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"True of Voice?"

The speech, actions, and portrayal of women in New Kingdom literary texts, dating c.1550 to 1070 B.C.

Doctoral Thesis

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Abstract and Preliminary Remarks

This thesis will examine texts from the corpus of ancient Egyptian love songs, narrative tales, and funerary literature (The Book of the Dead, specifically that of Anhai, Chantress of Amun), dating to the New Kingdom, c.1550 to 1070 B.C. I shall focus on the presentation and speech of women within these three literary genres, analysing not just what women say and do, but also what *is said about* them and their actions. However, this thesis does not aim to give an Essentialist account of women, as a homogenous group, in New Kingdom Egypt. Instead, I will discuss some of the constructs of gender and gendered identity in ancient Egypt as revealed by these texts, constructs that go beyond an overly simplified male vs. female binary opposition that is based on biological sex alone. In order to do this, I will use intersectional analysis in conjunction with a close reading of the texts, and concepts of transformations, liminality, and transfigurations in relation to individual identity will be addressed. One of the central concerns of this thesis is that of gender ventriloquism, the act of somebody putting their own words into the mouth of someone or something of a different gender to the original 'speaker.' This 'speaker' may be a fictional constructed character or a historically attested individual. In this study, these words must, out of necessity, be examined in written form, as ancient Egyptian is a dead language. The writer of these words must therefore be taken to be exactly that: someone who has written them down and not necessarily composed or invented them. Indeed, we do not have a named 'author' in the modern sense for any of the texts analysed in this thesis, although in some cases we do have the name of the 'owner' of the source, or the scribe who wrote the words down.

These factors lend themselves to a post-structuralist analysis of the texts, wherein I will consider them to be the product of a specific cultural milieu rather than only as the individual creation of a single person. The transmission as well as genesis of the texts therefore relies on both collective understanding and social reception to impart a desired message that may be accepted, altered, or rejected by the receiver(s), both ancient and modern. Although the content of the sources is largely culture-specific, certain aspects can be regarded as perennial, or at the least able to cross cultural borders. In the case of the texts analysed, I will argue that their transmission would be at least partly in oral form, most likely performative and potentially mutable to a degree. This then gives a physicality to the ventriloquism, a way of verbally actualising another's speech, and a means of vocally performing and even manipulating gender constructs. Feminist theory therefore plays a substantial part in my reading of the texts; both Anglo-American, regarding the performativity of gender, as well as French, in terms of

linguistic expressions of gender. Lastly, performance theory relating to the suspension of disbelief is considered, particularly in terms of creating a connotative non-literal identity through specific usages of the literature that often overrides, or at least modifies, the denotative identity of the gendered individual. Here, the themes of liminality and transformation already presented will be discussed alongside modern discourse from this discipline. My overall aim is to present a new reading of texts that are already familiar to Egyptologists, using modern theory in a way that can lead us to re-evaluate and deepen our understanding of gender constructs in New Kingdom Egypt. In this way, we are able to recover the lives and experiences of individuals who most often exist only on the peripheries of our extant literary evidence and in academic studies.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

ÄA   *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen,* Wiesbaden

BdÉ   *Bibliothèque d'Étude,* Cairo

BES   *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar,* Missoula

BIFAO   *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale,* Cairo

CdE   *Chronique d'Egypte,* Brussels

DP   *The Tale of the Doomed Prince,* p.Harris 500, BM EA 10060

GM   *Göttinger Miszellen,* Göttingen

HS   *The Contendings of Horus and Seth,* p.Chester Beatty I, Dublin.

JARCE   *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt,* Boston

JEA   *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology,* London

JNES   *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* Chicago

JSSEA   *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities,* Ontario

LÄ   *Lexikon der Ägyptologie,* 7 vols., W. Helck and E. Otto (eds.), Wiesbaden, 1975-89

LES   *Late Egyptian Stories,* A. H. Gardiner, *Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I,* Bruxelles, 1932

LingAeg   *Lingua Aegyptia Journal of Egyptian Language Studies*, Hamburg

MDAIK   *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologigischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo,* Berlin

PdÄ   *Probleme der Ägyptologie*, Leiden

RdE   *Revue d'Egyptologie,* Cairo, Paris and Louvain

SAK   *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur,* Hamburg

TB　　　　*The Tale of the Two Brothers,* p.D'Orbiney, BM EA 10183

TF　　　　*The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood,* p.Chester Beatty II, BM EA 10682

Wörterbuch　*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache,* 6 vols., A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds.), Berlin and Leipzig, 1957 (2nd ed.)

ZÄS　　　　*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertunskunde,* Berlin and Leipzig

Transcription/translation Symbols

[ ] Modern restorations

( ) Words supplied

< > Words or signs omitted by the ancient scribe

{ } Words or signs regarded as incorrect inclusion/ scribal error

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

Introduction

This thesis is a study of female and/or feminised voices in select New Kingdom texts dating from the beginning of Dynasty Eighteen to the end of Dynasty Twenty, approximately 1550 to 1070 B.C. Women, and personae presented as female, will be the focus. However, I am also concerned with identifying ancient individuals, or groups of people, who fall outside of the hetero- or cis-normative matrix, and thus present a challenge to the basic 'male vs. female' dichotomy that has long existed within the discipline of Egyptology.[1] It has been noted that, as a subject area, "Egyptology is conservative, dwelling upon the elite, with much less work on the silent majority," although recent studies have recognised the value of applying modern methodologies and theories to the ancient evidence in order to question the 'established' perceptions of the past.[2] I will use intersectional analysis in this thesis to explore positions of privilege and oppression, as well as to investigate how the multiple elements comprising individual identity would influence a person or character's experiences and portrayal within textual sources.[3] I will highlight the differences in gender as expressed through a specific medium[4] and illustrate just how varied the experiences of, and conceptions regarding, 'women' in ancient Egypt were. Sexuality and sexualised behaviour, as well as romantic love, will play a large role in this analysis, both in terms of individual erotic desire and the conventions imposed by society in regulating and expressing this eroticism. The presentation of the gendered body, as well as the speech and actions that emanate from it, will also be addressed. Using this framework, I will examine social inequalities and discrimination present in the texts through an intersectional lens, emphasising the complexity of the subject under analysis, in this case women in New Kingdom Egypt, and providing a nuanced reading into the presentation of the subjects we encounter in the literature under study.

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[1] Where the 'male' occupies the privileged, normative position, and the 'female' is posited as the opposing Other. See Gay Robins, *Women in ancient Egypt,* Cambridge, MA., 1993, pp.10-12; Gay Robins, "While the woman looks on: Gender inequality in New Kingdom Egypt", *KMT: A modern journal of ancient Egypt* 1, 3, 1990, pp.18-64, for example. Carolyn Graves-Brown acknowledged that "there is a tendency in all disciplines, including Egyptology, to accept the status quo and to assume the central ground," and cites several examples in which anachronistic sensibilities may have led to a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the ancient evidence. Carolyn Graves-Brown, "Preface", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, p.xvi.

[2] Graves-Brown, 2008, p.xviii.

[3] See Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality,* Cambridge, MA., 2016, pp.1-30, for a general description of what is meant by intersectionality and further discussion on the theory's use as a tool for analysis and to facilitate the discussion of complex human experiences, and pp.18-21 of this thesis for its application in this study.

[4] Largely epigraphic, although Chapter four will explore the visual depictions of the papyri owners found in the accompanying vignettes to their Book of the Dead texts.

General Methodology

Throughout this study, I will examine:

i.   how women were presented in the different literary texts and what the purpose of the text was;

ii.   how women spoke and were spoken about in the texts, considering the use of gender-specific words and imagery;

iii.   whether any recorded speech can be regarded as representative of a genuine female 'voice';

iv.   how the genre of the texts may affect women's presentation within them, particularly in the exposition of gender roles or customs;

v.   and finally, what the conclusions drawn from analysis of the above categories can tell us about gender in ancient Egyptian as a whole.

In this study of the extant literary sources, the key themes will be explored in each chapter, and will interlink with each other, uniting the analysis of the texts across this thesis. In particular, the underlying topic of 'gender ventriloquism'[5] will feature in all chapters, but the nature of the sources will temper how this presents itself, and how it impacted the literature linguistically. Following on from this, themes of transformations, changes of state and the entry into liminal spaces, as well as the exit from them, will be considered. This liminality, and its associated performativity, enables the individual to enter a variable state, a transitional position that allows for their gender to become fragmented, altered, or in some cases more fluid, and perhaps negates the more ominous aspects of voice theft or ventriloquism that exists within the sources to an extent. When analysing the speech of female personae in the literature, it is essential to consider who or what generated the speech. We can then examine whether the female characters are simply 'masks' allowing for the disguised articulation of a prevailing male point of view through voice appropriation or ventriloquism, in which the subject is *spoken for*, rather than *speaks* themselves. Throughout this thesis, I will look at specific compositions in order to analyse how women were presented as speaking and acting, and question whether this can be

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[5] A term modified from the work of Elizabeth Harvey, discussed further on pp**.**52-54 of this thesis. See Elizabeth Harvey, *Ventriloquised Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts,* London and New York, 1992, for her use and application of the term 'transvestite ventriloquism,' especially pp.1- 14, and p.12 for her argument that this ventriloquism is "an appropriation of the feminine voice, and that it reflects and contributes to a larger cultural silencing of women."

considered to be a genuine female 'voice' or experience; how the genre of the text may circumscribe the individual performance of 'self'; inherent biases and potential challenges to the stereotypical female, both implicit and explicit, in the texts; and questions of authorship and intended audience. In particular, I will focus on voice sharing and voice appropriation, and will consider the different genres of literature as demonstrating examples of ancient Egyptian 'gender ventriloquism' in which the written word cannot always be taken at face value, or as representative of 'true' verbal expression or experience. Attention will be paid to the almost undeniable certainty that the words and expressions, as well as portrayal and actions, of the female characters in the texts were emended and revised by male scribes, if not created outright by a single male individual. The work of Elaine Showalter demonstrates that the modern Feminist reader must distinguish between women consuming and critiquing literature that was produced by men ("feminist critique"), and women's analysis of texts produced by women specifically for women ("gynocritique").[6] For the evidence studied in this thesis, it is necessary to acknowledge that although women feature in the literature, they are often manipulated and constructed according to the dominant male voice and position of superiority. We are largely unable to approach the texts from a position of gynocriticism, as even though the content of the literature may have been orally disseminated and reflect more than one voice, we are limited by the form of the compositions that survive for us today.

This study begins with the premise that there was not a specific 'women's' language separate from that of 'men's' in ancient Egyptian.[7] This is the same in English, where "there are no pronunciations, grammatical forms, word or sentence constructions that are employed exclusively by men or by women."[8] Other tongues, such as that of the Algonquian-speaking First Nations American Atsina, do demonstrate language differentials or gender-specific vocabulary derived from gender variation, as does the dialect of Island Carib speakers.[9] This

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[6] Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics", *Women Writing and Writing about Women,* M. Jacobus (ed.), 1979, p.25.

[7] This has been examined in several articles by Deborah Sweeney, which will be discussed in detail later in this thesis. See Deborah Sweeney, "Women and language in the Ramesside period, or, why women don't say please", *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, *Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995*, C. J. Eyre (ed.), Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 82, Leuven, 1998, pp.1109-1117; Deborah Sweeney, "Gender and requests in New Kingdom Literature", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.191-213.

[8] Zdenek Salzmann, James Stanlaw and Nobuko Adachi, *Language, Culture and Society; An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, Colorado, 2012, p.265.

[9] *ibid*., pp.267-268.

may also be true for Sumerian, to give an example of an ancient language.[10] Rather, for ancient Egyptian as well as modern English, what differences there are between 'male' and 'female' speech have to do with the frequency with which some usages are employed by one sex or the other, the spoken word acting in conjunction with other factors such as age and social status. It is this difference I wish to explore in the texts; for example, giving a quantitative analysis of whether there is a division between how the sexes use, say, metaphor, in their speech. However, any patterns apparent in the compositions must be carefully treated, and the purpose of the text recognised. Deborah Sweeney, in undertaking recent analyses of gendered speech in ancient Egyptian literary texts, has emphasised the important fact that the compositions are "a *representation* of speech, rather than speech itself."[11] They therefore cannot be taken to be free of literary conventions when presenting dialogue or verbal expressions of emotion.[12]

In ancient Egypt, scribes or copyists undoubtedly enjoyed a privileged status over many other people, especially illiterate workers, for example as evidenced by the Ramesside *Satire of the Trades,* and were, as far as we know, all male with an élite training that set them apart from the vast majority of illiterate Egyptians.[13] For the texts examined, we see instances of male 'authors'[14] or copyists, most likely reflecting a wider cultural understanding rather than individual viewpoint, 'speaking' for a woman. Therefore, it does not seem possible to take the 'speech' or 'words' of a female in these texts as an accurate, unbiased recording of gendered speech, if there even was such a thing. This is done in conjunction with the acknowledgement that more than one voice likely contributed to the 'telling' of the text as it survives for us today. A methodology utilising modern theory and literary analysis provides a framework for examining texts that can be considered to have been composed by men primarily for men, (and certainly written down by a specific group of men who had the ability to do so), but which feature women who appear to both reinforce and challenge ancient Egyptian gender stereotypes. In addition, when considering oral transmission, audience response, and

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[10] Emesal, one of two Sumerian dialects, that was used exclusively by women in the written literature. Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture and Character,* Chicago, 1963, p.223; See Gordon Whittaker "Linguistic Anthropology and the Study of Emesal as (a) Women's Language" for a more recent discussion, in which the author describes Emesal as a literary device used to "...identify female speakers generically, never individually, in a given social role", p.9: *www.academia.edu/750427/Linguistic Anthropology and the Study of Emesal as a Womens Language*

[11] Sweeney, 2008, p.192. Original emphasis.

[12] *ibid.*

[13] Richard Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, London, 2002, p.50.

[14] I will avoid the term 'author' as much as is possible, based on the post-structuralist reading of the texts I employ, as discussed pp.57-63 in particular, and will instead refer to composers, copyists, and scribes, in relation to the texts analysed where relevant.

performativity of the texts, as will be discussed later, there is plenty of scope for women's influence in both the composition itself and its wider reception. Female individuals are therefore present in texts that appear to focus on men and the dominance of the masculine norm. However, they also provide an intriguing insight into the lives of historical as well as fictional personages, challenging the prevailing heteronormative male voice to an extent.

The ancient evidence and theoretical approaches

The following ancient texts will be translated, analysed and examined:

1. Love songs: Papyrus Chester Beatty I, Papyrus Harris 500, Papyrus Turin 1996, The Cairo Jar, the Deir el Medina corpus of ostraca, three additional ostraca of Theban provenance.[15]
2. Narrative tales: *The Contendings of Horus and Seth, The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood, The Tale of the Two Brothers, The Doomed Prince.*[16]
3. Funerary literature: The Book of the Dead, Dynasties Eighteen to Twenty, in particular the Papyrus of Anhai, BM EA 10472.[17]

Chapter one will introduce the modern theory used, and its application to the ancient evidence, as well as considering previous scholarship on the question of gender, both within and outside of the discipline of Egyptology. An examination of the position of women in New Kingdom society is also presented. This will demonstrate how the culturally constructed prevailing treatment of women at this time, as well as their 'ideal' behaviour and the behaviour of others when interacting with them, could be subverted, ignored, and challenged. Chapter two will

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[15] Facsimiles of original texts, with translations found in: Alan H. Gardiner, *The Chester Beatty Papyri, no. I,* London, 1931*,* pp.27-38, pls.16-17; 22-26; 29-30; Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third series,* London, 1935; Ernest A.W. Budge, *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Second Series,* London, 1923, pls.41-46; Georges Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el Médineh,* Vol II., Cairo, 1972, pp.43-44 and pls.75-79a; Siegfried Schott, *Altägyptische Liebseslieder, Märchen und Liebesgeschichten*, Zurich, 1950, pp.39-69.

[16] Facsimiles of original texts, with translations: Alan H. Gardiner *Late Egyptian Stories,* Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca I, Brussels, 1932*;* Leonard H. Lesko, "Three Late Egyptian Stories reconsidered", in L. H. Lesko (ed.), *Egyptological Studies in Honour of Richard A. Parker,* Hanover, 1986, pp.98-103; Emma Brunner-Traut, "Papyrus D'Orbiney", *LÄ* 4, 1982, pp.679-704; Susan Tower Hollis, *The ancient Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers,* Oklahoma, 2006, pp.197-203.

[17] Facsimiles of original texts, with translations: Ernest A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead, Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerâsher and Netchemet with Supplementary Text from the Papyrus of Nu*, London, 1899; Edouard Naville, *Das Aegyptische Totenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie, 1-3,* Berlin, 1886; http:www.totenbuch-projekt.uni-bonn for a digital archive of Book of the Dead sources.

look at love songs recovered from papyri, pottery and ostraca, examining 88 texts, with more detailed analysis of those that are written from the female point of view. Several songs will be selected for further analysis in case studies, and used to demonstrate how different modern theories, such as Queer theory and Cinematic Gaze theory, can produce markedly different readings of the same text. Chapter three focuses on four New Kingdom narrative texts, all of which have female 'characters', be they mortal or divine. Previously described as "misogynistic"[18], I will suggest that the inclusion of transgendered moments within the narratives give these texts a more nuanced character. While not rehabilitating the devious female personae, I will show that their portrayal depends partly on the nature of the text itself, and a simple division between the well-regarded male protagonist and the deviant female antagonist is insufficient in capturing complex social dynamics and values. Chapter four will examine sources for funerary literature, the spells and vignettes of the Book of the Dead, which belonged to women, along with other contemporary texts containing men's funerary literature. The documents belonging to women will of course be the focus; however, it will be necessary to compare and contrast these to the male-owned sources. Focusing on the papyrus of Anhai, a high status female who was buried during Dynasty Twenty, this chapter then considers these sources in light of the Suspension of Disbelief that accompanies a performance. This is not necessarily a 'professional' one, yet required the audience to accept the veracity of what they see and hear, at least for the duration of that performance. Indeed, "a performance has the unique ability to not only represent or show [an event, person or thing] but to *re-present* it, to *make it happen again*,"[19] a theme that unites the different genres of text throughout this analysis. This often relies on the connotative identity created by the performative sphere or situation over-riding the initial denotative identity of the performer(s), which will be discussed in greater detail below, in relation to gender.[20] The previous evidence from Chapters two and three will then be revisited in light of the discussion presented in Chapter four, with the performative matrix applied to further consider the liminal potential of the sources and the impact on the 'performer/s' within them in the Concluding Remarks.

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[18] Pascale Marie Teysseire, *The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale,* Doctoral dissertation, submitted Yale University, May 1998, p.1.

[19] Robyn Gillam, *Performance and Drama in Ancient Egypt,* London, 2005, p.2. Original emphasis.

[20] When receiving the text, for example, personal as well as socio-cultural associations are produced, which created connotative understandings applied to a denotative sign. For example, if the denotative sign is a rose, one might read it connotatively as "love", attaching a signified meaning to the initial sign.

It must be stressed that this performative matrix is not what we would think of in terms of current conventional understanding regarding theatre or drama; what 'theatre' means to a contemporary audience is very culturally specific. In contemporary Western culture, we often conceive of a performance as involving "…professional (or at least designated) performers going through a routine in front of an audience that has often paid for the privilege of being entertained."[21] In addition, in modern societies we generally expect the performance to be based on a textual source, or at least documented in some form, an expectation that implies one must be aware of participating in, or viewing, a scripted performance in order for it to *be* performative, which is not always the case.[22] These conceptions can inform our expectations of ancient performance. For modern Western audiences, for example, we expect to be spectators, rather than participants of the performance, a distinction that may not have been as pronounced in ancient Egypt. We must also recognise that unintentionally performed actions and modes of behaviour can be performative themselves. This is illustrated by Judith Butler's assertion that we "*do* gender"[23] which in turn can define identity of both the self and of others, and may not be instantly recognisable as such, especially when we are looking at a culture outside of our own, such as that of New Kingdom Egypt.

When addressing topics concerning gender in the ancient world, a problem arises in that we can only speculate on just how representative the surviving material record is. Challenges with data recovery occur throughout the discipline of Egyptology, as the élite minority, based on their economic resources, would seem far more likely to have produced artefacts that would show up in an archaeological assemblage. In addition, much of the past excavations focussed on mortuary areas belonging to higher status individuals, because the material record would be more likely to provide richer artefacts and more literary texts.[24] The minority of the population, perhaps between one and three percent, would have been fully literate, and writing is, indeed, only "a tiny proportion of the linguistic communication that takes place."[25] Several of the texts analysed in this thesis are incomplete, fragmentary or damaged in some way. Key words or phrases may be missing or unclear, due to lacunae in the papyri. The potential for oral

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[21] Gillam, 2005, p.15.

[22] Marvin A. Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., London and New York, 2004, p.35.

[23] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd ed., London, 1999, p.xii.

[24] As many of the domestic sites in ancient Egypt, being situated closer to the cultivatable land, do not survive, much of our evidence is lost for home life. Likewise, monumental architecture and excavation of royal sites would no doubt provide more materially valuable artefacts, even if it does bias the nature of the evidence we have available to study.

[25] John Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt,* Oxford, 2009, p.7.

transmission of texts and narratives in ancient Egypt, as well as issues regarding author attribution, will be discussed in Chapter one, as will reader expectations based on genre.

Not only do our texts vary in genre, but the category of 'women' within them is vast, as we would expect based on recent studies illustrating the redundancy of Essentialist 'categorisation' or assumed homogeneity of experience.[26] It is therefore necessary to approach the human and sometimes divine subjects in these texts with a full understanding of how societal-imposed gender constructs can affect the presentation of an individual or character. Biological sex is certainly fundamental to the construction of 'women' but this must not be the sole focus when approaching the sources, nor must all biologically female subjects be assumed to fit seamlessly into a normative designation of group identity imposed by culture. It is, of course, extremely difficult to pin down a disparate group of individuals into the category of 'women.' Ethnicity, marital status, age, regional identification and social position all contribute to the formation of gendered identities.[27] In addition, performative actions and social contexts can both reinforce and contradict expected gender norms.[28] Therefore, even restricting ourselves to a specific time period and categories of evidence, it must be acknowledged that not all women would have shared similar experiences or been bound by particular conventions or social obligations within this time frame, nor should we seek to find a homogeneity where there is none. Following on from the work of Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray[29] (who offer slightly different interpretations of women as the Other), Butler insists that there is no "unproblematic unity" to the category of women.[30] Instead, age, ethnicity, social status, marital status and regional affiliations must also be taken into account when discussing the subjects. An arbitrary binary division, the "us" and "them" mentality that allows us to understand ourselves by defining what we are not, necessarily glosses over similarities and common experience.[31] I also argue that the

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[26] Candace West and Don Zimmerman, "Doing Gender", *Gender and Society* 1, 2, 1987, pp.121-151; Suzanne G. Frayser, "Human Sexuality: The Whole Is More than the Sum of Its Parts", *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle (eds.), Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, Ge., and London, 1999, pp. 1-16; Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider,* Freedom, CA., 1984; Judith Butler, "Critically Queer", in *Identity: A Reader*, P. du Gay, J. Evans, and P. Redman (eds.), London, 2000, pp.108-117, for just a few examples.

[27] Terry G. Wilfong, "Gender in Ancient Egypt", *Egyptian Archaeology,* W. Wendrich (ed.), Malden, 2010, pp.164-179.

[28] Linda M. Hurcombe, *Archaeological Artefacts as Material Culture,* London and New York, 2007, p.101.

[29] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex,* E. Parshley (transl.), New York, Vintage, 1973; Luce Irigaray, "Women on the Market", *Literary theory, an anthology,* J. Rivkin, & M. Ryan, (eds.), Malden, MA., 1985, pp.799–811.

[30] Butler, 1999*,* pp.8-9.

[31] In the Saidian sense, in which emphasising a simplified binary dichotomy to give a privileged position to one of the two opponents is critiqued. This allows the participant to understand a category or concept by understanding its Other, i.e., its diametric opposite, and form constructions of identity via this opposing duality. In essence, we understand what A is by what A is not, and therefore need B to demonstrate the opposing characteristics of A. See Edward Said, *Orientalism,* New York, 1979.

genre of the text can have a significant impact on how women are presented within it, both how they 'speak' and are 'spoken about'; i.e. described via the written medium. It must also be stressed that even if modes of semiotic expression particular to women are apparent in the texts, this does not necessarily mean that this reflects how women spoke in ancient Egypt. Textual expression is not the same as spoken language; however, because ancient Egyptian is a dead language we must rely on the texts (and, as discussed in the relevant chapters, some visual/iconographic evidence), while recognising the biased information they can provide us with.

With this in mind, it therefore seems preferable to adopt a multidisciplinary approach to our chosen subject in order to couple modern discourse with ancient material culture, giving as complete a picture of the past as possible while avoiding the temptation to make it into a passive mirror of our own, or perhaps how we would like our own to be. Our second problem therefore relates to our interpretation as well as translation of the ancient texts. We must avoid manipulating the texts in order to adapt them to the modern readers' "ideological agenda", drowning out the original voices and their context in order to make the content "more palatable for a contemporary [readers'] sensibility."[32] While using modern theory, such as post-structuralist literary analysis, intersectional theory, and critique of authorial intent, we must therefore be careful not to overwhelm the ancient evidence with modern discourse. This modern discourse should assist with our reading of the New Kingdom texts, and enhance our understanding of them, but should not be applied to such an extent that the interpretation becomes anachronistic. This can be further complicated when we consider connotative identity as being created through specific usages of the literature, and so the identities that appear to us for analysis are, in many ways, more performative than denotative. They can become more in keeping with the theme of the literature than as truly representative of an individual, lived experience. However, these 'written' identities can still tell us a great deal about how gender, so performative in itself[33], was constructed in ancient Egypt, and how it may have impacted the literature just as the literature may have impacted it: in short, the written evidence could both influence, and be influenced by, constructs of gender and sexuality. Even for modern

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[32] Renata Oggero, "Translating a Woman's Voice from the Past: Issues in Translation of Mothers' Moral Testaments of the Early Seventeenth Century", *Translating Gender,* E. Federici (ed.), Bern, 2011, p.162.

[33] The work of Judith Butler is paramount to understanding gender as performative. See Butler, 1999, pp.1-10 in particular. Butler's performative theory of gender is not, however, universally accepted: see Geoff Boucher, "The Politics of Performativity: A critique of Judith Butler", *Parrhesia* 1, 2006, pp.112-141, for one conflicting view, in which the author argues that Butler's theory neglects the "material aspects of the social formation" of gender, p.133.

researchers, "…since in sexuality we commonly have access only to symbols, it is *only constructions* that can be studied," demonstrating that although we may not have access to every detail concerning our subject(s) gendered lives, those that we do have are valuable, useful, and necessary in reconstructing past worlds.[34]

It must be acknowledged that while the sources can provide some evidence of constructed gender and sexuality in ancient Egypt, we do not see the complete picture. Instead we access moments of an individual's life, whether they are 'real' and historical women, or imagined and constructed personae. We are therefore in danger of seeing gender almost as a static construct, rather than the fluid, changing conception that it in reality is, tempered by the voice(s) of the composer(s)/copyist(s) of the text, who may or may not be female. I plan to counter this somewhat by examining the form and function of our sources intra- and inter-textually, allowing for a detailed comparison of the female personae we see and hear in these texts. In this way, we make use of Julia Kristeva's two textual "axes", that allow for connections between reader and author, but also for text to text correlation and linkage, the semiotic notion of intertextuality.[35] Colleen Manassa has already noted the usefulness of intertextual analysis when studying compositions from ancient Egypt, using this methodology to emphasise "that every text exists within an interconnected 'universe' of texts of different genres, types, and registers, leading inevitably to parallels, allusions, quotations, and other manifestations of influence."[36] For Manassa, this can involve using monumental temple inscriptions and official accounts of battles to inform a reading of New Kingdom historical narratives such as *The Capture of Joppa.*[37] For myself, it allows us to recognise shared cultural conventions that find their way into different genres of literature from this time period, and identify features that impact upon our understanding of gender and gendered individuals via the information presented in the compositions. Kristeva argued that not just every reading, but every text itself, depended on shared codes, language and semiotic systems, that implied "…every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it."[38] I will

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[34] David N. Suggs and Andrew W. Miracle, "Theory and the Anthropology of Sexuality: Toward a Holistic Anthropology in Practice", in *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle (eds.), Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, GE., and London, 1999, p.46. My emphasis.

[35] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art,* L. S. Roudiez (ed. and transl.), New York, 1980, p.69.

[36] Colleen Manassa, *Imagining the Past: Historical Fiction in New Kingdom Egypt*, New York and Oxford, 2013, p.13.

[37] *ibid.,* pp.13-19.

[38] Julia Kristeva, cited in Jonathan Cullen, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, London, 1981, p.105.

therefore be comparing the textual evidence across genres where appropriate, as well as discussing non-epigraphic evidence from the New Kingdom in Chapters two and four to illustrate my arguments, seeking to identify Kristeva's culturally-specific "universe" in which the texts operate. This thesis therefore provides a new interpretation of texts already translated and studied, and aims to show that the same piece of evidence can be 'read' in many different ways reflecting diverse reception responses, while still retaining their specific ancient character. Constructions of gendered identity and the portrayal of the gendered body within a culturally-specific milieu will be the focal point throughout this analysis.

Chapter One

"A woman is asked about her husband, a man about his rank."[39]
Sex, gender, and the Egyptian milieu.

It now seems pertinent to outline previous research on sexuality and gender construction, as well as the modern theories that have informed the writing of this thesis. Each individual chapter will, in addition, review the primary sources specific to that chapter, examining the modern research conducted on the specific evidence, as well as briefly reviewing the application of current theory in relation to the texts under analysis. In this manner, it will be clear how modern theory and previous scholarly enquiry inform my reading(s), as well as letting the sources, and their potential multitude of ancient voices, speak for themselves, via close textual analysis. Chapter one shall first examine gender and sexuality as understood in modern, Western society today, before moving on to consider our evidence for gender construction, sexual behaviour and gendered individuals in the ancient Egyptian world, along with a review of previous Egyptological research on these topics. Second, the chapter will then go on to detail the specific milieu of New Kingdom Egyptian society in which these gendered roles operated, both at a conformist level, and as deviations or challenges to the culturally-imposed standard. The experiences of women at different socio-economic levels of society will be considered, and an outline of previous work on Egyptian sexuality and sexual orientation will be given. Methods of literary analysis and critique will be examined, including a discussion on the application of 'gender ventriloquism' and performativity, concluding the chapter with a return to questions of literary transmission and reception in this particular cultural setting. The subsequent analyses will focus on "a *perspective* characterised by multidimensional enquiry, open to a variety of explanatory options that can incorporate biology, society, culture, and/or psychology" that can look beyond what we are told by the surviving literature at face value, and explore beyond the surface.[40] This relies on more than "one dimension" of enquiry, a study of "variations in-cultural concepts that define aspects of sexuality within and across social groups" while recognising the temporal and culturally-specific nature of the society that produced the information available for us to analyse.[41]

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[39] 'Instruction of Any'*, Ancient Egyptian Literature Vol. 2: The New Kingdom,* Miriam Lichtheim (transl.), Los Angeles and London, 2nd ed., 2006b, p.140.
[40] Frayser, 1999, p.2.
[41] *ibid.*

Gender, sexuality, and the use of modern theories, ncluding intersectionality

Writing as early as 1673, the French Cartesian philosopher Poulain de la Barre argued that male prejudices against women were the result of cultural and social discrimination and not the product of natural 'inequalities.'[42] He went on to explain that "tout ce qui a été écrit par les hommes sur les femmes doit être suspect, car ils sont à la fois juge et partie."[43] Therefore, because men invariably defined women as inferior, women's place in written accounts would reflect this ingrained pro-male bias.[44] Nearly three hundred years after de la Barre was writing, Simone de Beauvoir observed that although men may indeed be both "juge et partie" when writing about women, female authors were no more able to step outside of sexual difference than their male counterparts were.[45] Tongue in cheek, Beauvoir suggests that only an angel or hermaphrodite could write a completely objective account of society.[46] Butler expands upon this, explaining that for much of human existence, this history was written by men, for men, and about men. This subjectively positioned the category of women as the secondary Other, only acknowledged in terms of its relationship to the dominant "I." In this case, the "I", the point of normative reference, is the category of the male who holds agency both in terms of performing the history and of transmitting it through writing.[47] Butler then goes on to consider whether the pitting of the masculine "I" against the feminine Other has caused a separation so great that it has created "an artificial set of questions about the knowability and recoverability of that Other."[48]

So, is it possible to "know" and "recover" our ancient subjects employing the use of modern theories regarding sex and gender? Although gender is often used to denote biological sex, it is not synonymous with it, and sexual orientation or sexuality does not rely on either conforming to or deviating from gendered character and/or physical traits. Frayser gives a

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[42] François Poulain de la Barre, *The Equality of the Sexes*, D. M. Clarke (transl.), Manchester and New York, 1990; Siep Stuurman, *François Poulain de la Barre and the Invention of Modern Equality*, Cambridge, MA., and London, 2004, pp.52-58.

[43] "Everything which has been written by men about women must be suspect since they are simultaneously judge and litigant", François Poulain de la Barre, quoted by Simone de Beauvoir, 1973, p.21.

[44] Stuurman, 2004, pp.156-158, referring to Poulain de la Barres' anonymous 1674 publication *De l'éducation des dames pour la conduite de l'esprit, dans les sciences et dans les moeurs: Entretiens*. Poulain de la Barre would later modify his views on women's education and ability to be employed in 'scientific' professions, yet can still be considered a "feminist Cartesian philosopher"; see Stuurman, 2004, pp.87-89; pp.272-275.

[45] de Beauvoir, 1973, p.27.

[46] *ibid*.

[47] Butler,1999, pp.196-197.

[48] *ibid*., p.197.

standard definition of human sexuality as "a system composed of biological, social, cultural, and psychological attributes that intersect in producing erotic arousal and/or orgasm, and associated with but not necessarily resulting in reproduction."[49] Gender is largely a social construct that varies over time and space, its construction having the ability to privilege and entrench personal identity within society just as deviations from gender norms can oppress or coerce, disadvantaging those who are regarded as marginal or non-conformative. Identity encompasses age, ethnicity, sexuality, social status, social roles, and how these operate in relation to gender-expectations, and differentiation results from different social impositions and expectations placed on a person.[50] Wolfe argues that "humans, with their capacity for language and myth-making, symbolize sex so that all sexual interactions, no matter how brief, are embedded in cultural meanings…[which] allows for the construction of gender and the assigning of appropriate behaviour for each gender."[51] The specificity of these "cultural meanings" are further complicated by the fact that "identities are not predictive of behaviour and may indeed mask or hide actual erotic encounters"[52] as individuals can outwardly conform to 'norms' of 'correct' behaviour, because they feel they must repress or conceal their true identity in order to be accepted socially. As sexual congress is almost exclusively a private act, in order to study sexual behaviour and practice it is necessary to rely on *what is said about it* in accounts which are unlikely to be wholly accurate representations of practice and behaviour in which actual experience can be hidden, misrepresented, or manipulated in ways that observations about other aspects of life are not.[53] Despite this tendency to make sex 'invisible', we as researchers are still able to learn a great deal "about the enormous variety of cultural values and attitudes associated with sex and sexuality"[54] that *are* visible through the texts and other artefacts left behind in the material record. In order to see as much of the picture as possible, we need to examine the ancient evidence within its social context, by paying close attention to the subjects that are the focus of the text or object. However, we also need to

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[49] Frayser, 1999, p.2.

[50] Terry G. Wilfong, "Gender and Sexuality", *The Egyptian World,* T. Wilkinson (ed.), London and New York, 2007, p.205.

[51] Linda D. Wolfe, "Human Sexual Behaviour and Evolution", *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle, (eds.), Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, GE., and London, 1999, p.83.

[52] Gilbert Herdt, "Sexing Anthropology: Rethinking Sexual Culture, Subjectivity, and the Method of Anthropological Participant Observation", *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle, (eds.), Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, GE., and London, 1999, p.19.

[53] Ernestine Friedl, "A Discussion of Culture, Biology, and Sexuality: Towards Synthesis", *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle, (eds.), Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, GE., and London, 1999a, p.88; See also D. E. Brown, *Human Universals,* New York, 1991.

[54] Ernestine Friedl, "Appendix: Sex the Invisible", *Culture, Biology, and Sexuality,* D. N. Suggs and A. W. Miracle, (eds.) Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 32., Athens, GE., and London, 1999b, pp.92-93.

consider who is missing, is mis-represented, or appears only at the periphery of the source. Of course, we generally see what we are told: as Friedl recognises, we are not able to "compare statements about behaviour, attitudes and values with observed actions"[55] yet this does not mean our analysis cannot bring about fruitful discussion or exploration of the topic.

The gender roles associated with, and defined by, a simple male vs. female dichotomy has been challenged with the rise of gay, lesbian, and transgender histories and it is even now being recognised that it is not enough simply to divide biological sex into two clearly defined categories. Culture impacts on when a child *becomes* a sexualised entity, for example, and studies on intersex individuals show that reliance on the conception of the Other is an inadequate tool for categorising humanity and human experience.[56] This thesis will use the term 'woman' to denote an individual who is biologically female. It must be recognised that this includes individuals who would be termed mother, sister, wife, and so on, but does not imply that they all shared the same experience. Essentialism, when referring to women, is simplistically characterised by the argument that women are "born, not made" and that 'womanhood' is innate rather than socially constructed.[57] That is, anyone who is biologically female, regardless of their sexual orientation, social status, ethnicity, ability to bear children, or age, is positioned in an opposing framework to the unspoken, implicit (biologically) male norm. In addition, while women are often positioned as the Other to this male norm, there are instances within the category of women where a certain type is considered deviant in itself. A modern example is lesbianism as opposed to normative female heterosexuality. I recall a response on social media by a (neither conventionally identified Butch nor Femme) lesbian to the question "So, which one of you is the man?" asked of herself and her partner. She answered with a question herself: "Which chopstick is the knife, and which is the fork?" showing the inadequacy of an 'either/or' mode of identification. Aspects of femininity and masculinity are, of course, also constructed, and can force the sexualised physical body into oppressive topes based on a socially imposed dichotomy that simplifies gendered identifications into a false duality. This is not reflective of an innate physiology, an unchangeable natural truism of what

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[55] *ibid*, p.93.

[56] Of course, Said emphasised this himself, undermining the notion of 'us and them' as definitive categories. *Orientalism,* 1978. Michel Foucault's introduction and translation of the memoirs of Herculine Barbin, a French intersex individual born 'female' in 1838 and legally forced to identify as 'male' in 1860, is one early scholarly example of assessing the experiences of a historic intersex person. See Herculine Barbin, *Herculine Barbin: The recently discovered memoirs of a Nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite,* Michel Foucault (intro.), New York, 1980.

[57] Frances Bonner and Lizbeth Goodman, "On Imagining Women", *Imagining Women; Cultural Representation and Gender,* F. Bonner, L. Goodman, R. Allen, and C. King (eds.), Oxford and Cambridge, 1992, p.2.

being feminine, being a woman, actually *is*, but rather an indication of what society and culture tells us is an appropriate expression of 'womanhood.'

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* has influenced many modern scholars of gender studies and feminist histories, although the text has been re-evaluated, discussed, challenged and responded to since its publication. This work aimed to expose the ways in which masculine ideology exploits the sexual difference to create systems of inequality, and the association of 'humanity' with 'men' and male experience forces women to occupy an inferior position in discourse.[58] De Beauvoir argued for women's equality, while insisting on the reality of the sexual difference in order to counter the heteronormative European masculine ideal that dominated Western society at the time of writing.[59] Writing after the impact of second-wave feminism, Butler's *Gender Trouble* has been a hugely influential book due to her ideas regarding gender performativity, as well as the various relations between sex and gender. Butler suggests that we abandon our conception of "women" as a viable category for representation, and consider gender to be a manifestation of our actions and behaviours that steps outside the "incontestable" heteronormative matrix.[60] For Butler, regulative discourse constructs the sexed body in relation to specific cultural requirements, compelling the individual to perform stylised actions that reinforce the ideas of heterosexuality as "normal", and a binary opposition between the sexes as "natural" or "innate." This does imply that gender is completely constructed, without taking into account certain biological factors, and has been countered by other scholars, such as Frayser, who argues that "accusations of reductionism and essentialism are sometimes well placed, but they do not make the relevance of biology or materialism go away" when discussing gendered behaviour.[61] Likewise, Bordo asked "if the body is treated as pure text, subversive, destabilizing elements can be emphasized and freedom and self-determination celebrated; but one is left wondering, is there a body in this text?" in response to the Butlerian viewpoint.[62] Following the work of Michel Foucault, Butler emphatically argued that certain cultural formations and ideals lead to displacement of the "real"; here, the "being of gender" is an effect imposed upon us by convention.[63]

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[58] de Beauvoir, 1973.
[59] *ibid.*
[60] Butler, 1999, pp.8-9.
[61] Frayser, 1999, p.11.
[62] Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Berkeley, CA., 1993, p.38.
[63] Butler, 1999, p.45.

Butler also owed much to the "analytics of power" developed by Foucault in his *The History of Sexuality,* in which he stated that power operates through the discursive construction of sexuality and its subjects, rather than the repression of sex.[64] Using the Victorian era as a case study, Foucault emphasised that the power mechanisms of sexuality are insecure, changeable social constructions, situated in a specific milieu, be it cultural and/or historical, arguing that repression is the "fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality."[65] To put it another way, repression through hegemony and established norms brings the sexual act into discourse, and those who fall outside of the imposed norms can be considered deviant or abberant.[66] For an extreme view regarding the cultural informance of sexual behaviours, Davenport states that as humans cannot behave "meaninglessly", where "meaningful" behaviour is culturally derived.[67] An "act sexual" must always be an "act cultural" and cannot be compared across cultures (both spatial and temporal) in this view.[68] This has been contested by Suggs and Miracle, for example, who argue that this stance is "counterproductive" and "divisive."[69] They go on to claim such an approach impedes how "…we might in theory as researchers construct relatively useful comparative programs for generalization in tandem with interpretive explanations of the particular cultural constructions."[70] Therefore, Foucaultian ideas on the construction of the self and sexual practice will be used in this thesis, but will not be regarded as incontestable, just as Butler's stance on gender as a purely cultural construct, *contra* Fausto-Sterling's work for example[71], is utilised throughout but not presented as irrefutable. Instead, I follow Wolfe's synthesis: "With the evolution of modern humans, mating behaviour came to be shaped by culture. In other words, there is a biological dimension to human sexual behaviour, and sex and gender among humans are largely informed by culture."[72] Cultural anthropologists stress the importance of socio-cultural factors in defining the sexual *nature* of human beings, yet it is important to recognize that evolutionary biology can play a role as well. However, as Frayser states, just because a behavioural trait *can* have a biological

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[64] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction,* R. Hurley (transl.), New York, 1990, pp.3-13; pp.92-98.
[65] *ibid.*, p.5.
[66] *ibid.,* p.4; p.7. It must be noted that Foucault's treatment of the ancient world, especially his claims regarding Roman sexuality have been contested.
[67] William Davenport, "An Anthropological Approach", in *Theories of Human Sexuality,* J. H. Geer and W. T. O'Donohue, (eds.), New York, 1987, pp.100-103.
[68] *ibid.*
[69] Suggs and Miracle, 1999, p.36.
[70] *ibid*.
[71] Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: biological theories about women and men,* New York, 1992.
[72] Wolfe, 1999, p.76.

explanation, it does not necessarily mean "that all behaviour has to be confined to this level of explanation."[73] Culture is the driving force behind gender constructs, but the impact of biology must not completely be ignored.

Feminist research has, largely, been undertaken by women for women.[74] In addition, it often sought to create a universal 'sisterhood' in opposition to male-driven repression and control. However, this necessarily overlooked issues of difference within women's lives and lived experiences, and has been challenged since the advent of Second Wave Feminism by scholars who recognised that 'feminism/feminist' as a blanket term for all women striving against oppression or marginalisation was insufficient. This Essentialism or assumed homogeneity of experience largely overlooked differences among women and was critiqued by feminists of colour, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, and "womanist" Audre Lorde, as well as by post-structuralists aiming to subvert and dismantle discursive power structures.[75] At the Akron, Ohio, conference on women's rights in 1851, Sojourner Truth, in a lengthy speech, famously asked "ain't I a woman?" as reported by several different sources, most famously by Frances Barker Gage. Gage's version of Truth's speech "communicates an intentionally feminist message"[76] positing all women together against patriarchal oppression. Other versions of the speech emphasise the anti-slavery rhetoric within it, and so awarded it a political purpose, more of an abolitionist's appeal than a feminist one.[77] Now, Truth's speech can be seen as an early example of a woman of colour challenging the underlying assumption of the early women's Suffrage movement that feminism only dealt with middle-class or privileged white woman's issues, something other feminists of colour, such as bell hooks, have more recently emphasised.[78] For hooks, feminism could not achieve the goal of making *all* women equal to *all* men, because not *all* men were treated as equal, due to race, class and social status. She

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[73] Frayser, 1999, p.11.

[74] See Paulette Benton, "Feminist Ethnography: On the politics of doing research on women", *Women's Studies Journal* 13, 1, 1997, pp.106-107.

[75] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics", *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (PhilPapers) 140, 1989, pp.139–167; Audre Lorde, "Age, race, class, and sex: women redefining difference", *Dangerous liaisons: gender, nation, and postcolonial perspectives,* A. McClintock, A. Mufti, and E. Shohat (eds.), Minnesota, 1997, pp.374–380. Lorde considered herself a "womanist" as she felt her black lesbian activism did not fit neatly into the category of "Feminism" as it stood at the time. Of course, post-structuralists can also be feminists, such as Monique Wittig and Luce Irigary, or post-colonial feminists, as typified by the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in *Thinking Academic Freedom in Gendered Post-Coloniality*, Cape Town, 1992.

[76] Kay Siebler, "Teaching the politics of Sojourner Truth's 'Ain't I a Woman'," *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 10, 3, 2010, p.512.

[77] Siebler, mentioning Marius Robinson's transcript of Truth's speech, 2010, pp.512–513.

[78] bell hooks, *"Ain't I a woman?" Black Women and Feminism*, Cambridge, MA., 1981.

commented that "women in lower class and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white… are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status," accentuating the disparities rather than commonalities of 'womanhood.'[79] As well as encouraging her readers to consider race, class and sex in relation to constructs of gender, hooks also stressed the importance of men's involvement in the equality and civil rights movement.[80] In a similar way, Siebler contends that analysis of Sojourner Truth's speech encourages modern readers to consider issues of "the social and political dynamics of race and gender" at the time of the Akron conference, as well as at our time of reading,[81] and as such is intersectional in nature. Intersectionality, a term coined by Crenshaw, accentuated how difference traits or facets of a person's identity are inseparable, and can create cultural patterns of discrimination and oppression.[82] Collins and Bilge explain that in terms of social inequality,

> "people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but as many axes that work together and influence each other."[83]

Generally, intersectionality "refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power."[84] This difference in power and associated agency impacts on the creation and entrenchment of social identities and person-to-person interactions, shaping how an individual views, and is viewed by, a specific socio-cultural context. The use of intersectional analysis allows us to identify and examine "hidden forms of collusion between resistance and dominance, or for showing the relational nature between privilege and oppression."[85] By viewing our ancient Egyptian evidence through an intersectional lens, we are able, therefore, to consider the lives and experiences of people

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[79] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*, Cambridge, MA., 1984, pp.51-52.
[80] *ibid.,* p.62; pp.82-83.
[81] Siebler,2010, p.527.
[82] Crenshaw, 1989, pp.139–167. See also Collins and Bilge, 2016, pp.1-30.
[83] Collins and Bilge, 2016, p.2.
[84] Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful", *Feminist Theory* 9, 1, 2008, p.68.
[85] Vivian M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries*, New York and London, 2015, p.viii.

who may have been initially overlooked in previous studies, simply because they do not feature as the central focus of the text.

Third Wave Feminists also focus on difference and diverse identities, examining the experiences of queer individuals as well as non-white women, for example, while challenging established stereotypes based on gendered roles.[86] As outlined by Mann and Huffman, Third Wave feminism owes much to the concept of intersectionality as well as post-structuralism, with a focus on difference and the deconstruction of coherent identities.[87] Intersectional theory is therefore a very useful tool when considering how several axes of identity can intersect and act simultaneously on a person, as "the events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor."[88] In reality, oppressive and discriminatory systems interact with gender, and discrimination based on biological sex is just one of these systems of control. Nonetheless, we would be naïve to ignore the fact that much of human history has been written by men, (usually about a certain type of male activity or achievement), causing Cixous to lament, "[n]early the entire history of writing…has been one with the phallocentric tradition."[89] This male bias, in Cixous' opinion, prevents women from accessing their own histories, from creating their own stories. Monique Wittig also criticized "the straight mind", a heteronormative mindset that gave a fallacious sense of unity and normalcy to constructs of sex and gender, explaining how this construct made lesbians 'not-a-woman', as 'woman' was defined in relation to a heterosexual binary.[90] Other scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, encourage the reader to look for "queer idioms" and "potential queer nuances" in different types of literature, challenging heteronormative biases in both the audience's and the author/copyist's mindset.[91] Sedgewick herself defined 'queer' as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically."[92] It must be stressed that Queer Theory, although owning much to Feminist critique, is not the same as feminism, nor does it only deal with

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[86] Rebecca Walker, *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism,* New York, 1995; Rebecca Walker "Becoming the Third Wave", *Ms. Magazine* 11, 2, 1992, pp.39-41, in which she introduced the term "Third Wave" as opposed to "post-Feminist."
[87] Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman, "The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave", *Science and Society* 69, 2005, pp.56-91.
[88] Collins and Bilge, 2016, p.2.
[89] Hélène Cixous, *The Hélène Cixous Reader,* S. Sellers (ed.), London and New York, 1994, p.879.
[90] Monique Wittig, "The straight mind", *Feminist Issues* 1, 1, 1980, pp.103–111.
[91] Jason Edwards*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick,* Routledge Critical Thinkers, London and New York, 2009, p.59.
[92] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, (Series Q), Durham and London, 1993, p.8. Sedgwick's emphasis.

homosexual relationships. Queer theorists investigate the "deconstruction and fluidity of transient identities", while Feminists focus on the "materiality of the body and the things done to" the bodies of women.[93] However, Queer Theory and feminism converge in that they "aim to transform the deprivation of *what is* into *what can be*", to show the need for revisions to the established and controlling *status quo*.[94] Queer Theory basically seeks to challenge normative thinking in the study of sex and gender, and acquires its meaning from this challenge: it operates as an oppositional relation to the norm, and queer identity is, in the words of Thomas Dowson, "not based on a notion of stable truth or reality", setting it apart somewhat from gay and lesbian identity.[95] In exploring sexuality and erotic practice, both ancient and modern, the simple male vs. female heterosexual or cis-normative dichotomy has been challenged, demonstrating that an incontestable polarity based on opposing biological sex is reductive and misleading. Foucault, among other theorists, also critiqued the modern privileging of orientation as the defining feature of sexuality, arguing that categorising an individual based on their sexual preference alone is anachronistic. We must, however, recognise that "there is a danger of manipulating the past in the service of contemporary politics"[96] when applying Queer Theory, and we must take care to let the evidence speak for itself as much as possible without imposing modern wishes or agenda on it without sufficient reason to do so.

How an individual speaks as well as acts or visually presents themselves is a large part of constructing gender and its associated expectations. Robin Tolmach Lakoff's 1975 work *Language and Woman's Place* introduced many ideas regarding language and gender to the discipline of sociolinguistics, some of which now seem dated and have been modified by subsequent scholars.[97] Lakoff herself reflected on the issues and conclusions presented in her original work, stating that she hoped her discussion would lead to greater awareness and, in a sense, rebellion against imposed gender conventions.[98] Focusing on class and power structures

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[93] McLaughlin, Casey and Richardson, 2006, p.2.
[94] Hennessy, 2006, p.133. Hennessy's emphasis.
[95] Thomas Dowson, "Queering Sex and Gender in ancient Egypt", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, p.30.
[96] Dowson, 2008, p.41.
[97] See Anna Livia, "Picking Up the Gauntlet", *Language and Woman's Place, Revised and Expanded*, M. Bucholtz (ed.), Oxford, 2004, pp.143-144; Sally McConnell-Ginet, "Positioning Ideas and Gendered Subjects: 'Women's Language' Revisited", *Language and Woman's Place, Revised and Expanded,* M. Bucholtz (ed.), Oxford, 2004, pp.136-141.
[98] Robin Tolmach Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place, Revised and Expanded,* M. Bucholtz (ed.), Oxford, 2004, p.102.

as well as gender norms, Lakoff identified many ways in which women's speech appeared to differ from that of men, such as the increased use of tag questions, hedge phrases, and excessively polite forms amongst women.[99] This, Lakoff believed, was incredibly important when considering gender inequalities but it does relate to Western (especially Anglophone) countries in particular, and the implications in this study on Egyptological research can be seen in recent work by Sweeney, for example.[100] In her analyses, Sweeney applied Lakoff's 'politeness' assumption to New Kingdom literature, concluding that this is informed by Western, middle-class female identity and, as women in the compositions under analysis actually refuse requests slightly more frequently than males do, its application to the ancient Egyptian cultural setting is problematic.[101] Deborah Tannen, writing in 1991, considered miscommunication between men and women to be the result of 'genderlects', different communication styles learnt by boys and girls at an early age that allowed for different methods of information exchange.[102] Tannen's division along purely biological lines seems oversimplified and Essentialist, and although the book found success among a popular audience, many academics disputed her conclusions, which Tannen based on examples and anecdotes from her personal life as well as scholarly research. In particular, the book was slated as anachronistic and as reinforcing conventional misogynistic stereotypes by Alice Freed, who characterises Tannen as an "apologist" for men, and points out that she did not consider racial or ethnic differences in her research.[103] Social power theory suggests that the 'women's language traits', as described in Lakoff, were reflective of socio-economic status as well as biological sex, with those with more power and status using fewer 'women's traits.'[104] Social status, as a part of gender identity, impacts upon speech and action just as biological sex does and illustrates how gendered identity is not solely reliant on a person's physiology. Consequently, if we simplify a society into two categories based on biological sex alone, the

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[99] *ibid*.

[100] Sweeney, 2008, pp.191-123.

[101] *ibid*, pp.202-203 in particular. See also Deborah Sweeney "Gender and Conversational Tactics in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*", *JEA* 88, 2002b, pp.141–162, in which language usage and its potential correlation to positions of power are addressed.

[102] Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation,* New York, 1991, pp.76-78 in particular. For criticism of Tannen's conclusions, see Deborah Cameron, "Gender, Language, and Difference: A Review Essay", *Signs* 23, 4, 1998, pp.948-51, particularly the consideration that the concept of difference in language use can result in further entrenching inequalities, with male 'difference' often being equated with 'dominance.'

[103] Alice Freed, "We Understand Perfectly: A Critique of Tannen's View of Cross-sex Communication", *Locating power: Proceedings of the second Berkeley women and language conference,* K. Hall and M. Buchholz (eds.), Berkeley, 1993, pp.144–152.

[104] Lakoff, 2004.

complexity of multiple identities is lost, and we assume that all members of that society experienced hetero- or cis-normative desire. This assumption then goes on to take for granted that the male and female personae function in opposition to one another, and that biological sex creates an uncomplicated dichotomy that allows for no shared experiences based on other aspects of identity. This is not the case, as has been discussed. Instead, we must recognise that "culture and psychology dance with society and biology to produce the complexity and dilemmas that we face in dealing with human sexuality as a whole"[105], and the study of gender and sexuality in ancient Egypt cannot be undertaken without consideration of the socio-cultural context in which our subjects lived and died.

Gender, sex and sexualities in ancient Egypt

Studying gender and sexual behaviour is hugely important in our quest for understanding ancient peoples, both individually and as a social group. It returns us "to the holistic concerns of anthropology as a study of humans as biological and cultural animals organized into societies"[106] which allows us to more fully comprehend the socio-cultural conventions that affected and shaped the lives of our subjects. As a society, ancient Egypt was highly gendered throughout its history, and this is reflected in depictions of individuals both in written and visual text.[107] Overall, women are almost exclusively visually depicted as being physically perfect and desirable, with little or no signs of aging, in much of the visual material record.[108] The scene below, from the wall reliefs painted in the tomb of Nebamun, is an excellent example of the traditional portrayal of a New Kingdom woman. Nebamun's wife is shown as youthful and attractive, of smaller stature than her husband, and wearing a heavy wig with a perfumed wax cone on top of it, clearly visible jewellery, and a diaphanous dress that emphasises the outlines of her body:

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[105] Frayser, 1999, p.10.
[106] Friedl, 1999a, p.86.
[107] Wilfong, 2007, p.206, for a brief discussion of gendered codes and markers, such as visual depictions, literary representations, and the use of language, as well as biological remains and physical bodily evidence for differentiation.
[108] Deborah Sweeney, "Forever Young? The Representation of Older and Ageing Women in Ancient Egyptian Art", *JARCE* 41, 2004, pp.67-68.

Figure 1: Fishing and Fowling wall relief scene from the tomb of Nebamun, now displayed in the British Museum, London. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

Visually, there was a hierarchy based on biological sex present in most, if not all, artistic depictions. The fact that the funerary papyrus of Anhai, a New Kingdom Chantress of Amun, only includes two small representations of her husband in order to allow her to occupy the dominant position as owner of the papyrus, and as the person travelling through the afterlife hoping for rebirth, is very telling.[109] He could not be positioned as subordinate to her in the main vignettes; therefore he is simply missing from the visual accompaniment to the text to supposedly deal with this problem. Some Middle Kingdom funerary stelae belonging to women depict them in the dominant 'male' position, but this is only done when the male shown on the stela is much younger (her son, for example) or of a lower social status (such as a servant).[110] This continued into the New Kingdom, with many artefacts positioning the female as subservient, or as an extension of the male, reflected in the trend of 'including' the female individual in her husbands' funerary assemblage rather than as an autonomous figure with her own independent identity.[111] Therefore, rules of decorum based on culturally-gendered roles still applied, positioning the female as subordinate to, or dependent on, the male in cases where they came from the same socio-economic class.

As Parkinson notes, androgynous representation of the human or anthropomorphised body tends to be limited to depictions of deities, as well as semi-divine figures such as royalty in some cases, and therefore does not provide firm evidence for an "intermediate sex" in

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[109] This will be examined in great detail in Chapter four of this thesis.

[110] For example, BM EA 804 depicts Mery-Sekhmet as a child seated on his mother's lap, and BM EA 280 shows the owner and her mother on a larger scale than the male figure pouring out an offering.

[111] See pp.179-183 of this thesis regarding the scarcity of female owned Book of the Dead documents. See also Robins, 1990, pp.21-22, for a discussion of the relegation to "second place" of the female in relation to her husband in New Kingdom tomb paintings.

epigraphic or literary works.[112] Depauw has examined the possibility of "gender transgressing" individuals in ancient Egypt, looking at titles and designations across a wide time span, giving examples from the Middle Kingdom up until the Greco-Roman period of Egypt's history.[113] In this article from 2003, Depauw identifies individuals such as possible eunuchs who seemed to exhibit traits of more than one gender.[114] Some Dynasty Eighteen depictions of Nefertiti and Akhenaten also seem to show a certain androgyny that did not rely on typical physical perfection. However, other artwork from this period, such as ÄM 21300, the famous Berlin bust, as well as ÄM 21220, a bust worked in quartzite, portray Nefertiti as the typical 'feminine ideal' in appearance.[115] Prior to the Amarna Period, the female king Hatshepsut also made use of 'gender-bending' imagery, for example in sculptures made during her joint rule with Thutmose III, c.1473-1458 B.C., which often merged "feminine traits with masculine symbols of royal power."[116] Her sphinxes generally combine the powerful, often masculine, form of this royal iconography with delicate, feminine facial features[117]; the Osiride statues from the sanctuary at Deir el Bahri hint at the feminisation of a male deity associated with Hatshepsut through the use of yellow skin colouring[118]; and, most likely from the start of her reign, an almost unique granite statue shows Hatshepsut wearing an "understated" sheath dress and jewellery, coupled with the king's *nemes* headdress and ureaeus.[119] It must be noted that in statues and depictions such as those at Deir el Bahri, Hatshepsut made use of traditional kingly regalia "that was worn by a pharaoh as the living embodiment of the god Horus" and should not be seen simply as a sign of "cross dressing"[120], despite her physical body showing little to no sign of her sex.

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[112] Parkinson, 1995, p.61; pp.68-69. The possible reference to a 'woman-boy' in *The Maxims of Ptahhotep* (maxim 32) could be an exception to this conventional representation of gendered depictions as an uncomplicated binary, although the text is not clear in regards to the identity of the individual, or group of individuals, designated ḥmt-ḥrd.

[113] Mark Depauw, "Notes on Transgressing Gender Boundaries in ancient Egypt", *ZÄS* 130, 2003, pp.49-59.

[114] *ibid*, pp.49-50 for eunuchs/castrati, and p.51 for a Dynasty Twenty Six example of a possible 'man-woman' from Abydos.

[115] See Dietrich Wildung, Fabian Reiter, and Olivia Zorn, (eds.), "Akhenaten and Nefertiti", *Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, Berlin. 100 Masterpieces,* Berlin, 2010, pp.80-109.

[116] Cathleen A. Keller, "The Statuary of Hatshepsut", *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh,* C. H. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, and C. A. Keller (eds.), New York, 2005, p.158.

[117] *ibid*., pp.158-172; p.66 for Hatshepsut as a maned sphinx; pp.164-165, for a discussion of the facial features of her collosal sphinxes from Deir el Bahri.

[118] The yellow, typically female skin tone used on these statues may "reflect Hatshepsut's decision… early in the co-regency period, to adopt kingly titles while retaining female aspects." *ibid*., p.158.

[119] *ibid*., p.170. Keller notes that only one other statue that depicts a female wearing a royal woman's dress and king's headgear is known dating to before Hatshepsut's rule; this depicts Neferusobek, the female king with whose reign Dynasty Twelve ended.

[120] Kasia Szpakowska, "Hidden Voices: Unveiling Women in Ancient Egypt", *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World,* S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds.), Malden, MA., and Oxford, 2015, p.30.

