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Gender and literary form at the edge of the Arthurian world: Richard Johnson's Tom a Lincoln and William Rowley's The Birth of Merlin re-examined

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GENDER AND LITERARY FORM AT THE EDGE OF THE ARTHURIAN WORLD:
RICHARD JOHNSON'S *TOM A LINCOLN* AND WILLIAM ROWLEY'S *THE BIRTH OF MERLIN* RE-EXAMINED

by

EMILIA BOONE

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Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

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Abstract

Emilia Boone

Gender and Literary Form at the Edge of the Arthurian World: Richard Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* and William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* Re-Examined

In its close examination of Richard Johnson's popular prose romance *Tom a Lincoln*, published in two parts in 1599 and 1607, and William Rowley's play *The Birth of Merlin or the Childe Hath Found His Father*, first performed in 1622, this project aims to explore two key texts which have been previously neglected in discussions of Arthurian and early modern canons. It explores the intersection between canon formation, textual form, and gender to argue that to expand the Arthurian canon is to expand the possibilities critical examination within it. Examining practices of testimonials, language, ventriloquism, and adaptation, this project probes the tensions between the Arthurian canon and early modern literary tradition and how each engages with issues of gender to argue for the inclusion of these two popular texts into the Arthurian canon.

Through comparison to both traditional Arthurian texts and the works of Johnson and Rowley's contemporaries, this project argues that the understanding of the Arthurian canon, particularly as a part of a longstanding literary tradition, and its representation of gender necessarily shifts when these two texts are taken into consideration. Johnson and Rowley's texts give voices to those who largely remain voiceless in the traditional canon, such as single mothers and victims of sexual violence, and as many of these elements clearly intersect with the form of the work, to dismiss these texts is to dismiss the contributions of the culture of popular media. Therefore, in its exploration of gender roles, this project demonstrates the dangers of potentially reductive arguments which focus solely on literary or historicist analysis of texts by examining the interplay between literature and cultural expectations inherent in the formation of a literary tradition.

Table of Contents

Introduction

This research aims to explore two key texts which have been previously neglected in discussions of the Arthurian canon and early modern literature. Through the exploration of the different literary codes that intertwine to create a text, it aims to, using early modern assumptions about gender roles, redraw the Arthurian canon to address its neglect of certain texts. It will probe those moral ambiguities surrounding sexual and gendered violence in early modern culture, specifically during the transition between the Elizabethan and Stuart reigns, and will use these ambiguities as a lens through which to examine the boundaries of the Arthurian canon and explore what happens when a longstanding tradition interacts with contemporary values. This project is a close examination of William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin or the Childe Hath Found His Father* (1622) and Richard Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* (published in two parts in 1599 and 1607).[1] *The Birth of Merlin* is a play which follows the early Briton war with the Saxons and its female emissary, alongside the pregnancy of the wizard Merlin's mother and later his birth. After several magical contests prove Merlin's might, the play's latter half depicts Merlin's famous prophecies and the defeat of Vortiger by Arthur's father, Uter, which facilitates the defeat of Merlin's devil father and the redemption of his mother. *Tom a Lincoln*, on the other hand, is a romance which tracks the adventures of Arthur's illegitimate son, the title character. In the play's first half, Tom is shown not only gaining victory in battle but winning the favour of two maidens, both of whom become mothers to his children. The second half, however, follows Tom's murder by his wife and the revenge quest of his son,

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[1] All references to Rowley's text will refer to William Rowley, *The Birth of Merlin Or the Childe Hath Found His Father | Robbins Library Digital Projects*, 1662, Robbins Library Digital Projects, The Camelot Project <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/rowley-birth-of-merlin-or-child-hathe-found-father> [accessed 22 January 2020]. All references to Johnson's text will refer to Richard Johnson, *Tom a Lincoln*, ed. by G. R. Proudfoot, H. R. Woudhuysen, and John Pitcher, 1st THUS edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Note that in all references I will keep the formatting from the texts to which I refer, and do no editing in the formatting of these quotes.

the Blacke Knight. As you can see, these two texts are ripe to be thought of in terms of gendered actions, as characters behave in ways which appear counter to more common representations of early modern gender roles, and they feature female characters portrayed in roles often ignored by other Arthurian texts. Through an examination of textual conventions in these works such as dialogue, language, and adaptation, this project will investigate the consequences of the introduction of early modern literary conventions to Arthurian literature. It will examine how Johnson and Rowley present characters and situations in ways seemingly contrary to both Arthurian and early modern norms as the two literary worlds combine. In probing these texts, this project aims to identify specific ambiguities in narratives of gendered violence, which this project defines as any violent act motivated by, or exacerbated by, an understanding of gender derived from prevalent patriarchal assumptions about appropriate behaviour. These texts have been given very little scholarly attention, and by reintegrating them into the Arthurian canon, this research will question the role of codes and traditions from multiple sources in the formation of a text, ultimately calling into question the boundaries of the Arthurian canon as understood by critics. This project will argue that these texts are tied to two different cultural moments: the literature of the early modern period and the Arthurian tradition. Early modern literature, then, functions as a network of texts, of which those of the Arthurian tradition make up a subset, and this project explores what happens to this subset when one applies to it the cultural scripts and expectations of early modern literature. In combining these two literary worlds and all of the tropes and codes which accompany them, Johnson and Rowley are able to craft texts that are unique among both. This project ultimately argues that to consider these texts alongside the Arthurian canon is to redefine what can be considered an "Arthurian" text.

This project examines these texts in relation to the current understanding of Arthurian canon, primarily in its established commencement in late medieval popularity with Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485), investigating what happens to accepted scholarly understanding when these texts are introduced to the canon.[2] This project defines the Arthurian canon as a set of texts featuring King Arthur and his knights that share specific qualities and values which scholars have identified as worthy of inclusion in a privileged body of works. This project argues that these specific values and tropes are what often merits a text's inclusion in the Arthurian canon, and that in looking only for these qualities the traditional canon neglects texts that are also worthy of scholarly attention as well as more public awareness. William Rowley and Richard Johnson despite working within the confines of Arthurian literature as a whole, deviate from these expected plot points, character descriptions, and values, and are thereby dismissed as less worthy of note. This project will argue, however, that these specific deviations, especially in how early modern gendered debates are staged within them, are what make these texts worthy of inclusion in the privileged canon.

Indeed, Rowley and Johnson's engagements with Arthurian literature are significant as they come at the end of a long period of Arthurian popularity. Arthurian literature received a surge of popularity following the publication of Chrètien de Troyes's romances with the popularity of courtly love which carried on through the medieval period and up into the sixteenth century. By the time of the publication of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, published between 1590 and 1596, Arthurian popularity had started to dwindle, not appearing in full force again until the mid-eighteenth century.[3] This makes Rowley and

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[2] All references to Malory's text will refer to Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, New edition edition (Ware, Hertfordshire England: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1997).

[3] All references to Spenser's text will refer to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Jr Thomas P. Roche and Jr C. Patrick O'Donnell, Reissue edition (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England ; New York, N.Y., U.S.A: Penguin, 2003).

Johnson's texts not only outliers in terms of content but chronology, and their choice to draw from this tradition after its waning popularity is notable, as demonstrated by the sharp decline in Arthurian texts published during this time. That these texts are derived from a long narratological tradition thereby necessitates the acknowledgement that Johnson and Rowley were not simply creating stories based on their own cultural landscape, but drawing from a long, established tradition. This project aims to examine which elements of these texts may act as commentary on early modern culture and which are crafted from ideas which remained steady and integral to the established Arthurian tradition. While there were thirteen major Arthurian texts composed in English during this period, this project will only address five which share similar narrative preoccupations. Finally, this project aims to recontextualise the literary works of Johnson and Rowley's contemporaries. Through comparisons to other early modern works which explore similar gendered themes, this research will identify where these texts frustrate the traditionally understood expectations of the gendered dichotomy, namely of proper female behaviour and especially sexuality. While Rowley and Johnson's approaches to these expectations are not wholly unique, that their representations of these expectations are dependent upon influence from both traditions makes their presentations of gender and violence particularly notable. It will explore the conversations between a literary tradition and the priorities of early modern writings, ultimately arguing that the combination of the two poses questions of what can be considered canon, and how strictly these boundaries can be drawn.

Arthurian literature is a tradition which dates back to the twelfth century in its modern understanding owing to the publication of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae*, but goes back much further in Welsh tradition. Arthurian stories then surged in popularity in the medieval era largely due to the romantic and courtly tradition made popular by French writers such as Chrétien de Troyes. Following the aforementioned lull in

popularity in the seventeenth century, the tradition regained popularity in the eighteenth

century's Romantic period. Scholars have published several collections and

encyclopaedias which document the texts included within this canon, as well as literary

companions.[4] Additionally, there is a substantive body of work which tracks the evolution

of the Arthurian canon and the characters within it.[5] These texts largely follow the

chronological development of the tradition and its characters, largely arguing for Arthur's

historical significance in relation to diverse cultural moments.[6] This project, however, aims

to situate early modern texts within an Arthurian framework, focusing not on the portrayals

and representations of characters not solely as representations of historical moments but

rather also as a part of a literary tradition. Despite these several works which examine the

Arthurian tradition, there is comparatively very little engagement with Rowley's drama or

Johnson's romance, and as the minimal engagement with these texts within

encyclopaedias demonstrate, knowledge of these texts is minimal. Although a few

scholars have used *The Birth of Merlin* as a case study within discussions of issues such

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[4] See Elizabeth Archibald, *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia: New Edition*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy and others, 1 edition (Place of publication not identified: Routledge, 2016) and Laura C. Lambdin and Robert T. Lambdin, *Arthurian Writers: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2008) for examples of Arthurian encyclopaedias. For literary companions, see Archibald, Helen Fulton, *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011), and Johnson.
[5] See Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (Courier Corporation, 2000), and Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. by Margaret Middleton and Roger Middleton, y First printing edition (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Charlott Spivack and Roberta Staples, *The Company of Camelot: Arthurian Characters in Romance and Fantasy* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994) for examples of these studies.
[6] See CROSBIE, CHRISTOPHER J., 'Sexuality, Corruption, and the Body Politic: The Paradoxical Tribute of "The Misfortunes of Arthur" to Elizabeth I', Arthuriana, 9.3 (1999), 68–80 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27869472> [accessed 21 January 2020], Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, *King Arthur and the Myth of History*, 1st edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), D. Kiryukhin, 'COURT TUDOR AUTHORS 'POLEMICS ON KING ARTHUR: POLYDORE VERGIL AND JOHN LELAND', Vestnik of Minin University, 2013 <https://vestnik.mininuniver.ru/jour/article/view/405> [accessed 21 January 2020], Elisabeth Michelsson, *Appropriating King Arthur: The Arthurian Legend in English Drama and Entertainment 1485-1625*, Illustrated edition (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1999), Robin Headlam Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth* (London : Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble,Inc, 1983).

as motherhood and kingship, most of the discussions of Rowley's play have focused on its

portrayal of magic and Merlin's demonic birth.[7] Even more references to the play come in

the struggle of identifying its author, as it was previously attributed to Shakespeare.[8] On

the other hand, Johnson's text has received almost no scholarly attention. It has appeared

in three notable scholarly articles, one of which was published in 1943.[9] Ryan Harper, too,

has provided a study in his introduction to the Robbins Digital Library edition of the text,

but otherwise the romance gains only brief mentions in other works, generally in passing.[10]

Following these extremely limited critical studies, this project aims to integrate these texts

into the Arthurian canon, and consider what happens to the canon outlined by those

collections when it includes these two minimally-examined texts.

Review of Literature

This project is firstly interested in the Arthurian canon itself. In addition to the

scholarly work on the history of the tradition described above, there is a substantial body

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[7] See Mark Dominik, '"Edmund Ironside" and "The Birth of Merlin" Revisited', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40.2 (1989), 251–54, Monika Karpinska, 'Early Modern Dramatizations of Virgins and Pregnant Women', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 50.2 (2010), 427–44 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.0.0094>, Park, Murray, and DAVID NICOL, '"My Little What Shall I Call Thee": Reinventing the Rape Tragedy in William Rowley's "All's Lost by Lust"', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 19 (2006), 175–93 for discussions of *Merlin* and kingship. For those interested in Merlin's demonic father, see Megan Lynn Isaac, 'Legitimizing Magic in "The Birth of Merlin"', *Early Theatre*, 9.1 (2006), 109–21, Sarah E. Johnson, '"Away, Stand off, I Say": Women's Appropriations of Restraint and Constraint in the *Birth of Merlin* and the *Devil Is an Ass*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 15.1 (2009) <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-2106797861/away-stand-off-i-say-women-s-appropriations-of> [accessed 21 January 2020], and Anita Obermeier, 'Merlin's Conception by Devil in William Rowley's Play The Birth of Merlin', *Arthuriana*, 24.4 (2014), 48–79 <https://doi.org/10.1353/art.2014.0048>.
[8] See Dominik and Fleissner.
[9] See Alex Davis, 'Savagery, Civility, and Popular Literature: Richard Johnson's "Tom a Lincolne"', *Studies in Philology*, 103.3 (2006), 264–80, NAOMI C. LIEBLER, 'Elizabethan Pulp Fiction: The Example of Richard Johnson', *Critical Survey*, 12.2 (2000), 71–87, and W. F. McNeir, 'Greene's "Tomliuclin": Tamburlaine, or Tom a Lincoln?', *Modern Language Notes*, 58.5 (1943), 380–82 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2910382>.
[10] See Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester University Press, 1994) and Lacy et al. For Harper's introduction, see Ryan Harper, 'Introduction to Richard Johnson's Tom A Lincoln | Robbins Library Digital Projects ' <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/intro_tomalincoln> [accessed 6 September 2020].

of work examining the development of the Arthurian legend and its interaction with mythic history.[11] Scholars such as Alfred O.H. Jarman and Purdie and Royan examine the Arthurian legend's links to Celtic history and national identity.[12] Other critics have examined particular elements of the Arthurian legend, for example the story of the Fair Unknown as it appears in canon stories, while Rosemary Morris has tracked the character of Arthur throughout the canon as it stands.[13] These works, however, have focused primarily on following the development of Arthurian romance and texts within the popularly assumed canon, neglecting texts such as Johnson and Rowley which fall outside these parameters in terms of genre and form. My research attempts to fill this gap in knowledge, and examine how the elements explored within these works function within these lesser-known texts.

A notable element of Arthurian scholarship, too, is the study of the character of Merlin, who features as the title character in Johnson's play. Several books have been dedicated to the development and function of his character throughout history.[14] The other major component of Merlin studies is the problem of his demonic father, discussed in

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[11] See *The Arthurian Revival: Essays on Form, Tradition, and Transformation*: 8, ed. by Debra Mancoff, 1 edition (London: Routledge, 2014), F. Johnson, and Finke and Martin.

[12] See A.O.H. Jarman, 'The Merlin Legend and the Welsh Tradition of Prophecy', in *Merlin: A Casebook*, by Peter H. Goodrich (Routledge, 2004), pp. 103–28 and *The Scots and Medieval Arthurian Legend*, NED-New edition (Boydell and Brewer, 2005), JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt9qdh72> [accessed 24 January 2020].

[13] Rosemary Morris, *The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1982). For discussions of the Fair Unknown, see ARNOLD SANDERS, 'Sir Gareth and the "Unfair Unknown": Malory's Use of the Gawain Romances', *Arthuriana*, 16.1 (2006), 34–46 and Robert H. Wilson, 'The "Fair Unknown" in Malory', *PMLA*, 58.1 (1943), 1–21 <https://doi.org/10.2307/459031>.

[14] See Stephen Knight, *Merlin: Knowledge and Power through the Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), Peter H. Goodrich, *Merlin: A Casebook* (Routledge, 2004), Carol Harding, M*erlin and Legendary Romance* (Routledge, 2014) <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-uk/products/merlin-and-legendary-romance-carol-harding-v9781317656791?duration=180&gclid=Cj0KCQiA1KiBBhCcARIsAPWqoSpwwr9iIjI17rJjq4bu3erf5 nQc5DVVEuvG-uSBlKJ-BpkoQPvury8aAqcyEALw_wcB>, Jean Markale, *Merlin: Priest of Nature* (Simon & Schuster, 1995) <https://www.simonandschuster.co.uk/books/Merlin/Jean-Markale/9781620554500> [accessed 21 January 2020], and Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *The True History of Merlin the Magician* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

depth by Anita Obermeier, who argues that the devil's fatherhood of Merlin and influence on Rowley's play in particular functions to establish rightful kingship, and Terri Frongia, who aims to reconcile competing "sacred" elements of Merlin's character with his demonic father.[15] While my research is deeply indebted to these sources, particularly in how they argue for the importance of Christianity to Merlin's character, Merlin's function within Rowley's play draws from multiple strands of research which this project aims to synthesise, namely the function and origins of his magic, his fatherhood by the devil, and his role as a kingmaker through the lens of gender and language, whereas many of these works explore one at a time. In summary, while works surrounding the traditions, forms, genres, and gendered dynamics have laid significant groundwork in the world of scholarly criticism, this project aims to fill gaps in this research to synthesise these elements while focusing on these two texts as a case study.

This project engages significantly with studies of gender in early modern England, with a specific focus on witchcraft, illegitimate motherhood, monstrous transgression, and sexual assault.[16] A significant proportion of these studies focus primarily on gender and politics, or on the language surrounding women and female sexuality.[17] These works do

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[15] See Terri Frongia, 'Merlin's Fathers: The Sacred and the Profane', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 18.3 (1993), 120–25 <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.0.1001> and Obermeier.

[16] See Joanne Bailey and Loreen Giese, 'Marital Cruelty: Reconsidering Lay Attitudes in England, c. 1580 to 1850', *The History of the Family*, 18.3 (2013), 289–305 <https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2013.779292>, Margaret W. Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), Cissie C. Fairchilds, *Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Pearson Education, 2007), Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (Yale University Press, 1995), Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 2014), C. Malcolmson and M. Suzuki, Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500–1700 (Springer, 2002), Jodi Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1998) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203754542>, Naomi J. Miller, *Changing the Subject: Mary Wroth and Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996), J. Ward, Violence, Politics, and Gender in Early Modern England (Springer, 2008), and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) for discussions of gender in early modern Europe.

[17] For discussions of gender and politics, see Hanawalt, Andrew J. Majeske and Emily Detmer-Goebel, *Justice, Women, and Power in English Renaissance Drama* (Fairleigh Dickinson

not merely focus on women, however; several studies examine early modern masculinity and its effect on the social order of early modern society.[18] These studies provide foundational information for this research, particularly in the realm of language, but they do not often engage with the literary traditions on which this project is based. Consequently, this project engages extensively, in particular, with studies of gender within the literary tradition it discusses. Mary Beth Rose argues that gender, namely "feminine" values, came to redefine heroism into the early modern era, which combines concepts of many different threads of analysis within this research.[19] Much of the work with which this project engages, however, is focused on gender and violence. Scholars such as Christina León Alfar and Jorgensen and Beehler dedicate significant attention to women and violence, both of which arguing primarily that definitions of "evil" are largely associated with transgression, or acting outside of prescribed gender norms, while further critical studies

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University Press, 2009), and Mihoko Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects: Gender, the Political Nation, and Literary Form in England, 1588–1688*, 1 edition (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, Vt: Routledge, 2003). For discussions of language used surrounding women, see Danielle Clarke, 'Speaking Out of Turn: Gender, Language and Transgression in Early Modern England', in *Staged Transgression in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Rory Loughnane and Edel Semple, Palgrave Shakespeare Studies (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013), pp. 180–93 <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137349354_13>, *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), and Ulrike Tancke, *'Bethinke Thy Selfe 'in Early Modern England : Writing Women's Identities* / (Amsterdam ; Rodopi, 2010). For works engaging with female sexuality, see Carol Thomas Neely, 'Constructing Female Sexuality in the Renaissance: Stratford, London, Windsor, Vienna', in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Richard Feldstein and Judith Roof (Cornell University Press, 1989).

[18] See Mark Breitenberg, 'Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England', *Feminist Studies*, 19.2 (1993), 377 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178375>, Anthony Fletcher, 'Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England', *History*, 84.275 (1999), 419–36 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.00116>, Foyster, Elizabeth, 'Male Honour, Social Control and Wife Beating in Late Stuart England', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 215–24, Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Routledge, 2014), and Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Manhood and Masculinity in Early Modern England', *History Compass*, 12.9 (2014), 685–93 <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12188>.

[19] Mary Beth Rose, *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature*, 2001 <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/G/bo3629708.html> [accessed 21 January 2020].

examine women's language and how this can be violent in itself.[20] On the other hand,

Fries et al provides an in-depth discussion of the female characters within the Arthurian

tradition, arguing for a reinterpretation by scholarship of their roles within the canon, while

Robert P. Miller tracks the "antifeminist" literary traditions of the medieval era and argues

that views of antifeminism, while it cannot be separated from courtly love, may not have

been the foundation of the trope as had been previously asserted.[21] A large number of

these Arthurian gender studies focus on particular well-known texts, with Spenser's *The*

Faerie Queene providing a particularly common text for scholarly analysis.[22] While these

texts have all proven essential to the foundation of my research in laying out those

elements of gender in Arthurian and early modern literature and the importance to the

development of both, they engage only with either the Arthurian tradition or early modern

literature. This limited engagement exposes a gap in scholarly attention which this project

attempts to fill; this research will examine the specific elements of early modern literature

which, when combined with Arthurian works, creates texts which are not necessarily

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[20] See Cristina León Alfar, *Fantasies of Female Evil: The Dynamics of Gender and Power in Shakespearean Tragedy* (University of Delaware Press, 2003). and *Women, Violence, and English Renaissance Literature: Essays Honoring Paul Jorgensen*, ed. by Paul A. Jorgensen and Sharon A. Beehler (Tempe: Mrts, 2003). For examinations of women's language, see Sidney L. Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen: Strategies of Rhetorical Violence by Early Modern English Women Writers* (Susquehanna University Press, 2002) and Kirilka Stavreva, *Words Like Daggers Violent Female Speech in Early Modern England*, Early Modern Cultural Studies, 2015.
[21] See *On Arthurian Women: Essays in Memory of Maureen Fries*, ed. by Maureen Fries, Bonnie Wheeler, and Fiona Tolhurst (Dallas, TX: Scriptorium Pr, 2001) and Robert P. Miller, 'The Wounded Heart: Courtly Love and the Medieval Antifeminist Tradition', *Women's Studies*, 2.3 (1974), 335–50 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.1974.9978363>.
[22] See Sheila T. Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), Lisa Celovsky, 'Early Modem Masculinities and The Faerie Queene', *English Literary Renaissance*, 35.2 (2005), 210–47 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2005.00058.x>, Maureen Quilligan, 'The Comedy of Female Authority in The Faeire Queene', *English Literary Renaissance*, 17.2 (1987), 156–71 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.1987.tb00930.x>, Ian Sowton, 'Toward a Male Feminist Reading of Spenser's Faerie Queene', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 15.4 (1989), 398–416 <https://doi.org/10.1353/esc.1989.0004>, and Mary Villeponteaux, 'Displacing Feminine Authority in The Faerie Queene', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 35.1 (1995), 53–67 <https://doi.org/10.2307/450989> for examples of scholarly engagement with gender in *The Faerie Queene*.

recognisable as either. Additionally, these works centre their focus on more well-known texts, and while their analyses have been extremely influential, this project aims to shed a light on lesser-known texts and how canon is influenced by paying them attention.

This project further engages with questions of genre and form though the lens of gender analysis. Johnson and Rowley's texts exist in different forms, and indeed the traditions from which they draw are varied in their formal compositions. Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* is a play while Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* is presented as a popular romance.[23] This project balances a historicist and formalist approach, aiming to examine textual elements such as language, testimony, adaptation and ventriloquism through the lens of early modern and Arthurian gendered expectations and cultural ideologies. In other words, this project aims to acknowledge the distinctions between prose and dramatic texts, and understand the formal constraints of—and appreciating deviation from—an inherited story. In combining these approaches, then, this research analyses two cultural and literary moments and assesses how the interaction between them in two under-studied texts can create a more complete picture of the texts and their places within both the historical moment and the Arthurian literary tradition.

This project engages, too, with the critical discussion of the popular literary forms of the early modern period. Scholars such as Bernard O'Donoghue and Robert P. Miller place the courtly love tradition so popular within medieval Arthurian literature in its historical and literary contexts, while Lori Humphrey Newcomb has argued that popular literature, often vilified by contemporary critics, had a large influence on William

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[23] See Hermann Fischer, *Romantic Verse Narrative: The History of a Genre* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), Flint F. Johnson, *Origins of Arthurian Romances: Early Sources for the Legends of Tristan, the Grail and the Abduction of the Queen* (McFarland, 2012), Loomis, and Kevin Sean Whetter, *Understanding Genre and Medieval Romance* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008) for studies of the history and development of romance.

Shakespeare's more celebrated plays.[24] While these texts can offer an in-depth history of romance, Johnson's text is very rarely mentioned among them. On the other hand, Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* is a play, as is a dramatic adaptation of Johnson's romance that was published in 1611. Discussions of drama in early modern England are far more prevalent within critical attention due to the relative popularity of the dramatic form. Jeremy Lopez discusses the performance element of early modern drama as well as more metatheatrical elements, among other critics.[25] Kim Solga, in her book *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts*, argues that violence against women was pervasive enough in early modern culture for its literature to take advantage of its omnipresence.[26] Solga's text has proved foundational to my own research, and I build upon many of her analyses as I engage with lesser-known dramas within the Arthurian tradition. Conversely, Susanne Friede has examined the absence of Arthurian entries within early modern drama, but ignores almost entirely the works which do appear, including Rowley's.[27] A subcategory of this critical tradition, as well, examines genres within the dramatic form, especially its two primary genres, comedy and tragedy.[28] All of

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[24] See R. Miller, Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), and Bernard O'Donoghue, *The Courtly Love Tradition* (Manchester University Press, 1982).

[25] Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM: Cambridge University Press, 2002) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gmul-ebooks/detail.action?docID=218095> [accessed 4 January 2021]. See also Sarah Dustagheer and Harry Harry Newman, 'Reading Metatheatre', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 36.1 (2018), 89–110 <https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2018.0006>, 'Metatheatre and Early Modern Drama', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 36.1 (2018), 3–18 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/shb.2018.0001> and Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer, 'The Performative Poweer of Narrative in Drama: On the Forms and Functions of Dramatic Storytelling in Shakespeare's Plays', in *Current Trends in Narratology* (Walter de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 200–213.

[26] Kim Solga, *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230274051>.

[27] Susanne Friede, 'When History Does Not Fit into Drama: Some Thoughts on the Absence of King Arthur in Early Modern Plays', in *History and Drama*, ed. by Joachim Küpper, Jan Mosch, and Elena Penskaya, The Pan-European Tradition, 1st edn (De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 56–59 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbkjx1b.8> [accessed 4 January 2022].

[28] For studies of comedy, see Rick Bowers, *Radical Comedy in Early Modern England: Contexts, Cultures, Performances* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008) and Kessen. For studies of tragedy, see

these scholars have contributed extensive amounts of research to this field of study, but this research will examine not the forms and genres themselves but rather how the forms interact with the tradition in which these texts sit.

Methodology

The project takes a case study approach, focusing on William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin*, first performed in 1622, and Richard Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln,* published in two parts in 1599 and 1607, examining specifically the ways in which their portrayals of gender and violence deviate from the expectations surrounding both Arthurian and early modern literature. That these two texts are situated simultaneously within the network of early modern texts and in the Arthurian tradition is the focus of this project, examining in particular the ways in which tropes and conventions of each tradition intertwine within these texts to present differing and often outright conflicting ideas of gender and violence. This project reads these texts within tensions of studying of the literary past, that of the cultural approach and a theoretical approach to gender, the literary form, and close reading, focusing in particular on language and devices that locate the texts within the Arthurian tradition and as early modern works. Rowley and Johnson's texts provide the ideal case study for this project because of their willingness to deviate from Arthurian tradition in ways which also appear to contradict expected early modern gender roles and the ideologies of gendered violence. These texts both present violent women who go unpunished for their transgressive actions and positive representations of feminine sexuality in addition to the negative representations closely associated with the same

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Blair Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy?: Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford University Press, 2015), Thomas Rist, *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration in Reforming England*, 1 edition (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), and S. Simkin, *Early Modern Tragedy and the Cinema of Violence* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2006) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230597112>.

concepts. These are two of the least often studied Arthurian texts, especially Johnson's, whose work has little to no scholarly research discussing it.

This project examines primarily the anxieties surrounding gender roles and expectations in the early modern era, and the tensions and violence which arise from these anxieties. Haunted by the "spectre of Elizabeth" King James I insisted on the reestablishment of the gendered order, in part to secure his own power and diminish the memory of Elizabeth.[29] This obsession with clear gender separation can be seen often in early modern literature, which either reiterate the importance of that clear divide or which blur the lines and present women outside of this sphere. Surrounding these ambiguities, and propelling the tensions within the stories, are the acts of violence which permeate these representations of gender. Whether a woman's violent revenge or cruel actions, the concept of "transgressive" women forms the foundation of early modern anxieties about gender: women who stepped outside of the bounds of chastity and silence were presented as monstrous and vicious.[30] Transgressive women, by this token, could not be controlled, and this control, as Elizabeth Foyster argues, is foundational to early modern constructs of masculinity.[31] The project's research, then, hones in on how these representations of violence can be a direct representation of gender. In viewing gender through acts of violence, this project finds those ambiguities in gender roles and exposes them in their most overt and aggressive forms, arguing that to do so is to expand the boundaries of what can be considered an Arthurian text.

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[29] Julie Crawford, 'Fletcher's The Tragedie of Bonduca and the Anxieties of the Masculine Government of James I', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39.2 (1999), p. 360.

[30] See Bailey, Foster 2014, and Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe*, 1500 - 1800 (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011).

[31] Foyster argues that control is the primary means of masculine definition, whether it be control over women, control over the home, or control over a man's own passions. See Foyster.

Johnson and Rowley's texts, in engaging with the stories of King Arthur, draws from a tradition which dates back in its recognisable English form to 1136,[32] when Geoffrey of Monmouth published adaptations of Welsh stories. Arthurian stories are some of the most ripe for exploration of gender and violence in the early modern period because they were not beholden entirely to the political or cultural standards of the day, but were also bound to the tradition of story and character which came before them. To examine how these texts engage with the Arthurian tradition, this project examines Arthurian texts from the year 1485, the date of publication of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, to Rowley's play's first performance in 1622. These texts in particular provide an overarching view of the shifts in period and encompass several genres. The publication of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* anchors the texts 'dates firmly in the transition between the medieval and early modern eras as it coincides with the reign of Henry VII.[33] While this is not inclusive of all Arthurian works mentioned here, as this project does refer to earlier works, Malory's romance is the earliest text to be examined in depth in this research.

This project additionally interrogates examples from two of the literary forms key to the rise of popular literature in the early modern period: the popular romance and drama.[34] Early modern literature saw the rise of so-called popular fiction, such as drama, ballads, and pamphlets, in addition to more well-studied works of Spenser and Shakespeare.[35]

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[32] Galfredus (Monumetensis) and others, *The History of the Kings of Britain* (Penguin Books, 1966).

[33] The end of the medieval and early modern periods are up for debate, but in Britain, the beginning of the Tudor period is where I will generally mark the start of the transition between the two eras. While some historians argue that Henry VII was a firmly medieval king due to the structure and organisation of his administration, it is generally accepted that the reforms made during his reign paved the way for the beginnings of the early modern era to the point that his successor, Henry VIII, is a king whose reign is firmly established within the early modern era.

[34] Keith Wrightson, *A Social History of England, 1500-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) p. 1.

[35] See Dustagheer and Newman, Findlay, Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9

These were works created more for those in the lower classes and were more acceptable

for poorer populations, even as they maintained an upper class audience. Lori Humphrey

Newcomb, in her book *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England*, and Naomi

C. Liebler in her article "Elizabethan Pulp Fiction" specifically explore the trends of popular

literature and romance as it grew in early modern England.[36] Because of this, it is

important to establish the chronological and literary parameters for this thesis. The main

body of work considered will primarily consist of works within the years of approximately

1580 and 1630, with a few exceptions. This is largely the tail end of Arthurian literature's

popularity that peaked in the medieval period; *The Birth of Merlin*'s 1622 performance

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February 2021], H. W. Herrington, 'Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 32.126 (1919), 447–85 <https://doi.org/10.2307/535187>, STUART A. KANE, 'Wives with Knives: Early Modern Murder Ballads and the Transgressive Commodity', *Criticism*, 38.2 (1996), 219–37, Karpinska, Andy Kesson, 'Was Comedy a Genre in English Early Modern Drama?', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 54.2 (2014), 213–25 <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayu035>, Lopez, J. Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Springer, 2016), Majetske and Detmer-Goebel, Ian McAdam, *Magic and Masculinity in Early Modern English Drama* (Duquesne University Press, 2009), *Broadside Ballads: Songs from the Streets, Taverns, Theaters, and Countryside of 17th-Century England*, ed. by Lucie Skeaping, Illustrated edition (London: FABER & FABER, 2003), and Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: Magician in English Renaissance Drama*, First Edition. Hardback. Dust Jacket. edition (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), for example. For studies of Spenser, see Harry Berger, 'Archimago: Between Text and Countertext', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 43.1 (2003), 19–64, Harry, 'Displacing Autophobia in Faerie Queene I: Ethics, Gender, and Oppositional Reading in the Spenserian Text', *English Literary Renaissance*, 28.2 (1998), 163–82 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.1998.tb01125.x>, Patrick Gerard Cheney, '"Secret Powre Unseene": Good Magic in Spenser's Legend of Britomart', *Studies in Philology*, 85.1 (1988), 1–28, Katherine Eggert, 'Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in The Faerie Queene', *Representations*, 70, 2000, 1–26 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2902891>, Genevieve Guenther, 'Spenser's Magic, or Instrumental Aesthetics in the 1590 Faerie Queene', *English Literary Renaissance*, 36.2 (2006), 194–226 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2006.00077.x>, Sowton, and *Violence, Politics, and Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. by J. Ward, Early Modern Cultural Studies 1500–1700 (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230617018>, for example. For studies of Shakespeare, see Aldeman, Alfar, Thomas Anderson, '"Legitimation, Name, and All Is Gone": Bastardy and Bureaucracy in Shakespeare's King John', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 4.2 (2004), 35–61 <https://doi.org/10.1353/jem.2004.0005>, Jennifer Clement, 'Beyond Shakespeare: Early Modern Adaptation Studies and Its Potential', *Literature Compass*, 10.9 (2013), 677–87 <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12080>, Jean Elizabeth Howard, Jean E. Howard D PH, and Scott Cutler Shershow, *Marxist Shakespeares* (Psychology Press, 2001), Maurice Hunt, 'Shakespeare's "King Richard III" and the Problematics of Tudor Bastardy', *Papers on Language & Literature*, 33.2 (1997), 115, and Marguerite A. Tassi, *Women and Revenge in Shakespeare: Gender, Genre, and Ethics* (Susquehanna University Press, 2011), for example.

[36] Newcomb and Liebler.

date, too, marks an end to the medieval Arthurian popularity. The major texts referred to in this project include Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Thomas Hughes's *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, alongside Johnson and Rowley's texts. These works, while not entirely inclusive of all of the works published in the Arthurian canon from 1485-1622, provide the most specific and thorough representations among them of the gendered expectations and violent behaviour. There are, however, a few outliers to this time period which will nevertheless be included within the parameters of this thesis. The first is Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which was originally published in 1485. There are two primary reasons for including this text in the thesis: the first is a date of importance, and the second is its importance to the tradition. 1485 is also the year of the ascension to the throne of Henry VII, which marked the start of the Tudor dynasty. While the exact start of the early modern period is more often neatly placed around the year 1500, the Tudor dynasty is one of the defining features of early modern England. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, Malory's romance helped to codify the Arthurian tradition for early modern writers and readers; when they thought of Arthur, they thought of Malory. This means that even when earlier traditions were considered by later Arthurian writers, many tropes and plot elements came from Malory. This foundational importance to the Arthurian tradition makes it a primary point of comparison when considering other works published later, necessitating its conclusion in this research. While other works published earlier in the canon are mentioned in this project, Malory's is the earliest to be given an in-depth analysis in this thesis. Conversely, on the later side of this project is Margaret Cavendish's 1656 romance, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*. This work was published several years after any of the major works considered in this project and during the Interregnum period. The work, while functioning as a short romance in a similar vein to Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln*, is important to the study of this text due to its

incredible similarities to Johnson's work despite both publication year and author gender, posing questions about accident, chronology, and narrative development, questions which are explored more fully in Chapter 3. With these two texts acting as chronological limits to this project's analysis as well as chronological outliers, this project attempts to both set boundaries for the analysis of canon while simultaneously acknowledging that such chronological barriers are in many ways artificial and are far from concrete.

In addition to comparing these primary texts to others within the Arthurian canon, this project also seeks to calibrate the Arthurian texts with others outside the tradition which explore similar subject matter. Each chapter will examine in depth a few texts— primarily dramas due to the form's extensive engagements with issues of gendered violence—outside the Arthurian canon to compare these ideas when they are unencumbered by the constructs of this tradition. These include Nathan Field's *A Woman is a Weathercock*, in which a pregnant character is able to manipulate her way into financial stability and still earn a happy ending; Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (c. 1613), which helps to provide a template for the way language was used towards, against, and about witches; and John Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1613) which heavily features female characters who resort to violence as a response to rape. These texts have either been accessed through the University of Michigan's Early English Books Online, or through individual online projects such as the Camelot Project and Robbins Digital Library. Similarly, as this project examines two works, one a drama and one a popular romance, the rising popularity of more widely-accessible literature is foundational to this project.

These two texts use language and convention which were common throughout more contemporaneous early modern texts. Their use within the Arthurian tradition expands the boundaries of the Arthurian canon beyond that of medieval romance and into the realm of early modern romantic and dramatic conventions. This project, then, exposes

questions of canon formation and argues that to incorporate these early modern texts into the Arthurian canon is to expand what can be considered an "Arthurian" text. Through the lens of methods such as testimony, language, ventriloquism and adaptation, this project examines the ways in which the combination of two cultural and literary moments, alongside their respective tropes, conventions and scripts, result in texts that question the definition of the canon as it is widely understood to stand.

Chapter Synopses

My first chapter will examine incidents of lone motherhood, exploring the ways in which diegetic testimonies from unmarried pregnant women are used in drama to both give the characters a voice and to establish their characterisation within the genre of the play. In William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin*, the character of Joan, Merlin's mother, is framed first as a comedic whore character who has found herself pregnant without someone to act as a father for her child. Alongside the Clown, who dominates most of her scenes, Joan spends the first half of the play searching for a man—any man—to act as her child's father. After Merlin's birth, however, the play undergoes an abrupt change in genre, becoming almost a chronicle history play for its second half as it follows the traditional story of Merlin's interactions with Vortiger. It is in this context that she tells the story of her pregnancy, repenting the sins that led her to her relationship with the devil, and she is offered a relatively happy ending in response. In this play, Joan is able to use her own voice to ensure her happy ending, and it is her voice which marks the shift in genre that will characterise the rest of the play, as well as the shift in her characterisation from hapless whore to penitent mother. That her pregnancy and even character is given any attention in the play is unusual within the context of the Arthurian tradition; while knights without fathers are common, the focus is almost never put on the experiences of the mother. On the other hand, her testimony reveals the early modern convention that

uses the voices of single mothers to establish a reality that determines the play's genre. The chapter compares Joan to Hedewick in George Chaptman's *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany* (c.1594), whose pregnancy by a man she thought was her husband becomes a tragedy when her version of events is not accepted by other characters and she is killed for adultery; and Wagtail in Nathan Field's *A Woman is a Weathercock* (c.1609), who manipulates a knight to accept her illegitimate child as her son and whose story ends with the comedy staple of a triumphant wedding. In all three plays, the single women appeal to men to act as the fathers of their illegitimate children, and while Wagtail's manipulation is accepted and she is offered a happy ending in a comedy, Hedewick's innocence in the face of rape is ignored in a tragedy. Joan, however, acts as an odd character, remaining unwed throughout the play and, although exiled, is allowed to remain a sympathetic character. This chapter ultimately argues that by engaging with the contemporary concerns of illegitimacy within a tradition which ignores illegitimacy even as it is central to many knights 'backgrounds, Rowley carves a space for his play, and his single mother character, that stands apart from either tradition.

The second chapter discusses the language of witchcraft and its use in drama as a shorthand for female evil. Magic and witchcraft were already important aspects of Arthurian literature, with sexualised enchantresses found throughout both Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* representing the dangers of predatory female sexuality. At the time of the composition of Rowley's play, however, cultural ideas about witchcraft had shifted towards those presented during witch trials, and new representations of witches, particularly in drama, were greatly influenced by the language of witch trial pamphlets. While *Merlin* is a play that traffics heavily in magic, its magic is rooted in Christian ideas of sorcery and the fight against demonic forces. Merlin's fatherhood by the devil is foundational to the magic of the play, which stages magical

contests to prove Merlin's godliness despite his demonic origins. Outside of Merlin's own magic, however, the play uses witch language consistently towards its female characters, despite none of the female characters possessing any magic or even being accused of witchcraft outright. Witches do exist in the world of the play—"The bards, the druids, wizards, conjurers" are invited to help Vortiger construct his castle but "no witch" (iv.1.25-30)—but none of the characters are actually implied to be witches. Instead, the language of witchcraft is used to identify the female characters as in some way transgressive or demonic. This chapter analyses the language used within witch trial pamphlets and examines how this language was utilised in other witch plays, namely Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (c.1613) and the collaborative play, *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), to which John Ford, Thomas Dekker, and William Rowley contributed. It explores the ways this language is used against non-magical female characters, examining those distinctly feminine transgressions associated with witches, particularly predatory sexuality and control over fertility and how they can be defined as evil by the simple use of the word "witch" with all of the connotations that come with it. The chapter argues that by inserting the language of contemporary witchcraft into an Arthurian text, Rowley denotes his female characters 'motivations and transgressions through language alone.

The third chapter shifts to discussions of Richard Johnson's romance, *Tom a Lincoln,* and explores narratives of rape and violence in both the Arthurian canon and contemporary early modern traditions. Johnson's romance features a brief episode on an island whose female inhabitants, before Tom's crew's arrival, killed every man on the island in response to the threat of sexual slavery following a war. It examines the ways in which the island's queen, Caelia, is both sympathetic despite her spearheading of mass murder against men but also how she is reintegrated into the stereotype of an early modern rape victim. Rape, in both its modern and medieval contexts, is a feature of almost

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all Arthurian stories, acting not as a violent act against the victim but either as a vehicle for chivalric rescue or as an easily explainable way for a knight to have an unknown father.[37] Arthurian stories very rarely call attention to the act of rape. On the other hand, early modern literature developed a narrative of rape that became a storytelling device with several common features, mostly around the ways the voices of the victims were used to stage specific debates, namely the value of revenge, especially against kings, and the theological acceptability of suicide. This includes language surrounding flaw and blot on the victim, as well as discussions of metaphorical or literal death. These tropes and scripts became foundational to this narrative, becoming a code by which stories included within them can be identified, even when elements, or indeed a rape, is metaphorical. In particular, stories of Lucrece, including Thomas Heywood's play, *The Rape of Lucrece a True Roman Tragedie* and William Shakespeare's famous poem "The Rape of Lucrece" existed to provide an ideal, a model to which early modern victims of rape to aspire. Other works discussed in this chapter, such as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, William Rowley's *All's Lost By Lust*, John Fletcher's *Bonduca* and Thomas Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent* reaffirm those tropes which make up elements of the early modern rape narrative. This chapter discusses the ways in which Johnson actively subverts these elements of the narrative in a manner which demonstrates his consciousness of them, as well as those areas in which he converges back onto the narrative's scripts. While the threat against Caelia and the other women on the island is not carried out, the codes embedded in the narrative allow the early modern rape narrative to be re-examined when Johnson's text is viewed within its parameters. The chapter then pivots to discussions of Margaret Cavendish's romance, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (1656), which presents a

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[37] In medieval England, rape could mean sexual violence but also abduction and elopement. See Catty, Baines and Batt.

narrative of rape remarkably similar to Johnson's, exploring the consequences of accident and the different ways these codes can be utilised by authors in the formation of looser rape narrative entries. This chapter expands our awareness of the way in which the tropes of rape are ubiquitous in early modern literature regardless of the literal contents of the plot.

Finally, the fourth chapter examines the role of adaptation and originality in Arthurian literature, though the curious publishing history of Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln*. The romance was first published in 1599 and received a sequel in 1607. In 1611, a play was published anonymously which adapts the first part of the romance but seems to have been aware of the developments of the sequel. Between these two versions, the characterisations of the female characters are drastically different. The first part of the chapter will examine those changes from the first part to the sequel. The first part of the romance sees the focus on Tom's status as a knight errant, and answers questions about masculinity and violence usually avoided in other Arthurian texts. The second part, on the other hand, removes these answers, choosing instead to define the manhood of its characters in the same way as many other Arthurian texts: through the defeat of powerful women. Arthurian literature often reaffirms the masculinity of its male characters by its defeat of a transgressive, violent female antagonist. These antagonists do not appear in Johnson's first part but play a major role in the sequel. In particular, Tom's wife, Anglitora, is insistent upon allowing her predecessor in Tom's romantic and sexual favour, Caelia, a proper burial when she is found dead. Her counterpart in the sequel, however, becomes adulterous and murderous, adorning herself with symbols of transgression, greed, and "other"ness. She becomes the primary antagonist of the sequel, and it is her murder at the hands of her own son, the Blacke Knight, which re-establishes the gender order of the romance. The comparison between the two versions of Anglitora demonstrate the ways in

which a writer may expand upon their own works and characters, and how sequels functioned in these contexts. The chapter then discusses the anonymous dramatic adaptation. The drama rewrites the character of Caelia, whose relationship with Tom is portrayed largely in terms of respect in Johnson's version, to be a lascivious, murderous woman. The voices of her female messengers are replaced by males, and the threat of sexual violence that motivated her actions in the romance is replaced instead by pettiness. The adaptation of Johnson's romance highlights the romance's original status as an adaptation of a long-standing Arthurian tradition, making the dramatic adaptation an adaptation of an adaptation. By examining Johnson's text as one which already acts as an adaptation while still analysing the drama's position as an adaptation of a romance, this chapter argues that to explore Arthurian literature in terms of adaptation is to call into question what constitutes an original text in such a longstanding tradition.

This project, in summary, will examine each of these examples of inappropriate female sexual and violent conduct to analyse how the intersections of two literary modes can create a text that pulls at the expectations of multiple traditions, an Arthurian text which engages with early modern cultural values which extend beyond traditional romance and courtly love. In the first chapter, I will begin by discussing depictions of single mothers and how voice is used to construct an understood truth.

Chapter One: Illegitimate Mothers and the Power of Storytelling

Given the significance of the Elizabethan theatre as a leading popular medium, narration can be understood as a sense-making cultural technique that also structures experience.[38]

In William Rowley's 1622 play, *The Birth of Merlin,* Joan Goe-Too't, who has just given birth to famed Arthurian advisor and magician, Merlin, gives a nineteen-line monologue which explains, in her own voice, her situation and how she came to be pregnant out of wedlock. Her brother, the Clown, spends the majority of his time on stage insisting that "the childe must have a father" (ii.1.117), stopping every man in the street to ask if he is the unknown man with whom his sister had an illicit sexual encounter, but the actual account is told by Joan herself. Following this account, the play changes abruptly. Rowley splits his play into two main sections, each following conventions of a different genre. The play's first half follows two distinct storylines: one tragic-historical that follows the machinations of the Saxons within the court of Aurelius, and one comic, following Joan and her Clown brother. After Merlin is born in Act 3, the play's focus pivots sharply to the story of Vortiger's search for a child without a father and his war with Uter Pendragon as described in Geoffrey of Monmouth. This latter half situates itself firmly in the tragic-historical genre, with the comic elements greatly diminished, and Joan, who was previously a comic character, becomes tragic as she continues her flight from the devil. *The Birth of Merlin* is not only the "only early modern play that magnifies Merlin's conception and birth story", but does so by offering a unique portrayal of single motherhood in early modern literature, as it allows Joan not only to remain unmarried, but portrays her as a good mother regardless of her circumstances.[39] Most importantly,

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[38] Nünning and Sommer p. 221.
[39] Obermeier p. 48.

