Agent nouns in the language of Caxton's edition of *Le Morte Darthur*

An analysis of the distribution and morphosemantic structure of agent nouns in William
Caxton's edition of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*

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Abstract in Norwegian

I denne masteroppgåva vart *agent nouns*, agentative substantiv, i språket til William Caxton si utgåve av *Le Morte Darthur* undersøkt. Eit agentativt substantiv er ein ordformasjon som uttrykker utføraren av verbet i basen. Dei er typisk forma av ein verbal base + ein agentativ suffiks, for eksempel ein *baker (bake + er)* er 'ein som baker'. Ein agent er ein semantisk kategori som er kjenneteikna av at kategori-medlemmane uttrykk visse *agentive properties.* Studien har undersøkt denne typen ordformasjon i *Le Morte Darthur,* som representerer språket i språkperioden *late Middle English.* Dei to overordna forskingsspørsmåla spør på den eine sida om desse formasjonane i forhold til kva som kjenneteiknar distribusjonen av dei i teksten, i forhold til etymologi både av leksema og suffiksa. På den andre sida kva som kjenneteiknar deira morfosemantiske oppbygging i forhold til uttrykking av *agentive properties* mellom agent substantiv, base, og om det er noko skilnad der mellom suffiksa.

For å undersøke agent substantiva vart teksten manuelt lest gjennom og relevante leksem henta ut, medan relevante suffiks i teksten vart søkt etter ved hjelp av programmet AntConc, for å forsikre at alle relevante formasjonar vart inkludert i korpuset. For informasjon om dei enkelte leksem i forhold til etymologi vart Oxford English Dictionary og Middle English Dictionary brukt.

Kort oppsummert var resultata at det er flest *native agent nouns* i korpuset, den mest representerte suffiks er *-er*, dei fleste agent substantive er prototypiske, og det kan virke frå dataen at suffiks *-er* kan forme agent substantiv frå ikkje-agentive basar og gjev derivasjonen *agentive properties*. I tillegg vart to potensielle fyrste attesteringar, *bitrayer* og *offenser*, observert i korpuset.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Abbreviations and conventions

EDF -   English Derived Form, i.e. native derivation

LMD -   *Le Morte Darthur*

CMEPV -   Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse

MED -   Middle English Dictionary

OED -   Oxford English Dictionary

OE -   Old English (c. 600 – 1150)

ME -   Middle English (c. 1150 – 1500)[1]

EModE -   Early Modern English (c. 1500 – 1776)

PDE -   Present-Day English (c. 1945–)[2]

AF -   Anglo-French

AN -   Anglo-Norman

ODEG -   The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar

An. borrowing - Analyzable borrowing

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[1]The starting point for ME is considered to be at the end of the Norman conquest (McArthur, 2003)

[2] The date for PDE was chosen as post-WW2 for simplicity, as it is not studied in-depth and is rather a simple way of referring to the English familiar to and spoken by modern speakers.

1   Introduction

This thesis specifically observes, and analyses agent nouns found in the language of William Caxton's printed edition of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. A general understanding of an agent noun is that it denotes a participant that performs the verbal action indicated by the noun's base. An agent noun is defined by The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar (ODEG) as "a noun with the meaning 'one who or that which does (the action of the verb)'" (1994, *s.v. agent noun*), e.g. a *runner* denotes 'one who runs' (for further discussion on derived agent nouns, see for example Dalton-Puffer 1994, 2011; Ryder 1999; Kastovsky 1985, 2006; Heyvaert 2003; Bauer 2006; Kalaga 2016). These agent nouns are types of nominalizations which belong to the semantic category of agentivity. Agentivity is a semantic category that encapsulates both verbs and nouns and is primarily associated with the expression of controllable happenings. The category is limited by the exhibition of certain semantic properties, and the most central properties in the literature appear to be animacy, causation, controllability, initiative, and volition (for a further discussion on agentivity, see Cruse 1973; Schlesinger 1992; Yang 1997; Heyvaert 2003; Kalaga 2016). These are the central theoretical concerns that this thesis investigates.

The aims of this thesis can be considered two-fold. The first aim is to provide an accurate and complete overview of the agent nouns in *Le Morte Darthur* (*LMD*)[3], including a mapping of the suffixes, etymology of the individual lexemes, and their usage. The second aim is to analyze the relationship between agent noun derivatives and their bases in terms of exhibited agentive semantic properties.

The method involved collecting agent nouns from the raw text through a combination of manual collection by reading and selecting relevant items on the one hand and performing corpus-searches for relevant agentive suffixes retrieved from previous studies on the other hand. These searches were performed using the AntConc software.

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[3]Unless otherwise stated, *LMD* refers to Caxton's edition.

The items were investigated for relevant etymological information concerning year of attestation, language of origin, and frequency using supplementary dictionaries. The supplementary dictionaries used were the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the Middle English Dictionary (MED). The collected agent nouns were classified first in an inclusive system adapted from Kalaga (2016), including unanalyzable and analyzable agent nouns. The tokens were investigated so the agent nouns could be marked for lexical meaning and textual usage. Finally, the analyzable agent nouns were analyzed in terms of the agentive semantic properties exhibited by the derivatives and their bases.

1.1   Research questions

The research questions correspond to the two primary aims of the thesis. They thus concern the overall distribution of agent nouns in *LMD* on the one hand and the morphosemantic analysis of these agent nouns on the other. As a consequence, the hypotheses cover a diverse set of concerns. There are two main research questions, and five hypotheses. The first research question (Q1) is:

Q1: What characterizes the distribution of agent nouns in *LMD*?

