ON THE LITERARY AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH’S CRITICISM OF MINNEDIENST IN HIS NARRATIVE WORKS

By

JOLYON TIMOTHY HUGHES

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2002
I would like to take the opportunity to dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my wife Sara and my daughter Hannah. Without their encouragement and support, this project would have never been possible. Special thanks also to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll E. Hughes and my wife’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chip Miller.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the outstanding contribution to the ideas presented here in this dissertation, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Will Hasty, head of my doctoral committee. The other committee members I would like to thank are Dr. Franz Futterknecht, Dr. Keith Bullivant and Dr. R.A. Shoaf. In appreciation of support throughout my studies at the University of Florida, I would like to thank Dr. Sharon M. DiFino, Dr. Harald M. Stahmer and James C. Albury. Others in the German Studies department deserving of special mention are Annemarie Sykes and Sophia Kurzweg, who have made life as a graduate student a little easier for all of us.

My studies at the University of Florida would not have been possible if not for the efforts of Rita and Wolfgang Richter of Bremen, Germany for teaching me German, Allen Stiegemeier of Quincy, Illinois for sending me to Germany and Dr. Jay Bodine of Colorado State University, the head of my M.A. committee. This material was composed using solely APPLE COMPUTERS and APPLE WORKS, then ported to MS WORD for printing purposes.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 WOLFRAM’S CRITICISM OF MINNEDIENST</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnedienst According to Wolfram: The Basic Constellation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Suffering of Love</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death in Pursuit of Honor</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Literary Relative? Some Observations on Moritz von Craûn</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 PARZIVAL’S CONTINUING THEMES</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Utopia</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 WOLFRAM’S ROMANCES: SOCIAL CRITICISM VERSUS “UTOPISCHES WUNSCHBILD”</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical and Literary Evidence</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Wolfram’s Specific Contribution</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

ON THE LITERARY AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH’S CRITICISM OF MINNEDIENST IN HIS NARRATIVE WORKS

By

Jolyon Timothy Hughes

August/2002

Chair: Dr. Will Hasty
Department: Germanic and Slavic Studies

In my dissertation, I present four chapters on Wolfram von Eschenbach’s three narrative works. This study specifically deals with the literary and social conventions associated with Minnedienst (love service) in the high Middle Ages. Wolfram’s Parzival and Titurel are compared to works in the same genre written by his predecessors Hartmann von Aue and Chrétien de Troyes. The textual comparison between Wolfram and the other authors clearly shows his critical agenda.

In Chapter 1, the introduction, I discuss Wolfram’s narrative works and lay the foundation for my thesis. Here, I articulate my theory about
Wolfram’s critical agenda. It is also in the introductory chapter that the terminology for the rest of the study is introduced and defined. Words such as triuwe, minne, Minnedienst, unzuht and verliggen is explained, and their importance in Wolfram’s narrative works is discussed. Here also, other texts for comparison are introduced for further comparison.

In Chapter 2, “Wolfram’s Criticism of Minnedienst,” I discuss Parzival’s critical passages in great detail. Chapter 2 is used as the textual background for Wolfram’s critical agenda; and also as an opportunity to investigate and formulate my ideas on the question of authorship, narration, and his motivation for writing the text. This chapter contains material on how love is attained (Minnedienst), the pain caused by the construct, and a knight’s search for honor.

The third chapter, “Parzival’s Continuing Themes,” is a continuation of the thesis presented in the second chapter. It continues the work begun in Chapter 2 and shows Wolfram’s return to his critical agenda in another work: Titurel, which was written much later than Parzival. I discuss the many connections to the themes Wolfram presents in Parzival in this shorter, fragmentary narrative. Based on my reading, I present an alternate view of Wolfram’s motivation to write Titurel and show new ties to the older Parzival.
The final chapter is “Utopisches Wunschbild.” In this concluding chapter, I argue against the idea that Minnedienst is an exclusively literary convention, that presents only an idealized image of the reality in which Wolfram and his audience lived. Based on literary and historical evidence, I show that Wolfram’s criticism of Minnedienst is also a kind of social criticism.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In this study I argue that Wolfram von Eschenbach depicts love service, or Minnedienst, in such a way that its negative consequences are manifested in a manner that is unprecedented in the chivalric romances composed before his Parzival. In Chapter 4 of this study I will try to show that this criticism of Minnedienst can be seen as a criticism of certain military and social practices. In this chapter I concentrate on the literary characters of Wolfram’s Parzival, particularly the women characters, whose experiences reveal most clearly the destructive consequences of Minnedienst.

In 1972 Marion E. Gibbs issued a challenge to scholars in her book Wibliches Wibes Reht to begin in earnest the interpretation and study of female characters in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival. This challenge has been answered by a voluminous amount of scholarly research on the topic and is still today a hotly debated subject. Almost thirty years later Gibbs maintains her belief that the defining attribute in a noble, female
character as portrayed by Wolfram von Eschenbach is triuwe. In my close and critical reading of Wolfram’s Parzival I believe that she has pointed out one of the characteristics, that make a female character noble and desirable in Wolfram’s world.

Gibbs singles out, however, only one attribute, albeit a very important one: triuwe. Wolfram, however, speaks of four distinct attributes: triuwe (faithfulness), kiusche (chastity), maze (moderation) and zuht (manners) (3, 2–5). It is Wolfram’s belief that all four attributes are necessary to make a female character good. Triuwe is, and I am in agreement with Gibbs on this issue, the most important of the womanly virtues established in Wolfram’s Parzival. However, the disregard of the other three by Gibbs leads her to neglect other possible readings of Wolfram’s text. It also allows her to look at the female characters in view of only one virtue, leading to a tilted positive view of only those characters strong in that particular attribute.

This viewpoint ignores other characters having strengths or weaknesses in the other three areas. Each female in Wolfram’s narrative exhibits varying degrees of each one of these attributes. In certain

---

1 See Marion Gibbs recent article in: Hasty, ed, A Companion to Wolfram’s Parzival, (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999)
2 Ibid.
characters this also means that some attributes can be absent altogether. The varying levels of the four attributes, and sometimes their absences, are important elements in the creative process and in the development of the female characters. Wolfram’s changing levels of female attributes adds an extra element of depth to them otherwise not apparent.

David Yeandle and Gertrude Jaron Lewis are in agreement that the Herzeloyde figure in Parzival is a figure wracked with grief. She is a figure described by David Yeandle as selfish and who is “a confused, grief stricken character who has all but lost her powers of reasoning” (Yeandle, 10). Gertrude Lewis takes the Herzeloyde figure to an even greater extreme of almost evil intent. Lewis’ statement is in direct opposition to Gibbs’ saintly depiction of Herzeloyde, the woman who, as Gibbs explains, knows no falsity as described by Wolfram himself.

Wolfram seems able to give information that is contradictory and very confusing. He describes Herzeloyde in glowing terms but then goes on to show her treat her son, whom she loves more than anything, selfishly. Wolfram’s ability to say one thing, be it about a character or a convention, and through the body of the text to show its opposite, is at
the very heart of this study. Very few facts that Wolfram gives are straightforward; such as the source he gives for the text, Flegitanis and Kyot, as well as his claim to be illiterate. Wolfram states these things as fact, though researchers have shown that they are untrue statements.

Wolfram does describe Herzeloyde as being saintly and Marion Gibbs is correct in stating that it is her triuwe, that brings about her grief. However, I maintain that Yeandle and Lewis bring forth a strong and undeniable argument that she has become mentally unhinged. This is due to the very noble trait, triuwe, which Gibbs has brought forth as the reason for her misery. The triuwe displayed by Herzeloyde has led to her heartbreak from the death of her husband, Gahmuret, and this loss has caused her to deny Parzival his inheritance. Her noble quality of triuwe causes her pain and stems directly from her loss through Wolfram’s portrayal of Minnedienst in his narrative. Wolfram states often that it is women’s nature to suffer and that love will always bring pain. Love and triuwe are the downfall of many female characters in Wolfram’s works.

Herzeloyde’s triuwe is more than just a quality allowing her to be noble and yet suffering. It is also the quality that, through the suffering it

---

brings upon her, leads her to exhibit unmâze, or a form of compulsiveness. An example of Herzeloyde’s unmâze is when she leaves the comforts of courtly society and goes out into the wastes of Soltane, thereby cheating Parzival of his inheritance of two kingdoms. Wolfram also gives a direct statement in Book III about Parzival being denied his rightful inheritance. The loss of Parzival’s inheritance is the basis for Lewis and Yeandle’s arguments. The change in the level of Herzeloyde’s unmâze brought on by Gahmuret’s death in knightly combat is an example of the ever-shifting levels of the four female characteristics in Wolfram’s depiction of women characters.

I agree with Lewis and Yeandle’s criticism of Herzeloyde, but I do not dismiss Marion Gibbs’ explanation of Wolfram’s defense and praise of her. It is understandable, in Wolfram’s conception, that she should become unhinged and display unmâze, due to the pain of her loss and her unusually high amount of triuwe. The quality of triuwe would demand nothing less from her. He defends her against any attacks because he is showing the effect that courtly love can have on an individual. This is also the case with other female figures displaying unmâze, showing that

---

Herzeloyde’s case is not an isolated one, but rather a common occurrence in a society that is based on Minnedienst.

He is not, therefore, trying to portray one particular trait in women, but rather the effect of courtly behavior on a saintly, almost perfect woman. If the practice of Minnedienst can lead to a situation in which the best example of womanhood dresses her son as an ass, forgets to teach him his own name, and neglects to give any instruction about God (an extreme omission for a child of the Grail Kingdom), what effect would this have on an ordinary woman with less ability to cope with loss? Courtly love and its power to destroy is the focus, that enables Herzeloyde to be almost saintly, as Wolfram describes her, and also allows for the disturbing behavior she manifests when she moves to the wastes of Soltane and dresses her son in a fool’s costume. Wolfram makes Minnedienst, and its consequences, capable of robbing the best example of womanhood, Herzeloyde, of her judgment. It steals those very qualities that make her the best example of womanhood. It will also lead directly to her death when her son Parzival, the only piece of her beloved Gahmuret left to her, departs to fulfill his destiny as a knight of the round table and savior of the Grail kingdom.
Wolfram’s defense of Herzeloyde is not his only defense of an important female character. In the Gawan episodes (a treatment of which is notoriously absent in Arthur Groos’ presentation of Parzival\(^5\)), Wolfram comes to the defense of another woman. Orgeluse also seems to be quite rude and a harbinger of insults and possible death. She is not only to be seen as displaying signs of unmâze, but also unzuht, a lack of breeding or poor manners, which is manifested in her constant taunting of Gawan. Wolfram, however, defends Orgeluse from her critics and explains that there is a valid reason for her actions, as crass as they might be. Wolfram later relates the story of Orgeluse’s loss of her love Cidegast through knightly Combat with King Gurnemanz.

These two separate occurrences of distraught women characters in Parzival demonstrate Wolfram’s interest in the negative consequences of Minnedienst. Each woman reacts differently to the same situation, but the similarity is too great to be merely coincidental. Herzeloyde will eventually die from this pain and Orgeluse will not, but both are unhinged for the same reason: Death of a loved one from Minnedienst.

Orgeluse is bent on Gurnemanz’ destruction, through any means

necessary. The pain of her loss causes her to err in her judgment and lapse in her manners, making her a danger to those she meets (Anfortas, Gawan, etc) and a rather unpleasant character. Her pain is much too similar to the pain that Herzeloyde experiences to be dismissed. The two situations are in this way too alike to be mere coincidence and must have been repeated for a reason.

Wolfram repeats the theme of a woman becoming mentally unhinged because of her lover's death in combat in order to show the negative consequences of Minnedienst. The reason Orgeluse does not die of her pain is perhaps because Cidegast was not the knight that Gahmuret was, or because Orgeluse has only lost one beloved, whereas Herzeloyde and Belekane have lost two. It is, however, most likely due to her destiny to be paired with the pinnacle of knighthood: Gawan. She is the second most beautiful female character, after only Condwriramurs, showing the closeness in stature of Gawan and Parzival.

It is here that the crux of my research begins. Adrian Stevens refers to Wolfram as “author-narrator” and builds a case for Wolfram to be seen in this double mode. In my argument I wish to see Wolfram in a slightly
different light, by separating the two functions. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes author and narrator as:

Main Entry: **author**

1a: one that originates or creates: *SOURCE* <software authors> <the author of this crime> b capitalized: *GOD* 1

2: the writer of a literary work (as a book)

Main Entry: **narrate**

: to tell (as a story) in detail; also: to provide spoken commentary for (as a movie or television show)

Wolfram does more than give commentary to, or reiterate an old story. His role is to cast the story in a new light, using his creativity to expand upon Chrétien’s narrative. This allows him the freedom to explore new themes and be critical in an entirely different way. Wolfram is in no way merely narrating a story, or retelling it.

The source of Wolfram’s *Parzival* is, according to most scholars, Chrétien de Troyes’ *Perceval, li Contes del Graal*. Adrian Stevens states clearly his belief that Chrétien’s tale was the source for *Parzival*:

“Although Chrétien is his (Wolfram’s) principle source, Wolfram does his best to deny this”. For the purposes of this study, the standard belief that Chrétien’s text was the source for Wolfram’s *Parzival* will be

---

6 See online http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary

accepted in order to support the arguments to be made later in the examination of textual examples.

Wolfram the author shows amazing creative ability simply in the creation of the narrative voice. The narrator stands as a different entity and tells the story, whereby he brings information to the reader/listener. This narrative voice is quite different in tone from the narrative voice present in Chétien’s *Le conte du Graal: ou Le roman de Perceval*. Where Chrétien has been described by some as misogynistic and hostile toward the lower classes, Wolfram is quite generous to all, including even the heathens, whom he frequently depicts as positive characters in his narratives.

Such positive depictions, which have the effect of concealing Wolfram’s critical agenda, are one of the ways in which he actively adds to Chétien’s text. Wolfram defends the actions of both Herzeloyde and Orgeluse, although their actions would indicate negative aspects of their personalities. He does not speak negatively about the lower classes, women, or those of other religions (Muslims as well as Jews). Wolfram

---

speaks positively of all groups in his works and thereby avoids insulting any group reading or listening to his text.

Wolfram has a very real reason for his positive depictions of the characters in his narratives. Knights, ladies and patrons undoubtedly comprised his audience. The level of education in the members of his audiences would vary, and only the most educated and possibly like-minded individuals would understand the critical messages contained in his texts. Many in his target audience were likely to have been entertained by the romances of Chrétien. Knowledgeable of Chrétien’s version of _Perceval_, those with money and power would not be likely to tolerate Wolfram’s inclusion of a critical agenda in his narratives. The sophisticated audience created the need for Wolfram to be less direct and able to deflect possible criticism. Such hostility is inevitable when criticizing society in the way that is suggested in the final chapter of this study. To this end, he uses apologies and statements of misdirection for the purpose of self-preservation. His creation therefore lies between the lines of the narrative.

Wolfram wishes to distance himself from Chrétien by invoking the

---

name of another author, Kyot. Kyot is, as most scholars agree, a fictional character. Most scholars agree that Chrétien’s *Perceval* was indeed the model on which *Parzival* was based. But as a creation of the author Wolfram, the narrator is a device to shield him from the criticism of patrons, other knights and ladies. The narrative voice smoothens the sections that might be viewed as openly critical. It placates hostilities, divorcing Wolfram the author from responsibility for his critical agenda.

Wolfram the author shows death in combat, thus criticizing Minnedienst, while Wolfram the narrator makes a statement to settle any ruffled feathers and keep anyone from suggesting the real motive for the changes effected in Chrétien’s narrative. He is a propaganda minister running a campaign of misinformation meant to distract from that part of the story that is strewn with death, pain and loss. The narrator makes the narrative entertaining and acceptable while allowing Wolfram the freedom to speak and to avoid suspicion.

Wolfram’s use of Chrétien’s text as a source is beyond dispute, but there is a great deal of free creation. No one doubts that Wolfram used the French text, although he claims a different source. It must have been Chrétien’s *Perceval*, because the similarities are too great to be dismissed. The main differences between the two texts can be seen in
what Chrétien’s did not write. Wolfram adds volumes to the beginning of the work and injects a critical agenda. Chrétien’s text begins at approximately Book III in Wolfram’s text. There are also fewer named characters with family histories in Chrétien’s romance, and the French author’s tale is unfinished. This allows Wolfram the author room to invent freely by adding clearly original motifs, which show a different focus in Wolfram’s work.

Wolfram’s creation of Books I, II and III are vehicles to introduce Parzival’s lineage, but there are also more significant motivations present that are consistent with a criticism of Minndienst. With regard to the question of lineage, Marion Gibbs argues that these books are present in order to show Parzival’s lineage and knightly prowess by way of Gahmuret, and his relationship to the Grail by way of Herzeloyde. She does not mention that Parzival would have inherited two kingdoms through Herzeloyde alone. The inheritance is from her unconsummated marriage to the now-deceased Castis, who is in no way actually related to Parzival. Gahmuret, however, also has ties to the Grail kingdom. Parzival has all of his important attributes —ties to the Grail Kingdom and high birth and station — from both sides of his family. The inheritances that Parzival should enjoy also come from his paternal side (his uncle Galoes)
and therefore do not merely come from one side — the maternal one — as Gibbs contends.¹⁰

It is my thesis that Wolfram created these three introductory books as an addition to Chrétien’s text in order to be critical of the literary convention in Arthurian tales known as Minnedienst. Joachim Bumke is a well-known scholar in the field of medieval German court literature, and his definitions and research on courtly love will be used to illustrate the criticism that is implicit in Wolfram’s message about the literary convention of Minnedienst. Based on my own analysis of Wolfram’s narrative works, I suggest alternatives to some of the influential positions taken by Bumke.

Of course, Minnedienst did not originate in Wolfram’s works. There are references to it in other medieval works by earlier authors such as Chrétien de Troyes and Hartmann von Aue. Adrian Stevens shows that Wolfram knew of Hartmann von Aue narratives Erec and Iwein, and his Parzival bears this out. Wolfram wants to show the destructive influence that Minnedienst has within the fictional world he has created. Textual

analysis demonstrates that Wolfram aims his criticism at the conventions of love service found in Erec and Iwein. He also uses the Parzival narrative as a vehicle to criticize Hartmann and others, as well as their writings. This criticism is then continued in his other, later narrative works, Titurel and Willehalm.

In Titurel, Wolfram brings marginalized-story lines of Parzival into the foreground, while temporarily putting the Grail story to the side. Titurel is a much shorter work, but it is connected to the masterpiece Parzival in more ways than are first apparent. Most important for this study is the critical stance toward Minnedienst that is clearly represented in this story of Sigune and Schionatulander, which is the central subject matter of Titurel. Titurel is also a vehicle for informing the reader/listener of family backgrounds, relationships, and losses in love, as well as how Schionatulander met his fate. The fragmentary Titurel is almost like a missing chapter of Parzival, written later to fill gaps left in the original creation.

Wolfram uses Books I through III of Parzival to show a pattern of deadly repetition in the practice of Minnedienst. In Minnedienst a knight serves a lady and agrees to be her champion, endeavoring to increase his own honor and win the love of the lady by means of successfully
competed feats of arms. Hartmann von Aue regards this as a positive literary construct by giving voice to its opposite in his *Erec*. He uses the main character, Erec, to show the negative social and physical effects of verlügenhet (laziness, lying down on the job and not protecting one’s knightly reputation) on a nobleman.

Erec spends all of his time with his beautiful wife and neglects his duties as king and knight. He loses all the respect of his peers as well as of his subjects. He then has to go on a series of adventures in order to regain the respect of all. These themes re-appear in Hartmann’s narrative *Iwein*, though in a different way, in order underscore the basic message about the necessity of maintaining one’s honor and love by means of Minnedienst. By putting the same message into two popular narratives in the same genre, Hartmann is able to influence the growth of the new “Gattung” of courtly romance. Wolfram’s *Parzival* and *Titurel*, I will argue, are written as a response that is intended to contradict Hartmann’s ideal of love service and knightly duty.

It is my view that Wolfram uses Gahmuret, Gandin, Schoette, Galoes, Isenhart, Belêkane, Fôle, Castis, Herzeloyde, Schionatulander, Orgeluse, Illinot, Anfortas, Gurnemanz’ family and Sigune to exemplify the
negative consequences of Minnedienst.\textsuperscript{11} All of these characters suffer, in one form or another, either from maiming or death, due to negative consequences of Minnedienst. The damage is particularly poignant in the examples of prolonged Minnedienst in the cases of characters such as Isenhart and Belêkane, Meljanz and Obie, and Schionatulander and Sigune.

Wolfram frequently informs the reader/listener, sometimes by means of characters such as Belêkane and Sigune, that the only reason the men are dead, and they themselves are left heartbroken, is because they withheld the reward of their love too long during the process of Minnedienst. Though much chivalric service had been completed for it, love (i.e. the consummation of love) had not been bestowed by the lady upon the knight. So the men were forced to seek out ever more dangerous challenges to bring themselves and their lady-loves increasing honor. But instead of reaching their goal, they die an early, unnecessary death. These cases of untimely death and heartbreak show the wastefulness of life in Minnedienst.

In the course of his narrative Wolfram shows far too many instances of prolonged Minnedienst gone awry for this to be merely

coincidental. In each of these instances the reader is confronted with “Wolfram the author” and, as I argue in the final chapter, his critical agenda, rather than “Wolfram the narrator,” pretending to approve of the literary construct of Minnedienst. The reader/listener is confronted with Wolfram’s ability to jump back and forth between his own true opinion and his protective poses, which leaves enough confusion to keep him out of harm’s way. Along with his infamous dark style, this confusion contributes to the difficulty of establishing the intention of Wolfram’s narratives and has thus given scholars ample substance on which to write.

