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Feminine Desire and Power in the Arthurian Tradition

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FEMININE DESIRE AND POWER IN THE ARTHURIAN TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how female characters can achieve their desires, in the following texts: Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and Marie de France's "Lanval". Building on the theories of Michel de Certeau and Helene Cixious, this study focuses on power and gender relations.

INTRODUCTION

When Geoffrey Chaucer's knight in "The Wife of Bath's Tale" quests to discover what women want, he receives various answers, but finally settles on the idea that women want sovereignty over their lives. While the knight may or may not have been correct in his answer, he does acknowledge that women have desires and are not empty vessels waiting to perform masculine desire. The knight soon realizes that women have different desires, ranging from obtaining a lover to accruing power.

This study focuses on these various desires and how women implement them. The Arthurian tradition recognizes both feminine and masculine desire repeatedly from its inception with Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* to Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century text *Le Morte Darthur*. For this reason, I have chosen to study feminine desire in the context of the Arthurian corpus. I analyze three medieval Arthurian texts in which language and magic play an important part: Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and prologue, and Marie de France's "Lanval." I have decided to arrange my chapters according to author because I want to discuss each text in relation to the person who wrote it; in particular, I want to show that desire is not simply integral to each text, but is also important outside of the text. Therefore, desire surrounds each text, both within it and without it.

Because of the nature of this study, I have limited the number of women whom I discuss in each chapter. In Chaucer's and Marie's texts, I deal with all the female characters because only a few appear in each. However, regarding Malory, I chose to work with several well-known women: Guinevere, Elayne (mother of Galahad), Morgan le Fey, and Nynyve. These are well-known characters that have large roles in the *Morte*, unlike other women who have minor roles or drop from the narrative. Moreover, these women have strong desires, so they aid in my discussion of female desire.

In order for women to achieve their desires they must use tactics. Michel de Certeau, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, differentiates between the terms tactics and strategies. I use these two terms when discussing power relations, especially the power structure in marriage or romantic relationships. The person in the strategic position has the most power in the relationship; he or she can achieve desires easily and can control or set rules for the behavior of the person occupying the tactical position. A character that employs tactics operates from a weaker position, and often is subject to the desires of the strategic person. Moreover, the tactical

person often must use manipulation and deceit to achieve his or her desires in order to outmaneuver the strategic person's plans. Generally, men maintain a strategic position while women are relegated to the tactical one, but this is not always the case. Men can be forced into a tactical situation by a more powerful man or magical woman. Because women usually act through tactics, the next few paragraphs are devoted to the two ways women can implement their desires.

Women always use linguistic tactics that either manifest through speech or action. One tactic women can wield is verbal language. Through words, women can manipulate and convince men to permit them to perform their desires. Depending on the situation, women typically use language as a means to achieve desire. However, language can also serve as an escape plan when implementing a desire goes wrong. To achieve desire, women may use words to make a man feel guilty or to persuade him. When referring to a woman's verbal tactics, I mean speech, the act of vocalizing one's thoughts. Therefore, verbal tactics only apply if a woman actually says something. In addition, these tactics are mostly used by non-magical women to achieve their desires, while magical women tend to rely more on bodily tactics which manifest usually through magic.

The other tactic women use is body language, signifying the ways in which women manipulate their bodies or use their bodies to achieve their desires through gestures, looks, beauty, seduction, or magic. So, rather than verbalizing their desires, women can silently use their bodies. For example, the women in my study often attract men through their beauty or outward appearance—therefore, they utilize their bodies in order to get a man or to manipulate that man into performing feminine desire.

An important component of body language is magical power. Because magic is an expression of the body, an often silent expression and a manifestation of a woman's desires, it is body language. Many Arthurian women can perform magic, and this ability gives them a great amount of autonomy over their lives. However, it is important to note that they are first and foremost women. Carolyn Larrington describes their general characteristics: "Enchantresses are not witches; they are sexually attractive women who employ their magic for their own ends, not in the service of Satan. Always alluring, intelligent and independent, sometimes they support the aims of Arthurian chivalry, at other times they can be hostile and petty-minded" (2). What is more, the authors take pains to make them as human as possible, often downplaying their

supernatural abilities. Therefore, magical women are usually represented as non-magical so that they are not viewed as a threat to the patriarchy. However, one cannot deny that magical power often does supersede verbal power.

Helene Cixious articulates ways in which women can create their own languages: “Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes” (2049). In the texts, women employ magic more than men. The one character that uses magic, Malory’s Merlin, departs the narrative early and thus leaves women the sole proprietors of magic. Because only women use magic, we can see it as a form of *écriture féminine*. Magic allows women to create a feminine language and a means to express themselves without relying on patriarchal signifiers; in the case of Nynyve, who learns magic from Merlin, she destroys masculine magical language by entrapping Merlin, and so destroys the signifiers from which she learns.

I arranged by chapters, not by chronology but by the tactical strength and power of women. For example, in Malory’s text, women struggle the most to achieve their desires, while in Marie’s lai, the fairy lady gets what she wants with a bit more ease. Thus, we will begin discussing feminine tactics in a traditional society, and then progressively move to a more liberal one. In chapter one, I discuss Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* and feminine desire in his text. In this chapter, I argue that women can only implement their desires in the intersection of masculine desire. Therefore, male desire is crucial to implementing female desire. Chapter two analyzes Geoffrey Chaucer’s “The Wife of Bath’s Tale.” I focus on the Wife of Bath as a character that uses language and her body to manipulate patriarchal strategies and gain power for herself. Finally, chapter three discusses Marie de France’s “Lanval,” with a close look at the fairy lady and Guinevere as powerful women. I argue that the lai appears to fulfill masculine fantasy but actually becomes a feminist escape fantasy.

Chapter 1: Power and Desire in Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*

In chapter one, I argue that feminine desire feeds off masculine desire. When a man wants a woman, his desires for that woman overwhelm his senses, until he can think of nothing else but his love object. This temporary masculine “madness,” as Malory would put it, gives women an opportunity to achieve their own desires through verbal and bodily tactics. A man filled with desire can be easily manipulated by a woman’s words or magic. She can either

figuratively or literally cast a spell on him because his desire interferes with his rationality. At the same time, a man without passion in his heart will fail to be convinced by a woman's tactics, and her words will have no effect.

I also discuss the gendered nature of the *Morte*. Malory created his text by relying on the English and French Arthurian traditions which we may view as gendered traditions—this information attests to authorial intent. Just as his characters enact desire through others' desire, the *Morte* cannot exist without the support of both traditions. Alluding to Ann Astell's study, I explain how Malory wrote the *Morte* in order to comment on England's political state in the fifteenth century. In addition, I describe his authorial intrusions in which he refers to himself as the author. These intrusions link his name several times with his veiled political commentary, showing, in effect, that he did not fear expressing his thoughts and inscribing his name to them.

Chapter 2: Alisoun's Desire for Power in Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale"

Many readers view the Wife of Bath as desiring marriage, but I argue in chapter two that she really wants power. Relying on "linguistic slips" in her prologue and tale, I deduce that Alisoun wants the pilgrims to think she wants marriage for its own benefits, but she really loves marriage for the power it offers her. Her tale is a tactic designed to promote her marriage schemes—the wyf is a watered down version of Alisoun and makes the Wife of Bath appear gentler than she actually is. Where Alisoun burns Jankyn's book, the wyf calmly discusses the virtues of gentillesse with her husband. The order of the prologue and tale are tactical in themselves; Alisoun makes herself sound unappealing in the prologue, especially when she attempts to dominate Jankyn, but the tale implies an Alisoun who could be easy and comforting to live with, a woman who will subscribe to masculine fantasy, figuratively making herself beautiful.

The Wife of Bath does not just want power within marriage, but in the text, as well. David Wallace argues that Chaucer, the pilgrim becomes Alisoun's sixth husband, and so, the text of the *Canterbury Tales* is figuratively written upon the Wife of Bath's body. As the body of the text, Alisoun fights with Chaucer, the glosser of the text, for control of it. Caroline Dinshaw believes that Alison is the gloss of the text, and so both Chaucer and the Wife are integral to the creation of it. Because of Chaucer's Retraction, I argue that Alisoun succeeds in winning control.

Chapter 3: The Fairy Lady, Guinevere and Marie de France: Achieving Feminine Desire in Marie de France's "Lanval"

Marie's "Lanval" is the most feminist of my texts. I argue that the fairy lady remains in control of her relationship with Lanval and her life by appearing to be submissive to Lanval. Because she caters to Lanval's desires, scholars often view the lai as fulfilling masculine fantasy in the same way "The Wife of Bath's Tale" does. Unlike the wyf, though, the fairy lady has continuous ulterior motives: She wants Lanval as her lover but also wants personal freedom. At the last moment, the lai transforms from serving masculine fantasy to promoting feminine escape from patriarchal domination.

Aside from tactical issues, the fairy lady's acquittal of Lanval demonstrates both verbal and bodily language. Although she uses verbal language to speak to Arthur's court, her literal body convinces them of Lanval's innocence. Because Lanval boasts of his lover's beauty, Arthur's court only wants to know if she is in fact more beautiful than Guinevere. Once they ascertain this fact, they acquit Lanval because he speaks the truth. For Arthur and his barons, to use a cliché, seeing is believing. They don't believe anyone could actually be more beautiful than the queen. So, the fairy lady's verbal language only contributes in part to the trial. She tells the court that Lanval is innocent, which is important in itself, because she could lie about what happened. It is interesting that a patriarchal court of law would believe physical testimony from a woman at all because women are supposedly inherently duplicitous. Because of Lanval's claim, body language is all they will accept. Any woman could testify on Lanval's behalf and say exactly what the fairy lady does; however, not every woman could easily be more beautiful than Guinevere.

I also argue that Marie's situation, as author of the text, mirrors that of the fairy lady; Marie takes a tradition that has been dominated by men and finds a space in which she can assert feminine authorship and make the Arthurian tradition her own. More than this, Marie must struggle to maintain control of her text, to ensure that her name remains associated with it.

CHAPTER 1

POWER AND DESIRE IN THOMAS MALORY'S *LE MORTE DARTHUR*

Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* focuses largely on homosocial relations: The text centers on the Knights of the Round Table and the quests on which they go. Women, on the other hand, play a peripheral role for Malory. They are the mothers and lovers of knights; they determine their identities by their associations to men. Rarely do women perform much action – as damsels in distress, they weep over the dead bodies of their lovers or become the victims of warlocks or immoral knights. They serve as the impetus that causes the Knights of the Round Table to launch into action. Both men and women in Malory's text have desires they wish to implement. Masculine desire usually comes easier, yet it is often irrational and motivated by lust. Conversely, female desire appears planned, not hasty. We cannot easily separate gendered desires because they feed off each other. Men pursue their desires quickly in such a headstrong fashion that women can manipulate masculine desire to achieve their own desires. Therefore, feminine desire is achieved through the exploitation of masculine desire. Using verbal and bodily manipulation, women rely on tactics to deceive their fathers and husbands. In addition, magic can greatly aid a woman in blinding the senses of men and overruling good judgment so female desire can succeed. Along with this dynamic, I also discuss Malory's attempts to implement his own desires onto the "feminine text."

It is important to have a firm grounding of what exactly constitutes masculine desire for Malory. From the beginning of the narrative, readers are confronted with masculine wishes that overpower the rational brain with their intensity. This description seems strange for a man, as medieval male characters are so often displayed as the rational creatures. Jacqueline Murray reminds us that "[m]edieval clerical writers frequently expressed their ideas about the nature of men and women in terms of binary oppositions, a conceptual framework that has been particularly influential and enduring. [. . .] Recent scholarship suggests that medieval ideas about gender were in fact far more varied and complex than a reading of the standard misogynist texts would suggest" (2-3). Therefore, the typical gendered binaries, such as men as rational and women as irrational, do not necessarily apply to Malory's text. So strong is masculine desire that men are completely consumed by it, bound to fulfill the desire no matter the cost. On the first page of Malory's narrative, we are immersed in masculine desire and its consequences: Uther Pendragon wants the Lady Igraine for his mistress, and he wages war with her husband, the duke

of Cornwale in order to get what he wants. Uther's irrational desires pass to Arthur, who will marry Guinevere, despite Merlin's warning. However, Arthur does not pay attention to the warning, but sends Merlin to proposition King Lodegreauns. Basically, when a man wants a woman, he will stop at nothing until he has her. From these examples, we learn that nothing comes between a man and the fulfillment of his desires. Therefore, a man in this situation can be prey to manipulation and deceit. For example, Arthur wants Guinevere so much that he ignores her love for Lancelot or thinks it is inconsequential to his own desire.