However, depictions such as these stand out precisely because of their atypical nature. Some other exceptions to the typically youthful and physically-perfect depiction of women do exist that date to the New Kingdom, such as the famous wooden statuette of queen Tiye, now housed in the Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, in which her aging face seems to stare with distain at the viewer.[121] Contrast this to the more traditional and conventional depiction on the coffin of Katebet, on display in the British Museum, EA 6665, who died in the late Eighteenth dynasty. She is shown as young, in her reproductive prime, and physically beautiful, wearing a full wig and expensive jewellery, despite the fact that her corpse is that of an elderly, almost toothless, woman. An older woman named Huy is depicted in TT 3, dating to Dynasty Nineteen, whose hair is shown as grey, reflecting her status as the mother of the tomb owner, Pashedu.[122] However, it is important to note that her body and dress, as well as facial features, are remarkably similar to the younger women shown in the registers below her depiction, and the tomb is not her own. Therefore, she is shown as older in order to stress that she is of the generation before her son, as is the man with white hair in the same register, the father of Pashedu.

In contrast to the physically perfect woman, men could be depicted with rolls of fat and facial wrinkles such as naso-labial folds in order to indicate wealth (access to greater amounts of food, and food of better quality), as well as the associated authority and experience of age.[123] Very rarely, women are shown with physical imperfections or markers of individual appearance, and when this does happen, it is mostly used to indicate someone from the labouring class or a foreigner.[124] This has lead Carolyn Graves-Brown to ask if women were depicted as, and considered to be, little more than sex objects.[125] She goes on to question whether this was necessarily a strictly negative feature, suggesting that overt sexuality could potentially empower a woman in certain situations, just as it could denigrate her in others.[126] Overall, though, it must be acknowledged that women generally occupied the subservient

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[121] ÄM 21834/ 17852 (crown).

[122] See Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings: The Theban Necropolis. Part 1, Private Tombs,* Oxford, 1960, pp.9-11, for information on Pashedu's tomb.

[123] Sweeney, 2004, p.67.

[124] *ibid.*, p.69. The depiction of the queen of Punt, from Deir el Bahri, is an example of a female figure shown as existing outside of this 'perfect women' stereotype, but of course her presence in Hatshepsut's reliefs were designed to indicate the exotic, outside-of-Egypt nature of her country as well as her individual foreignness.

[125] Graves-Brown, 2010, pp.49-50.

[126] *ibid.*

position in ancient Egypt and were ideally meant to be a nurturing support of their male relations, with the goddess Isis acting as a 'role model' for desirable female behaviour. From the Middle Kingdom onwards, many higher status women were designated *nbt pr*, 'Mistress of the House', which, as Betsy Bryan recognises, stressed "women's superior status within the home but also encouraged the husband to keep ultimate control of his wife"[127] by limiting 'feminised' activities to the domestic sphere as much as possible.

It seems fair to say that the main role an Egyptian woman during pharaonic times was expected to fulfil was that of wife (*ḥmt*) and mother (*mwt*).[128] The ancient Egyptians did not seem to have any formalised marriage ceremonies, instead cohabiting together as a family group, with the woman entering into the household of the man in most circumstances. The terms *grg pr* (to establish a household) and *ꜥḳ r pr* (to enter a household) are conventionally translated as 'marriage', emphasising the importance of the domestic sphere in defining relationships.[129] Despite the lack of formalised marriage ceremonies (or at least our lack of evidence for them), the word *ḥmt* is generally translated as 'wife', with *ḥ(ꜣ)y* corresponding to 'husband', and this convention will be followed in this thesis,[130] although perhaps 'domestic partner' would be a better term provided we recognise the potential inequalities in such an arrangement for the ancient Egyptians. Other designations do exist in the ancient sources, such as a woman "being with" (*m-di*) a man in what appears to be an established relationship, as found in p.Salt 124[131], and a woman being styled *ḥmt ṯꜣy*, implying that she 'belonged' to a man in a monogamous partnership.[132] Sexual activity, whether in an 'official' relationship between *ḥmt* and *ḥꜣy*, or in a more informal - perhaps even nonconsensual - situation, could be described by several

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[127] Betsy M. Bryan, "In women good and bad fortune are on earth: Status and roles of women in Egyptian culture", *Mistress of the Home, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt,* A. K. Capel and G. F. Markoe (eds.), New York, 1996, p.36.

[128] William Ward, "Non-Royal women and their occupations in the Middle Kingdom", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, "Non-Royal Women and their Occupations in the Middle Kingdom", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, p.43.

[129] Pieter W. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt,* Leiden, 1961, pp.9-10.

[130] See Robins, 1993, pp.56-60 for more information on the concepts of marriage and divorce (literally 'expulsion') in ancient Egyptian society, and J. Johnson, "Sex and Marriage in Ancient Egypt," in *Hommages à Fayza Haikal*, N-C. Grimal, A. Kamel and C. M. Sheikholeslami (eds.), *BdÉ* 138, 2003, pp.149-59, for additional commentary.

[131] Jaroslav Černý, "Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)", *JEA* 15, 1929, p.253.

[132] *Wörterbuch* 4, 345. See Depauw, 2003, pp.51-54 for a discussion of this term, including possible readings of *ḥmt ṯꜣy* as prostitute, or as woman-man in addition to married woman.

different terms.[133] For example, a person could be said to "know sexually" (*rḫ*) another person[134], could "copulate with" (*nḏmnḏm*) someone[135], with the same word sometimes being used as a noun to indicate sexual pleasure[136], or could "have sex with" (*nk*) an individual.[137] Landgráfová and Navratilová comment that *nk* seems to be the most frequently used verb for sexual activity, and could be translated in several different ways, "ranging from neutral [meanings] to rather gross variants" in a range of different contexts.[138]

Following on from sexual activity, motherhood was generally expected and required of his wife by a husband eager for an heir. 'The Instructions of Any' tells his son to "take a wife while you are young, that she make a son for you. She should bear for you while you are youthful…"[139] This text, most probably written down during Dynasty Eighteen, also outlines the two types of women a man could expect to meet, and how he should behave in their presence. The women are split into two extreme groups, one 'bad' and problematic, one 'good' and beneficial in their interaction with male members of the community. One should be wary around the morally corrupt adulterous woman and not "…stare at her when she goes by, do not know her carnally… such a woman is away from her husband… ready to ensare you."[140] In contrast, the virtuous and efficient wife did not need to be controlled in the domestic sphere, as she would prove herself capable in organising the household. Yet the audience are warned not to "go after a woman, let her not steal your heart"[141], incongruously ending a passage on domestic harmony. These opinions were not just limited to the New Kingdom. 'The Maxims of Ptahhotep', found on the Middle Kingdom p.Prisse, also survive on New Kingdom copies[142] and demonstrates how previous attitudes to women were still considered relevant several

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[133] Nearly twenty words refer to intercourse in the ancient Egyptian language, according to Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová, *Sex and the Golden Goddess I; Ancient Egyptian Love Songs in Context,* Prague 2009a, p.58, following the terminology outlined in S. Schrieber, "Einige Anmerkungen zum Sexual-Vokabular der alten Ägypter", in *Ägypten Im Afro-orientalischen Kontext: Gedenkschrift Peter Behrens,* Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere, Köln, 1991, pp.315-335.

[134] *Wörterbuch* 2, 446.8.

[135] *Wörterbuch* 2, 381.23.

[136] *Wörterbuch* 2, 381.22.

[137] *Wörterbuch* 2, 345.3-10.

[138] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.58.

[139] 'The Instructions of Any', *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Vol 2. The New Kingdom,* Miriam Lichtheim (transl.), Los Angeles and London, 2nd ed., 2006b, p.136.

[140] *ibid.*, p.137. The motif of 'ensnarement' reappears in the love songs, particularly those that posit the male as an animal captured or trapped by the female.

[141] *ibid.*, p.143.

[142] 'The Maxims of Ptahhotep', *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Vol 1. The Old and Middle Kingdoms,* Miriam Lichtheim (transl.), Los Angeles and London, 2nd ed., 2006a, p.61.

centuries later. Ptahhotep regards women to be "a fertile field for her lord", stressing her reproductive capacity, and warns his audience to "keep her from power… make her stay in your house."[143] It seems that the intended audience for this type of Instructional literature retained the same views in relation to the female sex over many generations, and women were seen as no more than supportive helpmeets designed to produced children, or dangerous seductresses who would bring nothing but strife if they were left to their own devices.[144] However, the denigration of women in these types of texts is tempered by the fact that men are also admonished in them, although of course the literature pays far more attention to male experience and behaviour as a whole.[145] Later texts, such as the Ptolemaic 'Petese Stories' reinforce this binary, outlining seventy examples of 'good' loyal wives who receive praise (*ḥs*) versus 'bad' *femmes fatales,* who are regarded with scorn (*ḥsf*).[146] However, while generalisations can be made from our surviving evidence about women overall, and women of a certain social status in particular, it is important to recognise that positions, expectations and roles could, and did, change over time and space. The following pages will discuss the current state of research regarding sex, gender constructs, and sexual practice in ancient Egypt, and will give examples from many types of surviving evidence from the New Kingdom that illustrate how we as scholars are able to access and comprehend this gendered social milieu.

Finding the female subject in ancient Egypt

Although élite men's imprint on the epigraphic and archaeological record certainly dominates, there are now more scholars taking an interest in making women 'visible' again in our accounts of the past. Thanks to studies by Deborah Sweeney, Carolyn Graves-Brown, Gay Robins, and Kara Cooney, to name but a few, ancient Egyptian women and the detailed analysis of their material imprint have been appearing in our reconstruction of the past over the last three decades. Studies such as Kasia Szpakowska's *Daily Life in ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun,*

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[143] *ibid*., p.69.
[144] This stereotyped dichotomy will be further examined in Chapter three, in which the misogynistic, reductive attitude to women as presented in the narrative tales is examined.
[145]Jaana Toivari-Viitala, *Women at Deir el-Medina. A study of the status and roles of the female inhabitants in the workmen's community during the Ramesside Period,* Leiden, 2001, p.55; Hana Navrátilová, "Gender and Historiography (in Deir el Medina)", *Sozialisationen: Individuum - Gruppe – Gesellschaft,* G. Neunert, K. Gabler, and A. Verbovsek, (eds.), Wiesbaden, 2012, p.154.
[146] See Kim Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4: The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy other Good and Bad Stories (P. Petese),* CNI Publications 23, Copenhagen, Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, 1999.

and Andrea McDowell's *Village Life in Ancient Egypt* also aim to broaden our understanding of ancient Egyptian society as a whole, examining different lived experiences based on aspects such as social status, age, regional affiliation, rural versus city life, and so on, rather than just focusing on differences of biological sex.[147] Gender archaeology has now also taken on board feminist discourse and 'post post-Processual' understandings, albeit quite belatedly compared to other disciplines, challenging our preconceived ideas and allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the past.[148] Sarah Milledge Nelson claims that "[t]he most effective ways to find gender in the past are to use several lines of evidence together."[149] Although Nelson is more interested in Neolithic archaeological remains, this statement certainly rings true for the multi-discipline approach of this study. Recent work on constructs of both masculinity and femininity have countered the reductionist view (unwittingly?) imposed by 'new' or processual archaeology[150] and allowed for a more nuanced understanding of gender and self-identity in ancient Egypt. Although much of the evidence does come from the Middle Kingdom or later, and this thesis focuses on the New Kingdom in particular, close analysis of the Old Kingdom Tomb belonging to Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep is just one example dating to the period before this thesis addresses of identifying potentially non-conforming individuals in pharaonic society.[151] Grave goods show apparent gender divisions from the Neolithic period in Egypt and studying these assemblages can be incredibly useful in demonstrating that from a very early time there were different 'categories' of people in existence. These categories were constructed and imposed by societal conventions, and it is worth reiterating here that gender itself is not something an individual is born with, unlike inherited status, although both can be identified to a degree in funerary assemblages.[152]

Gay Robins opened her 1993 monograph *Women in Ancient Egypt* by asking why it was necessary to author a book on ancient Egyptian women in the first place, rather than a cultural

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[147] Kasia Szpakowska, *Daily Life in ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun,* Malden MA., 2008; Andrea G. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt: Laundry Lists and Love Songs,* Oxford, 1999.
[148] Sarah Milledge Nelson, *Gender in Archaeology: Analysing Power and Prestige*, New York, 2004. pp.2-3.
[149] *ibid*, p.47.
[150] *ibid.*, p.34.
[151] Often referred to as the "Tomb of the Hairdressers" in discussions. See Thomas A. Dowson, "Queering Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.34-40 in particular for a discussion on the scholarship surrounding this tomb, and the many theories applied to the two men's relationship; Richard B. Parkinson, "Boasting about Hardness: constructions of Middle Kingdom masculinity", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.115-142; See Ahmed M. Moussa and Hartwig Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, Mainz, 1977, for a detailed description of the tomb and its decoration.
[152] Nelson, 2004, p.3.

history of both sexes.[153] Although Robins was not the first author to attempt to make ancient Egyptian women visible again[154], she acknowledged that, at the time her writing, they were largely overlooked in histories and studies of ancient Egypt, especially in those works that focused primarily on the political structure of the civilization.[155] Women, Robins reasoned, made up around 50% of ancient Egypt's population yet still seemed almost invisible in texts dealing with its life and culture.[156] Men, especially élite males, dominated the written histories, no doubt because of the hierarchical, patriarchal nature of the society under study, but also because of the focus and values of the academics who instituted the discipline of Egyptology.[157] For example, early Egyptological studies on ancient women are hugely problematic in that the Western Victorian-era concept of how respectable (middle-class) women should behave and be regarded influenced the writers' attitude to the subjects. This attitude positioned women as "men's decorative and contented inferiors", in the words of Vera Brittain, whose education was shaped by this mentality.[158] The "us vs. them/Occidental vs. Oriental" mentality of the time led to further anachronistic judgements, often in relation to divisions according to gender.[159] Writing about the reign of Hatshepsut, who ruled c.1478-1458 B.C., Kara Cooney questions

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[153] Robins, 1993, p.11.

[154] For examples of monographs, see Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, *La femme au temps des Pharaon,* Paris, 1986; Barbara Lesko, *The Remarkable Women of ancient Egypt,* Providence, R.I., 1986. For the proceedings of the 1987 conference held at Brown University on "Women in the Ancient Near East", see in particular Gay Robins, "Some Images of Women in New Kingdom Art and Literature", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.105-116; Shafik Allam, "Women as Owners of Immovables in Pharaonic Egypt", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.123-135; for the period outside of this thesis' time range, see Henry G. Fischer, "Women in the Old Kingdom and Heracleopolitan Period", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.5-24; William A. Ward, "Non-Royal Women and their Occupations in the Middle Kingdom", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.33-43; Bernadette Menu, "Women and Business Life in Egypt in the First Millennium B.C.", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.193-205. For museum exhibitions in Germany in the mid-1980's that focused on women in ancient Egypt, see Sylvia Schoske and Dietrich Wildung, *Nofret- Die Schöne. Die Frau im Alten Ägypten,* Mainz, 1984, in particular chapters on married couples, motherhood, and kin groups ("Mann und Frau", pp.12-21, "Mutter und Kind", pp.22-43), and sexual life ("Erotik", pp.132-145).

[155] Robins, 1993, p.11.

[156] *ibid.*

[157] *ibid.,* pp.12-13; Landgráfová and Navratilová, 2009a, pp.27-28.

[158] Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth,* London, Virago, 2004, p.23.

[159] As discussed by Hellum, 2016, in regards to the translation of words such as "butler" and its female equivalent as "maid servant" that reflected the gendered biases of the original Victorian-era translators. Jennifer Hellum, conference presentation, *FemCon 4: Visions,* University of Washington, Seattle, May, 2016.

the established perception that a woman in power was devious and self-interested, using only her sexual wiles to manipulate those around her, and should be viewed with distrust rather than lauded for her achievements.[160] She considers that this extraordinary female king was "…maligned not just by the ancient Egyptian rulers who followed her but also be nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egyptologists who were suspicious of her motivations and ready to judge her…"[161] In addition to projecting contemporary values back on the past, early male-authored studies on sex and sexuality in the ancient world tended to be "essentialist and descriptive"[162], lacking the application of a theoretical framework that allowed for nuanced reading of the evidence that critical gender studies now encourages.

Robins focused on élite or royal women in her 1993 monograph for the most part, as peasants and the lower classes are poorly represented in the archaeological record. She acknowledged that this work provides an overview into the lives of ancient Egyptian women with attention paid in particular to those who were wealthy enough to leave their mark archaeologically.[163] She also explained that in Egyptology, as in other historical disciplines prior to Second Wave feminism, women were considered the deviant 'Other' to men and so their absence from the previous histories of Egypt was not largely remarked upon.[164] Because of this, a huge proportion of humanity was missing from past research. Children and adolescents, the elderly, the non-élites, those who were not Egyptian-born were also largely absent. Women in ancient world studies, it seemed, were included only as part of "the 'obligatory' last chapter on hairstyles and dress"[165], something that researchers have tried to rectify in the last three decades of scholarship. Other works quickly followed on from Robins' monograph, as writers such as Joyce Tyldesley and Barbara Lesko, amongst others, published accounts that aimed to elaborate upon the position and status of women in pharaonic Egypt in particular, using a

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[160] Kara Cooney, *The Woman Who Would be King: Hatshepsut's rise to power in Ancient Egypt,* London, 2015, pp.1-4.
[161] *ibid.*, p.4.
[162] Terry G. Wilfong, *Women and Gender in Ancient Egypt from Prehistory to Late Antiquity: an Exhibition at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology 14 March – 15 June 1997,* T. G. Wilfong (ed.), Ann Arbor, MI ,1997, p.11.
[163] Robins, 1993, p.11, pp.14-15.
[164] *ibid.*, pp.11-12.
[165] P. Setälä, "Brick Stamps and Women's Economic Opportunities in Imperial Rome", *Current Issues in Women's History,* A. Angerman, G. Binnema, A. Keunen, V. Poels, and J. Zirkzee, (eds.), London, Routledge, 1989, pp.11-25, cited in Terry G. Wilfong, *Women and Gender in Ancient Egypt from Prehistory to Late Antiquity: an Exhibition at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology 14 March – 15 June 1997,* T. G. Wilfong (ed.), Ann Arbor, MI., 1997, p.92.

variety of sources to consider the variety in women's experience.[166] Other studies have also been undertaken detailing the lives and experiences of women in later periods, such as during the Ptolemaic rule of Egypt, and Egypt as part of the Roman Empire; however, these will not be consulted in this thesis as the time period is too late and aspects of the 'invading' culture could be considered to impose different gender constructs and understandings on the subject peoples.[167] Recent collections of essays now regard it as necessary to include sections regarding gender in pharaonic Egypt, using different sources of evidence for their conclusions.[168] Museum catalogues of exhibitions now also make a point of identifying gender and gender roles in non-epigraphic evidence or products of material culture as well as philological sources, such as Capel and Markoe's *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven*[169], and the Catalogue of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Michigan, *Women and Gender in ancient Egypt* exhibition held in 1997.[170] Nearly twenty years on from Robin's seminal work regarding ancient Egyptian women, Carolyn Graves-Brown published her own account of this group, again acknowledging that taking an essentialist view of 'women' in general and ancient Egyptian women in particular is to undermine and ignore the disparities and distinctions between individuals.[171] Graves-Brown states that the title of the book is a nod to the shared construct of 'ancient Egyptian women' that suggests that Hathor, or forms of this goddess, would have influenced how human women behaved and how their behaviour in turn impacted on perceptions of the divine.[172] She also makes explicit her goal to "encourage debate" and raise as well as answer questions,[173] something I hope to emulate in this thesis, reminiscent of one of the goals of intersectionality. Other works focusing on goddesses also provide some in depth discussion on women's roles in society, their lives and potentially fluid genders in

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[166] Joyce Tyldesley, *Daughters of Isis: Women of Ancient Egypt,* London and New York, 1994; Barbara S. Lesko, " 'Listening' to the ancient Egyptian woman: letters, testimonials and other expressions of self", *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Edward F. Wente, SAOC* 58, E. Teeter and J. A. Larson (eds.), Chicago, 1998, pp.247-254; B. Lesko, 1996.

[167] Often, the author of these works explores the topic of women in ancient Egypt both during and after pharaonic times, as illustrated by many of the monographs cited in this work, including but not limited to Robins,1993; Tyldesley, 1995; Graves-Brown, 2010; Capel and Markoe, 1996. For women in Egypt after Alexander the Great's conquest, see Jane Rowlandson *et al*, "Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: a Sourcebook", J. Rowlandson (ed.), Cambridge, 1998; Ada Nifosi, "Becoming a Woman and Mother in Greco-Roman Egypt: Women's Bodies, Society, and Domestic Space", London and New York, forthcoming 2018.

[168] Wilfong, 2010, pp.164-179; Wilfong, 2007, pp.205-217.

[169] Anne K. Capel and Glenn F. Markoe, (eds.), *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt,* New York, Hudson Hills Press, 1996 with a detailed examination of the Cincinnati Art Museum's exhibition catalogue.

[170] Wilfong, 1997.

[171] Graves-Brown, 2010, pp.5-6.

[172] *ibid.*, p.xi.

[173] *ibid.,* p.6.

relation to their interactions with the divine.[174] However, there is still work to be done: less than a decade ago, Wilfong lamented that the "ambiguity" of the evidence for gendered behaviour in ancient Egypt still results in a specific focus on women as a whole, and "the application of the wide body of theoretic methodologies" regarding sex and gender that arise from different disciplines are not utilised to their full potential in Egyptological research.[175]

Prior to *Dancing for Hathor*, Graves-Brown edited a volume presenting some of the papers given during the 2005 conference on gender studies in Egyptology at Swansea University. This conference tackled difficult and sometimes controversial aspects of Egyptian life and identity, as Graves-Brown notes in her preface.[176] As many of the research papers presented different interpretations of gender and sex stemming from close analysis of well-known philological sources, as well as artefactual and iconographic evidence, this collection of essays has proved invaluable for my own work. In particular, the articles by Deborah Sweeney and Heather Lee McCarthy demonstrate the benefits of applying a multidisciplinary approach to existing evidence in order to evaluate the insights it can provide within a gender studies framework.[177] The works of Richard Parkinson and Thomas Dowson in this volume also give an apt reminder that studying gender does not mean one looks exclusively at women's lives and their "expected limitations."[178] Constructs of masculinity and their variations due to age, ethnicity, sexuality, social status and so on are also fundamental to gender studies.[179] Wilfong also draws attention to the fact that there were, in reality, many different types of men and constructs of 'masculinity' within ancient Egyptian society, and the category of 'men' is just as problematic as the category of 'women.'[180] Wilfong outlined the intersectional nature of individual identity in ancient Egypt, although not using this term, and claimed that "gender must be understood...

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[174] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009a; Barbara S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt,* Oklahoma, 1995; Alison Roberts, *Hathor Rising: The power of the Goddess in ancient Egypt,* Vermont, 1997.

[175] Wilfong, 2007, pp.205-206.

[176] Carolyn Graves-Brown, "Preface", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, p.ii.

[177] Deborah Sweeney, "Gender and requests in New Kingdom Literature", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.191-213; Heather Lee McCarthy, "Rules of decorum and expressions of gender fluidity in Tawosret's tomb", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.83-114.

[178] Navrátilová, 2012, p.151.

[179] Thomas A. Dowson, "Queering Sex and Gender in ancient Egypt", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.27-45; R.B. Parkinson, "Boasting about Hardness: constructions of Middle Kingdom masculinity", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour'*, C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.115-142.

[180] Wilfong, 2007, pp.210 -211; Wilfong, 2010, pp.166-167. See also Dowson, 2008, pp.27-30.

alongside status, class, race, ethnicity, age, and other factors."[181] In analysing a specific group of women in ancient Egyptian society, Lana Troy's *Patterns of Queenship* examined key themes in the lives of a royal, exclusively female, group, as expressed through official titulary in particular. She considered how these women were incorporated into a mythic "feminine prototype", often via association with the goddesses Isis and Hathor, were "official representatives" of the feminised aspect of kingship[182], and examined the role of close kin marriage during the New Kingdom.[183] Although this work is certainly relevant to my topic, especially regarding the detailed discussion of the Egyptian world-view as divided along a male-female binary, the work covers a time period of nearly 3000 years and as such provides an overview to the lives of élite royal women over millennia, who stood apart from the majority of the female population. In this study, Troy emphasises that although it was ideologically possible for a woman to be 'king' and referred to as *s3t R^{c}*, it was in practice highly unlikely due to the structure of the political system and the extreme control that the male élites wielded.[184] Other works, possibly influenced by Troy's study, seem to act more as an apologist for (élite) women's status and perhaps over-emphasise the role of female royalty in terms of political power.[185]

Many of the studies detailing the lives and experiences of women in ancient Egypt mention some, if not all, of the ancient texts examined in this thesis. However, these texts are often briefly cited as examples of male-controlled bias against women or as extreme stereotypes of how women should and should not behave in accordance with social mores at the time of writing. For example, Tyldesley refers to *Truth and Falsehood*[186], *The Doomed Prince*[187], *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*[188]*,* and *The Tale of the Two Brothers*[189] in her 1994 monograph, yet seems to almost gloss over these literary sources as presenting a one-dimensional view of

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[181] Wilfong, 2010, p.177.
[182] Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History,* Uppsala, 1986, pp.1-3, for the introductory premises.
[183] Meltzer remarks that Troy, surprisingly, did not give an up-to-date detailed discussion on research regarding the royal 'harem' in her monograph. See Edmund S. Meltzer, "Review: Queens, Goddesses and Other Women of Egypt", *JAOS* 110, 3, 1990, pp.507-508 for this criticism.
[184] Troy, 1986, pp.139-143.
[185] Alison Roberts, *Hathor Rising: The power of the Goddess in ancient Egypt,* Vermont, 1997. Although Roberts provides a thought-provoking account of the association with Hathor of élite women during the New Kingdom, the work seems to reflect more of what we (as female readers) would like to see than only detailing the power and influence that in reality was present, or at least is elucidated by the ancient evidence.
[186] Tyldesley, 1994, p.36; p.62.
[187] *ibid.*, p.190.
[188] *ibid.,* pp.65-66.
[189] *ibid.,* pp.35-36.

women, and worth only brief mention. However, her aim was to write a general overview of women's lives in ancient Egypt rather than provide close literary analysis.[190] The presentation of these female characters as potential literary devices, or as a means of evaluating different types of gendered behaviour looking at more than just biological sex, is generally not considered. Despite the desire to better understand the women of ancient Egypt, it seems that much of the evidence available to us, be it philological, iconographic or archaeological, is analysed for what it can tell us about women in opposition to men, rather than evaluated from an intersectional point of view which would provide a more nuanced reading of the personae. Likewise, as noted by Landgráfová and Navratilová, "the *theme* of eroticism and sexuality" has been the focus in Egyptological studies of individual experience, as opposed to exploring the concepts within specific texts and "social situations"[191] that can allow us to more fully appreciate the culturally-constructed nature of gender and gendered behaviour. In many cases our subjects seem reduced into one of two very broad categories based on biological sex rather than exploring the different genders and modes of gendering attested to by our evidence, a practice this thesis aims to counter. Indeed, since "humans engage in more non reproductive sexual behaviour than most animals, [it can be] argued that sexuality was broader than the reproductive framework that is often used to define it,"[192] showing how binary divisions based on the physical body and its reproductive function are inadequate in understanding sexual practice and erotic experience.[193] This view is also reflected in the work of Toivari-Viitala, who, after considering non-epigraphic material from Deir el Medina, concluded, "it does indeed seem that any *binary division constructed between the two sexes* did not belong to the main principles on which the life [at the village] was structured."[194]

Landgrafová and Navrátilová, after reviewing previous research on ancient Egyptian sexuality and eroticism, remark that earlier Western investigation of the topic left it marginalised, with "two polarised views" emerging: either the ancient Egyptians were debauched and sexually corrupt, or were discreet and "especially chaste."[195] However, the evidence presented in Lise Manniche's *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt*, for example, suggests that although there was an

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[190] Publications such as Tyldesley's, written as a general overview, tend to simplify the subject under examination, and are, as Graves-Brown maintains, "easy and unfair targets for academic criticisms." Graves-Brown, 2008, p.x.
[191] Landgráfová and Navratilová, 2009a, p.27.
[192] Frayser, 1999, p.11.
[193] This dichotomy also ignores others who would not fit into the male vs. female binary division, such as intersex individuals and transgender persons who may outwardly conform to their identified gender norms, yet would not be able to reproduce or fully change the sexed body.
[194] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.203. My emphasis.
[195] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.27

'appropriate' level of sexual visibility (often in a specific context) the ancient Egyptians were by no means prudish or reluctant to acknowledge eroticism. p.Chester Beatty III recto BM 10683 from c.1165 B.C. lists the meaning of several erotic dreams, including sex acts with humans and animals, as well as sexualised body parts, p.Chester Beatty X, dating to approximately 1000 B.C., appears to describe "love potions", and a previous Middle Kingdom document (p.RamV/XII) gave a cure for impotence, allowing magic to assist "in erotic matters."[196] The famous Turin Erotic papyrus, dating to the Ramesside period, illustrates, in twelve vignettes, scenes of a sexual – almost pornographic – nature between women who appear of high status (or perhaps coiffed and pampered prostitutes) and conventionally unattractive ithyphallic men.[197] Myśliwiec notes that for many years, this artefact was not on display in Turin, for fear that its erotic nature would "distract visitors intending to view the museum's masterpieces of Egyptian Art."[198] This demonstrates how relatively modern judgements on the value of an artefact, especially one dealing with sex and sexual behaviour, can impact on its accessibility and inclusion in the 'official' account of ancient lives. A later papyrus, p.Tanis, appears to warn of having intercourse with prostitutes, either male or female, on a specific day of the year,[199] suggesting that not only was there some leniency in regards to using sex and one's body as a commodity, but also that sexual encounters not conforming to a heteronormative ideal certainly occurred.[200]

Homosexuality in ancient Egypt has been discussed in works by Parkinson, for example, who looks at male-male relationships, as well as constructions of masculinity.[201] He also recognised the importance of homosocial interactions between men in ancient Egypt, although of course this does not have to imply same-sex erotic desire.[202] Thomas Dowson, in an article that follows

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[196] Lise Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt*, New York, 1987, p.103.
[197] Joseph Omlin, *Der Papyrus 55001 und seine Satirisch-erotischen Zeichnungen und Inschriften*, Turin, 1971; Manniche, 1987, p.58, fig.51.
[198] Karol Myśliwiec, *Eros on the Nile,* Geoffrey L. Packer (transl.), Ithaca, 2004, p.x.
[199] Manniche, 1987, p.100.
[200] Thomas A. Dowson, "Queering sex and gender in Ancient Egypt", *My Things Changed Things: Social Development and Cultural Exchange in Prehistory, Antiquity, and the Middle Ages,* P. M. Vlčkova, J. Mynářová, M. Tomášek (eds.), Prague, 2009, pp.27-44.
[201] Richard B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," *JEA* 81, 1995, pp.57-76; R. B. Parkinson, "Boasting about Hardness: constructions of Middle Kingdom masculinity", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.115-142. Montserrat also examines homosexuality among men, although his analysis will not be discussed in further detail, as the period focussed on is outside of the scope of this thesis. See Dominic Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt,* London, 1996, pp.136-62, for further information.
[202] Parkinson, 1995, p.61.

on from his 2008 contribution to *Sex and Gender in ancient Egypt* revisits the much debated relationship between Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep that featured in several presentations given at the Swansea conference, and suggests that Queer theory can play an important role in our analysis of ancient sources.[203] Greg Reeder also pointed out that on a wall relief in this tomb, a reciprocal erotic encounter between Horus and Seth is apparently detailed, suggesting a challenge to heteronormative sexual relationships.[204] Some examples of same-sex encounters between males do exist in the literary area: *The Contendings of Horus and Seth,* which will be examined in Chapter three, as well as an earlier story set during the Old Kingdom regarding the relationship between king Neferkare and the military leader Sasenet, who is without a wife (*nn wn.w st ḥmt),* are probably the best known.[205] However, it must be acknowledged that the sexual nature of Neferkare and his generals' relationship is not as explicit as the homoerotic encounter between the two gods in *Horus and Seth.* In this episode, as noted by Landgrafová and Navrátilová, neither Horus nor Seth denies the sexual nature of their encounter in front of the other deities when asserting their right to the throne of Egypt.[206] For Halperin, ancient cultures "tended to construe sexual desire as normative or deviant according to whether it impelled social actors to conform or to violate their conventionally defined gender," suggesting that male-male erotic activities were problematic only because one participant had to adopt what was conceived of as a passive position, a view that he considers may be applied to ancient Egyptian attitudes as well as those of Classical antiquity.[207] Shukraft has suggested that the assembled deities only spit at Horus in order to mock him having been placed in a 'passive' position through Seth's alleged penetration, rather than this being an equivocal condemnation of same-sex erotic activities.[208] In addition, Horus' mother Isis only advises her son on how to avoid being tricked and impregnated by Seth, as opposed to telling him not to engage in potential homosexual activity at all.[209] A recent study by Kammerzell and Toto Rueda has also

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[203] Dowson, 2009, pp.27-30.

[204] Greg Reeder, "Same-Sex Desire, Conjugal Constructs, and the Tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep", *World Archaeology* 32, 2, 2000, p.202.

[205] For the text relating to Neferkare and the General, and further discussion, see Stephen Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 B.C: Questions and Readings*, London, 2004, pp.168-170.

[206] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.80.

[207] David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, London, 1990, p.25. See also Parkinson, 1995, pp.67-68.

[208] Beate Shukraft, "Homosexualität im Alten Ägypten", *SÄK* 36, p.313. The narrative is, in itself, a series of contests between the two gods to establish the dominance of one over the other.

[209] Renata Landgrafová and Hana Navrátilová, "Taboos of the Golden Goddess: Sexual Taboos in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom", *My Things Changed Things: Social Development and Cultural Exchange in Prehistory, Antiquity, and the Middle Ages,* P. M. Vlčkova, J. Mynářová, and M. Tomášek (eds.), Prague, 2009b, p.42.

suggested that the injunction against a male having sexual intercourse with another male as found in the *Maxims of Ptahhotep* should be read as a condemnation of forced sex, with anyone unwilling or resisting (*ḫsf.wt)*, rather than a denouncement of male same sex desire.[210] Landgrafová and Navrátilová apply this reading to the *Negative Confession* in the Book of the Dead as well as autobiographical inscriptions.[211] They conclude that statements previously considered a rejection of male homosexuality should instead be read as the 'voice' of the text stating that they did not force themselves upon another person, regardless of gender or sexual preference, or sexually abuse anyone.[212] It is possible that the condemnation of *nkk*-ing a *nkkw*, as expressed in the Negative Confession, could be more of a proscription against a sexual action that would not result in childbirth, 'wasting' fertility[213] rather than it being a revulsion or criticism of a certain 'type' of individual, in this case a homosexual male.[214]

Although seemingly missing from much of the ancient literature, lesbianism and female same-sex eroticism been examined by Toivari-Viitala and Wilfong, although Wilfong acknowledged that there is "very little evidence for sexual relations between women in the pharaonic period."[215] Carolyn Graves-Brown also cites studies by Sweeney and Onstine, among others, to claim that "there are no clear cut patterns in women's lives in the past [and] they rarely conform to stereotypes of women as imagined either by traditional Egyptologists or by early feminists,"[216] erotic encounters included. Heteronormative predominance in the socio-cultural sphere, as well as in the literary record, can indicate the strength of male élite control, and the presentation of "a form of sexual behaviour [as] "natural" may serve as rationalization for unjust social arrangements or unfounded stereotypes."[217] By minimising difference, the *status quo* was not as liable to be challenged, and those in power less likely to have control wrested from them. That is not to say that in New Kingdom Egypt there were no oppositions, no challenging of the established order; these challenges, both implicit and explicit, will be

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[210]Frank Kammerzell and Isabel Maria Toro Rueda, "Nicht der Homosexuelle ist Pervers: Die Zweiunddreißigste Maxime der Lehre des Ptahhotep", *LingAeg* 11, 2003, pp.63-78.
[211] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009b, p.41 for the *Negative Confession*; pp.36-38 for some examples of Autobiographical Texts, in which the owner of the text emphasises that he did not use his position of social power/superiority to compel another person to have intercourse.
[212] *ibid.*
[213] Particularly in the mortuary context, when procreative sex and erotic arousal was necessary for Osiris' rebirth and begetting of an heir and vindicator in the figure of Horus.
[214] Parkinson, 1995, pp.61-62.
[215] Jaana Toivari-Viitala, *Women at Deir el-Medina: a study of the status and roles of the female inhabitants of the workmen's community during the Ramesside Period,* Leiden, 2001, pp.139-82; Wilfong, 2007, p.216.
[216] Graves-Brown, 2008, p.xi.
[217] Frayser, 1999, p.11.

addressed in each of the following chapters. Indeed, the fact that "our voice may say one thing while our body says another is one of the reasons why cultural codes relegating sexual desire and emotional interest are so hard to enforce"[218], and in the case of ancient civilizations in particular, so hard to fully understand when our subject 'voices' only survive filtered through culturally specific media replete with potential bias and even censorship. In addition, it is vital to note that the terminology we use to discuss both gender and sexuality in ancient Egypt is through necessity a modern one, and has no known equivalent in the subject culture. Furthermore, the privileging of sexual orientation as *the* defining feature of identity may not have been at all relevant to the ancient Egyptians, and would most likely have been less important to personal classification than it is in the post-industrial Western world, post-Freud.[219] As recognised by Parkinson in his discussion of male homosexuality in Egypt, modern studies tend to accept that "sexuality as a dominant characterising force was not recognised in the ancient world: sexual preferences were acknowledged, but only as one would recognise someone's taste in food without characterising him or her on that basis as a member of a sub-species of mankind."[220] The aim is therefore to apply as sensitively and objectively as is possible, this modern discourse regarding sexuality, eroticism and sexual practice to an ancient culture which may not have experienced "boundaries of sexual classification" in the same sense that we do now.[221] With this in mind, we now turn to the specific context of New Kingdom Egypt, and the socio-cultural factors that contributed to the gendering of the individual.

Women's lived experiences: The New Kingdom evidence

Ostensibly speaking to his deceased wife, p.Leiden I, 371, dating to the Ramesside period, details the 'correct' manner in which the male voice felt that females should have been treated, at least in the context of a partnership. He reminds his spouse that he did not regard her as a servant, did not commit adultery (remaining with her *m ḥꜣy*, as husband) did not divorce/expel (*ḫꜣꜥ)* her, and was able to provide for her and their children.[222] This implies that women were

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[218] Jankowiak, 1999, p.57.
[219] Dominic Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History, fantasy, and ancient Egypt,* London, 2000, p.166.
[220] Parkinson, 1995, p.59.
[221] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.23.
[222] p.Leiden I, 371; Janet H. Johnson, "The legal status of women in ancient Egypt", *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt,* A. K. Capel and G. F. Markoe, (eds.), New York, 1996, p.180.

reliant, to an extent, on the good will or good behaviour of the men in their lives, and there was no guarantee that their spouses would consider them equal partners in the marriage. However, during the New Kingdom, women did have legal rights, and could both inherit and bequeath property.[223] Theoretically, a woman was able to conduct a lawsuit on her own behalf, but it seems likely that she would need the support of a man to succeed in practice.[224] Women could be called upon to be witnesses in court cases, could be part of juries, and were able to make contracts and deals in their own name. Johnson comments that the fact that women did not do these things as often as men did reflects a disparity in social practices, rather than in their overall legal status.[225] Baines and Malek also recognise this disparity, stating that the available evidence suggests that in terms of marital property and the bequeathing of goods "the woman's role was important, although not equal to that of her husband."[226] It must be noted that in cultures which exhibit a "strong gender dichotomy" designed to oppress women, aspects such as poor female medical care and no legal rights are present which does not seem to be the case for New Kingdom Egypt.[227] Women could correspond with each other[228], and with males[229], even if they probably required a scribe or other educated male to write and read the letters for them. They also seemed to have some control of their relationships. o.Nash 6, from Deir el Medina, details the multiple rejections of a man intending to cohabit with a woman from the village. He arrives at her dwelling with his belongings, assuming his desires will be acquiesced to, only to be told that he is not welcome and must leave.[230] Another woman, as detailed in a Ramesside personal letter, was able to advise her husband Khons Shedsukhons to return the

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[223] B. Lesko, 1991, p.6.

[224] Robins, 1993, p.141.

[225] Johnson, 1996, p.175; Shafik Allam, "Women as Owners of Immovables in Pharaonic Egypt", *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987,* B. Lesko (ed.), Atlanta, GE., 1989, pp.123-135.

[226] John Baines and Jaromir Malek, "Women in Society," *Atlas of Ancient Egypt,* Oxford, 1980, p.205.

[227] Navrátilová, 2012, p.151.

[228] Such as the letter from Ta-khenty-shepse to her sister Iyt, requesting foodstuff from her family to quell the complaints of her demanding husband Mery-Ma'at, and the correspondence of Isis and Nebuem-nu, regarding the weaving of cloth. McDowell, 1999, pp.41-42, in which the author states "a significant proportion... about one in seven" letters recovered from Deir el Medina are either sent to or sent from a woman. Contrast this to literary texts from the same period, in which female characters very rarely speak or exchange words with one another, something Sweeney identifies as "clearly counterfactual" and not representative of actual experience. Sweeney, 2008, p.192.

[229] A house inventory from Deir el Medina ends with the anonymous writer noting "another matter for Sheri-Re: Please have Amen-em-wia stay in my house… Please write to me about your condition", not only giving instructions for the woman to carry out, but also asking for her to reply to the correspondence with a personal update. McDowell, 1999, p.67.

[230] He actually tried to cohabit with her on two separate occasions, but was rejected both times, without her having made "clothing for his backside." Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.65; McDowell, 1999, pp.45-46.

tenancy of a field to a Nubian farmer who had previously been dismissed from his employ.[231]
There is a sense of surprise by the male voice in o.Nash 6 that the female has rejected him – in
short, she is not behaving as he expected and wanted, but is instead acting with some degree of
autonomy, at least in relation to the voices' desires. Another Deir el Medinan resident, an older
lady named Naunakhte, commissioned a very interesting document regarding her eight
children's inheritance, several of whom she felt had neglected her.[232] Three of her sons and
two of her daughters were to receive shares of her property, and the other three were effectively
disinherited, demonstrating the control she had over her possessions.[233] These types of records
demonstrate that although ancient Egyptian society was indeed gendered with a basic
understanding that 'male' was superior and in control of 'female', actual lived experiences did
not always reflect this.

Of course, not all women could reject an unwanted suitor, or have control over their domestic
and social lives, and act independently of cultural stereotypes. As a generalised group, women
could be subjected to threats, fear and violation,[234] could be seen as impure or unclean because
of their biological sex,[235] and relied more heavily on their kinship ties to survive than their
male counterparts would have had to. In particular, it seemed easier for a male to reject his wife
and expel her from their dwelling than vice versa, as evidenced by o.Petrie 61 which records a
promise made by the worker Heremwia to his daughter-in-law for lodgings in his storeroom at
Deir el Medina in the event of her husband rejecting her.[236] The lady Hener (also transcribed
as Hel or as Hunero), another Deir el Medinan resident, also relied on charity from a male
acquaintance in the form of monthly grain rations to survive after her second husband Hesy-

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[231] Deborah Sweeney, *Correspondence and Dialogue. Pragmatic Factors in Late Ramesside Letters Writing,* Wiesbaden, 2001b, pp.234-235.
[232] p.Ashmolean Museum 1945.97. Pieter W. Pestman, "The Last Will of Naunakhte and the Accession Date of Ramesses V", *Gleanings from Deir el-Medîna*, R.J. Demarée and J.J. Janssen (eds.), Leiden, 1982b, pp.173-182; see also Koenraad Donker van Heel, *Mrs Naunakhte & Family: Women of Ramesside Deir al-Medina*, Cairo, 2016.
[233] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.102.
[234] For example, o.Nash 5, recto, in which the workman Amenem-ipwt presents a case of wife-beating to the local council in order to safeguard the mistreated woman, who may have been a relative of his; p.DM 26B, in which another man has to swear an oath not to beat his wife, whose "[limbs] were aching" from his abuse. Toivaari-Viitala, 2001, pp.216-217.
[235] A possible reason for the decline of the Priestesses of Hathor, who fulfilled active ritual duties during the Old Kingdom, but lost prestige and cultic influence from the First Intermediate Period onwards and wielded no real power by the New Kingdom. See Robyn Gillam "Priestesses of Hathor: Their Function, Decline and Disappearance", *JARCE* 32, 1995, pp.233-236. Women may also have been removed from society during their menstrual weeks, as discussed by Paul Frandsen, "The Menstrual 'Taboo' in ancient Egypt", *JNES* 66, 2, 2007, pp.81-106.
[236] o.Petrie 61 text translated in Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.45.

su-neb-ef divorced her for adultery.[237] Other individuals outside of or marginal to the generalised 'women' grouping could also be made to feel unsafe or mistreated. Lower status men may have been threatened or abused by their superiors,[238] elderly persons regardless of gender could be more socially isolated or vulnerable,[239] and children relied on their parents and family for many years.[240] To give a telling example of how gender and sex could impact on the form of violence faced by an individual in ancient Egypt, we need only to look at the disreputable career of Paneb, the Foreman of the Tomb at Deir el Medina. He is recorded as having "removed Iyemwau's clothing, and that he threw her on top of a wall and took her by force"[241], as well as possibly having forced other women of the village (and in one case, a mother and her daughter) to have intercourse with him.[242] This notorious individual was also reported as having "attacked the [work]men during a night-time gathering, and that he took to walking on the walls, throwing stones at the men," as well as making threats to murder Hay, the male leader of a different work-gang.[243] This shows that it was not only women who faced physical threats, but that the nature of Paneb's attack on Iyemwau has a sexually-controlling and violatory element to it that is lacking in his violence towards lower status males or work rivals. Also from Deir el Medina, p.Turin 1880 records the sexual abuse of three female inhabitants of the village.[244] The women are individually named, but are also designated ḥmt t3y, which may be read as "married woman", or "man's woman"[245], perhaps hinting that the sexual violation against them was problematic because they 'belonged' to a man already, rather than condemned outright due to its negative impact on the women themselves. Here, it must be acknowledged that our understanding of these sources, and the violation of the women mentioned, is complicated by the fact that (as far as we can tell) the ancient Egyptian language

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[237] McDowell, 1999, pp.43-44, for the full text.

[238] For example, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, translated in Lichtheim, 2006a, pp.169-184, in which the peasant Khunanup protests about his mistreatment at the hands of the overseer Nemtynakht.

[239] *The Autobiography of Rekhmire* states that he "provided for the old one…causing the old women to say: 'That is good'," suggesting that the elderly relied on a variety of people for their care and well-being, while on the late Ramesside stela of Hori, his mother specifies that Irytekh inherits her property because "she has acted for me while I was old." Rosalind M. Janssen and Jac J. Janssen, *Getting Old in Ancient Egypt,* London, 1996, p.92; p.94.

[240] The New Kingdom *Instructions of Any* stress the need of the child for parental care, with Any advising his audience to support their mothers in old age, as they had not neglected their infants, had been "yoked" to the child while breastfeeding, and were "not disgusted" by the child's bodily functions. Translated in Lichtheim, 2006b, p.141.

[241] Pascal Vernus, *Affairs and Scandals in Ancient Egypt,* D. Lorton (transl.), Ithaca and London, 2003, p.77, translating p.Salt 124, recto 1, 19. See also pp.108-109 of this thesis for a further discussion of Paneb's activities.

[242] *ibid.,* p.76.

[243] *ibid.*, pp.74-75, as recorded on p.Turin "Strike" verso 3,1.

[244] Toivaari-Viitala, 2001, p.44.

[245] *ibid.*, pp.28-29.

had no specific verb designating 'to rape', but in many cases the context makes it apparent that coitus was non-consensual.[246] Around the same time as Paneb's life, a man named Penanukis is reported to have blinded a female servant and her daughter from Elephantine, after setting fire to their house, as recorded on p.Turin 1887, recto 2, 10-11. He is also said to have forced his rejected mistress Tarepyt to take a medicinal prescription designed to make her abort the child she was carrying.[247] Male family members could also inflict violence on their female relatives: p.BM 10052 details how a man struck his sister with a spear after she argued with him and refused to give him property from her husbands' storeroom, leading Toivari-Viitala to comment that while women as a generalised group could verbally challenge men, "when it came to physical assault their chances to hit back must have been small."[248] These examples of violence are extreme cases, yet they serve to demonstrate the violations that could be imposed on the female body, and the control another person could inflict on an individual woman's physical existence that would have long-lasting effects on her life in New Kingdom society.

The misogyny of the New Kingdom: A backlash against powerful women?

The evidence outlined above has not yet considered one particular group of women: the queens and royal females who lived in the upper echelons of society. These royal women would have had very different lives to many of the individuals already mentioned in the discussion above. Generally, Egyptologists consider women's status, particularly as expressed in the material record left behind by the upper classes, to have declined after the Old Kingdom (c. 2686-2181 B.C.) For example, élite women no longer seemed to play an active role in official cultic activity, as evidenced by the decline in the status and function of the Priestesses of Hathor.[249] Graves-Brown also outlines what appears to be a diminished role for royal women after the Old Kingdom, as well as a decrease in administrative titles held by females and 'women's work', such as weaving, becoming less important.[250] Despite the apparent reduction in their power and prestige, Troy considers queenship to be "a source of sacral power" throughout pharaonic

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[246] Landgrafová and Navrátilová, 2009b, p.39.
[247] Vernus, 2003, p.97.
[248] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, pp.218-219.
[249] Gillam, 1995, pp.211-212.
[250] Graves-Brown, 2010, pp.22-23; pp.30-31.

history that "provides the continuity of the kingship in its multigenerational composition as daughter, sister-wife and mother"[251], emphasising the close identification of the queen (or chief royal wife) with the goddess Hathor. The exalted status of these women would certainly have set them apart from the majority of ancient Egypt's female populace in many ways, yet there were also shared expectations based on biological sex imposed on them as well, such as being the carriers of an heir, and fulfilling the role of faithful and supportive wife. Troy also highlighted the importance of the female *as* female in her monograph, since the queen was considered essential and necessary for the "complementary nature of opposition", with the royal male and female coupled together to provide the "expression of a totality in terms of polarity", that allowed for the functioning of rulership.[252]

As the Second Intermediate Period drew to a close, with the Theban rulers finally expelling the Hyksos kings from Egypt c.1550 B.C., royal women seemed to grow in power as the Thebans consolidated their hold of the Two Lands. This was partly due to the death in battle of several of the Theban kings, such as Seqenenre Tao and Kamose, which necessitated royal women's assumption of power as regent until the male heir came of age. In particular, Ahhotep I, mother of Ahmose, was credited with ably protecting the Theban gains against the Hyksos, enabling her son to achieve victory against the foreign rulers. She was described as having "…accomplished the rites and taken care of Egypt… She has pacified Upper Egypt and expelled her rebels" on a stele from the reign of Ahmose, indicating that Ahhotep had to quell problems in Egyptian territory as well as maintain gains made against the Hyksos while her son came of age. Although operating at a tumultuous time, Ahhotep was following in the footsteps of other royal women by acting as regent for a young king. As far back as the Early Dynastic Period, Merneith had controlled Egypt during her son Den's youth, with her impressive tomb (Abydos Tomb Y) attesting to her success as it was of comparable size to the other kings of this Dynasty.[253] The last ruler of Dynasty Twelve was Sobekneferu, who ascended to the throne after the death of her brother Amenemhat IV. Dynasty Eighteen then started with royal women wielding considerable influence and power, reflected in the burial goods of Ahhotep, which included the Golden Flies of Valour and an elaborately decorated axe

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[251] Troy, 1986, p.3.
[252] *ibid.*, p.9.
[253] Graves-Brown, 2010, p.24. The fact that Merneith, like other Early Dynastic kings, also had a funerary enclosure at Abydos North cemetery adds to the difficulty in knowing whether she was only regent, or was a 'king' in her own right.

head, as well as the building of an impressive mortuary complex for Tetisheri, grandmother of Ahmose, the construction and proposed maintenance of which the king recorded on a stele.[254] Ahhotep's daughter Ahmes-Nefertari was given the powerful title of God's Wife of Amun, as was Merytamun, the wife of Amenhotep I, and Hatshepsut herself held this position from a young age, having received a title that was not purely honorific. The *Donation Stele* attests to the importance of this office, for example, and the holder received "great resources and influence" throughout the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period.[255] Indeed, the God's Wife of Amun was outranked only by the High Priest at Thebes, and was able to pass her title, along with its associated wealth and properties, on to a successor she herself chose.[256]

With the unexpected death of Thutmose II, then, it was not unprecedented for his sister-wife and God's Wife of Amun, Hatshepsut, to take the reins of power while her nephew and stepson Thutmose III was too young to rule. However, she quickly relegated the boy king to the sidelines, ruling as king herself, and assuming a full royal titulary to entrench her power along with visual iconography and proclamations which emphasised her right to the throne based on her superior royal bloodline, being the daughter of Thutmose I and his chief royal wife. Again, this was not without precedent; Sobekneferu, ruling c.1799-1795, was the first female ruler to use the full royal titulary, and also erected monuments that proclaimed her predecessors' support of her rule.[257] Graves-Brown considers Sobekneferu's inclusion in both the Turin King List as well as the Saqqara King List to indicate that "the Egyptians would accept the legitimacy of a female king" when necessary.[258] We can only imagine how the ancient Egyptian people felt about Hatshepsut's assumption of the throne, but her rule lasted for about 20 years and she seems to have died a natural death, indicating that any dissention was not strong enough to dispose her. There was, however, a backlash after her death, with Thutmose III and his successor Amenhotep destroying many images of Hatshepsut, condemning her to oblivion in the ancient Egyptian world view.

Despite Hatshepsut's successors seeking to limit the power and influence of royal women, perhaps as a reaction to her seizure of power, it was not long before several other influential

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[254] James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt vol. II*, Chicago, 2001, pp.15-16.
[255] Wilfong, 2010, p.165.
[256] Cooney, 2014, pp.36-38
[257] Bryan, 1996, p.30.
[258] Graves-Brown, 2010, p.145.

women rose to prominence, most noticeably Queen Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III and mother of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, as well as Akhenaten's chief wife Nefertiti. It seems that Tiye had such prominence that Amarna Letter EA 26, from the Mitannian king Tushratta, is even addressed to her, asking her to ensure the friendship between Egypt and the Mitannians would continue under the new king, her son.[259] The prestige accorded to Tiye during Amenhotep III's reign most likely affected Akhenaten's rule, and along with the religious innovations and changes his reign saw, we also notice what has been described as a 'feminising' influence to artwork and the reliefs depicting the royal family.[260] The prominence of the royal women is hard to ignore. Akhenaten is often depicted with Nefertiti and the couples' daughters, and as chief Royal Wife, Nefertiti is shown partaking in kingly activities, such as riding in the chariot with her husband, smiting enemies, and worshipping the Aten with him. Just as Hatshepsut's reign was largely ignored by the ancient Egyptians, so too did Akhenaten's Amarna Period receive censure and erasure from the official records. The king's new capital at Amarna was abandoned, and after his successor Tutankhamun's early death, the following kings Ay and Horemheb were keen to dispel all memory of the 'heresies' of Akhenaten's time on the throne. Royal women were not to reach such positions of power and influence for the rest of the New Kingdom. It has been suggested that the misogyny present in the narrative tales from the later New Kingdom is partly a result of these powerful women having 'overstepped the boundaries' and challenged the gendered status quo[261] that other genres of literature, such as the didactic *Instructional Texts* already mentioned, also seek to reinforce. However, Susan Tower Hollis has recognised that these texts may be more of a product of "basic ambivalence towards women" that was not just limited to the period following Dynasty Eighteen.[262] By presenting many of the women in the narrative tales as untrustworthy, devious, or of disreputable character, the male élites and scribes may have been trying to undermine these 'real' women's achievements and prestige, relegating females to an ideal role of subservience in a male

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[259] William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore, 1992.

[260] Gay Robins, "The 'feminization' of the male figure in New Kingdom two-dimensional art", in *Chief of Seers: Egyptian Studies in Memory of Cyril Aldred,* E.Goring, N. Reeves, and J. Ruffle (eds.), London and New York, 1997, pp.251-265.

[261] L. Lesko, 1986, pp.98-103, for example, in which he suggests that *Two Brothers* and *Truth and Falsehood* portray women in such a negative fashion in order to discredit the Dynasty Eighteen queens as well as Hatshepsut, who certainly wielded a considerable amount of power during their lifetimes. Lise Manniche has also suggested that Bata's wife in *Two Brothers* could be identified with Kiya, a Mitannian wife of Akhenaten, and her negative portrayal reflects Dynasty Nineteen attitudes to this queen; however, Lesko, in the just cited work, and Sally Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale: Constructing the Social Context", *JSSEA* 14, 1997, both refute this hypothesis. Katary, 1997, p.52.

[262] Hollis, 1989, p.35.

dominated world, for example.[263] This will be returned to in Chapter three, where the speech, actions and gendered portrayal of the female personae, both mortal and divine, Egyptian and foreign, will be explored.

The evidence discussed, both in relation to royal women and those of less élite status, does of course come from a specific time period in ancient Egyptian history, and it has already been outlined how gender constructs and expected gendered 'scripts' relied on the cultural milieu for their production and context. Gender and sexual culture are complex and nuanced, and a simple "one size fits all" methodology is insufficient. In the words of Herdt;

> "we might define sexual cultures as formulations of roles and norms, rules and beliefs that organize and regulate sexual conduct in the larger society. We cannot then ignore the political conditions that motivate these formations. The concept of sexual culture is therefore inherently bound by the internal contradictions of power and power relations *in each context* in which the sexual encounter occurs."[264]

With this in mind, we now turn to the concept of gender performativity, and how a liminal, transitional space can allow for the challenging of these "roles and norms" imposed upon individuals by their specific culture.

Gender and Performativity

It is possible to examine challenges to gender norms by looking through the lens of performativity, and its use of cultural codes both to enforce and contest normative behaviour. Gender, and its performance in a given culture, can be related to sexual desire and erotic experience, as well as to expressions of self-identity and individuality, and can be both subverted within, and regulated by, societal conventions. Gender, for Judith Butler, is "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame… that produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being."[265] Gender is therefore

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[263] Barbara Lesko, "Women of Egypt and the Ancient Near East", *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, in R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz, (eds.), Boston, 1987, p.52 in particular; Katary, 1997, pp.56-58.
[264] Herdt, 1999, p.23. My emphasis.
[265] Butler, 1999, p.25.

performative in nature, a 'doing' rather than an inherent 'being', although the subjects do not always have agency in deciding what gender they portray. Butler does make a distinction between performativity, expression and performance, such as in Chapter three of *Gender Trouble*, which deals with drag and 'gender-parody.'[266] A specific sphere, a certain setting for performance, can undermine and reframe the performative restrictions of gender, as the audience or witnesses willingly suspend their disbelief and enter into an alternate world where entrenched social conventions (such as the gendering of the anatomical body) may be discarded or disregarded. This is due to the liminal space these performances make use of, the potentiality inherent in the performance, and the rich variety of allusion, metaphor and gesture utilised to go beyond the denotative identity imposed on the performer. The performative Suspension of Disbelief is, in simple terms, an unofficial 'contract' made between the actor(s) and audience member(s) in which the viewer/audience member agrees basically to 'believe' what they experience performed in their presence, at least for the duration of the performance. The people witnessing the performance, and at times even those participating in it, are able "to go along in imagination with express judgements and doctrines from which they would ordinarily dissent."[267] This could include witnessing the funerary rites of a *mortal woman* while genuinely believing her to be transformed into the *male god* Osiris through the ritual process.

By entering a liminal state, a performative sphere in which the participants are prepared to accept the veracity of the action, both actor and audience are in a sense transfigured, and participate in a reality that privileges connotative identity over denotative categories. The performance itself relies on its total effect as 'sign', and the text informing or guiding it becoming a 'macro-sign', an element contributing to, and often controlling, the unified whole of the expression.[268] This allows the audience to act as "the ultimate maker" of meaning(s)[269], leading to dissonant readings and interpretations that are both confined by the performative sphere and liberated by it. The ordinary 'real' is pushed to the back of the mind and the 'unreal' of the performance attains a certain truth simply through its occurrence, or in many cases, re-occurrence. While this is particularly true for performances that rely on established ritual or mythic understandings for their wider context, we can also apply the Suspension of Disbelief to other, perhaps more mundane or secular, performances that allow for the temporary

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[266] *ibid.*, pp.183-193 in particular.
[267] M. H. Abrams, *Literature and Belief,* New York, 1958, p.viii.
[268] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama,* London and New York, 1980, p.5.
[269] *ibid.*

transformation of identity. Specifically for this study, this allows us to value the liminality of a woman performing love songs composed in both male and female voices to a group of onlookers equally with a female undergoing the intense mythologically-based transformations required to attain permanent existence in the afterlife.

In order to assess the impact of making a human figure into a signifier, a physical articulation of any given message, Umberto Eco revisits the American semiotician C.S. Pierce's consideration of the Salvation Army campaign to display a drunkard on a public stage in order to illustrate the evils of alcoholism.[270] Not only does the particular drunkard stand in for a whole category of individuals – becoming "a semiotic device: he is now a sign" - but he is also the physical presence of a wider social understanding, an articulation of an agenda.[271] This allows the connotative identity of the performer to override the utilitarian, everyday meaning behind what is presented to us at least within its specific context. In this way, our Chantress of Amun, Anhai, is able to *become* Osiris through the ritual performance of funerary rites and existence of the accompanying manuscript, her Book of the Dead. The bland, stereotypical women we meet in the narrative tales are as *real* as the text requires them to be for it to have meaning, even as we recognise that they are caricatures, poor representatives of actual female experience. Finally, the idealised lovers in the Love Songs, and some (probable) female performers of the texts, are able to transcend their denotative identity and take on personae that are at first glance at odds with their culturally gendered self. These women, throughout the duration of the performance, are the "stage sign-vehicle" whose purpose in the performative sphere is to "successfully stand for its intended signifier"[272], allowing for gendered identities to be blurred, challenged and subverted within a liminal setting. This of course does not only apply to women; it is vital to recognise that all personae or characters, when acting as a sign-vehicle, are required to lose their personal identity somewhat in order to entrench the 'realness' of their connotative identity. Very little evidence remains regarding New Kingdom dramatic staging of written texts[273], yet it is more than likely that there was a performative element to the literature studied here that required oral transmission, a specific setting for the transmission

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[270] Umberto Eco, "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", *The Drama Review* 21, 1, 1977, pp.109 -110.
[271] Eco, 1977, p.110; pp.115-116.
[272] Elam, 1980, p.6.
[273] Gillam, 2005, pp.11-12, and pp.67-92 for a review of New Kingdom evidence for dramatic performance, most of which comes from festival processions and rituals, as well as funerary rites such as the Opening of the Mouth ceremony.

to take place, and the ability for the audience to interpret the presentation in different ways while still recognising the performative veracity of what they were seeing and/or hearing.

