Essays in Medieval Studies 15
[*Page numbers of the printed text appear at the right in bold.*]

page 45

The Female Spell-caster in Middle English Romances:
Heretical Outsider or Political Insider

Barbara A. Goodman

Historically, the relationship between heresy and spell-casting is difficult to define.1 For example, H. A. Kelly points out that sorcery and heresy were not formally linked in England.2 They were regarded as separate crimes, although burning (especially after the 1401 Statute passed by Parliament) could be the punishment for both crimes. Certainly, English romances from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries do not explicitly relate sorcery and heresy.

Popular attitudes, though, often would link the two in the late Middle Ages, and this coupling could be accompanied by the issue of gender. As Kramer and Sprenger, two Jesuit inquisitors, wrote in 1486:

> since [women] are feebler both in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come more under the spell of witchcraft. For as regards intellect, or the understanding of spiritual beings, they seem of a different nature from men 3

Yet, as Malcolm Lambert explains, heresy stems not just from deviation from orthodox religious belief but also from deliberate actions against ecclesiastical authority and refusal to recant when ordered to do so.4 Exploring the links among sorcery, heresy, and gender in popular literature, such as Middle English metrical romances, can demonstrate how the individual and collective perceptions of these issues changed from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century.5 Thus three questions arise about spell-casting women in Middle English romances: have the heretical implications of these women's actions been ignored? Considering no authority intervenes to inform them that they are defying religious doctrines, can these politically powerful women even be viewed as heretics? And finally, how do the political and religious circumstances of the historical community impact these fictional women and their potentially heretical actions?

For the purposes of this paper, discussion will be limited to the female spell-casters found in metrical romances which contain imposed physical transforma-

page 46

tions and which were composed in England from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century. Shape-shifting (i.e. Voluntarily changing one's own form) and changing into an inanimate object such as a stone or tree are not included. The following romances contain imposed-changed body forms and are listed in general chronological order:

> *TIME PERIODS AND TEXTS (GENDER) SPELL-CASTER*
>
> I. Early to mid fourteenth century
>
> *Lybeaus Desconus*(M) 2 magicians
> *Cheuelere Assigne*(F) hero's grandmother
> *William of Palerne*(F) transformee's stepmother
>
> II. Late fourteenth century
>
> "The Wife of Bath's Tale" Unexplained
> "Tale of Florent"(F) transformee's stepmother
> *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*(F) hero's aunt

III. Fifteenth century

Tomas of Ersseldoune(?) diabolic implications
Weddynge of Syr Gawene and Dame Ragnelle(F) transformee's stepmother

IV. Sixteenth century

Carle off Carlile (?) accusation of necromancy
*The Turke and Gowin*Unexplained (text missing)
Clariodus(?) Fate (predicted by Wyrds)
Romans of Partenay (F) transformee's mother

Specific accusations of witchcraft and necromancy are limited. Of these twelve romances, six place the blame on female spell-casters, and only four of these accused women actually appear in the narratives. If this number seems low, it should be noted that only one romance, *Lybeaus Desconus*, specifically blames male sorcerers. The other romances, especially those written in the late Middle Ages, give either no explanation or imprecise information.

Thus the circle of female spell-casters is small and exclusive. What makes these women necromancers? The women do not declare themselves necromancers; rather they are accused by others. For example, Dame Ragnell tells Gawain that she was transformed by the actions of her step-mother:

For I was shapen by nygramancy
With my stepdame 6

In *William of Palerne* Queen Braunden's necromancy and witchcraft are explained twice, once by the narrator:

but lelliche þat ladi in 3ouþe hadde lerned miche schame,
For al þe werk of wicchecraft wel y-nou3 che cou3þe,
nede nadde 3he namore of nigramauncy to lere.
of coninge of wicche-craft wel y-nou3 3he cou3de,7

page 47

>and once by her husband:

but þan my wif wickedli on þise wise þou3t,
þat myn elder son min eritage schul haue
. . . .
with charmes & enchantmens sche chaunded my sone
In-to a wilde werwolf 8