Malory's female characters waste no time in manipulating love-lorn knights. Because men do not understand womanly desires and because they are equated with Eve, men fear feminine behavior motivated by a desire. When a woman desires a man, she can interfere with his knightly duties, most notably, to quest. As Caroline Larrington reminds us, "Whenever women follow their own desires, they make society anxious; they do not always have men's specific interests at heart, nor do they . . . always accept the overriding importance of the quest for honour—the chief value of chivalric society" (40). Malory illustrates what happens to men who are subject to feminine desire. For example, both Guinevere and Elayne desire Lancelot to become their lover. When Guinevere finds Lancelot in bed with Elayne, he "woke oute of hys swoghe, he lepte oute at a bay window into a gardyne—and there with thornys he was all to-cracched of his ad ru and hys body—and so he ranne furth he knew nat whothir, and was a wylde [woode] as ever was man" (472). As a consequence, feminine desire overpowers Lancelot, and he becomes literally crazy, running to the forest like a wolf. Lancelot has no power when it comes to defeating feminine desire: He becomes subject to it, tossed between the two women like a puppet. For men, womanly desire controls masculine strategy, even defeating it, and is therefore a danger to men and the patriarchy.

However, masculine desire is truly unpredictable. As readers, we know what women want, simply because they must work so hard to achieve their desires. For men, though, desire for women may strike suddenly and remain an urgent need until it is fulfilled; women also have strong desires, yet they must maintain their composure in to seize the right moment to implement their desires. Unlike women, men lose their rationality when they encounter desire, often becoming so consumed by it that they lose sense of their other objectives. Uther Pendragon is an excellent example: Although he has a kingdom to rule and govern, he spends all his energy in waging a war against the Duke of Corwale, because he wants the Duke's wife, Igraine. Women

retain their composure while implementing their desires, especially Morgan le Fey, who plans elaborate schemes in order to become queen; in fact, her other desires, such as her love for Accolon, do not interfere with her main goal.

Powerful men can implement their desires easily; powerless, women must employ tactics to gain what they want. Based on time, not space, tactics are the maneuvers of the powerless or weak. The non-magical women, Guinevere, Isode, and Elayne want a man and the power to pursue the man of their choice. They are concerned with their own lives and their own desires. They desire what men want them to desire, that is, they want men; however, they often want the wrong man. Still, for them to have desires at all is problematic: They should be passive objects of desire not actively pursuing desires of their own. The fact that women do not desire their husbands but someone else is even more troublesome¹. For example, instead of desiring Arthur, her husband, Guinevere wants Lancelot. So, she does desire a man, rather than wanting power or autonomy over her life, but she doesn't desire the man who "owns" her. The same happens for Isode. She should long for King Marke, but actually wants Tristram. Unmarried, Elayne still fits this model because she also wants the wrong man. Rather than desiring a man who actually wants to marry her, she spends her energy luring Lancelot to her bed.

The magical women in this chapter also want a man, but this is not their primary desire. The magical women want power and renown; having more power due to magic, magical women focus their attention on society as a whole. Morgan le Fey wants political power; she wants to usurp Arthur's throne. Throughout the text, she will literally do anything to accrue power and demoralize Arthur and his knights. She even plots, not one, but several attempts on her half-brother's life.

Nynve doesn't want political power even though she could have it if she wanted it; rather, she desires magical power, which explains why she ousts Merlin from the text. In addition, she thwarts Morgan's attempts to kill Arthur and promotes justice, acting as arbiter in a court of her own making. While Morgan undermines the patriarchy, Nynve upholds it when she thwarts Morgan's schemes to kill Arthur. Because the non-magical and magical women have different desires, I will discuss them in two different sections. The first part of the chapter will highlight the non-magical women's tactics, and the second part will focus on the magical women's tactics.

I. Non-magical women

¹ Although this scenario is an example of courtly love, the women's desires are still inappropriate and non-virtuous.

As I just mentioned, the non-magical women want a lover. This would not be a problem, except for the fact that these women are married to other men. So, instead of wanting their husbands, as would be proper, they love another man. In doing so, they appear to uphold the patriarchy while actually undermining it: Men want women to want men, which they do, but they don't want the men the patriarchy tells them they should want. Therefore, deception is a large part of enacting their desires. They must pretend to fulfill their prescribed roles as wives in order to get what they want. Thus, tactical maneuvers are crucial to implementing feminine desire. By employing a combination of verbal and bodily tactics, women can maneuver between their husbands and lovers. Women must appease masculine desire, before they can fulfill their own desires.

Because non-magical women desire men, they need only find a man they want, who will want them in return. Initially, they must use bodily tactics, though. Women must catch a man's gaze or make a man attracted to them. After all, if they do not interest a man, their own desires will not reach fruition. Then, later they can use verbal tactics to manipulate knights into remaining with them. Therefore, non-magical women use bodily tactics to first obtain a lover, and then use verbal tactics to manipulate him into acquiescing to feminine desires. Guinevere's relationship with Lancelot is a perfect example of how a woman can continue her relationship.

We learn even before Guinevere enters the narrative that she has her own desires: Merlin tells Arthur "Gwenyver was nat holsom for hym to take to wyf, for he warned hym that Launcelot scholde love hir, and sche hym agayne" (62). We should note that although this quote expresses Guinevere's desires, the emphasis remains on Lancelot and his desire for the queen. Therefore, Arthur must contend with the possible betrayal of a fellow knight and the fact that Lancelot blatantly seeks out the queen, even though she belongs to Arthur. While heterosexual desires do combat, homosocial ones do, as well. Masculine desire should not seek to fulfill itself on another man's woman because that woman has already been claimed by another man. Just because a man should not "steal" another's wife, there is no help for masculine desire and the feminine tactics that influence it.

Once Guinevere has Lancelot as her lover, she must use verbal tactics to retain him. If he goes to Elayne's bed, she will not be able to fulfill her desires—Lancelot will choose one woman or the other, not both. Therefore, she must keep Lancelot interested. Because Lancelot desires her, she can manipulate him into doing what she wants him to do. However, she also wants him,

so his desires mutually fulfill her own. She employs language to make Lancelot feel guilty about his affair with Elayne: “Sir Launcelot had gotyn a chylde uppon Elayne, the doughter of Kynge Pelles—wherefore Quene Gwenyver was wrothe, and she gaff many rebukes to Sir Launcelot and called hym false knyght” (470). In this situation, Guinevere uses tactics, not to deceive Lancelot, but to guilt him into never seeing Elayne again. She wants him all to herself, so using harsh words, she hopes to extract a promise from him that he will only love her.

Guinevere only has her body to offer Lancelot, and she uses it to her advantage. If Lancelot spends the night enjoying her body, he cannot be with Elayne. Guinevere uses a mixture of linguistic guilt and promises of her body as tactics:

Than the Quene sente for Sir Launcelot and bade hym com to her chamber that nyght—“Other ellys,” seyde the Quene, “I am sure that ye woll go to youre ladyes bedde, Dame Elayne, by whome ye gate Galahad.” “A, madame!” seyde Sir Launcelot, “never say ye so, for that I ded was ayenste me wylle.” “Than,” seyde the Quene, “loke that ye com to me whan I sende for you.”

“Madame,” seyde Sir Launcelot, “I shall nat fayle you, but I shall be redy at youre commaundement.” (471)

Again, she brings up his affair with Elayne to guilt him into coming to her bed. She also wants to let him know that she has not forgotten about his indiscretion. Even though Guinevere is married, and technically “taken,” she still feels she has the right to claim Lancelot. Her verbal jab at her lover, while it reveals she has insecurities, shows that Lancelot must win back her trust. Therefore, she employs a verbal tactic to test Lancelot: If he comes, then she knows he truly loves her, but if he fails to appear, then he demonstrates his love for Elayne. She wants to assert her power over Lancelot at this point, as his queen and lover. Moreover, the queen wants assurance that her age has not caused Lancelot to lose his interest, especially since Elayne is a younger woman. If Lancelot refuses her love, then she also knows that her body is not useful as a tactic any longer.

Still, Guinevere encounters times when her tactics refuse to work on Lancelot. Although she seems to do what she wants by taking Lancelot as her lover, the relationship depends completely on his discretion. Returning from the Quest of the Sankgreall, Lancelot resumes his adulterous relationship with the queen: “But ever his [Lancelot’s] thoughts prevyly were on the Quene, and so they loved togydirs more hotter than they dud toforehonde” (588). In the same

way, Lancelot ceases their nightly interludes because other knights watch their every move together. He tells his mistress, “The boldness of you and me woll brynge us to shame and sclaudir; and that were me lothe, to se you dishonored” (589). The emphasis in these quotes remains on Lancelot: His thoughts were on the queen, and he does not want the queen to be slandered. Guinevere has little control over how long her relationship with Lancelot lasts because the relationship is driven by Lancelot’s desires for her.

Despite her inability to control the relationship, she still tries to convince Lancelot to remain with her. Just as she does during the Elayne incident, she employs both verbal and body tactics meant to induce guilt. When Lancelot has ignored her for some time, she summons him and says, “Sir Launcelot, I se and fele dayly that youre love begynnyth to slake, for ye have no joy to be in my presence, but ever ye ar oute of thys courte; and quarrels and maters ye have nowadays for laydes, madyns, and jantillwomen, more than ever ye were wonte to have beforehande” (588). Her words fail to convince Lancelot, because he no longer will acknowledge desire for her. Therefore, her tactics have no impact on his mind. Maureen Fries believes that women need the cooperation of men to accomplish anything: “Guinevere is unable to act on her own. She is carried off and imprisoned; fought for and defended; freed and returned home; and fought for again: all at the will of and/or agreement between the males in the tale” (63). This quote applies to desire, as well as action; Guinevere cannot implement her desires if she does not first have a man who desires her. Therefore, without Lancelot’s desire, her desire remains unfulfilled.

Because her language does not affect Lancelot, she switches to a bodily tactic combined with a verbal one: “And whan he had all seyde, she braste oute on wepyng; and so she sobbed and a-wepte a grete whyle. And whan she myght speke, she seyde, ‘Sir Launcelot, now I well understoneded that thou arte a false, recrayed knight and a common lechourere, and lovyste and holdiste other ladyes, and of me thou haste dysdayne and scorne” (589). Her tears attempt to move Lancelot to pity and remorse for his dalliance with other women. While he does pity her, departing “with grete hevyness,” he does not desire her. Guinevere goes so far as to attack his chivalric sense by telling him he does not conform to the knightly ideal.

Guinevere’s trials also demonstrate an instance when feminine tactics do not sway the masculine mind. Several times in the narrative, language fails to help Guinevere, most notably when she’s on trial: first, during the poisoned apple incident and second, when she is charged

with treason for sleeping with Lancelot. Therefore, tactics don't grant a woman ultimate power. There are simply some situations in which women have no recourse. I will refer to the poisoned apple incident because Guinevere pleads her innocence instead of discussing the treason where her voice remains silent. Accused of poisoning fruit, Guinevere says, "I made thys dyner for a good entente, and never for none evyll; so Allmyghty Jesu helpe me in my right, as I was never purposed to do such evyll dedes, and that I reporte me unto God" (592). Guinevere fails to convince anyone of her good intentions because she faces a group of men all opposed to her. Men have no amorous desires in this instance, and so Guinevere's tactics fail to work. When men band together against a woman, she will ultimately fail, her tactics will be crushed. It is easy for Guinevere to coerce Arthur, one man, but to convince an entire group is almost impossible to manage, especially when they "seyde they coude nat excuse the Quene for why she made the dyner, and other hit muste come by her oother by her servauntis" (592). Even before Guinevere speaks for her innocence, the knights have convinced themselves that she is guilty. Against determined male minds, a woman cannot hope to dissuade them from their beliefs.

