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Songs of the Self: Authorship and Mastery in Minnesang

by

Kenneth Elswick Fockele

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Niklaus Largier, chair

Professor Elaine Tennant

Professor Frank Bezner

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by Kenneth Elswick Fockele

Abstract

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Despite the centrality of medieval courtly love lyric, or Minnesang, to the canon of German literature, its interpretation has been shaped in large degree by what is not known about it—that is, the lack of information about its authors. This has led on the one hand to functional approaches that treat the authors as a class subject to sociological analysis, and on the other to approaches that emphasize the fictionality of Minnesang as a form of role-playing in which genre conventions supersede individual contributions. I argue that the men who composed and performed these songs at court were, in fact, using them to create and curate individual profiles for themselves. The project of these poets is to persuade the audience of their own ethical insight and aesthetic skill. Each, in his own way, seeks to portray himself as the master of all possibilities offered by courtly song.

In chapter one, using the manuscript versions of a song by Heinrich von Morungen, I develop a new concept of authorship for the unstable medium of medieval lyric. Drawing on the insights of Material Philology, I show that Morungen anticipated and made use of this instability (or *mouvance*), imbuing his songs with the imprint of his authorship in a way that allows for the vagaries of oral and even written transmission. In chapter two, I explore the tension between a stable author figure and an unstable medium. Modern editorial practices have oversimplified the transmission of the lyric of Reinmar der Alte in the service of an exaggerated image of him as the virtuoso of joy in suffering unrequited love. Through a close reading of four versions of one of Reinmar's songs, I argue that the author emerges as the master of the sum of a flexible array of aesthetic and ethical possibilities. In chapter three, I use the conceptual framework developed in these close readings to sketch a broader picture of one poet as an author. Through a survey of Heinrich von Veldeke's songs, I show that juxtaposing contrasting perspectives throws into relief the implied author as a clerically educated figure who has mastered varied domains of intellectual and aesthetic knowledge and skill. By means of a comparison with the Latin poetry of Peter of Blois, I sharpen the contours of Veldeke's mode of clerical authorship. The form of authorship that I identify in this dissertation—the author as master of possibilities—is specific to Minnesang, but suggests that there are types of authorship particular to other genres and other moments in time that remain to be defined.

For my family

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Introduction

We know almost nothing about the twelfth-century poets who brought forth the body of astonishingly intricate and beautiful lyric that stands at the center of the German literary canon. Like the love songs of the French troubadours and trouvères, the German Minnesang was composed and performed at court by members of the ruling aristocracy. Their audiences likely consisted of their fellow noblemen and possibly the ladies whom they idealized in song. While a few of the early poets belonged to the highest echelons of the nobility and are thus attested in the historical record, most are known only through their songs and sometimes through encomia in the works of others.¹ Even where one appears in the historical record, it is almost never as a poet, but rather in roles such as ruler or witness to a charter.² This lack of information has left these poets, who appear so vividly in the illustrations of the great song collections of the thirteenth century, beyond our grasp as individual authors.

To cope with this deficit, scholars have taken one of three paths to approach the poets of the Minnesang. The oldest is to compose biographies for them by presuming that the details of their love songs come from their lives.³ Few scholars do this anymore.⁴ However, the other two methods are alive and well. The first is a functional approach which focuses on the society in which these poets lived, ascribing the salient features of their art to a broader social force, though there is little agreement on what this force was—whether, for example, the development of restraint by a warlike nobility, the psychology of the marginal man, or the self-preservation of the ruling class.⁵ In this paradigm, the performance of Minnesang at court is a ritual crucial to the self-definition of courtly society, in which the singer enacts a model for others.⁶ The ennobling ethical positions ostensibly espoused in the songs, such as the importance of constancy in unrequited love, are viewed as ideals, the imitation of which defined a segment of society at court.⁷ The singer functions as a representative and mouthpiece of the collective mentality, rather than as an individual. He performs his role in society.

The second approach, which is dominant today, is to treat the subject matter of Minnesang as fictional and to focus on its performance as a scene of role playing. In this

¹ For overviews of what is known about the authors and audiences of Minnesang, much of which is deduced from the literary works themselves, see Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 488–512; Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 449–75.

² The surviving primary documents are collected in Meves, *Regesten deutscher Minnesänger*. The famous exception is Walther von der Vogelweide, mentioned in the records of Wolfger, Bishop of Erla as a singer. See Curschmann, “Waltherus Cantor.”

³ This biographical trend began in 1822 with the biography by Ludwig Uhland, *Walther von der Vogelweide*.

⁴ One exception is Haferland, *Hohe Minne*.

⁵ See, respectively, Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 88–122; Köhler, “Vergleichende soziologische Betrachtungen”; Peters, “Niederer Rittertum oder hoher Adel?” For an overview of these approaches, see also Liebertz-Grün, *Zur Soziologie des “amour courtois.”*

⁶ See, for example, Kleinschmidt, “Minnesang als höfisches Zeremonialhandeln”; Grubmüller, “Ich als Rolle.”

⁷ See Jaeger, *Ennobling Love*; Schnell, *Causa amoris*, 154.

paradigm of fictionality, the songs do not express the real feelings of the poets and performers, but are instead analogous to turns in a game, the goal of which is the redeployment of conventional tropes in skillful ways. One of the major threads of this research has been the description of the various potential text-internal and text-external referents of the lyric *I*.⁸ The many fictive roles taken on in performance—the lover, the singer, the messenger, the lady—as well as the role of performer, always stand between the audience and the person who composed the song.

In my view, both of these perspectives obscure the author. In the functional paradigm, he appears as a cipher, a representative of a particular social class without individual subjectivity.⁹ In the fictionality paradigm, the historical figure who composed and performed the lyric disappears behind the screen of the roles that he has created.¹⁰ Yet each song was composed by a real person who had his own experiences, motivations, and personality. This person stands behind his song, and while we cannot see into his mind, we in the audience sense his presence and make assumptions about him as the creative force behind the song.¹¹ The conclusions we draw about this person are not random. They are the result of specific aesthetic choices he has made in composing his song, choices by which he portrays a version of himself for public consumption. My conviction is that we cannot understand the songs without understanding the projects of self-fashioning of which they were a part.

It is commonplace to see the lyric of Walther von der Vogelweide as a project of self-fashioning that extends beyond the fictive roles within his songs to Walther himself.¹² My argument is that this type of self-fashioning is not new in Walther's lyric, but rather can be seen in the songs of Heinrich von Morungen, Reinmar der Alte, and Heinrich von Veldeke before him. In several of their songs, the contrasts between various roles indicate that we cannot take them at face value. Close readings, with attention to manuscript versions, reveal tensions between the roles that can only be resolved from a perspective distinct from the roles themselves. In these cases, the texts give the impression there is someone behind the scenes pulling the strings, a figure who has a privileged position of insight. Thus the poet casts himself in the role of a skilled and

⁸ See the varied ways in which the concept of fictionality in medieval courtly lyric has been elaborated in, for example, the lively debate that was started by Warning, "Lyrisches Ich und Öffentlichkeit." Some of the major positions with regard to fictionality and performance in Minnesang are: Strohschneider, "nu sehent, wie der singet!"; Müller, "Ir sult sprechen willekommen"; Müller, "Ritual, Sprecherfiktion und Erzählung"; Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 31–36; Müller, "Performativer Selbstwiderspruch"; Hausmann, "Wer spricht?"; Müller, "Die Fiktion höfischer Liebe."

⁹ For this critique of the functional approach, see Chinca, "The Medieval German Love-Lyric: A Ritual?"

¹⁰ For a useful though flawed critique of the fictionality paradigm, see Haferland, "Minnesang als Posenrhetorik."

¹¹ This corresponds to the third element of the "author function" identified by Foucault, "What Is an Author?," 110. The dynamic by which a reader (or hearer) fills in gaps in a text has been explored by Iser, *Appellstruktur der Texte*.

¹² See, for example, Wenzel, "Typus und Individualität"; Goldin, *Walther von der Vogelweide*, 2; Paddock, "Speaking of Spectacle," 12–13; Gilgen, "Singer of Himself," 103.

knowledgeable man who knows much, sees far, and has mastered the aesthetic and moral possibilities inherent in courtly lyric: in other words, an author.¹³

In developing this approach to the author's self-fashioning, my project builds on recent work that moves away from the functional and fictional approaches to medieval literature and argues for the "return of the author." Mark Chinca and Christopher Young have shown that poetological reflection around 1200 is a sign of a developing autonomy of literature from purely functional states, that is, from subordination to ritual or the field of politics.¹⁴ In addition, Ursula Peters suggests that we can see the fashioning of the author's reputation in the manuscript transmission. She argues that, beginning in the thirteenth century, author images combined with textual strategies that emphasized the author to build a concept of personal, biographical authorship that lent texts legitimacy and authority.¹⁵ While she focuses on the way that reception and transmission of literary works deployed this concept, I begin by showing the ways that, in the case of Minnesang, poets shaped for themselves the figure of an author despite their knowledge that their songs, once sung, would leave their control.

In chapter one, using the manuscript versions of a song by Heinrich von Morungen as an example, I develop a new concept of authorship for the unstable medium of medieval lyric. The variation that we see in the transmitted versions of Morungen's songs is usually taken as a sign that the author's sovereignty over his own work was limited. Drawing on the insights of Material Philology, I show, on the contrary, that Morungen anticipated and made use of this instability (or *mouvance*), imbuing his songs with the imprint of his authorship in a way that allows for the vagaries of oral and even written transmission.

In chapter two, I explore this tension between a stable author figure and an unstable manuscript transmission. Modern editorial practices have oversimplified the transmission of the lyric of Reinmar der Alte in the service of an exaggerated image of him as the virtuoso of joy in suffering from unrequited love. Through a close reading of four versions of one of Reinmar's songs, I argue that the author emerges as the master of the sum of aesthetic and ethical possibilities displayed within each version and across all the versions. This craftsmanlike mastery has been lost in the modern scholarship on Reinmar. Astute self-fashioners such as Reinmar and Morungen used the bounded flexibility of medieval lyric structure to their advantage. Both poets built songs that anticipated the vagaries of oral (and potentially also written) transmission, in that they contained multiple possibilities for realization. While allowing for some flexibility in performance, they stamped the material with their own authorial personae.

In chapter three, I use the conceptual framework developed in these close readings to sketch a broader picture of one poet as an author. Through a wide survey of Heinrich von Veldeke's lyric, I show that the implied author they project is a clerically educated figure who has mastered many domains of intellectual and aesthetic knowledge and skill. In his songs, Veldeke juxtaposes distinct voices, which provide the audience

¹³ Wayne Booth has defined a similar concept for fiction, which he calls the "implied author," a version of the self that the author creates in his prose. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 70–73.

¹⁴ Chinca and Young, "Literary Theory and the German Romance."

¹⁵ Peters, *Das Ich im Bild*, 9.

with multiple perspectives on the speakers of his songs, ultimately throwing into relief the erudite authorial figure who stands behind them. While the anticipation of *mouvance* plays a smaller role in Veldeke's lyric than Reinmar's or Morungen's, he nevertheless uses the same principle of presenting unresolved contrasts to convey that, rather than promulgating any one ethical or aesthetic ideology, he has mastered the possibilities of all. Finally, through a comparison with the Latin poetry of Peter of Blois, I sharpen the contours of Veldeke's specific type of clerical authorship, which remains removed from the theological and anthropological preoccupations of the Latin love poets.

Throughout my entire argument, I focus on what the texts themselves can tell us about the authorial figures that they imply, who turn out to be more flexible, more playful, and more tolerant of contradictions than has been recognized before.

Chapter 1. Versions of the Self: *Mouvance* and Authorship in Heinrich von Morungen

At the end of a lament that his love service has gone unrewarded, the medieval German lyric poet Heinrich von Morungen (d. after 1218) uses the classical topos of the swan song to imagine the reaction of distant audiences who hear of his sorrow:

*Ich tuon sam der swan, der singet, swenne er stirbet.
waz ob mir mîn sanc daz lîhte noch erwirbet,
swâ man mînen kumber sagt ze maere,
daz man mir erbunne mîner swaere?* (XXII, MF 139,15–18)¹⁶

I do the same as the swan, who sings while he is dying.
What if my song perhaps yet achieves this for me:
that, wherever the tale of my misery is told,
they envy me my burden?

Morungen uses the metaphor of the swan to portray himself as one who sings not by his own choice but by his very nature; as he says elsewhere: *wan ich dur sanc bin ze der welte geborn* “for I was born into the world for the sake of song” (XIII, MF 133,20)¹⁷ These programmatic statements have been taken as a proclamation of authorial self-consciousness, providing evidence that Morungen thinks of his singing as a vocation and conceives of himself, above all, as an artist.¹⁸ In context, however, it is not simply his own artistic nature that forms the poet’s self-conception but, even more importantly, the recognition of his artistic mastery. Clearly, this song is not meant for his lady’s ears only. Nor does Morungen refer simply to the audience at the court where he composed and performed this song. Rather, he evokes an image of the audience he desires, one in sympathy with his ideals and moved by his example—perhaps most of all, an audience that remembers him, even though they know him only through his song. In other words, he intends to build a reputation.

Morungen articulates two goals in this strophe: to fashion his own reputation and to have it recognized by a lasting courtly audience. These goals require that the songs reflect upon a figure more permanent than the momentary role of the song’s performer. They demand that Morungen create and curate a “self” through song, an authorial figure who remains constant over time. But even to say that Morungen attempts to establish a reputation and to have it recognized reveals the difficulty for the poets: only the first goal can be put into the active voice. Morungen does not control the reception of his songs—

¹⁶ The Roman numeral refers to the song number in Moser and Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling* (MFMT). Unless otherwise noted, all Minnesang quotations are from MFMT. The conventional citation MF refers to page and line numbers in Lachmann and Haupt, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁷ On Morungen, see Tervooren, “Heinrich von Morungen.”

¹⁸ Heinrich von Morungen, *Lieder*, 207.

he recognizes, as the question syntax (*waz ob*) and subjunctive mood (*erbunne*) in the quotation above indicate, that once he has finished singing, his fame is no longer in his control. Of course, no one can dictate another's reaction to a song, but today we expect that the writer can, at least, control the song. Nowadays, songs are disseminated predominately in fixed form, through recordings. Morungen, however, cannot envision such transmission—here, even the medium of communication exceeds the author's grasp. To be sure, the author shapes his own performances; beyond these, however, he anticipates that his songs and reputation are spread through the mouths of other performers.

These issues of authorship and textual instability have seemed particularly pressing since the publication of *Speculum's* special issue on the New Philology and have animated discussion in recent decades about medieval forms of authorship.¹⁹ In my approach to the author figure, I follow Susanne Köbele, who has argued that questions of literary production and reception must be carefully separated but cannot be considered in isolation from one another.²⁰ In this spirit, using a pair of suggestive songs by Morungen as a test case, I will consider first the author's self-presentation in song, as it arises from the speaker roles in the texts, and second, the way this self-presentation both shapes and is shaped by the manuscript transmission. Together, close readings and examinations of the manuscript evidence show that the songs project a figure of the author that anticipates the vagaries of transmission, one that is not defined by a set of personal experiences or a coherent ideological program, but rather by a display of mastery over a full but flexible range of poetic possibilities.

The Figure of the Author

In focusing on the figure of the author I depart from the recent debates in Minnesang research over the fictionality of the songs. The consensus view frames them as fiction and holds that the art of Minnesang lies in the elegant variation of given tropes of courtly love, not the communication of individual experience. Lyric so stereotypical, so overdetermined by literary form and courtly ideology, must be an ennobling fiction rather than a mode of self-expression. In other words, the lyric *I*, the *ich* of these songs, does not represent the poet as he actually experiences emotions and events but rather a conventional role he briefly assumes.²¹

This hard and fast distinction between the speaker and the author, however, strains credulity. Is it plausible that these men composed songs that bore no relation at all

¹⁹ Nichols, "The New Philology." Of course, the questions themselves, as Nichols acknowledges, are not new; see Tennant, "Old Philology"; Stackmann, "Neue Philologie?" For two extensive overviews of the discussion of authorship in medieval studies and German studies, including the recent "return of the author," see Klein, "Inspiration und Autorschaft," 57–64; Peters, *Das Ich im Bild*, 1–19.

²⁰ Köbele, *Frauenlobs Lieder*, 26.

²¹ This consensus is summed up by Schweikle, *Minnesang*, 192–95, 217–18. The older literature on the fictionality of Minnesang is voluminous and naturally does not all fall within the consensus. A recent critical overview with reference to the most important contributions is Grubmüller, "Was bedeutet Fiktionalität im Minnesang?"

to their own lives? This is the question that animates the most recent strong reaction against the consensus. Harald Haferland argues that, since there is neither direct historical evidence nor specific textual indication that these songs are fictional, it is simplest to read them as individual, actual expressions of the poets' sentiments. He sees them as autobiographical accounts of the poets' real experience in love and as instruments they used to woo their beloved ladies.²² In the most sophisticated response to this challenge, Jan-Dirk Müller does not dismiss Haferland's claim out of hand but concedes that the fictionality of Minnesang cannot be proven. On the other hand, the argument that the songs are biographical is also not provable. As Müller points out, fiction always exists on a scale of its distance from fact: there is no either/or, only more or less.²³ Haferland and Müller each propose a way forward that attempts to break out of the binary between fact and fiction. Müller argues that there are not only two possibilities, the fact or fiction of the utterance related to the poet's life, but a third, which is the correspondence of the utterance to a fiction of the collective imagination of "courtly, ceremonialized song." The song is true in the sense that it matches this collective fiction.²⁴ Haferland, on the other hand, argues that the poet takes on a "pose" in the song, a stylization of his identity that is essentially authentic and sincere, though at a remove from the immediacy of the "real" poet.²⁵ In my view, however, it is more productive to turn our attention away from this concept altogether.

The problems with the application of the concept of fictionality to medieval literature, as Manuel Braun has recently demonstrated, ultimately do not admit of a solution. He bases this argument on three conclusions that he draws from an analysis of the relevant scholarship. First, no clear concept of fictionality is expressed in the Middle Ages. Second, any social practice that might have depended on a work's fictional status is lost along with the performance situation. And third, the kind of medieval literature that might today be taken as fictional has not developed techniques that differentiate it from other genres or forms of communication, such as historical narrative.²⁶ Thus, we must examine medieval literature through another lens.²⁷

²² Haferland, *Hohe Minne*, 37–44, 126–50, 374–76. Haferland's view recalls the nineteenth-century biographical interpretation of Minnesang. On the conflicted relationship of early twentieth-century criticism, exemplified by Carl von Kraus, to this older tradition, see Kuhn, "Minnesang als Aufführungsform," 1. More recently, Rüdiger Schnell has argued that the nineteenth- and twentieth-century philologists who practiced biographical criticism were in fact reading the texts in the same way in which medieval readers approached them — once the songs had been written down and become poems. Schnell, "Vom Sänger zum Autor," 103–4.

²³ Müller, "Die Fiktion höfischer Liebe," 49, 64. Andreas Kablitz argues that "fictionality" as a quality of representation is in fact a category rather than a scale: either a text claims to represent reality or it does not. However, he concedes that "fictivity" as a quality of that which is represented does exist on a scale in both fictional and factual writing: a text's matter can be closer to or farther from reality; see Kablitz, *Kunst des Möglichen*, 165–70. I would argue that these two dimensions cannot be so cleanly differentiated, and, with Sonja Glauch, that Kablitz's view comes from a modern conceptualization of fictionality; see Glauch, "Fiktionalität im Mittelalter," 406–10.

²⁴ Müller, "Die Fiktion höfischer Liebe," 51; see also Müller, "Ir sult sprechen willekommen."

²⁵ Haferland, "Minnesang als Posenrhetorik," 91.

²⁶ Braun, "Der Glaube an Heroen," 91–99.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

The debate over the fictionality of Minnesang assumes that its language functions as mimesis: it represents either the real world, an imagined world, or some blend of the two—a version of the real world with imagined elements added. The difficulty here is that the discussion is informed largely by the evidence given in the texts themselves. There is very little direct historical information about these poets or their milieu.²⁸ As mentioned above, one of the main reasons why Minnesang has often been considered fictional is that the songs are full of conventional tropes, which suggests that the authors have modelled their songs on other songs rather than on their own emotions.²⁹ But the fictionality of a text depends on the relation of the reader or author to it, not on the characteristics of the text itself.³⁰ The fact that Minnesang is clearly patterned on literary models is therefore not evidence of fictionality but of its participation in a literary discourse—what Mark Chinca refers to as its *Literaturhaftigkeit*, its literariness.³¹

Representation is, of course, not the only function of language in medieval art. As Mary Carruthers points out, medieval aesthetic understanding was steeped in the rhetorical tradition. One of the main functions of art was persuasion: “Instead of the Romantic maxim that art requires ‘a willing suspension of disbelief,’ medieval art instead seeks to effect in its audience [. . .] ‘a confident consent to believe.’” Taking the persuasive function of medieval art seriously opens the possibility that, rather than creating a “special state of being” (that is, a fictional world), the work of art establishes a social situation that calls for specific actions to be taken by the audience.³² Lyric, in particular, has its roots in the non-mimetic discourse of epideixis, the rhetoric of praise and blame.³³ Jonathan Culler has argued that this function of shaping collective judgment has remained central to the genre of the lyric throughout its history, despite the Romantic tendency to see lyric as pure subjectivity or the recent tendency to read it through the lens of fictionality, which is borrowed from the central modern genre of the novel.³⁴ According to this view, in lyric, the act asked of the audience is judgment, and the goal sought is belief.

So far, the debate about Minnesang has centered on the question of the referent of the word *ich*. My question is, instead what this *ich* attempts to convince the audience of. There is, of course, the obvious object of praise in these love songs: the lady. One

²⁸ See Meves, *Regesten deutscher Minnesänger*, 651–58 on Heinrich von Morungen. For recent work on the social position of the performers and on the incorporation of performance theory into medieval scholarship, see Dobozy, *Re-Membering the Present*, 3–26.

²⁹ Sara Poor has illustrated the problems with reading medieval texts as the product of literary conventions rather than human authors: it implies “a form of literary determinism that leads to a proverbial dead end.” Poor, *Mechthild of Magdeburg and Her Book*, 8.

³⁰ For an overview of the relevant research and a discussion with reference to Gottfried von Straßburg’s *Tristan*, see Chinca, “Mögliche Welten.” On reception as a criterion for fictionality, see also Schneider, “Fiktionalität, Erfahrung und Erzählen,” 61–65.

³¹ Chinca uses the term in the sense of the *literaturnost*’ of the Russian Formalists. Chinca, “Fiktivität und Fiktionalität,” 305.

³² Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages*, 14.

³³ In ancient Greece, as Jeffrey Walker has argued, epideictic rhetoric “shapes the fundamental grounds, the ‘deep’ commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums.” Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, 7–9.

³⁴ Culler, “Lyric, History, and Genre”; Culler, “Why Lyric?”

epideictic function of the songs might be to persuade the audience that the singer's beloved is indeed the fairest of them all. But Minnesang does not only make claims about the lady; it also foregrounds the *ich* who is making those claims, and thus invites the audience to make judgments that go beyond the performer, to the author himself.

In the pair of songs referenced above, Morungen uses a playful self-quotation to establish himself as the author of a body of work.³⁵ In one song, he uses several different metaphors to underscore the length of time he has been serving his lady with song, including a striking image of speaking birds:

*Waer ein sitich alder ein star, die mehten sît
gelernet hân, daz si spræchen minnen.
ich hân ir gedienet her vil lange zît.
mac sî sich doch mîner rede versinnen? (VI a, MF 127,23–28)³⁶*

If there were a parrot or a starling, they could already
have learned to say “love.”
I have served her for a very long time now.
But can she take heed of my words?

In another song, he laments that his beloved prefers another to him and says that the secret play of his eyes will be his message to her. Then he slyly cites his own earlier lines and, in doing so, evokes the length of time he has served her:

*Ich enweiz, wer dâ sanc:
“ein sitich unde ein star âne sinne
wol gelerneten, daz siu sprâchen ‘minne.’”
wol, sprich daz unde habe des iemer danc. (XI b, MF 132,7–10)³⁷*

I do not know who sang then:
“A parrot and a starling, though lacking sense,
Would have learned to say ‘love.’”
So say this and have for it my eternal thanks.

This self-quotation performs three functions in the strophe, one for each of the roles that the speaker is playing simultaneously. First, the speaker in his role as *lover* subtly emphasizes his loyalty to his lady both by alluding to another song that is about loyalty and by pointing out that he has been singing the same tune for a long time; that is, he has been unwavering in his love and its expression. He finishes with an attempt to keep the same song working for him in the future, using a common topos expressing gratitude

³⁵ Sarah Kay has recently documented the extensive practice of quotation in troubadour lyric, though the focus there is on quotation of others, not self-quotation. Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales*.

³⁶ On this song, see Pretzel, “Drei Lieder Heinrichs von Morungen,” 110–13.