Wolfram’s innovative narrative voice also allows him the freedom to insert a critical agenda against the use of violence, especially against women, which is hidden in his text. The narrative persona created by Wolfram is an extremely clever and very effective device for him to hide behind. This second voice acts to shield him from any backlash or real criticism. The narrative persona protects Wolfram the author from any harsh criticism stemming from Parzival, which could lead to a loss of patronage or worse. In a time of stiff penalties Wolfram was self-censoring, but more importantly, self-preserving. Wolfram the author will show an action of death or injury due to a social or literary construct and then the narrative persona will seemingly defend that same construct
with a short sentence, which leads to a polarization when scholars discuss the work.

Wolfram is actively criticizing Hartmann von Aue’s depiction of Minnedienst and its consequences in Erec and Iwein. As I show later on, he is using the courtly romance as a tool for criticism. This is an innovation that is particular to Wolfram, but I also try to link the work Moritz von Crâun and other works written outside of Germany to the criticism of Minnedienst that is first seen with Wolfram. Most scholars believe Moritz von Crâun was composed after Wolfram’s Parzival.¹²

The popularity of Wolfram’s text¹³ enhances the probability that the author of Moritz von Crâun was familiar with Parzival.¹⁴ The unknown author of the former work shows the negative effects of un-rewarded or prolonged Minnedienst in a more humorous manner, but he nevertheless displays it critically. The use of similar themes in other works written outside of Germany shows that the themes used in Parzival were not particular to German literature, but were also a matter of interest in other

¹³ See Will Hasty, ed. introduction, A Companion to Wolfram’s Parzival, (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999) IX.
literatures. In the Middle Ages, the abhorrence of violence was not a unique occurrence in Wolfram’s Middle High German work.¹⁵

My argument concurs to a large degree with that of Helmut Brackert as articulated in the article, “der lac an ritterschafte tôt, Parzival und das Leid der Frauen.” I wish to take this argument further, to what I believe is its logical conclusion. Wolfram has created extra material, which cannot be credited to Chrétien de Troyes, and therefore must be his material alone, as no other source for it is known. He further distances himself fromChrétien by inventing the fictional figures of Kyot and Flegitanis as the “sources” for his tale. The distancing from Chrétien and the addition of new material all runs in the same direction: Wolfram is actively engaged in a criticism of the destructive aspects of Minnedienst and beyond this in a form of social criticism, to the degree that the association of militarism and love in Minnedienst would have had an existence beyond the literary domain (I will focus on this point in the final chapter).¹⁶ This element of criticism, in the manner that Wolfram uses it,

is not present in the narratives of Chrétien and Hartmann and completely new to the genre.

In the following chapters, I will discuss Wolfram’s position as narrator and author and how this affects his ability to tell the story, Parzival, in a completely new way. Wolfram shows the pain that the convention of Minnedienst causes the characters in his narrative, which results in a completely different focus than the version of Chrétien de Troyes, the undisputed originator of the material. The effect of Minnedienst is shown to be particularly devastating to the female characters in the narrative. The death of knights in combat with their peers, not only decimates their ranks, but also directly leads to the suffering and deaths of their loved ones. This is especially true with mothers and wives and their battles with insanity, heartache and depression.

The wanton destruction of the knights and noble families through the wasteful killing of other Christian warriors, and its effect on the female characters, is the focus of Wolfram’s text. This is true both in the Parzival books and in the Gawan adventures. Instead of the Grail kingdom appearing as a utopian alternative to an Arthurian society of lower importance, one sees that Wolfram elevates both the new Grail and new
Arthurian societies. We will see that two new societies are able to come into being only after Arthur stops Gawan and Gramoflanz from fighting.

The new Grail and Arthurian kingdoms represent an inversion of the old Grail Kingdom under Anfortas, who is doomed because of his injury in Minnedienst fighting for Orgeluse. They are also an inversion of the old Utherian society, which is seen in the tournaments in Books I and II, in which Gahmuret competes and is the main figure. Both older societies were susceptible to flux and danger because they were based on the laws of chivalry, of which Minnedienst was a part. When Arthur finds a peaceful way to stop the competition between Gramoflanz and Gawan, thereby saving Itonje from imminent death, he begins a new era of peaceful living based on diplomatic solutions. Parzival, Arthur’s vassal, then assumes the peaceful reign of the Grail Kingdom, signaling a complete break with the older, violence-based society of the previous generations. The end result of Arthur’s new diplomatic solution and Parzival’s ascent to the throne of the Grail kingdom is that the knights are finally able to live to old age.

In order to defend my thesis that Wolfram’s depiction of Minnedienst involves a critical agenda, the final chapter shows that Wolfram had a real basis for social criticism that would have been well known to knights and clerics alike. Minnedienst, as depicted in the
narratives, is a literary construct, but it is also based on a military approach to life and love that was not merely literary. This will be shown with textual and historical evidence of different kinds.

There is Biblical evidence as well as commands by an early Pope (Urban II), which show a strong criticism of socially destructive aspects of warfare. The evidence will show that warfare was not essential to the welfare and defense of people, or to the territory the nobility was to defend. I will present the Biblical scriptures in association with the decrees by Urban II in 1095 in order to show an historical crisis, not merely a literary one, of which Wolfram and his audiences would have been aware. When one places this evidence alongside the many untimely deaths in Wolfram’s narratives, it is apparent that he was trying to change the genre and show the destructive nature of elements, which had previously been seen as entertaining and reasonable.
CHAPTER 2
WOLFRAM’S CRITICISM OF MINNEDIENST

It is the widely held opinion of researchers that Wolfram had a positive opinion of women and the institution of marriage (see Gibbs, Marion. *Wiblichez Wibes Reht*).\(^1\) While I agree that this is the case, in the chapter I will propose that the author Wolfram had a negative opinion as to the lengths one must go to for love, or Minne, to be won (by means of Minnedienst). In this chapter I will show that Wolfram generally liked women and that he therefore went to great lengths, albeit somewhat naively, to portray them positively. At the same time, textual examples will show that he pitied them and sympathized with the pains brought on them by the larger society in which they lived. The inflexibility of the world depicted in the romances left women powerless to affect any change. I will show that the women characters in Wolframs narratives are subservient to the males’ need for glory and honor.

The reason for the focus on women characters will become clear during the analysis: it is above all in the depiction of the experience of

\(^1\) Compare this to her later essay on this subject in: *A companion to Wolfram's Parzival*, Will Hasty, ed. (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999).
women characters that negative aspects of Minnedienst become most visible. In this chapter I will look at the manner in which Wolfram tended to render Minnedienst, and then I will examine more closely two related aspects of love service: the suffering it causes women whose husbands are killed, and the incessant pursuit of honor on the part of the men.

Minnedienst According to Wolfram: The Basic Constellation

Minnedienst, or love service, was a literary convention made popular in the Middle Ages through works by Chrétien de Troyes, Hartmann von Aue, and Gottfried von Straßburg, among others. Love service was becoming popular due to the popularity of the new genre that Chrétien had founded: Arthurian romance. Chrétien “created the Arthurian romance as a literary genre” (Harwood Cline, Introduction, ix) in the 12th century, which was to become a cornerstone for other authors in coming generations. King Arthur and his knights were noblemen just as those listening to the narratives. The Arthurian narratives were written mainly for nobles, about nobles: there are few characters of low station in most of the Arthurian romances. The popularity of a new literary genre, with its

---


rules and ideals so closely mirroring those of the contemporary society, must have had a huge impact. This can be seen in the sheer number of copies that were made of the *Parzival* manuscript, some of which still survive today.\textsuperscript{4} The relationships between men and women in the medieval German Arthurian romances are directly related to the role of Minnedienst in the narratives. The different literary conceptions of the authors will, in turn, be reflected in the way in which the relationships between men and women in their respective romances is depicted.

It can be argued that Wolfram is a more innovative writer than his contemporaries, such as Chrétien de Troyes, from whom he took the impetus to write the *Parzival* narrative. Many scholars believe that Chrétien, unlike Wolfram, was misogynistic\textsuperscript{5} in his approach to the same material.\textsuperscript{6} I would like to argue that Wolfram wrote not simply to instruct and delight his audience, but also for the betterment of society and more specifically for a better understanding of women’s roles in society. He


\textsuperscript{5} Compare to Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval: or The Story of the Grail*. Trans. Ruth Harwood Cline, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1985) 5840 – 5870. In which she states “...no violent hatred of women”. This statement would indicate that Cline believes he did have something against them, he merely was not violent.

\textsuperscript{6} For an in depth discussion on this topic see Andrée Kahn Blumenstein, “Misogyny and Idealization in the Middle High German Romance,” diss., Yale, 1973.
also advocated a more sensible kind of Minnedienst, in which there would be a ceiling to the dangerous deeds required of a knight by a lady.

Wolfram uses the romance Parzival as the vehicle to suggest a more sensible approach to chivalry and love. By doing so he practices not only literary criticism, but also a fair amount of self-preservation, because he himself belonged to the “ritterliche Ministeriales”.\(^7\) Fighting for the love of ladies in literature is one thing, and fighting for the love of ladies in reality is another. But assuming the latter has an influence on the former (which I will argue in the final chapter), Wolfram would directly benefit if a cap were to be placed on deeds required by a Lady during Minnedienst.

The question of authorial intent is a problematic one even with today’s authors. The authors of today can be questioned as to the meaning of passages in their texts and their backgrounds, along with other historical data about their surroundings. Such information can be helpful in assigning meaning in a modern author’s passages. This is often not the case with medieval authors, and especially with Wolfram von Eschenbach, about whom very little is known. So little is known about

Wolfram that even his hometown is merely assumed to be in Ober Eschenbach, which has renamed itself Wolframs Eschenbach.\footnote{Margaret Fitzgerald Richey, \textit{Studies of Wolfram von Eschenbach}, (London: Robert Cunningham and Sons Ltd., 1957).}

The price of producing a book in the Middle Ages was staggering, as was the amount of work that had to be undertaken to produce it. The amount of cows needed to produce the vellum paper used to make a book was astronomical. A single book, depending on length, could cost an entire herd of cattle. Only the members of the nobility could afford to fund such a project. Because of this cost, not much is known of the authors by way of extra writings, as they did not frequently write things down which were not absolutely necessary. Any personal intentions on the part of the authors, therefore, must be deduced from the themes and techniques employed by the authors while writing these texts.

Leo Strauss describes a type of self-censorship employed by authors in the past, who were gifted at writing between the lines. It is paramount to the thesis presented here that Wolfram be seen as a very intelligent author who was able to protect himself by veiling his message pertaining to the dangers inherent in Minnedienst in a well known Arthurian romance. Strauss states:
Suppression of independent thought has occurred fairly frequently in the past. It is reasonable to assume that earlier ages produced proportionately as many men capable of independent thought as we find today, and that at least some of these men combined understanding with caution. Thus, one may wonder whether some of the greatest writers of the past have not adapted their literary technique to the requirements of persecution, by presenting their views on all the then crucial questions exclusively between the lines (Strauss, 26).

Wolfram does not mention a patron or “Gönner”\(^9\) by name in *Parzival*, and it is not unthinkable that he had more than one. The need for multiple patrons is due to its length, the necessary time needed for composition, and the cost of producing such a lengthy work. Multiple patrons would force him not to mention one or the other out of political considerations.\(^{10}\) It is, however, unthinkable for him to have completed such a task with no patronage at all.\(^{11}\) Central to the argument in this chapter is that Wolfram’s *Parzival* as an “exoteric book.” Strauss writes: “An exoteric book contains then two teachings: a popular teaching of an

\(^{9}\) He does name Hermann of Thuringen in his *Titurel*, but in *Parzival* there is no patron mentioned.

\(^{10}\) See Sebastian Coxon, *The Presentation of Authorship in Medieval German Narrative Literature, 1220 – 1290*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 24. for an explanation of acrostics and showing that the first ten lines spell out the name of Gottfried’s presumed patron for his work *Tristan*.

edifying character, which is in the foreground; and a philosophic teaching concerning the most important subject, which is only between the lines” (Strauss, 36).

One must keep Wolfram’s audience in mind when reading his Parzival. The nature of his likely audience is the reason he has need of self-preservation, while he simultaneously exposes the flaws inherent in the systems his narrative exposes. Wolfram, writing for a wealthy patron, would have written the narrative to be performed in front of the patron’s court. Such a work involving so much time, effort, and material would not likely have been presented outside the court for an uneducated audience.

Many textual clues in Parzival suggest an educated audience (and author): the Latin names of planets (Jupiter, 768, 30), Greek figures, historical as well as literary ([H]Eraclius 773, 22; Pictagoras 773, 25) and, finally, the Arabic names for the planets (782, 1 – 13). With a highly literate audience, Wolfram had to assume that they would see through mildly veiled attempts to portray knights, ladies, and kings in a different way than had been seen before. He could also count on the fact that some, if not all, were already well acquainted with Chretien’s version.

If a knight or a lady were to hear Wolfram espouse an opinion that was contrary to their beliefs about proper knightly service for love, he
could be punished with loss of patronage, or worse. Wolfram was, as has been stated, a member of the lower nobility and therefore not particularly wealthy. He would be dependant on the favors of the higher nobility for his livelihood. As self-preservation, he felt it necessary to create a narrative persona, which could deflect any criticism and put a good face on a critical piece of literature.

There are indications of another type of “Publikum” envisioned by Wolfram. Eberhard Nellmann speaks to the various groups of Wolfram’s listeners in his *Wolframs Erzähltechnik*. Nellmann shows that there are groups within his audience who, through the mouth of the narrator, are called *tump*: the tumben and the tumben liute (the dumb, or ignorant) in *Parzival* (1, 15). In the section entitled “Erwünschtes und unerwünschtes Publikum”, Nellmann also refers to those in the audience not exhibiting enough *triuwe* (Nellmann, 6). Eberhard shows the aspects of these groups of spectators, or listeners, negatively.

Nellmann also exposes another category of listeners, which frequently remains uncounted in the “Publikum” Wolfram was trying to reach. He writes: “Zu erwähnen ist auch schließlich noch die spöttische Wendung gegen die Feigen, denen empfohlen wird, lieber nicht an den

---

tapferen Parzival zu denken”¹³ (Lastly, one must mention the mocking manner in which the cowards are advised not to even think about the courageous Parzival) (Nellmann, 6). Wolfram finds ways of injecting morals into his narrative, but in doing so in such a derogatory manner, he infers that he holds contempt for certain elements in his expected audience. This could, in fact, be Wolfram the author coming out from behind the cover of his narrative persona to show that he thinks has outsmarted them. No one in the audience will think of himself as a person unable to display triuwe or as being tump or a coward. The audience members might, however, have each other in mind as they hear this.

In Wolfram’s Parzival the popular teachings are those found in all Arthurian Romances of chivalry. In this particular case, the story of the prodigal son is also brought to the foreground (when Parzival finally turns back to God after years of anger at God). Wolfram’s specific message concerns the dangers inherent in glorifying violence in art and society. This concern, I will argue, is what Wolfram added to Chrétien’s text while retaining the entertaining plot.

Chrétien de Troyes wrote his Perceval between the years of 1178 – 1191, and most likely took the story from a now lost version of the tale.

The prologue in Chrétien’s *Perceval* “implies that the story existed in oral and written form” (Cline, *Perceval*, Introduction, X) before Chrétien wrote his version. The information, which can be found in Chrétien’s prologue of his unfinished *Perceval* is important for evaluating the independence of Wolfram’s conception of his *Parzival*, which was most likely written between the years 1210 –1220. It is of major importance because Wolfram’s work clearly came after Chrétien’s text and shows the addition of characters and themes to Chrétien’s version, which have no proven basis in any other source.

Most scholars are of the opinion that Wolfram did indeed take at least the outlines of his story from Chrétien’s *Perceval* (Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, 47). In Sebastian Coxon’s *The Presentation of Authorship in Medieval German Narrative Literature, 1220 – 1290*, Wolfram is tied not only to Chrétien, but in turn influences other German authors of the period. Coxon specifically indicates Wolfram and Chrétien’s continuing influence on Rudolf von Ems.¹⁴ Rudolf was most likely also a

---

ministeriales and referred to himself as a lower noble in a position of servitude.\textsuperscript{15}

With regard to Wolfram’s connection to Chrétien, the German author assures the reader there is none. Wolfram does indeed give the reader proof that he was at least knowledgeable of Chrétien’s \textit{Perceval}, and that he did not approve of Chrétien’s version of the romance:

\begin{quote}
Ob von Troys meister Cristjân
disem maere hät unreht getân,
daz mac wol zûrnen Kyôt,
der uns diu rehten maere enbôt (827, 1-4).
\end{quote}

If Chrétien, the master from Troys, has told this tale incorrectly
Kyot, who gave us the correct version may well be angry.

Wolfram states that the source for his \textit{Parzival} is not Chrétien, but rather Kyot. Kyot found the story, which had been written down by Flegetanis, who had read it in the stars (453, 11-455, 8). The tactic of denying that Chrétien was his source was not part of a literary feud with him, as can be said about his relationship with Gottfried. It is rather that Wolfram realizes that the genre is “self-consciously fictional” (Stevens, 99). By stating another source, Wolfram gives himself the freedom to tell the story of \textit{Parzival} in a completely new and creative manner, which the

\textsuperscript{15} Margaret Fitzgerald Richey, \textit{Studies of Wolfram von Eschenbach}, (London: Robert Cunningham and Sons Ltd., 1957).
new genre of romance allows for. He can now not only to retain the compelling and entertaining plots of Chrétien’s *Perceval*, but also inject his critical message between the lines of his new, fictional narrative.

Wolfram borrows the technique of presenting an obscure and unobtainable source for his work from Chrétien himself. Chrétien gives as his source a book he received from his patron Count Phillip of Flanders.\(^{16}\) Chrétien is very straightforward about his source and his intent: “This tale is called the *Story of the Grail*. The count has given him the book; now judge what Chrétien undertook” (de Troyes, Trans. Harwood Cline, 64–67). Chrétien names his source, but no one can prove that it actually existed. He then deviates from it to make it his own and impart messages to the reader that are to his liking. As Adrian Stevens has written,

The first impression is that the story of the grail is already recorded in an authoritative and unalterable form in the source, and that Chrétien’s task of putting it into verse is little more than a technical exercise... Far from executing his commission by merely reproducing his patron’s existing book, he is freeing himself from an old booking order to be able to present Count Phillip with a new and different one. But for an author like Chrétien to free himself from an old book implies that he is asserting the right to alter and rewrite the story it tells, and to make such a far-reaching and radical change to a written source is implicitly to claim liberty to write fiction (Stevens, 104).

\(^{16}\) See Ruth Harwood Cline’s Introduction in her *Perceval* translation, for a brief history of this narrative.
Stevens correctly states that the new genre is fictional and that its power comes from its status as fiction. The power to create new themes in an existing story can only take place in fiction. While I agree with Stevens’ assessment of the romances as fiction, the interpretation to be presented in this chapter deviates from Stevens’ focus on Wolfram’s romance in terms of family histories. Books I–III in Parzival are more than mere family histories and bloodlines for the Grail Kingdom. These are important themes in Wolfram’s text, to be sure, but Wolfram uses these books to demonstrate problems of the past generations and their consequences for the generation of Parzival and Gawan.

A recurring theme in Parzival is the love between a knight and a noble lady, which has disastrous consequences, because the female has withheld her favors from the knight for too long. She has continued to demand more chivalrous deeds from him before giving her consent to a reward. Wolfram gives four separate examples of this happening in his narrative: the situations of Belakâne, Herzeloyde, Sigûne and Obie. Belakâne’s case provides the first instance of this problem in Parzival. The narrator states that Isenhart, Belakâne’s lover, has been killed. His men make the claim that she is to blame because she had withheld her favors
from him for too long. She expresses the guilt that she feels because of
his death and claims that the pain is hers to carry:

Mîn vriunt der hiez Isenhart.
mîn wipheit was unbewart,
dô ich sîn dienst nâch minne enpfîenc,
dez im nâch vröuden niht ergienc.
des muoz ich immer jâmer tragen” (26, 25-29).

My friend’s name was Isenhart.
My femininity went astray
when I did not reward his service,
and did not give him what he deserved.
Now I must always suffer the consequences.

Prolonged Minnedienst has nearly fatal consequences for Queen
Belekâne. Because of her delay and Isenhart’s death, his loyal followers
attack her city. They wish to take revenge on her for the loss of their
king. Had Belekâne given herself to him within a reasonable time frame,
she might have saved his life and led a happy life herself. It is important
to the story’s plot that her lands are besieged. The siege on her castle is
the opportunity for Gahmuret to win her affection. Having made the
mistake once, she will not likely make Gahmuret wait, as she did in the
case of Isenhart.

If this were a single incident, it would not necessarily be very
important and could be dismissed as mere happenstance. But the loss of
a loved one, due in one way or another to the practices associated with
Minnedienst, is a recurring and powerful theme in Wolfram’s Parzival. Death in Minneditenst is particularly important, because of its repetition in the books not taken from Chrétien and creatively generated by Wolfram. It is paramount that the reader recognizes the basically tragic nature of this first occurrence of prolonged Minneditenst, which ends in tragedy, because this negative aspect of love service is to become a “Leitmotiv” that Wolfram blends systematically into his Parzival.