Unlike Guinevere, Elayne has the power of magic on her side. Elayne employs bodily tactics more than verbal ones. To make Lancelot her lover, she must transform her body to appear like Guinevere's, even though she is a beautiful woman, because Lancelot only wants Guinevere. So, in order to fulfill her own desire, she must also fulfill Lancelot's. She doesn't do the transforming herself, but relies on Dame Brusen's magic: "Than cam furth a lady that hyght Dame Brusen, and she seyde unto the kynge, 'Sir, wyte you well Sir Lancelot lovyth no lady in the worlde but all only Quene Gwenyver; and therefore worche ye be my counceyle, and I shall make hym to lye with youre doughter—and he shall nat wyte but that he lyeth by Quene Gwenyver'" (464). Although Dame Brusen does the actual transforming, the tactic belongs to Elayne because she deceives Lancelot by using her body. Manipulating reality, Elayne ensures her desires reach fruition. More than this, Elayne manipulates Lancelot's desires. Once Lancelot discovers that the queen camps nearby, his desire for her overcomes him. Due to his overwhelming desire, Elayne can fulfill her own desires by taking advantage of Lancelot's. So, her goals are obtained when Lancelot's are.

Elayne employs verbal tactics to explain why she no longer looks like Guinevere the next morning. This is one of the few times that Elayne employs tactics on her own. Most of the time, she works together with Dame Brusen. Even though she knows Lancelot does not want to return

to her bed anytime soon, she still hopes to convince him with her words: “My lorde, Sir Launcelot, I beseche you, se me as sone as ye may, for I have obeyed me unto the prophesye that my fadir tolde me. And by his commaundemente to fullfyll this prophecie I have gyvyn the the grettyst ryches and the fayryst floure that ever I had, and that is my maydynhode that I shall never have agayne—and therefore, jantyll knyght, owghte me youre good wyll” (466).

Moreover, she must explain why she looks like Guinevere previously but no longer does.

Much as does Guinevere, Elayne makes Lancelot feel guilty by reminding him about their son: “[W]ell she [Elayne] knew that that same night sholde be bygotyn Sir Galahad uppon hir” (465). Sir Galahad will be a bargaining chip for her. She knows she will not be able to become Lancelot’s lover because his heart belongs to Guinevere. But, she can assert power over him if she bears his son. Just as Guinevere employs guilt to make Lancelot come to her chambers, Elayne also hopes that if Lancelot feels guilty, he might marry her because of the child. If this manipulation of her body works, Elayne could fulfill her desire for him, either through marriage or simply having his presence in her life.

II. Magical Women

For Malory, the magical women are the most dangerous ones in his text. Joan M. Ferrante tells us that the more education a woman had, the more dangerous she became for society:

Since women are given to deception and trickery anyway, the more education they have, the more dangerous they become. That is not to say that trickery is always a negative factor, but the attitude toward women’s use of it is usually at least ambivalent. The attribution to them of magic powers seems at times to be a manifestation of fear of women; as it is practiced in courtly literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, magic is both an intellectual power and a secret one. (218)

We have already discussed how non-magical women assert their desires and the manipulative techniques they employ. It is therefore easy to understand why men would fear and avoid magical women. If an ordinary, human woman cannot be trusted to relay the truth, a magical woman doubly cannot be relied upon. Susan Crane agrees with this viewpoint, believing that magic makes women dangerous and unpredictable: “Women’s magic has an element of ambivalence that expresses femininity’s compounded attraction and danger in romance. Whereas men master magic as an exceptionally difficult science that they can then freely deploy, women’s

magic is less often learned than inherited, imposed by enchantment, or of unexplained origin, and not always under their control” (150). While Morgan and Nynve do learn magic, we cannot be quite sure how exactly it is learned. With regards to Nynve, we know she learns from Merlin; thus, her magic derives from the patriarchy, from a man who learned it as a science, to use Crane’s terms. Morgan, however, acquired magic in an all female environment which makes her magic much more unpredictable, and therefore more dangerous.

Although the two magical women both have magical abilities, they use their magic for different purposes: Morgan has selfish motives, to place herself on the throne, and failing that, to humiliate Arthur and his knights. Morgan wants to prove that she has power and can use it to harm Arthur. Nynve, on the other hand, uses magic for her own selfish purposes, often seen as beneficial to Arthur and his knights, though. In fact, she inadvertently upholds the patriarchy and its values, particularly the chivalric code by thwarting Morgan’s schemes against Arthur. But, Geraldine Heng reminds us, “It is only by a clearly partial standard of reference that Nynve is identified as beneficent and Morgan as malign—estimated, that is, only by the relative usefulness or threat of their presence for knightly society” (845). While we may choose to see them as opposite sides of a coin, their characters are not so easily assessed.

Nynve is not always as beneficent as people make her out to be. Like all the women in this chapter, she has goals she hopes to achieve. She wants magical knowledge because it will allow her to act free of men and do whatever she wishes. To gain knowledge, she promises her virginity to Merlin in exchange for magical knowledge:

Than sone aftir the lady and Merlyon departed. And by weyes he shewed hir many wondyrs, and so come into Cornuayle. And allwayes he lay aboute to have hir maydynhode. [. . .] And so one a tyme Merlyon ded ad rue in a roche whereas was a grete wonder, and wrought by enchauntement, that went undir a grete stone. So by hir subtile worchyng she made Merlyon to go undir that stone to latte hir wete of the mervayles there; but she wrought so there for hym that he come never oute for all the craufte he could do—and so she departed and leffte Merlyon. (79)

Nynve makes Merlin wait to obtain her virginity until she has attained enough magical power to satisfy herself. She is able to implement her own desires, to learn magic, because Merlin is consumed by his own desire for her. We learn that she does not fulfill her part of the bargain,

though; she maintains a façade, similar to Marie de France's fairy lady, who feigns submission in order to implement her own desires. Her behavior does not mesh with chivalry or virtue because she deliberately uses Merlin's desires to her advantage.

Once Nynyve receives what she desires, she locks Merlin away under a stone so he can never escape, never vie for her virginity. Her entrapment of Merlin demonstrates a tactical move. She waits for the right moment in time, the moment when she has enough magical knowledge, when Merlin does not suspect her devious intentions, and when the location suits her purposes. Heng explains in her article, "Power passes on with the surrender of one's sexual being to another. [. . .] By retaining intact her physical and psychic self, Nynyve continues to hold a palpable form of power over him who loves her" (845). Because Merlin constantly wants her body, Nynyve can control him. Giving him her body, though would make her weaker, subordinated to him. Withholding her body is a bodily tactic: Her situation opposes Guinevere's. The queen, desiring Lancelot, offers her body to him, but Nynyve feels no lust for Merlin and retains her virginity. Women can use their bodies in two ways, then, to obtain their objectives.

Nynyve uses her magic to enact her version of justice for the knight, Pelles. Pelles has so much desire for Ettarde that it is easy for Nynyve to befuddle his mind and change the direction of his desire. Malory tells us that Pelles never stops vying for Ettarde's love no matter how many times she scorns him or sends knights to bruise him: "And so this knyght promised Ettarde to ad ru hir into this contray, and nevir to leve her tyll she lovid hym; and thus he is here the moste party nyghe her logged by a priory. And every weke she sendies knyghtes to fyght with hym, and whan he hath putt hem to the worse, than woll he suffir hem wylfully to take hym presonere, because he wolde have a syght of this lady" (102). Much as is the case for Uther and Arthur, Pelles can think of nothing but earning the love of Ettarde, and so he debases himself, refusing to fight as a knight should, but surrendering himself to her men. Without magic, Nynyve would be unable to change Pelles's heart; indeed, he would continue to visit Ettarde's castle until he dies.

Sue Ellen Holbrook believes that Nynyve truly wants to rectify Pelles's situation for good: "Nymue's motives do not seem selfish, and since she has started to act on Pelles's behalf even before she met him, she cannot be accused of having manipulated the situation in her favor" (182). However, Nynyve does have selfish purposes: She wants to make Pelles her lover. Carolyn Larrington states, "Malory makes the Lady who would not tolerate Merlin's desire for

her into the scourge of a woman who seeks to decide for herself who will be her lover. The Lady persecutes the unfortunate lady Ettard, who refuses to follow the courtly script and reciprocate the love of Sir Pelleas” (115). Although Nynyve makes herself the “judge” of the situation, her verdict is not fair to Ettarde, who almost is in the same situation with Pelles as Nynyve is with Merlin, with the exception that Nynyve can perform magic. Instead of understanding Ettarde’s plight, she punishes the lady, making her fall desperately in love with Pelles. “Nenyve denies to other women the freedom to refuse to love the one who loves them, a freedom which, as her dealings with Merlin show, she was able to maintain in her own affairs through her knowledge of enchantment” (115-16). Trying to promote an appearance of justice has fooled many readers, who believe she simply wants to preserve chivalry and the social order. However, her actions are more selfish than beneficent. If she wanted justice to reign, she would simply transform Ettarde’s heart, so that she would give Pelles the love he deserves. But, she also changes Pelles’s heart, making him fall out of love with Ettarde. In a way, the situation seems like justice, but because Nynyve takes Pelles for her lover, we are led to believe that she switches his heart just so she can claim him.

Just as Nynyve has selfish schemes, Morgan le Fey dreams of political power. The dynamics change slightly with Morgan’s situation; instead of manipulating a man’s desire for a woman, she manipulates her brother’s desire for protection. While Arthur’s desires relating to protection do not overwhelm him, he does not suspect that Morgan actually seeks to harm him, so he is caught unawares when he discovers her devious actions. Instead of desiring Morgan, Arthur trusts her completely, so much so that she can manipulate his naiveté: “So aftir, for grete truste, Arthur betoke the scawberde unto Morgan le Fay, hys sister” (52). Because she is kin, Arthur does not pause to suspect that her magical powers might not be used for his benefit.

Morgan uses a mixture of verbal and bodily tactics to deceive Arthur. Morgan must send Arthur something to replace Excalibur and its scabbard or Arthur will doubt his sister’s honesty and intentions. “[T]here com a damsel fromme Morgan le Fay and brought unto Sir Arthur a swerde lyke unto Excalibur, and the scawberde, and seyde unto Arthure, ‘She sendis here youre swerde for grete love.’ And he thanked hir and wente hit had bene so; but she was falce, for the swerde and the scawberde was counterfete, and brutyll, and false” (87). Arthur does not suspect that his sword is false until he does battle with Accolon, Morgan’s lover. So, Morgan does a good job at deceiving Arthur, even delivering words of love to her brother to further allay any

doubt. She must constantly assure him of her devotion to cover her manipulative tactics. Using magic, which results from her body and her desires, she plants her hatred into the fake Excalibur.

Arthur and Morgan both desire the real Excalibur and its scabbard because it protects the king during battle. Their mutual desire feeds off each other. Morgan hopes to gain the sword to overpower her brother, to demonstrate the extent of her magical ability. She wants him to fear her power and what she could do to him. As a display of power, Morgan actually transforms her appearance. Having the power of transfiguration, Morgan avoids arrest by her brother, avoids submission to his laws which could oppress her: “Than she rode into a valley where many grete stonys were, and whan she sawe she muste be overtake, she shope hirself, horse, and man, by enchaumentente unto grete marbyll stonys. And anone withal come Kynge Arthure and Sir Outlake whereas the Kynge might know his sister” (94). Transforming into a stone represents a bodily tactic: She physically manifests her desire to escape from her brother and at the same time, demonstrates the power she has over herself and the environment, a power Arthur does not possess. Morgan realizes Arthur understands the depth of her power and sends him a mocking message: “Tell hym I feare ad rue whyle I can make me and myne in lyknesse of stones—and lette hym wete I can do much more whan I se my tyme” (95). Morgan uses a verbal tactic—she waits until after her brother has witnessed her transformation; Arthur knows the extent of her power, and she wants him to know she can do more than shape-shifting and is only waiting for the right time to inflict her wrath on him.

Morgan’s linguistic tactics are mostly used to get herself out of trouble. During her initial scheme to kill Arthur, Morgan decides to murder her husband, Kynge Uryence “for now I se my tyme is beste to do hit” (92). When her son thwarts her plans, she must convince him through language that she didn’t know what she was doing: “A, fayre son Uwayne, have mercy uppon me! I was tempted with a fende, wherefore I cry the mercy. I woll nevermore do so—and save my worship and discover me nat” (92). Because she is a magical woman, she does not need to rely on language to achieve her desires. Therefore, language serves as an escape plan; when Uwayne stops her from stabbing Uryence, she relies on language. So, Morgan’s use of tactics differs from non-magical women’s use of it. While Guinevere must use language to give Lancelot a guilt complex, Morgan employs language as an afterthought. So, non-magical women see language as a means to achieve desire, whereas magical ones view language as a back-up plan when desires cannot reach fruition.