Finally, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Sir Bertilak says of Morgan le Fay:

þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat in my hous lenges
And koyntyse of clergye, bi craftes wel lerned
Þe maystrés of Merlyn mony hatz taken--
For ho hatz dalt drwry ful dere sumtyme
With þat conable klerk, þat knowed alle your kny3tez
at hame;
Morgne þe goddes
Þerfore hit is hir name
Weldez non so hy3e hawtesse
Þat ho ne con make ful tame--
Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne hall 9

Such accusations are not unforeseen; Shulamith Shahar claims that in Europe from 1300 to 1500, "two thirds of the

persons accused of practicing witchcraft were women."[10] But the specific charge of necromancy is important in considering heresy, for, as Richard Kieckhefer explains, "Necromancy was *explicitly* demonic magic. ... The necromancer ... invoked demons or the Devil."[11]

Two women transformers, Presine in *Romans of Partenay* and Matabryne in *Cheuelere Assigne*, are not directly accused of necromancy. In *Romans of Partenay* the folio containing the account of Presine's actions is missing.[12] But we are told she is of the "otherworld," an expression which carries fiendish allusions. Moreover, with the curse Presine places on her three daughters, she is certainly a spell-caster--more than Matabryne who casts no spell. However, we are told of Matabryne: "she sette her affye in Sathanas of helle,"[13] which definitely gives her diabolic overtones.

The women in these romances are not involved in organized heterodox movements, such as the Lollards. Their behavior does not coincide with that of adherents of Lollardy, such as Agnes Grebill who was excommunicated and then burnt not so much for her position in the Lollard community as "for her stubborn, and unusual, refusal to admit and abjure her heresy."[14] Similarly, the women in these romances do not participate in heretical activities in order to support their husbands and fathers. Shannon McSheffrey states, "Most Lollard women became involved as wives or other relatives of men of the sect, suggesting that their involvement was less an individual choice than a family decision."[15] The spell-casting women in the romances do not take their actions under the auspices or insistence of their male relatives. Rather they act independently or with a few

page 48

chosen cohorts. Indeed, the women in the romances are never directly accused of heresy.

Consequently, the women in these romances are more closely aligned to another group of women accused of witchcraft and heresy. Historically, gender, heresy, and spell-casting combined together in royal and noble conspiracies in the later Middle Ages. William R. Jones states: "Dynastic rivalries and resentment of the real or rumored intrigues of royal mothers-in-law or other great ladies provided the background for several sorcery cases in fifteenth-century England."[16] Three women whom Jones discusses are Joan of Navarre, Henry V's stepmother who was denounced "for having encompassed and imagined the death and destruction of our lord the king in the most horrible manner possible,"[17] although she was never tried for treason; the Duchess of Gloucester, who was found guilty by the church court of heresy and guilty by a special royal commission of "treason" and "felony" in using image-magic against Henry VI; and Jacquetta of Luxemburg, Edward IV's mother-in-law, who was accused of image-making to bewitch the king and force him into marrying her daughter Elizabeth Wydeville.[18]

Like these historical women, the spell-casting women in the romances are highly educated. What Kieckhefer states about clerics and necromancy applies equally to these women: "What is most important for our purposes is that they all would have had at least a little learning, and for them this learning was a dangerous thing."[19] Moreover, like the historical women named above, the spell-casting women are of noble or illustrious birth, related to either the romances' male heroes or the kings of the courts. Indeed, the women in these texts are conspicuous in breeding, rank, and education. Their levels of education combined with their aristocratic genealogies make them the equals in talent and expertise of their male-hero counterparts.

