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UNDERCUTTING THE FABRIC OF COURTLY LOVE  
WITH 'TOKENS OF LOVE' IN WOLFRAM VON  
ESCHENBACH'S *PARZIVAL*

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In *Parzival*, Wolfram von Eschenbach provides us with several intriguing examples in which clothing—to which I am limiting myself in this article—plays a surprising role in the construction of gender roles that undercut and/or affirm the fabric of courtly love. On a surface level, clothing seems to perpetuate normative gender constructions in which women are locked into the role of an aloof beauty, the desirable waiting to be desired by a knight. Men on the other hand are in control of women and act upon them, especially when their honor and social distinction increases by being associated with the lady. Herzloyde's shirt, Condwiramurs's silk shirt and velvet coat, and Bene's and Repanse's erotically charged coats are but a few of the plethora of examples in *Parzival* in which clothes are used to express contradictory meanings to the beloved and the public. Furthermore, they signify multivalent constructions of gender in the relationships between men and women.

In this article I will focus on two areas in which clothes provide us insights into Wolfram's complex commentary on constructions of masculinity and femininity, and the discourse of courtly love: the pinning of a woman's clothing to a knight's armor and the male and female cloaked bodies. These examples will demonstrate that the giving and accepting of women's clothing often serves as a contested site in the power negotiations between courtly women and men, and that there is no single pattern which they follow in their interactions. They both affirm and undercut the fabric of courtly love and simultaneously challenge our modern assumptions of binary gender constructions in the Middle Ages. Several courtly ladies in *Parzival* initiate love service with knights and cause "gender inversion"<sup>1</sup> between courtly lovers beyond the pre-marriage phase of their relationship. They attempt to avoid being the object of male desire or to immobilize men with their erotically charged gifts. Knights, on the other hand, resist women's attempts to control their lives, in particular from those courtly

ladies who want to manipulate knights into love service and submission. Though they frequently accept tokens of love to wear on their armor, knights attach them to “inappropriate” places, thus sending a message of resistance back to their ladies. Female clothing given as tokens of love to knights reveals moments of gender inversion, gender reversal and resistance to gender expectations in Wolfram’s *Parzival*.

### **The Fabric of Courtly Love**

Courtly love, a term first coined in French by Gaston Paris in 1883,<sup>2</sup> is a fictional construct that arose in the twelfth century in medieval Europe. Even in its literary representations it is not a static concept but exemplifies regional, genre-, and language based differences. Scholars have tried to trace its development, to show the extent to which it engages or resists a standard paradigm, and to examine its social function versus its sexuality.<sup>3</sup> Since Gaston Paris, scholars have worked with the notion that a standard paradigm of courtly love exists, which is based on normative and hierarchical gender identities and which operates as one of the social ideals in establishing and maintaining love relationships within the medieval nobility. It is a fictionalized expression of sexual desire between courtly men and women and of negotiating positions of power and agency within the relationship of lovers. It is primarily an expression of aristocratic male heterosexual desire for a distant courtly woman. “[I]t is men’s feelings that are expressed and men’s prowess and social standing that are at stake as men practice and profess the art of love even though the adored ladylove stands nominally at the center of the process.”<sup>4</sup> While this paradigm primarily assigns agency to men who, within the context of courtly love relationships, actively seek out a courtly lady, it also follows the ideology of empowering women in their roles of ladyloves by assigning to them control over their lover once the relationship has been established. In this fictional world, a man had to submit himself to the beloved as an expression of his courtliness, love and service commitment to her. This act of submission corresponds to a reversal of what he would have assumed to be the “natural” gender order, as it represents an abandonment of masculine strength and of privileges such as autonomy and political independence.

Until the man expresses his desire for the courtly lady, she is locked into a position of passivity. She has no means for actively attracting a man, except by enhancing her desirability through her reputation as a noble

and beautiful woman. Placed on the metaphorical pedestal of courtliness, she has to wait as the desirable object to be approached by a noble man, the desiring subject. A lady can take action only after the expression of masculine desire by demanding specific service of him and thus control her lover. Likewise, the love relationship enabled her to express her affection or desire for her lover by performing simple favors for him or by giving him a token of love in recognition of his service. Courtly literature thus provides women opportunities of agency and tools to express feminine desire through the giving of gifts to lovers. It also provides a fictional space in which a desiring woman can challenge binary and hierarchical gender positions by choosing not to follow the assumed standard paradigm. Such tokens of love and desiring women feature prominently in Wolfram's *Parzival* and will be the focus of the remainder of this article.

### **Pinning Woman's Clothing to a Knight's Armor**

From the onset of their relationship, Herzeloide and Gahmuret battle against each other over positions of power and control. Herzeloide desires Gahmuret and is unwilling to wait for him to initiate their relationship because he is the best knight and with him at her side her power and reputation increase. Gahmuret fought on her behalf and in her service in the tournament, one to which she invited the best and the bravest, and marrying her was part of the agreement.<sup>5</sup> Gahmuret, however, does not wish to be tied to a lady through marriage, which would not permit him the knightly lifestyle he desires, to travel the world freely in search of knightly adventure and in control of his own destiny. Yet Herzeloide judicially enforces the marriage after Gahmuret attempts to avoid it.<sup>6</sup> Unable to avoid this marriage, however, he demands the right to participate in knightly tournaments once a month as part of the marriage negotiations, thus keeping some of his independence. He even threatens to abandon her if she does not permit him some masculine freedom and independence from her.

*lât ir niht turnieren mich  
sô kan ich noch den alten slich  
als dô ich minem wibe entran  
die ich och mit rîterschaft gewan.  
(Parz. 96:29-97:2)*

[If you don't allow me to participate  
in tournaments, I do know the old  
trick (which I employed) when I es-  
caped from my wife, whom I also won  
through chivalry.]<sup>7</sup>

Gahmuret fights back in the one area to which Herzeloide is denied access, namely chivalric combat.<sup>8</sup> This may have been an unhappy compromise for her, but it gives both what they desire. She has to allow him to increase his knightly reputation, as both of them will benefit from this increase in renown. Whenever Gahmuret leaves Herzeloide in search of knightly combat, she signals her desire for him by giving him her shirt as a token of love.