III. Malory

While female characters must find their desires in the intersections of masculine desire, Malory writes his text in between the French and English traditions. According to Catherine Batt, “Malory locates his own text ‘between’ French and English treatments of the subject, although it is also important that we recognize that this ‘betweenness’ is not consistent throughout the *Morte*” (xx). Although Malory is not consistent with this “betweenness,” he does seek to mediate between the two, sometimes conflicting traditions. The French tradition focuses more on textual authority and stability (xvii); conversely, “English romances on Arthur, while they may carry a historically referential subtext, are experimental, inquiring, and in their execution often nonconfirmatory or otherwise exploratory of assumptions about the Arthurian milieu. Every English retelling questions the emphases of previous works and rewrites Arthur’s relevance and significance for the needs of what it projects as its immediate audience” (xviii). So, Malory makes a conscious choice in not aligning his text with either tradition. He does not simply want to retell the stories, but to add his own ideas and explore the Arthurian world in relation to his own. Thus, we may see Malory in a strategic position in relation to the two traditions. Instead of allowing either the French or English mode to trump his own ideas, he overpowers the text, taking what he wants and changing storylines to mold his text into what he wants.

We may choose to see these traditions as gendered: The French tradition represents masculinity because it is ordered and emphasizes textual authority, while the English tradition represents femininity which questions the masculine tradition and constantly changes. Because Malory’s text is neither completely French nor completely English, he tries to find a neutral place in which to write, a place where both genders can be represented. Like his characters, whose desires rely on each other, his text relies on the French and the English—he cannot have the feminine without the masculine. By refusing to rely completely on the English tradition, he also refuses to allow himself to become feminized by the masculine French tradition.

Besides viewing the different traditions as gendered, we may see Malory and his text in gendered terms. For example, Malory inscribes his masculine persona on his feminized text by drawing attention to himself as an author. This is a trend that continues in my next two chapters: The authors in my study assert themselves as authors of their texts, so much so, that they want to ensure there is not doubt that the text was written by them. Malory first refers to himself as the author at the end of “Aftir Thes Questis,” where he writes, “[T]his was drawyn by a knyght

prisoner, Sir Thomas Malleorre, that God sende hym good recover” (112). Hereafter in the text, Malory often draws attention to his authorship and his imprisoned state: He boldly states his name at the end of most chapters. Although he asks for readers’ prayers, he ties himself to the text, where he could choose to write nothing about himself:

I praye you all, jentylmen and jentylwymmen that redeth this book of Arthur and his knyghtes from the begynnyng to the endyng, praye for me whyle I am on lyve that God sende me good delyveraunce; and whan I am deed, I praye you all praye for my soule. For this book was ended the ninth yere of the reygne of Kyng Edward the Fourth, by Sir Thomas Maleore, knyght, as Jesu helpe hym, for Hys grete myght, as he is the servaunt of Jesu bothe day and nyght. Amen. (698)

He ends the text, not with the focus on Arthur, but on himself. He intentionally draws attention to himself as the author, which may lead us to believe that he had an agenda to promote in writing the book. According to Ann Astell, he wanted to comment on the current political situation in England: “Like the Gawain poet, Sir Thomas Malory used Arthurian materials to comment in a veiled way on the troubled reign of an English king. In 1468-69, Edward IV was facing a threat of deposition akin to that Richard II had faced in 1398-1400” (138).² As a prisoner, charged with a long list of crimes, he has no compunction about drawing a connection between politics and Arthurian literature. Indeed, incarceration does not appear to affect him, as he continues to commit crimes after being released. According to Stephen H.A. Shepherd, “Malory is released on bail several times; during two of these periods of temporary freedom he is implicated in further crimes” which include stealing four oxen and harboring an alleged criminal (xxv). Because he is willing to commit additional crimes, even hiding a criminal, he seemingly has no qualms about figuratively writing about politics and clearly ascribing his name to it. After all, he goes to prison so many times, he does not seem to be bothered by it or compelled to cease his treasonous allusions or illegal actions. He has his own ideas which he does not fear expressing or feel the need to qualify with explanations of humility.

Unlike his female characters that use tactics, he uses strategies to continually assert his power over the gendered traditions and over his text. Both magical and non-magical women must use tactics to achieve desire, but Malory freely implements his desires for the text. While magic greatly aids a woman’s attempt to fulfill her desire, language can be just as effective,

² Astell cites Richard R. Griffith, who believes that Malory had a “pro-Edwardian ‘political bias’” (140).

particularly when used on a trusting or naïve man. Ultimately for women, men are the judges of a tactic's success or failure, no matter how much a woman speaks or performs spells. Malory's text demonstrates that tactics cannot change the patriarchy, but they can give women hope that their dreams might someday come true.

CHAPTER 2

ALISOUN'S DESIRE FOR POWER IN CHAUCER'S "THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE"

In the previous chapter, we examined the power Malory's female characters have in order to implement their desires. Malory's magical and non-magical women attempt to achieve their desires by employing verbal and bodily tactics. The Wife of Bath and the old wyf in her tale also try to implement their desires. The Wife of Bath and the loathly lady employ deceptive bodily and verbal tactics to gain power through the traditionally restricting institution of marriage. Thus, what restrains Guinevere, empowers Alisoun and the wyf. The Wife of Bath employs tactics, both in her prologue and her tale. She wants to achieve power by finding a husband. She does not subtly insinuate her desire for marriage, but states it bluntly: "Welcome the sixte, whan that evere he shal. / For soothe, I wol nat kepe me chaast in al. / Whan myn housbonde is fro the world ygon, / Some Cristen man shal wedde me anon" (45-48). To achieve marriage, and then power, Alison uses time to her advantage: The Wife of Bath makes clear that she will not be available forever because she will find a man to marry soon.

Despite her verbosity on the subject of marriage, Alisoun really craves power. Paul Strohm asserts that Alisoun wants power in the household:

Chaucer's Alice is rather obviously conducting a struggle for dominion in marriage, with sexuality only as an instrument of struggle and with dominion figured in terms of property, the most tangible of scales. [. . .] Alice is striving to overturn male domination in marriage, with the household the battleground, with sexuality the weapon, and with control of property the prize by which success is to be reckoned. She is, in other words, a treasonous wife. (142)

So, we can think about Alisoun as a non-magical Morgan le Fey. Instead of desiring political power, as Morgan does, Alisoun wants domestic and social power: She wants to control her husband and her society. We may recall Alisoun's anger when someone produces an offering at church before she does. Alisoun wants power, over her husband, her household, her body, and *The Canterbury Tales*, as well; in order to achieve this goal, she employs the loathly lady who supports Alisoun's desire for power. Every word the Wife speaks is an attempt to gain power and control while appearing to only desire marriage. She struggles, not only to control her own situation but to control the text, as well—as one of the co-narrators with Chaucer, she battles for power until she succeeds. Language is extremely important to Alisoun winning this battle: She

uses her language and the text itself to write *écriture féminine*, so that her textual body dominates Chaucer's words.

Verbal tactics are important tools for women to employ. Through words, women can enact their desires. Carolyn Larrington discusses the influence of words:

Women do have an important countervailing weapon to use against men: the power of words. Women use words to persuade or cajole, but they can also use verbal dexterity to extract promises from men, promises which, under the rules of honour culture, the men are bound to keep. Known in English folklore as the 'rash promise' and in French as the *don contraignant*, this is a frequent motif; the man who promises that he will do anything for his beloved very soon lives to regret it.
(51)

The Wife of Bath certainly boasts a verbal dexterity which she uses as a tactic to achieve her goals.

The Wife of Bath sees power and marriage as interlinked and dependent on each other. Elaine Tuttle Hansen reminds us that some critics view the Wife of Bath as "ironically trapped in the misogynist culture she explicitly names as the enemy and blind to the ways in which her tactics further embed her in the assumptions she tries in vain to defy" (274). However, the Wife of Bath is not blind to what she's doing. Expected to marry, Alisoun finds a way to transform marriage from an imprisoning state to one that offers her autonomy over her life. To say that she's trapped is true, though. Once she becomes dependent on receiving power from marriage, she must continue to marry. Only through marriage can the Wife of Bath have power.

The Wife's equation of marriage and power is not the norm in medieval literature. A brief look at the medieval marriage would be useful here to illustrate how ironic the Wife of Bath's scheme to glean power from marriage is. In the medieval marriage, the woman was a legal non-entity; only the husband and father mattered. Wives belonged first to their fathers and then to their husbands, body and soul, no matter what they said or thought about it. Shulamith Shahar³ describes the lengths husbands will go to reform their wives and mold them into docile creatures:

According to Beaumanoir, a husband was allowed to adopt any measure he considered appropriate in order to reform his wife. He could punish her in any

³ For more information on medieval marriage, see Dyan Elliott's articles on medieval marriage: "Lollardy and the Integrity of the Marriage and the Family," and "Marriage," which is compiled in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*.

way he chose, but could not injure or kill her. In the legal code of Aardenburg in Flanders in the fourteenth century it is stipulated that husband may beat his wife, injure her, slash her body from head to foot and ‘warm his feet in her blood.’ If he succeeds in nursing her back to health afterwards he will not have transgressed the law. (89-90)

If a wife displeased her husband, he could do practically anything to punish her, short of murder. We see this fact illustrated in Alison’s marriage to Jankyn, when he strikes her ears so hard that she becomes deaf. Even though the Wife must endure physical abuse from her husband(s), she still thinks that it’s a good idea. Not many other characters would agree with her. However, Jankyn was Alisoun’s last husband—not all her husbands abused her. Indeed, she does admit that three husbands were good and two were bad. Besides this fact, Alisoun knows how to obtain power through marriage, no matter how bad it is: “But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond, / And sith they hadde me yeven al hir lond, / What sholde I taken keep hem for to plesse, / But it were for my profit and myn ese?” (211-214). Knowing that her first three husbands want sex, she renders the marriage debt, which in turn grants her power over the household. While most female characters stray from marriage, the Wife of Bath runs toward it. So, she seeks an institution that oppresses women and desires to transform it into one that gives her power.

The Wife of Bath allows her desire for power slip into her speech. It is not an overt suggestion of longing for power, though. Alison describes having an extramarital affair with Jankyn:

I seye that in the feeldes walked we,
Tel trewely we hadde swich dalliance,
This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
I spak to hym and seyde hym how that he,
If I were wydwe, sholde wedde me. (564-68)

If the Wife of Bath only desires marriage, then there would be no reason for her affair with Jankyn. She is already married to her fourth husband, so her desire for marriage should be fulfilled. However, Alison likes to annoy her husbands until she gets her way: For example, with her fourth husband, she “in his owene grece I made hym frye / For anger, and for verray jalousie. / For God, in erthe I was his purgatorie” (487-89). Therefore, she enjoys marriage because it allows her to torture her husbands until she has power over them. Moreover, she wants to have a

husband-in-waiting in case her current husband leaves her or dies. Therefore, she makes a tactical plan for the future. In the event her current husband passes away, she will be able to marry someone else and get satisfaction from that relationship. Mary Carruthers reminds us of another reason the Wife marries: “The lesson that Alisoun has learned is obvious: marriage is contracted for money, and the acquisition of marriage is equivalent to the attainment of honor, respect, and independence” (50). The power Alisoun seeks is economic power over the household.

We learn more about how she gains power when she describes her marriage to Jankyn; this relationship turns on language, desire, manipulation, and her body—her tricks. Alisoun offers us a detailed glimpse of her life with a “bad” husband. There is no reason for Alisoun to tell the pilgrims about her struggles with Jankyn—this incident does not promote a potential marriage, but instead reveals her longing for power, and as Paul Strohm would say, her treasonous behavior. Thus, she does not have complete control over her linguistic tactics. She shows that marriage alone does not satisfy her, but she really longs for complete control:

And whan I saugh he wolde nevere fine
To reden on this cursed book al nyght,
Al sodeynly thre leves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke
I with my fest so took hym on the cheke
That in our fyr he fil backward adoun. (788-91)

Alisoun’s example of marriage does not paint a tempting picture. Indeed, she makes herself into a termagant, which does not represent the feminine ideal of submission and virtue. Compared to Griselda, Alisoun looks like a devilish fiend. Rather than complacently accepting Jankyn’s book reading, she argues until she receives sovereignty. Therefore, she uses language and the manipulation of her body to overcome Jankyn’s reading. “He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond, / To han the governance of hous and lond, / And of his tonge, and of his hond also; / And made hym breene his book anon right tho” (813-16). When she has “maistrie,” she seemingly turns into a Griselda-like woman.

