne puet feire a nul fuer,
> Mes c'est li mereors au cuer,
> Et par ce mireor trespasse,
> Si qu'il ne blesce ne ne quasse,
> Le san don li cuers est espris. (*Cl.* 702-07)

leads into a complex and delicate mesh of imagery based on light. At

first the heart is said to be like a candle set in a lantern:

> Donc est li cuers el vantre mis,
> Ausi com la chandoile esprise
> Est dedanz la lenterne mise. (*Cl.* 708-10)

illuminating the surroundings from the inside through the glass. This gives a gentle, steady glow. Suddenly light bursts in from the outside and sets the heart on fire:

> Car es ialz se fiert la luiserne
> Ou li cuers se remire, et voit
> L'uevre de fore, quex qu'ele soit (*Cl.* 726-28)

Chrétien has softened this transition from internal to external illumination by the introduction of a comparison with a pane of glass. He now goes on to exploit this analogy by turning the distorting effect:

> Les unes verz, les autres perses,
> L'une vermoille, et l'autre bloe,
> L'une blasme, et l'autre loe,
> L'une tient vil, et l'autre chiere. (*Cl.* 730-33)

By moving from the well-worn image of the dart of Love to this far more original one, Chrétien has achieved a far more subtle range of expression which enables him not only to depict in vivid, pictorial terms the sudden and complete transformation brought about by love but to hint at side effects: whereas the internal light was harmless:

> Et la flame qui dedanz luist
> Ne l'anpire ne ne li nuist (*Cl.* 715-16)

this new light from outside has more harmful effects:

> Un rai don je sui anconbrez,
> Qui dedanz lui s'est anombrez. (*Cl.* 739-40)

Moreover, Chrétien hints that love based on physical attraction may well prove deceptive:

Mes tiex li mostre bele chiere
El mireor, quant il l'esgarde,
Qui le traïst, s'il ne s'i garde. (*Cl.* 735-6)

The sentiment is put into the mouth of Alixandre, but there is surely humour in the fact that he takes no warning from it but proceeds to eulogise at length on all the individual features of his beloved - Chrétien's little joke at the expense of all lovers. This imagery now emerges again into a discussion of the arrow which has pierced him. The transition from ray to arrow is not explicit but forms a natural association of ideas. Again, Chrétien moves far beyond the original images: the arrow is described in detailed allegorical terms which make it clear that far from being any dart loosed by a god of Love, Soredamors herself has pierced the consciousness of Alixandre. The pivot of the allegory is the pennant - represented by the golden hair of Soredamors:

Li penon sont les treces sores
Que je vi l'autre jor an mer,
C'est li darz qui me fet amer. (*Cl.* 782-84)

The extension of this conceit gives rise to a lewd speculation which suggests that his thoughts are not as pure as might be wished:

Bien fust ma dolors alegiee,
Se tot le dart veü eüsse...
Ne m'an mostra Amors adons
Fors que la coche et les penons,
Car la fleche ert el coivre mise:
C'est li bliauz et la chemise,
Don la pucele estoit vestue. (*Cl.* 838-49)

This monologue illustrates a number of central features of Chrétien's rhetoric: it extends and intensifies the brief description of the growth of love within Alixandre, at the same time throwing into relief its obsessive quality; it transcends sheer rhetorical exercise by the delicacy and flexibility with which it is handled; the allegory develops more naturally because the basic metaphors have already been established; it permits the exploration of certain philosophical

concepts of reality and illusion (which are developed elsewhere by Chrétien - see later); and by one or two touches it makes Alixandre slightly more 'real' as a character while at the same time allowing Chrétien to pass somewhat sardonic observations on the nature of love.

However, it is not until we look at the answering monologue of Soredamors that we receive the full impact. His fascination with her golden tresses is echoed by her musing upon the etymology of her own name:

> Et autant dit Soredamors
> Come sororee d'amors. (*Cl.* 971-72)

This leads her to conclude that from henceforth she must be Love's gilding:

> Et je metrai an lui ma cure,
> Que de lui soie doreüre (*Cl.* 977-78)

thus showing how complete the transformation within her has been from her previous arrogance and giving a new significance to the previous imagery of light and brightness. To Soredamors' mind the meaning of her name presages her destiny - which in fact it proves to do. More than that, it enshrines Chrétien's view of the love-affair. Unlike Fenice who belies the etymology of her name by a false death and resurrection and loses the honour and reputation she has striven to maintain through surrender to passion, Soredamors will acquire nothing but glory from her love which leads naturally to marriage and queendom. The final level on which the monologues work is to highlight the essential harmony of the lovers whose thoughts unconsciously echo one another.

