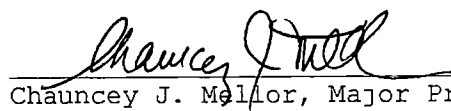
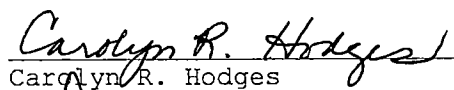


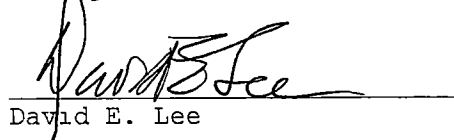
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Amanda L. Brown entitled "Swarz-wîz and heiden: Elements of Acceptance in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Willehalm and Parzival." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in German.


Chauncey J. Mellor, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
And recommend its acceptance.


Carolyn R. Hodges


David E. Lee

Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

*Swarz-wiz and heiden: Elements of Acceptance in
Wolfram von Eschenbach's Willehalm and Parzival*

A Thesis

Presented for the Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amanda L. Brown

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Abstract

In this work the role of both race and religion in Christian and so-called heathen communities is examined as they appear in Willehalm and Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Several characters in these works experience difficulty being accepted within the Christian communities in Germanic Europe for reasons which might be attributed either to their race or to their religion. Two major characters, Gîburc from Willehalm and Feirefiz from Parzival, and two minor characters, Rennewart from Willehalm and Razalîc from Parzival, were investigated. Although a number of factors--race, religion, relative beauty, and strength--appears to contribute to the characters' acceptance or non-acceptance in courtly society, in a majority of the cases, religion holds more significance for the acceptance of the characters in these works in their respective communities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

From the eleventh until the thirteenth century, the Christians of Europe waged campaigns against Muslims in the Middle East in an attempt to capture what both religions consider holy land. Out of these Crusades and the culture from which they developed grew the traditions of the romances about which Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote his two most significant works, Parzival and Willehalm. The plot of both works deals with, to a great extent, interactions between characters who come from the area known as North Africa and the Middle East today and characters who come from Europe. Besides the differences in geographical roots, Wolfram draws attention to each character's racial and religious characteristics. In many instances, particularly in Parzival, the narrator refers to characters by their religion, and often, particularly in the cases of Belacane, Queen of Zazamanc, and Feirefiz Angevin, draws attention to the color of their skin. Frequently, those characters who are non-European and/or non-Christian experience difficulty in being accepted or even welcomed into the Germanic Christian community in both Willehalm and Parzival. Although the narrators of both works make clear references and comparisons to the race of most of these characters--in most cases when a European Christian justifies his or her

reasons why a so-called "heathen" with a skin color different than his or her own--should be excluded from his or her community, he more often de-emphasizes race and focuses on the importance of a shared faith within a community. To the communities in these two works by Wolfram, religion is a more significant aspect of an individual than is his or her race.

In this work, I define "community" as a group of people with similar socio-economic standing who are most often in the same family or are related by marriage and who share the same religion. I will frequently use the term "community" interchangeably with the word "society." Examination of the factors of race and religion within the communities in these works is limited in terms of the communities defined by Willehalm in Willehalm, and Gahmuret and Parzival in Parzival. In Willehalm, I will most often call the community of reference the "Christian community." Gahmuret's and Parzival's communities will be considered "Christian," "European Christian," "Germanic Christian," "Arthurian," or will be referred to as the communities to which Parzival and Gahmuret belong.¹

It seems fairly clear that when Wolfram makes reference to another's religion as "heathen" he most likely intends

¹Use of these various terms is simply for the sake of style.

the religion to resemble Islam, judging by references made to Mohammed in terms of this religion. However, as in the following instances in Willehalm and Parzival, it is also quite clear that Wolfram's understanding of Islam is limited. At the beginning of Willehalm, the narrator speaks of the religious preparations which Terramer, whom the narrator referred to as "heathen," tends to before going into battle:

sînem liebisten got Mahmeten
und andern goten sînen
den liez er dicke erschînen
mit opfer mange êre
und klagete in ouch vil sêre
von Arabeln, diu sich Gîburc
nande. . . . (Willehalm 9:8-14)

"Mahmete," or Mohammed, is mentioned, but the narrator indicates that Terramer's religion considers him one of many gods in a polytheistic religion, which also requires sacrifice; neither characteristic, however, belongs to Islam. In Parzival, Feirefiz Angevin is also called "heathen," but in this case references to his religion often do not involve figures and allusions to Islam as above. Instead, two deities used in reference to Feirefiz's religion, Juno (Parzival 767:3) and Jupiter (815:6), come from Roman mythology. Because of these inconsistencies and

uncertainty as to the actual identity of the religion of the characters who are not Christian, these characters will be referred to here as "heathen," as they are in Willehalm and Parzival.

A. History

Around 1212, the year in which scholars believe Wolfram finished Parzival, over 200 years had passed since Pope Urban II issued the decree which rallied thousands of laymen and members of European nobility to become Crusaders for the cause of winning Palestine for the Christian realm--at least this was the Church's intent for the Crusades (Siberry 95). Those in the Church expected the Crusades to the Holy Land to be a military campaign which would ultimately overthrow Muslim rule of the area. In the view of the Church, a city could be spared destruction if its inhabitants were only baptized. However, the Church's intentions were principally that the Crusades be an outward manifestation of an inner spiritual pilgrimage, and therefore, Crusaders should go into the Crusade with the

'right intention.' According to the pilgrimage tradition, a major source of crusading ideology, the physical *imitatio Christi* was of little value unless it was also accompanied by an internal,

spiritual *imitatio*, which took the form of a moral regeneration and was a mark of true repentance(95).

But from first-hand reports of what actually happened once the Crusaders arrived in the Middle East, there is little evidence that this spiritual renewal actually occurred.² Killing, raping, and pillaging were quite common, while redemption and mercy were rare.

But was this matter of brutality a case of religious or cultural intolerance? Norman Daniel discusses the existence of a spirit of "xenophobia" throughout Europe during this period in The Arabs and Medieval Europe, and explains that

[o]ne feature of this [xenophobia] is the contrast between the theory that the crusading purpose was

²In an account from The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades, in June of 1099, the Frankish army marched to Jerusalem and immediately began a constant bombardment of the walls until sundown. At that time, the Franks agreed with the city to hold its attack until morning. During the night, inhabitants of the city attempted to evacuate over the city walls. When the Franks became aware of this, they again attacked and gained control of the city walls, and then began to lay siege to the city. The chronicler, Ibn Al-Qalanisi, states,

A number of the townsfolk fled to the sanctuary [of David], and a great host were killed. The Jews assembled in the synagogue, and the Franks burned it over their heads. The sanctuary was surrendered to them on guarantee of safety on the 22nd of Sha'ban (14th July) of this year, and they destroyed the shrines and the tomb of Abraham. (Gibb 48)

the liberation of Oriental Christians and the actual hostility most Latins felt in their encounters with their co-religionists of Greek, Syriac or Coptic allegiances. It is not clear how far--if at all--the Latins in Europe realized that the eastern rites were different from their own. Their encounter with the Byzantines would arouse both political and cultural hostility on each side; and when the Latin states were established, the Christian Arabs were treated without respect by the Latin Church. In Europe, 'xenophobia was easily aroused, and its contamination infectious; expressed at first in the belief in an Islamic aggression, it quickly became indiscriminate, as the pilgrims realized that the world was made up of many nations, and all of them alien.