<i>al kleine wîz sidîn</i>	[the queen's shirt was small, white
<i>ein hemde der künegin,</i>	and made of silk, and touched her
<i>als ez ruorte ir blôzen lip</i>	naked body.]
<i>(Parz. 101:9-11)</i>	

By giving Gahmuret her shirt, she attempts to tie him to herself and does not want him to forget her as a sexual subject full of longing for his touches and love. She gives him the closest thing to her own body, the undergarment that touches her naked skin. Her shirt becomes a fetish, a material substitute for herself.<sup>9</sup> The choice of undershirt itself is unusual, and clearly increases the erotic underpinnings of Herzeloide's and Gahmuret's relationship and displays them for all to see.

Gahmuret does not interpret the shirt as a substitute for his wife, but instead as a symbol for his lack of freedom. He does not nail her shirt to his shield as he had done with his father's coat of arms, but instead her shirt "*daz was sins halsperges dach*" [was his armor's cover (lit. roof)] (*Parz.* 101:13). Gahmuret wears her shirt over his armor where, though initially protected by the shield in front of him, it was slashed to pieces by his opponents' swords.<sup>10</sup> Protecting his wife's shirt with his shield and wearing it closer to his heart and body may signify a strong affiliation to his wife, and also signals to the opponent more strongly that he is fighting for a woman and that his fight has an erotic purpose. Yet allowing his opponents to slash away at his wife's garment, the symbol of his oppression, also signals the recovery of his freedom, even if only temporarily, as he always returns to Herzeloide's court, the realm of her control. Even though Gahmuret desires his freedom vehemently, he does not reject Herzeloide's token of love. He wears her shirt in a "less appropriate" place and thus also signifies his need to assert his independence and masculinity. By placing her most intimate piece of clothing on public display in a space on his body where

men slash it to pieces, he and his opponents rape or castrate her symbolically by openly cutting Herzeloide back down to “her size.”

Der Ehegatte wider Willen schlägt zurück, indem er Herzeloides Fetisch einem rituellen Gewaltakt aussetzt—einer Vergewaltigung, wenn man das Hemd als Symbol für Herzeloides Körper sieht, oder einer Kastration, wenn man den Hauptakzent auf die Beschneidung ihrer maskulinen Rolle setzt.

[The spouse fights back in disgust by exposing Herzeloide’s fetish to a ritual act of violence—to a rape, if you interpret her shirt as a symbol of her body, or to castration, if you place the emphasis on the cutting back of her masculine role.]<sup>11</sup>

For eighteen months, she repeatedly wins the power battle they wage, as Gahmuret continues to return to her court and to succumb to her control.

Though the couple does love each other, the narrator places greater emphasis on describing their interactions as a power battle and in political terms. The narrator mentions that Gahmuret received Herzeloide and her lands upon their marriage<sup>12</sup> and that he is king over three kingdoms,<sup>13</sup> but he repeatedly refers to Herzeloide as *künegin* [queen] during their marriage.<sup>14</sup> It is almost as if the narrator does not want us to forget that *she* is the ruling queen. Her description as queen stands in striking contrast to references of Gahmuret leaving Herzeloide and her court for knightly tournaments. Only after this emphasis on her queenship does the narrator comment on her love for her husband, though almost as an aside: “*ir was ouch wol sô liep ir man*” [She also appreciated / loved her husband] (*Parz.* 103:11). Gahmuret dies when he distances himself too far from her realm by joining his lord, the Caliph, in battle, though at home in their kingdoms “*er hete werdekeit genuoc*” [he had achieved sufficient esteem] (*Parz.* 101:21). His life also comes to an end when he considers his responsibility to the Caliph more important than that to his wife. It may be possible to interpret Gahmuret’s leaving Herzeloide for such a long time as a violation of their marriage contract which stipulates that Gahmuret may leave her court once a month to participate in knightly *tournaments*.<sup>15</sup>

By implication this also stipulates the brevity of these outings and the fact that they are tournaments, not actual battles. Gahmuret overstays his time by participating in a *battle* in a far away land, and Herzeloide anxiously awaits the return of her lover for six months.<sup>16</sup> It is striking that Gahmuret loses his life at this particular point in time after having ventured off too far, having changed the permitted chivalric activity from tournament to battle, having overstayed his deadline *and* unbeknownst to him, having produced an heir. His unborn son replaces Gahmuret. Herzeloide hopes to raise this “man” without knowledge of chivalry and to mold him into a type of a man that suits her purposes, one who will stay with her and never leave her as Gahmuret repeatedly did.

Immediately after learning of Gahmuret’s death, Herzeloide describes herself as:

<p><i>ich was viel junger danne er, und bin sîn muoter und sîn wîp: ich trage alhie doch sînen lîp und sînes verhes sâmen. den gâben unde nâmen unser zweier minne. (Parz. 109:24-29, emphasis mine)</i></p>	<p>[Although I was much younger than he, <b>I am his mother and his wife:</b> for I carry within me his body/life and the seed of his own flesh and blood which our love gave and received.]</p>
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Both Gahmuret and the unborn child become one and the same to Herzeloide, as she declares herself to be their mother and their wife. She is pregnant with “*sînen lîp*,” a phrase which simultaneously means “his body” and “his life,” emphasizing the collapse of identity of father and son into one person and the exchangeability of the body, Gahmuret, with the new life, Parzival. Herzeloide loves both and wants to hold on to the body as best she can. She does not want to let go of the only objects remaining of her husband, the slashed and bloodied shirt, the lance that killed him, and their unborn son. Again the shirt takes on the role of surrogate body, as it was the last object to touch her lover’s body. What served as a reminder of his wife’s desire for his body now is an empty shell, a symbol for his destroyed masculinity. Yet he continues to live on in his child, whom Herzeloide smothers with attention and uses as a surrogate for her lost lover, hugging, kissing and fondling the baby. Her love for Gahmuret and Parzival is great, but her fear of loss, especially loss of power, is greater, so great indeed that

she denies Parzival his heritage and raises him in isolation away from courts and chivalry. Her control over Parzival is intense, but ultimately her power is limited. He flees her and leaves her in emotional tatters, just as her shirt had been returned to her in tatters. Her femininity is powerful and fierce, but makes it impossible for her to keep her beloved close to her.

Gawan and Obilot's sleeve parallels the wearing of a woman's piece of clothing on armor, yet this love token functions quite differently. Obilot, a girl too young to accept and participate in chivalric love service, accomplishes what her father Lippaut could not, by expressing her "female" desire quite clearly. She requests Gawan's love service to defend her father's castle and lands against Meljanz. In many ways, Obilot seems mature beyond her years, yet comically innocent at the same time. She performs her duties as Gawan's ladylove with grace, but we can never quite forget that she is but a girl. Gawan does not embrace her as a lady, but as the narrator tells us, he embraces her "*als ein tockn*" [like a doll]! (*Parz.* 395:23) thus emphasizing her youth and object position.