There is one more aspect of these monologues which highlights a feature essential to a true appreciation of Chrétien's use of rhetoric. Alixandre's speech is concluded by the following lines:

> Granz est la complainte Alixandre,
> Mes cele ne rest mie mandre
> Que la dameisele demainne. (*Cl.* 865-67)

and the inflated gravity of the preceding rhetoric is punctured at a

stroke. This technique of stepping aside to comment slyly on his own flowery style (see, for example, his comment on the conceit of exchanging hearts, to be discussed later) surely points up the layer of irony running through his writing. Here, taken in conjunction with the fact that Alixandre first fails to recognise the famous golden hairs when they are especially sewn into a shirt for him, then, when they are drawn to his attention, behaves in the most extravagant fashion, there can surely be no doubt that Chrétien is both gently poking fun at the self-inflicted torments of these and all such young lovers and consciously employing his own rhetoric of love to do so. In this way, he is enabled to comment on the story in a more indirect manner.

Before moving on to look at the two remaining areas of linguistic usage defined in the introduction, there is one other factor to be considered. Although most of this language has a classical origin, one might expect to find contemporary influence, and I have already suggested that his concept of the figure of Love itself is closer to that of Troubadour poetry. Two striking features of the concept of courtly love as we find it expressed elsewhere are service to the beloved, expressed in terms of slavish devotion, and the application of religious terms and imagery, raising the lady to near divine status. If Chrétien really were a proponent of courtly love as has been claimed[13] one could expect to find these two aspects firmly enshrined in his standard rhetoric. In fact, there is a surprising dearth of such language and the instances in which it does make an appearance are restricted and pointed in context. The concept is several times translated into terms of service to Love itself:

> Or face de moi tot son buen,
> si com il doit feire del suen (*Cl.* 856-67)
>
> li deciple de son covant (*Yv.* 16)

and once, strikingly, applied to the god of love himself:

> qu'an li servir meïst s'antente
> li deus d'Amors, s'il la veïst. (*Yv.* 5371-72)

This inversion gains virtually blasphemous overtones from what follows:

Por li servir devenist hon,
s'issist de sa deité fors
et ferist lui meïsme el cors
del dart don la plaie ne sainne (*Yv.* 5374-77)

and the presence of irony is suggested by the lines which conclude this excursus:

que la genz n'est mes amoronge
ne n'ainment mes, si con il suelent. (*Yv.* 5388-89)

The idea of service to Love itself receives more extended treatment in the digression on the 'art of Love' in *Cligés*, referred to earlier. Love has a 'court', and must be treated as a 'seignor':

Sergenz qui son seignor ne dote
Ne doit pas aler an sa rote,
N'il ne doit feire son servise. (*Cl.* 3833-35)

This passage, which apparently promulgates the courtly ideal of the timid lover, in fact undercuts it by the revelation that Cligés' failure to declare his love is due, not to fear of his lady's reaction, but to fear of her husband! (*Cl.* 3861-68)

As for service to the beloved, this features prominently, of course, in *La Charrete* in terms of action, but not in terms of language. There is, however, one passage in *Yvain* in which this concept figures largely both in terms of action and language. This is the scene in which Yvain prostrates himself before Laudine seeking her mercy:

Mes sire Yvains maintenant joint
ses mains, si s'est a genolz mis
et dit, come verais amis:
'Dame, voir, ja ne vos querrai
merci, einz vos merciërai
de quan que vos me voldroiz feire,
que riens ne me porroit despleire'. (*Yv.* 1974-80)

The feudal connotations of the vocabulary reflect the fact that his life is at her disposal; the words 'come verais amis' underline the point

that what is really being played out is a little comedy of love, for which we (and possibly Yvain himself!) have been prepared by the ambiguous summons of Lunete referred to earlier. The irony is reinforced by the fact that Yvain, the stranger, really is subject to the whims of his lady: his elevation to the position of lord and master is dependant on her goodwill, as becomes clear as soon as he dares to cross her.