(Daniel 115-16)

It is difficult to decipher whether the motivation behind crusading violence was a result of political, racial, or religious intolerance, but the motivation behind other such violent incidents involving racial or religious conflicts outside of the Crusades during this time are slightly more clear.

Within Europe, decrees such as the one which the Lateran Council made in 1215 further illustrate the fear of

outsiders to which Daniel refers. In this declaration, the Council proclaimed "that Jews and Saracens ought to be distinguished from Christians by their clothes" (Haverkamp 342). Implied in this case is that religion at this time was the more significant distinguishing factor in welcoming or shunning someone from the community. The call for these religious groups to distinguish themselves with clothing markedly different than from those which Christians wore indicates that Jews and Saracens bore no physical characteristic or behavior which would mark them as different from the more prevalent religious community.

In other cases, the lives of non-Christians were spared simply because they agreed to be baptized. For example, in 1066, when the Jews of Trier were threatened by unruly mobs of Crusaders, Archbishop Egilbert provided them with sanctuary in his residence, but suggested, when it seemed the mobs would overcome them, that they accept baptism (214), which suggests that the participation in this Christian rite alone would have been recognized by the mob, thus saving their lives. This same concept of immediate acceptance through baptism also appears in Wolfram's Willehalm and Parzival.

B. heiden

The word *heiden* appears frequently and is particularly important in both Willehalm and Parzival. Several Christian characters, as well as the narrator, refer to non-Christian characters as "heidensch." Common use of the English cognate "heathen" to mean one who is "irreligious, uncultured, or uncivilized" has the potential to give a false impression of how Wolfram or any of his Christian characters consider those who do not share their faith. Etymological and textual evidence, however, shows that this word is not used in these works as a pejorative term.

Both the English "heathen" and German "heiden" most likely evolved from the same source as the Gothic word, *haiþno*, which renders the Greek *tà éthne*. According to the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, the English "heathen" parallels the German adjective, *heidnisch*, which refers to someone who inhabits open country ("heathen"). In another instance, the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, indicates that the old use of "heathen" denotes a disapproving tone toward one's lifestyle and generally is used to refer to someone of no religion or who belongs to a religion other than "Christianity, Judaism, or Islam" ("heathen").

Georg Friedrich Beneke's Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch indicates that most uses of "heiden" in literature of the Medieval period mean one who is "überhaupt nichtchrist, insbesondere Mahomedaner" (Beneke). Several examples cited by him, including some from Parzival and Willehalm, as well as poems from Walther von der Vogelweide and the Nibelungenlied, indicate such usage. For example, in the Nibelungenlied, Beneke cites "er ist niht gar ein heiden" (1201,5) and most significantly refers to a line from Walther von der Vogelweide which juxtaposes "kristen, juden, und die heiden" (16, 29; 22, 16), which in this usage indicates Jews are not heathen (Beneke).

The following passages from Willehalm and Parzival reflect the use of *heiden* as a term meaning any person or custom considered not to be a part of the Christian faith. First, Wolfram speaks of the Baruch whom Gahmuret serves upon his arrival in the East, prior to his adventures in Zazamanc:

er hete an krefte alsolhen zuc,
vil kunege wâren sîne man,
mit crôntem lîbe undertân.
daz bâruc-ambet hiute stêt.
seht wie man kristen ê begêt
ze Rôme, als uns der touf vergiht.
heidensch orden man dort siht:

ze Baldac nement se ir bâbestreht
(daz dunket se âne krumbe sleht),
der bâruc in vur sünde
gît wandels urkunde. (Parzival 13:22-14:2)

Here, the juxtaposition of *heiden*, or *heidensch*, with the rites of Christianity denotes that the use of *heiden* here implies that faith of the Baruch's subjects is not the same as that of the audience for which he writes. Likewise in Willehalm, Wolfram refers to the two armies in opposition as "die getouften" or "kristenheit" and "die heiden." From the beginning of the work, the audience is aware that this story concerns a conflict over a woman who converts to Christianity from another religion, and therefore, when the narrator declares, "Gîburge sueze wart in sûr,/ den heiden und der kristenheit" (Willehalm 12:30-13:1), the audience recognizes the term "heiden" as something referring to the other army's religion because of the religious term used to label the other army.

In another instance, Trevrizent, a hermit and brother to the Grail King, Anfortas, tells Parzival of his life before giving up knighthood and states about the battles he fought, "der heiden unt der getoufte/ wâr nûr strîtes al gelich" (Parzival 495:28-29). Here again, the contrast between *heiden* and *getoufte* establishes the word *heiden* as a

description of where one stands in regard to the Church rather than a degrading religious label.

Moreover, research shows that the use of the term *heiden* at the time in which Parzival was written most commonly meant someone or something not associated with Christianity. Franz Jelinek's Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch indicates that, at least by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the term *heiden* was used as a collective to refer to all religions outside of Christianity (Jelinek).

II. WILLEHALM

Wolfram writes Willehalm with the expectation that his audience is familiar with Parzival and, therefore, often refers to characters and incidents in Parzival to compare to those in Willehalm. Although Willehalm appears after Parzival, it is of benefit to examine this work first because it demonstrates the direction in which Wolfram's ideas progress over time, particularly a greater focus on religion rather than race. Both the society and many of the major themes in Willehalm echo those of Parzival. In Willehalm, however, events and characters are less fantastic in nature, and Wolfram's far more mature tone results from a more serious treatment of his subject matter. Most importantly, in determining whether a character is accepted or cast out from society, Wolfram makes no mention of race when referring to the European army or the Middle Eastern army in relation to one another. Instead, he focuses his attention on religious conflict, showing that an individual's Christian faith or non-Christian faith distinguishes one character from another in this work.

Book one opens not with Wolfram singing the praises of his own cleverness and talent, as in Parzival, but rather with reverence and humility in a hymn of praise and guidance

to the Christian God. Following the hymn, the author offers a prayer:

diu helfe dîner guete
sende in mîn gemüete
unlôsen sîn sô wîse,
der in dînem namen geprîse
einen rîter, der dîn nie vergaz.
swenn er gediende dînen haz
mit sündehaften dîngen,
dîn erbarme kunde in bringen
an diu werc, daz sîn manheit
dînen hulden wandels was bereit.
dîn helfe in dicke brâhte ûz nôt.
er lîez en wâge iewedern tôt
(der sêle und des lîbes)
durh minne eines wîbes
er dicke herzenôt gewan. (Willehalm 2:23-3:7)

This prayer not only tells the audience Willehalm's story in a pragmatic sense, but it also sets the tone of the entire work in its use of language and in the choice of form. As Marion E. Gibbs and Sidney M. Johnson comment in the introduction to their English translation of the work, "Willehalm concerns people of steadfast faith in God, not a God-seeker [as in Parzival], and it is the tragic

consequences of their faith in God and their love for each other that are of prime concern to Wolfram" (Gibbs 7).