But this equality is not accepted. Instead, these wicked female relatives take on dark overtones when contrasted with the male heroes who are also related to the court's rulers. The emphasis of the male hero's patrilineal heritage contrasts directly with the female transformer's matrilineal connections, with the contrast demonstrating the insufficiency, if not downright malevolence, of matriarchal connections.

Two early romances, *William of Palerne* and *Cheuelere Assigne*,combine strong, manipulative women with the fair unknown pattern, as the women attempt to disinherit the proper heirs. In *William of Palerne* Queen Braunden turns Alphouns into a werewolf so that her own son can inherit the throne. But this manipulative woman is defeated. William, after winning back his own lands, threatens Queen Braunden with burning if Alphouns is not returned to his proper form and rank. In *Cheuelere Assigne* Matabryne attempts to dominate her son and disinherit (actually kill) her grandchildren in an effort to maintain control. As R. E. Stratton suggests, Matabryne's persecution of Bewtrys "can include large cultural and psychological questions: she is desperate in her efforts to preserve the matriarchal society ...."[20] The conflict between God and Satan is stressed in this text through Enyas's being exhorted by an angel to do

battle and

by Enyas's fighting Matabryne's adherent, Malkedras, who blasphemes Enyas's cross:

> "I charde not þy croyse," quod Malkedras "þe valwe of a cherye;
> For I shalle choppe it fulle small ere þenne þis werke ende."
> An edder spronge out of his shelde and in his body spynnethe;
> A fyre fruscheth out of his croys and rapte out his yen 21

Significantly, Matabryne's own death, like Queen Braunden's threatened death, is through burning--the death prescribed to heretics and only later to witches.

As mentioned earlier, only a few of the sorceresses or diabolic women actually appear in these romances. Yet two of the four women who do appear and speak are in these early romances. By the later romances, the women have been silenced altogether, although the fear of powerful women has not disappeared. Elizabeth Petroff discusses this silencing as women's "unknowability." Petroff views doubts about woman's nature as indicating a real fear that "perhaps woman was fundamentally unknowable,"22 thus forcing men to "unmask" or cause the woman to reveal her true nature. In these two texts powerful women are unmasked and exposed as evil manipulators who desire to subvert the proper order and wield power over lands and men. The return of power to the male confirms patrilineal heritage.

But are these two diabolic women who cause transformations and put their trust in Satan while attempting to wrest control from the proper heirs heretics? The word is never used; no churchman apprises them of their danger. But with the blasphemy in *Cheuelere Assigne*, the political witchcraft in *William of Palerne*, and the use of burning as punishment in both of these texts, are not these women heretics in all but name? Perhaps these women are not named heretics because of the time period in which these romances were composed. Historically, "England produced no significant heresy before the late fourteenth century."23 Heresy in the early-to-mid 1300s was not as public an issue in England as it was in other European countries. Thus these women, while heretical in nature, are not accused of heresy and cannot be tied to any particular heretical community. Instead, they are more closely connected with women such as England's Queen Isabella who, like Matabryne and Queen Braunden, seized control of the kingdom from the male ruler, her husband Edward II, until she was placed into captivity by her son, Edward III.24

The late fourteenth century is when three poets, the *Gawain*-poet, Chaucer, and Gower, wrote their transformation-disenchantment romances. This was the time of the first significant heretical movements: John Wyclif's preaching and the rise of Lollardy.25 Heresy was coming to the forefront as a religious and political concern. Moreover, this was about the time of Alice Perrers, who was accused of gaining the affections of King Edward III and causing his madness through magical arts. In this historic instance sorcery was not linked with diabolic magic and heresy. But the question is, is this link made in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the only romance of the late 1300s which actually portrays its female spell-caster?