The only other extended use of the concept is in *Cligés*, where the context gives it equally ironic colouring. Fenice declares that her heart has followed Cligés to Britain in the role of servitor:

> Li suens est sire et li miens sers. (*Cl.* 4454)

The surprise element here, of course, reinforced by the play on words, lies in the reversal of the concept of courtly love: the woman, not the man, is playing the role of 'servant'. Not only this, but there follows what is, perhaps, apparently the most intrusively rhetorical passage in the whole romance: the way to be a successful servant, we are told, is to serve a bad master with flattery:

> S'or set bien servir de losenge,
> Si com an doit servir a cort,
> Molt iert riches, einz qu'il s'an tort. (*Cl.* 4482-84)

Her heart, she concludes, must do likewise:

> Autel covient que mes cuers face,
> S'avoir vialt de son seignor grace;
> Loberres soit et losengiers. (*Cl.* 4515-17)

This seems totally inappropriate: Cligés is far from being such a master, as she admits:

> Mes Cligés est tex chevaliers,
> si biax, si frans, et si leax
> Que ja n'iert mançongiers ne fax. (*Cl.* 4518-19)

However, this 'digression' is far from pure self-indulgence: the 'role-reversal' not only reminds us by its incongruity of Fenice's status as Empress by marriage of a sophisticated foreign court and hence of the

potentially adulterous nature of the relationship - it also points up the fact that, belying her sex, she takes the lead throughout the affair; moreover, the familiarity it betrays with worldly manoeuvrings casts some ambiguity on her character, highlighting the fact that she lacks the essential simplicity of Soredamors. Thus it allows Chrétien to comment obliquely on his heroine and to indicate his view of the affair.

This essentially ironic use of one of the lynchpins of courtly love is matched by his treatment of its concomitant: worship of the beloved. It is woven into the fabric of his only truly courtly relationship - that of Lancelot and Guinevere - and, significantly, makes its appearance in the episode in which he obtains his reward:

> et puis vint au lit la reïne,
> si l'aore et se li ancline,
> car an nul cors saint ne croit tant (*Ch.* 4651-53)

(with a deliberate stress on the ambiguous 'cors'). The imagery is carried on through the episode:

> Au lever fu il droiz martirs,
> tant li fu griés li departirs,
> car il i suefre grant martire (*Ch.* 4689-91)

and:

> Au departir a soploié
> a la chanbre, et fet tot autel
> con s'il fust devant un autel. (*Ch.* 4716-18)

At first sight, this might seem like a perfectly conventional use of standard courtly imagery with no attempt at comment or intervention. However, if it is taken in conjunction with the apparently blasphemous nature of Lancelot's self-inflicted wounds and with the tragi-comic outcome that ensues from the discovery of the blood-stained sheets, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Chrétien is using Christian images to criticise indirectly the immorality of the adulterous relationship. This is made more likely by the fact that the same language and ideas occur in the equally illicit affair between Cligés and Fenice. The concept appears when he is described in the

following terms:

> C'est ses Dex qui la puet garir
> Et qui la puet feire morir.[14] (*Cl.* 5645-46)

Once again, Chrétien is using the technique of reversal (woman worshipping man) to make the idea more striking (perhaps, too, subtly linked with the 'role-reversal' mentioned previously); the irony here derives from the fact that in the event Fenice nearly does die for him. Religious imagery recurs later in the context of her torment at the hands of the doctors:

> Li feisoient sosfrire martire (*Cl.* 5941)

and is reinforced almost immediately afterwards:

> La grant angoisse et le martire
> Que s'amie a por lui sosfert. (*Cl.* 5972-73)

Is Fenice to be understood, then, as a martyr in the religion of Love? This is belied by the fact that her suffering has been incurred as an unintentional result of the deceit she has practised in order to be able to indulge in an adulterous passion. Like Lancelot, she acquires stigmata; like Lancelot, too, the wounds are self-inflicted. This vein of irony runs through all the events surrounding her 'death' and 'resurrection' and must be linked back to the etymology of her name, referred to earlier. In the end, her martyrdom, like her resurrection, is a fraud and we are surely forced back to the view that, once again, Chrétien is using courtly conceits to express tacit disapproval of anti-social relationships.[15] In other words, it would seem that he uses the language of courtly love specifically as a vehicle to criticise the doctrine itself and has chosen not to incorporate religious and 'servile' terminology into his general language of love.

So much for conceits associated with the figure of 'Amors' itself. The remaining two areas which I propose to discuss are far more specific and self-contained and much more medieval in their development, although again Chrétien's treatment of them is highly subtle and individual.