Not only are the Christians in this work depicted as very religious and dedicated to their faith, but Wolfram also characterizes the heathens as dedicated to their beliefs as well. In Book two, Emereiz, the son of Gîburc and Tîbalt, confronts Willehalm following the gruesome battle at Alischanz:

'ei, waz dû lasters hâst getân
an mîner muoter al den goten
(dîn zouber nam's ûz ir geboten)
und mînem vater Tîbalt!

dar umbe Termis wirt gevalt

und al diu kristenheit durhriten.' (75: 4-9)

Emereiz appears less concerned in this case that his mother left his father for another man than that by converting to Christianity she has offended the heathen gods, thus showing Wolfram's audience that even though the heathens do not share the audience's faith, they nevertheless are rooted in their own faith. This also indicates the importance of the religion in the community to which Gîburc once belonged: if one family member rejects that community's gods, the entire family is thus shamed.

Two characters in this work best illustrate the role of religion in acceptance into or rejection by a community.

Giburc is apparently completely accepted by the Christian community and follows the faith whole-heartedly and continues to be simultaneously denied membership in and affirmed by the heathen community. Rennewart, on the other hand, although living in the Christian community, remains on the margin of society, continuing to adhere to his heathen faith.

A. Giburc

Giburc's experience exemplifies the influence religion exerts on communal acceptance. She leaves her husband, thus sparking a war which results in tens of thousands of deaths on both the Christian and heathen sides, and yet the Christian community gladly takes her into its midst and accepts her as the wife of a Margrave as well as a military leader solely because of her conversion and steadfast devotion to their own faith. The heathens believe that Giburc has brought shame on her family and, more significantly, their gods, and the result is a bloody war; and yet they still would risk everything to have her in their community once again. But in the end, Giburc attempts to bring peace to these warring communities by supplying both groups with a means to see each other as one community.

Giburc's sincere conversion to the Christian faith is particularly important, because it establishes that being a follower of a community's religion is the key to belonging to that community. Initially, Giburc's conversion to Christianity is questionable: Did she leave her religion because she fell in love with Willehalm, or did she adopt Christianity purely out of conviction? In Book one, the narrator states,

diu edel küniginne,
durh liebes vriundes minne
und durh minne von der hoehsten hant
was kristen leben an ir bekant. (9:17-20)

In referring to Willehalm's "minne" before God's "minne" the narrator gives the impression that perhaps her conversion was brought on more because of human love than supernatural love (Greenfield 198). Later, however, before going again to battle against Terramer and his armies, Willehalm, in a speech to rally his troops, defends to the audience the legitimacy of Giburc's faith:

\. . .dar nâch ich bat
in gevancnisse ir minne
sîn wîp, die kuneginne.
ir gûete mich gewerte
al, des ich an si gerte:
das tet si durh den touf noch mêr,

mit mir danne ir überkêr,

denne durh mîne werdekeit. (298:16-23)

Willehalm's witness to her character at this point in the story might be suspect and really more of a rationalization of his decision to lead men into a battle where he knows many will die. In this case, Gîburc's own words should serve as proof of her sincerity.

Gîburc's father and kinsmen continue to threaten an attack on Orange to force her return to heathenism at the opening of Book five, but in a speech in which she insists on the fruitlessness of their efforts, Gîburc claims,

' . . . ich hân den touf genomen
durh den, der al die krêatiure
geschuof, daz wazzer und daz viure,
dar zuo den luft unt die erden.
der selbe hiez mich werden
und al, das lebehaftes ist. . .
swaz mir duh den got geschiht,
der des alles hât gewalt,
gein dem schaden bin ich balt. . . '

(215:10-15; 216:24-26)

But even though these words support her sincerity, she also says,

'ze Arâbîâ unt in Arâbî
gekroenet ich vor den vurstē umbevie.

durh den hân ich mich bewegen,
das ich wil armuot pflegen,
unt durh den, der der hoehste ist.'
(215:28-216:3)

Once again the priorities involved in her conversion must come into question. In this case, poverty is considered in more of a secular sense, involving her leaving a wealthier king for a less wealthy ruler. Here, mentioning Willehalm before God is an aside to her initial argument, and therefore does not cause any doubt as to her devotion to Christianity. Had Gîburc expected to be a legitimate member of Willehalm's community simply because she married Willehalm and took his faith in name alone, Willehalm would never have rallied enough support to fight Terramer. Her shared religion, then, made the threat of heathen attack because of her not an attack on an individual, but instead an attack on the community's religion, thus motivating all of its members to defend their faith.

B. Rennewart

Rennewart exemplifies yet another instance of the importance of a common religion within the community. When he is introduced in Book four, he lives as the basest of kitchen help at King Louis's court, but Wolfram later

reveals that the sometimes uncontrollably brutal servant began his life as nobility in the heathen community. Even though the life of a servant during this period of time was hardly ideal, the king claims he singles out Rennewart for particularly cruel treatment.

After being taunted by pages while he does his chores, Rennewart becomes enraged and

dâ von im kiusche ein teil zesleif.
einen knappen dô begreif
der starke, niht der kranke;
er draet in z'einem swanke
an eine steinîne sûl,
daz der knappe, als ob er waere vûl,
von dem wurfe gar zespranc. (190:11-17)

Seeing the horrible incident, Willehalm runs to the king to inquire about the kitchen hand's situation. King Louis tells him of Rennewart's history and confesses that he treats him so badly simply because he refuses to be baptized:

ich weiz wol, das er edel ist.
mîn sin ervant aber mie den list,
einvaltîc noch spaehe,
von wirde noch von smaehe,
der in übergienge,
daz er den touf enpfienge.

ich hân unvuoge an im getân.
got weiz wol, daz ich willen hân,
ob er enpfienge kristenheit,
mir waere al sîn kumber leit. (191:1-10)

After hearing this, Willehalm, with the help of the king's daughter, Alize, persuades the king to release Rennewart to his custody in order to guide him away from any further violent outbursts (191:22-23). Willehalm then asks the boy to explain how he came to be in Louis's court, and Rennewart subsequently provides an interesting insight into his religious life.

Rennewart reveals that he comes from *Meckâ* and was sold to the king. He goes on to explain that although he has asked for help from Mahmete, he has turned to Christ, fearing that Mahmete will not help him:

'doch hân ich im sô vil geklaget,
daz ich sîner helfe bin verzaget
und hân mich's nû gehabt an Krist,
dem dû undertaenic bist. . .' (193:9-12)

Despite his pleas to Christ for help, he will not be pressured into baptism:

' . . .der kunic selbe streit
gein mir und hiez mich lêren,
ich solde mich bekêren.

nû ist mir der touf niht geslaht. . .'

(193:16-19)

Yet Willehalm allows him to fight with the army of the Christian community without undergoing this Christian rite, and Rennewart gladly does so in order to exact revenge on the heathen relatives who had put him in a position of subservience, and not because he believes in the Christian army's cause.