Gawan was able to deflect her father's request for help because of a previously accepted male responsibility which does not permit him to fight until his single combat against Kingrimursal.<sup>17</sup> Yet Gawan cannot deflect Obilot's request for assistance to help defend the city. In the male-male negotiations, Lippaut and Gawan both respect masculine responsibilities and conditions for maintaining one's honor. In the female-male negotiations, Gawan cannot uphold this argument, as Obilot reminds him of another knightly responsibility, that of defender of women under attack:

*lât ir mich, hêrre, ungewert  
nu schamliche von iu gên,  
dar umbe muoz ze rehte stên  
iuwer prîs vor iwer selbes zuht,  
sît mîn magtuomlîchîu fluht  
iuwer genâde suochet.  
ob ir des, hêrre, ruochet,  
ich wil iu geben minne  
mit herzenlîchem sinne.  
(Parz. 369:22-30, my emphasis)*

[If you, Lord, leave me dissatisfied  
and I part from you shamed, your  
praise must stand in judgment  
over your very own breeding,  
as I sought your favor when I, a  
maiden, left home to come here.  
If you desire it, Lord, **I will give  
you my love with all of my heart.**]



Gawan's honor is equally bound up in this responsibility. With the request for help by a defenseless woman, Obilot successfully forces Gawan into submission and into love service. They interact according to the terms of accepted love service without formally establishing it, and many of their interactions seem to follow the standard paradigm. Obilot sends a token of love to Gawan who "*uf einen sluogern al zehant*" [immediately nailed it (=the sleeve) on one (of his three shields)] (*Parz.* 375:23), a token that was specifically made to reflect her elevation to the status of ladylove. Her parents have dresses made for her and dress her as a "courtly-lady-doll." A particularly elegant and costly dress is made for Obilot into which the right sleeve is not stitched. That sleeve she sends to Gawan as her love token.<sup>18</sup> The sleeve clearly identifies Obilot as Gawan's ladylove, as she wears the one-sleeved dress and Gawan carries her sleeve "appropriately" on his shield while he fights for her and as her.

Nailing the sleeve to his shield, creates what Burns calls "a hybrid, cross-gendered costume"<sup>19</sup> which reconfigures his as well as her assigned subject positions. Obilot and Gawan themselves express their cross-gendered hybridity in their conversations with each other. Obilot tells Gawan that

<i>ir sît mit der wâhrheit ich,</i> <i>swie die namen teilen sich.</i> <i>mîns lîbes namen sult ir hân:</i> <b>nu sît maget unde man.</b> <i>(Parz. 369:17-20, my emphasis)</i>	[In truth you are me even though we have different names, you shall have my body (lit. my person's life/body): <b>now you are both</b> <b>maiden and man.</b> ]
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Elisabeth Schmid initially interprets this statement as a "Tausch der Identitäten" [an exchange of identities],<sup>20</sup> but later modifies to a more precise interpretation of Obilot's suggestion that requires Gawan "sich mit ihr zu einem handlungsfähigen Wesen zusammenzufügen" [to join himself to her as a person (lit. being) capable of taking action].<sup>21</sup> Similarly expressing a state of cross-gendered hybridity, Gawan tells Obilot that

<p><i>in iwerre hende sî mîn swert.</i>  <i>ob iemen tjoste gein mir gert,</i>  <b>den poynder müezt ir rîten,</b>  <i>ir sult dâ für mich strîten.</i>  <b>man mac mich dâ in strîte sehn:</b>  <b>der muoz mînhalp von iu geschehn.</b>  <i>(Parz. 370:25-30, my emphasis)</i></p>	<p>[in your hand is my sword. If  someone desires to joust against  me, <b>you will have to ride the  attack.</b> You shall fight for me.  <b>People will see me in the fight,</b>  <b>but by necessity it will be you on  my behalf.]</b></p>
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Schmid, despite her suggestion of a joining of Obilot and Gawan, does not understand their interactions as a sharing or merging of their bodies. Instead, she comments on Obilot as a performer of double roles, as *wirt* and *wirtin*:

Indem sich Obilot in der männlichen Form als *wirt* definiert, identifiziert sie sich mit ihrem Vater, dem hilfebedürftigen Burgherrn, sozusagen dem Mann mit weiblichen Vorzeichen. In der weiblichen Form hingegen, als Burgherrin, *wirtin*, definiert sich Obilot als Gawans aktiver Helfer, als Schutzgeist, der über seinem Kampfglück wacht.

[By defining herself in the masculine form as *wirt* [host/castle lord], Obilot identifies with her father, the castle lord in need of assistance, so to speak the man with feminine augury. However, in the feminine form as lady of the castle, *wirtin* [hostess/lady of the castle], Obilot defines herself as Gawan's active helper, as guardian angel, who watches over his success in battle.]<sup>22</sup>

She interprets Obilot's actions much more gender-normatively by taking them as being placed "in den Dienst der Familieninteressen" [into the service of family interests].<sup>23</sup> Thus the logic of Schmid's argument is that Obilot is not so much interested in winning Gawan as her knight, but primarily is motivated to restore peace to her father's kingdom as well as peace between her sister Obie and Meljanz. She uses the conventions of love service to serve her father, an interpretation which keeps Obilot much more in a gender-normative role and less so in one which challenges

these norms.

Both Obilot and Gawan clearly understand themselves as having or sharing hybrid, cross-gendered bodies, but I believe that their motivations are quite different. Gawan does not initiate *minnedienst* [love service]. Obilot, in an act of desperation, violates the standard paradigm which stipulates that “only men should initiate the love suit; women’s assigned role is to concede.”<sup>24</sup> She takes the initiative and approaches Gawan with the idea of becoming his ladylove if he defends her and her beleaguered family. We are left to wonder, though, if Gawan is fighting for his own honor as well as out of desire for Obilot’s love, despite the fact that this love service is more of a game to him since Obilot is too young for *minne* [courtly love].<sup>25</sup> The fact that her sleeve is nailed to his shield states publicly that Obilot accepted his lovesuit and that he now fights on her behalf, in her service, and out of love for her. Yet the bystanders, ladies, and knights see only this. The sleeve focuses all their attention onto Obilot, not onto Gawan, and I believe, that in this instance, that is Gawan’s preference. As he tells Obilot, everyone will see him in battle, yet she will be the one fighting; their bodies will be one, even if only temporarily, and she will increase and receive the honor.