The first is the conceit which personifies the various parts of the body and sets them in opposition to one another. This can take

different forms but the most common and most significant is the dichotomy between heart and body.[16] Devoid of any meaningful spiritual significance, the basic concept of 'exchange' is simply a useful vehicle for representing the pledge of affection:

> Par boene amor, non par losange,
> Ses ialz li baille et prant les suens (*Cl.* 2768-69)

and again:

> Ses ialz et son cuer i a mis,
> Et cil li ra son cuer promis. (*Cl.* 2777-78)

At first sight it appears to represent merely a literal extension of the 'love at first sight' concept already mentioned (e.g. *Yv.* 1371-72). However, this conceit of 'exchange of hearts' is to become a leit-motif of the affair between Cligés and Fenice - it already indicates the difference between them and their predecessors who took so long to recognise and admit to their mutual passion. The surprising thing, however, is that Chrétien immediately plays one of his tricks: this statement is directly contradicted:

> Promis? Qui done quitemant!
> Doné? Ne l'a, par foi, je mant,
> Que nus son cuer doner ne puet (*Cl.* 2779-81)

thus undercutting the conceit he has just established and undermining the credibility of this moment of passionate exchange. This is no accident: just in case we have missed the point, he goes on to elaborate it with pedantic care:

> Ne dirai pas si com cil dïent
> Qui an un cors ait deus cuers alïent,
> Qu'il n'est voirs, n'estre ne le sanble
> Qu'an un cors ait deus cuers ansanble. (*Cl.* 2783-86)

He proceeds to offer a rambling and rather lame 'naturalistic' explanation in terms of complete empathy:

> c'une chose vuelent ... (*Cl.* 2797)

which nevertheless continues to labour the point that:

> Mes uns cuers n'est pas an deus leus (*Cl.* 2809)

and:

> Et s'a adés son cuer chascuns (*Cl.* 2802)

How are we to explain this unhappy digression? We cannot surely conclude that it is simply a somewhat clumsy attack on those of his rivals who do employ such hyperbole - for one thing, Chrétien's technique is anything but clumsy; for another, scarcely 1,000 lines later, the conceit is casually reintroduced, as if it had never been challenged, and becomes the foundation-stone of the rhetorical development that follows. The only explanation can be that he has deliberately introduced a tongue-in-cheek debunking of his own rhetoric and that its purpose is to cast a humorous light on the tale of passion that is about to unfold.

Later on, Chrétien makes use of the same conceit to bring about the declaration of love between the couple (Soredamors and Alixandre were, of course, incapable of making any declaration at all). This time he develops the dichotomy between heart and body by means of a simile involving the bark and the wood of a tree. The initial statement comes from Cligés:

> Ausi com escorce sanz fust
> fu mes cors sanz cuer an Bretaingne...,
> Ça fu mes cuers, et la mes cors. (*Cl.* 5120-25)

Fenice answers in the same terms:

> En moi n'a mes fors que l'escorce,
> Car sanz cuer vif et sanz cuer sui.
> N'onques an Bretaigne ne fui,
> Si a mes cuers lonc segor fet. (*Cl.* 5144-47)

and the conclusion soon follows:

> - Dame, don sont ci avoec nos

> Endui li cuer, si con vos dites;
> Car li miens est vostres toz quites.
> - Amis, et vos ravez le mien. (*Cl.* 5170-73)

Thus the conceit has enabled them to conduct a conversation in terms of heart and body, whilst in reality probing the truth of their mutual sentiments during the enforced separation. The elegance and artificiality of the terms in which it is conducted only serve to emphasise that the passion they are revealing, unlike that of the other pair, is in fact illicit. The analogy of the tree which lacks any 'heart' is surely suggestive: as part of the play between outer show and inner reality which can be detected in the romance as a whole it surely reflects on how their romance should be viewed.[17]

It is, moreover, significant that Fenice declares her intention of avoiding the fate of Iseut in terms which reflect this same distinction between heart and body. Iseut is condemned because:

> Que ses cuers fu a un entiers,
> Et ses cors fu a deus rentiers. (*Cl.* 3113-14)

Fenice herself will follow a different path:

> Ja mes cors n'iert voir garçoniers,
> N'il n'i avra deus parçoniers.
> Qui a le cuer, cil a le cors (*Cl.* 3121-23)

The other alternative, that of giving her heart to the one who has the body, does not apparently occur to her! However, her solution can only be achieved by a trick, and, in the end, her rather specious moralising brings her no better reward in terms of reputation than that which she rejected.

