

From OE Epic to ME Romance

OE Epic

- 1)
Epic (according to Aristotle) places the emphasis on character and its development in a series of fairly restricted adventures.
- 2)
Thus epics voice the aspirations of large groups of people, races, nations. They depict a single figure fighting against a force threatening to destroy that whole nation. People see the epic hero as a projection of their whole race.
- 3)
Epics concentrate on natural and single themes.
- 4)
Epics tend to humanize characters.
- 5)
Epics are concerned with the development of character.
- 6)
Heroes always have a good reason for fighting in epics (save the people),
- 7)
Epic is totally masculine world.
- 8)
In general, epic values are Germanic.
- 9)
Settings in epic are related to reality.
- 10)
Governed by the heroic code (comitatus).
- 11)
Epics usually end in tragedy.
- 12)
In a very general way, epics are realistic.
- 13)
Common subject of the epic is the situation.

ME Romance

- Romance, however, places more emphasis on the adventures themselves.
- Romance, on the other hand, sees the hero in a much more restricted setting, concerned only with a single group, family, or class, such as the Knights of the Round Table.
- Romance centers on a series of sensational episodes.
- Romances are concerned with characters who are fantastic creations.
- In romance you have the "romance condition." What is of interest in the romance is how the hero will confront a particular trial. Predecessor of the Bildungsroman.
- In romance, they fight for the sake of the adventure itself or to gain a lady's love.
- Increasing importance of women. Actual change in social circumstances.
- Romance values are aristocratic.
- Settings in romance are exotic.
- Governed by the chivalric code (humility, service, obedience to God and/or women).
- Idealized view of "self- realization." Therefore, romances tend to end happily, because if the hero comes to realize who he is, then everything in his romance world is put into order.
- Romances are sacramental (related to the saint's legend).
- Common subject of the romance is the quest.