Repetition is very important in other medieval works in the genre, and not only to Wolfram’s Parzival. In the Quest of the Holy Grail repetition is also used to drive home a point. Matarasso speaks directly to the usage of this technique in the introduction of his translations. In the section entitled “Form and Style”, Matarasso writes that “the element of repetition in the hermit’s sermons may disconcert or irritate the modern reader, but this is a conscious and deliberate technique designed not merely to put across with maximum impact the moral and doctrinal content, but in Lancelot’s case to underline the subtle gradations in his spiritual ascent” (Matarasso, 24). Wolfram is using repeated scenes of death in Minneditenst in a similar fashion to deliver his message with maximum impact.
The most poignant of the female characters is Sigûne. The situations in which she is involved are so tragic because of the way in which they foreground of death in Minnedienst. Sigune carries her triuwe to a higher level than the others. She will remain faithful to her departed lover even after death. As the Penelope-figure in Homer’s *Odyssee*, who remains faithful to her husband Odysseus after he is believed to be dead, Sigûne carries on a faithfulness that is beyond normal conventions.\(^17\) She can marry again because she never consummated a marriage, or finished the period of Minnedienst with Schionatulander. Both Penelope and Sigune choose faithfulness and chastity over a convention that is neither illegal, nor looked down upon in their society.

Belekâne and Herzeloyde will both marry Gahmuret after their first partners, Îsenhart and Castis, have met with their respective demises. Both of these characters exhibit an extreme level of triuwe when dealing with Gahmuret, but do not exhibit the same amount with their first spouses. Sigûne represents the literary ideal in this situation. She is closely linked with the Grail Kingdom and is knowledgeable of both the religious and worldly domains. Because of her purity and her affiliation with the Grail, Sigûne takes on aspects of a Marian figure. She is Parzival’s

moral compass, despite her deep personal loss, and always points him in the right direction, even though she herself is bereaved.

Parzival finds Sigûne after his fateful meeting with Jeschûte on his way to be knighted by King Arthur. She is holding her dead lover Schionatulander in her arms, as the simpleton Parzival comes upon her. After she divines Parzival’s identity (compare Chrétien de Troyes Perceval,18 in which Perceval guesses his own identity), she tells him of her anguish. She also informs him that her dead lover has died in the service of both of them, albeit in very different capacities:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{in unser zweier dienste den tôt} \\
\text{hât er bejagt, und jâmers nôt} \\
\text{mir nach sîner minne.} \\
\text{ich hete cranke sinne,} \\
\text{daz ich im niht minne gap:} \\
\text{des hât der sorgen urhap} \\
\text{mir vroude verschrôten:} \\
\text{nu minne ich in alsô tôten (141, 17-24).}
\end{align*}
\]

In the service of the two of us he found death, and in pain, longing for his love he left me. I was out of my mind not giving him my love: Now fate has totally ruined my happiness: I love him even in death.

The narrator makes it clear that Sigûne is not only feeling sadness for her loss, but also guilt for Schionatulander’s death. Her delay in giving her love, or Minne, is the cause of Schionatulander’s death. Sigûne feels guilty for not having given him what he has rightfully earned (“daz ich im niht minne gap” see above). One must remember that Sigune has done nothing illegal or wrong according to the conventions of the time. She feels guilt and loss due to the morally corrupt practice in which she participated, which lead directly to Schionatulander’s death.

There is almost the sense that Sigûne feels as guilty as if she had been the one (Duke Orilus) who had killed Schionatulander (Orilus is also the knight responsible for the death of Gahmuret’s older brother Galoes). She will love him even in death and remain faithful to him, even though she is still a virgin and can legally be married off again or pick another husband. Her high moral standards and triuwe will not allow her to do this, as in the case of her close relative and surrogate mother Herzeloyde, as well as in the case of Belekâne. These two female characters will only display such a high level of triuwe to Gahmuret.

The question left unanswered by the text, is why she remains loyal to Schionatulander. Is it because of triuwe, being faithful to his memory, or is it because her feeling of guilt is so great? The guilt she feels is due
to the realization that he would not have died had she not made him
continue to search for greater danger to win more fame during
Minnedienst. In this instance, Wolfram carefully balances the two, giving
Sigûne an equal amount of positive reason, or triuwe, for her sense of
loss, as well as negative impetus, or guilt.

The narrator is rather direct in the case of Sigûne. She feels directly
responsible for her lover’s death and says so very openly. However, with
the last two characters in this category he is less than precise. While
Parzival is staying with his uncle Trevrizent, the reader is informed that
Herzeloyde, Parzival’s mother, was first given to Castis to marry.
However, before they could be married, Castis dies on his way home from
the Gralsburg. Despite the unconsummated marriage, he has already
given control over his two countries to Herzeloyde, his new bride:

du solt des sîn vil gewis
daz der künec Castis
Herzeloyden gerte,
der man in schöne werte:
dîne muoter gap man im ze konen.
er solt aber niht ir minne wonen:
der tôt in e leit in daz grap (494, 15-21).
You should know the following:
that king Castis
courted Herzeloyde
and she was given to him:
She was given to him as his wife.
He would never know her love:
Death laid him low in his grave.

Herzeloyde is a problematic figure in this sense, due in part because the narrator does not inform the reader whether or not Castis was killed in knightly combat or in another, more natural manner. There are no other incidents of knights meeting an untimely, natural death in the entire narrative. It is highly speculative to describe him as being the only one to die of natural causes without more information. One must assume that Castis is the only knight in the romance to die an unchivalric death, or that he meets his end as all of the other knights do: in knightly combat, trying to win honor and glory (more information about Castis and his fate are given in *Titurel*, which is discussed in the following chapter). This second possibility is more likely to be the case, due to the tragic nature of the Herzeloyde story. Were Castis to die during chivalric combat, Herzeloyde would have lost both of her husbands to the pursuit of knightly honor. The second death due to Minndienst would then better explain her death at the loss of her only son in the pursuit of this self-
same goal. It would assert with even more impact the negative effects Minnedienst has on people.

To lose Castis, Gahmuret and Parzival, mirrors more closely the losses experienced by Chrétien’s motherly figure.¹⁹ She lost not only her husband to a wound suffered in knightly combat that is eerily similar to the wound of the Fisher King, but also her first two sons. Wolfram has changed Chrétien’s narrative to make Parzival an only child. Chrétien creates figures killed in a knightly combat that is brought about by worldly intrigue and greed. Wolfram leaves only one reason for a knight’s death in the first three Books: prolonged Minnedienst is a defense against the danger of being verligen.²⁰

Because of Herzeloyde’s maidenhood, she can still be honorably wed. She is a daughter of the Grail community, Queen over two lands, and a virgin and widow at a fairly young age. This situation allows her to be held as the prize at the tournament that Gahmuret will eventually win. While being a human prize for a game is not a positive step in the role of a female character, it is the direct result of the outcome of her first

²⁰ Verligenheit will be discussed later in detail, along with the philosophical differences between Wolfram and Hartmann on this account.
marriage. It is also a socially acceptable means at the time to obtain a husband.

Herzeloyde’s husband Castis dies without consummating the marriage. There is, however, no textual proof that she loves him at all. There is no mention of her remorse at his death, because she suffers no visible consequences from it. The new situation can even be seen as a positive series of events for Herzeloyde, because only through Castis’ demise is she able to be legally wed to the already married Gahmuret. This can be inferred because the reader is never informed of an outburst on Herzeloyde’s behalf concerning Castis.

The amount of grief she experiences at Gahmuret’s death and Parzival’s departure implies that she did not feel as deeply for Castis as she did for Gahmuret. Herzeloyde never mentions Castis and shows no signs of grief at his passing. Indeed, she seems to have profited from the whole encounter with Castis, by inheriting two kingdoms and maintaining her legal right to marriage. She will, however, disinherit herself and her son from these kingdoms after Gahmuret dies, leaving the narrator to state that she has cheated Parzival of his inheritance.

It is ironic that Parzival would inherit kingdoms from a man other than his father. Additionally, upon his uncle Galoes’ death, he would be
king over Gahmuret’s family lands. He would attain these kingdoms because Galoes and Fôle have no heirs, making Parzival the only surviving relative. Aside from his half brother Feirefîz, Parzival is the only surviving member of his entire family because he himself kills Ither, the last remaining relative outside the Grail kingdom. The text only speaks of Parzival’s inheritance from Castis, who is not even related to Parzival. There is only mention of the inheritance through his mother, and how she simply left the lands, robbing Parzival of a kingly upbringing:

\[
\begin{align*}
der \text{ site vuor angestliche vart.} \\
der \text{ knappe alsus verborgen wart} \\
zer \text{ waste in Soltâne erzogen} \\
an \text{ küneclicher vuore betrogen} \quad (117, 29 – 118, 3).
\end{align*}
\]

That was exceedingly difficult. The boy was then hidden and brought up in the wastes of Soltane deceived of his kingly inheritance.

Lastly, there is a slightly different version of this theme with the figure Obie. Obie suffers as the result of her own actions, but she does nothing to change her mistake. Her own father states that she is directly responsible because of her dealings with Meljanz. She did not reward him for his service in Minnedienst:

\[
\begin{align*}
‘\text{Obie vrumt uns diese nôt.} \\
eins \text{ tages gedêch ez an die stat}
\end{align*}
\]

\[21\] See Lachmann’s family tree.
daz si der junge künec bat
nâch sîme dienste minne.
sî vervluochte im sîne sinne,
unde vrâgte in wes er wânde,
war umb er sich sinnes ânde’ (345, 26 – 346, 2).

‘Obie caused us this trouble.
One day it happened in the city
that the young king asked
for the reward for his service.
She cursed his intentions
and asked him what he intended
or if he had lost his mind.’

This action (or more appropriately, inaction) leads her, and those
around her, into even more suffering. The main difference with this
example of Minne and tragedy is that her lover does not die because of
her withholding of her favors. It is the city that she lives in, and her
family, that bear the brunt of her spurning Meljanz’s love after
Minnedienst. Meljanz is rejected by Obie and then starts to attack the
keep in which his vassal (Obie’s father) and love live, in order to impress
Obie and gain her by sheer force:

dô sprach diu junge Obilot
‘unvuoge ir dennoch mêr gebôt:
gein dem künge Meljanz von Lîz
si kêrte ir hôchverte vlîz,
dô er si bat ir minne.
gunërt sîn sölhe sinne!’ (353, 19-23).

So spoke the young Obilot
‘she has often spoken so irresponsibly:
she purposefully allowed King Meljanz of Liz
to experience her arrogance.
He asked her for her love.
His feelings were not reciprocated.’

There is no death of a loved one, but there is a strain put on the entire region because of Meljanz’ rejected love. Obie’s selfishness is a strain on everyone around her: her family, the citizens of the city and Meljanz. She is in love with him, but she wants increasing amounts of bravery and accolades from Meljanz in order that her own status might be improved. She watches him attack the walls of the city in which she resides, taking on the defenders with great skill. She is pleased at the bravery he shows during the skirmishes. She sees the attack on the city as the continuation of the time of Minnedienst. The narrator states quite clearly Obie’s feelings for Meljanz and asks for the reader’s sympathy for her as well:

si dâchte ‘ob er mich leret pîn,
den sol ich gerne durch in hân.
den jungen werden süezen man
vor al der werlt ich minne:
dar jagent mich herzen sinne.’
Von minne noch zornes vil geschiht:
nune wîzet ez Obîen niht (365,26 – 366, 2).
She thought ‘Even if he teaches me to suffer, I will gladly endure it for him. The young, high born, sweet man whom I love over all the world: He brings joy to my heart.’ Anger from love happens often: Only Obie does not know that.

There is, in this instance, a striking resemblance to the situation in which Belekâne finds herself because of Isenhart’s death, which was brought on by prolonged Minnedienst. Belekâne’s townspeople and servants are suffering at the hand of an invading army, just as Obie’s community is being besieged by her lord Meljanz’ army. Isenhart’s followers have blamed Belekâne for their Lord’s death, due to her unwillingness to recognize that Isenhart has done enough chivalrous deeds to win her favors. The pains that Belekâne is suffering are mirrored in her subjects, who are now fighting for their very lives. In the end all (Isenhart, Belekâne and her citizens) must pay the price for Belekâne’s withholding of her favor from Isenhart. The difference between the situations is that Belâkane made an honest mistake and admits her error,

Yet another episode is very similar. Wolfram uses the situation of the unrequited love between King Clamide and Condwiramurs in a similar fashion, to show the devastation caused to a city’s population. The one difference between this example and the other two examples of unrequited love, is that Condwiramurs does not love Clamide. In the other two examples of prolonged Minnedienst, the female characters love the males involved in the practice.
while Obie delights in the conflict that rages in her name around the castle.

The narrator describes Obie’s feelings for Meljanz directly, but also lets the reader receive the information about Meljanz’ advances through another source. The aforementioned quotation from Obilot, Obie’s younger sister, gives the reader the information about Meljanz’ advances towards Obie (353, 19-23). It is because of Meljanz’ unrewarded love that he feels he must attack the city to gain her and win her love.

Wolfram gives the reader a similar story of prolonged Minnedienst with disastrous consequences in several different episodes, so that one can see the far-reaching, negative effects of courtly love. He is involving the reader in a critical piece of literature, which shows his negative view of a contemporary literary convention. The fact that Wolfram shows Minnedienst to be so socially destructive, in so many places in his narrative, indicates that Wolfram is trying to persuade his audience to rethink the common conventions associated with Minne. He shows instances where an army is preparing to sack a city because of unrewarded love, and other valuable members of society are being killed in extended exploits of love, trying to prove their bravery. Wolfram uses clear-cut cases of the best and brightest knights that society had to offer
cutting each other down in their prime. He depicts the practice of Minnedienst as a wasteful exploit that simply does not serve a useful purpose when allowed to continue too long.

The literary convention of Minnedienst functions well as entertainment in the literature of the time, which had the traditional role to instruct and delight. If this convention were to be brought into the real world of chivalry without a ceiling, as an instance of life imitating art, then Wolfram is clearly warning about its deadly consequences. In Wolfram’s Parzival, unlike the works of Hartmann von Aue and Chétien de Troyes, a knight is questioning the ideals and customs of his own social class. Wolfram the narrator states that he would like to be known for his exploits on the battlefield by the women of his time, rather than for his poetry:

```
schildes ambet ist mîn art:    
swâ mîn ellen sî gespart,    
swelhiu mich minnet umbe sanc,    
so dunket mich ir witze cranc.    
ob ich quotes wîbes mine ger,    
mag ich mit schilde undouch mit sper    
verdienen niht ir minne solt,    
al dar nâch sî si mir holt.    
vil hôhes topels er doch spilt,    
der an ritterschaft nach minnen zilt (115,11–20).
```

I am a knight by trade:
If a women wishes
to love me because of my poetry
I would think she has taken leave of her senses.
If I wish to pursue the love of a woman
I will do so with shield and spear
and earn her love.
The stakes are high in the game
when one uses chivalry to find love.

Wolfram is not protesting all uses of arms. It is quite apparent that he is proud to take up his shield and spear and to win acclaim on the battlefield, at least based on the utterances of the narrator figure.

However, with the examples of Îsenhart, Gahmuret and Schionatulander that are set forth, it is evident that Wolfram as author was critical of the mindless pursuit of glory in Minnedienst. He is, at the very least, showing the need for some modification in the practices of Minnedienst, especially with regard to when the end of Minnedienst has been reached and when the reward should be given.

Wolfram shows that the literary convention of Minnedienst is not as straightforward in practice as it first appears in the earlier courtly romances. In doing so Wolfram has changed the focus of the courtly romance as a whole. Its function is no longer merely to instruct and delight, but also to call basic assumptions of chivalric action on behalf of honor and love into question. Wolfram, who casts himself as a knight (partly because this may well have been true, and partly to deflect
criticism of his own critical literary conception), shows that one can criticize a cultural construct from within and still entertain an audience.

Chrêtien’s *Perceval* does not contain any of the episodes that Wolfram’s *Parzival* shows in Books I-III (i.e. the story of Gahmuret and Parzivals’ family, the Orient adventures and his winning of the tournament at Kanvoleiz). The Sigûne figure makes no mention of her withholding reward for Minnedienst, and the critical incidents involving Îsenhart and Belekâne simply do not exist in Chrêtien’s version of the tale. Wolfram states that he received the story from a source other than Chrétien de Troyes, and that he heard the story from Kyot. Kyot in turn found the story written by Flegitanis, which is not accepted by most Wolfram scholars. The prevailing opinion is that Wolfram did indeed model his story after Chrétien’s version of *Perceval*. The idea that Wolfram used Chrétien’s story is consistent with the argument being made in this chapter, but there remains a question as to the origin of the first three Books of Wolfram’s text and the matter of Minnedienst. I have been arguing, and will continue to argue, that these three books were included for the purpose of informing the audience of Parzival’s lineage and nobility, delighting them with tales of faraway lands, instructing them in
the conventions of Minnedienst, and then criticizing the conventions contained in them.

**The Suffering of Love**

Wolfram is not only socially conscious about Minne, the practices surrounding it, and their ramifications, but also about marriage. By allowing the narrator room to speak as he does, Wolfram presents the reader with a profound pro-marriage message in *Parzival*. Parzival is never unfaithful to his wife, nor is anyone else in the narrative unfaithful to his wife. Marriage is a holy and unbreakable bond in Wolfram’s narratives. It is commonly held that marriage was not synonymous with love in Wolfram’s time, but rather that it was usually political or venal in nature.\(^\text{23}\)

In view of the common associations of marriage with political alliances, Wolfram, and the authors of the courtly romances, were somewhat forward thinking for their time.\(^\text{24}\) Yet, for being so pro-

---

\(^{23}\) For a discussion on this point see Jeffrey Ashcroft, Dietrich Huschenbett and William Henry Jackson, eds. *Liebe in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1987).

\(^{24}\) The figures of the German Arthurian romances of the time seem to find love in marriage. Erec and Enite, in Hartmann’s *Erec* are not married for political reasons, she is of a much lower station as she is the daughter of an impoverished count. Gottfried von Straßbourg, in his *Tristan*, also seems intent on criticizing the purely political arranged marriages by showing that queen Isolde and King Marke do not love each other, but that she loves the vassal Tristan.
marriage, Wolfram shows that to be married, or at least in love, is to be in pain and to suffer for both men and women. As Parzival speaks with his uncle Trevrizent out in the wilderness, Parzival tells his holy relative that he misses his wife, the beautiful Condwiramurs:

‘mîn hôhstiu nôt ist umbe den grâl;
dâ nach umb mîn selbes wîp:
ûf erde nie schoener lip
gesouc an keiner muoter brust.
nâch den beiden sent sich mîn gelust’ (467, 27-30).

My first desire is for the grail;  
I also miss my wife:  
On earth nothing more beautiful  
suckled a mother’s breast.  
I desire both incredibly.

Then Trevrizent replies to his nephew:

Der wirt sprach ‘hêrre, ir sprechet wol.  
ir sît in rehter kumbers dol,  
sît ir nach iuwer selbes wîbe  
sorgen pflîhte gebt dem lîbe...’ (468, 1-4).

The host spoke: ‘Sir, you speak well.  
If you suffer the pangs of longing  
for your own wife  
it is understandable and correct.

Later, Trevrizent offers more insight and advice to Parzival about the sanctity of marriage and how it should be an inspiration to him:

der minnet sîn selbes wîp,  
daz nie von manne mêre  
wîp geminnet wart so sêre,
ich mein mit rehten triuwen.
sîne site sult ir niuwen,
und minnet von herzen iuwer konen.
sîner site sult ir wonen:
iuwer varwe im treit gelîchiu mâl (474, 14 -19).

He loved his wife so much
that no other man ever
loved a woman so much,
I mean with real faithfulness.
Let him be your example
and love your wives as deeply as you can.
He can also be your example in other ways:
You are similar to him in many ways.

Despite Wolfram’s positive view of marriage, there seems to be a
darker side to this ideal. The female characters in Parzival are doomed to
suffering even after they are married. Indeed, the suffering increases
after marriage. The men they love, husbands and sons, will one day leave
them in order to seek honor. Evidence of this can be seen when Gahmuret
leaves Belakâne (and Herzeloyde). Although he loves her greatly, he must
leave her:

dâ was der stolze küene man,
unz er sich vaste senen began.
daz er niht ritterschefte vant
des was sîn vröude sorgen pfant
Doch was im daz swarze wîp
lieber dan sîn selbes lip.
ez enwart nie wîp geschicket baz:
der vrouwen herze nie vergaz,
im envüere ein werdiu volge mite,
an rehter kiusche wîplich site (54, 17 – 26).
There was a proud, audacious man
but he began to experience a longing.
He could not find knightly combat
and this was troublesome for him.
However, to him his black wife
was more dear to him than his life:
There was never a braver woman than she
and her heart was of noble quality,
displaying womanly restraint
as well as chastity.

It is inevitable that some of the husbands will die and others will not
be back for long periods of time. Their absence is too much for the
female character to bear. In a somewhat ironic twist, the good and noble
traits of a woman bring about negative consequences for them. Suffering,
in Parzival, is something that recurs with startling regularity, and is
brought on by the very trait that should help a woman be a better person
and find a husband. It is brought on by her faithful nature or triuwe:

\[
\text{wiplicher sorgen urhap} \\
\text{úz ir herzen blüete alniuwe} \\
\text{unt doch durch alte triuwe (435, 17 -19).}
\]

Feminine sorrow always
blossoms anew in her heart
nourished through her faithfulness.

It is sorrow that defines a woman and makes her what she is,
according to Wolfram. There is no female character in Parzival that
suffers more than the heroes’ mothers. The important mothers in this
work are: Schoette (Gandin’s wife and mother to Gahmuret), Belakâne
(Gahmuret’s heathen first wife and mother to Feirefiz), the wife of Gurnemanz (Gurnemanz is the father of Liaze and instructs Parzival in the art of war and of manners in knightly society), and Herzeloyde (Gahmuret’s second, Christian wife and mother to Parzival).