Morgan le Fay represents the final appearance of a female spell-caster in these

metrical romances. After this time, the women are referred to but not portrayed. Stephen Knight says of Morgan with regard to Malory's work: "She is a witch, of course ... but she also partly represents the power of a royal female who plots fiercely for her own family ...."26 However, in this romance Morgan's power and voice are gagged. She would challenge the hierarchy, but by not being allowed to speak can only be judged by her supposed actions, not by her words.27

Indeed, with regard to the patrilineal versus matrilineal hierarchy *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* upholds the traditional view. Gawain, the patrilineal hero-knight, nephew of the king, is fighting the magic of Morgan le Fay, the matrilineal woman-transformer and sister of the king. As Sheila Fisher points out, the hideousness of Morgan is unlikely:

> I, for one, find it difficult to understand how Arthur's half-sister could have become so old so soon, unless it

> were to link her with the corruption of the flesh, that, in this poem, becomes linked to the corruption that is women in the center of Arthur's court.28

The hero-knight conquers that female corruption and reasserts the masculine bond at the Green Chapel.

However, as a non-Christian force, Morgan's role is far more potent and possibly successful. As the later unmasked evil force, Morgan is pitted against the Virgin Mary of Gawain's shield, although Fisher also equates Morgan with Arthur's bishop:

> If, at Camelot's Christmas Feast, Gawain is seated beside Guenevere at a table which Bishop Bawdewyn heads (109-12), then in the second Christmas feast, the Lady has replaced Guenevere as Gawain's dinner companion, and Morgan has, significantly, taken the bishop's seat of preeminence at the head of the table 29

Of course, since the Gawain-poet is not questioning Christianity itself, Morgan cannot fully succeed in her purpose and therefore does not triumph over Gawain's protectress. Yet formal religion as defined by the Virgin Mary and Gawain's shield does not triumph either. Gawain is forced to seek his own non-Christian protection in order to survive, something which Arthur's court later is unable to comprehend. Gawain's misgivings elucidate why this is the only text in which the transformed creature is not in some way absorbed by the hero-knight's own society. A hero-knight who questions his values cannot bring home a new convert.

Bertilak's transformation and disenchantment are connected with these challenges to the religious status quo. Although *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* follows the basic pattern of a transformation-disenchantment romance, it never actually states that the Green Knight returns to his form of Bertilak.30 The deliberate obscuring of Bertilak's shape at the end of the narrative reflects the obscuring of Gawain's own values and certainties. A clear-cut disenchantment of the Green Knight would imply that Gawain was triumphant. An ambiguous disenchantment delineates Gawain's own doubts. Non-Christianity represented by

Morgan and the Green Knight does not prevail, but then neither does the ecclesiastical hierarchy's value-system as represented by Gawain.

Thus *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, while promoting the patrilineal structure of society through Gawain (the king's nephew) and rejecting the matrilineal drive for power through Morgan (the king's sister), calls into question the religious security of that patriarchal society. But is Morgan le Fay, the author of these doubts and misgivings, a heretic? In this text her fairy nature is downplayed and her human nature is stressed. Her physical decay emphasizes her corruption, but nothing directly links her to heresy. There are no threats of burning, even in Gawain's diatribe against women. Anything which would link Morgan to heresy, such as her replacing the Bishop at the Christmas feast, must be inferred. Even her malevolent intentions are told to us second-hand. Although there was a growth in the heretical communities in England at the time of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and heresy had become a social issue, Morgan le Fay is more like Alice Perrers in that she is accused of sorcery but not accused of heresy.

Romans of Partenay is dated as an early sixteenth century romance with the prose analogue *Melusine* contemporary to it. Thus both texts date soon after the accusations of witchcraft and heresy made against Joan of Navarre and the others. The almost simultaneous appearance of this poem and its prose counterpart confirms that something about this narrative appealed to the late medieval English society. *Romans of Partenay* represents the shifting social values of the late Middle-early Modern Age. It confronts critical concerns of its time: the desire for male progeny, marriage for land and power, anti-Church and anti-clerical sentiments, and the growth of the mercantile class. Yet it celebrates inherited lineage and portrays the pope as the final arbitrator of repentance and salvation, all traditional medieval values. This blend of the traditional and the modern is what makes this romance one of the most challenging and enigmatic of the texts.