Rowley allows Joan a space to establish her reality, through her own voice, as she recounts the story of Merlin's conception. Rowley thereby portrays a mother who, while initially prideful and promiscuous, may repent her "sin and shame" (iv.1.109) and live out the rest of her days happily, if removed from the society which rejects her pregnancy.

This chapter examines the appearance of three single mothers in drama, especially their ties to the act of storytelling, as demonstrated in Rowley's portrayal of Merlin's mother, Joan. It locates Joan's speech in a number of contexts: within the sphere of early modern thoughts and fears regarding pregnancy and illegitimate motherhood; within the more familiarly Arthurian romance interest in retelling stories; and within the power dynamics revealed through the construction of an accepted reality in the competition of two differing narratives. Rowley's drama locates itself in a space which is not quite within the Arthurian tradition nor within the conventions of the stage. As an Arthurian text, it owes many of its plot and character elements to an already-established tradition, but in its dramatic form, Rowley embeds within it an early modern context which calls upon the discourse of contemporary gender politics, and then places within both the Arthurian and early modern conventions the largely foreign element of a testimony account of single motherhood. The play, which shifts dramatically in genre at the halfway point as a means of reconciling two different stories, consequently carves out a space that is not of either literary world.

Merlin's story is frequently explored within Arthurian literature, but most representations focus on his conception, while Rowley elects to focus on his mother's pregnancy and his birth, relegating the story of the conception to a relatively short monologue dictated by Joan. This chapter examines Rowley's play in comparison to Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*'s casual approach to illegitimate fatherhood and Merlin's paternity as it prefers to focus on lineage as an arbiter of knightly greatness in

contrast with two early modern plays: a tragedy, George Chapman's *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*, and a comedy, Nathan Field's *A Woman is a Weathercock.*[40] These texts navigate the plight of the illegitimate mother, and in them, as well as in Rowley's play, the mothers give voice to their own circumstances, allowing the effects of their stories to gain the primary focus. In the mothers' ability to voice their own realities, Chapman and Field, and especially Rowley, give a voice to those who go almost entirely unmentioned in mainstream Arthurian literature as exemplified by Malory. This chapter will first lay out the Arthurian and early modern discourses of illegitimacy before exploring the testimonies of the unwed mother characters. It will then examine the ways in which these testimonies foreground the retelling of stories and the consequences of these retellings. Finally, it will discuss how these testimonies and retellings attempt to construct a reality around these narratives, and how whether these constructions fail or succeed to be accepted as truth dictate the presentations of genre, character, and audience reactions. It thereby explores the unusual power and impact of Joan's narration of her own story. It does this through a comparison with the way with which illegitimacy is engaged in Arthurian tradition, and within other plays of the time on the same theme. Ultimately, this chapter argues that foregrounding the testimonial narrative both reveals the possibilities of drama but also allows for the effects of the story, rather than the events therein, to become the focus; it might create irony, disrupt politics, or, in Joan's case, facilitate the glorification of Merlin.

 All references to Chapman's text will refer to George Chapman, *George Chapman's Tragedy of Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany* (Brockhaus, 1867). All references to Field's play will refer to Nathan Field, 'A Woman Is a Weathercock', in *A Select Collection of Old English Plays, Volume 11*, ed. by William Carew Hazlitt, 2013 <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/41930> [accessed 29 January 2021]. [40] While these texts cannot be said to encompass all of early modern tragedy or comedy, their engagement with the discourse of illegitimate pregnancies whilst still adhering closely to genre tradition allows them to function as example texts for this chapter.

Research within the literary field specifically regarding single motherhood has been

limited; much of the work discusses the children, primarily infanticide and bastardy laws.[41]

Richard Adair's *Courtship, Illegitimacy, and Marriage in Early Modern England* provides

the foundational work for this topic, and offers the most comprehensive study of bastardy

and infanticide in early modern England.[42] Other scholars, such as Peter Charles Hoffer

and N. E. H. Hull, and Michael Neill have, however, built upon Adair's work and have

examined the historical contexts of bastardy laws, in particular the 1624 statute upon

which much early modern ideas toward bastardy are based, which came two years after

the first performance of Rowley's play.[43] In particular, Dave Postles's analysis of how

mothers might live after the birth of the child, and R.C. Richardson's discussion of the

power imbalance between masters and servants provide compelling insight into the

circumstances of both motherhood and fatherhood.[44] These works, however, focus their

attention primarily on the legal circumstances and consequences in which lone mothers

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[41] See R. H. Helmholz, 'Bastardy Litigation in Medieval England', *American Journal of Legal History*, 13.4 (1969), 360–83 <https://doi.org/10.2307/844184>, Walter J. King, 'Punishment for Bastardy in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *Albion*, 10.2 (1978), 130–51 <https://doi.org/10.2307/4048339>, Jennifer McNabb, 'Ceremony versus Consent: Courtship, Illegitimacy, and Reputation in Northwest England, 1560-1610', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 37.1 (2006), 59–81 <https://doi.org/10.2307/20477697>, and Johanna Rickman, *Love, Lust, and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex and the Nobility*, 1 edition (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2008) for comprehensive analyses on the treatment of early modern single mothers and the legal circumstances surrounding illegitimacy. See also Peter Laslett and Karla Oosterveen, 'Long-Term Trends in Bastardy in England: A Study of the, Illegitimacy Figures in the Parish Registers and in the Reports of the Registrar General, 1561-1960', *Population Studies*, 27.2 (1973), 255–86 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.1973.10405709> and LISA ZUNSHINE, BASTARDS AND FOUNDLINGS: ILLEGITIMACY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND, 1st edition (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005) for discussions of bastardy and illegitimacy in contiguous periods.
[42] Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy, and Marriage in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 1996).
[43] Peter Charles Hoffer and N. E. H. Hull, Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England 1558-1803, Reprint edition (New York: New York Univ Pr, 1984) and Michael Neill, '"In Everything Illegitimate": Imagining the Bastard in Renaissance Drama', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 23 (1993), 270–92 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3507984>.
[44] Dave Postles, 'Surviving Lone Motherhood Early-Modern England', *The Seventeenth Century*, 21.1 (2006), 160–83 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117X.2006.10555572> and R. C. Richardson, 'A Maidservant's Lot', *History Today; London*, February 2010, 25–31.

found themselves, and the identification of suitable fathers and the birth of the child itself are given the most prominence.[45] A subset of these discussions make this exceptionally clear; the vast majority of work on illegitimate births considers the subject of infanticide.[46] Due to the considerable economic pressures under which these women were placed, that they may have resorted to the murder of the child has long been examined in historical literature.[47] Discussed at length from the mid-1990s by Richard Adair and Laura Gowing, the prevalence of this trope in literature, particularly drama, has made the crime appear especially ubiquitous and continues to attract scholarly attention.[48] There have also, in recent years, been increasing analyses of single women in early modern England, and the unusual economic and social situations in which they found themselves.[49] It is worth noting

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[45] A primary exception is Christina May Loucks, 'Creating Lewd Women out of Law and Press: How Laws of Bastardy and Infanticide in Early Modern England Affected the Single Mother' (unpublished Dissertation, Tennessee State University, 2010) <https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/dissertations/AAI1476503>, but this work still places focus on language and popular pamphlet literature rather than on single motherhood experiences.

[46] For analyses of infanticide, its causes, punishments, discovery, and frequency, see Stephanie Chamberlain, 'Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England', *College Literature*, 32.3 (2005), 72–91 <https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2005.0038> and Mark Jackson, *New-Born Child Murder: Women, Illegitimacy and the Courts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester; New York; New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1996). Betty S. Travitsky also offers work on the subject, however, extending her discussion into the world of literature but analysing the murders of children not just as infants, but as they grow as well, usually as a display of power by a particular parent. See Betty S. Travitsky, 'Child Murder in English Renaissance Life and Drama', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 6 (1993), 63–84.

[47] One prevalent cause of single motherhood, as well as infanticide, was poverty, which is given lengthy discussions in Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, New Ed edition (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press USA, 1996), Laura Gowing, Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England (Yale University Press, 2003), and G. R. Quaife, Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives. Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England, 1st Edition edition (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1979).

[48] See Adair and Laura Gowing, 'Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 156, 1997, 87–115.

[49] See Amy M. Froide, *Never Married Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: University Press, 2005) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199270606.001.0001> [accessed 19 February 2020], Cordelia Beattie, Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England, 1st Edition edition (Oxford ; New York: OUP Oxford, 2007), Fairchilds, Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry, Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics: 1, First edition (London: Zed Books, 2007), and Peters 1997 for further examinations of the single woman in early modern England.

that in this context, the definition of "single" would primarily consist of widows and the economic definition of "single" which could extend to married women. This body of work, then, does not consider lone mothers, who, while also placed in an unusual situation within their societies, would not have been permitted to utilise the economic loopholes offered to legally defined single women. On the other hand, there have been examinations of the role of parents, in particular mothers, and the relationships they had with children both personally and economically.[50] Additionally, Hera Cook dedicates work to the cultures of sex and contraception.[51] In summary, while it is fair to say that work can be found surrounding the topic of lone pregnancies, births, parenthood, or infanticide, discussions of the plight of mothers after the birth of the child and how both lives would have been affected during the child's life is comparatively sparse.

A similar selectivity can be seen in the analysis of the bastard as a character in drama, particularly Alison Findlay's comprehensive overview in her book, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama.*[52] The bastard is noted as a prominent character in drama, utilised primarily to act outside the confines of the society from which he is cast out.[53] Studies of the bastard character, however, are most substantially dedicated to the works of Shakespeare, who employed the trope often within his plays, such as *King Lear* and *Much Ado About Nothing.*[54] Those which aren't about Shakespeare still focus

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[50] See Janet Adelman, Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest (Routledge, 1992) and Nicholas Orme, 'THE CULTURE OF CHILDREN IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND', *Past & Present*, 148.1 (1995), 48–88 <https://doi.org/10.1093/past/148.1.48>.

[51] Hera Cook, 'Sexuality and Contraception in Modern England: Doing the History of Reproductive Sexuality', *Journal of Social History*, 40.4 (2007), 915–32 <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh.2007.0090>.

[52] Findlay. See also Nicholas Crawford, 'Language, Duality, and Bastardy in English Renaissance Drama', *English Literary Renaissance*, 34.2 (2004), 243–62 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0013-8312.2004.00043.x> and Neill.

[53] See Findlay for an in-depth analysis of the bastard's role in drama.

[54] See Hunt, Anderson, Aaron Kitch, 'Bastards and Broadsides in "The Winter's Tale"', *Renaissance Drama*, 30 (1999), 43–71 <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.30.41917355>, and Helen Vella Bonavita, '"In Everything Illegitimate": Bastards and the National Family', *M/C Journal*, 17.5 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.897> for discussions of bastard characters in Shakespeare.

primarily on the bastard child, especially ones who are of noble birth. In particular, Monika

Karpinska's article "Early Modern Dramatizations of Virgins and Pregnant Women"

analyses the appearance in dramas of virgins and pregnant women, arguing specifically

that the woman's position in what she terms an "in-between" space of male ownership,

actually does include Joan amongst her examples, but the discussion is brief and focuses

on her pregnancy alone, while my chapter seeks to discuss the role of Joan as a mother.

While Joan's pregnancy does see some mention in discussions of bastardy and

demonology, her status as a mother is rarely analysed except as it stands in relation to

female relationships to demonic power.[55] This chapter, then will explore this omission from

the field, giving its attention to literary representations of the voices given to those who,

while given some acknowledgement in scholarship, has not been discussed at length.

Turning to the specific child of a single mother, Merlin, by the time of the publication

of Malory's romance, the story of Merlin's origins had largely solidified: Merlin is the son of

an incubus demon and the daughter of the king of Demetia, whom he found in a nunnery.

While changes and additions expanded the story over the years—Robert de Boron is the

first to portray Merlin's mother as a peasant c. 1200, and she is first called a "whore" for

her dalliance with the demon c. 1155 in Wace's *Roman de Brut*—the story remained

remarkably close to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae.*[56] This account is

thought to originate the character of Merlin as it was recognisable by the time of Rowley's

play's composition, including his relationship with Arthur and parentage, all but conflating

two traditions, and his role as magician, which was the subject of the most attention from

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[55] See Isaac and Obermeier.

[56] See Lawrence-Mathers, Goodrich, Harding, and Obermeier pp. 55-59 for an overview of the evolution of Merlin's story in medieval and early modern consciousness. It is important to note, however, that Merlin's mother's pregnancy in the Prose Lancelot, a major source for Malory, is not seduced by the devil: "it is in fact her own desire and her refusal to accept the common law for women, which gives the devil an opportunity to come to her and ultimately to make her pregnant". See Berthelot p. 169.

the middle ages into the seventeenth century.[57] Rowley combines multiple sources for

Merlin's birth, including the romantic sources—in particular Robert de Boron, whose

version of the story laid the groundwork for the Vulgate and post-Vulgate cycles—which

add a layer of demonic treachery.[58] Rowley deviates from Malory, and indeed the

narrative's originator, Geoffrey of Monmouth, in substantial ways. The major changes to

Merlin's mother's story—her social status and her reputation—can be found in earlier

sources of the Merlin legend which Rowley elects to amplify to put a focus on the acts of

female transgression and sin. Despite While the medieval sources such as 1486's *Malleus*

Maleficarum take a "misogynistic" view that treats Merlin's conception as something

extraordinary, by the late medieval and early modern era, women having sexual

encounters with the devil was assumed to happen with regularity.[59] These views of the

time made Joan's encounter seem trivial, an everyday occurrence, and this is reflected in

Merlin's previously unnamed mother's name, Joan Goe-Too't, which "now signals her

sexual availability and accessibility".[60] She similarly attributes much of her situation to

pride, despite earlier sources depicting her as chaste.[61] Following the more infernal

tradition of Robert de Boron, Merlin is born amongst thunder and lightning, with the

language of "[bringing] this mixture of infernal seed | To humane being" (iii.3.287-288),

mirroring that of stories of the birth of the antichrist. Notably, Rowley also changes the

"venue" of Merlin's conception to the woods, "the preferred locale for trysts with the devil",

as it represented the supposedly wild and untamed nature of female sexuality and its

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[57] Goodrich p. 63. Note that Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of Merlin seems to have come primarily from Nennius's *Historia Brittonum*, since this is the first version to call the character Merlin, but the rest of Merlin's story seems to be largely Geoffrey's invention. See Jarman.
[58] Obermeier p. 59.
[59] Obermeier p. 61. See also James I, Kramer, *Newes from Scotland*, and Scot for contemporary views of witches' relationships with the devil.
[60] Obermeier p. 59.
[61] Obermeier p. 66.

supposed connection to nature.[62] Merlin, who, despite being named in the title of the play, only appears in its latter half, already fully grown and being raised kindly by a "chang'd" (v.1.36) Joan. These amplifications and additions demonstrate Rowley's interest in a specifically feminine sin, but rather than demonising Joan's sexuality entirely, she is allowed to give it a voice. Before I can discuss the use of the pregnant woman's voice to tell the story, however, I must first address the tropes of illegitimacy from which Rowley draws, both in Arthurian literature and in early modern drama.

Unwed pregnancies and the search for legitimacy

Rowley's play demonstrates and highlights the generally negative treatment of mothers of illegitimate children through the other characters' treatment of Joan, and the ways in which those mothers can navigate their ill treatment as they are largely reduced to passive participants in a system of sexual commodification. It is unique in interpretations of Merlin's birth, and in Arthurian depictions of illegitimacy, in that it places focus on these stigmas and problems faced by women who find themselves pregnant whilst unmarried. While she ends the play in a relatively respected position, as discussed below, the first half of the play, which explores this stigmatisation of illegitimate pregnancy, is in a matter-of-fact way demonstrative of the tropes and attitudes towards illegitimate motherhood that permeated early modern literature and, by extension, consciousness.[63] Joan is called "whore" on several occasions due to her pregnancy, and is treated cruelly by her brother,

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[62] Obermeier pp. 60-61.

[63] Gowing 2003 p. 32. Gowing asserts that "[m]ale anxiety about the rightful paternity of children is at the heart of patriarchal structures; men's control of women is an attempt to control what is fundamentally uncontrollable and therefore threatening" (178). This was at the heart of much of the fears of illegitimate pregnancies, particularly their threats to patrilineal descent; see Chamberlain p. 73 and Findlay p. 2, pp. 8-9, Hoffer and Hull p. 127. This unease largely stemmed from the anxiety that paternity could not be definitively proven: men constantly feared being cuckolded as a form of emasculation. After a child's conception, men had no further involvement in its development; despite the patriarchal obsession with generation, until the baby's birth, everything was in the sole hands of the mother (see Hoffer and Hull p. 31, Chamberlain p. 31).

the Clown.[64] To mitigate this perceived damage to Joan's reputation, the Clown spends the entire duration of Rowley's play desperate to find the father of his pregnant sister's child; if a woman married whilst pregnant, the child would have at least been considered legitimate in the eyes of the church.[65] This is used for comedy—it is ironic that in a desperate attempt to cover up his sister's sins the Clown spends his time loudly announcing these sins to every man he comes across. The consequences of this comedic hypocrisy, however, is that the search for Merlin's father is largely dominated by the male characters while Joan is left beaten and insulted.[66] Despite the generally negative treatment of the concept of illegitimacy upon which Rowley draws within the play, however, bastard characters were a common trope throughout Arthurian literature and featured prominently without some of the negative stigma associated with the illicit sexuality of their mothers.

As exemplified by Malory, illegitimate children can be found in the majority of Arthurian stories. Malory has a vested interest in the relationships, especially reunions, between fathers and sons, and fatherless knights are a common theme present throughout the work, of which illegitimate children are a prominent subset.[67] One of the

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[64] See Rowley ii.1.21, ii.1.23, iii.1.38, iii.4.352.

[65] In early modern England, there was a generally negative treatment of illegitimate mothers, something which was showcased often in dramatic works featuring single mothers and bastards, in which much of the negative treatment revolves around the damaged reputation of the mother. Single women who bore children out of wedlock would have been, to a certain extent, marginalised by society, and their reputations outside of pregnancy would have been used as evidence against them in bastardy and infanticide court cases. See Findlay p. 8, Adair p. 71, Hoffer and Hull pp. 10-11.

[66] Motherhood itself was sometimes seen as a threat to male order, perhaps due to the inability for men to understand the power given to them by motherhood, which meant illegitimate mothers were even more frightening; they had "fragrantly" acted against social norms. See Karpinska p. 430, Hoffer and Hull p. 31.

[67] See Cory Rushton, 'Absent Fathers, Unexpected Sons: Paternity in Malory's Morte Darthur', *Studies in Philology*, 101.2 (2004), 136–52 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sip.2004.0009> for a more complete analysis of Malory's interest in paternal relationships. In addition to these bastard knights, children of dead and especially murdered fathers, make up the other major aspect of Malory's interest in fatherless knights.

most prominent, the story of the bel inconnu, or Fair Unknown, existed as a trope in and outside of Arthurian literature well before Malory's own interest in the motif, as seen in the stories of the Cote Mal Taile and especially Gareth, whose adventure has dedicated to it an entire book of the romance and whose story follows many of the tropes inherent to the Fair Unknown.[68] Malory's interest in these characters is in line with his interest in paternity, especially in the desire for revenge in the name of the unknown father. Malory's extensive use of the trope is not, by any means, the only appearance of illegitimate knights, however; in fact, illegitimacy is a means to explain the great lineages of many knights whilst allowing them to remain unknown to the others, to give one example. His interest in patrilineal relationships runs through the heart of the majority of plots—even Arthur was born to unmarried parents—hence his depictions of the status of the knights provides a general marker for how the Arthurian canon as it is currently defined approaches the issue of illegitimacy.

For instance, throughout his romance, Malory spends a lot of time emphasising the paternity of several characters, while leaving out the mothers. While Elaine is a partial exception to this rule, she still ends up a vessel for Galahad, the knight of the Grail quest. Similarly, Lancelot, who fills the role of the unwilling parent who conceived a child by rape, may have been tricked into fathering Galahad, but Galahad is essential to the Grail quest.[69] This is characteristic of the roles of many illegitimate fathers within Malory's text, including Bors, the father of another great knight, Elyne. Unlike Rowley, who spends much

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[68] The story of the Fair Unknown existed around several common themes, including a young, beautiful hero, his introduction at a gathering of knights, requests for a boon from the king for an adventure, an insistence upon keeping his identity secret, the desire to avenge his father, and a damsel who does not have faith in the knight's abilities; the core of the story, however, lies in a hero's rude upbringing and the secret of his (often murdered) father's identity. See Wilson pp. 6-8; 10. See also Sanders 35 and 46 for a point-by-point breakdown of Gareth's adherence to the tropes of the Fair Unknown.

[69] See Chapter 4 for an extended discussion of the relationship between Lancelot and rape narratives.

of his play reinforcing the notion of patrilineal importance to conception by undermining

Joan's chastity, Malory does not focus on the sexual fall of the mother, but on the

greatness of the sons—Elyne is a good knight and Galahad has to exist for the Grail quest

to happen at all. Knights, including Elyne and Tor, justify their noble blood through their

noble fathers, and their illegitimacy merely explains how they can be unknown to those

fathers. Apart from Lancelot, who admits he is "shamed" (XI.ii.525) by his encounter with

Elaine, the shame that comes from an unmarried pregnancy or bastard childhood goes

entirely unmentioned. Fathering sons, according to the grail quest, is "natural and even

redemptive".[70] Lancelot too participates in the Grail quest, his greatness as a knight only

surpassed by Galahad so long as his son is alive; after which he may return to his role as

the greatest knight of the Round Table.

Elyne's nobility is explicitly shown through his male relatives, as he passes his

name from Brandegorys, his maternal grandfather, to Bors, while his mother is given no

name. Both she and Tor's mother, a victim of rape by Pellinore, are given no role in the

story or in their sons' lives: "for maternal concern, Malory substitutes paternal control".[71]

This is perhaps the most obvious means for Malory, and other Arthurian writers, to dismiss

the role of the mother. Even as Elaine can represent transgressive sexuality through her

manipulation of Lancelot, she, very much like Joan, is sidelined in favour of interactions

between other characters. The mothers of Arthurian tradition are representative of the

female vessel; almost entirely unnamed—even Joan's character prior to Rowley's play had

not been given a name—their importance to the Arthurian world is through their sons.

Guinevere, a female character who is given narrative importance, is notably not a mother.

To Arthurian works, then, motherhood is a means not to one's own greatness but the

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[70] Karen Cherewatuk, 'Born-Again Virgins and Holy Bastards: Bors and Elyne and Lancelot and Galahad', *Arthuriana*, 11.2 (2001), <https://doi.org/10.1353/art.2001.0045> p. 53.
[71] Cherewatuk p. 54.

greatness of a male other. Therefore, once their sons can rise to prominence in the realm of the knights and of court, the mothers are no longer necessary.

Conversely, early modern drama, as influenced by the prominent contemporary discourse of illegitimacy, does not share this casual attitude towards bastard knights, but Rowley's play, by virtue of its adaptation of Arthurian literature, must also address the issue of illegitimate birth, particularly Merlin's, which is not only illegitimate but demonic. Unlike Arthurian texts before his that focus on Merlin's conception, Rowley is more interested in the pregnancy and birth.[72] Joan refers to Merlin's conception as her "sin and shame" (iv.1.109), a view which seems to validate the Clown's and the rest of the male cast's fears about her transgressive sexuality. Merlin is called "moon-calf" (iii.4.311) by the Clown, which follows the tradition of bastard children being associated with monstrous births, and that he is born with "growth and bigness" (iii.4.321) and with a full beard seems to validate these concerns until his heroic actions prove otherwise.[73] The play's use of language commonly associated with bastard births to refer to Merlin would have undermined the greatness with which the audience associated Merlin, and while it would have, within the realm of the text, made Merlin's eventual greatness and role as royal advisor all the more powerful, it also serves to portray Joan as simply another bastard-bearer, and despite Merlin's power and reverence for his mother, the play continues to treat her as such. The dismissive treatment of Joan by the other characters, especially her own brother, is both in keeping with traditional dramatic interpretations of unwed mothers, and downplays the importance of the child she is carrying, the child the audience knows to be Merlin. Consequently, as Rowley adapts Merlin's story to highlight not the struggle of a chaste nun but of a prideful common woman, he allows for Joan's story of illicit sexual

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[72] Obermeier p. 60.
[73] Findlay pp. 49-50.

activity to call attention to the perceived problem of bastardy in early modern cities, rather than provide the magical origin of a character which earlier sources for Merlin's conception required, thereby diminishing her own agency in the story further.

In Chapman's *Alphonsus*, a historical tragedy following the fall from power of its titular character, Hedewick is an unambiguous victim of rape but is similarly labelled a whore because she slept with someone she incorrectly believed was her husband. When she is found to be pregnant, she is locked away and eventually killed by a father who refuses to have her sin bring him shame. When she claims that "her Bridegroom [came] to her at midnight" (iv.98), she sets off a heated interrogation of her new husband, who refuses that anyone "Shall make me say I did anothers deed" (iv.131). While the interrogation is initiated on the basis that Edward is lying, Hedewick's father still commands his men to "bring the Whore my Daughter from my sight" (iv.141). Hedewick believes at the time, and indeed continues to believe throughout her pregnancy and the birth of her child, that she lay only with her husband. Indeed she sleeps with him despite her commitment to chastity on her wedding night because in having sex with her husband she would have been simply doing her duty "in the service of particular institutions", in this case her marriage.[74] Despite her insistence, and apparently others' belief, that she lay only with her husband, thereby making the pregnancy legitimate, Edward's refusal to take responsibility for the child still labels her a whore. Her child, too, does not escape the fate of bastard children; he, alongside his "distressed Mother" (iv.369), is designated "curst" (iv.370) by Saxony, utilising the language of monstrous birth that had similarly labelled Merlin "moon-calfe". As children conceived through adultery were assumed to be "essentially evil", Hedewick's sin, even if committed in the name of what she believed were

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[74] Catherine Batt, 'Malory and Rape', *Arthuriana*, 7.3 (1997), p. 89.

her marriage vows, has doomed her to whoredom and her child to a curse.[75] As a result, Hedewick acts as a tragic embodiment of the negative consequences of bastard birth and as an example of otherwise chaste women being labelled bastard-bearers and whores by virtue of being pregnant improperly.

On the other hand, Mistress Wagtail in Field's *A Woman is a Weathercock*, a comedy of disguise, mistaken identity, and arranged marriage, is defined as a whore in her very first appearance. Unlike Hedewick and Joan, whose labels as whore are imposed upon them by their own sins, Wagtail, whose name literally means a "lewd woman", is introduced as a whore and she makes no real attempt to contradict this.[76] Her plot is defined by manipulation, and her second spoken line—the first other than a fairly generic greeting, is "I have been lain with a hundred, and a hundred times, and nothing has come on't" (ii.1.331). A duel in iii.2 sees her being called "whore" no fewer than twelve times, and her bawdiness is seemingly well known throughout the town. While she does make an attempt to protect her honour, she does not shy away from her labels and instead admits to her habit of sleeping with men—albeit when she thinks no one can hear her—and looks not towards love or acceptance but simply means to provide for herself and her child and to save her honour. The story of Mistress Wagtail, then, provides a comic example of illegitimate mothers' treatment in drama; she is still a whore, but is freer with her language and less concerned with the more immediate consequences of an illicit pregnancy or monstrous birth. While Joan's story parallels Hedewick's concerns with her sudden whoredom, she shares with Wagtail, by virtue of both the less tragic nature of Rowley's story and the established and well-known legend of Merlin's conception, the less overpowering and imminent threat of death. On the one hand, Joan's plots are inherently

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[75] Findlay p. 47.
[76] Francis Grose, 'Wagtail', A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (S. Hooper, 1785), p. 174.

comic, as seen in her relationship with the Clown, but Rowley does not, in his portrayal of

Joan's struggles, shy away from the potential severity of the consequences that plague

illegitimate mothers.

Of further significance is the way in which women in the play are dismissed as

whores, they often must then be spoken for by other characters, primarily men, reducing

their roles in the births of their own children to passive vessels carrying potential greatness

or a potential problem to be covered up and ignored.[77] Rowley's Joan, in line with other

early modern pregnant single women, spends the play attempting to legitimise her son,

calling attention to a prominent concern in early modern cultural discourse, as well as the

powerlessness of women who find themselves in Joan's position.

For example, Mistress Wagtail, a comic illegitimate mother whose role within the

play is defined by her search for a potential father to give her child legitimacy, approaches

multiple men throughout the latter half of the play to confront as the child's father. The

comedy is in her manipulation, much as it appears in Rowley's play as the Clown attempts

to find a suitable father for his sister's child. As Wagtail does not attempt to make a good

faith search for the true father of her child, she is thereby liberated from the confines of

duty and legitimacy, and her character becomes comedic in her transgressive acts. She

does appear to care for the child's true father, whom she says "dances as well…plays as

well on the viol, and yet he must not father thee" because "I have better men" (ii.1.333).

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[77] Largely due to the aforementioned fears of pregnancy, pregnant women were considered to have a more passive than active role in their own pregnancy—pregnancy itself was considered an "essentially passive function" where women carried and gave birth to the child for the express purpose of serving the paternal family and being "stamped with its name". Women's role as a parent was "negligible in legal terms", but illegitimate children had no father to whom to connect their names and so must be tied only to their mothers', largely excluding them from any benefits offered to children in a patrilineal society. This view of motherhood as being essentially passive serves two functions: it reigns in the anxieties surrounding pregnancy by men—if women were only passive contributors to the patrilineal line, their function as mothers becomes less intimidating— and it makes women subservient to and especially dependent on men, as they become unworthy as people, and worthy only for their bodies. See Postles p.166, Findlay p. 7; 19.

When a Page suggests Pendant, saying "let him be the father" as he is "a very handsome gentleman, I can tell you, in my lord's favour" (ii.1.346), Pendant, who is well aware of Wagtail's dalliances with other men, asks "do you think I am such an ass to believe nobody has meddled with you but I?" (ii.1.360). In this question, Pendant not only confirms that he has lain with Wagtail, but that so many have that he may be able to shrug off the accusation in favour of another. Indeed, it is he who suggests she approach the newly-made knight and son of lewd parents, Abraham, even though he is one of the men whom Wagtail insists never slept with her, saying "lay the child to him — | Stand stifly to it, leave the rest to me; | By that fool thou shalt save thy honesty" (ii.1.387-389). Wagtail's interactions with the Page and Pendant are notable in their honesty; Wagtail openly admits to being intimate with several men outside of marriage, and that she is looking for someone "better" to act as the father of her child because though the father is a good man, he is not appropriate to father the child of a gentlewoman. Wagtail, too, means to protect her honesty and find a suitable father for her child, and indeed her actions are a subversion of the very system which would have her and her child cast out. Under her interactions with the men, however openly manipulative and based on fantasy and fabrication, lies character who leverages her sexuality to ensure her child has a better start in life rather than the desperation seen in Joan when she, too, confronts multiple men.

Like Joan, Chapman's Hedewick demonstrates clearly the problems with being unable to secure a father for her child especially when that search may disrupt the line of legitimate succession for another man. Her story in the latter half of the tragedy revolves around the interrogation of Edward, whom she and her father attempt to get to claim her son as his own. While she does beg for his acknowledgement, the interactions are largely held between Edward and Saxony, leaving Hedewick, very much unlike the more assertive Wagtail, a non-character, a pawn between men, who is dispatched with little fanfare and

without specific stage direction. Hedewick becomes the representation for the problems of attempting to assign a father to a worthy man, in this case her husband, and the consequences should he refuse. Early modern men were much more easily able to refuse responsibility for the child, and Edward, in claiming he is not the father of the child and refusing to take responsibility for a child that is not his, acts in ways similar to the men of Rowley's play and the men of the bastardy courts.[78] For early modern men, because much of bastardy proceedings was based on the word of a woman against the word of a man, if men did not want to be fathers, they could fairly easily evade responsibility for the child.[79] While Hedewick's fate is more extreme than other representations of illegitimate motherhood discussed here, and is in fact more aligned with narratives of rape than narratives of illegitimacy, the notion that any man can be identified as father still undermines patriarchal legitimacy within the story. Edward claims

were I not a Prince of so high blood,
And Bastards have no scepter-bearing hands,
I would in silence smother up this blot,
And in compassion of thy Daughters wrong,
Be counted Father to another's child
For why my soul knows her unguiltiness
(iv.479-484)

Edward's words make it clear that both he and Saxony know that Hedewick's situation is no fault of her own, but that since Edward is a prince who needs a son to carry on his legacy, something which a bastard child cannot do, he will not accept the son as his own. The play's logic declares the child a bastard and that Hedewick's death was the only course of action for her; when it is revealed that she was raped, it does not exonerate her, she is still a "whore" for sleeping with someone else.[80] To this end, Hedewick's agency

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[78] Gowing 2003 p. 177.

[79] Gowing 2003 p. 184. For information on the problems with women's word in early modern courts, see Chapter 3.

[80] I will address this issue more completely in a later chapter, which is why I do not do so here. For more information, however, see J. Catty, *Writing Rape, Writing Women in Early Modern England:*

and guiltlessness is not important; what is instead important is the patrilineal line that would be tainted if Edward were to raise someone else's child.

Similarly, when faced with Prince Uter's refusal of his being the father of Joan's child, he curses her "with a pox to ye" (ii.1.78), and then beats her to the point where Joan cries "murder" (ii.1.85). Though the Clown, present during the beating, does ask Uter to "Hold" (ii.1.84), his anger at Uter is demonstrated later in the scene to be that "he will not acknowledge [his] sister" (ii.1.95), rather than his treatment of her. Nicodemus, when he is confronted by Joan's requests for marriage, demands of the Clown a "courtiers fee for my pains" (iii.1.60) before he will offer them any legal assistance. Another man she confronts in the same scene will hardly entertain her story before calling her a "whore" (iii.1.38), the only time in the play a character other than the Clown does so. It is notable that all of these interactions, though Joan does have some part in them, are directed to the Clown. Joan is able to offer her thoughts if only to beg the men to assist her, while the Clown is the one to demand action of the potential fathers. Before Merlin's birth, Joan is repeatedly cast aside as simply a pregnant whore while the men speak around her. The Clown even specifically laments the child's lack of a paternal name, asking "what name shall we have for him, when we meet him?" (ii.1.21). Consequently, in the search for Merlin's father, Joan's story becomes dominated not by her own experiences but by the men around her; her story, up until the point of Merlin's birth, centres around the attempt to make Merlin legitimate and the actions and reactions of the men she approaches.[81]

In summary, the portrayal of these mothers and their searches for the fathers represents a pattern that spans much of early modern drama. The first half of the play presents Joan's story very much in line with the expectations set by contemporary drama.

Unbridled Speech, Early Modern Literature in History (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230309074> p. 112.

[81] Plays like Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *The Witch* follow this formula as well, as do many others; see Findlay for a more complete listing of plays which feature bastard characters.

Joan, much like Hedewick and Wagtail, has her worth defined by whether a father has

acknowledged her child, and the search for that father overwhelms her story. As a text set

in the Arthurian world, too, Rowley situates the importance of Merlin's father within an

Arthurian framework of greatness and, to some extent, mystery. It is in the second half of

Rowley's play, however, that Joan's story diverges from that of early modern convention,

giving her less prominent of a role but more prominent a voice. Following Merlin's birth,

Rowley gives his mother a platform, shifting the narrative entirely from one which follows

that of early modern convention to one which draws much more heavily from the Arthurian

stories upon which the play is based. In doing so, Rowley is thereby able to call attention

to other facets of the dramatic form, including diegetic narration in the form of expository

speeches that tell rather than outwardly depict past events to mark them as differently, if

not more, important than the plot of the play itself.

Diegetic narration and the limited female voice

Through her monologue, Joan uses her own voice to tell her story, however limited

that voice may be. The monologue is aware of the advantages and constraints of the

dramatic form and exploits these for its narrative purpose. Indeed, Jeremy Lopez, in his

analysis of *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*,

asserts that the "drama and its audience were very much aware of the limitations of the

early modern stage, and that the potential for dramatic representation to be ridiculous or

inefficient or incompetent was a constant and vital part of audiences 'experiences of the

plays".[82] Sometimes it is impractical to show things on stage like a large battle of hundreds

of men,[83] or scenes of sexual contact, so these actions might be reported by other

characters rather than directly represented. Despite these apparent limitation, however,

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[82] Lopez p. 2.
[83] Lopez p. 85.

expository dialogue is "more often a choice than a necessity", allowing playwrights to utilise the trope not to avoid the depiction of events but rather highlight an event's importance.[84] The act of narration is a common trope of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and the use of narration, outside of simple practicality, can do anything from communicate characterisation or identity or even shine a light on social dynamics and the "cultural significance of storytelling in contemporary culture".[85] The use of narration by a character within the story is known as diegetic narrativity, which "foregrounds the act of narration rather than the narrative storyworld".[86] Diegetic narration is commonly used by characters to represent things like sexual activity that the playwright would not be able to show onstage, and in this vein, the pregnant women of early modern drama are required to utilise this narration to communicate their plight to the audience and other characters. For characters who found themselves pregnant out of wedlock, their stories were often based on a set schema with stock characters, which I will refer to here as a "cultural script" for narrating their situation.[87] In early modern drama, these women are almost always given the opportunity to tell their own stories, but their voices are severely limited by the men around them. Defined only by their illicit sexuality, these women are consequently able to use their however limited voice before being either written out of the action entirely or folded back into the patriarchal status quo defined by contemporary cultural scripts.

For instance, Chapman's Hedewick tells her own story in pieces but it is in large measure literally not understandable by the audience, forcing Saxony to speak for her. Hedewick's voice is clear and consistent throughout the scene, but it is entirely written in

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[84] Lopez p. 79.
[85] Nünning and Sommer p. 220.
[86] Nünning and Sommer p. 207.
[87] Gowing 2003 pp. 13-14. While this is similar to the experiences of real life single mothers, I refer to this cultural script as the expectations for how these characters should act in a dramatic context.

German.[88] Hedewick explains that "her Bridegroom [came] to her at midnight" (iv.98) and that "[Edward] found her Bed, and lay with her" (iv.110). Many of her early lines, notably the ones where she explains her sexual encounter with "Edward", are translated by either Saxony or Edward after she speaks them, to the point that the scenes are largely understandable even if her words are removed. While she does learn some English during her pregnancy, her English words are often written to be accented—using "seete" (iv.446) for "sweet"—or mixed in with easily understandable German words—her continued use of "kindt" (iv.489) for child—making her language inconsistent and occasionally difficult to fully understand. When she does use English, it is largely to beg for mercy from Edward, telling him "now ist to late…arme kindt ist kilt" (iv.503), rather than to explain the story in words accessible to the audience. The limits on her language are perhaps most pronounced because she must be physically spoken for, but that her words are largely able to be dismissed by the audience, and the scene understood almost entirely without her presence, demonstrates an extreme example of the habitual filtering or even silencing of these women's voices, a pattern against which Joan's voice can be understood. Hedewick's voice is a clear one; her lines are consistent throughout the scenes and though she is killed, she is largely believed by the men around her, but she is unable to use that voice freely to communicate both with characters and the audience. The inability for the audience to understand Hedewick's plight highlights the tragedy of her story. The knowledge of the play's genre all but seals Hedewick's fate, and the audience, with full knowledge of Alexander's treachery, must simply watch the inevitable unfold, while her inability to be understood by the audience calls attention to her helplessness in the face of

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[88] The printed edition of this play is a facsimile that puts Hedewick's lines, and any lines spoken in German, in a different font from the rest of the play, making her own words extremely difficult to decipher.

the machinations of others.[89] Therefore, while Hedewick's voice is her own, the language barrier present in her scenes demonstrates in extremity the problems facing improperly pregnant women in drama.

On the other hand, Mistress Wagtail has much more freedom in the use of her own voice and the limits to her speech are less literal and based more on contemporary attitudes and conventions towards single pregnant women. Indeed, throughout her plot in the play, Wagtail is largely spoken for by Pendant and the Page as she feigns love for Abraham to manipulate him into marriage. Her story is largely comic; relying on the manipulation of men above her social station so that she might be able to provide a stable home for her unborn child.[90] The introduction of her pregnancy, however, is largely given through her own voice. She explains to the Page through speaking to her unborn child "I have better men. Let me remember them, and here, in my melancholy, choose out one rich enough to reward this my stale virginity, or fit enough to marry my little honesty" (ii.1.333). She insists "I hurt not the babe" (ii.1.335) and therefore must find the most suitable father, and invokes her conscience when she refuses to name Innocent Ninny, her master, as the father (ii.1.337). When she and Pendant scheme to force Abraham into marriage, too, she claims, "I have as fruitful a brain as a belly: you shall hear some additions of my own. My fantasy even kicks like my bastard" (iv.2.233) and will not, as Pendant commands, "remember my instructions" (iv.2.232). Indeed she demonstrates her intelligence in her success with Abraham, who even praises her: "she has excellent wit" (iv.2.269). Despite the care and thought Wagtail puts into the future of her child—Wagtail

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[89] Hoxby describes a story like Hedewick's as a pathetic tragedy, which relies on dramatic irony to stir pathos in the audience as they brace for the inevitable in a drawn out series of misfortunes. See pp 111-137 for further discussion of the pathetic tragedy.

[90] The comic genre was one that celebrated the "vitality of life" (Hoxby p. 59), and experimented with characters whose radical ideologies hinted at a potential societal change to accommodate their new ideas. Wagtail, as a single pregnant woman who ends the play married despite her manipulations embodies both vitality—her pregnancy is a representation of life—and that radical happy ending. See Bowers for a more complete discussion of radical comic characters.

narrates her story largely directly to her unborn child—her credibility is ultimately undermined by the dialogue and actions which establish her character. She explains her story through coughs and spits, and her plot in the play is defined by manipulation and outright lies, but it is largely not these actions which limit her voice. Wagtail is the one to explain her story in full, but her lewd and unapologetic characterisation primes the audience to distrust her character. Wagtail's first line of substance is "I have been lain with a hundred, and a hundred times, and nothing has come on't" (ii.1.331) and we are greeted by her pregnancy, forcing the audience, from her first appearance, to face her illicit sexuality. The line above is not the first time she speaks—she greets Pendant earlier in the scene as he, by the stage direction, pulls Wagtail by the sleeve—but the short first appearance is still important to the characterisation that leaves the audience with the impression of sexuality. The scene functions almost entirely to introduce her—"God's precious! Save you, Mistress Wagtail" (ii.1.298)—and to introduce her name, literally a euphemism for a prostitute. Abraham's praise of her, too, can be construed sexually; "wit" could be used as a slang for vagina.[91] Even before she is given any dialogue or action of substance, her name alone primes the audience to dismiss her words. In following this priming of the audience with repeated demonstrations of Wagtail's "wit" and skills in manipulation, Field consequently restricts her much freer voice through the undermining of her character.

Joan's voice is similarly limited both physically and by the story. In the physical sense, the Clown confronts the men, largely talking over her and neglecting her input in the questioning, and then she largely disappears from the narrative after she recounts the story of Merlin's conception, appearing only once more in a significant capacity to be attacked a second time by the devil. Despite this, Joan's voice is unique in that not only

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[91] It could also mean penis, depending on the context. See Lopez p. 42.

does it draw on an established source material, but her confession is redemptive. In this vein, the changes Rowley does make and the focus he places on Joan's story brings audience attention to aspects of female transgressions on which Merlin's story does not normally focus, and he does so by allowing Joan to tell the story herself. Joan is the one to narrate the story of Merlin's conception to Vortiger. While she would be the only person to know the story in its entirety, up until this point, in interactions with other men, Joan's input is rather weak, with the Clown largely speaking for her. In this scene, however, she has an extended monologue where she does nothing but narrate her story.

In which I shall betray my sin and shame.
But since it must be so, then know, great king,
All that my self yet knows of him is this:
In pride of blood and beauty I did live,
My glass the altar was, my face the idol;
Such was my peevish love unto my self,
That I did hate all other; such disdain
Was in my scornful eye that I suppos'd
No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me.
Thus with the peacock I beheld my train,
But never saw the blackness of my feet;
Oft have I chid the winds for breathing on me,
And curst the sun, fearing to blast my beauty.
In midst of this most leaprous disease,
A seeming fair yong man appear'd unto me,
In all things suiting my aspiring pride,
And with him brought along a conquering power,
To which my frailty yielded; from whose embraces
This issue came; what more he is, I know not.
(iv.1.109-127)

This monologue rewrites Joan's character archetype from one of illicit pregnancy to one of redemption. In Joan's own words, she had once lived in "pride of blood and beauty" (112), and calls this pride a "peevish love unto my self" (114). Her language is tinged with self-contempt, describing her attitudes towards other as "hate" (115) and a "scornful eye" (116). By the end of the speech, however, she describes having been "conquer[ed]" (125) and fallen victim to her own "frailty" (126). In the disgust she exhibits in her words to the way she used to think of herself and others, she demonstrates not only that she no longer

sees herself in this manner, but that she has moved beyond this way of thinking. She

comes to Vortiger in humility and deference, condemning the "sin and shame" (109) that

led to Merlin's conception. Joan, despite earlier characterisations by others, especially her

brother, as a whore, is open and honest about her prior sins, and is able to identify the

exact moral failings that led to her situation, suggesting an active attempt not simply to

move forward but to be better in the future.

 Indeed, the characterisation shift demonstrated by the language of the monologue

is mirrored in reactions to Joan by other characters. While, very much like Wagtail, she

begins the play as a comic representation of the poor unwed mother, in vocalising her

story, Joan shifts her own perception, in the eyes of both the characters and the audience,

to a character caught in the grander machinations of Arthurian tragedy. Rowley's play

follows the tradition of Merlin's birth closely, and Merlin's conception, usually the point of

interest for those recounting Merlin's story, is not seen. In fact, it is the only play that

dramatises Merlin's mother's pregnancy and birth story, if not the only major English text

to do so.[92] Notably, there are almost no other depictions of any aspect of Merlin's story in

early modern England: Malory skips over his conception and birth entirely and other

Arthurian stories of the time either ignore Merlin or treat him as an established character.[93]

If the elevation of her storyline from that of a common woman's search for the father to a

major asset to kings and armies can be described as a shift in genre, Joan's monologue

acts as the locus of this shift: once she can vocalise her plight, she moves from the lewd

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[92] Obermeier p. 66.

[93] The only exception is Thomas Heywood's *Life of Merlin* (1641), which simply follows Geoffrey's original story almost to the letter and functions not to tell Merlin's story but to link his prophecies to English historical events. See DONALD L. HOFFMAN, 'MALORY'S TRAGIC MERLIN', *Quondam et Futurus*, 1.2 (1991), 15–31 and Lawrence-Mathers for more information on Merlin's role in Malory's romance.

woman of comedy to the mother of an esteemed kingmaker.[94] If Joan's fall from chastity and humility is a tragic one, too, this monologue finally realigns Joan's story with that of Merlin's birth and the wider Arthurian world, but that its origins are within the comic search for the father is significant. As a result, the monologue acts as the focal point of Joan's character: not only is she able to assert herself after being spoken over for the majority of the play to this point, her penitence and honesty rewrites the expected story of the comic unwed mother and allows the destitute woman a chance at sympathy and redemption.

Indeed, Merlin encourages her "That which you dar'd to act, dread not to name" (iv.1.108). She herself condemns her "peevish love unto my self" (iv.1.114) and is forthcoming in her confession, even though in the traditional narrative of illegitimate pregnancy, she would have been labelled a whore. Despite the focus on Joan's sexuality as a specifically feminine sin, however, the condemnation of Joan's sexuality is projected onto a traditional story of supernatural birth and in fact Joan herself is not condemned in turn. While Joan, like Wagtail, is primed to be seen as a whore by her interactions with the men around her, her story does not confirm the illicit sexuality with which she has been associated but instead provides it context that makes her more sympathetic. Rowley is bound to a source material well known to audiences, but still actively participates in the convention of diegetic narration. In doing so, he creates a sort of generic hybrid which provides possibilities for a unique voice for the illegitimate mother that is not one of tragedy or condemnation, but honesty and redemption. Her voice is still limited by the convention of drama and by contemporary attitudes towards patriarchal succession and

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[94] As discussed above, Rowley's play does not follow the traditional constraints of genre, and in fact weaves the comic Clown plots with the more traditional tragic or historical plots of kings and armies—that tragedies were thought to be thee stories of kings and armies is more completely discussed in Hoxby, p. 64—but following Merlin's birth, and especially after the delivery of Joan's monologue, the comic plot, as well as mst of the play's tragic elements, disappear almost entirely, and the latter two acts read as a more conventional history play.

legitimacy, but her more sympathetic voice consequently makes Rowley's depiction of Joan unique to portrayals of sexual sin as well as to Arthurian bastardy.