The same conceit of heart and body is developed for a different purpose in *Yvain*. The 'faithless' Yvain is brought the following message from Laudine: true lovers take their ladies' hearts but treasure them and bring them back safely; thieves steal them under false pretences:

> icil sont larron ipocrite
> et traïtor, qui metent lite
> en cuers anbler don ax ne chaut. (*Yv.* 2739-41)

The opposite is that:

> cil n'anblent pas les cuers qui ainment. (*Yv.* 2731)

In this context, the statement is given particular psychological and ironic force by the fact that not only is Laudine's message a result of hurt pride, but we have also already been given the following specific statement about Yvain:

> Li rois le cors mener an puet
> mes del cuer n'en manra il point (*Yv.* 2644-45)

- in other words, unlike the false lover, Yvain has left her with a heart in return. In typical fashion, however, Chrétien cannot resist adding a mischievous little flourish:

> des que li cors est sanz le cuer
> don ne puet il estre a nul fuer;
> et si li cors sanz le cuer vit
> tel mervoille nus hom ne vit. (*Yv.* 2649-52)

Perhaps the fact that there is no mention of his cherishing her heart in return - only the strange little conceit of a 'false heart of hope' (*Yv.* 2660-63) indicates that he is not such a blameless lover as he would like to believe! This kind of authorial 'distancing' is only possible because of the degree of sophistication and flexibility which Chrétien displays in his handling of rhetorical commonplace.[18] Another example of the device being used to comment on and implicitly criticise the characters is found at the end of *La Charrete*. If not by him, it is so reminiscent of Chrétien's general technique as to suggest that it at least formed part of his original intention:

> Si est voir, ele an est si pres
> qu'a po se tient, molt s'an va pres,
> que li cors le cuer ne sivoit. (*Ch.* 6827-29)

The contrast between reality and appearance is made absolutely clear in what follows:

> Ou est donc li cuers? Il beisoit
> et conjoïssait Lancelot. (*Ch.* 6830-31)

There is an ironic echo here of the conflict between *reison* and *amors* experienced by Lancelot when he hesitated before mounting the cart: in his case, *amors* won; Guenevere, like Laudine, is rather more hard-headed and can control her emotions to fit the dictates of her common sense. The contrast between her public behaviour and her private emotions serves to remind us of the reality of her situation and of the moral ambiguity of what has gone before. Unlike that of Cligés and Fenice, the adulterous situation of this pair is not to be resolved by any authorial trick of removing the intrusive husband.

Chrétien, then, has made of a rhetorical commonplace a flexible and subtle device for commenting indirectly on the action, for exploring the gap between reality and illusion, for highlighting the psychological motivation of his characters and for criticising the morality which they represent. Apart from this, his confidence in his mastery of language is such that he is prepared to satirise gently the very conceits which he is employing.

The final area I intend to look at is the use of certain paradoxical oppositions. Paradox was, of course, a favourite device both of classical and medieval writers. For example, Chrétien's representation of love as a pleasant malady:

> De toz max est divers li miens.
> Car se voir dire vos an vuel,
> Molt m'abelist, et si m'an duel,
> Et me delit an ma meseise. (*Cl.* 3030-33)

can be paralleled from Ovid:

> 'Vive' deus 'posito' si quis mihi dicat 'amore',
> deprecer: usque adeo dulce puella malum est.
> (*Am.* II., ixb, 1-2)

However, I wish to concentrate on two particular pairs which Chrétien builds into the narrative of *Yvain* as one of the key structural elements: these are the inter-related concepts of Love/Hate; Friendship/Enmity. Between them they form the two axes on which the story depends: Chrétien makes no overt judgement on the

conflicting claims of Love and friendship but a series of small pointers in the action nudge the reader in a particular direction. My concern here is the linguistic use he makes of these oppositions to explore once again the contrast between reality and appearances and to poke gentle fun at excessive indulgence in either emotion.