Orality and literature

Before considering the post-structuralist theories that inform my reading of the texts analysed, it is worthwhile to briefly consider the question of literature and literacy in ancient Egypt. I will attempt to avoid mention of an author when discussing the ancient texts, and will instead refer to the person who created the written copy as the copyist, scribe, or recorder, but not the unquestionable composer. Scribes undoubtedly enjoyed a privileged status over many other people, especially illiterate workers. Papyrus Sallier II, also dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty, contains a copy of the Middle Kingdom *Satire of the Trades*, which praises the scribal profession over manual labourers.[274] When examining any ancient Egyptian epigraphic evidence from a modern feminist point of view, we are hindered by the fact that "most texts were written by men of the scribal class from a male point of view," as stated by Robins.[275] Common themes, idiomatic language and repeated phrases, as well as verbal word play are, in the words of Fox, "not due to spontaneous generation, nor are differences due to a sudden and erratic jump, but rather the degree and type of divergence are the result of continuous accumulation and reshaping" of the literature.[276] Differences stemming from *re-presentation* of a certain event or narrative do not necessarily represent a rebellion regarding what a copyist has written up as a 'master' text, but instead illustrate the space and scope for modification, for Fox's "continuous accumulation" that potentially made the monumental royal propagandistic literature off limits except for the high élites. For other genres of literature, it seems that there were probable refinements and alterations, both in written form and orally in re-tellings, which took place. Verbal modifications to the 'text' could have occurred before and after the extant written version that survives for us today was made. It has already been discussed whether we can apply the term 'literature' to all Egyptian texts. For this thesis, literature will be taken to mean more than just *belles-lettres,* and encompasses many compositions that include markers

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274 Parkinson, 2002, p.50.
275 Robins, 1993, p.176.
276 Fox, 1985, p.xxiv.

of potential oral dissemination.[277] Loprieno's *Topos und Mimesis* dichotomy, at least in terms of functional distinction between genres of text, certainly influences the definition of literature, especially in terms of fictionality and supposed *situationasbstraktt*[278] in relation to the sources studied here. However, mimesis, or the representation of 'reality', especially in regards to human interaction, does not have to act in opposition to rhetorical conventions of topos, and Loprieno considers that the majority of ancient Egyptian literary texts vacillate between the two.[279] Assmann's suggestion that we refer to certain pieces of literature as "cultural texts" in order to avoid anachronistic misconceptions will not be discarded[280]; although I continue to use the term 'literature' to describe all of the texts examined in this thesis, I recognise the importance of these texts as expressions of cultural and collective identity.

As Roland Barthes has identified, when examining a piece of literature, we must recognise that "cultural codes" exist within it, referring to established conventions and expectations that do not need to be elucidated in the text for it to be successful, as they would be recognisable to the original audience.[281] An ancient literary text can be either non-fiction or fiction, or a mix of the two, and it does not have to conform to expected post-modern norms to be categorised as such. Dividing up the extant literary sources into genre is just as problematic. Gumbrecht has noted that, when analysing the texts, "such scarcity of sources… makes the reconstruction of any intertextual networks perhaps simply impossible", indicating that although we conventionally group texts into 'genres', this may tell us more about our own readings than it does of the original audience's reception.[282] Jay also shares this view, stating that "the problem in identifying the genre of a text lies in a gap in modern knowledge rather than in the text itself, for the ancient Egyptian would have been able to contextualize a specific text far more fully than we can today."[283]

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[277] See Christopher Eyre and John Baines, "Interactions between orality and literacy in ancient Egypt," *Literacy and Society,* K. Schousboe and M.T. Larsen (eds.), Copenhagen, 1989, pp.102-103, for a discussion on ancient Egyptian texts being read aloud and performed to an audience.

[278] Antonio Loprieno, "Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient texts and modern theory", *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms,* A. Loprieno (ed.), *PdÄ* 10, Leiden, 1996b, pp.39-41; pp.56-58.

[279]*ibid.,* p.46.

[280] Assmann, 1999, pp.6-8 in particular.

[281] Roland Barthes, "The Structural Analysis of Narrative: Apropos of Acts 10-11," *The Semiotic Challenge*, New York, 1988, pp.217-245.

[282] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Does Egyptology need a 'theory of literature'?" *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms,* Antonio Loprieno (ed.), *PdÄ* 10, Leiden, 1996, p.10.

[283] Jacqueline E. Jay, *The Narrative Structure of Ancient Egyptian Tales: From Sinuhe to Setna, Volume 1,* Doctoral Dissertation, submitted University of Chicago, Illinois, 2008, p.5.

The ancient Egyptians certainly considered scribes and writers as important members of society, worthy of praise and laudatory words in their honour, as evidenced by the Rammeside p.Chester Beatty VI, found at Deir el Medina.[284] Whether or not we can deem the men mentioned in this text as 'authors' in relation to our understanding of the term, the composer(s) and/or copiest of the papyrus regarded men such as Neferty and Ptahhotep as *ir nꜣ n sšw rḫyt… ḫpr rn.sn mn r nḥḥ,* "the writers of knowledge…their names have become fixed for all eternity."[285] This text goes on to explain that writing was an effective way of preserving one's name and memory, because the men mentioned are *šmt□ m sš r dd.tw sḫꜣ.tw.tw,* "gone…but writing lets them be remembered."[286] Other texts from the same site imply that certain individuals considered themselves, or were considered by others, as composers or authors of a text. In particular, the *The Instructions of Amennakht* can "confidently be attributed" to this scribe, as his name appears in at the beginning as opposed to the end of the text, and the extant copies of this composition suggest that Amennakht's work had "entered the literary canon" at Deir el Medina.[287] However, it must be recognised that the advice given in the text to the younger scribe Hor-Min consists of "elements of conventional Egyptian wisdom", rather than anything completely unique to this composition.[288] Perhaps the closest example we have to a "modern" 'author' in ancient Egypt is found in *The Complaints of Khakheper-re-seneb*, an Eighteenth Dynasty copy of a Middle Kingdom text.[289] He (or at least the writer/s of the text) laments:

> "Had I unknown utterances, sayings that are strange,
> Novel, untried words, free of repetition;
> Not transmitted sayings, spoken by the ancestors!
> I wring out my body of what it holds, in releasing all my words…"[290]

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[284] BM EA 10684, verso. See Lichtheim, 2006b, pp.175-178, for commentary and translation.

[285] p.CB IV, verso, 2, 6-8.

[286] p.CB IV, verso, 3, 10-11. See Mc Dowell, 1999, pp.137-138 for full translation of this text.

[287] McDowell, p.139. For the known copies of *The Instructions of Amennakht*, preserved on ostraca from Deir el Medina, see Andreas Dorn, "Die Lehre Amunnachts", *ZÄS* 131, 2004, pp.38-55. For other compositions most probably written by Amennakht, see Susanne Bickel and Bernard Mathieu, "L'écrivain Amennakht et son *Enseignement", BIFAO* 93, 1993, pp.31-51. See also Günter Burkart, "Amunnakht, Scribe and Poet of Deir el Medina: A Study of Ostracon O Berlin P 14262", *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Theory and Practice,* R. Enmarch and V. M. Lepper (eds.), Oxford, 2013, pp.65-82, for a discussion of Amennakht's probable other compositions, and p.81 for the agument that Amennakht "may enjoy a special place in this circle [of Deir el Medinan scribes] only in so far as the number of surviving works by him… far exceeds the number of works we have by any of his contemporaries."

[288] *ibid.*

[289] BM EA 5645.

[290] "The Complaints of Khakheper-re-seneb", BM EA 5646, recto, 1-3. See Richard Parkinson, "The text of Khakheperreseneb: New Readings of EA 5646, and an Unpublished Ostracon", *JEA* 83, 1997, pp.55-68; Lichtheim, 2006a, pp.145-149 for translation and commentary.

Khakheper-re-seneb bemoans the fact that the conventions of 'literature' were staid and circumscribed, craving "novel, untried words" in order to express his thoughts and feelings. Although making this complaint, he then goes on to use "generalized metaphors," and by addressing his woes to his heart, he utilises a conventional rhetoric device common in this genre.[291] Even if Khakheper-re-seneb was not an innovator as such, not an ancient James Joyce or e.e. cummings, the text does demonstrate that someone, be it individual or collective group, recognised that there were rules and regulations governing Egyptian compositions, and in order to transgress these rules, one had to be aware of what they were. However, the above lines imply that if the rules of the genre were transgressed too fully, the composition would not be particularly successful. Khakheper-re-seneb, although longing for "unknown utterances", does not completely break the mold, as it were, and the New Kingdom copy notably records the "transmitted sayings" of an "ancestor," the very thing that the original composition/'author' wishes to reject. As Eagleton claims, "all literary works... are 'rewritten', if only unconsciously, by the societies which read them,"[292] showing just how powerful the cultural impositions of time, place, and lifestyle can be, modifying and challenging the reception of the same text amongst different consumers. Emend "read them" from the above quote, removing any modern connotations of reading silently to one's self, to "transmit them", and we have the potential for the ancient texts to have functioned a similar way, creating many different interpretations and understandings.

Recent studies have indeed challenged previous viewpoints regarding Egyptian literature as purely written compositions, intended for consumption by a literate extreme minority. Writing in 1923, Alan Gardiner argued that ancient Egyptian literature was not orally transmitted, but rather only occurred in a written medium accessible exclusively to the few who could read and write.[293] However, this has been refuted by Eyre, for example, who contests Gardiner's earlier viewpoint by explaining that applying the 'rules' of modern European literature to the ancient texts results in an anachronistic reading of them.[294] It has been claimed that "oral performance is characteristic for Egyptian culture, and the nature of the Egyptian texts lie in 'performance'

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[291] Lichtheim, 2006a, pp.145-6.
[292] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction, Anniversary Edition*, Minneapolis, 2008, p.12.
[293] Alan Gardiner, "The Eloquent Peasant", *JEA* 9, 1923, pp.6-7.
[294] Christopher Eyre, "The Performance of the Peasant", in *Reading the Eloquent Peasant: Proceedings of the International Conference on The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant at the University of California, Los Angeles, March 27-30, 1997,* A. Gnirs (ed.), LingAeg 8, Göttingen, 2000, p.9.

literature"[295], stressing that our post-modern conceptions of author-reader relationship are insufficient when addressing the ancient texts. Sally Katary considers it likely that an "oral folkloric tradition… (with) story-tellers like the bards of Homeric Greece" did exist in ancient Egypt as well.[296] She cites the stories preserved on p.Westcar[297] as examples of literature referencing performances, and the telling of popular stories, which indicates that oral transmission of literature was "an established cultural feature" of pharaonic culture.[298] Both Parkinson and Eyre agree that the ancient Egyptian literature that survives today most likely reflects oral presentations and performances captured in a written medium, and is thus performative in nature. The written texts therefore reflect pre-existing oral traditions, although there was potential for editing and modification as the written form was developed.[299] Examples from different types of composition demonstrates that oral performativity affected the form of written literature, such as the requirement to "listen" to the instructions from *sebayt* literature, and tomb stelae containing the speech of the owner.[300] Other features of ancient Egyptian literature, such as metaphor, word play, alliteration and repetition all suggest that oral performance was most likely, as the success of these devices usually "only works under the condition that the texts are performed verbally."[301] Jay, after extensive analysis of grammatical form and function within ancient Egyptian narrative literature, recognises that "the tales are far simpler in style, perhaps reflecting the growing influence of the oral tradition on written literature" in terms of their development on from the Middle Kingdom sources, again stressing the potentially for performance and oral dissemination.[302]

Having already stated that the élite male scribes were somewhat set apart from their illiterate counterparts, it is necessary to raise the question of female literacy. Quirke, following Smith, suggests that a letter from Lahun dating to Dynasty Twelve (UC 32203) may have been written by a woman, rather than dictated by her to a male scribe.[303] Ir, the Lady of the House, complains

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[295] Emi Shirakawa, *Sound metaphor: functions of wordplays in ancient Egypt*, Doctoral thesis, submitted University of Liverpool, 2008, p.2.
[296] Sally Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale: Constructing the Social Context", *JSSEA* 14, 1997, p.40.
[297] p.Berlin 3033.
[298] Katary, 1997, p.40.
[299] Eyre, 1989; Eyre and Baines, 2000; Parkinson, 2002, pp.56-57. Eyre suggests that this goes back to the Old Kingdom, regarding the Cannibal Hymn PT.273-4, as demonstrating that "…the roots of [written] Egyptian literature as art lie in recitational-poetic forms", 2000, p.12.
[300] Shirakawa, 2008, p.15.
[301] *ibid.*, p.4.
[302] Jay, 2008, p.12.
[303] Stephen Quirke, "Women in Ancient Egypt: temple titles and funerary papyri", W.J. Tait, and A. Leahy (eds.) *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith*, Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1999, p.227.

to a male recipient that the women she is in charge of are not fulfilling their weaving quota. Due to the association with women as weavers, as well as the unpolished writing and direction of the hieratic script, it is possible that Ir wrote the letter herself, having had no formal scribal training and learning to write at a basic level only in order to run her household.[304] There is some evidence, such as name seals dating to the Middle Kingdom, which may suggest there were a few women scribes but this is contentious at best.[305] Although Fischer interprets the title *sšt* as 'female scribe' when it appears on these seals, many other Egyptologists follow Posener's suggestion that it relates to the application of cosmetics instead.[306] Interestingly, several of the letters written to a female recipient are addressed to men, suggesting that the woman was illiterate and would need someone to read it to her, and, presumably, write down her reply.[307] However, this does not just apply to women, as the letter to Petrepayneb attests, in which another male is named as the person who should read it to its male recipient.[308] One example of a letter, dating to the reign of Akhenaten in Dynasty Eighteen, was written by Ramose to his sister, Sheryre, in which the male author tells her to *ptr,* to look, at the letter, which may be interpreted as an indication she would have been able to read it for herself.[309] Janák and Navrátilová also raise the intriguing possibility that the Ramesside p.Turin 55001, the Turin Erotic Papyrus, was intended for a female audience, as it lampoons "men so mercilessly."[310] As the content of the papyrus required a degree of literacy in order to fully appreciate its subject matter, they posit that if it was indeed intended for a female audience, this implies that some women could read and write to an extent.[311] Grajetzki has also suggested that women and girls may have been educated to a degree, including perhaps leaning to read and write, by the family in a similar manner as a son and heir would have been, citing a reference to a woman called Henut having been "taught" (*sbaleph)* by her father on a stela now

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[304] Edward F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, Atlanta, 1990, pp. 82-83; It can be argued that the main obstacle preventing women from learning to write was the employment of men only in the royal administration. Quirke, 1999, p. 227; Mark Collier and Stephen Quirke, *The UCL Lahun Papyri: Letters*, British Archaeological Report International Series 1083, Oxford, 2002, pp.114-116.

[305] Of the 1800 name seals assembled by Martin, only 7.2% belong to women. Geoffrey T. Martin, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-name Seals, principally of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period,* Oxford, 1971.

[306] Quirke, 1999, p.228; Henry Fischer, *Egyptian Studies I: Varia,* New York, 1976, pp.78-79; Georges Posener, "'Maquilleuse' en égyptien", *RdE* 21, 1969, pp.150-151; Wolfram Grajetzki, "Women and Writing in the Middle Kingdom: stela Louvre C 187", *RdE* 60, 2009, pp.209-210 for discussion of this term.

[307] Wente, 1990, p.9.

[308] *ibid.*

[309] *ibid.*

[310] Jiří Janák and Hana Navrátilová, "People vs. p.Turin 55001", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt : 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, p.69.

[311] *ibid.*

in the Louvre.[312] At this point I do not consider it possible to say with certainty that women could be what we would term fully literate; however, I will argue in Chapter two that there is some convincing evidence for women to transmit literature orally during the New Kingdom, even if we do not have the surviving evidence that they did so directly via the written medium itself.

The post-structuralist approach to literature

> "Now I realised that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves… [the library] was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by a human mind, surviving the death of those who had produced them or been their conveyors."[313]

As Umberto Eco notes, "nothing is of greater consolation to the author of a novel than the discovery of readings he had not conceived but which are then prompted by his readers," often in relation to semiotic double isotopy or double readings that the author intended, but can then invoke other meanings in the receiver's consciousness.[314] This demonstrates that even if we have a named author (in the modern sense of the word) to ask what they meant or intended within a text, an alternative reading or understanding by a reader or receiver of the literature is not necessarily *wrong* when deriving meaning from it. Gold applies this type of approach to her study of Classical compositions, claiming that "we cannot expect to find in the 'subject' (or speaker or author) any individual authorial intentions on which we might rely to discover the meaning of the text or discourse because the 'subject' is a construct grounded in social discourse beyond any individual control."[315] The same, I would argue, is true for much, if not all, of our surviving literary evidence from pharaonic Egypt. The ancient sources are a product of cultural understandings and a multitude of voices, and the possibility of different interpretations by the contemporary audience is just as plausible as those received by modern readers. As Harvey recognises, "we can no longer assume that the authorial 'voice' resides in the text to which a particular signature is affixed, or that the text is the same for different readers, or that there is a clear correlation between the gender of a body and the gender of a

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[312] Grajetzki, 2009, p.214. The stela in question is Louvre C 187.
[313] Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose,* William Weaver (transl.), London, 1984, p.306.
[314] *ibid.*, p.543.
[315] Barbara K. Gold, " 'But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place': Finding the Female in Roman Poetry", N. S. Rabinowitz, and A. Richlin, (eds.), *Thinking Gender: Feminist Theory and the Classics*, Florence, US., 1993, p.79.

text."[316] The basic tenet of post-structuralism is the acknowledgement that discourse can manipulate perceptions of reality, and we are required, therefore, to examine the social context as well as the source, particularly relevant for the ancient texts studied in this thesis as in many cases no "particular signature", no particular author, exists.

Bennett suggests that before the invention of the printing press and copywriting, there was less concern with the author as creator of a text; rather the author was the means of writing down pre-existing words and traditions, which "did not entail verbal inventiveness."[317] Post-European Renaissance and Romantic notions of *the* author then led to "a turn...away from the focus on the literary work towards the subject who makes [it]"[318], a preoccupation that may not have been at all relevant for the ancient Egyptians in terms of experiencing what we would term literature. Wolfgang Iser's work on reader reception theory also stresses the active role of the audience in determining the meaning behind a text, which leads to divergence of response to the same piece of literature, although the text does impose some limits to this reception 'activity'.[319] Rose claims that "authors do not really create in a literal sense, but rather produce texts through complex processes of adaptation and transformation."[320] This is a view shared by other post-structuralist theorists, especially after Barthes' famous "Death of the Author" (and 'birth' of the reader) article[321], but is not unchallenged. Edward Said, for example, asserts that "literature is produced in time and in society by human beings, who are themselves agents of, as well as somewhat independent actors within, their actual history,"[322] indicating that the author is not completely distanced from the creation and reception of their text. Sartre also stated that "…if a certain Jean-Paul Sartre is remembered, I would like people to remember the milieu or historical situation in which I lived... how I lived in it, in terms of all the aspirations which I tried to gather up within [my works]…"[323], again emphasising the importance of the socio-cultural context in which texts are written down as fundamental to their significance.

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[316] Harvey, 1992, p.5.
[317] Andrew Bennett, *The Author: The New Critical Idiom,* London and New York, 2005, p.40.
[318] *ibid.*, p.5.
[319] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach," *New Literary History* 3, 2, 1972, pp.287-288.
[320] Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, Cambridge, MA., 1993, p.8.
[321] Barthes, 1967.
[322] Edward Said, *Theories of Discourse*, Oxford, 1986, p.3.
[323] Sartre, quoted in Max Charlesworth, *The Existentialists and Jean-Paul Sartre,* Queensland, 1976, p.154

We must consider just how much the characters' 'voices' influenced the reader and/or audience, and to what purpose the author put words into the mouth of the individuals in the text being studied.[324] Following on from this, it must be questioned just how much of an 'author' we can even identify in the texts under examination. Post-structuralism deviates from structuralist theory, in particular regarding claims to objectivity, and the rejection of the validity of authorial authority. Instead, plurality of meaning, of reception, is emphasised. The works of Barthes and Sartre[325] are particularly important for their consideration of author/audience interaction, and the shaping of the text through dissemination and cultural understandings. Barthes, as well as Foucault, suggests that a text is not simply the product of its author but is a composition stemming from shared experiences and understandings.[326] However, Stanley Fish has made use of the concept of linguistic competence to emphasise that the reader's response is not *completely* subjective.[327] Barthes claims that attributing a text to the creative process of just one author imposes limits on the text itself, as it is a compendium of ideas, "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash".[328] This is especially pertinent for this thesis, as many of the texts are considered to be the product of select cultural understandings being brought together in a written document. However, as Parkinson notes, for the Egyptian literary milieu, "the restriction of literacy in ancient Egypt means that all written language is in some sense 'official'"[329], and the writing down of the texts, even if based on widely disseminated oral discourse, was done by a select minority of the population.

I have been influenced greatly by Deborah Harvey's study of feminised voices in Renaissance English and Classical texts, in which she identifies what she terms as 'transvestite ventriloquism': texts that purport to be voiced by a female, yet are written by male authors who appropriate the feminised voice to serve their own purposes, hiding or 'transvestitising' their own authorial voice in the process.[330] Harvey refers to this as 'transvestite ventriloquism', but

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[324] Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, A. Lavers and C. Smith (transl.), New York, 1977; Roland Barthes, *Image- Music-Text,* S. Heath (transl.), New York, 1978; Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature,* London and New York, 2011.
[325] *ibid.*
[326] Barthes, 1978; Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay,* R. Miller (transl.), New York, 1975; Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader,* P. Rabinow (ed.), New York, 1984, pp.101-120 in particular.
[327] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, MA., 1980.
[328] Barthes, 1990, p.146.
[329] Richard B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature", *JEA* 81, 1995, p.60.
[330] Harvey, 1992, p.1.

I will use the term 'gender ventriloquism' in this work, as I feel it allows for greater scope in the discussion of voice appropriation. There is, in Harvey's view, an almost sinister aspect to this ventriloquism, as the male 'voice' appropriates the female in order to serve its own purpose, just as Hélène Cixous had argued that writing has been and continues to be "…typically masculine [and] a locus where the repression of women [is] perpetuated over and over."[331] These 'transvestite voices', of course, can and often do reflect the opinions and beliefs of the ventriloquist, who may decide to have another person speak the beliefs to give greater veracity or to disguise bias. Harvey explains that the male author verbally "cross-dressing" as "the other gender" creates a discrepancy between the actuality of women's experience and the presentation of it in these texts, further complicated by the actual cross-dressing of male actors performing female roles in her studied texts, and the subsequent gendering of the body through language.[332] A feminised body essentially has gendered speech scripted for it, and the performativity of the voice is often controlled by external influences, causing a worrying disjunction between the speech act and the body it *seems* to emanate from. Harvey challenges the work of T.S. Eliot, in which the female voice is recognised in reference to his authorial persona that, in Harvey's opinion, "absorbs women or feminine voices into a gender neutral (or male) category" and denies the agency of the 'female' speaker in 'her' own identity as 'woman'.[333] Alice Jardine, in *Gynesis,* also questions whether Feminist researchers can find a point of difference in male-authored texts, which make up the majority of our extant literature, and emphasises that "discourse about women" is different to "discourse by, through, as woman."[334] For our ancient evidence, we are restricted to surviving literary texts that have been rendered in their epigraphical form by male scribes or copyists. These texts may include female 'voices' that are reflective of genuine experiences, but it is necessary to identify and be wary of discourses about the concept of 'woman', of linking the female body with associated meanings, that may distance the modern reader from the ancient female subject, and only serve to tell us about male hegemony as producers of textual meaning. Applying Jardine's work to antiquity, Barbara Gold has suggested that when looking at ancient texts, we should consider "what is hidden, deemphasized, left out, or denied articulation, and try to make evident the spaces produced in these texts over which the writer has no control and in which "woman" can

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[331] Cixous, 1994, p.87.
[332] Harvey, 1992, pp.2-3. In particular, Harvey uses the example of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* to illustrate the discrepancy between the body and voice, and the words the body 'speaks'.
[333]*ibid.*, p.3.
[334] Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Women and Modernity,* Ithaca and London, 1985, pp.36-37.

be found"[335], allowing the modern reader to hear more than just the patriarchal voice of the 'author(s)' or copyists.

One of the central themes in A.S. Byatt's *Possesssion,*[336] first published in 1990, is that of ventriloquism; Byatt explores the idea of hiding or distancing one's self from one's own voice in order to put words in the mouth of a different persona via the characters in the novel, the majority of which can be considered a different gender to Byatt herself. Byatt actually refers to one of her characters, the fictional Victorian poet R. H. Ash, as a "ventriloquist", a writer who was able to 'speak' through his poetry as many different personae. In writing the speech, the prose and the poetry of Ash, among her other characters,[337] Byatt is purposefully ventriloquising the ventriloquist herself. In a question posed to the author Marlon James, I queried whether he felt his characters in *A Brief History of Seven Killings*[338], his most recent novel which dealt with historical events as well as the literary personae's responses to these events, were his creations, simply vessels for him to tell his story.[339] In response, James explained that although he decided which characters' viewpoints he would write from, they had a certain autonomy; the characters were distinct from James as author. Although he used them to tell his version of the story, the characters influenced the telling, the direction the story took in regards to their individual experiences and response to events, which was somewhat outside of his authorial control. This is because the characters, in a sense, already existed in history and were a product of shared socio-cultural memory who functioned semi-independently of the writer. In this way, James does act as a ventriloquist in that his specific literary personae would not exist nor speak in his work without his authorial input, yet there is a degree of separation between the writer and the characters, allowing for different voices to affect the telling of the tale.[340] This approach to authorial control of, and impact on, the content of a piece of literature is one I will take when examining the ancient texts, acknowledging that while biases and agenda exist within them, this is not necessarily indicative of one person's views or beliefs. Rather, the texts have the potential to challenge as well as reinforce dominant

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[335] Gold, 1993, p.79.

[336] A.S. Byatt, *Possession,* London, 1992.

[337] As well as her Nineteenth century poet Christabel LaMotte, and her modern academics Michel and Bailey.

[338] Marlon James, *A Brief History of Seven Killings,* London, 2015.

[339] Personal conversation with Marlon James at the Auckland Writers' Festival, Aotea Centre, May 2016.

[340] This is particularly important when we consider how James 'speaks' as personae of a different gender, race, religion and social background to himself, personae with a multitude of opinions and experiences that are more than just a creation of an individual writer. James' identification as a post-Colonialist author is of course reflected in this desire to give an account of history that challenges the 'official' version.

discourse, and include voices that are the product of cultural conventions as opposed to being only the product of a single individual's creative process. This modern conception of the *author as mouthpiece* negates, to an extent, the sinister aspect of voice appropriation that Harvey regards as so prevalent in Western Renaissance literature in regards to men speaking 'disguised' as women, and will be particularly relevant when discussing how the genre of ancient Egyptian literature affects the speech and deeds of those within it as examined throughout this thesis.

In the subsequent analyses, questions of 'authorship' will be addressed, and I shall deliberate to what extent we can see the texts as individual creative processes. I do not consider it possible to talk of an 'author' for the ancient Egyptian texts examined here, in the way we can regard Byatt as the author of *Possession,* or James as the author of *A Brief History of Seven Killings,* for example. In this, the work of Antonio Loprieno, regarding conceptions of the individual and ideas of cultural unity, as well as that of Jan Assmann and his examination of the "identity function" of ancient texts, are significant. Discourse surrounding decorum and cultural convention will also be fundamental to this study, following on from the work of John Baines.[341] It is debated how far we can even apply the term 'literature' to our surviving texts, and to what extent they reflect both normative and formative societal functions, as discussed by Assmann and Loprieno.[342] Assmann suggests that some texts we describe as 'literary' should be renamed 'cultural texts' as they both shape and entrench cultural identity and collective memory.[343] The term 'genre' will also be used, but it must be acknowledged that the classification of ancient Egyptian literature into genres is a modern construct.[344] The ancient Egyptians themselves referred to Instructional Literature as *sebayt,* but other categorisations, such as narrative tales, are named from a modern perspective, and care must be taken to avoid anachronistic assumptions regarding the nature and content of categories of genre.[345]

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[341] Antonio Loprieno, "Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Literary Theory," *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty–First Century*, J S. Cooper and G. M. Schwartz (eds.), The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, pp.209–32; Antonio Loprieno, *Topos und Mimesis: Zum Ausländer in der Aegyptisches Literatur, ÄA* 48, Wiesbaden, 1998; Jan Assmann, "Cultural and Literary Texts", *Definitely: Egyptian Literature. Proceedings of the Symposium "Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms",* G. Moers (ed.), Göttingen, 1999, pp.5-8 in particular; see also Baines, 2010.

[342] Antonio Loprieno, "Defining Egyptian Literature: ancient texts and modern theories", *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms,* A. Loprieno (ed.), *PdÄ* 10, 1996, pp.3-18; Assmann, 1999, pp.4-6 in particular.

[343] Assmann, 1999, pp.5-6.

[344] Simpson, 1972, p.3; Fischer-Elfert, 2003, pp.122-123.

[345] Simpson, 1972, pp.5-6; Parkinson, 2002, p.10.

As this thesis will only look at texts from a prescribed period, the sources will not always be examined in chronological order, especially as the exact date of composition, as well as potential reception, is not secure. Rather, they will all be regarded as a product of the specified time period and its cultural milieu, with any relevant changes over time considered when possible. It is worth reiterating Loprieno's cautionary advice here: while literature may serve as viable sources enabling us to reconstruct actual historical conditions and events, we must try to identify possible biases, agenda, and cultural conventions that colour and shape the ancient texts.[346] Whether disseminated orally or in written form, the texts existed for a reason. For the remainder of this thesis, I will refer to the epigraphic evidence as both texts and compositions, with the understanding that they were almost certainly all intended for oral performance, but only the written evidence survives for us today. The selected texts will therefore be analysed in a similar style to Roland Barthes deconstruction of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, in which Barthes claims the text reflects a multitude of voices, not just that of a single author.[347] In conjunction with this deconstructed close reading, modern theories as outlined above will be applied to our sources, with the overall goal of enriching our current state of knowledge regarding ancient Egyptian sexuality and gender constructs during the New Kingdom. The next chapter moves on to analyse the love songs, a very interesting corpus of literature relating to ancient Egyptian sexual behaviour, emotional attachment, and erotic encounters presented through a specific type of written record.

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[346] Loprieno, 1996, pp.212-213.
[347] Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay,* Richard Miller (transl.), New York, 1975.

"Her lips are sweet when speaking, she has no excessive words!"[348]
Gendering the love songs personae

This chapter will look at the corpus of literature conventionally termed love songs, recovered from papyri, pottery and ostraca, which detail erotic encounters and wished for interactions between the 'voice' of the song and the person they desire. Varying in length and subject matter, the compositions are diverse and, in many ways intensely personal, documents, although the constructed nature of the texts and the restrictions imposed on their content by conventions of the genre cannot be overlooked. The love songs are fundamentally important pieces of evidence for the discussion of gender, gendered speech and actions, as well as ventriloquism or voice appropriation in ancient Egypt, and the way in which genre can impact upon the presentation of an individual within the written evidence. The texts both reinforce and challenge, albeit subtly in several cases, dominant discourse regarding gender and gender-based oppression in ancient Egypt. In this chapter, intersectionality will be used to demonstrate that many factors constituting individual identity overlap or intersect with each other in the love songs, creating a range of positions of privilege and oppression that are by nature relational, and are informed by far more than just the subject's gender.[349] I will therefore be examining sexuality and sexualised behaviour, as well as romantic love, both in terms of individual erotic desire, and the conventions imposed by society in regulating and expressing this eroticism as found in these texts. After outlining the evidence for the love song corpus and the secondary scholarship pertaining to this, including issues regarding 'authorship', construction of the ideal lover and the gendering of the individual that informs this construction will be examined. Two case studies will follow. The first focuses on the text of o.DM 1266 B, 1, in which I give a close reading of the source, both as a specific piece of literature and as a composition that interacts intertextually with the rest of the corpus, to demonstrate how the application of modern theory can allow us to read alternative, new meanings into a piece of evidence. The second examines other textual evidence from the site of Deir el Medina, largely legal or administrative in nature, to give a comparative study regarding women's lived experiences that both contrast with, and in some cases reinforce, the experiences presented in the love songs.

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[348] *bnr sp.ty.s (ḥr) mdwt bn n.s ẖnw m ḥꜥw* p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1.
[349] May states that "there are multiple and enmeshed forms of both identity and oppression that need to be

The ancient evidence and secondary sources

This analysis examines love songs found on three papyri, p.Chester Beatty I, p.Harris 500, and p.Turin 1966[350], and on a largely complete pottery vessel, known as the Cairo Jar, that has love songs written over an earlier *sebayt* composition.[351] In addition to these sources, love songs are found on ostraca and potshards, the majority of which were recovered from Deir el Medina.[352] A total of 88 compositions will be analysed in this chapter. In this analysis I consider 'songs' to include 'verses' or 'stanzas' of song cycles, as well as individual compositions.[353] In the instance of two different sources bearing a version of the same song, I have included the separate versions as a song in its own right in this total: therefore, o.Borchardt contains one song, as does o.CGT 57367 recto., the latter appearing to be a copy of the former, both of which will be examined. I follow Landgráfová's reading of the four texts on o.DM 1650 as parodies of love songs, and so have not included them in my analysis.[354] In addition to their parodic nature, the compositions, particularly songs 2 and 3, are highly fragmentary and much of the surviving text is incomprehensible, again preventing their inclusion in my research.[355] Other fragmentary ostraca, such as o.Prague NpM P, 3827, are included, as the text contains phrases identifying it as belonging to the love song genre, even if the exact nature of the composition

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addressed simultaneously" when undertaking intersectional analyses. May, 2015, p.ix. In this case, we must recognise that "enmeshed" identities are not consistently accorded privilege over the different genres. The women we encounter in the love songs receive markedly different treatment to the female characters found in the narrative tales, as well as the women who owned funerary papyri, despite all three genres dealing generally with reasonably high status, Egyptian women.

[350] The first two papyri are housed at the British Museum, London, the third in the Egyptian Museum of Turin. p.Chester Beatty is the best preserved of the three, as p.Harris 500 and p.Turin 1966 both contain lacunae and scribal errors, with p.Turin 1966 being unfortunately poorly preserved in many parts.

[351] Currently housed in the Cairo Museum, Egypt, collection no. 25218 and 1266, the Cairo Jar is a large pottery vessel unearthed at Deir el Medina, which originally had a copy of *The Instruction of a Man for his Son* written on it. McDowell, 1999, p.112.

[352] Bernard Mathieu, *La Poésie Amoureuse de l'Égypte Ancienne: Recherches sur un genre littéraires au Nouvel Empire,* Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1996, p.27.

[353] For example, p.Chester Beatty I contains 3 song cycles, consisting of 7 songs/stanzas for the first song cycle, 3 songs for the second, and 7 songs for the third, so 17 compositions for analysis in total.

[354] Renata Landgráfová, "Breaches of cooperative rules: metaphors and parody in Egyptian Love Songs", *Sex and gender in ancient Egypt: 'don your wig for a joyful hour',* C. Graves-Brown (ed.), Swansea, 2008, pp.74-78. In this article, Landgráfová identifies some expected elements of love songs in these texts, which are apparently subverted into parody, such as the beloved woman becoming pregnant in song 4, and coitus being disagreeable in song 1, in which we are told *iw.f ḥwȝt n ḥnwt.i* ("...it is unpleasant for my mistress.")

[355] Mathieu also includes as partial translation of these songs, Mathieu, 1996, p.119, with a very limited discussion (p.125), due to the incompleteness of the text. See Landgráfová, 2008, pp.79-80 for a transcription of o.DM 1650 in hieroglyphics.

is lost.[356] Another composition, o.DM 1646, II, 1, is also included despite the fact that it appears dissimilar to the other songs, containing the phrase "...old body is tired, his bones creak", as this is probably in keeping with the rejuvenating power of love as found in additional texts.[357] However, other compositions, such as those found on p.DM 43, o.DM 1646, IV, o.DM 1651, I, and the fragments from the beginning of p.Turin 1966, have to be excluded from the analysis as the texts are so broken or incomprehensible that they cannot provide adequate information about the genre or the personae within it. The ostraca and the Cairo Jar seem to have been used for "casual and temporary enjoyment", while the papyri were kept for prolonged periods of time, as is evidenced by p.Chester Beatty I having been carefully stored by the family of Qenher-khepeshef over several generations.[358] Notable transcriptions of the songs exist, such as the transcription of p.Chester Beatty I completed by Gardiner, who also transcribed p.Harris 500, and p.Turin 1966 by Lopez.[359] With the discovery by Georges Posener of many ostraca in the rubbish pit area of Deir el Medina[360], the songs found on the Cairo Jar were able to be more fully reconstructed, and this artefact contributes greatly to the study of the texts, transcribed by Müller[361] and Posener[362], and included in analyses of the genre by Mathieu, and Landgráfová and Navrátilová, as well as by Fox.[363]

The love songs appear to date to no earlier than the Ramesside Period of the New Kingdom, as they are written in Late Egyptian; however, just because no definitive evidence has yet been recovered of earlier compositions this does not automatically mean that this genre was a New Kingdom innovation.[364] Likewise, it is possible that the love song genre was in use long after

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[356] For example, the phrase *mrwt.s* "love of her", found on this ostracon. See Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, pp.217-219, for a more detailed critique of fragmentary texts that are considered love songs due to shared motifs, imagery and linguistic similarity with the genre as a whole.

[357] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.154.

[358] McDowell, 1999, p.112. Pestman notes that "the fact that the owners of the archive collected so many of these texts shows their great interest in literary matters", Pieter W. Pestman "Who were the Owners, in the 'Community of Workmen', of the Chester Beatty Papyri", *Gleanings from Deir el-Medîna*, R.J. Demarée and J.J. Janssen (eds.), Leiden, 1982a, p.166, and pp.160-163 for the acquisition history of the papyrus from Qenher-khepeshef down to Ma'a-Nakht-ef.

[359] Alan H. Gardiner, *The Chester Beatty Papyri, no. I,* London, 1931; Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third series,* London, 1935; Jésus Lopez, "Le verger d'amour (p.Turin 1966 recto)", *RdE 43,* 1992, pp.133-143.

[360] See Georges Posener, *Catalogue des ostraca hiératiques littéraires de Deir el-Médina,* DFIFAO I, 1938; XVIII, 1951-1972; XX, 1977-1980, for the full inventory; Wilhelm M. Müller, *Die Liebespoesie der Alten Aegypter,* Leipzig, 1932.

[361] Müller, 1932, pp.13-28.

[362] Posener, 1951-1972, plate 79.

[363] Mathieu, 1996; Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a; Fox 1985.

[364] Simpson, 1972, pp.7-8, p.137; Foster 2001, p.17, for example. Both of these authors speculate that the 'love song' genre existed before the New Kingdom, perhaps evidenced by New Kingdom copies of the Middle Kingdom

the New Kingdom, and the evidence has simply been lost, or only survives on different media. Bernard Mathieu argues that the genre was still in use in the Late Period based on the inscription on a stele belonging to Mutirdis, dating to c.700 B.C., in which she is described in very similar terms as the women in the Ramesside songs.[365] It is important to note, however, that the Low dialect of Late Egyptian in which the love songs are written owes much to the cultural innovations of the Amarna Period, 1353-1336 B.C., during which time the Low dialect made its way into literary compositions.[366] As well as enriching existing forms of literary genres during the Ramesside Period, Orly Goldwasser considers the Amarna legitimisation of the Low dialect as potentially introducing oral traditions into the existing literary arena.[367] Guglielmi regards certain motifs present in many of the love songs to have their origins in the Late Eighteenth Dynasty.[368] This view was shared by Hermann, who cites bird-trapping metaphors, descriptions of the lovers going hand-in-hand, and the beloved girl being described as "Mistress of the Two Lands" as images relating particularly strongly to the visual culture of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten's reigns.[369] This does not presuppose that the love songs as compositions *must* date back to the Eighteenth Dynasty, as artistic depictions do not have to be coterminous with literary imagery that references similar motifs, but we can say that the socio-cultural milieu of this time "illuminates the nature of this genre" of literature.[370]

With the exception of p.Harris 500 and three ostraca recovered from Thebes[371] the sources for the love songs with known provenance were excavated at Deir el Medina, placing our evidence for this genre of literature in both a remarkable temporal and spatial setting. p.Harris 500, found in a casket at the Ramesseum, Thebes, dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty.[372] It contains four collections of love songs plus the famous Antef Song on the recto, as well as two narrative texts, *The Doomed Prince* and *The Taking of Joppa,* on the verso. p.Chester Beatty I contains a hymn to Ramesses V, as well as *The Contendings of Horus and Seth,* in addition to three

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kmyt, a compilation containing a lament describing a woman who longs for her absent husband, and his possible response that evokes the Ramesside love song exchanges between lovers. See also Wente, 1990, pp.15-17.

[365] See Mathieu, 1996, p.36, p.87, for further discussion.

[366] Orly Goldwasser, "'Low' and 'High' dialects in Ramesside Egyptian", *Textcorpus und Wörterbuch,* S. Grunert and I. Hafemann (eds.), Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999, pp.316-317.

[367] *ibid.*

[368] Waltraud Guglielmi, "Die ägyptische Liebespoesie", *Ancient Egyptian Literature, History and Forms, PdÄ* 10, A. Loprieno (ed.),1996, pp.337-338.

[369] Hermann, 1959, pp.138 -144.

[370] Fox, 1985, p.183.

[371] O.Michaelides 86, o.Gardiner 304 and o.Gardiner 186.

[372] Fox, 1985, p.7, who argues that Schott's, 1950, p.34, earlier assertion that this papyrus dates to the end of the Amarna Period is fallacious.

collections of love songs, and so cannot date to any earlier than this Twentieth Dynasty king's reign. p.Turin 1966, unfortunately of unknown provenance, has been dated to early Dynasty Twenty by Fox, who has identified three songs as well as administrative notes on this very fragmentary papyrus.[373] The Cairo Jar contains two cycles of love songs, written over an earlier copy of a different genre of literature, *The Instructions of a Man for his Son.*[374] Just like the papyri, some of the ostraca bear other texts written alongside the love songs, such as o.Borchardt I which also has a hymn to Amun-Re on it, and o.Gardiner 186 which is inscribed with lines of administrative text.[375]

As stated, the dearth of evidence for love songs from other time periods and sites across ancient Egypt does not mean that they were an 'invention' of Dynasties Nineteen and Twenty, available only to the specific community of Deir el Medina. Indeed, one of the love songs groupings on p.Chester Beatty I ends with the colophon "it (the song) has come to a good ending in *W3st*" which indicates that although the papyrus was excavated at Deir el Medina, these songs were performed or disseminated in the wider Theban area.[376] This is also evidenced by the discovery of three other ostraca from Thebes as mentioned above. However, it is imperative we acknowledge that the majority of our evidence comes from a specific and unique social context, and so cannot be assumed to be fully representative of New Kingdom discourse regarding the themes expressed within the compositions.[377] Comparing the love songs to other contemporaneous literature, such as legal and administrative documents from Deir el Medina, in order to build up a socio-cultural picture of a specific community, is also useful and will be done later in this chapter.[378] A specific social context is created, adding much to cultural studies of the Ramesside Period, but it is essential also that we should not try to see a homogeny based solely on similar themes, in this case the interaction of individuals on a sexual and/or emotional level. While gendered expectations and behavioural conventions can cross boundaries of genre, the purpose of the literary source or document also imposes upon and restricts the nature of the information we are given. Genre circumscribes what can be included in a text, as well as the modes of expression used to present the information. For example, it has been noted that the

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[373] *ibid.*, 1985, p.44.
[374] Landgráfová, and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.231.
[375] Mathieu, 1996, p.133; Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.225.
[376] Landgráfová, and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.222.
[377] For Deir el Medina as a microcosm of New Kingdom society, see McDowell, 1996, pp.1-27; Lynn Meskell, "An archaeology of social relations in an Egyptian village", *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5, 1998, pp.209-243.
[378] Discussed in detail pp.90-96.

love songs do not present an accurate description of daily life as a whole.[379] In particular, none of the love songs analysed here indicate that the couple have conceived, aside from a very obscure reference to "children" in o.DM 1652, 2, that does not give a clear indication whose children are being referred to. Pregnancy and the production of offspring are certainly relevant to our understanding of daily life and sexual love in Egypt, but are notably missing from the songs despite the fact that the compositions deal with erotic feelings and encounters.[380] Indeed, very few of the songs contain expressions of long term commitment.[381] Instead, other evidence can be used to flesh out the overall picture of the society that produced the texts, and can help us to fill in the gaps created by restrictions imposed by genre to identify not only *what* is missing in a certain corpus of literature but also *why* it is not included.

Orality and oral performance of the Love Songs

While the love songs are perennial in their subject matter and can speak to the modern reader at an emotional level, Lichtheim cautions against regarding them as "spontaneous outpourings", created spur-of-the-moment in the midst of feeling; rather they are examples of "deliberate, literary artistry", as evidenced by the choice of words, the style and temper, and the recurring imagery employed to evoke specific scenarios within a wider context.[382] The emotions expressed may have been genuinely felt, but they have potentially (indeed, most likely) been altered in the process of being turned into the subject of literature. They would have undergone revision and linguistic refinement through the process of scribal recording, as well as plausibly by repeated performance, and would have been circumscribed by expectations of genre. So, we must ask ourselves who composed the love songs, and whether it is possible to talk of an *author* at all in relation to individual text. The content of p.Sallier II, also dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty, demonstrates that the ability to read and write would give an

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[379] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.221, in particular relating to "household and economic obligations", which do not fit in with the reoccurring themes found in the songs.

[380] The parodic text of o.DM 1650, 4, contains what Landgráfová and Navrátilová refer to as a "curious mention" of *iwr m pr.f*, being "pregnant in his house", Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.216.

[381] o.Gardiner 339, 2, "I am by his side and will not part from him..."; o.DM 1266, A, 2, "We will be together... until the day of resting in old age comes"; p.Harris 500, II, 4, "you have been given to me by Amun for all of eternity"; o.DM 1266, B, 3, "I would see her love every day"; p.Harris 500, II, 6, "I will not go away, my hand will be in your hand"; o.DM 1266, B, 4, "(I) wish morning were mine to behold her, for as long as her lifetime lasts", are exceptions.

[382] Lichtheim, 2006b, p.181.

individual a degree of status and prestige in ancient Egypt.[383] Despite the high rate of literacy evidenced at Deir el Medina, estimated by McDowell to be as high as 40% of the village's inhabitants[384], the scribal class was still an elevated minority within that literate population. This minority were responsible for the written transmission, and what could be the canonization of, certain texts.[385] For Landgráfová and Navrátilová, Deir el Medina provided "an ideal place for transferring a possible oral tradition into a written form," suggesting that the high level of education among its inhabitants may have created an "exceptional" atmosphere that allowed for the recording, and possible emending, of previously established oral discourse.[386] However, when we consider the written evidence in light of post-structuralist concepts of the 'author' and also 'audience', the identification of the scribe as author or creator of the text becomes more problematic and tenuous. While a literate individual may include descriptions of people or events that resonate and appeal to them on a personal level, it seems that the conventions of the genre would, and did, control and dictate what content could be included in a composition. Fellinger states that "fomulaic phraseology does not provide evidence for the non-existence of the author's own experiences of society but indicates that they were hidden by and intermingled with the formulae which were characteristic of the various literary themes employed in the creation of these poems."[387] She also considers the 'authors' or scribes to have been constrained to an extent by the world in which they lived, unable or unwilling to commit to writing unrealistic portrayals of the men and women, as well as the gender roles, that would have "opposed their world view."[388] This forms the crux of her argument: namely, that the compositions are valuable and reliable sources overall for gender and gendered behaviour in New Kingdom Egypt, as their content could not deviate too widely from the transmitter's, and receiver's, lived reality.[389] Authorial intent, if that concept could even be applied to the songs, would therefore have to take a back seat to intentions imposed by genre as well as cultural conventions, and I would argue that the love songs as a literary type would prohibit too much individualism on the part of the copyist. If we wish to talk about individualism, it would more

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[383] Parkinson, 2002, p.50.
[384] McDowell, 1999, p.4.
[385] Parkinson, 2002, p.50; Fischer-Elfert, 2003, pp.119-120.
[386] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, pp.220-221.
[387] Renate Fellinger, "Sex object or equal partner? The role of women as portrayed in ancient Egyptian love poems", *Current Research in Egyptology 2012: proceedings of the thirteenth annual symposium, University of Birmingham 2012,* C. Graves, G. Heffernan, L. McGarrity, E. Millward, and M. S. Bealby (eds.), Oxford, 2013, p.43.
[388] *ibid.*, p.44.
[389] *ibid.,* pp.41-54.

plausibly be in terms of audience reception in relation to the text and its oral transmission as opposed to its composition.

In some written recordings, the scribe indicated their name and status as the copyist of the love songs, having added a statement claiming to have copied the song accurately, such as Nakht-Sobek, who wrote *ḥ3t-ꜤꜤ m ṯsy nḏm gmy.t m ṯꜤy drf ir n sš nḫt-sbk n p3 ḫr* ("the beginning of sweet verses discovered in the document-box, made by the scribe of the necropolis, Nakht-Sobek").[390] However, Nakht-Sobek cannot be considered the author of the songs found on p.Chester Beatty I, as it appears an earlier person actually copied the texts down on this document and Nakht-Sobek simply wrote his claim over the top of the original scribe's introductory statement. The apparent desire by the ancient population to record oral traditions on media such as papyri and pottery is particularly relevant for the love song genre, as several texts include labels such as *ḥsw* (songs) and *ṯsw* (verses) which act as markers of probable oral performance.[391] Fox suggests that the compositions were performed at festivals or celebratory occasions, probably at banquets and other social events.[392] Depictions of such banqueting scenes in New Kingdom art, found in tombs, and sketched on ostraca recovered from Deir el Medina and other sites, show female musicians and singers performing at these kinds of events, which were attended by both men and women.[393] o.Borchardt I, recto, even provides a meta-textual reference to the genre itself, with the female voice asking her beloved *bsy.k n.i irm ḥnḳt ḥsyw Ꜥprw m ḫꜤw iw r3w.sn Ꜥprw m sḫmḫ-ibw* "May you come to me with beer and musicians equipped with their instruments, their mouths equipped with entertainment (songs)." By referring to performance within a performance, this song reminds the audience of its context and purpose, and allows them to share in the lover's 'world' through a shared experience or common encounter.[394]

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[390] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.20

[391] Mathieu, 1996, p.138, for the Egyptian designations of the texts; Parkinson, 2002, pp.78-79; Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, pp.16-17.

[392] Fox, 1985, pp.246-247.

[393] Emily Teeter, "Female Musicians in Pharaonic Egypt", *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions,* (ed.) K. Marshal, Boston, 1993, pp.82-83. For examples of ostracon from this site depicting erotic encounters see Cairo IFAO 3000, BM AE 50, 714, Turin Museum, 9547, for example.

[394] Fellinger states that because women, as well as men, made up potential audiences for the performance of these compositions, their content would have had to "convey gender roles that were accessible and acceptable to both men and women." Fellinger, 2013, p.53.

The songs deal with both particular situations and abstract feelings, written in the voices of males, females and even nature itself, allowing the performer to sing the part of the lover(s) in first person, or in some cases observer(s) in the third person.[395] Although many of the voices in the songs are presented as those of women, it is still debated whether any love songs were female-authored. Barbara Lesko considered some compositions, such as those found in p.Harris 500, as indicative of genuine female emotion and possible authorship, although her more recent work challenges this position somewhat, in regarding the majority of 'female-voice' songs as male compositions.[396] Gay Robins has also tackled the question of female authorship in relation to the songs, as well as other literary texts, considering it possible but very unlikely that females physically wrote them down.[397] It would be fair to say that most, if not all, written texts were produced by men, and a specific class of élite educated men at that.[398] Robins has questioned, alongside the problem of female 'authorship', whether the men writing or at least copying the texts reproduced women's modes and patterns of speech accurately, if indeed there was gendered speech to replicate.[399] In my opinion, it is just as relevant to ask whether the scribal minority of literate males produced different types of *men's* as well as women's speech accurately - if it is possible to tell at all, given we are dealing with a dead language.[400] The 'speech' may owe far more to the genre of literature than to the gender of the 'speaker', reflecting the conventions of the literary type and its purpose rather than producing accurate linguistic recordings. To illustrate the importance of genre in deciding how an individual speaks and acts, it is possible to contrast the sexual desires of women in the Love Songs with those of females in the narrative tales that also date to the New Kingdom. For example, in *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, the sexual longing both Anubis' wife and Bata's wife feel is presented as inherently bad and acting against *ma'at*, cementing their status as devious, untrustworthy characters who hinder the hero's progress throughout the narrative. Both Anubis and Bata's wives lust after a man who is not their husband, while the women in love songs, although not designated the wife of their beloved, do not face this kind of

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[395] Such as the sycamore tree that shelters the lovers with its leaves, or the pomegranate tree that watches over the couple. Both examples from p.Turin 1966.

[396] Barbara Lesko, "True Art in Ancient Egypt", *Egyptological Studies in Honour of Richard A. Parker,* Leonard H. Lesko (ed.), 1986, pp.80-91, p.97, in particular; Barbara S. Lesko, " 'Listening' to the Ancient Egyptian Woman: Letters, Testimonials and other Expressions of Self", *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Edward F. Wente,* E. Teeter and J. A. Larson (eds.), Chicago, 1999, p.253.

[397] Robins, 2007, p.130.

[398] Therefore, the people actually writing down the texts, and potentially codifying the written version of oral performances, were male.

[399] Robins, 1989, p.106; Robins, 1993, p.176.

[400] This question reappears in Chapter three, in relation to the mortal scribe tackling the recording of divine speech in the narrative tales.

condemnation when detailing or acting upon their sexual desires. This may reflect different male opinions of women, if we are to assume that men appropriated the female voice in the love songs, or a simple positioning of the female as a sex object for the receiver's enjoyment. However, the acceptance of female sexuality in the love songs may indeed bolster the claim that this genre reflects genuine female voices, albeit specific ones, as women singing about their own experiences would surely not wish to portray themselves in a negative light, as deviant and going against *ma'at*. The compositions therefore seem more open to genuine female experience and desires, provided it complies with the idiom of the genre and its stereotypical personae to a certain extent.

In regards to women actually disseminating the compositions, Fox considers p.Chester Beatty I to give an example of a female performer in song cycle I.[401] This song cycle begins with the phrase *ḫꜥt-ꜥ m rꜣw nw tꜣ sḥmḫt-ib ꜥꜣt*, which Landgráfová and Navrátilová translate as "Beginning of utterances of great pleasure"[402], *contra* Fox who suggests that we should read *tꜣ sḥmḫt-ib ꜥꜣt* as "the Great (female) Entertainer" as opposed to "the great entertainment/pleasure."[403] Fox bases his translation on *tꜣ sḥmḫt* being a feminine participle (although the seated woman determinative/B1 classifier is missing), and states "the definite article is more appropriate if the reference is to a specific woman entertainer rather than to entertainment in general."[404] This view echoes the previous translation of Schott and the subsequent analysis of Mathieu, who states "...malgré l'absence du déterminatif feminine... il semble preferable de suivre l'interprétation...de FOX, en rappelant que nulle part ailleurs le mot *sḥmḫ-ib*, divertissement, n'est attesté au feminine".[405] Mathieu also suggests that the greater occurrence of men being directly addressed by women, rather than the other way around, reflects the probability of women performing some, if not all, of the compositions.[406] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, however, suggest that the inclusion of plural strokes indicates "an abstract interpretation" of the phrase in opposition to Fox's translation.[407] Gillam also takes this viewpoint, believing that the performer would have to be named if *sḥmḫt-ib* was intended

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[401] Fox, 1985, pp.53-56 for his translation and commentary.
[402] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.93.
[403] Fox, 1985, pp.55-56.
[404] *ibid.*
[405] Schott, 1950, p.10; Mathieu, 1996, p.36, note 29.
[406] Mathieu, 1996, p.144.
[407] Landgráfová and Navrátilová , 2009a, p.93.

to refer to a specific person.[408] Manniche does name a specific person, writing "she who sang to me was Tashere of the music room of the children of the mayor," in her translation of some of the p.Chester Beatty I songs.[409] However, it seems that this is perhaps a mis-translation of some kind, as I can find nothing in the original text that supports this reading, nor in other scholarly analyses of the song cycle. Rather, I believe, the use of a title rather than the specific personal name of the performer may be deliberately in keeping with the anonymity accorded to the lovers in the genre.[410] I am therefore ultimately inclined to share Fox and Mathieu's interpretation of the phrase, considering that the copyist of this song cycle was deliberately denoting a female performer.

This is further supported by the mention of a school for musicians found on p.Anastasi IV, on which it is detailed that performers learnt to accompany others in a mixed ensemble.[411] This suggests that a select group of females was given training in how to present oral discourse. Unusually for the compositions, the song cycle apparently performed by the *sḫmḫt-ib ꜥꜣt* contains both male- and female-voiced dialogue, expressing the longings, desires and feelings of two individuals whose gender can be understood to be not only disparate, but standing in contrast to each other. The performer voices both the ideal male lover as well as his female counterpart, so even discounting the high probability of the performer being a woman, this song nevertheless provides an example of gender ventriloquism, as at least one of the lovers must have been a different gender to the performer, indeed to the copyist who wrote down the text. Song cycle 2 on the same papyrus also introduces its texts with a similar phrase, but in this case "entertainment" is written as masculine: *ḥꜣt-ꜥ m ḥst sḫmḫ-ib*. In addition, the use of a title rather than the specific personal name of the performer may be deliberately in keeping with the anonymity accorded to the lovers in the genre. The accessibility of a fantasy world is strengthened by allowing the audience to identify with the unnamed personae, and by not including the name of the person who gave a particular performance, the timelessness and removal from the mundane, day-to-day life of the songs may be further entrenched in collective memory. The interpretation, as discussed in the work of Fox and Mathieu, that song cycle I

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[408] Robyn Gillam, "The Mehy Papers: Text and lifestyle in translation", *CdE* 75 150, 2000, p.208, footnote 8.
[409] Manniche, 1987, p.81.
[410] o.DM 1038, recto, may give a possible exception regarding the anonymity of the lover/ beloved, in that a man from Deir el Medina called Hay is not only mentioned by name, but is described as *wnsh djdj* (a lascivious jackal) on this ostracon. Landgráfova and Navratilova state that even if the text is not a love song itself, it's surviving content is "very reminiscent" of the genre. Landgráfova and Navratilova, 2009a, p.20. o.DM 1038 has not been included in my dataset, due to it being fragmented.
[411] p.Anatasi IV, 12, 2-3. See Suzanne L. Onstine, *The Role of the Chantress (šmꜥyt) in Ancient Egypt,* Oxford 2005, p.14.

does indeed refer to a female performer is not certain, but does seem highly probable. Just because a song was written down by a male scribe, it does not automatically make the song the product of that particular male's authorship, but simply tells us that a male scribe (or the person employing him) regarded a version of the composition as being worthy of setting down in writing. It is, considering the society that produced these texts, more likely that multiple influences acted on the written version that is available for us to study today than it is to consider them the creation or invention of a single author. This is especially apparent if we consider the probable oral transmission of the songs by both men and women, that could have taken place both before and simultaneous with, the recording of the words by a scribe. For this reason, I will refer to the songs as both texts and compositions, with the understanding that they were almost certainly all intended for oral performance, but only the written evidence survives for us today. I will also avoid mention of an author, and will instead refer to the person who created the written copy – most likely an elite male with some scribal training – as the copyist or recorder, not the composer, of the song.

It therefore seems that an almost certainly male scribe appears to have had no compunction in indicating that he heard a performance of particular songs from a woman. We might ask whether this kind of 'provenance' is a clever ploy in which the transvestitised male voice is further disguised, and any male opinions about women represented in the source are given greater legitimacy by being presented as coming directly from a female singer. Using Cinematic Gaze theory, Shang-Ying Shih considers this to be the case, stating "...by putting sexual longing in the mouth of young women in the love songs, male poets cleverly and effectively silenced and controlled female subjectivities by speaking *for* them in manners that reflected male perspectives on women and appealed to male desires and fantasies."[412] Aside from allocating the poets a male status that is inherently heteronormative, and completely submerging the feminine Other in process, Shih does not seem to consider that "male desires and fantasies" would not all be uniform. Likewise, Köpp-Junk regards the text of p.Chester Beatty I, often consisting of stanzas alternating between the male and female voice, to be "an expression of men's fantasies written in order to appeal to other men likewise."[413] Again, the unspoken assumption is that all men, listening to or even composing the songs, all experienced

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[412] Shang-Ying Shih, *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Ancient Egyptian Visual Culture and Visualities: Spectatorship, Sexuality, Gender, and Power,* Doctoral dissertation, University of Berkeley, California, submitted 2009, p.302.
[413] Köpp-Junk, 2015, p.37. For an opposing opinion, see Fellinger, 2013, pp.41-54, for the argument that the songs are not wholly representative of a male-dominated viewpoint that removed all agency from the women and reduced them to the status of 'sex object.'

heteronormative desire and there was no potential for abberant decoding of the songs whatsoever.

If we simplify society into two categories based on biological sex alone, the complexity of multiple identities is lost, and we assume that all members of the society felt hetero- or cis-normative desire. We also have to assume that Shih's "male poets" are the sole authors of the text, if we subscribe to this reductive view, and the female voices could not possibly reflect true female experiences or emotions. This assertion that the love songs *only* expressed privileged male viewpoints instantly raises warning flags, as the Essentialism that Third Wave Feminism and intersectional analysis seeks to challenge is left uncontested in such a viewpoint. The "male desires and fantasies" Shih speaks of are, in the context of the love songs, exclusively heterosexual, as are those of the female voice, and the gaze of the viewer or consumer of the composition must be that of a cis-normative male. Therefore, anyone falling outside of the heteronormative matrix would definitively have their desires rejected, silenced and controlled through non-inclusion, through a tacit dismissal of the notion that there were other kinds of love and desire. This may indeed have been the intention of the composers, yet the ambiguity of addressor/addressee in several of the compositions suggests that one 'correct' reading of every composition is not possible, even in antiquity, a feature further complicated by the performative nature of the texts themselves. For example, should we assume that the female voice in o.DM 1266, A, 3, and o.CGC 25218 8-14, appeals only to a heterosexual man, when she states "…my heart desires to go and bathe before you, so that I might make you view my beauty, in a dress of the best royal linen, soaked with camphor oil"?[414] The interpretation that a female voice does appear to reassert the privileged position of the normative male prerogative in songs such as this, does not completely exclude the possibility of a female voice talking about another woman in an erotic and sensual way for female, as well as for male, pleasure.[415] A woman who experienced same-sex desire, in performing or consuming this piece of literature, could take just as much pleasure out of this image as a heteronormative man

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[414] ib.i r hAyt r wab m-bAH.k di.i [ptr].k nfrw.i m mss n sSrw-nswt tpy iw.s txbw m tiSps. The female voice, in the written composition, addresses a male beloved, as evidenced by the masculine pronouns used for the second person singular.