To summarise, Rowley allows Joan to tell her own story in a way that, however limited, gives her a voice as an unmarried mother. While the monologue does follow contemporary depictions of motherhood found in other plays like Chapman's and Field's, the added layer of the Arthurian source material allows for Joan's position to be legitimised by the identity of her son. Joan's singular voice, then, calls attention to the ultimate consequence of the convention of a diegetic narrative within drama: rather than the events being recounted, the effects of the story being told gain the focus and attention of the narrative.

Consequences over actions

In dramatic narratives, a reliance on expository dialogue works to call attention not to the action as it unfolds but to how the action affects characters and institutions central to the world of the action. The action itself is secondary to the rise or fall of these institutions as the world of the play unfolds towards its climax. Indeed, where more often historians and romance authors would prefer to show the story of Merlin's conception outright, Rowley chooses instead to relay it to the audience through Joan's story.

The use of testimonial narratives to this effect can be traced back to Malory's use of telling stories to show many aspects of paternal and illegitimate relationships. Merlin reveals Tor's parentage to Arthur when Pellinore is not present (III.iii.71), leaving Arthur to reveal this fact to Pellinore himself (III.iv.72). Despite Malory's noted interest in paternal relationships, this scene forgoes the traditional reunion trope in favour of relaying the story impersonally. This exchange between Arthur and Merlin is demonstrative of Malory's

preference for revealing information to characters second-hand.[95] This is true, too, of Malory's depiction of Merlin and his origin story, demonstrating his discomfort with Merlin's parentage. Malory gives Merlin a relatively small role in his romance, possibly in an attempt to separate the heroic Arthur from associations with the demonic.[96] Like Rowley, Malory does not directly depict Merlin's conception or confirm the identity of his father; instead, the story is relegated to rumour and insults— "men saith that Merlin was begotten of a devil" (IV.xiii.105)—referencing the story that would have been known to the audience but avoiding portraying it outright. As a result, the beginning of the romance is "[haunted]" by the "untold tale of Merlin's birth", leaving his demonic father a "ghostly presence" over his role in the text.[97] Merlin is rejected by his lover, Nenyve, for being "a devil's son" (IV.i.89); that Merlin's own story is told second-hand, by those without intimate knowledge, demonstrates Malory's interest with the effects of storytelling within a narrative. Spreading rumours about Merlin's father, relegating the story to one told, rather than one seen, Malory therefore codifies the pattern within Arthurian works to rely heavily on storytelling as a means of sharing information, as well as the importance not of the information itself, but the effects the information has on the story surrounding it.

Likewise, Joan's story—her sin, her pregnancy, her accusations of whoredom— allows Merlin to take his place as magical adviser to the kings of Britain. After Merlin is born, she is given a brief moment of narrative liberation, but as it is still bound to generic conventions, following this moment, Joan largely disappears from the narrative. Her appearances after Merlin's birth serve to further Merlin's story—in addition to her narrative freedom, her account of his conception proves to Vortiger that he has found a child without a father, while her second encounter with the devil allows Merlin to prove his power and

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[95] C. Rushton p. 140.
[96] Lawrence-Mathers p. 211.
[97] Hoffman p. 15.

superiority over his father. For her own part, Joan's happy ending is not one of acceptance, however, as is Merlin's. Instead, she is sent into exile to encourage her continued purity and her repentance for her prior vanity. Joan, following the birth of her illegitimate son, completely gives up the search for Merlin's father. During her pregnancy, while the search is directed by the Clown, she spends the majority of her pregnancy complying with his wishes and naming men she believes could have been the father, but she ultimately rejects the marriage which might have saved her reputation. This is especially important to Joan's original encounter with the devil, which appears coercive in nature. Her story of Merlin's conception, "And with him brought along a conquering power, | To which my frailty yielded" (iv.1.125-126), includes several references to the euphemistic language of rape.[98] Marriage was considered a fix-all for pregnant rape victims, since the marriage would cancel out the "indiscretion", rape or otherwise.[99] It would remove Joan from the "paradox" of rape victims, and allow her to return to society without remaining outside of the acceptable places for women, a concept which will be examined further in a later chapter.[100] This reframes Joan's compliance with the Clown's desperation in the search of the father of her child: not only is she searching for Merlin's father, but for the man who took advantage of her, and who left her in disgrace. The language is ambiguous, though, and Joan's references to her pride are unique amongst depictions of Merlin's conception; his mother is usually depicted as chaste.[101] Regardless of the language and the framing of Joan's story, however, the marriage solution is ignored.

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[98] Barbara J. Baines, 'Effacing Rape in Early Modern Representation', *ELH*, 65.1 (1998) discusses at length the language of conquest used to describe rape, which acts to "[distance] the reader from its cruelty" (p. 85), but also removes the woman's volition. Additionally, the social requirements which allowed women to be believed stripped the victims of their senses of self, as they had to fit within the narrative and not their own stories. Yielding in frailty, as Joan describes, is one of those narratives. See Walker "Rereading Rape" For a more complete analysis of rape tropes in early modern literature, see Chapter 3.

[99] Baines p. 72.

[100] Nicol p. 177.

[101] Obermeier p. 66.

This does not, however, fix Joan's problem of social place. While the framing of the scene and future encounters with the devil do imply rape, the ambiguous language might have allowed for Joan to take her place in society as a whore. Instead, after she tells her story to Vortiger, the problem of Merlin's father is not mentioned again. The Clown taunts Merlin with his lack of a father in Act IV, but even he says no more after Merlin shows off his powers of magic and prophecy, after which the Clown insists on his title as "uncle" (v.2.147). Joan, even if she is not entirely accepted by her society, instead sent away by her son to "dwell with solitary sighs" (v.1.93), is no longer a "whore" to those around her. Subsequently, her negative treatment all but ends the moment Merlin can prove that he is worthy, and that she, tangentially, can be worthy as well.

Indeed, the worthiness of the mother as decided by the worthiness of the child is important to the traditional Arthurian narratives of illegitimate motherhood. Several of Malory's knights of the Round Table, including Galahad, Tor, and Elyne, are illegitimate sons of other Round Table knights, Lancelot, Pellinor, and Bors respectively. Lancelot's narrative is set apart, however, simply by the appearance and importance of Elaine. Elaine is not the only illegitimate mother to appear in Malory's work, but she is the only one to have any significant—and especially heroic—time dedicated to her. Despite her manipulation of Lancelot, and his accusations that she is a "traitress" (XI.ii.525), the resulting child, Galahad, causes "great joy" (XII.x.557) for the "most noblest knight of the world" (XI.iii.526), language explicitly used by Elaine to convince Lancelot of the positive nature of her actions. As with Merlin, Galahad renders the pain and shame of the parent worth it. It is notable, however, that this is the only time an illegitimate mother is allowed this much attention in Malory's work, as well as the larger Arthurian tradition. The focus on Merlin's mother, then, is a unique perspective and expands the possibilities of the Arthurian canon.

Rowley's unique treatment of this normally chaste woman, however, identifies the problems of the narrative of female sexuality. Joan begins the play as the Clown's property, with no husband and no apparent father,[102] but following his birth, Joan ties herself instead to Merlin, making him the holder and protector of her purity.[103] Rather than her pregnancy, the focus of her character shifts to her maternal pride for Merlin and his inherent goodness, showcasing Joan as a mother rather than a whore without a husband.[104] Joan's rejection of the pride that "as good as calls the devil to her" leaves her, for the rest of the play, unable to protect herself and her commitment to redemption is not enough to completely keep the devil from attacking her again.[105] This forces her to make good on her chastity when Merlin essentially builds Joan her own convent, removing her from the society which cannot understand her and enabling her to live out her life alone and away from that society's patriarchal strictures. Her moral tether to Merlin, too, protects her from the devil's continued assaults. After she tells her story, she could have been dismissed altogether by the play's narrative, but instead she reappears, once again under threat of sexual assault by the devil. It is Merlin who ultimately steps in to protect his mother, declaring to the devil "The power of Merlins art is all confirm'd | In the Fates decretals. Ile ransack hell, | And make thy masters bow unto my spells" (v.1.75-77) to ensure that "never shalt thou touch a woman more" (v.1.81). Merlin, who disobeys his father's wishes in utilising his demonic magic for good, represents the "emergence of good from evil".[106] In bearing a child who can defeat the devil, Joan's sin has produced a positive outcome. Joan's interactions with the devil, then, produce Merlin twice: once literally as a baby and once as the occasion for his goodness to emerge. Hence, like the

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[102] Findlay p. 8.
[103] Karpinska p. 441.
[104] Isaac p. 114.
[105] Karpinska p. 442.
[106] Findlay p. 179.

"great joy" brought by Galahad, to Rowley, the birth of Merlin justifies the circumstances of his conception.

Furthermore, regardless of her marital status, tying her morality to Merlin functions in very much a similar way to marriage within the confines of patriarchy: she may still be controlled, and no longer is a threat through her transgressive sexuality. In marriage, or in Joan's case, her motherhood, women can be "captured and contained" by men, where outside of this relationship, women were deemed dangerous.[107] Joan, whilst unmarried, represented "female power…unallied with nature".[108] If women's "nature" was to be married or in some manner the property of men, without a husband, Joan cannot be contained. Legal, and indeed religious, ideologies of early modern England did insist on this subjugation, but this did not necessarily need to be a husband.[109] So long as Joan could be contained by a male figure, in her case her son, she technically does not need a husband, but this does not prevent her from needing to remove herself from the traditional society. The consequences of her sin, then, cannot be avoided purely through her confession alone, even for her son. Before Merlin has proved his worth, as far as the Clown is concerned, Merlin is "moon-clafe" (iii.4.311), but once he has proved himself, the Clown becomes his "uncle" (v.2.147). Joan's redemption may have been facilitated by the telling of her own story, but she cannot entirely escape those societal consequences of illegitimacy. She must admit her own sins to facilitate her redemption, but it is Merlin who must ultimately prove her worthiness. Consequently, following her transgression, she is unable to integrate properly and still remain unmarried, and if her chastity is to be maintained, she must retreat to solitude.

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[107] Karpinska p. 438.
[108] Karpinska p. 428. Note that here the word "nature" refers to a the nature of a woman, and not the wildness of physical nature that was often associated with sexuality. See Obermeier pp. 60-61.
[109] Peters 1997 p. 329.

Moreover, Joan's solitude is the ultimate climax of her own story. Vocalising her own sin, allowing herself to be heard, even as she is still forced to conform to societal expectations of the consequences of sexual sin, earns Joan acceptance and respect in the context of the play's narrative. A loss of a woman's virginity may not be completely irreconcilable, but in order for a woman to maintain a good name, chastity after the fact was required.[110] In her retreat to Merlin's Bower, Joan is not only pledging herself to her future chastity but rejecting all future acts of sexuality. Even though Joan's sexuality is ultimately condemned and arguably punished, both Rowley and Merlin deem her harmless and "treat her kindly"; despite her admission to sex with the devil, the ultimate sin for which she should be punished, she faces no legal or ecclesiastical consequences.[111] The effects of Joan's story, then, present a unique narrative for an illegitimate mother and child. Founded on the source material which dictates Merlin's net positive effect on the world of Arthur's court, Joan's account of Merlin's conception allows for her own redemption whilst still remaining firmly within the confines of female sexuality. Her story does not excuse her actions, nor does it confirm her status as a whore; instead it allows for context which shines a sympathetic light on a woman who has admitted to her own sins and taken responsibility from them. She must still be exiled, at least in terms of early modern and Protestant views of convent life, in order to correct the paradox of her existence in the world of female subjugation, but she is portrayed with much more empathy and understanding, allowing for a view of female sexuality with a bit of nuance.[112] As a result of dedicating herself to her redemption in the confession of her mistakes, she has

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[110] Peters 1997 p. 328.

[111] Obermeier p. 66.

[112] Note that in medieval and indeed medieval Arthurian thought, a convent life was considered a perfectly acceptable and desirable place for lone women.

demonstrated the ultimate good she has brought to the world, even if this good was brought about through her sin.

The story about Joan's pregnancy is, then, ultimately not about the pregnancy itself, or even the problems of legitimacy which it depicts. Instead, it serves to produce Merlin, the great Arthurian magician, and further, Joan's telling of that story serves not to outwardly portray the story of Merlin's conception but, as the mother of an important and, at least within the world of Rowley's play, benevolent figure, to allow her a sympathetic lens through which she can be redeemed. Joan's monologue also reveals the true identity of Merlin's father and, beyond simply proving his identity as the child without a father, provides a side to Merlin's birth counter to the traditional narrative of demonic plots. Importantly, it presents to the audience two different narratives of the same story, calling to attention the function of storytelling as the creator of accepted reality.

Constructions of reality and limits of truth

While the effects of the stories as they are told draw attention to how actions and stories are interconnected, diegetic narration also allows narrators who do not represent actions faithfully to create a reality of their own. Whether this reality, then, is accepted or rejected by others in the world of the play demonstrates the versatility of storytelling and reveals its true power. An unreliable narrator, therefore, wields a performative power to shape reality, and" raises the question of which of the competing stories can claim authority, validity and truth."[113]

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[113] Nünning and Sommer p. 216. For further theoretical discussions of constructed truth, see Sarah Emily Faubert, 'This I Believe: Examining the Construction of Truth, Belief, and Reason', *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*, 26.1 (2020), 68–74, Raymie E. McKerrow, 'Foucault's Relationship to Rhetoric', *Review of Communication*, 11.4 (2011), 253–71 <https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2011.602103>, Peter Rushton, 'Texts of Authority: Witchcraft Accusations and the Demonstration of Truth in Early Modern England', in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Stuart Clark (London: Macmillan Education UK, 2001), pp. 21–39 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-333-98529-8_2>, and Theodore R.

Mistress Wagtail's manipulation of Abraham into marriage is perhaps one of the best examples of how reality can be shaped through language alone. When Pendant, who acts as Wagtail's accomplice, first confronts Abraham with their newly constructed narrative, he accuses him outright of fathering the child: "what a mad villain art thou...to get one wench with child, and go a-wooing to another" (iii.3.259), and then draws on Abraham's assumption of Wagtail's whoredom to appeal to his pride: "But, whore or no whore, she is most desperately in love with you" (iii.3.274). Pendant is the one who initiates the manipulation, but the real source of this constructed reality is Wagtail herself. Wagtail eschews Pendant's instructions to form a story of her own. She utilises the lament, a common trope of romance, to allow Abraham to overhear her—"why dost thou love | Where thou hast sworn it never to reveal? | Maybe he would vouchsafe to look on thee." (iv.2.234-236)—while she compliments him:

Thy very name,
Like to a hatchet, cleaves my heart in twain.
When first I saw thee in those little breeches,
I laugh'd for joy, but when I heard thy speeches,
I smil'd downright, for I was almost frantic,
A modern knight should be so like an antic
In words and deeds.
(iv.2.255-261)

The use of the lament and the exaggerated poetic style within it are reminiscent of pastoral poetry, and its effects on Abraham are immediate and pronounced. Abraham, more concerned with the loss of his love than the potential reality of the situation, accepts Wagtail's version of her child's conception—"there was one night above the rest, that I dreamt he lay with me; and did you ne'er hear of a child begot by dream" (iv.2.274)—with a mere memory of a similar dream of his own, even though they had never engaged in any contact that would result in a child. The constructed reality of Wagtail's manipulation

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Sarbin, 'The Social Construction of Truth', *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 18 (1998), 144–50 <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0091181>.

succeeds in altering in-world events: she and Abraham do marry as part of the play's happy ending. It is the convention of comedy to end happily no matter the mishap, and Wagtail's comes from her wit and strength of language.[114] She is able to reintegrate herself into the patriarchal order as a pregnant woman, rather than accepting exile, through the creation of a reality that claims authority over the truth. Wagtail's manipulation of Abraham is thereby demonstrative of a story's ability, when told with the confidence of the diegetic expository dialogue that simply relays off-screen actions, to affect the world of the play in a manner that might overcome truth itself.

Not every constructed reality is accepted as truth by the play, however, and this rejection can ultimately result in tragedy. Edward's rejection of the narrative manipulated by Alexander leads to the deaths of both Hedewick and her child. Alexander's schemes do create an accepted reality for Hedewick—she is, through Alphonsus and Alexander's manipulations, convinced that the man she slept with the previous night was her husband.

Alphonsus advises

Hie thee with speed into the inner Chamber,
Next to the Chappel, and there shalt thou find
The Danty trembling Bride coutched in her Bed,
Having beguil'd her Bridegroom of his hopes,
Taking her farewel of Virginity,
Which she to morrow night expects to lose,
By night all Cats are gray, and in the dark,
She will imbrace thee for the Prince of *Wales*
(iii.442-449)

The construction of this false reality is the foundation of the fall of Hedewick: because she could not in the dark distinguish Alexander from Edward, she is convinced of her innocence of any sin. This narrative, however, is mostly rejected by Edward, though elements of it, namely Hedewick's innocence in the matter is accepted even as he and Saxony continue to demonise her sexuality. Saxony identifies himself as Virginius

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[114] Lopez p. 126.

(iv.431)—a father of a Roman tale who kills his daughter after she was sexually assaulted—and Edward declares Hedewick "pitious" (iv.475) and identifies her "unguiltiness" (iv.484); it is clear that both men accept the truth of Hedewick's perceived reality. To these men, however, because Edward alone rejects it, her understanding of the situation and whether she was truly guilty of the sin of which she was accused does not matter. It is the disconnect between Hedewick and Edward's differing views on what is true which results in the scene's tragedy, a tragedy which Alexander, the mastermind of this disconnect himself must face when confronted with the deaths of Hedewick and the son he fathered, declaring "O piteous spectacle!" (iv.538). As Hedewick cannot exist in a world where her roles as wife and bastard-bearer coincide, there remains a tension between two lived understandings of reality. In depicting the tragic consequences of a constructed reality rather than its potential comic outcomes, Chapman highlights the other side of the coin from Field. These plays demonstrate that women are capable of using their voices to affect the trajectories of their stories, but this is ultimately affected by whether the character speaks in a comedy or a tragedy. Put simply, the genre of the play may affect whether or not a lie is believed, as in the case of Wagtail, or a truth is disbelieved, as is Hedewick's. The rejection of Hedewick's reality, therefore, demonstrates the tragedy inherent in the creation of an authoritative truth: so long as one party rejects a truth as another understands it, the two realities cannot coexist.

In his final appearance, the devil, too, attempts to create a false reality of Joan's repentance and sexuality, but his narrative is ultimately rejected, by both Joan and Merlin, demonstrating an acknowledgement within the world of the play of the possibility of redemption and the limitations of a black-and-white view of illegitimacy. Instead, Joan, in refusing to allow the devil to define her character, writes a new narrative, one in which her words and prayers can shed her of her lewd status. The devil's second attempt to assault

Joan is met with cries of "I am chang'd" (v.1.36) and that there is no reason for him to be there:

I had no pride
nor lustful thought about me, to conjure
and call thee to my ruine, when at first
thy cursed person became visible
(v.1.31-34)

Even as Joan has escaped the captivity of her pride and vanity, and she no longer wants to be manipulated, she struggles in keeping the devil away. The devil has attempted to create an image of Joan's sin and sexuality, insisting "Ile change thee to the same thou wert, | To quench my lust" (v.1.37-38). According to the devil's narrative, Joan's redemption is easily reversible, if not able to be entirely dismissed. The devil is even aware of that strength of conscience which is Joan's relationship with Merlin, vowing "From Brittain and from Merlin Ile remove her. | They ne're shall meet agen" (v.1.44-45). The devil attempts to create a world in which Joan cannot resist him, and while it is clear that Joan needs Merlin to fight the devil off, it is not because of Joan's fall back into sin or a failing of her character, but the force which the devil wields and threatens to use against her. That Joan is able to resist at all, however, challenges the devil's narrative and in turn the cultural narrative of innate feminine sexuality and sinfulness. Joan's resistance of the devil becomes an "exculpatory strategy" and a "counter narrative" to cultural expectations; she rejects the devil once he is revealed as such, when early modern demonologists believed that women willingly and happily had repeated consensual sexual encounters with the devil, even entering into "sexual service".[115] This cultural narrative would dictate that Joan continue her relationship with the devil and do so happily, but instead Rowley portrays the devil as a literal force for evil, an entity which must use force to coerce this relationship with Joan. Even if she cannot resist him alone, Joan's mere attempt runs

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[115] Obermeier p. 65.

counter to those expectations that illegitimate mothers are guilty of some form of sexual sin from which they can never escape. The devil's failed narrative of Joan's continued willingness to sin reveals a counter-narrative to that of the bastard-bearer: while her exile is still indicative that Joan is in danger of reverting to her sexual past—"There shall you dwell with solitary sighs, | With grones and passions your companions, | To weep away this flesh you have offended with" (v.1.93-95)—the simple act of rejecting the devil's narrative suggests that redemption for those who have sinned is, in fact, possible. Joan, in vocalising her penitence, allows for this shift in character definition. Her monologue makes her sympathetic, gives her a voice, and allows for even limited self definition. In this vein, Joan, in not allowing the devil's narrative to define her character, becomes the one mother in the world of early modern dramatic conventions to use her own voice to craft a new narrative, one of redemption, rather than of consistency of sin or tragedy.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the way in which Joan's story is told in Rowley's play. Joan is able to earn respect and sympathy both from other characters and from the audience despite her plight because of her dedication to repentance and confession. This chapter's analysis of Joan's story, then, is able to shine a spotlight on the voice of a character very rarely discussed, and in particular, reveals the power of her monologue to determine the outcome of the story. Joan's voice in an Arthurian context, a context which very rarely gives any attention to the mothers of important figures, let alone single mothers, allows for the creation of a new role within Arthurian literature for these characters of early modern drama. Significantly, it also introduces the diegetic dramatic testimonial to Arthurian literature, allowing the voices of marginalised characters to affect the outcomes of their own internal realities.

This play is significant because it presents an illegitimacy story that incorporates the Arthurian canon, as well as an Arthurian story which incorporates early modern beliefs surrounding illegitimacy. The Arthurian context now features a search for the child's father rather than the fatherless knights which permeate the medieval romances. On the other hand, the narrative of lone pregnant women which featured in early modern drama is now allowed to offer sympathy and a softened response to its illegitimate mother by adding the Arthurian context. This chapter has shined a spotlight on how these narratives have shifted through their combination, particularly through the narrative technique of testimony.

It is Joan's voice which allows her respect by the play: by giving his illegitimate mother space to tell her story, Rowley gives a voice to a character that is often entirely forgotten or ignored in other versions of Merlin's story. Traditional representations of Merlin's conception and birth put all of the focus on what is reduced in Rowley's play to a single monologue, instead allowing Joan to act as Merlin's mother and ultimately prove incorrect all accusations of whoredom levied against her. While she must still be removed from the society which cannot understand her position, and Merlin is still set apart from the rest of society by virtue of his bastard (and demonic) birth, that Joan is allowed to speak and still receive respect by the narrative despite admission of pride and illicit sexual activity is notable. Rowley's portrayal of Joan is notable in both the Arthurian canon and to the realm of early modern drama. While Rowley's portrayal of Joan does follow the trend of ostracisation and condemnation, her story is not one of exclusively comedy or tragedy. It is one of salvation and empathy, and while she is still guilty of sins of the flesh, she can still end the play respected and sympathetic.

Importantly, Joan is able to gain this respect through the narration of her own story. Diegetic narration is a popular convention of early modern drama, and Rowley demonstrates the two major benefits—and limitations—of this narration through Joan's

relationship with the devil. On the other hand, Joan's plot also shows the power of the constructed narrative, when the devil attempts—and fails—to assault her a second time. Diegetic narration can be used, for good or ill within the world of the story, to construct a reality almost from scratch, and whether this reality is accepted, this chapter has shown, can alter the world of the story in terms of its genre. Rowley's constructed reality does not conform to these options, and in doing so he defies expectations for women who both bear illegitimate children and have sexual encounters with the devil. Instead, Joan's rejection of the devil's narrative proves her commitment to repentance and purity, and allows for Merlin to defeat his father with the very magic he gave him.

One of the things this chapter has done is give voices to characters who are otherwise marginalised. In the next chapter, I will develop this analysis, focusing on language and how it is used further define marginalised characters and create a shorthand for transgressive behaviour through Rowley's play's portrayal of witchcraft.

Chapter Two: Bewitching Bodies and Vulnerable Outcasts: The Language of Witchcraft in *The Birth of Merlin*

Whether represented negatively or positively, magical figures are by definition different from the norm; they function as others against which normative conventions can be defined. In particular, describing and interpreting the gendering of magical figures allows us to to configure normative gender conventions by delineating their boundaries, those liminal spaces where humanity fades into monstrosity.[116]

William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* is a play that traffics extensively in magic and its effects on characters and the state. The play navigates Merlin's magic as a positive force in the life and birth of the future Arthur during a time of hostility to witchcraft and magic, acting as an assurance of the rightful process of succession. Despite this animosity and the importance of magic to the narrative, no witch appears as a character in the play even as Rowley draws from the contemporary discourse of witchcraft. All magical characters are wholly separate from the traditions of witchcraft, and are in fact referred to as "magician" (ii.2), "hermit" (i.2.167), and "prophet" (iv.5.436). Witches do seem to exist in Rowley's universe; "The bards, the druids, wizards, conjurers" are invited to help Vortiger, but "no witch" (iv.1.25-30). Witches' exclusion, however, especially considering the significant presence of magic and focus given to the language and concepts surrounding it is noteworthy. Rowley still engages with the discourse of witchcraft, however, incorporating elements of witchcraft tradition such as demonic influence and predatory female sexuality into his characters. Numerous female characters are identified with witchcraft, including Joan, the chaste Modestia (iii.2.219) and especially Artesia, who functions as the female villain of the play. Joan is decried by Prince Uter as "witch, scullion, hag" (ii.i.74) upon even a suggestion that they may have engaged in a sexual relationship. On the other hand, Artesia gets direct references to her beauty as magic, as

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[116] Breuer p. 7.

she is "witch by nature, devil by art" (iii.6.506) and "damn'd witch" (iv.5.371) to several characters. None of these women have any real magic to speak of, and in fact all of the magic users in the play are male. This means the choice of witchcraft language serves a specific purpose in the crafting of the play, and that Rowley is drawing on this language in a manner that suggests that it is not the magic itself which makes a witch. Instead, this language of feminine witchcraft is used to discredit the characters of these women, to insist upon their transgressions, or to attempt to remove them from a masculine sphere of conversation.

This chapter discusses the language of witchcraft and its use in Rowley's play, where magic plays a major role but witchcraft itself does not appear, and examines how this language use connects several different literary moments, including Arthurian literature, early modern drama, and witch trial pamphlets. This chapter will define witchcraft as any magical ability used by a human that requires communication with supernatural entities, in particular demons or gods, to effect the witch's will. As defined in the 1619 Pamphlet, "The Wonderful Discovery of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower", witchcraft is defined as acts "through the instruments of the Divell, by permission of God, so that the actors of the same have carried away the opinion of the world, to doe that which they did by Witchcraft, or at least to be esteemed Witches, for bringing such and such things to passe".[117] While this chapter acknowledges that both men and women could be witches, it focuses primarily on demonic witchcraft and its association with women. The Arthurian tradition is replete with magic, and scholars have long found interest in the magic of Arthurian literature, but have consistently noted that this magic is

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[117] 'The Wonderful Discovery of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower (1619)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 276–98 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9 February 2021].

primary used by sorcerers or enchanters.[118] This is especially true, in the early modern

period, in scholarly discussions of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.*[119] While the magic that

does appear in Rowley's play adheres closely to this tradition, much of the language used

to refer to and describe his female characters refer to witches and stem from witch trial

media.[120] This chapter, then, probes what happens to the Arthurian tradition when witches

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[118] See Breuer, Fox, Lawrence-Mathers, Richard Levin, 'My Magic Can Lick Your Magic', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 22 (2009), 201–28, and Markale for a specific focus on Arthurian literature. For works which include Arthurian texts see Michael David Bailey, 'The Feminization of Magic and the Emerging Idea of the Female Witch in the Late Middle Ages', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 19.1 (2002), 120–34 <https://doi.org/10.1353/ems.2003.0002>, *Cultures of Witchcraft in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. by Jonathan Barry, Owen Davies, and Cornelie Usborne, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63784-6>, Stuart Clark, Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe (Oxford University Press, 1999), Stuart Clark, Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2017), McAdam, E. William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe*, New edition edition (Brighton: Branch Line, 1985), Frances Timbers, Magic and Masculinity: Ritual Magic and Gender in the Early Modern Era (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), and Traister, among others.

[119] See Berger, Sheila T. Cavanagh, 'Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in "The Faerie Queene"', *Studies in Philology*, 91.3 (1994), 313–38, Cheney, Guenther, and D. Douglas Waters, 'Errour's Den and Archimago's Hermitage: Symbolic Lust and Symbolic Witchcraft', *ELH*, 33.3 (1966), 279–98 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2872107>.

[120] Gibson includes a collection of pamphlets that lay out the types of language seen in witch trial media. See also Anonymous, The Examination, Confession, Triall, and Execution, of Joane Williford, Joan Cariden, and Jane Hott; Anonymous, The Tryall and Examination of Mrs. Joan Peterson, before the Honorable Bench, and the Sessions House in the Old-Bayley, Yesterday; for Her Supposed Witchceaft [Sic], and Poysoning of the Lady Powel at Chelsey; Anonymous, The Dæmon of Burton, or, A True Relation of Strange Witchcrafts or Incantations Lately Practised at Burton in the Parish of Weobley in Herefordshire Certified in a Letter from a Person of Credit in Hereford; Anonymous, A Full and True Account of the Proceedings at the Sessions of Oyer and Terminer, Holden for the City of London, County of Middlesex, and Goal-Delivery of Newgate; Which Began at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bayly, on Thursday, Iune 1st. and Ended on Fryday, Iune 2d. 1682 Wherein Is Contained the Tryal of Many Notorious Malefactors, for Murders, Fellonies, Burglary, and Other Misdemeanours, but More Especially the Tryal of Jane Kent for Witch-Craft. Together, with the Names of Those That Received Sentence of Death, the Number of Those Burn'd in the Hand, Transported, and Vvhip'd. As Likewise Some Proceedings in Relation to the Persons That Violently Took the Lady out of the Coach on Hounslow-Heath; Anonymous, The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Vvitches Viz. Temperace [Sic] Floyd, Mary Floyd, and Susanna Edwards. Who Were Arraigned at Exeter on the 18th. of August, 1682. And Being Prov'd Guilty of Witch-Craft, Were Condemn'd to Be Hang'd, Which Was Accordingly Executed in the View of Many Spectators, Whose Strange and Much to Be Lamented Impudence, Is Never to Be Forgotten. Also, How They Confessed What Mischiefs They Had Done, by the Assistance of the Devil, Who Lay with the above-Named Temperence Floyd Nine Nights Together. Also, How They Squeezed One Hannah Thomas to Death in Their Arms; How They Also Caused Several Ships to Be Cast Away, Causing a Boy to Fall from the Top of a Main-Mast into the Sea. With Many Wonderful Things, Worth Your Reading; Anonymous, The Full Tryals, Examination, and

are added. Kirilka Stavreva has identified witch-trial pamphlet literature as a defining force in the development of witchcraft stereotypes, stereotypes with which Rowley engages in his use of the word "witch" to conjure images of female sexuality and transgression.[121] This chapter argues that owing to the popularity of this this witch trial media, the term could function as a shorthand for female evil. The term served two purposes: to undermine the character described as a "witch" in terms of their credibility, sympathy, and agency even in spite of a lack of magical ability to the (ostensibly male) audience; and to serve as a warning to men—if "witch" was the ultimate transgressor, then the term identifies the character as such and serves as a shorthand identifier to warn men against trusting the woman. The ultimate fear at the time associated with the term "witch" was of women's sexual control—sex is equated with female evil and the evil woman is most dangerous when in control of men. This chapter argues that language popularised by witch trial pamphlets was influential in the way that literary works, as demonstrated by Rowley, perceived and demonised even non-magical women. That Rowley's work traffics in this discourse despite the positive—or at the very least neutral—portrayal of magic is a testament to the widespread influence of this rhetoric on textual composition. The focus of Rowley's play on this discourse of witchcraft, one which had very specific definitions and ideological positions attached to it, demonstrates the ways in which writers could employy

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Condemnation of Four Notorious Witches at the Assizes Held at Worcester, on Tuesday the 4th of March with the Manner, How They Were Found Guilty of Bewitching Several Children to Death, as Also, Their Confessions, and Last Dying Speeches at the Place of Execution, with Other Amazing Particulars Concerning the Said Witchcraft; Anonymous, The Witches of Northampton-Shire Agnes Browne. Ioane Vaughan. Arthur Bill. Hellen Ienkenson. Mary Barber. Witches. Who Were All Executed at Northampton the 22. of Iuly Last. 1612, Buts, An Account of the Tryal and Examination of Joan Buts, for Being a Common Witch and Inchantress, before the Right Honourable Sir Francis Pemberton, Lord Chief Justice, at the Assizes Holden for the Burrough of Southwark and County of Surrey, on Monday, March 27. 1682; Newes from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable Life and Death of Doctor Fian, a Notable Sorcerer, Who Was Burned at Edenbrough in Ianuary Last, 1591.

[121] Stavreva.

the traditions surrounding witchcraft to define the characters, without the characters having

to actually perform magic within the narrative.

The chapter will argue that the appearance of Hecate and the fates alongside the

devil imbue the play with the discourse of witchcraft despite the fact that no traditional

witches appear in the play. Witchcraft language in a text from a tradition that, while

comfortable with the supernatural does not often involve the formal discourse of witchcraft

as it is more broadly recognised, is notable, as it expands the Arthurian canon to include a

discourse that is largely absent from this tradition. This tradition acted as a vehicle for the

early modern period to discuss the supernatural even though it was codified long before

witch-trial interest emerged in England. For instance, in Rowley's play, Merlin, the son of

the devil, is distinctly portrayed not as a wizard but as a prophet, almost every major

female character, despite not being magical, is associated with witchcraft.[122] The

gendering of magic mirrors similar portrayals, especially in Middleton's *The Witch*, where

Hecate also leads a group of witches demonised for their sexualities, and the collaborative

play *The Witch of Edmonton*, which sees another social outcast manipulated into contact

with the supernatural through a demonic figure.[123] Women's distinct association with

witchcraft is also of importance to *The Faerie Queene*, discussed in this chapter as both

an early modern allegory and an Arthurian text, which portrays magic users, almost always

female, in ways which manipulate female expectations to bring about harm to the male

heroes. Rowley engages significantly with the traditions of witchcraft as a form of

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[122] The distinction between wizard and prophet is important in the context of this chapter, as the association of Merlin with the Christian concept of prophecy was purposeful, as once the church outlawed magic and witchcraft, Merlin, already an established magical character, existed in a strange middle space. Referring to his powers of foresight as "prophecy" aligned him with Christianity and implied his foresight, like that of other prophets, was gifted to him by God. See Lawrence-Mathers for a book-length discussion of this shift.

[123] All references to Middleton's text can be found at 'The Witch, by Thomas Middleton ' <https://tech.org/~cleary/witch.html> [accessed 27 September 2022]. All references to *Edmonton* can be found at 'Luminarium Editions. Thomas Dekker. The Witch of Edmonton. (1623) ' <http://www.luminarium.org/editions/witchofedmonton.htm> [accessed 27 September 2022].

predatory sexuality and of social and patriarchal upheaval in his identification of his women as witches, and takes care to employ this terminology only in these distinct circumstances. Rowley identifies the morality of his characters not entirely through their actions, but by gendered magical language, regardless of the characters' actual use of magic or witchcraft. In these comparisons, this chapter will argue that Rowley uses the language of witchcraft as a shorthand to identify the indiscretions of his female characters, relying on the depiction of witches as sexual predators and unruly women personified to assign to his characters a moral alignment and a justifiable punishment for their actions. In the traditional Arthurian canon, especially in Malory and Spenser, it is the manipulative actions of these overtly sexualised magical women which defines them as evil enchantresses. In Rowley's world of Christian magical contests, however, it is the language of witchcraft which codes the portrayal of women, engaging the play in a hybrid discourse that combines that of Arthurian enchantresses, early modern witchcraft, and demonic female magic to code the transgressions of women and their vulnerability to demonic forces without their actions needed to prove these accusations true.

There has been a substantial amount of research on witchcraft and the witch trials and they have been a favoured subject for scholars for a long time.[124] The witch trials

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[124] See Tracy Adams, Kerryn Olsen, and Michelle A. Smith, 'Thinking About Magic in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Parergon*, 30.2 (2013), 1–10 <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2013.0086>., Barry, E. Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition and Everyday Life*, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230582118>, Breuer, Clark 1999, Clark 2017, Tim Clarkson, Scotland's Merlin: A Medieval Legend and Its Dark Age Origins (Edinburgh: John Donald Short Run Press, 2016), De Blécourt, Daniel Fischlin, '"Counterfeiting God": James VI (I) and the Politics of "Dœmonologie" (1597)', *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 26.1 (1996), 1–29, Malcolm Gaskill, 'Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 23.1 (1998), 1–30 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071029808568018>, Julian Goodare, 'Heresy, Magic, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe', *The English Historical Review*, 119.482 (2004), 791–93 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/119.482.791-a>, Ronald Hutton, The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present, Reprint edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), Isabel Iribarren, 'From Black Magic to Heresy: A Doctrinal Leap in the Pontificate of John XXII', *Church History*, 76.1 (2007), 32–60, Kissane, Melinda Mawson, 'Whores, Witches And The Lore: Rape And Witchcraft, Legal And Literary Intersections', *Australian Feminist Law Journal*,

largely began in earnest in England towards the end of the sixteenth century and reached

their peak in the second half of the seventeenth century before officially ending with in

1735 with the Witchcraft Act.[125] A recent trend in scholarship, as demonstrated by Frances

Timbers and Ian McAdam, is to examine the effects of magic on masculinity and the early

modern masculine self.[126] There have also been several historical and literary

examinations of witches, magical characters, and witch trials, especially in drama, where

the subject was particularly popular.[127] What I would like to discuss here, however, is the

language of witchcraft, and how words used in magical contexts may be applied to any

character regardless of magical ability as a culturally loaded way of identifying their

morality or indicting them for a specific moral failing, especially in women. In her article,

"'Away, Stand off, I Say': Women's Appropriations of Restraint and Constraint in *The Birth

of Merlin* and *The Devil Is an Ass*", Sarah E. Johnson discusses the quasi-magical effects

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12.1 (1999), 41–56 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13200968.1999.11077292>, Monter, Anna Rosner, 'The Witch Who Is Not One: The Fragmented Body in Early Modern Demonological Tracts', *Exemplaria*, 21.4 (2009), 363–79 <https://doi.org/10.1179/175330709X449099>, Diane Purkiss, The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations (Routledge, 2013), Peter Rushton, 'Women, Witchcraft, and Slander in Early Modern England: Cases from the Church Courts of Durham, 1560–1675', *Northern History*, 18.1 (1982), 116–32 <https://doi.org/10.1179/007817282790176645>, Jesper Sørensen, 'Magic as a State of Mind?: Neurocognitive Theory and Magic in Early Modern Europe', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 5.1 (2010), 108–12 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0163>, Jennifer Spinks, Sasha Handley, and Stephen Gordon, *Magic, Witches and Devils in the Early Modern World: Exhibition Catalogue* (Manchester: The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester, 2016), Stavreva, H. S. Versnel, 'Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion', *Numen*, 38.2 (1991), 177–97 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3269832>, Emma Wilby, 'The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland', *Folklore*, 111.2 (2000), 283–305, and Francis Young, Magic as a Political Crime in Medieval and Early Modern England: A History of Sorcery and Treason (London New York, NY: I.B.Tauris, 2017).

[125] The earliest pamphlet considered here is dated to 1566.

[126] McAdam and Timbers.

[127] See William Blackburn, '"Heavenly Words": Marlowe's Faustus as a Renaissance Magician', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 4.1 (1978), 1–14 <https://doi.org/10.1353/esc.1978.0002>, Howell V. Calhoun, 'JAMES I AND THE WITCH SCENES IN "MACBETH"', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 17.4 (1942), 184–89, Anthony B. Dawson, 'Witchcraft/Bigamy: Cultural Conflict in "The Witch of Edmonton"', *Renaissance Drama*, 20 (1989), 77–98 <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.20.41917249>, Herrington, James R. Keller, 'Middleton's The Witch: Witchcraft and the Domestic Female Hero', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 4.4 (16) (1991), 37–59, Kolb, Levin, Meg F. Pearson, 'A Dog, a Witch, a Play: "The Witch of Edmonton"', *Early Theatre*, 11.2 (2008), 89–111, and Felix E. Schelling, 'Some Features of the Supernatural as Represented in Plays of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James', *Modern Philology*, 1.1 (1903), 31–47.

of words and sexuality in regards to Rowley's characters, and it is this idea with which I will be engaging to form my argument, examining not necessarily the power and agency taken by female characters accused of witchcraft, but how the ideas about witchcraft and this dangerous agency can result in the women whose actions stray from the patriarchal norm attracting witchcraft-coded language without having to be accused of witchcraft outright.[128] Rowley's play has garnered very little scholarly attention, and while a few more recent articles engage with the play as a focus, they examine primarily the relationship between Merlin and magic, and magic and demonic forces, than witchcraft, and more expanded discussions of the play are lacking.[129] It does, however, appear in passing in a few discussions of dramatic magic, though the play's engagement with gender is almost entirely ignored.[130] This chapter will focus on this engagement with gender and the significance of the language Rowley employs in his discussion of women, and how this balance of Arthurian magical tropes and the language borne from witch trial media carves a space for his play within the canon of Arthurian and early modern dramatic literature.

This chapter will first explore the magic as it does appear in Rowley's play, and the traditions from which this depiction of magic was drawn, before then discussing the importance of a link between witchcraft and sexuality within both Arthurian literature and witch trial media. The chapter will then focus on the language in further detail, before finally discussing what happens when this sexualised tradition and specific language is applied to Arthurian tradition's nonmagical women. It argues that Rowley, in combining these traditions of Arthurian sorcery and sixteenth-century witchcraft, creates a hybrid tradition which can identify alignment, vulnerability, and agency of female characters through language alone. Discussions of magic utilised a particular rhetoric to identify

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[128] S. Johnson.
[129] See Isaac and Obermeier.
[130] See Findlay and Herrington.

magic users, and in order to examine the use of witchcraft language it is necessary to first

identify the language used and the importance of specificity in early modern witchcraft

ideology. Necromancy and witchcraft were the most explicitly evil forms of magic, and

often defined the moral alignment of magic users the instant the title was used.

Necromancy involved a pact with demons where worship was exchanged for supernatural

services, while witchcraft was much simpler and involved the "complete and absolutely

explicit submission" to the devil.[131] This meant that (the more commonly gendered male)

necromancy was an exchange between necromancer and demon, while (the more

commonly gendered female) witchcraft involved an unequal relationship between witch

and demon. Witches were the most common type of female magician.[132] Witchcraft was

what later times would come to understand as "a social construction whereby a person

was accused of being in league with the devil to cause harm".[133] While men could be

witches, they were far more likely to be associated with ceremonial magic; women, on the

other hand, were more likely to be accused of harmful witchcraft, which for men was

"extremely rare".[134] The difference came in the relationships between the spirits:

ceremonial magic was more likely to be associated with men and their ability to control

spirits and may overlap in some cases with necromancy, while witchcraft was associated

with women who were controlled by them.[135] The demon and the witch represent

"disorderly womanhood" and were used to enforce masculine control.[136] They were

primarily accused of harming children and cattle, and their alleged crimes against children

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[131] Bailey p. 127.
[132] Breuer p. 15. Bailey 122-123 and Herrington 468-469 give detailed definitions of early modern notions of witchcraft.
[133] Timbers p. 7.
[134] De Blécourt p. 300. Ronald Hutton defines ceremonial magic, on the other hand, as "the employment of elaborate rites and special materials to achieve magical ends, normally learned through written texts" (99). For further definitions and distinctions between types of ceremonial magic, see Hutton pp. 99-100, Herrington pp. 458-459, Timbers p. 7, Adams p. 3.
[135] Hutton p. 100.
[136] Levin p. 22.

were the most important of the accusations against them.[137] Witchcraft hunts might also overlap with the concept of the "cunning woman", a female medicinal practitioner whose skills were often based in folkloric beliefs.[138] The witch trials were not specifically hunts for women, but when looking for a witch, it was a woman they looked for, and "any woman could qualify".[139]

Women were believed to have a specific weakness that made them susceptible to bewitchment and demonic influence.[140] Female sexuality, in particular, was considered "corrupt", and women were thought to be "morally frail".[141] Witchcraft was often associated with an excess of female passion that "manifested itself in the form of sexually deviant acts" and there was a common belief that magic was used for "deviant, sexual purposes".[142] Witches were associated with "sexual desire and the wiles of women", and they could represent both the fear of female sexuality and female independence.[143] Women were considered especially prone to witchcraft due to a Christian ideology of the "physical, mental, and spiritual weaknesses of women" that left them open to demonic influence.[144] Witches' extreme sexuality has its roots in the Book of Enoch which claimed demons sought sexual relations with human women.[145] They were the subversion of the

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[137] See Timbers p. 6 and Hutton p. 195.
[138] For discussions of cunning women and their relationship to witchcraft, see Judith Bonzol, 'The Death of the Fifth Earl of Derby: Cunning Folk and Medicine in Early Modern England', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 33.4 (2010), 73–100, Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-Folk in English History* (A&C Black, 2007), Hutton, Purkiss, Sinéad Spearing, *A History of Women in Medicine: Cunning Women, Physicians, Witches* (Casemate Publishers, 2019), and Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Cornell University Press, 2018).
[139] De Blécourt p. 288. For a contemporary description of what qualities were considered during witch hunts, see Matthew Hopkins, *The Discovery of Witches* (DigiCat, 2022) and Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft: Wherein the Lewde Dealing of Witches and Witchmongers Is Notablie Detected, the Knauerie of Coniurors, the Impietie of Inchantors, the Follie of Soothsaiers, the Impud...* (Forgotten Books, 2018)..
[140] Levin p. 30.
[141] See Levin p. 34 and Tassi p. 62.
[142] See Findlay p. 52 and Timbers p. 152.
[143] See Lawrence-Mathers p. 149 and Cavanagh p. 318.
[144] Bailey p. 122.
[145] Timbers p. 14.

"natural, patriarchal, Christian, and national order".[146] It has been suggested that witch trials were at their most popular at the height of fears of women's sexuality, for example the fear of women bewitching the men with whom they were engaging in sexual relations.[147]

The idea of a pact between the devil and witches mirrored a pact with God made by Christians.[148] Pacts with familiars, animal companions to a witch, were a minority in real witch trials but a favourite subject of published accounts, and portrayed the demon demanding something, usually her soul or the denunciation of Christianity, in exchange for their services.[149] Witchcraft was often an inversion of Christianity, with nighttime sabbaths, flying, nakedness, sex with the devil, and cannibalism perverting the Christian worship of God.[150] The witches' Sabbaths themselves were not a common facet of witch lore in early modern England, but the idea of sexual pacts with a devil very much was.[151] It was up to the women to prove they weren't witches, and the trials relied on the fear of women's sexuality causing distrust of their testimony.[152] It is this language with which Rowley engages in his play, and the tensions between his awareness of these gendered language tropes and the appearance of the supernatural as a feature of Arthurian literature allows *Merlin* to stake a claim to its place in the canon. This is not to say, however, that Rowley in no way engages with Arthurian ideas of the supernatural, nor that there is no portrayal of magic in the play; on the contrary, a significant portion of the play is dedicated to the magic of Merlin and other male characters.

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[146] Stavreva p. 309.
[147] Mawson p. 52.
[148] Iribarren p. 34.
[149] See Hutton p. 262 and Wilby pp. 291 and 289.
[150] Breuer p. 129.
[151] McAdam p. 108.
[152] See Mawson pp. 42 and 44.