Defending a woman against male acts of aggression and giving her the honor for the victory resemble “normal” courtly love service. Yet Gawan’s repeated references to Obilot, her sleeve, and the fact that she fought that day and won all the honor, simultaneously signal that he wishes to distance himself from these actions. By “merging” himself with Obilot, he becomes a woman-man, allows her to become a man-woman, and crosses gender and status lines. He recedes, if not disappears, behind the memorable icon of the lady’s sleeve, and by extension, he withdraws from the love service which he professes to perform publicly. Her sleeve thus represents his service to her as well as his refusal to truly be her knight servitor. Their hybrid, merged bodies allow Gawan a way out of his conflicting responsibilities: he can defend a woman in need by allowing her the use of his body in battle *and* he does not violate the stipulated terms of his battle with Kingrimursal.

Although the return of her slashed sleeve after battle visually marks her as a desired, honored woman, it also indicates the public beating she received that day. This beating cuts away at her position of acting man-woman and reduces her again to the position of a “courtly-lady-doll”. Gawan

returns Obilot, the doll, to her parents with her desire for him unrequited. In Gawan's mind, she fought and won the battle and thus freed herself, even if she had to make use of their merged, hybrid bodies. Temporarily, Gawan suspends his masculinity and takes on a cross-gendered, hybrid body which allows him to retain his honor all around. Having severed their hybrid bodies, symbolized by the return of Obilot's sleeve, he leaves her behind in the feminine-gendered place of passivity waiting for another knight, whereas he is free to do as he pleases. He is not bound by this love service, as it was established "inappropriately": Obilot initiated it and expressed her female desire too aggressively. She trapped him with a reminder of his knightly responsibilities to women in need. Fulfilling his responsibilities allows him to end this quid pro quo relationship with Obilot. She suffers the consequences of her behavior for violating a man's prerogative. She is left behind pining for her "lover." Schultz describes the impact of courtly love as a loss or gain in renown, for which the Obilot-Gawan relationship is a good example of things gone wrong.

Distinction and love work differently for men and women. Whereas men hope to increase their renown by loving properly, women must take care not to lose their good name through loving unwisely. For both men and women, distinction depends on the proper management of love. But for men it is something to be gained, while for women it is something that can be lost.<sup>26</sup>

The narrator does not tell us if Obilot lost her good name for loving unwisely, but her distinction is not without blemish. Although she was able to attract a "lover" who defended her father's lands for her, she is too young and too unevenly matched to Gawan to properly manage this love. Gawan on the other hand gives the impression that he enjoyed this make-believe love service to the young Obilot. To him it was not real, but another opportunity to increase his chivalric distinction. Obilot's femininity is curious at best, as she is both wiser, more mature, and more assertive than most of the adults around her and she is innocently youthful. She knows what is expected of her as a "woman" and she is not afraid to achieve the desired goal. Despite her youth and the problematic implications of her acting literally beyond her age, her femininity is strong and only will grow stronger and more complex. Perhaps

she is youthfully unafraid, but she certainly challenges gender norms and temporarily is successful in attracting one of the best knights to serve her.

### The Cloaked Female Body

Herzeloide's and Obilot's slashed garments signify the knight's defiance for the ladies' attempts to control them, whereas Orilus's battle-torn cloak signifies newly found love and respect for his wife Jeschute, who according to Schultz "is made to seem more sexually alluring than any other figure in the entire romance"<sup>27</sup> or through the erotic image of the sleeping Jeschute is "verführerisch" [tempting].<sup>28</sup> Despite her sexual allure, Jeschute falls out of her husband's favor because he assumed that she had taken a lover and thus attacked his honor.<sup>29</sup> The trampled grass, her torn gown, and her missing brooch and ring are all the evidence he needed to come to his false conclusion. Orilus interprets the missing jewelry as tokens of love, which his wife must have given to her assumed lover.

*er wände, ir wîplicher sin  
wær gein im verkêret,  
unt daz si gunêret  
het ir kiusche unde ir prîs  
mit einem andern âmis.  
des lasters nam er pflîhte.  
ouch ergienc sîn gerihte  
über si, daz grœzer nôt  
wîp nie gedolte ane tot,  
unde an alle ir schulde.  
(Parz. 264:6-15)*

[He thought that her female disposition had turned against him and that she dishonored her virtue and value with another lover. He took care of this insult. He passed his judgment over her in such a way that no woman ever suffered greater affliction, other than death, and all without any fault of her own.]

Orilus does not dismiss his wife entirely, but instead denies her his "dienst od hulde" [service and favor] (Parz. 135:28) and he promises her that "ich sol iu fröude entêren, // [und] iwer herze siuften lêren." [I will deprive you of joy and will teach your heart to sigh] (Parz. 136: 7-8). He strips her of all the outward symbols due a noble lady and wife by starving her horse, destroying her saddle, replacing her bridle with bast and forcing her to wear the same undergarment throughout the ordeal.<sup>30</sup> The visual reminder of this insult to his reputation and social standing fuels his arrogance and strengthens

his pride. In an effort to assert masculine dominance in public, he parades Jeschute as a fallen woman for all to see in a manner inappropriate to her status: he shames her by exposing her body and sexuality publicly through the “*hemde zerfüeret*” [shirt in tatters] (*Parz.* 257:9) which is just barely held together with “*vil [...] stricke*” [many strings] (*Parz.* 257:11). This permits Parzival to notice her white and sun-burned skin and naked breasts (*Parz.* 257:10-17 & 258:25-29), and warrants the narrator to refer to her repeatedly as “*diu blôze herzogîn/frouwe*” [the naked duchess/lady] (*Parz.* 260:3; 260:19, etc.). Orilus thus sets a stern example for his household, lest anyone else dare question his authority. He clearly feels entitled to subject her to this harsh punishment, and even the narrator affirms this husbandly right.