Just as his acceptance of a position in the army is fueled by an ulterior motive, so is Willehalm's acceptance of Rennewart into the Christian army. Rather than taking the boy into the army solely out of kindness to remove him from an abusive environment, it appears Willehalm more likely asks that Rennewart be handed over to his care in order to exploit his size and strength. Wolfram states that, "wol sehs manne sterke/ an sîn eines lîbe lac" (188:6-7), and as mentioned previously, he had killed a page by throwing him against a pillar, causing him to split open. Unfortunately, because Willehalm exists as an unfinished work, it is difficult to say whether the Christian community was destined to change its attitude toward Rennewart, seeing him more as a full member of that society rather than as a weapon of war.

One person, however, considers Rennewart as a member of her community from the beginning of his life in Christian

Europe. When Rennewart was first presented as a gift to King Louis, he was actually given to his daughter, the beautiful Alize. As pointed out earlier, the king wished to have Rennewart baptized, and so

dô muos er von der êre
Alisen gesellekeit
varn: daz was ir beider leit.
Alise was triuwen rîche:
dar ûf ir tougenlîche
daz kint al sînes geslehtes jach,
dô man se geselleclîche sach.
dâ muose er sich dô scheiden von
sîner hōhen art in swache won,
niht wan durh toufes twingen
mit smaehen werken ringen. (284:20-30)

When Willehalm asks to take Rennewart into his care, initially King Louis refuses, but Alize begs her father to allow him leave until he finally agrees (191:25-28). She does all this without regard to Rennewart's religion or her own, which illustrates a theme implied throughout this work: religious tolerance.

C. Religious tolerance

The call for religious tolerance throughout Willehalm is realized through a demonstration which suggests Christianity and the heathen religion are actually united in one community. Before the opposing armies begin the battle in Book six, Gîburc delivers a desperate speech in which she pleads for mercy for the heathen army. In this speech, she asserts that the Christian army must show compassion because God created and values heathens and Christians alike, and she cites several Biblical examples:

ein heiden was der êrste man,
den got machen began.

nû geloubet, daz Elîas und Enoch
vûr heiden sint behalten noch.

Nôê ouch ein heiden was,
der in der arken genas.

Jôp vûr wâr ein heiden hiez,
den got dar umbe niht verstiez. . .

got selb enpfie mit sîner hant
die êrsten gâbe ane muoter brust
von in.

die heiden hin zer vlust
sint alle niht benennet. (307:28-307:6,12-15)

She then makes a bold statement, suggesting not only that Christian forefathers were heathens accepted by God but also that Christians themselves were once heathen as well:

wir wâren doch alle heidnisch ê.
dem saeldehaften tuot vil wê,
ob von dem vater sîniu kint
hin zer vlust benennet sint;
er mac sich erbarmen über sie,
der rehte erbarmekheit truoc ie. (307:25-30)

Giburc's call for religious tolerance aims to persuade Christians against brutality by demonstrating the similarities and common values of both camps. In the process, Wolfram has created out of two separate communities one community united by a common religious background. Since all were once heathen, and, as Giburc states, are created by the same God, both Christian and heathen are members of the same society, but are divided by religious practices.

III. *PARZIVAL*

A. The Gahmuret Episode

Even though Gahmuret's story covers only two of the sixteen books in *Parzival*, Wolfram provides broad insight into the factors which in this work determine whether an individual is accepted or rejected by a community, specifically the roles of race and religion. In particular, the relationship between Gahmuret and Belacane and the reactions of others toward their relationship, as well as observations and reactions toward Razalič, one of the best knights in the army opposing Gahmuret, show that religion, race, and culture are indeed taken into consideration in defining a person here. Ultimately, however, racial and cultural differences remain secondary to religious differences, which lead to the ultimate demise of Gahmuret and Belacane's seemingly ideal relationship.

1. Belacane and Gahmuret

Having received but rejected his older brother Gandin's generous offer of part of his own inheritance, Gahmuret leaves his homeland, Anjou, to seek personal knightly fame in far-off lands. After many battles waged "ze Marroch unt

ze Persiâ" (Parzival 15:17), Gahmuret finds himself in the kingdom of Zazamanc, whose people both mourn the death of Isenhart and fear the damage the kingdom will incur at the hands of his angry kinsmen, who arrive to avenge his death. Honorable knight that Gahmuret is, he offers his help, and the people of Zazamanc agree to pay him handsomely. But at that point, the narrator adds,

liute vinsten sô diu naht
wârn alle die von Zazamanc:
bî den dûht in diu wîle lanc.
doch hiez er herberge nemen:

des moht ouch si vil wol gezemen. (17:24-28)

Even though Gahmuret offers to help the people of this community, clearly he is initially concerned about living among people with a skin color different from his. In a later passage, Wolfram writes about Belacane's first reaction to Gahmuret; one of the first things she says is, "er ist anders denne wir gevar:/ ôwî wan taete im das niht wê!" (22:8-9). Concerning these lines, Joachim Bumke writes, "Der Erzähler schurt solche rassistischen Vorstellungen noch, indem er den Schwarzen ein Bewußtsein ihrer Minderwertigkeit zuschreibt" (Bumke 37). If one looks at the two lines isolated from the rest of the speech from which this is taken and the fact that she questions whether the color of her skin and the color of the skin of her

people will bother him, it appears as if Belacane struggles with a feeling of inferiority because of her race. Yet seven lines later, her complex appears to have disappeared as she wonders whether Gahmuret is good enough for her:

"1st er mir dar zuo wol geborn,/ daz mîn kus niht sî verlorn?" (22:15-16). Since this scene is presented by an objective narrator, who simply tells the audience what happens without adding personal commentary, the frenzied response by Zazamanc's queen serves a didactic role in the narrative. Through this, Wolfram presents Belacane to his Medieval European Christian audience as a woman rather than defining her by religious or racial characteristics. In doing so, he aims to convince this audience that if she shows these womanly characteristics, then perhaps she also shares some other traits similar to their own.

But despite Gahmuret's initial uncertainties and obvious discomfort upon his arrival in Zazamanc, he quickly settles into the society. As Wolfram shows commonalities shared by Belacane and other women in European courtly society, he illustrates Gahmuret's discovery that he can easily assimilate himself into the world in which Belacane lives. Once he realizes that knighthood functions in Zazamanc and other exotic lands as it does in his homeland, "Gahmuret appears as much at home as he would have been among his fellow Angevins" (McConnell 205).

Finally, the knight from Anjou meets the queen whom he serves, and in their first meeting, the narrator tells how uncontrollably attracted Belacane is to Gahmuret. He then begins a jocular description of her:

ist iht liehters denne der tac,
dem glichet niht diu künegin.
si hete wîplîchen sîn,
und was aber anders ritterlîch,
der touwegen rôsen ungelîch.
nâch swarzer varwe was ir schîn,
ir krône ein liehter rubîn (24:6-12)

At first glance, this passage seems just like any other of Wolfram's lighter, more humorous characterizations found throughout the work, but as Robert Tannert, Jr., explains, this is yet another of Wolfram's narrative methods used to call attention to a particular passage. Here, Tannert talks about Wolfram's use of false negation:

The highest points on the curve for each work are annotated to demonstrate that, as expected, false negation is most concentrated in passages of narrative importance, where the author wants to call attention to the scene. For instance, the passage in Parzival, in which Gahmuret meets his first wife, Belakâne, attains a rate of ten

examples of false negation per 100 lines,. . . .

