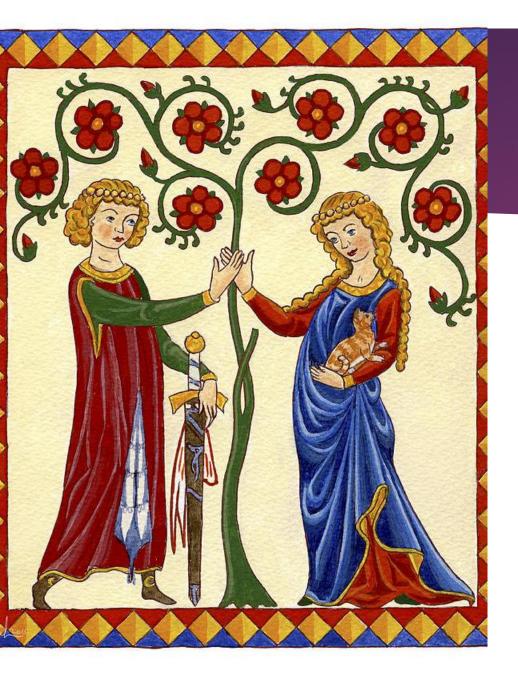


Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

HEROIC ROMANTICISM –
MEDIEVAL ROMANCE
LATE 14TH CENTURY

Characteristics medieval romance

- Chivalry (ridderlijkheid) is idealised
- The knight and his noble deads are idealised.
- An important element of a medieval romance is the courtly love of the knight for the lady.
- The setting is often imaginary or unclear.
- Supernatural elements add tension and mystery.
- Disguises (vermommingen) and hidden identities
- The number 3
- The knight goes on a quest, which is usually successful.



Courtly Love (hoofse liefde)

- A love between a knight and a married lady of the nobility
- Code of 'Chivalry' mostly friendship
- Obedience and loyalty
- Strict rules!
- Exchange of gifts
- Had to stay a secret
- Considered art: poetry and passion

Christianity – the number 3

- Wholeness, completeness and perfection
- God is 'omniscient', omnipotent' en 'omnipresent' (alwetend, almachtig en alomwezend).
- 'The Holy Trinity' Father, Son and holy Spirit
- Sir Gawain is tested three times throughout the story
- ► He stays with the Lord and Lady Bertilak for three days
- ▶ The wife tries to seduce him three times, et cetera.

Quests

Quests are a part of medieval romanticism. Most of the time, these quests end well.

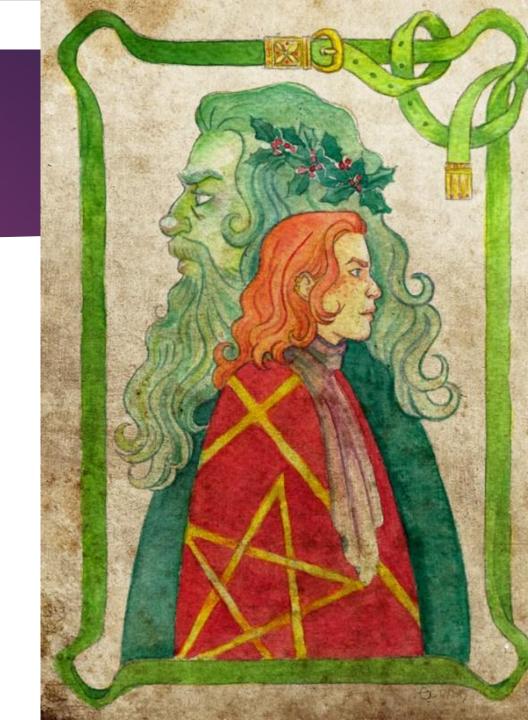
- The hero's journey towards a goal
- ▶ Takes a lot of effort and the hero has to take on many obstacles
- ▶ The hero has to obtain something (or someone!) to take home

Who is Sir Gawain

- One of the bravest knights of King Arthur
- ► Younger nephew of King Arthur
- Very brave
- ► Land of King Arthur: Wales

4 parts

Long, alliterative lines followed by short rhyming lines



Challenge accepted

Sir Gawain is a very brave young man, who wants to be a knight.

Knights are faithful servants; they are very loyal to their lord and they want to serve.

Gawain accepts the Green Knight's challenge:

- He wants to spare King Arthur from having to cut off the Green Knight's head;
- 2. He wants to show his bravery and loyalty (thus chivalry)

Three tests

- 1. Is he brave enough to accept the Green Knight's challenge?
- 2. Will he keep his pact with the Green Knight? Will he follow the rules/ Code of Chivalry and adhere to the five virtues?
 - Friendship/ loyalty
 - Generosity
 - ► Chastity (kuisheid) sinful nature is also a theme
 - Courtesy (hoffelijkheid)
 - Piety (vroomheid) therefore Christianity is a theme
- 3. Will he follow the rules/Code of Courtly love? Will he be able to resist temptation?

Does Gawain pass the three tests?

- 1. Is he brave enough to accept the Green Knight's challenge?
- 2. Will he keep his pact with the Green Knight? Will he follow the rules/ Code of Chivalry?
- 3. Will he follow the rules/Code of Courtly love? Will he be able to resist temptation?
- He accepts the Green Knight's challenge. (courageous, loyal)
- He kisses the lady, but resists further temptation (courteous, chaste)
- He accepts the green belt, but doesn't give it to the lord. (disloyal, not generous)
- He goes to meet the Green Knight, but flinches (= deinst terug) (cowardly)
- Later he lets the Green Knight strike a blow (courageous)
- He is ashamed but the lord forgives him.

Resources

- https://gawaincomic.com/2019/12/26/seasons-greetings/
- https://medium.com/@faberacademy/sir-gawain-and-the-study-of-plot-809f06792607
- <u>https://fineartamerica.com/featured/courtly-love-with-cat-raffaella-lunelli.html</u>