[415] A modern parallel to this (largely) successful subversion of the heteronormative voice can be seen in female opera singers such as Viardot-Garcia and Calvé performing the part of Orfeo (Orpheus) in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice,* in mid-Nineteenth century productions, particularly in the lament to the dead female lover. See Elizabeth Wood, "Sapphonics", *Queering the Pitch;The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology,* P. Brett, E. Wood, and G. C. Thomas (eds.), London and New York, 2006, p.29, where Wood states that "the opera's conventional meaning is both emphasized and subverted by the lesbian context… mak[ing] visible the invisble lesbian experience as it gives voice to forbidden desire."

would, for example, and it is not imperative that a female had to occupy the position of 'observed.' As a receiver of the literature she could place herself as the observer, thus challenging the dominant heteronormative male gaze that at first glance pervades this composition. The full content of the song corpus, and the sensation-driven focus that evokes the senses of smell and touch as well as sight therein[416], also suggests that the enjoyment of the compositions may not have relied only upon the reciever occupying the 'primary gaze' position.

Shih's assumption then goes on to take for granted that the male and female lovers function in complete opposition to one another, that biological sex creates an uncomplicated binary dichotomy that allows for no shared experiences based on other aspects of identity, an assumption that will be refuted in the following pages. We also have to acknowledge that even if the male 'poet/s' could be considered 'author/s' to an extent, the words that he puts into a character's mouth are confined by the conventions of the genre, and may not reflect his desires, his emotions, or his modes of speech any more than they do the personae made to speak them. While it is undeniable that a bias towards male hetero-normative desire and superiority *does* occur in the literature of ancient Egypt, as will be explored in Chapter three, we should not take for granted that no opposition to this bias, no disparate opinions or experiences, existed at all. If this is done, scholars ignore and condense the diversity of human experience into an improbable dichotomy that allows no room for individual agency, no challenge to stereotypes and instead relies on all members of society conforming to rigid, fixed gender roles. Critical analysis of the texts grants us some insight into non-conformative readings, even as we as modern receivers recognise the privileging of the cis-normative male viewpoint and dominant position in society just as the original audience most likely would have. This does not unequivocally mean that we regard this genre as inherently sexist or misogynistic, but rather we can approach the love songs as compositions detailing "inscriptions of gender and renditions of sexual difference"[417] which informed the society that produced and consumed the texts themselves. Indeed, the content of some of the love songs challenges the idea that all members of society conformed to rigid, fixed gender roles, as will be seen.

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[416] Alexandra Verbovsek and Burkhard Backes, "Sinne und Sinnlichkeit in den ägyptischen Liebsesliedern", *Sex and the Golden Goddess II; World of the Love Songs,* R. Landgráfová and H. Navrátilová (eds.), Prague, 2015, pp.112-117 in particular.
[417] Elaine Showalter, *Speaking of Gender,* New York, 1989, p.5.

Feminism, intersectionality, and the Love Songs

I will now address the gendering of the human body and the 'voice' which emanates from it in the songs, relying primarily on Third Wave Feminist theory to do this, considering how the concepts of intersectionality and post-structuralist thought impact upon our reading of the texts, and how they can enhance our understanding of the ancient Egyptian culture, at least as expressed through this particular genre of literature. First, the creation of the privileged voice within the love songs will be outlined, with examples given describing how the lovers were constructed as stereotypical ideals, differently gendered in some respects but overall united through the experience of occupying the central position in the compositions. Second, the manner in which the compositions omit the experiences of individuals who would not fit into this stereotype is examined, specifically looking at those personae whose age and sexual orientation prohibit their inclusion. In this section it is also argued that even the privileged voice experiences a form of oppression through restrictions imposed upon individual agency, illustrating a subtle complexity in the texts that seems to relate to a more realistic presentation of social life in ancient Egypt than is first apparent in the idyll described in many of the love songs. Since the scribes who wrote down the texts analysed in this presentation were almost certainly all male, I will then move on to challenge the assumption that the genre does little more than place the female as an objectified Other. Is the female 'voice' only requisitioned and subjugated by the male, used purely to further entrench the privileged heteronormative male construction of the perfect woman? I will argue that this is not necessarily the case. The question of veracity in the female voice will be returned to and considered in light of how our post-modern concept of authorship impacts on our understanding of the texts.

> *Section 1: Gendering the lovers: physical and emotional gendering and the creation of an idealised hierarchy*

Due to their subject matter, we may expect the love songs to deal with the sexualising of the individual body as well as describing thoughts and emotions. This then informs the actions of the lovers and their overall portrayal within the individual texts as well as the corpus as a whole. In order to analyse this portrayal and explore its implications, Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity plays an important role, particularly the normative account of gender; basically, "which expressions of gender are acceptable, and which are not" in a given culture.[418] These expressions of gender depend upon, as well as inform how we perceive, the anatomy of a person

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[418] Butler, 1999, p.xxii.

in addition to how we respond to their presentation, actions and emotions. The male and female voices in the texts are characterised as being young, presumably ethnically Egyptian, and in love with a member of the opposite sex. However, there is no "single conception…of the way the sexes behave", with male and female personae exhibiting a wide range of actions, emotions, and behaviour throughout the corpus.[419] Their love may be unrequited, it may be returned, and in several of the songs the couple have, or will soon, consummate their love. Of the 88 songs analysed, 36 are written in the male first person voice, and 38 in the first person female voice, with an additional four songs appearing to be composed from the female point of view, as they describe the desire of the voice for the male beloved to go to them, and likely have the female voice refer to herself in the third person[420] in phrases such as "…Heaven/ the divine has given her love (to you)…" as found in p.Harris 500, I, 3. It is possible that these four songs[421] can be read as a third person of indeterminate gender telling the male what to do in order to see their beloved woman. However, it is equally likely given the context that they are expressions of female-voice desire for a scenario in which the male visits them, as the incipit phrase to all four expresses a "wish" for the male beloved to come to the female personae.[422] The use of animal imagery applied to the male supports their inclusion in the 'female–voice' category through conventional presentation, although it is not impossible for the male voice to use this kind of zoomorphic simile or metaphor when describing himself either.

Ten of the songs are spoken in the voice of observers/ a third person view point, such as the compositions on p.Turin 1966 in which the voice is that of a tree, or are simply unclear as to whether a male or female voice is speaking. In many instances the text of the song does not always tell us clearly if the voice is in a relationship with their beloved, or if the beloved returns their feelings. In contrast, for songs such as p.Harris 500, III, 1, and o.DM 1266, A, 7, the text strongly suggests that the couple are together and the love is returned, as we are told *tw.i m ḥni.k* "I am in your embrace" and *i.snn.i st…ḥntš.kwi* "when I am kissing her… I am ecstatic" in these two compositions respectively. p.Chester Beatty I, in song cycle I, is unusual in that the audience seem to know more about both of the lover's feelings for each other than their beloved does. The songs in this collection can be read as switching between the voices of the two lovers, creating a dialogue between them that allows the audience access to their innermost thoughts and desires, an access that is apparently denied to their prospective partner. For

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[419] Fox, 1985, p.305.
[420] Allowing the audience to associate the voice with their own beloved, rather than the specific performer.
[421] p.Chester Beatty I, II, songs 1, 2, and 3, and p.Harris 500, I, 3.
[422] "Wish you would come", or "May you speed" to the beloved woman.

example, p.Chester Beatty I, I, 2 records the female voice lamenting that "he does not know about my desire to embrace him," the only explicit reference in the whole corpus to the beloved being unaware of the voice's emotions, even if we as audience know their love is requited. Further compositions include phrases that make it clear that the love is unrequited or untenable, such as the male voice in o.DM 1266 B, 6, complaining *tm.i ẖꜥw n ḥꜥt.s* "I cannot approach her body", and the female of p.Harris 500, II, 7, being devastated that her lover has *gm.f ktt* "found another," ending their relationship. Other songs leave the audience in the dark: we simply do not know if the person they desire is aware of their feelings from the information given in the text. It is often also unclear whether the voice in several Songs describes a situation in which they are together with their beloved or if they are 'speaking' of a perfect hypothetical scenario, especially when the prospective form of the verb is used. So, in p.Harris 500, I, III, when we are told "may you speed to see your beloved…", we as audience cannot be sure if the female speaker is wishing for a repeat visit from an established lover or if she is articulating the desire to be with him in her imagination. This ambiguity, as well as the anonymity of the lovers, none of whom are addressed by name, and are instead often called *sn* "brother" or *snt* "sister"[423], allows the receiver(s) to interpret the events and scenarios presented in the text in different ways. Their own situations and emotions can affect their understanding of the song or songs, and allow them to identify *with* the voice, as well as position the voice *as* their own ideal lover. Sharing the same biological sex as the speaking voice of the composition is not necessarily required for an audience member to relate to this voice; rather the events and emotions described facilitate a shared experience and the ability to feel empathy for the personae in the songs. A general breakdown of the corpus can be achieved, but it must be recognised that some of the songs only give implications or hints to which of the categories it belongs, making the texts far more nuanced than may be initially expected:

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[423] In this context, these terms do not imply a kin-relationship, but rather mark the individual out as special, highly esteemed, or valuable to the voice. The beloved person is essentially the "second" of the voice, their actual or longed for 'other half.'

Table 1: Status of relationships in the corpus

	Returned love	Unrequited love	Lover unaware	Situation unclear
Male voice	9/**5?***	3	0/**4?***	24
Female voice	20/**17?***	1	0/**3?***	17
Observer/ 3rd person/ speaker unclear	4	0	0	10

*Figure changeable depending on which category p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1-7 should be included in.

The female-voiced songs appear to describe just over twice as many instances of returned love than the male voices do, whereas it is more likely that the male voice speaks of unrequited love than the female. Considering that it is possible to regard the songs as imposing a hierarchy of male domination on the female Other, it is perhaps surprising that it is more often the female voice who achieves her desires, and we find the male voice expressing sentiments such as *m ir r.i ḥnwt m ir m ir ḫ3ᶜ.i* "do not act against me, mistress, do not – do not leave me."[424] This challenges the idea that the male point of view must always speak from a position of privilege or superiority, as this song and others such as p.Chester Beatty I, III, 7, and p.Chester Beatty I, III, 6, do not present a fulfilment of male desire. In several instances, the compositions can be read as presenting women as "equal partners in relationships" rather than as simply as "erotic abstractions."[425] The rejection by the *snt* can be read as giving female empowerment, the ability to prevent the male from fulfilling his wish to engage in sexual activity, even if this is achieved by her acceptance of another, more desirable suitor.[426] However, it must be remembered that the female voice is a construct, and her success in this context does not necessarily translate to 'real life' experience. In addition, the desire for a male partner as expressed by a literary persona, a female 'voice' that has been committed to writing if not created by the scribe, cannot be taken at face value as unquestionably representative of all genuine female desire. Many more songs have to be categorized as 'situation unclear' as their content cannot give a definite indication of the lover's status in regards to their beloved. The division between male- and female-voiced songs in this category is not too disparate, with 67% of the male-voiced and 45% of the female-voiced songs being designated as 'unclear' regarding the outcome of the

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[424] O.DM 1078, recto.
[425] Wilfong, 2010, p.209.
[426] Such as is found in p.Chester Beatty I, III, 7, in particular.

lover's desire. This demonstrates that contextual ambiguity is shared between the voices, and the biological sex of the 'speaker' does not automatically tell us whether their love is to be returned, kept secret, or rejected.

There is no denying that there is an immediate physicality to these songs, as well as a 'worship from afar' type of romanticism, as expressed by both male and female voices, although actual, literal, descriptions of sexual activity are rare in the compositions. Instead, metaphorical presentations or allusions to love-making appear more frequently. Phrases such as "…her body, filled with goodness, conquers him"[427], "you will…complete her in her night"[428], and "you fill her gateway… her gate will be made to shake"[429] imply both coitus and possible orgasm for the lovers. Other compositions stress physical contact if not actually intercourse, with ten songs expressing the speakers' desire to embrace or be embraced by the beloved[430], six compositions speaking of kissing or being kissed, and yet more texts mentioning *gmgm* "caressing"[431] the lover's body, *swḏȝ-ḥr* "taking pleasure"[432] in each other's company, and displaying themselves to their lover in an erotically charged situation.[433] The sexualised male body is generally described differently from the female one; physical characteristics, such as the hair, breasts, thighs and grace of movement are spoken about when describing a female persona. Five songs refer to a female's breasts, two of them being spoken in the male voice[434], two in the female[435], and one in the voice of an observer (a tree).[436] Both the male and female voice also make mention of a *snt's* hair, a feature charged with erotic significance. A female talks about spending time perfecting her hairstyle, *wnḥ.i pȝy.i nbdw*[437] in order to appear attractive and has her hair "laden with aromatic ointment"[438], and different male voices compare their beloved's tresses to lapis lazuli[439], as being "softer than fine linen"[440], and as the "loop" with which he is

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[427] o.DM 1646, II, 2: *ḥt.s mḥw m nfrw ḥr bḥn sw*
[428] p.Chester Beatty I, III, 1: *iry.k…mnḵ.k st pȝy.s grḥ*
[429] *ibid.*, *ẖnm.k r tȝy.s rwr iry tw sḵipȝy.s ḥrˁ*
[430] p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1; o.DM 1266, A, 5; o.DM 1266, A, 6; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 7; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 2; p.Harris 500, III, 1; p.Harris 500, IV, 2; p.Harris 500, I, 1; p.Chester Beatty I, III, 4; p.Chester Beatty I, III, 1.
[431] p.Harris 500, III, 3; p.Harris 500, I, 1.
[432] p.Turin 1996, 2.
[433] o.DM 1266, A, 3.
[434] p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1; p.Harris 500, I, 4.
[435] p.Harris 500, II, 5; p.Harris 500, I, 1.
[436] p.Turin 1966, 1.
[437] p. Harris 500, II, 8.
[438] p.Harris 500, I, 9; *šnw.i ḥnˁ m ḵmi*
[439] p.Chester Beatty, I, I, 1;
[440] o.DM 1266, 1647, 2.

captured.[441] A female voice in p.Chester Beatty I, I, 4, also details the use of cosmetics, saying that she is so devastated at not seeing her lover that she does not *ḏḏ msdmt r irty.i* "apply black paint to my eyes", or *wrḥ* "anoint" herself, again demonstrating that the enhancement of appearance took place. The hairstyle of a male, or his paying attention to his appearance, is not mentioned in the entire corpus.

Other physical characteristics are mentioned, such as *inmw n sprw* "skin as a sheet of gold"[442] and being like *mẖnmt* "red jasper"[443]; however, it is unclear which of the lovers in the composition this refers to, although similar descriptions such as *gꜣbty.s ḥr iṯt nbw* "her arms surpass gold"[444] point to the descriptions applying to the female body. The songs also refer to the goddess Hathor as "golden one" on p.Turin 1996, 3, when speaking of the sycamore tree[445] that stands in for a female body, tells us *tšrt sy r ḥnmt* "she is redder than jasper." A male lover is described in more abstract terms, such as being an *sfy iḳr nn mitt.f* "excellent lad who has no equal" as well as *sn stp biꜣwt* "the beloved of choicest character" on p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6, although a different stanza of the same song cycle designates the individual female lover as *iḳrt* "excellent", as well. However, her excellence is more physical, as she is also described as *sšpt* "dazzling" and *wbḫt iwn* "fair of skin complexion" in the same sentence. Another male voice describes himself as *ꜥꜣyw* "confident" and *rwd* "strong"[446], outlining his bravery in the face of danger, in this case a *dpy* "menacing crocodile" that stands between him and his beloved. A woman can also describe herself as needing to be *ḳnw* "brave" in the context of the song.[447] However, the *sn's* bravery allows him to act and overcome obstacles in his path, whereas that of the *snt* requires her to control her desires and passively wait in the hopes that her lover takes action. Addressing her heart, the voice tells us that her bravery will allow her to "stay steady each time you think of him" and prevent her from acting "like a fool", which will in turn prevent other people from thinking poorly of her. Referring to their heart, as well as the heart of the beloved, using both *ib* and *ḥꜣty*, is a trait shared by both the male and female

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[441] p.Chester Beatty I, III, 3; *ḫꜥꜣ.s iwnr r.i m šnw.s*
[442] o.DM 1646, III.
[443] o.Prague NpM P 3827,1.
[444] p.Chester Beatty I, I, I.
[445] See Cynthia Sheikholeslami, "pTurin 1966: Songs of the Fig Trees", *Sex and the Golden Goddess II; World of the Love Songs,* R. Landgráfová and H. Navrátilová (eds.), Prague, 2015, p.82, p.96-97, for the probable identification of all three trees as varieties of fig tree, either the sycamore fig or *Ficus carica*, the ordinary fig.
[446] o.DM 1266, A, 4.
[447] p.Chester Beatty, I, I, 4.

lover. 22 songs spoken in the female voice mention the heart[448], just over twice as many as the male-voiced compositions, which do this in 10 instances.[449] In addition, two songs in which the voice is that of an observer or unclear also include reference to this body part.[450] It is far more common for the male-voiced compositions to include descriptions of the physical characteristics of the beloved, but the female-voiced songs are by no means silent when referring to the male body either. This can be done directly, but metaphors and similes applied to the human form are also used by both voices, as well as by observers, although the male voice is more likely to describe their lover's body, either in concrete and abstract terms, than the female is. In contrast, the female voice places more emphasis on personality or character traits than the male does, with nearly twice as many female-voiced songs including descriptions of this facet of identity than the male voice does:

Table 2: physical characteristics and emotions in the corpus

	Physical characteristics of the beloved	Metaphor/simile used for body/ appearance of the beloved	Personality of the beloved	Emotions of the 'voice'
Male voice	23	12	9	26
Female voice	16	7	17	22
Observer/ 3rd person/ speaker unclear	4	3	5	7

The male lover is presented as conventionally being the more active of the two, as illustrated in p.Chester Beatty I, III, 4, in which a female chastises her lover for prevaricating, saying that she had to go to him rather than the other way around, which suggests that this was not considered 'normal' behaviour. Mathieu also regards the waylaying of the male in the same

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[448] o.DM 1635+ o.CGCT 57319; o.DM 1636; o.DM 1266, A, 1; o.DM 1266, A, 3; o.Gardiner 339, 3; o.DM 1079, 3; p.Harris 500, I, 1; p.Harris 500, I, 5; p.Harris 500, I, 9; p.Harris 500, II, 1; p.Harris 500, II, 3; p.Harris 500, II, 4; p.Harris 500, II, 5; p.Harris 500, II, 6; p.Harris 500, II, 7; p.Harris 500, II, 8; p.Harris 500, III, 1; p.Harris 500, III, 2; p.Harris 500, IV, 1; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 2; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 4; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6.
[449] o.Gardiner 186; o.Leipzig 1896; o.CGC 25761; o.DM 1266, A, 4; o.DM 1266, A, 5; o.DM 1266, B, 3; o.DM 1266, B, 6; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 3; p.Chester Beatty I, I, 7.
[450] o.DM 1641, 1; p.Chester Beatty I, II, 1.

source, stanza 3, as indicating that it was the man who should conventionally make the first step in initiating contact[451], suggesting the woman was required to wait passively in such circumstances. However, physically going to see the beloved person, both in the voice's assertion that they have done, and their desire to do so, is almost equally split between male and female voiced songs, further reinforcing the genre's subversion of social norms to an extent in indicating a "certaine parité dans le dynamisme des personnages... se dissimule en réalité."[452] p.Chester Beatty I, I, 2 also has the female voice lament that although her beloved lives close by to her, she *nn rḫ.i šmt n.f* "cannot go to him." Another female voice admits that she was so eager to go to her beloved that she neglected her hairdressing, a mistake she will not make again, as she vows *ꜥḳnt.i m nw nb* "to be prepared any time" in the future.[453] The male voice in p.Chester Beatty I, I, 5 states that he *hꜥꜥ.kwi* "was exalted" and *ḫntš.kwi* "was glad" when his beloved came to him, but a few lines later admits that since then he has not seen her in five days, showing that female activity does not guarantee the desired outcome for either lover. Likewise, the male lover is exhorted to come quickly to his beloved, with the female voice in several songs from different sources encouraging him to "speed to see your beloved, like a horse on the battlefield…like the flight of a falcon"[454], "come quickly... like a gazelle bounding across the desert"[455], "like a horse of the king, the choicest of thousands…."[456], and "come...like a fast royal messenger"[457]. In three of these examples, the male is likened to an animal. This is also found on p.Harris 500, 1, 5, in which the female voice calls her lover "my lustful jackal cub", a metaphor that describes his emotional state and the characteristic of being *dꜣdꜣ* (lustful), as well as placing her desire in relation to his, suggesting a shared passion.

Imagery comparing the male to an animal is also used by the male voice when describing himself, as several compositions contain hunting imagery, in which the male is the bird[458] caught in the *pḫꜣ mrw* "cedar wood trap" of the female, a metaphor for her genitalia, and her

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[451] "En empêchant le garçon de se rendre chez la fille, il contraint indirectement celle-ce à faire le premier pas. Méhy retarde la première phase dynamique des démarches conventionnelles et conduit la soeur à un habil subterfuge." Mathieu, 1996, p.156.

[452]*ibid.*, pp.157-8. Mathieu's analysis demonstrates that in 56.6% of cases, it is the male who takes action in the love song corpus, although the female-voiced songs express the desire to act in a hypothetical scenario far more frequently than the male does.

[453] p.Harris 500, II, 8.

[454] p.Harris 500, I, 3: *mi ssmt ḥr pgꜣ…mi ḫtt n bik*

[455] p.Chester Beatty I, II, 3: *mi gḥs ḫꜣpw ḥr mrw*

[456] p.Chester Beatty I, II, 2: *mi ssmt n nswt stp n ḫꜣ*

[457] p.Chester Beatty I, II, 1: *mi ipwty-nsw n ꜣs*

[458] p.Harris 500, I, 4, in which he is likened to a *krṯ* goose; p.Harris 500, II, 3, likens him to a *gb* goose; and in o.DM 1636 the female claims *wrš.i ḥr grg.f mi ꜣpd* "I spend my time snaring him like a bird."

hair is described as *wꜥwyt* "bait"[459] used for luring the prey. The female voice also refers to setting her trap in order to catch birds in p.Harris 500, II, 2, and p.Harris 500, II, 1, but also tells the audience that it is the male who has *sḫtḫt.i* "ensnared me" in the first composition. In addition, the male compares his heart to being joyful like "a Nile bass in its pond"[460], and as we are told that his beloved is in his presence, it is possible that the "pond" refers to her vagina. Architectural metaphors, such as the gateway to the house, are also used to describe the female's genitalia, with the voice of p.Chester Beatty I, III, 7, wishing to *gm.f pr.s wn* "find her house open" whenever he wishes to visit. p.Chester Beatty I, III, 1, makes this connection even more explicit, stating, *ḥr ms.k sw r pr n snt ḫnm.k r tꜣy.s rwr iry.tw sḳi pꜣy.s ḥrꜥ stf sw tꜣy.s nbt* "bring it to the house of your beloved and fill her gateway, her gate shall shake and her arbour will overflow." After being rejected by his lover, the male voice complains that "she made me stand at the door of her house... and deprived me of my night," implying that her refusal to admit him to her dwelling place also translates as non-admittance to her body.[461] The female voice also uses this metaphorical language in relation to her own body, speaking of the male reaching her "cave/gateway" in p.Chester Beatty I, II, 3, a song that appears to start in the first person voice then switches to the third person, allowing the female to describe her wish for a hypothetical encounter with her lover. However, the male genitalia does not escape the use of *double entendre* either: p.Chester Beatty I, III, 5, has the female voice exclaim "I found my beloved in the mouth of the canal...(where) he offered me the charm of his loins. It is longer than it is wide!"[462] Within the context of the song, she is most likely not just talking about the canal. Another song seems to refer to the beloved male's semen, *mtwt.f*, but the ostraca is very fragmentary at this point in the composition, and it is impossible to say whether the full text would have explicitly detailed the act of male orgasm, or whether an allusive or metaphorical description of the act or his genitalia is given.[463]

Not all the voices are successful in their quest for love. In addition to the male voices who are not welcomed into his beloved's house, a female voice in p.Harris 500, II, 7, is upset at her rejection: "...he has found another. She gazes at his face. What now – heartbroken..." A different female voice in p.Harris 500, I, I, tries to tempt her beloved to remain with her, telling him "...take my breast, its riches will flow forth for you, a day in my [...] embrace is better than

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[459] p.Harris 500, I, 4.
[460] o.DM 1266, A, 5: *mi wḏ m pꜣy.f mš.*
[461] p.Chester Beatty I, III, 6: *pꜣ dit ꜥḥꜥ.i m rꜣ n pr.s…iw.s (ḥr) dnit.i m pꜣy.i grḥ*
[462] p.Chester Beatty I, III, 5: *gm.i sn m rꜣ ḫnn... sw (ḥr) in inw n ḏrw<.f> iw kꜣ.f r wsḫt.f*
[463] o.DM 1646, II, 2.

hundreds and thousands in the fields", using her sexuality to try and achieve her desires. It is unclear whether he is to be thought of as permanently leaving her, or whether the separation is temporary: the voice hints that he is leaving to get sustenance and garments[464], or perhaps actually has to work in the fields, and we as audience are unsure as to whether he will return. The male copyist may here be recording the female voice as saying what he wishes to hear, but certain motifs, such as love being more beneficial than food and drink[465], suggest that conventions of the literary genre circumscribe the desires articulated by the voice as much as, if not more so, than individual 'authorial'/scribal intent. In addition, o.DM 1266, B, 4, states that a male voice wishes *n.i dwȝ n mȝȝ*(.*s*) *mi i.irw ʿḥʿw.s* "morning were mine to behold her, for as long as her lifetime lasts," suggesting that he believes his love will last for longer than her youth and beauty will and she is not simply a 'sex object' in this context. o.DM 1078, recto, demonstrates that a male voice is also fearful of facing rejection from his lover. He admits that he takes time to flatter his lover so that she does not *ḫȝʿ* "leave" or *ir r* "act against" him, placing the woman in a position of power, and indicating that she had the agency to end their relationship. p.Harris 500, II, 3, even implies that the specific male speaking faces competition from other men regarding the affections of the beloved.[466]

Other songs describe both the male and female voice as ill due to the absence of their beloved, with the voice of p.Harris 500, I, 7 stating that "she will cause the doctors to be shamed, because she knows my illness."[467] In II, 5 of the same source, the female also complains that she is "like a person who is in her grave. Are you not health and life?"[468] due to the absence of her beloved. p.Chester Beatty I, I, 2 is even more explicit, with a female explaining "My beloved confuses my heart with his voice, he has caused sickness to seize me!" The lovers also feel intoxicated due to the presence of the person they love. o.DM 1266, A, 7, tells us "When I am kissing her... I am ecstatic (even) without beer" and o.Gardiner 339, 2 claims "his face is sweet/pleasant with intoxication". They may also be confused as to how to act because, simply, they are love-struck, as in p.Chester Beatty I, I, 3 and 4. "I could not compose myself" says the male, to which she replies, if only to the audience, ""when I think of (the) love for you, it does not let

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[464] The female voice mentions food, beer, and linen, which the male seems to require, and tries to entice him to stay with her by providing alternatives or more pleasurable options.

[465] p.Harris 500, III, 2, for example, as well as several other compositions such as found in p.Turin 1996, 3, o.Borchardt I, and p.Chester Beatty I, I, 7, referring to beer, wine, food, incense and other products that contribute to the conceptual setting of the Songs.

[466] With the male being a goose netted by the female, while "numerous birds circle around."

[467] *iw.s r ir nȝ n swnw r bḥl ḥr iw.s rḫty pȝy.i mr*

[468] *tw.i mi nty m pȝy.i ist ḥr bn ntk pȝ snb ʿnḫ*

me behave properly." In regards to how the lovers actually 'speak', Sweeney has analysed how the female voices tend to make more requests than the males (therefore using a wider variety of verb forms), and although the male and female lovers make promises regarding the future, the male voices do not directly address their beloved as frequently as their female counterparts do.[469] Even though the female voices are shown as initiating sexual contact less often than the males do, Sweeney considers the love songs as representing "a certain amount of autonomy" in regards to the young women's activities.[470]

As each specific song enters into dialogue with the rest of the corpus, norms of gender performativity are reinforced and reiterated, but at the same time they are challenged and subverted within the specific framework of the composition. The use of similar phrases and common themes suggests a degree of unity between the lover's individual experiences; regardless of their biological sex and the gendering of their body, they are, in many ways, united by their status of being young and in love. However, their biological sex has an impact on how this is expressed, and what actions should be taken to achieve their desires. Landgráfová and Navrátilová continue the ongoing debate among scholars regarding whether we can consider the love songs as "universal examples" of human sexual behaviour across time and space.[471] There does not seem to be one "universal" reading of the texts for the modern scholar, nor, I would suggest, would there have been for the ancient audience. It is essential to acknowledge the interaction between gender and power that influences our reading of the texts today which may lead to anachronistic interpretations of the social and political spheres of ancient Egyptian life as is *seemingly* expressed by the ancient sources. For myself, this became apparent in my preconceived idea that any male appropriation of the 'female' voice was a negative feature, a way for the dominant male "I" to manipulate and repress the female "Other/them" as Shih argued. Closer analysis of the love songs suggests that this is not necessarily the case, at least in this particular genre of literature. Potentially, gendered voice 'borrowing' was a way of making a cultural text more accessible to different audiences, bridging rather than emphasising a simple male-female dichotomy. In this way, the love songs generate a more inclusive "Us" that incorporates the different biological sexes and range of emotional and erotic experiences, creating a "Them" in opposition which could rely more on social class and age than it does physical sex.

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[469] Deborah Sweeney, "Gender and Language in the Rameside Love Songs", *BES* 16, 2002a, pp.43-46.
[470]*ibid.*, p.48.
[471]Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.219.

The love songs demonstrate that systems of privilege and dominance rely on more than just biological sex and the gendering of the sexed body. While it is possible to read several of the songs as positioning 'male' as superior to 'female', and using expressions of female emotion to please the heteronormative male gaze, this does not hold true for all the songs. Indeed, we must ask ourselves why is it that, if the purpose of the genre is to oppress or control women as a unified group, it is actually a female voice who gets what she wants in more songs than a male? Quite simply, the easiest way of privileging the male voice as a whole would be to have men achieve their goals more frequently, rather than be thwarted in their desires, separated from their beloveds, made a fool of, or in some instances face outright rejection, which is what in fact occurs in several compositions. The love songs therefore seems to show that oppression or disadvantagement took place along the lines of a tiered system, which takes into consideration aspects of gender other than biological sex when privileging one individual over another.

Section 2: Lover Outsider? Those on the periphery

Employing the concept of intersectionality allows us to explore challenges to the normative or privileged status enjoyed by the lovers in the songs, encouraging us to look for individuals on the periphery, or notable only through their absence. o.DM 1266 B, 1, which begins with the phrase "Wish I was her Nubian", gives an indirect example of intersectional oppression present in ancient Egyptian society.[472] The male voice speaking this composition is so desperate to see his lover and spend time with her that he claims he is prepared to debase himself by taking on the role of a Nubian lower-class serving woman. While this may be hyperbole on the male lover's part, it does illustrate the discrimination that a woman would face based not only on her biological sex but also on other aspects of her identity, in this case her ethnicity and social status. It is certain that there were female servants, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian, working at Deir el Medina, although whether they lived permanently in the state-owned houses with the worker's families is debatable.[473] Černý's work has demonstrated that female servants during the New Kingdom would have received rations of grain as well as salaries, but would have been paid far less than the males.[474] The servants could also face threatening situations or have

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[472] This particular composition will be examined in greater detail pp.95-105.

[473] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.4; McDowell, 1999, p.210. See also Tobias Hofmann, "Arbeitseinsätze und Löhne der sogennanten Sklavinnen von Deir el-Medine", *Living and Writing in Deir el-Medine: Socio-historical Embodiment of Deir el-Medine Texts,* A. Dorn and T. Hofmann (eds.), Aegyptiaca Helvetica 19, Basel, 2006, pp.113-118.

[474] Jaroslav Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period, Bd'É*, 1973.

their individual autonomy curtailed, as shown by p.Bankes I, dating to Dynasty Nineteen.[475] This document detailed the abduction of a female servant who had been "carried off like (other) things" along with her child, as well as the writer's assertion that he had himself legally brought her from the chief of Weavers.[476] In o.DM 1266, B, 1, the servant's position is only desirable in that she is the 'companion', the *iry-rdwy*, of a higher status Egyptian woman, the object of a male voice's desires, and does not reflect the servant's individual situation or experiences. While the desire to adopt her position may be hyperbole on the male lover's part, it does illustrate the discrimination that a woman would face based not only on her sex but also on other intersecting aspects of her identity, in this case her ethnicity and social status.

This also occurs in a second composition on the same ostraca, in which the male voice expresses his desire to take on the role of the washerman who cleans the clothes of the beloved woman.[477] He claims that handling her clothing would make him *rd* "strong" and bring him *ršwt ṯḥḥwt* "joy and ecstasy," suggesting that her garments stand in as a proxy for her body, the real object of his desires. Likewise, p.Harris 500, 1, 8, has the male voice claiming "I wish that I was appointed a porter, so that she could scold me. Then I could hear her angry voice, as a child in fear of her."[478] This situates the female in a position of power, if only in a hypothetical scenario in regards to the male voice. However, there is no indication that the more privileged female scolding the lower class male – the porter in this instance – would be unusual or disproved of. As we are told that upon hearing her angry words directed at him, he would be *ẖrd n ḥryt.s* "a child in fear of her", we can assume that it would be acceptable for a higher status female to speak harshly to a lower status male as the metaphor used for his emotions is a plausible, if not pleasant, one. Just as an older person may scold a child or juvenile, so too may the more socially-advantaged woman assert her power over the porter or other household servant, regardless of their sex. Again, we are reminded that not all members of the same biological sex experience the same privileges. By wishing to be the lower status washerman or porter in order to be able to handle the clothes of the beloved woman or hear her speak, the male voice entrenches a hierarchy reliant on status and socio-economic status acting in conjunction with biological sex.

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[475] Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, "The Bankes Papyri I and II", *JEA* 68, 1982, pp.126-133; Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.32.
[476] I. Edwards, p.127; pp.127-129 for full translation of the papyrus.
[477] o.DM 1266, B, 2.
[478] *ẖl ditw.i r iry.ꜥꜣ iry.s ẖdnẖdn r.i kꜣ sḏm.i ḥrw.s ḳndty ẖrd n ḥryt.*

There are some songs that indicate that the beloved woman, while probably not what we would term lower class, still had work or chores to do. o.CGC 25761, 2, mentions that "my beloved has come to filter fat...", o.Leipzig 1896 has the male voice say "I found my beloved taking and bringing fish and small birds," p.Chester Beatty I, collection III, 3, more emphatically states the beloved woman's social position: *rḫ sy m ḫ3ꜥ iwnr snt nn msw.s irw-iḥw* "she knows how to throw a loop, the beloved woman, but she was not born to a cowherd." Interestingly, it is in the songs composed from a male's point of view that we find the most references to social status as part of identity. p.Chester Beatty I, collection III, 7, seems to indicate that the male voice is unable to be with the woman he desires due to another man, of higher status, having previously established a household with her. The voice, after pleading with the locks, bolts and hinges of the woman's doorway (already discussed as a metaphor for her genitalia) is told "this house belongs to the son of the Overseer of the city."[479] This song may be seen as one in which the male achieves his desire, and he is referring to himself as "the son of the Overseer of the city", but it is more likely that this is not the case.[480] The personae in the songs, while according especial status to themselves or their lovers, use more abstract and unattainable designations, such as "prince", "star", and "goddess", and the title of "son of the Overseer of the city" seems too specific for the male voice to apply to himself, as it would hinder self-identification of the audience with the (anonymous) speaker. Songs spoken in the female voice may mention the male beloved performing work or tasks, as shown by the example given already in which the man digs a canal. However, it is only the male voice who expresses the desire to take on a less prestigious social role in order to be close to his beloved. This may be due to the fact that a woman's social and economic status was largely tied up with that of the dominant male in her life, such as her father or husband, which adds another facet to her identity: reliance on a male authority figure for her own position in society. Therefore, we do not find her wishing to actually be a servant in order to be close to her lover.

It is only the male voice who expresses the desire to take on a less prestigious social role in order to gain access to his beloved in the genre. However, in four of the songs, a female voice does describe herself as serving her lover, while not literally being a serving woman herself and facing a loss of status. p.Harris 500, II, 5, states *pẖr n.k <m> mrwt.k* "(I) serve you with the love of you" as well as calling her lover *p3y.i ꜥ3,* "my prince", o.DM 1266, A, 2, has the

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[479] *ḥwt tn n ms n p3 imy-r3 niwt.*
[480] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.191, where this hypothesis is considered.

female voice say *iw.i ḥnꜥ.k…m ḫft-ḥr nb.s* "I will be with you…before her master"[481], and o.Borchardt I and o.CGT 57367 recto even describes the how she will (*m*) *sn tꜣn ptr.k* "prostate herself when she sees you." o.DM 1646, II, 2, which probably has the female refer to herself in the third person, also implies that during coitus, he is *nb n pꜣy.s*[…] "the master of her…" but the text is broken here and we cannot tell if the male is "the master" of her physical being, her emotional desires, or whether he has "mastered" how to satisfy her sexually. The first two options would suggest that the female is dominated by the male and is able to control her, whereas the third option puts the female in more of a position of power, as he has had to learn how to please her. The positioning of the female as one who serves or defers to her beloved stands in opposition to the 'wishes' songs just discussed, as she does not want to take on the role of a lower status person in a hypothetical scenario in order to be closer to the individual she desires and who she is not in a relationship with. Instead, the Songs that have the female voice take on the role of a servant are ones in which the love is requited, and the couple are together in some manner. She takes on a serving role *after* establishing a relationship, rather than adopting a lower status position in order to form one, or otherwise approach a person she would not come into contact with.

We see a female voice refer to her lover in other compositions as "prince of my heart"[482], and "my god, my lotus flower" and also "my hero" in the same song.[483] However, it is not just the male who is accorded high status. o.DM 1266, A, 7, desires "royal linen" to be spread for the beloved woman, o.Gardiner 186 calls his lover "the exalted mistress", and the male voice of p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1, even likens his beloved to "the star rising at the start of a good year."[484] The female voice also describes herself as "foremost of all beauties"[485] and "a noblewoman, mistress of the Two Lands"[486], giving herself a privileged position, at least in regards to how important love has made her feel. The male voice in p.Chester Beatty I, III, 3, even explains that his mistress *ḳnb.i* "subdues me" and *ꜣbwt.s* (*wi*) *m pꜣy.s ḫtm* "brands me with her ring", making him "literally become her property."[487] In some ways, the positioning of the male as higher status or dominant in the four songs just discussed could be seen as an extension of this desire to exalt the beloved person, giving the 'servant' some agency in that they want to

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[481] Fox suggests that the lacuna should be restored as "[like a maidservant] before her master." Fox, 1985, p.31.
[482] p.Harris 500, III, I.
[483] o.DM 1266, A, 3.
[484] *sbꜣt ḫꜥy m ḥꜥt rnpt nfrt.*
[485] p.Harris 500, II, 6.
[486] p.Harris 500, I, 9.
[487] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.209.

perform tasks to give their beloved pleasure. Another song, p.Harris 500, III, 2, details how both partners work to create something that gives them both pleasure, in this case a garden in which a woman planted flowers and her lover dug a canal, "a pleasant place to walk about." In this text there seems to be a mutual desire to please each other that is missing from p.Harris 500, II, 5, o.DM 1266, A, 2, and o.Borchardt I and o.CGT 57367 recto. The subservience of the female in these four songs can therefore also be regarded as an instance in which male (scribal) appropriation or recording of a female voice does remove female agency and emphasise the heteronormative agenda that places the male as the dominant partner in a relationship. They seem to stress that once in a relationship, the female should behave as *nbt pr*, assisting and caring for her partner, highlighting dominant gender roles that New Kingdom society generally appeared to require. The freedom and agency, perhaps even equality, that the female holds in other love songs is reduced here to a re-entrenchment of the 'normal' yet still stereotypical state of affairs in which the female occupies a secondary position in a domestic partnership; however, this is tempered somewhat by other compositions such as p.Chester Beatty, I, III, 3, where 'ownership' is of a male by a female. Therefore, even as a female voice adopts a subservient position in these compositions in relation to her beloved male, she still occupies the privileged position of lover, part of the idealised "us" of the genre that excludes others on a basis more complex than a simple division along lines of biological sex. The four songs that do include descriptions of a woman acting in a servile manner are also in the minority, as at least 34 other female voiced texts do not contain such imagery, and even when her position is perhaps more reflective of day-to-day life, the female is not automatically relegated to a position of exclusion, a "them" or "other/outsider" status in which personae not deemed suitable to be one who loves or is loved are situated.

Section 3: Restrictions imposed on the lovers

Even within the genre of the love songs, imposition and restrictions are put in place by other members of society, namely the lovers' families. Their parents have the ability to prevent the lovers being together and acting on their desires, and are presented as controlling influences that have the status to decide the future of the young voices within the text. o.Gardiner 339, IV, hopes that *irw gnnw n rs… iw.n sšw ḥr pꜣ ḏꜣḏꜣt n pꜣ pr* "may they grow weary of being awake…we being free (of observers) on the terrace of the house", and p.Harris 500, I, 5, has the female voice explaining *nn iw.i r sḏm nꜣy.sn sḥrw r ḫꜣꜥ pꜣ ꜣb.i* "I will not listen to their counsels to give up my desires." p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6, states "if only my mother knew my wish...o Golden One, place him in her heart. Then I will run to my beloved," indicating that

the young female lover must wait for her elders to arrange the courtship with her beloved.[488] The second stanza of this love song makes the lack of agency enjoyed by this young female voice more explicit, stating "...he is among the neighbours of the house of my mother... My mother is good to advise me to stop seeing him." If the man knew of her feelings, he might "write to my mother... so that my father and mother might be happy. My entire family will rejoice..." This demonstrates that not only must the young woman wait for the approval of her elders, she is also disadvantaged by the fact that her future could also hinge on the actions of her beloved, as it seems socially acceptable that he could write to her mother to arrange the match, whereas she cannot.

p.Turin 1966 contains three love songs written in the voice of a tree the young couple seek shelter and privacy under. The tree 'speaking' in song 1 threatens to disclose the lover's secret, claiming *bn iw.i r gr n.sn* "I will not be silent for them", as it feels the couple have neglected its care. The tree of song 3 is more compliant, stating (perhaps ironically, considering the text) "I remain discreet, not saying what I see. I will not say a word" regarding the lover's liaison.[489] This demonstrates that the lovers could not simply do as they wished, as a word spoken in the wrong ear could end their encounters. o.Nash 12 also gives an example of another couple unable to be together. The lovesick young man expresses his exasperation that people, such as *wꜥb* priests and *ꜣy-mhn* (milk carriers), are still going about their business at night, stopping him and his lover from meeting and enjoying their time together. Again, the lovers cannot put their desires first, without considering the opinions of others, and the initial "Oh, night" exclamation also suggests that a degree of secrecy was required for many liaisons, regardless of sexuality, operating under cover of darkness. Finally, p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6, gives an example of another theme in the genre: the young woman wishes that her mother was aware of her love for the young man who lives near them, and would give her parental sanction to the union. The word *rḫ* in the phrase "you know me" and the determinative the copyist included indicates that they are already involved in a sexual relationship,[490] yet must keep it secret from their parents and the other inhabitants of their village, at least for the time being. It may therefore be possible to see the content of some of the love songs as rebelling against the control of the elder members of society, by showing that their decisions would not always go unchallenged, at least in the literary arena. However, the fact remains that the texts highlight

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[488] *ḥn mwt.i rḫty ib.i…nbwt h ꜣimi sw m ib.s kꜣ ḥn.i n sn.i*
[489] *nn iw.i r ḏd-mdw*
[490] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.185.

restrictions faced by members of society whose age disqualified them from acting on their own feelings and emotions, putting them at the mercy of their elders. As Sweeney identifies, the utilisation of "relatively tentative…expressions about their future" by both male and female voices in the compositions suggests that the lovers, regardless of biological sex, were limited by a lack of individual power due to their youth and the fact that they would most likely have to defer to their parents' wishes when taking a partner.[491] This illustrates that yet another aspect of identity informs the individual's overall agency within the genre.

Applying the concept of intersectionality to these texts is not without its difficultly. The love songs are a specific genre of ancient Egyptian literature, and we are forced to rely on the epigraphic evidence that survives. Many of the ostraca are in a fragmentary state, with some of them containing no more than a few broken lines of text, as is p.Turin 1996, which unfortunately has suffered considerable damage in parts. This just serves to illustrate how useful it can be to apply a non-Essentialist approach such as intersectionality to our subject matter. Just as Kathy Davis emphasises, intersectionality encourages us to "ask another question" and acknowledge any blind spots we have[492]; for the love songs, we should ask what or who is missing? We may not be able to answer this fully using only the texts of the love songs: however, the recognition that not everyone shared the same experiences based on biological sex is very valuable and adds to our understanding of the ancient Egyptian social milieu.

Case study 1: a critically queer reading of o.DM 1266 B, 1

The text of o.DM 1266 B, 1, written on the Cairo Jar, will now be analysed in detail. Previously, this composition was introduced as an example of discrimination faced by a woman of Nubian origin and low social status, and will now be returned to, focussing on the relationship between the Nubian serving woman and her Egyptian mistress. This song is one of thirteen recorded on this vessel, and one of six in the second collection of songs that share the common theme of wish-making and the voice's desire to be in close physical proximity to their beloved, even if they have to adopt a disadvantaged social position in order to achieve this goal as previously

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[491] Sweeney, 2002a, p.27; pp.44-45, in particular, the use of the initial prospective *sḏm.f* in order to express a wish for future action, which is used in only two more instances by the female voice than the male in the corpus.
[492] Davis, 2008, p.77, referring to the work of Mari Matsuda.

discussed. The Cairo Jar texts were copied onto the container by someone who could be regarded as "an experienced scribe, to judge from the handwriting", and Hagen considers the possibility of the vessel having "symbolic value" to its owner, as it would have been more unwieldy to store than a papyrus roll containing the same love songs.[493]

The full text of the song is as follows:

> ḥl n.i t3y.s nḥsy nty m iry-rdwy.s <m> k3pw
> sy (ḥr) int <n>.s […] rrmwt
> iw.f {n}<m> ḏrt.s ẖnm.s
> m k3 ḏd {sw} <sy> in n.i inw n ḥꜥw.s nbt

> "I wish I was her Nubian, who is her companion in secret,
> She brings her [...] mandrakes,
> It is in her hand so she might smell it.
> In other words, she brings me the form of all her limbs."

Unfortunately, the Cairo Jar texts do not give any indication of who performed them, nor do we have the name of the scribe or copyist who wrote down the compositions. However, it is reasonable to assume that song o.DM 1266 B, 1 is, like many other contemporary sources, a product of cultural understandings and a multitude of voices, and the possibility of different interpretations by the contemporary audience is just as plausible as those received by modern readers. Notions of love and desire as expressed in this song will be considered, examining the interaction between the apparently male "voice", the beloved woman, and her female Nubian servant. In order to do this, I will analyse the text's imagery and seemingly specific choice of words to ask whether we can apply a queer reading to this particular composition. Although we term these texts "love" songs, it does not automatically follow that the sexual behaviour in the songs result from what we would term "love" as opposed to "pleasure", long- term emotional commitment as opposed to lust and immediate gratification.

In the words of Jankowiak:

> "[n]o culture is ever completely successful or satisfied in either synthesizing or reconciling love and sex, although every culture is compelled to make the attempt…the resulting dissonance sounds in all spheres of culture. In industrial city and agricultural

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[493] Fredrik Hagen, "Ostraca, Literature, and Teaching at Deir el Medina", *Current Research in Egyptology 2005, Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Symposium,* Rachel Mairs and Alice Stevenson (eds.), Oxford, 2007, p.40.

village alike, there is tension between sexual mores and proscriptions regarding the proper context for expressing love and sex."[494]

It is possible to see some of this tension apparent in the text of o.DM 1266 B, 1, as well as other love songs and contemporary compositions of a different genre, when identities seem more fluid, perhaps as a result of the personae or characters entering a liminal or transformative sphere. Robins writes that it is possible that the Egyptians utilised the love song genre to express "concepts in literature which would not have been acceptable in everyday life"[495], presenting a 'possible world' that allowed the individual more freedom from the social restraints of the time.[496] As already mentioned, Guglielmi has suggested that the events described by the love songs occur in the familiar Nile setting, but with a more carnival-like, or festival, atmosphere that allowed for a degree of transgression and unthreatening rebellion against social norms.[497] Sweeney acknowledges that in other texts from the corpus, the ambiguity of the speaking voice's gender could allow for the songs to express same-sex desire, and in other compositions, "same-sex lovers might have read the heterosexual texts subversively to celebrate their own affection."[498] For Matthieu, the fact that women address their male beloved more frequently than the male voice speaks to a female, points to the songs directing the male gaze to the female as object.[499] He then proposes that this might indicate that it would be unsuitable for a female singer to perform a song praising another woman.[500] However, Sweeney counters this, wondering why exactly a female voice talking about another woman in the third person would not be "construed as an expression of desire" in the same way than if she were to address her beloved woman in the first person voice.[501] The fact that the female voice does seem to reassert the male gaze, positioning the man as the focus in some texts, does not exclude the possibility of the female voice talking about another woman in an erotic and sensual way for female *as well as* for male pleasure. Is it then feasible to consider a female same sex relationship between the beloved woman and her Nubian servant being hinted at in o.DM 1266, 1, B? Or, conversely, could we see their relationship as one based on platonic

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[494] Jankowiak, 1999, p.49.
[495] Robins, 1989, p.111.
[496] See Moers, 2001; Baines 1987; Landgráfova and Navrátilová, 2009a, for more discussion of the potential imagined world presented in the love songs.
[497] Guglielmi,1996, pp.337-338.
[498] Sweeney, 2002a, pp.36-37.
[499] Matthieu, 1996, p.144.
[500] *ibid.*
[501] Sweeney, 2002a, p.40.

love and companionship that has been hijacked by a male 'voice' in order to express heteronormative male voyeuristic desire?

First, it is necessary to discuss the possibility of a sexual relationship between the two women. As each specific song enters into dialogue with the rest of the corpus, norms of gender performativity are reinforced and reiterated, but at the same time they are challenged and subverted within the specific framework of the individual composition. The 'festival-like' atmosphere of the songs sanctions the subversion of the expected 'norm' to an extent. I would argue that the specific grounding of the songs in their literary context actually allows for more freedom within them for the personae, characters, or individual actors to embody aspects of differing sexual behaviours and challenges to gender roles than are expressed in other contemporary sources, both literary and non-epigraphic. There are restrictions imposed by culturally constructed gendered norms and expectations, but it seems that as long as genre expectations are met, the voices within the songs have more scope for rebellion against what society in general requires of the gendered individual. In these texts the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are constrained primarily by the love song genre and reinforce how a constructed lover acts within these boundaries, while at the same time stressing an individual if relatable experience. The love songs can be compared to New Kingdom tomb paintings, as the work of Foster illustrates, in that they both stress the idyllic, problem free, perfect life represented therein.[502] However, the tomb paintings, illustrative of the perfect *after*life that the owner wished to enjoy, stress the procreative power of sex by including depictions of the family group (reminiscent of the Osiris-myth essential to rebirth). The love songs do not do this. Instead, the emphasis is placed on 'here-and-now' sexual pleasure that is grounded in recreational enjoyment, with no mention of reproduction, except possibly in o.DM 1650, already mentioned as being a parody of the genre. Therefore, because reproduction is not a priority in the love songs, sexual relationships do not necessarily need to conform to heteronormative standards necessary for producing children. The possible female same sex relationship in o.DM 1266, B,1 does not therefore step outside the boundaries of 'love' and 'sex' in this particular genre, although it is perhaps unusual in that the songs overall do focus on desire for, or relationships between, young Egyptian opposite sex couples or personae.

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[502] Foster, 1975.

A suggestion was made that the reference to mandrake flowers in the song could support the idea that the women were involved in a homoerotic relationship of some kind, and the mandrake could be a metaphor for the (missing) phallus.[503] In order to explore this possibility, investigating other depictions of mandrakes from this time period, as well as references to the plant in the entire love song corpus, was necessary. Mandrake, *mandragora officinarum,* is a perennial plant with large leaves, orange fleshy fruits, and purple or greenish-yellow flowers. It has a thick root which has frequently been said to resemble a person, often an anatomically correct male, and it has been connected with "mysticism and magic" throughout the ages around the Mediterranean area, according to the work of Lise Manniche.[504] In ancient Egyptian, mandrake is called *rrmt* or *rrmwt.* Other ancient Texts, such as Genesis in the Old Testament, as well as the Israelite Song of Songs (or *Canticles*, which shares similar features with the Egyptian love songs as outlined in the work of Fox[505]) mention mandrake's use as an aphrodisiac. This may be due to the Doctrine of Signatures, in which the form of the object indicates its use.[506] In this case, the resemblance of the mandrake root to a sexually mature human figure suggests that it has sexual connotations and can effectively be used as a cure for barrenness and as an aphrodisiac.[507] As well as being mentioned in the love songs, mandrakes are also present in artistic depictions from the New Kingdom onwards. They are often depicted in garden scenes, usually with cornflowers and poppies for their aesthetic appeal, such as in the tombs of Neferhotep (TT 49) and Sennedjem (TT 1). Ivory panels from a casket buried with Tutankhamun show the king with his wife in an idyllic garden setting, with mandrakes forming part of the floral decoration, as well as being picked or tended to by women in the lower register under the royal couple.

Culturally specific metaphors abound in the love songs as discussed, in particular those of landscape and architecture beings used to describe sexual activity, identified by Landgráfová who cautions "against anachronistic searching for metaphors" while acknowledging they were

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[503] This suggestion was offered during the 'Intersectionality in Antiquity' workshop held at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, in September 2015, at which an abridged version of this chapter was presented.
[504] Manniche, 1989, p.117.
[505] Fox, 1985.
[506] "Nature marks each growth… corresponding to its curative benefits." Paracelsus, in Bradley C. Bennett, *"Doctrine of Signatures: An Explanation of Medicinal Plant Discovery or Dissemination of Knowledge"*, Economic Botany 61, 3, 2007, pp.246–255.
[507] Philippe Derchain, "Le lotus, la mandragore et le persea", *CdE* 50, 99-100, 1975, p.77: of the mandrake, Derchain states "ses qualités aphrodisiaques sont bien connues."

a deliberate feature of the genre.[508] To give another example of this, it could be possible, therefore, to consider the wish for the male to "speed to see your beloved...like the path of an arrow..."[509] as an image of phallic penetration in p.Harris 500, I, 3. However, it may also be read simply as another expression of speed or haste in keeping with the theme of the individual composition, rather than deliberately indicating sexual activity. Mandrakes are mentioned in at least six other instances in the love songs[510], but only one example could plausibly fit in with the mandrake as phallus/male-replacement metaphor, and this is by no means certain.[511] A different example from p.Harris 500, 1, 4, demonstrates that although the mandrake could be included as a metaphor for a human body part, it does not have to be phallic, as in this song the plant, specifically its fruit, is compared to the female beloved's breasts. In other songs, a variety of flora are used to describe physical human attributes, both male and female, such as the simile in p.Turin 1966, 1, in which the tree has *k3i.i mi mndwy.s* "fruits like her breasts", and p.Chester Beatty I, I, 1, which compares the female beloved's fingers to lotus flowers. o.DM 1266, A, 3, demonstrates that the lotus could be used to describe a male person as well, as the female 'voice' calls her male lover "my lotus flower", further demonstrating that in the love song corpus not all metaphors or similes apply only to one gender or one biological sex. The mandrake may also have been included as a status symbol, just as the sycamore tree in p.Turin 1966, 1, describes itself as "brought from Syria, as a captive of the Loved One", a prestige item imported from outside of Egypt. It is probable that the mandrake was not grown in Egypt until the New Kingdom,[512] and so may have been given a special, exotic status because of its relative 'new-ness' to the flora of the Nile Valley. More pragmatically, the mandrake may have been specifically chosen for the sound of the word, as these were orally performed compositions. In some instances *rrmt* (mandrake) may have fitted in with alliteration or the tone of the song more successfully than, say, *sšn* (lotus) would have[513], despite both flowering plants having connotations of intimacy and pleasure.[514] Just as other flora and fauna are used to invoke the

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[508] Landgráfová, 2008, pp.71-73, in which she uses the ancient text's violation of the Gricean Cooperative Principle to support non-literal, metaphorical readings of phrases such as *iry.k 3bw.k m t3y.s ḥgi* ("...you will achieve your desire in her snare...") from p.Chester Beatty I, III, 2.

[509] *mi w3 n ʿḥ3,* p.Harris 500, I, 3.

[510] o.DM 1266, A, 2; o.Gardiner 339, 3; o.DM 1266, B, 5; p.Harris 500, I, 4; p.Harris 500, I, 6; o.Gardiner 339, recto.

[511] o.DM 1266, A, 2, which mentions "…a mandrake in the hand of a man", unfortunately with a lacuna directly before these words.

[512] Manniche, 1989.

[513] For example, in o.DM 1266, A, 2, where *rrmt* may have been used in the phrase *mi rrmt m ḏrt* as both words have one syllable and end in the "–*t*" sound.

[514] See Derchain, 1975, p.72, for a brief discussion of both the mandrake and lotus evoking a context of love and amorous encounters.

setting of the songs, it is likely that in o.DM 1266 B, 1, the mandrake is a sign of the context – the setting both physical and conceptual of the lovers' encounters. It is probably anachronistic to regard the mandrake in this instance as connotative of a phallus, and I would suggest its inclusion instead serves to remind the audience of the idyllic, fertile *topos* of the love song genre. It is therefore connotative of sexual love in general, "une symbole d'une sensualité joyeuse"[515], but does not necessarily have phallic connotations. Consequently, it is conceivable that the mandrake is a marker of some kind of erotic relationship between the two women in this song, but is not required to act as a foil for a 'missing male' component.

Contemporary visual depictions of the plant support this argument. As mentioned, tomb paintings tended to stress the specifically procreative power of the owner and close family group in their depictions, but they did also portray other individuals in intimate, again 'festival-like' settings, such as banquets. Interestingly, the example below from the tomb of Nebamun shows one woman clasping the wrist of another who is holding up a mandrake fruit to her mouth.

Figure 2: Banqueting wall relief scene from the tomb of Nebamun, now displayed in the British Museum, London. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

Another scene from the tomb of Nakht, dating to Dynasty Eighteen, also shows a woman presenting what appears to be a mandrake fruit to a second female figure, while around them other women smell flowers and seem to be enjoying each other's company.[516] Even in a medium where the focus is procreational sex, necessary for rebirth and for creation itself, we

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[515] *ibid.*, p.86.
[516] TT52.

see images of what appears to be recreational pleasure, or at least a different type of intimacy than shown between the central mythologically-ideal father-mother-son group.

This leads on to a second question: why do the two women have to be "secret companions", and can this secrecy support the possibility of a queer reading for the song? Is it an indication that they were involved in a female same sex relationship which, while not condemned outright, had to be approached with more circumspection than a heteronormative couple would have to? The love song corpus gives several examples of more conventional couples not being able to be together, to be separated, or to have to keep their love a secret. For o.DM 1266, B, 1, it is possible also to interpret the phrase *iry-rdwy.s <m> k3pw* (her companion in secret) in a different way. *k3pw* is read as "in secret" by Fox, Foster, and Mathieu, as well as by Landgráfová and Navrátilová, in their analyses of this composition, yet it is possible to translate it as "under cover", hence the "secrecy" translations, and perhaps also as "inside (the house)". Initially, if we consider the female Nubian servant to be the "companion in the house" instead of "secret companion", the sexual dissonance of a possible queer reading or female same sex erotic interpretation seems to vanish. I would argue that this would be true of *other* genres of literature from this time: remembering Landgráfová's cautionary advice about looking for metaphors where there are none, the servant could simply be one who attends on her mistress inside the house. However, in the context of the love songs, this wording takes on a different hue. In this genre, female genitalia is often described in architectural metaphors, and entering into her "gateway", "house", "chamber", and so on, is clearly indicative of sexual intent or even coitus. An example from p.Chester Beatty I, III, 1, even places the seated woman determinative at the end of words such as *rwr,* which can mean gateway or cave, making the metaphorical vaginal connotations even more obvious.[517] The text exhorts the male lover thus: *ḫnm.k r t3y.s rwr iri.tw sḳi p3y.s ḥqꜥ stf sw t3y.s nbt* "…fill her cave, her gate will shake and her arbour will overflow." However, does this architectural metaphor have to indicate penetrative sex between a consenting male and female, or can it stand in for a more generalised eroticism?

It seems that entering into the private sphere of the beloved indicates different types of intimacy and does not always lead to heterosexual coitus. We also see instances of the female entering into the male's private sphere, as well as expressing the desire to do so. For example, p.Harris 500, II, 6, has the female voice exclaim "I found my beloved in his bedroom, and my heart was

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[517] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.164.

exceedingly happy", and the male in p.Chester Beatty I, I, 7, who is suffering from love sickness, tells us that "my wellbeing is her coming into my room, when I see her then I become healthy… she banishes evil from me." When describing his *nbt* 'arbour', in p.Harris 500, II, 5, the female voice is likely referencing a specific place or location rather than using it as a metaphor for her male lovers' body, showing that certain metaphors are gender specific.[518] In addition, many other songs mention the restorative power of being in close proximity to the beloved person, implying that their presence will cure all of the 'voice's' ills regardless of whether intercourse occurs. Indeed, the female voice in p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6, claims that she rejoiced when the beloved "looked at me when I passed by" his house, after seeing "his door open." This is yet another example of architectural references being used to delineate a physical private sphere, as we cannot read "his door open" as alluding to *his* vagina. As Vinson has outlined, the use of architectural metaphor and imagery in the songs can be literal, as well as figurative or symbolic.[519] While in some cases "gaze at the door suggests the sexual gaze or goal of the female", it is more likely that the figurative employment of the theme of entering into a house or courtyard is applied to a male wishing for, or experiencing, sexual pleasure with the female beloved.[520] This suggests that the use of architectural metaphors and references is therefore similar to the use of the mandrake to indicate the general sexualised setting. It reminds us of the context of the love songs and the themes of love, desire and romanticism that run through them, and although it may act as a metaphor for, or allusion to, sexual penetration, it is not only employed as a marker for actual intercourse.