Merlin and the Problem of Magic within a Christian Tradition

The overt portrayal of magic in Rowley's play is often distinct from his interest in topics of witchcraft, though occasionally muddled. Most prominent is the magic of the title character, Merlin. Merlin is not a witch; his story in the play follows very closely the chronicle histories and their description of his power.[153] His story is, however, framed through the above-mentioned witchcraft discourse; even as the magic he uses is not, nor is it implied to be, witchcraft, the language of witchcraft still follows him. The strange and occasionally contradictory language used to describe him comes largely from his long and complicated history as a chronicle character. It is necessary, therefore, to define who Merlin was to Rowley and his audience before discussing Rowley's depiction of the character.

Merlin, as a character, was fairly well established by the time of *Merlin*'s first performance in 1622, meaning that audiences would have largely been familiar with his story in a way much like their familiarity with figures of history plays. For much of his time in mediaeval and early modern consciousness, he was a historical figure more than a legendary one, the most important British figure until the birth of Arthur.[154] His profile led him to become a recurrent character in the world of romance, where he inhabited a space defined by magic and magical characters, with this tradition of magic beginning in the earliest depictions of Merlin by Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1136) and Chrétien de Troyes (c. 1170-1181), for example his poem *Cligés*.[155] By the time of *Merlin*'s composition, Merlin was firmly established as a magical figure connected to destiny within the Arthurian canon and by extension the destined line of legitimate succession about which he helped to bring, particularly in the chronicle works. Merlin's magical ability was broad and loosely

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[153] See Chapter 1 for an overview of Merlin's literary development.
[154] Lawrence-Mathers p. 10.
[155] Breuer p. 10.

defined.,[156] He was at once a "seer, an inspired prophet, an astrologer, a proto-alchemist, an expert in natural magic, and an adept at cosmology".[157] He is perhaps best known for facilitating the birth of Arthur and for acting as magical advisor to Arthur at various points during his reign, depending on the author. Perhaps his most important role was that of prophet. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini* (c. 1130), purporting to be a collection of Merlin's prophecies, were likely composed before his famous history, and they spread rapidly and became widely accepted.[158] In fact, the popularity of the prophecies seem to have been the impetus for the spread of the history, rather than the other way around.[159] So important was Merlin's role as a prophet that there are more surviving copies of his prophecies than almost any other mediaeval work.[160] Merlin was, however, as discussed in the previous chapter, a child of a devil, and this problem of his birth story colours much of how he is interpreted throughout his appearances in the Arthurian canon.

Thomas Malory, for example, in his *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), seems to take tremendous issue with Merlin's birth, and as such, despite acknowledging his status as a magical figure, portrays him more as an advisor to Arthur, rather than as a magician.[161] Not only are his powers significantly downplayed, but his role is, as well, as Merlin disappears fairly early in the narrative. Malory is more interested in the period of Arthur's reign after Merlin's death, but is notably fairly uncomfortable in general with the supernatural, skipping over it, downplaying it, or glossing over it. Indeed, Malory does not show or directly address the story of Merlin's birth, instead reducing it to a rumour: "men saith that Merlin was begotten of a devil" (IV.xiii.105). Several characters do not trust

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[156] Corinne J. Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Boydell & Brewer, 2001) p. 238.
[157] Lawrence-Mathers p. 6.
[158] Lawrence-Mathers p. 29.
[159] Lawrence-Mathers p. 30.
[160] Lawrence-Mathers p. 80.
[161] Saunders p. 237.

Merlin's heritage, who "laughed him to scorn, as King Lot; and more called him a witch" (I.viii.11). One knight tells another riding with him to beware Merlin, "for he knoweth all things by the devil's craft" (III.xiv.85), and Merlin's lover, Nimue, traps him after learning his craft "for she was afeard of him because he was a devil's son" (IV.i.89). Despite Merlin's counsel being treated as having an overall positive influence on the narrative of the story, his parentage colours his every action, and may explain his tendency for deception—he very often appears to characters in disguise, and his downfall at the hands of Nimue. It also explains the May Day Massacre, when "Merlin told King Arthur that he that should destroy him should be born on May-day, wherefore he sent for them all, upon pain of death…and all were put in a ship to the sea" (I.xxvii.41).[162] Malory does focus his interpretation of Merlin on his role as a prophet, referring to his role as relaying "tale[s] of prophecy" (II.x.53) to the romance's characters. He simultaneously suggests, however, less positive interpretations of his character; he is, therefore, portrayed as "a deceptive and wily master of disguise, a fiend".[163]

Malory was not, however, the only writer troubled by the story of Merlin's birth. Thomas Heywood, in his *Life of Merlin* (1641), describes Merlin's magic as "darke and hidden arts, as magick, necromancy, and the like".[164] Similarly, and perhaps more strikingly, in his masque *Britannia Triumphans* (1638), William D'Avenant, whose portrayal of magic was likely inspired by *The Tempest* (c. 1610-1611), casts Merlin as the villain, where he is described as "the great devourer of mysterious bookes".[165] Though this language suggests Merlin performs the philosophical magic deemed more acceptable by early modern society, the magic he is asked to perform, "to wake those that have many

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[162] Breuer p. 101.
[163] Breuer p. 100.
[164] Heywood p. 27.
[165] The portrayal of Merlin's use of books and study as a means of learning magic was popularised in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* through the character of Prospero. See McAdam and Traister for detailed discussions of magic in *The Tempest*.

ages slept" suggests the performance of necromancy. Not only does he do this, but he "charme[s] the spirits of the knight and unto hell conjure their wings" and asks them to "heare and willingly obey". Not only, then, is Merlin performing necromancy, but calling upon spirits which are specifically associated with hell. While this may also appear to mimic the practices of philosophical magicians, the calling of spirits perhaps too closely mirrors the practices of witchcraft. Indeed, D'Avenant later describes Merlin as "most reverend lord of dark unusual sciences", which, if in fact does refer to Merlin's use of spirits or demons in philosophical magical ritual, reiterates the clerical concern that ceremonial magic is simply demonic magic in disguise.[166] Despite all of this, Merlin is still called "most ancient prophet of this isle" so the importance of his role as a historical prophet is not ignored by D'Avenant, even if he is not hailed for it, but this is later qualified as he is called "cosening Prophet" who brings up "ayry mimic apparitions", directly insinuating that his magic is deceitful.[167] Merlin himself does not seem to have much faith in his abilities, as "so hollow and dismall is the sound of all my inward murmures". That he appears to reject "both…British history and tradition" suggests D'Avenant is making Merlin, once a revered historical and legendary figure, a parody of his power; in writing this masque, "D'Avenant turned his back on the past in order to more fully glorify the present".[168]

It is clear, then, that Merlin was an ambiguous figure in early modern literary, and specifically dramatic, consciousness whose central importance to the story and British pre-history is qualified by a certain uneasiness about the implications of his birth and powers, particularly with respect to how Merlin's parentage might affect his moral alignment as a magician. It is in this tension between demonic parentage and prophetic heroism that

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[166] See Breuer and Traister for a more thorough discussion of the Church's views on magic and theurgy.
[167] These "apparitions" are also made popular in *The Tempest.*
[168] Traister p. 142.

Rowley's witch-language becomes so significant. As Rowley uses witch-language against female characters, rather than consistently against Merlin, is becomes notable that it is the women that attract the majority of the language. It is important, though, to acknowledge Rowley's familiarities with debates around Merlin's origins within the Arthurian canon. Though Rowley clearly sees Merlin as an overall positive force, as Uter refers to him as the "guide of all my actions" (iv.5.436) and later sends "Thanks to our prophet | For this so wish'd for satisfaction" (v.2.213-214), he is called "witch" and "conjurer" (iii.4.328-9) by his uncle. His parentage leaves him, at least to the Clown, untrustworthy and "monstrous" (iii.4.337), and, as discussed in the previous chapter, it takes until Merlin has proved himself the great prophet he is to become that the Clown ceases his insults against both Merlin and his mother. Merlin's status as the son of the devil closely mirrors narratives of witchcraft; in fact Rowley removes the role of the Christian God in Merlin's birth, giving the devil a more prominent role in Merlin's creation and magical ability.[169] Additionally, the devil is the one to tell Merlin to "Go hence to Wales…there Vortiger the king | Builds castles and strong holds, which cannot stand, | unless supported by yong Merlin's hand" (iii.4.365-8), which gives the devil who fathered him a much larger role in Merlin's story of greatness. As Merlin takes this advice from the devil, and several spirits in service to him appear throughout the course of the play, Rowley once again invokes images of witches who confer with spirits for their magical abilities. While the devil is given a much larger role and more influence over the world of Rowley's play than other versions of Merlin's story, it makes Merlin's victory over his father a much more important one, and represents not only a child triumphing over his demonic father, but also a triumph over the influence of the devil in the play's society.

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[169] Obermeier p. 62. Note also that traditionally, it is God who grants Merlin the power of prophecy, to counteract the desires of the devil to create a being in conflict with Christianity.

To this end, Rowley's attention to Merlin's birth story and foregrounding of the devil serves to promote the virtues of Christianity over demonic influence, as Merlin's goodness within the play is dependent upon his rejection of his parentage and conversion to Christianity. His defeat of his father in saving his mother, where he proclaims "thy powers too weak; what art thou, Devil, | But an inferior lustful incubus" (v.1.65-6), represents the triumph of Christianity over demonic magic. Merlin's alliance with Christianity makes him stronger than the devil; he cannot stop the devil, but he can oppose him, creating an equilibrium.[170] Merlin is "redeemed" through his association with Christianity.[171] That he must be redeemed at all, of course, demonstrates the automatic assumption of, or at least wariness in the face of, his demonic nature.

Merlin's alliance with Christianity is most clearly shown through his role as a prophet. I will be using the term "prophet" here to describe Merlin's particular magic both because of its use within the play and because of the Christian tradition which was far more comfortable with Merlin's magic if it could be labelled prophecy.[172] It should be noted, however, that despite Merlin's prophecy not being spoken of in terms of magical labels, in the context of the play, Merlin's prophecy was considered magical and himself a magician. Rowley's version of Merlin follows very closely to the stories of his life as shown in the chronicle histories and most widely-read romances, and the playwright does pay special attention to these prophecies. His magical powers in the play are distinctly prophetic; Rowley includes Merlin's two most famous prophecies, that of the dragons underneath Vortiger's castle and of the blazing star.[173] In his first meeting with Merlin, Vortiger, who has just discovered the truth of Merlin's birth, already completely trusts Merlin's abilities as a prophet, assuring him "Thy cunning I approve most excellent"

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[170] Isaac pp. 119-20.
[171] Isaac p. 120.
[172] See footnote 6 for an explanation of this comfort and history.
[173] See iv.1.184-209 and iv.5.388-460.

(iv.1.183). Similarly, as Merlin laments at the blazing star, Uter begs him to "speak thy prophetick knowlege" (iv.5.352). The characters within the play make no attempt to question Merlin's abilities, and he acts as an advisor to both Vortiger's and Uter's side in the war with neither side questioning his loyalty. Within the play, Merlin's trustworthiness as a prophet needs only minimal proof which come in the form of symbolic magical contests. Early in the play, the holy hermit Anselme defeats the pagan magician Proximus without using any magic of his own; his godliness is enough to make the false spirits conjured by Proximus "tremble" (ii.3). "Know, mis-believing pagan, even that power, | That overthrew your forces, still lets you see, | He onely can controul both hell and thee" (ii.3.369-71), Anselme warns Proximus, demonstrating with words alone that Proximus's spirits, described as "hell-hounds" (ii.3.361) by Proximus himself, are unable to survive the power of God before them. This sets up the conflict between good and evil spirits, and Proximus's inability to understand why the power of God could disperse his spirits is his weakness.[174] Merlin's contest with Proximus, then, in which the latter dies mere seconds after being told "there's not a minutes time | 'Twixt thee and thy death" (iv.1.155), not only establishes Merlin's skill, but his alliance with God. Despite his demonic father, then, the godly magic which is shown within the play to twice defeat another skilled magician is enough to assure both kings, on either side of the conflict, to trust and rely on Merlin's prophetic abilities.

Although Merlin and other male magicians are the only characters to use magic within the play, and only Merlin, which as discussed above is more attributable to his demonic parentage than any magic he performs, is described with the term "witch". Rowley still uses the language of witchcraft to describe non-magical characters, specifically women. He uses the idea of witchcraft as inherently tied to sexuality to give the

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[174] Isaac p 118.

word "witch", as well as related words used throughout the play, extra weight as to the characters' moral standings as perceived by the community.

Arthurian Enchantresses, Dramatic Witches, and Predatory Sexuality

While witchcraft itself does not appear in its most explicit form in Rowley's play, traditions of witchcraft do appear, including the devil and the focus on women's sexuality. That women's sexuality is intrinsic to witchcraft has a significant impact on the discourse and language of witchcraft with which Rowley engages, as illustrated here through references to early modern pamphlet literature, and therefore it is necessary to establish the significance of this connection before the language itself can be thoroughly discussed. In order to paint a more complete picture of why this connection is important to *Merlin*, I will first lay out some examples of this connection, first in Arthurian literature, then in witchcraft drama, and then discuss Rowley's use of the connection to present his female characters in order to demonstrate how this connection forms the basis of much of the language Rowley uses in creating his code for female characters.

In more traditional Arthurian representations, witches are consistently described using sexual language, and are shown performing magic for the sake of their own personal sexual gratification or to interfere in the sex lives of others, thereby disrupting patrilineal dynastic descent. Perhaps the archetypical female witch of Arthurian legend is Morgan le Fay, who, in her first introduction in Malory's romance, is noted to be a "great clerk of necromancy" (I.ii.4); indeed, her skill in such is the first thing about her we learn.[175] Morgan, whose depiction in Malory can be traced back through Arthurian poetry, chronicle, and romance as a figure who epitomises the fears of female agency and "the fetishising of this anxiety onto the supernatural" in tales such as *Gawain and the Greene Knight*, the

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[175] Breuer p. 111. While Morgan le Fay provides what could be considered the foundation for the beautiful witch or enchantress, her role in Malory's text is examined more completely in the following chapter, so I am limiting the discussion of her role here.

French Vulgate Cycle, and the Huth *Merlin*, must also be seen as an amalgamation of supernatural beliefs collected within Arthurian literature over time.[176] As represented in Malory, Morgan's magic is mostly distinct from predatory sexuality, only using being associated with such in one notable appearance. Morgan comes across the sleeping Launcelot along with three other queens, who all attempt "to have him to her love" (VI.iii.154). Morgan's plan is to "put an enchantment upon him that he shall not awake…and when he is surely within my hold, I shall take the enchantment from him, and then let him choose which of us he will have unto paramour" (VI.iii.154). While she is the only one of the queens to use magic, all four are deemed by Launcelot "false enchantresses" (VI.iii.155) and "sorceresses" (VI.xviii.179). This is the only case of Morgan using magic for sexual purposes, and even here she is not alone, but still she must be seen as the archetypal sexual enchantress. While on the one hand, it can be said that medieval misogyny is responsible for her one sexualised act to become her defining appearance within Malory, that she has carried with her the baggage of a longstanding tradition of Arthurian sexualised enchantresses complicates this.[177] This act builds upon the folkloric traditional knowledge of enchantresses, and specifically Morgan, being associated with sexuality; with this one act Morgan takes her place as the archetypal enchantress who epitomises the witch of Arthurian legend. Though most of her magic as portrayed in Malory is not sexual in nature, she too is associated with transgressive sexuality and the sexual or magical manipulation of a man. This representation of lustful enchantresses who use their magic for lecherous desires is the one expanded upon to great extent by Spenser in his poem, *The Faerie Queene* (1590), which, in its extensive

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[176] See Wynne-Davies pp. 22-68 for an in-depth account of the depictions of both Arthurian figures and Morgan as they developed in tandem throughout the formation of what would have been known as the Arthurian canon to this time. See also Breuer, who tracks the development of the supernatural within the figure of the Arthurian witch.

[177] See Breuer for extensive list of these enchantresses and their development through and even after Malory.

portrayal of Morgan-like witches, but while also taking inspiration from other Arthurian enchantresses, consequently becomes the most prominent depiction of traditional, Arthurian witches.

Indeed, Spenser's Duessa, consistently labelled witch—I.ii.38-40 has her branded as such no fewer than five times—in particular, is sexualised from her first appearance. She is introduced to Redcrosse as a "goodly Lady clad in scarlot red" wearing jewels "the which her lauish lovers gave" riding a "wanton palfrey" (I.ii.13), and her interactions with her knight before he meets Redcrosse in battle are "mirth and wanton play" (I.ii.14). While other meanings of the word "wanton" are available, the word also acts as a double entendre, so that even her horse and playful nature are "wanton". Furthermore, the description of her from her former lover Fadubio claims that she "haue before bewitched all men's sight" (I.ii.39) and that under her facade as a fair lady hides a "foule vgly forme" (I.ii.38) and "neather partes misshapen, monstrous" (I.ii.41). The latter description is especially notable, as though Spenser's witches are not those who appear in witch pamphlets, he nevertheless utilises imagery and language which will become inherent to the latter. "Newes from Scotland", for example, describes perhaps in most explicit vulgarity the teats used by witches' familiars as "large Teats in the secret Parts of their bodies", and that "the Duiell dooth lick them with his tung in some priuy part of their bodie, before hee dooth receiue them to be his seruants".[178] Indeed, notes of these teats, especially their locations, can be found in nearly every pamphlet that includes a familiar, and that many of these representations focus on "privy parts" or "neather partes", as described by Spenser, demonstrate the importance of sexuality, particularly a monstrous sexuality, to the witchcraft ideologies of both Rowley's contemporaneous world and the Arthurian story.[179]

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[178] "Newes from Scotland" pp. 6 and12. See also p. 13.
[179] "Newes from Scotland" p. 4. See Marion Gibson's collection of pamphlets for a look at the types of language employed within them.

This linguistic instance is Spenser's only major connection between the two traditions. This could likely be attributed to his focus on allegory instead of direct references to the cultural landscape—if Duessa's sexual appetite is considered monstrous, that her sexual organs have a monstrous appearance would provide a vivid image of this monstrosity—so its use here may not have much to do with pamphlet literature and could be a coincidence. However, its appearance still demonstrates an awareness of witchcraft lore and its illustrative usefulness in Arthurian depictions of witchcraft.

Furthermore, in his introductions, first to Fidessa and then as her true form, Spenser utilises language heavily coded with sexuality as well as magic. Not only does her scarlet red clothing in her introduction invoke images of passion and lust, she is established quickly as having "lauish lovers", implying more than one. Additionally, her magical ability is explicitly stated to be for the purpose of deceiving these lovers:

By which deceipt doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her colours dyed deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?
(I.vii.1)

Duessa distracts Redcrosse with her beauty and is driven by her sexual appetite, only for them to fall into her trap.[180] That Spenser gives particular attention to Duessa's "neather partes" is especially striking even outside of the aforementioned connection to pamphlet tradition: this is what about Duessa that is the most "monstrous". It is what she hides, this monstrous, misshapen sexuality with which she attempts to prey on virtuous knights such as Redcrosse that poses the most danger. The illusion of her beauty is just that: illusory; it is in the deception, the ability for beautiful women to hide an ugly nature, that is on display

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[180] Breuer p. 115.

in descriptions of, and indeed in the name of, the duplicitous Duessa. It is not simply her beauty, then, but her sexuality the knights must beware.

Indeed, in her article, *Nightmares of Desire: Evil Women in "The Faerie Queene"*, Sheila T. Cavanagh claims that this is the danger about which Spenser intended to warn his audience, that sexuality, particularly the sexuality of "bewitching" women, could sway men from virtue.[181] While exemplified by Duessa, evil women throughout the poem use sex as their primary weapon against the knights.[182] Duessa, for example, uses "fowle words tempting faire, soure gall with hony sweet" (I.vii.3) in her temptation of Redcrosse. This is not, however, unique to Duessa. All of Spenser's beautiful witches are evil; Duessa, Lucifera, Acrasia, Phaedra, Ate, and Munera who are characterised by their beauty and deception as well as their roles as "voracious sexual predators".[183] Spenser's witches are consistently associated with sex and sexuality, perhaps no more explicitly than Acrasia, the beautiful witch who tempts knights to her bower.[184] When the audience is introduced to the bower, she has brought to it

A new Louer, whom through sorceree
And witchcraft,, she from farre did thither bring:
There she had him now layd a slombering,
In secret shade, after long wanton ioyes:
Whilst round about them pleasauntly did sing
Many faire Ladies, and lasciuious boyes,
That euer mixt their song with light licentious toyes.
(I.xii.72.3-9)

Her actions are specifically in the service of "quight molten…lust and pleasure lewd" (II.xii.73.8) as she "oft inclining downe with kisses light" (II.xii.73.5). Acrasia is the "most prominent figure of female power" in the poem, and this power is explicitly sexual.[185]

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[181] Cavanagh p. 330.
[182] Cavanagh p. 320.
[183] Breuer p. 114.
[184] Breuer p. 115.
[185] Catty p. 78.

Acrasia's magic serves as a male fantasy of lust and power, luring men in with their own sexual desires.[186] In falling for Acrasia's magical seduction, her victims fall prey not only to her sexual desires, but their own, losing their agency and subjectivity in the process as their power over sexuality has been removed from them.[187] Spenser's witches are perhaps the most dangerous in their beauty and deception, and their use of seduction as a deliberate tool against men. The language of witchcraft, as mentioned above, is dependent upon this relationship between witches and their dangerous and monstrous sexuality, and it is this relationship which Spenser exploits, drawing on this association to make his beautiful witches all the more menacing. The lesson, according to Spenser, is for men to watch for duplicity and deception in the sexuality of women; his witches are not merely sexual women, they are specifically evil because the utilisation of that sexuality, and the deception inherent in his representations of witchcraft, that make them the specific dangerous witches. More traditional pamphlet witches, however, are not actively seeking sexual relations with male characters, at least not overtly, and their magic focuses far more on interfering in the sex lives of others, often upon request.

For example, in Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*, the play which contains the most links to pamphlet literature, the witches are defined almost exclusively through their sexuality. Their first mention is as "whoreson kind girls, and such bawdy witches" (i.1.105), defining them not just by the unpleasantness expected of witches of this dramatic sort, but by their sexual appetite. Just as witchcraft pamphlets call attention to women as "harlot and witch", as well as their "whoredome", so Middleton allows his witches to relish in their sexuality.[188] They are shown in their first scene onstage delighting in their sexual pleasure;

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[186] This aspect of Acrasia's character will be examined more completely in Chapter 4.
[187] Cavanagh p. 317.
[188] See W.W., 'A True and Just Recorde (1582)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 72–124 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164>

Hecate, the leader of the witches, calls for her witches to "dance, kiss, and coll" (i.2.202), and they want a man to "pleasure us, but we enjoy him in an incubus" (i.2.204). Hecate's word for flying, "mounting", (i.2.210) has sexual undertones, and her son, Firestone, aims to go after women, asking his mother permission to "overlay a fat parson's daughter" (i.2.266). The crude language with which the witches describe their sexually charged activities demonstrates their pride in their lascivious natures. Firestone describes the witches as "foul sluts" (iii.3.352) in praise, further establishing their joy and pleasure in their sexual pursuits and calling to mind Henry Goodcole's description of his witch behaving "sluttishly".[189] Their sexual activites are also implied to be predatory, as Hecate greets Almachildes by telling the audience in aside that "I have had him thrice in incubus already" (i.2.369). This reference in itself is reminiscent of a genuine fear plaguing those who penned witchcraft pamphlets, as illustrated in 1613's "Witches Apprehended", as Master Enger

espied **Mary Sutton**, (the daughter) in a Mooneshine night come in at a window in her accustomed and personall habite, and shape, with her knitting worke in her hands, and sitting downe at his beds feete, sometimes working, and knitting with her needles, and sometimes gazing and staring him in the face, as his griefe was thereby redoubled and increased. Not long after she drewe neerer unto him, and sate by his bedde side (yet all this while he had neyther power to stirre or speake) and told him if hee would consent she should come to bedde to him, hee should be restored to his former health and prosperitie.[190]

[accessed 9 February 2021], p. 119 and 'The Examination and Confession of Certaine Wytches (1566)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 10–24 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9 February 2021], p. 15.

[189] Henry Goodcole, 'The Wonderfull Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer, a Witch (1621)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 299–315 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9 February 2021], p. 36.

[190] ' Witches Apprehended (1613)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 266–75 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9 February 2021] p. 272.

This episode demonstrates the real contemporary fears of witches using sexuality as a manipulative tool against men. Like Mary Sutton, and indeed Spenser's witches, Hecate preys on men in the community for her own fun, and does so apparently outside of their control, as an incubus spirit would be a demon version of the witch's victim. Even as these witches are called "hag" (i.2.356) and are not the beautiful enchantresses of which Spenser warns, Middleton's witches are just as sexually voracious and take pride in their sexual transgressions. Their over-sexualisation reflects the sexual overtones of the main plot; apart from mentions of their interactions with men in incubus, much of the magic performed in the play serves to disrupt the sexual activities of the non-magical members of the community.[191] Sebastian comes to Hecate to "strike a barrenness in man or woman" (i.2.325), while Almachildes similarly approaches her to cast a "love charm" (i.2.374). What makes these witches dangerous to Middleton's world, then, is their interference in the "cycle of reproduction", as the "most repugnant expression of female aggression and depravity", teeming with "lascivious and incestuous desires".[192]. Their relationship with sexuality demonstrates their clear intent to interfere with the patriarchal order and its associated ideas of reproduction,[193] and the sexual language with which they are described punctuates this transgression with shocking images of female sexual immorality.

It is with this language of sexual depravity and witchcraft that Rowley engages in *Merlin,* but this is not the only time a work with Rowley's name interacts as such. In *The Witch of Edmonton*, Mother Sawyer, as a witch, is not described with language so overt, but witchcraft is still directly linked to this sexuality. While witches' relationships with their familiars are frequently sexual in nature, Sawyer's relationship with hers, Tom the Dog, is defined more by emotional intimacy and companionship, as Dog promises "I love thee

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[191] McAdam p. 262.
[192] Keller p. 42.
[193] Keller p. 43.

much too well | to hurt or fright thee" (ii.1.121-2). The pamphlet upon which this play was based, however, describes the location of Sawyer's witches' teat, from which her familiar would suckle for her blood, as over her "Fundiment", implying a sexual relationship.[194] Instead, witches' relationship to sexuality appears through the community's views of her and the crimes she committed. Two clowns worry that unless they dispose of her, "all our wives will do nothing else | but dance about other country maypoles" (iv.1.8-9) and that "our cattle fall, our wives fall, our daughters fall, and | maid-servants fall" (iv.1.10-1). These are suggestions of crimes the audience never witnesses Sawyer committing or even thinking about committing, but it is clear that her accusers are primarily concerned with sexual transgression "which they attribute to the witch's powers" and that "hierarchy, sexual property, and male power are all at risk" by virtue of Sawyer's continued existence.[195] One of the only acts of magic the audience sees her directly perform, the one for which she is hired, is a sexual act, one which involves forcing a woman to fall in love against her will. Even if the spell is only a trick, and Sawyer clearly has no intent of actually effecting Cuddy's will, the language of the scene is heavily coloured by implications of sexual assault. "She will seem wantonly coy, and flee | thee; but follow her close and boldly" (ii.1.274-5), she tells him, which clearly evokes imagery of a woman fleeing sexual violence. This once again establishes the dangerous sexuality of these witches and their making victims of their community. Even if Sawyer does not actually acquiesce to Cuddy's wishes, the image of a woman insisting a man embrace a fellow woman as she flees from him is one of monstrous femininity. That she does not follow through with the request is in itself a transgression, a revocation of a promise based on a financial transaction and implicit trust from a man of the community, to whom she is meant to be submissive.

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[194] See Goodcole p. 306 and Dawson p. 87. Marion Gibson, in her edition of the pamphlet, defines "fundiment" as "anus" See footnote 16, Gibson p. 306.
[195] Dawson p. 85.

Sawyer's every action in this scene is a transgression, and the spell she promises to perform once again evokes images of the predatory sexuality which defines both Middleton's and Spenser's witches.

Despite the lack of overt sexual magic in *The Birth of Merlin*, or even the presence of witches, Rowley still utilises the language associated with this sexualised witchcraft in his depiction of non-magical female characters and the influence of the demonic throughout the play. Consequently, the connection between female witchcraft and predatory sexuality forms the foundation of the magical language which Rowley employs throughout his portrayal of femininity in *Merlin*.

Witch Pamphlet Rhetoric and Dramatic Witchcraft Villainy

The image of demonic magic and its connection to female sexuality becomes a shorthand for evil in Rowley's play. Without the appearance of acts, imagery and language associated with witchcraft allows for the indication of morality or lack thereof within a character or scene without having to set up a character's actions as such. Perhaps the most overt incidences of this practice are in Rowley's portrayal of figures strongly associated with evil female witchcraft on the assumption that the audience would be familiar with these figures and what their presence implies about those with whom they interact. The devil summons the fates to assist in Merlin's birth, asking for help to "bring this mixture of infernal seed | To humane being" (iii.3.286-7). Leading the group of three fates is Lucina, who, while called Lucina in the dramatis personae, is referred to in dialogue as "Hecate", identifying Lucina with the classical goddess of magic.[196] Hecate,

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[196] Rowley identifies Hecate in his play as Lucina, the Roman goddess associated with the moon, though the two goddesses are inherently interchangeable. Due to a mythological figure known to Romans as the Diana Trivia, multiple goddesses were considered to be different aspects of a single figure. In the Diana Trivia, it is Diana, but in some versions, the other aspects are given to Hecate, who is most often herself portrayed as a triple goddess. Lucina being referred to as both

perhaps most famous in early modern drama for her appearance in *Macbeth*, is also the name of the leader of the evil witches in Middleton's play. In her appearance as a leader of demonic-associated witches, she both invokes the image of her classical counterpart as the goddess of magic, but also with the evils committed by herself or by those with whom she associates.[197] As a classical deity, as well, she invokes the Christian trope of turning pagan deities into demons and false spirits, so she counts as a demon in early modern Christian thought.[198] Rowley's Lucina Hecate is directly in league with and submissive to the whims of the devil, even as she and her fates are ultimately those who bestow upon Merlin his magic and his prophecy (iii.3.294-7). Middleton's Hecate, who creates potions using an "unbaptised brat" (i.2.191) and "a russet mole upon some lady's cheek" (i.2.200) calls back not only to the famous potion scene from *Macbeth*, whose witches use "liver of a blaspheming Jew" (iv.1.26) as well as "Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips" (iv.1.29) in their own potion, but to the beliefs and practices associated with witches, as they were often thought to use body parts as part of their demonic practice.[199] First performed after both *Macbeth* and *The Witch*, Rowley, in his evocation of these figures, can clearly create connections in the minds of his audience to the demonic witches which came before. Consequently, even as Lucina and the fates perform almost no magic onstage apart from the thunder and lightning which greets them, and the magic they perform on Merlin furthers the destiny of Britain rather than threatens it, their demonic associations still follow them and code their magic as untrustworthy without them having to commit any acts of violence.

Lucina Hecate and Porserpine, another aspect of the triple Hecate as well as the Diana Trivia in the play cements this character as the triple Hecate and not a separate goddess. For more information on early modern perceptions of Lucina and Hecate see: Richard Linche, *The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction Wherein Is Liuely Depictured the Images and Statues of the Gods of the Ancients, with Their Proper and Perticular Expositions,* 2010.

[197] Kranz p. 370.

[198] Breuer p. 120.

[199] Calhoun pp. 185-6.

Furthermore, these figures' association with the devil is similarly a shorthand for female demonic witchcraft. Though no character in the play ever makes a pact with the devil, and Joan, despite her seduction by him never becomes a witch and later rejects his continued advances, the devil's presence codes every incidence of magic as aligned with or opposed to the devil. The competition between the magicians sets up a conflict between Christianity and paganism, giving Merlin's demonic magic justification when he becomes a force for Christianity as mentioned above, but the devil's presence and further interactions with the characters after Merlin's birth ensures his continued influence on the story even after his primary role as Merlin's father is complete. His role in Rowley's play parallels the appearance of Dog in *Edmonton.* Dog's ability to appear how he wants and walk in and out of every plot in the play makes him the most dangerous character: he is not confined simply to Mother Sawyer's witchcraft, instead choosing to embark on his own side quests, often leaving Sawyer alone until it comes time for her execution.[200] He assists, for example, in Frank's murder of Susan, helping to tie him to a tree (ii.3.374-5) and becomes friends with Cuddy Banks, to whom he promises to play in the Morris dance. Dog, until Sawyer's capture, is the character who ties the three plots of the play together. While the Devil's role is far more limited in Rowley's play, he is the one to bring Merlin into the wartime conflict, as the character who not only ensures Merlin's gift of prophecy through the fates, but he is also, as mentioned above, the character who suggests to Merlin to go to Vortiger and help with his castle (iii.4.365-8). Like Dog, the devil spends much time attempting to deceive characters through his appearance, first coming to Joan as "fair yong man…In all things suiting my aspiring pride" (iv.1.123-4), and later "in mans habit, richly attir'd, his feet and his head horrid" (iii.1), and his interactions with other characters always serve to further his own plans. He is only foiled when Merlin finally opposes him.

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[200] Pearson p. 90.

Unlike Dog, the devil is unable to simply walk away from the action to leave his handiwork behind, but that Merlin's defeat of his father is not absolute is significant; it reminds the audience of the ever-present threat of the devil, but their presence also reminds the audience of the demonic magic he brings with him. Whether Mother Sawyer makes a literal pact with Dog for witchcraft or the devil simply facilitates Merlin's power of prophecy, the association of magic with a fully visible demonic character links the magic of the story intrinsically with demonic forces. With the added threat of evil looming over the communities, the threat of witchcraft therefore becomes obvious and ever-present simply due to the appearance of these characters.

In addition to recognisable characters, Rowley employs specific magic-based language to identify several characters' morality, or more specifically lack thereof. The identifying language of women associated with witchcraft carries a lot more weight than the accusation alone may imply. The identification of magical character by language was employed specifically in the early modern period, especially based on the certain type of magic the person could perform.[201] This practice was used fairly often in literary contexts, as well, especially when magic played a significant role in the narrative, and this precedent is found directly in witchcraft pamphlets. The 1619 pamphlet, "The Wonderful Discovery of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower", details these definitions at length.

Writers, have concurred and concluded in this; that divers impious and facinorous mischiefes have beene effectuated through the instruments of the Divell, by permission of God, so that the actors of the same have carried away the opinion of the world, to doe that which they did by Witchcraft, or at least to be esteemed Witches, for bringing such and such things to passe: For howsoever the learned have charactred delinquents in this kinde by titles of sundry sortes, and most significant attributes; as *Pythonissae* dealing with artificiall Charmes; *Magi* anciently reputed so, for extraordinary wisedome and knowledge in the secrets of simples and hearbes; *Chaldei* , famous for Astronomy; *Necromancers* for practising to raise dead bodies, and by them to foretell events of the earth; *Geomantici* , for conversing with Spirits, and using Inchantations; *Genethliaci* , for presuming on the calculating of Nativities, or if you will, assuming the credit of Figure-casting; *Ventriloqui* , for speaking with hollow voyces as if they were possessed with Divells; *Venefici* , for

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[201] See Lawrence-Mathers p. 157 for definitions of the major types of magician and their magic.

dealing with Poyson, and either killing or curing that way: For you must understand however the Professors aforesaid practise murther and mischiefe, yet many times they Pretend cures and preservation; with many others, carrying the shew of great learning and admitted knowledge; yet have they all but one familier tearme with us in English called Witches. As for the conceit of wisemen or wise woemen, they are all meerely coseners and deceivers; so that if they make you beleeve that by their meanes you shall heare of things lost or stolne, it is either done by Confederacy, or put off by protraction to deceive you of your money.[202]

While Rowley does not use these linguistic distinctions to the extent laid out in this and other pamphlets, the specificity he does use in reference to his female characters draws clearly from this tradition. Three of the play's four women are called "witch", and while Modestia is called such because of her powers of persuasion that men cannot control, the other two characters, Joan and Artesia, play this straight.[203] That witches and whores are inherently interchangeable, as discussed above, is also echoed in the witch pamphlets not through actions, but through language. W.W.'s pamphlet highlights this most clearly; three of his accused witches are branded whores. While one can be seen as an insult from accused to accuser, the other two labels come *because* of the witchcraft accusations; they are witches, therefore they must also be whores.[204] For her part, Joan is called "witch, scullion, hag" (ii.1.74), "pretty wanton" (ii.1.119), "strumpet" (ii.1.77), and "whore" (iii.1.38) over the course of the play, but despite the suggestions of witchcraft, she is "never treated as a witch"; she is never outright accused, never tried, never feared for how her witchcraft could affect others.[205] It is her pregnancy, and the necessary assumption of sexuality that accompanies the pregnancy, that makes her a witch. Indeed, not even her relations with the devil warrant these accusations; it is her sexuality alone.

In another illustration of this association, the witches of Middleton's play take great pride in their titles. Most commonly, the witches are described as "hag", by Sebastian

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[202] ' The Wonderful Discovery' pp. 280-281.
[203] See S. Johnson p. 12.
[204] See WW pp. 95-96; 101-102; and 116.
[205] Obermeier p. 66.

(i.2.356) and Almachildes (i.2.370) in particular in their dealings with Hecate. Witch trial literature was fond of the word "hag", and the descriptor as synonymous with "witch" appears in one pamphlet without the identity of the witch in question, let alone the witch's sex, being known to those investigating.[206] The OED defines "hag" as an "infernal being, in female form", "A woman supposed to have dealings with Satan and the infernal world; a witch", making the terms "hag" and "witch" interchangeable in the context of the pamphlets and the play.[207] Thus, when Hecate tells Almachildes nonchalantly that he can "call me the horrid'st and unhallowed'st things | that life and nature trembles at" (i.2.372-373), her uncaring and unflinching reaction does not deny her dealings with the devil, who never appears in this play, but indeed does not care about anyone making those accusations. The implied pride Hecate takes in these infernal dealings mirror the pride she takes in her lascivious nature. Their natures, however, are revealed through their language, not through their actions, making the titles the characters employ for them significant.

On the other hand, *Edmonton*'s witch, Mother Sawyer, is identified as such long before Dog is introduced, and the names she is called by her accusers both before and after her pact with Dog reflect accusations of excessive sexuality. Old Banks calls her "jadish witch" (iv.1.3), and though jadish traditionally means ill-tempered, when referring to a woman, it can also mean unchaste. Additionally, she is referred to as "Old trot" (iv.1.22), for which "hellcat"—a term used several times to identify the witches of Middleton's play

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[206] See "The Dæmon of Burton" p. 3 for a contemporary use of the word "Hagg" to describe a witch. It should be noted, however, that despite a limited use of the word outside of this pamphlet before the 1640s—1606's "'The Severall Practises of Johane Harrison and Her Daughter" (1606)', in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, by Marion Gibson (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 151–57 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/plymouth/detail.action?docID=243164> [accessed 9 February 2021], p. 143, for example, does feature this insult—its popularity in pamphlets would increase towards the latter half of the century. See also "The tryal, condemnation, and execution of three vvitches" p. 3.

[207] Oxford English Dictionary.

(see ii.2.275)—and "witch" are considered synonyms.[208] Other names she is called

throughout the scene include "hot whore" (iv.1.23), "saucy" (iv.1.83), and "base hell-hound"

(iv.1.94). It is significant that this sexual language is used during the scene in which she is

officially accused of witchcraft. As mentioned above, Sawyer never actually commits a

sexual crime on stage and the crimes she does commit are far removed from sexuality,

but still the language used to describe her witchcraft suggests "sexual sin, specifically

uncontrolled lust".[209] The connection between predatory sexuality and demonic female

witchcraft is therefore once again a nearly interchangeable one.

A character does not have to possess magic to be associated with this language,

however. Middleton has Gaspero describe Antonio as having been "bewitch'd" by Florida

(iii.2.113), whom Sebastian later calls "strumpet" (iii.2.280). She is notably the only non-

magical character to be named as such, making her association with sexuality more

prominent. Similarly, Artesia, the villain of the historical plot of Rowley's play, is

consistently accused of "bewitching" Aurelius (ii.2.180, 207; iii.6.556) or using "magick"

(i.2.308) and "flattery" (i.2.253) by nobles who do not approve of her relationship with

Aurelius. Aurelius's constant defensiveness of his new wife and accusations of treason

against those who do not approve of the marriage is considered evidence of her witchcraft,

and Aurelius himself admits to being swayed by her beauty:

my tongue
Turns traitor, and will betray my heart--sister to
Our enemy:--'sdeath, her beauty mazes me,
cannot speak if I but look on her.
(i.2.216-217)

Artesia's beauty is as effective in swaying the political decisions of this British king as any

magic, and is perhaps more effective, as the Saxon magician, Proximus, is shown to be

defeated twice by the moral high ground of Christianity held by the British. Artesia is called

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[208] Miriam Webster.
[209] McAdam p. 269.

witch in a world that sees no witchcraft, called devil in a world in which the devil exists despite her lack of interaction with him. Rowley's employment of this witchcraft language despite the existence of more ceremonial forms of magic makes the play's treatment of these women significant. The play need not condemn the immoral actions of Artesia; her association by other characters with demonic magic is enough to do that for her. Her sexuality is what makes her a witch, her power over men what makes her dangerous. Very much like Malory's enchantresses and Spenser's both beautiful and ugly witches, it is Artesia's "bewitching" of Aurelius which leads to the accusations against her. While this language, as well as characters like Spenser's Duessa and Acrasia, has precedent in witch trial pamphlets—Phillip Flower, for instance, is accused of having been "lewdly transported with the love of one *Th. Simpson*, who presumed to say, that shee had bewitched him for hee had no power to leave her"—Rowley's beautiful enchantress-like villain is rooted more firmly in the Arthurian tradition inhabited by Spenser.[210] In creating a villain whose sexuality is the primary "magical" weapon against a man, Rowley's Artesia becomes not just a witch in the contemporary trial literature sense, but in the sense of an Arthurian enchantress. The presence of both the sensual Artesia and the "whoreish" Joan, therefore, places Rowley's texts within both contexts, and it becomes inextricably linked to both traditions. It is in this odd middle ground that Rowley carves out his space, implying significant ramifications for the world of his characters, especially the women within it. It is with this convention, the identification of transgressive sexuality in women through the language of witchcraft, that Rowley engages, and this idea, then, that informs his descriptions of his non-magical women.

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[210] See "The Wonderful Discovery of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower" p. 285.

Nonmagical Witchcraft and the Power of Language

The use of gendered witchcraft language in reference to both magical and nonmagical characters implies an association between women, particularly women's sexuality, and evil deeds or intentions. It combines the two traditions and ends up creating an almost contradictory marriage by demonstrating the power of the word "witch" as insult. In the words of *Edmonton*'s Mother Sawyer, "tis all one | to be a witch as to be counted as one" (ii.1.112-113). Calling a woman "witch" was a way of defining her as transgressive, as socially dangerous, so naming woman "witch" bestows upon her a dangerous power she may or may not have and acts as a prelude to destroying her; once a woman is named "witch", for all intents and purposes that is what she is. Consequently, all it takes is for the accusation to be levelled against a female character, and she becomes, in any way her agency allows, "witch". If witchcraft is the culmination of a fear of women stepping outside appropriate gender roles, then, women who attempt to gain this power without magic may be vulnerable to accusation or even demonic influence. Witchcraft was a "performative force";it was the performance of transgressive agency that could lead to witchcraft accusations, or women's submissive vulnerability which could lead to their susceptibility to demonic forces.[211] That witchcraft accusations followed women who did not conform to patriarchal norms is relatively well accepted by scholars; however, within his text, Rowley is able to build upon this tradition by identifying transgressive characters who have no suggestion of witchcraft.[212] The language does not define their transgressions, it simply labels it in a way which identifies them as sexual and social

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[211] Stavreva p. 317.

[212] For discussions of witchcraft accusations and patriarchal norms, see Bailey, Barry et al., Bever, Breuer, Clark 1999, De Blécourt, Fischlin, Malcolm Gaskill, 'WITCHCRAFT, POLITICS, AND MEMORY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND', *The Historical Journal*, 50.2 (2007), 289–308 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X07006073>, Herrington, Hutton, Kolb, Levin, Mawson, Rosner, P. Rushton, Stavreva, Geraldine Wagner, 'Contesting Love's Tyranny: Socially Outcast Women and the Marginalized Female Body in Lady Mary Wroth's Urania', *English Studies*, 87.5 (2006), 577–601 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00138380600768080>, and Waite.

transgressions through the metaphor of witchcraft. Women may show their power, then, through a type of "magic" of their own, a type of bodily or rhetorical influence, either to protect against the "seductive and exploitative" influence of others or as their own "base form" of magic to gain power for themselves.[213] These women are not obvious practitioners of magic, even as they are labelled witches, but their transgressive power, this alternate magic, allows them to take power in their own lives.[214] For Rowley's women, this language does not grant them power but identifies women using this agency in order to undermine their character.

To achieve this form of agency, women must take power through the methods open to them within the patriarchal system, which may manifest as sexual manipulation or as speaking or acting out of turn. For example, Artesia uses her sexuality to get what she wants, but is brutally killed by the play's end in an act of punishment for the transgressive female and forcibly returned to the social state in which she belongs, a journey which is clearly mapped throughout the play through language used to refer to her. Artesia's mere introduction is a transgression in itself. She first appears to Aurelius as an orator to broker a peace between the Britons and the Saxons, and that she is a woman is met with immediate suspicion from Aurelius's generals (i.2.198). Within Artesia's first three lines are talks of love—she "in terms of love | Brings peace and health to great Aurelius" (i.2.202-203); she asks for peace "with endless love unto your state and person" (i.2.210); and proposes the agreement so that "Both states in peace and love may now inherit" (i.2.239)—and this, accompanied by her "bewitching" beauty, are enough to make Aurelius

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[213] S. Johnson p. 7. For more information on gender and language in early modern literature, see M. C. Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt in Medieval and Early Modern England: Speaking as a Woman* (Springer, 2011), Nancy Gail Selleck, 'Coining the Self: Language, Gender, and Exchange in Early Modern English Literature' (Princeton University) <https://www.proquest.com/openview/4b5327e4e70d2d93de5c4d1c64c10121/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y> [accessed 19 April 2023], and Helen Wilcox, *1611: Authority, Gender and the Word in Early Modern England* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).
[214] S. Johnson p. 10.

marvel, "she speaks of love agen" (i.2.240) as he makes his decision to marry her. Artesia arrives immediately in control; she knows exactly the language and actions that will sway Aurelius to satisfy her desires and even how to make him trust her so completely that he acts against the advice of all of his generals to marry her. Consequently, Artesia appears in the play already placing the audience on edge, and the witchcraft language serves to amplify this unease.

Furthermore, she directly exerts control over her body, which "appeals to and repels only and precisely those she means to".[215] She easily distracts both Aurelius and Uter with her body while alienating them from their counsel and is able to manipulate the situation so that Uter keeps their affair from Aurelius just long enough for him to believe that Uter is pursuing Artesia, rather than the other way around. She plays the submissive female—"My beauty forc't mine own captivity" (iii.6.473)—to feign innocence and passivity, but also reiterates the power of her beauty. Additionally, if Uter indeed could not resist her beauty when he attacked her, she gives once again the power to her body. Uter's cries of "Impudent whore" (iii.6.437) upon his rejection of her advances assigns her transgression to her sexuality, to the very body over which she exerts her control. His accusations and rejection confirm that he is aware of her potential for manipulation, but he is still unable to predict that she will betray him until it is too late.[216] Her body remains manipulative, her beauty remains bewitching, and she becomes more powerful than other, male Saxons with similar interests. Proximus, the magician who supposedly assisted the Saxons' victories in battle, is killed quickly and without much fanfare, having been humiliated in two separate magical contests. By contrast, Artesia is the character who wields the most power, succeeding in manipulating the Britons until it is far too late and Aurelius is killed. She holds onto this power even upon her death; every suggestion of methods of execution is

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[215] S. Johnson p. 20.
[216] Ibid.

met with reasons why this would be preferable for her: their method of torture is a "poor invention" (v.2.168); to burn to death is "a phoenix death, and glorious" (v.2.171). Even the solution on which the Britons settle, to trap and starve her, invites her to "live upon your curses" (v.2.176) and leaves her apparently disappointed: "I wanted more" (v.2.179), she says, causing the Britons to shoo her away before she can say anything more. Her taunts "disempower" her captors, allowing her to maintain control even in her final moments.[217] The Briton's final insult against her, "Erichtho" (v.2.167) names her witch of classical myth: not only does her power follow her to her death but her witchcraft associations. Artesia is the ultimate witch in a world without witches, the ultimate wielder of magic in a world where magic is a vital tool for kings. Her body displays "impressive powers of enchantment", and she leads the Britons into battle.[218] Artesia's transgressions, defined by her body and sexuality, make her the demonic witch, and the insults against her, with their sexual and magical connotations, amplify her demonisation even as Artesia herself accepts the labels with a sardonic glee.