Three of the mother figures follow the same pattern: their husbands either die or go missing and their sons leave them, although the latter happens to Belakâne posthumously. In the case of Gurnemanz’ wife, to whom Wolfram does not give a name, she loses all three of her sons: Scheneteflûrs, Lascoyt and Gurzgrî. It is after hearing of the death of the third son Gurzgrî that she cannot continue living. The reader is also informed of the negative impact that his death had on Gurzgrî’s wife Mahaute (see following quote). Scheneteflûrs dies at the hands of Condwîrâmûrs’ assailants “Clâmîde und von Kingrûn” (178, 3) defending Condwîrâmûrs on the battlefield. Lascoyt was also killed in knighly combat, but for a very base reason. He was killed out of greed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Min ander sun hiez cons Lascoyt} \\
\text{den sluoc mir Idër vil Nyot} \\
\text{umb einen sparwaere (178, 11 – 13).}
\end{align*}
\]

25 The situation of Gurnemanz’ family is discussed in detail in Titurel. There is another family member dead that the reader/listener might not be aware of until he is familiar with the Titurel narrative. Schionatulander is Gurzgrî’s son but dies after his uncles, parents and grandmother have also died. Gurnemanz’ loss of his grandson will be discussed further in the following chapter, which deals specifically with Titurel.
My other son was named Lascoyt
who was killed by Nyot’s son Ider
for a sparrow hawk.

Gurzgrî dies in knightly combat with his new wife along side him:

mîn dritter sun hiez Gurzgrî
dem reit Mahaute bî
mît ir schoenem ībe:
wan si gab im ze wîbe
ir stolzer bruoder Ehkunat.
gein Brandigân der houbestat
kom er nâch Schoydelacurt geriten.
dâ wart sîn sterben niht vermiten:
da sluog in Mâbonagrîn.
des verlôs Mahaute ir liehten schîn,

und lac mîn wîp, sîn muoter tôt:
grôz jâmmer irz nach im gebôt (178, 15 – 26).

My third son was named Gurgri
who was accompanied by Mahaute
with her beautiful figure:
After she had been given in marriage
by her proud brother Ehkunat.
Near Brandigan, the capital,
he rode against Schoydelacurt.
His death there was not to be avoided:
Mabonagrin slew him.
Mahuate lost her beautiful appearance,
and my wife, his mother, lay dead.
The great pain from his death condemned her.

Left alone, these females are prone to heartbreak and eventually
dead. They are incapable of living any longer if they do not have a male
to live for in their lives. This would indicate a weakness that men do not
have in the narrative. None of the male characters suffer more than
occasional pangs of longing after being away for great lengths of time, while searching for new exploits to make their reputations grow to even loftier heights. A good example of this effect with the male figures is Gurnemanz. He has lost his three sons and he states:

\[\text{des ist mir dürkel als ein zûn} \\
\text{mîn herze von jâmers sniten (178, 5 – 6).}\]

That for me was the darkest of days, my heart is cut open by pain.

This is not enough pain to kill him as it was for his wife. Indeed, he loses three sons and a spouse, more than the amount of loss that was enough to kill his wife. This begs the question of the female characters’ strength in view of the male characters’ ability to survive an even more stunning loss. Wolfram’s view of a female’s triuwe must be such, that the nature of a woman’s triuwe is indeed more profound and deep than that of a male. This also dramatically increases their suffering and makes their ability to love the male characters that much stronger. The male characters realize the consequences of the life they choose, and can bear them, while the women do not have the choice and are unable to bear these same consequences. Gurnemanz speaks about the pain he feels, as Parzival is about to leave his lands:

\[\text{ir sît min vierder sun verlorn.} \\
\text{ja wand ich ergetzet waere}\]
dřier jaemerlichen maere.
der wären dennoch niht wan driu:
der nu mîn herze envieriu
mit sîner hende slüege
und ieslich stücke trüege,
daz diuhte mich ein grôz gewin,
einz vür iuch (ir rîtet hin),
diu driu vür mîniu werden kint
diu ellenthalft erstorben sint.
sus lônt iedoch diu ritterschaft:
ir zagel ist jâmerstricke haft.

You will be the fourth son to be lost. 
I had hoped to be avenged by you for my three losses. 
There were only three pieces but now my heart has four, 
and if each son were to have a piece that would be a great victory. 
One for you as you leave, then three for my lost children each of which dies nobly. 
Such is the price of chivalry her grasp is painful.

In the instance of Parzival’s trance, upon seeing the blood on the snow, he shows that he misses Condwîrâmûrs. He has the power to turn back and see her, to visit if only for a while, but he chooses not return. The reader is never informed that the idea has even entered the hero’s mind. She, on the other hand, has no voice in the matter. He leaves because he desires to do so, which is more than a desire to see his mother, but rather the love of chivalry. Parzival hears of his mother’s death, but does not return to Condwîrâmûrs and continues on for five
years. If Condwîrâmûrs forces him to stay, he will lose honor because he will be considered to be verligen, but by letting him go she increases her own sorrow for years to come.

The first female character to die, chronologically, due to the loss of her husband and sons, is Schoette. Gahmuret asks Kaylet about Schoette’s health. Kaylet then describes to Gahmuret how his mother has died of heartbreak:

er sprach ze Kaylette
‘wie gehabt sich Schôette,
min muoter vröuden arme?’
‘so dâz ez got erbarme.
dô ir erstarp Gandîn
und Gâlôes der bruoder dîn,
unt dô si dîn bî ir niht sach,
der tôt ouch ir daz herze brach’ (92,23-30).

He said to Kaylet
‘How is Schoette,
my poor mother?’
God have mercy.
First Gandin died,
and then your brother Galoes,
and when you were not by her side,
death then broke her heart.’

Schoette’s husband, Gandin, dies in knightly combat, as does her firstborn son Galoes, who is killed by Duke Orilus. With Gahmuret out in the world seeking adventure, she has no one left to her. It is her faithful nature (triuwe) and love for her husband and sons that make her die of
heartbreak. The reader will be confronted with this same scenario two more times during the course of this romance, making it a powerful theme in Wolfram’s narrative.

Chronologically, the next to fall victim to the heartbreak of losing the man she loves is Belakâne. Belakâne is the only mother who is not aware of her husband’s death when she dies. She is only aware of the fact that he is not with her. This is enough heartbreak to end her life and make an orphan of her only child, the black and white checkered Feirefîz. The reader is not informed of her demise until late in Book XIV when Feirefîz tells Parzival the tale of his mother’s death, although the reader knows that it must have transpired long ago.

Even though the half-brothers have little knowledge of each other, they have the similar fates of their mothers and their shared father as common ground. Gahmuret had left Belakâne and remarried (Herzeloyde), desiring new challenges and a life of chivalry. This is made possible because Belakâne is a heathen and therefore the marriage between Gahmuret and Belakâne is not official, and hence binding, according to contemporary Christian beliefs. Gahmuret’s departure from Belekâne had a greater effect on her than he could have imagined. In fact, his departure is the reason given for three deaths: his leaving contributed to the death
of his mother Schoette, Belekâne, and will lead directly to Herzeloyde’s
death:

gein mînem vater der gerich
ist mînhalp noch unverkorn.
sîn wîp von der ich wart geborn,
durch minne em sterben nâch im kôs,
dô si minne an im verlôs (750, 22-26).

My father cannot escape responsibility
he left me as an orphan.
His wife, from whose whom I came,
died from love and desire for him
after he left her.

Feirefiz tells Parzival of Belakâne’s death when the two half
brothers meet for the first time. Their mothers are victims of a
remarkably similar fate. Belakâne has already lost Isenhart, and is married
to Gahmuret – for love, and not merely political reasons. Herzeloyde loses
Castis and weds Gahmuret out of an undying love. In fact, the scenario
will repeat itself with amazing similarity. It happens to the very next
female character Gahmuret finds. The next female character is
Herzeloyde, and she will meet her doom for the same reason. There are
no other instances of Minne between the two (Belekâne and Herzeloyde).

Belakâne is also aware that it is her triuwe that causes her so much
anguish:

daz clage ich noch, vil armes wîp:
ir bêder tôt mich immer müet.
I, poor women, mourn still:
the death of both men pains me.
From my faithfulness suffering blossoms.
I was never any man’s wife.

Belekâne loses Gahmuret, not because he does not love her, but because he has to win honor and glory on the battlefield. With the loss of her second love, her heart is broken, and she dies after giving birth to Feirefiz. Gahmuret states on several occasions that his heathen wife is dear to him and that he loves her greatly: “ich hân ein wîp: diu ist mir lieber danne der lîp” (I have a wife, she is more dear to me than my life) (94, 5 – 6). Nonetheless, he chooses to leave her to seek adventures, which seems to be his real love. He leaves someone, whom he claims to love very dearly, for what almost seems an addiction: knightly combat.

Gahmuret’s second and Christian wife is Herzeloyde. Gahmuret is killed in battle because he does not wear his chain mail cap (hârsenier). The manner of death is similar to the fate of Isenhart before him, who was killed in combat while performing Minnedienst for Belekâne.

dô daz der helt âne wart,
sîn lîp dô wênig wart gespart.
das lebens in dâ nâch verdrôz,
mange âventiure suochte er blôz (27, 19 – 22).
As the hero that he was
ehe paid little heed for his life.
His life was bound to be eventually lost,
because he sought out adventure unarmored.

Although Gahmuret did not fight “blôz” (unarmored) as in the case
of Isenhart, he does fight without his “härsenier”. His enemies sabotage
his cap, because they cannot win otherwise. They pour ram’s blood onto
his helmet in order to weaken it:

mînen hêrren lebens lenge vlôch.
sîn härsenier von im er zôch:
des twanc in starkiu hitze.
gunêrtiu heidensch witze
hât uns verstoln den helt guot.
ein ritter hete bockes bluot
genomen in ein langez glas:
das sluog er ûf den adamas
dô wart er weicher danne ein swamp (105,13 – 21).

My lord’s life fled from him.
He took off his armored visor:
the strong heat forced him to.
The heathen’s dirty tricks
stole the valiant hero from us.
A knight taken ram’s blood
and filled it in a vial:
he smashed it on his diamond helmet:
which now became as soft as a sponge.

sînem helm versneit des spers ort
durch sîn houbet wart gebort,
daz man den trunzun drinne vant (106, 15 – 17).

The spear cut through the helmet
then bored its way through his head,
so that they found the point there.
It is only in this manner that these two heroes can be killed, as they are so much better at warfare than their peers. Perhaps this too will add to the renown of the fallen hero: that a fair fight with them was in actuality not a fair fight at all. The main point of differentiation between the two, however, is that Isenhart is killed before he has been able to consummate his love for Belekâne, while Gahmuret is not killed until after he has already impregnated and left her. There are, however, striking similarities in these two depictions. The end result is the same, as Gahmuret is married to Herzeloyde and is killed, which leaves the impregnated queen in utter distress:

\[
\text{mînes herzen vröude breit} \\
\text{was Gahmuretes werdekeit.} \\
\text{den nam mir sîn vrechiu ger (109, 21-23).}
\]

The joy of my heart, that was Gahmuret’s greatness. His love of chivalry took him from me.

Gahmuret’s departure and death cause both Herzeloyde and Belekâne pain enough to kill them. The only thought that sustains Herzeloyde is that Gahmuret is alive in the form of his son, whom she is carrying in her womb. This was, however, not a strong enough thought to sustain Gahmuret’s first love, Belekâne;

\[
\text{Die muosen wol von schulden clagen.} \\
\text{diu vrouwe hete getragen}
\]
They had great reason to mourn. The woman carried a child, that grew in her womb. She was left with no help. Eighteen weeks it had lived as the mother fought against death, Lady Herzeloyde, the Queen. The others were bereft of their senses, because they did not help the woman: She carried in her womb the very flower of knighthood if he did not die before birth.

Herzeloyde is able to convince herself that her own death would kill Gahmuret a second time, and so she is able to go on living. The pain that finally ends her life comes from her young son Parzival, and his wish to journey out into the world to become a knight, seeking honor just as his father had done. In seeing Parzival while still an unborn child as another Gahmuret, the thought of losing Gahmuret a second time is simply unbearable to her. If her love is really for Gahmuret, and not for Parzival
himself, then it is Gahmuret’s second departure from her for a chivalrous life that kills her.

Parzival is not aware of his mother’s death due to his departure until he speaks with his uncle Trevrizent.²⁶ Trevrizent tells Parzival the story of his parents and relatives, which has been denied him throughout the narrative. Trevrizent also informs him that the act of leaving his mother was the event that ended her tormented life:

Dô sprach aber der guote man
‘ich enbinz niht der dâ triegen kan:
diner muoter daz ir triuwe erwarf,
dô du von ir schiede, zehant si starp.
du waere daz tier daz si dâ souc,
unt der trache der ir dâ vlouc.
ez widervuor in slâfe ir gar,
ê daz diu süeze dich gebar...’ (476, 23 - 30).

And so spoke the good man
‘I am not one, who can deceive you:
It was your mother’s faithfulness,
that killed her after your departure.
You were the suckling on her breast,
you were the dragon that flew away.
She had already experienced it in a dream the sweet women, who gave birth to you.

Parzival must realize that it was the combination of his desire to leave his mother to become a knight, and her own triuwe, that broke her

heart upon his leaving. His unswerving desire to be knighted serves also as further evidence of Parzival’s selfishness as a child. Herzeloyle’s new pain, compounded with Gahmuret’s absence, is more than she can bear. She is in the end doomed to die because Parzival and Gahmuret love chivalry, and the honor associated with it, more than anything else. They are willing to commit the ultimate sacrifice of themselves and their loved ones to obtain it.

The knights are single-minded in purpose, regardless of the price that will have to be paid by those who love them. Inevitably, this is the real suffering to which women are condemned to in the society that is based on Minnedienst. They are second-class citizens, who in their own marriages are seen as distant runners up to jousting and swordplay.

Death in the Pursuit of Honor

Women suffer as a rule in Wolfram’s narrative. This suffering can be traced backwards to the death of a beloved husband, a loved one leaving home never to return, and to the practices of Minne. For a knight to impress a noble lady, he must perform feats of great danger to increase his honor and win her love. This is the only way presented in the narrative to win the favor of a woman. The audience is confronted with the male honor code and its direct influence on the well being of the female
characters. The female characters themselves are sometimes willing participants in this pursuit of honor as the instance of Obie would indicate.

Death by knightly combat is a powerful theme from the very beginning of the narrative. In Book I, Parzival’s paternal grandfather Gandin is killed in knightly combat: “unz er lag tôt an ritterschaft” (and he lie dead from knightly combat) (5, 28). Gahmuret’s brother Galoes meets a similar fate, which also has a devastating effect on his love, Queen Fôle.

‘ôwî künigin Fôle,  
durch dîne mînne gap den lîp  
Gålôes, den elliu wîp  
von herzen clagen solten  
mit triuwen, ob si wolten  
daz ir site braehete  
lop swâ mans gedaehte.  
küngîn von Averre,  
swie lützel ez dir were,  
dan mâg ich doch durch dich verlôs,  
der ritterlichen ende kôs  
von einer tjoste, diu in sluoc  
do er dîn clienoete truoc’ (91, 16 – 28).

‘Oh Queen Fole,  
for your love Galoes gave his life  
all women should  
mourn him with all of their hearts  
with faithfulness, if they wish  
to bring to themselves  
the praise they could earn.  
Queen of Averre,  
As little as it means to you  
to lose a relative,  
who met his end in combat
during a joust, he was slain
wearing a token of your love.’

It is also stated that Gahmuret’s grandfather Addanz meets a similar fate. The death of one’s father is almost a family inheritance in the narrative. It is the only thing that each father gives each son, regardless if first or second born (e.g. Galoes and Gahmuret). Gahmuret wants his son to know of his family’s tradition and strength. Perhaps this is a foreshadowing of what is to come and proof that Gahmuret knows that he too will leave both of his sons. He will give the first-born Feirefîz Anschevîn and the second-born Parzival the same legacy that he and his brother had also received from their father Gandîn. It might appear as a sign of family pride, but it is in actuality the documentation of a cycle of orphans and widows that is self-perpetuating in the Parzival narrative:

‘wissen sol der sun mîn,
sîn ane der hiez Gandîn:
der lac an ritterschefte tôt.
des vater leit die selben nôt:
der was geheizen Addanz’ (56, 5 – 9).

‘A son of mine should know,
his grandfather was named Gandîn:
he is dead from knightly combat.
His father suffered the same fate:
His name was Addanz.’
The author is closely binding the terms “love” and “suffering” in this work. Wolfram states plainly that it is the attraction of “love” and the act of fighting for it, that bring these heroes to their doom when he writes:

\[
\text{si gap der stolze Gålôes} \\
\text{fil li roi Gandîn,} \\
\text{der vil getriuwe bruoder sîn,} \\
\text{dâ vor unz im diu minne erwerp} \\
\text{daz er an einer tjost erstarb (80, 14 – 18).}
\]

She gave to the proud Galoes, son of king Gandin, his (Gahmuret’s) faithfull brother before he, fighting for love, died in a joust.

Gahmuret directly equates Minne with his brother’s death, leaving only the inevitable question: if his brother had not been forced to fight for love, would he have met such an untimely death? It is a more honorable death to die in the throws of battle than to die of old age. No one in Gahmuret’s family reaches old age. Even the women are robbed of their peaceful golden years, because the men refuse to be seen as (verligen) dishonorable men who did not look after their reputations.

---

A knight does not have the luxury of governing his territory. He must keep a constant vigil over his reputation. Galoes, Gandîn and Gahmuret are kings, yet they are compelled to seek adventure regardless of the consequences. Each of these three heroes leaves his wife for knightly pursuits, which in the end leaves these poor, female characters widowed at an early age. The need for defending one’s reputation as a knight seeking adventure is a topic not only in this narrative. In Hartmann von Aue’s Erec, the title character does not keep up his reputation and spends too much time living comfortably in the arms of his new bride:

Êrec wente sînen lîp
grôzes gemaches durch sîn wîp.
die minnete er sô sêre
daz er aller êre
durch si einen verphlac,
unz daz er sich sô sehr verlac
daz nieman dehein ahte
ûf in gehaben mahte (2966 – 2974).

Erec used his body for only great exertions with his wife. He loved her so much that he lost all honor because of her, and he became so lazy that no one paid any attention to anything he did.

---

Hartmann is writing a warning to all knights that they should not allow their skills to deteriorate though lack of practice. He further insists that their lifestyles of easy living and comfort make them appear soft in the eyes of many. In doing so, Hartmann shows his approval of the courtly society and wishes to pass on instructions to protect it. He is leaving the knights with a clear indication of what to do and what not to do. Were this advice only in the Êrec narrative, one could dispute the strength of Hartmann’s conviction on the matter. In the other Arthurian narrative by Hartmann von Aue, Íwein,29 Hartmann gives Gâwein the task of imparting advice to the title character on the same subject, by reminding him of Êrec’s fate and that he should avoid it at all costs:

‘geselle, behüetet daz enzît
daz ir iht in ir schulden sît
die des werdent gezigen
daz sî sich durch ir wîp verligen.
kêrt ez niht allez an gemach;
als dem hern Êrecke geschach,
der sich ouch alsô manegen tac
durch vrouwen Énîten verlac.
wan daz er sichs erholt
sît als ein rîter solte,
so wäre vervarn sîn êre.
der minntet ze sère’ (2787 – 2798).

‘Friend, be careful that you do not fall into bad habits.

That your behavior would show
and have become lazy with your wife.
Do not go so far
as that which happened with Erec.
He spent many a day
wasting away his time with Enite his wife.
If he doesn’t recover,
as a knight should,
his lost honor
then he loves to much.’

The main difference between the two authors, and their views on
the society and culture of their time, is that Hartmann defends the need
for protecting one’s knightly reputation, while Wolfram criticizes it.
Wolfram does this by showing that all of Parzival’s male relatives have
died in such a manner. Hartmann’s two works Erec and Iwein are, in this
respect, concerned with worldly fame and keeping one’s reputation once
it has been achieved. Possibly as an answer, or even a penance for this
worldly outlook, is Hartmann’s religious tale Der arme Heinrich.30 This work
is not within the Arthurian genre, leaving Wolfram only to bring up the
weaknesses inherent in the other Arthurian narratives by Hartmann.31 As
Erec and Iwein are concerned with gaining worldly stature and maintaining
their reputations, Hartmann has his main character, Heinrich (also a
knight), stricken with a disease as punishment for such worldly thinking.

30 Hartmann von Aue, Der arme Heinrich, (Tübingen, M.Niemeyer, 1972).
31 Wolfram makes no mention of Der arme Heinrich. He only speaks of the
Arthurian works by Hartmann von Aue.
By doing so, Hartmann reverses his previous stance. This outlook, which is
cconcerns more than merely avoiding verligenheit, is much closer to
Wolfram’s viewpoint.

Only Parzival, Feirefîz and Trevrizent (the older uncle no longer
competes in tournaments) will live to old age and show that they have
learned from their father’s generation’s mistakes. Gandîn, Galoes, Fôle,
Gahmuret, Addanz, Belakâne, Castis, Isenhart, Schönette and Herzeloyde
will all die an untimely death, due at least in part to the knight’s need for
honor in combat and the pain that this literary convention leaves in its
wake. Parzival’s family has almost ceased to exist, due solely to the
practices of chivalry and Minnedienst. The result for his family line is
indeed catastrophic.