The opposition first appears in connection with Yvain's newly-born love for Laudine:

> son cuer a o soi s'anemie,
> s'aimme la rien qui plus le het. (*Yv.* 1364-65)

A little later the idea returns, this time with unmistakeably religious overtones:

> toz jorz amerai m'anemie,
> que je ne la doi pas haïr
> si je ne voel Amor traïr. (*Yv.* 1454-56)

The second instance draws its humour from the fact that Yvain is in fact very far from hating Laudine: what he is actually trying to do is to convince himself that he has justification in loving her. These statements, of course, reflect the apparent reality of the situation - Yvain has fallen in love with the one person who has most cause to hate him. However, this hatred has no basis in personal antipathy and they are in fact destined to become lovers. Behind this again lies the larger question of how reasonable - and how realistic - it is for this sudden transformation to take place. Just as he eschews a tragic outcome to fatal passion, so Chrétien apparently avoids this issue - the husband is forgotten as soon as decently possible, and at no stage is there any mention of love for him on Laudine's part. However, there are several oblique, sardonic touches which suggest that it is at the back of his mind. For example, after she has argued herself into believing that since he did not intend to harm her she has no real reason to hate Yvain, Chrétien comments dryly:

> Ensi par li meïsmes prueve
> que droit san et reison i trueve
> qu'an lui haïr n'a ele droit (*Yv.* 1775-77)

There is more than a suggestion that she enters into the affair for

reasons of expediency, while as for Yvain, his monologue reveals no sympathy for her - only feelings of lust:

> A tot ce qu'il sont plain de lermes
> si qu'il n'en est ne fins ne termes,
> ne furent onques si bel oel. (*Yv.* 1473-75)[19]

The next time that the opposition appears, it is in an apparently totally different context. When Yvain and Gauvain meet in battle we find the comment:

> N'est ce Amore antiere et fine?
> Oïl, certes; et la Haïne
> don ne rest ele tote aperte?
> Oïl, ... (*Yv.* 6007-10)

The digression that follows explores this paradox at great length, in allegorical terms that are only loosely related to the action by the fact that they are couched in terms drawn from medieval combat, for example *molt en coche, qu'ele esperone* (*Yv.* 6035-36). The allegory oscillates between expressions more appropriate to the abstract concepts:

> Par foi, c'est mervoille provee
> que l'en ensanble trovee
> Amor et Haïne mortel. (*Yv.* 6015-17)

and those which reflect more closely the situation of the human participants:

> li anemi sont cil meïsme
> qui s'antroement d'amor saintime (*Yv.* 6043-44)

The digression finally seems to resolve itself in terms of a formal debate on the proposition: 'will either have the right to complain that they have been defeated by a friend?' Is this, then, simply a sterile exercise on the model favoured in medieval school-rooms and elsewhere? Surely not: in the first place, the repetition of the paradox at this stage serves to link the passage in our minds with the earlier conflict in the persons of Yvain and Laudine and to establish the

connection between the two themes of (male) friendship and (married) love; secondly, Chrétien is once more engaged in exploring the relationship between reality and illusion - in reality they are friends and only a trick of fate has opposed them to each other; thirdly, and most significantly, the question is surely tacitly raised: how good a friend is Gauvain? From what follows it becomes clear that the quarrel is in effect his fault since he has accepted the championship of a case which no-one - not even the King - regards as just. In other words he is a vehicle of criticism for adherence to an out-moded chivalric code based on personal glory regardless of justice.

Apart from these more allegorical explorations of the relationship between Love and Hate, there is a less formalised and more subtly psychological juxtaposition of the two. Laudine threatens that:

> Mes l'amors devanra haïne (*Yv.* 2566)

if Yvain breaks his word. This change does apparently take place. However, I find that there is no real suggestion at the end that Laudine is fundamentally unwilling for the situation to be resolved, provided that it can be done in such a way that her pride is not damaged and Lunete's trick achieves this for her. Yvain certainly shows no reservations:

> Ne li sovient or de nelui
> que par la joie l'antroblie
> que il a de sa dolce amie. (*Yv.* 6796-98)

Chrétien displays the same ironic detachment about the swing of the lover's feelings between love and hatred as he does about the other excessive manifestations of passion. In other words, Love is not a reliable guide for conduct.

If, then, we take an overall view of Chrétien's use of rhetorical devices, we are forced to the conclusion that while on the surface he has constructed a consistent language of love which depicts a grand, romantic passion in terms verging on the 'precious', he has in fact continually undercut this view by means of these very linguistic devices, puncturing the hyperbole and implicitly criticising the excessive reactions of his lovers.