On the other hand, Rowley's use of witchcraft discourse in a magical play is unusual in that his Britain does not feature witches. The closest reference Rowley gives to their existence is when Vortiger, for help with his castle, calls upon "The bards, the druids, wizards, conjurers" but specifically "no witch" (iv.1.25-30). Witchcraft plays, however, use this discourse in similar ways, drawing on the incidences of witchcraft that do occur in their worlds to establish the morality of non-magical characters even while avoiding direct witchcraft accusations against them. Most explicitly, the women's actions in *The Witch* draw direct comparison to the evils of the play's witches. Throughout the play, nonmagical women are "condemned by their similarity" to the witches; they become the standard by

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[217] S. Johnson p. 21.
[218] S. Johnson p. 30.

which transgressive feminine actions are judged.[219] These comparisons would not have been lost upon Middleton's audience, even as apart from one instance mentioned above, actual witchcraft language is not used against them.[220] This is especially true in the case of the Duchess, who, like Artesia, can be said to use her association with witches to manufacture agency and power against those with whom she has a quarrel. In the clearest connection made between any of the female characters and the witches, the Duchess, whilst visiting the witches for assistance in murdering Almachildes, is greeted as "daughter" (v.2.192; 203), and greets Hecate in turn as "mother" (v.2.198). It is not likely the case that these titles reflect an actual relationship between the two women, but instead suggest a kinship, a bond between them as transgressive women.[221] Without witchcraft language used directly against her, this kinship establishes the Duchess's role as one which mirrors the aims of the witches, even if only in spirit. As if to solidify this connection, the Duchess is deemed "lustful woman and bold murderess" (v.3.350), an accusation which, in its links with witchcraft's lust and sexuality brands the Duchess the witches' associate by means only of her supposed lechery. While this accusation, tied to her supposed adultery, is almost immediately proven false and the Duchess vindicated on this crime alone, her attempted murders, and dealings with the witches in order to accomplish these ends, leaves her in the minds of the play and of the audience forever tied to the witches with whom she associates. In the Duchess's own words, "mischief is mischief's friend" (iv.1.89), and while she may not me deemed "witch", the connection between the two shall linger.

In contrast, an accusation of witchcraft does not have to malign a woman's attempts at agency, but might instead denote their vulnerability. These women are not condoned in

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[219] See Keller pp. 37-38 and 43.
[220] Keller p. 48.
[221] Keller p. 45.

any actions they take in desperation or in pride, but they remain sympathetic. The

accusation "witch", then, cannot, in these cases, brand a woman inherently bad, but

instead reveal their vulnerability at the hands of those around them, and, by extension,

demonic forces or actions. Both Joan and Mother Sawyer have dealings with demons as a

result of this vulnerability, and it is this that the witchcraft accusations reveal, rather than

any malicious intent. Mother Sawyer's descent into demonic witchcraft is the direct result

of victimisation. She utilises the power of her words, even before she becomes a witch,

and it is this transgression which turns the town against her and labels her demonic. She

describes this phenomenon the first time she appears onstage:

Some call me witch,
And being ignorant of myself, they go
About to teach me how to be one; urging
That my bad tongue—by their bad usage made so —
Forspeaks their cattle, doth bewitch their corn,
Themselves, their servants, and their babes at nurse.
This they enforce upon me
(ii.1.7-14)

This speech becomes a theme throughout *Edmonton*, that it is people who victimise

women who create the witches they so fear. The narrative makes it clear that her

witchcraft is expected; one clown remarks "if she comes, the devil and all comes along |

with her" (iii.1.13-14) and Dog even confirms this upon Sawyer's execution: "let not the

world witches or devils condemn; | They follow us, then we follow them" (v.1.91-92).

Sawyer herself laments "Such so abused | Are the coarse witches; t'other are the fine, |

Spun for the devil's own wearing" (iv.1.133-135). It is clear that she "sells her soul in self-

defense".[222] The sympathy shown to Sawyer and her life as an outcast was extremely

unusual, both for the trials themselves and the literature based on them.[223] In the case of

Mother Sawyer, it is her "bad tongue" which condemns her, both into becoming a witch

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[222] Pearson p. 96.
[223] Herrington p. 483.

and with her execution. Sawyer's attempts to argue the hypocrisy of the law, that "men-witches" (iv.1.145) are allowed to commit heinous crimes, including against women, without being accused of witchcraft demonstrates her unwillingness to be intimidated by those who would accuse her. It is her final accusation, too, against the "golden hooks flung at [a woman's] chastity" (iv.1.154) and the practice of "putting counterfeit pieces | Away for true gold" (vi.1.158-159) which seals her fate. In pointing out both the predatory sexuality and falseness of men, for which women are immediately condemned, Sawyer steps over the line—"By one thing she speaks | I know now she is a witch" (iv.1.160-161). Sawyer is "angry, ugly, and alone" but she "plays the cursing hag" as an attempt to achieve some form of agency, even as she resents the accusations of witchcraft, since a woman like her would not have been afforded much agency without magic.[224] She becomes a witch for her use of language, then, and indeed the language of witchcraft is used to both for and against her as she fights her circumstances.

The accusations against Joan, on the other hand, are not bound to her tongue or even her poverty, and in fact, that she is assigned the label "witch" without having any ability is extremely unusual. Outside of the accusations that lead Sawyer to taking up the mantle, in the witchcraft literature from which Rowley draws, no character who does not actually use magic is assigned the label "witch". On the one hand, this could be said to be true for Joan. Her first encounter with the devil, in fact, comes before the first accusation is uttered against her, but it is notable that this is not the action which brings about the accusation. Instead, it is the Clown's accusation that the prince fathered Joan's unborn son, that "she has been at it before me; 'tis a womans fault" (ii.1.67) and that "we all love to Go-too't, as well as your worship" (ii.1.69), calling attention to the sexual connotations of Joan's name. Despite Joan's relative lack of voice in this scene, the implication that she

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[224] Pearson p. 90.

believes herself to have had any relations with the prince is what prompts his cries of "witch, scullion, hag!" (ii.1.74). To Uter, this is not a literal accusation; he shows no indication of believing that Joan is actually a witch, only that his anger has been provoked by the insinuations against him. To him, he knows her only as "I do thunder, hell, and mischief" (ii.1.73), not enough to level any informed accusations, and indeed, this is the only time the word is used against Joan. This in itself is notable; it demonstrates the versatility of the insult if it can, in the course of two scenes, be used as a legitimate accusation against Artesia and a casual one against Joan, even in a play with demons and magic. The former, however, adds another layer to Uter's accusation. Though the character could not have known this, Joan has had previous dealings with the devil, and it is for this reason she is left vulnerable to his insults. Like Sawyer, the accusation "witch" calls attention to the character's vulnerability, though unlike Sawyer, her vulnerability is not entirely outside of the realm of consorting with demons. They switch roles: Joan is vulnerable in part because of her dealings with demons, while Sawyer deals with demons because of her vulnerability. The vulnerabilities of both, however they may have come about, bring with them accusations of witchcraft and public ire.

Witchcraft language was not limited to Arthurian literature or witch plays, however; early modern drama commonly utilised witch language to label a (usually female) character monstrous, transgressive, or otherwise evil. If the accusation of witch can be used purely as slander and devoid of any literal magical associations, its appearance outside the world of magical plays would demonstrate this. Therefore, while I shall be but brief, I feel it imperative to acknowledge the use of witch language in these contexts to paint a broader picture of the dramatic environment in which Rowley's play was composed. Shakespeare, for example, was acutely aware of his culture's interest in female power, both in its need to respect it and its fear of it, and often used witch language

to express this interest.[225] Most notably, Cleopatra's power is described as "witchcraft join

with beauty" (ii.1.642).[226] Very much like Artesia's use of her body and sexuality to control

Aurelius, so too does Cleopatra employ hers for the control of Antony. These two women

are extremely self-aware, their gender performance inextricably linked with sexuality as a

form of female power, and for both women, the performance of this "witchcraft" on

powerful men and its inherent danger sets the performance of female sexuality against "a

monolithic conception of female gender as stereotypically wily, manipulative, and politically

illogical and deficient".[227] Indeed, Antony proclaims her "triple-turned whore" (iv.12.2917),

"monster-like" (iv.12.2944), "the greatest spot | Of all thy sex" (iv.12.2943-2944), and

loudly cries "the witch shall die" (iv.12.2956) upon their defeat in battle at sea. Through his

defeat, Antony displaces his military failures onto Cleopatra's sexuality, leaving Cleopatra,

much like Artesia, to take the blame for the failures of the men they manipulated.[228] This is

not to say that neither woman is blameless for these failures, merely that their direct

participation, namely direct fighting, in the military exploits of Antony and Aurelius is

limited; their actions are instead those of sexual manipulation, and it is this manipulation

that brands both women witch. While Cleopatra is the most prominent Shakespearean

character to attract this label, she is far from his only non-magical character branded

"witch". 1 Henry VI's Joan is "that witch, that damned sorceress" (iii.2.1486) for the way

she can inspire the French army into battle, while Richard III labels Queen Margaret "foul

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[225] Alfar p. 18. As Shakespeare is the writer most commonly associated with early modern drama, I use his plays as a case study example here.

[226] All references made to this text are to William Shakespeare, 'Antony and Cleopatra (Complete Text) :|: Open Source Shakespeare '
<https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=antonycleo&Scope=entire&pleasewait=1&msg=pl> [accessed 22 October 2021].

[227] Alfar p. 108.

[228] Alfar p. 112.

wrinkled witch" (i.3.628), for her hatred of him.[229] Notably, Margaret is portrayed and

treated as a practicing witch even as she practices no forms of magic outside of her

cursing. The latter even offers Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York a place in her

revenge when Elizabeth "should wish for thee to help me curse" (iv.4.2875), echoing

Margaret's earlier promises to do so, her angry words dismissed by the court she so

hates. For these women, words are their witchcraft, their ability to, in Joan's case inspire

and in Margaret's to curse, allow them power over others outside of magic. Shakespeare's

plays, most explicitly in Othello, acknowledge this power of words, when Brabantio

accuses Othello of bewitching Desdemona and Othello replies that Desdemona would

merely "Devour up my discourse" (i.3.495) and that "This only is the witchcraft I have

used" (i.3.514).[230] Contemporary drama, as exemplified here through Shakespeare, then,

demonstrate clearly the power the language of witchcraft may hold for those on its

receiving end. If it is in fact this tradition drawn upon by the playwrights of both *Merlin* and

Edmonton, its usage should then cease its significance at the first insult, when actual

dealings with demons could not be known by the characters. These plays, however, do

feature demons who take advantage of this vulnerability—in Joan's case for the devil to

attack her a second time and in Sawyer's to become the very thing of which she'd been

accused—even if the sympathy remains, its acknowledgement does not make the

characters "good". They have still sinned; they have still had dealings with demons, and

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[229] All references to *Henry VI* are to William Shakespeare, 'Henry VI, Part I (Complete Text) :|: Open Source Shakespeare '
<https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=henry6p1&Scope=entire&pleasewait=1&msg=pl> [accessed 22 October 2021]. All references to *Richard III* are to William Shakespeare, 'Richard III (Complete Text) :|: Open Source Shakespeare '
<https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=richard3&Scope=entire&pleasewait=1&msg=pl> [accessed 22 October 2021].
[230] All references to this text are to William Shakespeare, 'Othello (Complete Text) :|: Open Source Shakespeare '
<https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=othello&Scope=entire&pleasewait=1&msg=pl> [accessed 22 October 2021].

must still be punished. The accusation despite lack of actual ability sets them apart; the word is a label for those who do not fit in the mould, and does reveal structural issues which place some, particularly poorer women, in vulnerable positions. If, as suggested above, Joan is the poor pamphlet witch to Artesia's Spenserian enchantress, however, her lack of magic, the same poor demeanour that condemns Sawyer, and sincere repentance should preclude her from the accusation if Merlin's father is not the factor which leads to it. Yet the word is used almost carelessly; it has no meaning for Joan the way it does for Artesia, instead revealing the importance of and inspiration from witchcraft dramas and pamphlet literature on the cultural understanding of women and poverty.

As the language alone, rather than behaviour, can distinguish women, Rowley's play can then establish these linguistic shortcuts within an Arthurian tradition which can now make use of the language to identify those female characters prone to predatory lust. While women who find themselves on the outskirts of normative society are identified as especially vulnerable to demonic influence, as seen through the fate of Joan, women who choose to transgress against these same norms invite accusations of witchcraft, especially if their transgressions are a mark of their predatory sexuality, the same sexuality which defines Arthurian female enchantresses, as seen through the actions of Artesia. Rowley codes his nonmagical female characters with witchcraft language as a means of defining both their dangerous actions and their sin-stained souls. It becomes a standard by which to define women, and to condemn their actions regardless of any interactions with the demonic forces which are not only present but specifically emphasised in the world of Rowley's narrative, and this definition, when expanded into the Arthurian tradition, carries with it both its traditional meanings and, now, the connotations codified in witch-trial media.

Conclusion

In Rowley's world of wizardry, prophecy, and magical contests, witch language is used against non-magical characters in manners that have nothing to do with magic at all. Most of them do not even have significant plot-relevant roles: Artesia sparks the war and Joan gives birth to Merlin, but after these contributions they disappear until their fates are revealed in Act V. The women serve, within the play, as transgressive instigators of male action; they are the ones who, for one reason or another, cause the action of the men. This is especially true of Artesia, who sparks the war, but she is also the most transgressive character and the only true villain, as though he is an antagonist, Vortiger's villainy is more muddled and down to fate rather than true evil. Artesia's villainy is shown through her predatory sexuality. That she manipulates both Aurelius and Uter and uses her body as her primary form of influence makes her the play's most dangerous character. Her "bewitching" beauty makes her the play's "Erichtho"; she becomes the witch in a world devoid of witchcraft. Though she wields no magic in the traditional sense, her body and her beauty are still able to distract both of the princes from their duties and turn them against each other. She is introduced immediately in a role usually filled by a man, as the Saxon orator, and her dialogue immediately establishes her attempts to attract Aurelius. She is the play's ultimate transgressive female, and her role as such is demonstrated explicitly through the language used to define her influence. Her sexuality, therefore, recalls characters such as the traditional enchantresses of romance, of Spenser's Duessa and Acrasia, but also invokes images of the lustfulness and sexual crimes of the witches in more traditional witchcraft representations, as seen in *The Witch* and *Edmonton*. The danger of demonic influence that Joan represents mirrors the falls of Middleton and *Edmonton*'s women. Joan finds kinship in the pregnancies ofMiddleton's Francisca and *Edmonton*'s Winnifred, but while Francisca plays the role of Artesia in attempting to turn

characters against one another for her benefit, Joan remains the submissive wife as she attempts to reintegrate herself into the patriarchal hierarchy from which she was cast. Instead, she is like Winnifred, the poor young widow who, after the death of Sawyer, is the most at risk of demonic influence.[231] Joan becomes the embodiment of the weakness of women to the devil, and though she finds comfort in her repentance, she must ultimately live in the consequences of her sin in order to protect herself from falling into sin once more.

In the context of the play, however, witches do exist, and indeed magic is essential to the play. Merlin's ability to best his opponents in magical contests are foundational to the Christian themes of the play and the rehabilitation of a potentially problematic character via his demonic birth. On the other hand, witches themselves do not appear as characters in the play, and yet language used against female characters is closely associated with language used in early modern witchcraft pamphlets. This pamphlet language is a violence in itself, used against any woman who is deemed transgressive or indeed attempts to have any influence over male characters; they are "bewitching" men. While Arthurian literature is itself no stranger to magic, this play introduces the elements of early modern witch trial conventions and language, and it is the latter convention which Rowley draws from as he uses this language against his characters. The language itself is used as a short hand, a code to define female characters and their behaviours without having to describe what they have done or demonstrate any ability: the word "witch" itself suffices to diminish their credibility in the world of the play.

Rowley's world, however, is not devoid of magic; it does not use the language of magic outside of its context. Instead, the language exists in the same world as the Christian struggle between demonic magic and the will of God. Merlin's very existence, as

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[231] Pearson p. 106.

the son of the devil, demonstrates the marriage between magical practice and the discourse of witchcraft. The rhetoric used against the women, however, is specifically that of witchcraft, a type of magic which does not appear in Rowley's narrative. Through Artesia's use of her body to manipulate men and Joan's susceptibility to the devil, Rowley warns his audience of the dangers of behaviours by linking them to witchcraft. In establishing those connections between the labels given to demonic witches in contemporary drama and in traditional romance, Rowley does not need to necessarily define what about these women is dangerous. Instead, the rhetoric speaks for him; the actions of the women condemned through simple comparisons to both those women who were condemned to death for witchcraft and the Arthurian lustful enchantresses. It becomes evidence of their attempts at agency within their own stories, but also of their vulnerability to the influence of the devil. The overlap with Arthruian representations of beautiful, lustful, and predatory sexuality gives the witch language a double meaning within Rowley's text: to undermine the agency of the poor or transgressive women—Sawyer represents how consistently labelling an outcast as a witch could lead to demonic influence—and to warn against male sexual control by women, as portrayed through Duessa and Artesia. In combining these two traditions of female magic, Rowley's play can entirely rewrite the male characters' perceptions of the women with a single word, even as no magical or demonic action is performed. Joan and Artesia, then, act as the intersection between these two linguistic traditions, and demonstrate the power of language to affect characterisation and sympathy towards female characters.

There has been very limited analysis of witchcraft language in drama which does not include magic, and indeed this chapter exposes this idea of linguistic shorthand even within Arthurian or magical plays which do not feature witches. With most magical analysis of this play focusing on Merlin and the magic which is performed, this chapter attempts to

examine those elements of magic which are incorporated outside of the world of magic the play presents within its story world. Consequently, this chapter demonstrates that language from one tradition can expose the way characters in another are coded and portrayed, and introduces the language of witchcraft pamphlets into Arthurian literature, a tradition normally devoid of witch-trial witches. The next chapter, however, will move away from Rowley's play, using Richard Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* to examine the collision of different narrative traditions of rape and how codes and scripts can become recognisable even in a text that does not follow the tradition which these codes form.

Chapter Three: "Bloudy murther": Rape and the appropriation of voice in *Tom a Lincoln*

How can women's anger at rape usefully interrupt the smooth ideological structures that have defined rape for thousands of years? What stories of rape can be usefully told without a reinscription of traditional hierarchies of power? How can we discuss the social mechanisms at work in representations of rape without reinforcing victimization and enjoining silence on women? How can we distinguish a literary trope from a physical act? Why is women's anger over representation considered illegitimate?[232]

Richard Johnson's 1599 prose Arthurian romance *Tom a Lincoln* presents an

unusual narrative of sexual assault, both within the Arthurian canon and among other early

modern texts. This episode exposes the assumptions and ways of thinking upon which a

particular cultural script was founded, and how this can be obscured by the passage of

time. It demonstrates the ways in which a text which, while on its face, does not follow the

narrative these scripts create, reveal those structures of power and cultural assumptions

behind them. Johnson's romance presents an episode focusing on an island whose

women had turned to violence in response to a threat of sexual violence. This scene can

be viewed through the lens of an early modern rape narrative tradition which placed the

voices of victims at the forefront for the purpose of the perpetuation of this narrative, which

this project will refer to as "ventriloquism". While no physical rape occurs in the romance,

by reading it as a rape narrative one can see more clearly those assumptions of power

and structures of the patriarchy which underlie early modern narratives of rape. Johnson's

text, in the ways it manipulates, subverts, and acknowledges the tradition, presents

character dynamics, power structures, and actions that function in a manner contrary to

those of other stories of this type, but the acknowledgement of these elements allow for a

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[232] Karen Robertson, 'Rape and Appropriation of Progne's Revenge in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Or, "Who Cooks the Thyestean Banquet?"', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Christine Rose and Elizabeth Robertson, 2002 edition (New York: AIAA, 2001), pp. 213–40.

reading of the text as one which was aware of and indeed drew from those assumptions which govern early modern rape narratives. Similarly, while her later relationship with Tom is entirely removed from the threats of rape against her, the lack of physical rape occurring does not preclude this text from the rape tradition; on the contrary, the codes and assumptions which guide Caelia's narrative are the same which are integral to early modern narratives of rape.

In the episode, a female messenger from an island upon which the title character and his crew have shipwrecked tells the story of the island of Larmos, which was entrenched in a constant war for which all of the men on the island left to fight. The wars resulted in the island being "left destitute of men, to the great discontentment of the Ladies and Damsels", but when they asked the king to return their husbands to them, he answered that as punishment he would not allow any man home, leaving the country desolate, and he would give the women to the "spoyle" of his enemies. The women "tooke it in such euill part, that they conspired against their King, and Husbands" and killed every man on the island except the king, who was put on a boat and sent out to sea. The warrior women who now rule the since-renamed Fairy Island refuse to allow the knights to enter their land, because "the Ladies will suddenly giue you a meruailous Battell".[233] This scene portrays a woman who, following threats of sexual slavery, led a rebellion against the men of her island to protect herself and the other women from rape.[234] This is highly unusual for works of Arthurian literature, which uses set "shemas, scripts, and vocabulary" to

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[233] See Johnson pp. 24-26

[234] This story mirrors the little-known Anglo-Norman legend of Albina and the founding of Albion, in which women, who are married off without consent, plot to kill their husbands. Upon being found out, they are placed on a boat out to see and wash up on an island, which becomes an island of women and giants before the arrival of Brutus. Despite this story not being a narrative of rape, the parallels are still interesting to note. The full text can be found at Jane Bliss, 'Des Grantz Geanz', in *An Anglo-Norman Reader* (Open Book Publishers, 2018), pp. 60–77. For an overview and analysis of the legend, see Lisa M. Ruch, Albina and Her Sisters: The Foundation of Albion (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2013).

represent both the act and threat of rape and sexual violence, which functions as a common trope within romance.[235] While romance does not necessitate rape, it is intrinsic to the genre as far back as Chrétien de Troyes in the thirteenth century, whom most romancers imitate, and the kidnap of women, and their subsequent rescue, is one of the most prominent elements of Arthurian romance.[236] This scene plays on the Arthurian and romantic assumptions of sexual violence, but draws additionally from those cultural scripts which govern stories of early modern rape. In this way, this romance, despite not featuring a physical rape, can reveal assumptions about structures of power within early modern rape narratives when read in terms of the tropes and codes embedded within this tradition.

This chapter explores the island's new queen, Caelia, and her damsels ' experiences of threatened rape in Johnson's romance, which received a sequel in 1607. While the damsels are able to avoid a physical rape, to engage with the romance in terms of the early modern rape narrative is useful in identifying the vocabulary and codes taken for granted within these narratives. Doing so allows one to engage more fully with the rape narrative, understanding the power struggles staged by these stories. The romance's engagement with rape narratives, however, is distinctive not only compared with other Arthurian narratives, but also compared to those of early modern literature more broadly in how its would-be victims react to the threat of assault. While this chapter will compare this representation of sexual threat with those instances in other Arthurian narratives, specifically Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1596), it will primarily construct a narrative of rape as it appeared in early modern

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[235] Walker 1997 p. 3.

[236] Monica Brzezinski Porkay, 'The Violence of Courtly Exegesis in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Christine Rose and Elizabeth Robertson, 2002 edition (New York: AIAA, 2001), p. 97. Note that in medieval thought, the word "rape" could mean a sexual assault in the modern sense but also could mean kidnapping or even elopement. The point was that a woman was taken from her husband or father by a man, whatever the context. See Catty, Baines and Batt.

texts, primarily dramas, which featured rape as a common plot element, through the lens

of the appropriation of the voices of the victims. It will examine several plays, including

Thomas Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent* (published 1661), John Fletcher's *Bonduca*,

(first performed 1613), William Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust* (printed 1633), and Thomas

Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (published 1608), as well as William Shakespeare's *Titus*

Andronicus (performed 1594) and his poem "The Rape of Lucrece" (1594).[237] This chapter

will also examine Margaret Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (1656) as it

explores the ways in which Johnson's text diverts from the traditional early modern rape

narrative in a manner which seemingly predicts similar diversions by stories published

much later than his own.[238] The comparison between the early modern texts discussed

here, particularly in the ways all of the works ventriloquise the voices of the victims,

reveals the power dynamics and debates which govern the codes of this narrative, that is,

that these stories were often inherently political and provided a stage for political and

theological debate.[239] This chapter will argue, then, that to examine Johnson's treatment of

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[237] All references to Middleton's play will refer to 'Hengist, King of Kent, or The Mayor of Quinborough by Thomas Middleton '<https://tech.org/~cleary/hengist.html> [accessed 25 April 2022]. All references to Fletcher's text will be drawn from Fletcher, John, 'Bonduca', B&F <http://people.exeter.ac.uk/pellison/BF/bonduca/frameset.htm> [accessed 22 April 2022]. All references to *All's Lost By Lust* will refer to All references to this text will be drawn from Rowley, William, *A Tragedy Called All's Lost by Lust*. Written by William Rowley. Divers Times Acted by the Lady Elizabeths Servants. And Now Lately by Her Maiesties Servants, with Great Applause, at the Phœnix in Drury Lane, 2004 <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11155.0001.001>. All references to Heywood's play can be found in Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece a True Roman Tragedie*. With the Seuerall Songes in Their Apt Places, by Valerius, the Merrie Lord amongst the Roman Peeres. Acted by Her Majesties Seruants at the Red-Bull, Neere Clarken-Well. Written by Thomas Heywood., 2003 <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A03244.0001.001>. All references to *Titus Andronicus* will come from Shakespeare, William, Titus Andronicus, 2015 <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Titus-Andronicus/William-Shakespeare/Folger-Shakespeare-Library/9781982156893> [accessed 22 April 2022]. All references to Shakespeare's "Lucrece" will come from Shakespeare, William, 'THE RAPE OF LUCRECE ' <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/Poetry/RapeOfLucrece.html> [accessed 22 April 2022]. Note that all of these references will include the formatting and editorial markers of the texts being referenced.
[238] All references to this text will be drawn from Cavendish, Margaret, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2004).
[239] See Baines, Eleanor Glendinning, 'Reinventing Lucretia: Rape, Suicide and Redemption from Classical Antiquity to the Medieval Era', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 20.1–2

his threatened rape victims in the context of the of the early modern rape narrative is to put into sharp focus its staging of debates surrounding power.

The episode of threatened sexual violence portrayed in Johnson, has virtually no significant analyses either within the context of rape literature or Arthurian literature; there is, however, a significant amount of research which explores the history of rape and the backgrounds and contexts surrounding it.[240] Garthine Walker and Barbara J. Baines, for example, have provided in depth analysis surrounding the laws and conventions pertaining to rape, rapists, and victims in early modern England.[241] It is generally accepted that the early modern period marked a shift in definitions of rape at the same time narratives of rape continued to be popular.[242] In the medieval period especially, rape was defined as a property crime, with the true victims being the men from whom the women were forcibly taken, as well as the patriarchal hierarchies based on genealogy and bloodlines.[243] The early modern period, however, marked a shift from rape as a property crime to rape as a sexual crime, which supposedly gave more focus on women's consent, despite the fact that in practice, men were unlikely to be prosecuted on the word of a woman.[244] This rise in popularity of debates surrounding consent helped to shape a narrative of expectations of rape victims, the responsibility of which to uphold was placed on the victims. Kim Solga, in her book *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts*, argues

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(2013), 61–82 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12138-013-0322-y>, and *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Christine Rose and Elizabeth Robertson, 2002 edition (New York: AIAA, 2001). for discussions of the ways in which rape narratives functioned as a platform for political debate.

[240] See Caroline Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Oh, Donatella Pallotti, 'Maps of Woe Narratives of Rape in Early Modern England', J*ournal of Early Modern Studies*, 2 (2013) <https://doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-12637>, and Diane. Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The 'heroic 'Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999).

[241] See Baines and Walker.

[242] See Baines, Catty, and Pallotti.

[243] Baines pp.70-71.

[244] Baines pp. 72-73.

that this narrative was inherently circular, and that the narrative of rape, depicted primarily

through literature and performance placed upon victims the responsibility to act in the real

world according to these narratives, which would continue to feed the literary narrative,

and so on.[245] These works, while essential to the understanding of early modern concepts

of rape, limit their discussion of the appropriation of the voices of the victims and tend to

focus on specific texts rather than exploring their places within different narrative

traditions.

Scholarly explorations of literary representations of rape have similarly increased in

number.[246] Jocelyn Catty's in-depth discussion of literary rape tropes, *Writing Rape,*

Writing Women in Early Modern England - Unbridled Speech, lays the groundwork for

much of the important research done not only on the writings of women, an area of study

which has similarly gained prominence as well in the last ten years, but in analyses of

representations of rape in literature.[247] The most important literary rape victim, discussed

by many scholars especially in regards to the poem written by William Shakespeare

bearing her name, is Lucrece; several scholars have used stories focusing on her as a

means of tracking cultural ideas towards rape and the debates on the subject reflected

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[245] See Solga.

[246] See Samantha Frénée-Hutchins, 'TAMING THE HEART OF THE WILD: THE DOMESTICATION OF WOMEN IN JOHN FLETCHER'S TRAGEDIE OF BONDUCA', *Gender Studies*, 12.1 (2013), 177–93 <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2013-0011>, Cynthia E. Garrett, 'Sexual Consent and the Art of Love in the Early Modern English Lyric', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 44.1 (2004), 37–58 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.2004.0005>, Kathryn Gravdal, '"Chrétien de Troyes, Gratian, and the Medieval Romance of Sexual Violence" in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17.3 (1992), 558–85 <https://doi.org/10.1086/494749>, Nicol, Lee A. Ritscher, The Semiotics of Rape in Renaissance English Literature (Peter Lang, 2009), Robertson and Rose, Saunders, and Solga.

[247] See Catty. For those interested in recent literature surrounding literary rape, see Amy Greenstadt, *Rape and the Rise of the Author: Gendering Intention in Early Modern England*: 5, Har/Ele edition (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), Richards and Thorne, Sondergard, Stavreva, and Tancke.

within them.[248] While many scholars, such as Catherine Batt and Susan Frye, have offered in-depth discussions of rape in Arthurian stories, especially *The Faerie Queene* and *Le Morte D'Arthur*, many more explore the influence of Ovidian myth, specifically the story of Philomela and Lavinia's rape in *Titus Andronicus*.[249] These discussions, however, are focused largely on the representations of rape, rather than how these representations stem from and simultaneously further codify narrative traditions. Those works which do explore Johnson's romance are few in number and largely focus on the effects of the episode on Tom, largely ignoring the rape threats altogether.[250] This chapter, then, will establish through a few prominent example texts the literary narrative of early modern rape for the purposes of exploring this omission. It will explore the power structures which govern early modern rape stories and the appropriation of the voices of victims, arguing that despite *Tom a Lincoln*'s refusal to subject its characters to a physical rape, the romance's engagement with the vocabulary and assumptions of rape narratives allows one to see more clearly the power structures inherent in these narratives.

There have been, however, very few discussions of ventriloquism of rape victims in early modern literature. The primary exception to this is Solga, who argues that it "constructs rape victims as actors in a perverse theatre of trauma designed to externalise

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[248] See Baines, Catty, Glendinning, Elisa Oh, 'The Gatekeeper within: Early Modern English Architectural Tropes of Female Consent', *Humanities*, 8.1 (2019), 40 <https://doi.org/10.3390/h8010040>, and Sale.

[249] See Batt 1997, Batt 2016, Eggert, Susan Frye, 'Of Chastity and Rape: Edmund Spenser Confronts Elizabeth in The Faerie Queene', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Christine Rose and Elizabeth Robertson, 2002 edition (New York: AIAA, 2001), pp. 381–410, and Saunders. For those interested in Ovidian myth, See Emily Detmer-Goebel, 'The Need for Lavinia's Voice: Titus Andronicus and the Telling of Rape', *Shakespeare Studies*, 29 (2001), 75–92, Sid Ray, '"Rape, I Fear, Was Root of Thy Annoy": The Politics of Consent in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 49.1 (1998), 22–39 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2902206>, K. Robertson Simkin, Solga, and David Willbern, 'Rape and Revenge in Titus Andronicus', *English Literary Renaissance*, 8.2 (1978), 159–82 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.1978.tb01391.x>.

[250] See Davis, Findlay, Harper, Elisabeth Michelsson, *Appropriating King Arthur: The Arthurian Legend in English Drama and Entertainment 1485-1625*, Illustrated edition (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1999), and Renevey.

and thereby legitimate the crimes they are ostensibly reporting".[251] Catty also spends a

few pages in her book discussing the genre of lament as ventriloquism.[252] These

discussions, however, focus primarily on specific forms, namely drama and lament,

respectively.[253] Exploration of ventriloquism in early modern texts in general, as well, is

few and far between, focusing primarily on religious contexts in the heat of the

Reformation.[254] Elizabeth D. Harvey, in her book *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory*

and English Renaissance Texts does explore in depth how ventriloquism was utilised in

early modern writing.[255] Her work, however, does not discuss portrayals of rape or how the

voices of rape victims are used and manipulated. This chapter will combine those ideas of

early modern rape representation, its inherent theatricality, and the ventriloquism of the

voices of victims to argue that Johnson's text actively subverts the early modern literary

rape narrative in a manner which seems to treat rape with the same disregard as many

Arthurian stories but which demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgement of the

function of those elements it appears to subvert within the early modern rhetorical

narrative. This narrative, this chapter asserts, is a type of code to which, due to the

passage of time, our modern understanding has lost the key. It argues that Johnson's text

shines a light on the assumptions of power which govern the early modern rape narrative.

Further, it argues that by identifying elements throughout Johnson's text which reveal the

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[251] Solga p. 54.

[252] See Catty pp. 57-71.

[253] The chapter recognises that its identification of some common tropes of rape plays a bit fast and loose with distinctions between prose, poetic, and dramatic forms, however it does not seek to elide those differences; indeed the ways in which these acts of narrative and violence are distinctly navigated in an early modern prose text is a key focus of this chapter.

[254] See M. Hayes, *Divine Ventriloquism in Medieval English Literature: Power, Anxiety, Subversion* (Springer, 2011), Blair Morris, 'Demonic Ventriloquism and Venetian Skepticism in Othello', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 53.2 (2013), 311–35 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.2013.0016>, and Alexandra 1966- Walsham, 'Religious Ventriloquism: Translation, Cultural Exchange and the English Counter-Reformation', *Transregional Reformations*, 2019, 123.

[255] Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Routledge, 1992) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203359419>.

inescapability of these patriarchal structures, it thereby broadens the boundaries of what texts can be considered contributors to this narrative. The chapter will first briefly establish the Arthurian narrative of rape; as *Tom a Lincoln* is an Arthurian romance it is essential to acknowledge those influences which came primarily from Arthurian tradition. It will then explore the wider early modern rape narrative, examining how victims in these works talk about their rape both before and after the assault to lay out how victims are expected to prevent and respond to their attack. It will examine how Johnson's own story subverts this narrative, and in what ways these subversions show an active rejection of many of these elements and thereby how this rejection requires an awareness of this rape discourse. Following this, the chapter will discuss which elements Johnson elects to reintegrate into his own story, discussing in particular the often political purpose of early modern narratives and the ways in which victims 'voices can achieve these narrative ends. In this section, I will explore the political and theological debates, namely surrounding power, staged in these texts, and how the relationship between Johnson's Tom and Caelia exposes the inescapable nature of patriarchal structures in the context of these debates. It will ultimately argue that by reading *Tom a Lincoln*, a text which does not actually contain an instance of rape, as a rape text, we can gain a more complete understanding of those codes and assumptions which underlie early modern narratives of patriarchy. Finally, the chapter will examine Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, and discuss the ways Johnson's text, through the merging of different traditions, has created a work that not only shines a light on how a discourse can be approached metaphorically, but which simultaneously explores elements, however accidentally, explored more in depth later in the century, thereby also blurring boundaries between chronological canon definitions.

The apathy of the Arthurian rape narrative

The episode on Fairy Island demonstrates the consequences of a scene drawn

from the ways in which a tradition can be altered, rejected, or changed, and it is important,

then, that it is situated in a text drawn from wildly different traditions of the depiction of

rape. Therefore, before I can explore the influence of the early modern rape narrative to

the ways in which Johnson writes his romance, it is important to first acknowledge the

narrative of rape within the Arthurian tradition from which the romance draws. This section

argues that even as Johnson's calling attention to the existence of rape in his romance is

distinctive within the Arthurian tradition, that he draws from a long-established canon is

necessary to the understanding of the function of rape within his romance. Many Arthurian

works do not dwell on incidences of rape; indeed its two major texts of the period, Thomas

Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1596)

feature rape only as a means to other, more important elements of the plot. In these

stories, rape is almost invisible due to its ubiquity in the canon.[256] Malory, for his part,

ignores almost every instance of rape. The most notable example of this is the story of

Uther and Igraine, during which Merlin transforms Uther "like the Duke her husband" (I.ii.3)

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[256] There is, of course, direct reference to rape in Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale", in which a "lusty bacheler" (883) finds a woman and "By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed" (888). While this event is given more attention than others, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" can, by the definition of Arthurian canon in this thesis, not be considered an Arthurian text because Chaucer's works form a canon of their own. This sorts "The Wife of Bath's Tale" as a Chaucer text, and is not, in many scholarly analyses of Arthurian literature, considered alongside the Arthurian canon. For analysis of rape in Chaucer's tale, however, see Caroline Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Suzanne Edwards, 'The Rhetoric of Rape and the Politics of Gender in the Wife of Bath's Tale and the 1382 Statute of Rapes', *Exemplaria*, 23.1 (2011), 3–26 <https://doi.org/10.1179/104125711X12864610741666>, Bernard F. Huppé, 'Rape and Woman's Sovereignty in the Wife of Bath's Tale', *Modern Language Notes*, 63.6 (1948), 378–81 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2910104>, Christine M. Rose, 'Reading Chaucer Reading Rape', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2001), pp. 21–60 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-10448-9_2>, and Corinne J. Saunders, Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England (Boydell & Brewer, 2001). References to Chaucer can be found in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Chaucer's Works, Volume 4 (of 7) -- The Canterbury Tales*, ed. by Walter Skeat, Chaucer's Works, 7 vols (Project Gutenberg, 2007), iv <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22120/22120-h/22120-h.htm> [accessed 16 April 2023].

in order to trick Igraine into a sexual encounter with Uther. Rather than the relationship between Uther and Igraine, Arthur's birth is the ultimate purpose of this interaction. As depicted in this scene, women were considered heroic when they used their bodies "in the service of particular institutions", but this completely ignores the consequences of the services their bodies provided, including any establishment of consent.[257] Igraine, in conceiving, carrying, and giving birth to Arthur, is performing a public service: bringing forth the great, fated king of Britain. In fact, her desires and feelings about the trickery are further ignored when she is shown to "h[o]ld her peace" and then marry Uther shortly after her husband's death "with great mirth and joy" (I.ii.3). Indeed, upon learning of Uther's deception, Igraine "made great joy" (I.iii.4) because the king had fathered her child. The focus, for Igraine, is the nobility of the man who tricked her, not that she was tricked at all. It is "the public effect of rape, rather than the personal violation [that] is of primary importance".[258] This episode establishes the utility of rape narrative to romance: to make evident the noble bloodlines, and thereby worthiness, of its knights.

This is further evident in Malory's depiction of the conception of Galahad by Elaine's deception. Lancelot is the unusual male victim, the only one of note in any stories mentioned here, Arthurian or otherwise. Elaine lies with Lancelot when he is "asotted and mad" (XI.ii.525), placing him under an enchantment. This is not necessarily unusual for Lancelot, who spends much of his plot as the object of female desire and manipulation, but the distortion of this manipulation into sexual assault is a fact not lost upon Lancelot; though it is not outwardly called a rape, Lancelot clearly sees the act as a sexual violation.[259] Upon awaking, Lancelot exclaims "I am shamed" and declares Elaine a

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[257] Batt 1997 p. 89.
[258] Saunders p. 238.
[259] There is much discussion within scholarship of Lancelot's position as the centre of female controlled plots. In fact, like a raped woman, he must constantly resist control over his body from others, but this does not feminise him; his status as the male hero and his function within the

"traitress" (XI.ii.525). Other characters, including the narrator, however, are far more concerned with Galahad as a result of the union than the distress felt by Lancelot. Sir Bors "wept for joy" (XI.iv.527) upon realising that Galahad was Lancelot's son, and Arthur, too, greets him with "great joy" (XII.x.557). To Malory's narrator, Galahad will be the "best knight of the world" (XI.ii.525), and this "explicitly redemptive union between [Lancelot] and the most noble maiden…depends on Lancelot mistaking Pelles's daughter for the queen" as the deception allows both for the conception of this great knight and for Lancelot to remain devoted to his partner in courtly romance.[260] The focus for the narrator is not on Lancelot's rape, but the nobility of the union itself, a union which will ultimately produce Galahad, an unquestioned good for the ostensibly male narrator. Through Lancelot's character, then, Malory's romance re-establishes the rape story as one with a narrative purpose: to produce noble knights whilst still keeping his heroic characters sufficiently free from sin.

Similarly, the scenes of rape in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* are glossed over unless they serve a narrative function. Spenser threatens rape to virtually every female character, and much like the victims depicted in Malory, the results of these rapes are more important to the poem than the acts themselves.[261] The incidences upon which the poem focus are not literal but symbolic, and traffic heavily in voyeurism and the taboo.[262] For example, the first image of the captured Amoret shown to readers is her masque representation, where she is said to have "deathes owne image figurd in her face" (III.xii.19), shown with "her brest all naked" (III.xii.20) and "her trembling hart…drawne forth" (III.xii.21). The violence and sexuality of this imagery, seen even before the real

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narrative shows a "masculine identity in crisis" but still very much a masculine identity. See Batt 1997 pp. 88-93.
[260] Batt 2016 p. 86.
[261] See Catty pp. 74 and 77.
[262] Catty pp. 22-23.

Amoret appears, tells both Britomart and the reader exactly what faces them beyond the masque. Indeed, when Britomart is able to enter the room containing the virtuous Amoret, she finds the enchanter Busirane "transfixed" on "her dying hart…perforce to make her him to loue" (III.xii.31). Busiraine is shown plunging his "murdrous knife" (III.xii.32) into Amoret's heart as a "displaced physical rape, a violent attempt at possessing" her.[263] This symbolic rape is visceral, detailed, and graphic, and functions to showcase the valiance of his female knight, representing chastity, who, acting within the romance trope of the rescue of a damsel in distress from sexual violence, can depict the victory of chastity over this disturbing lust.[264] Amoret's kidnapping, much like the rapes of Lancelot and Igraine, functions as a means to the glory of another character, thereby reiterating the function of Arthurian rapes as a means promoting those institutions which benefit from them.

Johnson's romance treats its threats of rape with a similar apathy, glossing over the story and presenting it merely as a reason for the island's need for the knights to repopulate it. In this way, *Tom a Lincoln* does adhere to the traditions of the Arthurian canon's approach to rape, but that the rapes are avoided through extreme violence mark the romance as notably different from any Arthurian narrative before it. The lack of interest Johnson demonstrates calls attention to *Tom a Lincoln*'s status as an Arthurian text, acknowledging the importance of certain tropes and plot elements within such a long-standing tradition. It is important, however, that Johnson's rape story, though brief, additionally demonstrates an awareness, and active rejection, of the early modern rape narrative that pervaded the literature of his contemporaries. The engagement with both the contemporary and Arthurian traditions in the construction of this episode, and the diversions from both traditions that the merging creates, calls attention to those codes and

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[263] Frye p. 363.
[264] Catty p. 25.

assumptions which make up a tradition and how the inclusion of these elements can identify texts drawn from a tradition even if major plot elements are ignored or indeed actively rejected.

Ventriloquising the early modern narrative: anticipation of and response to rape

Just as real world reported stories of rape in early modern England relied on set "schemas scripts, and vocabulary", literature, too, largely adhered to a specific narrative of rape.[265] Rape was a popular subject in early modern literature, and indeed Catty argues that it "exploited the subject of rape".[266] This narrative, however, is presented by many authors through the voices of the victims, even in those stories which rely on the effects the stories have on the men in the women's lives rather than on the victims themselves.[267] The narrative of rape in early modern literature is a broad tradition of these scripts and tropes, so this section will explore the establishment of this narrative by examining the way these narratives ventriloquise the voices of the victims and how this ventriloquism perpetuates the schemas and scripts inherent in the tradition. While this section will demonstrate that in some ways Johnson's episode does not resemble this narrative exactly, it argues that understanding the codes and scripts which underlie this early modern rape narrative allows for a deeper understanding of Johnson's text and the assumptions upon which it is based. This section, then, will explore four major elements of

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[265] Garthine Walker, 'Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England', *Gender & History*, 10.1 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.00087> pp. 2-3.
[266] Catty p. 231.
[267] Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust* shows Iacinta lamenting over the effect of the assault on her father, see iii.48 and iv.51; Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, in a parallel to the Ovidian story of Virginius and Virginia, centres the drama of the assault "around the homicidal clashes of powerful men", see Robin L. Bott, '"O, Keep Me From Their Worse Than Killing Lust": Ideologies of Rape and Mutilation in Chaucer's *Physician's Tale* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*', in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Christine Rose and Elizabeth Robertson, 2002 edition (New York: AIAA, 2001) p. 190; while representations of Lucrece "defin[e] rape in terms of male rivalry and honour", see Baines p. 85.

the narrative as it appeared in other works of early modern literature, particularly drama due to its keen interest in rape employment as a taboo and to "titillate" the audience.[268] It will focus primarily on the definitions of rape and the attempts made by victims to avoid it, through the lens of how these narratives use the voices of the victims. Early modern narratives of rape, whether in literature or in real-world complaints relied on a set of assumptions about women and their place in society. This section will argue, then, that in advocating for those methods which were expected of real-world victims, these texts ventriloquise the survivors of assault in a manner which continues to perpetuate the very narrative, based on early modern expectations, which it follows. Writing about rape enshrines it in a culture and perpetuates ideas about women's bodies and minds and plays on a desire for the taboo which makes readers or audiences voyeurs to the suffering of the victims.[269] This functions as a platform on which a sort of early modern rape narrative is formed. This section argues, then, as Johnson's romance engages with and rejects this narrative, it demonstrates the ways in which rhetorical gestures can denote engagement with a tradition, even if this engagement involves active rejection.

In Johnson's text Caelia and the women of Fairy Island are active in their story, both in their actions and with their voices in recounting it. The women of the island's primary action is violence, and indeed violence underlies both the act of, and stories about, rape. In most early modern rape stories, however, the victims or would-be victims threaten violence against themselves, an action which was expected and almost taken for granted in these narratives.[270] To the early modern rape narrative, rape is a matter of life and death. Johnson's romance similarly presents threats of this violence as a life-and-death matter, though rather than it be so for the victim, death instead comes to those who

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[268] See Catty pp. 93-94.
[269] Catty p. 22.
[270] Greenstadt p. 141.

would threaten them, namely the king and by extension his men. The messenger, one of the women on the island who has ostensibly participated in the act of violence against the men, explains that having been told the women of the island would be "giuen ouer to the spoyle of his Enemies", rather than threaten death to themselves, the women would "put to death all the men" and "neuer after they should suffer man to enter into their Countrey".[271] The language here may not create a direct comparison to that used by, for instance, Fletcher, whose protagonists similarly react to violence with violence in kind as discussed below, but the assumptions which lie beneath it are the same. In times of war, victors often considered the bodies of women part of their winnings, and rape is thereby intrinsically linked to the relationship between men and women in war.[272] Therefore, it is clear that when the king threatens to hand the women to his enemies, he is indeed threatening them with rape. Even as rape is not committed nor even stated outright, that the threats against them are of sexual violence and that the reaction is one of death demonstrates that the romance relies on the same cultural foundations as do other early modern narratives of rape. It reveals itself, through allusions to these elements and reliance on the same assumptions as firmly entrenched within this tradition.