Gahmuret, when faced with a second marriage, states clearly that
he does not want to be tied down and must be allowed to fight for
further honors. His life is not complete without knightly competition. He
will not stay long with Herzeloyde if she will not willingly allow him to
pursue the upholding of his knightly reputation:

sîn süezer munt mit zühten sprach
‘vrouwe, sol ich mit iu genesen,
sô lat mich âne huote wesen,
wân verlât mich immer jâmers craft,
sô taete ich gerne ritterschaft.
lât ir niht turnieren mich,
sô kan ich noch den alten schlich,
als dô ich minem wîbe entran,
die ich ouch mit ritterschaft gewan’ (96,24-97,2).

His sweet mouth, spoke with breeding
‘Lady, if I should enjoy life with you
so let me inform you today
if the pain is to leave me
I will have to compete in knightly combat.
If you do not allow me to go to tournaments
I still know my old tricks,
which I used to flee my wife,
who I also won through combat.’

One of the best examples of honor being upheld before the well
being of a woman is the case instance of Jeschûte and Orilus. Parzival has
taken Jeschûte’s ring, and because of this her husband treats her unfairly.
Duke Orilus blames her for all that transpired in the tent. It is, however,
because of Parzival’s ignorance and lack of social graces that she is in this
predicament. Jeschûte always acts according to polite, social customs,
but suffers nonetheless. She suffers, however, in a most unusual way. She
does not worry as much about her own physical condition or even death,
but rather that Orilus should not lose any of his honor or status. Her
triuwe is evident along with her selflessness:

‘nu erêt an mir ritters prîs.
ir sît getriuwe unde wîs,
und ouch wol sô gewaldic mîn,
ir muget mir geben hôhen pîn.
ir sult ê mîn gerihte nemen.
durch elliu wîp lât es iuch gezemen.
ir mugg mir dannoch vüegen nôt.
læge ich von andern handen tôt,
daz iu niht prís geneicte.
swie schiere ich denne veicte,
daz waere mir ein süeziu zît,
sît iuwer hazzen mir lît’ (136, 11-23).

‘Don’t lose your reputation because of me.
You are faithful and wise,
with power over me
you may also punish me painfully.
You should hear my plea.
Remember your opinion of women.
You can still punish me afterwards.
I only wish that another would kill me,
so that no one could blame you,
I would gladly die
It would be a sweet end
now that you hate me.’

Orilus is already a killer. He has killed several other knights in single
combat and is actively searching for more combatants and victims. Yet
Jeschûte does not wish to say that he is unfair. She is respectful to Orilus
in every way and only wishes that she had not been in that position, or
that she were dead by another’s hands. Even in wishing for death, she
wishes to save Orilus’ reputation and not have him tainted with the death
of a woman.

The situation of Jeschûte and Orilus is also reminiscent of Êrec’s
treatment of Enite in Hartmann von Aue’s Êrec. Enite does not blame Êrec
for mistreating her, although she might have the right to do so, and never
complains about her treatment. Êrec tests her to see if she can be trusted and is very cruel to her. In a similar way, Orilus drags Jeschûte along with him, all the while neglecting her and treating her cruelly. There is no blame for Orilus until much later, when Parzival beats him in combat and sends him to Arthur. Even here, it is unclear if it is truly an admission of wrongdoing:

Ouch ergienc sîn gerihte
über si, daz groezer nôt
wîp nie gedolte âne tôt,
unde ân alle ir schulde.
er möhte ir sîne hulde
versagen, swenne er wolde:
nieman daz wenden solde,
ob [der] man des wîbes hât gewalt (264, 12-19).

And so was his penalty
on her, a greater pain
was never suffered aside from death,
by an innocent woman.
He was convinced
that if he so chose:
No one could intercede
if a man has power over a woman.

It is unclear in this passage, given the man’s has power over his wife, if anyone else has the power to intervene in their squabble. The “ob” (if) in stanza 256, lines 1,19 casts considerable doubt onto a possible interpretation of Wolfram’s opinion on this subject. Wolfram states that both parties have strong arguments in this manner, at least
each in his own way, as long as one assumes that the man has authority in a marriage:

mich dunket si hîn bêde reht.
der beidiu crump unde sleht,
geschuof, künne er scheiden,
sô wende er daz an beiden,
deiz âne sterben då ergê.
si tuont doch sus ein ander wê (264, 25-30).

I think that they both are right.
Both points have good and bad
God can decide
and make both right
and therefore neither must die.
They hurt each other enough already.

It is indeed the case that a man’s essential preoccupation with his honor far exceeds his concern for the woman’s physical well-being. It is also true that some women actually agree to live under these conditions (as appears to be the case between Orilus and Jeschûte). Jeschûte’s triuwe to Orilus leads to the predicament of her being physically and emotionally mistreated, but also desiring to respect Orilus’ place in society and trying to maintain that status. Jeschûte is not concerned for herself as much as she is concerned with maintaining Orilus’ honor. His reputation and well-being is put above her own:

‘laege ich von andern handen tôt,
daz iu niht prîs geneicte’ (136, 18-19).
'If I were to lie dead from another’s hand
Then you wouldn’t lose honor.’

sine müete niht, swaz ir geschach,
wan ir mannes ungemach:
des trûren gap ir grôze nôt,
daz si noch sanfter waere tôt
nu sult ir si durch triuwe clagen:
si beginnt nu hôhen kumber tragen.
waer mir aller wîbe haz bereit,
mich müet doch vroun Jeschûten leit (137, 23-229).

It wasn’t her own sorrow that bothered her
but rather the bitterness of her husband.
His sorrow gave her great pain,
death would have been kinder.
Now you should bemoan her faithfulness:
From now on she will carry many sorrows.
Even if all other women hated me,
I would have sympathy for Jeschute.

‘ich was entswenne sîn wîp:
nune möhte mîn vertwâlet lip
des heldes dierne niht gesîn:
sus tuot er gein mir zürnen schîn’ (259, 23-26)

‘I was once his wife:
Now I am now longer worthy
to be the hero’s serving girl.
Such is his anger directed against me.’

Wolfram is actively criticizing Hartmann’s view on Minnedienst and
its role in society, but he also borrows elements, such as aspects of the
story of Érec and Enite, from Hartmann. Could this be the reason that he
does not give credit to Chrétien de Troyes? Did he invent Flegitanis in
order that he might have the freedom to invoke story lines from other
authors as well and change them to fit into his critical narrative? Chrétien received a book from Count Phillip of Flanders "containing a ‘Story of the Grail’, which the poet called the best story ever told to entertain royal courts" (Hardwood Cline, Introduction, x). The book has never surfaced, so ironically Chrétien could have given Wolfram the same technique. With no known source, it is also possible that Chrétien used another of these techniques and intertwined another’s story in his own.

It is doubtful that Wolfram is referring to this book from Phillip of Flanders, from which Chrétien adapted the story, when he speaks of the Flegitanis’ book. Wolfram's critical agenda was a departure from the agenda of Aventiure and Minnedienst portrayed in the previous Arthurian works. The audience was most likely knowledgeable of Chretien and Hartmann’s versions of the narratives based on their popularity at the time. He would have to claim a different source to allow himself the freedom to create a work that would diverge from the source so drastically.32

There is little chance that any historical evidence will be found that will shed light on the origins of Wolfram’s text. There can be little doubt, however, that he changed Chrétien’s text into a more critical narrative. The theme of a female looking more closely at the honor and well being of her husband would seem to bare this out. In Érec, the hero’s wife Ênîte states the opinion that his life is more important than hers three times. The fact that the author takes the time and effort to mention something three times is also in itself an important reminder to the audience. Ênite’s treatment is so close to that of Jeschûte’s that there must be an importance attached to Wolfram’s repetition and adaptation of an already repeated theme found in Hartmann’s text.

Repetition is the key to memory, and repeating something three times to an audience will engrain the subject in the reader/listener’s mind. The number three is very important in this time. It is a mystical number, which is also biblical in its significance (Father, Son and Holy Ghost). In Chrétien’s works, important parts are repeated three times to show their importance. For example, Perceval thinks of asking the question about the Grail and bloody lance three times, but he also fails to ask it three times (3204, 3211, 3244).
Enîte’s mentioning of her lesser standing, and what is better for society, is no less important than other repeated occurrences. Hartmann, no doubt, employs a similar tactic for informing the audience of an important notion by repeating it three times:

\[
\text{nù kam der muot in ir gedanc:} \\
\text{‘bezzer ist verlorn mîn lîp,} \\
\text{ein als unklagebære wîp,} \\
\text{dan ein alsô vorder man} \\
\text{wan dà verlûr maneger an’} \ (3167 - 3171).
\]

Courage came into her thoughts: ‘Better for my life to be lost, as a powerless woman, than for a powerful man to die, then many would suffer.’

The repeated item is the suffering of a woman character. The suffering of women is a theme that runs through the Parzival narrative with amazing regularity. It is first found in the beginning of the text with the deaths of Schoette, Belekâne and Herzeloyde. It continues everywhere Parzival goes. He meets the suffering Sigûne and Jeschute, as well as Liaze, Condŵîrâmûrs, Obie, Obilot, Orgelûse and Itonje.

The clearest example of a woman’s happiness being sacrificed for a male’s honor is Itonje, whose brother Gawân must fight King Gramoflanz to win Orgelûse and maintain his honor. King Gramoflanz must fight Gawân to save his honor, because the noble knight took his garland.
Gramoflanz also wishes to avenge the death of his father, who was allegedly killed by Gawân’s father, King Lot. Itonje is torn between the two combatants and bewails her predicament:

> nu was ez ouch anderhalp sô komen,
Itonje hete aldâ vernomen
daz ir bruoder unt der liebste man,
den magt inz herze ie gewan,
mit ein ander vehten solden
unt des niht lâzen wolden.
dô brast ir jâmer durch die scheme.
swen ir kumbers zu gezeme,
der tuot ez âne minen rât,
sit siz ungedienet hât (710, 9-18).

It came to pass that in the other camp Itonje was also aware that her brother and the most beloved man, a maiden had ever taken into her heart, were set to fight one another and would not be diverted. Her pain burst through all walls of shame. If her pain seems comely this happens against my desires, because she has not earned that.

The two combatants are set upon killing the other, or dying in the fight. They will not swallow their pride even though this will destroy Itonje, whom they both love (although neither of them had seen her before). She too feels love for them both, although it was only recently disclosed to her that Gawân is her brother and she has never even met King Gramoflanz. Her triuwe to both is an immediate bond between them
all and proof of her nobility. The same triuwe could also be her undoing, as Wolfram has stated earlier in the work. Triuwe, combined with minne, will always lead to suffering for women in the narrative. There is no example of the two in combination without the suffering of a woman.

It has been established in this chapter that the pain due to death in Minnedienst has the power to kill a female character in the Parzival narrative. The fight between Gawan and Gramoflanz is not allowed to happen because Bene is able to convince King Arthur of the likely drastic consequences for Itonje. Perhaps in this final act, Wolfram is making a statement against the pursuit of honor at all costs. Although Wolfram in his narratorial voice states that he would rather be known for his deeds on the battlefield than for his poetry, the work leaves the reader wondering why he would save Itonje from her fate if honor is at stake. Wolfram allows Gawân and King Gramoflanz to avoid fighting and still save face, thus saving Itonje. The author Wolfram is showing that there is a limit to which Minnedienst should be held and that a peaceful solution can be found that enriches both parties: this is shown by Gawân and Gramoflonz, neither of whom must suffer any loss of honor by not fighting.
A Literary Relative? Some Observations on Moritz von Craûn

A later work that discusses similar themes is Moritz von Craûn. The author of Moritz von Craûn is unknown, but does name other authors of the time and gives small hints as to sources. In line 1160 the poet specifically names Heinrich von Veldeke and writes in a similar manner about Veldeke’s Eneasroman. It is, therefore, not difficult to imagine that the author of this narrative is also familiar with the Parzival narrative of Wolfram, given its enormous popularity. The main theme in Moritz von Craûn strikes an all-too familiar chord when compared to Parzival. Its main theme is unrewarded Minnedienst. It is also possible that the ability to criticize Minnedienst, in addition to the lengthy period of service without reward, is drawn directly from Wolfram’s narrative.

After the poet of Moritz von Craûn gives a lengthy description of the history of chivalry, the story turns to the main character, Maurîcius. He is described as faithful (stæte) (417) he is a great knight with a problem: his beloved will not reward him for lengthy love service. The poet gives advice for serving women:

\[
\text{Vil tugentlîche kunde sich} \\
\text{her Maurîcius bewarn.} \\
\text{durch daz muose im widervarn}
\]

---

ére von guoten wîben;
bî den wolde er bilîben.
der bœsen lôn ist kleine.
er welte ûz allen eine
unde diende der viel menegen tac.
swer dienet und gedienen mac,
der diene, sô ez im beste tûge
unde då man im gelônen müge.
swaz lône geben bœsiu wîp,
sie machent sêle unde lîp
den mannen dicke unmaere
unt manegar vröuden lære.
diu guoten gebent hôhen muot:
ir lôn ist êre umbe guot.
den sal ze rehte ein sælec man
dienen, der gedienen kan (403 – 417).

With great virtue
Sir Mauricius could look after things.
From that he would experience
honor from noble women:
by these he would gladly remain.
The reward from low-born woman is terrible.
He chose from all of them one
and served her for many days.
Whossoever serves and understands service
he serves, how it will be most profitable for him
and where he can be rewarded.
Whatever reward lowly women give
they ruin the body and the soul
of the man serving them
and wreck all happiness.
The noble women give high spirits:
Their reward is honorable and good.
A good and happy man should
serve them if he can.

The poet describes the attributes of noble and ignoble women in
respect to their abilities to reward a knight. The entire focus of the
stanza is on the reward of the love service. The poet is directing the knight to be careful in his search for a lady to serve. Any mistake in this service can seemingly have disastrous consequences for him. This is an indication of the risky nature of the practice and its need for some type of qualification.

Mauricius picks a noble woman, but she waits too long to give him his reward. He waits for the reward and begins to doubt her and become depressed (420 – 422). In line 430 Mauricius says exactly this:

‘sî lônet mir ze spate,
der ich sô vil gedienet hân,
diu wil es niht vûr guot enpfân.
des mac ich nimmer werden vrô’ (430 – 433).

‘She rewards me too late,
the one I have served so much,
she does not want to do the right thing.
I will never be happy again.’

Mauricius’ desire for his beloved is very strong. He spends the next lines intermittently defending her and condemning her, saying that through her, and Minnedienst, he has come to the pinnacle of fame. She has caused him to do great deeds, winning him recognition in many lands (435 – 45). The increasing fame leads to even more difficult tasks to continue his climb toward greatness. It is an ever-increasing amount of danger for a knight to fight for a reward that does not come. It is
reminiscent of Belekâne, and Isenhart’s Minndienst for her. In the coming tournament, Moritz could indeed die, fighting for love. If this continues, Mauricius will eventually be defeated and die, or possibly wither away from a lack of love:

ich diene unde wirbe,
biz ich gar verdirbe;
daz ist ein kumberlichiu nôt
mir täte baz ein senfter tôt,
danne ich sus gebunden müese wesen.
sî ist, von der ich muoz genesen
oder lônes siech belîben
âne sie von allen wîben (465 – 472).

I serve and court,
it until I am about ready to die;
that is terribly painful
it would be better for me to die peacefully
than to be tied to this woman.
It is from her that I must receive it
If I am to be rewarded and healed
alone from her out of all women.

The author makes reference to Moritz’ love interest’s unwillingness to reward him, despite all of his efforts on her behalf. In line 510 he says “ir herze herte alse ein vlins” (her heart is as hard as a stone). One does not find out until later that she is married to another. Mauricius must then hold a tournament in her honor, and win it, in order to receive her reward.

Mauricius falls asleep waiting for his reward, because he has expended too much energy in fighting to obtain it. In the end, he finally
receives his reward, but only after scaring her husband half to death and making her an adulteress (1615). His torture and self-doubt, the tournament and all of the danger, and the scene at the end involving the lady’s husband, are the end results of this misadventure of Minnedienst. The author is plainly showing the negative aspects that Minnedienst can have as a literary construct. He does this with more humor that Wolfram does, but the message is the same. The practice of love service is in need of qualification, with a limit placed on both time and the number of deeds necessary to obtain reward.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, it must be pointed out that the aspects discussed in the sections above are not present in the same forceful way in Chrétien de Troyes Perceval. Suffering is a defining characteristic for females in Wolfram’s world, not in Chrétien’s. In the German romance, women must exhibit kiusche, triuwe, maze and scham (3, 2-5) in order for them to properly display their nobility. If they withhold their Minne from a knight for too long, Wolfram indicates that this constitutes lack of maze. If they are getriuwe, a quality that makes them desirable and noble, then they will inevitably be left in pain.
By depicting the dangers in the combination of minne and triuwe, Wolfram shows the reader the paradox of a woman’s nobility and her role in noble society: that which makes a woman noble and good also brings about misery and even death. The males, manifesting the learned behavior of a convention, bring about immense pain for their female counterparts in search of honor. They do this despite the knowledge that this is detrimental to the woman’s health. Examples of this learned, selfish behavior in the text extend throughout the narrative, from book I to the nearly disastrous encounter between Gawan and Gramoflaz. Gahmuret’s need for fighting in tournaments, in essence killing three women is the primary example of the knightly addiction at the cost of female’s well-being. Parzival knows the knightly behavior instinctively. The draw to the courtly lifestyle is too much and he kills his mother with his departure for knighthood. Wolfram states that women suffer as a result of this convention and are powerless to change their fate.

Helmut Brackert draws attention to many of the same problems in Wolfram’s work that have been shown in this chapter. He uses them to come to a much stronger conclusion than is presented here. In his “Ist
Brackert uses the murder of Ither as a starting point to tie all of the other murders together and make a statement. Ither is a relative of Parzival, and yet Parzival kills him for his red armor. Brackert then equates this with Cain killing Abel when he says, “denn Parzivals Erschlagung Ithers wiederholt den Brudermord Kains” (Brackert, 158) (Parzival’s killing of Ither repeats Cain’s fratricide).

In Wolfram’s narrative, almost everyone is related to everyone else. The killing in knightly combat presents an even more involved problem when all of the combatants come from the same family. Brackert writes: “Um keinen Verwandten zu töten, dürfte kein Ritter einen anderen Ritter töten” (Brackert, 158 – 159) (In order not to kill a relative, no knight would be able to kill another knight). He goes on to state that, seen in a totality, this would bring about the end of knightly combat. In agreement with Karl Bertau, Brackert states:

Wenn nun Ritter grundsätzlich nicht mehr tötende Menschen sind oder sein sollten, hören sie in gewisser Weise auf Ritter zu sein. Diese Konsequenz wird zwar an keiner Stelle des Parzival verbal gezogen. Es kann jedoch gezeigt werden, daß sie überall implizit, als konkrete Denkform vorhanden ist, und daß sich an dieser konkreten Denkform das Problembewußtsein abarbeitet.

---

When knights are to be, or already are, people who do not kill, in a certain way they cease to be knights. This consequence is never verbally put forward in any place in Parzival. It can, however, be shown to be implicit and present everywhere as a concrete form of thought, and that it works on this concrete form of thought as a conscious problem.

Brackert’s thesis does not take into account that Parzival and his real brother Feirefiz do not kill each other. God causes Parzival’s sword to break before this sin can take place, begging the question of Ither’s murder and why that sin was not stopped in a similar manner. The actual killing of a brother does not take place. It is more appropriate, in view of the evidence presented, to state that Wolfram is trying to keep the Christian knights from fighting one another (see the final chapter for a more indepth discussion of this topic). He is more concerned with elevating knighthood to a spiritual level that only permits fighting those of other faiths, such as the invading Muslims in his Willehalm. Wolfram as narrator states that he is a knight, and proud of his ability. This may indeed be true, and the actions he describes are not a call for a total abandonment of chivalry, but rather a call to be more civil to one’s Christian brothers and to “endow fighting with a higher spiritual purpose”.

Wolfram does not seem to have anything against war if it is conducted for the right reason. It is also possible that he could be in favor of some form of Minnedienst if it ends within a reasonable time frame. Wolfram declares that he wishes to be known for his deeds on the battlefield and not for his writing. This statement seems rather ironic to modern readers because he is known only for his writings and little is known pertaining to his valor on the battlefield.

He writes his tale as an answer to the literary conservatism of Hartmann von Aue. Both authors have their tales from the same source, but Wolfram seeks to change Chrétien’s material in a critical way, whereas Hartmann does not. Wolfram writes his Parzival in a less strict style, one that is closer to spoken language than Hartmann, whose style is beautiful, literary and well polished. Wolfram shows that he is not concerned as much with the literary style of his narrative as he is with the messages of criticism he is crafting, when he states: “ichne kan deheinen buochstap” (115, 27) (I can’t read a letter).

Hartmann wrote Erec and Îwein as positive models of the society in which he lived. These two literary figures were to be looked up to and emulated. In Hartmann’s Œrec, the title character must go out and fight for his reputation, which he has lost through inactivity and disinterest. In
doing so, he learns from his mistakes and arrives once again at the peak
of fame. Hartmann states that the quest (‘aventure) is the most
important part of the story. He makes this point clear in his narrative
Îwein. When asked to explain what ‘aventure is and why he seeks it,
Kâlogrenant states to the wild man:

nû sich wie ich gewâfent bin:
ich heize ein ritter und hân den sin
daz ich suochende rîte
einen man der mit mir strîte,
der gewâfent sî als ich.
daz prîset in, und sleht er mich:
gesige aber ich im an,
sô håt man mich vür einen man,
und wirde werder danne ich sî (529– 537)

See how I am armed:
I am a knight and I have it in mind
to ride in search
of a man, who will fight against me
and is armed as I am.
If he beats me, he gains honor,
but if I defeat him
they will think of me as a man
with ever increasing fame.