³⁷ For detailed discussion of other aspects of this song, see Schweikle, “Textkritik und Interpretation”; Objartel, “Morungens Strophe”; Pfeiffer, “Die Gewalt der Sprache.”

towards others who will put in a good word for him with his lady. Second, the speaker as *singer* emphasizes his artistry by treating his own words as worthy of quotation. When the singer says that he does not know who sang these lines before, of course the audience knows that he *does* know, since it was he.³⁸

With this gesture, the voice speaking in the song outstrips the momentary role of the singer, pushing the audience to perceive not only the two roles *within* the song, but one *behind* it as well. The coyness of the self-quotation relies on listeners who are in the know; it implies that this snatch of song must have been familiar to the audience as Heinrich von Morungen's own. Perhaps he is attempting to make it so with a performative speech act that, by imputing to these lines the quality of being well known, makes them well known.³⁹ Or perhaps the lines had in fact become popular at court since the composition of the first song and had become Morungen's calling card. In either case, for the statement to achieve its full possibilities, the audience, or at least some of its members, must recognize the lines as a self-quotation. Thus the joke pulls the audience in beyond the surface roles of singer and lover, bringing them to recognize a third figure: the *author*, who arises from the text as an organizing subjectivity that ties together the two songs—a self behind the roles. It is this author who is speaking in the closing line, where he urges his implied audience to repeat his words and thus spread his song. In this way, the author both draws on his reputation, in order to connect these utterances across songs, and develops that reputation further, by encouraging more performances.⁴⁰

The persuasive, performative nature of the quotation, its attempt to conjure up a reputation for Morungen, is not the only indicator that this strophe reveals the voice of an author figure. Just as important is that the content of the message seems to contradict its function. Whereas his self-quotation emphasizes the lover's constancy, the singer's artistry, and the author's reputation, the actual sentiment within the quoted passage downplays the ideals that animate both the singer and the lover: even a mindless bird could parrot the words of courtly love. A single instance of the image of a bird learning to say the word "love" could simply be a way of emphasizing the duration of his love service. But by repeating the image, by overdetermining it with the addition of the descriptor "âne sinne" (lacking sense), by tying it to the figure of Morungen, and by encouraging its continued (empty) repetition, the speaker here indicates that he sees through the conventions of Minnesang. The language of Minnesang, and its special degree of attention to love and suffering, is revealed as formulaic. This dissonance hints

³⁸ This distinction between the singer and the lover is conventional in the scholarship. Recently, however, James Schultz has explained exactly how these roles work: the singer is a "performance function" — that is, an identity that the performer assumes by means of stepping out before an audience — while the lover is a "performative role" in the sense of speech-act theory: the speaker makes himself known as a lover by citing norms of the courtly discourse of love. Schultz, "Performance and Performativity in Minnesang," 377–87.

³⁹ For a treatment of the theory of performativity and its application to medieval lyric, see Kasten, "In der Schwebe," 76–84.

⁴⁰ An analogous play with multifaceted author roles, though of course with different stakes, can be seen in Rudolf von Ems's *Weltchronik*, as Moritz Wedell has demonstrated. Wedell, "Poetische willekür," 15–18. Similarly, thirteenth-century medieval Latin writings evince a broad range of author roles. Vollmann, "Autorrollen," 817–27.

at a constitutive divergence between, on the one hand, the roles of singer and lover, and on the other, the author figure: while the singer and lover may lament that love brings sorrow and may even express frustration at rejection by the beloved, it is the author who has a position of insight from which he can question the ideals embodied by the practice of Minnesang. Thus, the song works to persuade the audience of both its author's mastery of literary conventions and his transcendence of them.

As Sarah Kay has argued with respect to troubadour poetry, intertextual references in the vein of Morungen's self-quotation can "reinscribe the subject in the framework of autobiography, provided that this term is not taken as referring to an individualistic narrative which is anecdotally true, but rather to self-representation in which discursive generality is tempered by a sense of historical specificity."⁴¹ This does not imply, in the mode of Haferland, a return to viewing the songs as literally true. In my reading of Kay's analysis, these gestures persuade the audience that they can sense the presence of a self behind this song, and behind all the other songs attached to the same author.

This is the kind of self-presentation that occurs in Morungen's songs as well, except that the key characteristic of the author figure is not autobiographical or even narrative.⁴² In contrast to the troubadours, who are the subject of Kay's analysis, the German poets do not generally mention their own names. More importantly, these songs do not make the figure of Morungen concrete for the audience by constructing a coherent course of actions that he took or events that happened to him.⁴³ So far as a narrative can be reconstructed for the first song—*West ich, ob ez verswîget möhte sîn* "If I knew whether it could be kept silent" (VI a, MF 127,1)—the following events have taken place: the speaker's beloved has come through his eyes into his heart, he has served her a long time, and many others lament his sorrow by singing his songs to her, but she ignores them as well as him. Such a summary is nearly impossible, however, for the second song—*Ich bin iemer der ander, niht der eine* "I am always the second, never the only one" (XI b, MF 131,25)—as almost all of it is in the subjunctive mood or the future tense. It can nevertheless be gathered that the speaker longs for his beloved and has hopes for a rapprochement with her, if their meeting is not hindered by guards (*huotaere*). The general situation of Minnesang is recognizable in both songs, but there are no specific events that tie them together as deriving from the life of the same person.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*, 16. Kablitz makes a similar argument about the Petrarch of the *Canzoniere*: "the fictive I of the poems stylizes himself text-internally, and that means within the fictive world that these texts construct, as the figure of the historical author." Kablitz, "Literatur, Fiktion und Erzählung," 39. The distinction between the author and the narrator or speaker has recently been questioned; see especially Glauch, *An der Schwelle zur Literatur*, 77–105.

⁴² Rüdiger Schnell has argued for the separation of the concept of the author as producer of the text and as biographical subject. Schnell, "'Autor' und 'Werk,'" 72.

⁴³ My point here contradicts the oft-made argument that no historical interest in an author figure behind the lyrics came about until a more clearly biographical and explicitly personal mode of poetry developed over the course of the thirteenth century. A recent example with references to earlier literature is Glauch, *An der Schwelle zur Literatur*, 117–29.

⁴⁴ This stands in contrast to the new kind of lyric that Oswald von Wolkenstein invents around the turn of the fifteenth century. He transforms the conventions of authorship by drawing on his own life story and

The absence of narrative indicates that any sense of coherence between the songs is not to be found in biography or even in a perception that the characters—the lover, the beloved—are the same in both songs, but rather in the attempt to persuade the audience that the figure of Heinrich von Morungen himself is the locus of insight.⁴⁵ He is the one able both to perform the roles of singer and lover and to transcend them, to compose songs in two different keys and nonetheless bind them together. The lover may be stymied, the singer may be repeating empty clichés, but the author sees through it all.

***Mouvance* and Authorial Reputation**

Self-presentation, of course, is not all there is to authorship. For us, the author is reachable only through the works as they have been transmitted. The New Philology, in particular, reminds us of the ways in which the material transmission of works—as Stephen G. Nichols termed it, the “manuscript matrix”—calls into question the role and even the concept of the individual author.⁴⁶ Influenced by Paul Zumthor and Bernard Cerquiglini, new philologists came to see the instability of medieval works not as evidence of error but as a productive aspect of medieval literary culture.⁴⁷ There was, in their view, “a sense of potential incompleteness” in medieval works that invited revision and renewal by later “authors” who were not subservient to the authority of an original author in the modern sense.⁴⁸ According to Cerquiglini’s often quoted dictum, “The author is not a medieval concept.”⁴⁹ This textual instability—*mouvance*, in Zumthor’s term—has in the last few decades perhaps been more important to the interpretation of lyric than that of any other medieval genre.⁵⁰ Other genres, such as religious, didactic, and legal texts, show less *mouvance*. In general, the greater the claims of the *materia* to transmit norms and values through immutable truth, the greater the degree of stability the

turning it into a work of art — not simply an autobiography, but what Manuel Braun calls an “art of life.” Braun, “Lebenskunst,” 138.

⁴⁵ As Beate Kellner has shown with respect to one of Walther’s songs, modern ideas of coherence are often beside the point in Minnesang. Kellner, “Nement, frowe, disen cranz,” 202.

⁴⁶ Nichols, “Philology in a Manuscript Culture,” 4. As he later argues, “the whole concept of “authority” when applied to secular literature can be seen as a chimera, an ideal sought for by some authors, though perhaps fewer than one might think.” Nichols, “Why Material Philology? Some Thoughts,” 17.

⁴⁷ Whether one places the emphasis, with Zumthor, on orality and *mouvance*, or, with Cerquiglini, on textuality and variance, seems to me less important than what they share: an interest in the fluidity of medieval literary language and its openness to revision. Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, 47–48; Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 32–45, 77–78, 84 n. 10.

⁴⁸ Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, 47.

⁴⁹ Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 8. For Cerquiglini, influenced by Michel Foucault, “the author” as an organizing concept depends on the cultural and technological conditions of modernity, such as the printing press, the laws of copyright, and the conventions that arose in connection with both. *Ibid.*, 1–12. See also Barthes, “The Death of the Author.”

⁵⁰ This is partly due to the convenient brevity of lyrics. Joachim Bumke’s magisterial *Die vier Fassungen der Nibelungenklage* demonstrates how textual instability can be incorporated into the study and edition of narrative works—only with tremendous effort.

texts demand.⁵¹ A single lyric might appear in several manuscripts in quite dissimilar dress—replacing some words or using different syntax, comprising a different number and order of strophes, or being attributed to a different (or no) author. Do we not need, then, to seek a framework other than that implied in the term “authorship” to understand how audiences would have received an entity so changeable and so easily divorced from the context of its production?⁵² On the contrary: in my view, *mouvance* is not incompatible with the sense of the author that I have been drawing out here. Indeed, *mouvance* can in certain circumstances be a textual strategy used to help evoke the figure of the author and establish his reputation.

What happens to the author’s reputation after his song has been sung? This depends in large part on what happens to his songs—not only whether they are passed on but, if so, in what form. The songs were undoubtedly transmitted both orally and in writing, though much more is known about the manuscript versions. These manuscripts provide evidence of the importance of the author figure for the reception of Minnesang in particular. On the one hand, it is true that most narrative, religious, and didactic texts of the time were transmitted anonymously, as were many lyrics.⁵³ Even some of the Middle High German narrative works that we associate today with authors, such as the *Tristan* of Gottfried von Straßburg, were often transmitted in manuscripts without the author’s name and thus must have been, for many medieval audiences, anonymous.⁵⁴ But on the other hand, all three of the major German songbooks from this period, all written in the decades around 1300, not only name the authors of the individual songs but organize the whole collection by the authors’ names.⁵⁵ Some manuscripts of French and Provençal lyrics are also organized by author, but the author principle is both more consistent and

⁵¹ The strongest demand for stability is made by texts that do the work of salvation: Grubmüller, “Verändern und Bewahren,” 32; Quast, “Der feste Text,” 45–46.

⁵² Jan-Dirk Müller has recently made this argument using as his example a strophe that is transmitted anonymously in one manuscript but is included in other manuscripts in songs attributed to Walther and to Reinmar. Müller, “The Identity of a Text.”

⁵³ For more on the anonymous transmission of medieval lyric, see Holznagel, *Wege in die Schriftlichkeit*, 53–54.

⁵⁴ Wachinger, “Autorschaft und Überlieferung,” 3.

⁵⁵ The three songbooks are the *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A* (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, cpg 357; written in Alsace, c. 1270), the *Weingartner Liederhandschrift B* (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. HB XIII 1; Constance, c. 1300), and the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C* (*Codex Manesse*; Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, cpg 848; Zurich, c. 1300). A fourth major collection of Minnesang appears not in a songbook but in a composite manuscript, the *Würzburger Liederhandschrift E* (second volume of the Housebook of the prothonotary Michael de Leone; Munich, Universitätsbibliothek, 2^o Cod. ms. 731; Würzburg, c. 1350), in which the lyrics are likewise organized by author. Manuscript descriptions, links to online facsimiles, and selected bibliographical information are available online in the *Handschriftencensus*: “Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A”; Busch and Heinzle, “Weingartner Liederhandschrift (B)”; Heinzle, “Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C”; Hein and Heinzle, “Zweiter Band des ‘Hausbuchs’ des Michael de Leone (‘Würzburger Liederhandschrift’).” More detailed research overviews and bibliography are available in the *Verfasserlexikon*: Kornrumpf, “Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A”; Kornrumpf, “Weingartner Liederhandschrift”; Kornrumpf, “Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C”; Kornrumpf, “Michael de Leone.”

more pronounced in the German manuscripts.⁵⁶ This is clear from the common feature of author illustrations. In illustrated troubadour and trouvère manuscripts, the authors are usually depicted in small historiated initials; in the two later and more elaborate Minnesang manuscripts, the *Weingartner Liederhandschrift* and the *Codex Manesse*, however, each oeuvre is usually introduced by a full-page color image and rubrication with the name of the author to whom the songs are ascribed.⁵⁷ In addition, the authors appear in both of these manuscripts in the order of the social hierarchy, beginning with Emperor Heinrich VI.⁵⁸ The combination of the space given to author images and the weight placed on the rank of the author indicates that the written record of Minnesang was a forerunner of the growing legitimation and authorization of medieval texts through the category of personal authorship, which continued through the later Middle Ages.⁵⁹ The figure of the author fundamentally structured the written reception of Minnesang.

In these illustrated manuscripts, produced more than a century after the beginnings of Minnesang, the author images provide an “aura of authorship” that substitutes for the physical presence of the author in performance.⁶⁰ But no direct evidence of the reception of those performances of Minnesang exists. The surviving written record begins, for the most part, nearly a century after the time when these poets were practicing their art.⁶¹ Whether the authors composed in writing and whether the songs circulated during these intervening decades in writing or only orally is not clear, though the evidence suggests that the culture was semi-oral.⁶² What is clear is that, whatever other modes of circulation were available, the author’s own oral performance and its aural reception left strong traces in the songs.⁶³ But since almost all the melodies,

⁵⁶ Holznagel, *Wege in die Schriftlichkeit*, 53–56. Sylvia Huot has shown that the author plays a larger role in the transmission of Old French lyric than in the transmission of Old French narrative. Huot, *From Song to Book*, 46–48. A recent book on the development of medieval songbooks in European context is Galvez, *Songbook*.

⁵⁷ Peters, *Das Ich im Bild*, 25–32, and images 114–60 at the end of the book. As Peters mentions, author images have the same or greater prominence in illustrated Minnesang manuscripts that survive only in part, the Budapest fragments (Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Germ. 92; Bavaria, c. 1300) and the *Naglersches Fragment* (Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, mgo 125; southwest Germany, c. 1300). On these manuscript fragments, see “Budapester Liederhandschrift”; “Naglersches Fragment”; Kornrumpf, “Budapester Liederhandschrift.”

⁵⁸ That is, they are placed in the order in which the compilers thought them to have stood in the social hierarchy, though it is not clear to what extent the compilers’ subjective impressions matched the historical reality; see Bumke, *Ministerialität und Ritterdichtung*, 14–21.

⁵⁹ See Peters, *Das Ich im Bild*, 9; Wachinger, “Autorschaft und Überlieferung,” 23. This gradually increasing interest in personal authorship is also evident in Latin theological texts after the twelfth century, as Jan-Dirk Müller and Christel Meier have pointed out, and in German narratives of the thirteenth century, as Sebastian Coxon has argued. Müller, “Auctor – Actor – Author,” 29; Meier, “Autorschaft im 12. Jahrhundert,” 208; Coxon, *The Presentation of Authorship*, 17–34.

⁶⁰ Stolz, “Die Aura der Autorschaft,” 97–99.

⁶¹ For a description of the few fugitive Middle High German lyrics written down before the first major codex, the *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A*, was compiled c. 1270, see Holznagel, *Wege in die Schriftlichkeit*, 21–25.

⁶² Müller, “Literacy, Orality, and Semi-Orality,” 297, 321–25.

⁶³ See especially Tervooren, “Aufführung”; Strohschneider, “nu sehent, wie der singet!”

and of course any accompanying gestures or dances, are lost, precisely what can be gleaned about the practice of performance is still much debated.⁶⁴

Indirectly, the manuscript transmission compels the conclusion that the author was, from the beginning, an important organizing principle even of aural reception. In this semi-oral context lurked two dangers that could derail an author's careful self-presentation. The first was the potential for his name to be lost, for despite the close relationship between author and song, there are indications that the songs were also performed by other singers. One indication is that the songs themselves often feature messengers who perform for a lady in place of the absent lover. In a famous lyric, Emperor Heinrich, for example, entreats others to sing his song to his beloved, whom he has not been able to greet himself for many days.⁶⁵ Indirectly, the manuscript attributions also illustrate this phenomenon. Sometimes, when a singer performed a song composed by someone else, his name became attached to it as the author, which led to mistaken attributions in some manuscripts.⁶⁶ Misattribution and anonymous transmission show the limits of the audience's historical consciousness of the author in Minnesang.⁶⁷ And yet for this genre, the author paradigm dominates: most of the manuscript attributions are accurate and consistent across manuscripts. For this to be the case, the tradition of associating the songs with their authors must have been much older than the manuscripts themselves.⁶⁸

The related phenomenon of *mouvance* seems to have been the greater of the two dangers. Again, the only evidence for what took place in this semi-oral context is what survives in manuscript form. Minnesang, like French and Provençal lyric, is particularly characterized by the form of instability in which integral blocks of lines, usually whole stanzas, are rearranged in different manuscripts to form new patterns. This seems to indicate that later performers and redactors, lacking a sense of the integrity of the author's creation, made free with the song texts.⁶⁹ Indeed, there is evidence that in some cases scribes made significant changes to the texts they compiled.⁷⁰ Given this evidence,

⁶⁴ The interest in performance in the German Minnesang scholarship goes back to Kuhn, "Minnesang als Aufführungsform." More recently, although Gert Hübner, for example, has argued that the texts do not reveal practice, Julia Zimmermann and Michael Shields have provided compelling examples of what can be gleaned from close reading. Hübner, "Gesang zum Tanz im Minnesang"; Shields, "Tanzspuren"; Zimmermann, "Typenverschränkung." On the melodies, see Aarburg, "Melodien."

⁶⁵ Kaiser Heinrich III, MF 5,16–22. As Beate Kellner has shown, in this song, the difference between the role of the lover and that of the singer is particularly important: later singers could not have been taking on the persona of the emperor in any literal sense. Kellner, "Ich grüeze mit gesange," 117.

⁶⁶ See Bein, *Mit fremden Pegasusen pflügen*, 32–35.

⁶⁷ An example of the former is the attribution of songs to both Reinmar and Heinrich von Rugge; Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 62–64, 339–42. And of course, there are instances of anonymous lyric transmission, despite the overall preponderance of named transmission. See, for example, the lyrics scattered in the collection of didactic poetry known as the *Heidelberger Liederhandschrift D* (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, cpg 350; Middle Germany, c. 1300). For more information, see Könitz, "Heidelberger Liederhandschrift cpg 350"; Wachinger, "Heidelberger Liederhandschrift cpg 350."

⁶⁸ Wachinger, "Autorschaft und Überlieferung," 12.

⁶⁹ Müller, "Aufführung – Autor – Werk," 156–61.

⁷⁰ Franz Josef Worstbrock has argued, for example, that the scribe of the *Codex Manesse* heavily edited the strophes of the Burggraf von Rietenburg in order to form them into a coherent oeuvre. Worstbrock,

few would argue now that the manuscripts consistently capture versions of songs that the authors composed for different performances.⁷¹

Despite the redactors' role, however, variation is not merely a phenomenon of reception; it is inherent in the songs as the authors composed them. Morungen's self-quotation provides a small-scale but significant example of an adaptation that must have been undertaken by the author himself. In the second song (XI b), he adds the words *âne sinne* "lacking sense" to the lines he quotes. The whole architecture of the second song depends on this alteration. It allows what had been the first two lines of an alternate rhyme scheme in song VI a (*sît / minnen / zît / versinnen*) to become the middle two lines of an enclosed rhyme (*sanc / sinne / minne / danc*). Thus, the change in wording cannot be a later corruption but must have been made when the second song was composed.⁷² In this instance, there is a delicate balance between the persistence of the quotation's meaning through the near verbatim correspondence—he has served for so long a time that a bird could have learned to sing "love"—and the insertion of a new sense through the addition of a short phrase—the emphasis on the senselessness of the empty parroting of the language of love.

There is also larger-scale evidence that variation is a phenomenon of production as well as reception, as Thomas Cramer has shown. In the first place, rearrangement of strophes is not a universal aspect of medieval song. Indeed, the same poets who composed Minnesang also composed songs in a longer form with strophes of differing length and structure (often on religious themes), and this form—the *Leich*—proves very stable in transmission.⁷³ This suggests that *mouvance* was not unavoidable. Moreover, *mouvance* is more characteristic of some poets than others. It is present in early Minnesang but grows much more prominent in the decades around 1200 in the songs of Morungen, Reinmar der Alte, Walther von der Vogelweide, and Neidhart, before becoming less prevalent during the thirteenth century.⁷⁴ This suggests that *mouvance* is part of a poetic program associated with particular authors. In response to this pattern, Cramer has suggested that this consistent variability could be due to particular authors'

"Überlieferungsrang," 124. For the argument that later redactors were primarily responsible for the variability of Minnesang texts, see Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst?*, 53–63; Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 14–26. Redactors made even greater changes in courtly epic texts; see Bumke, "Autor und Werk," 95–101.

⁷¹ Among examples of this earlier line of argument, see Frenzel, "Minnesang: Sung Performance and Strophic Orders"; Schweikle, "Zur Edition mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik," 9–11.

⁷² Despite earlier claims, often based on stylistic considerations, that much of the material in the Minnesang manuscripts is "inauthentic," there is no evidence that any of these lines were composed by someone else and added to Morungen's songs. For the nineteenth-century debate on the authenticity of several lines of song VI, see Heinrich von Morungen, *Lieder*, 153; Moser and Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 2:98 and 3.1:289–91.

⁷³ See Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst?*, 53. Some twelfth- and thirteenth-century French and Provençal songs stabilize their form using devices such as a complex rhyme scheme, while other songs from the same period, and even by the same authors, are open to *mouvance*. Van Vleck, *Memory and Re-Creation*, 71–129. For evidence of these techniques in thirteenth-century German love lyric, see Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst?*, 116–24.

⁷⁴ See Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst?*, 50–124.

choice to construct songs in such a way as to leave them open to later rearrangement and renewal.⁷⁵

But we do not have to be satisfied with conclusions based on inference from these trends in manuscript variation. In fact, in the two songs examined here, Morungen explicitly anticipates that his songs will be sung, and changed, by others. I have already noted that in the second of Morungen's songs (XI b), the singer encourages his audience to repeat the lines that he has quoted, further spreading his name and fame. In the earlier of the two songs (VI a), he is more explicit about what happens when his songs are sung by others:

*nû ist diu klage vor ir dicke manicvalt
gegen mîner nôt, swie sis niht erkenne.
Doch klaget ir maniger mînen kumber
vil dicke mit gesange. (VI a, MF 127,15–20)*

Now the lamentation before her is multiplied as much
as my distress, but still she does not recognize it.
So many lament to her my sorrow
very often in song.

In this image, the speaker emphasizes and re-emphasizes the multiplication of his song in the mouths of others, and he seems aware that it multiplies not only in number but also in form (*manicvalt*). Morungen's song anticipates specifically what can happen in oral performance, but even in the manuscripts we can see the traces of the unstable transmission process. The manuscripts bear out Morungen's statement that his song becomes manifold. Song VI is transmitted in two versions—one in manuscript A, and one in manuscript C—that differ in both number and arrangement of the strophes. In manuscript A, the song begins on fol. 14v with the line *Der also vil geriefe in einen touben walt* "If one were so often to cry out in a silent wood," (VI b, MF 127,12), and in manuscript C on fol. 77v with *West ich, ob ez verswîget möhte sîn* "If I knew whether it could be kept silent" (VI a, MF 127,1). Both are attributed to Morungen. This song, like most of the German love lyrics from this period, uses a two-part strophe form: an opening *Aufgesang* (consisting of two metrically identical halves called *Stollen*) followed by a metrically differentiated concluding *Abgesang*. Not only does C reverse the order of the two strophes as presented in A, but it also splits one strophe into two parts between the *Aufgesang* and *Abgesang*. Each of these becomes part of a new strophe.⁷⁶ This reorganization of the structure can be represented as follows:

⁷⁵ Cramer argues that in some cases the authors may have introduced unconventional elements into their songs as "stumbling blocks" (*Stolpersteine*) that force later performers and redactors to stop and look at the songs with fresh eyes, thus perhaps provoking them into creative engagement. *Ibid.*, 68. For a critique of this argument, see Schiendorfer, "Minnesang als Leselyrik," 397–99.