<p><i>er möht ir sîne hulde, versagen, swenner wolde: nieman daz wenden solde, ob [der] man des wîbes hât gewalt</i> (<i>Parz.</i> 264:16-19, my emphasis)</p>	<p>[he can deny her his favor, if he so wants to: no one should prevent that, <b>insofar as the man has pow- er of / control over the wife.</b>]</p>
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Dieter Kühn translates the line “*ob der man des wîbes hât gewalt*” as “sofern der Mann ihr Eheherr ist” (*Parz.* Vol. 1, p. 441) [insofar as the man is her husband], which is fine in a legal context, but it is far too limiting. Though the narrator alludes to the legal context which allows a husband to discipline his wife, he is simultaneously questioning Orilus’s control, as he states quite literally that only *if* a man can control his wife can he deny her his favor. The question is not if Orilus *feels entitled* to exercise the right to discipline Jeschute—he clearly does—but instead the question is if Orilus indeed *has* power or control over Jeschute. On the surface, it looks that way, as he disciplines her harshly and refuses to reconcile with his wife. Even after his loss in battle to Parzival, Orilus refuses Parzival’s demands for reconciliation. Orilus’s pride goes so far that he prefers death to reconciliation with Jeschute.

“*ôwê küene starker man,  
 wa gedient ich ie diese nôt,  
 daz ich vor dir sol ligen tôt?*”  
 “*jâ lâze ich dich vil gerne lebn*”  
*sprach Parzivâl, “ob tu wilt gebn  
 dirre frouwen dine hulde.”*  
 “*ich entuons niht: ir schulde  
 ist gein mir ze grœzlichen. ...*”  
 (*Parz.* 266: 4-11, my emphasis)

[“Oh, brave, strong man, how do  
 I deserve such affliction that I  
 should lie dead before you?  
 “I would definitely grant you your  
 life,” said Parzival, “If you will  
 grant your wife your favor.”  
 “That I will not do! Her guilt to-  
 wards me is just too great. ...”]

The narrator affirms the validity of both men’s claims by stating “*mich dunket si hân bêde reht*” [it seems to me that both are in the right] (*Parz.* 264:25). Therefore both men are justified to react the way they do based on the knowledge they have. Orilus disciplines his wife because he does not know what really happened between the youthful Parzival and Jeschute; he only sees the visible signs of her having taken a lover and her challenge to his masculinity. Parzival as the victor in their battle is entitled to demand from Orilus the reconciliation with Jeschute. Parzival is the assumed lover who had stolen the ring and broach from Jeschute, not because he was motivated by “sexual desire but by filial obedience.”<sup>31</sup> As a matter of fact, Parzival is sexually indifferent towards this most sexually alluring woman and only thinks of his mother while holding Jeschute in his arms. It is her gourmet food that catches his attention and especially “*ein vingerlîn [...] // daz in gein dem bette twanc*” [a ring (on the hand of the beautiful Jeschute) which drew him towards the bed] (*Parz.* 130:26-7). Therefore, both Jeschute and Parzival are innocent of sexual transgression, yet Orilus will not see reason and repeatedly refuses the terms of his loss to Parzival. Orilus reconciles with Jeschute under pressure from Parzival, but only reinstates her as his honored wife after Parzival voluntarily swears an oath and attests to Jeschute’s innocence and faithfulness by returning the ring. For Orilus, a woman’s words are not sufficient evidence to prove her innocence, but apparently neither are a knight’s words, the threat of death, and the rules of chivalry.

Only after Parzival’s oath and the proof of her innocence does Orilus cover Jeschute with his cloak. He places upon her

<p><i>sin kursît,</i>  <i>das was von rîchem pfelle, wît,</i>  <i>mit heldes hant zerhouwen</i>  <i>(Parz. 270: 11-13)</i></p>	<p>[his fur coat, made from rich,  white furs, torn to shreds by the  hand of a hero.]</p>
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He has just this battle-torn cloak to give to her in order to protect her body from further public display of what only he, as her husband, should see. In that sense, his tattered cloak is a token of love and a symbol of the termination of her public humiliation. This shredded cloak is not a sign of contested power positions between a man and a woman, as the other pieces of clothing discussed so far have been. In the context of chivalric combat, the cloak symbolizes male strength, especially that of the victorious one. Orilus and his cloak take a severe beating and are cut back down in size, exposing his arrogance and lack of humility as his biggest flaws. Orilus needs to be taught a lesson; he needs to be shown boundaries and proper knightly behavior.

In the male-female relationship between husband and wife, the battle-torn cloak is a sign of newly found respect for and protection of the once dishonored wife. However, it is also an expression of asserting masculine rights. Her beautiful body belongs to him and exists for him alone to enjoy. Orilus humiliated her in his anger by parading her like cattle, making her a visible object of his anger, and also of his masculine control over all of his property. Though her reduction to the rank of disposable goods marks “her sin,” it also marks him as an emasculated man, unable to hold on to his wife, her love, and her respect. He, too, wore his imperfect masculinity for all to see by publicly subjecting Jeschute to such harsh treatment. As soon as he realizes his mistake, he literally covers up his own shame by handing Jeschute his battle-torn cloak. In his anger, he attacks and cuts back his own masculinity, while attacking other men in battle increases his honor and masculine reputation. The cloak again symbolizes hybridity by signifying the restoration of Jeschute’s femininity through the covering of her exposed body *and* by signifying the restoration of Orilus’s masculinity.

Beautiful and radiant bodies, as well as courtly clothing and behavior, are necessary to enable courtly lovers to fall in love.<sup>32</sup> Falling in love is not about sex; indeed, Schultz notes that “[t]he body that provokes



love is not marked by sex.”<sup>33</sup> Condwiramurs and Parzival fall in love with each other’s nobility and courtliness. Despite the ideal conditions for courtly love, Condwiramurs does not desire male attention and clearly expresses this by putting on a long velvet coat over her white silk shirt. She wishes to protect her femininity and herself against unwanted male desire, yet she meets Parzival in the middle of the night in his room. The narrator frames this episode by telling the audience the following:

*ez prach nicht wîplichiu zil:  
mit stæte kiusche truoc diu magt,  
von der ein teil hie wirt gesagt.  
die twanc urluoges nôt  
(Parz. 192:2-5)*

[Womanly honor was not destroyed; for the maiden whom we shall now talk about is characterized by complete purity. War danger pressured her.]

*dô gienc diu küneginne,  
niht nâch sölher minne  
diu sölhen namen reizet  
der meide wîp heizet,  
si suochte helfe unt friundes rât.  
(Parz. 192:9-13)*

[The queen did not go there in search of that kind of love which turns maidens into women (lit. which demands that a maiden be called a woman), she sought a friend’s help and advice.]