These assumptions are demonstrated with perhaps the most popular language used in early modern literature in an attempt by victims to avoid sexual violence: that of the symbolic death. The victims 'voices equate their assault with a physical death, primarily for the sake of the protection of their honour. In early modern rape narratives, death is always preferable to rape because no matter how virtuous the survivor was before the assault, she will always come under suspicion by others as to whether she really

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[271] Johnson p. 25.
[272] See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, Reprinted edition (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993) pp. 31-113 for a detailed discussions of the links between rape and warfare, as well as discussions of enemy women as war prizes for victors.

resisted or whether she was the one at fault.[273] As sexual sin was of primary importance to early modern conceptions of female honour,[274] stories of rape in this period were inherently concerned with the protection of this honour and what happens when it is lost. So important was the need for women to maintain their chastity that it was common in rape narratives for women to threaten or wish harm upon themselves rather than allow themselves to be raped.[275] In this context, death is preferable to sexual sin. Johnson's women, however, refuse to submit to their own deaths, instead resorting to murder. Their reaction, then, demonstrates more than one way out for the island's women: rather than turn the violence against themselves they do so against those who would threaten them. This use of the victim's voice may be described as "euill" and "bloudy murther", and the problems of the violence of the women's actions will be discussed in detail below. However, Johnson's acknowledgement of the narrative, even to subvert it, demonstrates the importance of the narrative as one to be subverted, refusing to engage with these tropes even if they are addressed. In its subversion, then, Johnson's romance refutes the necessity of this element to the canon, thereby frustrating the elements of early modern tradition which privilege the voices of the victims for the advocacy of these ideas.

The early modern rape stories, on the other hand, tend to follow the expectation that threatened violence be directed towards the self. When threatened with assault by her sons, Shakespeare's Lavinia begs Tamora to "be call'd a gentle queen, | And with thine own hands kill me in this place" (ii.3.168). Similarly, Middleton's Castiza begs Horsus to physically rather than sexually assault her "as ransom for mine honour" (iii.3.299) as she compares rape to "an eternal act of death in lust" (iii.3.282), while Rowley's Iacinta asks

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[273] Catty p. 37.
[274] Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London', *History Workshop*, 35, 1993, p. 2.
[275] Greenstadt p. 141.

Rodericke to "strike me dead" (ii.168) rather than give into his "lust" (ii.167). Lucrece, whose death by her own hand is discussed in detail below, foregrounds the preference of death to rape in both Heywood and Shakespeare's adaptations. Heywood features Lucrece asking Tarquin to "Hate me, and in that hate first let me dye" (1432), and in her lament to her husband, it is her reputation she grieves before the assault on her body: "My reputation mangled, my renown | disparaged, but my body, oh, my body…Staind, polluted and defilde" (1709-1712). Shakespeare's Tarquin frames his act in terms of murder, threatening to frame Lucrece for adultery by claiming he will "kill thine honour" (517). In her later lament, she asks for Time to "Be guilty of my death" (932) and steels her hand to "Honour thyself to rid me of this shame" (1032). In a much more violent version of this narrative, Fletcher's Bonduca, following her loss in battle, admonishes her daughter for wishing to live as a Roman prisoner rather than die alongside her mother and sister. She asks 2 Daughter if she "long'st to prostitute [her] youth and beauty | to common slaves for bread" (iv.4.44-45) and calls her a "whore" (iv.4.109) but as her speech continues and the women announce their intentions to kill themselves to the Romans, 1 Daughter comforts her sister with promises of "no wars come, | Nor lustful slaves to ravish us" (iv.4.153-154). It becomes clear that Bonduca's concern, while articulated harshly, is for her daughters ' vulnerability to the Romans, reinforcing the narrative preference for death before surviving to be assaulted. This exploration of the more traditional narrative of early modern rape therefore demonstrates the importance of the preference for death over the incidence of rape, both as a way to preserve the honour of the victims and as a way to avoid the shame that would be placed upon them. While the violence of these victims 'language underlies the actions of *Tom a Lincoln*'s fairy women, their responding act of violence is not made against their own bodies, but against the bodies of those who threatened them. Johnson's

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women, then, turn this narrative on its head. His story now acknowledges the components of this narrative whilst simultaneously refusing to participate in its strictures.

Similarly, with the shift in definitions of rape from a property to a sex crime came the concept of will and consent. There was some medieval discussion on the subject; one prominent debate concerned the separation of the mind and the body wherein the body yielded to threats or violence but the mind stayed pure.[276] The engagement with consent "derived from a complex body of theological texts", and moving into the early modern era, this separation between the body and the will—that the body was forced to admit but the woman's will remained strongly against it—was an important defence of a woman's lack of volition.[277] As consent became more important to early modern ideas surrounding rape, so too did notions of consent begin to penetrate the early modern literary narrative of rape. As explained by Shakespeare in his *Rape of Lucrece*, "Her body's stain her mind untainted clears" (1713), demonstrating the ways in which concepts of consent and the word of a woman became new standards upon which to base the newly shifting definitions of rape.[278] Johnson's Caelia, however, is given no opportunity to express her consent or lack thereof, let alone the other non-royal women. Upon sending their request for the return of their husbands, the king refuses with a promise that "his Country should bee lost and made desolate, and the Women giuen ouer to the spyole of his Enemies" before any man would be allowed to return again.[279] Without the option to consent, even if only symbolically, the women of the island instead make their lack of consent physical. This

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[276] Baines p. 87.

[277] Oh p. 3. See also Baines p. 69.

[278] Consent put far more onus on the woman's voice in complaining of rape; while it allowed the victims far more agency, it also carried with it the implication that as women could tell their own stories, they could also be lying. The development of this new narrative functioned to reassure the audience of the victims 'lack of consent and therefore lack of culpability in the crimes committed against them and allowing them to remain sympathetic to an audience already skeptical of rape victims 'claims. See Pallotti pp. 217-218 and Greenstadt p. 4.

[279] Johnson p. 25.

violent response acknowledges the importance of the women's will, and show the women demonstrating their refusal clearly, even if not verbally. In many early modern rape stories, however, victims are given the opportunity to verbalise their lack of consent, which makes clear to the audience that there can be no fault for any sin laid at their feet. Consent appears as an important concept in Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent*, where before her rape, Horsus asks Castiza to "give consent | Then with the faithfulness of a true friend" (iii.3.291) as "'scape me you cannot" (iii.3.287). Rowley, in his play *All's Lost By Lust*, pressures Iacinta similarly when Rodericke tells her to "yeeld [herself] freely" (ii.125). The language of yielding, however, presents a dynamic that is not of equal parties, but of a woman submitting to the will of her rapist. The mere lip service offered to the concept of consent is seen likewise in Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*. Heywood's Tarquin, despite threatening Lucrece, says "I loue thee, wilt thou accept it?" (1422). This attempt to convince her to submit to her own violation mirrors Horsus's question to Castiza of "Will you consent?" (iii.3.309). In offering the option to submit to their rapes, to consent to the "loue" offered by their attackers, these narratives acknowledge the shifting ideas and definitions of rape as important to the development of sympathetic victims.[280] Consequently, when these women are given the chance to actively refuse, they are able to prove to the reader and to the audience that they are chaste even if only in their minds. That consent acts as a pillar of many early modern rape stories means that to view Johnson's romance through this lens is to view the damsel's act of violence as an expression of a lack of consent made physical. When viewed in this context, *Tom a Lincoln* becomes a text that exposes the importance of the rejection of consent to the early modern rape narrative. In turning the traditional verbal rejection of consent into an act of physical violence, Johnson cements his text as one which can both address and reject

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[280] Heywood 1422.

those common rhetorical scripts and still operate within the tradition itself. Johnson's romance allows early modern rape victims to explore new responses to rape threats not featured in other narratives. As the romance alludes to consent, then, it addresses those fundamental elements of the rape tradition and allows for a more complete understanding of the structure of these narratives, exposing how each element therein serves its particular function.

While the petitions made against an assault are integral to the narrative of early modern literary rape, the words used to describe an assault to others are equally as essential to the foundation of the tradition. This is especially true with regards to descriptions of assault as a "stain" on a woman's chastity; indeed metaphors describing a woman as in some way flawed were a key component of early modern rape narratives.[281] Johnson, however, does not frame his women in terms of the potential flaws to their honour the sexual slavery would cause. Instead, his victims vocalise their story in terms of a warning against any man who would dare come to their island again. On the one hand, this serves to highlight the wrongs of the islanders 'actions, but on the other it allows them a means to relay their story from a place of power, rather than as threatened victims. The initial encounter with the damsels on the island is framed negatively; when Tom and his men first arrive on Fairy Island, they are met with "two thousand women…all most richly armed…like an Army of well approoued Souldiers".[282] It is Tom's crew who have washed up on their island, and the men who have to beg for "succeur at [their] hands".[283] This extreme imbalance of power, where women have military power over men who spent much of their time in the romance up until this point in battle, is not natural in the context of

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[281] Walker 1998 p. 2.
[282] Johnson p. 24.
[283] Johnson p. 25.

the story, and requires "good courage" for Tom to confront.[284] The dialogue between Tom and Caelia at their first meeting shows the expected deference to the ruler of the island, but also the discomfort of men at the mercy of women. He "giue[s] you right humble thankes for these your courte|sies", but upsetting early modern patriarchal power structures, the men are entirely in the women's power; without their kindness, they cannot live.[285] The scene plays on the uncanny, of the women armed fully "like an Army", carrying with these words the implication that women cannot be an army, only "like" an army. This position of power over the men, too, is uncanny. According to early modern patriarchy, Caelia should be a villain, and her women and their response to threats of rape should be unequivocally condemned. Johnson, though, does not make this assertion, and indeed does not even pass moral judgement on the women of Fairy Island. Caelia does refer to her threat to face Tom and his crew in battle as one on "goodly men…the choyce of all humane people, and with their courteous demeanors", and that she has only threatened them with a battle so they would not "draive the mercilesse and sauage Nation to affect them", but this is the last time anyone in the story moralises Caelia and the other women's actions, and is in fact the last time the murder of the men is ever mentioned.[286] The violence against the island's men serves a purpose: to remove the men from the island so Tom and his crew can repopulate it. As argued above, this is a prominent feature of Arthurian rape narratives, where the focus of this episode is not on the violent acts of the women but the consequences for Tom and his crew. In the context of the early modern rape story, however, this allows the narrative to acknowledge it in passing and then move on, rather than spend time on its moral implications. Though the narration implies that the women are savages due to their responses to the threats of rape, and the women,

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284 Johnson p. 24.
285 Johnson p. 27.
286 Johnson p. 26.

including Caelia, would claim so themselves, after this "official" condemnation of the act, this is the last we hear about the actions of the women. The messenger's description of the women's actions, then, even as they are framed in terms of the uncanny, still allows them a place of respect from which to tell their story. This position is consequently in opposition to the position of "victim" that other early modern survivors occupy.

In the more traditional rape narratives, the language engages significantly with the idea of the damaged victim, with the negative effects on the victim's body and honour by the sexual violation. Representations of Lucrece place the language of shame and sin at the forefront of her laments. In order to navigate potential grey areas in the concept of consent and stain, debates about whether coercion and threats of death constituted consent began, ultimately, though arguably only theoretically, deciding in the negative.[287] In practice, however, if a woman yielded to their attacker under the threat of death, it is still a form of consent; if she could be forced to consent, "could the virtue of her mind stay wholly separate from her violated body?".[288] The lament and the language of stain, then, play into the idea of female complicity; laments "ventriloquise the female voice, but still fail to elucidate such matters".[289] Heywood's Lucrece describes her assault as "My blot; my scandall and my shame" (1664), paranoid that her maid can notice her "sinne" (1662) by simply looking at her. Much like Lothario's insistence to Iacinta that she is no longer definable after her rape, Heywood's Lucrece laments that "Being no more a woman, I am now | Deuote to death, and an inhabitant | Of th'other world" (1671-1763). As Lucrece begs for death before her assault, so too does she compare her situation to death afterwards, no longer a woman; Tarquin has "Rauisht and kild me at once" (1742). She considers the rape her "wrong" (1706), after which she is "dishonour'd and disgrac'd"

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[287] See Baines p. 82 and 91.
[288] Oh p. 7.
[289] Catty pp. 61-62.

(1706). She is not only stained but "strumpited" (1716), the connotation of which word implies a level of complicity. Indeed, before her suicide she claims "My staine I thus wipe off" (1759). Shakespeare's Lucrece uses similar language during her lament, wishing for a way to "rid me of this shame" (1032) as she "couldst not defend" herself (1035), leaving "Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd corrupted" (1173). She wants to "clear this spot by death" (1054), as "When life is shamed, and death reproach's debtor" (1156). She objectifies herself, referring to her body as "this blemish'd fort" (1176) filed with "gross blood…stain'd with this abuse" (1658). This stain language is essential to the tragedy of Lucrece's story; without the stained body affecting a victim's life irreparably, without the need for a woman's chastity to be constantly maintained, there would be no reason for the death that makes the story a tragedy. In summary, the stories of Lucrece demonstrate that the language of sin and stain is essential to the early modern rape narrative, and the voices of victims are often utilised to present and perpetuate the element and its function within the narrative.

These metaphors, however, are not limited to those of stain and blot. In Rowley's *All's Lost By Lust*, for instance, the characters make no mistake about what has happened, including the use of the word "ravisher" to describe Rodericke's role six times, including directly comparing him to *Lucrece's* Tarquin (iv.60).[290] As the narrative continues, Iacinta's "stain" is placed at the forefront of all her laments. Lothario taunts her for her shame, saying "it is now doubtfull what thou art; being neither | Maide, wife, nor (saving your reverence) widow" (iii.14-15), and "Thou hast lost a Maydenhead, a shrewd cracke: | A flaw that will hardly be soaderd againe" (iii.33-34), expanding the metaphor to include cracks and a ruined social standing. This language is not restricted to those allied

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[290] see ii.139, iii.52, iv.84, iv.106, iv.117, iv.118.

with Rodericke. She describes herself in terms of "shame" (iii.13), and her description of her own assault to her father is filled with the language of defect and blot.

Say your Iacinta then (chast as the Rose)
Comming on sweetly in the springing bud,
And ne're felt heat, so spread the Sommer sweet:
But to increase and multiply it more,
Did to it self keepe in its owne perfu•me:
Say that some rapine hand had pluckt the bloome,
Iacinta like that flower, and ravisht her,
Defiling her white lawne of chastity,
With ugly blacks of lust; what would you do?
(iv.78-86)

This language traffics heavily in the concepts of blemish and dirt, particularly that chastity is a purity that would take little to taint. As her "white lawne of chastity" is darkened by "ugly blacks" (iv.85-86), the speech creates a picture of a darkness slowly encroaching on the light. Similarly, when she is a "Rose" she is unable to bloom and "to [her] self keepe in [her] own perfu•me" (iv.82). Throughout these several parallel metaphors, Rowley's play interacts repeatedly with these images which drew from foundational assumptions about women and rape. The purity of women's chastity was a fundamental concept in ideas of early modern rape. Drawing from when rape was a property crime, the maintenance of a woman's chastity was about maintaining the "quality of the damaged property".[291] As notions of consent eclipsed ideas of women as legal property even as the patriarchal ideologies remained skeptical of victims 'claims, ideas of chastity became similarly blurred. If chastity required will to uphold, it should be centred in the mind, but notions of flaw and destruction would suggest chastity is instead of physical state.[292] As Iacinta cannot fit into the societal structure as a raped woman, this stain, though invisible, has consequently marked her.

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[291] Baines p. 71.
[292] Catty p. 15.

Conversely, some works which engage with victims 'responses to their assaults portray those responses as, by early modern standards, contrary to how a victim should react. There were several ways, however complicated, that a woman could legally accuse her attacker, and in literature, these methods are made more dramatic through laments and calls for revenge. However, if a victim acts outside of these accepted and expected responses, she is seen as "malevolent and disruptive".[293] For instance, Fletcher's *Bonduca*, much like Johnson's romance, does not depict the women's assault outright but instead portrays the victims 'responses after the fact. While Fletcher's play offers the closest depiction of a reaction that reflects Johnson's, Fletcher's story is far more concerned with proving his victims 'foolishness rather than giving them voices with which to speak. Bonduca's civil war against the Romans is in direct response to their abuse towards her and the rapes of her daughters, to the point that the war against them has "given [me] health again" (i.1.163). Despite this clear indication, however, that Bonduca has found meaning within her fight against those who would abuse her, the story frames her violence as clearly and unequivocally wrong. In their prayers for victory against the Romans, Bonduca asks the gods to "double the sad remembrance of our wrongs | …the vengeance" (iii.1.4-5), while her daughters ask them to "revenge thyself" (iii.1.34), "if ever to thy justice | Insulting wrongs, and ravishments of women | (Women derived from thee)" (iii.1.27-29). The gods, though, do not appear to hear them, as the flame they are attempting to light through their prayers continues to go out. Caratach, on the other hand, the noble, Roman-loving cousin to Bonduca, is easily able to light it by praying instead for "good hearts, good enemies, | good blows o'both sides" (iii.1.68-69). In his prayers for courage, nobility, and a good fight, it is Caratach who is legitimised, in the eyes of the

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[293] Bamford pp. 30-31.

gods and of the play, when the Britons are forced back in battle, when Bonduca's reasons for the fight are proven insufficient for victory.

This animosity is most clearly demonstrated in Caratach's language towards Bonduca's emotions. He labels her men cowards, claiming "The virgin from the hated ravisher | not quite so fearful" (i.1.95-96). That Caratach compares the Britons 'cowardice to a woman running from rape demonstrates the play's disdain towards women who act outside of the prescribed ideology of the raped woman. Bonduca is the epitome of the woman who is not meek and submissive in her response, and this makes her, and by extension the men she commands, less morally upstanding and more deserving of mockery for their emotions than a woman fleeing the exact violence Bonduca presents as motivation for the conflict. In fact, Bonduca is rendered "boastful and incompetent" by the narrative, and all of her mistakes in battle are attributed not to her relative inexperience in battle, but to her gender. Caratach names her the "woman fool" and asks "who bid you | meddle in men's affairs?" (iii.5.180-181).[294] The play's framing and dialogue make the argument that Bonduca is being selfish in offering up men's lives for the sake of her honour, and that her war is a "transgressive abuse of authority, both natural and political".[295] Bonduca's motivation is not manly enough to be acceptable for battle, they are "your fretful prayers, | Your whinings, and your tame petitions…weak tears | And troubled hearts" (iii.1.57-61); only Caratach, who can understand the Romans 'noble motivations, their "courage arm'd with confidence" (iii.1.59) is able to act as a voice of reason of the British camp throughout the play, while all the other characters on Bonduca's side are either compared to or coded in some way feminine. In fact, Caratach is the only member of Bonduca's side to survive the play, reinforcing the play's insistence that revenge, and

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[294] Crawford p. 357.
[295] Thomas p. 319.

150

especially revenge for rape, is not an acceptable form of violence, and is indeed too passionate, emotional, and therefore feminine to succeed against those fighting more honourable wars, such as Caratach and the Romans. Caratach's contempt towards "femininity" in conflict is most explicit as he comes upon the Daughters 'captured Roman soldiers. Furious at their "treachery" (iii.5.85) and "craft" (iii.5.89), when one of the daughters insists "[They] will have vengeance for [their] rapes" (iii.5.96), Caratach responds that they "should have kept [their] legs close then" (iii.5.98). In blaming their rapes on their (female) sexuality, Caratach explicitly associates their violence with their lack of femininity, insisting they "learn to spin" (iii.5.115). His main concern, however, is not that the soldiers were captured—though his consistency in releasing Roman prisoners should suggest he does not believe that taking prisoners is noble—it is the methods by which they were captured, specifically their "trick"s (iii.5.81). He is appalled that "those who should gild our conquest, | Make up a battle worthy of our winning, | Catch'd up by craft" (iii.5.87-89). He is especially offended that they have been disarmed, and the first thing he does upon releasing them is return to them their swords. The lack of their swords are significant to the power imbalance the daughters have created. Swords, a notably phallic symbol, are representations of masculine power and dominion, especially over women.[296] That the women have removed their symbols of power acts as a symbolic castration: it removes the men's physical power and emasculates them, removing, therefore, their sexual power as well. The daughters 'trickery, then, acts as the ultimate insult. They have used their sexuality to emasculate their enemies and remove from them their symbolic and literal power over the women.

This power imbalance is representative of Caratach's apparent fears of female sexuality, and his direct conflation of Bonduca and her daughters 'war and their gender.

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[296] Crawford p. 363.

He even calls them "sluts" (iii.5.92) in his fury, criticising not their naiveté, their inexperience in battle, or even their dishonesty, but specifically their transgressive sexuality, which Caratach believes was the reason they were assaulted in the first place. Through Caratach's responses to Bonduca and her daughters 'methods and motivation for war, Fletcher's play criticises those reactions on the parts of victims which do not align with the traditional early modern rape narrative. To this end, the foolishness in the art of war of Bonduca's army act as a continued endorsement of those responses which characterise the virtuous characters, such as Lucrece. Caratach's survival, too, reinforces his moral high ground and the foolishness of the British side. Johnson's narrative of threatened rape, on the other hand, does not traffic in the language of stain and sin, nor does it overtly condemn the women for their actions. Johnson's romance subverts the notion of the "proper" way for the victims to act in a way both similar to and entirely opposite to Fletcher's play; the island's women, too, commit an act of violence to prevent violation but further encounters between the soldiers and the island's damsels are largely positive. They may be too violent to be praised as Lucrece was, and this violence may be briefly moralised, but they are still not portrayed as having escaped permanent damage by the avoidance of sexual slavery. Indeed, any condemnation of their violence is brushed aside, and they are approached with respect instead of the animosity shown to other violent rape victims, such as Bonduca's daughters. These acknowledgements of what should happen only to subvert the expectations demonstrate on Johnson's part a clear awareness of the codes and assumptions inherent in this early modern tradition, and consequently interrogate what happens to this tradition when these elements are rejected.

This section has laid out the narrative tradition which authors engaging with stories of rape largely followed, as well as the ways in which this narrative was upheld and encouraged through the use of the voices of the victims themselves. Johnson's work,

however, while clearly aware of the tropes and schemas of the rape narrative, actively subverted the expectations of how the victims should act and respond. Johnson's narrative is clearly not one of literal rape: no violence occurs, it is merely threatened, and as the story takes place after this threat of violence instead of portraying it as it occurs, the threats are largely past. Indeed, the threats of sexual violence may simply function as a convenient way to remove men from the island. Instead, to compare Johnson's romance to those rape narratives, and to read this episode in a similar way to those narratives of rape in the early modern world, new meanings begin to emerge. Not only does it reveal the narratives that were taken for granted in early modern literature, where the romance can allude to recognisable codes and conventions as shorthand for his own story, Johnson's text places a focus on the function of the victim's voice. That the messenger is a woman of the island telling the story of her people gives this Arthurian text a layer not present in other Arthurian narratives which allude to sexual violence in a similarly convenient way. Even as it refuses to adhere to many early modern traditional elements, the acknowledgement of and engagement with them allows the romance, though distinct in these ways, to remain securely within the practices of that tradition. By reading Johnson's text as a rape narrative, then, the utility of a victim's voice in the more traditional early modern rape stories becomes clear, and their contribution to the presentation of political and religious debates can come into focus.

Tradition, debate, and rhetorical gestures

While the points from which Johnson diverges from the early modern tradition are worthy of note, it is equally important to explore the functions of those moments which converge with the tradition once more. In the relationship between Tom and Caelia, the romance is intimately concerned with structures of power. How power is transferred from

one character to another characterises their every interaction. Early modern rape narratives, too, are ultimately stories about power and power dynamics. To read *Tom a Lincoln* as a rape narrative, then, is to see the function of power within rape narratives more clearly. Similarly, as Johnson's romance takes a character who had so clearly removed herself from the patriarchal structures which had threatened violence to her, the re-establishment of this patriarchal order, and her inability to escape it, comes into sharper focus when reading the episode in terms of the vocabulary of rape found throughout. While many elements of Johnson's text appear, to the modern eye, to separate his romance from the narrative of early modern rape, then, these convergences act as rhetorical codes and metaphors which identify the text as part of the cultural tradition even as a physical rape does not occur. As discussed in the previous section, this narrative utilises the voices of the victims to establish and perpetuate itself. Further to this, however, the act of endorsing the existing narrative through the voices of victims acts as a form of ventriloquism, puppeting a survivor in a manner which not only re-inscribes the narrative but which actively uphold those of the patriarchal system. Even though, as Catty has argued, political readings should not overlook the voyeuristic purpose rape scenes served for early modern audiences, rape stories are often political in nature as they provided a platform upon which to stage both political and theological debates.[297] In staging these debates through the bodies of women who had been threatened with rape, *Tom a Lincoln* reveals the power struggles inherent in those narratives which traffic directly in the narratives of rape alluded to in early modern rape texts.

Johnson's episode, concerned with the aftermath of threatened sexual violence, depicts the establishment of an extreme imbalance of power. This dynamic is not only

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[297] Catty pp. 93-94. See Baines, Crawford, Dunn, Glendenning, Nicol, and Robertson and Rose for discussion of the political debates staged within early modern rape narratives.

imbalanced, but imbalanced in favour of the character who, in terms of early modern patriarchy, should not hold this position. This imbalance of power is taken to its most extreme point in Johnson's text when Caelia is the one to seduce Tom. This scene plays into the idea that women's sexuality is something to be feared, as well as women's association with the carnal.[298] It is Tom who must submit to Caelia, rather than the other way around, and while originally, he "wist not what to doe", finally he, "hauing the nature and courage of a man", sleeps with and impregnates her.[299] This attitude, which shows Tom's submission to sexuality as "courage of a man" mirrors the tendency in young men to "see sexual experience in terms of acquiring manly confidence."[300] When Caelia seduces him, he is in her power. In acquiring his manly confidence to have sex with her, the power is returned to him, and he is able to keep it for the rest of their relationship. This scene associates female sexuality with something unnatural, something with which, when presented to Tom, he does not know what to do. His male sexuality, however, is courage, it is his "nature", and therefore the truer nature of their power relationship. In ridding the island of men, Caelia has erased men's sexual power over the women on her island. In finally sleeping with a man, even if it was to repopulate the island with better men, she willingly returns to the men their sexual power, power which has the potential once again to put the women of the island at their mercy. This danger, however, is presented as the "natural" state of the island. By giving the agency to rewrite the power dynamics of the island onto Caelia, Johnson realigns his own romance to follow these standards and integrating coded comments on the real-world political debates often played out through rape narratives. Johnson thereby establishes *Tom a Lincoln* as a text concerned with debates surrounding power, debates which similarly define early modern rape narratives.

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[298] Baines pp. 81-82.
[299] Johnson p. 29.
[300] Fletcher, A. p. 425.

In this way, Johnson's text, when read as a rape story, puts these power debates into sharper focus and offers a pointed reading of early modern rape texts as stories fundamentally about power.

While Johnson's staging of power debates is depicted as interpersonal and outwardly patriarchal, these themes run through the stories of other early modern rape narratives which present arguments about power. For instance, vengeance on behalf of the victims is encouraged against a king in both versions of Lucrece—Shakespeare's poem has Lucrece beg the Romans she confesses to to "be suddenly revenged on my foe…let the traitor die" (1686-1689), while Heywood's victim asks them to "Sweare youle reuenge poore Lucrece" (1700)—and indeed the conflict is resolved upon the death of Tarquin and ascendance of a more suitable king. Lucrece is the one given a prominent voice—her laments take up the majority of Shakespeare's poem and a large monologue in Heywood's play—but her story is ultimately one of male rivalry and honour.[301] Her ultimate suicide, then, acts as the "ultimate consent to patriarchal narratives".[302] Rowley's *Lust*, on the other hand depicts such a response as unwise and dangerous. Upon Iacinta's explanation of her assault to her father, he vows that her words have "draw[n] forth my sword | To be revengde" (iv.126-127), but Iacinta disapproves: "Recollect your noble spirits, conquer griefe, | The manly way" (iv.159-160). It is Iulius who continues to refuse, insisting, "I am not mad, | Nor must be idle" (iv.162-163), and he betrays his country to ally with his enemies in order to avenge his daughter's rape. Iacinta, even as the wronged victim, acts as a voice of reason towards her father, insisting that Iulius be "manly" (iv.160) in total opposition to Lucrece's desires for revenge. In this case, the alliance with the Moors is her father's sin, the betrayal of his country as a means to his vengeance against

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[301] Baines p. 85.
[302] Baines p. 89.

156

his sovereign. Indeed, it is Iacinta who suffers following this decision, as the spokesperson, referred to only as Moore, demands Iacinta's hand in marriage in exchange for their assistance. Despite Iulius's insistence that "ile not compell her heart, wo•e, win, and wed her" (iv.213), Iacinta sees the prospect as "my secon• hell" (iv.211) and later exclaims "Love thee? as I would love my ravisher" (v.157). To Iacinta, the demands of the Moore are akin to a second violation, and despite his claims to act on her behalf, Iacinta wishes her father to repent: "He must, and will, | That ere he freed a captive infidell" (v.160). Iulius's crime, then, is not necessarily his pursuit of revenge, but his actions in service of this goal, namely his alliance with his enemies. That it is Iacinta who voices this sin is significant; while in some contexts male vengeance in response to rape is righteous, it is the victim herself who voices that demand. It is Lucrece who asks for the revenge, and Iacinta who insists her father recover his wits. This is not to say that it is the victim who decides what is and is not just revenge. On the contrary, the voices of the victims are used by the writers to legitimise the arguments either for or against revenge made by the respective stories. Through the mouth of Iacinta, the upholding of the royal and courtly order is given legitimacy, as is the importance of national loyalty. It is through her voice that the play's more overtly political message is conveyed. While Lucrece verbally bestows upon the male characters the explicit power to avenge her, Iulius's haste, against the victim's wishes, acts as a warning against ill-advised, unjust, or simply careless vengeance. The power ultimately given must be legitimate, and the voices of the rape victims are used by the authors of these texts to establish what is legitimate and punish those exercises of power which are not. The vocal authority then assumed by the victims of rape to dictate legitimate power of men thereby functions as a mouthpiece for those standards which continue to perpetuate the narratives in which they function. The vocabulary of power structures underpins the plots of these narratives, and in using the

voices of the victims to legitimise these debates, these texts make clear the utility of rape narratives to stage these discussions.

Indeed, when the victims do not function as mouthpieces for traditional narratives of rape, their actions may be used to condemn the actions of those who remove themselves from these conventions. For instance, the suicides of Bonduca and her daughters are, as discussed above, committed to avoid further sexual violence. This results from their loss in war, a defeat which is explicitly punishment for their actions, not the actions of a man. While suicide would have been seen in the Roman world as an honourable act in the face of defeat, and indeed Bonduca is named "noble" (iv.4.690) following her death, the underlying element of sexual violence which the queen and her daughters explicitly give as a reason for their deaths—"no…lustful slaves to ravish us" (iv.4.634-6355)—marks their deaths as entrenched firmly within the rape tradition. The language of the scene further reinforces this insistence upon their place within the rape narratives: the Romans continuously refer to Bonduca as "Woman" (iv.4.601-602), and ask her to "be a queen still, | A mother, and a friend" (iv.4.607-608), stripping her of her identity and leaving her only a woman faced with further fears of rape. The repeated use of the word "woman", too, works to remind Bonduca of her sex and to attempt to get her to act properly according to her gender.[303] Their suicides, then, externalise their corruption not just as rape victims but as "unnatural wom[e]n" (iv.4.602), in a sense redeeming them through the death they impose upon themselves for the ironic sake of their own self-preservation. Despite their consistent refusal throughout the play to conform to gender roles, their final act fulfils the narrative of the raped woman. In Fletcher's play, Bonduca and her daughters call attention to the consequences of actions which do not adhere to the patriarchal narrative of the idealised rape victim: it does not show sympathy for the daughters 'rapes and indeed is "primarily

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[303] Thomas p. 317.

concerned with the women's sexuality in terms of its power dynamics".[304] The Romans now declare Bonduca "truly noble, and a queen" (iv.4.690) whereas she had been previously framed as foolish. The women's suicide "carves out a redemption space for them all", giving them, through their agency to choose the "correct" response, the power to atone for their sins.[305] The play reestablishes the traditional narrative of rape by punishing its victims and forcing their repentance, thereby reiterating the standards it aims to perpetuate through the voices of its reformed foolish victims. In giving the victims the space to redeem themselves by re-integrating themselves into patriarchal structures, Bonduca and her daughters allow Fletcher's play to not only present their situation as an upset of power, but to resolve the problem of the power imbalance through the actions of those women who upset the traditional structures. Much like *Tom a Lincoln*, *Bonduca* is a play which acts to re-assert patriarchal standards of power through the actions of those who have violence threatened against them. Fletcher's play, like the above discussions of power put forth in other early modern rape narratives, re-affirms the advantages of a rape narrative to stage debates about power and violence. To read these arguments about power in terms of Johnson's romance, then, is to put into sharper focus the rape narrative's concern with structures of power.

As Fletcher's text demonstrates, the return of the victim to a place within society that could be understood by the men around them is an important element to the staging of debates in early modern rape narratives. Indeed, Johnson's re-appropriation of the rape narrative does not end with Caelia's domestication, and after presenting a character who functions in a manner wholly different from expected female roles within a romance, Johnson turns Caelia into a stereotype, particularly that of the sacrificial rape victim. After

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[304] Thomas pp. 320-321.
[305] Thomas p. 321.

waiting for Tom on her island for six weeks, she decides to "cast my selfe, headlong into the Sea" so she can reunite with him even in death.[306] While her role here is analogous as well to other classical archetypes such as Dido and Aeneas or Ovid's *Heriodes*, it functions to reconcile uneasy structures of power within Johnson's romance in a manner similar to that of early modern rape narratives.[307] Through this re-establishment of patriarchal power, Caelia's story asserts that the patriarchy is inescapable, and despite all of her actions to this point, she has functioned, primarily, to remain pure for more "worthy" men than those she kills. In reading her death in terms of the suicide of a rape victim, the inevitability of these structures of power within rape narratives becomes clear. Caelia writes a letter to be found with her body in blood, so that if she ever finds her way to him again, "this bloody Letter may witnesse the true loue that I bore him, to the houre of my death."[308] Even as her sex with Tom was consensual, it was also out of wedlock, and though heroic, Caelia finds herself in a similar paradoxical place which victims of rape often found themselves in literature, especially since the status of her chastity before the murder of the other men on the island is unknown. In this way, her "chastity" must now refer to her devotion to Tom, and indeed, her love for him is both what places her back into her patriarchal role and which kills her. In this way, it is not that her uneasy position within patriarchal structures is caused by a non-consensual sexual encounter, but that the text, even in portraying a consensual relationship, nevertheless portrays her death in terms of the sacrificial suicides found in rape narratives. By reading the story of Caelia as a rape narrative, one can glean the importance of patriarchal power structures to the early

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[306] Johnson p. 54.

[307] Ovid's poems of Phyllis, Hypsipyle, and Dido feature women lamenting their abandonment by their lovers before killing themselves, while the poems of Oenone and Deianira feature women before taking their lives following causing the deaths of their lovers following similar abandonment. See Ovid - The Heroides, trans. by A.S. Kline (Poetry in Translation) <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasheroides.php>.

[308] Johnson p. 54.

modern rape narrative and the effectiveness of ventriloquism in its perpetuation. Tom has succeeded in domesticating Caelia, and Caelia's laments, which place her back into the sphere of female status better understood by early modern systems of law, uphold this standard as ideal, as she is "intombed…most honourably as befitted a Princesse of her calling".[309] Even as Johnson's engagement with the rape narrative functioned differently as it subverted its tropes and expectations, it ultimately serves a similar purpose in using the victim's voice to reestablish the power structures which threatened her with assault. In doing so, he has acknowledged and engaged with other important aspects of early modern rape narratives, converging upon some elements even as he diverged from others. In this way, Johnson has carved a space for his text in an early modern tradition, working with tropes, gestures, and rhetorical manoeuvres to craft a text which, while on the surface appears separate from narratives of rape is in fact deeply rooted within them. By reading *Tom a Lincoln* against the grain, as a narrative steeped in the codes and vocabulary of sexual violence, we are able to understand those ways of thinking which form a foundation of a cultural narrative, in this case debates about proper structures of power.

Indeed, those women who did report rape needed to act deliberately to ensure they were believed, and there existed what Garthine Walker describes as an "annihilated" agency to choose how to respond.[310] As rape cases were presented to male judges, lawyers, and juries, the language had to be used in a form that men could easily understand.[311] Rape put women in a paradoxical position within the patriarchal system as they were not chaste, but they were also not adulterous whores.[312] This lack of ability to

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[309] Johnson p. 57.
[310] Walker 1998 p. 19.
[311] Walker 1998 p. 4.
[312] Nicol p. 177.

define rape victims within the confines of early modern patriarchy required stories featuring these women to realign their victims alongside these easily identifiable roles. On the one hand was the "marriage solution", in which marrying the rapist acted as a seeming fix-all because it cancelled out the "indiscretion" of sex outside of marriage, even if this sex was forced.[313] The other solution, seemingly much more common in early modern drama in particular because of its advantages to the tragic genre, was death. Following from the tradition of romance, raped women are likely to be dead by the end of a play; they "should not outlive their shame".[314] In an act which functions as an analogue of Livy's story of Virginius and Virginia, Shakespeare's Titus kills Lavinia, saying "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, | And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die" (v.3.47).[315] This murder comes after Lavinia's complete silencing by her rapists, during which attack they cut out her tongue so she cannot identify them. As she tries to explain what has happened to her, flipping through a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for a similar tale, it is the men who must interpret her actions for the sake of the audience: "This is the tragic tale of Philomel…rape, I fear, was the root of thine annoy…wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl, | Ravish'd and wrong'd, as Philomela was?" (iv.1.51-54). Lavinia's silence is literal, and for the rest of the play, she must resort to being physically spoken for by the men around her. It takes several tries for her to be understood by the other male characters, and when she is finally able to find a way to speak for herself, it is through writing, thought at the time to be a "masculine" form of communication.[316] Despite Lavinia's success in forcing her voice into the play through the act of writing, her position within the narrative must still be corrected, and it is for this reason she suffers murder at her father's hands. Once her story has been

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[313] Baines p. 72.

[314] See Catty pp. 95 and 112.

[315] See Bott and K. Robertson for detailed explanations of Shakespeare's engagement with Lividian and Ovidian myth, and of Virginius and Philomela, respectively.

[316] Bott p. 203.

told and her voice has been heard, her story is largely forgotten in the fight for Rome, and she, in order to remain sufficiently feminine and thereby sympathetic, must play out the accepted role of a rape victim and ask for help of the men of the play.[317] The play therefore gives responsibility for correcting the dishonour done to his daughter, but also to himself and to Rome, to Titus, and to resolve her uncomfortable societal position, Titus uses this responsibility to take Lavinia's life.

While Lavinia's demise is at the hands of another, perhaps much more common was for rape victims to die at their own hands. Suicide in response to rape was the "idealised" solution, and as rape was difficult for literature to externalise, the suicide became the externalised representation of the violence the women suffered.[318] Suicide to avoid rape, becoming a martyr to one's own chastity, was also considered "laudable", and while the church did not approve of suicide, "patriarchy takes precedence over God's own canon".[319] Perhaps the most famous and celebrated suicide of a victim of rape was performed by Lucrece, which, as discussed above, was enacted to protect the reputation of herself and her husband. Despite Heywood's Romans reassuring Lucrece that "If you were forc'd, the sinne concernes not you" (1719), she persists, insisting "I quit my soule of all such sine…Ile not debarre my body punishment" (1765-1766). Similarly, Shakespeare's poem notes that "Her body's stain her mind untainted clears" (1713) but Lucrece still refuses: "no dame, hereafter living, | By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving" (1717-1718). Shakespeare, in particular, makes Lucrece's decision the moral one; rather than simply exalting Lucrece's fame as does Heywood and indeed Rowley and Fletcher, his Lucrece warns other women against using her story as an excuse for themselves to

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[317] See Bott p. 200 and K. Robertson p. 228.
[318] Baines p. 90.
[319] See Catty p. 57 and Baines p. 89.

remain in sin.[320] These words are significant coming from Lucrece herself; it "reiterates the force of legal operations at their most misogynistic" as it continues the oppression which requires her suicide to redeem her.[321] These deaths demonstrate a removal of the rape victim from the position she occupies which is difficult for the patriarchy to understand, and allows these women to continue to be regarded as heroic and, as far as they can be, chaste characters. By putting these ideas in the mouths of the rape victims, and in foregrounding their acceptance of their fates, these women reestablish the narratives of patriarchy which perpetuated a real-world hierarchy. Within the worlds of the story, however, the power is returned to the male characters, and it is this return which characterises one common function of early modern rape narratives.

Margaret Cavendish and the consequences of accident

The previous two sections have established the traditional early modern narrative of rape, particularly how this narrative appropriates the voices of its victims to uphold the perpetuation of the narrative and by extension the patriarchal structures which created it. In particular, they have examined the ways in which Johnson's romance subverts the narrative even as it is clearly aware of its tropes and conventions, as well as how it adheres to the narrative as it ventriloquises the voice of its victims, thereby highlighting how a text which seemingly has nothing to do with a narrative can traffic in the narrative's vocabulary in a way that brings to light new understandings of those texts which follow it. This new narrative retains an interest in rape much like the early modern canon, but subverts it actively and allows the violence to serve a purpose, much like the rapes of Arthurian literature. It is important to note, however, that the merging of the early modern

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[320] Sale p. 2; see Shakespeare "Lucrece" 1717-1718. For references to Lucrece's virtue in Rowley's play, see i.298 and iv.114. For references to Lucrece in Fletcher's play, see iv.4.642.
[321] Sale pp. 2-3.

rape narrative and the Arthurian tradition not only carves out a distinct space for the romance in both, but in doing so creates a story which, however accidentally, followed similar trajectories as those of newer narratives which developed surrounding rape later into the century. In particular, Margaret Cavendish's short romance *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (1656) follows a very similar course to Johnson's, presenting a would-be rape victim who uses violence to escape her attacker and is only eventually reestablished as part of the early modern narrative after spending the majority of her story leading an army and establishing her own agency amongst the men who wish to control her. The comparisons between these two texts, laid out in this section, will show the ways in which Johnson's subversions almost predict new trends in rape stories, and demonstrate the ways in which narratives which arose in the Restoration era could be created even accidentally by the merging of two disparate narratives. It will further demonstrate the way the differences from the early modern tradition highlighted above, when compared to this later text, shows that different narratives were open to various writers, regardless of time or gender.

Cavendish's heroine, known as Travelia for most of the story, wastes no time when threatened with her violation and outright shoots her rapist. The narrative does not linger on the shooting, referring to it only by saying she "shot him" in the middle of a sentence, foregrounding instead the Prince's attempt to convince her to submit to him rather than the violence itself.[322] Not only is the violence not given much attention in the episode in which it appears it "appears to be the first work of English literature in which a woman violently attacks and defeats her would-be rapist", excluding Johnson.[323] Cavendish's portrayal of a woman using this sort of violence without much thought at all to the consequences

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[322] Cavendish p. 10.
[323] Greenstadt p. 133.

challenges the idea of women's helplessness. Indeed, Travelia first reacts to her rapist

with threats against herself, something that was common in traditional rape narratives that

expect women to harm themselves rather than "allow" themselves to be raped, as

discussed above.[324] This narrative, whilst playing into the notion that women had to follow

a set script when faced with sexual violation in an attempt to avoid or at least prove that

they had been assaulted, also allows Travelia to surprise the prince. Consequently, when

he hears her say "I will kill or be kill'd" he hears not the intent behind her words, but the

narrative script he expects: he never believes that she would commit violence against him,

only herself.[325] Very much like Johnson's Caelia, Travelia responds to threats of violence

with violence in kind. In both romances, this violence is not explicitly condemned, or even

commented on in more than a passing manner. Neither narrative spends much time

explaining the violence, and neither narrative focuses much on whether it was wrong to

commit it—Cavendish, in fact, never offers an opinion on the manner. Both instances are

framed as simple protection, and while Cavendish's narrative does put a focus on the

Prince's quest for vengeance, and much of Travelia's arc later in the story is defined by

her multiple run-ins with the prince, neither narrative makes the act of violence against the

men who would have violated them the express focus of the women's character. As

Johnson crafts his text using codes and assumptions rather than specific plot elements, he

creates a story which, much like Cavendish's romance, allows Caelia to gain some agency

against her potential violation.

Indeed, by placing a woman's point of view at the forefront of her narrative,

Cavendish's romance offers a story which, by virtue of following more closely to Johnson's

story than those of the other rape victims, however accidentally, points to a trend of

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[324] Greenstadt p. 141.
[325] Greenstadt p. 142. See Cavendish p. 9.

restoration literature in which far more women were becoming involved in the discussions of rape.[326] While her attempted rapist appears as a point of view character, his scenes are vastly outweighed by those with Travelia at the centre. In fact, it is Travelia's agency, and not the Prince's nobility, which gets the primary focus in their scenes together. The prince is first introduced as a "grand Monopolizer of young Virgins", not the noble knight who will be wronged by the violence Travelia inflicts upon him.[327] The traditional words are replaced by a gun, and agency replaced with the rape that would appear inevitable from this prince.[328] In fact, Travelia puts up only token resistance, knowing before she even meets the prince that "the gods would not hear her".[329] If the masculine, chastity-loving God will not protect her virtue from a prince lacking in nobility, then she will take her own protection upon herself. Travelia's violence was for her sake alone, and its detriment to the man involved is not a condemnation but a celebration of the act in the moment; she is a "monument to her own virtue."[330] Like Caelia and her damsels, Travelia's violence is not to be condemned, and even as Caelia's violence is not celebrated as is Travelia's, the lack of punishment for either's actions consequently place Johnson's romance as more aligned with these narratives such as this rather than the rape narratives of his contemporaries. Through the character of Caelia, Johnson has created a narrative which exposes the

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[326] See Jennifer L. Airey, *The Politics of Rape: Sexual Atrocity, Propaganda Wars, and the Restoration Stage* (University of Delaware, 2012), Toni Bowers, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance*, 1660-1760, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), Warren Chernaik, *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), Anthony Kaufman, '"The Perils of Florinda": Aphra Behn, Rape, and the Subversion of Libertinism in the Rover, Part I', *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, 11.2 (1996), 1–21, Sarah Olivier, '"Banished His Country, Despised at Home": Cavalier Politics, Banishment, and Rape in Aphra Behn's The Rover', *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, 27.1 (2012), 55-74,124, and Katherine M. Quinsey, *Broken Boundaries: Women & Feminism in Restoration Drama* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996) for discussions of the representation of rape in Restoration literature.
[327] Cavendish p. 5.
[328] Greenstadt p. 143.
[329] Cavendish p. 4.
[330] Greenstadt p. 143.

possibilities of opening up the boundaries of canon to include that which can be achieved by accident.