Susan Crane also sees the book burning incident as a power struggle. Drawing on the rising in 1381, she notes that writing was seen as a means to maintain the status quo: “[F]rom the earliest to modern times, the appearance of writing in cultures correlates not with an increase in

knowledge but with the development of complex social hierarchies” (205). So, in destroying her husband’s book, Alison hopes to also destroy his airs of superiority and his dominance over their relationship. “The widespread burning of documents suggests that to the rebels writing appeared innately to be an instrument of oppression” (205). Alison also views writing as oppressive, and so Jankyn’s book is a symbol of her lack of power in the marriage. Once the book turns into ashes, she equalizes her station in the household with Jankyn’s.

Aside from a power struggle, the book burning incident demonstrates Alison’s attempt to change society. Crane states, “To assert with [Lee] Patterson that the Wife, in arguing for the worth of female sovereignty, does not want ‘political or social change’ is to exile gender and gender relations to the realm of the depoliticized ‘self’ as if they had no political or social implications” (215). Therefore, for the Wife of Bath, attaining power and changing society are interrelated objectives. We notice her rehabilitative attempts on the pilgrims when she wants to convince them that remarriage is a good idea. Moreover, the book burning, at least for Alison’s and Jankyn’s marriage proves beneficial. “Alison even presents burning her clerical husband’s book as part of their reconciliation, a mutual step toward a new order rather than an act of destruction” (216). After she has rid Jankyn of his book, she takes complete control of the marriage. Indeed, for the Wife, written texts remain something to avoid. While speaking of remarriage, she prefers to speak from her experience, avoiding the written word altogether.

The Wife of Bath’s tale is also a tactic to entice men. For example, she wants her audience to see her as the old wyf: If she has a husband who respects and defers to her, she will turn into a beautiful, submissive maiden, and they will literally live happily ever after. Otherwise, she will be an ugly hag who lectures her husband every night on the virtues of gentillesse. The tale is another tactical move on her part. She paints a fantasy picture of the possible future. Of course, the entire tale is not a fantasy, particularly for the knight. The end of the tale, however, signifies that once a husband gives his wife “maistrye,” they will never again encounter marital problems. “And thus they lyve unto hir lyves ende / In parfit joye” (1257-58). She leaves the pilgrims with a fantasy, a fantasy that could not become a reality. Through the tale, the Wife of Bath rectifies her linguistic slips in the prologue.

The wyf also wants to marry, but her reasons for marriage differ from Alison’s. Having power, due to her magical ability, she is not as power-hungry as Alison is. Rather, she wants to marry; this is her goal. We may think back to earlier in the chapter when I described the tale as a

tactic on the part of Alison. Because the Wife of Bath wants the pilgrims to believe her number one goal is marriage, her character wants to marry, as an illustration of Alison's desire.

Therefore, the wyf's reason for being is to support Alison's desire for power.

Then, again, we may wonder, why marry a confirmed rapist? We know that the old wyf is not loathly all the time: She has the power to transform her own appearance. Or, in other words, she is not under a spell like Dame Ragnell. Her appearance changes according to her will. Therefore, she could go about as a beautiful maiden and attract any number of men. We must keep in mind that for Alisoun, excepting Jankyn, it is marriage and a man's station that matters, not the man. It is marriage that grants her power because she can easily overpower any man. The Wife of Bath, then, grabs any marriage opportunity that presents itself. If a man seems interested, she places him in her figurative husband-in-waiting queue. Encountering Jankyn in the woods, she wastes no time in telling him that they should get married (after the death of her husband, of course). The same happens for the wyf: She sees an opportunity to get a husband, and she lunges for it. Moreover, the fact that he must recognize feminine desire will make him that much easier to dominate.

As a product of the Wife of Bath, the old wyf uses manipulative tactics to gain a husband with station. Old and unattractive, the wife's appearance will not entice any man to marry her. Therefore, if she wants to marry, she must wait for the right opportunity. She waits for "the precise instant [that] an intervention transforms into a favorable situation" (Certeau 38). Noticing that the knight approaches, she manipulates the situation in her favor: Beautiful women dancing attract the knight, and the wyf receives the perfect opportunity to snatch a husband for herself. Desperate for a conclusive answer, the knight will promise anything—he makes a rash promise: "Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire" (1008). The old wyf's timing here is crucial: If she approaches the knight at the beginning of his quest, he would not be in the throes of desperation but would ignore her in favor of other answers. Therefore, waiting until his quest nears completion, the wyf employs her tactic well. The wyf's actions echo the Wife of Bath's, who does not care whom she marries, as long as she finds someone. This is not to say that the Wife of Bath would marry a rapist or a criminal, just that she is not picky—she's not looking for Prince Charming. Marriage, for the Wife of Bath, is a means to an end.

Moreover, the Wife of Bath does not mind chasing after a man, as she does with Jankyn. The old wyf continues to manipulate the knight—she will not allow a prospective marriage

opportunity to pass her by. Remembering his rash promise, the wyf follows him to Arthur's court. Again, she uses tactics to her advantage in interrupting the knight's trial. She waits until the knight is acquitted before she announces her claim on him: "Er that youre court departe, do me right. / I taughte this answeere unto the knyght; / For which he plighte me his trouthe there," (1049-51). At this moment, the knight must obey feminine desire directly after recognizing its existence. The wyf's timing is crucial here, just as it is in the forest. If she waited until after the trial to pose her request, he would not fulfill it. Only the presence of the queen's court enforces his promise: "[H]e / Constreyned was; he nedes moste hire wedde, / And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde" (1070-72).

The wyf is not the only one who employs deception to get what she wants. All the women in the tale manipulate the knight⁴. Indeed, the whole quest is a plot on the part of the queen, who forces the knight to discover that women actually have desires. The knight must acknowledge that women desire and are not objects to be used and discarded. The queen has waited for the time when she can overpower a man into admitting that women have desires and some basic rights to those desires. Therefore, the queen sets up a power dynamic between the knight and herself.

Dinshaw explains that what women desire is not as important to the women in the tale as the fact that they simply desire:

That much of the energy of the first part of the narrative is devoted to enumerating the many things that women desire...attests to the notion that it's more important to acknowledge that women desire than to specify what it is that pleases them most. After the knight's year-long quest, the court is packed with women...waiting to hear him declare...what they presumably already know—waiting, that is, for the moment in which feminine desire will be acknowledged, publicly, by a man. (127)

We shouldn't be surprised that these women manipulate the knight. After all, the only way women can technically assert their desires is through deception; deception becomes especially

⁴ For more on the duplicitous and manipulative nature of women, read "How Walewein wanted to know the thoughts of women," which is part of the Middle Dutch *Wrake Van Ragisel*. The duplicitous nature of women is also described in *Die Wrake van Ragisel*, a Middle Dutch text that explains women really want sex not sovereignty: Walewein, disguised as a dwarf, tests Ydeine's faithfulness to him. When she willingly sleeps with him Walewein understands that women are not as virtuous as they appear to lovers.

important for non-magical woman who do not have a magical power locus from which to pull. The queen is akin to Malory's Guinevere, who must lie to Arthur in order to spend time with Lancelot. The quest is deceptive because the queen and her ladies do not actually want the knight to discover what women want—they do not need a specific answer. The quest is really about discovering that women desire, and for a Knight of the Round Table to acknowledge it publicly, possibly even swaying other knights. The quest echoes Alisoun's deceptive nature—she claims to want marriage, but really wants power.

By placing the knight on trial, the queen and her court want to assert their power over the knight. This is a tactical maneuver to get a man to recognize female desire. However, Marion Wynne-Davies argues that the women in the tale do not take the rape seriously, and they really just want to acquit the knight the entire time: "Seemingly in confirmation that the rape must not be regarded too seriously, it is the Queen who is made to plead for the knight's life and he is saved from the King's court of law and placed in the Queen's court of love. The gender implications are clear: this rape is not a serious crime and, indeed, it is actually a woman who reprieves the rapist" (25). However, the women do take the rape seriously. If they didn't, they would simply pat the knight's hand and tell him to go home. The queen asks to try the knight, not because she wants to save his life, but because she wants him to vocalize feminine desire. If she really meant to let him off easily, she would not send him on the quest. Moreover, Wynne-Davies maps the Wife of Bath's love of violence onto the women in the tale. Although this could be a useful tool, there is no evidence that the queen or any other woman in the tale loves violence. After all, if this were the case, the assaulted maiden would not have accused the knight of rape. We must keep in mind that the queen tries the knight, not because she loves violence, but because she wants feminine desire publicly recognized.

Aside from the queen and her ladies who can only use language to gain power, the wyf already possesses magical power. We see the extent of the wyf's power when the knight wanders through the forest. Carter notes that the wyf derives her power from nature: "The generic loathly lady's beastliness signals that she belongs in the wilderness; her unstable flesh is chaotic like the forest. Like the figure *Natura*, she is often gigantic; her superhuman power comes from nature, that traditionally feminized locus" (330-31). Indeed, we see her first act of magic in the forest: "Er he cam fully there, / Vanysshed was this daunce, he nyste where. / No creature saugh he that bar lyf. / Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf" (995-98). The wyf has the power to make at

least twenty-four women appear and then later, disappear. This is no small feat. In Geoffrey Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, Merlin moves Stonehenge from Ireland to England, an act requiring a great amount of magical prowess. In Malory's text, his magical women, Morgan and Nynyve, have magic that grants them power over their surroundings. We may recall Morgan's shape-shifting that allows her to escape from Arthur. Magic allows women's tactics to overpower male strategy.

When she performs magic, the wyf speaks through her body. She figuratively writes her own identity in a way no man in the tale can. Neither Arthur nor the knight can use magic to gain what they want, but she can. Magic and language are the means by which the wyf attains her desires. Helene Cixous tells us that women must write by using the body, because the body is the only thing that men cannot take from women. Men have appropriated verbal communication and structured it with grammar and rules. When the wyf performs magic, she speaks in a feminized language, and this is her true source of power.

As does the Wife of Bath, the old wyf attempts to overpower the knight through her words. She is not as forceful as the Wife of Bath in making her point. For example, instead of ripping three pages from her husband's book, she calmly talks to the knight about how to improve his behavior: "[M]en may wel often fynde / A lordes sone do shame and vileyne; / And he that wole have pris of his gentrye" (1150-52). We do not receive the knight's response during this speech; we cannot be sure that he understands the message, or he might not want to hear what she has to say. Either way, he does not react to her speech. According to Carter, "He seems not to understand what she is saying; her verbal promise does not get much of a response from him. Only her actual transformation a little later awakens his joy and his enthusiasm" (338). While the knight does not appear to understand the wyf or at least does not want to accept what she says, he does want her to stop talking. Just as the Wife of Bath rails against Jankyn, the wyf talks until the knight can no longer endure her lecture, so that he lets her do whatever she wants. When the knight grants her autonomy, she can transform.

The transformation demonstrates a tactical move, not an attempt to satisfy masculine fantasy. Susan Crane believes that shape-shifting is a masquerade: "Shape-shifting offers, if not a way out of the body, a way to indict its tyranny over the feminine by dramatizing its arbitrariness. Further, by countering their repulsive manifestations with hyperbolically appealing ones, shapeshifters raise the possibility that beauty is not native to woman but is an artificially

produced masquerade” (85). Shape-shifting, then, is a tactic that demonstrates scheming, not a way to please a man. The knight interprets his wife’s physical change as an act to satisfy his carnal desires, but it really is a way for the old wyf to exert her influence over him. If the knight is happy, the wyf will have an easier time getting him to carry out her will.

Aside from gaining power through a marriage, the Wife of Bath seeks to gain power from the actual text⁵. We may see the Wife of Bath as the text. She speaks bodily by literally being the text. Dinshaw reveals, “The gloss undertakes to speak (for) the text; the Wife maintains that the literal text—her body—can speak for itself” (115). The Wife takes up the position of the text not only because the text is gendered feminine but also because men appropriate and misuse glosses, a fact she wants to rectify. She can use the text as a tactic to gain power. Without the text to begin with, the glosses would have no importance. Dinshaw posits that Alisoun seeks compromise in mediating between the glosses and the text: “The Wife thus describes a marriage relationship—and, allegorically, a relationship between text and glossator—that would acknowledge the desires of both sides and would yield satisfaction to both” (125). Certainly, the Wife of Bath is fine with compromise, but only after she has been granted power. Whether or not she actually exercises the power, is not as important as the fact that she has the power in the first place. She wants her body, as the text, to be recognized.

