

# How feminism has transformed the character of Morgan le Fay: A literary and media analysis

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# Setting the Stage

## “WHY?”

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- M. Wendy Hennequin
  - Medievalist and Feminist?

## QUESTIONS AND GOALS

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- How has feminism affected representations of the character Morgan le Fay?
- Can all these representations work together?

# Setting the Stage

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- Feminism
- Beginnings
- *Le Morte d'Arthur*
- *The Mists of Avalon*
- *Merlin*
- Conclusions

# Elaine Showalter

## ◉ Feminine

- 1840-1880
- “appearance of the male pseudonym” 19

## ◉ Feminist

- 1880-1920
- “rebelled against the dictatorship of male establishment” 31

## ◉ Female

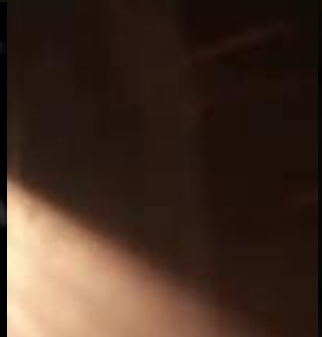
- 1920-
- “trying to unify the fragments of female experience through artistic vision” 35



# Keep in Mind

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- “Feminism’s goal is to change this degrading view of women so that all women will realize that they are not a ‘nonsignificant Other,’ but that each woman is a valuable person possessing the same privileges and rights as every man.” Bressler 180



# Morgan who?

- ◉ Mythology
  - Modron
  - Morrígan



# *Vita Merlini*

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- 1150 AD
- “positive and even androgynous” (Fries 2)
- “she has learned the use of all plants in curing the ills of the body. She knows, too, the art of changing her shape, of flying through the air...”



# *Le Morte d'Arthur*

## Morgan le Fey

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- 1485
- “she was a grete clerke of nygromancye” (5)
- Attempts on life and pride

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- “Feminism’s goal is to change this degrading view of women so that all women will realize that they are not a ‘nonsignificant Other,’ but that each woman is a valuable person possessing the same privileges and rights as every man.” Bressler 180

# Femi- What?

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- 400 years
- “most medieval literature did not accept this simple feminist idea, and the few medieval texts that do accept that women are people do not accept that women are equal people or good people”  
Hennequin 49

# *The Mists of Avalon*

## Morgaine

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- 1983
- “is it any wonder I hated him?”
- Avalon



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## ◉ Feminist

- “rebelled against the dictatorship of male establishment” 31

# *The Mists of Avalon*

## Morgaine

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- 1983
- Virgin Huntress and the Horned One
- “Never again—never!”



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## ○ Female



- “trying to unify the fragments of female experience through artistic vision” 35

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◎ “courageous self-exploration” 33



# *Merlin*

## Morgana

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- 2008-
- “I don’t understand anything anymore. I need to understand what’s happening to me.”



# *Merlin*

## Morgana

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- “I would have sold my soul for someone to show me kindness such as this”



# Elaine Showalter

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## ◎ Female

- “trying to unify the fragments of female experience through artistic vision” 35



# Acknowledgements

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- Dr. Muriel Brown
- Dr. Betsy Birmingham
- And you!

# Conclusion

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- ◉ Modern authors
- ◉ Possibility

# Works Cited

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- ◉ [Disney.wikia.com](http://Disney.wikia.com)
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