⁷⁶ A common explanation for *mouvance* in Minnesang is that the strophe is the basic unit of coherence, while the song is secondary and open to change; see Moser and Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 2:19–20; Tervooren, "Wahl der Leithandschrift," 136–37; Zotz, *Intégration courtoise*, 145. Morungen's

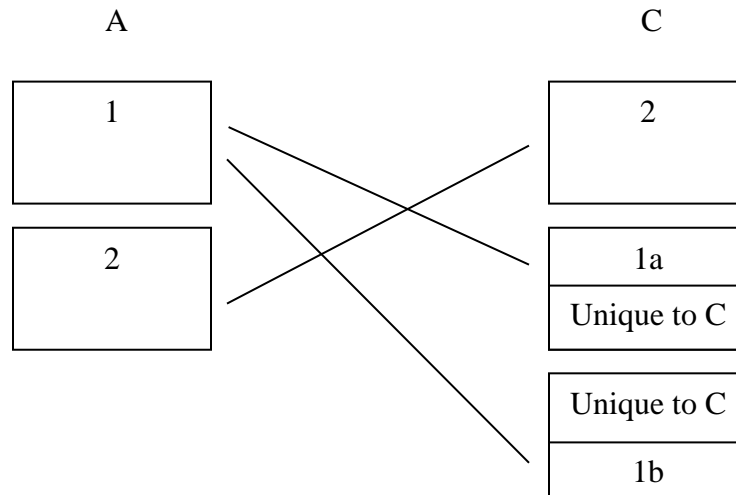


Figure 1: The structure of Morungen’s song VI, variously called *West ich, ob ez verswîget möhte sîn* (VI a, from the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C*, fol. 77v) or *Der also vil geriefe in einen touben walt* (VI b, from the *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A*, fol. 14v).

Were these structural changes made by the author, other performers, or scribes? Cramer claims that even authors who anticipated later variation did not themselves make the changes that appear in different manuscripts. According to his argument, it is unlikely that, for example, four different manuscripts happen by chance to transmit four different authorial versions of a song.⁷⁷ Yet it is scarcely more likely that four manuscripts coincidentally transmit four later singers’ or scribes’ versions, each of which addresses the questions inherent in the text in a different but complementary manner. Surely this question must be answered case by case.⁷⁸ As Mark Chinca puts it, “recensions are most likely to be authorial when each is meaningful and complete in itself and the differences between them are not the result of simple abridgment or extension.”⁷⁹

However, there can be no certainty as to which recensions are authorial. For, if the poet uses his songs to persuade his audience of his position of mastery and insight, it should not be surprising that those members of the audience who are themselves performers, and who take up the songs, do not disassemble them for new construction but renovate them with care for the existing framework. The lyrics that are transmitted in multiple versions offer a time-lapse collaboration between poets, performers, and redactors, in which poets composed with variation in mind and thus provided the creative frame for their own and later interpreters’ interactions with the songs.⁸⁰

song complicates this view. Here the strophes, like the song as a whole, do not maintain their integrity across manuscript versions.

⁷⁷ Cramer, *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst?*, 62.

⁷⁸ For this point, see Heinen, *Mutabilität im Minnesang*, v.

⁷⁹ Chinca, “A Song and Its Situations,” 118–19; similarly Holznagel, *Wege in die Schriftlichkeit*, 422.

⁸⁰ As Kathryn Starkey and Haiko Wandhoff have suggested with regard to Walther’s song *Nemt, frouwe*,

A close look at Morungen's song shows how he uses this flexibility to persuade the audience of his status as the master behind all the possible permutations. While both versions could be summarized as conventional laments for unrequited love, each views this love with a different slant—and thus constitutes an independent recension of the same work. The A-version of Morungen's lyric presents a straightforward song of love for the unattainable lady, woven from Morungen's characteristically tactile imagery. In the first strophe, the speaker laments that his lady does not take note of his love despite his long service, and protests that he could more easily bend a tree with his words than reach her. In the second strophe, he emphasizes the secrecy of his love, employs the classical topos of the enclosure of the lady in his heart, and concludes with an exclamation voicing his desire for her reciprocation.⁸¹ This version of the lyric illustrates the unending nature of love service by traversing the distance from a complaint to an affirmation of his constancy, from despair to abiding hope.⁸²

The C-version inverts this trajectory by reversing the order of these two strophes. It places the description of the speaker's love and the expression of his desire at the opening, which then justifies his complaint about the lack of recognition of his long service and prepares the way for the impossibility topos (here, bending a tree with words) that ends the lyric. This inversion establishes a different temporality in which the lyric enacts a narrative of long suffering. The inclusion of the two half-strophes unique to C serves this end both on the level of form, by lengthening the space that the narrative of suffering occupies, and on the level of content, by emphasizing the length of time he has served his lady. The word *lange* "long," for example, appears three times in C but not at all in A. In addition, these two new half-strophes include the lines about the parrot and those about the others who take up the speaker's lament, adding a greater level of self-reflexivity to the C-version of the song.

Thus, each manuscript provides a different but equally valid version of the song.⁸³ Neither version is unified by a consistent message, but nor are they not mere juxtapositions of unrelated strophes. Despite their differences, they share a common project: by exploring alternating states of mind and ways of comprehending the possibilities of love and song, they persuade the audience of the author's position of ethical and artistic insight. We cannot know with certainty who is responsible for the distinctive features of each version, but our privileged position as recipients who have access to both—a position that could have been shared by audiences who heard multiple performances or by scribes who could choose from more than one exemplar—allows us to perceive the nuances that arise in the play of one version against another. Thus, the

disen kranz (L 74,20). Starkey and Wandhoff, "Mouvance – Varianz – Performanz," 67–68.

⁸¹ The abundant classical topoi in Morungen's songs have led many scholars to conclude that he had a clerical education and knew Latin; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 498. Nevertheless, the concept of authorship at work in his songs bears no strong relation to the medieval scholastic theory of authorship, as delineated most thoroughly by Alastair Minnis. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*.

⁸² Beate Kellner has demonstrated the sophisticated interplay in this version of the song between proximity and distance created by the juxtaposition of vision and voice. Kellner, "Gewalt und Minne," 40–41.

⁸³ Schweikle, "Doppelfassungen," 66–67. On this point, despite their methodological differences, Joachim Bumke and Bernard Cerquiglini would be in agreement. Bumke, "Der unfeste Text," 127; Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 77–78. See also Strohschneider, "Situationen des Textes," 71 n. 39.

resignation of the C-version can seem like a reaction against the naive hope of the A-version; on the other hand, the optimistic A-version can seem like a mental bulwark against the creeping despair of the C-version. Each stands on its own, but taken together, the two versions present a larger image of the circular nature of suffering in love—which travels from despair to hope and back again.

In this way, the two versions illustrate a bounded flexibility that delineates an authorial figure. The boundedness of this figure comes from the overall consistency of the wording and the strophes that constitute each version of the song, its flexibility from the small changes of wording, the rearrangement of strophes, and the (sometimes significant) changes in tone and meaning that these bring about.⁸⁴ Whatever changes might be made by the author himself or by later scribes, redactors, or performers, these are contained within a framework established by the author. The former's authority derives not from the particular message of the songs, nor from the narration of a coherent biography, but from a position of insight as the curator of multiple aesthetic and intellectual possibilities.

What I have argued for here is a form of authorship particular to this era of Minnesang, which both anticipates and depends on the vagaries of its transmission. Morungen's self-created reputation is not established on the basis of a firm, coherent, and consistent body of work but is, rather, built on a shifting set of songs that, from the beginning, do not have concrete form. The examples have shown the way that two songs (VI a and XI b)—or even two versions of the same song (VI a and b)—can contradict one another in message, in meaning, and in the conception of what courtly love entails. If Morungen composed songs with the idea that they would later be rearranged and adapted, he could not expect a subtle and complex line of argument to survive. Instead, the songs establish at the outset a flexible framework within which their versions comment on a given set of situations and problems, each one exploring and articulating different aesthetic and moral possibilities. Seen in this light, the figure of the author rises above biographical narrative or argumentative coherence to embody, instead, the mastery of a wealth of approaches to song and to love. The *ich* in these songs sets out to persuade immediate and distant audiences that this self animates a body of work—not *despite* the changes that the songs undergo but even *by means of* those changes. Though the songs invite renewal and regeneration, the author also says, "I was there first." From the beginning, a single song contains multitudes—infinite riches in a little room.

⁸⁴ This observation is inspired by Mark Chinca's argument that verbatim correspondence or near-correspondence guarantees the identity of a song from one performance to another, and also from one manuscript to another, by circumscribing the amount of variance. Chinca, "A Song and Its Situations," 115–16. See also Baisch, "Autorschaft und Intertextualität," 101. This argument applies equally to the figure of the author that the songs evoke.

Chapter 2. A Song of Selves: Reinmar der Alte as Master of Possibilities

Heinrich von Morungen has always been granted the elevated status of an artist. The way that he introduces an individual perspective into a tightly circumscribed art form, both through his startlingly visual imagery and his mastery of unusual forms, contrasted with the poverty of evidence that he was appreciated in his own era, has given rise to the sense that he was ahead of his time.⁸⁵ Ingrid Kasten has described his “Poetik des *schauwens*” (poetics of seeing) as a turn toward the world of concrete appearances, in which the glance of the beloved awakens the wild and fascinating force of love and overpowers the senses of the lover.⁸⁶

In all this, Morungen contrasts with Reinmar der Alte (d. before 1210), who was the most famous lyric poet of their moment, but is today, aesthetically speaking, rather less appreciated. “Scholastiker der unglücklichen Liebe”⁸⁷ (scholastic of unhappy love), “Meister des schönen Schmerzes”⁸⁸ (master of beautiful pain), purveyor of a “Poetik des *trûrens*”⁸⁹ (poetics of sorrowing), he is usually cast as the culmination of the tradition of *Hohe Minne*: the praise of virtue in self-restraint, joy in suffering unrequited love.⁹⁰ The image of Reinmar as the apogee of the ideals of classical *Minnesang* was produced by editors and scholars in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who strove to distill, from the large pool of songs attributed to Reinmar in the manuscripts, a single essence to be found in a tidily coherent biography and ideology of love.⁹¹ The zenith was reached when Carl von Kraus declared large swaths of Reinmar’s transmitted oeuvre inauthentic and focused instead on a core of songs that revolve around unrequited love.⁹² In classrooms and literary histories, this view of Reinmar remains unchanged: the

⁸⁵ Heinrich von Morungen, *Lieder*, 207.

⁸⁶ “Morungen [wendet] sich entschieden der Welt der konkreten Erscheinungen zu und begreift die Liebe als eine irrationale Macht, von der ein ebenso faszinierender wie beunruhigender Reiz ausgeht. So erhält die Frauenschönheit bei Morungen eine zentrale Bedeutung, denn ihr Anblick, das schauen, weckt das Verlangen nach Liebe und führt zu einer Hingabe an die Sinneseindrücke, die bis zur Selbstvergessenheit geht und in der sich für Morungen die eigentliche Liebeserfahrung konstituiert.” Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 319.

⁸⁷ Attributed to Ludwig Uhland; see Stange, *Reinmars Lyrik*, 23–24.

⁸⁸ Bertau, *Deutsche Literatur im europäischen Mittelalter*, 749.

⁸⁹ “Die gesellschaftliche Moral, die den Bestand des Gemeinwesens gewährleistet, ist für ihn ein fragloser Wert, und daraus ergibt sich zwingend, daß der einzelne bereit zu sein hat, auf die Verwirklichung sexueller Wünsche, die diese Ordnung gefährden könnten, zu verzichten. Dieser Verzicht ist allerdings keine Selbstverständlichkeit, sondern er muß mühevoll im Kampf gegen die ‘Triebnatur,’ in der leidvollen Erfahrung des *trûrens*, errungen werden. So erhält das *trûren* einen hohen ethischen Wert.” Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 310–11.

⁹⁰ For a sense of Reinmar’s reputation among medieval German authors, see the encomia collected by Günther Schweikle in *Dichter über Dichter*, listed on page 138.

⁹¹ In manuscripts A, B, C, and E, a total of approximately 88 different songs (270 strophes) are transmitted under Reinmar’s name, more than any other poet except Walther von der Vogelweide.

⁹² Kraus, *Die Lieder Reimars des Alten*, 3. Many of the songs he athetized are transmitted only in manuscript C.

conservative foil to the unappreciated genius Morungen and the innovator Walther von der Vogelweide.⁹³

This characterization reduces Reinmar to the cliché of the suffering lover. In recent decades, however, Helmut Tervooren and others have begun to add some movement to this stiff figure by rehabilitating for scholarship many songs, including vulgar ones, that had long been considered inauthentic, although the manuscripts attribute them to Reinmar.⁹⁴ These critiques point out the circularity of reducing the canon based on an image of Reinmar the sorrowful, then using the reduced canon to reinforce this image. By including once more in Reinmar's oeuvre songs celebrating joy in love, these arguments intend to foster a more open image of Reinmar as an author.⁹⁵

Now that we recognize the greater breadth of themes and forms in Reinmar's lyric oeuvre, it is easier to break free of the idea that his songs were primarily an exercise in promoting an ethical agenda, and thus from the tendency to identify Reinmar himself with the figure speaking in his songs. I propose that we do not have to look to the "inauthentic" songs to see how Reinmar carves out a position for himself as an author figure, but rather that a close reading of even his most canonical songs and their manuscript transmission shows that the image of him as the pure "Meister des schönen Schmerzes" is a scholarly invention. Neither biography nor ideology provides the key to the concept of authorship at work in Reinmar's songs. Instead, the songs use multiple surface roles, different versions of the singer and lover, to reflect many possible ways of responding to courtly ideals through stances toward both the beloved and society. In doing so, Reinmar explores the possibilities of figuration produced by the roles of the lover and singer in order to illustrate the aesthetic and intellectual mastery of the author figure standing behind them. Seen in this light, the songs of Morungen, Reinmar, and Walther represent not so much positions in a debate about the nature of love, but different approaches to exploring the fundamental possibilities available within the art form.⁹⁶

Reinmar articulates the drive for mastery in one of his most famous and often quoted strophes:

*Des einen und dekeines mê
wil ich ein meister sîn, al die wîle ich lebe:
daz lop wil ich, daz mir bestê
und mir die kunst diu werlt gemeine gebe,
Daz nieman sîn leit alsô schône kan getragen.* (Reinmar XII, MF 163,5–9)

⁹³ See, for example, Müller, "Das Mittelalter," 34; Gilgen, "Singer of Himself," 103.

⁹⁴ Tervooren, *Reinmar-Studien*; Tervooren, "Reinmar-Bild."

⁹⁵ See Maurer, *Die "Pseudoreimare"*; Bertau, "Überlieferung und Authentizität"; Stange, *Reinmars Lyrik*. But compare the literature review by Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 4–9, who opposes the open image of Reinmar. For a general overview of the Reinmar research, see Schweikle, "Reinmar der Alte." Franz Josef Holznagel points out that each of the three major *Minnesang* collections presents its own Reinmar. Holznagel, *Wege in die Schriftlichkeit*, 184.

⁹⁶ My argument here is inspired by Niklaus Largier's recent essay reconsidering the anti-courtly ideology that Walther's song "Nemet, frowe, disen kranz" has been said to represent. "Die Fiktion der Erotik."

Of this only and nothing more
do I want to be master, all the while that I live:
I want the praise that lasts for me,
and for all the world together to concede my artistry:
that no one can bear his pain so beautifully.

As the singer tells it, his whole life and energy are focused on a single goal: the mastery of singing his sorrow more beautifully than anyone else. This statement has often been read as breaking the bounds of the performance role of the singer and proclaiming authorial self-consciousness, providing evidence that Reinmar thinks of his singing as a calling and conceives of himself as an artist.⁹⁷ But in the twelfth century, the concepts of *kunst* and *meister*, as Hugo Kuhn has shown, are something different. Mastery encompassed skill in the various arts, from fencing to music, not merely what we now call the fine arts.⁹⁸ In that way, it was a semantically blurry term, which made it productive.⁹⁹ It connoted ability, competence, and rank, along with a binding *auctoritas*.¹⁰⁰ As Sabine Obermaier points out, in the context of this strophe, the word *meister* indicates a situation of competition in which the speaker claims preeminence.¹⁰¹ This passage, then, is less about claiming an inspired status for art as such, but rather about establishing Reinmar's identity as a craftsman of surpassing expertise, one who has mastered all the numerous skills needed for his chosen art.

In the first part of my argument I will address the manuscript transmission of one of Reinmar's most intricate songs, *Ein wiser man sol nicht ze vil* (XII), and the ways it has been misrepresented in editions and scholarship that contribute to the construction of the traditional view of Reinmar. In the second part I will lay out a close reading of the manuscript versions of *Ein wiser man* in order to bring out the way that the interplay of roles produces the sense of an author persona behind them pulling the strings.¹⁰² This song negotiates the problem of how to love while remaining distant by trying out different ways of articulating the problem of the relation between lover and beloved, singer and object of song. The singer takes on new roles from one strophe to the next, the identity of the self figured now as a quandary inside his own heart, now as a conflict acted out on a public stage. This range of possible articulations and explorations of love varies not only from one strophe to the next, but also across the manuscript versions.

For orientation, I present the song on the following pages as it is edited by Hugo Moser and Helmut Tervooren in *Des Minnesangs Frühling* (MFMT), with my own translation. Their edition follows the strophe order of manuscript E.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ E.g. Reinmar der Alte, *Lieder*, 345; Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 36; Schultz, *Courtly Love*, 109.

⁹⁸ Kuhn, "Determinanten der Minne," 85–88.

⁹⁹ Bürkle, "Der Meister-Diskurs," 125.

¹⁰⁰ Grosse, "Der Gebrauch des Wortes 'meister,'" 291–94.

¹⁰¹ Obermaier, *Von Nachtigallen und Handwerkern*, 66.

¹⁰² I will refer to the work as a whole using the shortened title *Ein wiser man*, in regularized orthography, and the manuscript versions according to the manuscript sigla and their own orthography.

¹⁰³ Against MFMT, I have restored *sîn wîp* to verse 2, as it appears in all four manuscripts. See Rupp, "Reinmars Lied Nr. 12," 83; Reinmar der Alte, *Lieder*, 346; Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 837–38.

Ein wîser man sol niht ze vil (Reinmar XII, MFMT)

<i>Ein wîser man sol niht ze vil sîn wîp versuoehen noch gezîhen, dêst mîn rât, von der er sich nicht scheiden wil, und er der wâren schulden doch keine hât. Swer wil al der welte lûge an ein ende komen, der hât im ane nôt ein vil herzelîchez leit genomen. wan sol boeser rede gedagen. vrâge ouch nieman lange des, daz er ungerne hoere sagen.</i>	MF 162,7	A wise man should not too much put his woman to the test or accuse her, that is my advice, from whom he does not want to part, if he does not know of any true faults. Whoever wants to come to the end of all the lies of the world has without necessity loaded his heart down with suffering. For dishonorable talk should be kept quiet. And no one should ask for long about that which he does not want to hear spoken.
<i>Si jehent, daz staete sî ein tugent, der andern vrowe; sô wol im, der si habe! si hât mir vröide in mîner jugent mit ir wol schoener zuht gebrochen abe, Daz ich unz an mînen tôt niemer sî gelobe. ich sihe wol, swer nû vert wüetende, als er tobe, daz den diu wîp sô minnent ê danne einen man, der des niht kan. ich ensprach in nie sô nâhe mê.</i>	MF 162,25	They say that constancy is a virtue, mistress of the other [virtues]; happy he who has it! She has in my youth ended my joy with her cultivated behavior, so that I will never praise her more, unto my death. I see well, he who acts frenzied, as if he were raging, that the women love him more readily than a man who cannot do this. I have never spoken to them so accusingly.
<i>War umbe vüeget mir diu leit, von der ich hôhe solte tragen den muot? jô wirb ich niht mit kündecheit noch dur versuoehen, alsam vil meneger tuot. Ich enwart nie rehte vrô, wan sô ich si sach. sô gie von herzen gar, swaz mîn munt wider sî gesprach. sol nû diu triuwe sîn verlorn, sô endarf ez nieman wunder nemen, hân ich underwîlen einen kleinen zorn.</i>	MF 162,16	Why does she inflict suffering on me, from whom I should have high spirits? For I do not woo with guile nor in order to tempt, as so many do. I was never truly happy, except when I saw her. Thus all my mouth spoke to her came truly from my heart. If the loyalty now be lost, then no one may wonder if I occasionally have a little anger.

<p><i>Ez tuot ein leit nâch liebe wê; sô tuot ouch lîhte ein liep nâch leide wol. swer welle, daz er vrô bestê, daz eine er dur daz ander lîden sol Mit bescheidenlîcher klage und gar ân arge site. zer weltē ist niht sô guot, daz ich ie gesach, sô guot gebite. swer die gedulteclichen hât, der kam des ie mit vröiden hin. alsô dinge ich, daz mîn noch werde rât.</i></p>	<p>MF 162,34</p>	<p>A sorrow after joy brings pain; so also does a joy after sorrow obviously bring pleasure. Whoever wants to remain happy should suffer the one for the sake of the other with decorous lament and wholly without dishonorable behavior. Nothing in the world I've ever seen is as good as calm waiting. Whoever keeps it patiently, he always came out of it with happiness. Therefore, I hope that relief will be mine.</p>
<p><i>Des einen und dekeines mê wil ich ein meister sîn, al die wîle ich lebe: daz lop wil ich, daz mir bestê und mir die kunst diu werlt gemeine gebe, Daz nieman sîn leit alsô schône kan getragen. dez begêt ein wîp an mir, daz ich naht noch tac niht kan gedagen. nû hân eht ich sô senffen muot, daz ich ir haz ze vröiden nime. owê, wie rehte unsanfte daz mir doch tuot!</i></p>	<p>MF 163,5</p>	<p>Of this only and nothing more do I want to be master, all the while that I live: I want the praise that lasts for me, and for all the world together to concede my artistry: that no one can bear his pain so beautifully. A woman inflicts this on me, so that I cannot remain silent night or day. Now I have such a temperate disposition that I accept her enmity as a pleasure. Oh, what real distress that still gives me!</p>
<p><i>Ich weiz den wec nu lange wol, der von der liebe gât unz an daz leit. der ander, der mich wîsen sol ûz leide in liep, der ist mir noch unbereit. Daz mir von gedanken ist also unmmâzen wê, des überhoere ich vil und tuon, als ich des niht verstê. gît minne niuwan ungemach, sô müeze minne unsaelic sîn. die selben ich noch ie in bleicher varwe sach.</i></p>	<p>MF 163,14</p>	<p>I have long known well the path that leads from joy to sorrow. The other, which should show me out of sorrow into joy, that one is not yet blazed for me. That my thoughts bring me such immeasurable pain— that I often overlook and act as if I do not understand them. If love brings nothing but ill, then love must be accursed. I only ever saw her with pale demeanor.</p>

The Song in Transmission

A unique version of this song appears in each of the four major Minnesang manuscripts.¹⁰⁴ Even the way we identify the song is unstable: in two manuscripts, it opens with a strophe that begins with the phrase *Ein wiser man sol niht ze vil* (MF 162,7), and in two others with a strophe that begins *Ich weiz den wec nu lange wol* (MF 163,14).

The *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A*, the smallest and earliest of the collections, written in Alsace toward the end of the thirteenth century, contains almost all of the contemporary genres of song. As in the other manuscripts, the songs are grouped by author. Reinmar's oeuvre opens the manuscript, with 70 strophes (19 songs) on folios 1r–4v, including a three-strophe version of our song on folio 2r, beginning *Ein wiser man sol niht zevil*.

The *Weingartner Liederhandschrift B*, produced in Constance around 1300, contains mostly more “courtly” love poems, largely omitting the religious *Leichs*, the sensual *Tagelieder*, and the political or didactic *Sangsprüche*. The authors are ordered by social rank, beginning with Emperor Heinrich VI, and each author is introduced by a full- or half-page color portrait. The manuscript includes 115 strophes (31 songs) by Reinmar, in two sections. Reinmar's author portrait, thirteenth in the manuscript, introduces a section of 28 strophes. A version of the song *Ein wiser man*, however, appears in an addition of 87 Reinmar strophes immediately following the oeuvre of Heinrich von Morungen, the fifteenth author. This addition, labeled by a later hand *H Reinmar der alte*, is referred to with the siglum b. Evidently the first scribe made a mistake as to where he placed these songs in the manuscript, but the concern for correct attribution was such that a later scribe corrected the error. The b-version of the song comprises three strophes, beginning on page 88 of the manuscript with *Ich wais den weg nu lange wol*.

The *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C* (or *Codex Manesse*) is the most opulent and thorough of the collections. Produced in in the early fourteenth century in Zurich for the wealthy Manesse family, it is a large-format volume with a full-page author portrait introducing each oeuvre. The goal of the compiler was apparently to collect as many songs as possible, across all genres. Reinmar's 262 strophes (64 songs) appear in the thirty-seventh place, beginning on folio 98r. C contains a four-strophe version of the song on folio 100v, beginning with *Ich weis den wec nu lange wol*, which probably shares a source manuscript with the *Weingartner* manuscript. Two other strophes that modern editors usually associate with the song appear later in this manuscript, on folio 101r, as the final two strophes of a different song, *Swaz ich nu niuwer maere sage*.¹⁰⁵ Sometimes the scribe of the Manesse manuscript initially copied a song, only to find that later another manuscript with a longer version of the same song came across his desk. In these cases, the scribe often added the missing strophes to the end of that poet's oeuvre and indicated the song to which they belonged.¹⁰⁶ However, no mark in the manuscript indicates that the scribe thought the two additional strophes belonged with the four earlier strophes; nothing indicates that they are not simply the

¹⁰⁴ See footnote 55 above.