(Tannert 44)

Wolfram's calling attention to the passage in question is particularly important because the use of false negation works to diffuse any power the color of her skin might have over the thinking of Wolfram's audience. Not only does this passage help downplay the importance of Belacane's cultural and racial background, but this is the description of her by the narrator. In a passage found a few lines following this characterization, after she tearfully explains how she and her kingdom came under siege, Wolfram considers Gahmuret's thoughts about Belacane:

Gahmureten dûhte sân,
swie si wære ein heidenin,
mit triuwen wîplîcher sin
in wîbes herze nie geslouf.
ir kiusche was ein reiner touf,
und ouch der regen der sie begôz,
der wâc der von ir ougen vlôz
ûf ir zobel und an ir brust.
riuwen pflege was ir gelust,
und rehtiu jâmers lêre. (28:10-19)

Compared to the passage the narrator declaims, the words used to characterize the queen from Gahmuret's perspective lack reference to the color of her skin and instead describe

her womanly attributes and her religion: "ein heidenin," but one who "is as much Christian as any woman formally baptised" (Gibbs 21). Even though Gahmuret sees her here without regard to her race or religion, he later uses the difference in their religions as a reason to leave Belacane.

In a puzzling letter he leaves for her at the end of the first book, Gahmuret grants his birthright to Belacane's child, but closes with "vrouwe, wiltu toufen dich,/ du maht ouch noch erwerben mich" (56:25-26). Sigfried Richard Christoph suggests this might only be a panacea to disguise the fact that he does not want to stop seeking fame, glory, and ladies' attention (Christoph 43). In spite of being heart-broken over his leaving, however, Belacane remains true to her own faith and retorts "wil er wieder wenden,/ schiere sol ichz enden" (56:29-30).

Following his desertion of Belacane, Gahmuret finds himself once again in familiar surroundings in Western Europe, jousting in a tournament for which the prize is Queen Herzeloyde's hand in marriage. In light of Christoph's suggestion that knightly life promised fame and glory, but only short-term romantic attachment, it seems a strange coincidence that he has placed himself in a situation where the prize is yet another woman who wants to marry him. Despite the manner in which he leaves Belacane, Gahmuret is somewhat redeemed in Book two by revealing his

deep emotions for her, even though the men in his camp scold him for deadening their festive mood:

'nein, ich muoz bî riwen sîn:
ich sene mich nâch der kûnegîn.
ich liez ze Pâtelamunt
dâ von mir ist mîn herze wunt,
in reiner art ein sûeze wîp. (90:17-21)

He goes on to clarify that his reasons for leaving her were not because of the color of her skin: "nu waent manc ungewisser man/ daz mich ir swerze jagte dane:/ die sach ich vûr die sunne ane" (96:4-6). By allowing the audience to witness Gahmuret's outpouring of emotion, Wolfram establishes that Gahmuret does indeed love Belacane, although his actions suggest that--at least in Wolfram's world--love does not conquer all.

Gahmuret wins the tournament and, just as the morning after breaks, Lady Herzeloyde arrives to "allow" the hero to claim his prize--herself. Once again, Gahmuret reclaims some honorable standing with Wolfram's audience:

dô sprach er 'vrouwe, ich hân ein wîp:
diu ist mir lieber danne der lîp.
ob ich der âne wære,
dennoch wess ich ein mære,
dâ mit ich iu enbræste gar,
næm iemen mînes rehtes war.' (94:5-10)

Not only does he strongly affirm that he is already married to a woman whom he dearly loves, but he then tries further to rebuff her advances, claiming that if his marriage is not enough to convince her of his unavailability, he will find something to drive her away. Herzeloyde strikes the final blow which ends his threats, however, making reference to both Belacane's religion as well as her race:

'Ir sult die Mœrinne
lân durch mîne minne.
des toufes segen hât bezzer kraft.
nu ânet iuch der heldenschaft,
und minnet mich nâch unser ê. . ." (94:11-15)

Because her first objection is Belacane's race, it appears as if this is the greatest problem Herzeloyde has with Gahmuret's marriage. She then mentions her objection to Belacane's religion almost as an afterthought, as if she has no case against a marriage between two people of differing races. But as Helen M. Mustard and Charles E. Passage write in a note in their English translation of Parzival, objections to a marriage on the basis of religion would have had merit during this period: "Wolfram's audience would readily accede to the notion that marriage between a Christian and a heathen had no validity" (Mustard 53). According to Georges Duby, in the twelfth century ". . . the Church held that marriage was. . . a solution of last

resort. . . . Marriage was tolerated, but only as a remedy against carnal lust. . ." (Duby 16). By the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Wolfram wrote Parzival, marriage had been slowly evolving from a completely secular issue into a sacred institution over which the Church exercised control (Duby 16). Because Belacane is non-Christian, she cannot take part in a ceremony sanctioned by the Church without baptism, and therefore her marriage to Gahmuret has no validity in the Christian world, as Wolfram's audience would have realized (16-17). Later, in a similar situation, Feirefiz Angevin is told his marriage to Secundille would be annulled as a result of his conversion to Christianity: "' . . .Jupitern dînen got/ muostu durch si verliesen/ unt Secundilln verkiesen'" (815:6-8). Even so, Gahmuret continues to resist until Herzeloyde asks for a ruling from a council of knights in the matter, at which time the King of Zazamanc is forced to renounce his marriage to his treasured queen, though apparently not his throne.

While it seems that sharing the same religion is of greatest importance in the community from which Gahmuret hails, Wolfram's characterization of the heathen community seems contrary to that. After Gahmuret's marriage to Belacane and his resulting ascendancy to Zazamanc's throne, there is no mention of protest to Gahmuret's claim or marriage on the basis of either race or religion. Either

Wolfram intends Zazamanc to represent an ideal society, free from any sort of religious, racial, or cultural bias, or this is a case of implied accepted cultural superiority. In other words, Wolfram might be assuming that these people see Gahmuret as a being above them simply because of his race, his religion, or his knightly prowess.

2. Razalic

Although Razalic is only a minor character in Book one, the few references to him show how Wolfram takes characteristics such as race and religion, about which people in his contemporary audience might have felt some hesitation if there was any difference between another person's and his or her own, and manages to diminish those qualities to the point where the character in question is judged more on a broadly human standard. In this case, the narrator very clearly refers to Razalic's race, religion, and the fact that he fights for the army opposing Gahmuret's, but the placement of his lines referring to his human, knightly characteristics manages to overpower all the previously mentioned characteristics.

The passage concerning Razalic begins by telling the audience of his origins and his being:

ein fürste Razalic dâ hiez.
deheinen tac daz nimmer liez
der rîcheste von Azagouc
(sîn geslehte im des niht louc,
von kûneges fruhte was sîn art),
der huop sich immer dannewart
durh tjostieren für die stat. (41:9-15)

Immediately, the audience knows that first and foremost this knight is skilled and strong and comes from a high-born family. All this is more likely a device to make Gahmuret look more capable when he eventually swiftly defeats him in battle.