Finally, in order to support a queer reading of this song, I wish to briefly compare another composition from the same source that also deals with wishes and desires, and the 'speakers' willingness to adopt a low status position in order to be close to his beloved. This is o.DM 1266, B, 2, the song immediately following the focal text in the second cycle on the Cairo Jar, in which the male voice wishes to take on the duties of a washerman in order to handle his beloved's clothing. There is a definite sexual element to this activity. The washing of the clothing and wiping of *ḥꜥt.i m pꜣy.s nfry f[d].s ḥr.s m im* "my body with her garments, that she

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[518] *ṯw.k m tꜣy.k nbt iw gbꜣt.k wꜣḥ ḥr ḳꜣbt.i… iw.i ḥr ḏd n ib.i m ẖt.<i> m nꜣ nḥwt [imi n.i] pꜣy.i ꜥꜣ m pꜣ grḥ* "when you are in your arbour, your arm resting on my breast… I say to my heart within my body, in prayers [give me] my prince tonight!"

[519] Steve Vinson, "Behind closed doors: architectural and spatial images and metaphors in ancient Egyptian erotic poetic and narrative literature", *Sex and the Golden Goddess II; World of the Love Songs,* Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová (eds.), Prague, 2015, pp.121-144; pp.122-123 for Vinson's discussion of the terminology used.

[520] The female "gaze at the door" is found included in several songs on p.Chester Beatty I, as discussed by Vinson, *ibid*, p.136.

had cast off…" has an erotic significance for the voice, and allows him to take great pleasure in imagining performing a menial task. This may be simply a fantasy of the male 'speaker'; however it is possible that a washerman or other person would actually do this, and the fantasy is not strictly hypothetical. Returning to our original example, it is possible that the voice accords special status to the Nubian servant's closeness to her mistress in a way that relates to the text of o.DM 1266, B, 2. There is a possibility for the two women to have an intimate relationship, as the voice in both songs seems to regard the lower status personae as having the potential to actually do what he wishes he could. The Nubian servant may indeed see *inw n ḥꜥw.s nbt* "the form of all [the beloved's] limbs", taken to mean her nakedness, and bring her mistress mandrakes, which as discussed, have clear sexual or romantic connotations (if not necessarily phallic ones) in the context of the genre. There is also a possible power play with a sexual element indicated by her description as *iry-rdwy,* the companion, but literally "one who is at the feet of", the higher status Egyptian woman. Their apparent intimacy, at least in the love song context, does give weight to a transgressive, or at least not-the-norm reading of this composition, which can be explored still further in future research.

It has previously been suggested by Robyn Gillam that there is a possibility for another of the love songs to express male same-sex desire.[521] This is stanza 3 of p.Chester Beatty I, I, in which the male voice, initially speaking of his wish to see the beloved woman, encounters Mehy and his entourage of *mryw,* and seems to forget the *snt* in order to be placed among Mehy's followers. This possibility for male-male eroticism, Gillam notes, is just that. The text does not explicitly state that the male voice is permanently distracted from his female beloved by sexual desire for Mehy, but the presentation of Mehy and his military accoutrements as well as his *mryw* (written with the phallus determinative) does seem to indicate "a fantasy about sexual as well as social power."[522] The male voice confesses that he is unable to compose himself in Mehy's presence, and after telling Mehy *mk iw.i n.k* "see, I am yours", he will be placed with the lovers as one who is *kp* "ensnared." The motif of ensnarement or being trapped is a familiar one in the genre as previously outlined. The identity of Mehy is problematic, and has been addressed by several scholars in their analyses of the love songs[523], as he is mentioned in three other sources for this genre in addition to p.Chester Beatty I, I, 3. Mehy may be an embodiment

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[521] Gillam, 2000, p.213.
[522] *ibid.,* p.215.
[523] For example, Vernus, 1992, p.174; Mathieu, 1996, pp.38-39, where he argues against earlier interpretations of Mehy as a royal prince.

of the abstract concept of love and/or desire that has ensnared the male voice, perhaps as a "(minor) deity" who has the potential to both help the lovers be together and to entice one lover away from the other.[524] However, it cannot be ruled out that the passion the apparently male first person voice feels is for a male individual.

In addition to this, Mehy's followers could be conceived of as his own male lovers or suitors, and this may be an oblique reference to same sex desire between men, even if the full song cycle of p.Chester Beatty I, I, has the male voice return to his original longing for the female who appears to 'speak' the alternate stanzas. Gillam outlines previous studies in which the translator tried to explain away the potential for male-male eroticism in this text by suggesting scribal error or a confusion over pronouns,[525] or an exclusion from, rather than inclusion into, Mehy's group,[526] but concludes by saying the nature of the composition potentially allows for "an erotically charged male gaze trained on both women and men."[527] In addition, Sweeney posits that certain songs, such as p.Chester Beatty I, I, 6, could plausibly be read in multiple ways. For example, she suggests that same-sex couples could fantasize that their erotic desires would be recognised by society in the same manner as hoped for by the apparently heteronormative voice in this composition.[528] Finally, in regards to same-sex desire, Parkinson also recognises that in some texts "men who participated in same-gender sexual acts have a limited position" in which "their presence is felt and admitted, even if it is not approved of."[529] This suggests that homoerotic encounters were not completely prohibited from inclusion in the literary sphere.[530]

Because the love song genre serves a specific purpose, it does not give a complete picture of sexual life in ancient Egypt, and is not without its biases and conventions. However, just recognising that not everyone shared the same experiences based on their biological sex is valuable, and adds to our understanding of the ancient Egyptian social milieu as a whole. Landgráfova and Navrátilová state that the love songs "reflect a world that is far from being formed exclusively by the gender normativity ruled by male preference"[531], an opinion that I

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[524] Landgráfova and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.107.
[525] Gardiner, 1931, p.32.
[526] See Gillam, 2000, pp.210-213, for a detailed discussion.
[527] *ibid.*, p.216.
[528] Sweeney, 2002a, p.37.
[529] Parkinson, 1995, p.75.
[530] *ibid.*
[531] Landgráfova and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.22.

share and have hopefully demonstrated the veracity of. Utilising modern theory can help us give nuanced readings of a composition and identify individuals whose lived experiences, in this case, their sexuality, could place them on the periphery of what was presented as 'normal' or 'correct' gendered behaviour. As Parkinson states, while same-sex desire was not the focus of relationships in literary texts, "it was not suppressed from all forms of cultural discourse"[532], and o.DM 1266, B, 1, could be an example of this implicit acknowledgement of non-mainstream eroticism. We must, however, be careful when using modern theory not to use our definitions and their associated connotations in an anachronistic manner. Almost paradoxically, 'queer'/Queer is labelling yourself as an individual whose identity is too fluid to be constrained by traditional terms; a third party needs some kind of consent to designate an individual as queer. Therefore, we do not know if the characters or personae in the love songs would identify as queer. A more modern example would be the term "Boston Marriages" to describe the living arrangements of two financially independent, unmarried women during the Victorian era, who may have been in what we would term now a lesbian relationship.[533] Some of these women shared a platonic friendship, a companionship, while others were sexually involved with each other, in long-term exclusively monogamous relationships. This example demonstrates that even if the criteria of a sexual relationship or liaison meets our expectations of a 'lesbian', 'homosexual', or even 'queer' relationship, we cannot assume that our terminology applies seamlessly to the experiences of the original individuals. The usage of the term 'lesbian' has been specifically avoided throughout this case study for this reason.[534] Therefore, a queer reading of love song o.DM 1266 B, 1, is possible, and the interaction between the women may plausibly have homosocial, erotic connotations or implications. However, while it is possible to understand the characters to be fulfilling 'queer' criteria in that they occupy a potentially transgressive or unexpected position, at least in context, we cannot say the personae would have identified as queer themselves.

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[532] Parkinson, 1995, p.76.

[533] Esther D. Rothblum and Kathleen A. Brehony, (eds.) *Boston Marriages: Romantic but Asexual Relationships among contemporary Lesbians,* Massachusetts, 1993.

[534] See Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, "Introduction", *Among Women: From the homosocial to the homoerotic in the Ancient World,* N. S. Rabinowitz and L. Auanger (eds.), Austin, Texas, 2002, pp.3-4 in particular, regarding the use of loaded terminology such as 'lesbian' and 'homosexual' in studies such as this.

Case study 2: Idealized experience versus 'real life' encounters

As already mentioned in Chapter one in relation to women's experiences during the New Kingdom, several documents from Deir el Medina record acts of violence, some of which involved sexual violation or possibly coercion of the female individual by a male. Here, I wish to present a brief comparative study of the love songs with the more administrative or legal documents from the workman's village, in order to explore the examples of gendered violence that did occur in daily life that would not find expression in the romanticised milieu of the love songs. The genre of the songs prohibits the inclusion of such acts, yet there are hints or oblique references to discord, and when we consider the opposite of the experiences presented, the 'normalcy' that the love songs create, we can see hints of a darker side of actual experience that could not be given voice to, yet most likely would have impacted on the world of the love songs' audience and their encounters within this world.

Love song o.DM 1078 gives an example of a male voice pleading with his beloved to stay together with him, saying "do not leave me mistress, do not make me wait", explaining that he uses flattery to entice her to continue their relationship. However, in real life, as it were, it seemed easier and more likely for a male to reject his partner and expel her from their dwelling rather than vice versa. o.Varille 30 details part of an oath taken in which the female partner is promised part of the couple's shared property in the event that they separate, for example. At Deir el Medina the houses were registered in the names of the workmen assigned to live there, which also indicates why women faced expulsion from the dwelling, and therefore the partnership, more often.[535] Documents such as o.Varille 30 suggest that a guarantee regarding belongings and property was necessary for the woman to feel secure in a marriage, and quell possible worries about being left with nothing should the relationship fail. o.Ashmolean 1945.39 also outlines the repeated expulsion of his wife by the workman Ruty, detailing how the woman had to live in the dwellings of two other individuals and rely on them for food and provisions as well as shelter. We are told by Khnum-mose that *iw t3y.f ḥmt ḥr irt 40 n hrw ḥmsti m-di.i m p3y.i pr* "his wife spent 40 days living together with me in my house", during which time he gave her measures of emmer wheat and loaves of bread. After this time she presumably returned to the dwelling of Ruty, until *iw.f ḥr ḫ3ˁ.s ˁn iw.s irt 20 n hrw m pr n mn-n3* "he repudiated her again, and she spent 20 days in the house of Menna," during which time

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[535] McDowell, 1999, pp.32-35; pp.40-51.

Khnum–mose gave her fabric for clothing.[536] However, it was not just women who could be disadvantaged by men's sexual whims and desires. p.DM 27, analysed by Allam[537] as well as Toivari-Viitala[538], details how a man of lower status was himself beaten after complaining about a higher status male, named Mery-Sekhmet, having sexual intercourse with the woman he had taken for his wife. Eventually Mery-Sekhmet was made to promise not to visit the woman, an oath he reneged on at least once, and we are not told how the woman felt about the whole situation, or what agency she had in controlling this aspect of her life.

The love song found on p.Harris 500, I, 5, opens with the kind of emotions expressed by the female voice that we would expect to see in a text of this genre. However, these protestations of love are followed by threats of physical violence that she could face if she does not abandon the person of her desires, implying that she will be forced to behave as other, unnamed, people required her to:

> *pȝy.k tẖw bw [rẖ].i ẖȝꜥ.f r štty ḳnḳnt*
> *r wrš m sẖwr r pȝ tȝ n ẖȝrw m šbd ḥr ꜥwn*
> *r pȝ tȝ n kš m bꜥyt r tȝ ḳȝyt m ẖbyt r pȝ nḥb m srsr*
> *nn iw(.i) r sḏm nȝy.sn sẖrw r ẖȝꜥ pȝ ȝbw.i*
>
> I cannot let go of the intoxication of being with you, until I am driven away and beaten,
> To live in the marshes, to the land of Khor, with staff and sticks,
> To Kush, with a palm rod, to the highlands, with a stave, to the lowlands, with a cane,
> I will not listen to their counsels to give up my desires.

Just as the 'wishes' songs can include hyperbole in wanting to adopt a disadvantaged social position in order to serve the beloved woman, this potential violence may also be a literary device used to illustrate just how committed the voice is to her lover. Her commitment and desires are so strong that it would take physical pain to prevent her from being with the male. While hardships and dangers may be encountered by other voices, they do not have the harsh realism faced by the female in this particular text, which stands in stark contrast to the rest of the corpus, with the possible exception of the fragmentary text of o.DM 1646, II, 2.[539] In other songs, such as o.DM 1266, A, 4, and p.Chester Beatty I, II, 3, we as audience know that the male lover will not actually get hurt, and the danger he faces is explicitly diminished. So, while

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[536] *ibid*, p.35.
[537] Shafik Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit Transkriptionen aud dem Nachlaß von J. Černý,* Tübingen, 1973, pp.301-302.
[538] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, pp.62-63.
[539] *ḥww.w n btȝ.w* "they are beaten, they committed no wrong", implying that the couple could face physical punishment for being together, although the composition is uncertain.

dpy ꜥḥꜥw ḥr mꜣst "a menacing crocodile waiting on the sandbank" could pose a problem akin to 'real-life', the following description of the reptile as *mi pnw* "like a mouse" negates the threat.[540] Likewise, the gazelle standing in for the zoomorphised male body easily out-pursues the hunter and his dog, and "will reach her (the beloved's) gateway" safely, Hathor having decreed the lovers to be destined for one another.[541] This is not done for the "staff and sticks" mentioned by the female voice in the previous example, which remain instruments of potential violence, capable of inflicting damaging wounds. The device of portraying the man as animal is in keeping with several other songs from the corpus as discussed pp.70-71, but also serves to distance the human form or voice of the song from the violence by presenting it through a metaphorical situation, a transmission of potential violence on to a non-human body. The peril the male lovers face, either metaphorically or hypothetically, is therefore not really comparable to the threat imposed on the female voice of p.Harris 500, I, 5. This inclusion of the possibility of bodily pain heightens the risk the lover faces, yet even as a poetic device reflecting the depth of feeling the voices express, it seems out of place in such a romanticized, largely idyllic literary context. Its inclusion, therefore, seems to act as a reminder that the path of true love never did run smoothly, and in the love songs, just as in real life, the lovers do not always get what they want. However, the fact that it is only a female voice who acknowledges the tangible possibility of violence inflicted upon her body by refusing to do as anonymous others bid her is impossible to ignore, or consider to be solely a poetic device distanced from reality. Rather, it gives an example, however unexpected in the genre, of oppression based on gendered roles and norms that existed in a wider social context.

The behaviour of the Foreman Paneb, an individual living at Deir el Medina during Dynasty Twenty[542] stands in stark contrast to the anonymous male lover in the songs just presented, although of course the love song genre would not include the kind of actions we see perpetrated by this individual. I am also by no means suggesting that his behaviour was representative of all Deir el Medinan males, but there are other documented instances of violence towards women committed by people other than Paneb. The scribe Amennakht, on p.Salt 124, compiled a list of Paneb's offences, many of which detail his violent behaviour and use of force to get

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[540] o.DM 1266, A, 4; *ḥꜣty.i ꜣyw ḥr mrw gm.i ḫnty mi pnw.* "My heart was confident on the bank, and I found the crocodile like a mouse."
[541] p.Chester Beatty I, II, 3; *i.ir.k spr r tꜣy.s rwty r sn ꜥ.k r sp 4… in nbwt wḏ st n.k pꜣy.i.* "You will reach her gateway so that your hand might be kissed four times…it is the Golden One who has destined her for you."
[542] J. Černý, "Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)" *JEA* 15, 1929, p.256.

what he wanted.[543] Paneb's own son even apparently denounced his father's sexual excesses, stating that:

> *nk p3-nb ʿnḫ(t)-n-niwt twy iw.s m ḥmt n rmṯ-ist ḳnn3 nk.f ʿnḫ(t)-n-niwt ḥnr iw.s m-di pn-dw3 nk.f ʿnḫ(t)-n-niwt ḥnr iw.s m-di ḥsy-sw-nb.f*

> "Paneb had sex with the citizeness Tuy when she was the wife of the workman Kenna, he had sex with the citizeness Hener when she was together with Pendua, he had sex with the citizeness Hener when she was together with Hesy-su-neb-ef."

Not only did he have intercourse with Hener, causing not one but two of her husbands/partners to be cuckolded and repudiate her, but Paneb, along with his son Aaphety, also had sex with Webekhet, Hener's daughter.[544] Toivari-Viitala states that it is possible that the women "tolerated" Paneb's advances as a means of acting "within an asymmetrical power constellation"[545] which suggests that the women may not have been physically forced to have intercourse with him. However, their acceptance of him could have had a compulsory element: for women such as Tuy and Hener, and especially Webekhet, who does not appear to be old enough to have a husband of her own or be able to make her own decisions, they had little choice but to comply with Paneb's desires regardless of their personal wishes. When describing the attack on another citizeness, Iyemwau, Paneb is said to have *ḏʿi*'ed her, after stealing or removing her clothing and forcing her atop a wall in the village.[546] This is an unusual word for describing sexual activity, and leads me to believe we should designate the attack as rape, as *ḏʿi* can mean to oppose, to pierce or transfix, and *ḏʿyt* is of course "wrong doing." When describing his encounters with other women, the word *nk* is used, again indicating that Iyemwau did not consent, as a different word is applied to her experience. The fact that no male family member or husband is named in relation to Iyemwau also suggests that the offence was committed against her alone, and is included in the records of Amennakht due to its seriousness, although the scribe could also have used it as an example of behaviour aimed to discredit Paneb and damage his career.

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[543] It must be acknowledged that Amennakht was a rival of Paneb's, and may have had ulterior motives for denouncing him in this manner. "Personal animosity", Paneb's suspicious elevation to the office formerly held by Amennakht's older brother Neferhotep, and the fear and resentment Paneb seems to have instilled in his colleagues could all have contributed to Amennakht's compilation of charges against him. Davies, 1999, pp.32-36.

[544] It is possible that there were two different women of the same name at deir el Medina, who both had intercourse with Paneb, causing marital strife. See Davies, 1999, p.65, *contra* Jac J. Janssen, "Two Personalities", *Gleanings from Deir el-Medîna,* R.J. Demarée and J.J. Janssen (eds.), Leiden, 1982, p.114, who does consider the wives of Hesy-su-neb-ef and Pendua to be the same person. Hesy-su-neb-ef was the father of Webeket. Davies, 1999, p.65.

[545] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.156.

[546] p.Salt, 124, recto, 1,19.

As stated, the love songs do not reflect the physically violationary aspects of sexual intercourse that is seen in the documents concerning Paneb. To give an example of a male being denied coitus in the love songs, we can examine p.Chester Beatty I, III 6, in which the voice is upset that his beloved did not allow him into her house and (*ḥr*) *dnit.i m p3y.i grḥ* "denied me of my night." Rather than using derogatory language against the beloved, or force his way in to her dwelling place, he states he will complain about his treatment, asking *iswt iw.i gr n.s* "should I be silent about it?" before, presumably, leaving her alone. p.Chester Beatty I, III 7, details the speech of a male voice pleading with the entrance to his beloveds house, but again not relying on force to gain entry, and admitting that *bw wn n.i* it was "not opened to me." He instead tries to cajole the door and its component parts to let him in through promises of sacrifices, just as the male of o.Nash 6 may have hoped that by turning up with goods and provisions, the woman might look kindly on his desire to live with her. None of these males, whether historical or fictional, uses force to enter the woman's house, particularly relevant when we consider that architectural metaphors were used in the love songs to designate the female genitalia, and forced entry into her house could be akin to rape in the context of the genre. Persuasion, enticement and cajolery can be used to instigate or continue a sexual encounter in the love songs, but force or compulsion does not feature in the genre, as would be expected. Mutual satisfaction and shared pleasure are emphasised, and the fact that it is only one of the parodic texts found on o.DM 1650, which includes a possible reference to coitus being *ḥ3wt* "unpleasant" is telling. This does obliquely indicate that in 'real-life', outside of the idealised world of the love songs, not all participants would have enjoyable sexual encounters, but the text does not make it clear why the mistress finds the situation unpleasant. It is just as possible for the song to be mocking the male's lack of skill and ability to please his partner and her disappointment with him, as it is to indicate that the female has been coerced into coitus against her will. Instead, "filling" or "entering" the beloved's gateway should, according to p.Chester Beatty I, III, 1, *tḥtḥ n3y.s šrgḥ mnḳ.k st m p3y.s grḥ* "…enflame her passions, and you will complete her in her night" indicating that coitus should be an enjoyable experience for the female lover as well, as the male voice places emphasis on her satisfaction.

Finally, other non-epigraphic pieces of evidence from Deir el Medina can be examined to supplement our picture of sexual life in the village. Ostraca depicting erotic encounters and coitus have been recovered, such as o.BM 50714 housed in the British Museum, and o.11198 now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, which show an act of male to female penetration on both

examples.[547] The male figures illustrated on these ostraca are shown very differently to those on the Turin Erotic Papyrus, which depicts the male figures as grotesque priapic, almost comedic, figures in contrast to the sexually desirable and physically attractive females. The content of the Turin Erotic Papyrus suggests that the illustrations were designed for a heterosexual male audience, wherein the beauty of the women caters to the male gaze. However, the more realistic depiction of both sexes on the ostraca perhaps indicate that they could be viewed by both men and women in order to gain pleasure, which does not necessarily have to come from looking solely at the 'opposite' sex. Other ostracon, in particular those depicting female musicians, such as o.DM 2390[548] and o.DM 2391[549], and dancers, as shown on a limestone fragment from the village[550] do seem to privilege the male gaze through the exclusion of a male figure and the overt sexualisation of the female. Yet again, it does not prevent the possibility of a female viewer enjoying these images, but does seem to orient the gaze towards the female body as object to be looked at from a position of (a viewer's) power. Yet more depictions, such as a wall painting from a house at Deir el Medina showing a naked, possibly tattooed woman amongst vines[551], seem initially to reinforce this sentiment, but due to the cultural context other interpretations can be contemplated. The figure in the example just given could represent female sexuality being displayed for an observer's pleasure but it could also empower a viewer in a feminised sphere that relates to erotic experience but is more culturally-specific than simply considering the 'direction' of the gaze. One such sphere could be childbirth, where depictions stressing procreative power were used to decorate the rooms in which the expectant mother might deliver and nurse the infant, and artistic motifs such as convolvulus vines and other flora help to invoke the context.[552] The ostracon and other visual

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[547] For o.BM 50714, see Lise Manniche, "Some aspects of ancient Egyptian sexual life", *Acta Orientalia* 28, 1977, fig.3 p.20, discussion p.22; for o.11198, Cairo, see Manniche, 1977, fig.2 p.19.

[548] Egyptian Museum, Cairo, IFAO 3000.

[549] See Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.21 for illustration.

[550] 7052, Museo Egizio,Turin.

[551] The house is S. E. VIII, and only part of the image survives, showing the woman from the waist down. Bernard Bruyère, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Deir el Médineh 1934-35,* Cairo, 1939, fig. 145, pl.10. For a recent discussion of this scene, it's context, and the female figure as a dancer, see Nadine Cherpion, "La danseuse de Deir el Médineh et les prétendus "Lits clos" du village", *Egypte, Afrique & Orient*, 63, 2011, pp.55-71.

[552] Although raised brick platforms in certain houses at Deir el Medina might indicate a place where women gave birth, it is not conclusively known in which room of the house childbirth did occur. See Kasia Szpakowska, "Hidden Voices: Unveiling Women in Ancient Egypt", *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World,* S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds.), Malden, MA., and Oxford, 2015, pp.35-36. Weiss has arged that although the *lits clos* "may have had a prophylactic function of protecting women in the dangerous period of childbirth" at Deir el Medina, they could also have other functions, such as being used as household alters, providing protection for all members of the family, and are therefore not limited to being solely part of a "female sphere." Lara Weiss, "Personal Religious Practice: House Altars at Deir El-Medina", *JEA* 95, 2009, p.202. It has also been argued that the construction of these structures, particularly their elevation, mean that they would not necessarily have been

depictions, just like the epigraphic evidence recovered from Deir el Medina, are not necessarily straightforward sources that have one uncontestable reading when it comes to assessing gender constructs and the sexualisation of the body in the society that produced them.

Chapter Conclusions

As Fox stated, comparing the love songs to the Israelite Canticles, "[w]hile we cannot know that the views the ancient Egyptian and Israelite songs express are the Egyptian view of love or the Israelite view of love, they certainly do show some Egyptian and some Israelite views of love, and therein lies their importance for cultural history."[553] Paraphrasing this, it can be said that while the love songs do not express *the* ancient Egyptian concept of gender and identity, they definitely show *some* constructions of it, some methods of creating and entrenching a gendered body within the expectations of a specific literary genre. Likewise, the texts illustrate modes of oppression created through exclusion, based on the intersection of multiple identities rather than relying simply on biological sex as a means of creating a privileged position. The love songs demonstrate that women and men *were* treated as different, if not always diametrically opposed in this literary genre, yet we have to look beyond the surface of the texts to fully understand the complex realities of experience, oppression and privilege. Therefore, applying a simple male vs. female dichotomy, with the male in the dominant 'normal' position of the matrix, is insufficient when considering gender and gendered discourse within the love song corpus. While it is possible, initially, to see the essentialist female as the Other here, it seems more accurate to say that the ideal presented in the love songs is that of heterosexual love between a young Egyptian man and a young Egyptian woman. Multiple identities combine to create the stereotypical lover, and those that do not fall into this stereotype appear only as peripheral figures. Personae whose identities and experiences disqualify them from being the subject or the voice of the songs are the real Other, facing oppression through exclusion. Applying the concept of intersectionality can help us realise their absence and the multiplicity of factors that made up their identity causing this exclusion, even if we are not able to build up a detailed picture of them as individuals.

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practical for use during childbirth. Aikaterini Koltsida, "Birth-bed, sitting place, erotic corner or a domestic altar? A study of the so-called "elevated bed" in Deir el-Medina houses", *SAK* 35, p.170

[553] Fox, 1985, p.xix.

Landgráfová and Navrátilová also state that the love songs "are embedded in the environment within which they existed and the protagonists were bound by rules to which they should conform."[554] By stressing the importance of conforming to certain 'regulations' imposed by the genre of the songs, it is implied that it was acceptable for different genders to adopt a voice not immediately recognisable as their own. If we agree with Montserrat[555] and Landgráfová and Navrátilová[556] that sexuality (as we understand it) was not the crux of an individual's personal identity in ancient Egypt, it becomes easier to see the gender ventriloquism apparent in the love songs not as the 'theft' of a disenfranchised group of speaker's agency, but as a sharing and recognition of common cultural identity and emotion that, while not free of oppression or exclusion, seems to draw less distinction between biological sex in imposing a privileged position than our next genre of literature does. The following chapter will examine and analyse the narrative tales, considering the apparent misogyny present in them as far removed from the more balanced and accessible nature of the love songs.

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[554] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p.22.
[555] Montserrat, 1997, p.119.
[556] Landgráfová and Navrátilová, 2009a, p. 86.

Love Songs Dataset

Table 3: The allocation of gendered 'voice' in the Love Songs

	1st person male voice	1st person female voice	3rd Person voice	Unknown/ unclear
P.Harris 500 1, 1	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 3	no	yes?	no	yes?
P.Harris 500 1, 4	yes	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 5	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 6	yes	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 7	yes	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 8	yes	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 9	no	yes	no	no
P. Harris 500 2, 1	no	yes	no	no
P. Harris 500 2, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 3	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 4	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 5	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 6	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 7	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 8	no	yes	no	no
P. Harris 500 3, 1	no	yes	no	no
P. Harris 500 3, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 3, 3	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 4, 1	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 4, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 1	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 3	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 4	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 5	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 6	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 7	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 1	no	yes?	no	yes?
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 2	no	yes?	no	yes?
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 3	no	yes?	no	yes?
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 1	no	no	yes?	yes?
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 2	no	no	yes?	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 3	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 4	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 5	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 6	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 7	yes	no	no	no

P.Turin 1966, 1	no	no	yes-tree	no
P.Turin 1966, 2	no	no	yes-tree	no
P.Turin 1966, 3	no	no	yes-tree	no
O.DM 1266 A, 1	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 2	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 3	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 4	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 5	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 6	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 7	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 1	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 3	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 4	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 5	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 6	yes	no	no	no
O.Gardiner 339, 1	yes	no	no	no
O.Gardiner 339, 2	no	yes	no	no
O.Gardiner 339, 3	no	yes	no	no
O.Gardiner 339, 4	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1079, 1	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1079, 2	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1079, 3	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1079, 4	no	yes	no	no
O. Borchardt I	no	yes	no	no
O.CGT 57367 (recto)	no	yes	no	no
O.CGC 25761, 1	no	yes	no	no
O.CGC 25761, 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1646 1	no	no	yes	no
O.DM 1646 2, 1	no	no	no	yes
O.DM 1646 2, 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1646 3	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1647 1	no	no	no	yes
O.DM 1647 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1648 2, 1	yes?	no	no	yes?
O.DM 1648 2, 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1651 2	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1653	yes	no	no	no
O.Gardiner 304	yes	no	no	no
O.Leipzig 1896	yes	no	no	no
O.Michaelides 86	no	yes	no	no
O.Nash 12	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1078 recto	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1078 verso	yes	no	no	no

O.Gardiner 186	yes	no	no	no
O.Prague NpM P 3827 1	yes	no	no	no
O.Prague NpM P 3827 2	yes?	no	no	yes?
O.DM1635 + O.CGT 57319	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1636	no	yes	no	no

Table 4: The inclusion of physical description, emotional states, and the characteristics of the personae in the Love Songs

	Body of beloved	Emotions of lover	Personality/Characteristics of beloved	Heart mentioned
P.Harris 500 1, 1	yes	no	yes	yes
P.Harris 500 1, 2	no	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 3	no?	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 4	yes	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 5	yes	yes	yes	yes
P.Harris 500 1, 6	yes	no	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 7	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 1, 8	yes	yes	yes	no
P.Harris 500 1, 9	no	yes	no	yes
P. Harris 500 2, 1	no	yes	no	yes
P. Harris 500 2, 2	no	yes	no	no
P.Harris 500 2, 3	yes	yes	no	yes
P.Harris 500 2, 4	yes	yes	no	yes
P.Harris 500 2, 5	yes	yes	yes	yes
P.Harris 500 2, 6	yes	yes	yes	yes
P.Harris 500 2, 7	yes	yes	no	yes
P.Harris 500 2, 8	no	yes	no	yes
P. Harris 500 3, 1	no	yes	yes	yes
P. Harris 500 3, 2	yes	yes	yes	yes
P.Harris 500 3, 3	yes	yes	yes	no
P.Harris 500 4, 1	no	no	no	yes
P.Harris 500 4, 2	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 1	yes	yes	yes	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 2	no	yes	yes	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 3	yes	yes	no	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 4	no	yes	no	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 5	no	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 6	no	yes	yes	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, I, 7	yes	yes	no	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 1	no	yes	yes	yes
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 2	no	yes	yes	no
P.Chester Beatty I, II, 3	no	yes	yes	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 1	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 2	yes	yes	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 3	yes	yes	yes	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 4	no	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 5	yes	no	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 6	yes?	yes?	no	no
P.Chester Beatty I, III, 7	yes	yes	no	no
P.Turin 1966, 1	yes- female	yes- of tree	no	no

P.Turin 1966, 2	no	no	no	no
P.Turin 1966, 3	yes- female	no	yes- both m and f	no
O.DM 1266 A, 1	yes	yes	yes	yes
O.DM 1266 A, 2	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 3	no	yes	yes	yes
O.DM 1266 A, 4	no	yes	no	yes
O.DM 1266 A, 5	no	yes	no	yes
O.DM 1266 A, 6	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 A, 7	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 1	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 2	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 3	yes	yes	no	yes
O.DM 1266 B, 4	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 5	no	yes	no	no
O.DM 1266 B, 6	yes	yes	yes	yes
O.Gardiner 339, 1	no	no	no	no
O.Gardiner 339, 2	yes	no	yes?	no
O.Gardiner 339, 3	no	no	yes	yes
O.Gardiner 339, 4	no	no	no	no
O.DM 1079, 1	no	no	no	no
O.DM 1079, 2	yes	no	yes?	no
O.DM 1079, 3	no	no	yes	yes
O.DM 1079, 4	no	yes	no	no
O. Borchardt I	no	yes	yes	no
O.CGT 57367 (recto)	no	yes	yes	no
O.CGC 25761, 1	no	no	no	no
O.CGC 25761, 2	no	yes	no	yes
O.DM 1646 1	yes	no	no	yes
O.DM 1646 2, 1	yes?	yes?	yes?	no
O.DM 1646 2, 2	yes	yes	yes	no
O.DM 1646 3	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1647 1	no	no	no	no
O.DM 1647 2	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1648 2, 1	yes	no	no	no
O.DM 1648 2, 2	no	no	no	no
O.DM 1651 2	yes	yes	no	no
O.DM 1653	no	no	no	yes
O.Gardiner 304	yes	yes	no	yes
O.Leipzig 1896	yes	no	yes	no
O.Michaelides 86	yes	no	no	no
O.Nash 12	no	yes	yes	no
O.DM 1078 recto	no	yes	yes	no
O.DM 1078 verso	no	no	no	no
O.Gardiner 186	no	no	yes	no

O.Prague NpM P 3827 1	yes	no	no	no
O.Prague NpM P 3827 2	no	no	no	no
O.DM1635 + O.CGT 57319	no	no	no	yes
O.DM 1636	no	no	no	yes

"You took up your spear on account of the speech of a filthy whore."[557]
The positive and negative portrayal of women in the narrative tales

In this chapter, the genre of literature examined presents us with seemingly one-dimensional female characters, who either occupy the position of 'bad' untrustworthy antagonist or 'good' supportive helper in relation to the male protagonist. These women are essentially caricatures, positioned at either end of an extreme binary, and seem to reflect the 'misogynistic' attitudes towards the female sex found in the Instructional literature of the Middle and New Kingdom to a greater extent than they do the more nuanced portrayals of women and women's experience that we have just seen presented in the love songs. In the narrative tales, a female character generally only speaks to, and acts in relation to, a male counterpart, and it does not appear possible, at first glance, to regard a female persona as anything more than a stock character. They seem to be used simply as a literary device designed to entrench a male hierarchy and position of superiority, while moving the tale on towards its desired conclusion. However, modern theory, such as intersectionality, and Feminist literary critique does allow us to delve deeper into these texts, and if not rehabilitate these devious, manipulative females, we can at least question *why* they are presented as they are.

As Gold has outlined in regards to literature from antiquity, when searching for the female subject we often need to "make creative connections and to use the skills developed by feminist researchers operating in other disciplines in order to find sensitive and successful approaches to elucidating women's actions, thoughts, and desires", especially as so little of the surviving epigraphic material appears to contain 'real' women's experiences.[558] In relation to this, it is necessary to consider how the narrative tales relate intertextually to other sources, which contributes to our understanding of the construction of female literary personae, and the impact that the textual genre has on gendered biases. In addition, the genre of the texts does circumscribe male behaviour and interactions, although with far less of an overall negative bias that we see leveled towards the female personae, which will also be explored. First, the ancient evidence will be introduced, alongside modern studies and analyses of the texts. Next, theories of narratology and narrative critique will be addressed, considering how this approach to literature enhances our reading of the four narrative tales, in particular regarding the inclusion

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[557] *iw.k ẖry pȝy.k nwy ẖry-st-rȝ n kȝt tȝ ḥwt.* p.D'Orbiney, *The Tale of the Two Brothers,* 7,8.
[558] Gold, 1993, p.79.

of mythic and religious beliefs in the texts. After the analytical framework has been outlined, I will inspect specific aspects of the texts, such as the operation of the female within a male-dominated sphere of influence, as well as mythological allusions and content. Common themes, such as rebirth, transformation, and the fulfilment of destiny, are all examined while considering female agency and the restrictions imposed upon the gendered body. A case study will conclude this chapter, in which transgendered moments and gender fluidity within the compositions, particularly from *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, will be investigated, influenced by the work of the Classicist Barbara McManus.[559]

The ancient evidence and secondary sources

In this chapter I will examine four pieces of narrative literature, paying particular attention to how women were presented, and how they spoke and operated, within the context of these compositions.[560] The female characters can be either mortal or divine, or in one case created by the Ennead, and some of the 'human' women occupy a position in which they have the potentiality to function as foils for goddesses, as their male sexual partners fulfil the role of Osiris in the context of the composition. The copies of the texts I examine all date to the New Kingdom, are written in Late Egyptian, and contain grammatical markers of this stage in the language development.[561] The literary forms and devices used in these compositions have been detailed in a publication by Fritz Hintze, who focused on the narrative structure of Late Egyptian stories, documenting the various grammatical forms the narratives employ.[562] However, that is not to say that these pieces of literature are a product solely of the New Kingdom: for example, the deities, their purview, and interactions with each other are reflective of older, pre-existing mythologies, at least in part.[563] No story exists in a vacuum, and they are

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[559] Barbara F. McManus, *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics,* New York, Twayne Publishers, 1997.
[560] See, for example, Stephen G. Quirke, "Narrative Literature," *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms,* Antonio Loprieno (ed.), *PdÄ* 10, Leiden, 1996, pp.263-276, for a discussion of the texts as "literary narratives."
[561] Such as the usually static stem of participles and relative forms, the use of *pꜣ, tꜣ* and *nꜣ* as articles and their position in the sentence as modifiers, and the emergence of new graphemes and redundant phonograms such as – *w* and *-ti*. See also S. Groll's "Foreword" to Jaroslav Černý and Sarah Israelit Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar,* 3rd ed., Rome, 1984, pp.LV-LXVI, for the distinction between "literary" and "non-literary" Late Egyptian, and other grammatical features of the texts, such as the insertion of *ḥr* between the subject and the infinitive of the conjunctive as an over-correction.
[562] Fritz Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache Neuägyptischer Erzdhlungen,* Berlin, 1950.
[563] See Assmann, 2001, pp.96-97, for his discussion on the development of myth from Old Kingdom sources and its refinement and elucidation in later texts. For myth as part of the literary tradition, see Baines, 1996, p.365, for the view that the development of textual narratives were essential to the inclusion of myth within *belles lettres/*literary works.

certainly subject to an editing process, audience expectations and cultural constraints, all of which can change over time and space, and so are valuable pieces of evidence for examining the construction of women and femininity during the New Kingdom within a specific literary genre. The narrative tales, as a genre, have been described as including "a wide variety of elements, purposes, and aspects" by Simpson, and Parkinson has suggested that in compositions such as these, the texts allow for "an awareness of their fictionality."[564] This permits them to include seemingly impossible events, such as Bata being able to live with his heart outside of his body, and human characters being spoken to by animals, such as Bata and the Doomed Prince.

In this discussion, I make use of Mieke Bal's definitions of *narrative texts*, *stories*, and *fabula*. A narrative text is one in which a story is told via "an agent or subject" using a certain medium such as language, the story is the "content of that text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection and 'colouring' of a fabula", and the fabula is the "series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced" by the characters/actors in the story.[565] This terminology will be used throughout the chapter. The male protagonist will also be referred to as the 'hero' of the composition. Although they may be flawed characters, they are 'heroic' in the sense that their actions benefit their community and they can bring advantages to the wider world (both material and 'spiritual'), often facing hardships or trials themselves in order to achieve this.[566] For the ancient Egyptian context, the benefit the community receives from the heroes of the compositions is a return to *ma'at* and the triumph over chaos, and as women are in several cases the cause of the chaos or threat to order, they cannot be seen as heroic figures in their own right.

Section 1: The Tale of the Two Brothers

Our copy of the New Kingdom narrative survives on p.D'Orbiney, written down on this document by the scribe Ennana. I will discuss how five of the characters in this text are portrayed: Bata, the hero of this tale who eventually becomes king of Egypt; his older brother Anubis, who initially acts against Bata but then assists him in the second half of the text; the

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[564] Simpson, 1973, pp.5-6; Parkinson, 1991, p.98.
[565] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* Toronto and London, 3rd ed., 2009, p.5.
[566] See Robert A. Segal *Theorizing About Myth,* Amhert, MA., 1999, pp.117-134, for a detailed discussion of 'hero-myth' and the theories of Ranke, Campbell, and Raglan that inform much of modern analysis relating to their categorisation, subject matter, and societal function.

wife of Anubis who attempts to seduce Bata and then lies about the event resulting in her death as punishment; the wife of Bata, a divinely created woman who betrays her husband and tries to have him killed several times, which also results in her presumed death as punishment for her wrongdoing; and pharaoh, the unnamed king of Egypt who takes Bata's wife as his own "great lady" after luring her from the Valley of the Pine[567] to Egypt, believing his soldiers responsible for the death of her husband and removal of his (unseen) rival. p.D'Orbiney most likely dates towards the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty, as the inscription refers to "the king's elder son, Seti", suggesting either that Merneptah was still ruling Egypt, or his son Seti II's short reign had begun when Ennana recorded the composition.[568] For *Two Brothers,* we should not regard the scribe Ennana as the 'author' in the modern sense, but rather as the copyist, the individual who simply wrote down the words of the story that most likely existed in oral tradition, disseminated among far more people than the literate minority.

Modern scholarly analysis of this story began in 1852, with a partial translation of the text by Emmanuel de Rougé, which then lead to "a swirl of controversy" regarding how it should be classified in the literary tradition.[569] It has been suggested that the tale can be regarded as the combination of two or more separate compositions,[570] again emphasising how the inclusion of a scribe's name as copyist does not automatically make them a text's individual 'author' or composer. The narrative has been widely discussed in relation to its content as well as its classification as a folktale/*märchen*, as mythical narrative, or even as 'fairy tale', and scholarly focus has mainly been on the Potiphar's Wife motif[571] (Anubis' wife's attempted seduction of Bata)[572], the Betrayal of the Husband motif[573] (Bata's wife's treacherous behaviour encouraging pharaoh to kill her previous partner on more than one occasion)[574], and the

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[567] Or "cedar" in other translations.

[568] Published by Alan Gardiner, 1932, pp.9-29. For the hieratic and hieroglyphic transcription see Charles Edward Moldenke, *The tale of the two brothers, a fairy tale of ancient Egypt; the d'Orbiney papyrus in hieratic characters in the British Museum; the hieratic text, the hieroglyphic transcription, a translation, notes and a glossary*, New Jersey, Elsinore Press, 1898.

[569] Katary, 1997, p.39.

[570] *ibid.*

[571] Thompson's motif index K 2111. Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography. Translation and enlargement of Antti Aarne's Verzeichnis der Miirchentypen*, 2nd ed, Folklore Fellows Communications no. 184, Helsinki, 1961.

[572] *TB,* 3,6-4,2. See Alan Dundes, "Projective Inversion in the Ancient Egyptian 'Tale of Two Brothers'", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 115, 457/458, 2002, pp.380-381; Susan Tower Hollis, "The Woman in Ancient Examples of the Potiphar's Wife Motif, K2111", *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, P. L. Day, (ed.), Minneapolis, 1989, pp.28-42.

[573] K 2213.4 and/or "Faithless Wife" categorisation 318.

[574] *TB,* 12,4-6; 16,5-6; 18,1-2.

Resurrection motif[575] (Bata's many transformations and rebirth).[576] Susan Tower Hollis has outlined the *märchen*-esque content apparent in *The Two Brothers*, leading her to conclude that the text is "the oldest fairy tale in the world."[577] Hollis acknowledges that there are shared folklorist motifs with other cultures apparent in this story, yet defends her decision to regard it as a purely Egyptian composition, positioning it in its cultural and historical context throughout her work. In addition, she emphasises her belief that the story depends on its audience's collective understanding to transmit its full meaning, perhaps to potentially different social groups.[578] The mythic elements in this narrative suggest that the basic premise of the story would have been known to a wider proportion of ancient Egyptian society than just those who were literate. In particular, the Osirian rebirth-myth in which the 'justified' individual transcends the finality of death, permeates this specific tale as well as the other compositions examined in this chapter.

Just because deities appear as characters in a narrative, this does not instantly make the narrative a myth in itself. De Vries has claimed that *Two Brothers* was a myth due to the premise that Bata was a foil representing Osiris, and that stories about gods *were* myths, as opposed to folktales.[579] Dundes refutes this, citing it as "a totally fallacious bit of reasoning" claiming that, as deities may be characters in diverse genres of literature, their presence in a tale does not automatically make it a myth.[580] Therefore, he states, the *Two Brothers* "is almost certainly a folktale, and within the folktale rubric, it bears the unquestionable characteristics of a wonder or fairy tale."[581] However, we should not assume that its content was not taken seriously by the ancient audience. The tale itself may have been told for entertainment rather than as a factual recounting of a series of events, yet even if it is to be seen as a folktale "regarded as fiction" its moral and instructional value does not have to be diminished.[582] In

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[575] E 670.

[576] *TB,* 7,12-8,1; 14,1-4; 15,1; 17,1; 18,7.

[577] Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World*, Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 12, Oklahoma, 1990.

[578] *ibid.*

[579] De Vries, 1954, p.60.

[580] Dundes, 2002, p.383.

[581] *ibid.* For a conflicting view, see Thomas Schneider, "Innovation in literature on behalf of politics: The Tale of the Two Brothers, Ugarit, and 19th Dynasty History", *Egypt and the Levant*, 18, 2008, pp.315-326. Schneider argues that the composition reflects influences from outside of Egypt, using Ugaritic mythologies to fill "a gap" in Egyptian discourse that served the purpose of legitimising the mythologically unorthodox transfer of kingship present in Nineteenth Dynasty Egypt. He concludes by stating, in his view, that the text is therefore definitively "not a fairy tale as frequently thought." Schneider, 2008, p.324.

[582] William Bascom, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives", *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth,* A. Dundes (ed.), Berkeley, CA., 1984, pp.8-9.

addition to this, Hollis also considers that the text potentially "contains reflexes of an actual historical situation," in particular that of the succession dispute between Seti II and Amenmesse, after the death of Merneptah in 1203 B.C.[583] Following this approach, Bata's ascension to the throne reflects the restoration of $m3^ct$ that Seti II's supporters would surely have emphasised after Amenmesse was removed from power. The divine determinative (falcon on stand) that follows Bata and Anubis' names in the composition also supports Lesko's suggestion that *Two Brothers* could be referring to local deities from Upper Egypt's 17th Nome, and so have political as well as mythological significance.[584] Finally, in a recent study, Wettengel has considered the tale to represent New Kingdom conceptions surrounding the cyclical journey of the sun as it passed through day and night, as mirrored in the development of the plot and the journey of the hero.[585]

Section 2: The Tale of the Doomed Prince

Dating to late Dynasty Nineteen or Dynasty Twenty of the Ramesside Period, p.Harris 500, verso, contains the hieratic text of *The Doomed Prince* alongside other compositions, although the papyrus is now damaged resulting in the loss of the tale. For this analysis, two main characters will be considered: the Doomed Prince himself, and his wife, the daughter of the prince of Naharin. Purchased in 1872 from the collection of Anthony Charles Harris, the papyrus is now housed in the British Museum (BM EA10060).[586] Möller dates the written composition to the reign of either Seti I or Ramesses II during Dynasty Nineteen.[587] It has been suggested that the tale itself dates to earlier than the written document that survives for us today, as outlined by Helck who considers it to be a Dynasty Eighteen composition based on its varied use of the "after many days had passed" formulae.[588] This has, however, been challenged by Camilla Di Biase-Dyson, who views the tale as an early Dynasty Nineteen composition. She suggests that the inclusion of Mitanni (Naharin) as a foreign power is reflective of a Dynasty Eighteen setting, that was meant to evoke a time in the past, as many

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[583] Hollis, 1990.

[584] Lesko, 1986, p.99.

[585] Wolfgang Wettengel, *Die Erzahlung von den beiden Brudern: Der Papyrus d'Orbiney und die Konigsideologie der Ramessiden,* OBO 195, Freiburg, 2003.

[586] Gardiner, 1932, pp.1-9; Möller, 1927, pp.21-24.

[587] Georg Möller, "Zur Datierung literarischer Handscriften aus der ersten Halfte des Neuen Reichs", *ZÄS* 56, 1920, pp.42-43.

[588] Wolfgang Helck, "Die Erzählung vom Verwunschenen Prinzen" *Form und Mass: Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten, Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht,* J. Osing & G. Dreyer (eds.), Wiesbaden, 1987, pp.218-225.

märchen require, which in turn indicates that the text was composed after the time it describes or seems to reference.[589]

Posener, among others, posits that the *Doomed Prince* would have had a happy ending for the protagonist, remarking that the conclusion of the tale may have been the precursor of a story found in Diodorus Siculus, in which the hero successfully 'cheats' his death.[590] This view is also echoed by Lichtheim, who suggests the tale should be called *The Prince who was Threatened by Three Fates*, implying that he faced danger that could be overcome.[591] Indeed, as Eyre recognised, once a specific fate has been defeated in the composition, another will not return to take its place: thus, the snake the wife of the Prince kills is *the* serpent-fate, and her clever actions to dispatch it result in the threat to the Prince from snakes in general being neutralised.[592] This suggests the other fates will also be dealt with, or the threat they pose will be negated in some manner, allowing for a positive outcome for the Prince and presumably his loyal wife. As the other narratives conclude with a restoration of the hero's rightful status, we may expect the Prince to return to Egypt on the death of his father and ascend to the throne, fathering his own son and heir with his Mitannian wife who has proven herself worthy of being the hero's consort. Thus, the correct transfer of kingship would occur and *ma'at* is not permanently threatened. Many other folk tales and fables contain the motif of helpful animals, which assist the hero in return for their kindness.[593] It could be suggested that the dog will ultimately not harm the man who raised it from a puppy, especially if we take Lichtheim's reading of *ḥr ṯꜥit tp-r* to mean that the dog spoke to the Prince, as opposed to biting him as is found in Wente's translation.[594] However, as the other three tales examined in this chapter describe the murder of Osiris by his brother Seth, Seth's attempt to sexually dominate his young nephew Horus, Anubis' attempted murder of his brother Bata, Falsehood's denunciation, blinding and attempted murder of his brother Truth, Bata's wife's several attempts to have Bata

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[589] Camilla Di Biase-Dyson, *Foreigners and Egyptians in the Late Egyptian Stories, PdÄ* 32, 2013, pp.177-179.

[590] Georges Posener, "On the tale of the Doomed Prince" *JEA* 39, 1953, p.107. Diodorus recounts a legend surrounding how king Menes, being pursued by his dogs, seeks refuge in a lake in which a crocodile offers him safe passage to the other side. Posener then links this rescue of Menes with part of the Osiris-myth, where Osiris' body is carried on the back of a crocodile, and suggests that the dog perhaps represents Seth as an agent of chaos.

[591] Lichtheim, 2006b, p.200.

[592] Eyre, 1976, p.105.

[593] Stith Thompson's motif index B.180 magic quadrupeds and B.210, speaking animals, and potentially B. 300-349, helpful animals.

[594] p.Harris 500, 8, 7; Lichtheim 2006b, p.202; Wente, 2003b, p.90.

killed, Horus' beheading of his mother Isis, and so on, we should not automatically assume that the dog will repay the prince's care with loyalty.

Section 3: The Blinding of Truth by Falsehood

Found on p.Chester Beatty II (p.BM 10682), the source for this composition dates to Dynasty Nineteen.[595] The beginning of the text has been damaged and the modern audience is unaware of why Falsehood wanted his brother Truth blinded, claiming Truth perhaps mishandled or lost a dagger, described in unbelievable terms, as a pretext for having his brother punished. In this composition, I will take into consideration the characterisation of four personae integral to the story. They are Truth, the hero who has been blinded and forced to occupy a lowly social position by his brother; Falsehood, the brother and antagonist of Truth, who believes him to have been murdered at his command; the son of Truth who fulfils the implied role of Horus, challenging Falsehood and restoring his father's rightful social position; and the Lady, an apparently unmarried woman who bears Truth's son but does little else to assist in the vindication of Truth and restoration of order. Both the protagonist and antagonist can be seen as personified concepts, their names reflecting their place within the Osirian rebirth mythology, as well as the Egyptian world view of the cosmos as operating according to *ma'at* and *isfet*.[596] Due to the allegorical nature of the text, Truth (*mȝʿt*) acts as a foil for Osiris and Falsehood fulfils the role of Seth (*grg*), with Truth's son assuming the role of Horus. Because of this, we might expect the Lady as mother to be positioned as Isis; however, this is not the case. While she does not actively oppose Truth as Falsehood does, she does not go out of her way to help him have his revenge either. She is portrayed as driven solely by her sexual desires and acts according to her erotic impulses, although there is nothing in the text that suggests she mistreats or neglects her son as she does Truth. It has been suggested that she may have been named "Greed"[597] or possibly "Desire" ("Begierde"),[598] reflecting the male names' description of their role in the story. In this study she will be referred to as the Lady. In the composition, the vindication of the hero results in the achievement of a "harmonious situation…with the elimination of further strife" that Wente considers typically reflective of "the application of the principle of Maat" in Egyptian thought.[599] The text has been discussed by Theodorides, in

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[595] Gardiner, 1932, pp.30-36; Gardiner, 1935, pp.2-6.
[596] Emma Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptishe Märchen*, Dusseldorf and Cologne, 1965, pp.73-76.
[597] Wente, 2003c, p.105.
[598] Brunner-Traut, 1965, p.73.
[599] Wente, 2003c, p.104.

relation to the judicial aspects of the composition and it is interesting to note the way in which the Ennead as jury is portrayed, presenting them as foolish and easily mislead, not qualities one would hope to find in an arbitrator or decision-maker.[600]

Section 4: The Contendings of Horus and Seth

This narrative tale is found at the beginning of p.Chester Beatty I, recto,[601] dating to the reign of Ramesses V during Dynasty Twenty, and recovered from Deir el Medina as discussed in relation to the love song compositions found on it in the previous chapter. Several goddesses feature in the text, and although only Isis functions as a major character, the presentation of Hathor and Neith will be considered as well. I will therefore examine the portrayal of five deities: Isis, the sister-wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, whose activities in the composition directly relate to the fulfilment of her son's goals and the vindication of her husband; Hathor, who appears in the text far less than Isis does, and again has her activities limited to actions beneficial for two male deities, Pre[602] and Horus; Horus, who has been challenged for his birthright by Seth, and who seeks vengeance against his uncle for this usurpation and the murder of Osiris; Seth, personifying chaos or *isfet*, who regards his claim to the throne of Egypt more solid than Horus', based on his superior age and strength; and finally, Neith, who also plays a peripheral role in the action but is accorded a position of power as arbitrator that we might find surprising considering the dominance of the male characters in both this text and the narrative tales genre as a whole.[603]

The text deals with the trials and tribulations Horus faces when attempting to prove his rightful claim to the kingship of Egypt against Seth, who despite many losses, drags the conflict out by proposing subsequent new contests. Horus is always victorious, and one wonders why the Ennead allows Seth to keep the battle going.[604] Because of this, *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* has been called by Posener "an interminable trial before the ennead convened under the presidency of Re," as Seth is bested many times before the Ennead eventually reach a decision

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[600] Aristide Théodoridès, "Le serment terminal de « Vérité-Mensonge » (P. Chester Beatty II, 11, 1-3)", *RdE* 21, 1969, pp.85-105.

[601] Gardiner, 1932, pp.37-60.

[602] This deity is named as Re, Pre, the 'Lord of All', or Pre-Horakhti in the texts, and when referring to him I shall use the designation included in the specific composition being discussed.

[603] Examined in the case study, pp.174-175.

[604] Michèle Broze, *Mythe et roman en Égypte ancienne: Les adventures d'Horus et Seth dans le Papyrus Chester Beatty I*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 76, Leuven, 1996, pp.126-7, in which she argues that Horus' growth and ability to overcome multiple challenges are an essential feature of the composition and are required for him to assume the office of Kingship.

that seems, to the reader, a foregone conclusion.[605] For this text, the main protagonist is Horus, the youthful progeny of Isis and Osiris, who is opposed by Seth, his uncle who previously murdered Osiris and aims to prevent Horus from gaining the rulership of Egypt, desiring the position for himself. The text operates in the mythological sphere, and the interactions of the deities drive the plot forward, although it would be obvious to the ancient audience that Horus will emerge triumphant. The point of interest in the composition is therefore not what the outcome is, but how the outcome is achieved.

Narratives such as *Horus and Seth* raise problems in terms of categorisation. The story takes place in the divine sphere, recounting interaction between the deities and potentially explaining why Egyptian kingship was passed from father to son whenever possible. Detailed studies have been undertaken regarding *Horus and Seth* as reflecting how the outcome of the conflict related to the inheritance of kingship. John Gwyn Griffiths regards the story as having a political origin, in which mythology is utilised to illustrate the unification of Egypt at the beginning of the Dynastic Period, as opposed to Oden's view that the tale is purely aetiological myth.[606] Oden considered *Horus and Seth* to be a myth, first and foremost, because it is of a traditional quality complete with a recognisable plot and easily identified characters and should not be regarded as detailing the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the rule of one king c.3000B.C.[607] However, it can still be categorised as a folktale within a mythic setting, as it does not seem to fall into the category of "God's Word", texts constructed by religious authorities to elucidate and educate its audience.[608] According to Loprieno, the story can be regarded as political satire coupled with mythology and is potentially one of the first examples of "mythology as a textual genre."[609] Indeed, the lack of respect shown to the deities and the use of humour when describing some of their activities is perhaps surprising to the modern reader, accustomed as we are to seeing the deities treated with reverence and deference in other contemporary Egyptian texts. However, Wente has suggested that the composition was unlikely to be "directly associated with the practice of the official religion" due to its "often humorous and bawdy" nature, and regards the fact that it was included on p.Chester Beatty I, alongside other "entertainment" literature such as several love songs, as disqualifying it from

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[605] Georges Posener, "Literature," *The Legacy of Egypt*, J. K. Harris (ed.), Oxford, 1971, p.240.

[606] John Gwyn Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth from Egyptian and Classical Sources,* Liverpool, 1960.

[607] Robert A. Oden, " 'The Contendings of Horus and Seth' (Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 1): A Structural Interpretation", *History of Religions* 18, 4, 1979, p.353.

[608] Edward F. Wente, "Response to Robert A. Oden's 'The Contendings of Horus and Seth' (Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 1): A Structural Interpretation", *History of Religions* 18, 4, 1979, p.371.

[609] Loprieno, 1996, pp.50-55 in general, quote from p.50.

state-sanctioned religious literature.[610] Previously, Gardiner had described this text as designed to be told "before a squatting circle of guffawing fellaheen,"[611] a rather anachronistic, Orientalising view that reduces the tale to little more than low-society amusement, a characterisation that more recent analyses have successfully countered.[612] For Sweeney, the composition contains "one of the central myths of ancient Egypt, expressing values very dear to the Egyptians, such as justice and family solidarity" and can therefore appeal to audiences outside of the court élite.[613]

Myth, Narrative and Narratology, and the contextual sphere of the tales

Many of us have grown up listening to and disseminating stories with both mythic and folkloristic elements. The stories may have been told to educate, to entertain, or to explain how the world works. They often had recognisable characters and motifs, with a predictable ending and expected plot development, and the "cultural embeddedness of narrative" cannot be overlooked when analysing compositions of this nature.[614] These kinds of composition are reflective of the cultural understandings and conventions, as well as religious beliefs in many cases, of the society that produced them, usually functioning in a manner that entrenched expected practices in day to day life by presenting events as occurring in a mimetic plane of existence. Although I feel it is possible to view the four narratives studied here as containing elements of *märchen* or of folk tale,[615] this often implies a lack of religious content. In many instances the seemingly profane or secular events contain religious allegory or mythic connotations. Myth itself is, as defined by Dundes, "a sacred narrative" that is meant to be believed and may be considered to "constitute the highest form of truth, albeit in metaphorical guise."[616] Von Hendy goes on to say that myth is "a traditional story commanding special respect," but can also be taken to mean a "widely disseminated falsehood" following on from

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[610] Wente, 1979, pp.371-372.

[611] Alan H. Gardiner, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty: descriptions of a hieratic papyrus with a mythological story, love songs, and other miscellaneous texts,* London, 1931, pp.10-11.

[612] Such as Broze's in-depth analysis of the verb-forms used in this narrative, and her argument that the text reflects artful and subtle composition, bringing in different incidents and elements of Horus and Seth's mythological interactions with each other to create a unified story. Broze, 1996, pp.157-230 in particular.

[613] Sweeney, 2002b, p.143.

[614] Bal, 2009, p.225.

[615] In particular, *TB* and *DP*, following on from the work of Hollis, 1990; 2003; Dundes, 2002; and Griffiths, 1960.