¹⁰⁵ Reinmar XIV, MF 165,10.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Starkey and Wandhoff, “Mouvance – Varianz – Performanz,” 52–53, 71–72.

ending of *Swaz ich*. As far as the scribe and recipients of C were concerned, *Ein wîser man* was four strophes long.

The *Würzburger Handschrift E* is the only manuscript to transmit a six-strophe version of the song. Written around 1350 in Würzburg as the second volume of the *Hausbuch* of the prothonotary Michael de Leone, it collects German and Latin texts of many genres, mainly verse and mainly didactic, for the edification of his family. The manuscript contains a selection of songs by Walther and Reinmar, likely because of a mistaken association of these poets with Würzburg. Several folios are missing between the Walther and the Reinmar sections, which could have contained up to 50 strophes (about 11 songs). The manuscript nevertheless attributes 164 strophes (36 songs) to Reinmar. The songs are separated graphically: most begin with a large red initial and end with the attribution *her reymar*. Fittingly for a didactic manuscript, its version of *Ein wîser man* begins (on folio 188r) with the sententious advice: *Eya wiser man solt niht ze vil / sin wip gezihen noch versuochen dest min rat*. The manuscript redactions can be summarized as follows:

Table 1: Manuscript redactions of *Ein wîser man*. Strophes are numbered according to their order in E. The final two strophes in C appear on a separate folio as part of a different song.¹⁰⁷

Manuscript	Number of strophes	Sequence of strophes
A	3 str.	1 – 3 – 2
b	3 str.	6 – 1 – 2
C	4 str. 2 str.	6 – 3 – 1 – 2 5 – 4
E	6 str.	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6
i	1 str.	3

The four versions of the text can be transcribed as on the following pages.¹⁰⁸ The divergence of form is so great that, to my mind, we can neither choose one authoritative version nor reconstruct the original song.

¹⁰⁷ The strophe beginning *We war umbe fuget siu mir leid* is also transmitted anonymously on folio 115v of a florilegium in manuscript i, the mid-fourteenth-century *Rappoltsteiner Parzifal* (Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Donaueschingen 97; written in Strasbourg between 1331 and 1336.). In the following, I leave aside this single strophe. See Bauer and Heinze, “Rappoltsteiner Parzifal”; Wittmann-Klemm, “Rappoltsteiner Parzifal”; Holznagel, “Minnesang-Florilegien,” 77.

¹⁰⁸ I have brought consistency to the use of u for the vocalic v, and the round s. I have also expanded umlauts and abbreviations. Other dialectal features and (potential) mistakes I have left as in the manuscript.

Redaction A

Ein wiser man sol niht zevil
sin wip versuochen. noch gezihen dest
min rat
von der er sich niht scheiden wil.
und er der waren schulden doch keine
hat.
Swer wil al der welte luge an ein ende
komen.
der hat im ane not ein vil hercelliches leit
genomen.
wan sol boeser rede gedagen.
frage och nieman lange des
dc er ungerne hore sagen.

War umbe vueget mir diu leit.
von der ich hohe solte tragen den muot.
io wirb ich niht mit kundeheit.
noch dur versuochen alsam vil meneger
tuot.
ich erwart nie rehte vro. wan so ich si
sach.
so gie von herzen gar swc min munt
wider si sprach.
sol nu diu trituwe sin verlor.
so endarf ez nieman wunder nemen
han ich underwilen einen cleinen zorn.

Si iegent dc stete si ein tugent.
der andern frowe so wol im der si habe.
si hat mit froide in miner iugent.
mit ir wol schoner zuht gebrochen abe.
dc ich unz an minen tot. niemer si gelobe
ich sihe wol swer nu vert wuetende als
er tobe.
dc den diu wip so minnent e.
danne einen man. des des niht kan.
ich ensprach in nie so nahe me.

Redaction b

Ich wais den weg nu lange wol.
der von der liebe gat unz an das lait.
der ander der mich wisen sol.
us laide in liebe der ist mir noch
unberait.
das mir von gedanken ist also unmassen
we.
des ueberhoere ich vil. und tuon als ich
des niht verste.
git minne nuwan ungemach so muesse
minne unselig sin.
die selben ich noch ie in blaicher varwe
sach.

Ain wise man sol niht ze vil.
sin wip versuochen noch gezihen dast
min rat.
von der er sich niht schaiden wil.
und si der waren schulde ouch dehaime
hat.
swer wil al der welte liuge an ain ende
komen.
der hat im an not ain vil herzelliches lait
genomen.
man sol boese rede verdagen.
und frage ouch niemen lange des
das er ungerne hoere sagen.

Siu iehent das stete si ain tugent.
der andern vrowen wol im der sin habe.
si hat mit stete in miner iugent.
mir gebrochen mit ir schoenen ziuhten
abe.
das ich si unz an minen tot. niemer me
gelobe.
ich sihe wol swer nu vert. sere wuetende
als er tobe.
das den diu wip noch minnent e.
danne ainen man. der des niht kan.
ich sprach ime nie so nahe me.

Redaction C

Ich wais den wec nu lange wol.
der von der liebe unz an das leit.
der ander der mich wisen sol.
us leide in liebe der ist mir noch unbereit.
dc mir von gedanken ist als unmassen we.
des uber hoere ich vil und tuon als ich des
niht verste.
git minne niht wan ungemach.
so muesse minne unselig sin
die selben ich noh ie in bleicher varwe sach.

War umbe fueget diu mir leit.
von der ich hohe solte tragen den muot.
io wirbe ich niht mit kinndekeit.
noch durh versuochen als ie doch vil maniger
tuot.
ich wart nie rehte fro wan als ich si sach.
und gie von herzen gar swas min munt ie
wider si sprach.
sol nu diu trituwe sin verlor.
so darf eht nieman wunder nemen
han ich underwilent einen kleinen zorn.

Ein wise man solt niht zevil.
sin wilb versuochen noch geheissen dest
gezihen dest min rat.
von der er sich niht scheiden wil.
und si der waren schulde ouch deheine hat.
swer wil al der werlte luge an ein ende komen.
der hat im an not ein vil herzelliches leit
genomen.
man sol boese rede verdagen.
und frage ouch nieman lange des
dc er ungerne hoere sagen.

Redaction E

Eya wiser man solt niht ze vil
sin wip gezihen noch versuochen dest
min rat.
von der er doch niht scheiden wil.
und warn schulde doch keine hat.
swer wil al der werelde ze ende kommen.
der hat im ane not ein hertzeleit
genommen
man sol boeser rede gedagen.
und frage nieman lange
daz er doch ungerne hoere sagen.

Sie iehent daz die stete sie ein tugent.
der andern frauwe wol im der sie habe.
die hat mit frauden an miner iugent.
gebrochen mit ir schoenen zuehten abe.
daz ich sie untz an minen tot nimmer wil
gelobe.
ich sihe wol swer nu fert wuetende als er
tobe.
daz den due wip nu minnent e.
denne einen man der des niht kan.
ich sprach in nie so nahe me.

War uemme fuegent sie mir leit.
von den ich hohe solte tragen den muot.
ion wirbe ich nit mit kinndekeit.
noch durch versuochen so vil maniger
tuot.
ichn wart nie rehte vro wenne als ich sie
sach.
und gie von herten gar swaz ie min munt
wider sie sprach.
sol nu die truewe sin verlor.
so darf des nieman wunden
han ich underwilt einen cleinen zorn

Si iehent dc stete si ein tugent.
der andern frowe wol im der sin habe.
Si hat mir stete in miner iugent.
mir gebrochen mit ir schonen zühten abe.
dc ich si unz an minen tot niemer me gelobe.
ich sihe nu vert sere wuetende als er tobe.
dc den diu wib noch minnent e.
danne einen man der des niht kan.
ich gesprach in nie so nahe me.

Tuot ein leit nach liebe we.
so tuot auch liht ein lieb nach leide wol.
swer wolle daz er fro beste.
daz eine er durch daz ander liden sol.
mit bescheidenlicher klage und ane arge
site.
zer werlde wart nie niht so guot des ich ie
gesach so guot gebite.
der die bescheidenlichen hat.
der komes ie mit frauen hin.
alsus mac min noch werden rat.

Des einen und dekeines me.
wil ich ein meister sin al die wile ich lebe.
das lob wil ich das mir beste.
und mir die kunst diu werlt gemeine gebe.
dc nieman sin leit so schone kan getragen.
des beget ein wib an mir dc ich naht noch tac
niht kan gedagen.
nu han eht ich so senften muot.
dc ich ir has ze froeiden nime
owe wie rehte unsanfte dc mir doch tuot.

Des einen und deheines me.
muoz ich ein meister si die wile ich lebe.
daz lob wil ich mir beste.
und daz man mir die kunst vor alder
werelde gebe.
daz niht mannes kan sin leit so schone
trage.
ez begat ein wip an mir des ich tac noch
naht niht mac gedage.
so bin aber ich so wol genuot.
daz ich ir hazze frauen nime.
owe wie reht unsanfte doch daz selbe
tuot.

Es tuot ein leit nach liebe we.
so tuot ouch lihte ein lieb nach leide wol.
swer welle das er fro beste.
dc eine er dur das ander liden sol.
mit bescheidenlicher klage und gar an arge
sittē.
zer werlde ist niht so guot dc ich ie gesach so
guot gebitte.
swer die gedulteklichen hat.
der kam des ie mit froeiden hin
also dinge ich dc min noch werde rat.

Ich weiz den wec nu lange wol.
der von liebe get uniz an daz leit.
der ander der mich wisen sol.
uz leide in liep der ist mir vil ungeret.
De|a/z mir was von gedanken waz
unmazzen we.
des ueber hoere ich vil und tuon reht als
ich mis niht verste.
git minne nuer wanne ungemach
so muoz minne unselic si.
wenne ich sie noch \in// ~~hie~~ bleicher
varwe sach.

The Dream of Order

Editors are faced with the unenviable task of conveying this complexity in a clear, elegant, and yet still comprehensive way. If one compares a selection of six major editions of *Minnesang* that include *Ein wîser man* (Table 2 below) with the manuscript redactions (Table 1 above), an important trend in the representation of the song becomes evident. Whereas three of the four manuscript versions of the song end with the strophe beginning, in the wording of manuscript E, *Sie iehent daz die stete sie ein tugent* “They say that constancy is a virtue” (E 2,1), only one of the major editions includes a song that ends with this strophe.¹⁰⁹ Rather, three of the five editions place the strophe *Tuot ein leit nach liebe we* “A sorrow after joy brings pain” (E 4,1) at the end, even though this strophe does not conclude the song in any extant manuscript version. What is so appealing about a song in which this strophe is the final note? It is the only strophe in the song that ends with a note of hope. The speaker praises *guot gebite* “calm waiting” (E 4,6), and says of it:

der die bescheidenlichen hat.
der komes ie mit frauden hin.
alsus mac min noch werden rat (E 4,7–9)

Whoever maintains it properly,
he always came out of it with happiness;
therefore, may relief be mine.

By concluding with these words, the editions of the song give a glimpse of a future in which the speaker continues to love loyally from a distance, waiting and hoping. But this version of the song is a scholarly construction symptomatic of the modern preoccupation with the ideal of distant love and the identification of Reinmar as its greatest proponent. These editions impose on the song an unwarranted sense of balance and permanence that resonates with Reinmar’s modern reputation rather than with the more complex picture of the author figure that the manuscript transmission gives.

This transmission has proven a playground for traditional textual criticism. Editors of both scholarly and popular editions have attempted to reconstruct an original text that makes sense by modern standards at least since Karl Lachmann and Moriz Haupt’s 1857 first edition of what became the standard anthology: *Des Minnesangs Frühling* (MF). Lachmann and Haupt considered these strophes to form two songs; they printed the first according to the strophe order in manuscript A, and carved the second out of the version in manuscript E.¹¹⁰ The transmission can be summarized as follows:

¹⁰⁹ And there, it is only one of the two songs in to which they have broken *Ein wîser man*. When I quote from a specific manuscript version, references are to manuscript, strophe, and line.

¹¹⁰ Lachmann and Haupt, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 162–63. On the history of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, see Brunner, “Brauchen wir eine Neuausgabe von ‘Des Minnesangs Frühling’?,” 33–34..

Table 2: Selected editions of *Ein wîser man*.¹¹¹ Strophes are numbered according to their order in the longest manuscript version of the poem: E.

Edition	Date	Manuscript version	Sequence of strophes
MF ed. Lachmann, Haupt	1857		1 – 3 – 2 4 – 5 – 6
MF ed. Kraus	1940		1 – 3 – 2 – 6 – 5 – 4
MF ed. Moser, Tervooren	1977		1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6
Schweikle	1986		6 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 4
Kasten	1995		6 – 3 – 1 – 2 – 5 – 4
Heinen	1989	A	1 – 3 – 2
		(b)C1	6 – 3 – 1 – 2
		C2	5 – 4
		E	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6
		i	3

In one of the most influential interpretations of Reinmar’s poetry, Carl von Kraus in 1919 reorganized and pruned Reinmar’s large oeuvre as it appears in the manuscripts into a cycle narrating a courtly love story. In order to fit *Ein wîser man* into this cycle, Kraus rearranged the six strophes into a single song that tells a story of skillful wooing through the singer’s veiled self-praise and veiled criticism of his beloved.¹¹² Finally, Kraus installed his version of the song in a 1940 edition of *Des Minnesangs Frühling* that radically increased the number of editorial interventions, and that remained the standard for over thirty years.¹¹³

The most recent major revision of *Des Minnesangs Frühling* (MFMT, 1977), however, retreats from the reconstructive approach that had informed all the previous editions of this anthology, and instead presents the strophes of *Ein wîser man* in the order in which they appear in manuscript E.¹¹⁴ Rather than following a single base manuscript (*Leithandschrift*) for the whole song, however, the editors Hugo Moser and Helmut Tervooren choose a new base manuscript for the text of each strophe, arguing that the strophe, rather than the song, is the thematic unit of construction.¹¹⁵ Though they do not present any alternative versions of *Ein wîser man*, Moser and Tervooren do print four of

¹¹¹ An English-speaking audience might be most familiar with Olive Sayce’s 1967 edition, in which she follows the strophe order in the Kraus version of the text: *Poets of the Minnesang*, 78–80. Sayce has more recently published another edition of *Ein wîser man*, in which she follows the order in the Lachmann and Haupt version, but considers all six strophes as a single song: Sayce, *Romanisch beeinflusste Lieder des Minnesangs*, 200–17.. This strophe order also appears in the popular Fischer edition with facing-page modern German translations: Brackert, *Minnesang*, 120–24. There are, of course, many other editions, but I have included the ones that have the greatest historical or current significance, and that represent the song with a range of strophe orderings.

¹¹² Kraus, *Die Lieder Reimars des Alten*, 33–37.

¹¹³ Kraus, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 218–21. Unaltered reprint of the 1940 edition.

¹¹⁴ The edition of the song is in Moser and Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 1:313–15.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:16–20. See also Tervooren, “Wahl der Leithandschrift,” 24–25.

Reinmar's poems in two versions.¹¹⁶ This is hardly representative, however. As I mentioned earlier, in Reinmar's entire oeuvre of 68 songs (including the eight Moser and Tervooren consider inauthentic), 39 are transmitted in more than one manuscript. Nearly three-quarters of these (29) vary in the order or number of strophes. Printing a song in multiple versions should be the rule rather than the exception.

Two recent editions of *Minnesang* that are oriented toward a broader audience print versions of *Ein wiser man* that do not appear in any manuscript and end with the strophe *Es tuot ein leit nach liebe we*. Günther Schweikle's entire 1986 Reclam edition ostensibly follows a single manuscript, as the title indicates: *Reinmar. Lieder nach der Weingartner Liederhandschrift (B)*. However, in the interest of completeness, Schweikle also includes some songs that are not in B at all and makes a practice of including strophes missing from B by simply adding them on at the end of a song as it appears in B. In the case of *Ein wiser man*, the result is a version that includes the three strophes of the b-version, plus the three strophes missing from it, which Schweikle takes from multiple locations in manuscript C.¹¹⁷ Here, the synthetic impulse overpowers the principle of basing the edition consistently on a single manuscript.¹¹⁸

The most recent large-scale edition of *Minnesang* to include *Ein wiser man* is the 1995 Deutscher Klassiker volume *Deutsche Lyrik des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*. In this thoroughly commented edition, Ingrid Kasten follows the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C*. Kasten prints the C-version of *Ein wiser man*, appending the two strophes that are transmitted as a part of another song in that manuscript. In the notes, she argues in favor of this composite because she sees in it a train of thought culminating in artistic self-awareness and hope for success in love, but she also makes clear that it is only one among several possible versions.¹¹⁹

These editions represent the phenomenon of *mouvance* in one of two ways. Schweikle's edition, like the Kraus and Moser/Tervooren editions of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, indicates next to each strophe in which manuscripts and where in those manuscripts the strophe appears. Kasten's edition, like the Lachmann and Haupt *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, lists the versions of the song by manuscript in the apparatus at the back of the book, not on the same page as the text. There is a problem with these

¹¹⁶ Reinmar's songs VI a/b, XXXIV a/b, XXXVI a/b, and LI a/b. For song XIX, the editors print partial diplomatic transcriptions because of controversies in the scholarship. See the note in Moser and Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 2:109.

¹¹⁷ Reinmar der Alte, *Lieder*, 158–69, 343–47.

¹¹⁸ Schweikle points out what I mention in the description of the song in manuscript C: the final two strophes of the "C-version" of *Ein wiser man* do not actually appear in C as a part of this song, but rather as a part of another song, Reinmar X. However, he includes them nevertheless: "Daß die Strophen C 60, 61 aber doch zu diesem Lied XIII (MF 163,14) gehören, beweist einmal die Fassung E, in der sie nicht angefügt, sondern in den übrigen Liedablauf eingeordnet sind (s.o.), zum andern die Überlieferung von Lied X, das in A und b nur vier Strophen aufweist." Ibid., 344. The argument that comparison with other manuscripts can guarantee that these strophes belong to the song only follows from the premise that there is an archetype, and from the goal that it should be reconstructed. This contradicts Schweikle's expressed methodology in this anthology. Taking the C-version on its own terms, there is no indication that these strophes belong to *Ein wiser man* in C or in any of its exemplars.

¹¹⁹ Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 310–15, 835–39.

methods, however. Regardless of the intention of the editor, the effect of printing a single version of the text, even with marginal notes, footnotes, or endnotes with the details of other manuscript versions, is to suggest an authoritative text.

Despite scattered gestures toward printing songs with particularly complex transmission in multiple versions, only one edition of *Minnesang* has grappled significantly with the problem of representing *mouvance*, a phenomenon which the editor Hubert Heinen calls instead *Mutabilität* (mutability).¹²⁰ His volume *Mutabilität im Minnesang: Mehrfach überlieferte Lieder des 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhundert* (1989) collects songs that appear in more than one manuscript, insofar as they differ in wording or in the number or order of strophes, and presents the versions synoptically.¹²¹ Heinen prints five versions of *Ein wîser man* (see Table 2 above), compiling the b- and C-versions together for the sake of space, but indicating that the second strophe in this version only appears in C, not in b, and separating the two strophes that appear separately in C.¹²² This edition, printed in much smaller numbers, does not have nearly the profile or the currency in the classroom that the others do.¹²³

Each of these editions is a monument of scholarship and fulfills its own purposes; most of them admittedly do not intend to represent *mouvance*. Yet the cumulative effect of the most prominent editions is to reinforce an outdated construct of Reinmar as an author. This construct is reinforced in the most recent substantial interpretation of Reinmar's work.

There, Albrecht Hausmann bases his analysis of Reinmar's oeuvre on his reading of a reconstructed version of *Ein wîser man*, which he puts together out of the four-strophe version from C and the two strophes that appear in C as part of another song.¹²⁴ (This is the same strophe order that appears in Kasten's edition. See Table 2 above.) Though Hausmann admits that this song is not attested by an extant manuscript or even a reconstructible previous stage,¹²⁵ he argues that it has not survived the transmission process because its meaning was too subtle and its structure too fragile.¹²⁶ For Hausmann, these two concluding strophes provide the solution to the problem that has dominated the song from its beginning, namely the reconciliation of joy and sorrow.¹²⁷ However,

¹²⁰ In addition to the selected songs printed in more than one version in recent editions of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, Klein, *Minnesang*, prints some songs in two or more versions. Her edition does not include *Ein wîser man*.

¹²¹ Heinen, *Mutabilität im Minnesang*, iv.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 100–103. The fifth version printed is from manuscript i. See note 107 above.

¹²³ An electronic edition that promises to have the flexibility to do justice to the rich transmission of medieval lyric is in preparation by a team led by Manuel Braun, Sonja Glauch, and Florian Kragl. The edition, called *Lyrik des deutschen Mittelalters*, is online at <http://www.ldm-digital.de/>. As of November 23, 2016, the lyrics treated here had yet to be included.

¹²⁴ Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 120–30.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹²⁶ “In keiner der heute erhaltenen Textfassungen ist die komplexe und deshalb im Überlieferungsgang fragile Aussagestruktur von Lied XII vollständig erhalten.” *Ibid.*, 129. Hausmann does not cite a stylistic study that previously argued for the same reconstructed C-version that he does: Ziegler, *The Leitword in Minnesang*, 150–59.

¹²⁷ This strophe shows these concepts “in ihrer grundsätzlichen Komplementarität,” according to Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 126–27.

Hausmann is more concerned with identifying the fissures and inconsistencies of the song than its solutions, and he argues that this ostensible solution is in fact a failure.¹²⁸ Hausmann sees the song as setting up two roles for the lyric *I*: the singer who gives advice and the lover who gives in to passion. Each exists on a different level of fictionality: in the figure of the singer, the speaker in the song collapses with the real-life performer, whereas in the figure of the lover, the speaker remains a character within a fictional world.

The final two strophes stage what Hausmann calls an “inzenierte Entfiktionalisierung” (staged de-fictionalization): the speaker in these strophes presents himself as both singer and lover at the same time in order to make the difference between what is fictional and what is “real” seem to disappear. However, because the audience can see through this “inszenierte Entfiktionalisierung,” this is no solution but in fact the production of an aporia at the heart of Reinmar’s construction of subjectivity.¹²⁹

On the other hand, some interpretations of *Ein wîser man* itself provide an example of the concerns of the New Philology *avant la lettre*. The earliest of these begins from the paradigm of orality and performance. Friedrich Neumann sees each version as the record of a performance of the song, and sees each strophe as “a little song within a loosely connected whole song” rather than a coherent story.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, he reconstructs a version that does not exist in any manuscript but that he believes comes closest to the original.¹³¹ In a 1980 essay, Heinz Rupp goes one step further by interpreting each manuscript version of *Ein wîser man* as a poem in its own right. He contends that each manuscript had its own historical audience, and thus that the version of the song in that manuscript was, for that audience, *the* song.¹³² Rupp summarizes the train of thought in each version and determines that the overall impression conveyed by the poem varies according to its manuscript: the A-, b-, and C-versions are dominated by resignation, the C-version plus the two strophes from the end of the C-version of *Swaz ich nu niuwer maere sage* ends in hope, and the E-version is inconclusive, with the first three strophes resigned, the fourth and fifth hopeful, and the sixth resigned again.¹³³ In Rupp’s reading, each manuscript version is a separate poem, though not all the poems are coherent by our modern standards.

Multiplicity and Mastery

In my reading, not only does each manuscript version of *Ein wîser man* convey a different overall impression, but each version and each strophe within that version uses a different voice, or role, to capture a new formulation of the relationship between the speaker and society. The stances taken by the speaker in the different strophes of the song

¹²⁸ On Hausmann’s approach, see Young, “Review,” 41; Goheen, “Review,” 930.

¹²⁹ Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 130.

¹³⁰ “ein Kleinlied in einem locker gefügten Liedganzen,” Neumann, “Reinmars Lied,” 162–64.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 163–66.

¹³² Rupp, “Reinmars Lied Nr. 12,” 83.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 84–92.

have often been seen as incompatible with one another:¹³⁴ the terms in which he conceives of the quandary of love, the tone he takes toward his audience, and the response to suffering that he advocates all change so greatly from one strophe to the next that it is hard to see them as the product of a single person responding to a particular set of experiences he has had in love. At the same time, despite attempts to draw from them a coherent ethical program, they resist such flattening. The contrasts between the different stances the speaker takes allow an author figure to emerge who does not come to endorse any one stance toward love, but rather stands above all of them. The display of these multiple intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic formulations does not shape an argument about love, but rather outlines a persona to which a reputation for mastery can attach itself.