*si heten beidiu kranken sin,  
er unt diu küneginne,  
an bi ligender minne.  
(Parz. 193:2-4)*

[Both he and the queen had no knowledge of love play.]

Condwiramurs comes to Parzival’s bed at night, tearfully seeking his support and advice. Although her innocent behavior is emphasized repeatedly, the references to battle, and the need for defense and armistice to describe their interactions that night increasingly take on more and more explicit sexual references and connotations.<sup>34</sup> Condwiramurs comes prepared to Parzival’s bed that night:

<p><i>an ir was werlichiu wât, ein hemde wîz sîdîn: waz möhte kampflicher sîn, dan gein dem man sus komende ein wip? (Parz. 192:14-17, my emphasis)</i></p>	<p>[On her was <b>werlichiu wât</b>, a white silk shirt: who (lit. what) could be more battle-ready than a woman thus walking towards a man?]</p>
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The silk shirt, which she wears that night under her velvet coat, is described as “*werlichiu wât*”—which Dieter Kühn translates as “*werhaftes Gewand*” [defensive clothing] (*Parz.* Vol 1, p. 323)—is a phrase that can take on additional and very different meanings: either as “fastened/tied clothing” or “battle-ready armor.”<sup>35</sup> The latter meaning is furthermore emphasized by the reference to her battle-readiness as she approaches Parzival’s bedroom with its literal and sexual references clearly intentional. Condwiramurs’s silk shirt performs double duty: in its female-gendered association, it functions as sexual allure as a tightly fitting, translucent shirt. In its male-gendered association as protective armor, it functions as a defense mechanism in battle, especially as an attack on her virginity. Just as Herzeloide’s shirt had turned Gahmuret’s armor into a hybrid, cross-gendered costume, Condwiramurs’s silk shirt likewise takes on a similar function, though even more poignantly emphasized by the phrase “*werlichiu wat*.”

This silk shirt signals Condwiramurs’s conflicting desire and responsibility. It is her duty, according to courtly expectations and the discourse of courtly love, to attract a knight to help ward off the attacks of Clamide, a rejected suitor who wants to force Condwiramurs into submission and marriage. The female-gendered beautiful body plays an important role in securing such knightly service. Women are won in combat and ultimately “exchanged as valuable beauties.”<sup>36</sup> Yet Condwiramurs chooses not to act according to the standard paradigm of courtly love service. Because of her modesty, virtue, and her resistance to being desired, she does not make herself more desirable to Parzival and instead covers her sexually charged body with a velvet coat. By covering her body, she expresses her desire not to be desired. Upon Parzival’s invitation, despite her much-praised modesty and virtue, she nonetheless immediately jumps into his bed and lies next to him for the remainder of the night after securing the following promise from him:

“*welt ir iuch êren,  
 sölhe mâze gein mir kêren  
 daz ir mit mir ringet niht,  
 mîn ligen aldâ bî iu geschiht.*”  
*des wart ein vride von im getân:  
 si smouc sich an daz bette sân.*  
 (Parz. 193: 29-194:4, my emphasis)

["If you will distinguish yourself  
 with such honor that you will  
 show restraint towards me **and**  
**will not wrestle with me, I will**  
**lie next to you immediately.**"]

They made a pact with each other  
 and **she instantly snuggled up to**  
**him in bed.]**

Though her mind does not desire a man and deceives her into believing that she only sought his help, her body clearly does desire him, as indicated in the implied abandoned velvet coat and the speed with which she joins him in bed. She is an exceptionally beautiful woman who uses her body to attract and defend, to express her female desire for Parzival while simultaneously rejecting it as indicated by and expressed through her silk shirt and velvet coat. Both pieces of clothing are symbols of her femininity and desirability as well as her defense against unwanted male pursuit. She is truly wearing *werlichiu wat* in all its possible meanings. Condwiramurs in her *werlichiu wat* is the token of love for Parzival, and their courtly love relationship quickly leads to marriage. Thus, despite her initial resistance, she acts according to courtly expectations of love and gender. She is the prized object which Parzival wins through chivalric combat and as his wife, she becomes his to enjoy and control.

### The Cloaked Male Body

Men's bodies can be covered in a variety of ways, with armor, or with clothes for every day or for special occasions. I will focus on a specific cloaking of the male body, that in which a man receives a woman's coat as a sign of distinction upon his arrival at court. Courtly welcoming rituals consist of either the castle lord's daughter or a squire removing the knight's armor, dressing him in clean and court-appropriate garments, and serving him at dinner. Interestingly enough, these garments either fit him perfectly or have in fact been made specifically for him, and the castle always is prepared for the hero's arrival and is ready to celebrate and honor him.

Gawan successfully won the battle for the ferryman and is invited

to stay the night. As part of the welcoming ritual, Bene, the ferryman's young daughter, removes Gawan's armor and her father instructs her to serve Gawan well as a sign of honor and respect for his distinction. Yet Bene makes it quite clear in a private conversation with Gawan that she is serving him only to win "*iweren hulden*" [your favor/loyalty/devotion] (*Parz.* 549:21). She makes it quite clear that she desires to enter into a relationship of courtly love with him and intends to make Gawan her husband, something her father encourages. The bed prepared for Gawan is less than perfect, the materials used are substandard for a knight of Gawan's standing.<sup>37</sup> To make up for the less than excellent quality of the bed and as a sign of distinction, Gawan receives as a bed cover "*der meide mantel einen // härmin niuwe reinen*" [the maiden's coat which was made of new, white ermine] (*Parz.* 552:21-22). Instead of taking advantage of Bene that night, who is clearly interested in sexual intercourse, Gawan does not fulfill her desire and sleeps alone, though uses her coat as a blanket. He is not afraid to accept and use the gift, yet he rejects the meaning of the gift, i.e. as a token of love to formalize their courtly love relationship. Bene does not follow the standard paradigm of courtly love by expressing her desire and by attempting to initiate a courtly love relationship, and he is thus like Obilot in his slighting the male prerogative.<sup>38</sup>

Parzival's arrival at the grail castle is marked by some striking deviations from this standard pattern of courtly welcome. Parzival's armor is removed and he is given Queen Repanse de Schoye's coat as a distinction and honor, yet this coat is not a gift, but only a loan: "*ab ir sol er iu gelihen sin: // wan iu ist niht kleider noch gesniten*" [you shall have it as a loan from her, since your clothes have not yet been tailored] (*Parz.* 228:16-7). It is striking that the grail people are not prepared for Parzival's arrival which they had long awaited and expected.<sup>39</sup> It is also unusual, that the cloak is given as a loan. Garments given to a knight upon his arrival at court are a gift for him to keep.