[616] Alan Dundes, "Introduction", *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth,* Alan Dundes (ed.), Berkeley, CA., 1984, p.1.

the works of Freud and Nietzsche.[617] Although they are replete with fantastical elements, exaggeration and unusual events, the four narratives examined in this chapter contain mythical elements that fir with the former of von Hendy's definitions just given. This is due to the inclusion of features relating to or referencing the Osirian death-cycle and discourses of kingship that would have impacted on the lives of the audience, circumscribing and informing cultural practices. Although fantastical, there is the implication in these texts that they were, to a degree, intended to be taken seriously as cultural compositions, even if they were not, strictly, myths themselves. The exact chain of events may not have been taken to be realistic occurrences by the original audience, but the message the texts were designed to impart almost certainly was respected and awarded a degree of authority, a concept not incompatible with the 'entertaining' nature of the tales. Because of the mythic connotations and referential points inherent in the tales, it seems preferable to regard them as *märchen* containing mythic or allegorical elements presented in a narrative framework. All four of the compositions included in the subsequent analysis are, basically, "prose narratives", an appropriate if somewhat general term "for the widespread and important category of verbal art which includes myths, legends, and folktales."[618]

As Bottigheimer outlines, historians can fall into the trap of treating *märchen* or tales that contain folkloristic elements alongside myth as ahistorical; that is, it is as if "they believe that these narratives had reached the printed page by an unexceptionable and unedited route" indicating "outmoded beliefs that tales passed unchanged from one century to the next."[619] While setting the tale in its particular cultural milieu, it is therefore essential to consider its history and transmission at different times, especially if we are to consider elements unique to a particular telling of the story. This of course includes the depiction of gender roles, which cannot be separated from their historical context. It has been suggested by John Baines[620] that the New Kingdom narratives build upon and continue from earlier texts such as those found on p.Westcar[621], but their temporal context cannot be overlooked. A more modern example demonstrating how the 'telling' of a narrative text can change according to audience expectations over a reasonably short period of time comes from the *märchen* tales collated and

[617] Andrew Von Hendy, *Modern Construction of Myth*, Bloomington, IN., 2001, p.299.
[618] Bascom, 1984, p.7.
[619] Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative Research and History", *Social History* 14, 3, 1989, p.344.
[620] John Baines, "Classicism and Modernism in the Literature of the New Kingdom", *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms,* Antonio Loprieno (ed.), *PdÄ* 10, Leiden, 1996, p.160.
[621] p.Berlin 3033, which includes the tale of *Khufu and the Magicians*.

recorded by the Brothers Grimm. These compositions were, for the most part, stories that women told children for entertainment, but also to impart lessons.[622] The most widely disseminated oral telling of the Rumpelstiltskin story ends with the imp flying out of a window on a cooking ladle, having failed to claim the Queen's child. Yet this ending was changed for the first written edition (1812), in which Rumpelstiltskin leaves on foot, and again for the 1857 edition in which he meets a more gruesome end, stamping his foot so deep into the earth he rips himself in two trying to escape.[623] This example is pertinent for this study, as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were not the authors of the stories in that they composed and invented the original versions; rather they were copyists writing down tales from an existing oral tradition, selecting examples to record that would be familiar to their intended audience that were open to revision, editing and changes.

The most familiar and easily recognisable characteristics of *märchen* involve the setting, style of composition, character, and the predictable plot outcome. Most settings remove the tale from the real world, taking us to an often unspecified temporal epoch and outlandish spatial place, in which chronological time does not have to be specified.[624] Unusual events occur, such as talking animals,[625] exceptional feats and clever plans,[626] and magical transformations.[627] The characters are typically either completely good or entirely evil and easy to identify, although this is not always the case. This usually creates a straightforward binary dichotomy between our protagonist (good) and our antagonist/s (evil), and encourages us to identify with and support the protagonist. They are usually motivated by one overriding desire and are generally expected stereotypes who play a defined role, with little scope for character development or 'personal growth.' Stereotypical characters have to behave in certain ways, because "if the story were to depart too far from these set characteristics, they would no longer be recognisable," and part of the success of *märchen* tales relies on the narrative fulfilling

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[622] Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *The annotated Brothers Grimm,* Maria Tatar (ed.and transl.), London, 2012, pp.2-3.

[623] Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales*, Harvard, 2003, pp.15-17.

[624] Manassa, 2013, pp.21-22, in which she considers Bakhtin's conception of 'adventure-time' applicable to *TB,* since the narrator does not need to provide concrete expressions of time for events to occur within, such as Bata's journey to the Valley, and can compress the three years of Anubis' quest to find his brothers' heart to one sentence only.

[625] The cows in *TB;* The three animal fates in *DP*.

[626] The prince leaping up to the window of the daughter of the Prince of Naharin, despite it being 70 cubits away from the ground in *DP;* Bata survives his self-emasculation and is able to transform himself several times, cheating death in *TB*; The tricking of Falsehood by Truth's son in *TF*; the various challenges won by Horus against Seth, sometimes with the help of others such as Isis in *HS*.

[627] Bata's transformations; Isis' disguises; Seth and Horus' transformation into hippopotami.

certain functions, often proscribed by dominant expectations or hegemonic cultural experiences.[628]

Generally, the action tends to be formulaic, and the protagonist often undertakes a physical journey that can be symbolic of their self-discovery, although the other personae do not tend to do so. For the four narrative tales, this occurs in Bata's journey to the Valley of the Pine and subsequently back into Egypt, the Prince's explorations into Naharin that leads to confrontations with his fates, and Truth's son's journey to trick Falsehood. Repetitious patterns are found, perhaps to aid the storyteller in memorization, such as the use of epithets and similes, and the word for word repeating of another person's speech when recounting past events. Endings are almost always happy for the hero or protagonist, as well as those who help him achieve his goals, and retribution is doled out to the wicked or unhelpful characters who fail to assist the protagonist or hinder him in any way. Stylized intensification and extreme situations can be used to increase the drama, such as the various contests Seth forces Horus to participate in, even if the audience is well aware what the outcome of the tale will be. Characters acknowledge magic as a normal part of life without surprise or disbelief, which distances the action of the narrative from reality, and disguises or hidden identity serve their purpose without being prematurely uncovered. Examples of this include Bata's revelations to his wife while in his bull and persea tree transformations; Isis' disguises enabling her to cross to the Isle in the Midst and trick Seth into condemning himself; Seth's willingness to believe Horus' boat is actually made of stone; the misinformation regarding his heritage by the Doomed Prince; Truth's son only revealing his parentage after successfully making his case before the Ennead, and so on. On a very basic level, then, we expect a happy ending for our 'good' characters, while the 'bad' characters receive a suitable punishment. Horus (eventually) emerges triumphant over Seth, Bata is avenged and becomes king of Egypt, and Truth is vindicated against Falsehood. E.M. Forster makes the distinction between 'round' and 'flat' characters in narratives, who either exhibit complex characteristics and may not behave in the way the reader has come to expect, or are no more than predictable, unchanging stereotypes respectively. Bal considers that this 'psychological' categorisation of personae has led to 'flat' characters such as are found in *märchen* to be dismissed as irrelevant in the past when undertaking character analysis.[629] However, once we recognise that value judgements applied

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[628] Bal, 2009, p.121.
[629] Bal, 2009, pp.115-6; p.120.

to their construction can offer insights into the text and it's cultural situation, their relevance in studies such as this becomes apparent.[630]

The portrayal of the female characters: gendering the body, speech, actions and emotions

The female characters appear to occupy one end of an extreme duality; they are either wicked and deviant, or virtuous and supportive of the male protagonist.[631] The presentation of gendered individuals within these texts act as "simplifying social fictions that produced inequalities in the process of producing difference"[632] and by adopting the categories put in place by the evidence itself we are able to see how constructions of sexual difference could proscribe acceptable behaviour and modes of interaction. Several of the female characters speak and act as stereotypes of the 'bad' woman, hindering the protagonist through both action and speech, allowing the text to create a negative feminised space which the positive masculine protagonist responds to, and ultimately triumphs over. In both *Two Brothers* and *Truth and Falsehood*, some of the obstacles the male hero has to overcome are created by the unacceptable actions of female characters. It has been noted that the women in the Narrative Tales tend to behave in "an *extra*-ordinary manner" and their actions form an "aberration" that necessitates inclusion in the composition in a manner that was not required for gender-conformative behaviour.[633] Constructions of male and female do not always act in opposition to one another, with 'male' unequivocally occupying the 'positive' position, but the texts do tend to posit the gendered characters as different and unequal, a division informed by the biological sex differential.[634] Thus, 'male' generally is superior to 'female', and 'masculine' traits are regarded as preferable to 'feminine', even if some characters such as Horus in *Horus and Seth,* and Bata in *Two Brothers,* have to prove or re-establish their masculinity.

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[630] *ibid*. The relevance of mythical elements or connotations in the tales also applies to value judgements present in the content of the texts, as myth itself can act as "a charter of behavior" that "provide a valid justification for obligations and privileges." Lauri Honko, "The Problem of Defining Myth", *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth,* A. Dundes (ed.), Berkeley, CA., 1984, p.47.

[631] See Quirke, 1996, p.275.

[632] Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality", *Signs* 30, 3, 2005, p.1771.

[633] Teysseire, 1998, pp.45-46, where she also identifies the 'good' behaviour of the Doomed Prince's wife as unusual in that she is not an Egyptian woman, but is a foreigner, daughter of the prince of Naharin, and foreign women were usually viewed with suspicion.

[634] Consider Falsehood and Seth as the main antagonist of Truth and Horus respectively, but also Re's opposition to Horus, Anubis' attempt to kill his brother Bata, pharaoh's 'theft' of Bata's wife and his sending the royal soldiers to fell the tree on which Bata's heart is kept, the prince of Naharin's refusal to marry his daughter to the Egyptian prince, and so on.

In every one of the texts studied in this chapter, the female characters all act as anti-subjects at one point or another, pursuing "her own object," which is, "at a certain moment, at cross purposes with that of the first subject", the hero.[635] Even in the compositions where the 'good' female character/s act as helpers and supportive assistants in relation to the 'hero', it is still possible to identify moments in which the female 'helper' undertakes an action or expresses an opinion that does not please the male protagonist. From *Doomed Prince,* the princess's assertion that the Prince should have his dog killed in case it turns out to be the cause of his death, not an unreasonable suggestion since a dog was named as one of his three Fates, is ignored and she is rebuked.[636] Although the female's advice seems sensible and is given with the intention of protecting the male protagonist, it can be easily discarded and her opinion deemed secondary to that of the male. Isis, in *Horus and Seth,* is a firm champion of her son's right to the throne, yet she also acts against him at a certain points, such as releasing Seth (in the form of hippopotamus) during one of the contests,[637] and cutting Horus' hand off when he shows her Seth's semen that he caught.[638] In the same text, Hathor could also be seen as acting against Horus, in that she brings Pre-Horakhti out of his stupor by showing him her genitalia,[639] which may have been in Horus' interests as in order for the trial to proceed Pre needed to be present, but it must be remembered that Pre championed Seth's right to the throne based on his virility and ability to defeat the chaos-serpent Apep every night.[640]

In contrast to the majority of the love songs, the narrative tales use the third-person voice, positioning the narrator outside of the action, and indicating that both audience and narrator are distanced somewhat from the events and personae included in the texts. The use of both the male and female first-person voice in the love songs allowed for audience identification with the speaker, a way to personally relate to and experience (if only vicariously) the emotions and situations presented in this body of literature. For the narrative tales, the reverse appears to be the intent. We, as audience, may sympathise with certain characters and vilify others, yet it seems that although it is possible to regard the personae as extreme examples of how one should and should not behave, we are not required to put ourselves in their position. The narrative

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[635] Bal, 2009, p.209.
[636] *DP,* 7,8.
[637] *HS,* 9,7-9.
[638] *HS,* 11,5-7.
[639] *HS,* 4,2-,3.
[640] *ist ib n P3-Rˤ r dit t3 i3wt n stš ˤ3 pḥty s3 nwt* "Now, because Pre desired to give the office to Seth, great of strength, the son of Nut…" *HS,* 2,2.

voice does recount the dialogue 'spoken' by the characters, as well as describing their actions and emotions. In all four of the texts, sentences spoken by male characters make up the majority of speech. For every one sentence spoken by a female, there are 3.28 sentences spoken by a male character, as shown in Table 4 below. Of the total sentences from the four texts, 10.89% are spoken by women, 35.64% by men and 6.22% by characters of unspecified sex, or a collective group.[641] For this analysis, I have taken a sentence to be a complete grammatical unit, usually corresponding to a sentence in English translations, but more importantly a complete unit in the original Egyptian text.

When a character repeats verbatim the words of another, as Seth does when recounting Isis' deception on the Isle in the Midst, these words are taken to be those of Seth, not Isis. I have categorised them as such because although the words reflect the way the original character has spoken, they are now words from the mouth of another persona. The second character, in this case Seth, may have altered, paraphrased or summarised the words, reflecting their own modes of speech. Indeed, when recounting the exchange to Pre, Seth speaks Isis's words almost verbatim, but expands upon his own, adding further comments that did not appear in the original exchange.[642] I would argue that the fact that the second character chooses not to change the words of the first is just as important linguistically as if they did change them, especially when we consider the importance of biological sex in characterising the actors within the stories. The repetition may simply be a means of aiding oral performance and allowing the teller of the tale to remember who said what, yet it is inescapable that there are several different examples of males and females sharing each other's words. The different sexes ventriloquise each other when recounting dialogue and verbal exchanges they have had, with both male and female characters appropriating the speech of another persona in this way. There seems to be no prohibition on a woman utilising the words of a male character and vice versa. It is also clear that deceitful words can be appropriated from a lying character and repeated by their opponent who is telling the truth, so the exact same words can prove veracity even when they had been previously used to give a false account of an event or interaction.[643] A male repeating the words of a female character does not lose their masculine identity when doing so, and a

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[641] The remainder of the sentences do not contain direct speech.

[642] Compare *HS* 6,9-6,11, in which Isis speaks and 7,4-7,8, where Seth repeats her words to Re, with 6,11, "Thereupon Seth said to her 'Are the cattle to be given to a stranger even while the man's son still lives?'" and 7,9-7,11, "And Seth told him 'I said to her: are the cattle to be given to a stranger even when the man's son still lives? So I said to her. The good-for-nothing's face should be struck with a stick, and he should be evicted, and the son put in the father's position'", as an example showing how Seth does not alter Isis' original words, but includes an additional sentence of his own when speaking to Re.

[643] See pp.154-157.

female utilising the speech of a male, although this does not occur as frequently, does not gain more prestige or power from this voice appropriation or ventriloquism.

Table 5: Distribution of characters within the four pieces of narrative literature

	Truth and Falsehood	*Two Brothers*	*Horus and Seth*	*Doomed Prince*
No. of male characters	4	8	18	7
named	2	4	15	1
unnamed	2	4	3	6
major	3	3	4	3
minor	1	5	14	4
No. of female characters	1	3	6	3
named	0	0	6	0
unnamed	1	3	0	3
major	1	2	1	1
minor	0	1	5	2
Unspecified/collective	3	10	1	8
Total sentences of text	72 remain	243	287	105 remain
Male spoken sentences	35	61	132	24
Female spoken sentences	4	27	39	7
collective	2	13	15	14

I have categorised major characters as those who have a great impact on the development and conclusion of the story, such as the protagonist, antagonist/s and those whose actions and individual characteristics are necessary for the story to progress in the way it does. Therefore, Bata, Anubis, both wives and the pharaoh are considered major characters in *Two Brothers*. Minor characters are those who have a peripheral role to play in the tale, and those who are very basic stereotypes who could be replaced with an equally stereotypical personage. Continuing with *Two Brothers* as an example, the chief of the royal washermen, the chief slaughterer and Pre-Horakhti are classed as minor characters. Collective or unspecified characters are those without a definite biological sex, such as the sea, or those who appear in

groups, such as the cattle of Bata, the soldiers of pharaoh, the Ennead, the Seven Hathors and the royal officials in *The Two Brothers*[644] The fates of the Doomed Prince initially posed a problem, but have been characterised as major unspecified characters, as I feel the preferable reading of the third person singular pronoun when referring to the snake, the dog and the crocodile is as "it" rather than "he."[645] I have, however, placed the powerful water spirit into the category of minor unnamed male characters, as he is not one of the Prince's fates, but rather an independent entity. Transformed characters, such as Bata as a bull, Isis as an old woman and Horus and Seth as hippopotami have not been included as separate characters; these transformations are part of the original character and as such do not need to be considered as individual entities.

The content of the tales encourages the audience to support and identify with the 'good' protagonist, hoping he will overcome his foes and challenges placed in his way, and ultimately achieve his goal/s. 'Good' characters are those who consciously assist the protagonist, helping him achieve the desired outcome, the triumph over evil or injustice. 'Bad' characters are basically all others that do not act in the protagonist's interests, using the old maxim 'if you're not with us, you're against us'. Therefore, the pharaoh in *Two Brothers* falls into this category as does Pre in *Horus and Seth,* as he supports Seth's claim over that of Horus. Anubis in *Two Brothers* initially acts against Bata until the deception of his wife is uncovered, but his later assistance and subsequent rewards place him into the category of a 'good' character. The same is true of Isis, who acts against Horus, angering him and causing her decapitation by him when she tells her harpoon to release Seth; nevertheless, Isis must be considered a 'good' character, for despite this moment of potentially unwise compassion for her brother, she champions her son throughout the tale. Seth, as the challenger of Horus and murderer of Osiris, must be considered a 'bad' character, at least in this context. Seth was not a completely evil god in Egyptian religion, however. He did represent the forces of chaos, unfruitfulness and rebellion, but his strength could provide protection and be beneficial, and there are instances of reciprocity between him and Horus, such as found in certain protection spells.[646] Without knowing the end of the tale, it is difficult to decide whether the three fates of the Doomed Prince should be categorised as bad characters or not. Based on their role as manifestations of

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[644] Although the Seven Hathors are a form of the goddess Hathor, they would be categorised as separate from her if the two were to appear in the same composition; however, neither of the Tales in which the Seven Hathors appear contain a reference to Hathor as well.

[645] And as outlined in Eyre's 1976 study, the fates are "specific and unique animals, and not simply any snake, dog, and crocodile." p.105.

[646] Hermann te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, G. E. van Baaren-Pape (transl.), Leiden, 1967.

danger to the prince, as well as the fact that the killing of the snake by the Prince's wife is something to "praise Re" for, they have been categorised as 'bad' characters. This could of course change if a complete version of the story is uncovered. Characters such as the Seven Hathors, who announce as opposed to decide the fate of the newborn baby, neutral palace staff and messengers have not been included as either 'good' or 'bad' characters. Many of the minor or collective characters can be put into either the 'good' or 'bad' category. Instances of this include the stepmother from *Doomed Prince* who is an example of a 'bad' female minor character, the 'bad' group of soldiers sent to kill Bata in *Two Brothers,* and the herdsman who allows Falsehood to take the ox belonging to Truth's son. Other minor characters, such as Hathor in *Horus and Seth,* act to help the protagonist, as do collective characters such as Bata's cattle, who warn him of his brothers' murderous intent. However, not all 'good' acts turn out the way they are initially intended; Pre and Khnum fashion a wife for Bata to stop him being lonely, but she deserts him and tries to have him killed several times. This example illustrates how the deities 'good' intentions cause Bata to be placed in real danger, but also shows that the desire for her husband's death by Bata's wife ultimately leads to his rebirth and assumption of the throne. In cases such as these, the intention, not the outcome, determines whether the character should be regarded as 'bad' or 'good'. Following this, the son of Truth is definitely a 'good' character, because he is dishonest about the size and splendour of his ox only to expose Falsehood's untruth by mirroring its exaggeration and implausibility, and of course his speech is designed to restore his father, another 'good' character, to a position of honour.

Although not all female characters are presented as wicked or deviant, they never occupy the position of worthy protagonist. Teysseire has analysed various ancient Egyptian texts from the Middle Kingdom through to the Greco-Roman Period to examine the portrayal of women within the narratives, questioning not only if there is an inherent misogynistic discourse within them, but if the genre of the text affects the presentation of the female characters.[647] In the New Kingdom narratives analysed here, the only non-divine female character that we are invited to see in a positive light is the wife of the Doomed Prince. Although one of the main characters who has a great impact on the progression of the tale, she is also an ephemeral individual about whom we are told very little. She is of a high social status, being the daughter of the prince of Naharin, and is young (being referred to a *šrit*), allowing her to be a considered a suitable partner for the protagonist. Her father, the prince of Naharin gathered together all of the young sons of the local gentry and set them a task typical of folktales, a physical test designed to

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[647] See Teysseire, 1998, pp.43-75 in particular.

determine who would win his only daughter's hand in marriage. He told them *n.sn ir p꜄ nty iw.f r pḥ p꜄ sšd n t꜄y.i šrit iw.s n.f r ḥmt* "the one who reaches the window of my daughter, she will be a wife to him."[648] We are not informed as to whether the youths vie for her hand in marriage because of her father's status and social prestige, or because they are enamoured of her personally, but the fact that her father "caused to come all the sons of all the princes of the land of Khor"[649] indicates that he instructed the youths to travel to Naharin and compete. This suggests that we view her as more of a desirable prize to be given away by her father and won by the strongest competitor, than as a 'worthy' individual in her own right.

The princess is physically attracted to the hero of the tale, even before he joins in with the other youths in leaping for her window. We are told that even as he stood watching the others compete to win her, *iw ḥr n t꜄ šrit n p꜄ wr n n꜄ḫ꜄rn ḥr.f* "the face of the daughter of the prince of Naharin was upon him,"[650] but her physical appearance is not described, and of her character and personality we also receive little information. We assume her to be clever, as she intoxicates the snake-fate by putting out bowls of wine and beer in order for it to become drunk and be rendered helpless, literally "turning upside down."[651] This allows her to chop it into pieces, as she has not fallen asleep but remains protectively watchful over her husband. She is also not adverse to displays of conspicuous emotion, making two threats to commit suicide if the Prince is harmed or driven away. She swears an oath to Pre-Horakhti, announcing:

> *nn iw.i r wnm nn iw.i r swri iw.i r mwt m t꜄ wnwt*
> " I will not eat, I will not drink, I shall die in this very moment!"[652]

Apparently unfazed by this, her father sends servants to kill the Egyptian prince, but the princess prevents this by again threatening suicide, saying she will not live for an hour more than her beloved if he is to be slain. Her extreme reaction is presumably because a more moderated appeal to her father will be ignored or rejected, and one wonders if her threat is successful solely because she is the prince of Naharin's only child, and so he is more concerned with his genetic line dying out than he is with his daughter's welfare or happiness.[653] Indeed, the prince of Naharin appears more won over by the good qualities of the prince, when he

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[648] *DP,* 5,6.
[649] *DP,* 5,5.
[650] *DP,* 6,4.
[651] *DP,* 8,4-5.
[652] *DP,* 6,14.
[653] *DP,* 5,4: *ist bw pw šw msy npi wr n Nhrn hrw wꜥ(t) n šrit* "none had been born to the prince of Naharin, except a small daughter…"

finally meets him, than he is by his own daughter's appeal.[654] Later in the tale, when she tells her husband to get rid of his dog, seemingly good advice considering that he confided in her regarding his fates, he rejects her words outright, implying that the princess had no choice other than to resort to extreme threats when persuading her father to acquiesce to her wish to marry the young prince, knowing that she would be otherwise ignored and have decisions made for her. Just as the princess in *The Doomed Prince* has to resort to threatening suicide in order to pressure her father into allowing the marriage between her and the prince to take place, Anubis' wife tells her husband that she will kill herself if Bata is not murdered, announcing "if you permit him to live, I shall die!"[655] Sweeney acknowledges that although both male and female characters in literary texts threaten physical harm or violence towards other personae, it is only the women who "threaten violence to themselves" suggesting that they had "more limited options in extreme situations" than were available to their male counterparts.[656]

While women are often positioned as the Other to the male norm, there are instances within the category of women where a certain type is considered deviant in itself. Anubis' wife inverts the norm and creates *isft* in the domestic sphere in order to characterise her as a 'bad' woman as well as to act as a literary device and move the plot forward. She is therefore positioned in opposition to the 'good' masculine hero, but also implicitly against a 'good' female role model, who "confines herself to the role assigned to her by society vs. the bad woman who dishonours herself by crossing... established social boundaries".[657] Bata, and Anubis to an extent, perform male tasks, such as working in the fields and using/owning weapons, while the females are restricted to the domestic, private sphere. This reinforces gendered stereotypes, and the sexualisation and marginalisation of female characters can reassert the dominant hegemony of an androcentric viewpoint. When Bata returned to the family home from the fields to get supplies, he found Anubis' wife "seated, braiding her hair". When he asks her for the seed he is to sow for his brother, she refuses to help, saying *m-dit ḫ3ꜥ(.w) t3y.i nši ḥr w3t* "do not make me drop my hairdressing on the road."[658] She is thus presented as self-indulgent and vain, more concerned with the self-serving act of creating an attractive coiffure than she is with assisting the family unit to cultivate the land and thus provide food for the following harvest. After noting Bata's ability to carry great quantities of seed, suggestive of his strength and virility,

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[654] *DP,* 7,1.
[655] *TB,* 5,3-4.
[656] Sweeney, 2008, p.201.
[657] Teysseire, 1998, p.1.
[658] *TB*, 2,12- 3,2.

she propositions him, saying "let us spend an hour lying together. It will be enjoyable for you. And then I will make you fine clothes."[659] Katary describes Anubis' wife as ""faithless, lustful, and deceitful, but not particularly intelligent," regarding her reaction to Bata's refusal of her invitation for sexual congress.[660] Her apparent worthlessness is further confirmed when Anubis kills her, as he mourns for his self-exiled younger brother but is not presented as regretting murdering his spouse at all.[661]

With the death of Anubis' wife, a new female character is needed in order to drive the plot forward. In order to prevent Bata from being lonely, the divinities encourage Khnum to fashion him a wife, who was "more beautiful in her body than any woman in the whole land, for the fluid of the Ennead was in her."[662] When pharaoh desires her, being enamoured by the scent from her hair, she is bribed with jewellery to go to Egypt, and live with the king "who loved her very much."[663] Following her instructions, the king's soldiers cut down the tree on which Bata's heart was balanced, effectively inducing a death-like state in the hero until Anubis is able to revive him. Travelling back to Egypt, Bata plans his revenge, and in his transformed guises twice confronts his wife, denouncing her as "false one" or "liar,"[664] causing her to fear his identity being revealed, which would jeopardise her status and position. In order to prevent this, she adopts similar tactics to Anubis' wife: she appeals to her more powerful male partner to bring about Bata's death. However, unlike Anubis' wife, Bata's wife does not claim to have been beaten by Bata, but uses her sexual wiles and the king's desire for her in a more scheming, manipulative fashion. Bata's wife tells pharaoh:

> *imi ꜣrḳ n.i n nṯr m-ḏd ir pꜣ nty iw.{i}<t> r ḏd.f iw.i r sḏm.f n.s*
> "Swear to me by the god, in saying: 'As for what <she> will say, I will obey it for her."[665]

Sweeney and Katary both suggest that this method of making requests, coercing the more powerful person into a position where, once they have agreed, they cannot change their mind without losing face, adds to the characterisation of Bata's wife as unscrupulous and deceitful.[666] Sweeney also contrasts this to the request made by the Doomed Prince's wife in that he have

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[659] *TB,* 3,8-9.
[660] Katary, 1997, p.44.
[661] *TB,* 8,9.
[662] *TB,* 9,11.
[663] *TB,* 12,2-3.
[664] *TB,* 17,7.
[665] *TB,* 16,4.
[666] Sweeney, 2008, pp.195-196; Katary, 1997, p.51.

his dog killed, suggesting her more straightforward speech indicates that she is an honest character, acting out of concern for the Prince, rather than demanding an act that only serves her self-interest in the Machiavellian manner of Bata's wife.[667] Hollis has emphasised that she *has* to act in such a negative, deceitful way in order for Bata to fulfil his destiny,[668] but the ruthless attitude of the text towards the character and the repercussions she faces instils unease in a modern Feminist reader. This is especially relevant when we consider the composition inter-textually with the rest of the narrative tales corpus, in which corrupt and devious male characters do not face such extreme punishments or character assassination, as will be seen.

While male characters may interact with other men or male gods, females rarely talk to a character of the same sex. Instead, they operate in a male-dominated sphere, and often speak or act only in relation to the protagonist or another male main character. For example, Hathor finds Horus and tells him *i.wn irt.k di.i n3y irtt im* "open your eye, in order that I can put this milk in it"[669] after Seth blinds him, but does not speak to Isis at any time in the text. Even Isis, when wishing to tell her consort Osiris about Horus' vindication, has to do so via an intermediary.[670] The Lady is the only female who appears to exchange words with other women, instructing her female servants to bring Truth to her house in order to be doorkeeper after they have informed her of his attractiveness.[671] Presumably, the women in pharaoh's retinue sent to bring Bata's wife back to Egypt also speaks to her, but there is no dialogue between the two included in the text, and it is notable that in these two examples, both Bata's wife and the Lady are of higher status that the woman they speak to, most likely preventing a friendship or a close bond between the them. The devious nature of the majority of 'human' female characters may explain why the women seem to live and function in isolation within the context of the tales. If one woman acting alone can cause so much chaos and strife, a group of women supporting each other could prove too problematic for the male characters to handle and, in the case of Anubis and Bata, punish. For the residents of Deir el Medina, it seems to have been accepted that a man was socially responsible for taking action against his wife's immoral conduct, as demonstrated by o.DM 439, in which a woman rebukes a male inhabitant of the village for not 'dealing with' his wife's presumably adulterous activities, telling him

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[667] Sweeney, 2008, p.196.
[668] Hollis, 1989, pp.29-42.
[669] *HS,* 10, 8.
[670] In this case, the North Wind. *HS*, 1,6.
[671] *TF,* 4,1-4.

"you are blind regarding her!"[672] It has also been noted that although all three goddesses who play an active role in *Horus and Seth* all help or support Horus in some manner, "they do not act in concert."[673] Possibly, if Isis, Hathor, and Neith had joined forces to achieve a common goal, the story would be over instantly. Again, this suggests that women operating in groups was worrisome and could potentially threaten the male-dominated established hierarchy.

As shown in Table 5 below, the activities and speech of female characters is restricted in the narrative tales, and their autonomy and agency curbed in a manner that does seem to be applied to male personae, even those who are 'bad' or antagonistic characters, such as Falsehood and Seth. The fact that only the goddesses are named may also be a method of removing female power, their anonymity reducing the transgressive women even further to stereotypes and distasteful caricatures. The unnamed, but positively portrayed, princess of Naharin is of course the exception to this, but the fact that she is not an Egyptian woman limits the potential for a contemporary audience to identify with her, again relegating her to someone of 'outsider' or Other status. As Bata's wife parallels Anubis' to an extent, their anonymity could also be a reflection of this, and indirect references to the women and their lack of personal names "must have meaning."[674] Female characters, essentially, are turned into objects and are defined by their male relations/husbands, as little more than possessions in this genre of literature. The unwillingness of the composers or copyists of the texts to give the 'human' females personal names may also indicate that they are being punished for transgressive behaviour, as found in documents regarding the court conspiracy against Ramesses III, in which wrong-doers were forced to take names such as "Re hates him" as penalty or castigation for their actions.

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[672] Borghouts, 1981, pp.11-12; McDowell, 1999, pp.49-50. The man's reply is preserved on the other side of the ostracon, in which he appears to deny an on-going relationship with the woman being criticised.
[673] Sweeney, 2002b, p.160.
[674] Katary, 1997, p.43.

Table 6: Speech interactions within the four pieces of narrative literature

	Truth and Falsehood	Two Brothers	Horus and Seth	Doomed Prince
Male speaking to				
Female	2	8	14	2
Male	11	9	26	8
Unspecified /collective group	6	3	34	6
Female speaking to				
Female	1	0	0	0
Male	1	12	11	3
Unspecified/collective group	1	0	7	2
Unspecified/collective speaking to				
Male	3	6	11	7
Female	1	0	1	0
Unspecified/collective	0	4	7	0
Total sentences of text	72 remain	243	287	105 remain

Relating to the isolation of the female characters, male characters evoke fear in females, which portrays 'masculine' as dominant and controlling, and 'feminine' as not only physically weaker, but also lacking strength of character, being more likely to act according to negative emotions.[675] After Anubis' wife propositions Bata, we are told:

> *wn.in p3 ꜥḏdw šri ḥr [ḫ]pr[w] mi 3by šmꜥt m ḳndt [dri]*
> *ḥr p3 smi bin iḏd.n.s n.f*
> *iw.s snd.w r iḳr sp sn*

> "Then the youth (Bata) became like an Upper Egyptian panther in anger,
> on account of the evil speech which she had said to him,
> while she was greatly afraid."[676]

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[675] This is particularly apparent in *The Two Brothers,* but male anger is also emphasised in *HS,* with Sweeney, 2002b, p.149, recognising that it is far more common for male gods to become angry and giving way to fits of rage than it is for female deities to do so in this composition.

[676] *TB,* 3,8-9.

The fact that the wife of Anubis is fearful is reemphasised a few lines later, when the narrator describes her preparations for deceiving her husband and implicating Bata:

> *is tꜣ ḥmt n pꜣy.f sn ꜥꜣ snḏ.ti [ḥr] pꜣ smi iḏd.n.s wn.in.s*
> *ḥr in ꜥdw pdr iw.s ḥr ḫpr mi nty knk.ti n ꜥḏꜣw*

> Meanwhile, the wife of his elder brother was afraid on account of the speech she had made (to Bata).
> So she took fat and grease and made her appearance as one who had been beaten..."[677]

Just as Anubis' wife fears her transgression becoming public knowledge, so too does Bata's wife. She "became exceedingly frightened" when Bata seeks revenge, and makes demands of the king after they have had sex, when "he was happy with her."[678] The fact that Isis transforms into a kite and flies up into a tree before she taunts Seth, after he admits that Horus' claim to the throne is stronger, also suggests a degree of fear or physical vulnerability that exists only for female characters.

When displeased, the male characters are portrayed as having the potential to do harm to the female body, inflicting violence as a form of reprisal regardless if the female is a 'good' or 'bad' character. Seth also rebukes his sister Isis for injuring him with her harpoon during his contest with Horus in which they both transform into hippopotami. He said to her *iꜥš n ḥmt.t sfḫ im.i ink pꜣy.t sn n mwt* "tell to your weapon: 'let go of me!' I am your brother of the mother."[679] This is hypocritical, considering that Seth shows no sibling loyalty himself, having murdered his own brother who was also Isis' husband, and actively attempts to prevent his nephew from gaining his birth right throughout the composition. This demonstrates the complexity of divided loyalties a woman might face in her day to day life, regarding her male relations and her interactions with them, and also suggests that the ancient audience would view women as more susceptible to emotional appeals even if they went against their own goals. It is therefore particularly apt that this incident occurs in relation to Isis' interactions with her male kin, as she is "quintessentially a goddess who operates out of family loyalties" and we need not see her compassion for Seth as a 'weakness', as the ancient Egyptians seemed

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[677] *TB,* 4,6-7.
[678] *TB,* 16,1-4; 17,1-12.
[679] *TB,* 9,4-5.

to place a high value on loyalty to one's kin.[680] This seems to be mirrored by the portrayal of Hathor in this composition, as the caring and joyous aspects of her character are emphasised, while the more destructive facets of her nature are ignored.[681] The only female character in the tales who inspires fear in a male character is the stepmother in *Doomed Prince.* The text does not make it clear whether the Prince's father really has taken a wife who causes the youth to leave Egypt, or whether she is fabricated by the hero in order to provide a convenient excuse for his excursion into Naharin. He tells other characters that:

> "I am one who is the son of a charioteer... my mother died, then my father took for himself another wife. She began to hate me, so I fled from her presence..."[682]

The implicit characterisation of the step-mother as an individual who will "favour her own children, even to the point of violence" gains the Prince the sympathy of the other youths, as well as the prince of Naharin, and the brief description serves its purpose, providing the Prince with a believable reason for travelling from his home.[683]

Returning to *Two Brothers,* the very scenario that Bata fears and tries to avoid in the beginning of the story is repeated in reverse and brought to fruition at the end. Bata, in the first part of the tale tells us that his brother Anubis is "like a father to me" and Anubis' wife is "like a mother." Accordingly, Bata does not want to cuckold the man who is like his father by having intercourse with the woman whom he considers a type of surrogate mother. However, in order to complete the story and have Bata ascend to the throne of Egypt, it is necessary for him to impregnate the wife of the king, a man who will believe the reborn Bata to be his son, and keep up the pretence that it is the king who sired the child. Ultimately, it is the king who has committed adultery, although he does not realise it. He is aware that the lady he is co-habiting with was previously committed to Bata, but he believes that his soldiers were responsible for Bata's death by following his orders in cutting down the tree with Bata's heart on it, thereby freeing her up to be in a new relationship. The woman who will give birth to Bata-reborn has therefore previously been described as Bata's wife, and after swallowing the splinter of persea tree, becomes the mother of her husband. Bata is his own progenitor, although he does not impregnate his wife in the traditional way. Having her become pregnant after swallowing the

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[680] Sweeney, 2002b, p.154.
[681] *ibid.* As expressed in texts such as *the Destruction of Mankind,* Hathor, in her guise of Sekhmet, could be fierce and bloodthirsty, and as Solar Eye, the goddess had the potential to inflict suffering as well as provide protection.
[682] *DP,* 7,3-4.
[683] Eyre, 2007, pp.223-4.

tree bark is therefore most likely a literary device absolving Bata of wrongdoing by copulation with the King's partner, as well as a way of emphasising Bata's virility and potency brought about via his transformed state. The *Kamutef* motif, the king as 'bull of his mother' is made use of here. It is acceptable, even desirable, for the male to impregnate his consort, making her his mother, and therefore the individual responsible for sexual arousal as well as procreative fulfilment, because it takes place in the mythological sphere.[684] However, a woman's desire for a younger man (to whom she has the potential to act as a maternal figure), is not condoned, as this interaction takes place in a more realistic sphere, that of daily life and social interaction.

Even after the restoration of Bata's masculine strength and virility has been emphasised, the conclusion of the story leads us to believe that he was incapable or unwilling to sire an heir to the throne. We do not know if Bata as king takes a wife, and we assume that his appointment of Anubis as successor was done not only as a reward to Anubis for services rendered, but also because Bata had no child of his own to succeed him. This parallels the previous king's situation, as his supposed heir was Bata-reborn, who is not his biological son. Likewise, we are left wondering who will succeed Anubis, who took the throne after the death of his *younger* brother, the age gap being even more pronounced as Bata had to be reborn and presumably grow up before completing his 30 years as king. Anubis, by the time it was his turn to rule Egypt must have been an elderly man. This may be an implicit reference to the end of Dynasty Nineteen, as Ay, Horemheb, and Ramses I were all older individuals at their ascension and neither Ay or Horemheb had a biological son to succeed them. Perhaps we as audience are meant to regard Bata as rejecting women and encounters with females altogether, having been so mistreated by both his and his brother's wives,[685] although I know of no example from Egyptian literature where male-enforced chastity, possibly similar to the rejection of sexual acts by monastic communities as a means of virtue and piety, is recommended. Just as Bata cannot or will not reproduce even after his transformations into a bull, an animal perceived of as sexually vigorous, the potentially phallic trees, or even a new body presumably with restored genitalia, so too is the impotence of the king hinted at. The tale tells us that he "made holiday" with Bata's wife, so engaged in sexual activity on more than one occasion. However, he presumably has had no children with any woman, so no other heirs who might challenge Bata's

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[684] Robins, 1993, p.17; p.41. Here, Robins discusses the impregnation of a goddess by her father the sun God during the daily solar cycle, who she gives birth to at each sunrise, thus taking on the role of daughter, consort, and mother.

[685] This would explain further his unorthodox method of getting his wife to conceive. The tale also makes it clear that Bata feels heteronormative desire towards his wife, as evidenced *TB,* 9,12.

assumption to the throne. This is necessary for the conclusion of the story, as Bata must fulfil his destiny, yet it is inescapable that even the one child the king believes himself to be the father of is not his biological offspring. Just as the king is depicted as misguided and manipulated, he is also shown to be unable to fulfil his duties in producing a son to take over rulership of Egypt after his death. Ultimately, female desire and sexual choice in taking a partner is represented as irrelevant to the successful outcome of the story, at least from the protagonist's point of view. It is only included in episodes characterised as negative and transgressive, integral to the plot development but in opposition to the values stressed by the narrative. The overall marginalisation of female characters can reassert the dominant hegemony of an androcentric viewpoint, and the women, even the divine ones, exist on the peripheries of the narratives, firmly positioning them as secondary to the male personae or actors.

Crime and gendered punishment within the texts

As outlined, it is not only the female characters who act as antagonist towards the male hero. Other men or male deities, usually those motivated by the status and social power of their rival, can oppose and harm the protagonist, creating discord and strife. However, the punishments doled out to, and inflicted upon, male characters are very different to that of the female personae. Therefore, the way the narratives respond to, and deal with, the unacceptable, condemned actions of the antagonist shows a marked difference based along the lines of biological sex. One of the major taboos in the tales is adultery, especially when an older individual attempts to coerce a younger person into coitus, made all the more distasteful when a familial relationship exists between the participants. It is not only women who commit, or attempt to commit, adultery in the narratives. Seth, whose sister-wife is Nephthys, attempts to engage in sexual activity with the beautiful young woman who approaches him for counsel while on the Isle in the Midst. The woman is of course Isis in disguise, as "a young woman whose body was beautiful, and who had no equal in the entire land."[686] Seth does not know the woman is in fact Isis, and is depicted as so eager to have intercourse with her, indeed, he "desired her most lecherously"[687], that he hastily agrees with her story, and condemns his own

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[686] *HS,* 6,5-6.
[687] *HS*, 6,7.

actions in doing so.[688] He is made to look foolish and easily outwitted, which is the cause of his being ashamed (*tm*) when he recounts the occurrence to Pre-Horakhti. During a break in their contests, Seth also invites Horus to " '…come, let us make holiday in my house',"[689] a proposition with sexual overtones that Horus readily agrees to. Seth's sexual activity with an individual who is presented as young and inexperienced and therefore not able to take his father's position as king without time passing, is not categorically condemned. The fact that Horus is his nephew is also not reviled, but of course the interactions of the deities did not have to conform to the day-to-day social impositions that would impact upon non-royal individuals. Seth is again humiliated after this episode, having unwittingly consumed the semen of Horus, which "emerged as a solar disk of gold upon Seth's head" in front of the Ennead.[690] Seth's intentions were to impregnate Horus and ridicule his young rival by announcing " 'I have performed a man's work against him…',"[691] but instead is shown to have been tricked, his punishment for his intended deception simply being his humiliation. It must be remembered that Seth's previous actions, the murder and dismemberment of Osiris, and intended usurpation of Horus' birth right, are the reason for the events that unfold in the tale, yet his punishment does not seem to reflect the seriousness of his conduct.

In contrast, the female transgressors are punished by death and bodily destruction, which not only ends their life in the mundane world, but prevents their rebirth in the next.[692] McDowell has noted that, regarding charges of adultery found on documents from Deir el Medina, if a man had sexual encounters with a married woman "the wrong was against her husband rather than the adulterer's own wife."[693] The adulterer's wife had also been 'cheated on', yet it seems that the cuckolding of another man was far more worrisome than a husband's unfaithfulness towards a woman while in a committed relationship with her. The punishment of the wife of Anubis for intended adultery and intercourse with a man regarded as her 'son' is unambiguous. She is killed, presumably by the same spear that Anubis was intending to use on his brother, and cast to the dogs by her husband:

iw.f ḥr ẖdb tȝy.f ḥmt iw.f ḥr ẖ3ʿ.s r nȝ n iww

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[688] *HS*, 6,5-7,2.
[689] *HS,* 11,2.
[690] *HS,* 12,11.
[691] *HS,* 12,4.
[692] Eyre, 1976, p.113, in which he outlines these punishments as akin to being devoured by Ammut in the afterlife, causing a "second and permanent death so feared by the Egyptians."
[693] McDowell, 1999, p.46.

"…he (Anubis) killed his wife, and he threw her (to) the dogs…"[694]

The ignominious end that Anubis' wife faces is presumably repeated for Bata's wife, who by this point in the narrative is also his own mother, as well as the widow of the king. After being judged by Bata and his "great royal officials", she is presumably also killed, dying "by the knife" just as the seven Hathors decreed:[695]

[w]n.in.[tw] <ḥr> in n.f tȝy.f ḥmt
iw.f ḥr wpt ḥnꜥ.s m-bꜥḥ.sn
iw.tw ḥr ir tiw im.sn

"They brought to him his wife,
and he contended with her before them,
and they made 'yes' among them…" regarding her punishment.[696]

While the contrast in treatment between male and female characters as presented in the texts have been outlined, gender is not the only vector of identity that needs to be considered. Intersectional analysis, as has been seen, reminds us to look for experiences and individuals who are excluded from the main text or discourse. In this genre of Egyptian literature we rarely see depictions of low status personae, and when we do they appear peripheral, minor characters whose only role is to carry out the instructions of their social superiors. With one exception, all of the main female personae in the narrative tales are positioned as of very high status. They are either divine (Isis, Hathor, Neith) or divinely created (Bata's wife), royal (the daughter of the Prince of Naharin) or coupled to a royal person (Bata's wife, and the daughter of the prince of Naharin after she marries the Egyptian prince), or apparently wealthy enough to live independently and have many servants (the Lady). Anubis' wife is portrayed as non-élite, as she has to perform domestic duties, but has enough leisure time to spend on her coiffure and appearance,[697] as well as to use as a bargaining tool, promising Bata that she will make him fine clothes as an incentive for his participation in sexual activity. It is very interesting that the only non-élite female character is the one whose punishment for wrongdoing is emphatically described in the text. This suggests that while a high social status was not protection from retribution or physical harm for women, it did impact on the textual presentation of the punishment being carried out. This is particularly apparent when comparing the description of

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[694] *TB,* 8,9.
[695] *TB,* 9,14-15.
[696] *TB,* 19,5-7.
[697] Potentially with a servant assisting her. *TB,* 3,1-2.

Anubis' wife's punishment with that of Bata's,[698] as well as the ambiguity surrounding Truth's son's condemnation of his mother. Perhaps reflective of his divine status, as well as Pre's support, Seth does not lose out entirely in the text of p.Chester Beatty I. Horus receives the office of Osiris, the rule of the Two Lands, but Seth is permitted to dwell with Pre, "thunder(ing) in the sky and be(ing) feared."[699] We can also assume that Neith's decision to "double Seth's possessions. Give him Anat and Astarte..." was enforced, as other texts mention these goddesses as being espoused to Seth.[700] Other sources do, however, allude to the punishment of Seth for the murder of Osiris and the attempted usurpation of Horus' birth right. For example, the Pyramid Texts contain a spell asserting that "Horus has laid hold of Seth and has set him under you [Osiris/the deceased] on your behalf so that he may lift you up and quake beneath you as the earth quakes, you being holier than he in your name of 'Sacred Land'...").[701] This considerably older text is far more explicit in portraying Seth as a defeated foe, in comparison to *Horus and Seth.*

Falsehood is shown to have lied when denouncing Truth, and receives a fitting punishment from the Ennead, being blinded and made the doorkeeper of his vindicated brother.[702] Nemty is also physically punished for ferrying Isis across to the Isle in the Midst, but just as Falsehood is not killed for his actions, neither is Nemty. Bata is ultimately victorious over the machinations of two devious, unprincipled women, but to a lesser extent he defeats two male characters as well. In a less dramatic sense, Bata triumphs over a misinformed and murderous, but later repentant, male character (Anubis), in addition to a misguided king who also acted to bring about his death. Although they have both acted against Bata, threatening or actually inflicting physical harm, neither Anubis nor pharaoh receive the condemnation that the devious women do. Anubis is given the chance to redeem himself by helping his brother, his only punishments being temporary, such as the sadness he feels as Bata goes into self-imposed exile, and the journey away from his home he has to undertake. The king's punishment may simply be the fact that the audience is aware that he falsely believes Bata-as-crown prince to be his biological child, and the narrative offers opportunities to these male characters to atone and make amends for past actions that is denied to the women. With the ending missing, it is more

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[698] Wente calls the ending of the story "tersely worded", and its brevity and abruptness stands in contrast with the rest of the text. Wente, 2003d, p.80.

[699] *HS,* 16,6.

[700] The Harris Magical Papyrus contains a reference to Seth opening the vulva of both Anat and Astarte. Robert K. Ritner, "A Uterine Amulet in the Oriental Institute Collection." *JNES* 43, 3, 1984, pp.209-221.

[701] Utterance 356. R. O. Faulkner (transl.), *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford, 1969.

[702] p.Chester Beatty II, 11, 2.

difficult to draw conclusions regarding the Prince's supposed triumph over his three fates. The snake has been killed in the surviving text, but both the crocodile and the dog remain a threat to the protagonist. In addition, the powerful water spirit could prove dangerous, and this text ultimately remains ambiguous in terms of who or what should be 'punished'.

Telling tales with lies and disguises

In addition to characterising a persona as either 'good' or 'bad' based on their actions and the motivation that informs the acts they perform, a character's speech can also indicate to the reader whether they fulfil the role of protagonist, antagonist, or helper. On a very basic level, we expect the antagonist to lie and utilise deceptive speech, while the protagonist is far more likely to speak truthfully. In this discussion, a lie is taken to be an utterance that is spoken in order to intentionally deceive one or more listeners, and is meant to be believed and uncontested, never being revealed as an untruth in order to benefit the speaker's agenda. Despite the portrayal of women as devious and untrustworthy, the wife of Anubis is the only female character that tells an outright lie. Not only does she pretend to have been beaten by Bata, she inverts the very words she said to him, telling her husband that it was Bata who propositioned her. In doing so, she puts her own words into Bata's mouth, claiming it was he who said "come, let us spend an hour together" and appropriates his indignant response, refusing the sexual advances on the grounds of familial loyalty:

> *is bn ink t3y.k mwt ẖr p3y.k sn ꜥ3 m-di.k m sẖr n it*
> "Is it not so that I am your mother? And your elder brother is as a father to you?"[703]

She attempts to authenticate this lie by vomiting, using fat and grease to give the appearance of physical trauma, and neglects to attend to her husband as she would usually do in order to convince him she has been assaulted and threatened:

> *iw.f ẖr gm t3y.f ḥmt sḏr.ti mr.ti n ꜥḏ3*
> ".. .and he found his wife lying down, being unwell/vomiting deceivingly..."[704]

In this way, she endeavours to corroborate her speech with physical evidence, a ploy that initially convinces Anubis of the veracity of her words. Having convinced him that she is the innocent party, she encourages her husband to take revenge and kill his younger brother, telling

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[703] *TB,* 5,3.
[704] *TB,* 4,8.

him that if Bata is not murdered, she will die herself.[705] This stems from her fear of being found to have attempted to commit adultery, despite Bata's assertion that he " '…will tell it to no one, nor will I let it escape from my mouth…'."[706] In this part of the tale, both Anubis's wife at Bata use the same words, but for very different purposes. She aims to hide and distort the truth of the character's encounter, while Bata, when pressured to do so, reveals the truth. Fleeing from Anubis' wrath, Bata appeals to Pre-Horakhti, the "judge between the wicked and the just,"[707] who obliges Bata by separating the brothers. Bata indignantly tells Anubis that the true account of the seduction had been "turned about for you into another thing" by the false testimony of Anubis' wife, and cuts off his penis in order to prove his purity.[708] Just as the wife of Anubis alters her physical appearance to try and give credence to her account of events, so too does Bata, emasculating himself as a testimony to his innocence, which ultimately convinces Anubis that his brother is the injured party.

Other female characters utilise deception and ambiguous words to achieve their goals. Isis disguises herself as an old woman in order to trick Nemty, the ferryman, into taking her cross to the Isle in the Midst. When Nemty refuses, saying he has been instructed not to ferry any women across, Isis replies "It was on account of Isis that this was said to you."[709] This is true, as it *was* to prevent Isis crossing that Nemty was given this directive; however, Isis does not actually deny her true identity. We are told that she acts,

> *iry.s ḫpr st m wꜥ n iꜣwt n rmṯ*
> "having transformed her image into that of an old woman…"[710]

and lets this deception, together with bribery, persuade Nemty to do as she wants, but she does not actually say "I am not Isis" at any point. Likewise, when Isis tricks Seth into condemning his desire to usurp Horus' birth right, she disguises herself again, and tells an allegorical story describing herself as "the wife of a herdsman (who) bore him a son."[711] This is a particularly apt, and one must admit, transparent metaphor, as humanity was often described as the cattle of Re, and Osiris, as king, would have been their herdsman and protector. Again, Isis' deception is based on trickery, both with transformed appearance and ambiguous words, but not on

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[705] *TB,* 5,4.
[706] *TB,* 4,1-2.
[707] *TB,* 6,5.
[708] *TB,* 7,6-7.
[709] *HS*, 5,12.
[710] *HS,* 5,6-7.
[711] *HS*, 6, 8-9.

outright lies. She uses her eroticised body to manipulate Seth, and appeals to his sexual desires in order to further her own goals. Seth, trying to impress the beautiful young woman, condemns himself by his own words, and even after complaining to his champion Re, is told "you yourself have judged yourself."[712]

Likewise, the Lady, mother of Truth's son, does not shy away from telling the youth who his father is when she is questioned. She has, to an extent, hidden the truth through her actions, as she keeps Truth as the doorkeeper to her house rather than treating him as a member of the family, something her son furiously rebukes her for. However, in the text she immediately answers her son's question about his parentage, making it clear who the youth's father is. The text gives no indication that Truth's son had asked his mother this question before. When Bata's wife wants the bull that Bata has transformed into killed, she simply tells pharaoh, "he is good for nothing," and although she does not tell the pharaoh why she wants the bull dead, nor does she make up a lie justifying her request.[713] The same is true for her desire to have the persea trees felled. Rather than justify her desires with words, she waits until pharaoh is "exceedingly happy with her,"[714] (presumably they have just had sex), and then makes her requests. Sweeney, after analysing requests made in *Horus and Seth*, concludes that while females could make requests in much the same manner as males did, they often utilised trickery, sexual persuasion or cajoling vocabulary to improve the chance of getting what they wanted.[715] It seems that when this did not work, they would have to defer to the men in their lives, as the Prince of Naharin's daughter does when she asks her husband to have his dog killed, or make extreme threats against her own life, as she does when her father refuses to let the Doomed Prince marry her.[716] This certainly supports Sweeney's assertion that "women had to work harder" than men to achieve their goals in this genre.[717]

However, deception is not the sole purview of women, and the wife of Anubis is not the only character to tell an outright lie. For example, Seth simply states "I did not find him" when asked if he has located Horus, even though he had not only found his opponent but blinded him as

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[712] *HS*, 7,14. Shafik Allam considers Seth's words to be particularly important in this episode, as the verbal admission of guilt or wrong-doing could legally be used against a litigant in a court case. See Shafik Allam, "Legal Aspects in the 'Contendings of Horus and Seth' ", *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths,* A. B. Lloyd (ed.), London, EES Occasional Publications 8, 1992, p.139.
[713] *TB*, 16,7-8.
[714] *TB*,16,5; 17,15.
[715] Sweeney, 2008, pp.212-213.
[716] *DP*, 7,8; 6,13; 6,15-16.
[717] Sweeney, 2008, p.203.

well.[718] Even the laudable hero may lie. The eponymous protagonist of *Doomed Prince* hides his position as the son of the king of Egypt, although it is not clear whether the evil stepmother he tells other characters is the cause of his flight is no more than an excuse, a lie to protect his identity. He specifically tells other personae in the tale that his father is an Egyptian charioteer, a fact we as audience know to be untrue, or at least deliberately oblique and misleading.[719] When a character tells a lie, their speech is introduced the same way as if they were telling a truth, *ḥr ḏd n.f*. When the texts uses a word such as *gereg*, such as in *Two Brothers* by Bata to describe the false testimony of Anubis' wife, and by the Ennead to show disbelief at the son of Truth's description of his ox, it can apply to the speech of male or female personae.[720] It can apply to a lie designed to hide the truth as well as a fantastic statement aimed to expose it, and can apply to the speech of a 'bad' woman as well as a 'bad' man. Falsehood, as his name implies, condemns his brother Truth with an outrageous lie, and Truth's son tells what appears at first glance to be an equally fabulous lie to restore his father's honour and condemned his uncle. However, it can be argued that the son of Truth does not really tell a lie based on the earlier definition of a lie as an attempt to intentionally deceive. Truth's son does not want the lie to be believed, not even for a second. He mimics the words of Falsehood in order to show just how implausible they are, and the vindication of his father depends on his statement being considered not just implausible, but impossible. However, the son of Truth does not make his true identity known until after he has made his case against Falsehood's deceitful speech, but just as Isis has done in *Horus and Seth*, he does not verbally deny his true identity either. Goedicke suggests that it is the "superior intellect compared with that of his contestant Seth" that allows Horus to achieve the office of kingship in this tale, as he is able, with the help of Isis in some instances, to trick Seth and outwit him by reversing Seth's own plots.[721] Goedicke claims that Horus "does not intentionally deceive Seth but proves his superior judgement," discrediting his uncle by making him look foolish.[722] Therefore, it is still possible to regard 'good' characters as not actually lying through false speech; instead they use trickery, ambiguous words, or disguises to bring about the desired 'good' outcome.

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[718] *HS,* 10,4.

[719] *DP,* 7,4. The king, as leader of the army, could conceivably be described as a charioteer or "chariot warrior" but even so, the Prince is presented as being deliberately evasive regarding his heritage, as well as his reason for leaving Egypt.

[720] And of course, the opponent of Truth is named *Gereg*, "Falsehood".

[721] Goedicke,1961, p.154. For example, Seth's suggestion that the two rivals build "stone boats" could be taken ambiguously, with Horus interpreting the contest as one to build a "transport vessel *for* stone" allowing him to win the contest by making a boat that can transport stone, as well as looking like stone. See also Oden, 1972, pp.356.

[722] Goedicke, 1961, p.154.

Female sexuality as problematic in the tales

As a modern Feminist reader of the texts, certain elements are problematic, and induce more ambiguous feelings towards different characters than would be felt, potentially, by a male receiver, especially a contemporaneous male audience member who lived in the culture that produced the tales. To give a personal example, I found myself empathising with Bata's wife to a degree even as I experienced a desire for Bata, as the story's hero, to succeed in his quest for vindication. While Bata is portrayed as the injured party in the text, both ethically and physically, it was hard not to sympathise with a young woman who was created by the deities for the express purpose of being given to a man, almost as if she were property or an inanimate object, and being committed to a partnership through the agency of others. After seeing Bata living alone, the Ennead:

> "…felt exceedingly sorry for him. Pre-Horakhti said to Khnum, 'Please fashion a woman for Bata, in order that he does not live alone.' Thereupon Khnum made for him a companion of the house who was more beautiful in her body than any other woman in the whole land…"[723]

Bata's wife does not have a choice in her initial situation, and since she did not decide to be Bata's partner, one cannot help but feel that if placed in the same position, the chance to escape from a relationship she had no agency in entering, we too would wish to move on to something more satisfactory. Her desire to leave Bata seems in part due to his inability to please her sexually, but she also faced restrictions to her freedom of movement, with Bata specifically telling her not to go outside of their dwelling.[724] She is lured away to Egypt with fine jewellery, and presumably more material possessions and a higher social status, which could make both the modern and ancient receiver regard her as shallow and selfish. Her subsequent manipulation of pharaoh and attempts to kill Bata prevent us, no doubt as well as the ancient audience, from wanting her to achieve her goals. However, while we might regard her punishment as reasonable retribution for her multiple attempts on Bata's life, we may still feel uncomfortable with the situation that led to her wanting to be rid of him. While we do not condone her methods, it is hard (for a modern reader, at least) to completely condemn her motivations. We may feel that the implied restrictions placed upon ancient Egyptian women that are reflected in her being 'given' to Bata are partly responsible for her actions, rather than her being the inherently wicked individual she is constructed as.

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[723] *TB*, 9,6-10.
[724] *TB*, 10,2.

The murder of Anubis' wife may also, in the context, seem acceptable punishment as her actions and distortion of the truth spurred on Anubis' attempt to kill his younger brother, which she actively encouraged, telling her husband "when he (Bata) returns, do not let him live."[725] Her fear at Anubis finding out about her attempted seduction of Bata leads on to a chain reaction of extreme situations, and again the modern reader does not exonerate her conduct, but could be uncomfortable with how her murder is dismissed as 'just' punishment. We may wish for her punishment because of her wish for incestuous sex and subsequent plot to kill Bata, despite the fact that he has promised not to tell anyone about the encounter. However, we do not regard this behaviour as representative of female erotic desire in general, and therefore do not view other female sexuality, such as that expressed in the love songs, with suspicion. The tales are extreme dramatizations and cannot be seen as reflecting an ordinary, day-to-day situation, but the underlying implication that an adulterous woman deserved a punishment more severe than the (intended) crime is worrying, at least when read in a modern, Western context. The tales might operate in a sphere removed from real life by their fantastical elements, yet the biases towards the female gender could plausibly reflect real modes of oppression that impacted on daily life during the New Kingdom.

Interestingly, Alan Dundes has proposed a possible alternative reading of the attempted adultery/incest described in *The Two Brothers*. Focusing on the 'Potiphars' Wife' motif of folktales, he questions the significance of Bata's self-emasculation, missing from the Biblical episode from which the theme takes its name.[726] Dundes states:

> "From a feminist perspective, it is surely significant if it is Bata who is "guilty" because it means that blaming [the] wife for what is essentially a male "crime" is yet another example of men cleverly casting women as the villain. The episode, read literally, without the benefit of an understanding of projective inversion, makes [the] wife just one more in an endless series of women depicted as evil, beguiling, seductive creatures, a classic case of blaming the victim."[727]

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[725] *TB*, 5,4.

[726] *Genesis* 39, where Potiphar's Wife attempts to seduce Joseph, then claims he propositioned her, resulting in his imprisonment until her lie was revealed.

[727] Dundes, 2002, p.388.

Dundes then goes on to consider how this relates to another psychoanalytic interpretation of the narrative, that of Philip Slater in 1968, who regards Bata as "an oedipal hero" in regards to the young man's guilty desires being projected onto Anubis' wife, the woman who was "as a mother" to him.[728] In regards to Bata's actions, Slater questions "why he feels called upon to castrate himself and go into exile if he is not in fact guilty," suggesting that Bata's self-mutilation is atonement for his lust, rather than refutation of Anubis' wife's desires.[729] It must be recognised that there is evidence for the Egyptians believing that Seth was not entirely unprovoked, or driven solely by jealousy regarding his brother's position as king, in his murder of Osiris.[730] This relates primarily to the sexual encounter between Seth's sister-wife Nephthys and Osiris, resulting in the birth of Anubis, and suggests that Osiris was not always conceived of as the innocent, injured party.[731] However, the guilt of the wife, as opposed to Bata's, is further strengthened by her dishonest behaviour and devious self interest, as shown by her willingness to deceive her husband by pretending to have been physically assaulted. Hollis, writing before Dundes' analysis, claimed that "Bata's emasculation probably expressed the physical affirmation of his innocence" reflecting the generally accepted view that Anubis' wife was indeed the guilty party.[732] Dundes responds that he "hopes the reader can see the fallacy of this argument. Self-emasculation surely reflects guilt, not innocence!"[733] He is not the only scholar to have taken this viewpoint.

Previously, the Folklorist Otto Rank claimed:

> "Bata strives from the beginning to seduce the 'mother', whom he, in the second part ever pursues in symbolic disguise, which plainly betrays that the slander by her at the beginning of the narrative is to be considered only as a projection of his incestuous wish."[734]

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[728] Philip Slater, *The Glory of Hera: Greek Mythology and the Greek Family*, Boston, 1968; See Dundes, 2002, p.390, for his discussion.

[729] Slater, 1968, p.279.