In order to illustrate the emergence of the author figure, I will begin with a close reading of the version of the song from manuscript E. Although I examine this version first, I do not mean to suggest that it is the original or primary one. It is simply the longest. Moreover, my analysis is by definition incomplete, since I cannot consider the work of art itself, as it was realized in performance, but only the traces of that work that are fossilized in the words that survive in manuscript form. A close reading of that text shows that the speaker gradually shifts focus from the exterior to the interior world. The first strophe presents a piece of advice: *Eya wiser man solt niht ze vil / sin wip gezihen noch versuoehen dest min rat* “A wise man should not accuse or test his beloved too much, that is my advice” (manuscript E, strophe 1, lines 1–2). The second takes this advice and views it at an ironic distance. The middle strophes relate the advice to various social ideals: in the third strophe, sincerity; in the fourth, decorous behavior; in the fifth, poetic mastery. And finally, the sixth strophe reformulates the initial problem in purely internal terms. Thus over the course of this version of the song, Reinmar gives a new take on an old adage by taking it from the aphoristic to the reflective level. For this reason, I call this the interiorization version.

In the first strophe, the speaker takes on the didactic voice of traditional wisdom by presenting an old saying: when others at court cast aspersions upon one’s beloved, a wise man should ignore them and remain constant in his love, for putting his woman (*wîp*) to the test and attempting to track down every lie about her will only lead to sorrow. The impersonal, didactic voice that crops up here is familiar, as Albrecht Hausmann has pointed out, from the genre of *Sangspruchdichtung*—didactic, gnomic poetry usually composed and performed by poets of a lower social class than Minnesang.¹³⁵ This bit of received wisdom is a translation from the song *Bien cuidai toute ma vie*, by the twelfth-century French trouvère Gace Brulé—indeed, the only such translation in Reinmar’s

¹³⁴ Nicola Zotz, for example, argues that the strophes do not hang together in any manuscript version, and that coherent interpretations depend more on the efforts of scholars than on the text: “Besser noch aber sollte man sich überhaupt davon lösen, aus den sechs in sich geschlossenen Einheiten ein Ganzes konstruieren zu wollen, das so wohl nie bestanden hat.” Zotz, *Intégration courtoise*, 145. In my interpretation, however, the juxtapositions of the strophes in the manuscript versions are one of the most important ways that they create meaning.

¹³⁵ Hausmann, “Wer spricht?”

entire surviving oeuvre.¹³⁶ Despite following the original closely, Reinmar has adapted the adage to emphasize the social context of the self, as Nicola Zotz has argued.¹³⁷ In Gace's song, the motive that the speaker warns against exists solely in the lover's mind: jealousy. There, in the second stanza, the speaker says:

*Ains se doit on bien gairdeir
D'enquerre, per jalousie,
Ceu c'om n'i voroit troveir (2, 5–7).*

You should rather refrain
from searching, through jealousy,
for what you would not want to find.¹³⁸

The speaker casts himself as an experienced and philosophical man who knows how not to make himself unhappy; he warns against the role of the brooding lover who thinks too much and spins problems out of his own mind. Reinmar's song, however, externalizes this problem to the social sphere: a lover does not need to be wary of his own overactive imagination, but of *boeser rede* "dishonorable talk" (E 1,7). Reinmar's speaker also adds that the solution to the problem lies in the lover's behavior, which should conceal his emotions: he should keep calm and carry on. In his version of the didactic strophe, Reinmar's speaker erases the inner realm of the self present in Brulé, preferring to set him in the world of his neighbors. This externalization sets the stage for the subtle meditations on interiority that follow.

In the second strophe—the ironic distance strophe—the speaker immediately pivots away from the didactic tone. Now, he holds the advice that he just gave at arm's length; it is an old truism that he no longer endorses: *Sie iehent daz die stete sie ein tugent* "They say that constancy is a virtue" (E 2,1).¹³⁹ He himself, however, has tried constancy and it has only brought him pain; therefore, he says, he can no longer follow it. Indeed, he says, his rivals who behave as if they are mad are more successful than he is. By saying that he can *no longer* hold to the ideal of constancy, *untz an minen tot nimmer* "never until my death" (E 2,5), the speaker sets up a temporal aspect to his identity. The temporal progression gives a logical coherence to the break between the first strophe and

¹³⁶ On Reinmar's engagement with French ideas, see Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 316; Zotz, *Intégration courtoise*, 243.

¹³⁷ Zotz, *Intégration courtoise*, 146.

¹³⁸ Original and translation from Rosenberg and Danon, *The Lyrics and Melodies of Gace Brulé*, 151.

¹³⁹ The first lines of the strophe—*Si iehent, daz staete sî ein tugent, / der andern vrowe; sô wol im, der si habe!*—are open to three readings. My reading is that they mean "They say that constancy is a virtue, / mistress of the other [virtues]; happy he who has it!" However, it is also possible to read them as "They say that constancy is a virtue / of the other ladies; happy he who has them" or "happy he who has it." This last possibility is unlikely, since it describes constancy as a virtue belonging to ladies, but then oddly shifts focus and seems to attribute it to a hypothetical man. The second reading, though, is perfectly coherent. In this case, the emphasis of the strophe is slightly changed, in that the critique of the speaker's lady becomes more explicit. Nevertheless, the core move in the strophe is the same as in the reading I prefer: the virtue of constancy is held at an ironic distance.

the second: first, the speaker parrots the social ideal of constancy, but then he becomes disillusioned and sees this ideal as an imposition. The disillusionment has two causes: both his disappointment that his beloved does not reward his constancy and his realization that his ill-behaved rivals succeed where he fails. Thus their behavior exercises some fascination over him, even though he paints himself as superior. The speaker figures himself as caught between two models of behavior exhibited by his fellows at court: constancy in distant love, and aggressive pursuit. One is morally superior, the other empirically successful. He formulates a self in the uncomfortable space between these two models.

In the first two strophes, the speaker has already produced and juxtaposed two contrasting roles: the giver of advice and the disillusioned lover, both operating on the public stage of courtly love. The following strophes start to do something else. They reflect the same structural tension between remaining distant from the lady and pressing one's case. But the speaker voices this dilemma in language that is inwardly oriented, *not* public in nature, as if he were formulating the possibility of an interior space separate from the exterior world.

We begin to see this internal space articulated in the third strophe, the sincerity strophe, in which the speaker protests that he does not deserve to suffer because his words are matched by the fervor in his heart. The speaker here formulates a self predicated on the consonance between his internal emotions and external behavior:

*ion wirbe ich nit mit kuendekeit.
 noch durch versuochen so vil maniger tuot
 ichn wart nie rehte vro wenne als ich sie sach
 und gie von herzen gar swaz ie min munt wider sie gesprach.* (E 3,3–6)

Indeed, I do not woo with guile,
 nor in order to tempt, as so many do
 I was never truly happy, except when I saw her.
 and everything my mouth spoke to her came truly from my heart.

The speaker uses a common trope to formulate a self, from the inside out, in consonance with the ideal of constancy that he has praised in the first strophe. The defining characteristic of this self is the claim that his adherence to the norm in behavior and words stems from his true emotions. Indeed, he emphasizes his adherence to this ideal by abjuring the act of putting a woman to the test—the very act he has rejected in the first strophe. Here, in the sincerity strophe, he says, in effect: my feelings are exactly those I am supposed to have. At the same time, the speaker also internalizes the conflict between the ideal of constancy and the temptation of aggression. The clash of two models of behavior from the previous strophe—praising the lady from a distance versus pursuing her wildly—shifts to a contest of two internal states: *truewe* “loyalty” (E 3,7) and *einen kleinen zorn* “a little anger” (E 3,9).

In the fourth and fifth strophes—which I will call the decorum and the artistry strophes—the speaker formulates a self with less emphasis on social interaction and more

on the representation of his internal state through his song. In the decorum strophe, he establishes an ideal model of self-expression in which his measured, stately, and beautiful song conceals inner turmoil caused by the alternation of sorrow and joy. Anyone who wants to remain happy, *daz eine er durch daz ander liden sol. / mit bescheidenlicher clage und ane arge site* “he should suffer the one on account of the other with decorous lament and without dishonorable behavior” (E 4,3–5). In the artistry strophe, which we considered at the beginning of this chapter, the speaker does not define a self in opposition to society, but above it:

*daz lob wil ich mir beste.
und daz man mir die kunst vor alder werelde gebe.
daz niht mannes kan sin leit so schone trage.* (E 5,3–5)

I want that praise should last for me,
and that they should concede my artistry before all the world,
that no man can bear his pain so beautifully.

Here the speaker’s gaze is turned both inward and outward, but his self-praise is not for sincerity (in which the exterior reflects the interior accurately), but for the transformation of inner suffering into beautiful song. The artistry of “bearing pain beautifully” resonates with the “decorous lament” and charges the singer’s performance with both ethical and aesthetic significance as a form of control exerted on the emotions. The speaker emphasizes that one should suffer patiently and calmly—in fact, that one should bring one’s emotions into line with one’s already exemplary behavior. Thus, he dramatizes the effort of internalizing the external expectations placed on the lover.

The voice here is usually taken to be the artist speaking directly to his aims. For several reasons, however, it is actually subtler and less programmatic than it seems. First, as I have pointed out, this is only one version of the self, and it does not occupy a position of particular prominence. It is not the beginning or the end of the song in this or any manuscript version, nor does the song have a narrative or formal structure that gives this strophe special emphasis. In fact, the voice of artistic self-confidence is undermined even within the strophe, which concludes with a cry of pain that breaks through his composed surface:

*ez begat ein wip an mir des ich tac noch naht niht mac gedage.
so bin aber ich so wol genuot.
daz ich ir hazze frauden nime.
owe wie reht unsamfte doch daz selbe tuot.* (E 5,4–7)

A woman inflicts this on me, so that I cannot remain silent night or day.
Now I have such a temperate disposition
that I accept her enmity as a pleasure.
Oh, how intemperately that still pains me!

His beautiful composure cannot hold. The position of one who bears sorrow beautifully is contradictory—the speaker’s demonstrated behavior (lamenting his sorrow) gives the lie to his own report of his behavior (bearing sorrow beautifully).¹⁴⁰ These statements about his behavior thus cannot be taken literally, but have to be seen as part of the speaker’s self-presentation. When quoted out of context, it appears that the singer who claims to bear sorrow beautifully speaks for Reinmar. But in the context of this song and its performance, the self-aware, ambitious artist represents but one version of the self among many.

The final strophe we could call the interiority strophe: it realizes the space of interiority that was erased from the didactic opening strophe by Reinmar’s translation. The speaker reintroduces the alternation of joy and sorrow that we remember from the decorum strophe but casts it in terms of the mind: *Ich weiz den wec nu lange wol. / der von liebe get untz an daz leit* “I have long known well the path that leads from joy to sorrow” (E 6,1–2). To deal with his suffering, the speaker conceives of a self with its gaze turned inward. Rather than recommending courtly behavior, he says simply: *daz mir von gedanken waz ummazzen we. / des ueber hoere ich vil und tuon reht als ich mis niht verste* “That my thoughts brought me such immeasurable pain—that I often overlook and pretend I do not understand it” (E 6,5–6). His pain exists in an inward space, but one that is divided by his pretense. To cope with the depth of his pain, he deceives himself. The view of the self from the didactic opening strophe has been inverted. There, the voice of tradition recommends that one conceal private problems by keeping a polite silence in public. Here, the speaker conceals private problems even from himself, by keeping his silence in private.

My contention is that these strophes do not merely represent different moods, as Rupp has it, but rather multiple approaches to the emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic issues raised by love and song. By juxtaposing them, the author shows himself a master not only at evoking affect in all the aesthetic registers available to him, but also puts on display his ability to plumb the depths of the emotions these problems elicit by constructing not one animating lyric subjectivity, but many. He demonstrates that he deserves praise not only for bearing sorrow beautifully, but for mastering a wide range of possible forms of expression in song: translation as well as his own composition; aggressive as well as calm reaction to suffering; reflection on love as an interior as well as an exterior problem; sententious as well as subjective speech.

¹⁴⁰ Jan-Dirk Müller explains this clearly: “Behauptungen wie *Daz nieman sîn leit alsô schône kan getragen* (MF 163,9), *dez ich leit mit zühten kan getragen* (MF 164,32) oder daß *ich doch grôze swaere hân, / wan daz man mich vrô drunder siht* (L. 71,29f., zit. n. MF) dürfen nicht wie ein historischer Bericht, als neutraler Protokollsatz über das Verhalten des Hofmanns Reinmar gelesen werden: Sie sind Bestandteil einer als Klage inszenierten Liedaussage; sie besagt, daß der Wortlaut der Rede (*leit*) an etwas gemessen werden soll, das selbst nicht Bestandteil der Rede ist, das aber im Situationskontext, in dem die Rede vorkommt, beobachtet werden kann.” Müller, “Performativer Selbstwiderspruch,” 219.

Reading the Versions

The cumulative effect of the manifold emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic articulations of love that Reinmar lays before his audience in this version of the song is striking whether the song is read, as we encounter it, or sung. Indeed, the possibilities of voice and gesture in performance would have impressed this variety with even more force upon the audience. Multiplicity is a fundamental structuring feature of the song. A greater experience of this multiplicity, however, is available for those who read or hear more than one version of the song. This is not limited to modern scholarly audiences, but could also have included medieval scribes who had more than one exemplar with different versions of the lyric, and even audiences at court who might have heard the song performed in more than one way. These juxtapositions allow us to see the greater level of flexibility of thought that comes with *mouvance*.

The E-version of the song differs from the other manuscript versions in two important ways. First, through the progression of strophes in the E-version, the speaker internalizes an identity originally expressed in external terms, whereas the other manuscript versions take other trajectories. Second, the other versions do not include the two poetological strophes—the artistry and decorum strophes, and are correspondingly less self-reflexive about the singer and emphasize instead the suffering of the lover. It is by no means obvious that this difference is due to the subtraction of strophes that were “originally” a part of the song. These strophes could just as easily have been added to the version in E by Reinmar or a later redactor. The aim is not to reconstruct this history, which is ultimately unknowable, but to see each version on its own terms.

The A-version of the song does not dramatize the internalization of a social constellation, but an interaction between interior and exterior selves. This version of the song contains the first three strophes of the E-version, but in a different order. It opens with the same didactic praise of the ideal of constancy—*Ein wiser man sol niht zevil / sin wip versuochen. noch gezihen dest min rat* “A wise man should not accuse or test his beloved too much, that is my advice” (A 1,1–2)—but then diverges. Rather than immediately distancing himself from the ideal of constancy in the second strophe, the speaker protests that he has been sincere and constant in his love. His reward having been nothing but sorrow, he says: *so endarf ez nieman wunder nemen han ich underwilen einen kleinen zorn* “Then no one may wonder if I occasionally feel a little anger” (A 2,9). In the strophe that follows, the speaker tells us that others value constancy: *Si iegnt dc stete si ein tugent* “They say that constancy is a virtue” (A 3,1). In this context, the displacement of the norm onto an impersonal “they” does not come across as a stance of ironic distance, but as the speaker’s recognition of the censure that the social norm offers to his anger. For this reason, I call this the rebuke version of the song.

The speaker defines himself here in contradistinction to the type of man, *der vert wuetende als er tobe* “who acts frenzied, as if he were raging” (A 3,6). The contrast points up the effort to bring his emotions under control and the refusal to translate internal feeling into external action. The rebuke version of the song, being shorter and more coherent, brings the strophes into the closest thing they see to a narrative structure, describing the progression of emotions caught between the poles of the ideal of distant

love and the unsatisfied desire for more.¹⁴¹

There is a structural difference between, on the one hand, the A- and E-versions, which first present the social norm, then begin to call it into question, and, on the other hand, the b- and C-versions, which do not begin with the didactic strophe. Since it is generally accepted that b and C share an exemplar, and since the differences among these two versions of *Ein wîser man* are minor, I focus primarily on the C-version, which is one strophe longer.

The b- and C-versions of *Ein wîser man* form a streamlined inversion of E: an externalization rather than an internalization of the speaker's lament. He initially formulates the conflict without explicit reference to social conventions, as if joy and sorrow exist first in his mind rather than as two models of others' behavior that he could imitate.¹⁴² The first strophe establishes the problem of overcoming suffering—the speaker knows the path from *liebe* “joy” to *leit* “sorrow,” but the one out of *leide* into *liebe* is unknown (C 1,1–4)—and frames it as an internal problem that exists in the speaker's thoughts (C 1,5). The second strophe makes the problem concrete by its focus not on *minne* in general, but on the beloved, who is nevertheless attenuated to a mere pronoun: *diu* “you,” *si* “she,” (C 2,1, 2,5, and 2,6). At the same time, this strophe opens up the conflict to the larger concern of the relationship of the self to society, first through the speaker's assertion of an agreement between what he feels privately and what he does and says publicly: *und gie von herzen gar swas min munt ie wider si gesprach* “and everything my mouth ever spoke to her came truly from my heart” (C 2,6). Second, the speaker contrasts his sincerity to the dishonesty of his rivals, who woo *mit kiundekeit* “with guile” (C 2,3) or *durh versuochen* “in order to tempt” (C 2,3).¹⁴³

In light of this opening, the third and fourth strophes formulate the speaker's identity as an externalization of an originally internal problem. We see the lover's two reactions to the lady's indifference—loving from afar on the one hand, growing angry on the other—as they come to be represented in society. The didactic advice that the wise man abstains from putting his woman to the test or accusing her (C 3,1–2) puts into practice the speaker's attempt to overlook (*über hoere* C 1,6) his suffering. And the person who *vert sere wuetende als er tobe* “acts very frenzied, as if he were raging” (C 4,6) is acting on the impulses represented by the speaker's curse, *so muesse minne unselig sin* “then love must be accursed” (C 1,8) and his *zorn* “anger” (C 2,9). The staging of the dilemma in society does not, however, lead to a resolution, but, as Heinz Rupp notes, to a mood of resignation.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, it leads to a moment of self-awareness: the speaker recognizes his own inability to translate his internal aggression and dissatisfaction with the norm into action; he sees that he cannot give up constancy

¹⁴¹ Hausmann has noted the sequence of overlapping motifs from one strophe to the next, temptation in the first two strophes (*versuochen*, A 1,2 and A 2,4), and aggression in the second and third (*zorn*, A 2,9, and *wuetende*, A 3,5). Hausmann, *Reinmar der Alte als Autor*, 130.

¹⁴² I cannot follow Gert Hübner's idiosyncratic suggestion that the C-version of the song is a *Wechsel*, in which the first and third strophes are spoken by a woman. These strophes lack the signals common in *Frauenstrophen* that the speaker is female. See Hübner, “Minnesang als Kunst,” 157.

¹⁴³ The b-version is further streamlined by omitting this second strophe.

¹⁴⁴ Rupp, “Reinmars Lied Nr. 12,” 88.

and act frenzied. Since he is *einen man, der des niht kan* “a man who cannot do that” (C 4,8), he is thus doomed never to be successful in love.

This close look at the manuscript versions of *Ein wiser man* contrasts with the usual construction of the song and of Reinmar as an author. Not only is it impossible to identify one true original version, but the flexibility of the song is in fact its central characteristic, and the central literary fact that any interpretation must account for. Three distinct songs emerge from different constellations of the strophes, each staging a relationship between the selves in the song and the social norms of loyalty and constancy: the internalization version of E, the externalization version of b and C, and the rebuke version of A. Version E—the most multifaceted, in part because of its greater length—stages an internalization of a problem first formulated in external terms. The speaker constructs a self from the outside in, through the association with or dissociation from social groups. The A-version occupies the middle position, staging one near transgression and its rebuke. The b- and C-versions take the opposite tack to E, formulating identity first as an internal matter without express mention of the court, then externalizing this identity into social constellations. This span suggests that two things are at stake here: not only the nature of love as either adherence to or transgression of these norms, but also the ways of constructing knowledge about love. The song explores different possible ways of understanding the self—from the outside in or from the inside out.

It might seem at first that this form of instability or fluidity leaves the reader or redactor, rather than the author, sovereign over the material. The song seems to become a medieval version of a choose-your-own-adventure story. But there are only so many paths in this adventure. Despite the differences between these recensions, all are recognizably versions of one work. Two strophes (1 and 2) appear in all four versions, and two others appear in three versions each (3 in ACE, 6 in bCE). What is more, the words of the song remain, to a large degree, stable. These songs are not the products of oral poets who improvised based on well-known material. As Mark Chinca argues, verbatim correspondence or (more often) near-correspondence guarantees the identity of a song from one performance to another, and also from one manuscript to another.¹⁴⁵ There is room for significant variance from one performance situation to another, but the variance remains circumscribed by a flexible architecture. Though it is impossible to know the extent to which these versions of the song are authorial productions or later redactions by scribes or performers, the composition of songs out of loosely related strophes lends them from the very beginning a suppleness of thought that encourages the exploration of aesthetic possibilities within the scope set out by the author. Thus the figure of the author emerges as sovereign over all possible insights into and aesthetic realizations of the conventions of courtly love lyric.

It is only through attention to varying manuscript versions of their lyrics that we can see the ways that Heinrich von Morungen and Reinmar der Alte, far from promulgating a fixed ideology, in fact use flexibility in the architecture of their songs to explore variations on the conventions of Minnesang. Both wear these conventions more lightly than has usually been thought to be the case, and both exploit *mouvance* in order

¹⁴⁵ Chinca, “A Song and Its Situations,” 115–16.

to fashion for themselves a reputation for aesthetic mastery and privileged insight and to have it recognized by others and transmitted to a wide and lasting courtly public. Their songs reflect upon a figure beyond the surface roles of lover and singer, an author persona that is responsible for the songs and remains constant over time despite the fluidity of their works. These authors are not, however, conceived biographically or ideologically. Nor does this concept of authorship entail the same sense of control over the authors' works that modern technologies, norms, and legal systems have accreted. Morungen and Reinmar understood, as we have forgotten, that once a song has been sung it no longer belongs to its author, but to its hearers.

Chapter 3. Perspectives on the Self: Heinrich von Veldeke as Clerical Author

While Minnesang scholarship has in large part cast Reinmar as the exemplar of a lost sensibility and hailed Morungen as a poet whose aesthetic still resonates today, it has paid much less attention to their earlier contemporary Heinrich von Morungen (d. ca. 1190). He has often been considered a special case, one tangential to the main body of the German Minnesang tradition.¹⁴⁶ He gained this reputation in part because he came from near Maastricht in Limburg, a region far from most poets of the Minnesang, and evinced traces of this Low German origin in his language. He straddled the cultures of the Low Countries and Germany rather than representing either univocally—over the course of a long career, he was attached to courts near his home as well as in Thuringia. Undoubtedly another part of the neglect in the context of Minnesang has been the scholarly focus on Veldeke's major narrative work, the Middle High German *Eneit*, translated from the Old French *Roman d'Enéas*. Less studied is his legend of St. Servatius, translated from the Latin into a Maaslandic dialect of Low German.¹⁴⁷ In these works, as well as in the lyrics, which have been preserved in Middle High German, he shows evidence of having had a clerical education at a cathedral or monastery school.¹⁴⁸ Yet despite this relative neglect, of all the poets of the spring of Minnesang, Veldeke's oeuvre is perhaps the most varied, both in its themes as well as its genres.

The case of Veldeke demonstrates how a poet can carve out an identity for himself as an author not through consistency, but through variety. He does not simply transmit new French ideals of courtly love, nor does he primarily concern himself with defining "rechte Minne," two preoccupations well-established in modern scholarship. Rather, as Bernd Bastert points out, Veldeke uses the many genres available from the traditions of Romance, Latin, and German lyric, together with a wide range of voices, to demonstrate his mastery of the aesthetic possibilities of love lyric in a way that few other German poets before Walther do.¹⁴⁹ Yet the contrasts between these genres and voices do not lead to incoherence; instead, the productive tension between religious and worldly vocabularies of love demonstrates the spectrum of possible aesthetic and ethical stances toward love. Over the course of Veldeke's body of lyric work emerges the persona of a sovereign author who has mastered not only many lyrical traditions, but also the intellectual possibilities available to a clerically educated man of the court. These contrasting voices provide the audience multiple perspectives from which to compile from the varied speakers of the songs an image of Veldeke the author that thus appears as if in stereo vision, seen from more than one angle at once: a clerical persona who marshals deep knowledge and broad skill to make and convey judgments that can range

¹⁴⁶ See Bastert, "Möglichkeiten der Minnelyrik," 321–24.

¹⁴⁷ Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneasroman*; Vivian, Jongen, and Lawson, *The Life of Saint Servatius*.

¹⁴⁸ For information about Veldeke's works, see Wolff and Schröder, "Heinrich von Veldeke"; Schieb, *Henric van Veldeken*, 2–6; Sinnema, *Hendrik van Veldeke*, 54–66; Classen, "Heinrich von Veldeke," 23–24.