Soon after Razalic's defeat and death, a squire recovers his shield, helmet, and sword, and the narrator then comments on the knight's death:

ein helm er fuorte ouch in der hant,
unde ein swert daz Razalic
durch ellen brâht in den wîc.
Dâ was er von geschieden,
der kuene swarze heiden.
des lop was virrec unde wît:
starb er âne toufen sît,
so erkenn sich über den degen balt,
der alle wunder hât gewalt. (42:30-43:8)

Just as the audience begins to cheer that the leader of the opposing army has fallen in battle, Wolfram once again brings out Razalic's knightly qualities and shows empathy for a skilled, fallen warrior. In fact, he not only attempts to convince the audience of Razalic's greatness, but hopes that the God of the Christians might, too, be convinced and show mercy. In a society so focused on the Church, if Wolfram can convince his audience that God sees people for human qualities and not simply as members of a specific race or religion, he has a chance to win his audience to the same way of thinking.

B. The Parzival and Gawan Episode

Despite clear examples showing religion has greater significance in the communities described in Gahmuret's adventures, some ambiguities remain as to the degree to which race is a factor defining one's potential for acceptance in these communities. In the remaining fourteen books, devoted to the adventures of Parzival and Gawan, the terms of acceptance become far clearer. While these episodes indicate that judging an individual by the color of his or her skin does occur in the Arthurian and Grail communities, it nevertheless also shows that race does not have the overwhelming power to alienate a person from a

community as does having a different religion. Examination of both major and minor characters indicates that interaction between those within the Christian community and those outside it can take place with civility in courtly circumstances, but as the case of Feirefiz shows, religion ultimately determines one's place in society.

1. Cundrie la sorcière

Fitting Cundrie la sorcière into Arthurian society is a perplexing task. Unlike everyone else within this circle, she is heathen and, as the narrator unapologetically relates in detail, hardly beautiful:

Diu maget witze rîche
was gevar den unglîche
die man dâ heizet bêâ schent. . .
mîn zuht durch wârheit missevuor,
das ich sus muoz von frouwen sagen:
kein andriu darf ez von mîr clagen. . .
nâch ir minne was selten tjost getân.
(313:1-3, 26-28: 314:10)

Yet she is highly educated, speaking "latîn, heldensch, franzoys" (312:21) and is also versed in "dîaletike, . . . jêometrí," and even "astronomî" (312:23-25), and except for the Grail King and Grail Knights, she alone passes,

seemingly at will, between the "real" world and the Grail Kingdom. In fact, not even the Grail King's sister, Sigune, knows where the Grail Castle is located, although Cundrie does. When Arthur ventures to ride near the supposed location of the castle, he brings many of his knights along with him and makes sure every one of them is heavily armed for fear that the Grail Knights will swiftly and easily slaughter them all if he should stumble onto the location of the Grail Castle. Cundrie functions in Arthur's world as prophetess, judge, and informer, and in both worlds as a care-giver, but neither Arthur's court nor the court at Munsalvaesche considers her a part of their communities.

When she arrives at Arthur's camp, she rides in unannounced, although recognized, reveals mysteries, passes judgment, then rides away as suddenly as she appeared, leaving tears and grief in her wake. If she were to wait for a welcome, she would never deliver her judgment because, as the narrator indicates, she was familiar to and even respected by all, but none relished her presence:

hie kom von der ich sprechen wil,

ein magt gein triwen wol gelobt,

wan daz ir zuht was vertobt.

ir mære tet vil liuten leit. . .

si kom iedoch: daz muose et sîn.

Artus her si brâhte pîn. (312:2-5, 17-18)

Later on in the narrative, Sigune describes Cundrie's bringing food directly from the Grail to her hermitage as a considerate act while she mourns Schianatulander:

. . . 'dâ kumt mir vonne grâl
mîn spîs dâ her al sunder twâl.
Cundrie la surziere
mir dannen bringet schiere
alle samztage naht
mîn spîs (des hât si sich bedâht),
die ich ganze wochen haben sol.' (438:29-439:5)

Here, Cundrie is welcomed, but still only as a messenger who has access to both the Grail and the "real" world and is still not a true part of either community. Even though this appears to be the case, it is not possible to say with complete certainty that her marginalization results from her "heathenness," her unattractiveness, or because she intentionally keeps herself between both worlds. However, in Wolfram's introduction to Parzival, he says that in this story he will not represent women based on "ir herzen dach, daz man siht" (3:22). Most of the imagery he uses to describe Cundrie is animal, rather than human. With no identifiable racial differences or similarities between her and any of the communities with which she has contact, the audience, looking beyond her ugliness, is then left to judge

Cundrie by her actions and her "heathenness," two aspects which have nothing to do with physical characteristics.

2. Feirefiz

While Belacane's and Cundrie's experiences indicate significant evidence for the argument that religion holds great importance for acceptance within Medieval German society, Feirefiz Angevin's experiences are perhaps the most significant. For the first time since his birth the audience hears of Feirefiz's existence in great detail with Cundrie's judgment of Parzival's actions. As Cundrie continues to condemn Parzival for not asking Anfortas the cause of his pain, she mentions the "heathen" city of Tabronit, where Feirefiz Angevin--who is the son of the Queen of Zazamanc, and has a complexion described as both black and white (57:18) who is the son of the Queen of Zazamanc--has married the Queen of that city. Shortly thereafter, Parzival is approached by "von Janfûse diu heidenin" (327:21),³ who tells him,

³The narrator mentions that this woman, although heathen, is in close association with Arthur and other members of his court (327:21-30). In addition to this, during Gawan's adventures, the audience is told that Orgeluse also speaks the "heathen language." No indication, however, is given as to how or why Orgeluse knew the language, or why the woman from Janfûse came to be within Arthur's circle, or how or if she was welcomed within his society. However, Gawan marries

'Cundrie nant uns einen man,
des ich iu wol ze bruoder gan.
des craft ist wît unde breit. . .
sîn vel hât vil spæhen glast:
er ist aller mannes varwe ein gast,
wîz unde swarz [ist er] erkant. (328:3-5, 15-17)

She tells of his greatness as a knight and king:

. . .er ist ein kûnec hêr.
nie man gesaz von sîner tjost,
sîn prîs hât vil hôhe kost,
sô milter lîp gesouc nie brust (328:23, 25-27)

From this point, the narrator establishes Feirefiz as a person who is proportionately, at least in his own world, equal, or actually greater than, those in Arthur's world in terms of wealth and courtly status, differing from them only in race and religion. In fact, his status is established before he is born.

In the same letter in which Gahmuret tells Belacane that he would return to her if she will be baptized, he first establishes the legitimacy of their unborn child:

werde unser zweier kindelîn
anme antlûtze einem man gelîch,
deiswâr der wirt ellens rîch.

Orgeluse, which helps her garner acceptance within the community.

erst erborn von Anschouwe.
diu minne wirt sîn frouwe:
sô wirt ab er an strîte ein schûr,
den vinden herter nâchgebûr. (55:28-56:4)

This acts not only as a document giving Feirefiz rights by primogeniture to material inheritance, but also as a prophecy of the virtues and qualities which his father bequeaths to him. These virtues, which arguably his mother also possessed, are unquestioningly recognized by those in Arthur's circle, and unlike Belacane, Feirefiz gains immediate acceptance within that community.