[730] Alexandra von Lieven, "Antisocial Gods: On the Transgression of Norms in Egyptian Mythology", *Lotus and Laurel, Studies on Literature and Religion in Honour of Paul John Frandsen,* R. Nyord and K. Ryholt (eds.), Copenhagen, 2015, p.182; Alexandra von Lieven, "Seth ist im Recht, Osiris ist im Unrecht! Sethkultorte und ihre Version des Osiris-Mythos", *ZÄS* 133, 2006, pp.141-150.

[731] Von Lieven, 2015, p.182.

[732] Hollis, 1990, p.104.

[733] Dundes, 2002, p.388.

[734] Otto Rank, "The Investigation of Myths and Legends", 1964, p.60, quoted in Dundes, 2002, p.389.

This posits Bata as a typical Rankian myth-hero, in which the content of the fabula reflects "a disguised, unconscious, and merely fantasized venting of impulses that cannot be vented directly,"[735] in this case, the hero's unacceptable sexual desire for a mother-figure.[736] However, as Hollis has emphasised in her response to Dundes, it is important to examine the composition as a whole as well as to analyse certain elements in the story. The modern scholar must not, Hollis states, "neglect… to situate this part of the narrative into the larger context of the tale."[737] She then goes on to say that:

> "…scholars must not lose sight either of the whole narrative or of the narrative's context by focusing on one idea - in this case sexual projections or "projective inversions"…whether Bata wanted to seduce his sister-in-law or whether she wanted to seduce him makes *no ultimate difference* in this particular tale because the same result ensued: the domestic tranquillity was shattered and Bata started on his way to ultimate kingship."[738]

Although I do not regard Dundes' conclusions as irrefutable by any means, for this particular study it *does* make a difference as to who wanted the potential sexual encounter between Bata and Anubis' wife, *contra* Hollis in the above quote. This is because Dundes' reading does, to an extent, remove the blame from the wife of Anubis for the events in the first part of the tale, or at least make her share culpability with Bata, and in doing so raises even more worrying questions for a modern, Feminist reader: Why is it that, if the tale does contain projective inversion, Bata's inappropriate lust and desires leads to the murder of Anubis' wife, while Bata himself is redeemed and re-integrated after his stay in the Valley of the Pine, and ultimately rewarded with the rulership of Egypt? Was the socio-cultural milieu that created the story really so misogynistic that it condoned the punishment of an innocent woman as a result of male transgressive behaviour, and how does this behaviour reconcile with Bata's presentation as honourable protagonist?[739] The 'misogyny' present may be a result of the Western, Victorian

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[735] Segal, 1999, pp.133-134, in which he discusses Rank's assertion that the function of hero-myths is to "fulfil a blocked need" and give voice to personal neuroses.

[736] Perhaps alluded to through the inclusion of her performing an eroticised activity, that of creating an elaborate and presumably sexually-alluring hairstyle.

[737] Hollis, 2003, p.213.

[738] *ibid.,* pp.215-16. My emphasis.

[739] Following on from this, I wondered, if we support Dundes' reading of *The Two Brothers,* whether Anubis should be categorised as the real 'hero' of the composition, as not only does he forgive his brother for the transgression, travelling to the Valley of the Pine after the souring of his beverages indicates Bata's 'death',

era reading of the text that produces anachronistic value judgements that do not accurately reflect the ancient's understanding of their compositions.[740] Perhaps Bata had made a minor transgression, an inappropriate if largely innocent mistake, when he interrupted Anubis' wife while she was dressing her hair, an activity that could have been charged with sexual overtones or may have been considered a personal, private moment for the woman concerned.[741] If this were the case, Bata's temporary exile and removal of his penis would not need to be as severe a punishment as Anubis' wife experiences as a result of her intended transgression, the attempt to seduce her husband's younger brother. We, as modern receivers of the text, may simply be missing an important contextual marker that would have been so obvious to the original audience that it did not need to be elucidated in the narrative itself, and as such we take the events as manifest, 'literal' occurrences, rather than latent, 'unconscious' experiences.[742] Even if we do consider the self-emasculation of Bata as convincing in supporting Dundes' assessment of the text, it must also be recognised that other factors lead to ambiguity and the potential for multiple interpretations. These factors include Pre's creation of the waterway to separate and protect Bata from Anubis' wrath, the clearly described punishment of Anubis' wife, and the parallel construction of her as 'bad' or morally corrupt by her 'replacement' in the second part of the story (Bata's divinely-created wife).

For the readers of today, an alternative reaction to the portrayal of the Lady in *Truth and Falsehood* can also be given. It is hard not to want to admire her for being an independent woman, with her own agency, although we must recognise that her ability to act comes from her status and presumably her independent wealth. She is also seemingly unapologetic about her sexual desires, as she does not try and make excuses for the fact that she conceived a child by Truth, as we might expect from other tales containing elements of *märchen*. Although she

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assisting his brother to be reborn and vindicated against the divinely-created wife. The very last thing we read in the narrative is that Anubis becomes king after Bata's death, and perhaps this final reward is meant to reflect Anubis' status as the most morally sound character. The tale focuses more on Bata's characterisation that Anubis', which clouds the issue somewhat; however, this would certainly be an interesting topic for future research but is outside the scope of this thesis, as it would concentrate too much on the male characters as opposed to the female.

[740] Both Dundes and Hollis note that Stith Thompson chose not to include Bata's self-emasculation in his 1946 summary of the tale, for example, reflecting Thompson's personal "prudishness", according to Dundes. Hollis, 1990, p.187; Dundes, 2002, p.380.

[741] I would like to thank Deborah Sweeney for this idea. Sweeney suggested that Bata, upon entering the private dwelling of his brother and his brother's wife and finding her engaged in her hairdressing, perhaps should have excused himself and immediately left, as he had made an impolite, if unwitting, intrusion. The idea that Bata had entered an area usually off-limits to him can be supported by the fact that he sleeps in the stables (*TB* 1, 8) rather than sharing the couple's house, and in addition, he therefore might not know what room to fetch the seed for planting from and has to tell Anubis' wife to "give me the seed" (*TB* 2,12).

[742] Dundes, 2002, p.383.

kept the identity of her son's father hidden from him, she does not seek to have Truth murdered, removed or banished in order to protect her reputation from future enquiries. This stands in contrast to Falsehood who, after blinding his brother and forcing him to act as doorkeeper in order to humiliate him, then charges some servants to have Truth killed by throwing him to lions.[743] Nor does the Lady attempt to get rid of her child, although it must be obvious to her staff who the father is: they were charged with bringing Truth to her after all, and when they have done so "she became pregnant that very night."[744] Intersectional theory reminds us to consider how social status as well as gender roles might have affected their characterisation. The Lady does seem to hold some power over Truth, and uses her higher social status to keep him as door-person to her house.[745] She is presented as using him a sex object, gaining her pleasure from a male body she is attracted to for erotic gratification while not wishing to secure this connection through marriage or the setting up of a home together.[746] Truth's now lowly status may prevent her from formalising their relationship or openly acknowledging him as her child's father, but she does not treat him in the same way as Anubis and Bata's wives do Bata. Presumably, he did not reject her sexual advances as he fathers a child, although he may have been compelled to do as she wanted due to her being of higher status than him. This is the reverse of some of the love songs in which the male voice wished to become a servant or lower status individual in order to serve their beloved, as he specifically expresses desire for the higher status woman in a way that Truth does not. In addition, one of these compositions actually outlines the male's desire to become the woman's porter and guard her doorway, the very scenario that Truth is relegated to, suggesting that there was a degree of sexual arousal to gain from this kind of uneven power situation, at least according to the voice of p.Harris 500, I, 8.[747]

The son of Truth tells his mother that her kin "should be gathered, and a crocodile summoned" when he finds out who his father is, implying that he believes she should be killed by the animal as retribution for her neglect of Truth.[748] We are told that the youths' companions tease him for not having a father:

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[743] *TF,* 2,3-4; 2,8-9.
[744] *TF,* 4,5.
[745] *TF,* 5,8-9.
[746] *TF,* 4,4.
[747] ꜥwy.s wn... ḫl di.tw(.i) r iry-ꜥꜣ iry.s ḫdnḫdn r.i "Her door is open... I wish that I was made a porter, so that she could reprimand me."
[748] *TF,* 6,2-3.

> *wn.in n3y.f iryw ḥr ḏd n.f mntk šri niim mn m-di.k it*
> "His companions said to him, "Whose child are you? You do not have a father!"[749]

which indicates that the Lady is not, and presumably never was, married, and has not tried to pass off Truth's son as the child of an 'official' partner, and so does not act dishonestly towards an established lover. We are unsure whether Truth's son condemns her for placing his father as a doorkeeper and not giving him a respectable social standing, or if his disapproval stems from the fact that her attachment to the male was predicated simply by her libido. This makes female eroticism that does not operate within the boundaries of a recognised relationship problematic and frowned upon. The text is also highly patriarchal, in suggesting that a child without a father was worthy of mockery, and the mother alone is insufficient for the child to be accorded respect, at least in this scenario. In contrast to this, it must be remembered that according to mythology, Osiris was unable to act as a father to Horus, separated as he was by his existence in the afterlife. It was down to the positive activities of female goddesses, keeping Horus safe from Seth in the marshes as he matured, that allowed for the vindication of the divine father. The text does not mention the Lady again after her son's condemnation of her, and we are left wondering whether she did indeed face punishment as dictated by a male character. The fact that Truth's son, when telling the Ennead how to punish Falsehood, has his words acted upon and followed, may indicate that we are meant to believe that his condemnation of his mother was enforced, and just like Bata and Anubis' wives, she was killed for what was perceived as a sexual transgression. Truth's son's threat reflects the fate of Ubainer's wife in p.Westcar wherein she is burnt to ashes as punishment for adultery, and so relates back to an earlier text that again positions the female as devious and untrustworthy when sexually aroused. It is actually the adulterous male who is specifically devoured by a crocodile in this composition, however. The Lady could have compelled Truth to take part in a sexual encounter due to her elevated social status, but the end result of this, the begetting of a son and heir, and an eventual avenger, is testimony to male pleasure. In order for the Lady to conceive, Truth must have reached orgasm during coitus, as indicated by the ejaculating penis determinative being used. Similarly, Isis also uses her sexuality and desirability while on the Isle in the Midst to deceive Seth in *Horus and Seth*, although this deception is done to assist her son Horus in achieving his rightful position as king, and she does not actually have intercourse with Seth, and so does not receive Horus's censure of her act. Yet again, female

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[749] *TF,* 5,3.

eroticism is hijacked in the pursuit of male-driven goals, and so can only be regarded as positive in the narrative tales when it benefits someone of the opposite sex.

This stands in notable contrast to the love songs, in which a female voice sometimes take initiative in order to achieve their desires, and their seduction of the male does not receive criticism. While female sexuality may be used in this genre to give the male pleasure as well, the love songs do not depict the sexualised female body as sinister or shameful, and in texts such as o.DM 1266, A, 3, the female is not portrayed as wicked or deviant when she uses her physical attractiveness to please herself as well as her male lover. Her statement in this song that *ib.i r hꜣyt r wꜥb m-bꜣḥ.k di.i* [*ptr*].*k nfrw.i* "My heart desires to go and bathe in your presence, so that I cause you to see my beauty" receives no negative criticism, no implication that she is sexually deviant like the Lady or Anubis' wife. Of course, the love songs do not speak of adulterous liaisons, no husband to be duped or disrespected, and so the construction of the lovers allows for a more positive portrayal of the female personae. Because the love songs also exclude sinister taboos such as a "mother-figure" lusting after their "son", we see a different conception of acceptable female sexual behaviour in this genre, with the women being portrayed as having a degree of freedom to act on their impulses that is missing from the narrative tales. Anubis and Bata's wives, as well as the Lady in *Truth and Falsehood,* must express their sexuality and desire in relation to 'correct' behaviour regarding the men in their lives. Therefore, the sexuality of women, as expressed by these texts, is perceived of as dangerous and unpredictable, an agent of discord, and potentially very damaging to *ma'at*. The Lady seems to act little differently to the female voices in the love songs, yet faces condemnation for her actions. This may be due to the fact that the tale covers a longer span of time and she has of course conceived a son, yet it is striking just how much in opposition to the love songs personae her desires are presented. Even when rejected by their lover, the male 'speaker' does not result to threats against the female body or personal character that we see Truth's son giving voice to, or using insults such as Bata's description of Anubis' wife as a "filthy whore", or "sexually-aroused slut" in Wente's translation,[750] again giving a more respectful portrayal of the women in the love songs genre than the narrative tales.[751]

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[750] Wente, 2003d, p.84

[751] It is not just women who are insulted in this genre of literature, however. For example, in *HS* 12, 3-5, we are told *wn.in tꜣ psḏt ꜥš sgb ꜥꜣ wn.i<n>.sn ḥr bš pgs r ḥr n ḥr* "Then the Ennead let out a great shout, then they spat in the face of Horus", and in this composition Pre is also told that he has no worshippers (3,10) while Horus apparently has bad breath (3,8). Sweeney notes that it is not just men who insult other characters, but admits that Isis' taunting of Seth is "much milder" than the male-voiced insults. Sweeney, 2002b, p.148.

In the course of *Horus and Seth,* Hathor exposes her genitalia to Re in her attempt to cheer him up. This "seemingly gratuitous interlude"[752] in the narrative is surprising to the modern reader in that Re is Hathor's father, yet for the ancient Egyptians this was not problematic, as she was also his consort and the exposure would not have been 'incestuous' and condemned in the way that Anubis' wife's attempted seduction of Bata was. The text tells us that after being insulted, Pre

> "…spent a day lying on his back while in his pavilion, exceedingly saddened, and alone by himself. After a time had passed, Hathor, the Lady of the Southern Sycamore, came and stood before her father…and she exposed her private parts before his eyes. Thereupon the Great God laughed…"[753]

The act of a female exposing her genitalia, *anasyrmenê,* has been examined by Emily Morris in relation to mythological texts from other cultures in addition to ancient Egypt, and she suggests that Hathor's 'display' could have been appropriate to the situation for two reasons. First, by exposing herself, Pre may have been reminded of his "potency in realms both sexual and political", allowing him to recover from his lethargy and ignore the insult thrown at him. Second, in a text that demonstrates a degree of irreverence towards the deities, it is possible that this episode is meant to be taken as a joke aimed at Pre, in which Hathor treats him as a virile young man when the text has portrayed him as anything but.[754] Morris then considers how Hathor's exposure can be seen as eliciting surprise from the audience, causing shocked laughter at her expense as well, as she does not act how a distinguished goddess should, "playing the clown" for the audience's perhaps unexpected amusement.[755] While all audience members, regardless of gender and sexual preference, might find Hathor's actions amusing, any sexual arousal the image may evoke seems specifically directed towards the male heteronormative gaze, reflective of Pre's, as he is the beneficiary and designated viewer of the action. In this manner, a goddess as powerful as Hathor still has to act according to male erotic desire to an extent.

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[752] Emily F. Morris, "Sacred and Obscene Laughter in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth,* in Egyptian Inversions of Everyday Life, and in the Context of Cultic Competition", *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of His Retirement*, T. Schneider and K. Szpakowska (eds.), Münster, 2007, p.198.
[753] *HS,* 4,2-3.
[754] Morris, 2007, p.201.
[755] *ibid.,* p.203.

This case study approaches the texts from a multi-disciplinary and Feminist point of view, asking if the modern scholar is able to find multiple readings in pieces of literature that appears to emphasise a dominant male heteronormative prerogative. In undertaking this investigation, Barbara F. McManus' 1997 study regarding transgendered moments in Virgil's *Aeneid* has been an invaluable starting point and inspiration.[756] Characterisation, action, and reaction will be examined in order to outline how some of the characters in this literary genre occupy a liminal, transgendered sphere at certain points in the narrative, while others do not break away from their stereotypical and expected construction. In texts where our main characters often, if not always, appear split along a simple binary dichotomy of male=good/female=bad, is it possible to see any positive characterisation of the feminine? And how are we to respond when the male hero announces "I am a woman like you" to his wife half way through *The Two Brothers*, indicating the possibility of gender reversal, or at least confusion, that seems at odds with the purpose of the story? [757]

Utilising McManus' methodology and adapting it for the ancient Egyptian milieu allows, I will argue, for the identification of transgendered instances and a degree of gender fluidity in texts that at first glance appear simple and one-dimensional in their characterisation. Ambiguities and tensions within the narratives can be explored and re-evaluated, while still recognising the specific cultural understandings and expectations that permeate the texts. The Egyptian narrative tales are separated by genre as well as by time and culture from the *Aeneid,* the Roman epic McManus uses for her analysis of transgendered moments within Classical literature. However, despite their differences, the texts do share some similarities. These include focusing on a male protagonist and his journey to achieve the social position he deserves, involving the deities' impact on the characters' lives as well as the human interactions they encounter, and, on a basic level, presenting masculine character traits as largely identified with, and embodying, positive cultural values, while the feminine is repeatedly associated with their negative counterparts. McManus concisely states that her interpretation is not intended to "supplant or contradict other readings" of the *Aeneid*; rather, she wishes to present a "changed angle of vision" that "enrich[es] our perceptions of a text that many regard as highly patriarchal,

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[756] Barbara F. McManus, *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics,* New York, 1997, pp.91-118.
[757] *TB,* 10-2.

if not misogynistic."[758] Instead, her analysis of Virgil's epic utilises Feminist theory in order to demonstrate how her own reading of a text "closely associated with normative masculine cultural values," both ancient and modern, has been "transformed and enriched" by taking a multidisciplinary approach.[759] She follows this by challenging the established perception that the characters in the *Aeneid* do not, in the course of the epic, enter a liminal space in which gender has a certain fluidity, a performativity that can be subverted or challenged, especially in regard to male characters occupying a "feminized" space. McManus then goes on to question why modern women are expected to read the text from an "immasculated" perspective, or simply identify, as a female reader, with Dido as a female character.[760] To refute this, she gives an example of a female journalist and former student who identifies with Aeneas "*as a woman*", regardless of whether she is performing roles deemed by society as gender-appropriate or gender-transgressive.[761]

McManus makes use of the terminology presented in Duerst-Lahti and Kelly's 1995 edited *Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance* to explain how certain behaviours or traits can be regarded either as "transgendered moments" or as "sex-role crossovers."[762] The two, she emphasises, are very different, although both rely on assumptions of a fixed binary dichotomy between biologically 'male' and biologically 'female' individuals, and the acceptance or disapproval of performance is impacted by the prescription of gendered behaviour.[763] This is reflected in the Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida, among others, in that expressing concepts in terms of binary opposition carries the implication that one is positive, and one is negative, for many cultures. Derrida explains that due to this binary opposition,

> "…we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a vis-a-vis, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other… The first task of

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[758] McManus, 1997, p.93.

[759] *ibid.*, pp.91-92.

[760] *ibid.*, pp.92-94.

[761] *ibid.*, p.94

[762] See Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly, "Introduction", *Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance*, G. Duerst-Lahti and R. M. Kelly (eds.), Ann Arbor, 1995a, pp.1-7; Georgia Duerst-Lahti, and Rita Mae Kelly, "On Governance, Leadership, and Gender", *Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance,* G. Duerst-Lahti and R. M. Kelly (eds.), Ann Arbor, 1995a, pp.11-37.

[763] McManus, 1997, p.95; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995b, pp.28-29; p.33.

deconstruction would be to find and overturn these oppositions inside a text or a corpus of texts."[764]

By erasing, overturning, or blurring the boundaries between binary oppositions, deconstructionists aim to call into question the hierarchy implied by this Othering, and McManus' use of transgendered moments allows for further exploration of instances in which the binary is challenged or shown to be in some ways insufficient.

Duerst-Lahti and Kelly explain that transgendered moments "occur when we no longer believe a trait or behaviour to be appropriate only for women or for men, yet we recognize that gender still matters" in how we perceive the performance of the moment.[765] This works in opposition to sex-role crossovers, in which an individual acts in a way that is *only* appropriate for the opposite sex, and so completely transgresses entrenched social functions.[766] A transgendered moment is therefore one in which an individual's actions or behaviours may be evaluated differently in regards to their gender, but they are not attempting to take on the "opposite" sex through "losing" or refuting their own as they would for a sex-role crossover. To illustrate this, Duerst-Lahti and Kelly use the example of an individual remaining at home to care for children rather than re-entering the workforce. The biological sex of the individual does not dictate whether they *can* do this or not, but it does have an impact on how their choice is perceived: a person considered biologically male is not "becoming" a woman if they are a homemaker, but their gender will not be understood in the same way as a biologically female person performing the same behavioural trait.[767] This allows speech and action to be evaluated differently depending on who is performing a specific action or role. The performer, when entering a transgendered moment, is not really seeking to become a different sex, but making use of a liminal sphere that allows for greater fluidity and a blurring of the gender differential without completely removing it. McManus recognises that "[A]lthough contemporary societies offer some transgendered possibilities, it is much harder to find anything comparable in ancient civilizations."[768] This is largely because the ideology of the society emphasised a strict male/female divide in terms of behavioural traits to preclude sex-role crossovers that was seen

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[764] Jacques Derrida, "Interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta", *Positions*, Alan Bass (transl.), Chicago, 1981, p.41.
[765] Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995a, p.6.
[766] *ibid.*
[767] Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995b, p.28.
[768] McManus, 1997, p.95

as threatening and sinister.[769] However, actual human behaviour does not, and did not, always conform to the dominant ideology of the society, and "tensions and ambiguities" that are present within a text can be explored by considering them in light of the transgendered.[770] Now, I turn to the portrayal of Bata in *The Two Brothers,* and consider his presentation throughout the text while paying particular attention to his characterisation while in the Valley of the Pine, after the removal of his phallus, and before his transformations and journey to back to Egypt.

An ancient 'Orlando'? Bata as ḥmt "woman"

First published in 1928, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* details the extended life and experiences of the title character, who changes biological sex from male to female half-way through the course of the novel.[771] Orlando is still the same 'person', exhibiting the same character traits and behaviour throughout, and switches gender-roles along with zir[772] gendered clothing. Woolf seems to suggest that gender roles are therefore imposed largely by society, rather than by biological sex, and Orlando occupies a liminal position in that zir perceived identity and responses to zir characterisation are fluid, changeable and not entirely defined by the physical body. In this manner, Orlando is 'transgendered' despite zir sex-change, as the physical body does not define the roles zie takes on, but impacts on both other characters in the novel's, and the reader's, assessment of zir behaviour, speech and activities. In a similar way, Bata can be perceived of as transgendered, as he does not fully lose his masculine identity while "as a woman" or forget his past life and personality. He simply lives without his heart, as well as without his penis. However, his physical change of state allows for his behaviour to be regarded as more feminised and problematic until he is able, with the help of his brother Anubis, to restore his body to its initial state through a series of transformations, thus also restoring *mꜣꜥt,* and enabling the successful culmination of the narrative.

Initially, Bata is described in overtly masculine terms, stressing his strength and exemplary character. The narrative tells the receiver that he is especially favoured amongst the deities,

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[769] *ibid.*

[770] *ibid.*, p.96.

[771] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography,* London, 2016.

[772] Woolf does not use gender-neutral pronouns when describing Orlando, but I feel it is necessary to do so here, when talking about the character in general, both before and after the physical sex change.

firmly cementing his position as hero and protagonist of the story, the character to whom we should wish success in his endeavours. We are told that he was:

m ꜥḥ ꜣwty nfr nn wn ḳdw.f m tꜣ ḏr.f is wn pḥty n nṯr im.f

"an excellent young man. There was none like him in the whole land, because the strength of a god was in him,"[773]

yet he was also humble and respectful, caring for his cattle,[774] sleeping in the stable with them,[775] and working hard to provide sustenance for his brother and brother's wife.[776] After fetching a large quantity of seed from the property, a 'masculine' task which he apparently managed with ease, the wife of Anubis told Bata "…'there is great strength in you. I see your vigour daily,' and she desired to know him in his capacity as a man."[777] After her advances were rejected, she tells her husband that it was in fact Bata who attempted to seduce her, which leads to Anubis' unsuccessful attempt on his brother's life. Bata hotly refutes this version of events, telling Anubis:

ir pꜣ pꜣy.k <iit> r ḫdb.k m grg iw.k ẖry pꜣy.k nwy ẖry-st-rꜣ n kꜣt tꜣ ḥwt
iw.f ḥr in wꜥ n sfnd gši iw.f ḥr šꜥd ḥnn.f
iw.f ḥr ḫꜣꜥ.f r pꜣ mw iw.f pꜣ nꜥr ḥr ꜥmꜣ<.f> iw.f ḥr gnn
iw.f ḥr ḫpr ẖsy sw iw pꜣy.k sn ꜥꜣ ḥr šnw ḫꜣt.f r ikr sp sn

" 'As for your coming to kill me unjustly, you took up your spear on account of the speech of a filthy whore,'
then he took a knife of reed, and he cut off his phallus,
and he threw it into the water, and the catfish swallowed it, then he became feeble, and he became as one who is weak, and his elder brother became greatly sick of heart."[778]

Once living in the Valley of the Pine, Bata tells his wife "do not go outside, lest the sea carry you off, as I will not be able to rescue you from it *because I am a woman like you.*"[779]

Orlando's body physically changes, yet even with a female body, zie is able to remember the experiences and lessons learned from being male, and is able to be a complete individual who operates within a trans- or multi-gendered state. Bata, on the other hand, is portrayed "as a woman" due to the incompleteness of his male body. This lack positions him as transgendered,

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[773] *TB,* 1,4.
[774] *TB,* 1,5 and 1,12-2,2.
[775] *TB,* 1,9-1,10.
[776] *TB,* 1,3; 1,5-1,9.
[777] *TB,* 3,6-3,7.
[778] *TB,* 7,8-8,1.
[779] *TB,* 10,2.

because we see him as undertaking gendered activities that are at odds with the traditional role associated with overall masculine physicality, primarily being able to copulate with a partner. Bata declares himself essentially female after he has cut off his penis to prove his virtue to Anubis, an act which leads to marginalisation both in terms of his physical condition and his location outside of Egypt, and is potentially intended to further emphasise his limbo or transitional state while he is in the Valley, as well as presage his subsequent transformations. After Anubis has restored his brother's heart to its original position in Bata's body, by having him drink the cool water in the bowl containing it, Bata "became as he used to be."[780] It is startling that the only good, positively portrayed 'woman' in the whole of this narrative is not actually female, both in terms of biological sex and overall gendered activities, but is a male character who simply, and temporarily, does not have a phallus.

Bata is not described by the text as having more womanly traits, such as paying attention to his hairstyle, using sex to achieve a goals, or coveting luxury goods as both his and Anubis' wives do, and his language usage does not seem to reflect a 'change' of sex. The scribe does not use female pronouns for Bata during this portion of the text, and the orthography of his name remains the same. He does not give voice to emotional outbursts while "a woman", such as is found in the words of the princess of Naharin or Anubis' wife. In fact, his only impassioned words occur *before* he severs his penis when he denounces Anubis' wife. In addition, his 'feelings' and emotive responses are described by the narrative voice, not put in the mouth of the character himself through the inclusion of first-person dialogue. For example, in respects to his divinely-created wife, we are told that Bata "...desired her very much" by the narrative voice, rather than have Bata 'speak' the words himself or verbally express his desires. Thus, Bata's temporary characterisation as being a woman essentially stems from his inability to give pleasure to his wife through penetrative sex or to create new life through ejaculation. His activities are not all 'female gendered,' as he hunts wild animals, and despite his earlier description as being "week and feeble" he still has the strength to kill the majority of pharaoh's soldiers when they infiltrate the Valley of the Pine.[781] He also warns his wife that if anyone else finds his heart in its place on the blossom of the tree, "I will fight him."[782] This has lead me to wonder whether the sea acts as a metaphorical counterweight for Bata's emasculated state, and might explain why he tells his wife "I cannot protect you." The water itself, which

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[780]*TB,* 14,2-3.
[781] Also discussed Hollis, 2003, p.215.
[782] *TB*, 10,3.

catches the hair of his wife, may be representative of semen, which Bata cannot produce, and so is able to 'capture' the female in a way Bata himself, being "as a woman" at this point in the fabula, cannot. This is further supported by the narrative's description of Bata previously placing his heart on the blossom of a tree in the Valley, because this removes his ability to impregnate her, even if he had been physically able to copulate with her, as the heart was believed to produce semen by the ancient Egyptians.[783]

Bata's lack of a penis, and inability to challenge a sexual rival, may be part of his incapacity to make his wife obey his instructions, and therefore leads to her betrayal and choice of another, sexually active, male as his replacement. Of course, we can also see the wife of Bata as status driven; she leaves the Valley of the Pine in order to cohabitate with pharaoh, who can provide her with more material wealth and social status than Bata can. Her greed for luxury products seems linked with her presumed desire for a sexually fulfilling relationship. Basically, she takes, as opposed to gives. The fact that Bata cannot control his wife may also add to his assertion that he, too, "is a woman", and cannot exert the degree of power, both emotional and physical, over his spouse that he could if his body were complete, nor can he fulfil the 'masculine' role of active, dominant sexual partner. It is not until he is fully reborn, after a series of transformations, that he can make his wife (and mother, as she becomes after swallowing the persea tree wood) face her punishment and exert his masculine authority. In the Ptolemaic p.Jumilhac, Seth, often in the form of a bull, repeatedly loses power when he is castrated and has his phallus cut from his body,[784] and it is telling that Osiris requires Isis to create a replacement penis for his dead body in order to defeat the finality of death and be vindicated through the begetting of a son and heir. The ability to inseminate a female 'vessel' seems to indicate power and vitality, and Bata, after severing his phallus, was not only "weak" but also essentially feminised, as one who cannot penetrate or impregnate a woman.

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[783] Hollis, 1990, p.215.
[784] Hollis, 1984, pp.253-6.

Other personae taking on transgendered characteristics[785]

In *Horus and Seth* the goddess Neith is portrayed as judge and arbitrator alongside Pre, which are typically masculine attributes usually awarded to a high-status male individual, giving them a position of power and authority. McManus explores a similar transgendered construction of a female, in her analysis of Dido as possessing authority that relies on 'masculine' codes of power and judgement.[786] Just as Dido occupies a transgendered sphere in relation to her wielding of power, she is never presented as anything other than female, and similarly Neith remains a *goddess*, a female divinity who nevertheless has the authority to command. After Banebdjed suggests that a letter should be written to her, seeking her advice in order to settle the conflict between Horus and Seth, the Ennead agree.

Neith responds as follows:

> "Then Neith the Great, the God's mother, sent a letter to the Ennead, in saying- 'Award the office of Osiris to his son, Horus. Do not commit obvious acts of injustice which are improper, or else I shall become exceedingly furious so that the sky touches the earth'… And so the letter of Neith the Great, the God's mother, reached the Ennead…and they declared as one- 'the goddess is correct.' "[787]

Neith possesses the 'masculine' ability of telling others what to do, giving voice to threats if the instructions are not obeyed, and making decisions that are accorded a degree of respect. Her reply does not include the 'niceties' of greetings and titularies that were incorporated into the letter sent to her, and the grammatical forms she uses are "not overtly marked for politeness"[788], suggesting she was powerful enough to make her opinion clear without couching it in language reflecting other god's prestige. This is of course tempered by the fact that her instructions are not obeyed straight away,[789] but the promise of Banebdjed that " '…as for what she will say, we will do it' " is kept, as Neith's instructions are the same as the conclusion of the tale.[790] Neith is described as having the ability to make the sky crash to the ground in her fury,[791] and it could be suggested that her warlike purview also gives her a degree

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[785] Interestingly, although Isis takes on masculine roles and characteristics in later texts, in *Horus and Seth* her actions and activities are firmly defined by her feminine role of wife, mother, and sister. See Depauw, 2003, p.54, for Isis acting 'as a man.'

[786] McManus, 1997, pp.100-101.

[787] *HS,* 3,2-6.

[788] Sweeney, 2002b, p.150.

[789] However, Osiris had to send two letters to the Ennead before his instructions are enforced, showing it was not just Neith whose advice was sought after but not immediately obeyed, and Pre actually insults Osiris (*HS,* 15,2-3) before the god of the afterlife makes explicit threats in his second correspondence.

[790] *HS,* 5,6.

[791] *HS*, 3,4.

of authority based on martial strength that may not be accorded to a fully 'feminised' deity such as Isis. Later texts from the Temple of Esna even refer to Neith's masculinity dominating her personal characteristics at the expense of her feminine nature, yet this is again an example of a woman, albeit a divine one, occupying a transgendered position due to her warlike purview, rather than seeking a sex-role crossover.[792] Indeed, Sweeney suggests that Isis' participation in court in this composition was "probably considered slightly anomalous" in itself, and perhaps was only permitted because Osiris could not speak on behalf of Horus and so the responsibility fell to Isis as the widowed mother.[793] Despite Neith's warlike aspects, she does not actively participate in the judicial process in the way Isis does, pronouncing her judgement by letter. She is also referred to as "the God's mother" five times, emphasising her female anthropomorphised body and demonstrating that 'female' activities were not always incompatible with 'masculine' behavioural traits, at least in the divine realm.

Conversely, Anubis seems to perform feminised funerary duties on behalf of his younger brother, taking on the role of Isis to an extent.[794] Of course, the female characters in this story could not do this, their devious and untrustworthy personality preventing their association with the loyal and supportive goddess. Bata-as-Osiris required assistance after the tree on which his heart was balanced is cut down, and Anubis, having received the agreed upon sign that his brother needed help, is compelled to travel outside of Egypt. Isis also had to do this in order to recover Osiris' body after Seth's machinations, and Anubis' activities in restoring Bata's heart and reviving his body parallels this episode of Osirian mythology. Even before this part of the tale, Anubis seems to enter a transgendered sphere, due to the manner in which he is portrayed mourning for his brother:

> *iw pꜣy.f sn ꜥꜣ ḥr šmt n.f p pꜣy.f pr iw ḏrt.f wꜣḥ ḥr ḏꜣḏꜣ.f*
> *iw.f wrḥ n iwdn špr pw ir.n.f r pꜣy.f pr iw.f ḥr ẖdb tꜣy.f ḥmt*
> *iw.f ḥr ẖꜣꜥ.s r nꜣ n iww iw.f ḥms m gꜣs n pꜣy.f sn šri*

> (Bata's) elder brother went away to his house, his hand being placed upon his head, he being smeared with dirt. He arrived at his house, and he killed his wife,

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[792] Deborah Sweeney, "Sex and Gender", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology,* E. Frood and W. Wendrich (eds.), Los Angeles, CA., 2011, p.5.

[793] Sweeney, 2002b, p.146. She does, however, go on to say that the portrayal of Isis, and her activities on behalf of Horus, indicates that even if it was not the norm, "it was considered desirable for women to be able to speak freely in court." *ibid.,* p.148.

[794] This point is touched upon by Roth, who briefly mentions Anubis as Bata's "good brother" fulfilling the function of the "good wife Isis." Ann Macy Roth, "Father Earth, Mother Sky: Ancient Egyptian Beliefs about Conception and Fertility", *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record,* A. E. Rautman (ed.), Philadelphia, 2000, p.197.

and he threw her (to) the dogs, then he sat mourning for his younger brother."[795]

This description evokes contemporary depictions of women grieving for a male family member in vignettes from funerary papyri and reliefs on tomb walls.[796] These women fulfil the role of Isis, and to a lesser extent Nephthys, in the funerary context and their actions contribute to the deceased's ability to be reborn via a connotative identification as Osiris. When in the Valley of the Pine, Anubis' activities are essential to Bata's eventual triumph, and bring to mind the description of Isis from the stele of Amenmose, dating to the Eighteenth Dynasty.[797] In this source, Isis is said to have "protected her brother…[she] sought him without wearying…not resting until she found him," and is one who "was his guard, who drives off the foes, who stops the deeds of the disturber." [798] The comparisons between the deity and the elder brother are striking, especially in consideration of Anubis' murder of his wife and subsequent removal of a "disturber", a transgressive force of chaos personified in the female character.

When considering the treatment of the characters analysed in this case study, we examine personae "whose identity crosses the boundaries of traditionally constructed groups" if only temporarily.[799] They enter transgendered moments and situations, not literally becoming the opposing sex, but performing gendered acts and activities that are received differently depending on whether the male or female body is acting out the performance of 'doing.' Using ideas of intracategorical complexity allows us to "focus on particular social [constructions] at neglected points of intersection"[800] and consider how a character, such as Bata, is presented as inherently male while occupying a feminised space according to his physicality and inability to control his wife. Bata, at a certain point, is not literally a woman, but cannot act as a male 'should' or was conventionally expected to. He figuratively becomes female, allowing us read his portrayal as ambiguous, a male persona with a modified male body who takes on aspects of female-gendered sexual behaviour.[801] He does occupy a transgendered position, which can both aid his identification with Osiris before his rebirth, as well as move the story towards its satisfactory conclusion.

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[795] *TB,* 8,6-9.
[796] The Book of the Dead papyri belonging to Hunefer (BM EA 9901) and Any (BM EA 10470), for example.
[797] Louvre Stele C286.
[798] Lichtheim, 2006b, p.83.
[799] Dill, 2002, p.5.
[800] McCall, 2005, p.1774.
[801] The forcible removal of his phallus does not assume that Bata acquired female genitalia as a 'replacement.'

Chapter Conclusions

The women in the narrative tales cannot be regarded as fully-fledged individuals, complete characters who can be considered representative of 'real' women. Overall, they are situated at each end of the 'good' vs. 'bad' spectrum, with no tangible in-between positions occupied, preventing them from being constructed as nuanced, relatable characters. While a modern reader can experience sympathy for some of the personae who occupy the position of manipulative, wicked woman, we cannot see their portrayal as positive. Any ambiguity in our reception of them is most likely a product of *our* cultural milieu than that of the society which produced the compositions. Essentially, the women in these compositions are "fabricated creatures made up from fantasy, imitation, memory: paper people, without flesh and blood," as are found in narrative tales, stories, and *märchen* across many different cultures.[802] However, their portrayal can provide insight into how society dictated and reinforced acceptable behaviour, often couched in highly gendered rhetoric. Their actions and intentions are judged in relation to how they impact on the male characters, in particular the protagonist of the tale, and their individual agency is restricted by the context of the genre and their function as literary devices. Not all women/female personae are 'bad' characters in these compositions, even though the protagonist is invariably male and therefore a 'good' character. This demonstrates that the binary dichotomy of good vs. evil, *m3ꜥt* vs. *isft,* emphasised by the texts does not always rely on another dichotomy, that of men vs. women. The sexual ethics and cultural expectations surrounding erotic behaviour in the narrative tales are not fully elucidated or explained. The original audience would be, no doubt, familiar with the culturally-specific setting of the tales, and would not need the kind of exposition we as modern translators and readers require to make sense of oblique references or practices alluded to in the text. For example, in relation to *Horus and Seth,* Sweeney considers the portrayal by the (male) copyist of the female deities to reflect "a cultural stereotype rather than an accurate observation"[803] regarding women's speech and actions, a conclusion that can be just as effectively applied to the other narrative tales examined here.

The ventriloquising of female speech, the words that the composer or scribe allowed women to speak, does little more than entrench a male bias, portraying women as secondary to the male 'norm' and appropriates their voice for the construction of compositions whose main

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[802] Bal, 2009, p.113.
[803] Sweeney, 2002b, p.143.

purpose is to reassert hegemonic, powerful male dominance in this genre. Ultimately, the position, actions and character of the female personae is constructed in a way that the *nature* of the composition demands, but the (modern) audience is left with the thought that the dominant voice in society demanded this presentation as well, and is therefore inherently misogynistic. The women may be oppressed and portrayed in a negative light in the tales because of an ingrained social inequality, and social denigration and hierarchical power structures could then be reinforced by the telling of the tales, creating a vicious circle that seems to condone the treatment of women as inferior to men, at least in relation to this particular genre of literature. However, the potential for transgendered moments within the compositions did allow for some limited challenges to the normative power structures that informed much of their content. In order to occupy a transgendered role, the character, such as Bata, could be conceived of as entering and acting within a liminal context. This is further considered in the next chapter, in which the identity of deceased women appears to be positively conceived of as fragmented and fluid, as a necessary means for her to traverse the dangers of the afterlife and be reborn as one who was *mꜣꜥ-ḫrw,* true of voice. This is evidenced by the content of the funerary literature and the artefacts included in burials, but also by visual depictions and the vignettes accompanying the epigraphic sources, as will be seen.

Chapter 4

"May she perform transformations according to the wish of her heart in every place that she desires, the Osiris, the Lady of the House, the Chantress of Amun, Anhai." [804]
The conundrum of women becoming 'Osiris NN' in the New Kingdom Book of the Dead

This chapter will examine the funerary texts and accompanying vignettes from the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, known as the Book of Coming Forth by Day, included on papyrus BM EA 10472, 1-7. This document was made to form part of the mortuary equipment incorporated in the burial of Anhai, a high status woman who died c.1070 B.C.[805] First, the document itself will be introduced, and its importance as a rare example of a piece of funerary literature owned by a woman from the New Kingdom will be outlined. Second, after a brief discussion regarding conceptions of the afterlife and the importance placed upon successful rebirth as evidenced by the material record in general, I will address the current scholarship surrounding the fragmentation of women's identity in death as expressed through their funerary assemblages and burial equipment. The fundamental topic here regarding this fragmentation is, as expressed by Cooney, how the mortuary process acted as "a powerful and creative mechanism...[which] explains how the Egyptians were able to apply a masculine sexualized creative mythology to an individual female's rebirth."[806] I will then go on to examine how the content of Anhai's Book of the Dead papyrus, as a specific component of high status New Kingdom burials, fits in with this existing scholarship. This will be done particularly in regards to the female deceased individual occupying a liminal position that appears to challenge, subvert, or even negate her sex to a degree. Throughout, I will explore how her connotative identity, that of Osiris-Anhai, and the visual representations of her denotative identity, that of the woman Anhai, interact, and what this can tell us about funerary beliefs involving Egyptian women during this time period. I will also, where appropriate, compare and contrast other funerary papyri dating to both the New Kingdom and early Third Intermediate Period, which

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[804] *iri.s ḫpr r di ib.s m bw nb mrr.s in Wsir nbt pr šmyt n Ỉmn Ỉnḥꜣy* Spell 15, BM EA 10472,1.

[805] Anhai, or her family, certainly had a relatively large amount of wealth to spend on the papyrus, evidenced not least by the guilding on the golden sun disk depicted on sheet 1 of the document. Taylor, 2010e, p.246, for an illustration of the vignette accompanying Spell 15, BM EA 10472,1. It is worth noting here that although a person may not have had enough wealth to purchase a papyrus scroll to be buried with, as Smith identifies, "access and ownership are two different things." Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia,* Oxford, 2017, p.222. A person who was not élite could potentially still have had someone recite funerary texts for them at their burial, giving a degree of access to the literature, yet this would not of course survive in the material record for us today.

[806] Cooney, 2008, p.20.

were owned by men as well as by women. This will highlight differences as well as similarities in the treatment of these individuals based on pre-mortem sex and the gendering of the physical body. Ultimately, the analysis will demonstrate that the association of a woman with a male god in the specific mortuary context was not without its problems, challenging though they were, but ultimately surmountable through creative adaptations and the liminal nature of the rebirth process.

The ancient evidence and secondary sources

The papyrus on which Anhai's funerary texts were written on is now housed in the British Museum, BM EA 10472, 1-7, although it is currently not on display, and has been divided into seven sheets. It was acquired by E. A. Wallis Budge, probably in 1888 when he visited Egypt in his capacity as Keeper in what was then the British Museum's Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities.[807] The division into seven sheets was made by Budge, and originally, the papyrus would have been a continuous scroll measuring about 430cm in length, with a width of approximately 44cm. The papyrus has suffered minor damage in parts, and some of the coloured pigment has faded. However, there are few lacunae within the texts themselves, which are written in cursive hieroglyphics using black and red ink. As the many vignettes were not completed, with several missing specific colours such as the application of red and yellow pigments, Anhai may have died and been buried before the artisans were able to finish the papyrus. As well as its many detailed vignettes, the papyrus includes texts from Spells 15, 110, 125, and 146 of the Book of the Dead, as well as the titles of Spells 79 and 82. In addition to the texts on the papyrus itself, variations of Spell 6 were written on several of the shabti's included in Anhai's burial.[808] Two boxes for storing the shabti's were used, both of which contain scenes reflecting the funerary context and Anhai's successful rebirth.[809] The papyrus itself was placed in a wooden container, BM EA 20868, that was topped with a mumiform statue of Osiris wearing the *atef* crown, which stands 63.5cm high.[810] The plinth of the statue

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[807] Stephen Quirke, *Owners of Funerary Papyri in the British Museum,* Occasional Paper 92, London, 1993, p.6.
[808] For example, BM EA 2473, 1-7. All of these shabti's have text from Spell 6 included on their decoration, and two other, marginally smaller, shabti's include the name and titles of Anhai.
[809] BM EA 24712; BM EA 54090. Anhai is shown standing before deities such as Anubis, Osiris enthroned, and Isis, all of whom played an important role in the mortuary process.
[810] Nigel Strudwick *Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt,* London, 2006, p.236.

is shaped to indicated the hierogyph *m3ꜥ*, relecting her status as *m3ꜥ-ḫrw,* one who is true of voice, one of the blessed dead.

Unlike the vignettes, the Spells were completed by the scribe, although Budge claimed that the document is "valuable rather as a work of art than as an authority for the text,"[811] perhaps due to the fact that some male-owned papyri include longer versions of the same Spells.[812] However, given the scarcity of female owned Book of the Dead sources from this period in Egyptian history, I would maintain that both the texts and vignettes are important for what they can tell us regarding the rebirth of a woman, and the two cannot easily be separated. Both texts and vignettes ultimately serve the same purpose, that of assisting Anhai achieve continued existence after bodily death. I will argue that the vignettes act primarily as a visual reminder of her denotative female identity in addition to illustrating her journey through the Netherworld. In contrast, as well as describing Anhai's activities and wishes, the texts emphasise her connotative identity, that of Osiris-Anhai, which was necessary in the specific funerary context. There is some overlap between the two, however, such as the potentially darker skin tone being applied to some, if not all, of the depictions of Anhai, as will be discussed. Yet the connotative identity that so closely links the subject with the male god of the dead was not able, nor apparently required, to completely replace Anhai's gendered pre-mortem 'self.' The relevance of this division between the deceased's denotative and connotative identity will become apparent in the following discussion regarding the fragmentation of the post-mortem identity of women given in the following pages.

On her papyrus, Anhai is named as *šm3yt imn* "the Chantress of Amun", *nbt pr* "the Lady of the House", *wrt ḫnrt nbtw ḫnwm* "the Leader of the musicians of Nebtu and Khnum", and *wrt ḫnrt n wsir* "the Leader of the musicians of Osiris." Her husband Nebsumenu is designated *ḥry iḥwn ḫnw* the "Stable Master of the Residence", and Anhai's mother, Neferiyty, is also mentioned by name.[813] Both of these individuals are depicted on sheet 5 of the papyrus, in the scenes showing agricultural activities in the Field of Reeds, although Anhai's mother is shown in mummiform. The epithet "Osiris" is also applied to Anhai, a particularly important title for any deceased individual, as not only was an association or temporary syncretisation with the god of the dead established, it also "amounted to an advance verdict of innocence at the

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[811] Budge, 1899, p.37.
[812] Such as the versions of Spells 110 and 125 included on Ani's papyrus, a document dating to Dynasty Nineteen, and therefore earlier than Anhai's papyrus.
[813] Budge claimed that Anhai's husband is not named on her funerary papyrus. Budge, 1899, p.37.

judgment of the dead."[814] This scene can be found on sheet 4 of Anhai's papyrus, the vignette showing the weighing of her heart against the Feather of Truth, as well as the subsequent acceptance of Anhai after she is deemed justified, illustrated by an image of her adorned with the feathers of *ma'at*. Of course, one papyrus containing select funerary texts and vignettes, created for a specific purpose, cannot possibly represent the experiences of 'Egyptian women' as a whole, either in life or in death. Anhai, for the purposes of this analysis, will be taken as representative of a certain type of Egyptian woman in the New Kingdom; although apparently not royal, she was economically well-off, and the holder of important religious titles and roles, such as the Chantress of Amun, which reflects her connection with the city of Thebes.[815] She was also married, although her age at death is unknown, as is whether she had children.

Niwiński considers Anhai's papyrus to date to the Third Intermediate Period, having been made during Dynasty Twenty one, due to the inclusion of two vignettes that appear to reference scenes that were only included in the tombs of kings during the New Kingdom.[816] These vignettes, on sheet 7 of BM EA 10472, depict a mummiform figure attended to by two ram-headed deities, and a scene that derives from the Book of Gates, shown below in Figure 3:

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[814] Thomas G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the ancient Egyptians concerning the Hereafter as expressed in their own terms,* The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, *SAOC* 37, 1974, p.3.

[815] The attested find-spot of the papyrus, along with the associated burial goods, was from the necropolis of Deir el Bahri, on the West bank opposite the city of Thebes. Budge, 1899, p.37. See also Carol Andrews "A Family for Anhai?", *JEA* 64, 1978, pp.88-91.

[816] Andrzej Niwiński, *Studies on the Illustrated Theban Funerary Papyri of the 11th and 10th Centuries B.C.,* Freibourg, 1989, p.149; pp.336-337.

Figure 3: The final vignette from Anhai's papyrus, BM EA 10472, 7. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

These scenes are very similar to those included in the Books of the Underworld, of which the Book of Gates is a component, and apart from one Theban tomb (TT 158), do not seem to appear in non-royal contexts until the Third Intermediate Period.**[817]** However, Niwiński's view has been described as "controversial", and the majority of scholars date the papyrus to the end of the New Kingdom, to the end of Dynasty Twenty, based on the form of the title held by Anhai's husband, as well as due to stylistic features, such as the illustration of facial features, that support Quirke's refutation of Niwiński's method.[818] Quirke also argues that Anhai's papyrus is "a rare 20th Dynasty breach of the rule that certain funerary compositions were exclusively for the tomb of the king", and points out that the "paucity" of Book of the Dead texts from the time of Anhai's life and death may cause us to see the inclusion of these vignettes as unusual.[819] The historical Anhai has proved problematic to trace, not least because her funerary papyrus and surviving burial equipment uses several variant spellings for her name.[820] In addition, her husband also has a very common name for the period. Anhai's title *wrt ḫnrt n wsir* suggests that she was closely related to a Chief Priest of Osiris, and Andrews considers a variety of evidence to indicate that she was related in some way to the family of a man called Nebsumenu, son of Paser, the connection with whom may have provided her with her important

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[817] Quirke, 1993, p.17

[818] *ibid*; Stephen Quirke, "Review", *JEA* 79, 1999, p.310; Andrews, 1978, pp.88-98.

[819] Quirke, 1993, p.17.

[820] Andrews, 1978, pp.89-90.

religious titles and roles.[821] Anhai's papyrus will therefore be considered to date to the end of Dynasty Twenty, and be reflective of late New Kingdom beliefs regarding an élite woman's entry into the afterlife.

Anhai's Book of the Dead has been studied in publications by Budge, Taylor, and Quirke, for example, and has been recognised as a reasonably rare example of a woman's funerary papyrus containing both spells and vignettes from the New Kingdom.[822] Papyri such as Anhai's present the modern scholar with the opportunity to examine conceptions of death and rebirth in ancient Egyptian thought from this time period, helping us to better understand not only the afterlife itself, but also the ways in which the ancient individuals attempted to secure their place within it. The earliest Book of the Dead source dates to the mid Fifteenth century B.C., although several of the Spells have their antecedents in earlier funerary literature, with some even having their origins in the Pyramid Texts first inscribed in King's pyramids from c.2345 B.C. onwards.[823] The Book of the Dead texts, just like other mortuary processes such as mummification, "assisted the transference of the deceased from one level of the hierarchy of being to another," allowing them to be reborn and continue living.[824] The Book of the Dead Project, begun over 20 years ago now, was created with the specific aim to detail and examine the genre, looking at both its development and its history.[825] The Project has lead to the creation of the Book of the Dead database, housed at Bonn University, an archive which contains records of over 4000 documents, providing information regarding the owner, their choice of Spells, and the details of the document's preservation and provenance.[826] The archive has largely been digitalised, and can be accessed at http:www.totenbuch-projekt.uni-bonn.de, a valuable online resource despite the restrictions imposed on the inclusion of images.

Using Irmtraut Munro's collection of Eighteenth Dynasty sources with Book of the Dead texts, supplemented by further documents from the British Museum, Quirke provided a dataset

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[821] Andrews, 1978, p.97. This Nebsumenu is not able to be conclusively identified as the spouse of Anhai, however.

[822] Budge, 1899, pp.37-44; Quirke, 1993, pp.30-31; Irmtraut Munro, "The Evolution of the Book of the Dead", in *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,* J. H. Taylor (ed.), London, 2010, pp.70-71, where sheet 2 of Anhai's papyrus is discussed under the heading "A woman's Book of the Dead of the late New Kingdom."

[823] Andrews and Faulkner, 1986, p.11; Munro, 2010, pp.54-79 for a discussion on the development of the Book of the Dead from the earlier funerary literature through to the Ptolemaic Period.

[824] Alan B. Lloyd, "Psychology and Society in the Ancient Egyptian Cult of the Dead", *Yale Egyptological Studies* 3, W. K. Simpson (ed.), New Haven, CT., 1989 p.125.

[825] Müller-Roth, 2010, p.190.

[826] *ibid.*, pp.190-1.

illustrating the ownership of the sources according to the sex of the owner from the start of the New Kingdom into the Third Intermediate Period.[827] Although Quirke recognised that the dataset is not "exhaustive", it can be used "as a substantial sample including probably all more accessible and important examples" of the surviving literature.[828] From this collection of sources, it becomes apparent that very few women in relation to men were buried with papyri or other artefacts such as linen shrouds that contained spells from the Book of the Dead during Dynasties Eighteenth, Nineteen, and Twenty. Overall, male owned items account for more than 85% of the sources included in Quirke's dataset which date to the New Kingdom.[829] Clearly, even allowing for the incompleteness of the surviving material record, women were considerably less likely to be buried with funerary equipment containing Book of the Dead Spells and vignettes than men were. In several cases, such as the well known male-owned papyri belonging to individuals such as Hunefer and Ani, women were simply included on their husband's documents, or even, as evidenced by Shemsu's papyrus, those belonging to their sons.[830] These male-owned sources indicate that one funerary papyrus could basically do 'double duty' for a married couple, or close kin members. In this way, women were largely dependent on their male relations' successful rebirth to enter into the afterlife themselves.

After the end of the New Kingdom, roughly contemporary with Anhai's burial c.1070 B.C., women appear to have owned or been provided with their own funerary literature to a greater extent than their female predecessors were. This trend continued into the Late Period and beyond, with Book of the Dead papyri owned by women appearing in the material record as often as those belonging to men did during this time.[831] While it was common for a female to appear, in a secondary position, in the vignettes and illustrations comprising her husband's Book of the Dead during the New Kingdom, she is depicted less frequently on male owned papyri from after this time.[832] This indicates that in being provided with her own documents,

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[827] Quirke, 1999, pp.230-1, after Irmtraut Munro, *Die Totenbuch-Handschriften der 18. Dynastie im Ägyptischen Museum Cairo,* Wiesbaden, 1994.
[828] *ibid.,* p.230.
[829] See Quirke, 1999, pp.230-231 for the full lists of the sources from which I have derived this percentage. The owners, although wealthy enough to afford the papyri, were not royal. See Niwiński, p.1.
[830] BM EA 9901, belonging to Hunefer, and dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty, included his wife Nasha in depictions on four of the eight sheets. Nasha was, like Anhai, a Chantress of Amun; BM EA 10470, the Book of the Dead of Ani who died during Dynasty Nineteen, has several vignettes of the deceased being accompanied by his wife Tutu; BM EA 9988, dating to the Eighteenth dynasty, included depictions of Reget although the papyrus belonged to her son Shemsu. Just like several other women included on their husband's documents from this time period, no funerary papyri for these women survive.
[831] Rita Lucarelli, "Making the Book of the Dead", in *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,* J. H. Taylor (ed.), London, 2010, pp.271-272; Quirke, 1999, p.231.
[832] Quirke, 1999, p.232.

her inclusion on her husband's papyri may have been regarded as superfluous. The general inclusion of a woman on a male kin-member's papyrus was reflected in other burial practices during the majority of the New Kingdom. The tomb-chapels built over the burial site were, first and foremost dedicated to the male head of the household, for example.[833] In many cases, a single manuscript was placed with this man, and it was through their links with him that the wives and perhaps other family members were able to access the afterlife as well.[834] For Anhai, the fact that she was buried with her own manuscript may reflect the decline in shared tomb-chapel construction at the end of Dynasty Twenty, giving her greater autonomy and less dependence on her husband in the mortuary context.[835] This could be an indication that, due to her prominent religious roles and cultic duties, she also wielded a high degree of agency and perhaps independence during her lifetime as well.

Of the 42 papyrus sources dating to the New Kingdom containing Book of the Dead texts that are housed in the British Museum, only three belonged to women. As well as Anhai's papyrus, BM EA 73807 belonged to Resti, the Lady of the House, and dates to Dynasty Eighteen. It contains Spells 27, 30A, 38B, 42, 44, 30A, 54, 77, 83, 84, 85, 77, 86, 123, 124, 125, and 149. Nefertiri, Lady of the House, owned BM EA 9969, which has been dated to the New Kingdom although a more exact date cannot be given. It includes Spells 1, 27, 30B, 75, 77, 86, 83, 84, 85, and 146. The papyrus belonging to an additional woman, Neferrenpet, has been so damaged that only a few small fragments of vignettes remain, depicting her working in the Fields of the afterlife. Therefore, no textual comparison can be made in relation to the content of the Spells, and so this papyrus is useful only for comparison of the imagery used.[836] The British Museum collection also houses several other funerary papyri belonging to women who held similar, if not the exact same titles, as Anhai, and appear to have been of comparable social and economic status as she was, although they lived slightly later than she did. Some of these papyri date to Dynasty Twenty one, and therefore fall into the Third Intermediate Period of ancient Egypt's History, yet their owners probably lived, died, and were buried within a few generations, within living memory, of Anhai herself.[837] Their content is therefore still relevant to this study

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[833] Stuart Tyson Smith, "Intact Tombs of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties from Thebes and the New Kingdom Burial System," *MDAIK* 48, 1992, pp.201-2.
[834] *ibid.*
[835] Kathlyn M. Cooney, "Changing Burial Practices at the end of the New Kingdom: Defensive Adaptations in Tomb Commissions, Coffin Commissions, Coffin Decoration, and Mummification", *JARCE* 47, 2011, pp.3-44. Due to economic difficulties and the fear of tomb robbery at the end of Dynasty Twenty, "Thebans increasingly valued a space-efficient burial which focused on the minimal essentials for rebirth." Cooney, 2011, p.4.
[836] BM EA 9928.
[837] BM EA 10010, owned by Mutheteptiy, who was also titled Chantress of Amun, most likely dates to c.1050 BC, for example.

provided it is recognised that some political and cultural change did take place over this relatively short period of time. Therefore, the following sources will be compared and contrasted with Anhai's document. These include BM EA 9904 and EA 10743, belonging to Astem-Akhbit, lady of the house, noble woman, Chantress of Amun, and Singer of the goddess Mut; BM EA 10002, owned by Tameni, lady of the house and Chantress of Amun; BM EA 10010, owned by Mutheteptiy, who was also titled Chantress of Amun; and BM EA 74136, belonging to Di-mut-iwdw, another woman who held the position of Chantress of Amun. In addition, two notable other papyri belonging to high status women are part of the British Museum collection. BM EA 10541 was owned by a royal woman, Nodjmet, called the Lady of The Two Lands, and King's Mother, who died c.1064 B.C., and was married to Herihor.[838] Nodjmet's papyrus will not be compared to that belonging to Anhai, however, as it is not certain whether the papyrus was originally part of her burial assemblage, or was introduced at a later date when she, alongside other royal mummies, was reburied in a Royal Cache (TT 320) aimed at preventing the destruction of the original burials by tomb robbers. The Greenfield Papyrus, BM EA 10554, which is the longest known Book of the Dead scroll at more than 40 meters long, and belonged to another élite Third Intermediate Period woman named Nesitanebetasheru, will also not be examined in detail for similar reasons.

There does not seem to be any specific Spell found on sources dating to Dynasties Eighteen, Nineteen, and Twenty that was unique to, or composed specifically for, female funerary use. Indeed, versions of Spells 15, 110, 125, and 146, all of which are found on Anhai's papyrus, were among the more popular texts included on New Kingdom Book of the Dead sources.[839] In addition, during the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period, the funerary papyri and other documents such as leather rolls and linen shrouds that contain Book of the Dead texts show that there was no apparent determined sequence or order for the Spells to be written in.[840] All of the Spells included on Anhai's Book of the Dead are replicated on at least one other New Kingdom papyrus. Two female-owned papyri housed in the British Museum include one of the same Spells as found on Anhai's source. Nefertiri also has Spell 146 on her papyrus, and Resti's document has a version of Spell 125 written on it, although this part of her papyrus is damaged. Several male-owned papyri from this time period also have the same Spells as those found on

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[838] Lucarelli, 2010, p.271.
[839] Niwiński, 1989, p.230.
[840] Quirke, 1993, p.15. This earlier unfixed sequence is designated the Theban Recension, while the Saite Recension refers to documents from the Late Period onwards, in which the texts follow an allocated order. *ibid.*, p.15; p.20.