By showing the deaths of Parzival’s entire family and many other
figures in the narrative, (see the final chapter for a listing of these
occurrences) Wolfram states often, in order to make quite plain, that the
art of war should not be wasted in frivolous pursuits such as love, which
can be won without killing off the nobility. Parzival does not continue to
fight for love after he has Condwîrâmûrs. He has to find his way back to God, but in his way of thinking, he is not yet ready, and this is the cause of his aventiure.

To make plain that this is his intent, Wolfram places Hartmann himself in one of his scenes. Hartmann is a courtier hobnobbing with Arthur:

\[
\begin{align*}
mîn hêr Hartman von Ouwe, 
vrou Ginovêr iuwer vrouwe 
und iuwer hêrre der kûnc Artûs, 
den kumt ein mîn gast ze hûs. 
bitet hüeten sîn vor spotte. 
ernt ist gîge noch diu rotte: 
si sulen ein ander gampel nemen: 
des lâzen sich durch zuht gezemen, 
anders iuwer vrouwe Enîde 
unt ir muoter Karsnafîde 
werdent durch die mül gezücket 
unde ir lop gebrücket. 
sol ich den munt mit spotte zern, 
ich mînen vriunt mit spotte wern (143, 21 – 144, 4). 
\end{align*}
\]

Sir Hartmann von Aue, 
Lady Gwenevere 
with the Lord and King Arthur 
I sent a guest into your house. 
Please guard him from teasing. 
He is not a violin or a game board for play, 
they should find another with other toys, 
suitable to their stations. 
Otherwise I will pull Lady Enite 
along with her mother Karsnafide 
through the mill 
and ruin her reputation.
Parzival, as a tumbe tor, would like to enter this society at all costs. Wolfram warns them not to insult Parzival, because he will defend his hero quite strongly. In stating this, he shows what he thinks of Hartmann and the society he is perpetuating in his works. Hartmann sits around with Kings and Queens, inspiring the knights to perform dangerous deeds for their sport, while he merely gossips with the nobles and does not practice what he preaches. Arthur, as well, does not go out and fight for Guenivere’s love, only those under him do.

Parzival’s real troubles begin upon first reaching King Arthur’s court. They laugh at him, use his ignorance and his desire for knighthood to their own ends, and lead him to kill a relative. The Arthurian society brings Parzival to a falling out with God and with his own family. There is, however, another society in Parzival that shows a model that functions with fewer problems than the chivalrous society of Arthur, but is also affected by Minnedienst gone awry: the Grail Kingdom.

Parzival starts out on his journey as a fool, and in a much greater state of ignorance than in Chretién’s version of the story. He enters the Arthurian society of courtly romance and intrigue and is immediately beset with problems that will cause him anguish. It is not until he comes back to God and finds his way out of the Arthurian society, into the
utopian idea of the Grail community, which he must first repair, that
Parzival can be truly happy.

The Arthurian society too undergoes a transformation, when Arthur
finds a peaceful solution to Gramoflanz and Gawan’s senseless battle.
Earlier, Gawan does not attack Parzival while he is staring at the blood in
the snow. Gawan shows tact and calculated reason, unlike his injured
counterpart (Keye), who has jousted against the knight in the trance and
lost. Some would say Gawan is practicing self-protection, but as the
picture of knightly virtue and courage he would never back down from a
battle. The Arthurian society shows that it is in need of this kind of a
change. It will depart from the earlier tendency to fight first and ask
questions later, which is the tendency of Keye, who suffers as a
consequence of not reasoning out the problem a defeat at the hands of
Parzival. A knight’s first thought is for honor, which Wolfram shows ends
all too often in injury or death.
CHAPTER 3
PARZIVAL’S CONTINUING THEMES

Wolfram von Eschenbach is not merely known as the author of Parzival. Parzival is Wolfram’s major work and by all standards certainly a masterpiece of medieval German literature, but he is known for writing several other works as well. Wolfram wrote poetic works, such as his Tagelieder and Werbelieder, to which he alludes in Parzival when he names himself. He states quite plainly that he understands something of the art of singing: “ich bin Wolfram von Eschenbach, unt kan ein teil mit sange...” (114, 12 – 13). (I am Wolfram von Eschenbach and something of a Minnesänger).¹ It is, however, for his three major narratives that he is best known.

The focus of this chapter will be on another of his major works. This work, I will argue, is not only a continuation of the Parzival story, but also a continuation of the criticism he began in his Parzival. Containing only 170 stanzas with 6 lines each (1020 total lines), his Titurel is much shorter than Parzival, which contains 827 stanzas of 30 lines each

(24,810 total lines). This fragmentary, and much shorter work could almost be inserted into the Parzival story in section 138, between lines eight and nine. With only 1020 lines, the section would not add a significant amount of work for the reader/listener. It would, however, provide an invaluable amount of background information about the characters in Parzival that is otherwise lacking.

The major works in medieval German literature at this time were Arthurian in nature, stemming from the works of Chrétien de Troyes. Wolfgang Mohr speaks of this Arthurian current in German literature in his discussion included with his Titurel translations. He writes that “die neuste Mode war, französische Romane, die selbst eine Generation vorher in Frankreich als neue literarische Gattung in der Volkssprache aufgekommen waren, in deutschen Versen nachzuerzählen” (Mohr, 103). (The latest trend was to retell French novels, which had themselves only

---

2 See Wolfgang Mohr, trans. Titurel : Lieder : mittelhochdeutscher Text und Übersetzung, (Göppingen : Kümmerle Verlag, 1978). for a discussion of the fragmentary remains of Titurel and the reconstruction process into one piece. The statement of Titurel being complete can only be made when the two fragments are put together to form a complete idea, which is then able to be inserted into Parzival completing the Sigûne and Schionatulander portion of the narrative.

3 I am speaking here of Hartmann’s Erec, Îwein and Wolfram’s Parzival. There were, undoubtedly, others outside this genre. These three works, together with Gottfried’s Tristan show a large interest in Arthurian themes.
come into France in the vernacular as a new literary genre a generation before).

Titurel is the story of Sigune and Schionatulander. After the first 12 stanzas the story is of the families of both Sigune and Schionatulander and how the two come to love each other. The story ends before Schionatulander is killed by Duke Orilus on an errand of Minnedienst. The tale tells of his adventures and informs the reader/listener of the task he undertook that led to his demise. Since Wolfram gives information relating to each character’s family, one also receives information about other lesser-known figures in the Parzival narrative.

Wolfgang Mohr posits that Wolfram’s Titurel involves a shift in emphasis from themes such as the quest for the Grail, which is in the forefront of Parzival. Mohr writes that Wolfram, by writing Titurel, allows himself to work further on his Parzival and was thus able to bring topics that were in the background in Parzival into the fore. Conversely, he was able in Titurel to diminish the importance of other topics that were in the foreground in Parzival.⁴ “Er dichtete an seinem ‘Parzival’ weiter,” Mohr writes, “jedoch nicht so, daß er in den ‘Parzival’ Ergänzung

⁴ See also the following page in Mohr’s discussion on Titurel (104), in which Mohr discusses the added dimensionality in Parzival through the creation of the new focus in Titurel.
hineinkomponierte, sondern, indem er ein Thema, das im ‘Parzival’ im Hintergrunde der Haupthandlung verlief, in den Vordergrund holte, die Liebesgeschichte von Sigune und Schionatulander” (Mohr, 103).

One of the things that Wolfram brings more into the foreground in Titurel is Herzeloyde’s first husband Castis. There is little information about Castis in Parzival, other than that he was Herzeloyde’s husband in an unconsummated marriage and that he dies leaving the kingship of two kingdoms to his young widow. Herzeloyde promptly leaves the civilized society of these two kingdoms and goes out into the wastes of Soltane after the death of her second husband, and father to Parzival, Gahmuret.

In Titurel there is more information about the demise of Castis. There is nothing more in Parzival about his death than the fact that he died before consummating his marriage with Herzeloyde. In Titurel there is a direct reason given:

In den selben ziten was Kastis erstorben.
der het ouch zu Muntsalvatsche
die claren erworben.
Kanvoleiz gap er der frouwen schone
und Kingrivals; zin beiden trouc sin houbet
vor fürsten die krone (26, 1 – 6).
At the same time Castis died. He too had, at Muntsalvatsche, competed for the beautiful woman. He gave the beautiful woman Kanvoleiz and also to Kingrivals; through the two of them the crown of authority was worn.

Castis dies during Minnedienst, trying to win more glory for the beautiful woman, and the beautiful woman here can only be Herzeloyde. Although not stated directly, it can be inferred that she demanded more deeds of Castis before she would consummate the marriage. If this were not the case, there would be no need for him to continue competing, aside from avoiding the reputation of being verligen. Castis, therefore, joins the ever-increasing numbers of knights and ladies who are dead due to the practice of Minnedienst.

His death places a burden on Herzeloyde and could explain her active roll in searching for a husband at the tournament at Kanvoleiz, the one at which Gahmuret wins Herzeloyde. Perhaps her guilt in waiting too long to reward Castis weighs as heavily on her as the death of Schionatulander on Sigune. At any rate, she does not wait long to reward Gahmuret:

Kastis Herzelöuden nie gewan ze wibe,
diu an Gahmurets arme
lac mit ir magetlichem libe. 
doch wart si da frouwe zweiger lande,
des süezen Frimuteles kint,
die man von Muntsalvatsche dar sande (27, 1 – 6).

Castis never won Herzeloyde for his wife,
she, who lies in Gahmurets arms
with her honor intact.
However, she became queen over two lands,
the sweet daughter of Frimitel,
who was sent from Montsalvage.

Since she has lost Castis in Minndienst and then later Gahmuret, it
is not difficult to see why Herzeloyde does not want Parzival, the living
part of Gahmuret she still has, to pursue a career in chivalry. Wolfram
gives Herzeloyde a valid excuse for being overly cautious with her only
born son. He backs up his presentation of pain and death in Parzival with
added information. To this end, Wolfram writes in Titurel that:

Alle die minne phlagen und minne an sich leiten,
nu hoeret magetical sorge
und manheit mit den arbeiten (56, 1 – 3).

All, who undertake love service and give themselves to love,
hear now of woman’s sorrow
and the striving of men.

This is not the only warning about love service in Titurel. On one
occasion Herzeloyde warns Sigune of the pains involved in love.
Herzeloyde is a surrogate mother to Sigune and here warns her about
giving her love at too young an age. In doing so, she speaks of some of
Schionatulander’s kin and reveals a fair amount of tragedy due directly to death in Minnedienst:

Ich klage et daz du bist alze fruo sin amie.
du willt den kumber erben.
    des Mahaude phlac bi dem talfine Gurzgrie.
dicke ihr ougen habent an im erfunden,
daz er den pris in manen landen hielt,
    under helme uf gebunden.

Schionatulander an prise uf muoz stigen.
er ist von den liuten erboren,
    die niht lant ir pris nider sigen,
er würhse in breit gestreckt in die lenge (127,1 – 128,4).

I am worried that you are becoming his beloved all too early.
You will inherit the pain,
that Mahaude experienced with her husband Gurzgrie.
She witnessed with her own eyes
how he competed for the prize in every land,
wearing the helmet.

Schionatulander will also covet the prize.
He is born of those people,
who never let the prize sink back to earth.
He will grow great in that pursuit.

Schionatulander is Mahaute and Gurzgrie’s son.\(^5\) Gurzgrie\(^6\) is the youngest son of Gurnemanz of Graharz. In Parzival the reader is informed of Gurzgri’s three sons, Scehntaflûrs, Lascoyt and Gurzgrî (177 – 178),
dying in combat to save Condwiramurs. This means that Gurnemanz not

\(^5\) See Lachman’s family tree on the rear cover of Parzival. The family tree shows how closely all of the characters in Parzival and Titurel are.
\(^6\) Note the spelling differences between Parzival, Titurel and Lachmann’s family tree: Ex. Lascoit, Lascoyt – Gurzgri, Gurzgrí, Gurzgie among others.
only loses his three sons, but his wife and grandson as well. He therefore loses two more people than was enough to kill his wife. He fears also that in letting go of Parzival, he will lose a fourth son: “ir sît mîn vierder sun verlorn” (177, 14). Schoette (Gandin’s wife, Galoes and Gahmuret’s mother) is also named as Schionatulander’s surrogate mother (126, 6). Schionatulander is therefore very close to Gahmuret’s (Parzival’s) family. His death would bring even more pain to Parzival’s relatives, at least to those of them that remain alive.

In Titurel, Wolfram continues to stress the close association of Minnedienst and untimely death. He does not leave any part of the family tree out of the pain and suffering. He uses Titurel as a way to continue the work he started in Parzival and advance his criticism with more cases of tragic love service. The reason for Schionatulander’s death is relatively unspectacular. One can even describe it as absurd. Instead of being given a duty of great importance, that would bring himself and thereby also Sigune more fame, he is sent on a fool’s errand. Sigune tells him what he must do to gain her love:

\[
\begin{align*}
Daz spriche ich, werder friunt, dir \\
noch nieman ze vare. \\
ob wir beidiu junc solten leben \\
zuo der zit unsere künftigen jare, \\
so daz din dienst doch gerte miner minne,
\end{align*}
\]
du muost mir daz seil ê erwerben,  
da Gardeviaz ane gebunden stout hinne (166, 1-6)

This I say, dear friend, neither  
to hurt you or another.  
If we two should live out our youth,  
here is the decision for our future lives:  
Before your service will win my love  
You must fetch me the rope  
to which Gardeviaz was bound.

The task is absurd for a knight of Schionatulander’s standing and  
prowess. He is to go fetch a runaway dog named Gardeviaz. Yet he  
undertakes the task willingly because of his love for Sigune, as well as his  
desire for his reward. Wolfram picks such a lowly task to display the  
lengths that women could go to in making knights their love (service)  
slaves. Such a strange task, which does not require knightly prowess and  
could be accomplished by any farmer or servant at hand, shows  
Wolfram’s intention to criticize the practices associated with Minnedienst.  
He wishes to demonstrate the wastefulness of such an arrangement.

Mohr asks a direct question of the text: what is being told? (Mohr,  
109). He then states that the story that is supposed to be told is not  
really told. The expectation of a story that is plainly there, but never  
really told is precisely the difficulty the narrative of Titurel presents:

Der Text ist schwierig zu verstehen, aber soll und will präzise  
verstanden werden. Was macht ihn denn so schwierig? Es  
soll etwas erzählt werden, aber es wird nicht erzählt.
The text is difficult to understand, but wants to and should be precisely understood. What makes it then so difficult? Something should be told, but it is not.

Mohr’s confusion is easy to understand when one looks at his conclusion for the main focus of the story. Mohr believes that the narrative is meant to be Wolfram’s vehicle to relate the story of the wondrous dog leash: “Ihn lockte es, die eigentliche Haupthandlung in Gang zu setzen, die Geschichte von dem kostbaren Hundeseil” (Mohr, 112).

The discussion of both leash and collar are only four stanzas long, 139 – 143, and are not extraordinarily extravagant for descriptions of wondrous items in medieval literature.7

In Parzival, the story of the leash is already hinted at when Wolfram writes that a dog leash brought Schionatulander his pain (“ein bracken seil gap im den pin” [141,16]). There are, however, other themes at work in Titurel. These themes (Minne and Minnedienst) are mentioned more than in one place and are interwoven with other closely related topics. Other important topics are Titurel being the only character to make it to old age and Frimutel being taken out of the realm of chivalry. The topics of pain

7 For a good example of extravagant descriptions of such items, see the description of the hat in Wernher dem Gartenaere. Meier Helmbrecht, (Halle a.S.: M. Niemeyer, 1911).
and death in love and love service make the story of the dog leash seem trivial by comparison.

To continue with his critical agenda, Wolfram picks a heretofore-untouched branch of the family tree and describes its loss due to Minnedienst. In Parzival the reader hears very little of King Arthur’s family. This oversight is rectified in Titurel with a two paragraphs about Arthur and Ginover’s son, Illinot. In Titurel Wolfram does not stop mentioning Illinot, but also speaks of the effect his death has on others as well. Wolfram uses the family ties to find an excuse to bring Illinot’s name into the story. He uses the pedigree of the dog Gardeviaz, and how it came into Sigune’s hands, in order to relate the story of Illinot. The dog, a love gift for Illinot’s beloved Florie, is the means to speak of Illinot’s death in Minnedienst:

Si was von Kanadic erboren, ir swester Florien, diu Illinote dem Britun
mir herze, ir gedanc unde ir lip gap ze amien,
gar swaz si hete, wan bi ligende minne.
si zoch in von kinde unze an schiltliche vart
und kos in für alle gewinne.

Der holt ouch nach ir minne under helme sin ende.
obe ich niht braeche mine zuht,
ich solte noch fluochen der hende,
diu die tjost uf sinen tot dar brahte.
Florie starb ouch an der selben tjost,
doch ir lip nie spers orte genahte (147, 1 – 148, 6).
She was born in Kanadic, her sister Florie. 
She gave to the Briton Illinot 
her heart, her thought and body in love. 
She withheld, however, the full measures of Minne. 
She had enticed him from childhood to knighthood. 
He was her most prized possession.

He died fighting for her love. 
If not for courtly politeness, 
I would curse the hands 
That brought his death in the joust. 
Florie died in that same joust, 
although her body never neared the lance.

Florie’s death is yet another that is directly attributable to death 
during Minnedienst. Her husband dies during Minnedienst and she too is 
doomed to die, because she cannot live on without her beloved. In direct 
opposition to Herzeloyde, her child (Schionatulander) is not enough to 
keep her alive. Triuwe is the cause of the women’s death, but it is always 
its combination with Minne that is deadly in Wolfram’s works. The 
importance can easily be measured when the term’s occurrences in the 
text are counted. In Parzival the term triuwe is mentioned 100 times.8 
The harmful results from triuwe are only present when minne is involved. 
The importance of the word Minne far outweighs that of triuwe in

---

Wolfram’s narratives. When compared with Wolfram’s usage of triuwe, the term minne is used 356 times in *Parzival*.9

The emphasis placed on minne extends beyond *Parzival* into *Titurel*. In *Titurel* the term minne is used 91 times.10 Minne references far outnumber triuwe references in both *Parzival* and in *Titurel*. In the latter work, triuwe is only mentioned a total of 7 times.11 The emphasis is therefore placed on minne and the pain caused by Minnedienst, brought on by a certain level of triuwe, rather than merely triuwe alone.

Florie’s death due to her triuwe, through the pain of loss in Minnedienst, is not only destructive to the Arthurian family, but also to the entire kingdom. Illinot is the only heir produced by Arthur and Ginover (see Lachmann’s family tree). Earlier in the text, the death of Sigune’s mother during childbirth prompts Manifilot, Frimutel’s brother, to cease participation in Minnedienst because the pain was too great. Wolfram writes of this situation: “der schiet ouch durch jamer von sinem swerte, daz ir dewedere hoher minne noch tjost engerte” (23, 4 – 6). (Because of the pain he quit his sword and would not engage in high minne or

---

9 Clifton D. Hall, *A Complete Concordance to Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival*, (Garland Publishing: New York & London, 1990) 241. This also includes forms of the word minne such as minnete, etc.
10 This is based on my own counting in the text.
11 This again, is based on my own counting of the occurrence of the term in the text.
jousting). The death of the heir apparent, through Minnedienst, and the
death of his wife are not mourned with similar abstinences because those
deaths are commonplace in the narratives Parzival and Titurel. Death in
childbirth, however, is extremely rare (in fact it is a unique occurrence).

The title of the shorter work is Titurel, although the character
Titurel is only present for the first twelve of the one hundred seventy
stanzas. The narrative is actually the story of Sigune and Schionatulander
and how they came to be in Parzival’s path. Why, then, is the title not
more appropriately named after the characters involved in the body of
the narrative and not after a character only present at the very
beginning? The title could be based on the pain suffered by Sigune and
Schionatulander. Wolfgang Mohr writes that an appropriate title, by his
way of thinking, was a later one, which named it after the broken dog
leash: “so könnte man von dem Lied oder Epos von ‘Sigune und
Schionatulander’ sprechen. Noch besser ist der Titel, der sich in einem
Handschriftenkatalog des 15. Jahrhunderts findet: ‘Das Brackenseil’”
(Mohr, 115).

Mohr discusses the problem of the seemingly inappropriate name
for the narrative at length in his essay. He writes: “Nach heutigen
Ansprüchen trägt die Dichtung den Namen ‘Titurel’ zu unrecht” (Mohr,
(for the practices of today, the poem carries the name of Titurel inappropriately). If the more appropriate title of “Sigune and Schionatulander” had been used, it would have been ahead of practices in other areas of Europe. He gives a reasonable explanation for the title by stating the medieval practice of naming a work according to the first characteristic words found in the beginning; “Do sich der starke Titurel mohte gerüeren” (Mohr, 114).

Titurel is the first Grail King with whom the reader/listener is familiar. However, more striking in view of Wolfram’s critical agenda is that Titurel is the only character in the stories to reach old age. Unfortunately, there is very little information regarding Frimutel, the second Grail King. Here is the real reason for naming the narrative Titurel. The rarity of anyone living a very long time is something Wolfram’s narrations underscore. Attention is drawn to the fact that long life is rare, in fact unique to this one character, in a society based on Minnedienst.

Titurel realizes in the first few lines that he must lay down the reigns of

---

12 I am thinking here firstly of Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, A.C. Baugh, R.A. Shoaf, eds. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), which also leads to Shakespeare’s version of the tale as well as his *Romeo and Juliet*. Of course this would exclude Giovanni Bocaccio’s *Troilus* because the title does not contain the female’s name.
power and turn them over to his son Frimutel. At this time he speaks of his wishes that he could have taken part in chivalric activity:

Do sich der starke Titurel mohte gerüeren,  
er getorste wol sich selbern unt die sine  
in sturme gefüeren.  
sit sprach er in alter: “ich lerne  
daz ich den schaft muos lazen.  
   des phlac ich schone unde gerne.

