

Samuel Neery

Professor Rusche

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Erec and Enide's Romantic Harm

Elizabeth S. Leet's article examines the effects of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide*'s function of marriage and identity entanglement. *Erec and Enide* focuses on the "identitary" entanglement of Erec's knighthood/princehood and Enide's broken silence that come as conflict from their happy marriage and fulfillment; that leads to Erec to chivalric dysfunction unbecoming of a future king, which leads to pressure to restore his honor. Leet's article focuses on the dynamic issues at play with Erec's dysfunction that he attempts to repair and Enide's vow of silence to her husband being broken as she fears his safety over his disapproval. Leet's thesis claims, scholars have over credited Erec for correcting himself without regard to Enide's effort and that his chivalric agency isn't deprived but changed, "Through his escalating passivity and, therefore, vulnerability, Erec pushes Enide to defy his interdiction against her speech in order to restore him to chivalric wholeness" (Leet 47). Concluding that ultimately Erec's restoration comes from the very thing he denied – Enide's speech – which he thought was abandonment toward him but was done out of Enide's love, then when realized, restores his chivalric honor.

Leet's thesis is quite reputable as she pulls from multiple feminist authors such as Peggy McCracken, Jane Burns, and Donna Haraway. Leet pulls primarily from Haraway's work as it relates to the identitary entanglement of Erec and Enide's relationship. Haraway marks and quotes the moment of Erec's purge from the knights in the text and illustrates the reasoning, "[Wherever there was a tournament he sent them there, most richly appareled and (Chrétien de

Troyes 67).] The luxurious attire of these knights marks their excellence, while their feudal lord appears instead luxuriating under bed sheets” (Leet 48). Which incurs grief in Enide at her husband’s purge, blaming herself. But, as Haraway explains, is turned into a strength as seen in the crowd that gathers with concern for Erec when going to quest but not for Enide, “Collective expressions of concern foreshadow imminent bodily harm to Erec while revealing a belief in Enide ability to withstand physical trials more effectively than her husband” (Leet 49). Leet reasons that this display proves Enide as a more capable and embodies – “her stoical service, his somnolence and injuries” - that define the quest (Leet 49).

Leet’s support of her thesis is sound with the evidence she pulls from the help of Haraway’s text and the use of lines taken directly from the text show that Enide, through the use of her speech, has a substantial role in the transformation of Erec’s chivalric functionality. Leet gives insight to Erec’s repairing of his honor is damaged by his ownself through his own unreliability as he mistakes love for abandonment which is evident as his own flaw as his subjects care for his safety, while Enide isn’t cared for not out of spite for her but knowledge of her capability that is foreshadowed in their quest together. In this way Leet is convincing by pulling on the subtle aspects of the text which may have been interpreted as blame over reliability, which opens the text to further insight into the functions of Enide as a more capable and, arguably, a chivalric woman more than her male counterpart with analysis of her speech. Then with Leet’s even usage of other literary author’s analyses and direct quotation of the original text, makes Leet’s article convincing and the individual examination of Erec and Enides relationships as recreant, widow, and royalty makes it hard to find fault within the examination of Chrétien de Troyes’ text *Erec and Enide*.

Works Cited

- Chrétien de Troyes. *Arthurian Romances*, trans. C.W. Carroll. New York: Penguin, 1991, pp. 37-122.
- Leet, Elizabeth S. "Becoming Object/Becoming Queen: the Marital Contact Zone in Chrétien De Troyes' Erec Et Enide." *Postmedieval a Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2020, pp. 45–56.