¹⁴⁹ Bastert, "Möglichkeiten der Minnelyrik," 321.

from court criticism to playful puncturing of pretension to genuine experiments with new ideals.¹⁵⁰

Multiple Voices, Multiple Perspectives

The most often noted voice in Veldeke's songs is that of the lover promulgating the Romance ideal of courtly love—a position often taken to be Veldeke's own. Scholars note that Veldeke emulates the forms, melodies, and themes of Provençal and French lyric, introducing the ideals that will form the basis of German lyric. As Olive Sayce has summarized it: "In Veldeke's poetry love is clearly seen as an ideal aspiration, which imposes a code of behaviour. The lady is a pattern of beauty and virtue and sets a standard of conduct for the man. Her favour can only be won by restraint and patient suffering."¹⁵¹ This view of Veldeke as the importer of French ideals into German literature has historical grounding, as well. It has often been conjectured that Veldeke might have met troubadours and trouvères in person at the Whitsuntide festival celebrating the knightening of Frederick Barbarossa's sons in Mainz in 1184, which Veldeke mentions in his *Eneit*.¹⁵² But resort to this event is not necessary to explain Veldeke's familiarity with Romance literary culture, since Limburg is situated at the crossroads between France and Germany, and was in the twelfth century a crucial point for both economic and cultural transmission.¹⁵³ As Veldeke describes in his *Servatius*, Maastricht is located "on a public road leading from England to Hungary, to Cologne and Tongerns, and also from Saxony to France and by boat—for those who travel this way—to Denmark and Norway: all these roads meet there."¹⁵⁴ Cultural influences traveled the same trade routes as goods.¹⁵⁵

A few brief examples will serve to illustrate some of the major influences from the Romance lyric in forms, motifs, and themes—most importantly, the exaltation of the beloved and the emphasis on love from afar as the source of joyful pain. Veldeke's language and forms owe a debt to Romance models. For instance, one of Veldeke's most

¹⁵⁰ By suggesting a clerical persona, I do not mean that the songs reflect the course of Veldeke's life, or that they can be arranged into cycles showing the development of a love story, as earlier scholarship had it. Rather, as I have been arguing, this is a persona is constructed by means of the songs. For the earlier theories of Veldeke's song cycles, see Frings and Schieb, "Heinrich von Veldeke. Die Entwicklung eines Lyrikers"; Weindt, *Die Lieder Heinrichs von Veldeke*. For a critique of these theories, see Kaplowitt, "Song Cycle," 126–32. Moreover, I do not mean that Veldeke is an author who fits into a clerical "type," but that the persona he creates has characteristics that read as clerical. See Ursula Peters's critique of the overly broad application of the concept of author types: Peters, "Hofkleriker – Stadtschreiber – Mystikerin."

¹⁵¹ Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 109. See similar formulations in Goldin, *German and Italian Lyrics of the Middle Ages*, 13; Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 252; Classen, "Heinrich von Veldeke," 24–25; Hasty, "Minnesang," 145. For a general description of the Romance influence on Veldeke, see Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 109–13. See also the catalogue of tropes Veldeke adapted from Romance lyric in Touber, "Natureingang, Motivik, und Frankreich."

¹⁵² Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneasroman*, 347,13–348,4 (lines 13,221–52). See Sinnema, *Hendrik van Veldeke*, 28–29; Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 114.

¹⁵³ See also Tervooren, "wan si suoehen birn ûf den buochen," 213–19.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted and translated in Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 67.

¹⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*, 62–66.

anthologized songs, *In dem aberellen* (XIV), uses a dactylic meter adapted from Romance songs and begins with an elaborate nature introduction, on the model of the early troubadours. The description of spring stretches over two strophes and dwells on the birds, who sing of the love they find as the leaves turn green, before the speaker compares himself to the birds:¹⁵⁶

*si huoben ir singen
lûte und vroelîche,
Nider und hô.
mîn muot stât alsô,
daz ich wil wesen vrô. (MF 6–8)*

They raised up their song
loudly and joyously,
low and high.
My spirits are just so:
that I want to be joyful.

The situation here is delicately balanced by an apo koinou construction. When the speaker says that his *muot stât alsô*, the *alsô* looks forward to the explanatory clause that follows, with the sense of “thus,” but also back to the mood and the song of the birds, with the sense of “the same way.” (The translation attempts to mimic this Janus-faced grammatical structure.) Although these lines seem to make a simple analogy between birds and lover, the second clause forces its reader (or hearer) to reevaluate the function of the word *also*, thereby emphasizing an unexpected distinction: for the speaker, in contrast to the birds, this state remains aspirational. Since he wants to be joyful, it follows that he must not be yet.

Courtly love in this sense is often conceived as distant, ethicized love for a lady who is put on a pedestal. In Veldeke’s song *Swer ze der minne ist sô vruot* (XII), thought to be a contrafactum of *Oiés pour quoi plaing et soupir*, by the trouvère Gace Brulé, the speaker praises love as the source of all good:¹⁵⁷

*Swer ze der minne ist sô vruot,
daz er der minne dienen kan,
und er durch minne pîne tuot,
wol im, derst ein saelic man!
Von minne kumet uns allez guot,
diu minne machet reinen muot,
waz solte ich sunder minne dan? (MF 61,33–62,3)*

¹⁵⁶ For the Romance influence on the form of this song, see Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 112.

¹⁵⁷ On contrafacta, see Schweikle, *Die mittelhochdeutsche Minnelyrik*, 1:85–91.

Whoever is so wise in love
 that he can serve love
 and take pains for the sake of love—
 good for him, he is a blessed man!
 From love proceeds everything good,
 love makes a pure mind,
 what should I do without love, then?

Though *saelic* does not always have the force of “blessed,” in this instance, the purifying effect of the love on the mind brings out the moral judgments latent in both *saelic* and *guot*, a word that in this context strives toward a higher good. As Olive Sayce points out, this abstract and generalized praise of love is common in Romance lyric.¹⁵⁸ But of course, this praise does not imply unalloyed pleasure, as the word *pîne* reminds us. The construction *pîne tuot* makes pain into something that the speaker takes on actively, rather than merely suffering passively, but the element of suffering remains. This joyful suffering, which the next strophe explains comes from loving the lady without reward (*Ich minne die schoenen sunder danc*, MF 62,4), ennobles the lover—indeed, he cannot conceive of his identity without it. The song *Swer mir schade an mîner frouwen* (III) uses the common topos of the sun and moon to elevate the beloved: *gnâde, vrowe, mir, / der sunnen gan ich dir, / sô schîne mir der mâne* “Lady, be merciful to me: I give you the sun; the moon shines for me” (MF 58,20–22). Like the moon, the speaker is illuminated by the reflected light of the source of good and nobility: his lady.

The speaker in Veldeke’s songs often defines love in a primarily ethical manner, sometimes to a greater degree even than the Romance poets do. A signal instance appears in a song that quite clearly draws on a French model. In the first strophe of *Tristan muose sunder sînen danc* (IV), Veldeke alludes to the story of Tristan’s love potion, taking his cue from a song by Chrétien de Troyes. The speakers in both Veldeke’s and Chrétien’s songs distance themselves from love conceived as irrational passion, for which Tristan is a byword. The knowing reference to the Tristan-story assumes that it is familiar to the audience. Of course, Veldeke’s adaptation of Chrétien’s song illustrates the influence of French culture. But Veldeke’s version introduces a twist.¹⁵⁹ Both speakers begin the same way, by claiming that they are not compelled by an external force like the magic potion. Then Chrétien’s speaker adds that his love is compelled by his eyes. Veldeke leaves out this reference, attenuating the sense that love is a physical reaction to external stimuli. Instead, he concludes his song with a pointed shift to short and punchy lines and an emphasis on the spiritual element of love:

¹⁵⁸ Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 111, n. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Compare Bernger von Horheim’s version of the same strophe from Chrétien, which shows much more devotion to the source: it is a contrafactum and a close translation. See the edition of the relevant parts of all three songs in Sayce, *Romanisch beeinflusste Lieder des Minnesangs*, 91–118; as well as the analysis in Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric*, 124–25.

*wolgetâne,
valsches âne,
lâ mich wesen dînund wis dû mîn. (MF 59,7–10)*

Beautifully created one,
without faithlessness,
let me be yours
and you be mine.

These last four lines, with their rhythm reminiscent of dance songs, have been variously seen as a reference to the tradition of the Latin poetry of the *vagantes* or to an earlier substratum of German lyric represented by a few surviving examples, such as *Dû bist mîn, ich bin dîn*.¹⁶⁰ While this raises the interesting question of how Veldeke weaves various traditions together here, my primary interest is rather in how he comments on his source in order to define what love ought to be. The adjectival nouns the speaker uses to address his beloved stress her moral virtue (*valsches âne*); even the quite standard reference to her beauty (*wolgetâne*) activates the *deus artifex* topos rather than dwelling in the realm of the activation of the flesh. Through his explicit comparison of himself to Tristan, and his implicit comparison of himself to the speaker in Chrétien's song—a level of insight only available to listeners in the know—Veldeke's speaker defines correct love in a specific way: it stems from the power of emotion, rather than from an external source, and its focus is spiritual rather than physical. As the appeal in the last two lines emphasizes, reciprocal love remains an aspiration.

But what is the normative status of courtly love in these songs? Is the speaker who promulgates the ethic of courtly love to be identified with Veldeke? Not all of his songs in the voice of the courtly lover work with the same definition of what love ought to be. In the song *In den zîten von dem jâre* (V), the speaker refers to *rehte minne*, which seems at first to be something along the lines of what we have seen so far: patient suffering in distant love:

*Die mich darumbe wellen nîden,
daz mir leides iht beschiht,
daz mac ich vil sanfte lîden,
noch mîne blîtschaft vermîden
und wil darumbe niht
noch gevolgen den unblîden
Dâ nâch, daz sî mich gerne siht,
diu mich dur die rehten minne
lange pîne dolen liet. (MF 60,4–12)¹⁶¹*

¹⁶⁰ For the reference to the *vagantes*, see Mertens, “Intertristanisches,” 50. For the reference here to an earlier substratum of German lyric, see Zotz, *Intégration courtoise*, 160–61, 163. And on that earlier substratum, see Wachinger, “Deutsche und lateinische Liebeslieder”; Worstbrock, “Verdeckte Schichten.”

¹⁶¹ Like Günther Schweikle, and against MFMT, I have restored *noch* to line MF 60,7, as it appears in manuscript C. See Schweikle, *Die mittelhochdeutsche Minnelyrik*, 1:176; and the note in Moser and

Those who want to envy me
 that I don't suffer any sorrow—
 I can suffer that very easily
 without giving up my joy,
 and will yet not for that reason
 follow the joyless ones,
 after she looks at me gladly,
 she who, for the sake of right love,
 makes me suffer my pain a long time.

In brief: the speaker seems to be joyful, and indeed confirms that he is joyful, but ultimately admits that he suffers for the sake of *rehte minne*. The lady is not only the occasion of his suffering, but actively imposes it upon him. He suffers for a long time at a distance, waiting for a small sign of favor from his lady. But the song does not end here. The speaker continues:¹⁶²

*Ich wil vrô sîn durch ir êre,
 diu mir daz hât getân,
 daz ich von der riuwe kêre,
 diu mich wilent irte sêre.
 daz ist mich nû so vergân,
 daz ich bin rîch und grôz hêre,
 Sît ich si mueste al umbevân,
 diu mir gap rehte minne
 sunder wîch unde wân. (MF 59,32–60,3)¹⁶³*

I want to be happy for the sake of her honor,
 she, who has done this to me,
 that I turn away from sadness,
 which misled me for so long.
 It has gone thus for me now:
 I am rich and lifted high,
 since I was allowed to embrace her
 who gave me right love
 with no struggle or madness.

Tervooren, *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, 112.

¹⁶² While the two extant versions of this song, in manuscripts B and C, present the first two strophes in different orders, that does not affect my interpretation. The significant fact is that in both manuscripts, the following strophe comes third and last.

¹⁶³ As in the previous strophe, C provides a better reading in one instance here—the preterite subjunctive *mueste* rather than MFMT's preterite indicative *muoste* in line 60,1. The sense is that he was allowed to embrace his lady, not that he was forced to.

The speaker's sadness has fallen away because he has been granted his reward: an embrace. Later, we will encounter an embrace that has the valence of a breach of etiquette. Here, it is not described that way. In this strophe, *rehte minne* remains connected to honor, and remains in the active control of the woman; it remains aspirational, but it is an aspiration achieved. *Rehte minne*, it turns out, does not have to be distant. Does this mean that the ideal of love we have traced in other songs needs to be revised? In my reading, no. In this song, Veldeke is continuing to operate within the semantic and thematic register of the Romance ideal of love that Olive Sayce and others articulate. But rather than asking his songs to nail down a consistent definition of *rehte minne*, I suggest we see them as presenting a range of possible ideals.

Literary and historical sources of the twelfth century show many different and seemingly contradictory views of love, and thus, depending on where they place the emphasis, scholars can come up with many different ways of describing the “system” of courtly love and what its crucial aspects are. Rüdiger Schnell convincingly reframes the debate. Courtly love was no system, as he argues:

wir haben es mit keiner festumrissenen Liebestheorie zu tun, sondern mit einer “höfischen” Diskussion über “höfisches” Liebesverhalten. In der Zielsetzung, auf ein vorbildhaftes Verhalten hinzuweisen, stimmen aber die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven der meisten Dichter überein. Wie also zu zeigen sein wird, ist das literarische Phänomen “höfische Liebe” eher als Diskurs über die rechte, wahre Liebe denn als Reproduktion einer stets vorausgesetzten festumrissenen Liebeskonvention zu begreifen.¹⁶⁴

In the case of Veldeke, I would take this argument a step further. Veldeke himself presents more than one possible model of “vorbildhaftes Verhalten” and holds the ideals in tension with one another.¹⁶⁵ In this way, he is more akin to later poets such as Hartmann von Aue and Walther than has usually been seen.

This tension arises not merely between two versions of the ideal—distant or fulfilled love—but also between fundamental approaches to the very existence of an ideal: praise and critique. If the voice of the courtly lover praises the various ideals of love, the voice of the ironic lover undermines the very same virtues. To begin with the concept of distance: in *Gerner het ich mit ir gemeine* (XVII), the speaker says:

¹⁶⁴ Schnell, “Die ‘höfische’ Liebe,” 237.

¹⁶⁵ With this approach, I wish to avoid going down the well-trodden path of the many attempts to define Veldeke's concept of *rehte minne* in the Eneit and to oppose it to either *falsche minne* or to *unminne*. In my view, even without attempting to construct a speculative metaphysical background for Veldeke's concept of love, we can see the ways in which love is used pragmatically in different contexts with different valences. For the debate over *rehte minne*, see especially Maurer, “‘Rechte’ Minne bei Heinrich von Veldeke”; Schröder, “Dido und Lavine,” 164–67; Weindt, *Die Lieder Heinrichs von Veldeke*, 65–130; Kistler, *Heinrich von Veldeke und Ovid*, 212–31. A few suggestive thoughts toward a different way of dichotomizing Veldeke's concepts of love as “personal” and “collective” may be found in Lieb, “Modulationen,” 46.

*Gerner het ich mit ir gemeine
tûsent marke, swâ ich wolte,
unde einen schrîn von golde,
danne von ir wesen solde
verre siech unde arme und eine.
des sol si sîn von mir gewis,
daz daz diu wârheit an mir is. (MF 64,10–16)*

I would rather have, together with her,
a thousand marks, wherever I would like,
and a chest of gold,
than that I should be far
from her, sick, and alone.
She should be sure of that from me,
that that is the truth about me.

The references to being far from her, sick, and alone, are an exaggerated version of the pose of the lover, a joke that relies for its effect on the audience's familiarity with that convention. As Bernd Bastert points out, this means that the conventions of courtly love must have been part of the audience's horizon of expectation, so we cannot imagine that Veldeke is introducing his hearers to French ideals *ex nihilo*.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, we can see that some of Veldeke's own songs could have helped to build up that fund of courtly commonplaces in the background of his audience members' minds. Here, the specific tone of this irony is important. The speaker does not react angrily to and reject the strictures of convention, as Hartmann's speaker does in *Maniger grüezet mich alsô* (XV, MF 216,29), and as we have seen Reinmar's speaker do in one section of *Ein wîser man*. Rather, he strikes a tone of amused benevolence, claiming that he wants these things that are obviously enjoyable, not certain other things that are obviously terrible, then topping it off with a gratuitous protestation of sincerity. He is not so much arguing against the ideal of distance as he is playing with it, making it ridiculous. At the same time, he plays on his own status by remarking how much he would enjoy this wealth.

There is no way to know Veldeke's biography or social position with any precision. However, there are several reasons to believe that he was part of a social stratum that encompassed both ministerials and lower nobility. It seems likely that Heinrich von Veldeke belonged to the family of that name that is known to have provided ministerials to the Count of Loon in the thirteenth century. The knowledge of Latin and the great degree of learning that Veldeke's narrative works evince make it clear that he was clerically educated, though we cannot say for certain whether he was intended for a career in the church.¹⁶⁷ Passages in his works indicate that he composed *Servatius* at the behest of Countess Agnes of Loon and Sexton Hessel of the monastery of Servatius in

¹⁶⁶ Bastert, "Möglichkeiten der Minnelyrik," 339.

¹⁶⁷ Renate Kistler has demonstrated just how well Veldeke knew the Latin antecedents for the material and the concepts of love in his *Eneit*—Ovid in particular. Kistler, *Heinrich von Veldeke und Ovid*.

Maastricht, and that he finished his *Eneit* at the request of Count Palatine Hermann (who became Landgrave Hermann I) in Thuringia. From these details, we can gather at least that Veldeke at times enjoyed the patronage of the higher nobility and that he traveled for the sake of his art.¹⁶⁸ Once we recognize the relatively low, though by no means base, position from which Veldeke is addressing his courtly audience—which rubs off on the speaker in his song—the reference to wealth takes on an additional valence. The speaker here appears as the opposite of Chaucer’s Clerk of Oxenford, of whom it is said: *For hym was levere have at his beddes heed / Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed / Of Aristotle and his philosophie / Than robes riche, or fithete, or gay sautrie.*¹⁶⁹

The tone and position of the speaker are similar in Veldeke’s song about fulfilled love, *Si ist sô guot und ist sô schône* (XVI). Here, Veldeke alludes through form and image to Kaiser Heinrich’s famous song *Ich grüeze mit gesange* (III), in which the emperor says that he would rather give up the crown than give up his lady: *ê ich mich ir verzige, ich verzige mich ê der krône* “before I do without her, I will do without the crown” (MF 5,36). Veldeke’s speaker playfully claims that, if he were Kaiser, he would give his lady the crown: *solt ich ze Rôme tragen die krône, / ich saste ez ûf ir houbet* “If I wore the crown in Rome, I would set it on her head” (MF 63,30–31). As Frank Willaert points out, Veldeke uses the same form and many rhyme words from Kaiser Heinrich’s song.¹⁷⁰ As with *Gerner het ich mit ir gemeine*, part of the joke lies in Veldeke’s relatively modest position compared to the emperor. Here we begin to see the specificity of Veldeke’s approach to the intertextual game of Minnesang. As he does even in the voice of the courtly lover in *Tristran muose sunder sînen danc*, Veldeke holds conventional topoi and images at arm’s length, inverting and playing on them with a crisp turn of phrase and a few telling echoes, not in a drawn-out translation or a belabored argument.

A more biting, though still playful approach animates another song in the ironic mode, this time about loyalty: *Ir stüende baz, daz si mich trôste* (XXVIII). Here Veldeke’s speaker pronounces advice that his beloved would be wise to take:

*Ir stüende baz, daz sî mich trôste,
danne ich durch sî gelige tôt.
wan sî mich wîlent ê getrôste
ûz maniger angestlicher nôt.
Als sîz gebiutet, ich bin ir tôte,
wan iedoch sô stirbe ich nôte. (MF 66,32–67,2)*

¹⁶⁸ On the historical details that can be gleaned about Veldeke’s life, see especially Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 465–66, 471, 476, 482, 491–92; Bumke, *Mäzene im Mittelalter*, 113–18, 356 n. 306; Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneasroman*, 846–47. Great detail and helpful analysis, if at times, too much certainty on ambiguous matters may be found in Sinnema, *Hendrik van Veldeke*, 11–33. For a portrait of Hermann’s court as a literary center, see Peters, *Fürstenhof und höfische Dichtung*.

¹⁶⁹ Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, lines 293–96.

¹⁷⁰ Willaert, “Die Gewalt der Sprache,” 4.

It would better befit her to comfort me
 than that I lie dead for her sake.
 For she has comforted me before
 in many dreadful hardships.
 If she commands, I will die for her,
 but I won't die gladly.

Dying of love for one's lady is of course a common motif. In Minnesang, it is perhaps most familiar from two later songs that belong to what used to be called the "feud" between Reinmar and Walther.¹⁷¹ In *Wol ime, daz er ie wart geborn*, also known by the alternate version of the first line, *Vil saelic wart er ie geborn* (IX): Reinmar declares emphatically of his beloved: *stirbet sî, sô bin ich tôt* "If she dies, then I am dead" (MF 158,28). He claims that his very life depends on her. Walther parodies this in his song *Lange swigen, des hat ich gedacht* (L 72,31): *sterbet si mich, sô ist si tôt* "If she makes me die, then she is dead" (L 73,16).¹⁷² In Walther's version, if she forces him to die for her, then she will also die—because she exists only in his song. As Ingrid Kasten points out, this reveals that Reinmar's statement only makes sense as a self-reference to his own art: his song is what depends on her existence, not his life.¹⁷³ Thus Reinmar and Walther both take the motif into the realm of poetological self-reflection. Veldeke's irony, on the other hand, keeps it firmly in the realm of reflection on life. When he says that he will die, but not gladly, the image of dying reluctantly for one's beloved reveals the entire premise of dying for love as ridiculous. Of course he would rather live for love than die for it! All the more so, considering that she has already comforted him in the past; this is no first capitulation. While the self-reflection in Reinmar and Walther spins out the logic of courtly love, Veldeke's irony punctures its ideal.

Veldeke performs a similar inversion of the motif of dying for love when he takes up the topos of the swan song in *Die minne bit ich unde man* (XXV):

*Die minne bit ich unde man,
 diu mich hât verwunnen al,
 daz ich die schoenen dar zuo span,
 daz si mêre mîn geval.
 Geschiht mir als dem swan,
 der dâ singet, als er sterben sal,
 sô verliuse ich ze vil dar an.* (MF 66,9–15)

Love, which has completely defeated me,
 I beg and exhort,
 to let me spur the beautiful one
 to multiply my happiness.

¹⁷¹ For the more current interpretation of the intertextual references among Walther and Reinmar songs, see Bauschke, *Die "Reinmar-Lieder" Walthers*.

¹⁷² In manuscript E, the first half of the line reads *stirbe aber ich*.

¹⁷³ Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 830.

If it happens to me as to the swan,
which sings as it is dying,
I'll lose too much therein.

The swan song appears in at least two troubadour songs, as well as two songs in the *Carmina Burana*. In each of these instances, the import of the topos is that the singing should give comfort to the singer: even though his love is not reciprocated and he is dying, he consoles himself with the beauty of his song. As it is phrased in one of the songs from the *Carmina Burana*: *Sic mea fata canendo solor, / ut nece proxima facit olor* “Thus singing I try to ease my fate, as does the swan when it is near death” (CB 116).¹⁷⁴ But in Veldeke’s song, there is no consolation. He deliberately disappoints this expectation with his final line, which is both cutting and still playful. As I mentioned in chapter one, Heinrich von Morungen later uses the topos of the swan song to emphasize his status as a poet: he is born to sing. Like Reinmar and Walther, Morungen foregrounds the poetological ramifications of the motif of dying for love.

In Veldeke, however, poetological reflection again takes a back seat. This is not to say that the poem is unsophisticated. The topos of the swan inherently reflects on song as song, but by cutting it so short, with such pregnant irony, the speaker seems deliberately to reject excess self-reflection. Here we have a clear difference between Veldeke and Morungen, and one that helps explain why Morungen is so beloved of modern commentators while Veldeke’s verse is largely overlooked: Veldeke is simply less interested in ruminating on his status as a poet. We can see from these short ironic songs that his speakers can be snappier in their judgments, less engaged by contemplating possibilities than by simply enacting them. In the songs of the ironic lover, Veldeke demonstrates that he is familiar with common topoi, but, without any clearing of the throat, he turns them to his own devices.

So far, we have seen two different, contrasting voices, the first promulgating some form of *rehte minne*, the second ironically undermining it. In both cases, the voice speaks from the perspective of a lover. From time to time, the man in Veldeke’s songs seems not to be a lover, but rather to represent a more detached point of view, a voice of wisdom that can bestow advice. In *Die man sint nu niht fruot* (XI), for example, the speaker pronounces judgment on men who are not prudent, in contrast to women who are virtuous:

*Die man sint nu niht fruot,
wan sie die vrowen schelten.
ouch sint sie da wider guot,
daz sie in ez niht wol vergelten.
Swer daz schiltet, der missetuot,
dâ er sich bî genern muoz.*

¹⁷⁴ Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 190. References to the *Carmina Burana* (CB) are by song number from this edition. The other poems are CB 103; Cercamon VII; Peirol I. See Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 628..

*der brüevet selbe melden,
die gedihent seldom.* (MF 61,25–32)

Nowadays men are unwise
when they criticize ladies.
And they are kind in response,
for they do not retaliate against them.
Whoever criticizes that does wrong,
when he should be improving himself through it.
He examines rumors himself,
which seldom thrive.

