

The first meeting between dorigen and aurelius essay



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In these lines Aurelius admits his unrequited love for Dorigen, which he had kept secret for “two year and moore”. The manner in which he discloses this secret which had been controlling his mind, goes against all the stereotypes of courtly love at that time which has been proven to be a key theme running throughout the poem. Chaucer has previously described Dorigen’s husband, Arveragus as the typically perfect, well-respected courtly lover and in this extract, Chaucer contrasts the character of Aurelius against him; showing how love can turn a well respected nobleman into an untrustworthy dramatic liar. Prior to this extract, Aurelius had conformed to the customs of courtly love closely, by admiring and pining after his love from afar but in this extract his feelings for Dorigen become apparent and this triggers his gradual movement away from the typical courtly lover which he up till now been perceived. Aurelius is described by the Franklin as “a man of worshipe and honour” suggesting a man of high importance possessing a good reputation, like a typical male courtly lover.

Chaucers’ repetition of “moore and moore” builds up tension in the poem, implying something important is about to be declared. Aurelius tries to manipulate his conversation with Dorigen to where he wants it “unto his purpose drough Aurelius” and this shows him not to be full of gentillesse, like a respectful courtly lover. He then goes onto explaining his love for her, but the way in which he expresses this is done in a very selfish manner. He puts Dorigen, who he is supposedly in love with, in a very difficult and awkward position, as they have been said to be friends “he was hire neighebour” and she is already married.

His ignorance to her feelings shows the selfish side to his character, as does the constant repetition of “ I” in his speech and suggests he does not love her as deeply as he claims to. This implies he is only thinking about himself, despite what his dialogue may say. His speech is filled with courtly love language, “ service (devotion)... erdon (reward) .

.. reweth (pity)” and is also very dramatic. For instance Aurelius swears by God that he wished he had gone over sea (like Arveragus) so he was not tempted by Dorigen, “ I wolde that day that youre Arveragus//Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius//Hadde went ther”. This is very dramatic, as is perceived as a lie and portrays his character as untrustworthy and an excessive liar especially as he promised in God’s name – an image far away from the perfect courtly lover.

His excessive and overly dramatic character can be compared to that of Dorigen’s, which we have already witnessed by Chaucer’s portrayal of her character. She too so far as only seemed to be considering her own personal feelings in a very selfish manner. Chaucer uses the language technique of hyperbole when Aurelius says “ For with a word ye may me sleen or save” and “ peynes smerte” as they are both more examples of over exaggeration on Aurelius’ behalf. Death imagery is also apparent in his speech as Aurelius uses language such as “ sleen.

.. grave..

. do me deye”, this also shows his over dramatic nature. As his character is not believable, this draws yet again on the reoccurring theme of truth vs.

illusion within the poem. Aurelius’ repetition of “ God” emphasises religion, <https://assignbuster.com/the-first-meeting-between-dorigen-and-aurelius-essay/>

which was very important in Chaucer's time, and also suggests his comparison of Dorigen to a deity.

The way in which he begs her for mercy "have mercy, sweete" also shows this. After Aurelius' hyperbole-filled declaration to Dorigen, "she gan to looke upon" him, suggesting her shock to what she just heard and her naivety and innocence. Her distorted and broken up dialogue reiterates this point, as Chaucer repeatedly interrupts her with "quod she". The language Dorigen next speaks ironically contradicts what she wants Aurelius to believe.

For example, she states how she wishes he had not informed her of his love and swears in God's name she will never be unfaithful to her husband "By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf//Ne shal I nevere been untrewed wyf". The fact that this time she is the one that swears on religion is ironic as it was Aurelius who had previously, and both swore on very different things. Never the less, Dorigen still refers to Aurelius as "Aurelie", which can be perceived in either a flirty way or just a nickname she has got for a close friend. By doing this, Chaucer is here trying to keep a mysterious and elusive air around Dorigen and her true feelings, building anticipation and suspense in the reader; over what will happen next in the couples relationship. In contrast to Aurelius' character, Dorigen is seen as loyal and trustworthy in these lines, as her use of a double negative in her speech "Ne shal I nevere been untrewed wife" emphasises her definite point in which she responded and claims that is her final answer. However Dorigen does not disclose or speak of her love for Arveragus nor mention his name, this can be a

suggestion that maybe she is tempted by Aurelius and is having second thoughts contradicting her dialogue.

This suggestion is continued when she later suggests a way in which Aurelius will be guaranteed of all her love; if he could “ remove alle the rokkes”.

Without a doubt Dorigen has proposed this idea to guarantee the safe return of Arveragus from over seas, “ That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon” but as Dorigen does not state this (maybe as a way of further leading him on and giving him false hope or maybe as a way to not damage her close friends feelings or pride to harshly), Aurelius is oblivious to it. He deems this as an impossible task “ this were an impossible! ” (as does Dorigen) and initially gives up on it, by begging her for an alternative; “ Is ther noon oother grace in yow? ” and this seems to be the final thought on the matter as her promise should be disregarded. However this is, as Dorigen will find out later, a fatal mistake in which she has just made. She has given hope to Aurelius and has led him along by issuing him a promise although it was “ in pley”. This continues the association of the wealthy upper class playing and filling their days with futile activities, as Dorigen turns Aurelius’ very serious declaration into a game, this could propose she is enjoying what he said and is finding joy in the situation.

The theme of play within the noblemen and women carries on the stereotypes that Dorigen is a typical female courtly lover. Following this, Dorigen’s tone turns more sinister as she patronises Aurelius, almost talking to him as a child by describing his heart full of “ folies”. She is questioning the decency in his character and his friendship with her. Their confrontation with one another ends on bad terms, with Aurelius concluding in his typical <https://assignbuster.com/the-first-meeting-between-dorigen-and-aurelius-essay/>

melodramatic tone, that he will die a death “ doth horrible”. Although Aurelius argues throughout this extract that he will do anything for Dorigen, the readers do not believe him and think he is being increasingly insincere; this does not follow the idealised pattern of courtly love, as he loses people’s respect for himself which at the beginning of the extract he claimed to possess a vast amount of. By making his character less likeable, he is subconsciously doing what he is so desperately trying not to and his initial plan of trying to manipulate the conversation to find the best time to tell Dorigen of his love for her, failed miserably.

This is shown by his miserable and bitter imagery in the closing lines; “ Aurelius ful ofte soore siketh”. Chaucer develops both characters within these lines further, giving them both individuality by moving them away from their previous stereotypes, this makes them more interesting and unpredictable, thus reflecting on the poem as a whole.