When Feirefiz and Parzival finally meet in battle in Book fifteen, Parzival is included among those who honor Feirefiz's legitimacy as the first-born son of Gahmuret. Once the two are well into battle, Feirefiz introduces himself as "Anschevin" (745:28), which startles and angers Parzival, who believes he holds the right to be called by this name, still unaware that he fights his older brother, who is the true "Anschevin." But after their relationship is revealed, Parzival concedes his claim to the title and even refuses Feirefiz's suggestion that he address him by the familiar "du":

diu rede was Parzivâle leit.
der sprach 'bruoder, iuwer rîcheit
glichenet wol dem bâruc sich:

sô sît ir elter ouch dan ich.
mîn jugent unt mîn armuot
sol sôlher lôsheit sîn behuot,
daz ich iu duzen biete,
swenn ich mich zûhte niete.' (749:23-30)

All of this is done out of respect to Feirefiz's position and without regard to either his race or his religion. Thus, Feirefiz is Gahmuret's legitimate issue.

In this same battle between Feirefiz and Parzival, the way in which the narrator refers to both of the sons of Gahmuret indicates the great importance of religion to this work. During other battles in Parzival, the narrator distinguishes between the two combatants by referring to various characteristics about the two. When Parzival fights Ither von Gaheviz, the narrator refers to Ither as "the Red Knight" because everything about him is red.⁴ After Parzival defeats Ither and takes his armor, people then begin referring to him as "the Red Knight." In other cases, such as in Book seven, when Gawan battles against the army of Meljanz, he recognizes by an emblem which a slain knight wears on his helmet and shield that it is Arthur's son who has been killed:

⁴ see Parzival, 145:17-29

ouch het ieslîch Bertûn
durch bekantnisse ein gampilûn
eintweder ûf helm oder ûf den schilt
nâch Ilinôtes wâpen gezilt:
daz was Artûses werder sun. (383:1-5)

In much the same way as this, there are several ways by which the narrator could have referred to Parzival and Feirefiz, given Wolfram's love of epithets in preference to the actual names of the persons.⁵

As mentioned above, Parzival is often referred to by his red armor up until this point. At the beginning of Book fifteen, the narrator also describes Feirefiz's trappings, which happen to be unusually opulent:

ez ist wunder, ob ich armer man
die rîcheit iu gesagen kan,
die der heiden vur zimlerde truoc. . .
swaz diende Artûses hant
ze Bertâne unde in Engellant,

⁵ For example, the main characters are the only figures in the work whose names are revealed to the audience from their first appearance. In the case of Herzeloyde, she appears in line 60:9, but Wolfram does not reveal her name until 720 lines later at line 84:9, and even then he teases the audience before actually providing the name. Typically, characters are referred to most frequently by a distinguishing characteristic, and only in order to remind the audience who is being discussed does he mention a character or have other characters mention a character by name.

saz ver gulte niht die steine
die mit edelem arde reine
lâgen ûf des heldes wâpenroc.

der was tiure ân al getroc (735:9-11, 15-20)

Because the coloring of Feirefiz's skin is foreign to Wolfram's audience, the narrator might also have referred to him by his skin color, but instead, during this climactic battle, the brothers are referred to as "der heiden" and "der getoufte."

Besides using religion as "team names" for each of the brothers, the narrator at one point pauses to inject his own opinion about their fighting. He interjects that two brothers of the same father--one flesh and blood--striking blows at one another is a terrible tragedy:

Daz ich die rede mac niht verdagen,
ich muoz ir strît mit truiwen clagen,
sît ein verch und ein bluot
solh ungenâde ein ander tuot.
sî wâren doch bêde eins mannes kint,

der geliuterten triuwe fundamint. (740:1-6)

At the surface level of the story, the narrator is speaking about Parzival and Feirefiz and their relationship through their father, Gahmuret, but because he calls the two by labels indicative of their religions it appears that Wolfram, through the narrator, asserts a secondary motive

onto this passage: a negative commentary on the Crusades. What is implied here that Christians and heathens, children of the same god, were, during Wolfram's time, destroying one another like the two sons of Gahmuret, not realizing they share the same god. From this point on, even after his identity is revealed, little reference is made to the color of Feirefiz's skin, but references to and situations about his religion increase, indicating that for this community, and for the story, the importance of religion is far greater than that of race. However, even the difference between Feirefiz's religion and that of Parzival's community does not deter that community from hosting the heathen king as befits his social rank.

Parzival and Feirefiz ride to Arthur's camp, where Parzival presents Feirefiz to Gawan first, not as a wealthy ruler and knight, but as a kinsman:

'bin ich dîn mât, daz ist ouch er:

des sî Gahmuret dîn wer.

diz ist der kunec von Zazamanc.

mîn vater dort mit prise erranc

Belakân, diu disen rîter truoc.' (758:11-15)

Soon after that, the news of Feirefiz's arrival reaches Arthur, "des er vrôude vil bejagte" (761:10). In both cases neither Arthur nor Gawan hesitates to welcome Feirefiz into their midst on any account, including his differing race or

religion. His black and white complexion is, however, mentioned:

Dez harnasch was von in getân.
dô schouweten disen bunten man
al die wunders kunden jehn,
die mohtenz dâ mit wâhrheit spehn:
Feirefiz truoc vremdiu mâl. . .
Gâwân den heiden dô genuoc
kuste: der rîche Feirefiz
was beidiu swarz unde wîz
über al sîn vel, wan daz der munt
gein halbem zîl tet rôte kunt. (758:1-5, 16-20)

In this case, though, the description of his complexion serves only as a passing reminder that this man is indeed from a different background than the others in their group, but only superficially so. He is without question accepted as the kinsman and the noble he is.

As Wolfram diminishes his audience's focus on the color of Belacane's skin by accentuating her human and womanly qualities, so he also does with Feirefiz. Previously, the narrator has constantly referred to Feirefiz's wealth and greatness as a knight and noble. Now he speaks of him simply as a man attracted to a woman. During the great feast given after Parzival's cure of Anfortas, Repanse de Schoye captivates Feirefiz. In a most courtly manner, he

then tells Anfortas how deeply she has affected him and asks how he might win her:

ir blic mir inz herze gêt.
ich wânde sô starc wær min lip,
daz iemmer maget ode wîp
mir freuden draft benæme.
mirst worden widerzæme,
ob ich ie werde minne enpflienc. . .
'Sol diu magt iur swester sîn, . . .
so gebt mir umb ir minne rât.
nâch ir sit al mîns herzen ger.
ob ich ie prîs erwarp mit sper,
wan wær daz gar durch si geschehn,
und wolt si danne ir lônnes jehn.'
(810:14-19; 812:1, 6-8)

Even though his reaction is not so open or apparent as Feirefiz here, Parzival's response when he meets Liaze is quite similar. Gurnemanz encourages his interest in his daughter, but Parzival still feels he needs to fight greater foes more courageously before he can win her (176:26-177:8). Showing that Feirefiz goes about wooing and winning women in the same way as other men of this time draws attention away from his race and focuses on his personality. In addition, throughout this section, references to his race and skin color eventually decrease to a point where they hardly

occur, and instead, more references to his religion begin to appear. As the frequency of these religious references increases, these take on an exponentially more intense, urgent tone, until, finally, the narrative reaches the point where Feirefiz's view of the Grail is blinded, and in order to see the Grail and marry Repanse de Schoye, he must convert. At this point, Feirefiz's race becomes irrelevant, leaving his religion the only factor by which to determine his acceptance.