Serving as the body of the text, the Wife of Bath writes *écriture féminine*. Instead of feeding into masculine discourse in the form of glosses, the Wife of Bath supports the undervalued text. Cixous tells us, “By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has

⁵ The Wife of Bath exerts her authority elsewhere in the *Canterbury Tales*. Other pilgrims directly and indirectly cite her opinions on marriage and female sovereignty. The most direct reference to the Wife of Bath, outside of the General Prologue and her own prologue and tale, happens in “The Merchant’s Tale”. At the beginning of the tale, the lusty Januarie discusses his marriage options with other men. One of these men, Justinus, tries to convince Januarie not to marry May: “But lat us waden out of this mateere. / The Wife of Bathe, if ye han understonde, / Of mariage, which we have on honed, / Declared hath ful wel in litel space” (159). It is interesting how the Wife of Bath is cited here. She is not cited through the narrator’s voice, the voice of a fellow pilgrim, but through the voice of a character. The Merchant, therefore, makes the wife an authority that is seemingly well known, even to fictional characters. Moreover, an old man asserts that a woman is an authority on marriage, instead of reverting to Jerome.

An indirect reference to the Wife of Bath occurs in “The Tale of Melibee”^f. Melibee has agreed to be governed by his wife, Prudence: “‘Now, sire,’ quod dame Prudence, ‘and syn ye vouche sauf to been governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe yourself in chesyng of youre conseilours’” (222).

Other tales in the marriage group comment on the Wife of Bath’s advice, that women should have sovereignty in marriage. For example, “The Clerk’s Tale” advocates strongly against female authority. Through Griselda, the Clerk shows that a subservient woman is rewarded in the end, even if her life is full of hardships. Then, “The Franklin’s Tale” shows that compromise in marriage is the best way. So, the Wife of Bath exerts herself elsewhere in *The Canterbury Tales*.

been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display” (2043). By writing her self, she amasses power because she opposes men and challenges their power. She earns power because her position as text is a necessity in supporting the glosses that men uphold.

As the text, the Wife of Bath figuratively marries Geoffrey, the pilgrim, a fact that David Wallace asserts: “When Chaucer positions himself as a sixth of six, then, he identifies himself as just the man that the Wife is looking for” (82). Wallace believes that the Wife of Bath and Chaucer are inextricably linked. The Wife of Bath is the body upon which Chaucer can pen his tales:

Within the body of pilgrims, however, there is one body in particular that shows forth, in memorably intensified form, everything that Chaucer seeks; everything that he needs to fulfill his particular function as auctor. I speak, of course, of the Wife of Bath. [. . .] Within the broad parameters of a literary tradition that genders literary text as feminine and the operations done to texts—inventing, glossing, compiling—as masculine, the meeting of Chaucer and the Wife represents that union out of which the *Canterbury Tales* will come to fruition. (81-2)

Through this explanation, the Wife’s tactics do achieve her goal. As Chaucer’s “wife,” she becomes not just a character, but an author, a co-participant in the text.

David Lawton has called this dual-narrator phenomenon a hybrid construction:

What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two ‘languages’, two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal—compositional and syntactic—boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a simple sentence. (3)

Although the Wife of Bath technically speaks during her prologue and tale, we cannot discount Chaucer as a speaker, as well. Therefore, when the Wife speaks, Chaucer also speaks. They are dual narrators, speaking as one person, figuratively united through the text. Therefore, it is

important to note that we cannot interpret certain phrases in the Wife of Bath's Prologue or Tale as belonging to Chaucer; Chaucer doesn't "peek" through the Wife's speech. Rather, the Wife is the body of the text and Chaucer is the interpreter of it.

"Wedded" to Chaucer, Alisoun wants to overpower him, just as she did with her previous five husbands. She seeks to control the text with her body and she, unlike Chaucer, does not give up easily. Hansen notes that the Wife "is not allowed to escape from the role of authentic, essential, vengeful woman to a position in which her gender would be less marked, where heterosexuality could be less violent or less normative and compulsory, and where she might appear neutral or transcendent, as Chaucer so readily and frequently does" (286). We can view the Wife of Bath as ultimately winning her struggle for control. She uses her language to fight for power until the very end of her last speech: "And eek I praye Jhesu shorte hir lyves / That nought wol be governed by hir wyves" (1261-62). However, Chaucer retracts his writing in *The Canterbury Tales*. He makes null and void everything he has added to the text. Thus, we are left with the Wife of Bath's body. It is her body that wins against Chaucer's pen.

At the end of the Wife of Bath's Tale, both men and women achieve satisfaction: Both parties get what they want. The wyf and Alison achieve their desires for marriage and power, respectfully, while their husbands attain a masculine fantasy. Despite the Wife of Bath's hunger for power, Jankyn eventually receives a quiet home, and Chaucer has a body, on which to write his text. With the old wyf, the knight gets a beautiful woman. So, compromise has been reached, even though men and women often have conflicting desires. This shows that even in the direst situation, a resolution can be reached or a solution found. Moreover, the different sexes can find a way to make each other happy or at least satisfied. Thus, Chaucer has presented a text that is neither feminist nor anti-feminist. He has attempted to equalize the sexes to satisfy everyone.

CHAPTER 3

THE FAIRY LADY, GUINEVERE AND MARIE DE FRANCE: ACHIEVING FEMININE DESIRE IN MARIE DE FRANCE'S "LANVAL"

We move from Chaucer's masculine fantasy to a vision of feminism in this chapter. Instead of women relinquishing power in favor of submission, Marie's characters use submission as a tactic in order to achieve their desires. Marie de France's "Lanval" presents two strong female characters: the fairy lady and Guinevere. Readers often see them as very different characters. For example, the fairy lady is beautiful, forgiving, and gracious while Guinevere is jealous and cruel. However, despite their differences, these women are actually very similar. They both have a certain amount of control over their own lives, they are both beautiful, although to different degrees, and they both want to actualize their desires, most notably to make Lanval their lover. Attaining one's desire is the important issue for these women, but it is also hard for them to achieve. Especially in medieval literature, women face problems or obstacles when they try to reach a goal and fulfill a want. Nothing is handed to these women; they must work to make their desires a reality. Ironically, both women work hard to enact their desires, but only the fairy lady succeeds due to her deceptive tactics.

Only by pretending to conform to patriarchal values do women achieve their desires. Both women pretend to conform: The fairy lady makes Lanval believe she has his best interests in mind even though she has ulterior motives, and Guinevere seeks a lover while continuing to act as Arthur's chaste and virtuous queen. Unable to change the patriarchy and Arthur's world, the fairy lady's only solution is to return to Avalon. Therefore, female empowerment serves masculinist fantasy in hopes to enact a change in society, but in a final twist, the lai turns into a feminist fantasy of escape from a stubborn society.

Marie's situation, with regard to textual authority, mirrors that of the fairy lady; for them, author and character, to obtain freedom over life or text, they must go beyond patriarchal society and sources. In effect, they must pave their own roads to achieve their desires. Marie takes a tradition that has been dominated by men and finds a space in which she can assert feminine authorship and make the Arthurian tradition her own.

Joan M. Ferrante in "Public Postures" tells us that women must wait for the right opportunity to implement their desires: "With limited opportunities to exercise real power over their own or others' lives, women in medieval literature and sometimes in real life find subtle or

hidden ways to exercise such power, to manipulate people and situations, and to spin out fictions which suit them better than their reality, fictions by which they can, or hope to, control reality” (213). Ferrante’s quote relates to women using tactics to attempt to control their lives. Women try to fulfill their desires through linguistic, magical, and bodily tactics. Marie also uses tactics, particularly linguistic ones, to retain control over her lais and fables. More than simply using tactics, women must use them through the lens of manipulation and deception.

Both the fairy lady and Guinevere use tactics, that is, they wait for the right moment to achieve their desires. The fairy lady waits for the opportunity to lure Lanval to her tents; she doesn’t storm into Camelot and demand to see Lanval. Then, the fairy lady remains in her tents until Lanval summons her. Therefore, the fairy lady operates with regard to time, not space. Guinevere also maintains a tactical position. She waits until her ladies are occupied with other knights and Lanval withdraws from company: “When the queen saw the knight sitting alone, she approached him straightaway” (76). As a married woman, she cannot broach the subject of them becoming lovers just anywhere. She must delay her advance until Lanval is alone and no one can overhear their conversation.

Guinevere’s use of tactics is manifested through her language. Despite her lack of public authority, Guinevere does have linguistic power. Approaching Lanval, she tells him, “Lanval, I have honoured, cherished and loved you much. You may have all my love: just tell me what you desire! I grant you my love and you should be glad to have me” (76). Through her words, she tries to convince Lanval to become her lover. She cannot physically force Lanval to love her, nor can she rape him, as Chaucer’s knight does. Her words, along with her beauty, are her sources of influence.

Besides asking for Lanval’s love, Guinevere’s words can also degrade a person. Because she cannot force Lanval to love her, she only has her words to shame him: “I well believe that you do not like this kind of pleasure. I have been told often enough that you have no desire for women” (76). With her proposal declined, Guinevere humiliates Lanval. As the queen, she must assert her autonomy over Lanval; she cannot be humiliated by a knight of no recognition. While this situation demonstrates Guinevere’s linguistic power, it also shows a tactical move on her part. Guinevere waits for the right time to approach Lanval. Her action demonstrates a hidden maneuver, because no one else knows that she desires Lanval or intends to make him her lover.

This is her attempt to make herself happy, to do something for herself, not to please Arthur or another man.

The fairy lady also demonstrates linguistic power at a tactic, but this power is, ironically enough, demonstrated more by her silence than her speech⁶. Pam Whitfield acutely points out that the fairy lady does not speak until the scene in which she proves Lanval's innocence: "Neither woman [the fairy lady and Guiliadun] has been given a voice in the lai before the climactic point; here Marie allows each heroine to speak for herself, to affirm the sacred nature of true love even as she rejects the traditional male values system" (250). The narrator tells us what the fairy lady says prior to this scene, but we do not receive her actual words until she appears at the trial. This does not show that she has less power than Lanval or that he in fact dominates their relationship. Her silence, instead of signaling submission, shows strength and power. She does not talk at the beginning of the lai because she requires Lanval's submission; it is his turn to talk. She is absent in the middle of the lai because Lanval has betrayed her, and she has abandoned him, as a consequence. Had she been submissive, she would have spoken words of submission to Lanval and would not have stayed by his side despite his betrayal. Therefore, silence is a useful tactic for the fairy lady to employ. Abandoning Lanval has given her control over the relationship completely, not just hidden control. When she does speak to acquit Lanval, she cinches her hold over him and the relationship.

When she does speak, Whitfield tells us that her words do not disparage Guinevere:

She [the fairy lady] displays her beauty, but does not parade it to the queen's discomfort; she says only that the other woman was in the wrong when she accused Lanval of making advances. She can not help the queen win a wrongful suit, but she does not directly challenge Guinevere's social station or humiliate her in the presence of the court. Lanval's lover has a ready audience if she chooses to further admonish the queen or to accuse Lanval of folly, but she avoids blame-giving. (249)

The fairy lady could strut around as much as she pleases in order to show the truthfulness in Lanval's boast, but she doesn't. Lanval has already boasted about her, and she does not need to repeat his actions. Her restraint is in itself a tactic. She knows what life is like for a wife, as she has submissively served Lanval. She also realizes that Guinevere wants to achieve her desires,

⁶ For more information about silence as power, see Elaine Tuttle Hanson's "The Powers of Silence: The Case of the Clerk's Griselda." Only through silence and submission does Griselda "earn" her family back. In the same way, the fairy lady acts submissively toward Lanval so that she can enact her own desires later.

just as she does. Therefore she merely states that Guinevere was wrong in accusing Lanval and leaves it at that.