When Melusine first meets Raymound she declares she is a good Christian, yet she advises him to dissemble about his uncle's death. Raymound, to obtain her aid, vows to marry her and never to inquire what she does on Saturday. This oath--we are immediately told--will be broken. Melusine, like most of the transformed creatures, is bespelled at their meeting; however, unlike the other creatures, her transformed state is not apparent. This use of hidden form

relates to Petroff's discussion of unmasking, and certainly Melusine more than any other woman is unmasked or exposed. However, her unmasking has a different nuance in that her unmasking occurs not through a noble act but through an ignoble act. Raymound too is not what he appears to be; he is unmasked as a dishonorable knight in his failure to uphold his sworn oath, not a surprise given his willingness to dissemble about his uncle's death.

This dual unmasking reflects the political disparity between the works written in the early Middle Ages and those written in the late Middle Ages. The unmasked women in *William of Palerne* and *Cheuelere Assigne* are grasping for temporal power. In *Romans of Partenay* the author does not concentrate solely on women's political aspirations, but rather exposes the base natures of both men and women. Politically, neither is to be trusted.

page 52

Melusine and Raymound's sons further their political purposes by marrying for land and power. Each son enters into not only a political but also an economic agreement with his spouse-to-be. Thus he establishes his claim upon another region or country, spreading the Lusignan lineage and enriching its status. Perhaps this explains why Fromont's decision to enter the monastery upsets his father and later his brother. He is not contributing to the growth of the family fortunes. Meanwhile, Horrible, the son whom Melusine warns must be put to death, resembles the younger sibling who will keep the country in constant war, fighting over succession. Putting Horrible to early death will protect the family and their constantly enlarging domains.

Yet this romance, while an intricate political tract, also has deep religious overtones. Spiritually, both Melusine and Raymound are suspect. Despite her protestations of being a good Christian, Melusine's serpent body can be seen as a metaphor for a demonic or evil nature. Robert J. Nolan claims that Melusine's hidden form connects her with allegorical interpretations of living in sin illustrated by men who live with women with hidden animal forms.31 Moreover, the action which precipitates Raymound's revelation is Gaffray's burning down of the monastery where his brother Fromont is to become a monk. The anger and destruction which Gaffray displays reflect the suspicion with which the Church was regarded: Gaffray believes the monks of the monastery are involved in lewd and demonic acts and have almost hypnotized his brother. Gaffray's frenzied action is condemned, but his belief in ecclesiastical corruption is not. Indeed, Melusine later confirms his suspicions. Of course, the possibility of redemption is offered. Raymound repents his broken vow and goes on a lengthy pilgrimage to Rome, and Gaffray builds a new monastery. Salvation through repentance is possible, although apparently Melusine is damned eternally.

As for the spell-caster who cursed Melusine with her transformed body, although the folio dealing with the transformation's explanation as discovered by Gaffray is missing from the manuscript, the content can be deduced from the French source. Melusine's mother, Presine, has inscribed a tablet telling why Melusine and her sisters are cursed. On this tablet Presine identifies herself and her daughters as being from the fairy-country, Avalon. She names her husband as King Helmas, another knight who has broken his oath. Interestingly, however, she does not curse her daughters in order to grab power from the male; rather, she curses them for their unfilial behavior. Despite her anger at her husband's broken vow, she seems to be defending the patriarchal system. The manner in which the English poet would have utilized this explanation is unknown. How would Presine's actions be portrayed? With approval or disapproval? Very little can be deduced about this spell-caster, for while Melusine has not been marginalized, Presine, the spell-caster, has been. Her voice--and at least she has one--is that of words inscribed on a tablet. Only a carved statue of her appears in the text. Is Presine, this woman from Avalon, a heretic? She demands equality from her husband, but is she politically manipulative? No indication of defiant political or religious behavior is given, and the only ones who are punished in this text are her daughters for their unfilial behavior.