This point can be highlighted by one final aside. One other method used by Chrétien is to depict metaphors literally in terms of action,

thereby rendering them ridiculous: Yvain is both literally and metaphorically in prison - and chooses to remain there; when rejected by Laudine he becomes truly mad and runs amok, making a fool of himself; Fenice feigns illness to escape Alis - 'ill' with love, she becomes ill in fact and nearly dies at the hands of the doctors; while Lancelot inflicts on himself the wounds of love and is exposed to public ridicule when he puts his concept of 'love as service' into action. Symptoms of love in Alixandre and Soredamors are interpreted as sea-sickness, and Yvain's lion plays the part of a love-sick knight. In the end it can be seen that love is potentially destructive unless contained within the limits of rational behaviour.

In conclusion, then, to what extent does an analysis of Chrétien's rhetoric of love help us to a clearer understanding of his view of the role of love within society? Love at first sight, depending purely on physical attraction, is gently mocked; the most extreme manifestations of love are shown to be pure rhetorical exaggeration which, if put into practice, would draw general contempt; uncontrollable and adulterous passion is exposed to criticism. Nevertheless, love must be reckoned with as a force in human affairs and it must be put to positive use. Lovers may make fools of themselves and be viewed by the ironic eye of age but they are always with us and must be tamed by society. From the negative, we may infer the positive side of love by reversing the image: contained within a stable, married relationship based on a harmonious partnership within a settled and hierarchical society. This view is clearly expressed by the blessing of Guenevere, which may be applied to all young lovers:

> Par mariage et par enor
> Vos antre aconpaigniez ansanble;
> Ensi porra, si com moi sanble,
> Vostre amors longuemant durer. (*Cl.* 2266-69)

TEXTS

Chrétien de Troyes, *Chevalier de la Charrete*, ed. M. Roques, Paris 1981

Cligés, ed. A. Micha, Paris 1975
Yvain, ed. M. Roques, Paris 1971

Ovid, *The Art of Love and other poems*, ed. E.H. Warmington, London 1969
Amores, trans. G. Lee, London 1968
Heroides and Amores, trans. G. Showerman, London 1971

Virgil, *Aeneid* Book IV., ed. R.G. Austin, Oxford 1966

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch.	*Chevalier de la Charrete*
Cl.	*Cligés*
Yv.	*Yvain*
Ars Am.	*Ars Amatoria*
Am.	*Amores*
Rem. Am.	*Remedia Amoris*
Her.	*Heroides*

NOTES

[1] See particularly J. Ribard, *Le Chevalier de la Charrete*, Paris 1972.

[2] Cf. also *Cl.* 462-63.

[3] Virgil, *Aeneid* IV., 68-74.

[4] Cf. *Cl.* 468-70.

[5] Cf. *Cl.* 2978-79.

[6] Cf. *Cl.* 1621.

[7] This technique of reversal is used effectively by Chrétien elsewhere. See *Yv.* 1448-70 where the idea of rejecting love is described as *felenie* and *traison*.

[8] This metaphor forms a background to the later description of the 'combat' between Love and Hate (*Yv.* 6007-111). For a discussion of this passage, see later.

[9] F. Guyer, *Romance in the Making*, New York 1954.

[10] Guyer, p.142, note 15.

[11] This usage has a particular point: we are told that the girl is so

beautiful that the god himself, if he saw her, would fall in love with her and serve - a near-blasphemous use of reversal.

[12] See T.P. Cross and W.A. Nitze, *Lancelot and Guinevere*, New York 1970, pp. 95-96, note 3.

[13] For a discussion of this, see for example 'La Femme et l'Amour', M. Borodire, Geneva 1967, pp.188 fol.

[14] Cf. also the more standard use in *Cligés*, where he is taking leave of his beloved (*Cl.* 4323-25).

[15] For a discussion of the interplay between reality and delusion, see L. Polak, 'Cligés, Fenice et l'arbre d'amour', *Romania*, 93, 1972, 303-16.

[16] One variant which appears fairly frequently is the treatment of such parts as 'servants' and the accompanying accusation that they are guilty of treachery e.g. *Cl.* 469ff. 746-54.

[17] On this, see L. Polak, *Cligés*, London 1982.

[18] For a general discussion on the role and function of irony in medieval writing, see D.H. Green, 'Irony and Medieval Romance', in *Arthurian Romance*, ed. D.D.R. Owen, Edinburgh 1970, pp.49-65.

[19] Guyer (note 9 supra, p.185) draws attention to a passage in Ovid (*Ars Am.* III. 431-32) which may have inspired this conceit. Ladies in search of a husband are advised to weep on the grounds that 'even at the funeral of one husband, a woman has often found another'!