As both Johnson and Cavendish's texts explore actions taken by victims not afforded to early modern survivors, both stories likewise, through their endings, remain firmly within some form of set tradition, in this case one which upholds patriarchal power structures. What is notable here, however, is not that the structures are upheld, but that Cavendish's Restoration narrative does so in a manner remarkably similar to Johnson's. This is not to say that Cavendish must have read Johnson, but that Johnson, through the merging of the early modern rape narrative and the Arthurian use of rape as a plot convenience, created a story so similar to Cavendish's that it blurs the lines between the two ideas and challenges the strict definitions thereof. For instance, Cavendish's narrative not only undermines Travelia's prior agency in the story domesticating her, but she marries the prince who once would have raped her. The prince has been married throughout the majority of Cavendish's text, but "when Travelia heard he was a Widower, her heart did beat like to a feaverish pulse, being moved with several passions, fearing it was not so, hoping it was so, joying if it were so, grieving that she ought not to wish it so."[331] Here, Cavendish's narrator acknowledges that Travelia feels she should not want him to have lost his wife, but it is clear through this language, and language earlier in the text when she proclaims she would not wish for his wife's death—"I will not buy a husband at that deere rate, nor am I so evill, as to wish the death of the living for any advantage"— that her concern and fear for his new-found status as a bachelor is not to do with his previous violence against her, but her guilt at feeling joy at the death of another person, and when they marry, Travelia tells the Prince that "he should govern her, and she would

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[331] Cavendish p. 127.

govern the Kingdome."[332] This single line of dialogue directly places her under his control, and despite her seeming victory in getting to govern a kingdom, she is still now a submissive wife to a man who has shown himself to be both violent and disingenuous towards her. This final reestablishment of the patriarchal roles so important to traditional early modern rape narrative can be compared directly to the similar requirement of Johnson's women. Their violent actions may have been a means to an end, with Caelia's violence functioning to give Tom a means to assert his manhood and Travelia's to punish and eventually rehabilitate a would-be rapist, but they must still become men's inferiors and take their place in society as wives, even if Caelia's status as "wife" is not literal and ultimately leads to her death. Their places as military commanders may not have been commented on as negative, but their final fates still imply that it was unnatural for them to be entirely independent, and demonstrate the need for these characters to be returned to their places as women within the patriarchal order. The effect, then, of Johnson's engagement with the assumptions underlying early modern rape narratives, as well as his active subversion of different elements within them, is to craft a story which functions almost identically to Cavendish's. As the lines between the two texts blur, so too do the lines between what is considered early modern and what is considered Restoration, challenging chronology as a means of defining canon. The consequences of these tensions in defining what makes up a canon text is that these boundaries become strained, opening possibilities of what can and cannot be included among texts of particular traditions.

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[332] See Cavendish pp. 23 and 133.

Conclusion

      The clash of the Arthurian tradition, in which rape is an expected trope to prove the worthiness of a knight, and the early modern rape story, which focuses on victim's voices for the staging of contemporary theological debates, allows more focus the be placed on narratives of rape than other Arthurian narratives have previously allowed. Johnson's romance demonstrates the ways in which a narrative can, through using the vocabulary of a particular literary narrative, bring into focus that narrative's interest in cultural ideas and patriarchal structures. It is able to simultaneously be a part of a tradition while seeming, from the outside, outside of it. By tracking general means that rape narratives used the voices of the victims to justify the narrative's existence, it is possible to identify the ways in which Johnson both actively and consciously deviates from this tradition and when he adheres to it, especially to reintegrate Caelia into easy-to-define patriarchal character definitions. While no physical rape appears in the romance, the elements of the rape narrative which do appear defines the text as one which concerns itself with the same debates and structures of power as the early modern narrative tradition of rape. These metaphorical narratives may be ignored when discussing early modern rape stories because they do not feature the act of rape, when indeed to know the codes and conventions used by early modern rape stories, and to identify them in a text where no rape physically appears, is to make clearer the function and utility of a rape narrative. This chapter, then, highlights the way that rape narratives do not have to feature physical rapes to be identified as within a rape tradition. By specifically examining how these narratives ventriloquise their victims for the purpose of upholding structures of power, this chapter asserts that *Tom a Lincoln*'s acknowledgement of, subversion of, and adherence to the conventions of early modern rape stories place it firmly within this tradition. On the other hand, this chapter has also highlighted the role of accident in the creation of narrative,

exploring the comparisons between Johnson's romance and Margaret Cavendish's

Assaulted and Pursued Chastity. This romance, published over fifty years after Johnson's,

features incredible similarities to *Tom a Lincoln*'s rape story, both in the reactions of the

potential victims to the threat of assault and in how they are viewed by the narrative. This

chapter, then, explores the consequences of accident on a narrative and the utility of

textual comparison across wider chronological periods. This chapter also questions

arbitrary nature of canon boundaries when a text is dismissed despite the ways it brings

into focus the way cultural narratives are used to a political purpose. The next chapter

continues these questions, examining Johnson's text as an adaptation.

Chapter Four: Strong men and evil women: character adaptation and rewriting in
Tom a Lincoln

The fact that all writers of continuations must begin as readers of the source text means that each continuation is also a record of reading and reception. They make explicit…the books have their starting-point in other books, rather than an *ex nihilo* act of original creation. The writing of continuations thus undermines the boundaries between passive consumption and active production of literature.[333]

Richard Johnson's romance *Tom a Lincoln,* first published in 1599, is a work which

led to two expansions in different media: a sequel, written once again by Johnson and

published by in 1607, and a play of the same name by an anonymous playwright likely of

the Inns of Court, composed in 1611, which adapts only the first part of the romance.[334]

The prose continuation is different in almost every aspect from the first, most notably in the

characterisations, especially of the women. Its dramatic adaptation makes similar changes

to the relationships between male and female characters. While it should be noted that the

concept of the consistent story across multiple instalments is a modern one, the extremity

of the changes between the first and second parts are jarring to a reader.[335] It would, of

course, be simple to take the inconsistency in tone and character and dismiss the story as

simply bad, but there is more to be said for the work as a whole, especially when it comes

to cultural influence and the act of adaptation. Throughout this project, I have discussed

how form and its implications speak to cultural narratives, and Johnson's text allows for an

exploration of the act of adaptation in early modern texts, as well as of adaptation within a

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[333] N. Simonova, Early Modern Authorship and Prose Continuations: Adaptation and Ownership from Sidney to Richardson, 2015th edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) p. 14.

[334] See Proudfoot pp. x-xi and Findlay pp. 191-192 for discussions of the play's authorship. All references to this play will refer to Richard Johnson, Thomas Heywood, and Malone Society, *Tom a Lincoln* (Malone Society, 1992). Note that I will be keeping formatting and editorial marks exactly as they appear in this edition and make no edits to the text as quoted.

[335] See *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, ed. by Betty A. Schellenberg and Paul Vincent Budra, Theory/Culture (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998). and Simonova for lengthy discussions of how the approach to writing sequels and continuations developed from medieval times through to the modern novel.

tradition of adaptation, such as the Arthurian canon, and how this affects ideas of originality, or at the very least inventiveness in early modern literature. The act of adaptation also demonstrates how shifting gender relationships between adaptations affects the original texts and the representation of characters within them. It also highlights the opposite: how representations of characters affects the gendered relationships. Adaptation itself is described by Linda Hutcheon as "repetition with variation", and in the case of Johnson's work, several layers of adaptations are present.[336] Not only has *Tom a Lincoln* been the inspiration for both a sequel and a dramatic adaptation, Johnson's original text, as a work situated within an Arthurian context, is likewise an adaptation of the previous works in the Arthurian tradition. While Arthurian texts are often spoken of in terms of adaptation, they are rarely looked at as adaptations themselves.[337] This chapter, then, aims to track Johnson's story across its adaptations, through the lens of the interactions between sexes and the presentations thereof, to explore what happens when a writer rewrites a work and changes the form.

This chapter examines these adaptations by focusing on tracking the character definitions and gender relationships within them. The work demonstrates significant tensions in early modern character definitions. For example, while the first part of the

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[336] Hutcheon p. 4. For further foundations of adaptation theory, see Deborah Cartmell, Timothy Corrigan, and Imelda Whelehan, 'Introduction to Adaptation', *Adaptation*, 1.1 (2008), 1–4 <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apn015>, Thomas Leitch, 'Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory', *Criticism*, 45.2 (2003), 149–71, and Kyle Meikle, 'Rematerializing Adaptation Theory', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 41.3 (2013), 174–83.

[337] Dorsey Armstrong, 'Rewriting the Chronicle Tradition: The Alliterative Morte Arthure and Arthur's Sword of Peace.', *Parergon*, 25.1, 81–101 <https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.200811680>, Fox, and Kenneth Hodges, 'How King Arthur Invented Christmas: Reimagining Arthur and Rome in Early Modern Scotland and England', *Arthuriana*, 29.3 (2019), 25–42 <https://doi.org/10.1353/art.2019.0036> devote short articles to how certain texts and genres are built within the Arthurian tradition, and Michelsson, and R. Morris each discuss the appearance of Arthur and his knights in different works across a tradition. Christina Miller, 'The Problem with Page to Screen Adaptation: A Case Study of King Arthur and Tristan and Isolt', *Honors College Theses*, 2019 <https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege_theses/291> does focus on a specific Arthurian adaptation, while Whetter includes a lengthy *Le Morte D'Arthur* in her study defining the genre of medieval romance.

prose limits Tom's interactions with women apart from his encounter with Caelia discussed in the previous chapter and the meeting with his wife, Anglitora, the sequel features women in much more prominent roles. Almost all of these featured women, regardless of their characterisations in the first part, are portrayed in extremely negative lights, as violent, murderous, and cruel. The same can be seen in the play based on the first part, which similarly forces female characters into the same violently different roles. In both cases, the characterisations function to cast the male characters in a more positive light. When viewing the canon of Arthurian literature as a whole up to this point, however, the changes in representation of female characters can, as this chapter will argue, be seen as an act which reestablishes the work within the tradition by creating versions of the prose which feel more recognisably Arthurian. Johnson's romance is not an entirely new story; he writes within a long-standing tradition filled with its own genre conventions, tropes, and character archetypes. Indeed, whether the work fits into the chronicle or romance genre, Arthurian texts and the plots, characters, and questions posed within them, can be traced through a longstanding tradition largely to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae* and Chrétien de Troyes' romances, through the French cycles and the English alliterative revival, after which it was solidified into its most recognisable form through Thomas Malory's romance *Le Morte D'Arthur.*[338] In itself, the first part of *Tom a Lincoln* can be considered an adaptation of the Arthurian mythos, a repurposing of these conventions for the sake of a new story. The act of adaptation, then, is revealed as deliberate and in turn runs through the core of the romance. Therefore, when in writing the sequel these conventions are repurposed for such drastically different reasons, the second part and adaptation call attention to the act of adaptation itself. While this is not unique to

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[338] See Armstrong, R. Morris, and Whetter for discussions of the development of the Arthurian tradition to this point.

Tom a Lincoln, Johnson, or Arthurian literature, its prominence in these works and its function within them makes it worthy of note and sanctions the placing of *Tom a Lincoln* more securely as an Arthurian text than has been previously considered. This chapter examines each of these elements, first by comparing one character across Johnson's original romance and its sequel to establish how the changes made realign the story and characters with the gender relationships of the Arthurian tradition. Next, I will explore the questions of masculinity, femininity, chivalry and violence raised within Johnson's text and how in providing answers to those questions Johnson's first part sets itself apart as an outlier in the canon which is then rectified by the sequel's return to form. Finally, I will analyse one character across the first part and the play to demonstrate the ways in which the initial story can be reintegrated into the familiar realm of Arthurian tradition, ultimately arguing that it is not the changes made by the sequel and adaptation which can be seen as odd or noteworthy, but that the first part, in its less traditional Arthurian characters and dedication to answering questions about legitimacy and violence, proves itself to be a deviation from the recognisable canon. In the change in the presentation of Johnson's female characters from less definable to more traditional categories, the texts redefine the masculinity of the male characters by contrasting them with powerful, villainous women. This chapter argues that in analysing the manipulation of texts from one form to another shows how working within an established tradition blurs lines between what can be deemed an "original" text.

Ryan Harper, editor for the Camelot Project's transcription for *Tom a Lincoln*, claims that the second part of the text "is devoted primarily to undoing the action of part one";[339] indeed, many of the character descriptions and motivations that appear in the second part

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[339] Ryan Harper, 'Introduction to Richard Johnson's Tom A Lincoln | Robbins Library Digital Projects'.

are all but diametrically opposed to their appearances in the first. In part one of Johnson's work, he displays a comparatively nuanced expression of heroic masculinity and transgressive femininity, whilst still remaining in the lines of acceptability in patriarchal character definitions. Tom is a heroic character, but his initial attempt to become a knight leads to crime; and while Cælia still dies by the end of the story, her life and death, including her crimes, are portrayed sympathetically. In part two, however, Tom, and later his son, the Black Knight, are now primarily defined by their violence at the hands of, or towards, women, rather than other men. Anglitora, on the other hand, who in the first part functioned simply as a beautiful maid with whom Tom falls in love, is now defined by cruelty, lust, and murderous intent. This chapter will argue that these shifts fit into a larger pattern, utilised throughout the Arthurian canon, to define men through their interactions with powerful, transgressive women, and that this pattern's prominence in the different ways of rewriting the prose's first part demonstrates that a text that otherwise seems incoherent and contradictory can be established as a subject of critical examination if one approaches it from the angle of the dynamics of literary adaptation.

Before I can begin my analysis, it is important to first establish some of those gendered expectations and ideas employed by Johnson, the anonymous playwright, and other writers within the Arthurian canon. Richard Hillman describes "Fall of Man overtones" featured in several stories as existing "through female and ultimately diabolic seduction, into the knowledge of good and evil - and, pointedly, into morality".[340] It is this notion of the Fall of Man—that men's interactions with the world are ultimately defined by the insidious actions of women—that defines the most anxious elements of early modern masculinity. This concept, defined by Mark Brietenberg as "anxious masculinity" is one which defines

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[340] Hillman p. 16.

manhood against what manhood isn't, namely womanhood.[341] This concept of manhood,

Brietenberg argues, is constantly under threat; women acting against the definitions

enforced on them by patriarchal norms threatens men's place at the top of this hierarchy.

Arthurian literature traffics heavily in this anxious masculinity, even as it does also define

masculinity against other men through violence. Throughout Arthurian literature, men are

defined both by their homosocial militant interactions with other men as well as their

steadfast resistance against the wiles of duplicitous, lustful, and even cruel women. It is

this latter definition of manhood which Johnson's second part and the anonymous play

utilise as they define their male characters. In conforming to this tradition of defining men

against Eve-like women, Johnson's narrative now follows the trajectory of Arthurian

tradition, whilst allowing itself the opportunity for shock value and grotesque elements,

which becomes a major feature of the second part. In doing this, however, the story must

completely redefine the characters introduced by Johnson's original story, thereby

questioning the concept of originality and inventiveness when working within a tradition of

adaptation. Indeed, there has recently developed a trend of scholarship discussing early

modern concepts of rewriting, adaptation, and continuation, but this trend is very new and

is limited in discussions about writing within a pre-existing tradition and across

adaptations.[342] Critics have worked to establish the definitions of genres and traditions, but

these texts do not concern themselves with adaptations or how texts that fit within

adaptive traditions, such as Arthurian texts, function as adaptations.[343] Similarly, while

research surrounding the definition of gender roles within literature is abundant and

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[341] Brietenberg p. 386.

[342] See Budra and Schellenberg, Simonova and Lisa Starks, Ovid and Adaptation in Early Modern
English Theatre (Edinburgh University Press, 2019) for discussions of early modern rewritings.

[343] See Armstrong, Fox, R. Morris, and Whetter.

diverse, it focuses primarily on how gender functions within a specific work, rather than

over a tradition and specifically between related adaptations.[344]

Before I begin my analysis, it is important to first define what masculinity looked like

to early modern writers. Early modern masculinity was dependent upon several competing

factors, including class, honour, the home, and indeed violence. According to many

scholars, much of the foundation upon which manhood and womanhood were based in

early modern England depended on the concept of honour.[345] "Honour is what men and

women live by", with men's focused primarily on military achievements and women's on

their chastity.[346] It has been argued that the concept of manhood, and by extension male

honour, is based on men's "other"ing of women, creating a male identity which stands in

opposition to what is defined as "woman".[347] While masculinity has other definitions, it is

with this comparative definition which this chapter engages. In his article, "Manhood, the

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[344] See Aughterson, Arnold, J., and S. Brady, eds., *What Is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, Genders and Sexualities in History (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230307254>, Broomhall, Carroll, Celovsky, J. Feather and C. Thomas, Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture (Springer, 2013), Flather, Fletcher A, Foyster, Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender & Social Control in Medieval England: Gender and Social Control in Medieval England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Jorgensen and Beehler, Katherine Lewis, Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013), Katherine J. Lewis, 'Male Saints and Devotional Masculinity in Late Medieval England', *Gender & History*, 24.1 (2012), 112–33 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2011.01671.x>, Low, Majeske and Detmer-Goebel, Neal, Neely, Reinke Williams, Richards and Thorne, Rose, Ethan H. Shagan, The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England (Cambridge University Press, 2011), Alexandra Shepard, Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England (Oxford u.a: Clarendon Press, 2006), Suzuki, Tancke, Jennifer C. Vaught, Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature (Routledge, 2016), and Willen for discussions of constructs of gender and how literature utilises and helps form these constructions.
[345] See Foyster, Jesús López-Peláez Casellas, 'A Lotmanian Approach to the Ideological Function of Honour in Early Modern English Texts', *Interlitteraria*, 18.1 (2013) <https://doi.org/10.12697/IL.2013.18.1.02>, Reta A. Terry, '"Vows to the Blackest Devil": Hamlet and the Evolving Code of Honor in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52.4 (1999), 1070–86 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2901836>, and Garthine Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries of Female Honour in Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6 (1996), 235–45 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3679239> for analyses of medieval and early modern concepts of both male and female honour.
[346] Tassi p. 106.
[347] Brietenberg p. 382.

Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England", Anthony Fletcher argues that manhood can be essentially defined as "not feminine", qualities which may include weakness, softness, delicacy, or self-indulgence.[348] Bernard Capp, in particular, dedicates much of his work to discussing the double standards that defined masculinity as that which is not feminine.[349] This definition of manhood applied, as well, to what masculinity meant for the home. The man's role as a head of the household allowed him to outwardly display his manhood.[350] There was a certain authority associated with having control over one's dependents, namely his wife and children.[351] For a masculinity that was dependent upon what is not feminine, to hold this power over women, and indeed over men of lower social status, provided this comparison that cemented one's manhood.[352] A man's role as the head of a household, the primary mode of acceptable masculinity was patient, a "soldier of god" who was to be "active and stoic in the face of adversity rather than effeminately passive".[353] The primary means of upholding this image was through emotional regulation and personal self control. It was self government, above all else, which gave men their status as men, as well as the power he held over his household.[354] Moderation was government; it was active, not passive, proving what someone did to control their passions, rather than not having passions at all.[355]

This means that while women were expected to have and act according to their emotions, men were expected to be able to control them, and act according to the rational mind. This is especially true of upper class men, particularly kings. Early modern kings were expected

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[348] Fletcher, A p. 421.

[349] See Capp 1999 and Bernard Capp, Bernard Capp, '"JESUS WEPT" BUT DID THE ENGLISHMAN? MASCULINITY AND EMOTION IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND', *Past & Present*, 224, 2014, 75–108.

[350] Fletcher, A p. 431.

[351] Peters p. 331.

[352] Timbers pp. 35-36.

[353] Timbers p 76.

[354] Jordan p. 254.

[355] See Shagan pp 7-8 and p. 36.

not to express their emotions, as to lose control of his emotions was evidence of his

inability to control his kingly conduct.[356] Ben Jonson, for instance, warns in his *Speeches*

at Prince Henry's Barriers that "He that in deeds of Armes obeyed his blood | Doth often

tempt his destinie beyond good" (395-396), and that kings should have "equal Iustice,

upright Fortitude | And settled *Prudence*" (399-400).[357] Similarly, femininity was defined by

what it wasn't rather by its own definition; manhood was the norm, womanhood the

offshoot.[358] Consequently, as Ulrike Tancke suggests, the "existence of an Other…[was]

fundamental to identity formation".[359] Scholarly work on the subject of violence is also

plentiful; the rules of violence worked to define many of the most important aspects of

especially elite masculinity.[360] As some have argued, masculinity was defined by "courage,

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[356] Frederika Bain, 'The Affective Scripts of Early Modern Execution and Murder', in *The Renaissance of Emotion*, ed. by Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan (Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 221–40 <https://www.manchesterhive.com/display/9780719098956/9780719098956.00018.xml> [accessed 15 April 2023] p. 224-225.

[357] Ben Jonson, 'The Speeches at Prince Henries Barriers', *The Camelot Digital Project* <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/jonson-speeches-at-prince-henries-barriers> [accessed 16 April 2023].

[358] Tancke p. 9.

[359] Tancke pp. 73-74.

[360] See Sara Butler, *The Language of Abuse: Marital Violence in Later Medieval England* (Brill, 2007) <https://brill.com/view/title/13684> [accessed 21 January 2020], Albrecht Classen, Violence in Medieval Courtly Literature: A Casebook (Routledge, 2012), C. A. J. Coady, *Morality and Political Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), HUSTON DIEHL, 'The Iconography of Violence in English Renaissance Tragedy', *Renaissance Drama*, 11 (1980), 27–44, Susan S. M. Edwards, 'Anger and Fear as Justifiable Preludes for Loss of Self-Control', *The Journal of Criminal Law*, 74.3 (2010), 223–41 <https://doi.org/10.1350/jcla.2010.74.3.638>, Feather and Thomas, Bradley J. Irish, 'Vengeance, Variously: Revenge Before Kyd in Early Elizabethan Drama', *Early Theatre*, 12.2 <https://www.academia.edu/209279/_Vengeance_Variously_Revenge_Before_Kyd_in_Early_Eliza bethan_Drama._Early_Theatre_12.2_2009_117-134> [accessed 21 January 2020], Richard Kaeuper, 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. by Roberta L. Krueger, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 97–114 <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521553423.007>, Richard W. Kaeuper, *Violence in Medieval Society* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2000), Richard W. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe (Oxford University Press, 2001), Low, E. Amanda McVitty, 'False Knights and True Men: Contesting Chivalric Masculinity in English Treason Trials, 1388–1415', *Journal of Medieval History*, 40.4 (2014), 458–77 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2014.954139>, Jodi Mikalachki, 'The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: Cymbeline and Early Modern English Nationalism', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.3 (1995), 301–22 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2871120>, Charles V.

drive, energy, passion, and appetite",[361] men were expected to "assert some version of the trope of military power" to preserve a fragile masculinity as well as the fragile society which they must defend, relying on chivalry to temper the violence inherent in the feudal system.[362]

Violence was, however, continuing into the renaissance, largely gendered masculine; literary depictions of violence presented masculine usage of violence as its only legitimate form.[363] Male honour "tends to be defended with arms and violence", making it a powerful tool that had the potential to "recalibrate the male status hierarchy".[364] When women used violence, therefore, it "called forth a rhetoric of exceptionality and unnaturalness, and provoked a special horror that owed much to its being an infringement on male prerogative."[365] Indeed, Feather and Thomas argue that the authority held by men over government and family are "deeply implicated in the practice of violence".[366] This

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Phythian-Adams, 'Rituals of Personal Confrontation in Late Medieval England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 73.1 (1991), 65–90 <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.73.1.5>, Linda A. Pollock, 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 47.3 (2004), 567–90, Lisa Robeson, 'Noble Knights and "Mischievous War": The Rhetoric of War in Malory's Le Morte Darthur', *Arthuriana*, 13.3 (2003), 10–35 <https://doi.org/10.1353/art.2003.0033>., Monica Santini, 'A Knight Errant in the Seventeenth Century: *Tom a Lincoln* and Medieval Romance', in *Lost in Translation?*, ed. by D. Renevey and C. Whitehead (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), xii, 327–37 <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.TMT-EB.3.4242>, Shagan, Simkin, Aferdita Tepshi, 'Blood Feuds and Revenge in Canons and Medieval Statutes and Social Consequences', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4.3 (2015), 199, Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado, Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White, 1 edition (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), *Violence, Politics, and Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. by J. Ward, Early Modern Cultural Studies 1500–1700 (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230617018>, Headlam Wells, "'Oute of Mesure': Violence and Knighthood in Malory's Morte Darthur"', in *Re-Viewing Le Morte Darthur: Texts and Contexts, Characters and Themes*, ed. by K. S. Whetter and Raluca L. Radulescu (Rochester, NY: D.S.Brewer, 2005), pp. 119–31 and Stephen D. White, 'The Feelings in the Feud: The Emotional Turn in the Study of Medieval Vengeance', *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia*, 2013, 279–311 <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004221598_012> for discussions of male forms of violence in medieval and early modern England.
[361] Fletcher, A p. 422.
[362] McAdam p. 39.
[363] Woodbridge p. xi.
[364] Tassi p. 194 and Nussdorfer p. 116, respectively.
[365] Woodbridge p. xii.
[366] Feather and Thomas p. 4.

often meant that there were legitimate forms of violence, particularly war and executions, and that it was generally considered legitimate when used by superiors against inferiors.[367] It was also used as a means of defending one's honour and masculinity against perceived slights.[368] The distinction here between legitimate and illegitimate violence serves two functions in the definition of early modern manhood. The first is that it re-emphasises self government over the passions—only acceptable forms of violence legitimised the loss of control. Upper class men had more opportunities for legitimate violence; they had more inferiors against whom they could exact it, and they were more likely to have military command. As the head of households as well as governmental positions, they had a paternalistic role for their families and their subordinates.[369] On the other hand, it similarly allowed a point against which women could be defined; if there was legitimate masculine violence, feminine violence could be defined as illegitimate. Violence, as a masculine force, was protected by the state through codes of chivalry as it understood the contradictions between the value placed on violence and the potential social struggle of its use, legitimising individual forms of romanticised violence.[370] Women, on the other hand, had no such legitimacy offered by the state. Several scholars have identified this as a point of interest for early modern writers and readers, and violent women became a favourite subject of literary works.[371] Violence became, then, a field on which writers could explore tensions between honour and transgression. To summarise, scholarly work

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[367] Amussen pp. 2-4. Note that Amussen also asserts that domestic violence, which was primarily defined as excessive violence against one's wife, was not considered legitimate.

[368] See Peláez Casellas p. 36 and Tassi pp. 17-18.

[369] See Amussen p. 1.

[370] See Classen, Kaeuper 2000 and Kaeuper 2001.

[371] See Alfar, Cavanagh 1994, Clarke, Gaskill 1998, Gowing, Jorgensen and Beehler, Kane, K. J. Kesselring, 'Bodies of Evidence: Sex and Murder (or Gender and Homicide) in Early Modern England, c.1500–1680', *Gender & History*, 27.2 (2015), 245–62 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12124>, Kristin M. Smith, 'Martial Maids and Murdering Mothers: Women, Witchcraft and Motherly Transgression in Henry VI and Richard III', *Shakespeare*, 3.2 (2007), 143–60 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450910701460908>, Sondergard, Stavreva, and Walker 2003 for discussions of the early modern fascination with female violence and murder.

surrounding early modern gender construction argues that gender was confirmed through comparison to an "other", and while this can be useful in identifying what was and was not honourable for men and women, this chapter aims to explore beyond these arbitrary definitions to analyse how its use within an established tradition can reframe works as they rewrite previous texts and redefine characters for the purposes of a new adaptive texts.

Conversely, ideas of transgression also largely differed by gender, and like violence before it, scholars have spent much time discussing ideas of early modern transgression.[372] There was some shame in male sexuality, especially infidelity, which many men found extremely shameful.[373] Sexual insult for men, however, was largely levelled not against their own sexual impropriety, but against their inability to control a woman's sexuality.[374] Men's sexual honesty was targeted "indirectly…by association with immoral women".[375] Indeed, much of the dishonour felt by men was associated with the influence of women. Scholars such as Ian McAdam and Anthony Fletcher have explored the idea that sexual activity may be considered emasculating, and sexuality itself threatened emasculation.[376] To give into lust was considered a feminising lack of control.[377] For women, on the other hand, as Brietenberg argues, fear of transgression

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[372] See Brietenberg, Butler, Bernard Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited: Plebeian Women and Male Sexual Reputation in Early Modern England', *Past & Present*, 162, 1999, 70–100, Clarke, Susan Dunn-Hensley, 'Whore Queens: The Sexualized Female Body and the State', in *"High and Mighty Queens" of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, ed. by Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney, and Debra Barrett-Graves, Queenship and Power (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2003), pp. 101–16 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-10676-6_7>, Hanawalt 1998, Hillman and Rubbery-Blanc, E. Amanda McVitty, '"My Name of a Trewe Man": Gender, Vernacularity, and Treasonous Speech in Late Medieval England', *Parergon*, 33.1 (2016), 91–111 <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2016.0005>, SUSANNAH BRIETZ MONTA, 'Foxe's Female Martyrs and the Sanctity of Transgression', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 25.1 (2001), 3–22, Sondergard, and Stavreva for discussions of the importance of both male and female transgressions.
[373] Capp 1999 p. 73.
[374] Fletcher, A p. 432.
[375] Stavreva p. 21.
[376] McAdam p. 30, Fletcher, A p. 423.
[377] Woodbridge p. xxi.

comes from the concern that a passive object of desire might seek an active role, bringing her outside of the control of male power.[378] From as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, women were believed to be the "immediate cause of sin".[379] Most discussions of violent women stayed within women-only spheres, such as "witchcraft, scolding, prostitution or infanticide, which emphasize the mysterious or deviant nature of female criminality rather than illustrating any of the more mainstream aggressive tendencies so regularly associated with male offenders".[380] Women's sexuality was a primary focus of transgression; women were believed to be inherently incapable of keeping sexual boundaries, and male honour was largely based on the regulation of female chastity.[381] Marisha Caswell contends that feminine violence, and by extension feminine transgression, is a "demonstration of female authority and agency, which stood in direct contrast to a woman's subordinate position within the marital hierarchy. Such violence, even in self-defence, upset the gender order".[382] The fear of women's usurpation of power comes from the idea of woman as unknowable, and women who did not conform to the social norm as threats to the status quo.[383] In this vein, feminine identity itself is defined by women's ability to conform to sexual and social expectations imposed on them by the patriarchal societal structure. Johnson's work defines women's identities and moralities in this way, allowing for the definition of his male characters to be defined alongside these definitions of women. In shifting characterisations of his romance's women, Johnson allows for more stable definitions of his heroes' masculinities as they defeat those transgressive women. That Johnson's text functions as an adaptive text, both as a text

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[378] Brietenberg p. 386.
[379] Scott p. 41.
[380] Kilday p. 142.
[381] See Gowing 2003 p. 52 and Brietenberg p. 389.
[382] Caswell p. 120.
[383] See Alfar p. 141 and Fouassier-Tate p. 72.

within an adaptive tradition and one which spawned adaptations of its own makes these gendered shifts significant; as Johnson works to refocus his male characters' virtues in terms of the women they defeat, he calls attention to the tensions inherent in adaptation as he adapts Arthurian legend and his own work, and watches his work adapted in turn. Consequently, *Tom a Lincoln* emerges as a text which demonstrates tensions within working within a longstanding tradition when the worlds of gender and adaptation combine.

The "specter of female evil": examining continuations in the character of Anglitora

As Johnson moves his focus from his original text to its sequel, there is a shift in priorities that, as seen in its portrayal of gender, results in the second part's realigning of Johnson's text with the Arthurian tradition. While part one does feature Arthurian characters and stories, it is part two which feels to the reader much more like an Arthurian text. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the representation of Tom's wife, Anglitora. In this section, I will compare the presentation of one character across the two parts together and how the changes between them affect other characters' shifting masculinities, first by examining the character of Anglitora and then by laying out the Arthurian tropes of which her depiction in the sequel is reminiscent. I will explore in the form of a case study how Johnson shifts his focus from first to second part in order to highlight those popular elements of stories which became foregrounded in the emerging form of the sequel, and how these elements affect both the presentation and interpretation of genre, tone, and gender. To this end, this section will demonstrate the ways in which Johnson's sequel acts not only as a continuation of his original 1599 romance, but as almost a return to form to the Arthurian tradition from which the romance was adapted.

Anglitora undergoes perhaps the most drastic metamorphosis from part one to part two, where she becomes the stereotypical definition of female "evil". The second part of

the prose is characterised not by chivalry and conquest like the first, but by shock value and the grotesque. From the queen's descent into murder of Tom's mother to Anglitora's aforementioned murder of Tom himself culminating in a slave, half buried, eating his own arms to survive, the sequel is prone to shocking displays of violence and gore. Johnson's text went through several reprints and was clearly a very popular text in the time it was composed, and while it is important to note that one cannot ascribe intent to the writing of Johnson's sequel—indeed Alex Davis, in his article "Savagery, Civility, and popular Literature: Richard Johnson's 'Tom a Lincolne'", argues all of the intentions he seems to have in regards to nationalism, morality, and nobility go almost spectacularly wrong to the point that to assume these intentions existed would be an attempt to force the narrative into a box into which it simply does not fit.[384] Nevertheless, there is a clear interest in the second part in the tensions between civility and barbarity, in contrast to the first's interest in chivalry, and it is this interest which apparently gives rise to depictions of the grotesque.[385] This consequently becomes notable in regards to this change in characterisation: in order to accommodate this shift in tone, the characters have to change in such drastic ways, the idea of the definition of men against evil women coming so prominently to the fore, that these gendered relationships become central to sequel's presentation and tone. This is especially true in its use of shock and barbarism, a word used in this context to refer to the acts of horrific violence committed in direct defiance of contemporary values of civility and honour.

For example, upon Anglitora's first introduction in part one, she is described as the "fayrest mayde that euer mortall eye behelde…Nature her selfe could not frame her like".[386] Her presentation is simple; she is the most beautiful maiden of a group of them,

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[384] Davis pp. 268-269. See also Michelsson p. 244.
[385] Davis p. 274.
[386] Johnson p. 45.

and her initial behaviour implies that her disposition matches her beauty. When she

reappears in part two, however, not only has her behaviour but her descriptors changed;

she is immediately "othered" when she leaves Tom. Her shift from a heroic character to a

villainous one is marked by the acknowledgement of complete unknowability of the

motivations behind her actions. Upon her departure from Arthur's court, she

had the at|tyre of an *Amazon,* made all of the best *Arabian*silke, co|loured like the changeable hue of a Raine-bow: about her necke hung a Iewell of a wounderfull value, which was a Di|mond cut in the fashon of a Heart split asunder with a Tur|kish Semiter: betokening a doubt that shee had of her Knights loyaltie.[387]

The first time Anglitora's dress has been described in detail within the narrative, she has

gone from being simply fair to becoming something distinctly un-English. She has become

more alien after her villainous transition, despite being "hitherto relatively unexoticised".[388]

In addition to her descriptors calling attention to the fact that she has become the "other",

in this case both as a woman and as something foreign and sinful, within the context of the

presentation of this new Anglitora, her newfound luxury comes to mean more than just

exotic, but suggests she has now become a whore. The jewel itself is a broken heart,

which for Anglitora represents the disloyalty of her husband, and she wears her broken

heart around her neck as an advertisement of her newly-severed loyalty to him. Filled with

the "venome of disloyaltie", she does not hesitate to enter into a sexual relationship with

the knight at whose castle she and her son come to live, and Anglitora, "that in former

times was accounted the worlds ad|miration for constancie, was now the very wonder of

shame".[389] Adultery, in early modern England, was seen as a female mode of revenge, an

attack on male honour and reputation,[390] and the jewellery she now wears reflects the idea

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[387] Johnson pp. 65-66.
[388] Davis p. 273.
[389] Johnson p. 76.
[390] Tassi p. 259.

that whores had a penchant for luxury and bled money from honest men.[391] The jewel she

wears around her neck, described as having "a wounderfull value", draws attention to the

riches she now flaunts. The jewellery has become a part of her new identity; she flaunts

her luxury as a symbolic betrayal of Tom, a betrayal that becomes literal when a "Scarffe

of Iewells" becomes the weapon used in Tom's murder.[392] Not only is the whorish luxury

the ultimate weapon that fells the great knight, but it was a gift given to Anglitora by Tom,

bringing the betrayal full circle. Her riches and jewellery, then, becomes symbolic of her

shift in characterisation; as she adorns her body she transforms into the female "other".

It is important to note that the early modern interest in acts of savagery, especially

in popular literature, was extremely gendered. The popularity of dramas featuring

transgressive women—such as *Titus Andronicus*, another work which traffics in the

grotesque, and *Bonduca*, discussed in the third chapter above—as well as broadside

ballads describing murderous women shows that there was a strong market for violent

women and the men who stood against them that meant stories were continually produced

and sold.[393] Evil women were almost always defined by their relationships with men,

particularly in regards to their sexuality and ambition, and it is within this framing of evil

women that Johnson focuses his characterisation of Anglitora as something that defines

both Tom himself and the priorities of his sequel. León Alfar observes that "female evil…is

culturally constructed and depends on binary oppositions deployed by masculinist

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[391] Gowing 1993 p. 14.

[392] Johnson p. 82.

[393] Kane p. 230. For ballads depicting violent women, see 'Ballads Online '
<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> [accessed 30 November 2021], 'Broadside Ballads '
<https://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/collections/broadsideballads/1> [accessed 30
November 2021], 'Broadside Ballads: New York State Library '
<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/broadsides.htm> [accessed 30 November 2021], Hyder E.
Rollins, A Pepysian Garland; Black-Letter Broadside Ballads of the Years 1595-1639,: Chiefly from
the Collection of Samuel Pepys, (Cornell University Library, 2009), Old English Ballads, 1553-
1625, Chiefly from Manuscripts, ed. by Hyder Edward Rollins (Alpha Edition, 2020), Skeaping, and
'UCSB English Broadside Ballad Archive '<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/> [accessed 30 November
2021] for lists of English Broadside Ballads.

structures of power in order to retain control over what is believed to be the chaotic, uncontrollable, and innate deficiency of the female mind and body. Female evil is produced by male fears of female desires".[394] As a result, then, men defined feminine evil based on the inversion of the hierarchies they themselves had erected: the bodies they wanted to keep chaste, and the rebellions they attempted to squash in their submission.[395] Women, León Alfar observes, "by failing to live up to virtue becomes chaotic, and eventually, evil", thereby constructing a femininity that transgressed only when it threatened upheaval of the structural superiority of masculinity.[396] There was a belief in a "duplicity of femininity", which defined women as particularly two-faced, with one public aspect the pure virgin and the hidden self of the evil feminine.[397] Basically every belief about whoredom came back to the endangering of male control; to be a whore is to conjure the "specter of female evil that threatens to subvert masculinist…systems of power".[398] In this belief, then, a woman does not need to be a literal whore to be called or described as one. As discussed in the second chapter of this project, whoredom, as the ultimate masculine fear concerning women's behaviour, had become the go-to insult to imply the evil of femininity. In a similar vein, female violence was a "demonstration of female authority and agency, which stood in direct contrast to a woman's subordinate position within the marital hierarchy. Such violence, even in self-defence, upset the gender order".[399] It is this definition of female evil that Johnson pulls from in his characterisation of Anglitora in the second part of his prose as he shifts her characterisation from one fairly removed from Arthurian tradition to that of the enchantress archetype seen in the

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[394] Alfar p. xxvi.
[395] Alfar p. 2.
[396] Alfar p. 33.
[397] Purkiss p. 34.
[398] See Gowing 1993 p. 16 and Alfar p. 121.
[399] Caswell p. 120.

character of Morgan. In realigning Anglitora's character with that of a famous Arthurian enchantress, Johnson's sequel, then, returns his female character representations to those common or arguably expected of a text within the Arthurian canon.

Of course, Anglitora's greatest crime within the text is not her sexuality, but the murder of her husband. While this act, and by extension Tom's inability to control his wife is, as stated below, an indictment of Tom's own masculinity, this act also offers a condemnation of the type of femininity displayed by Anglitora. The narrative is clear that "not any remembrance had shee of Woman|hood", simultaneously separating her act entirely from her femininity but also fully defining Tom's murder as a gendered act.[400] The legal response to spousal murder was an inherently gendered one; when a husband murdered his wife, he was charged with simple capital murder, but wives who killed their husbands were charged with petty treason. The treason inherent in this act was the inversion of the gender hierarchy.[401] This makes Anglitora's act gendered not simply in that it is unbecoming of a woman to act in such a violent manner, but that it inverts the patriarchal marriage structure when a woman rebels against her husband. Anglitora's murder of Tom satisfies both aspects of the ultimate feminine evil: her lust and adultery and her upheaval of her submissive position. This is what made female murderers particularly evil, that they were "susceptible to such actions by their very sex".[402] This female evil, constructed and maintained by male anxieties, was the ultimate endpoint of the transgressive feminine, the ultimate manifestation of the inverse gender hierarchy. This is especially true for Anglitora because of the manner of murder: most women did not murder violently, but rather acted according to gendered expectations, for example

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[400] Ibid.
[401] Kane p. 224.
[402] Kesselring p. 245.

poisoning their victims, which was easier to control and raised less suspicion.[403] Some

women, though, felt "the need to be violent transcended gender and its associated

stereotypes".[404] These violent women were thought to murder more with their bare hands,

and it is into this stereotype that Anglitora's murder of Tom directly plays.[405] Anglitora

shoves jewels down her husband's throat; the crime is both hyper-violent and personal. In

using the symbol of her lust, then—the jewels representing her betrayal of Tom's loyalty—

Anglitora becomes the ultimate feminine evil.

Indeed, that Anglitora can be, in part two of Johnson's romance, neatly placed into

every category of feminine evil, and especially Arthurian female evil is notable considering

her characterisation in part one, where she can be less easily classified and contained

within the archetypes of the Arthurian canon. She sneaks away from her chamber to spy

on Lancelot and Tom as they talk about Tom's love for her, and comes to his chamber

"attired in a white Froke without sléeues" to wash from him the dragon's blood.[406] Though

compared to her later descriptions this attention to her dress is short, the narrative notes

both her frock's whiteness—associated with purity—and its lack of sleeves, which

suggests a subtle sexuality. Her purity is reiterated, however, when upon an offer that they

sleep together that night, she requests that "you will saue mine Ho|nour, lest I bee made a

scandall to my Fathers glory".[407] Tom then concedes to the requests for nobility, but when

Prester John refuses her hand in marriage to him, she leaves with him of her own accord.

Her later shift to villainy, then, is marked when she realises that "she had forsaken Father,

Mother, Friends, Acquaintance, and Countrey, all for the loue of a Bastard, bred in the

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[403] Kilday p. 147.
[404] Kilday p. 148.
[405] Kesselring p. 250.
[406] Johnson p. 50.
[407] Ibid.

wombe of a shameless Strumpet".[408] This betrayal of Tom, then, demonstrates Anglitora's apparent disregard for the gender hierarchy that would keep her loyal to her husband in contrast to her earlier appearance of fidelity. Until part two, Anglitora's self-assuredness and agency defines her as a heroic character. Upon learning of Tom's parentage, these same traits have become negative and transgressive, and she forsakes the very norms to which she was so violently attached. With Anglitora, Johnson consequently rewrites a character strong in her own agency into one who conforms to male definitions of female transgressive identity wherein these traits are unacceptable and threatening to the hierarchy. As these newfound traits can be mapped almost exactly onto the early modern contemporary's expectations of evil womanhood, especially acknowledging the popularity of works surrounding violent women, the changes between the two Anglitoras becomes not a problem of inconsistent writing, but of shifting priorities. The focus on the shocking and grotesque character as compared to the more demure yet still assertive one of the first part suggests an acknowledgement of those elements to which audiences would find themselves attracted. In comparing the two Anglitoras alone, one can therefore infer a literary attraction to the stereotype, the archetype of female "other" that informed the creation of Johnson's sequel.

Of course, the definition of transgressive women according to male ideas of female sexuality and evil is not unique to Johnson within the Arthurian canon, and it is how Anglitora's character aligns to these previous traditions of Arthurian female transgression that the changes between the two parts becomes notable. Malory's most prevalent female villain, Arthur's sister Morgan le Fay, is described as getting Accolon to agree to her plans "by her false crafts" and "false lusts" (IV.xi.102). She is, like Anglitora, associated with luxury and jewellery, as she sends a damsel to court with "the richest mantle that ever was

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[408] Johnson p. 64.

seen in that court, for it was set as full of precious stones as one might stand by another, and there were the richest stones that ever the king saw" (IV.xv.108). The most prominent virtuous woman, by contrast, Guenever, is described as "the most valiant and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find" (III.i.68), and that at the "first sight of Guenever" Arthur "ever after loved her" (I.xviii.28). Not very many characters in Malory's text are given much description, the characterisation created largely from actions, but these two brief descriptors attached to the two most prominent women in Malory's work—"false lusts" for Morgan and "valiant and fair" for Guenever—evoke the same imagery for the definitions of women offered by male patriarchal ideologies. Malory repeatedly uses two primary images of women: "The damsel in distress and the enchantress" throughout his work, and he makes sure to "other"—to separate from the realm of morality and humanity—the ones he labels enchantress.[409] "Powerful women tend to be other and threatening" in Malory's narrative, very much like Morgan is portrayed, and Guenever is characterised as the damsel in distress several times throughout the romance.[410] Notably, however these two extremes of female characterisation cannot be easily matched to the two images of Anglitora between parts one and two of Johnson's work: like Guenever, Anglitora is described originally as "fair"; Anglitora's assuredness in her own desires and willingness to forsake her family and to even suggest sexuality in her interactions with Tom impede her from existing within the archetype of the damsel in distress. While Guenever's adulterous love for Lancelot leads to the downfall of Camelot and she, too, is allowed a subtle sexuality, Guenever still acts as a damsel in distress in ways part one's Anglitora does not; Anglitora cannot be easily described as a Guenever archetype. In the second part, however, the same actions which once made Anglitora self-assured define her as

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[409] Saunders p. 263.
[410] Ibid.

lascivious, and is portrayed as giving in to similar "false lusts" to Morgan, This dynamic between the two definitions of womanhood—the first part's refusal and the sequel's fastidiousness in defining Anglitora within it—demonstrates the ways in which Johnson conforms his descriptions of powerful women to those male anxieties characteristic of Arthurian literature that define feminine evil. What traits once made Anglitora hard to define has transformed her by the second part into a Morgan archetype. The male-defined femininity and female evil has made its mark on the second part of Johnson's work, consequently redefining Johnson's female characters according to this ideology of female definition. In defining Anglitora the way Johnson does in the second part, he creates a character dynamic that adheres far more closely to the Arthurian tradition that would be more recognisable to a popular audience. Johnson was not merely writing a follow up to his own work but an Arthurian story, and the shifts in character dynamics, especially as seen in the portrayal of Anglitora, can be seen as a return to the Arthurian point of interest in the romance. That these shifts play into the archetypes of the Arthurian canon is important to note as Johnson continues to write within a canon of work, adapting in his sequel not only his own story but building upon those of several authors which came before him.

In summary, as the first part of the prose moves to the second, the changes between the female characters, and the male characters by association, Johnson's prose romance demonstrates the tensions between genre and tone within Arthurian literature and how these elements may affect consideration of gender. While no causal relationship can be confirmed—this chapter makes no claim to knowing Johnson's specific intent— acknowledging the importance of tradition and adaptation is essential to the understanding of a work. Johnson's second part exposes the tensions inherent in writing an original story whilst working within the confines of an established tradition. It is both a direct sequel to a

194

work by Johnson and a work in the Arthurian tradition, giving the story two separate story-worlds within which to work and stay consistent. That the female characters are given consistent focus, and that these characters are the elements which are changed and re-examined by later works and authorial priorities is what makes *Tom a Lincoln* in particular the Arthurian text of most interesting discussion in terms of adaptation. As his work shifts to become more in line with the tradition from which it was adapted, the relationship between the text and its sequel thus poses questions of text and continuation, asking instead what can be considered an "original" text to be adapted when working within such a complicated tradition.

Creating heroic men with powerful women in *Tom a Lincoln* part two

If the shift between Johnson's focus on violent men to violent women from his first text to his sequel transforms Tom's story to one that aligns itself more with Arthurian tradition, as the first part has argued, then taking the Arthurian canon as a whole, with *Tom a Lincoln* included, points not to the second part as being a sudden shift in focus or priorities but to the first as being an outlier within the canon. As Johnson writes his texts within this well-established tradition, taking a step back and examining the canon as a whole is vital to the understanding of Johnson's text's place within it. When looking at *Tom a Lincoln* from this angle then, this section will argue that the odd text out is not the sequel's seemingly violent deviation from the source, but the original text's diversion from Arthurian tradition. The first part presents itself as and appears to be an Arthurian text, but it is not interested in that which makes a text feel Arthurian. The sequel, on the other hand, makes arguments that are more familiarly Arthurian, arguments that are staged, broadly speaking, on gendered ground. The tensions between the definitions of masculinity presented by the two parts, specifically moderation in violence and courtly love as both a

positive and negative force, as represented through the second part of the romance, has the effect of bringing Johnson's text back into more familiar Arthurian territory and highlighting the first text as an outlier within the Arthurian tradition. Of course, the existence of the sequel alone attests to the popularity of Johnson's original prose—only reestablished by the existence of the dramatic adaptation discussed in the next section; the first surviving edition of the work, from 1632, is the sixth.[411] In their collection, which discusses the development of the sequel, Paul Budra and Betty Schellenberg assert the audience's desire for the sequel as one to "re-experience in some way a memorable story", so to explore this sequel is to explore what constituted an early modern idea of literary "charisma".[412] The most notable shift from the first to second part of the romance is the ways in which male characters are defined, presenting female villains as an evil against which masculinity could be defined. As masculinity is by definition unstable, it must be constantly and consistently reasserted through conquest, and while martial masculinity did allow men to define themselves against each other, women remained a reliable adversary against which they could renew their sense of manhood. This manifests in Arthurian literature primarily as powerful, transgressive women who must be killed or otherwise defeated for the sake of the patriarchy. This trope is an especially popular one in Arthurian tradition; nearly every major story features male characters asserting their manhood over such powerful women, and it is this tradition which this section will explore in order to examine how Johnson's prose is reworked in rewritings. This section will first establish the tradition of feminine violence as a symbolic force in the traditional Arthurian canon. Following this, I will present the questions of violence and moderation raised within Johnson's second part, and how it answers these questions, before then examining how

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[411] Davis p. 265.
[412] Budra and Schellenberg p. 5.

