

Brides and Doom

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Brides and Doom

Gender, Property, and Power
in Medieval German Women's Epic

Jerold C. Frakes



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The alternative readings I will propose should not be considered as yet another, superior interpretation that overthrows all the others. My goal is rather to show, by the sheer possibility of a different reading, that “dominance” is, although present and in many ways obnoxious, not unproblematically established. . . . It is the possibility of dominance itself, the attractiveness of coherence and authority in culture, that I see as the source, rather than the consequence, of sexism. For one thing, it allows for deviance to a certain extent, because deviance can be so easily accommodated, recuperated.

— Mieke Bal

What is at stake, then, is clearly the nature of reading; the question is not whether to be or not to be philological but how to read in such a way as to break through preconceived notions of meaning in order to encounter unexpected otherness—in order to learn something one doesn’t already know—in order to encounter the other.

— Barbara Johnson

To date, philology has been a Western and male-dominated preserve. . . . While the study of etymologies, semantic changes, morphological and syntactic structures, and the interrelatedness of different languages and language groups can never become obsolete, a broadening of perspectives must surely follow the steady increase in the numbers of women and minority practitioners in Western universities, and the incipient increase in the quality and quantity of scholars from outside the hallowed Western seats of learning, who are beginning to question the origins of our civilization from the comparativist perspective of their own—often equally ancient and civilized—past. There will be a new awareness of the relevance of issues such as gender, nationalism, and race.

— Margaret Alexiou

This book will argue the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts. It conceives of the political perspective not as some supplementary method, not as an optional auxiliary to other interpretive methods current today . . . but rather as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretations.

— Fredric Jameson