The generality of the declaration is signaled by the plural *die man*. There is no first person here, but rather an impersonal voice that represents a view from nowhere. Far from being a lover himself, the speaker criticizes men who talk about ladies. The single-strophe song ends with a cryptic *Abgesang*. It seems that nearly every reader of the song has construed the mysterious final two lines in a different way.¹⁷⁵ The more recent interpretations read them as a warning to those who would expend excessive effort to determine the truth of rumors. Their perspective is reminiscent of the didactic voice in the first strophe of Reinmar's *Ein wiser man*, which likewise warns against obsession with investigating rumors. Despite the flattening effect of didacticism, however, Veldeke's advice-giver maintains something of the cleverness that his lovers have shown. In a similar song (*In den zîten, daz die rôsen*, VII) Veldeke again warns against becoming preoccupied with the lies of base people, and again finishes with an explanation as to why it is a waste of time: *daz darf doch niemen ruochen, / wan si suochen birn ûf den buochen* "that should not bother anyone, for they are looking for pears in beech trees" (MF 65,10–12). With this snappy flourish, which conveys a sententious point through a fresh metaphor, Veldeke turns an aphorism into a witticism.

As Ingrid Kasten points out, the critique of men and praise of ladies, as well as the sententious conclusion, fit into the conventions of *Spruchdichtung*.¹⁷⁶ Several of Veldeke's songs have the characteristics of *Spruchdichtung*, and are thought to have been transmitted together in two groups in manuscripts B and C.¹⁷⁷ Ludger Lieb argues that one of Veldeke's poetic techniques is to compose songs that can be altered to fit the conventions of love lyric or *Spruchdichtung*, depending on the occasion. One example he uses to illustrate his insight is a pair of strophes that are transmitted separately but usually combined into a single song and read as a *Wechsel*, in which the first strophe is spoken by a woman, the second by a man.

¹⁷⁵ See the summary in Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 623.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 622.

¹⁷⁷ See Thomas, "Zu den Liedern," 162, 241. He identifies fifteen strophes from Veldeke's oeuvre as *Sprüche* and argues that they were transmitted together in two groups. These are strophes 15–24, 35–37, 40, and 48 in both manuscripts B and C, which in MFMT are included in songs VI–XIII, XI, XXII, and XXXI.

“*Der blîdeschaft sunder riuwe hât
mit êren hie, der ist rîche.
daz herze, dâ diu riuwe inne stât,
daz lebet jâmerlîche.
Er ist edel unde vruot,
swer mit êren
kan gemêren
sîne blîtschaft, daz ist guot.*”

*Diu schoene, diu mich singen tuot,
si sol mich sprechen lêren,
dar abe, daz ich mînen muot
niht wol kan gekêren.
Sî ist edel unde vruot,
swer mit êren
kan gemêren
sîne blîdeschaft, daz ist guot.* (MF 60,13–28)

“He who has joy without regret
here with honor, he is rich.
The heart in which regret dwells
lives in misery.
He is noble and wise,
who with honor
can increase
his joy; that is good.”

The beautiful one who makes me sing,
she should teach me to speak—
the one from whom I cannot
at all turn my mind away.
She is noble and wise,
who with honor
can increase
his joy; that is good.

As is typical of a *Wechsel*, the two interlocutors speak past one another rather than to each other. In Lieb’s reading, however, the first strophe is not actually spoken by a woman, but instead by the advice-giver of *Spruchdichtung*. He argues that the strophe is missing many of the signals that other women’s strophes have, and that the more general language and the ideal of love without regret are more characteristic of *Spruchdichtung*.¹⁷⁸ In this reading, these strophes do not go together, but rather are

¹⁷⁸ Lieb, “Modulationen,” 38–42.

alternates. To bring Lieb's insight to bear on the voices speaking in these two strophes: his interpretation turns them into a strong example of Veldeke's ability to explore dual possibilities and allow both to exist side by side, neither negating the other. The same form and many of the same root ideas inform two different perspectives on love. One is the generalized praise of love without sorrow, spoken in the voice of the advice-giver. The other balances on the edge between lament and praise, a lover exalting his lady while touching lightly on the obsession that engenders song.

In one way, however, I would go beyond Lieb's argument. It is true that the first strophe clearly fits into the *Spruch* model. The second one, however, is also closer to the *Spruch* model than it is to the songs that are clearly in the voice of the lover, whether courtly or ironic. The final three lines, nearly identical in both strophes, are spoken in the same impersonal voice as a maxim. Even the first four lines, which do have a discernible first-person perspective, seem flat and give less insight into the speaker than the songs we have looked at above. Though spoken in the first person, the lines seem to glance off the surface of the mind rather than reflecting its inner state. Thus, in the second strophe, we see a blending of the voices of the lover and the advice-giver in the praise of joy and honor.

Examining this varied cross-section of songs has given us an outline of the defining characteristics of Veldeke's lyric. In addition to certain peculiarities of his vocabulary, such as the prevalence of the unusual words *blîdeschaft* and *vruot*, which have been explored at length elsewhere,¹⁷⁹ we can see several recurring devices: Veldeke uses conventional topoi but often gives them an unexpected, even jaunty spin; he makes his language pregnant through brevity; and he often pivots away from poetological rumination. But just as prominent as these connecting threads is the diversity of the songs. The topoi Veldeke employs stem from Provençal, French, German, and Latin lyric; the philosophy of love takes contradictory forms; the tone varies from praise, to lament, to censure; the forms vary widely, drawing on both Romance and German predecessors; and most of all, the three distinct voices of the courtly lover, the ironic lover, and the advice-giver stand in contrast to one another. By drawing on a multitude of traditions and working in a variety of aesthetic modes, Veldeke demonstrates his flexible skill and his broad mastery of the possibilities of lyric, in a way similar to what we have seen with Morungen and Reinmar. As with them, it is safe to say that we cannot simply identify Veldeke the author with the lover promulgating a new Romance ideal in some of his songs. But what kind of authorial profile comes into focus in the light of these widely-ranged songs? In my view, the figure who can encompass this range of forms and postures in this manner is the author as cleric.

¹⁷⁹ For an overview of relevant research, see Sinnema, *Hendrik van Veldeke*, 34–42. For the way that Veldeke—in his narrative works, though not his lyrics—chooses rhymes that are acceptable both in Maaslandic and in a “Middle High German literary language,” see Klein, “Literatursprachen,” especially 86–89.

The Clerical Self

If we return to the first song we considered in this chapter, we can start to examine how Veldeke evokes the figure an author that we might tentatively identify as clerical. In *In dem aberellen* (XIV), Veldeke picks up the protest against dying for love that we have seen twice already, and again expresses it through an ironic twist to a conventional topos. This time, he suggests that he might substitute penance instead:

*ich sol verderben
al von mîner schulde,
sî enwolte ruochen,
daz si von mir naeme
Buoze sunder tôt
ûf gnâde und durch nôt.
wan ez got nie gebôt,
daz dehein man gerne solte sterben.* (MF 63, 13–19)

I will perish
of my own guilt,
unless she deigns
to accept from me
penance instead of death,
through mercy and of necessity.
For God never commanded
that anyone should desire to die.

Reference to penance is not uncommon in troubadour lyric, where it is taken up, for example by Peire d'Alvernhe, Bernart de Ventadorn, and Peire Vidal.¹⁸⁰ In each case, the speaker in the troubadour song laments that he is forced to do penance through his sorrowful love despite not having sinned. As Bernart puts it:

*Si tot fatz de joi parvensa,
mout ai dins lo cor irat.
Qui vid anc mais penedensa
faire denan lo pechat?
On plus la prec, plus m'es dura*

Though I put on the likeness of joy, there is a heavy grievance in my heart.
Who ever saw a penance being done before the sin? The more I pray, the
more she hardens her heart.” (lines 29–33)¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ For a list of references, see Kasten, *Deutsche Lyrik*, 625.

¹⁸¹ From the song *Lo tems vai e ven e vire*, edited and translated by Goldin, *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères*, 154–59.

Veldeke again turns the topos to his own use here. His speaker's guilt is taken for granted, though he does not mention what precisely he has done to incur it. More significantly, he wishes to choose penance, rather than being consigned to it against his will. This allows Veldeke to set up penance as a preferable alternative to the death topos that he has in his sights for critique. And further, it allows him to bring in God on his side, the ultimate authority to back his tongue-in-cheek demolition of the idea that one might desire to die for love. By deploying terms from the religious realm, he sharpens his satire of the hyperbole inherent in the tropes of courtly love.

The critique of love comes also in the voice of the advice-giver of *Spruchdichtung*. Some songs, such as *Dô man der rehten minne pflac* (X), invoke the sentiment of *laudatio temporis acti* in order to critique the court. In one of these, the speaker specifically condemns the power of love:

*Diu welt ist der lîhtecheite
alze rûmeclîchen balt.
harte kranc ist ir geleite,
daz tuot der minnen gewalt.
Diu lôsheit, die man wîlent schalt,
diu ist versüenet über al,
die boesen site werdent alt:
daz uns lange weren sal. (MF 61,1–8)*

The world chases after frivolity
too boastfully quick.
Her defense is very weak;
the power of love makes that so.
The intemperance that was once condemned
is now accepted everywhere,
base customs grow old:
this will remain long with us.

The speaker here neither praises love nor treats it with ironic distance; he straightforwardly decries its intemperance and frivolity. Indeed, the language used is more reminiscent of the tradition of court criticism than of love lyric. For example, neither *lôsheit* nor *lîhtecheite* appears anywhere else in the songs of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, while *lôsheit* is used by Berthold von Regensburg and *lîhtecheit* by Heinrich von Melk, among others.¹⁸² The tradition of clerical court critique reaches back to Peter Damian's *Contra clericos aulicos* (ca. 1072). At its high point in the middle of the twelfth century, a circle of clerics who spent time at the court of Henry II of England,

¹⁸² See Berthold von Regensburg, *Predigten*, 1:114, lines 20–21. *Die lâzent ir hâr wahsen wider reht durch hôhvert unde durch lôsheit; daz ist gar ein grôziu ûzsetzikeit*. See also Heinrich von Melk, "Von des todes gehugde," line 147. There he criticizes women who do not want to be led, and who *wellent leichtichait phlegen*. *Lôsheit* is also used by Thomasin von Zirklare, and *lîhtekeit* in the *Buch der Rügen*, *Benediktiner Regel*, and *Fronleichnam*.

including John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, and Walter Map, portrayed the court as a decadent place characterized by excess and luxury in entertainment and love. Though court criticism began out among the learned clerics in Latin, it spread in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries into the vernacular, and Veldeke's song shares its approach with such writers as "Poor Hartmann," Heinrich von Melk, Thomasin von Zirclaere, Berthold von Regensburg, and the singers of *Spruchdichtung*.¹⁸³

In light of this discourse of court criticism, it is fair to ask whether Veldeke's ironic songs are meant to be devastating rather than arch, and whether Veldeke's poetic project is satire that exposes the excesses of worldly love at court. This is how D. W. Robertson read Andreas Capellanus and Chrétien de Troyes, with much less straightforward evidence of their disapproval than this song provides us for Veldeke. In Robertson's analysis, "Christianity was then recognized as a religion of love, rather than as a cult of righteousness, so that aberrations of love were thought to have far-reaching implications in the conduct of everyday affairs," and thus both Andreas and Chrétien satirize idolatrous passion in order to reveal its basic sinfulness.¹⁸⁴ Though their works are humorous in method, they are ultimately censorious in outlook. Yet this interpretation of Veldeke would put too much weight on this slim poem. By what criterion can we judge it to contain the otherwise hidden truth, discount the wry tone of the Veldeke's irony, and jettison the evidence from his other encomia to love? A more reasonable reading accepts that all of these perspectives contribute to a view of the whole, not that any one provides the key.

This becomes all the clearer when we look at a set of songs that draw on religious language not to critique or undermine love, but to add a submerged layer of humor for members of the audience who can catch the allusions. Returning to the song *Swer mir schade* (III), discussed above in the first section of the chapter, we see that religious motifs are introduced on the surface level first. To begin the song, the speaker curses anyone who lowers him in his lady's eyes, but balances this with a promise of prayer for anyone who helps him with her:

*swer mîn dar an schône mit trouwen,
dem wûnsche ich des paradîses
unde valte ime mîne hende. (MF 58,14–16)*

But whoever looks after me with love,
I wish him Paradise,
and I will fold my hands for him.

By deploying religious vocabulary, Veldeke here assimilates an important clerical role to the situation of love poetry. He takes a typical term from the discourse of courtly love, *triuwe*, usually used in that context to denote loyalty, and evokes the connotation of

¹⁸³ See Köhn, "Militia curialis"; Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, 54–66; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 415–23.

¹⁸⁴ Robertson, "The Concept of Courtly Love," 3–4.

God's love, *caritas*.¹⁸⁵ This double meaning of *triuwe* does not become clear, however, until the following lines, with their reference to praying for the salvation of the person who has done the speaker this service. Again, the language is unusual for the German lyric: this is the only time that the word *paradîs* appears in *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. In this context, the emphasis in the following lines (MF 58,19–20) on the lady's mercy (*gnâde*) and even the invocation of the *deus artifex* topos (*wolgetâne*) gain resonance. Yet the song refrains from sacralizing this profane love. In the first place, this pious vocabulary only comes after the opening curse of the lover's enemies. Second, the following strophe turns away from the ethical shades of love to its potential fulfillment by invoking the *locus amoenus*:

*die bluomen springent an der heide,
die vogel singent in dem walde.
Dâ wîlent lac der snê,
dâ stât nu grüener klê,
er touwet an dem morgen. (MF 58,27–31)*

The flowers bloom in the meadow,
the birds sing in the woods.
Where once snow lay,
now there stands green clover.
It is full of dew in the morning.

Here the image of the dew contributes to the depiction of the natural setting for love. Despite the prominence of the *locus amoenus* in courtly lyric, dew is a relatively uncommon image in that context. Other than Veldeke, it is used by only three authors in *Des Minnesangs Frühling*.¹⁸⁶ Veldeke does, however, refer to dew in another song that can shed some light on its valence. Dew in fact appears twice in the woman's song, *Manigem herzen taet der kalte winter leide* (XXXVII). The first time, it sets the scene of spring: *Swenne der meie die vil kalten zît besliuzet / und daz tou die bluomen an der wise begiuzet* "When May brings an end to the very cold time, and the dew bathes the flowers in the meadow" (2,1–2).¹⁸⁷ Then the female speaker describes what will happen in the meadow:

¹⁸⁵ Trevrizent echoes the Biblical "God is Love" in his advice to Parzival: *sît getriuwe ân alez wenken / sît got selbe ein triuwe ist*. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 462, 18–19. See Gentry, "Triuwe" and "Vriunt," 17–18.

¹⁸⁶ Once by Ulrich von Gutenberg, in his *Leich* (I, MF 69,21), once by Heinrich von Morungen (IV, MF 125,38), and twice by Wolfram von Eschenbach (VI, line 2,2; VIII, line 4,3). Three of those usages are in metaphors for human appearance (Gutenberg, Morungen, and Wolfram VIII).

¹⁸⁷ Though this song is attributed to Veldeke in the only manuscript in which it appears, the *Codex Manesse*, it has been considered inauthentic by some scholars. In my view, there is no reason to mark it off from other Veldeke lyrics. Since it is not included in MF, the numbers refer to strophe and line in MFMT.

*Mîn liep mac mich gerne zuo der linden bringen,
den ich nâhe mînes herzen brust wil twingen.
er sol tou von bluomen swingen:
ich wil umb ein niuwez krenzel mit im ringen. (3,1–4)¹⁸⁸*

My beloved may gladly bring me to the linden,
he whom I want to press close to my heart and breast.
He should shake the dew from the flowers:
I want to wrestle with him for a new wreath.

As unlikely as it may seem, the use of shaking the dew from flowers as a metonym and metaphor for sexual love in nature is an adaptation of a typological figure from the realm of Biblical exegesis. Dew was associated in many medieval contexts with fruitfulness. More specifically, as Stefan Zeyen points out, the famous dew on Gideon's fleece (Judges 6) was interpreted as a prefiguration of Mary's Annunciation; similarly, the Annunciation was described as heavenly dew.¹⁸⁹ This association led in later Middle High German lyric to a more concrete interpretation of dew as semen; this interplay of religious and bawdy connotations appears in lyrics by Neidhart, Tannhäuser, and Konrad von Würzburg.¹⁹⁰ Here in Veldeke's song, the mischievous allusion to Biblical exegesis in a sexual context lends an extra frisson to the erotic imaginary, a layer of meaning that would be apparent only to audience members with a sufficient level of education. But for those who are in the know, this allusion commands respect for the depth of knowledge and the adroit repurposing of that knowledge demonstrated by the author. Taken together, these two songs demonstrate how Veldeke creates a learned persona for himself both on a level accessible to the whole audience, through his reference to praying on behalf of another, as well as one reserved for a narrower audience.

The View Through the Lover

In the light of these varied uses of religious language—ranging from irony to critique to sexual innuendo—the nature of the clerical author who stands behind these works has yet to come into focus. The perspective of the court critic is not sustained across a broad swath of lyrics. Nor is the playful ironist or the subtle eroticist always in evidence. Veldeke, of course, was also the author of the epic *Eneit*. Thus another possible role for him is the one that C. Stephen Jaeger has proposed for the clerically trained

¹⁸⁸ The manuscript has *tougen* instead of *tou* in line 3, which does not make sense grammatically. Perhaps *tougen* was at some point substituted by a prudish scribe. Given the context (*tou* has appeared in the previous strophe, *tou* fits with the actions described in this sentence, and the following line deploys related erotic metaphors of wrestling and the wreath), most editors emend to *tou*, which seems the most sensible course. For an exception, see Schweikle, *Die mittelhochdeutsche Minnelyrik*, 1:200.

¹⁸⁹ Zeyen, *...daz tet der liebe dorn*, 49; see also Klein, *Minnesang*, 342, with further references.

¹⁹⁰ Zeyen, *...daz tet der liebe dorn*, 48–51. Dew imagery in many forms becomes quite prominent in later works such as Frauenlob's *Marienleich*, Mechthild von Magdeburg's *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*, and Konrad von Würzburg's *Trojanerkrieg*.

authors of Middle High German courtly narratives: moral educator. In Jaeger's view, clerics wrote romances in order to bring the ethical idea of courtliness, developed in the ecclesiastical realm, to the audience of the nobility at the secular courts. According to his model, these clerical poets operated in a "framework of correction and instruction," in which romances serve the same function as unsolicited letters of advice. Thus the authors of the romances "did not appear before great lords as petitioners or as hired scribes, but as teachers."¹⁹¹ Whether or not we accept this as the role of the narrative authors, it is clear that it is insufficiently flexible to fit Veldeke's lyric.¹⁹²

Indeed, it is difficult to find a model in the cultural imaginary of vernacular literature for the type of clerical figure implied by the lyrics we have looked at so far here. Timo Reuvekamp-Felber has catalogued the functions that clerics serve in German vernacular narratives—care of souls, provision of written culture, spiritual authority, secular ruler, and author, as well as subject of criticism—and none encompasses the contradictions raised here.¹⁹³ In Reuvekamp-Felber's account of the cleric as author, a cleric serves as the guarantor of the truth of the account that he writes, as well as providing the technical skills of literacy that allow the events to be committed to parchment.¹⁹⁴ None of these functions, however, encompasses the range of voices we have seen in Veldeke's lyric.

Reuvekamp-Felber points out that Middle High German narrative works create implied authors who differ from the narrators, and suggests that we approach these authors not as historical people, but rather "als Summe ihrer poetischen Möglichkeiten."¹⁹⁵ These possibilities encompass many fields of knowledge the implied authors have mastered: "Sie besitzen Wissen über Gattungstraditionen, lateinische Poetiken, größtenteils Französischkenntnisse, kennen sich aus in Astrologie, Medizin und Recht. Sie partizipieren am Wissen und den Möglichkeiten einer schriftliterarischen, klerikal geprägten Tradition."¹⁹⁶ In my view, this approach can be productive for lyric as well. As we have seen, Veldeke cuts a similarly knowledgeable figure as an implied author, demonstrating learning in specific areas overlapping only partly with Reuvekamp-Felber's list: genre traditions; Provençal, French, Latin, and German language and lyric; courtly ideals and the critique of them; classical learning and Biblical exegesis. However, in my view, Veldeke goes beyond demonstrating his mastery of possibilities; rather, he presents contradictory possibilities and ideals in such a way that they remain in tension with one another. Thereby, he challenges his audience to come to terms with that tension, as he has, without resolving it.

When his songs are seen in this light, it becomes clear that none of the speakers unproblematically represents Veldeke's view on a particular topic. For this reason, the most important technique Veldeke uses to keep all of his positions in tension with one another, beyond simple juxtaposition, is that he sometimes produces a speaker that the

¹⁹¹ Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, 234–35.

¹⁹² See the critique of Jaeger's model in Reuvekamp-Felber, *Volksprache*, 78–101.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 173–359.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 349–59.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 145–46.

audience can see through. This technique sets up a particularly enlightening comparison with a poet who is universally read in the context of a clerical identity, Peter of Blois (c. 1130–c. 1211)—a comparison that demonstrates both the usefulness and the limitations of the label “clerical” for Veldeke.

I will begin with a pair of songs by Heinrich von Veldeke in which a man and a woman speak about the same event—his failed attempt to woo her. This pair is unique in the corpus of *Minnesang* in that it is a *Wechsel* that spans across two separate songs.¹⁹⁷

In the first song, *Ez sint guotiu niuwe maere* (I), a male speaker activates the classic love constellation of courtly lyric: his beloved has not rewarded him for his loyalty. He begins with a conventional nature opening, then praises his lady and laments that he has lost her good will because of his *tumbes herze* “foolish heart” (MF 56,7). Indeed, a form of the word *tump* is repeated in every strophe of the song, and in the third strophe, explicitly contrasted with *wîsheit* “wisdom,” which the speaker is self-aware enough to know that he lacks: *dô wart mir daz herze enbinne / von sô süezer tumpheit wunt, / Daz mir wîzheit wart unkunt* “Then the heart inside me was wounded by sweet foolishness, so that wisdom was unknown to me” (MF 56,23–25). Instead of remaining distant in pure love, he has succumbed to the effect of passion: Love has brought him out of his senses, *minne / brâhte mich ûz dem sinne* (3,1–2), and led him to entreat his beloved to take him in her arms. The speaker briefly recognizes his own transgression against the courtly norm of remaining distant:

*Daz übel wort sî verwâten,
daz ich nie kunde verlâten.
dô mich betruoc mîn tumber wân,
der ich was gerende ûz der mâten
ich bat sî in der kartâten
daz si mich müese al umbevân.* (MF 57,1–6)

Let the wicked word be cursed
that I was never able to leave unsaid.
When my foolish hope tricked me,
I felt measureless desire for her,
I implored her for the sake of *caritas*
that she must take me in her arms.

Through the references in the previous strophe to the Christian moral qualities of *wîsheit* and *tumpheit*, combined with the rare usage in this strophe of a Germanized form of the Latin *caritas*, the speaker instrumentalizes vocabulary from the realm of the spiritual for the purposes of the corporeal.¹⁹⁸ Ingrid Kasten argues that, despite this

¹⁹⁷ It is clear that they are two separate songs based on their different formal structures. It is also clear that they belong together not only from their content, but from the fact that in both B and C, the woman’s song is transmitted immediately after the man’s song. In A, only the woman’s song is transmitted, though with some interesting differences that I will address below.

¹⁹⁸ Bernd Bastert argues that Veldeke’s songs gain their spark and their meaning by means of references to

religious vocabulary, the song remains in a secular realm and the moral judgments that *wîsheit* and *tumpheit* might invoke are not brought to the forefront here.¹⁹⁹ In my view, when we read these allusions in the context of Veldeke's other songs that repurpose religious terminology, we can see that he is in fact putting these connotations to work, though not in order to turn the events here into a mere morality play. The moral connotations come with just a light enough touch to make it seem as if they are not quite under the control of the speaker. They give the speaker the feel of someone who, in reaching for a register of language just beyond his reach, ends up saying more about himself than he intends to. Despite his momentary self-awareness, rather than accept his self-criticism, the speaker cuts short his reflections and concludes his song by making an excuse for himself:

*Sô vil het ich niht getân,
daz sî ein wênic ûz strâten
durch mich ze unrehte wolte stân.* (MF 57,7–9)

I had not done so much
that she would step even a little
off of the right path for my sake.

This has a double meaning: on the one hand, he has not done enough to convince her to give in to him. On the other hand, he has not gone so far that it harms her honor. In this song, then, the speaker gives us a moment of self-criticism, but quickly closes it off—too late, however, to close off the critical perspective that his obliviousness has opened up for the audience. The speaker's evident foolishness points up the distinction between him and the author—the one who slips these jokes into the mouth of someone who does not understand them. The humor comes from the contrast between the buffoon and the knowing persona the audience imputes behind him.

The companion song, *Ich bin vrô* (II), exploits this critical view by showing the man to the audience from the perspective of the beloved. As Ingrid Kasten has argued, in the classical *Minnesang* tradition, *Frauenlieder* and *Frauenstrophen* often serve to legitimate male desire: the view behind the curtain shows that the lady is in fact dedicated to the man in her heart, but simply forced by social norms to continue to reject him.²⁰⁰ Given that in the German tradition only men composed and performed *Minnesang*, this form of “women's speech” is, of course, the projection of the male authors. Such *Frauenlieder* confirm the image of the man as the ideal singer and loyal lover, while at the same time “objectively” verifying his worthiness to be loved, since the lady is

literary conventions, theological concepts, and cultural ideals that an audience in the know recognizes. In this instance, Veldeke uses *caritas* to refer to the discourse of selfless love versus cupidity. Bastert, “Möglichkeiten der Minnelyrik,” 332–35. In a related reference to clerical knowledge, Anton Touber has argued that the form of the song draws on the same Latin tradition as does the form of the *Stabat mater*. Touber, “Veldekes Stabat Mater.”