The more interesting question here concerns the expectations that are bound up in the loan of women's coats to Parzival and Gawan. Why is it a particular distinction for a knight to wear women's clothing and what impact does that have on a knight? According to Schultz, "the basic elements of courtly clothing were the same for men and women in this period, [yet] men's and women's clothes were not identical."<sup>40</sup> The key difference in their clothing is that women's clothing reached the floor,

whereas men's were cut shorter with their legs clearly visible. Thus shapely legs, Schultz argues, became the hallmark of masculine beauty.<sup>41</sup>

Yet legs in themselves are not peculiarly male. Thus one cannot say that men's clothes reveal a sexed body. Rather, men's clothes created a gendered body. Exposing the legs turns the body into a man's, since the body with visible legs can only be a man's. It is the clothes, not the legs that make the body masculine.<sup>42</sup>

Thus clothing that envelopes the legs turns the body into a feminine one since the body with cloaked legs can only be a woman's. Thus Repanse's and Bene's cloaks make Parzival's and Gawan's bodies feminine. The feminization of their bodies is striking in itself. This transformation is made more poignant by the proximity of the cloaking to the removal of armor from their bodies, a symbol of a knight's masculine identity. Taking off armor is part of the standard courtly welcoming ritual and marks the transition from chivalric to courtly life, which a knight had to undergo in order to display his courtliness. Stripped of armor and wearing men's "court" clothes would have been sufficient to mark a knight's transition between life outside and at court.

Repanse and Bene use their coats as tokens of love within the context of the welcoming rituals. Without the means to express their desire for the hero freely, both women take advantage of court protocol by providing the knight with court-appropriate clothing as a sign of respect and honor to the visitor, yet this clothing comes with a special twist. The women's coats are erotically charged. Giving her coat as a blanket, Bene expresses her sexual desire for Gawan and although not explicitly stated in the text, this provides her a means to fantasize about her new coat touching Gawan's (naked) body. For Parzival, though he is married to Condwiramurs, Repanse's coat holds an eroticized charge, as it focuses his attention onto her, the maiden queen of the grail, unblemished and pure.

*diu künigîn valscheite laz  
sazte für den wirt den grâl.  
daz maere giht daz Parzivâl  
dicke an si sach unt dâhte.  
diu den grâl dâ brâhte:  
er hete ouch ir mantel an.  
(Parz. 236:10-15, my emphasis)*

[The Queen devoid of all falsehood placed the grail in front of the lord. The story says that **Parzival looked at her very intently, she who had brought in the grail, and he thought about the fact that he was wearing her coat.**]

As a matter of fact, the erotic charge of Repanse's coat distracts Parzival entirely from the wonders of the grail, perhaps contributing to the fact that he later fails to ask the important question about the nature of the grail king's ailment. However, Repanse's desire was more cleverly concealed by the plausible excuse that his clothes had not been tailored, yet Trevrizent tells Parzival at a later occasion, that

*sine lêch dirs niht ze roume:  
si wand du soltst dâ hêrre sîn  
des grâls unt ir, dar zuo mîn.  
(Parz. 500:28-30, my emphasis)*

[She did not loan you the cloak simply to honor you / she did not loan you the cloak so that you can boast about it. **She thought you would be lord** of the grail and of her, additionally also of me.]

The grail people clearly expected Parzival to ask the right question and to become grail king, which is why Repanse treats him as if he already were her king. Her gift thus signals her submissiveness to and respect for her lord Parzival along with her desire for him. Bene and Repanse seek a relationship with Gawain and Parzival respectively. With no recourse available to express their desire publicly, they cloak the knights in their desire and shock them with their cloak's erotic charges into a feminine body. Playing with courtly conventions of showing respect and honor, these ladies also suffuse their gifts and service with their own personal message to the hero: their desire to enter into a relationship of courtly love with him. Bene desires sexual fulfillment, Repanse a partner at her side, a grail king worthy of that role. Neither of them waits for the man to initiate the relationship and subtly

shift the meaning of the gift of clothes.

Repanse's and Bene's actions present a reversal of the standard paradigm of courtly love, in which the man initiates the relationship or pines after the woman desiring a sign of affection or token of love from her. Since Repanse and Bene take on the male role of courtly lovers, Parzival and Gawain, according to the plan of these two ladies, have to play the female parts and thus the cloaking of their bodies which makes them feminine, takes on a greater meaning: Bene and Repanse undermine Parzival's and Gawain's masculine positions, they reverse hierarchical and gender roles, and express their desire through their eroticized cloaks. Only the intended recipient can hear the specific erotic message, whereas outwardly they project the image of "proper" courtly service to the visiting hero.

### Conclusion

Each of these pieces of clothing, given as a token of love, expresses its multivalent gender identity in surprising ways by simultaneously signifying participation in normative gender relationships and courtly practices *and* challenging them in the giver's or wearer's attempt to create a more diverse set of gender roles. A woman's clothing pinned to a knight's armor signals publicly a knight's service to a lady. In the specific cases of Herzloyde's shirt worn over Gahmuret's armor and Obilot's sleeve pinned to Gawain's shield they furthermore take on the function of allowing both men to resist the control these ladies attempt to impose on their lives. The hybrid costume created by the addition of female clothing to the knights' armor allows both men to pursue their own agenda of chivalric independence while publicly professing love service to the lady in question. The cloaking of the female body in a man's coat symbolizes the restoration of Jeschute's status-appropriate role as honored wife and Orilus's assertion of his masculine rights to reclaim the feminine body. Simultaneously, it signifies a covering up of a man's shame and his emasculated masculinity for he had dismissed Jeschute unjustly. Condwiramurs's cloaking herself in a silk shirt, which is described as "*werlichiu wat*," signals its female- and masculine-gendered functions in a single phrase. Her shirt serves as sexual allure as well as armor necessary to ward off male attacks. It heightens the attractiveness of her beautiful, female-gendered body and, combined with her velvet coat, expresses her resistance to being desirable. The cloaking of the male body in a woman's coat genders it feminine and provides women with a means to

express their desire for knights. At the same time, it conceals the woman's desire and the eroticized charge of her cloak through the participation in gender-normative roles of courtly welcoming rituals.