When proving Lanval's innocence, the fairy lady also uses bodily tactics. Because Lanval boasts about her beauty, Arthur's court really wants to know how beautiful she is. Therefore, her body, more than her words, acquit Lanval. Marie writes, "The lady entered the palace, where no one so beautiful had ever before been seen. She dismounted before the king, and in the sight of all, let her cloak fall so that they could see her better. [. . .] When they had looked at her and praised her beauty greatly, she spoke" (81). She intentionally allows them to admire her beauty and think about Lanval's claims. She even waits to speak until everyone has seen her and mentally compared her beauty with Guinevere's. Therefore, she uses her body as a tactic to convince Arthur and his barons to release Lanval.

However, her words at court are not completely worthless or futile on her part. Her words demonstrate another tactic: She cannot remain silent because then she would be more akin to a statue than a witness testifying on Lanval's behalf. She must verbally tell the court who she is and why Lanval should be released. Only after she has spoken does Arthur acquit Lanval. Therefore, both tactics are critical to Lanval's innocence; neither her body nor her words as testimony can stand alone.

Aside from her linguistic bodily power, the fairy lady has magical power which represents another tactical maneuver. The fairy lady does demonstrate the ability to perform magic. In *Women as Image*, Ferrante explains why women are considered to have supernatural powers: "Because she represents a force that the man does not completely understand and cannot control, the lady is often said to possess supernatural powers [. . .] But this magic, which seems to give her control over his destiny, does not work forever; when he betrays his love in some way, he frees himself of that power and loses its benefits" (74). She can do what no other magical woman in my study can do: She can magically appear in another location. Whenever Lanval summons her, she leaves her present location and appears wherever he is. This ability greatly aids her wish for secrecy. She also has a talent for "eavesdropping." Even though she is not present when Lanval betrays her, she still knows what happens. She tells King Arthur, at the trial, the details of Lanval's and the queen's conversation. Magic is a tactic that allows the fairy lady to maintain her control over the relationship. She can know, without being present, when Lanval betrays her and what he says. She can pretend to not be in control, even though she really

does dominate the relationship. Magic, thus, aids the fairy lady's manipulation of her relationship with Lanval so that he does not suspect that she remains in charge.

Aside from the magical and linguistic power, we can glimpse the difference between Guinevere's and the fairy lady's ability to enact desire through their relationships with men. Because men are generally accepted to be more powerful than women, a woman's relationship with a man will reflect the amount of power she has to fulfill her desires. If the woman is clearly dominated by her husband/lover, she is seen as an ordinary, submissive woman. A woman with little power is the norm, not the exception. A woman with equal or exceeding power than her husband/lover is an anomaly.

The fairy lady's power, through Lanval's eyes, is manifested through her wealth. After all, a person with wealth will ultimately have power as a consequence and also a greater ability to achieve desires. "They [the fairy lady's servants] led him [Lanval] to the tent, which was so beautiful and well-appointed that neither Queen Semiramis at the height of her wealth, power and knowledge, nor the Emperor Octavian, could have afforded even the right-hand side of it" (74). Basically, the fairy lady is wealthier than anyone Lanval knows personally or has learned about in history. Due to this wealth, the fairy lady can fulfill any desires she has.

At the same time that she asserts dominance over the situation, she also speaks of her love for Lanval. Her words convey that she wants to make him happy, indeed happier than a king or emperor. Chaucer's loathly lady also wants to make her husband happy, transforming into a beautiful woman to please him. While the fairy lady seems also perfectly happy giving Lanval wealth and access to her body, she does not completely subordinate herself to his will, but she makes him believe he controls the relationship because she appears at his request.

However, the fairy lady actually controls the relationship because she creates rules for Lanval must follow. She asserts her power and dominance by telling Lanval what he must not do: "'Beloved,' she said, 'I admonish, order, and beg you not to reveal this secret to anyone! I shall tell you the long and short of it: you would lose me forever if this love were to become known. You would never be able to see me or possess me'" (75). Through this admonition, she tests Lanval's worthiness to be her lover. She will grant Lanval her wealth and access to her body only if he remains loyal to her and respects her wishes.

Due to the fact that Lanval sees himself as controlling the relationship and we first encounter the fairy lady through his eyes, she is not referred to as "a fairy lady." Rather, she is a

“maiden,” from another land. As Laurence Harf-Lancner states, “The romance texts from the years 1160-1220 that most clearly affirm the supernatural nature of these characters at the same time deny them the denomination ‘fairy.’ The hero meets a *pucelle* (‘maiden’), a *demoiselle* (‘damsel’), a *dame* (‘lady’), or a *meschine* (‘girl’) of noble extraction who, when she has granted him or her love, is henceforth designated as *s’aime* (‘his sweetheart’) or *ad rue* (‘his lover’)” (142). Although Lanval cannot fail to notice the fairy lady’s magical power, he does not categorize her as a fairy. Indeed, when he speaks about her to the queen, he speaks of her beauty, not her ability to appear to him at any time. It is important to remember that just because her name suggests ordinariness, does not mean that she is actually an ordinary woman. The designation maiden rather than fairy lady on Lanval’s part testifies to the fact that he sees himself as controlling the relationship. In his eyes, the fairy lady is his submissive lover who will obey his every desire.

Interpreting the fairy lady as an ordinary woman, Pam Whitfield argues that she is largely acted upon by Lanval and that only when he betrays her does she have space to act for herself: “At the crucial moment, both women [the fairy lady and Guiliadun] act, rather than await their fate, thus becoming agent instead of object. Perhaps most importantly, in doing so they retain control of the situation and determine the outcome of their relationships” (245). This crucial moment, Whitfield tells us, is the moment of betrayal, when Lanval is at the fairy lady’s mercy because her actions can either save him or condemn him. Whitfield also believes that the loyalty shown by the fairy lady does not embolden her: “The loyalty of each woman [Guiliadun and the fairy lady], promised by word or deed, initially appears to dis-empower her: she takes on a passive, serving role toward the man, awaiting his cue. The man, however, lacks virtue, discretion, or simply patience, and it is his fatal flaw or poor judgment that turns the tables and empowers the woman” (244). While these quotes may prove true for Guiliadun, they do not correctly assess the fairy lady. The fairy lady controls the relationship between Lanval and herself from its inception to the time they depart together for Avalon. The fairy lady requests a statement of submission from Lanval as a lord would do to a vassal. She only offers her love after he has given this promise. Furthermore, she is not the love slave that Whitfield makes her out to be. It is true that she comes when Lanval wants her, but this happens because she is from another world. She cannot visit Lanval whenever she pleases because then the secrecy of their relationship would break. Being magical, she could summon Lanval to her as she does before

their first encounter. The relationship is on her terms, but she makes it appear like it's on his so that he will become her lover. The power of the relationship always rests in her hands, but she wants to ensure that he is as worthy as he appears to be.

Although she appears submissive, the fairy lady assumes the masculine role in her relationship with Lanval, just as Chaucer's wyf does with her husband in "The Wife of Bath's Tale." First, the fairy lady is the one who seeks out Lanval, a traditionally male role. According to Glyn S. Burgess, "Marie's ladies are similarly influenced by the positive characteristics of the male lovers, but they often grant their love only as a result of the man's persuasive arguments. . . . In 'Lanval,' the fairy does the talking initially, but Lanval needs little persuasion to accept her love and change his way of life" (164-65). While most of Marie's female characters only submit to a male lover at his request, it is Lanval who submits to the fairy lady's offer. She tells Lanval, "Fair friend, for you I came from my country. I have come far in search of you and if you are worthy and courtly, no emperor, count or king will have felt as much joy or happiness as you, for I love you above all else" (74). Just the fact that a woman offers her love to a man is a bold move, but she does so because she is independent of other people and social norms.

The dominant one in the relationship, the fairy lady has the power to feminize Lanval, but instead she restores his manhood to him. For example, King Arthur transforms Lanval into a figurative woman. Deprived of wealth by Arthur, Lanval is in a feminized position: Arthur "apportioned wives and lands to all, save to one who had served him: this was Lanval, whom he did not remember, and for whom no one put in a good word" (73). In a feudal society, a knight only had power and wealth through his land; with no property, Lanval becomes feminine—weak and dependent on others. Meeting the fairy lady, he gains wealth and earns manliness both through this wealth and through the fairy lady's submission to him. For example, "When the girl [the fairy lady] heard these words from the man who loved her so, she granted him her love and her body...She gave him a boon, that henceforth he could wish for nothing which he would not have" (74). Everything that Arthur denies Lanval, the fairy lady gives him; she allows him to resume his masculine position. Later in the lai though, Guinevere, similar to Arthur, strips Lanval of masculinity by asserting that he is a homosexual. Guinevere tells him, "I well believe that you do not like this kind of pleasure. I have been told often enough that you have no desire for women. You have well-trained young men and enjoy yourself with them" (76). The fairy lady rescues his masculinity again, at the end of the lai. Ironically, the fairy lady is, along with

Arthur and Guinevere, in a position to further feminize him, because she gives Lanval wealth and demands a feudal oath of servitude from him. But she does not do this.

At the same time that she asserts her own dominance, she allows Lanval to regain his masculinity by having wealth and summoning her. She grants Lanval a strategic position, but she could allow her tactical one to usurp control of the relationship at any time. The fairy lady wants to have a relationship with Lanval; she doesn't want to be his lord and master, but wants their relationship to be one of equality. The fairy lady can observe how men treat their wives and expect subordination from them. She does not want to take the place of a man in her relationship and force Lanval into that of a woman. Therefore, her domination of him, in particular when she abandons Lanval, is to teach him a lesson similar to Chaucer's wyf. Had she remained in control of the relationship, she would be doing to Lanval what men already do to women, and she wants to enact change. Thus, she argues for equality. She allows Lanval to experience her dominance and then saves him thereby demonstrating that equality between a woman and man can be attained.

Guinevere does not have as much power in her relationship with King Arthur as the fairy lady does with Lanval, but she still has some power. If she had absolutely no power, King Arthur would not bother to listen to her complaints about Lanval at all. However, he believes what his wife tells him: King Arthur "entered the queen's apartments and when she saw him, she complained aloud, fell at his feet, cried for mercy and said that Lanval had shamed her. [. . .] The king grew angry and swore an oath that, if Lanval could not defend himself in court, he would have him burned or hanged" (77). Guinevere has enough power over Arthur to convince him that her lies are the truth. She uses both linguistic and bodily tactics in this instance to manipulate Arthur into accusing Lanval for his crimes. She speaks of Lanval's crimes, and then uses tears to ensure her wishes are carried out.

Guinevere does not have the power to publicly accuse Lanval of slander. Instead, Arthur accuses his vassal: "Vassal, you have wronged me greatly! You were extremely ill-advised to shame and vilify me, and to slander the queen" (77). This action shows that Guinevere is Arthur's possession. Although Guinevere is present at the trial, she does not take place in it. In fact, she does not speak at all. Lanval's future lies in the hands of Arthur and the barons. By accusing the queen, Lanval has insulted Arthur, and so Arthur states, "You...shame and vilify *me*" (77 emphasis mine). Burgess reveals "When Lanval announces to the queen that his

beloved's poorest *meschine* is superior to the queen in *beaute*, *enseignement*, and *bunte*, he is presenting the fairy as a potentate with a court outstripping that of King Arthur himself. This statement is as much an insult to the king as to the queen herself" (105). Therefore, Lanval has enacted a power struggle between himself and Arthur. Arthur cannot have his vassals boasting that they are better than him, as monarch of the land. This is akin to Satan wanting to usurp God's place, and believing that he is better than God.

A power struggle exists not only between the men, but outside the text, as well. Marie is involved in a power struggle, but for her, it is over the control of her texts. Carolyn Larrington reveals in *Women and Writing* that "Marie de France alludes to her anxiety that some clerk may claim her Fables as his own; thus Marie is careful to embed her authorial imprimatur in all her texts which have survived: the Fables, the Lais, and her translation of the *Espurgatoire de St. Patrick*" (223). She wants to remain in control of the texts she has created, even if she could not write them herself. Larrington also states that "the skills of reading (which many women were able to do) and of writing were regarded as separate. In twelfth-century England, for example, a well-educated noble lady would be expected to be able to read three languages: Latin, French and English, but writing was a skill for scribes, who earned their living by it" (222). Therefore, inscribing her name in each text is a tactical move on her part. The fact that she uses a scribe really doesn't matter. What is at stake is her audience's believing she wrote them. If she includes her name in her work, it is harder to disprove her as the author, whereas if she actually wrote them with her own hand and did not include her name textually, her audience might have been less likely to believe the *lais* were written by a woman.