“Möht ich getragen wappen”, sprach der genende,  
“des solte der luft sin geret  
   von spers krache uz miner hende.  
sprizen gaeben schate vor der sunnen.  
vil zimierde ist uf helmen  
   von mines swertes eke brunnen.

Obe ich von hoher minne ie tjost enphinge,  
und op der süezen minne kraft  
   ie saelden an mir begienge  
wart ie gruoz von minneclichem wibe,  
daz ist nu gar verwildet  
   minem seneden, klagendem libe (1,1 – 3, 6).

As long as the strong Titurel was able,  
he trusted his ability guide his people  
to weather any storm.  
Now, in old age he spoke: “I am aware,  
that I must leave the stewardship.  
I did this very well and enjoyed it.

If I were able to carry weapons, the fearless one spoke,  
the wind would carry the sounds  
of my spears and their noisy strikes.  
My spears would make a shadow before the sun.  
One would see the bejeweled helmets  
casting sparks from sword blows.
If I have ever received a joust from high Minne,
the sweet power of love
has left me whole.
If I ever found greetings and honor from noble ladies,
that desire has now become foreign to me
through my self-sacrifice.

Titurel’s son Frimutel is to become King of the Grail Kingdom after him. After he speaks to his son, it becomes plain to the reader that he himself gave up the knightly pursuits of Minnedienst in order that he might become Grail King. Apparently Titurel was the very first Grail King, because he received the Grail from an angel (6, 2). Titurel speaks not of triuwe to his son, but rather of the kiusche and reine (purity) needed to be Grail King:

Des grales herre muoz sin kiusche unde reine.
owe, süezer Frimutel,
   ich han niht wan dich al eine
miner kinde hie behabet dem grale.
nu enphach des grales krone und den gral,
   min sun der lieht gemale.

Du hast bi dinen ziten schiltes ambet
geurbort hurteclichen,
   din rat was alda verklambet.
uz der riterschaft muose ich dich ziehen.
nu wer dich, sun, al eine,
   min kraft wil uns beiden enphliehen (7, 1 – 8, 6).

The Grail King must be chaste and pure.
Oh, sweet Frimutel,
to you alone
of all my children can care for the Grail.
So take the Grail crown and the Grail itself
my son the keeper of the light.

You have held the office of a knight
and practiced with weapons.
Your winnings there are over.
I must now pull you out of chivalry.
So now defend yourself only,
my strength fails us both.

Titürel must pull Frimutel out of the Arthurian world of Chivalry.
Frimutel learned the ways of the outside world and may well desire to
battle on, but this is not the way of the Grail King. It can, therefore, be
surmised that Frimutel will be the second figure to live to old age,
because he will not be taking part in Minnedienst anymore. Titürel looks
to the past with longing, but as the Grail King he only practiced self-
defense. The Grail Kingdom was the highest level to be achieved (Frimutel
besaz da werdecliche den gral uf Muntsalvatsche, daz was der wunsch
über irdeschiu riche [12, 4 – 6]) before the Grail kingdom’s came into
hard times during the reign of Frimutel’s son Anfortas.

Anfortas, the reader/listener knows from Parzival, was injured in
Minnedienst for Orgeluse against King Gramoflanz. Anfortas broke the rule
of his grandfather and father, and in the practice of Minnedienst was no
longer chaste. He was also not only seeking to defend himself, but to
harm another. Upon re-entering “normal” chivalric society, Anfortas
forfeits his health and kingship of the Grail. Similarly, in his own
adventures Parzival must also practice with weapons and become worthy,
but then he must leave these practices behind to become Grail King.

The New Utopia

The common method of seeing the Grail community, in relationship
to the Arthurian world of chivalry, is as that of a utopian society. Wolfram
himself says that under Frimutel it was the highest, ideal society. This is
changed under Anfortas. The King is wounded and the society suffers
accordingly, therefore necessitating a new King. Parzival, the new king, is
a member of Arthur’s court and, as such, owes some allegiance and
respect to the good king. This is visible in the fact that Parzival seeks
Arthur out because only Arthur can make him a knight.

After Parzival has become a knight, he sends the knights he has
defeated back to Arthur as if seeking approval or showing allegiance. In
doing so, he demonstrates a degree of deference to Arthur. Parzival may
come and go as he pleases, but he behaves, at least in the beginning,
very much like someone who is to some degree subject to King Arthur. If
Parzival is an Arthurian knight, then the Grail kingdom is not above
Arthurian society, but rather serves to connect the Arthurian chivalric
society to the Kingdom of God.
If we direct our attention away from the heavenly associations of the Grail kingdom, we may observe another interesting utopian model in Wolfram’s work. That might be called “the new Arthurian society.” The new Arthurian society is formed after Arthur stops Gramoflanz and Gawan from fighting needlessly. Arthur has remained inactive through the entire narrative. It is always others doing the work before this point. For example, when Ither directly challenges Arthur’s authority, Parzival saves the day to his own detriment, by unknowingly killing his relative. Later, however, Arthur stops Gramoflanz and Gawan from fighting by way of diplomacy. He finds a new way to solve conflicts that does not involve the elimination of his best warriors. In doing so, he also saves the life of Itonje, Gawan’s sister and Gramoflanz’ love interest. She too would have died had one of her loved ones died by the other’s hand. Arthur does this because he also has suffered the same grievous loss. The death of his son Illinot and his daughter in-law Florie force him to action.

Arthur cannot bear to remain idle and allow any more people to die through his inaction. Arthur creates a new way at this moment, which is in direct opposition to the old way of his father, Uther Pendragon. The old society of Uther is shown in examples of the tournament at Kanvoliez and
is typified by Gahmuret. In this society one can see most clearly the
death and destruction associated with Minnedienst.

To this point there is a cycle of violence that appears in every
generation. The father, in search of honor and glory, cannot stand to be
seen as verligen and continuously battles on. He must also seek
increasingly dangerous exploits in the pursuit of honor. The old society of
Gahmuret is like the society depicted in Hartmann’s stories, which is
cconcerned mainly with aventiure. This is the way of orphans and widows,
from Gahmuret’s grandfather Addanz to Parzival.

The same action repeats itself again and again in Wolfram’s text,
showing a recurring pattern of death and desertion. Parzival never meets
his father, nor does his half-brother Feirefîz. Gramoflanz wishes to kill
Gawan, because Gramoflanz’ father was allegedly killed by Gawan’s father,
King Lot. Schionatulander’s mother and father were killed because of the
practices of Minnedienst, as were his two uncles and mother. Indeed,
Parzival’s family is devastated by the practice. King Lot also dies and
Gawan’s mother marries Florant (see Lachmann’s family tree). The cycle
seems to go on unhindered, until Arthur is able to break the pattern of
needless violence, which threatens to deprive the good king of his
knights. These knights have, until Arthur’s diplomacy, strictly adhered to
the warnings against being verligen that were present in Hartmann’s Erec and Iwein. Wolfram makes a distinction between Utherian and Arthurian societies and uses the ties of the Grail Kingdom, through Parzival’s tie to the round table, to elevate the new society. He shows this in order to demonstrate that the society under Arthur is breaking away from the needlessly violent, old kind of knighthood.

**Conclusion**

Wolfram’s work *Titurel* is a short narrative that gives the reader/listener added information about the characters in *Parzival*. The fact that this smaller work was written as an addition to a previous work shows the immense popularity of the longer *Parzival* and the public’s desire for more. Wolfram did not simply write a short entertaining piece of literature. He uses *Titurel* as a vehicle to inform as well as to bring his critical agenda into an even clearer focus. Wolfram adds family histories and provides stories in *Titurel* for otherwise marginal characters in *Parzival*. These marginal characters have grave importance to the larger, critical picture Wolfram wishes to portray.

Wolfram is able to present a more complete picture of the destructive force that Minnedienst presents in *Parzival* with the additions of character histories in *Titurel*. In the latter work he shows how
ridiculous some of the tasks required of knights performing Minnedienst are, and that these tasks too can have disastrous consequences. The dangers are present for both the performer of the task, as well as for the lady assigning the service.

Based on Arthur’s diplomatic solution to the problems posed by a battle between Gawan and Gramoflanz, it would seem that Wolfram may be moving in the direction of a new social model that protects itself with reason and dialogue, and rejects the need to resort to fighting to solve every dispute. An example of this new reason is when the conflict between brother and lover will have disastrous consequences, as is the case for Itonje. Wolfram then associates this higher Arthurian society to the Grail Kingdom, thus elevating knighthood to a religious order through the figure of the repentant Parzival.

It is difficult for Gawan to accept the new order at first because he was a youngsters at the tournament of Kanvollez. He too finally sees the benefits of a diplomatic solution, which will keep his sister alive. Nobility can either live in the old Utherian manner or the new, elevated Arthurian society with its ties to the Grail Kingdom and, therefore, to God. Equating chivalry with a new Arthurian society, with ties to the Grail Kingdom, is a possible way of elevating the noble society itself to a higher level. This
could also serve to relate political and ideological issues of more general concern to medieval knights and Christians (this point will be discussed in detail in the following chapter).

As a knight, one must choose: to endlessly go tournamenting and killing as Gahmuret, his entire family, and the knights in the time of Uther Pendragon do, and to die in relative youth; or to grow past this point, seeking diplomatic solutions, and fighting only in the service of God. By choosing the latter, one chooses the higher state of the Arthurian realm and possibly the Grail Kingdom, as Parzival is able to do. In the time of the crusades there was motivation to elevate the nobility to a higher state of grace. The art of war had to be connected to the Christian ideals in order to justify the crusades and the holy war against the Muslims. Wolfram describes the beginning of a new nobility which is very powerful. The new nobility will only use its power for its own defense or for the defense of Christendom, not in random acts of violence against each other.
CHAPTER 4
WOLFRAM’S ROMANCES: SOCIAL CRITICISM VERSUS “UTOPISCHES WUNSCHBILD”

The idea that Wolfram used his most famous works as a vehicle for social criticism, based on his view of Minnedienst, is at odds with the view of medieval German court literature espoused by the well-known scholar Joachim Bumke. Bumke states quite correctly in his Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im hohen Mittelalter that “The historical sources give us no information” (Bumke, 33) regarding the relationship of literary conventions such as Minnedienst to social reality beyond literature. This leaves the modern reader to infer a meaning from the author’s words, or to find pertinent information in historical data that Bumke has overlooked or that has become available since he wrote this in 1990.

Bumke, based on the lack of historical information that he spoke of, challenges the idea that the social relations as depicted in the romances exist in any other realm but the literary. He writes: “Was die Dichter darüber berichten, kann nicht als getreue Beschreibung der Wirklichkeit genommen werden; sie geben ein ins Ideale verzerrtes Bild” (Bumke, 33).
Thus, with regard to the focal point of this study, the logical elaboration of Bumke’s position is that Minnedienst exists only as an idealized image in the realm of medieval fiction and fantasy, or as an “utopisches Wunschbild” (utopian idyllic picture) in the minds of the medieval authors and listeners. For Bumke, it would not correspond in any way to the real world in which authors such as Wolfram and courtly audiences lived. Bumke bases his view not on information, but instead on a lack of information about the relationship of court literature to the social situation in which it was produced. Given the lack of clear indications that the social relations as depicted in the literary works might correspond to real social relations, he assumes that there is no connection beyond that of a depiction based in fantasy. If evidence could be produced that pointed to the reality of at least some aspects of the social relations that Bumke sees exclusively as idealized representations, then Bumke’s position would appear to be weakened and the idea of a socially critical agenda on the part of Wolfram to become more plausible.
The Historical and Literary Evidence

With the historical evidence that there were tournaments much like those described in many medieval works (which will be discussed below), it seems only a short jump to assume that a knight might try to do well in one of these contests to impress a lady. It also seems probable that knights would have been eager to compete with each other so that they could demonstrate their superiority in a time when valor would have been an important consideration for fathers of unmarried noble ladies in the matter of marriage contracts. To prove oneself in knightly combat was to show a father that he could count on that knight to provide protection for his daughter. More important for the knight, it was a chance to climb in social rank and distinction.

Wolfgang Mohr poses a theory of social climbing in light of the textual evidence in Parzival. He argues that a son-in-law is an ample replacement for a son and will also aid in the defense of territory. This is given as the reason for Gurnemanz’ helping Parzival as the “tumbe tor” (idiot) comes through his land:

‘Wenn man erst einmal mit Hilfe seiner Tochter eine Wahl getroffen hat, so wird ihre Wehrhaftigkeit auch ohne Schwert auf andere Weise ebensoviel wert sein: Sie verschafft einem in züchter Liebe einen Kraftvollen (Schwieg)sohn, und darauf

If one can first make the decision that with the help of his daughters, their ability to defend even without bearing arms will be just as valuable but in a different manner: They will produce a powerful son (in-law) controlled by love, and I mean to build upon this. Lipaut argues in a like manner to Gurnemanz in book 3 when he hopes that he will find in Parzival, with the help of his daughter, a substitute for his fallen sons.

The three sons that Gurnemanz needs to replace were killed in Minnedienst. The grief from their deaths then also killed his wife because of her triuwe (faithfulness and honor), leaving him with only his daughter. It then becomes her role to bring the new protector into the family: Parzival.

In his Höfische Kultur, Bumke also describes love service as a manner of social climbing.¹ In the chapter entitled Courtly ideal of Society, Bumke lists the instances in the major German medieval texts where a knight of lower social standing moves up socially by marrying a woman of higher standing. These listings are:

---

¹ I am using the translation by Thomas Dunlap instead of the original manuscript to save time and space.
1.) Tristan as lord of Parmenie and vassal of the duke of Brittany was not even a prince, while his lover Isolde was the queen of England and daughter of the king of Ireland.  
2.) Gahmuret was the son of a king, but was younger than Galoes, and it was only through marriage to the Queens Belekâne and Herzeloyde that he became a king.  
3.) Iwein marries Laudine to become king.  
4.) Lancelot marries Iblis.  
5.) Wigalois marries Larie.  
6.) Parzival marries Condwiramurs to become king.

There are instances in several medieval German works, in which a lady advanced her station through marriage. Hartmann von Aue uses this situation in the marriage of Enite and Erec, where Erec was a king and Enite the daughter of an impoverished count. He also gives an even better example with “die kleine Braut” (the little bride) in his Der arme Heinrich. Die kleine Braut is a peasant girl, the daughter of farmers, and she marries Heinrich, their benefactor. Bumke gives two further examples of this taking place in Wolfram’s texts. In Willehalm, King Loys is married to the daughter of a vassal, the count of Narbonne. He also shows the relationship between the King Meljanz and his vassal’s daughter Obie (Bumke, Courty Ideal of Society, 364). I have lingered on this aspect of

---

2 These two figures do not marry, but Tristan is not Isolde’s societal equal. For this reason, Bumke adds these two names to his list.  
social mobility because it demonstrates another way in which Minnedienst would have been connected to the real concerns of nobles in the Middle Ages. In real social relations as in literature, the price of social mobility achieved by fighting seems to have been very high, and not a few very influential voices were critical of it.

In the year 1095, Robert the monk went to hear Pope Urban II’s (Pope Blessed Urban II, Otho, Otto or Odo of Lagery, was Pope during 1088-1099) speech at Clermont announcing the first crusade (actually there are four accounts of the Pope’s speech at Clermont that have survived to this day, in which he asked the knights of Christendom to aid those in the east against the invading Arabs). Although this account is firsthand, there is still a problem with its accuracy. Robert the monk did not write the speech down until 25 years later and he gives only a general account, not a specific quotation after so many years, of what the Pope said to the people at that time. But Robert’s words are nonetheless significant. Not only was there a call for the knights to aid the east, but also to stop fighting amongst themselves: “Hence it is that you murder

---

and devour one another, that you wage war, and that very many among
you perish in intestine strife”.

What Pope Urban II did in this speech was to remove any guilt of
murder from anyone who killed a Muslim in the liberation of the Holy
Land. If a knight were to kill another Christian, it remained a sin, the sin
of murder, and the soul would suffer. If he killed an Arab (heathen),
however, then there would be no guilt. On the contrary: there is spiritual
reward and the knight’s soul is assured a place in heaven. Furthermore, all
combatants fighting for the return of the Holy City were to receive a
plenary indulgence, and their property was to be viewed as being sacred
(see footnote 3). Dennis Howard Green makes statements such as that of
Robert, which condemned fighting among Christian knights, the
foundation of observations in Homicide And ‘Parzival’:

The church frequently had to prohibit this pestifer ludus,
which entailed the death of knights and peril to their souls as
homicides. Behind such clerical opposition, however, there lies
not just the criticism of knightly homicide, but also the

5 Paul Halsall, ed. Medieval Source Book: Urban II Speech at Clermont
1095 (Robert the Monk Version), (Fordham: 1996)
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2a.html>, online, January.
6 For a detailed account of Urban II’s life see
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15210a.htm>
7 Compare the Pope’s remarks to Isaiah I, 15 - 31. New King James
Version, 1982. online, <http://etext.virginia.edu/kjv/browse.html> and
the Standard Revised Edition: Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia
Library.
repugnance felt for the wanton wastage of human life in what was no more than a social pastime, so that to the sin of murder was added that of callous irresponsibility, a brutalized playing with life (Green, 13 - 14).

The “pestifer ludus” Green refers to in this passage is knightly combat in tournaments. Tournaments were a popular form of entertainment in the Middle Ages, but also a source of grievous loss. The church recognized this and tried to regulate the practice with official church policy and the Pope’s direct command. The church wanted to take the energy expended against other Christian knights and use it to its spiritual, political and monetary gain by directing it toward the followers of Islam. Green effectively demonstrates that both clerical and secular authorities came to be critical of tournaments as unnecessary and wasteful:

In distinguishing between those who die in defense of their country (and thereby incurred no guilt) and those who die in a tournament (and are therefore destined to Hell) Caesarius of Heisterbach\(^8\) is making just this point: however regrettable the death of a warrior in battle on behalf of his country, there can be no doubt at all about the sinfulness of those who die in unjust and causeless warfare. The same contrast between necessary warfare and wanton violence recurs, on the secular plane, when a ruler prohibits tournaments, as did Philip the tall in 1318, for fear that they would rob him needlessly of knightly forces which he required in his war against

---

Flanders\textsuperscript{9} or on the religious plane, when the tournament motif is transferred to the crusades, so that the twelfth-century French poet can argue that God has proclaimed a tournament between Hell and Paradise which all his followers should attend\textsuperscript{10} (Green, 14).

Philip the tall was not the only prominent figure in European history to encounter bad luck in tournaments. In June of the year 1559, King Henry II of France was counseled not to participate in a jousting match at a tournament against Gabriel de Montgomery.\textsuperscript{11} In the final turn, Montgomery, six years the king’s junior, did not lower his lance in a timely manner. It shattered upon impact, sending a large splinter through the king’s visor. There were two mortal wounds, as well as other minor injuries to the king’s face and throat. One splinter penetrated his eye; the other impaled his temple just behind the eye. Both, however, penetrated his brain, but did not kill him immediately. Henry remained alive for ten pain filled days before finally dying of his wounds.\textsuperscript{12}

The most striking aspect of Henry II’s story is the supposed connection between his death and an alleged prediction by Nostradamus.

\textsuperscript{9} Miss Harvey, op cit., p. 136, quotes from Du Cange on this prohibition of tournaments: \textit{Si nous les souffrions à faire, nous ne pourrions avoir les Nobles de nostre Royaume si prestement pour aidier à nostre guerre de Flandres.}


in one of his quatrains (Century 1, Quatrain 35). In this Quatrain, Nostradamus supposedly speaks of elements in the final joust, such as how both combatants had the emblem of the lion on their shields:

\[
\text{The young lion will overcome the older one,} \\
\text{On the field of combat in a single battle;} \\
\text{He will pierce his eyes through a golden cage,} \\
\text{Two wounds made one, then he dies a cruel death.}\]

Nostradamus’ quatrain is only a curiosity and not necessary for the validity of my argument. It does, however, underscore how much danger was inherent in jousting and how aware of it the people of the time had become. It was not difficult for someone to make a prediction about death in a tournament. The seer had merely to anticipate the eventuality of injury or death in combat.

There are other cases of monarchs injured in jousting. King Henry VIII of England almost shared Henry II’s fate on two different occasions. In 1524, George Cavendish reported on Henry’s joust with the Duke of Suffolk,\(^\text{14}\) which Henry had commissioned after designing a set of armor.\(^\text{15}\) Henry began the tilt with his visor up and received a blow inside the visor.

---


\(^{14}\) For a visual representation of Henry’s joust in front of Katherine of Aragorn see: http://tudorhistory.org/henry8/gallery.html

\(^{15}\) Online http://www.englishhistory.net/tudor/h8joust.html
where the shaft splintered, almost causing the exact injury suffered by Henry II. Luckily, Henry was not injured, but he was rumored to suffer headaches and leg ulcers after that time. Later, at age 44, Henry suffered a leg injury in another jousting accident and was unconscious for 2 hours afterwards.

Henry died in 1547 and the cause remains undetermined, but his leg wounds contributed to his demise. The date of Henry II’s death and Henry VIII’s injuries were three and a half centuries after Wolfram’s time. It is, however, evident that nobility and clergy were aware of the danger inherent in this needless form of battle even before the first crusade, preached by Pope Blessed Urban II.