This wearing and exchange of clothing, the hybrid and re-gendered bodies in *Parzival*, signify how fraught with ambiguity medieval discourse on gender constructions is and that people's real or fictional ideas about masculinity and femininity were not constructed exclusively along binary lines. Though upholding the expectations of courtly love by being tokens of love as a reward for courtly (love) service, these garments are suffused with additional meanings which undercut the fabric of courtly love. Women give these clothes to challenge masculine superiority and to at least temporarily subvert it. At the same time, they publicly uphold the conventions of courtly love and guard their reputations. By negotiating these complex social expectations medieval men and women weave and undercut the fabric of courtly love, even if only fictionally.

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1. James A. Schultz, "Love Service, Masculine Anxiety and the Consolation of Fiction in Wolfram's *Parzival*," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 121:3 (2002): 342-64, here: 355.

2. See Gaston Paris, "Lancelot du Lac, II: Conte de la Charette," *Romania* 12 (1883): 459-534.

3. See e.g. Howard R. Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977); Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur. Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986); E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed. Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); David F. Hult, "Gaston Paris and the Invention of Courtly Love," in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed., R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 192-224; C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love. In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness – Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals – 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1985); Sarah Kay, *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); F.X. Newman (ed.), *The Meaning of Courtly Love* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1972); Denis



de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, transl. Montgomery Belgion (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

4. E. Jane. Burns, "Courtly Love: Who Needs it? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition," *Signs* 27:1 (2001): 23-57, here: 23.

5. See *Parz.* 60:9-17. I am quoting Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* according to the following edition: Ed. Karl Lachmann, revised & commented upon by Eberhard Nellmann, translated by Dieter Kühn, 2 vol. (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2006). All references to this edition will be made directly in the body of the text immediately following a quote.

6. See *Parz.* 87:1-6, 88:23-30, 94:1-96:11.

7. All translations in this article are mine unless otherwise noted.

8. See Susanne Hafner, *Maskulinität in der höfischen Erzählliteratur* (Peter Lang, 2004), 150.

9. See E. Jane Burns, "The Damsel's Sleeve: Reading Through Clothes in Courtly Love." In her *Courtly Love Undressed*. 1-16, here: 6. Burns makes this point of clothing as fetish and material substitute for a woman more generally, not specifically applied to Herzeloide.

10. See *Parz.* 101:14-15.

11. Hafner 156.

12. See *Parz.* 87:12.

13. See *Parz.* 108:6.

14. See e.g. *Parz.* 99:30, 100:8, 100:14, 101:10, 103:3, 103:6-10, 107:28, 109:7.

15. See *Parz.* 97:5-12.

16. See *Parz.* 103:15-17.

17. See *Parz.* 366:26-30.

18. See *Parz.* 374:7-375:30.

19. Burns, "Damsel's Sleeve" 5.

20. Elisabeth Schmid, "Obilot als Frauengeber," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 41:1 (1991): 46-60, here: 55.

21. Schmid 56.

22. Schmid 56.

23. Schmid 56.

24. Burns, "Damsel's Sleeve" 8.

25. See *Parz.* 372:5-12.

26. Schultz, *Courtly Love* 168.

27. James A. Schultz, "Parzival, Courtly Love, and the History of Sexuality," *Poetica* 38:1-2 (2006): 31-59, here: 35.

28. Gert Kaiser, "Liebe außerhalb der Gesellschaft. Zu einer Lebensform der höfischen Liebe," in *Liebe als Literatur. Aufsätze zur erotischen Dichtung in Deutschland*, ed. Rüdiger Krohn, 79-97, München: C.H. Beck, 1983, here: 84.
29. See *Parz.* 264:1-19.
30. Also see *Parz.* 256:1-32 for a later, more detailed description of the physical impact of the ordeal on Jeschute.
31. Schultz, "Parzival" 36.
32. See Schultz, *Courtly Love* xx. For another ground-breaking discussion on the importance of luminescence as one of the most important qualities constituting medieval beauty, see Sarah-Grace Heller, "Light as Glamour: The Luminescent Ideal of Beauty in the *Roman de la Rose*," *Speculum* 76:4 (2001): 934-959.
33. Schultz, "Parzival" 39.
34. See *Parz.* 192:13-196:8.
35. See *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch von Matthias Lexer*. Zugleich als Supplement und alphabetischer Index zum *Mittelhochdeutschen Wörterbuche* von Benecke-Müller-Zarncke. Nachdruck der Ausg. Leipzig 1872-1878 mit einer Einleitung von Kurt Gärtner. 3 Bde. Stuttgart: S. Hirzel 1992; published online: <http://germazope.uni-trier.de/Projects/WBB/woerterbuecher/lexer/lexer/WBB/lexer/wbgui> and Beate Hennig, *Kleines Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993, which list the following meanings for "werlich": "werhaft" [well-fortified] (Lexer) & "kampfbereit, tapfer; befestigt" [battle-ready, courageous; fastened] (Hennig 317); and for "wât": "Kleidung" [clothing] (Lexer) & "Kleidung; Rüstung; Gewandstoff" [clothing; armor; cloth for cloth making] (Hennig 314).
36. Burns, *Courtly Love* 4.
37. See *Parz.* 552:9-22.
38. Bene's coat appears a second time in the story where it operates according to more normative terms. Gawan successfully survived the challenges in the Castle of Wonders which earned him Orgeluse's love. The couple returns to the river in need of crossing it. This time Bene accompanies her father and she brings her white fur coat along for Gawan to wear after she removes his armor. On this occasion Bene makes no obvious attempts to gain Gawan's affection and instead serves him and her lady mistress demurely. On this occasion the coat is more clearly a sign of honor and less an erotically charged gift as it had been in its first appearance.
39. I would like to note here, that the oldest, complete manuscript of *Parzival* in the Bayrische Staatsbibliothek München, CGM 19, only mentions that Repanse's coat is a loan to Parzival, but does not give an explanation for the loan, nor makes any mention of the fact that Parzival's own clothes were not ready at his arrival as the print edition

does (see fol. 19ra:65-71). This manuscript therefore does not quite cast such a negative light on the lack of preparedness of the grail community for Parzival's arrival as the print edition does.

40. James A. Schultz, "Clothing and Disclosing: Clothes, Class, and Gender in Gottfried's *Tristan*," *Tristania: A Journal Devoted to Tristan Studies* 17 (1996): 111-23, here: 117.

41. See Schultz, "Clothing and Disclosing" 117.

42. Schultz, "Clothing and Disclosing" 118.