Marie uses *écriture féminine* in writing her *lais*. According to Joan M. Ferrante, she used oral sources rather than written ones: "Marie chooses for the most part to work with oral sources in the *lais* ... That is, though she could work with learned sources if she chose to, she prefers to work with material that has no written form, that she can mold (or even invent to her purpose" (195). Using oral sources, Marie returns to the maternal body that is not given a sanctioned voice or language. Carolyn Larrington states, "*Écriture masculine* or *feminine* cannot simply be mapped onto 'male author' and 'female author'; men can imitate *écriture féminine*; women, especially those taught by men to an advanced level in the masculinized educational system, such as Heloise, learn successfully to use and deploy male styles and arguments" (229-230). Because Marie was educated through texts written by men and taught to value both these texts and the

styles of writing, she would instruct the scribe to write in a masculinized style. Her texts would feed into the ones that came previously. As a woman, the male-written texts would consume hers.

A person who employs *écriture féminine* needs to accept his/her writing. Unlike writers of hagiographies and other proponents of the humility topos⁷, Marie does not pretend to be ignorant. Rather than ascribing the power of her text to God, she retains the glory for herself. When an author states that God told her what to write, she becomes a vehicle instead of a thinking, intelligent woman. She loses her control over her text because it comes from God, who owns it. Larrington tells us that Marie is not like other writers who humble themselves: Marie does not feel a need to assume a humble posture. If Marie had doubts about her abilities or her accomplishments, she does not betray them to the audience. [. . .] She begins the prologue to the *lais* saying that anyone with God-given eloquence should not hide it, but show it, use it to spread the effect of good” (195).

Medieval authors, both male and female, did need to justify their texts and give them authority, a fact that Larrington states in *Women and Writing*:

The writer of either sex suffered from anxiety about authority. Medieval teaching and learning was based on the analysis of the words of those wise men whom tradition—the Church, the classical world, courtly patronage systems—had certified as auctoritates. To speak or write in the expectation that others would listen or read was to set oneself up as an auctor. Authorizing strategies thus had to be found: the argument that one was writing to instruct in morality or educate through commentary on, or making new versions of, authorized material was one effective means of circumventing the inhibition. Other writers—the later medieval women mystics are a good example—referred to God as their authorization. (225)

Marie does tell us that she writes in order to educate her readers. However, she does not write about spiritual issues as Julian of Norwich or Margery Kempe do; she writes about life, about nobility and supernatural creatures. Interestingly enough, her sources do not come from the classical world. Thus, she attempts to authorize and give power to texts that have not yet been written but only spoken. She does meet with opposite; Larrington writes that she “had trouble

⁷ We may think of Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Bridget of Sweden, and other religious women who ascribed their texts to God.

with envy and slander” but she does not let it stop her from writing (195). She insists on giving her texts authority on their own merit, not because they are derived from patriarchal texts. Just as she was a strong woman in reality, she creates strong female characters to demonstrate that women can, in fact, handle and wield power.

Marie creates two strong women in “Lanval.” But, she presents a magical woman as inherently good while a non-magical woman has ulterior motives. Her portrayal differs from that of Chaucer and Malory. Both of these authors, as men, believe women with magical properties must be reigned in and controlled by the patriarchy. For example, Chaucer’s loathly lady relinquishes her magic and becomes a good wife. Malory’s Morgan le Fey demonstrates what happens to a patriarchal society when a woman uses her magic for selfish reasons. But Marie allows the fairy lady to operate on her own plane; she does not become part of King Arthur’s court at the end of the lai or subsume her identity with Lanval’s. Instead, she leaves Camelot of her own volition and Lanval follows her. Through the fairy lady, Marie reveals that a powerful woman threatens patriarchal society, and so, for her to retain her power, she must leave society. Because Marie cannot leave her society, as a member, she writes a tale of a woman who does have the courage to do so.

At the end of the lai, the fairy lady leaves society to ensure her freedom. She leaves Arthur’s court of her own volition and does not force Lanval to follow her. She has submitted herself to Lanval’s wishes as he has done for her while in prison. Now, they are on equal planes having both been dominant and submissive to each other. They can begin a relationship based on equality, but it must be a decision that is made individually. The fairy lady understands that she cannot maintain a relationship of equality while remaining in Arthur’s court, and so she decides to return to Avalon. Whether or not Lanval stays is for him to decide. Thus, the lai turns from masculinist fantasy, the kind we see in Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s Tale, to a feminist escape plan. Marie tells us that women cannot be either autonomous or equal to men in a relationship or in society; submission will always be a burden women must shoulder. The fairy lady, being supernatural rather than human, cannot accept this. After all, the fairy lady observes what the patriarchy has turned Guinevere into: a woman full of jealousy and resentment. Should she remain within Arthur’s realm, the fairy lady could meet the same fate.

CONCLUSION

A GLIMPSE AT GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

I would like to conclude this study with a brief analysis of *Gawain and the Green Knight*. In this work, women operate, for the most part, through strategies; however, the positioning of tactics and strategies is not consistent because characters move from one position to another. These women remain pure and chaste while still achieving their desires: Although Morgan le Fey wants to destroy the Round Table and make Guinevere die from shock, she is still regarded as Arthur's aunt who deserves respect. Similarly, the Lady, Bertilak's wife, can seduce Gawain without suffering negative consequences.

Unlike the other female characters in this study that must fight for every ounce of power they can grasp, Morgan le Fey is the omnipotent force behind the events in *Gawain and the Green Knight*⁸. Without her, the story, and especially the Green Knight, would not exist. We learn that Morgan forces the Green Knight to challenge one of Arthur's knights, and she is responsible for his supernatural strength and appearance:

þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene,
And nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder.
Bot, styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,
And ruyschly he razt out þereas renkkez stoden,
Laȝt to his lufly hed and lyft hit vp sone,
And syþen boȝez to his blonk; þe brydel he cachchez,
Steppez inot stel-bawe and strydez alofte,
And his hede by þe here in his honed haldez;
And as sadly þe segge hym in his sadel sette,
As non vnhap had hym ayled. (429-38)

This quote demonstrates the extent of Morgan's magical power—a beheaded man can remain alive and seemingly unscathed. We may recall Malory's Morgan le Fey, whose greatest feat is turning herself and her companions into stone. Neither woman actually eliminates Arthur's

⁸ Michael W. Twomey argues that Morgan and Bertilak are actually collaborators. See his article "Morgan le Fay at Hautdesert."

kingdom; however, the Gawain Morgan has more autonomy over men's lives and can actually cause the death of men whereas Malory's Morgan threatens to kill Arthur but is not successful.

Morgan controls the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. She arranges for him to lose his head in order to test the courage of the Knights of the Round Table; she hopes to find a weakness in one of the knights and discover a way to destroy Arthur's kingdom. Bertilak tells Gawain:

“Ho [Morgan] wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle
For to assay þe surquidré, 3if hit soth were
Þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table.
Ho wayued me þis wonder your wyttez to reue,
For to haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dyze. (2456-60)

Although the Green Knight acts like he runs the charade, he really dances from strings that Morgan holds. Never does he question her schemes against King Arthur and his knights as unscrupulous or immoral, even though it is clear that Morgan's plots are not meant as a joke--she actually hopes she can scare Guinevere into a grave and prove that Arthur's knights have cowardly hearts and squeamish innards. Therefore, Morgan has placed the Green Knight under a spell so he does whatever she commands. Given his warm hospitality, he would not wish death on Guinevere or dishonor on the knights. As Bertilak comments, “Weldez non so hyze hawtesse / Þat ho ne con make ful tame⁹” (2454-55). Basically, the Green Knight admits to being under Morgan's influence and shows that because of her magic anyone can be subject to her will.

Unlike Morgan, who maintains strategies for most of the text, the Lady, Bertilak's wife uses both strategies and tactics; she maintains a different role with Bertilak than she does with Gawain. Ordinarily, a woman would assume the tactical position in relation to a man, who has more agency. Because Bertilak tells the Lady to seduce Gawain, or at least pretend to seduce him, she does not need to use tactics to perform her desire with Gawain—given permission by

⁹ With regard to Morgan's power, it is crucial to note the editorial debate about her power versus Bertilak's power. Early editors of the text (Tolkien and Gordon; Andrew and Waldron) changed the grammatical structure of lines 2445-51 in order to empower Bertilak. Michael Twomey states, “Editorial practice has been to put a full stop after 2445 and to make the best of the grammatical confusion that follows from treating 2446-51 as an aside rather than part of Bertilak's self-identification” (108). Therefore, lines 2445-46 read as follows in early editions: Berilak de Hautdesert I hat in þis londe. / Þur3 mi3t of Morgue la Faye, þat in my hous lenges” (108). The phrase, through the might of Morgan le Fey does not make sense when it is separated from information in the preceding line.

her husband, she has free reign to enter his bedroom. We may remember that tactics are only used for duplicitous reasons, to undermine a strategy. In the temptation scenes, though, the Lady performs the strategic position and feminizes Gawain by acting in the male courtship position: The Lady enters his bedroom, initiates the kisses, and pursues him. Geraldine Heng contends that the Lady assumes the masculine role in her encounters with Gawain: “Where it is usually the knight who comes into his identity as an active, desiring subject, a male courtly lover, through such commonplaces—by establishing a love relation with a desired female, the object of love, in time-honored custom—here it is the Lady who usurps the active masculine function” (118-19).

In the masculine position with regard to Gawain and the feminine in relation to her husband, the Lady is caught between strategic and tactical behavior. She still operates through language as if she uses tactics, but asserts herself boldly as in a position of power. Thus, her actions result in a conglomeration of weakness and power. Heng believes the Lady’s words become a physical seduction: “Gawain’s and the Lady’s speech convene a literal seduction—quite literally a seduction in and of language, devising conditions in which desire can be most intensely actuated and sustained ... speech then occurs not in place of sex but in the place of sex, in the sexual position, and acts as the form and medium of the sexual relation: love-making composed as speech-making” (102-04). Rather than sleeping with Gawain, which would complicate her relationship with her husband and also Gawain’s with Bertilak, she negotiates between her two positions, and thus demonstrates the fluidity of the strategic/tactical dynamic.

Just as women fight covertly against men in my three previous texts, we notice that Bertilak manages to exert his will over Morgan’s. Thus, tactics always have a chance to win against strategies, at times. No matter who holds the tactical position, men or women, a person with a smaller amount of power can still exert his or her will, at times. This is what Bertilak does: He cannot prevent Morgan from transforming him into the Green Knight, but he can do what he wants as the Green Knight. He does not allow Gawain to lose his head to the ax, but asks his wife to give Gawain a girdle which will protect his life:

ffor, hit is my wede þat þou wereʒ, þat ilke wouen girdle;

Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel, forsoþe.

Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes als,

And þe wowying of my wyf I wroʒt hit myseluen.

I sende hir to asay þe, and sothly me þynkkeþ
On þe fautlest freke þat euer on fote zede.
As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,
So is Gawain, in god faith, bi oþer gay knyȝteþ. (2358-65).

Although Bertilak wants to test Gawain's honor as a knight, to learn if he will take advantage of his wife or not, he gives him a chance to prove his knightliness before he slices off his head. Therefore, Bertilak wants to ascertain if Gawain deserves to die or he lives up to the title of knight—Morgan does not give Gawain this chance because she plans for him to be beheaded, just as she plans for Guinevere to die from fear.

Tactics and strategies switch positions in this text: Morgan operates from a strategic position throughout the majority of the text, but at the end, she is pushed back into a tactical one. This is not to say that she could not regain her strategic footing at another time, though. After the final battle, Bertilak tells Gawain to meet his aunt, Morgan. She has been removed from the category of the magical, fearful woman to that of an aging relative. Bertilak tells Gawain, "þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady; / Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arþureþ half-sister" (2463-64). Bertilak's speech conveys Morgan's human aspect, that fact that she is indeed a woman, a human woman with supernatural powers. Because the men have defeated her plan, they no longer must fear her, but can discuss her as an old, non-threatening woman. The supremacy of Morgan in this text demonstrates that women can succeed in obtaining power; it is possible for women to wield strategies rather than tactics. Therefore, women can have hope that they will not forever fight a losing battle or keep struggling against stubborn strategies with their weaker tactics.

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