One exception to his acceptance in the community occurs toward the end of Book sixteen. Parzival's wife, Condwiramurs, and his children join him at Munsalvaesche when he at last becomes Grail King. Parzival brings his son, Loherangrin, to meet his uncle, Feirefiz, but as the narrator explains, "dô der was swarz unde wîz,/ Der knabe sîn wolde kussen niht" (805:30-806:1). He then adds, "werden kinden man noch vorhte giht" (806:2). Suggested here is not specifically that children shrink from people of different races, but rather that children are unsure of what they have never before encountered. Understanding that this is the case, "des lachte der heiden" (806:3). This scene operates as another of Wolfram's subtle lessons in human relations. As the child is the only one to behave in such a way toward Feirefiz, he implies that this type of

discriminating behavior is childish, and the adults' laughter dismisses it as such.

Finally, the narrator reaches an event in the work which provides significant evidence that inclusion in the community to which Parzival belongs is more heavily influenced by religion rather than by race. While Feirefiz is readily accepted within Arthur's circle--that is, at least by the *adults* in Arthur's circle, beginning with his introduction to the group in Book fifteen--Book sixteen demonstrates that he is not yet completely a part of the community. To claim the title of Grail King, Parzival rides with Feirefiz to Munsalvaesche. At a banquet to honor the new regent for at last curing Anfortas' pain, the Grail provides an incredible banquet as it did during Parzival's first visit to the Grail kingdom. All in attendance recognize the source of the feast, except Feirefiz, who is completely puzzled as to the food's origin:

der heiden vrâgte mære,
wâ von diu goltvaz lære
vor der tafeln wurden vol.
daz wunder im tet ze sehen wol.
dô sprach der clære Anfortas,
der im ze geselln gegeben was,
'hêr, seht ir vor iu ligen den grâl?'
dô sprach der heiden vêch gemâl

'ich ensihe niht wan ein achmardî. . .'

(810:3-10)

Anfortas now realizes that Feirefiz possibly does not see the Grail, which Feirefiz affirms. When the news of this reaches the ancient Titurel, the mystery of this odd occurrence is solved:

der [Titurel] sprach 'ist ez ein heidensch man,
sô darf er des niht willen hân
daz sîn ougen âne des toufes craft
bejagen die geselleschaft
daz si den grâl beschouwen:

da ist hâmit für gehouwen.' (813:17-22)

Seeing that baptism is in fact the one barrier between Feirefiz and his ability to see the Grail, Parzival and Anfortas both encourage the heathen king to be baptized "und endlösen gewinnes kouf" (813:30). Both parties recognize that this religious act remains the only obstacle to Feirefiz's complete acceptance within this community, but each party has a different motivation for his taking part in this sacrament.

As noted above, Parzival and Anfortas suggest that Feirefiz be baptized in order to "purchase eternal reward" (Mustard 424). In this way his brother and the former Grail King try to convince him of the importance of establishing a

spiritual bond with this community. But then Feirefiz asks Parzival about the secular consequences of baptism:

'Ob ich durch iuch zu roufe kum,
ist mir der touf ze minnen frum?' . . .
'holt man den touf mit strîte,
dar schaffe mich bezîte
und lâz mich dienen umb ir lôn.
ich hôrte ie gerne solhen dôn,
dâ von tjoste sprizen sprungen
imt dâ swert ûf helmen klungen.' (814:1-2, 25-30)

Anfortas reacts to this with a hearty laugh, in much the same way as Wolfram's thirteenth-century Christian audience might have:

Der wirt des lachte sêre,
und Anfortas noch mêre.
'kanstu sus touf enpfâhen,'
sprach der wirt, 'ich wil si nâhen
durh rehten touf in dîn gebot. . .' (815:1-5)

However silly this might have sounded, and whatever Feirefiz's motivation might have been, a baptism which would result in his marriage to Repanse de Schoye works out even better for him than a spiritual conversion alone. By marrying someone born and raised in this community, who holds a position of great prestige as a servant of the Grail, Feirefiz further secures his acceptance within this

society. So as Anfortas promised, Feirefiz converts from his old religion to Christianity, lifting the barrier which obscures his view of the Grail:

an den grâl was er ze sehen blint,

ê der touf het in bedecket:

sît wart im vor enlecket

der grâl mit gesichte. (818:20-23)

Being baptized allows him to "see things that he didn't see before" on two levels, using a simple, mundane level to illustrate the higher truth. On the first he indicates that conversion to Christianity aids in Feirefiz Angevin's absolute acceptance within the Grail community. But at the same time, it also shows that there is something of a supernatural bond which unites these people within Christianity. While the people of this society had already welcomed him into their number, his complete acceptance is based on "playing by the rules" and taking part in sacraments after his conversion.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this work, I have examined several characters whose experiences illustrate the relative roles of race and religion in determining their acceptability in the courtly societies described in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival and Willehalm. History indicates that the society in which Wolfram lived while writing these two works was one in which people of different races and religions came into contact with one another, resulting frequently in violent conflict. His works offer an alternative to this conflict, showing that by recognizing the human qualities inherent in all people, differing races and religions become less formidable barriers.

Willehalm deals not with race or skin color, but instead, conflicts in this work concern religious differences. In particular, the experiences of Gîburc and Rennewart show the importance religion holds in both the Christian and heathen communities. Although at first her conversion to Christianity is suspect, Gîburc proves herself devoted to the Christian faith and then uses her ties to both the heathen religion and Christianity in an attempt to end their fighting by revealing their common spiritual ancestry. Rennewart finds acceptance in the Christian community first through Alize, who recognizes his human

merits rather than his religion. Even though Willehalm allows Rennewart to fight in the Christian army, his reasons for doing so should not be regarded as acceptance but rather as exploitation of Rennewart's talents as a warrior.

Similar to the way in which Alize accepts Rennewart, Parzival shows that both race and religion play a significant role in Medieval society, but should not undermine a person's human value. Gahmuret eventually rises above superficial characteristics such as race and religion to marry Belacane, thus becoming the King of Zazamanc, only in the end to allow the constraints of European Christian society and his own need to continue knightly service to end his union with a beautiful, courtly woman. Cundrie la sorcière lives in service of those within the Christian community, but she is yet never completely accepted by its members for reasons which are not completely clear, yet point to the fact that she does not share the community's religion. Finally, even though Feirefiz shares neither skin color nor religion with his kinsmen, the people of the community to which his brother, Parzival, belongs ignore these differences and accept him first as a kinsman. His complete acceptance in the community comes as a result embracing their religion as his own. In the end, his conversion to Christianity serves to secure his place within

the Grail community through marriage and the forging of a common spiritual bond.

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