page 53

Matabryne, Queen Braunden, Morgan le Fay, Presine--all are politically connected women who have diabolic ties or practice necromancy to gain power. The first three are defeated in their political power plays in strong confirmations of the patrilineal hierarchy of the times. Their defeats reinforce the values of the communities that they have tried to subvert. Presine does not even attempt to control her community or grab power. The women of these early texts are more prominent and are prosecuted most strongly. By the late fourteenth century, only one spell-caster, Morgan le Fay, appears and she is silenced, although she also is never punished for her actions. By the sixteenth century, the

spell-casters, when they exist, are second-hand references or names on tablets, political insiders by virtue of their lineages, but slowly becoming more and more marginalized.

Is it ironic or intentional that when women in historical times were being most severely prosecuted as witches and heretics, women spell-casters in romances were being gagged or disappearing? I mentioned earlier that six of the twelve transformation-disenchantment texts accuse women of being spell-casters. It is the later texts which pull back on these accusations. Thus, as seen in the quotation given earlier, despite the Green Knight's lengthy explanation of Morgan's actions, he never uses the term "witchcraft" or "necromancy." In other later texts, no mention is made of witchcraft. In *Carle of Carlile* the carl states he was cursed by necromancy, but he makes no mention of who or why:

> The carle sayd, "Gawaine, God blese thee,
> For thou hast deliuered mee.
> From all false witchcrafft
> I am deliuerd att the last.
> By nigromance thus was I shapen
> Till a knight of the Round Table
> Had with a sword smitten of my head 32

Similarly, in *Clariodus*, one of the latest texts, Sir Porrus blames his transformation on Fate, again with no reason given:

> Thairfor my mother gart with diligence
> The Waird Sisteris wait quhen I was borne,
> To heir quhat waird thay sould lay me beforne;
> Agreit that war, and melancholie
> Thay wairdit me, gif ane knave chyld war I,
> That efter I was sevin 3eiris old
> To be transformit in ane lyoun bold 33

Indeed, the rise in heretical movements and the accusations of heresy made against politically strong women did not cause an increase in accusations of witchcraft and necromancy in Middle English metrical romances. Rather, as the associations between witchcraft and heresy evolved in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, authors drew back from using those explanations in their romances. Portraying strong, diabolic women such as Matabryne or politically manipulative female necromancers such as Queen Braunden in the late Middle Ages would

page 54

have suggested the far more dangerous act of heresy. Thus the women in the early romances, who most clearly fit the definition of a heretic--politically powerful, attuned to the devil, employing witchcraft, and in danger of burning--are not accused of heresy because the link between witchcraft and heresy had yet to be made formally in England and significant heretical movements had not yet emerged there; while the women in the later romances are gagged, or removed completely from the narratives, or polished to appear as "good Christians" or "women of the otherworld," because the coupling of witchcraft with politics had become too dangerous. One might say that the disappearance of the accusations parallels the severity and danger of such accusations. With historical women such as Joan of Navarre and the Duchess of Gloucester34 accused of image-making and under suspicion of treason and heresy, the combining of spell-casting with necromancy and diabolic practices in romances would have imbued these romances with dangerous political and religious attributes which most authors dared not risk.