Anhai's, showing that none of the texts on her papyrus attest to specific Book of the Dead Spells reserved solely for inclusion on a woman's document. Spell 125 is found on fifteen male-owned sources,[841] Spell 146 on five male-owned sources,[842] Spell 110 on seven,[843] Spell 82 on eight,[844] Spell 15 on six,[845] and Spell 79 on two.[846] Therefore, Anhai's gender did not prevent her from utilising the same texts as used by men to achieve the same outcome. However, Gay Robins suggests that, as men largely controlled the family's resources, they would give priority to their own monuments, both in terms of quality and quantity.[847] This could easily apply to burial equipment as well, including funerary texts, and one way of reducing burial costs would be to include a woman on her husband's own papyrus, as discussed. Thus, it was not necessarily Osiris' anthropomorphisation as a *male* deity that dictated the relative infrequency of female owned Book of the Dead documents being produced during the New Kingdom, but rather the impact of societal norms that linked biological sex to financial and economic power structures dictating access to products assisting rebirth. Therefore, a woman's access was limited to a degree not because she had a different sex to the god, but because she lived in a society that generally encouraged financial dependence, alongside other systems of control, of a female on a male person. This created unequal power structures that affected the individual's ability to consume and purchase material goods. Indeed, in the 1997 catalogue of the Kelsey Museums' *Women and Gender in Ancient Egypt* exhibition, Wilfong stated that access to the afterlife was "more tied to status than gender," indicating that economic hierarchies played a considerable role in dictating who would be buried with items designed to assist the rebirth process.[848]

It has been suggested that the increased numbers of funerary papyri containing Book of the Dead texts and vignettes that belonged to women, which appear in the archaeological record from the start of the Third Intermediate Period and beyond, may indicate that the owners took

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[841] BM EA 10489; BM EA 10470; BM EA 9949; BM EA 10736; BM EA 10471; BM EA 9964; BM EA 9900; BM EA 74126; BM EA 10477; BM EA 10466; BM EA 9939; BM EA 9943; BM EA 9933A; BM EA 9913; BM EA 10009.
[842] BM EA 10489; BM EA 10470; BM EA 9949; BM EA 9900; BM EA 9913.
[843] BM EA 10470; BM EA 9964; BM EA 9900; BM EA 9928 (vignette); BM EA 9929; BM EA 9933A; BM EA 10009.
[844] BM EA 10489; BM EA 73806; BM EA 10470; BM EA 9956; BM EA 10471; BM EA 9964; BM EA 74134; BM EA 9913.
[845] BM EA 10470; BM EA 9901; BM EA 9953B; BM EA 10471; BM EA 9955; BM EA 9988.
[846] BM EA 10477; BM EA 10021.
[847] Robins, 1993, p. 57.
[848] Wilfong, 1997, p.20.

greater interest in their own rebirth texts.[849] Lucarelli posits that because so many of these papyri were owned by women who held religious titles and performed cultic duties, they would have been "probably well versed" in the mythologies central to the Spells, and so could feasibly have "edited their own texts."[850] One wonders if, assuming such an editing process involving individual choice occurred, the women also made a conscious decision regarding and rejecting inclusion on their husband's papyri. Specifically, they might have regarded it as an insufficient guarantee of their own rebirth, leading to the creation of more female-owned documents. More pragmatically, some of these women may have been buried at very different times to their husband, or might not have been married at all. If they predeceased their spouse, for instance, they could not be included on his funerary papyrus because, quite simply, he might not have purchased any of his own burial equipment in the time before her death. Their inclusion on his funerary papyrus could still occur, yet this could be many years after the woman's death, and one wonders if she would be conceived of as having to wait in some form of limbo until her husband died in order to traverse the netherworld in his company?

For those members of society who could afford the scrolls or other artefacts, purchasing a product containing Book of the Dead texts seems to have been important when preparing for the next life. The ancient Egyptians understood the afterlife to be located in another sphere or realm, as a place where the blessed dead continued their existence as a transfigured spirit and lived in a world that was essentially a perfect version of their life along the Nile. For the inhabitants of the afterlife, their existence was "not an unchanging endlessness, but rather constant renewal,"[851] with the afterlife providing all that they needed to continue living for all eternity in the Fields of Yaru.[852] The burial process, and its associated practices such as mummification and the provision of the deceased with funerary texts, enabled the component parts of the person, such as the body, *ba*, and *ka*, to overcome the separations and destruction that mortal death brought about. After being deemed true of voice, the composite elements of the individual could be reassembled and reunited, as they became an *Akh or Akhet* spirit,

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[849] Rita Lucarelli, "Making the Book of the Dead", in *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,* J. H. Taylor (ed.), London, 2010, pp.270-271. Although included on the tomb decoration, rather than as part of a Book of the Dead papyrus, the Ramesside temple scribe and *wab*-priest Amenwahsu may even have included a composition of his own on his Theban tomb chapel wall. See Amin A. M. A. Amer, "The Scholar-Scribe Amenwahsu and his Family", *ZÄS* 127, 2000, pp.1-5.

[850] Lucarelli, 2010, p.271.

[851] Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: the one and the many*, J. Baines (transl.), New York, 1982, p.160.

[852] Alan B. Lloyd, "Psychology and Society in the Ancient Egyptian Cult of the Dead", *Yale Egyptological Studies 3,* W. K. Simpson (ed.), New Haven, CT., 1989, p.123.

enabling a continuation of existence in the afterlife. The sun god was important in this context, as his cyclical journey across the sky by day, symbolic death at sunset, and rejuvenation via traversing the Underworld, giving the ancient Egyptians a model of "the endless cycle of recurring life" that they wished to participate in.[853] As such, the deceased could be associated with Re or Re-Horakhty as well as with Osiris. Re and Osiris came to be regarded as complementary deities, and were conceived of as merging or uniting during the rebirth cycle, ensuring continued existence for them both.[854] Texts praising the sun god indicate that the deceased cultivated an association with this deity as well as with the god of the dead, further increasing their own chances for successful rebirth.

Osiris essentially provided a divine prototype for people to emulate in their quest to achieve life after death. As mythological god-king of Egypt, Osiris was the first being to die after being murdered and dismembered by his jealous brother Seth, and was subsequently reborn, reflected in his status as god of the afterlife. His sister-wife Isis played an important role in this mythology. From the end of Dynasty Five onwards, starting with the Utterances inscribed inside the tomb of Unas, the king was named as 'Osiris NN' in the Pyramid Texts which resulted in his being 'defined' as an Osiris in this mortuary context, yet this does not imply that the two were conceived of as being identical. Rather, assigning the epithet "Osiris" to him allowed the king to "aquire a further divine role," one intended to help negate the finality of death and ensure that he ascended to the sky and joined the ranks of divinities in the celestial hereafter.[855] In the words of David O'Connor, "the story of Osiris provided Egyptians with an archetypal event that denied the finality and annihilation death seemed to bring," and the act of combining or syncretizing the name of the deceased with the deity firmly positioned them as sharing in a divine, masculine mythology necessary for rebirth.[856] All members of society, via ritual identification with this deity, were thus given the potential to defeat death and enjoy a bucolic existence for all eternity, provided they were judged to be true of voice by the deities.[857] This may explain why the deceased needed to be identified specifically with Osiris, a male god who underwent changes of state. This divine masculine association would enable the deceased to 'create' their new life after death via sexual regeneration when they were deemed justified. Not all Egyptologists accept that the designation 'Osiris NN', with NN standing in for the

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[853] John H. Taylor, "Life and Afterlife in the Ancient Egyptian Cosmos", in *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,* J. H. Taylor (ed.), London, 2010a, p.19.
[854] The tomb of Nefertari, QV66, depicts the union of Osiris and Re as a ram-headed deity, for example.
[855] Hornung, 1982, p.193.
[856] David O'Connor, *Abydos: Egypt 's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris,* London, 2011, p.30.
[857] *ibid.*

personal name of the deceased individual, actually implies a transformation or direct association with the deity on the part of the person so named. For example, Mark Smith argued that 'Osiris NN' should be read as 'the Osiris of NN', indicating rather "their status as a member of the god's entourage in the underworld", a view which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.[858]

It is apparent that differential treatment towards the sexes seems to have existed in death as well as life. Robins believes that although ancient Egyptian women occupied a secondary position in relation to men in society, with gender distinctions existing throughout pharaonic history, they "shared in the same afterlife as men and had the same needs for their burial and cult."[859] Thus, the practice of identifying the deceased woman with a male god has led to claims that much of the funerary rituals and the texts intended to guide the deceased through the afterlife were originally intended for male use only. Women were then accommodated within this male-dominated theology.[860] However, recent research has indicated that the situation was far more complex than the simple insertion of the female subject into an inflexible matrix designed only for men. It has been argued by Cooney that this accommodation required a "fragmentation" of female identity, obliging the deceased woman to retain her mortal gendered 'self' even as she took on the guise of the male god in order to be reborn.[861] Cooney's work follows on from that of Ann Macy Roth and Heather Lee McCarthy, regarding women's place in the rebirth cycle, and will be discussed shortly.[862] Although unusual, male and female deities could be syncretised, because, as Hornung explains, this syncretism did not "imply...fusion of the gods involved."[863] Rather, syncretism formed "a new unit" in which the component parts could join without "sacrificing their individuality."[864] The deceased individuals aimed to emulate Osiris, yet "were not fully integrated into his being, since they retained their earthly identities" even after being accepted into the ranks of the blessed dead.[865] The desire to become an Osiris was a temporary measure, a means of transformation in a liminal context that

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[858] Mark Smith, "Osiris and the Deceased", J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles,* http://escholarship.org/uc/item/29r70244, 2008, p.1.; Smith, 2017, p.221, pp.255-264.
[859] Robins, 1993, p.163.
[860] *ibid*., p.175.
[861] Cooney, 2008.
[862] Ann Macy Roth, "The Absent Spouse: patterns and taboos in Egyptian tomb decoration", *JARCE* 36, 1999, pp.37-53; Roth, 2000, pp.187-201; McCarthy, 2002, pp.173-195; McCarthy, 2010, pp.83-114.
[863] Hornung, 1982, p.96; p.97 for examples such as Neith-Osiris, and Mut-Min.
[864] *ibid*, p.97.
[865] Taylor, 2010a, p.19.

momentarily overrode the other aspects of identity, that was adopted as a means of securing a specific goal. Women as well as men, it appears, were able to successfully take on this association in the funerary context. Making use of Cooney's research in particular, I will now assess the contradictions presented in Anhai's Book of the Dead papyrus, examining the incongruities between the textual gendering of her as 'Osiris Anhai', and the overtly feminised[866] depictions of her in the accompanying vignettes. Ultimately I will demonstrate that this particular individual was plausibly conceived of as adopting a dual, fragmented identity in order to successfully traverse the afterlife. This required more gender-fluidity than that of her male counterparts to do so, but did not necessarily position her as permanently changing her sex, just as her transformation into 'Osiris Anhai' was a temporary measure necessary for her to navigate the liminal journey through the underworld. In this manner, Anhai takes on a transgendered identity in much the same vein as some of the characters in the narrative tales, as previously discussed, because her association with Osiris does not require a total sex role cross-over on her part.

"How to be both?": Fragmented or dual identity in the ancient Egyptian funerary texts belonging to Anhai

In Ali Smith's 2014 novel, "How to be Both", she outlines the life and challenges faced by the Italian Renaissance artist Francesco del Cossa, who, in Smith's work, hides the fact that she is a woman in order for her art to be taken seriously in an excessively male-dominated social milieu. Although this is Smith's fictional interpretation of the life of a historically attested individual, her exploration of dualities constituting personhood that at first glance seem incompatible and opposed has a wider resonance. Despite being separated by vast differences in culture and time, Anhai faced a similar fragmentation of her identity, at least as attested by the funerary literature made to be included in her burial. However, Francesco del Cossa was required to be both male and female to achieve success during life, where as for Anhai, this dual identity, or blurring of a gender differential, was necessary post-mortem. This would enable her to successfully traverse the afterlife and be reborn as one who is "true of voice", one of the justified dead. In becoming 'Osiris NN', in being associated or syncretised with a specific god, the female individual was essentially subject to "fragmentation and subsequent adaptation

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[866] With the probable addition of a typically male skin tone in some vignettes, discussed pp.196-200 of this thesis.

of the human identity" during the rebirth process.[867] At first glance, this appears to reflect a rebirth matrix into which females had to be accommodated into as an afterthought, if not outright shoehorned into. On closer examination, the issue becomes more nuanced, as will be demonstrated.

The concept of women becoming an Osiris may initially seem illogical to the modern observer, and one wonders why we do not see women being identified with a female funerary deity until the Greco-Roman Period, with the designation of Hathor being coupled with the woman's name as that of Osiris previously was, for example.[868] Indeed, it seems that non-royal women were identified as 'Osiris NN' in the written record as early as Dynasty 8 or 9, and prior to this, the Queens of the sixth Dynasty were named as 'Osiris NN' in their Pyramid Texts, and were in these compositions linked with the sun god Re as well as the chthonic Osiris.[869] Middle Kingdom funerary literature also demonstrates that the women under analysis had to adopt a dual-gendered identity in order to ensure their successful rebirth. Meyer-Dietrich, examining women's rebirth as evidenced by texts from Meir, states that "der männlische Symbolismus… ist Ausdruck für die Zeugungsfähigkeit", stressing that the adoption of male creative potential by women was necessary during rebirth, yet did not completely replace the female or feminised post-mortem identity of the individual.[870] Instead, the male and female sexual functions, the reproductive "androgyny" Meyer-Dietrich speaks of, acted together, making it possible for the deceased woman to enter the afterlife.[871] Roth argued that as death "marked a return to the undifferentiated pre-existent state" of being, "in this androgynous environment, dead women could be identified with Osiris" with little or no problem to the Egyptian mind-set.[872] This allowed the women to "re-conceive themselves" and effect their own rebirth by the same means as men were able to, emulating Osiris and essentially undertaking a re-presentation of this deity's mythology.[873] So how did a human woman like Anhai take on the attributes and identity

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[867] Cooney, 2008, p.5. Here, she discusses the work of other scholars, such as that of Jan Assmann, in which adaptations used in female funerary equipment have been overlooked, analysis being focused on male-owned artefacts and non-gender specific transformations in relation to burial practices.
[868] S. d'Auria, P. Lacovara, and C. Roehrig, *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt,* The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1988, pp.76-77.
[869] McCarthy, 2002, p.174; Cooney, 2008, p.5.
[870] Erika Meyer-Dietrich, *Senebi und Selbst: Personenkonstituenten zur rituellen Wiedergeburt in einem Frauensarg des Mittleren Reiches,* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 216, Fribourg and Göttingen, 2006, p.285.
[871] *ibid*, pp.284-286.
[872] Roth, 2000, p.200.
[873] *ibid*.

of a male god, performing and re-presenting the story of Osiris while occupying a liminal, transformative sphere, in order to effect her own entry into the afterlife?

Existing scholarship addressing the problem of female rebirth in the New Kingdom

Several scholars have, in the past two decades, begun to study the experiences of ancient Egyptian women in regards to their rebirth and transformation in the afterlife. Because the rebirth matrix relied on culturally specific creation myths that stressed a regeneration and rebirth reliant on male sexual activity,[874] it has been proposed that women were required to face additional adaptations and transformations in comparison to those undergone by men.[875] This required the woman to be an essentially female being in a dual gendered state that was fluid and mutable, at least temporarily. In all of the mythologies of creation and rebirth, as Roth discussed in "Mother Earth, Father Sky," it was a male sexual act that provided the means to rebirth after physical death, as well as the way to create life from nothingness and chaos.[876] Goddesses were not absent from creation mythologies, but they played a supporting role, assisting the male deities rather than independently 'creating' by themselves. In rebirth myths, they functioned in much the same way as mortal women did in terms of the general ancient Egyptian understanding regarding creative potential and fertility. Fundamentally, women, whether divine or mortal, played two specific roles that Roth identifies as the initial stimulation or arousal of creative sexual behaviour in a male counterpart, and the subsequent carrying and nurturing of the progeny.[877] Women and goddesses therefore ultimately "assisted in fertility, but were not responsible for the actual creation of life" themselves.[878] However, despite the importance of the female as a 'vessel' able to bear creation in the form of a child, the majority of Pharaonic artistic depictions of the human form, including vignettes from the Book of the Dead, both male and female owned, do not show women as pregnant or as physically showing

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[874] See Roth, 2000, pp.190-191, in which she considers the ancient Egyptian cosmogony and conception of the physical world to determine their belief in regarding male elements as responsible for fertility and creation, as typified by the purviews of the earth god Geb and his consort the sky goddess Nut.

[875] Cooney, 2008, pp.5-6 in particular, where she briefly discusses the fragmentation of both male and female individual identity during the rebirth process. She suggests previous scholars may have overlooked female accommodation into the Osiris-myth and adaptations made because of this, as the focus was on the concept of fragmentation of the post-mortem male individual identity, first and foremost.

[876] *ibid*; See also Bryan, 1996.

[877] Roth, 2000, p.194.

[878] *ibid*.

signs of having produced offspring.[879] The woman's *potential* to bear children is therefore stressed in many representations of the female form, rather than signifying that she has already done so. Although a powerful and effective magician, Isis could only use her own *heka* to fashion a replacement phallus for the mummiform Osiris and provoke post mortem desire in her spouse, as she was unable to conceive Horus without the semen of her male counterpart, for example. She could receive Osiris's creative potential in the form of his ejaculation, could nuture Horus in her womb as well as after his birth, and support his claim to the throne of Egypt, yet she was reliant on her brother-husband's fertility to start the process. This may explain why, despite Isis being heavily involved in rebirth mythology, the deceased, regardless of gender, needed to be identified with Osiris. Because Osiris was a male god who underwent changes of state, this masculine divine association would enable the deceased to 'create' their new life after death via sexual regeneration when they were deemed justified. We must, however, acknowledge that it was not just women whose identity became fragmented during the rebirth process. In addition to becoming 'Osiris NN', the deceased individual, regardless of sex, was essentially split into their component parts, such as the *ba* and *ka,* and often underwent transformations, with the ultimate goal of becoming an *akh*-spirit and existing for eternity in the Fields of Yaru and Hetep.

After examining tomb decoration and representations of the tomb owner throughout pharaonic history, Roth concluded that in order to forge the necessary post-mortem association with Osiris, women had to take on a fluid gendered state, adopting both a temporary male identity alongside an idealised version of their female self.[880] This would essentially allow them to be reborn via a re-occurrence or continuation of the Osirian rebirth mythology. Ruling at the end of Dynasty Nineteen after being King's wife and acting as regent for the short-lived Siptah, the female king Tawosret's tomb was decorated with different categories of scenes, as identified by McCarthy. Alongside the "traditionally 'kingly' scenes", KV 14 included vignettes that had been previously depicted in other queen's tombs, as well "innovative" scenes that combined the iconography of a queen with the typical decorative scenes found in king's burials.[881] In order to become a transfigured spirit, McCarthy suggests that women through necessity underwent a further adaptation, assuming a fluid, dual post-mortem identity that allowed for

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[879] Robins, 1993, p.180; the drooping breasts of some female mourners in tomb reliefs, from mid Dynasty Eighteen onwards, may be an exception to this, as the drooping breasts could suggest signs of the women having breast-fed, as well as be markers of maturity. See Sweeney, 2004, pp.74-75.
[880] Roth, 1999, pp.51-53.
[881] McCarthy, 2002, p.83.

rebirth in the mode of Osiris, supporting the earlier conclusions of Roth.[882] Cooney, after examining a variety of women's burial goods, such as coffins and shabti figurines from the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period, also agreed with the work of Roth and McCarthy.[883] The fragmentation of female identity in a liminal mortuary context may even reflect an empowering of the woman involved, allowing the deceased female access to power structures and gender based hierarchies that might have been denied to her in life.[884] She was able to retain aspects of her mortal gendered 'self', while at the same time she took on, even appropriated for a specific purpose, the powers and believed effectiveness of a male god. Later depictions in the Book of the Dead, such as those showing Mut-Pakhet as an ithyphallic goddess, as well as the inclusion of penis amulets in the graves of New Kingdom women, seem to suggest that the concept of gender fluidity did not pose too much of a problem to the Egyptian mind-set.[885] Indeed, Roth has considered the severing and loss of Osiris's penis as highly relevant in regards to women's inclusion in the rebirth matrix.[886] She claims that, as he no longer had a phallus, Osiris exhibited "androgynous characteristics" and, like Bata in *Two Brothers,* can be regarded as in some ways "a woman" because of this.[887] This may seem like a complicated process in relation to the changes that a male underwent in order to pass into the next life. However, I would argue that the most important and frightening transformations the deceased underwent was the change from dead/inert to reborn/active, and the direct if temporary association with Osiris was a means for the individual, regardless of sex and/or gender, to achieve this by emulating the only example present in their mythology.

The association of Anhai with the sun God and the relevance of female skin tones

Spell 15, the hymn to the rising sun, is included on sheet 1 of Anhai's papyrus. The text is accompanied by a vignette depicting the sun god as a falcon, crowned with a solar disc, and perching on the hieroglyphic sign for the West, the realm of Osiris. Anhai is depicted twice at the bottom of this scene, in her *ba* form, worshipping Re along with a troop of baboons and various deities that include Isis and Nephthys. The *ba* was conceived of as the part of the

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[882] McCarthy, 2008, pp.90-91.
[883] Kathlyn Cooney, "Gender Transformation in Death: A Case Study of Coffins from Ramesside Period Egypt", *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73, 4, 2010, pp.224-237; See also Cooney, 2008.
[884] Cooney, 2008, p.12.
[885] McCarthy, 2008, p.91.
[886] Roth, 2000, p.199.
[887] *ibid*.

complete person which would ascend to the sky and join the Sun god, and so "assumed vital importance" after the individual's death.[888] In this aspect, it is notable that Anhai is shown as female, as well as partly zoomorphic. She is also depicted in her 'perfect' human form, the idealised physical avatar that she would live as, if she was deemed justified after the weighing of the heart ceremony. Another Chantress of Amun, the lady of the house Tameni, has a scene depicting her offering to Re as the opening vignette to her Book of the Dead as well, although her papyrus does not include Spell 15 as textual accompaniment to this scene, in contrast to Anhai's.[889] However, in the vignette she is shown with very similar physical characteristics as Anhai. Tameni is depicted as youthful and physically attractive, wearing an elaborate wig topped with a perfume cone, large, visible items of jewellery, and a long dress through which her physical form is apparent, as she pays homage to Re. The emphasis placed on the physicality of the female does not appear to be an impediment for these women to be associated with male deities by any means, at least in the funerary context.

Generally, depictions of men and women made use of a "gendered color code for skin" in visual imagery.[890] It is possible that women, on their funerary equipment, were deliberately depicted with the darker skin usually reserved for portrayals of men in order to stress the woman's dual gendered-identity. It could also suggest a link with male creation deities with a solar purview, such as Re, Re-Horakhty, and the syncretised Re-Osiris, as both red and yellow/gold pigments were associated with stages of the sun's journey across the sky.[891] This is evidenced by McCarthy's examination of the tomb decoration of Nefertari, in which she suggests that the masculine skin tone used on the wall reliefs complimented the visual depictions of the queen as a woman.[892] In addition, she stressed that the specific mortuary context allowed élite women such as Nefertari a greater gender fluidity due to the transformative potential associated with rebirth, and the uncertain, liminal sphere that the architecture of the tomb reflected as a conceptual journey through the Netherworld.[893] Skin tone thus acted as a visual cue of both divinity and masculinity, indicating that this woman's gender was fluid, able to incorporate

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[888] Lloyd, 1989, p.119.
[889] BM EA 10002.
[890] Wilfong, 2010, p.165.
[891] Gay Robins, "Art", *The Egyptian World,* Toby Wilkinson (ed.), London and New York, 2007, p.363.
[892] McCarthy, 2002, pp.191-2. She notes that only once throughout the entire tomb decoration scheme does Nefertari have a typically feminine yellow skin tone, and in all other depictions of her, she is shown with "significantly darker" skin that the goddesses.
[893] *ibid*.

masculine elements or characteristics, as she traversed the Underworld. This acted in conjunction with the textual references to her as being linked to male deities.[894]

For Book of the Dead papyri owned by men, if women were included in the vignettes of their husband's documents, they were most likely to be depicted as having a noticeably lighter, more yellow-toned skin in comparison to the male figures. This is apparent in the Book of the Dead documents belonging to Hunefer, Amenhotep, and Ani,[895] for example, whose wives are shown in various vignettes. In these examples, their wives have yellow-toned, paler skin, emphasising their female identity, and visually marking the women as differently gendered. Additionally, the women are shown in far fewer vignettes than their husbands are. Other male-owned papyri include images of the man's mother, such as those of Shemsu, who is accompanied by his mother Reget in the vignette of Spell 15, and Tui, whose mother Taremeten-bast appears twice on his papyrus.[896] Reget and Taremeten-bast, just like the wives of Hunefer, Amenhotep, and Ani, are depicted with much lighter skin than their sons, and may be conceived of as fulfilling the role of female sexual element both arousing and nurturing Shemsu and Tui.[897] This visual iconography could be a method of stressing the female identity of these women specifically in opposition to that of the male papyri owner, positioning them primarily as the vessel required to receive the creative potential of the male. In instances where the female has a reddish-brown hue to her skin, her husband could be depicted with even darker skin, as is shown on the papyrus of Nakht, on which his wife Tjuyu has a marginally lighter skin tone than he does.[898] The fragments of Neferrenpet's Book of the Dead clearly depict her with a masculine skin tone, as shown in Figure 3 below. However, as so little of her papyrus remains, it is not possible to say whether her husband's skin would have been darker, if he were even shown on the papyrus at all, nor whether her skin tone would have been consistent throughout the vignettes.[899]

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[894] *ibid.*

[895] BM EA 9901, belonging to Hunefer, which also depicts his wife, although with less frequency; BM EA 10489, owned by Amenhotep, dating to Dynasty Eighteen, on which his wife Mutresti is shown accompanying him in several vignettes; BM EA 10470, owned by Ani.

[896] BM EA 9988, owned by Shemsu, dates to Dynasty Eighteen; BM EA 9913, belonging to Tui, dates to the early Eighteenth dynasty. Both documents are incompletely preserved.

[897] This could allow Shemsu and Tui to be the 'Bull of his Mother', theoretically impregnating Reget and Taremetenbast, renewing themselves in a method reflecting the daily renewal of the god Re via the solar cycle and the associated mythology. Roth also notes that the presence of wives, mothers, and/or other women in the decoration of male owned tombs throughout pharaonic history was "almost universally required" and may be an indication of the tomb owners' presentation as *kamutef.* Roth, 1999, p.51.

[898] BM EA 10473, dating to Dynasty Eighteen, which also names the couple's daughter Takyky in the inscriptions.

[899] BM EA 9928.

Figure 4: Neferrenpet working in the Field of Yaru, BM 9928 (fragment). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

It is probable that Anhai, like Neferrenpet, would have been depicted with darker skin if the artists had completed her papyrus. There does seem to be traces of reddish-brown pigments that could have be intended to form the base of her skin tone present on several depictions, however. This is apparent on her arms and cheek on sheets 2 and 4, as shown below, as well as on sheet 1 in the vignette accompanying Anhai's exhortation to the rising sun:

Figure 5: BM EA 10472, 2, showing traces of colour applied to Anhai's arms and cheek. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.
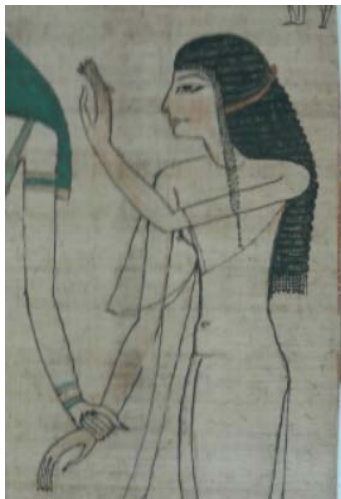
Figure 6: BM EA 10472, 4, with reddish-brown pigment particularly visible on Anhai's cheek and forearms. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

As the physical body of these women remained depicted as overtly feminine in other aspects, this masculine feature seems able to exist alongside female characteristics with no incongruence. The wearing of diaphanous gowns, and long, heavy wigs topped with lotus flowers and fragrance cones, coupled with the visibly rounded lines of the hips, thighs, and breasts, and the inclusion of instruments such as the sistrum, stress the sexualized female form. The application of this typically male skin tone to the female body does not, therefore, seem to require the woman's form to become androgynous. Indeed, as the vignettes depict the 'perfect' physical version of the subject, the women's bodies are, if anything, hyper-feminised. The overtly feminine portrayal of Anhai's physical body in the vignettes, comparable to the depictions of other women on funerary papyri regardless if they were or were not the owners of the document, is notable. This was most likely in order to act as a reminder of their final, perfect condition in which they would exist for eternity. The artist was almost certainly not applying a reddish-brown pigment in error, as the sex of the figures are unmistakable, and physically exhibit no other signs of androgyny.

The (probable) image of Anhai in mummiform, shown on sheet 7 of her papyrus, is the sole instance of her physical form being depicted as androgynous. In this depiction, darker pigments have not been applied to the face, perhaps indicative that the artist intended to use yellow paint that would act as a marker of a high status golden mummy mask. This would again position Anhai as undertaking the same journey of rebirth, with all its processes and accoutrements, as Osiris had done. As it has been suggested that "gender transformation only seems to have been possible in a hidden context"[900], the inclusion of the mummiform figure on the papyrus could

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[900] Cooney, 2008, p.6.

indicate a subtle acknowledgement of this process. On a different woman's papyrus, the mummy of the Chantress of Amun, Mutheteptiy, is also portrayed laying on a bier surrounded by protective deities.[901] Again, the mummy itself is androgynous, with no visible markers of biological sex apparent through the bandages, and Mutheteptiy wears the slightly curled beard that further identifies her with Osiris. She also has reddish-hued skin. This depiction is not obviously gendered, and without knowing who the owner of the papyrus was, or being able to read the hieratic text above the figure, we could not identify the figure as representing the mummy of a woman. The accompanying deities, Isis, Nephthys, and the four sons of Horus, are named in this vignette, but above Mutheteptiy's mummy, the hieratic reads *sꜥh.s*, "her mummy", a designation that further blurs the boundaries between male and female, human and divine, in this liminal space.

The following section of this chapter will examine the use of both male and female pronouns in women such as Anhai's funerary goods, a use that could be seen as accidental, as scribal error on female owned items that were adapted from primarily male use. However, in addition to the convincing arguments laid out below for regarding the mixing of pronouns as deliberate, it would be problematic to believe that the artist had simply made a mistake when drawing a female owner with a male (or physically androgynous) mummy, a mistake that would have had to have been made on more than one papyrus over a long span of time. After portraying a hyper-feminised, overtly gendered physical form of the papyrus owner in preceding vignettes, we must ask why different artists also included depictions of this owner in mummiform complete with a *god's* beard, as we see on Mutheteptiy's papyrus. Osiris was, of course, the first and only deity to experience mummification, to have died and been reborn. I would suggest that these depictions not only reinforce the case for women undergoing gender fragmentation during the rebirth process, but also support the designation of the deceased individual, regardless of sex, as 'Osiris NN', as indicative of the individual temporarily 'becoming' Osiris in order to be reborn. For Smith, arguing that 'Osiris NN' should always be read as the 'Osiris of NN', "the gender difference between [women] and the god posed no obstacle to a woman's acquisition of an Osirian aspect, since females as well as males were eligible to join his worship."[902] The entering of the individual into Osiris's retinue as one of the god's followers, as part of the "constellation of adoring deities"[903], could certainly be applied to Anhai and other

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[901] BM EA 10010,3.
[902] Smith, 2008, p.3; Smith, 2017, pp.221-223.
[903] Smith, 2008, p.3.

women after their judgement in the netherworld; however, if the women did not need a specific masculine identity in order to reach the place of judgement, the creative adaptations outlined not only in this chapter of this thesis, but also in the discussed works of Cooney and McCarthy, for example, would have not been necessary. However, because the adaptations occur in many different women's items and texts, it is highly likely that they *were* necessary, that they were done purposefully and in a meaningful way. Regardless of whether we read 'Osiris NN' or 'Osiris of NN', it must be acknowledged that a wholly feminised post-mortem identity appears insufficient to successfully complete the rebirth process for the women studied here. Further instances of the creative adaptations on both Anhai's papyrus, and on other women's funerary goods from around the same time period, will now be discussed in more detail.

The use of male pronouns in Anhai's Spell 15

Cooney notes that, by the New Kingdom, the mostly correct use of masculine and feminine pronouns on funerary equipment should be regarded as a "testament to the Egyptian flexibility in the understanding of individual gender in their funerary existence."[904] She then goes on to suggest that certain 'scribal errors' regarding pronouns could actually be a way of providing the deceased women with "multiple gendered powers" and, in the correct context, may not have been mistakes at all.[905] Cooney argues that, in fact, high quality New Kingdom funerary items, such as a heart scarab amulet made for a woman called Nubity, deliberately used both male and female third person singular pronouns for this very purpose.[906] Rather than indicating a poorly thought-out adaptation of men's funerary objects, this item, she states, had the potential to give agency and empowerment to "a woman who wanted to become male for her rebirth transformations and yet wanted to retain her feminine self for her afterlife existence."[907] This contests an earlier assertion that certain spells, such as Spell 6 that was commonly inscribed on shabti figurines, was intended "primarily for men" due to the inconsistent use of gendered pronouns on items buried with women.[908] Coffins, such as the one buried with Iset during the New Kingdom, demonstrate the ability of the artisans to:

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[904] Cooney, 2008, p.12.

[905] *ibid.*

[906] Now in the Yale University Gallery of Art. Cooney, 2008, pp.12-3.

[907] *ibid.*, p.12.

[908] Anne K. Capel, and Glenn F. Markoe, (eds.), "Catalogue of the exhibition", *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt,* New York, 1996, p.152.

"represent [her] multiple manifestations for her journey into the netherworld on a single funerary object. The lid depicted her as an *akh* being, while the case sides show her transformation into a creative masculine god throught the Book of the Dead texts."[909]

In some instances, such as Coffin Florence 8527, a coffin originally used in a man's burial was reused, with minor modifications, for a woman.[910] Although the primary reason for doing this may have resulted from economic concerns, the reuse does not appear to have diminished the effectiveness in aiding the rebirth of the new owner in the eyes of the ancient Egyptians, as it's inclusion in the second burial suggests. This supports the assertion that a woman not only temporarily assumed a fluid gender during the rebirth process, but that, in becoming 'Osiris NN', the occupant of the coffin, regardless of sex, required similar equipment in order to undergo the same experience as this god.

The papyrus belonging to Anhai seems to also deliberately be designed to provide its owner with "multiple gendered powers." Overall, the papyrus uses the correctly gendered third person singular pronouns in relation to its owner, yet Spell 15, on closer examination, seems to include textual reference to "multiple gendered powers" in a similar way to Nubity's heart scarab. However, this is done through the use of the first person singular pronoun. When referring to Anhai in the third person, in phrases such as *ḏd.s* "she says", *ḫt.s* "her body", and *dt.s* "her hand", the text always uses the female third person singular pronoun. When replicating the speech of Anhai, in which she refers to herself in the first person, the text alternates between the male seated figure and the female seated figure in words such as "I" or "my". We see the female seated figure being used in phrases such as *ꜥḳ.i* "may I enter", *di.sn n.i ḥtp(w)* "may they grant to me offerings", and *rn.i* "my name". In the same Spell, other phrases are written with the seated male figure, for example *mꜣꜥ.i ptḥ* "may I see Ptah" *swr.i mw* "may I drink water" and *bštw.i ḥnꜥ* "may I unite with…" The difference is visible in the examples shown below:

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[909] Cooney, 2010, p.231. This was of course not the only coffin to do this; see Cooney, 2008; Cooney, 2010, for further examples.
[910] Cooney, 2011, p.33.

Figure 7: The seated female determinative as first person singular pronoun used in Spell 15 on BM EA 10472, 1. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

Figure 8: The seated male determinative as first person singular pronoun used in Spell 15 on BM EA 10472, 1. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

This use of male and female pronouns in the same Spell, written by the same scribal hand, can be seen as a method of emphasising Anhai's fluid gender at this point in her rebirth cycle. Here, her connotative identity is stressed in conjunction with her denotative female 'self,' as expressed by her overtly feminised form. However, another Spell and it's vignette, Spell 110, places far more emphasis on her identity as a woman, all the more important as it shows Anhai's continued existence in the Fields of Yaru after she had been deemed *mꜣꜥ-ḫrw*, "true of voice." Before Anhai could enter this bucolic afterlife, it was necessary for her to prove her innocence.

The Negative Confession of Spell 125 and Anhai's judgement

The judgement of Anhai is depicted on sheets 4 and 5 of her papyrus, with the introduction to the Spell included on sheet 3, and the Negative Confession occurring on sheet 6. If a person was to continue living in the afterlife, their heart could not be destroyed, as it was necessary for the individuals survival "as a moral, thinking agent."[911] Anhai's heart is referred to several times, both during the judgement as well as after its successful culmination, when her heart has been seen to not weigh more than the feather of Truth, and the result recorded by Thoth. In each case, the word for her heart, *ib,* is written with the correct female pronoun, as well as the seated woman determinative, further emphasising her original sex now that she has been deemed worthy of entry to the Field of Reeds. Taylor notes her change of clothing and adornment in these depictions. While waiting for the outcome of the weighing of her heart, accompanied by Horus who grasps her wrist, Anhai is "simply dressed, without collar, bracelets or garlands in her hair."[912] Just to the right of this depiction of Anhai largely unadorned, she is shown again on a similar scale, but with a far more elaborate dress and accoutrements, shown below in Figure 9. Her dress, made of a large quantity of material as evidenced by the carefully drawn pleats and folds, is tied below her breasts, and she now wears bracelets and a necklace, which depicts the anthropomorphisd goddess Maat and the ankh sign.[913] The red ribbon or filette tied around her hair at the level of her ears in the previous image has now moved to form a band around the crown of her head, in which two feathers, indicative of *Maat*, have been secured. She also holds these feathers of Truth in each hand, and has two more attached to chains looped over each arm, dangling at the elbows of her raised arms.[914] Taylor suggests that this change of costume shows "visible signs of her acceptance by the gods," and highlights the idea that she "has emerged 'true of voice' from the ordeal of judgement."[915] She is supported and embraced here by Hathor, goddess of women and sexuality, lady of the West.

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[911] Lloyd, 1989, p.119.
[912] Taylor, 2010d, p.231.
[913] Anhai may even have owned such a necklace. A later example complete with a 2.7cm high figurine of the goddess, BM EA 48998, is remarkably similar to the one she is shown wearing in this vignette, and this artefact could have been intended for the owner to be buried wearing.
[914] The papyrus belonging to Tameni also depicts the vindicated woman as wearing *ma'at*-feathers.
[915] Taylor, 2010d, p.231.

Figure 9: Anhai, vindicated, BM EA 10472, 4. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

I would suggest that this emergence is the most important of Anhai's transformations, and her female gendered identity is reaffirmed in her triumphant vindication after judgement, allowing her to become an effective *akhet* spirit.

Conspicuous by their absence: the lack of female mourners and her husband in Anhai's vignettes

In contrast to several male owned Book of the Dead papyri from the New Kingdom, Anhai's spouse Nebsumenu does not appear alongside her in any of the vignettes, except for the depiction of the couple carrying out agrarian labour in the Field of Yaru, which will be discussed below. As has been outlined, some male-owned papyri included vignettes showing the owner's wife accompanying him in the afterlife, as well as mourning his death and burial, reminiscent of Isis's grief at the murder of her brother-husband. Unlike many of her male contemporaries, Anhai's Book of the Dead does not depicted her burial, and the associated rites which presumably would have accompanied the internment of her mummified body, although she is portrayed in mummiform on sheet 7 of the papyrus. These funerary rites include rituals such as the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, which ensured that the deceased could breathe, eat, and speak in the afterlife, as well as the mourning activities of women designed to evoke

and mimic the lamentations of the goddesses Isis and Nephthys over the inert body of Osiris. Women could act as professional mourners (*ḏryt*) at funerals, and as evidenced by vignettes on the papyri of Hunefer and Ani, for example, it was ideally the wife of the deceased who performed these mourning activities.[916] This firmly positioned her in the role of Isis in particular, which further strengthened her husband's association with Osiris.

It is probable that the solitary depiction of women not just on their papyri, but also on tomb wall reliefs, for example, enabled her to perform what can appear to be a variety of different and divergent roles.[917] With no spouse present to assume a position of masculine prominence, the woman could be considered "her own husband, her own wife, and her own mother," and therefore was able to be the force that "stimulated her own (male) fertility" as well as act as the vessel that received and nurtured her reborn self.[918] It therefore seems that gender fragmentation only occurs when the male partner is not present. A male-owned funerary papyrus can be seen as doing 'double duty' for both partners, with the female's inclusion in scenes such as working in the fields of Yaru and accompanying her husband through the Gates and Portals of the afterlife, implying that the document ensures her rebirth as well as his. However, in this manner, her success is largely dependant on that of her husband and his syncretism with Osiris, while her association with the male divine element that makes rebirth possible is reduced and deemphasised, if included at all. In the vignettes in which she is shown, the woman is visually presented in her final form, as one who has already traversed the liminal state before rebirth. As such, wives and mothers of the male owner are depicted as a perfect, eternal version of themselves. However, in other scenes, she does take on very significant divine attributes, closely linked with, and integral to, the mythology of Osiris. These attributes are, however, unmistakeably feminine, and the role she plays is that of a goddess: her part in the rebirth myth is that of Isis. As chief mourner attending to her husband's coffin and bewailing his mortal death, she fulfils the duties of grieving wife, but also provides the female counterpart to her husband's assumption of divine male creative power. Artistic decorum dictates that her transformations and association with Osiris cannot overshadow his on a male-

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[916] Graves-Brown, 2008, p.26. The wife of the papyrus owner could also be accompanied by other women during funerary rites and the procession, perhaps indicating his wealth and prestige in that he was able to afford a large group of mourners to attend his funeral, as shown on sheet 4 of Hunefer's papyrus.

[917] Roth, 2000, p.199. See also Deborah Sweeney, "Walking Alone Forever, following you; Gender and Mourners' laments from Ancient Egypt", *NIN* 2, 1, 2001b, pp.27-28.

[918] *ibid.* However, Roth also notes that the omission of the husband in a woman's tomb decoration should not be assumed to indicate he was of higher status than his wife, and so would take the focus from her as artistic decorum dictated, nor should it be "attributed purely to the tendency to given men precedence" in depictions of the two. Roth, 1999, p.46; pp.50-51.

owned papyrus. There is still a fragmentation of identity for the female here, however. In taking on the role of Isis, as well as being a reborn *akhet* herself in depictions stressing the eternal, idyllic existence granted to those deemed *mꜣꜥ-ḫrw*, she has a dual identity that is in this case does not require her to take on male attributes. Instead, she is both divine widow and reborn wife.

The skin colour of women like Tutu place this dual feminised role at the forefront of their depictions in relation to their husband's presentation. This may be a way of reentrenching the social, domestic hierarchies that existed in day to day life, ensuring the continued existence of such structures and conventions in the afterlife alongside those who lived within them during their lifetime. Indeed, several texts from the Book of the Dead emphasised the desire for the afterlife, a fearful place for those embarking on the quest for rebirth, to remain as normal and relatable as possible. Spells 189 and 53, for example, detail the deceased's wish to stand upright, and experience normal bodily functions in the next life. In addition, Spell 125, the Negative Confession, refutes deviant mortal behaviour that would act against *ma'at*, such behaviour that was presumably prohibited from the afterlife. Placing the female partner in the role of Isis on her husband's funerary equipment ultimately stressed a reunion of the family group along the lines of domestic hierarchies, expressed through the mythology of the divine couple. The sexualisation of a woman's figure in this context indicates that she functioned as a stimulus for the male ability to recreate via erotic desire, in addition to occupying the role of mourning spouse and bereaved widow.

One wonders if the female individual played differing roles on more than one papyrus. For example, would Anhai have been shown in a manner similar to Tutu and Nasha on her husband's funerary papyrus, assuming he was buried with one, which has not thus far been rediscovered or identified? This would presuppose that the same woman could be both Isis and Osiris on two separate papyri which shared the same purpose, and were owned by individuals with a close connection to each other. This would allow and enable the woman to occupy more than one position within the rebirth matrix. Unfortunately, the fact that the vast majority of funerary papyri from the New Kingdom were owned by men, whose association with Osiris formed the central concern of the documents, negates this supposition to an extent. It seems, based on the surviving evidence, that a woman would have to relegate her own association with Osiris to the sidelines when a male-owned papyrus was doing 'double duty' for both partners. She instead relied on his creative potential and divine male syncretism acting in conjunction with her positioning as a supportive, helpful goddess, rather than having primary agency for

her own rebirth. The association with their husband, who acted as 'Osiris NN', appears to have been considered adequate participation in the Osiris-myth for women such as Tutu and Nasha, for example, one which negated the necessity for them to have been provided with their own documents.

However, an exception to the rule exists. This is BM EA 74136, the papyrus of Di-mut-iwdw, another Chantress of Amun, who was buried during Dynasty Twenty One. The papyrus of Djedkhonsiuf-ankh, BM EA 74135, Di-mut-iwdw's husband, also survives, and both documents were buried in individual wooden boxes with Osiris statuettes atop of them.[919] Quirke considered it probable that the couple shared the same burial, so separate papyri would not necessarily have been needed to deal with the exigencies of separate interment.[920] Unfortunately, both papyri are considerably damaged, and no vignettes remain, if they ever existed. Despite this, the documents are very valuable in that they demonstrate that, for this couple at least, one papyrus serving both partners was deemed insufficient. In addition, both papyri contain versions of Spells 23 to 26-8.[921] While Djedkhonsiuf-ankh's papyrus has an additional text, Spell 162, it is possible that his wife's document also originally included this Spell, which has now been lost through damage. Tellingly, these two papyri do not appear to differentiate between male and female in their inclusion of appropriate and useful texts. If Djedkhonsiuf-ankh's document was intended to provide a guide for Di-mut-iwdw as well, we would perhaps expect to see different Spells included on her papyrus, as a more efficient way of enhancing her ability to be reborn via additional textual support.

Anhai's Spell 110 and a possible prohibition regarding women working in the fields of Yaru

From the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts onwards, the deceased individual was conceived of as living for eternity in the Fields of Yaru, also called the Field of Reeds, reflecting the largely agrarian nature of ancient Egyptian society.[922] This vignette on Anhai's papyrus seems to suggest that, although she was associated with male creative deities *during* the rebirth process, when this process was considered successfully completed her denotative identity once again returns to prominence. With the resumed emphasis on her femininity, Anhai appears to face a

[919] Lüscher, 2010, p.300. BM EA 9872 for her wooden box, dimensions measuring 29.8 cm by 9.5 cm.
[920] Quirke, 1993, p.73.
[921] Quirke, 1993, p.35; p.37.
[922] Andrews and Faulkner, 1986, p.12.

gender specific restriction regarding her activities in the Fields of Yaru, one which necessitated the inclusion of her husband in the vignette. After she was deemed justified, Anhai's continuous, idyllic existence in the Field of Reeds is depicted by the vignette on BM EA 10472, 5, and in the first and second registers of the four making up this scene, her husband Nebsumenu appears for the only time on the papyrus. He is depicted on the same scale as Anhai, although in the first register she is shown as bending at the waist in a pose of adoration and would be taller than him if she were standing upright. Anhai and Nebsumenu both perform agricultural tasks, with Anhai gathering flax and driving oxen to plough a field, while her husband uses implements such as a hoe and sickle. They both travel by boat to pay homage to two mumiform figures, and in the same register, Anhai bows to two other mummies. One of these figures is identified in the textual accompaniment as an *wsir mwt.s nfr.iiti* "Osiris, her mother Neferiyty", although this figure possesses no physical attributes that visually identify it as that of a woman. Indeed, all the mumiform figures in the top two registers of this vignette wear the divine beard, curling at the end, which further emphasises the association of a woman with Osiris as a male deity.

The accompanying text details Anhai's wish to "plough and reap" in the Fields in order to provide herself with "choice food," but does not describe her husband's activities. Part of the vignette depicting the couple working together can be seen below:

> Figure 10: Anhai and Nebsumenu in the Field of Yaru, BM EA 10472, 5. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum; Photograph by C. Crowhurst.

From this vignette, it appears that one duty or task in the afterlife that a woman could not do involved the handling of sharp tools and weapons. Taylor suggests that Anhai's husband had to be portrayed in the Field of Reeds wielding the sickle, for example, because she would not have been permitted to use such a tool.[923] For funerary papyri dating to after the New Kingdom, "the convention of avoiding the blade" was still applied to women who otherwise acted independently of their spouse on their own funerary papyri.[924] Of slightly later date than Anhai's papyrus, Leiden papyrus T.3 belonging to Tayuheret and Cairo papyrus 133 belonging to Herywebkhet, both depict these women as undertaking most of the tasks in the Field of Reeds, yet they also appeared to require the presence of their husband for the activities necessitating the use of a bladed tool.[925] The content of the vignette to Spell 110 indicates, therefore, that once the judgement of Osiris-Anhai had been completed, her pre-mortem female identity would be returned to, and the temporary use of gender fluidity in a transitional state was no longer required. In this vignette, Anhai is most likely shown in her *akhet* form, no longer required to occupy a liminal, transformative position that both allowed for and required gender fluidity and creative adaptations.

Interestingly, the scenes from Ani's papyrus depict him performing very similar duties to Anhai in the Field of Reeds.[926] Just as Anhai does, he bows to deities, travels by boat, worships the Benu bird, and drives two teams of oxen yoked to a plough. The only gender specific job appears to be the use of a sickle to harvest flax, which is present in Anhai's vignette as well as Ani's, but is performed by Anhai's husband on her papyrus. Ani's wife is not present in his vignette. The same is true for the Eighteenth dynasty papyrus belonging to Userhat, BM EA 10009, 3. He, also unaccompanied by a wife, performs much the same tasks and activities as Anhai, and also is shown cutting flax, a 'job' perhaps deemed unsuitable for a woman. In a later papyrus, belonging to another Chantress of Amun, her activities do include performing this task, but this specific depiction is of much smaller scale than her other duties, and the papyrus itself seems to reflect a later tradition to that of Anhai.[927] Spells and vignettes such as those included on the papyrus of Nakht[928] which depicted and described him armed with weapons, repelling dangerous animals like snakes and *heka* stealing crocodiles, would

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[923] Taylor, 2010e, p.258.
[924] Quirke, 1999, p.232.
[925] Andrews, 1978, p.88.
[926] BM EA 10470, 35.
[927] BM EA 10554, 81. The vignette is divided into three registers as opposed to four, and it's owner was most likely buried early Dynasty 22, so during a period of social, political, and cultural change that separated her from the lifetime of Anhai, despite their sharing of the same cultic title.
[928] BM EA 10471, 14 and 16.

presumably also not be suitable for inclusion on a woman's papyrus. However, it seems that this prohibition regarding women using tools and bladed instruments in the afterlife did not apply to goddesses, as Anhai's papyrus depicts a hippopotamus-headed goddess guarding the fifth pylon to the Hall of Judgement holding a knife. In addition, the goddess Nakau, who guards the fourth pylon, also wields a knife. In contrast, Anhai facing these guardian deities, holds a sistrum, a musical instrument with connotations of female sexuality and associations with Hathor, the goddess of women. This further emphasised her denotative identity that would be returned to after her heart was weighed against the feather of *ma'at,* when her temporary, gender-fluid Osirian identity was no longer needed.

A return to performativity and ritual re-presentation

Iti s worth reiterating here that Egyptian art was largely performative, "with every image and hieroglyph functioning to bring about a desired reality"[929], particularly in the fraught, dangerous liminal sphere of death and rebirth. Servajean states that the performative nature of the texts most likely posed a dual problem for the reader/receiver and the author.[930] The writer or scribe had to, out of necessity, consider the way that the reciever could modify or alter the Spell to suit their own individual needs, in a manner that was not required for other genres of literature, such as administrative documents.[931] Gender fragmentation or fluidity was one such method for modification and adaptation of an established tradition, particularly regarding a deceased woman. Cooney suggests that gender transformations, specifically the female's adoption of divine masculine attributes, was only achieved in a "hidden context", one which indicates that the transformation was a "mysterious and secret affair."[932] The space Anhai occupies is liminal, with the potential for rebirth and the much sought-after transformations making the individual's identity mutable and adaptable to a degree. The vignettes included on her papyrus temper this somewhat, but acting in conjunction with the texts, they also have an inherent potentially within the depictions. Although standardised and idealised, the same generic presentation of Anhai, repeated with some variation throughout her papyrus, allowed her feminine sexuality to contribute to her ability to be reborn. However, her adoption of divine male creative power also aided her on her quest for rebirth, imbuing her with a masculine sexual

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[929] Cooney, 2010, p.232.
[930] Frederic Servajean, *Les formules des transformations du Livre des Morts, XVIII - XX dynasties, IFAO,* Cairo, 2004, p.23.
[931] *ibid.*
[932] Cooney, 2008, p.6.

potency that she would not have experienced in life. By adopting a liminal, transfigured identity in this genre, the individual was also able to make use of hierarchical power structures that may have been denied to them at other times. The association of a woman specifically with Osiris gave her access to a position of power defined and entrenched in collective memory through the discourse surrounding the deities' mythological purviews and traditions. Therefore, the prominence accorded to her connotative identity while performing in this liminal space gave her the influence needed to complete the required transformations while not completely denying her denotative identity in the process.

Indeed, this gender fluidity can be seen as "partly due to the performative function of Egyptian art, aimed at establishing whatever was depicted in an alternative reality, such as the world of the gods or the afterlife. In principle, people were depicted at the peak of their energy and beauty in order to remain so forever."[933] Anhai's connotative identity was therefore necessary to enable her to take on male creative attributes and powers to successfully acheive rebirth, yet her denotative identity, in its most idealised form, also had to be included for her to make use of after she had been deemed True of Voice. Anhai's papyrus, alongside a whole host of other female owned funerary items, evidences that "ancient Egyptian women thus played a variety of sexual roles, although some roles were only available to them after death."[934] The role of 'Osiris NN', in relation to women, may not have seemed as problematic to the ancient Egyptians as it can do to a modern observer. Wendrich emphasised that personhood and identity in pharaonic Egypt constituted a "supernatural" element, one that was "closely associated with notions of the Afterlife."[935] She then goes on to say that "identity before or after the moment of death is actively constituted and does not exist outside human communication… [it is] shaped by the interaction of members within a group, or with outsiders."[936] The mythology of Osiris and its presence in cultural collective memory therefore allowed for any individual, regardless of gender, to re-present it and make use of a performative matrix in order to achieve their own rebirth. Ultimately, as Wilfong states, the application of the designation 'Osiris NN' to both men and women during pharaonic history "may reflect an ambivalence not yet fully understood" in regards to ancient Egyptian conceptions of gender.[937]

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[933] Sweeney, 2004, p.67.
[934] Roth, 2000, p.200.
[935] Willeke Wendrich, "Identity and Personhood," *Egyptian Archaeology,* W. Wendrich (ed.), Malden, MA., 2010, p.201.
[936] *ibid.*
[937] Wilfong, 2010, p.168.

Further study and close analysis of women's funerary literature and burial assemblages can only aid our understanding regarding this challenging topic.

Chapter Conclusions

The texts included in Anhai's papyrus detail a continuation of the Osirian mythology that entrenched its truth, effectivness and veracity in collective cultural memory through reoccurance, rather than reenactment. The texts, and presumably accompanying funerary rites and liturgies, are essentially a re-presentation, not representation, of the events enabling Osiris's rebirth after death and dismemberment. The combination of visual and mythical realities enabled women to circumvent the seemingly illogical situation posed by their dual identity in the rebirth process, and undertake the transition through the liminal stage after death via mythological identification with a male deity that gave them a degree of gender fluidity, while still retaining their original sex or physicality. Anhai's Book of the Dead demonstrates that women during the New Kingdom were not always simply included in their husband's funerary literature in order to be reborn, and the Spells and vignettes used on her papyrus show that women did not require texts separated from, or different to, those used for men in the funerary context in order to achieve the same results.

The association of Anhai as Osiris-Anhai allowed her to temporarily identify with the male deity, adopting his attributes without refuting or losing her own identity, which assisted her in traversing the dangers of the Netherworld and ultimately ensuring her rebirth. The higher a woman's status was seems to have impacted on her ability to occupy a liminal position and undergo gender transformations in the highly stratified New Kingdom society, at least as evidenced by the surviving material record. Wielding real power and authority in this world appears to have translated into the ability to more easily take on male attributes of strength, power, and regenerative potential in the next. However, it can be argued that the sex of the subject, as well as presumably their age and to a degree their status, became secondary to the most fundamental transformation they faced: that of deceased mortal into reborn *akh* or *akhet*. The sex and gender of the deceased female was not lost all together, and this fragmentation and gender-fluidity, Cooney suggests, is "not representative of a lack of agency, but rather an expression of her active place within society" in regards to the women who were incorporated

into this rebirth matrix.[938] The funerary literature belonging to Anhai, in her dual roles as Osiris-Anhai overcoming the trials of the Underworld and as a more perfect version of herself after being deemed justified, was just one of the mechanisms in place that detailed, for the élite Egyptian woman in overcoming the finality of mortal death, how restictions imposed on the sexed body could be negated, subverted, and overcome. Ultimately, the Osirian death and rebirth cycle was able to incorporate men and women, associating or syncretising them with this deity without having to fundamentally change the myth itself in order to incorporate the separate sexes. However, men and women did receive a degree of differential treatment in their use of this rebirth matrix, and it seems that more adaptations were needed for women to represent this part of Osirian mythology.

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[938] Cooney, 2008, p.21.

> "Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband."

> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* originally published 1929.

Recent studies on sex and gender in ancient Egypt have aimed to enhance our knowledge regarding disparate groups, their roles and responsibilities, their lived experiences, and their culturally constructed and defined identities within this society. Importantly, analyses such as that of Jaana Toivari-Viitala have shown "that the two options, women as independent issue or as an integral part of a wider context, no longer needs to be considered as polar opposites" in Egyptological research.[939] While the focus of the study may be the portrayal of women, their experiences do not have to be looked at in isolation, as fundamentally incompatible with other individuals based solely on gender. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, it is insufficient to examine women in ancient Egypt as a homogenous, Essentialist group, disregarding factors other than sex when looking at the construction and presentation of the ancient individual. Just as the intersections of the many factors constituting identity must be taken into consideration when undertaking analyses of this kind, so too must the nature and purpose of the sources that provide us with the information regarding our subjects be explored. Using three different genres of literature from the New Kingdom, as well as supporting epigraphic sources and artistic depictions, I have shown that not only does the portrayal of individual women differ between textual genres, but also within the genres themselves in relation to the 'type' of woman encountered therein. This demonstrates that the category of 'women' was not conceived of as wholly rigid, inflexible, and unchanging. However, some culturally imposed conventions did place restrictions on female agency, speech, and presentation within each genre of literature, as has been detailed in each chapter.

Despite the apparent scarcity of female scribes, copyists, and artisans in pharaonic society, the potential for oral dissemination of the texts studied here, as well as the inclusion of established

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[939] Toivari-Viitala, 2001, p.9.

mythical elements within the compositions, suggests that women were not excluded from their transmission and reception, as well as potential composition. Restrictions were placed on the personae, yet these restrictions relied on far more than just the sex of the individual. We do not always see women acting in opposition to men, nor did female characters or individuals always occupy a secondary position in relation to their male counterparts. In the love songs, the female voices were accorded a degree of agency to express their desires, and erotic feelings as told from a female point of view were not condemned as inappropriate nor denigrated. Thus, we see female voices receiving similar, if not the exact same, treatment as the male voices do in this genre. While the female-voiced desires and physical descriptions of women may have been used to please a heteronormative male listening to, or telling, the compositions, the greater likelihood of women achieving their desires in relation to men as well as the overall positive portrayal of female eroticism indicates that the purpose of the songs was not to suppress women as a general group. However, the privileged position within the songs of 'lover' or 'beloved' did relegate other individuals to the periphery of the texts, or excluded them all together. The circumstances of oppression and exclusion resulted from multiple, interlocking factors constituting identity, rather than simply entrenching a hierarchy which relied on a binary division between male and female, with 'male' occupying the dominant position.

In contrast, the speech and actions of female characters in the narrative tales appears to have been manipulated and appropriated in order to establish the male individual as the focus of the text. This appropriation presented the female personae as little more than caricatures, who acted either as a supportive family member or a disreputable, immoral antagonist, their desires and motivations responding to those of the male personae. As such, the ventriloquising of women's voices most likely reflects the agenda of the male scribal élite and initial target audience, and women's words and actions in this genre cannot be taken as representative of genuine female experience. Of course, the fabulous, mythical nature of the narratives do not lend themselves to a veritable presentation of *anyone's* experience, whatever their gender. However, the conventions, biases and inequalities that pervade the compositions, particularly in relation to gender, cannot be ignored. Although the events described by the tales are not 'factual' accounts of daily life, the attitudes informing their content were a product of the socio-cultural context, and as such would have impacted on the experiences of the members of that society to a degree. It is important to recognise that not all male personae in this genre were portrayed in a positive light, and even the invariably male protagonists could face discrimination due to other facets of their identity, such as their age, and status as an 'outsider.' Although the misogynistic nature

of the narrative tales cannot be underplayed, even this genre does not exclusively portray female personae as devious, dishonest, unscrupulous and weak.

The funerary literature from the Book of the Dead included in women's mortuary assemblages give us yet another perspective regarding the speech and presentation of women during the New Kingdom. The words spoken by women in these texts were still most likely 'speech' generated by literate males, who ventriloquised the female voice for a specific purpose. This is, however, ultimately done to benefit the women themselves, enabling them to achieve rebirth and an idyllic continued existence in the afterlife. It also cannot be assumed that the female owners of the funerary papyri had no influence regarding the content included in the documents, as has been discussed. The words they 'spoke' may have been designed primarily for men, as is reflected by the direct association with a god such as Osiris, yet the fact that a woman could successfully utilise these words for her own purpose is telling, especially as the Spells and vignettes were designed to vindicate the individual, portraying them in a wholly positive manner. Indeed, the inclusion of the individual into the rebirth matrix required transformations regardless of sex, and the ownership of funerary papyri by women of a high status suggests that associating a mortal woman with a male god was, for the ancient Egyptians, not necessarily problematic, nor did it require the woman to permanently become male. The liminal, performative space, and the ability to re-present a mythological occurrence, attested to by the funerary literature further added to the potential for the gender fluidity and transformations apparent in the surviving female-owned sources. The women under analysis in this chapter did face additional challenges than those experienced by men in relation to their rebirth process, but were aided by their élite status and access to economic wealth, privileging them over poorer members of society regardless of sex or gender.

As the evidence studied has demonstrated, men and women did not always receive the same treatment during the New Kingdom, both in every day lived experiences as well as in textual portrayals and literary presentations. Restrictions were placed on the gendered body, based on existing power structures and social hierarchies. However, a woman's identity was not always dependant on, and opposite to, that of men. It could be defined in relation to other types of women, for example those of a different social status, and presentations of female characters and personae could be both nuanced and complex as well as stereotypical and one dimensional. Ultimately, this thesis has demonstrated that although sex and gender played a notable role in the creation of power structures in New Kingdom society, which found expression in the

material record, they were not the *only* factors dictating whether an individual would experience discrimination or privilege, acceptance or rejection. The sources examined show that the portrayal of a character or persona depended on far more than just the individuals' physical sex. Men and women were not always conceived of as being diametrically opposed in a simple, uncomplicated dichotomy, and a multitude of factors contributed to the treatment of the subjects present in the extant evidence. As such, the examination of these personae must be intersectional in nature in order to adequately understand privilege, oppression, and the impact of the socio-cultural context which informed the presentation of the gendered individual.

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