¹⁹⁹ Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 250.

²⁰⁰ Kasten, “Weibliches Rollenverständnis,” 136–37.

revealed to be unable to deny her love for him. In our example, however, the perspective of the woman does not provide objective verification of the man's worthiness to be loved. The lady is not at all oppressed by unrealizable love. In fact, she is described by the narrator of the second song as being particularly carefree: *sô sprach ein vrowe al sunder clage / vrîlich und ân al getwanc* "thus spoke a lady without lament, freely and without any constraint" (MF 57,12–13).²⁰¹ She is unconcerned about the man's distress—instead, she is scornful. While the man emphasizes his *tumpheit* and his loss of *wîsheit*, she adds to this a critique using the vocabulary of courtliness: she says that he entreated her *dorpelîche* "like a clod" (MF 57,32), and that she misjudged him:

*Ich wânde, dat hê hovesch waere,
des was ime ich von herzen holt.
daz segg ich ûch wol offenbaere:
des ist hê gar âne schult.* (MF 57,34–37)

I thought that he was courtly,
and so I was fond of him from my heart.
I'll tell you openly:
he's definitely not guilty of that.

One way of reading this song is as a didactic method of educating the audience in a new courtly ideal of love service that hinges on the male exercise of restraint.²⁰² The most famous example of the lady as the teacher of courtliness comes in Albrecht von Johansdorf's dialogue song *Ich vant si ane huote* (XII, MF 93,12). In that song, the man and the lady meet, he laments his lovesickness for her, and he importunes her for her love in return for his singing and service. She refuses, saying it would be to his honor but her detriment, and she concludes by saying that he does have a reward: *daz ir deste werder sint und da bi hochgemuot* "that you are more worthy for it, and elevated in spirit as well" (MF 94,14). She teaches him the ethical value of the courtly ideal, and even the emotional satisfaction that ought to come from its practice. This ending, however, is paradoxical in that it seems that the lady is the superior figure, since she is the one who enlightens the man, but she does so by pointing out the noble qualities that his pursuit confers upon him. In the end, the man turns out to be the figure to be admired.

Veldeke's woman's song goes beyond this didactic structure in two ways. First, the man and the woman both know what the ideal is; the question is simply of whether he will live up to it. When he does not, he tries to make excuses, while she teases him mercilessly. She is less a didactic figure than an arbiter of the rules. Second, it has a satirical edge that mocks rather than elevates the man. The snappy humor of Veldeke's songs comes to its acme here. Comic timing does not get any better. The message here is

²⁰¹ For a typology of the functions of women's speech in Minnesang, see Ehlert, "Männerrollen und Frauenrollen."

²⁰² Kasten, *Frauendienst*, 247–52. On the semantic field of the term *hovesch*, see Ganz, "'curialis'/'hövesch'"; Ganz, "'hövesch'/'hövescheit.'"

not that love is ennobling, but that it is easy to fall short of its ideals: the lady defines uncourtly behavior and holds it up for mockery.

But there is still more going on. Not only does the lady reify the courtly norm against which the lover has foolishly transgressed, but her tone punctures his aura of worthiness to be loved. Taken together, the two perspectives of the insufficiently self-aware male speaker and his sarcastic, carefree critic provide a kind of stereo vision: the audience is brought not to identify with the male speaker, but to see through his pretension. When we recognize the critique implicit in the pair of poems, we are brought to posit an authorial position from which it is being made. A distance opens up between the author and the male speaker. The audience gains another perspective on him: he is ignorant, even a figure of fun. And, crucially, they are laughing *at* the speaker, but *with* the author. In this case, the two speakers' voices do not so much add together to an author who encompasses them both, as they give the sense of allowing us to see through the bumbling speaker to the urbane, ironic author in the background.

An interesting aspect of this song's transmission underscores my argument here.²⁰³ There seem to be two versions of the woman's song, one intended to be paired with the man's song, and one suitable for being performed or read separately. The first of these is three strophes long and is transmitted, following the man's song, in both manuscripts B and C. The second is five strophes long and is transmitted, without the man's song, in manuscript A.²⁰⁴ The two added strophes are the first and the third. The structure can be represented as follows:

²⁰³ In general, *mouvance* is less common in Veldeke's lyric than Reinmar's or Morungen's. See the relevant songs in Heinen, *Mutabilität im Minnesang*, 10–17.

²⁰⁴ For transcriptions of the manuscript versions, see Heinen, *Mutabilität*, 10; and Gertrud Weindt: *Die Lieder Heinrichs von Veldeke*, 2:352–7.

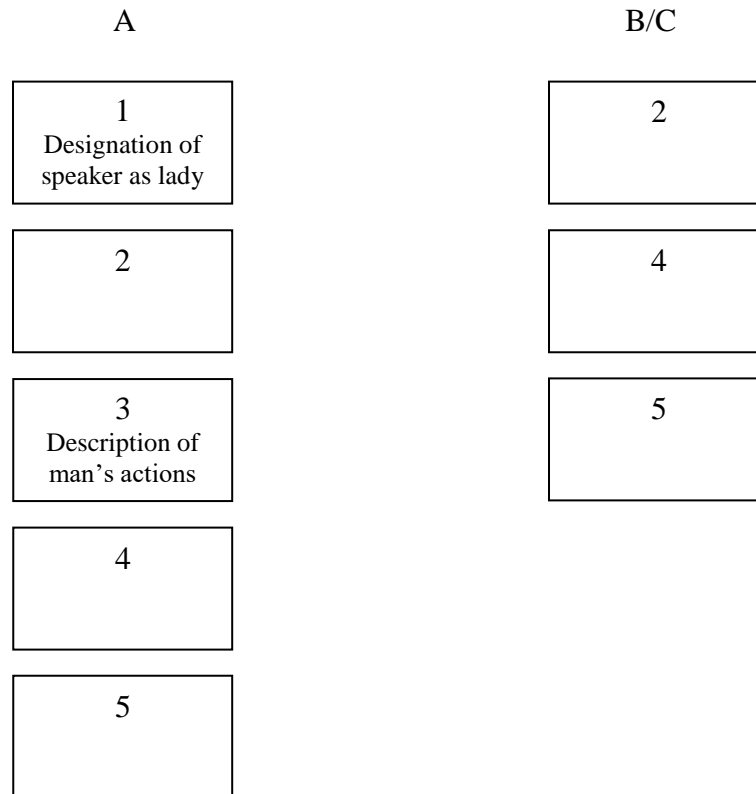


Figure 2: The structure of Veldeke's song II, variously called *Ich bin vrô* (II a, from the *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift A*, fol. 33r–33v) or *Mir hete wîlent ze einen stunden* (II b from the *Weingartner Liederhandschrift B*, pages 60–61; and the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift C*, fol. 30v).

In the longer A-version, the first strophe serves, with its very first lines, to incorporate a nature opening, which in the shorter version of the woman's song is not necessary, since it follows the man's song, which has its own nature opening. Second, the first strophe makes explicit that a lady is speaking, as mentioned above: *sô sprach ein vrowe al sunder clage* (MF 57,12). The added third strophe tells what the man's transgression was—that he tried to embrace her, that he did so like a clod, and that it came from his foolish heart—all information that is needed because the man's own narrative is not present. Getting the whole picture through only the woman's perspective, however, changes the ultimate effect surprisingly little. Since the man is not staged, and thus is not a concrete figure of fun, her critique has to create the image of his foolishness, which it does by repeating *tumb*, *tumpheit*, and by raising the stakes by calling him *dorpelîch* (MF 57,26–32). In other words, the woman's voice does the same work, through other means, that the juxtaposition of the two voices does in the version where the two songs are paired. In both instances, the paramount focus is the way that the woman's voice allows us to see through the courtly lover and to recognize the author's position as that of someone who has both mastered the conventions of courtly love and is

able to hold them at enough distance to have a little fun with them. The difference is that when the man's song is included, we can see in subtle ways the specific process of the distancing of the author from the male lover, which is unnecessary when only the woman's voice is heard.

A similar dynamic is at work in two poems by Peter of Blois. Peter, a French cleric who served in many administrative positions, most notably at the Angevin court of Henry II of England, wrote in Latin.²⁰⁵ His poems are transmitted anonymously in the Codex Buranus and Arundel manuscript 384, among other places. The setting of his lyric production is broadly similar to Veldeke's, in that it is likely a secular court in the second half of the twelfth century, though the audience is composed of educated clerics rather than secular nobility.

The two relevant poems by Peter differ from Veldeke's in that they are not transmitting or reacting to the social and ethical ideals of courtly love, nor were they composed for performance at court. They are much more literary and allusive, and in form they are completely different. Nevertheless, in my view, they share the technique of providing multiple perspectives on the speaker, which has the effect of allowing the audience to see through them to an implied authorial figure, though with a different result.

At first glance, the clerical speaker in Peter's poem *Olim sudor Herculis* (CB 63) seems to reject the trap of desire. In eight erudite stanzas, he tells the story of the mighty Hercules, who was undone by love; and in the final stanzas, he resolves to best Hercules by resisting the blandishments of Venus. It seems to be a simple example of a decision taken against desire, and indeed P. G. Walsh reads it this way.²⁰⁶ Yet there are signals throughout the poem that we cannot take the speaker's self-praise at face value. The first is the utter disproportion between the speaker's dilemma – he is torn between desire and the modest and nonspecific *alia studia* (4b) – and Hercules's, who succumbs to desire at the expense of eternal *fama* (1a).

Most importantly, *Olim sudor Herculis*, like Veldeke's poems, gives us multiple perspectives on the speaking subject. The first six stanzas tell in the third person the narrative of Hercules's fall. It is not until the seventh stanza that we suddenly realize this story is being told by a lyric *I*, who injects himself by boasting that his steadfastness is superior to Hercules's:

*Sed Alcide fortior
aggredior
pugnam contra Venerem.* (4a)

But I am stronger than Hercules, and I take up the fight against Venus.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ On Peter's career as a poet and its context, see Dronke, *The Medieval Poet and His World*, 281–339.

²⁰⁶ P. G. Walsh reads the poem this way. Walsh, *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana*, 22. See also Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, 300. For Peter's poems, I cite the texts and translations from Walsh's edition.

²⁰⁷ Walsh, *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana*, 19–20. See also Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 23–24.

We cannot help but see the speaker's vainglory: conditioned to expect failure by the poem's extended emphasis on the fallibility of the greatest hero of antiquity, we see him critically. It takes a lot of nerve to claim to be stronger than Hercules. Moreover, the language in which the speaker claims to reject Venus's delights reads more like a description of yielding:

*Dulces nodos Veneris
et carceris
blandi seras resero,
de cetero
ad alia
dum traducor studia.* (4b)

I undo the sweet knots of Venus and draw back the bars of her alluring prison; for the future I devote myself to other pursuits.

This language of unbarring recalls the unbarring of Venus's palace in Peter's poem *Grates ago Veneri* (CB 72), which places the audience inside the mind of a rapist. After forcing himself upon his victim, the speaker there says *sic regia / Diones reseratur* "In this way Venus's palace is unbarred" (4b).²⁰⁸ So even as the speaker of *Olim sudor Herculis* says he is fleeing from Venus, he is inextricably caught in the language of passion at its most problematic, as it is used in the very poem where the narrator most heinously breaks moral and legal norms.²⁰⁹

The other perspective comes from the refrain, which pulses along underneath the tale of Hercules, interjecting in a detached and philosophical register a commentary about "the lover" who does not lament his waste of time, but squanders it in Venus's service:

*Amor fame meritum deflorat;
amans tempus perditum non plorat,
sed temere diffluere
sub Venere
laborat.*

Love strips the bloom from the meed of glory. The lover does not lament the waste of time, but rashly toils to squander it in service to Venus.

As the audience reads the first stanzas, "the lover" who is criticized here seems clearly to be Hercules; after the seventh stanza, it seems to apply just as clearly to the speaker. At this point, it becomes clear that this poem does not function as an admonishment to stay strong against the blandishments of love. Rather, the point lies in

²⁰⁸ Walsh, *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana*, 42–44; Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 41–42.

²⁰⁹ For the clear ecclesiastical prohibition of rape, punishable by excommunication, see Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 209–10, 249–50.

the contrast between the speaker produced, who cannot see his own imminent fall, and the perspective of the audience, who see through him. As Frank Bezner has summed up the poem: “The poetic narrator asserts that the monster-killing H[ercules] was ‘defeated’ by the temptations of love, declaring himself more steadfast, even as he unknowingly falls victim to love: this is a demolition of the vain grandiosity of the Lover seeking to deny his dependence.”²¹⁰ Through the same effect we have seen in Veldeke’s songs, insight is here located not in the speaker of the poem, but outside of him in the reception of the poem by the audience, and thus in the implied authorial figure who orchestrates this demonstration of the unwitting fall. This disembodied voice of critique is reminiscent of the voice of Veldeke’s advice-giver and the speaker in *Spruchdichtung*.

This poem has a pendant in Peter’s famous *Vacillantis trutine* (CB 108), which is often said to illustrate the surrender to desire that *Olim sudor Herculis* rejects.²¹¹ *Vacillantis trutine* is told in the first person by a speaker who stands wavering at a metaphorical crossroads, tempted by love on one side and reason on the other. The speaker here examines his own mind carefully, beginning with the gyrating fluid imagery of the first stanza:

*Vacillantis trutine
libramine
mens suspensa fluctuat
et estuat
in tumultus anxios,
dum se vertit
et bipertit
motus in contrarios.* (1a)

My purpose hangs in the balance of the wavering scales; it is wave-tossed and boils over in troubled confusion as it twists and splits into opposing emotions.²¹²

This time the speaker lets the audience right into his own wavering mind, where *amor* strives against *ratio* (1b). As we have seen in *Olim sudor Herculis*, the pursuits of love are set up against more rational pursuits, but here the speaker dwells in the conflict:

*Me vacare studio
vult ratio.
sed dum amor alteram
vult operam,
in diversa rapior;
ratione*

²¹⁰ Bezner, “Heracles,” 330.

²¹¹ Walsh, *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana*, 22.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 137–39; Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 178.

*cum Dione
dimicante crucior. (1b)*

Reason desires me to devote myself to study. But since love desires the other activity, I am dragged in opposing directions. I am tortured as reason grapples with Venus.

Already, it is clear that this speaker is more reflective and self-conscious than the speaker in *Olim sudor Herculis*. This close-up view of the speaker's emotional state is complemented by his anguished self-evaluation in the refrain:

*O, o, o, o, langueo!
causam languoris video,
nec caveo
videns et prudens pereo.*

How listless I am! I see the cause of my listlessness but do not guard against it. With eyes open and of sound mind I seek destruction.

In the refrain, the speaker reflects on the inevitable conclusion of his internal debate: succumbing to love. Peter Dronke argues that diction, meter, rhythm, and rhyme convey the oscillation of the lover between desire and reason. Dronke goes too far, however, when he claims that the result is a “foregone conclusion” and “the inner conflict here is only a pretence.”²¹³ Seen from outside the world of the poem, one could say that the inner conflict in any lyric is only a pretense, since it is staged for the benefit of an audience. I think it is more interesting to look again at the different viewpoints the poem provides on the speaker. The salient difference between this poem and *Olim sudor Herculis* is not that that one is a rejection, the other an embrace of love, but that this one constructs a subject who can see through himself. The stanzas provide his view of himself as torn between desire and study, and the refrain provides his own acknowledgement that he is not fully in control of himself. He is self-destructive even though he realizes that he is self-destructive—a realization doubly emphasized with both *videns* and *prudens*.

Thus Peter portrays the divided subject in two ways: in *Olim sudor Herculis* he shows us the subject torn between desire and duty who believes that he will remain strong, while the audience can see through his pretense because of the many perspectives the poem provides. In *Vacillantibus trutine*, however, Peter gives us a view inside the mind of a subject who watches himself as he falls – giving us stereo vision by means of the multiple perspectives that the divided consciousness of the speaker himself provides.

One of Veldeke's songs neatly combines characteristics from these two poems by Peter. In *Diu minne betwanc Salomône* (XXVI), the speaker compares himself to Solomon, the famous victim of love:

²¹³ Dronke, *The Medieval Poet and His World*, 300.

*Diu minne betwanc Salomône,
 der was der alrewiseste man,
 der ie getruoc küniges krône.
 wie mohte ich mich erwern dan,
 Si twunge ouch mich gewalteclîche,
 sît si sölhen man verwan,
 der sô wîse was un ouch sô rîche?
 den solt sol ich von ir ze lône hân. (MF 66,16–23)*

Love forced Solomon,
 who was the very wisest man
 who ever wore a king's crown.
 How can I defend myself, then,
 from her also compelling me by force,
 if she could overcome such a man,
 who was so wise and also so powerful?
 I will have my compensation from her as reward.

Like Peter, Veldeke here refers to an exemplary figure who, despite his surpassing abilities, cannot resist the power of love. This is not an uncommon topos.²¹⁴ But the figure here recognizes his own failing, as does the speaker of *Vacillantis trutine*: he is too weak to resist love. There is, of course, a stark difference in how love is figured. Far from being equated to destruction, love here will yield a reward. But more interesting than this difference is the similarity in the position of insight that the speaker occupies. *Vacillantis trutine* and *Diu minne betwanc Salomône* are each one of what Peter Dronke characterizes as “these astonishing moments in which a poet can at times see through himself, watching his own movements of thought and feeling and behaviour with a kind of vulnerable detachment.”²¹⁵

In light of these last examples, I would like to return to the distinction between the speaker in the poem and the authorial figure that the audience is invited to identify in the background. In Veldeke's *Ez sint guotiu niuwe maere* and *Ich bin vrô*, as well as Peter's *Olim sudor Herculis*, we have seen the way that giving multiple perspectives on the speaker allows—or forces—us to see him in a critical light, and suggests a gap in which we can locate a certain subject position with privileged insight, located specifically *not* in the speaker, but in the persona of the author. The author simultaneously distances himself from the speaker in the poem and stakes out a position of mastery for himself. In this

²¹⁴ For songs that mention Solomon as victim of love, see Sayce, *Exemplary Comparison*, 160, 174–75, 202, 207, 242. These songs are by Peire Vidal, Falquet de Romans, Le Chastelain de Couci, Thibaut de Champagne, and Veldeke. Sayce does not catalogue any references to Hercules in medieval vernacular poetry at all, nor any of Solomon as victim of love in medieval Latin poetry.

²¹⁵ Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, 143. Here, Dronke is talking about the vernacular lyric and saying that this does not happen in medieval Latin lyric. I have been arguing, of course, that it does happen in *Vacillantis trutine*.

way, he shapes his own reputation. Yet the final two examples, *Vacillantis trutine* and *Diu minne betwanc Salomône*, locate this position of insight and mastery within the speaker. For Peter, the speaker's self-awareness represents an achievement: one who can see through himself as he falls, who recognizes the very critique that the poem is making of his own subject position, is potentially on the way to reconciling the conflicting demands of the courtly and the clerical.²¹⁶ As Peter Dronke has described the intellectual program of the Latin poets at the court of Henry II: "Clerical and anti-clerical, courtly and anti-courtly, bawdy and spiritual, romantic and cynical, satirizing themselves and others, their poetry can be seen as a continual embodiment of that *sic et non* which characterizes not only Abelard's contradictions and inner tensions but also the outlook of many of his most sensitive successors in the twelfth-century clerical world."²¹⁷

The very similarity of Peter's and Veldeke's poetic techniques here, however, helps to sharpen the difference between them, and thus our understanding of the kind of author figure that Veldeke projects. In Veldeke's song, introspection is not nearly so well developed. The speaker's recognition of his own weakness is a brief moment of insight, no more lasting than the insight that the male speaker has in in *Ez sint guotiu niuwe maere*. Veldeke gives no indication of the same kind of highly developed clerical anthropology that shines forth from Peter's songs and his other writings. Rather than the dialectical tension of *sic et non*, Veldeke presents in his songs a range of contrasting possibilities for how to experience, figure, and judge love. The sovereign way that Veldeke moves from one of these possibilities to the next, and the knowledge that he demonstrates as he does so, make unmistakable that the figure behind these varied songs is defined by a clerical education, even if not by the same clerical preoccupations as Peter of Blois and his fellow Latin poets. Ultimately, for Veldeke, the speaker's ability to see through himself is secondary to our ability to see through him to that vanishing point on the horizon of the song: the author. The emphasis does not lie on internality, but on the vitality of unresolved contradiction, the simultaneous existence of many voices and positions, none of which can claim absolute validity. The songs that allow us to see through the speaker confirm that no one voice can be taken to be final. While the author offers up all the contradictions, he does not reconcile them, nor does he push the audience to. He allows us to experience them.

²¹⁶ See the argument about Peter's famous Letters 76 and 77 in Cotts, *The Clerical Dilemma*, 126–27.

²¹⁷ Dronke, *The Medieval Poet and His World*, 285.

Conclusion

The men who composed and performed medieval German love lyric in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were, as best we can tell, noble dilettantes who composed lyric in their spare time, not traveling entertainers who sang for their bread.²¹⁸ Historically, men in this social milieu defined themselves to a large degree by their position of strength, both in military prowess and in their relation to women.²¹⁹ The basic question that this contrast brings up is: Why would such men stand before the court and sing—and in particular, why would they sing about a love that causes them to subordinate themselves to their beloved? Any answer to this question will necessarily remain speculation, since there are no authorial statements on the subject from medieval sources. For this reason, it cannot be the main focus of sustained inquiry. Nevertheless, it is too fundamental a matter to ignore. Keeping in mind these difficulties, one of the best answers to the question has recently been given by James Schultz: The men composing and performing these songs must have accrued some kind of symbolic capital from exploring problems and anxieties that could not be addressed outside of this literary realm, and in particular from the beauty of the songs in which they undertook this exploration.²²⁰

In my view, the aesthetic and ethical mastery these authors demonstrate, each in his own way, in fashioning for himself an authorial figure must have contributed to this accrual of symbolic capital. Schultz's proposal appeals not only because it helps explain the motivation for composing and performing Minnesang, but because it leaves room for the individual differences we see in the works of the different poets while still providing a coherent framework through which to understand the patterns they share. While interpreting the songs as an expression of class ideology or as the rearrangement of conventional tropes flattens these differences, keeping in mind the structural but personal motivation that each poet had to define for himself an individual identity as an author gives a common background to their distinctive achievements.

When we consider the medieval courtly love lyric as a means to persuade the audience of the author's position of insight and mastery, we can still appreciate the individual ways that each poet goes about this in each song. Heinrich von Morungen playfully quotes himself and demonstrates that he has already foreseen the variation that his song will undergo. Reinmar der Alte fits an entire spectrum of ethical views, emotional reactions, and aesthetic approaches into a single, flexible song. And Heinrich von Veldeke demonstrates across a broad oeuvre his mastery of the many genres and voices of medieval lyric, as well as the learning of a cleric. Reading their songs in this way does not overdetermine their meaning or close down possibilities, but rather opens them up to further readings.

²¹⁸ On the social rank of these men, see Bumke, *Ministerialität und Ritterdichtung*, 58–69; Kasten, *Fraudienst*, 18–19; see also the summary in Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 495–99.

²¹⁹ See, for example, Schnell, "Unterwerfung und Herrschaft," 103–33; Schultz, *Courtly Love*, 173–79.

²²⁰ Schultz, "Performance and Performativity in Minnesang," 393.

These readings should examine poets of the Minnesang as individuals without pigeonholing them too quickly. New readings of Morungen could focus on his anticipation of *mouvance* and do for his multiply transmitted songs what several readings have done for one of Walther's most complexly transmitted songs.²²¹ There is a new overarching interpretation of Reinmar to be written that takes into account both the canonical songs and the often *athetized* "inauthentic" songs that have attracted recent attention and rehabilitation. And Veldeke's broad range and deft touch, which anticipate Walther's, could be better integrated into the narrative of the development of Minnesang.

On a broader level, new forms of medieval authorship remain to be defined. The concept of authorship appropriate for Minnesang differs from our modern assumptions, and it likewise differs from the concepts befitting medieval genres that sprang from other milieux. The identification and description of these concepts will depend on new close readings. In that sense, we are not here at an end. Rather, as Morungen (or perhaps Reinmar) put it, *nu bin ich vil kûme an dem beginne*.²²²

²²¹ Starkey and Wandhoff, "Mouvance – Varianz – Performanz"; Kellner, "Nement, frowe, disen cranz."

²²² "Now I am hardly at the beginning" (Heinrich von Morungen XXXII, MF 145,31). Though today universally attributed to Morungen, under whose name the first strophe of this song appears (twice!) in the *Codex Manesse*, the full song appears only with attribution to Reinmar, in the *Würzburger Liederhandschrift*.

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