Calumet College of St. Joseph

Notes

1. Recent books on heresy include Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame, 1995); Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford, 1992); Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities 1420-1530* (Philadelphia, 1995); and R. I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (London, 1975) and *The Origin of European Dissent* (Oxford, 1985). A book which discusses similar issues, while not dealing directly with heresy, is David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996). Finally, two books which contain medieval texts on sorcery are Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, Penn., 1997), and Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janet L. Pallister (Chicago, 1983).
2. H. S. Kelly, "English Kings and Fear of Sorcery," *Medieval Studies* 30 (1977), 207-238.
3. Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Monatgue Summers (London, 1928), p. 44.
4. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, pp. 4-5.
5. For a general discussion of Middle English romances and their relationship with social issues, see Stephen Knight, "The Social Function of the Middle English Romances," in *Medieval Literature*, ed. David Aers (New York, 1986), pp. 99-122.
6. Frederic Madden, ed., *The Weddynge of Syr Gawene and Dame Ragnelle*, in *Syr Gawayne: a collection of Ancient Romances and Poems by Scottish and English Authours related to the celebrated knight of the Round Table* (London, 1839), lines 692-93.
7. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *William of Palerne*, EETS ES 1 (London, 1867), lines 117-20.
8. Skeat, *William of Palerne*, lines 4096-97, 4104-5.
9. J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, eds., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, rev. 2nd ed., ed. Norman Davis (Oxford, 1967), lines 2446-56.
10. Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (London, 1983), p. 274.
11. Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), p. 153.
12. Lines 4550-4606 are missing from *Romans of Partenay*. Folio 103b from the French text is used in the EETS edition to replace the missing lines. See Walter W. Skeat, ed., *Romans de Partenay*, EETS ES 22 (London, 1866).
13. R. E. Stratton, ed., *A Critical Edition of Cheuelere Assigne* (Lewiston, N.Y.,1991), line 10.
14. McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy*, p. 110.
15. McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy*, p. 137.
16. William R. Jones, "Political Uses of Sorcery in Medieval Europe," *The Historian* 34 (1972), 670-87; here p. 682.
17. Jones, "Political Uses," p. 682.
18. Jones, "Political Uses," pp. 683-85.
19. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, p. 155.
20. Stratton, *A Critical Edition*, p. 19.
21. Stratton, *A Critical Edition*, lines 329-32.
22. Elizabeth Avilda Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York, 1994), p. 26.
23. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, p. 225.
24. See Malcolm Barber, *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe 1050-1320* (London, 1993), and A. R. Myers, *England in the Late Middle Ages*, 8th ed. (London, 1991), for details on Queen Isabella's actions and the political situation at this time period.
25. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, pp. 225-83.
26. Stephen Knight, *Arthurian Literature and Society* (New York, 1983), p. 116.
27. This reminds one of Marguerite Porete, who was condemned for her speaking her words (her acts), not for the words themselves. Morgan le Fay is condemned for her actions as reported by Bertilak and never allowed to speak.
28. Sheila Fisher, "Leaving Morgan Aside: Women, History, and Revisionism in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in *The Passing of Arthur: New Essays in Arthurian Tradition*, ed. Christopher Baswell and William Sharpe (New York, 1988), pp. 129-151; here p. 144.
29. Sheila Fisher, "Taken Men and Token Women in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in *Seeking the Women*, ed. Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley (Knoxville, 1989), pp. 71-105; here pp. 79-80.
30. See Marie Boroff, "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: The Passing of Judgment," in *The Passing of Arthur: New Essays in Arthurian Tradition*, ed. Christopher Baswell and William Sharpe (New York, 1988), pp. 105-28, for

a discussion of Bertilak's ambiguous disenchantment.
31. Robert J. Nolan, "The Origin of the Romance of Melusine: a New Interpretation," *Fabula* 15 (1974), 192-201. It should be noted that not all scholars agree with Nolan's interpretation. For another perspective, see Velma B. Richmond, *The Popularity of Middle English Romances* (Bowling Green, 1975).
32. Auvo Kurvinen, ed., *Carle off Carlile*, in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle in Two Versions* (Helsinki, 1951), lines 401-7.
33. David Irving, ed., *Clariodus: A Metrical Romance* (Lewiston, N.Y.,1991), book 1, lines 1026-32.
33. See Jones, "Political Uses," and Kelly, "English Kings," for additional information on Joan of Navarre and the Duchess of Gloucester, along with others accused of sorcery during the same time period.