A Pope’s decree would be touted from every pulpit in Western Christendom. It is highly unlikely that Wolfram would have been unfamiliar with the kind of criticism of needless fighting among Christians that was part of the pope’s call for the First Crusade. It is even more unlikely that he would be unaware of similar messages on the subject in the Holy Bible, as for example in Isaiah 1, 15 - 20:

15: And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

---

16 See online http://home.hiwaay.net/~crispen/tudor/Henry8_medical/
16: Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 
17: Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 
18: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 
19: If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 
20: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

In this passage one sees a call to stop the violence against others and the necessity of cleansing one’s soul of sins. Correspondingly, a knight’s „hands are full of blood“ when he kills a fellow Christian. The Catholic Encyclopedia quotes the Pope Blessed Urban II as saying at Clermont: „Let them turn their weapons dripping with the blood of their brothers against the enemy of the Christian Faith. Let them -- oppressors of orphans and widows, murderers and violators of churches, robbers of the property of others, vultures drawn by the scent of battle – let them hasten, if they love their souls, under their captain Christ to the rescue of Sion.”\(^\text{17}\) This quotation is remarkably similar to the verses in Isaiah, with references to weapons dripping with blood, orphans, widows, and the Holy City. In the following lines, 21 - 30, the subject in Isaiah is also the faithful city and how it has become tainted and in need of rescue:

\(^{17}\) See online <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15210a.htm>
21: How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.
22: Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:
23: Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.
24: Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:
25: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:
26: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.
27: Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.
28: And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
29: For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
30: For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
31: And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

To a medieval Christian, this passage takes on special meaning.

Jerusalem was under control of the Muslims until the First Crusade. The Holy City of all Christians was thus under hostile occupation and being corrupted. The passage in Isaiah would give the Pope ideological ammunition in his campaign to win the Holy Land back from the Muslims.

It is highly unlikely that the well-read Wolfram was ignorant of both the
Pope’s decree and the passages in Isaiah. There are themes present in later works by Wolfram that indicate he was inspired by the message inherent in both the lines from the book of Isaiah and the message of the Pope, which began the move towards freeing the Holy Land.

How can we know that Wolfram would have been familiar with papal decrees and biblical verses? Wolfram declares himself in Parzival to be illiterate: “ichne kan dechene buochstap. dâ nement genuoge ir urhap: disiu âventiure vert âne der buoche stiure” (I can’t read a single letter. For many that (being able to read) is the starting point, but this adventure needs no help from books) (115, 27 - 30). He mentions his inability to read and lack of schooling a second time in the narrative: “swaz an den buochen stêt geschriben, des bin ich künstelôs beliben. niht anders ich gelêret bin: wan hân ich kunst, die gît mir sin” (From all of the things that have been written in books I have learned nothing. What artistic ability I have has been given to me by the Holy Ghost: in no other way have I been educated) (2, 19 - 22).

Bumke systematically breaks Wolfram’s declaration of illiteracy down and comes to the conclusion that he was exactly the opposite of what he claimed to be. In his Wolfram von Eschenbach, Bumke points out that in the text the narrator knows too many things, from too many
different areas of science, to be illiterate. Bumke states: “Es kann kein Zweifel darüber bestehen, daß er ausgedehnte und bis ins Detail gehende Fachkenntnisse besaß, vor allem auf den Gebieten der Medizin, der Kosmologie, Astronomie, Naturkunde und Geographie, außerdem der Theologie und Philosophie” (There can be no doubt, that his vast and detailed knowledge on various subjects, especially in the fields of medicine, cosmology, astronomy, natural sciences and geography as well as theology and philosophy) (Bumke, 7 - 8). Later on, he writes “auf Grund dieser Nachweise kann man es als erwiesen betrachten, daß Wolfram lateinish gebildet war” (based on this evidence one can consider it to be true, that Wolfram was educated in Latin) (Bumke, 8).

Bumke also makes reference to the debate over Wolfram’s French ability. He notes that there are differing views of Wolfram’s ability to speak French, from those scholars who believe he was not very well versed in French, to those who believe he was concealing this ability just as he claimed to be ignorant of Latin and reading. Bumke makes special mention of the passage: “Herbergen ist loschieren genant. sô vil hân ich der sprâche erkant. ein ungefüegiger Tschampâney s kunde vil baz franzeyz dann ich, swich franzoys spreche” (To take up lodging is loschieren in French. I can understand that much about this language. A
peasant farmer from the Champaign region speaks much better French than I do, although I do speak French) (Willehalm, 237, 3 - 7).

Comparing himself to a native speaker of the language, regardless of the social standing of the latter, is a probably humorous way of stating that he speaks French very well. Although Bumke, in his Wolfram von Eschenbach, doesn’t make the claim that Wolfram is simply being clever, he does lean toward Wolfram being knowledgeable of French, as well as literate in Latin (Bumke, 9).

If Wolfram were to be seen as literate, well versed in Latin, French and theology, a Ministeriales\(^\text{18}\) (un-free knight), and a devout Christian, then it is seems quite likely that Wolfram knew of Pope Urban II’s famous words. It is likely that he knew of the Pope’s decrees dealing with tournaments and the weight of such a homicide (killing a knight for sport at a tournament) on the knight’s soul. He would know about these consequences, because they directly affected him. With all that has been presented, it seems evident that Parzival was an answer to the idealized

\(^{18}\) See Margaret Fitzgerald Richey, Studies of Wolfram von Eschenbach, (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957). Specifically, see her second chapter entitled “Biographical Data and Inferences” for one of the most exhaustive looks at where Wolfram possibly came from and what claims have been made about his heritage and language (Frank or Bavarian).
picture of knightly combat in the service of a lady displayed in the works of Hartmann von Aue and Chrétien de Troyes.

This answer is visible not only in Wolfram’s Parzival and Titurel. Wolfram continues to focus on the tragic consequences of Minnedienst in his Willehalm, which depicts the struggle between Christians and Muslims in ways that are analogous to the Chanson de geste tradition. In a situation reminiscent of the attack on Troy, due to Paris’ capture and kidnapping of Helen, Wolfram creates a situation in which Gyburc and Willehalm are being besieged by her Muslim relatives. The main difference is that Gyburc wants to be with Willehalm and fights her relatives off, defending the castle and lands until Willehalm can get help from his family, whereas Helen is kidnapped and held against her will. Willehalm’s love for Gyburc and the invasion by the Islamic armies are the background for epic battles, in which Christians fight against Muslims who are depicted as courtly knights. In such a defensive situation, against an invading heathens,¹⁹ the use of arms is warranted. This stands in stark contrast to the unnecessary jousting and battles between fellow Christians for love and honor.

In creating Gyburc and Rennewart in *Willehalm* and Feirefîz in *Parzival*, Wolfram shows that followers of Islam can be saved if they choose the Christian God over their own. Even this way is not as straightforward as it first appears. The element of love must also be present to bring the heathens into a position of grace. In their book *Der “Willehalm”* Wolfram von Eschenbach, John Greenfield and Lydia Miklautsch argue, in my view correctly, for the value of love in the works of Wolfram von Eschenbach: “die minne gehört zum Wesen der Gottheit...” (Greenfield and Miklautsch, 237). In Wolfram’s works, their (the heathens) access to a holy life (Christianity) is made possible by love, because love belongs to Godliness. They go on to state that minne und ander klage (4, 26) (love and other pain) are the focus of Wolfram’s poetry.

Wolfram’s *Willehalm* shows the deadly influences of Minnedienst on society. This work’s major difference is that it shows the destructive influence on a grand scale, not just on an individual basis, as is the case with Sigûne and Schionatulander and others in *Parzival* and *Titurel*. In *Willehalm*, the heathens suffer losses from Minnedienst as do the Christians. Wolfram shows that the suffering is universal, not just a Christian phenomenon. He makes the Muslim characters in his works
appear courtly and they, therefore, suffer the same fates as their courtly Christian counterparts.

Conclusion: Wolfram’s Specific Contribution

The literary depiction of the service of a lady was not new in Wolfram’s times. Ovid had taught that to love was to serve and Andreas Capellanus had written a treatise on love involving service sometime between 1180 and 1200. Both Ovid’s Amores and Capellanus’ Art of Courtly Love were written in Latin, highly literary and ideal in nature. The type of love service, or Minndienst, that one sees depicted in Chrétien’s Arthurian romances, and in Hartmann’s versions of them, can be classified much as Bumke and Green have stated: as an idealized, literary construction. The earlier Arthurian works are close to the Latin representations of love service. Wolfram’s narrative, however, refuses to be classified in this way. Wolfram takes the idea of tournaments being a drain on society, as presented by Urban II, and shows the devastation that such campaigning brings not only to knights, but also to their families and realms.

---

Wolfram’s *Parzival* was one of the most popular romances of its time. *Parzival’s* popularity can be measured by the extraordinary number of manuscripts still extant today. If it had not been popular, there would not have been many copies made, and therefore fewer extant versions. For hundreds of years after the author’s death, the works were copied and handed down. The many copies had a great influence on future German authors.\(^{22}\) The reason for the popularity of Wolfram’s *Parzival* is due primarily to its inherent entertainment value. The entertaining element of the text helped its popularity with many audience members, as was discussed in chapter 2, but its critical element assured its popularity in areas of scholarship. The text is entertaining, but entertainment adds to its importance when viewed next to the critical content in the narrative. Wolfram managed to blend together an old story written by Chrétien de Troyes\(^{23}\) and a new doctrine set forth by Pope Urban II, thus creating a new view of Minnedienst. His new depiction is in

\(^{22}\) For a more detailed look into the influence of Wolfram on later German authors and how many copies are still available see Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschebach*, (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1991) 27 - 30.

\(^{23}\) This thesis is almost universally accepted. Wolfram, despite all of his protestations, did indeed have Chrétien de Troyes Conte del Graal as his source. For more information of this topic see: Margaret Fitzgerald Richey, *Studies of Wolfram von Eschenbach*, (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957). Specifically, chapter three entitled “Wolfram von Eschenbach and Chrétien de Troyes” 51 - 72.
direct opposition to the previously idealized view of the utopian society based on Minnedienst, in the manner that Hartmann and Chrétien had made it appear.

Wolfram shows that Gahmuret wishes to go on to tournaments regardless of what the females in his life have to say about the matter. He leaves Belekâne, because he can no longer go to tournaments while married to her. He makes Herzeloyde promise him that he can go on tournamenting or he will leave her as he did Belekâne:

\[
vrouwe, \text{ sol ich mit iu genesen,} \\
\text{so lat mich ane houte wesen,} \\
\text{wan verlat mich immer jamers craft,} \\
\text{sö taete ich gerne ritterschaft.} \\
lät ir niht turnieren mich, \\
sö kan ich noch den alten slich, \\
als dö ich minem wiße entran, \\
die ich ouch mit ritterschaft gewan (96, 25 - 97, 2). \]

(Lady if I am to enjoy life with you so let me be as I am today. If I am not to be kept in misery, I like to do knightly deeds. So if you don’t allow me to go to tournaments, I still know my old trick of how I escaped my (other) wife who I also won through knightly combat).

Medieval audiences would have been mindful of the criticism of wasteful killing that Wolfram places in Parzival. The modern reader’s inability to see this aspect of the text can be surmised on the basis of the
lack of scholarly research on this topic. Of the thousands of books and articles published on Parzival, only a few have broached the subject of death in Minnedienst and its consequences on women.\textsuperscript{24}

The critical elements do not appear in Hartmann or Chrétien’s versions of the Arthurian romances. Wolfgang Mohr in his Wolfram von Eschenbach calls Wolfram’s Parzival a “Nacherzählung” (Mohr, 98) (repetition; a. ped. re-narration; adaptation),\textsuperscript{25} which is not plausible when one considers the fact that almost one half of Wolfram’s longer work (Chrétien’s Parceval has no end and it is suspected that he died before its completion) is free creation and not based upon any work that Chrétien undertook. In Bumke’s Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im hohen Mittelalter there are several differences between the two works Conte du Graal and Parzival mentioned:

1. In Chrétien’s version the Grail is a golden bowl, Wolfram makes it a stone.
2. With 18,000 verses, Parzival is almost twice as long.
3. Wolfram sights Kyot as the source (also Flegitanis) Chrétien says that he received the greatest book in the world from his patron to re-write.
4. The first three books

\textsuperscript{25} Heinz Messinger, ed. Langenscheids Großes Schulwörterbuch, (Berlin: Langenscheidts, 1977).
5. The orient motif from the Gahmuret stories including Feirefiz and the end.

Bumke states that there is no known source for the Gahmuret stories beyond Chrétien de Troyes. Without any other source than that of Chrétien de Troyes, it is incorrect to insist that Parzival is simply a retelling of the same story:

The Conte du Graal corresponds to books III - XIII, from Parzival’s youth through Gawan’s adventures in Schastal marveile. The pre-history of Gahmuret (books I - II) and the end of the Gawan - Parzival sequences are independent of Chrétien. It is unclear where the material for these parts came from. A coherent Gahmuret source is not known. The Parzival plot is placed in a larger context through the pre-history and through the appearance of Feirefiz at the end, which brings out the eastern motifs.

With no source other than Chrétien known, it is quite possible (and probable) that Wolfram invented the parts that differ from Chrétien and used that freedom to create a piece of social criticism. Bumke notes
some very large differences, but these are not the only changes in Wolfram’s story. A well-known researcher on Chrétien de Troyes states, that “Chrétien - the romancer - was intent on amplifying nature topoi. These philosophical conceptions about Nature, the principle of generation, opened up for Chrétien a new range of conceits for the theme of the most beautiful creation” (Luttrell, 11). Wolfram chose very different topoi for his Parzival, further distancing his version from that of his predecessor.

Wolfram was intent on weaving the socially critical message of Pope Urban II into his narrative. He wanted to demonstrate that Minnedienst was far more complicated and more deadly than Hartmann or Chrétien had imagined. Wolfram shows how knights, patterned after Hartmann’s heroes (such as Gahmuret and all of his family), all come to meet the same fate by competing against other knights in Minnedienst.

In Wolfram’s narrative, almost all of the characters are inter-related (see the family tree on back cover of Lachmann’s sixth edition edited by

26 For more reading on the nature topos, see E.R. Curtius, Zur Literaturästhetik des Mittelalters. II, (1938) as well as European Literature and Middle Ages, (1953).
27 Four versions of this speech exist. For another eyewitness account of the speech see Paul Halsall, ed. Online Medieval Source Book: Urban II Speech at Clermont, 1095, according to Fulcher of Chartres, (Fordham: 1996) online http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2a.html January.
Schirok). The murder of Ither, which is recognized as a sin, is inherent in almost any knightly combat that can take place. The only way to be sure one is not murdering a relative in Parzival, is not to risk fighting in a tournament. There is even a problem with stating one can only attack the followers of Mohammed, because Parzival’s own brother Feirefiz is a Muslim when they first meet.

In Parzival, there are far more instances of death due to love service and the endeavor to avoid verligenheit. Wolfram shows the other side of Minnedienst and of the obsession with one’s worldly reputation in no uncertain terms:

1. Gahmuret’s father Gandin is killed in battle.
2. His grandfather Addanz is also been killed in the same manner.
3. Isenhart is killed seeking greater honor to win Belekâne.
4. Her castle is besieged by Isenhart’s followers, threatening to kill her.
5. Gahmuret kills Belekâne by leaving her.
6. Galoes, Gahmuret’s brother is killed by Orilus (relatives).
7. Castis is killed during Minnedienst before consummating marriage with Herzeloyde (Titurel).
9. Gahmuret is killed.
10. Schoette dies of heartbreak.
11. Herzeloyde dies when Parzival leaves her to become a knight.
12. Schionatulander is killed by Orilus.
13. Gramoflanz’ father was killed by Lot.
14. Ither is killed (relatives) by Parzival in singular combat.
15. Keye’s shoulder is broken in singular combat.
16. Scheneteflûrs is killed in knightly combat.
17. Lascoyt is killed in knightly combat.
18. Gurzgrî is killed in knightly combat.
20. Gurnemanz’ daughter-in-law Mahaut dies from heartache.
21. Meljanz attacks the city, threatens inhabitants due to unrequited love.
22. Condwiramurs’ city is attacked and starved almost to death.
23. Cidegast is killed by Gramoflanz.
24. Orgeluse exhibits unmaze (unbalanced - no restraint) because of heartache (triuwe) due to Cidegast’s death.
25. Anfortas is hurt during Minnedienst for Orgeluse, Grail Kingdom is thereby put in peril.
26. Illinot, Arthur’s son, is killed during Minnedienst.
27. Illinot’s beloved Florie dies of heartache.
28. Sigûne dies of heartache.
29. Firefiez, Parzival and Gramoflanz are left fatherless.

These are the real differences between Wolfram’s Parzival and Chrétien’s Conte del Graal. The majority of these characters do not even exist in Chrétien’s version, and when they do there is no explanation of motives or stories of death. Every time Wolfram invents a character there is a connection to death during love service in one fashion or another. There is no part (Arthur’s court, Grail Kingdom, families) that remains untouched by the tragic consequences of Minnedienst in the entire narrative.

The number of deaths in Wolfram’s narrative is also very different from other Arthurian narratives. When compared to The Quest for the Holy Grail Wolfram’s text shows the deadly consequences quite often. By
contrast, Matarasso writes about the relative few deaths found in The Quest for the Holy Grail:

Again and again the author stresses God’s infinite mercy towards sinners, and in this tale of jousting knights and hard-fought battles, death is a rare visitor. It is only those who reject God’s grace, like Gawain and Lionel – the proud, the vainglorious and the empty-headed – who slay their adversaries, and they are specifically rebuked for doing so. But they themselves escape being killed – the author withholds judgment; and their victims, Owein and Calogranant, die reconciled with God. As for those knights who are unhorsed or wounded, they are tenderly carried to the nearest abbey, there to be restored to health of body and, one hopes, of soul (Matarasso, 21).

Every family in Parzival is touched by death in one way or another. The Grail Kingdom is thrown into a state of instability because its king, Anfortas, was injured during Minnedienst. Herzeloyde, Sigûne, Schoette and Belekâne die of heartache due to the deaths of their loved ones in tournaments. Ither is killed by his relative, which shows the negative effects the practice has on the round table. There are even Fehden (feuds), like the animosity between Gramoflanz and Gawan, which will be carried out years after they were originally conceived (and not even by the original combatants).

Unlike the arguments put forth by Green, Mohr and Bumke, the interpretation presented here is that Wolfram did not idealize knighthood
as much as it may first appear. Green mentions that only two other authors have touched upon a knight’s guilt in battle, which is “central to the literary idealization of chivalry. For although Mohr has penetratively revealed Parzival’s knightly guilt in killing his first opponent, Ither, “his focus is concentrated on the hero and he only partially takes into account the teeming world of figures with which Wolfram populates his work” (Green, 11).

Green’s analyses the guilt of knights across many works and is much more inclusive of other figures than either Mohr or Bumke. He also falls short of seeing the interconnected nature of all the figures and how Wolfram created them with personal stories all going back to Minnedienst and/or single combat (avoiding being verligen). Mohr and Bumke stop their inquiries into the nature of knightly combat before any connections can be made, although both make mention of some of the differences noted on the previous page. Because these authors do not see the violent nature of Wolfram’s world, it is easy for them to call the convention of Minnedienst an “utopisches Wunschbild”. The assumption that Minnedienst is, and can only be seen as, a literary device in medieval literature is questionable in view of the historical and literary evidence.

29 See Green’s preface to Homicide and ‘Parzival’, p. 11. for his footnote.
The same evidence makes the refusal or reluctance to examine how love service and behaviors associated with it, may have reach beyond the purely literary sphere, unwarranted.
WORKS CITED


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jolyon was born in Quincy, Illinois but lived in up-state Illinois until the beginning of school. He graduated from Quincy Senior High School in 1988 and was sent to Germany for a year abroad in a German Gymnasium in Bremen, West Germany. After finishing Gymnasium and learning German, Jolyon enrolled at Quincy University for a semester to be with his parents. He also served another function in Quincy by helping foreign exchange students get acclimated to life in the Midwest.

The spring semester of 1990 saw Jolyon move to Normal, IL and enroll at Illinois State University. Several major changes later, including International Business and Music Performance (Guitar), he became a full-fledged German major. At Illinois State University JT (as he is commonly called by friends and relatives) served as the editor for the ISU Allgemeine, President of Delta Phi Alpha German Honors society and Treasurer for the ISU German Club. JT also spent semesters in Bielefeld and Paderborn Germany as well as a short stay in Leicester, England. Graduation came in 1994, but he stayed an extra year to fulfill the requirements for a second degree in History.
In 1995 Jolyon moved to Fort Collins, Colorado to start an M.A. program at Colorado State University, with a stipend as a graduate teaching assistant. Fort Collins is where he met his future wife, Sara Elizabeth Miller. JT also took the first summer as an opportunity to stay in Uppsala, Sweden for three months and attend Medborgarskolan for the Swedish proficiency exam. This was a very important step in Mr. Hughes development because he was able to see the Codex Argentis, housed at the library there, along with studying older forms of the Germanic languages. The following year saw JT employed at Hewlett Packard in Loveland, Colorado.

Sara and JT were married in Estes Park, Colorado on July 25th 1998. After a weeklong honeymoon at Dunn’s River Falls in Jamaica they moved to Gainesville, Florida where Jolyon would begin his career as medievalist and graduate teaching assistant. JT has taught all levels of German at UF from 1120 – 2240 and also taught the first two semesters of Swedish. Recently he has been working at CIRCA as well as providing technological assistance to the Discover German project.

In March 2001 Jolyon and Sara became the proud parents of Hannah Brynn Hughes, who was born at 8:21pm on her mother’s birthday. The year 2001 also brought JT’s first opportunity to present a paper at a
conference at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Jolyon’s first job after graduation is at Colorado State University, where he will be the TA supervisor and professor for Germanic Studies up to the year 1500.