Arthurian literature traditionally navigates these questions without offering definitive answers. Finally, I will explore how the second part of the prose re-stages these questions in a manner more aligned with Arthurian literature, and examine how this raises new questions about what constitutes an original story within a well-established literary tradition.

Before I can explore how *Tom a Lincoln* uses gender relationships to pose and subsequently answer questions presented within Arthurian literature, it is important to first establish how these relationships work within the traditional Arthurian canon as a symbolic force for masculine definition. For example, in Book V of Spenser's poem *the Faerie Queene*, Artegall's masculinity is called into question as he is symbolically castrated upon meeting and falling prey to Radigund. Upon his defeat he is "disarmed quite" (V.v.20.3) and dressed "In womans weedes, that is to manhood shame" (V.v.20.7). Radigund's apparent motivation is simply to shame the manhood of the knights she defeats. Though it is enough that she is a woman in power, an escaped knight claims her motivation as appropriately feminine:

The cause, they say of this her curell hate,
  Is for the sake of Bellodant the bold,
  To whome she bore most feruent loue of late,
  And wooed him by all the waies she could:
  But when she saw at last, that he ne would
  For ought or nought be Wonne vnto her will,
  She turn'd her loue to hatred manifold,
  And for his sake vow'd to doe all the ill
Which she could doe to Knights, which now she doth fulfill.
(V.iv.30.1-9)

Radigund does not claim lust or sexuality as her primary sin. Instead, she is the ultimate usurpation of patriarchal authority, making knights dress as women and watching them "Spinning and carding all in comely rue" (V.v.22.4). When she "broke his sword, for feare of further harmes" (V.v.21.8), she removes from him the ultimate symbol of his manhood. The sword has long been linked to male honour—through associations of its phallic shape

and ability to penetrate flesh—and to remove it, and especially to break it, is to emasculate Artegall in the most symbolic way.[413] This castration represents the fear of male definition by powerful women and the threat posed to masculinity by these transgressions. Despite her motivation ultimately to shame the knights she captures, Radigund's motivation is distinctly feminine, the jealous rage of a scorned lover. This places Radigund not in the male sphere of violence, as her initial appearance as an "Amazon" would suggest, but instead in a specifically feminine sphere of transgression. The narrative makes no mistake about the gendered nature of her crimes, which becomes important as it only further emasculates the knights she defeats. This is further demonstrated by her making the knights work in women's clothes in traditionally feminine roles; it places the men in the female domestic space, the ultimate inversion of the patriarchal structures of authority.[414] The most egregious point of emasculation, however, is what defines Artegall in relation to this powerful woman: he "to her yielded of his owne accord" (V.v.17.2). In this sense, Artegall is ultimately responsible for his own defeat.[415] It is this deference to the power of a woman over whom he is supposed to have superiority that is emasculating, that is, yielding to a woman's martial might rather than dedicating his service to the glory of a woman in the vein of courtly romance. In particular, because her face "Bewrayd the signes of feature excellent" (V.v.12.7) Artegall cannot participate in combat, and he allows the knightly manhood to be overcome by the beauty of the feminine. This beauty, of course, is ultimately duplicitous; Radigund has quickly "gan renew her former cruelnesse" (V.v.14.4), but he still submits to her willingly. The submission of the male to the female is the symbolic castration made visual with the breaking of his sword. Artegall, then, becomes

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[413] Timbers p. 107.
[414] Carroll p. 229.
[415] Carroll p. 182.

defined as less of a man because of his deference to the beauty and vindictiveness of a woman.

Likewise, Malory's romance is especially notable for defining men based on their relationships with powerful women. Lancelot, in particular, has been noted by several scholars to be defined almost entirely by women—his relationships with Guenever, the Lady of the Lake, Elaine, and Morgan, among others, even as Malory attempts to make him a paragon of virtue.[416] He spends much of his time in the romance at the mercy of women who plot against him, giving him repeated opportunities to define himself against them. Early in his quests, he encounters an enchantress, Hellawes, who demands Lancelot "kiss me but once" or else die, so that she may "have thy body dead" if she cannot have it alive—"I would have balmed it and served it, so have kept it in my life daiys, and daily I should have clipped thee, and kissed thee, in despite of Queen Guenever" (VI.xv.174). His relationship with Elaine is almost entirely orchestrated by women. She has been placed into the boiling bath from which Lancelot saves her by Morgan and the Queen of Northgalis, because "she was called the fairest lady of that country" (XI.i.523), giving these women the vindictiveness of traditionally evil women as their primary motivation, once again making the fight against them a matter of gender. Later, Elaine approaches an enchantress, Dame Brisen, who claims to be able to "make him to lie with your daughter, and that he shall not wit but that he lieth with Queen Guenever" (XI.ii.524). It is notably Elaine who initiates the sexual relationship, and Lancelot's son is begotten of the whims of women. Traditionally vindictive women place Lancelot in a position to rescue her; the enchantress manipulates Lancelot's perceptions to get him to sleep with her against his own judgement; he is manipulated into a sexual encounter by a woman he has just

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[416] See Batt 2002 p. 84 and Saunders p. 247. See also Batt 1997 and Saunders for in depth discussions of Lancelot's relationships with women throughout Malory's romance.

rescued, and Hellawes pretends to be a damsel in distress to lure him into his own tomb.[417] These women, with either literal power or the power to manipulate, play into the stereotypes of Malory's other women in order to gain sexual favours from Lancelot. Hellawes and Elaine use their positions as the damsel in distress archetype explicitly to gain sexual favours from the man who saved them, while the enchantress archetype in Hellawes, Morgan, the Queen of Northgalis and Dame Brisen function to wickedly manipulate Lancelot in their assistance of the damsels. These women, in particular Hellawes and Elaine, are aware of the characteristics by which women are defined, and use them in their schemes against Lancelot. When Hellawes's damsel plot fails, she resorts to becoming the enchantress. While Elaine's motivations are seemingly more noble than the other women's, she is unafraid to manipulate and trick Lancelot into sex. While Morgan and the Queen of Northgalis have only a passing role in Lancelot's deception, that their motivations are stereotypically "female" in their jealousy and vindictiveness simply draws further attention to the particularly feminine nature of Lancelot's plots. In his early adventures, Lancelot's dangers are very often caused by women. Both Morgan and the Queen of Northgalis appear to attempt to enchant Lancelot for their sexual pleasure in his earlier victimisation. Upon finding him under a tree, Morgan, the Queen of Northgalis, and two others demand that Lancelot "choose one of us which thou wilt have to thy paramour, for thou mayest not choose or else in this prison to die" (VI.iii.155). His rescue from this prison is similarly upon the whim of a damsel begging for help for her father. This episode of Lancelot's endangerment and rescue are entirely at the mercy of women. Lancelot, throughout Malory's romance, is consistently the subject of female desire and attempts at possession.[418] Many of his plots revolve around the rescue

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[417] Ibid.
[418] Saunders p. 248.

of women, and it is only upon his escape from those powerful women who mean to possess him that he is able to reassert his manly heroism. Whilst for others, victimisation at the hands of powerful women would be an emasculating force, for Lancelot, it is an opportunity to prove his might. Catherine Batt notes that Lancelot, while consistently presented as a pinnacle of virtue, sins in his love for Guenever; his victories over other powerful women are constant and necessary to assert his heroism despite his own transgressions.[419] It is a conflict of self control in the face of lust: Lancelot's role as a hero, therefore, is necessarily defined by his victories over those women who see him as an erotic object; he must prove his virtue in his defeat of these powerful women, placing his own masculine identity at the mercy of women who sexualise and objectify him.

On the other hand, in Johnson's original prose romance, Tom a Lincoln, in his identity as the Red Rose Knight, demonstrates the masculine ideal as defined by martial exploits with and against other men. Apart from Tom's mother, Angelica, there are notably very few female characters in the early chapters of part one. Tom is defined, instead, by his being drawn to martial exploits and knightly pursuits, even as he is raised a shepherd: "from his Cra∣dle and infancie, it séemed he was vowed to *Mars,* and martiall exploits".[420] His early successes in battle are what finally defines Tom beyond his actions before coming to court, as the shepherd playing the knight. It is through these actions that Tom gains the honour he had, as discussed below, previously neglected in his pursuit for martial victories. In medieval and early modern England, "to be masculine implied the ability to become violent", and in fact the entire structure of the early modern patriarchal hierarchy revolved around the practice whether officially or unofficially, of violence.[421] For a man of noble blood, as Tom is, his "yearning for martial exploits" is what betrays his true

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[419] Batt 1997 p. 92.
[420] Johnson p. 12.
[421] See Forsyth p. 68 and Feather and Thomas p. 4.

nobility; his interest in violence is said to come not from his own masculinity but from his noble blood, his relationship to Arthur.[422] Noble blood did not matter, however, without the violent martial deeds to back it up.[423] When Tom comes to Arthur's attention and is made a knight of Arthur's court, he is almost immediately successful as the "chiefe Generall ouer the Armie mustered for Portingale" following the murder of one of Arthur's ambassadors.[424] The "Portingale Court" is described as partaking in "inhumane violence, with the death of many thousand guilt|less soules", placing Arthur, and by extension Tom, in direct contrast to the men of this court. These men have no names or identities except as the evil Tom must defeat, as a knight that "all martiall Captaines may learne to imitate".[425] In his performance as general of Arthur's army in Portugal, Tom, in a version of the bel inconnu trope, proves not only his nobility as Arthur's (still secret) son, but also as a true knight and man. Similarly, his first major battle away from Arthur's court is against a dragon which threatens the court of Prester John, which, even if "all the Knights in the world were assembled together", the force would be insufficient to defeat it.[426] While the dragon itself is not necessarily a masculine force to be defeated, being able to so do when no other champion ever could proves not only his masculinity—and by extension his worthiness for Anglitora—but his exceptional masculinity and honour against those who had tried and failed in the past. The Portuguese court, their "inhumane violence", is placed in direct opposition to Tom and Arthur's just violence; their attack is justified based on the violence already shown them.

Of course, Tom's definition of character through his relationships with other men is part of a longstanding tradition within Arthurian literature in placing male honour at the

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[422] Davis p. 266.
[423] McVitty p. 462.
[424] Johnson p. 17.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Johnson p. 46.

forefront of male characterisation, but there are distinct differences between the noble,

warlike violence of Johnson's first part and the chivalric violence of Arthurian literature.

Arthur was the pinnacle of what English men believed they should be, and stories

surrounding his court play heavily into the notion of masculinity as defined by martial

contact with other men[427]. On the battlefield, men can prove themselves not only to other

men but to themselves, and can showcase their masculine strength and prowess.[428]

Through its focus on masculinity and battle, as well as the push and pull of legitimate and

illegitimate violence, Arthurian literature dramatises the origins and function of chivalry in

action—to provide an outlet for violence within the nobility in the absence of war, and to

romanticise its function within the medieval society.[429] This is given great emphasis, for

example, in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, in which special emphasis is given to the knight's

oath. To this end, the battlefield becomes the primary location for the demonstrations of

manly virtues which prove themselves through martial victories. The reverse is also true;

villainous deeds are framed through the same lens of male relationships. Mordred's

kidnapping of Guinevere, for example, is not based on his lust for her; in fact, she is more

of a means to an end. Instead, it is "plainly that he would wed her which was his uncle's

wife and his father's wife" (XXI.i.782). His actions, therefore, are framed through how they

will affect other men, not Guinevere. While Guinevere's will, or lack thereof, to marry

Mordred does become an issue for Mordred's plans, it is not on his mind when he decides

to marry her. Instead, his intent is explicitly the betrayal of Arthur.[430] In summary, this

episode within Malory's text provides an example of the Arthurian tradition's tendency to

define men in relation to other men, one which places violence at its centre.

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[427] Shagan p. 187.
[428] Cleland p. 130.
[429] For an extended explanation of the role of chivalry in medieval legitimate violence, see Kaeuper pp. 98-107.
[430] Saunders p. 250.

To idolise a violent version of manhood, however, is to run into the problems of becoming too violent, and to abuse the power associated with martial strength, and it is these questions of moderation with which Arthurian literature commonly engages. "Martial manhood must be tempered…lest the hero become *too* manly"; excessive violence makes the men no better than those he fights.[431] Thomas Hughes's *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is notable for explicitly staging this debate in dialogue between two characters.[432] The play pits the compassionate Arthur against the war-mongering Mordred. Arthur, the most noble character in English legend, begins to question his ways of war and instead becomes too soft-hearted. Arthur has returned to Britain after a long and fruitful campaign, where "Throughout the world my conquest was their spoil" (iii.1.229). Upon looking back at his legacy—bringing Britons to battle only for them to return to face a battle at home, Arthur wonders, "Must they still end their lives amongst the blades? | Rests there no other fate, whilst Arthur reigns?" (iii.1.238-239), and insists "Compassion is as fit for kings as wrath" (iii.1.85). It is instead his advisors who insist that he return to war to free Britain from Mordred. On the other hand, Mordred and his advisor, Conan, spend much of the second act of the play debating the proper way to rule: fear or compassion, with Mordred insisting that "A kingdom's kept by fear" despite Conan's advice that they are "lost by hate" (ii.2.111). For Mordred, "My sword shall force assent" (ii.2.124), and "Men be compell'd as well to praise as bear, | And subjects' wills enforc'd against their wills" (ii.2.163-164). Importantly, in Modred's mind, he is the one saving Britain from further war. In his statement of intent to go to war to Conan, he claims "If Mordred scape, this realm shall want no wars" (i.4.398). Similarly, when Mordred is confronted by his brother, Gawin,

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[431] Cleland p. 133.

[432] All references to this text will be drawn from Thomas Hughes, 'The Misfortunes of Arthur', in Certaine Devises and Shewes Presented to Her Majestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne at Her Highnesse Court in Greenewich, 1587 <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/hughes-misfortunes-of-arthur> [accessed 22 January 2020].

about his unnecessary war, he is reminded of Arthur's successes: "Remember Arthur's strength, his conquests late" (ii.3.242), but Mordred only counters, "who hath oft'ner waged wars than he?" (ii.3.112). Mordred's justification for his own violence points to Arthur's conquests as "haughty" (ii.3.248). Mordred describes Arthur with pridefulness which put Mordred in charge so he could continue to go to war, and in one of the most profound lines of the play, whether he believes his claims or whether he is attempting to justify his own actions, Mordred denies that Arthur's battles are heroic, claiming "he'll purchase peace with wars" (ii.3.256). While Mordred acknowledges that his version of kingship is a violent one, free from the compassion to which Arthur lays claim, both he and Arthur question the efficacy of war as a meaningful indicator of one's leadership abilities. It was Arthur's leaving for war that led Guenevera to enter into her adulterous affair with Mordred, and following his mortal wound, Arthur himself laments "what my rage hath wroght…My meanless moods have made the fates thus fell, | And too much anger wrought in me too much" (v.1.25-28). In Arthur's own mind, it is his inability to control his passions, his anger, which leads to his own destruction; while he was once emotionless in battle, in facing his son, he has succumbed to his own wrath.[433] Christina León Alfar has noted that the manly need for competition with other men creates a system of "bloody competition for preferment and power".[434] In Gawin's words, "War seemeth sweet to such as have not tried" (ii.3.312), and it is Mordred's naive ambition which ignites this anger in Arthur. Despite the seemingly strict binary in the framing of Mordred's fault within the play, Mordred's questions regarding the efficacy of war, confirmed by Arthur's own hesitation, blurs these lines. Mordred may represent the hyper-masculine, hyper-violent manhood that places too much importance on violence and fear in rule, but, in an allusion to debates

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[433] Findlay p. 189.
[434] Alfar p. 35.

over what constitutes a just war, he acknowledges that Arthur's constant insistence on continued conquest not only has alienated his wife and the Britons he had left behind, but is also hypocritical: he claims to pursue peace but does so through violence and death. Arthur may be the noble conqueror who has brought pride to Britain's legacy and, as mentioned above, acted as the ideal of a king and as a man, but even he is unable to consistently regulate his emotions efficiently enough to save his own life. Most importantly, however, he also acknowledges that he is leaving a questionable legacy as a king who leads his subjects from war to war. Even through this acknowledgement, however, he remains dedicated to his violent reputation, requesting to be buried with no rites and no large tomb, "so that in every coast | I still be fear'd" (v.1.174-175). Hughes's depiction of these two men may appear to present the conflict between overly passionate manhood and hyper-violent manhood, but he also exposes the tensions and nuances inherent in these definitions, and interrogates those motivations and thoughts, undermining and collapsing the apparent binaries the characters themselves seek to erect. In this vein, Hughes's play presents in the most exhaustive fashion the difficulties in definitions of masculinities as defined against other men. Mordred's violence is fearsome and cruel compared to Arthur's but his goal is simply to put an end to Britain's legacy of conquest; Arthur's noble warmongering may have made him a force to be reckoned with, but even he questions the legitimacy of his violence and succumbs to the very passions which martial masculinity hopes to keep at bay. These conflicts demonstrate the tensions inherent in homosocial masculine self-identification, and the problems in placing oneself within the binary of good-evil and strong-weak in relation to other men. As Hughes demonstrates the intricacies of homosocial self-definition, Johnson, too, questions the extremes of martial manhood in the early chapters, and the second part of his prose will soon encounter the same tensions but approach them very differently.

In its strong focus on martial exploits as a defining feature of manhood, Johnson poses the same questions as other texts within the Arthurian canon but, unlike those texts, chooses to answer them. While Tom does feel called to violent acts, without a legitimate outlet for these traits, he and the men who follow him "liued long time vpon the robberies and spoyles of the passengers".[435] His adoptive father begs him to stop, but Tom responds that he cannot be "reclaimed from this honorable kind of life (I count it honourable, because it taketh of manhood)".[436] The wording here is significant; despite the crimes Tom commits and the actions that kill several of his men's parents, including his own father, the narrator still sees his life as one of manhood and honour. This outlook shows the limits of a manhood defined by martial exploits, answering the question posed in works like *Misfortunes* and settling on what is and is not to be considered legitimate violence. In the narrator's and in Tom's mind, all martial acts are honourable, even those which hurt innocent people. As mentioned above, Johnson will later explore whether violence is justified even in legitimate circumstances with the defence against the Portuguese army, but in this early chapter Johnson takes these ideas to their logical extreme. That which should be honourable is criminal, and as a result the story is left with a criminal protagonist who believes himself honourable. As the romance will come to the conclusion that Tom's inherited masculinity only needed a legitimate outlet to be tamed, it sets itself against works like Hughes' which refuse to offer legitimate answers to these questions. Arthurian literature is based on the tensions of moderation and chivalry, and in providing an answer to those questions Johnson's first part destabilises the foundation upon which the tradition is built. In Johnson's text, the Portuguese men become simply a faceless demonic horde through which Tom can prove his own manhood. The dragon is

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[435] Johnson p. 13.
[436] Johnson p. 14.

purely monstrous; it does not need any qualifiers or justified revenge to necessitate its defeat. In asserting his manhood by providing legitimate avenues for Tom's violence, Johnson's first part sets itself apart from the Arthurian canon as a whole, becoming an outlier made all the more notable by the return to form which characterises its sequel.

In a direct contradiction to the answers offered by the romance's first part, Johnson's sequel undermines Tom's legitimacy as a warrior through its re-characterisation of its female characters as representative of the aforementioned Arthurian tradition of feminine evil. As a woman like Anglitora redefines herself as a villain, she leans heavily into the archetype of the lustful woman who murders her husband for the sake of her adulterous desires. If these new desires define Anglitora, the implication is, then, that Tom, her husband, has lost the ability to control her. Indeed, with his murder at her hands and subsequent burial "in a Dunghill without the Gate, not shedding so much as one teare for his death", Tom has become not only dead but effectively emasculated, weakened by inability to regulate the behaviour of his wife, as represented by her adulterous lust.[437] Had he died amongst "renowned Souldiers: then thy death béene more honorable", but he instead died at the hands of a woman.[438] Anglitora's sexuality and lust, then, become symbolic of her descent into evil, of the "filthinesse of shame" as she lives "in a lustfull stewes".[439] Tom, however, as the male representative of the patriarchal structure of Arthur's lineage, must not remain the victim of women's transgressions. Instead, he appears as a fearful ghost to his son, the Blacke Knight, announcing himself as the "Ghost of thy murthered father" and asks him to "reuenge my death vpon thy adulte|rous Mother".[440] Until this point, the Blacke Knight had been living as a "Wilde-man", and it is

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[437] Johnson p. 82.
[438] Johnson p. 85.
[439] Johnson p. 83.
[440] Ibid.

only after he is able to "sacrifice thy blood vnto the Soule of my murthered father" is he able to leave behind the life of a wild man and become a knight errant, alongside his half-brother, as his father had done.[441] His defeat of his murderous mother is what brings him back to sanity. The Blacke Knight, then, mentioned only a few times prior and who disappears for much of the second part to live in the wilderness, defines himself as a character, as a knight, and as Tom's son when he kills Anglitora. In this sense, as well, he is able to redefine the legacy of his father, whom he avenges and whose body he rescues from its "Dunghill" resting place. As Anglitora removed Tom's masculinity in her murder of him, the Blacke Knight both restores it and claims it for himself as he proves himself stronger than the female evil before him. He has asserted not just his masculinity but his superiority over those women who infringe upon the male dominated space, and in the process, he is able to rescue both his sanity and his father's legacy. The story of the Blacke Knight and Tom's death redefine Johnson's men in a strictly gendered fashion against powerful women, joining with a longstanding Arthurian tradition of the same. It is when these two definitions of manhood: the first part's exploration of moderation and the second's return to tradition that the study of the two parts of Johnson's text becomes useful. To compare the two presentations of manhood, then, is to explore through the lens of these gender differences what constitutes an original and sequential text, asking what happens when a text and its sequel, so radically different when compared to one another, is instead measured against the wider tradition in which it sits. When analysing the tradition as a whole, with the inclusion of both parts of Johnson's story, *Tom a Lincoln* undermines the concept of an "original" text, or rather what can be considered an inventive adaptation, when drawing from a longstanding literary tradition, destabilising the more modern understanding of pretext and sequel in an Arthurian context.

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[441] See Johnson pp. 82 and 86.

Tom a Lincoln on Fairy Island: a question of adaptation

While Johnson's prose romance and its sequel provide a case study into the priorities of early modern sequel writing through the lens of gender, the similarities between the second part and the dramatic adaptation of the first may offer insight into those parts of Johnson's first text that may have demonstrated the "charisma" that invited further engagement.[442] Adapting only the first part of Johnson's prose, there has been speculation that this 1611 play may have been written by Heywood, and perhaps for an Inns of Court audience, and it forms perhaps the most illustrative example of how the characterisation of heroic men is defined by their dominion over powerful women.[443] The primary change from Johnson's text is in the play's portrayal of the female characters, especially Cælia, the queen of Fairy Land. That these changes can be mapped almost exactly onto those between Johnson's first and second parts of his prose suggests that similar elements of the first part were considered interesting enough upon which to be expanded, demonstrating, in Hutcheon's words, how the adaptation "permits us to think about how adaptations allow people to tell, show, or interact with" the original text.[444] The effect of these similar changes are that these adaptive texts become ones within the Arthurian canon which engage with these gendered issues in a direct way, in a manner that is both consistent with other Arthurian texts but which also which reframe Johnson's original martial text in terms of gender and character. These new elements function to drag the first part, the outlier, as argued above, back into the Arthurian mainstream tradition and allow us to track the Arthurian tradition in a manner which shows that this misogyny, in terms of its treatment of female characters, is required for a text to feel familiarly Arthurian.

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[442] Budra and Schellenberg p. 5.
[443] See Davis p. 265 for a discussion of the play's authorship.
[444] Hutcheon p. 22.

While the first part features Arthurian elements, the text does not feel recognisably

Arthurian until the play reintroduces these misogynistic aspects. This section will, much

like the first, examine in case study one female character—in this case the fairy queen

Cælia, from the original prose to the adaptation, to argue how these shifts reestablish

Johnson's first part within the Arthurian canon as one which, one again questions the

concept of inventiveness when working within an established tradition.

Before analysis of the play can begin, it is important to note that while this section

does focus primarily on the shifts in gender relationships, there are several changes from

Johnson's work which can be attributed to differences in genre conventions. When

translating a work between two forms of media, different conventions will be emphasised

by the adapter.[445] In particular, visual media has "indexical and iconic signs–that is,

precise people, places, and things–whereas literature uses symbolic and conventional

signs".[446] Unfortunately for the purposes of the examination of the adaptation of Johnson's

work, what was meant as a visual story is now only extant in written form, so many of

these elements and conventions are not obvious in the form in which it currently exists.

This being said, even the play text illuminates some of the distinctly dramatic elements

which were added as the form moved from prose to play. Most obviously, the addition of

the character of Rusticano, a clown figure, adds an element of dramatic comic relief

reminiscent of Rowley's Clown or Shakespeare's Falstaff to the events of Johnson's

text.[447] He plays a particularly large role in the play, which "shows decisive similarities with

the traditional Court Fool and the Vices of the medieval mystery plays and mummings"

that were common at the Inns of Court.[448] Additionally, a dramatic chorus, represented by

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[445] Hutcheon p. 35.
[446] Hutcheon p. 43.
[447] For a discussion of Rusticano's role in the play, see Proudfoot p. xxi.
[448] Michelsson pp. 250-251.

Time, as well as the added suicide of Prester John and his wife in a manner which harkens back to *King Lear* demonstrate further its dramatic elements.[449] While Johnson's original romance is episodic and, as discussed above, focused primarily on Tom's martial exploits and victories, scholars have identified the play as a parody of chivalric romance, with the comedic and melodramatic elements added to further the goal of poking fun at the genre.[450] Notably, as well, several legal jokes, as well as the legal vocabulary utilised in the epilogue in particular, hints at the play's potential original purpose as a Christmas Revel at Gray's Inn.[451] Each of these elements shows a marked change from Johnson's text, and each contribute to what Michelsson describes as a "radically" different tone, but that these changes are distinctly dramatic in nature only further emphasises those changes that cannot be explained by shifts in tone or form.[452] In particular, the play's female characters are now represented in ways which differ drastically from the source text. It should be noted that scholars have argued for the playwright's apparent knowledge of the sequel and its own revision of the characters, but as the influence of this knowledge on the composition of the play and its characters cannot be known, it is important to examine the effects of these changes on the canon, and on the interpretation of Johnson's first text, whilst leaving aside knowledge of the sequel.[453] This all said, the parallels between the characters of Johnson's sequel and the play when compared to their presentation in part one reiterates those questions of originality posed by the second part, as the play once again places itself within the more familiar context of Arthurian female representation.

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[449] See Proudfoot pp. xxi-xxiii.
[450] See Proudfoot p. xxiii, Findlay pp.191-192, and particularly Michelsoon pp. 244-286, who dedicates an entire chapter to the argument of the play's parodic intent.
[451] Proudfoot pp. x-xi.
[452] Michelsson p. 249.
[453] See Findlay pp. 191-192 and Proudfoot pp. xx-xxi.

As discussed in chapter three above, Johnson's romance, while still relegating Cælia to a traditionally submissive role following her sexual encounter with Tom, still gives her the freedom to react violently to the threats to her honour and chastity without fear of moralisation or explicit punishment. While Cælia's actions are presented as wrong in Johnson's text, her story is understandable and validated by her ultimate heroism, even if her power must still be defeated. In the anonymous play, however, Cælia is an entirely different character. This is evident almost immediately, when a male mariner who has come to the island with Tom is the one to explain the story of Fairy Island, rather than the female armoured messenger who delivers this narration in Johnson's prose. In the most striking change, the play completely shifts Cælia's motivations. Johnson explains the women's murder of their husbands as the result of the King's announcement that

hee had besieged his E|nemies in their Townes of Warre; and before one man should returne home till he came with Conquest, his Country should bee lost and made desolate, and the Women giuen ouer to the spoyle of his Enemies: Which answere, when the Ladies had receiued, they tooke it in such euill part, that they conspi|red against their King, and Husbands, and put to death all the men children that were in the Countrey; and after deter|mined, when their Husbands, Fathers, and Friends returned from the Warre, that they should the first night of their com|ming, bee slaine sléeping in their Beds, and that neuer after they should suffer man to enter into their Countrey.[454]

In this version of the story, the women are given a motivation, the refusal to be made the sexual slaves of their husbands' enemies, which the narrative itself refuses to condemn outright. It is the men's actions which explicitly prompt the violence against them. The play, however, places the complete fault on the women:

eight years togethr left the fairy land
be refute of men, now the faerian dames
longing for that wich women most desire
there nightly sport and wished dallians
sent for theyre howesebands back : whoe thus return
theyre wives an answer : bid them be content
and wee will see them at this warrs event
there wives impyient at this sterne reply
vowed that theyre howsebands at return should dy

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[454] Johnson p. 25.

213

and being come home victors, as they greed
each in theyre beds did make there howsebands bleed
(1172-1182)

The women of the island's actions are now the result of their own specifically female lust. What was once a fearful reaction to the threat of sexual violence is now violence that has been sexualised by the perpetrators. It is the avoidance of sex which motivates the prose's women, and the want of sex which motivates the play's. While the prose does acknowledge their actions as "bloudy murther", the women who committed the crime are not deemed inherently evil.[455] On the other hand, Tom, who does not offer judgement of the women's actions in the prose, laments "O irreligious acte" (1187) upon hearing of the men's deaths. Not only have the women's motivations entirely changed, but their actions are now immediately moralised. They are not given the opportunity to tell their own story. Significantly, too, it is not the threat of men's loss at war which motivates the women's violence but their victory. Giving the men the strength to defeat their enemies in battle serves to make Cælia's actions in the play even more cruel: as the prose's men have lost in the past and followed through on the threat, the prospect of sexual slavery is immediate and ever present, but with the men's victory in the play, the murders are simply vindictive revenge against the lack of sexual pleasure. The women are now defined by lust, not by the protection of their bodies and their honour; they have therefore become the ultimate female evil, usurping their husbands' power for the purpose of sex, much like Anglitora's murder of Tom in the second half of Johnson's prose.

Indeed, the play's complete re-characterisation of the women makes clear how they have been defined as the "spectre of female evil", but the change in Cælia and her fairies' characters have a profound effect on the men who repopulate her island. The play's

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[455] Johnson p. 26.

narrative is ultimately about placing men in complete control. Johnson's Cælia is taken by immediate emotion upon meeting Tom, but her request for sex and marriage is framed as a respectful conversation. She asks "let me request this one thing at your noble hands….if it shall please you to grant me loue…héere shall you rule sole King, and be the Lord of all this Countrey", and Tom's response is just as respectful: "till I haue fi|nished an Aduenture which in my heart I haue vowed, I will not linke my affection to any Lady in the world. But thinke not (Madam) that I refuse your loue through disdaine".[456] The play's Cælia, on the other hand, is helpless in her love for him: "I cannot cast mine eies from off his sigh,t | they yeeld me such vnspeakable delights" (1286-1287). While Cælia's prose version does feel a similar pull to the knight, their conversation places them on even footing. The play's version places Tom in complete control. She is weakened by her love for him; this is not his seduction of her or her of him, this is about him symbolically capturing her as she is left helpless by his beauty. Her suggestion to Tom of sex is not a request in this version, but an offering, "our virgin treasure open to yow" (1409), because "our maiden heads p*er*plex us sore" (1417). This is framed more as a gift for the men than a request on even footing. They are offering their bodies at the feet of the men, the same bodies that in the prose from which this play was adapted were under threat from sexual violence.

Similarly, the shift in power dynamics affects Tom's standing and confidence on the island. As I have previously argued in chapter three, Cælia's decision to sleep with Tom upon his arrival on the island is what grants to him the manhood which seemed unsteady upon his arrival. It is not, however, Tom's sexuality which reasserts his manhood in the play. His mere presence is enough to reduce Cælia to weakness, an evil sexual weakness that now frames her as the sexual predator, as she claims "Torquine thy lust was great, compared to mine | by small" (1586-1587). In defining herself as the ultimate rapist of

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[456] Johnson p. 27.

classical literature, Cælia cements her transgressive nature as an overtly violent, dangerously sexual one. This woman, who was once fighting against being a victim of rape, now frames herself in terms of becoming a rapist. While Johnson's Tom must gain the "nature and courage of a man" to sleep with Cælia, the play's Tom already plays the role of man, admonishing a woman for her sexuality: "yo^u lye to open, Gard yor self belowe" (1652).[457] According to Alison Findlay, the Cælia of the play is meant to represent Tom being "overcome by lascivious desires which are part of his nature" and his abandonment of her is framed as his return to honourable martial pursuits,[458] but the dynamics of power between the two characters do more to make Tom the hero of the play. He arrives on the island already prepared for a violent confrontation with its inhabitants, "whoe denies | either weel slay them or our honowre dies" (1197-1198); unlike Johnson's Tom, he does not meet Cælia wholly at her mercy. Instead, Tom's arrival on the island, the taming of Cælia, and the repopulation of the community is framed as not a defeat against a particular powerful woman, but of female evil as a whole.

yow see what favour the faerian dames
yeilded to him & all his company
whole did abhorre all mens society
yet see Meer straungers wuld soe much p̃evayle,
there woemanish fury force & strenth[t] to quaile"
(1684-1688)

Tom's arrival on the island is ultimately another conquest on his adventure to prove himself the martial man. In conquering this island by conquering its queen, he enacts the ideology of the masculinist power system which relies on the "violent objectification of the female attendant on that system".[459] The conquest of Cælia represents the conquest of the island. Tom does not need to prove himself a man through sexuality the way Johnson's

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[457] For the referenced quote, see Johnson p. 29.
[458] Findlay p. 191.
[459] Alfar p. 112.

Tom does. Instead, his defeat of Cælia serves to reassert the martial masculinity he has claimed through his previous adventures as a knight errant. This defeat of the vicious, lustful queen is consequently the ultimate defeat of that which threatens manhood.

That Cælia's character plays this role in the drama is significant, too, considering her characterisation in the first part of the prose. The changes from original to adaption play directly into those tropes of the defeat of feminine transgression for the sake of the protection of unstable masculinity. Johnson's Tom faced emasculation when he arrived at the mercy of the women; the play's Tom faces no such dilemma. The women of the play are explicitly evil and not the nuanced, more complex characters of the prose. If the second part of the prose acted to undo the action of the first, the uneasy categorisation of the masculinity and femininity—good and evil—of its characters, the play serves the same function for the narrative of the first part. It restores the uncomfortable character of Cælia to a more easily definable place in the narrative, and through this redefinition of her character, the potentially unstable masculinity of Johnson's Tom is instead never in question but rather reasserted through sexual and martial conquests, or suggested conquests, of the island, functioning in his violent capacity much like characters such as Lancelot, discussed above. Leaving the play's Cælia helpless upon Tom's immediate arrival shows her defeat as not a battle which needs to even be fought, but one which is easily won. Tom's dominion as a martial man over the transgressive feminine merely proves the submission of the women and the superiority of the man. In these changes, the play takes Johnson's work and adds it to the more easily definable versions of masculinity, to the tradition of Arthurian literature which defines its male characters through their relationships with powerful women. The changes may be the most pronounced example of how Johnson's work can be co-opted into these unstable and anxiety-laden definitions of masculinity. Defining men's strength through the defeat of powerful women is a tradition

that has been inherent to men throughout Arthurian literature, and while some Arthurian stories, and Johnson himself in the first part, has explored the nuances in masculine characterisations, the sequel and adaptation suggest that there was some audience desire for violence and character definition between the simpler extremes of the gendered binary. Without other men against which to define themselves in many knightly adventures, Arthurian men are often shown to be defined by their interactions with women. The new presentation of Cælia adds Johnson's story, albeit edited, to this tradition, just as Johnson himself does in his re-characterisation of Anglitora in the second part.

Conclusion

The radical changes in the presentation of female characters from the first part of Johnson's romance to the second, and from the first part to the anonymous play, reveal tensions both in character definition and definitions of originality in Arthurian works. In this way, it also acts as a case study for what can be considered inventive when working with a tradition of continual adaptation. While the characters in *Tom a Lincoln* are Johnson's own, ultimately he is drawing from at this point several centuries of other works. When his own work is subject to continuation and adaptation, these issues are placed at the fore. This chapter has demonstrated these tensions as the priorities of each text shift, and has argued that to think of Johnson's text in terms of adaptation further act to expand the study of adaptation into the Arthurian tradition.

While the first part of the romance approaches female characters with more nuance and answers questions of masculinity not normally answered by Arthurian works, the sequel and dramatic adaptation shift almost entirely to a more traditionally Arthurian framework in which the masculinity of male characters are defined by the defeat of transgressive or even violent women. While Johnson is working within the Arthurian tradition, his protagonist and female characters are largely original, allowing him to set his

own rules within the world he creates, but as he continues his own work for his sequel, he redefines these rules in a way which adheres more closely to other more traditional definitions of manhood. The changes featured throughout Tom a Lincoln demonstrate how writers utilise use these definitions as they retool texts and characters for their own use. The act of adaptation in the early modern period is one which has had limited critical attention, and *Tom a Lincoln,* as well as its sequel and adaptation, provide a case study both for how texts could be adapted from a single text as well as within an established tradition, as well as raise questions of what, especially within a long-standing tradition such as Arthurian literature, constitutes an "original" text. In shifting the characterisations of Johnson's women, the second part of the prose and the play join the Arthurian tradition of navigating these tensions in masculine definition by defining the male characters in contrast to these powerful women, thereby removing those definitive answers instead resolve the anxious masculinities of male characters in line with expectations of the Arthurian tradition. In taming these transgressors, Tom and the Blacke Knight are now allowed to claim a more stable version of masculinity.

The sequel and dramatic adaptations, then, force us to examine Arthurian literature in terms of adaptation; though there is a longstanding canon in place, they are stories that have essentially been adapted and re-adapted over time. To examine Arthurian literature in terms of adaptation is to expose tensions in gender definitions and to introduce the theory of adaptation to the realm of Arthurian criticism. While this chapter acknowledges that to make any assumptions as to the intent behind choices within adaptations is outside the remit of this project, by examining Johnson's work through the lens of adaptation, one finds tensions between pretext and sequel, sequel and adaptive tradition, and the very concept of originality within a tradition. In examining Johnson's women in particular, however, this chapter consequently illuminates an important facet of early modern textual

composition, one which extends further to encompass the issues of the Arthurian canon as a whole. This project, then, has combined two traditions and demonstrated the ways in which seeing them not as two separate entities, but as a set of codes and values that intersect across historical traditions, redraw the boundaries of strict canon definitions.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that in acknowledging William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* and Richard Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* as texts drawn from two textual networks one can more fully understand those elements which craft a canon text. The Arthurian canon has been defined in scholarship through a set number of texts with very little room for redefinition, especially in terms of more popular forms of literature. This thesis, however, in integrating these two texts into the Arthurian canon, has demonstrated the limits of this long-standing definition and argued for the merits of these texts 'inclusion, particularly in their responses to gender and violence. It argues that, by including these texts in the canon, Arthurian literature in the early modern era incorporates those issues of gendered violence which pervaded early modern consciousness in ways not previously addressed by other, earlier works. Similarly, this project has used comparisons to both Arthurian and early modern texts to identify those conventions and scripts which belong to each tradition, establishing those elements of a text come from the merging of such disparate narratives. Through analyses of different types of gendered violence found within these two under-studied texts, this project has thereby argued for expanding the possibilities of the Arthurian canon definition and for the inclusion of early modern trends and conventions in the analysis of Arthurian literature as a whole.

While the mothers of illegitimate children in the early modern plays discussed in the first chapter do not suffer the same ire and consequences as their counterparts in early modern society, they act as a representation of the fears of unbridled sexuality in women and the consequences this can have for men. This demonstrates a dramatic functionality to these lone pregnant women character: in their appearances in drama, illegitimate mothers are often utilised to explore the internal diegetic narration and its functions within the play. The stories of their plights are told verbally, and in foregrounding these diegetic

narratives the plays can then explore the effects of these narratives on their societies and the men around them. While all of these mothers are given voices to tell their own stories, their voices are ultimately limited and they are forced to take actions that would remove them from the paradoxical position of their illegitimate status. That Joan's sexuality did ultimately result in a positive outcome allows her to eschew her previous role as representation of pride and sexuality and become a figure of chastity and repentance.

On the other hand, Rowley's play places Merlin's mother in a position not normally granted to the character in earlier Arthurian works. Rather than focusing solely the issue of Merlin's demonic father, she is given focus in the story, giving a voice to a traditionally voiceless, and indeed nameless, character. While this narrative focus does coincide with the trend towards portraying single pregnant women in drama, in the context of an Arthurian narrative, this focus on Merlin's mother is highly unusual. Not only do lone mothers not get much focus in other Arthurian works, but they often go almost entirely unacknowledged. In placing focus on an Arthurian lone mother, especially Merlin's mother, and in allowing her to affect the outcome of her own story, Rowley's drama offers to the Arthurian tradition a character not normally seen. Additionally, as a drama, this character is given a voice to speak directly to the audience. In a tradition which often focuses on the effects of a story told rather than the story itself, the testimony of Joan allows Rowley to add to the Arthurian tradition a direct, vocalised testimony to a significant event. In this way, Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* expands the Arthurian tradition's engagement both with lone mother characters, and allows its testimony to be addressed directly to an audience and to be given prominence not normally given to Arthurian characters, particularly women.

Similarly, though Rowley engages in witchcraft discourse, his play is not about witchcraft; the witchcraft language instead serves as a shorthand indicator as to how the

audience should feel about the play's female characters, capitalising on the contemporary establishment of witchcraft language to create his own interpretation of Arthurian women through a distinctly sixteenth century lens. Joan, while seemingly the most important character in the story of Merlin's origin, is largely a means through which Rowley can warn against encounters with the devil. Engaging with the language of witchcraft whilst portraying a world without it makes the witch language significant. Rowley utilises the language of witchcraft, particularly its associations with transgressive femininity and especially predatory female sexuality, to identify the dangers of these women to fall into corruption. Through this merging of magical character tropes, Rowley's play introduces the language of witchcraft into the Arthurian tradition in a way not antithetical to traditional representations but which introduces a linguistic convention for identifying, classifying, and sympathising with female characters. The witchcraft language becomes, then, a code for identifying the roles of the women as transgressors, either against patriarchal society or the wishes of other men. Through his engagement with the pamphlet literature which found popularity in the early modern period, Rowley's play adds a new layer to the magic of Arthurian literature. Whereas previous Arthurian portrayals of magic sat outside of this area of witch-trial interest, Rowley is able to expand the Arthurian tradition into the realm of witch pamphlets, incorporating language and tropes that might be otherwise missed without acknowledgement of the early modern views of and appetite for witch trial media.

The narrative of rape presented in the short episode of Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln* featuring Caelia is one which reveals much about what constitutes a canon text when two or more narratives merge into one text. As a narrative tradition of rape developed in early modern literature, stock concepts, tropes, and codes functioned to codify these ideas. Johnson's romance, then, even as a physical rape does not appear in the text itself, is clearly indebted to these ideas and codes. Johnson presents a narrative of sexual violence

223

which, when read in the context of this early modern rape narrative, reveals these elements as ones which largely function to stage specific cultural debates, namely about the nature of violence, vengeance, death, and sexuality. This narrative presents these debates through the voices of its victims, and as Johnson gives his women, ones who had been threatened with the sexual violence intrinsic to both the Arthurian tradition and early modern literature, a voice in their story, he puts into sharp focus the cultural role of these voices. The acknowledgements of the early modern narrative within Johnson's work in the process of both actively subverting the narrative and combining it with those of the Arthurian tradition, as well, bear a striking resemblance to the narratives of rape told later in the century, namely Margaret Cavenish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, demonstrating a consequence, however accidental, of crafting a text drawn from combined traditions. Drawing from conventions found in the Arthurian tradition, early modern literature, and even anticipating elements of other narratives which were published later, Johnson's romance does not allow itself to conform to any one tradition. When focusing, then, on the way Johnson uses the voices of his victims, one can find tensions in the definition of the early modern rape narrative, tensions which create a story not beholden to this tradition and which, as a result, challenges the construction of the definition of a canon text and blurs the boundaries between both canon and chronological distinctions.

Tom a Lincoln, too, in its portrayal of women in two extremely different lights—the nuance of Cælia in part one versus the complete reversal of the character Anglitora into the transgressive feminine murderer in part two—demonstrates the tensions in character and gender definition and how these tensions take on new meaning between adaptations of similar texts. When placed against a tradition that defines women in very archetypical ways, these tensions then pose questions of originality, adaptation, and canon formation. These shifts in the women's characterisations in Johnson's work reframes the work into

one which new views Tom's life through his relationships with violent women rather than his violent encounters in the context of war. While Arthurian literature does indeed engage in conversations surrounding martial masculinity, the first part of his romance offers answers to questions not usually answered in Arthurian literature. In analysing a work within a particular tradition, it is essential to, therefore, consider the role of adaptation in the composition of a work. Within the Arthurian tradition in particular, when there are so many previous interpretations with which to work, the act of adaptation and how writers choose to utilise specific characters becomes part of the foundation of the rewritten work. Johnson's *Tom a Lincoln*, as a text not usually considered by Arthurian criticism, makes a prime case study for this idea. As both an adaptation of the Arthurian canon and a text with a sequel and adaptation of its own, Johnson's work becomes, in condensed form, a vehicle through which we can begin to understand the issues of early modern adaptation and originality. Through the more direct engagement with the act of adaptation with his romance, the inclusion of *Tom a Lincoln* into the Arthurian canon would encourage scholarship to consider Arthurian literature in terms of adaptation, with every new text building upon an adaptation of an old one. To view Johnson's romance through this lens, then, is to shift the view of the Arthurian canon not just in terms of a literary tradition, but rather as a tradition of adapted text, thereby introducing to Arthurian criticism a framework of adaptation.

This thesis, then, in examining the issues of illegitimate motherhood, witchcraft, rape, and violent women has exposed tensions within the Arthurian canon when these texts are incorporated into the tradition. As the two literary worlds merge, representations of women emerge which appear to run counter to each individually. However, when analysing these works through the lens of the merging of textual ideas and codes, this research has demonstrated the ways these seemingly contrary portrayals of women are

borne from the collision of conventions and tropes from them both. In comparison with both Arthurian and early modern texts, this project has probed those conventions which can be attributed to both, and exposed those questions of how critics can and should define the boundaries of a literary canon. This research has consequently demonstrated the need for a reevaluation of the Arthurian canon as it currently stands, and to incorporate those cultural values and conventions of the time of composition into analysis of the texts within them. This thesis has, then, demonstrated that to consider these two texts within the canon of Arthurian literature is to expand the canon in a way that considers new forms, cultural moments, and narratives not previously considered alongside those more commonly associated texts. In short, this project has argued that incorporating these texts into the Arthurian canon expands the possibilities of what can be considered an "Arthurian" text.

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of a Ring Which the Devil Gave Him, Could Find out Any Monies That Was Hid,
and Escape Undiscover d from His Enemies; but His Covenant Being Expir d,
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the Tryal of Many Notorious Malefactors, for Murders, Fellonies, Burglary, and
Other Misdemeanours, but More Especially the Tryal of Jane Kent for Witch-
Craft. Together, with the Names of Those That Received Sentence of Death,
the Number of Those Burn d in the Hand, Transported, and Vvhip d. As
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