Q1 includes 2 hypotheses (H1 & H2). Based on previous observations concerning the language of Middle English and the language of Caxton's publications often containing a large degree of non-native lexemes, H1 assumes that there are more non-native than native agent noun lexemes. Concerning the tendency during Middle English toward an enrichment of agent-realization (Dalton-Puffer, 1994), and the influx of new suffixes during the period, H2 assumes that many of these agentive suffixes found in Middle English are represented in the data.

The first research question thus concerns the characterization of how agent nouns are used throughout the text. The second research question concerns the morphology and semantics of these agent nouns. The second research question (Q2) is:

Q2: What is the morphosemantic make-up of the agent nouns in *LMD*?

Q2 includes 3 hypotheses (H3–H5) concerning the morphosemantic aspect of the agent nouns. Based on the understanding of what an agent noun is (section 2.1 and 2,2), H3 assumes that a majority of the agent nouns in the data will be prototypical agent nouns. Based on the understanding of agentivity as a category where membership is gradable, and degree of membership is based on the number of exhibited semantic properties, as well as an expectation that suffixes can mark derivatives for these properties, H4 assumes that there will be deverbal agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases. Similarly, H5 assumes that different agent suffixes will exhibit different properties and differ in what properties their bases exhibit.

1.2   Structure

The thesis is divided into five chapters, including this introduction. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical position of this thesis as well relevant theoretical background concerning agentivity, derivation, and relevant language-historical information. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used as well as the retrieved data. Chapter 4 presents the basic analyses of the agent nouns found within my corpus, in terms of lexical meaning and basic morphological makeup. Chapter 5 presents the results of the morphosemantic analysis and the discussion of the findings and hypotheses, as well as the summary & conclusion of the thesis.

A final note is on the spelling of the Middle English (ME) lexical items that are present in this study. A Present-day English (PDE) translation is provided when an agent noun is first introduced, however a PDE translation will not be included for every item in every table. Instead, an overview of all the agent noun lexemes along with a PDE translation is provided in Appendix I. All of the translations provided in this appendix, as well as the translations of longer examples into PDE, are my own translations.

2   Theoretical background

This chapter outlines the relevant theoretical background for this thesis. The chapter is threefold; section 2.1 covers the notion of agentivity, its associated semantic properties and presents an understanding of how this category is defined and limited. Section 2.2 concerns the morphosemantics of derivation of agent nouns and builds upon these principles in tandem with the understanding of agentivity proposed in section 2.1, to present an understanding of what a derived agent noun is. Finally, section 2.3 contains a diachronic overview of previous research and of the relevant language-historical details regarding the language period and the textual material that constitutes the data.

2.1   Agentivity

First, it should be briefly discussed what is meant by arguments, participants, and semantic categories. Arguments are defined by The ODEG, (1994, *s.v. argument*) as the "person, other animate being, or inanimate entity involved in the action of the verb" and as "a major element in a proposition". Arguments are the elements taken by the verb in the proposition. A related is the participant, defined in the ODEG in terms of "the case or semantic function of a noun phrase can be called its *participant role*" (1994, *s.v. participant*), and defined by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985: 740) as "entities realized by noun phrases". Participant refers to the semantic function of these noun phrase arguments in the scenario expressed by the verbal structure. Consider example [1]:

[1] She had already read the newspaper article (*CoCA*)

The subject *she* in [1] is an argument that functions as the subject of the verb, and a participant that performs the semantic function of being the agent of having read the newspaper. Syntactic elements can be classified into different syntactic categories, and

similarly elements can be classified into different semantic categories in terms of which semantic function they perform. Agentivity is a semantic category.

Semantic properties constitute meaningful associations of words that limit and define a semantic category. A linguistic category defines a set of expressions where "all of the expressions that belong to the category (i.e. the extension of the category) share properties that make them pattern alike" (Tonhauser, 2008: 334). Thus, a semantic category is comprised of shared semantic properties. However, the extent to which these properties are conclusive limitations of category membership is an issue which will be returned to later in this section as well as in section 2.2.

Turning to the notion of agentivity specifically, it is tied to the nature of what verbs and their participants express and may be attributed to the verb or its arguments. Agentive is a semantic category, one which can be expressed by both verbs and nouns The ODEG, (1994, *s.v. agentive*), defines the agentive as designating "a noun, suffix or semantic role that indicates an agent". Agentivity is therefore closely related to the agent, the semantic role of a participant who controls the happening denoted by the verb. A participant whose semantic role is that of the agent would therefore be an agentive argument, exhibiting agentive semantic properties.

Yang (1997: 675) defines the agentive participant as an "animate being which controls the happening denoted by the verb" and likewise the agentive verb as a verb that "denotes some happening which is controllable by an animate being". Firstly, it can be noted that the central feature of agentivity in the understanding provided by Yang (1997) seems to be controllability. Secondly, we can note that agentivity is a feature attributable to nouns and verbs alike, and it can be expressed by both. We may therefore refer to both an agentive noun and an agentive verb and be referring to the same feature – Cruse (1973) notes that agentivity can be considered a relational feature[4] between a verb and a noun, where an agentive verb implies an agentive participant. Consider the example in [2]:

[2] Devin kicked the ball hard (*CoCA*)

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[4]A similar discussion concerns thematic relations, which according to Parsons (1995: 637) assume that "thematic roles such as Agent, Instrument, Theme,… correspond to relations between events (or states) and things".

The sentence in [2] denotes an action being controlled by an animate being. *Kicked* is an agentive verb, and the agentive verb implies an agentive participant, which would be the subject *Devin*. The main takeaway from this brief discussion is that agentivity may be expressed by both a verb and a noun, also shown by the fact that the agent noun *kicker* is derived from the verb *kick*. Therefore, one can speak of both agentive nouns and agentive verbs.

There are different views on what it is that defines the agentive participant. Yang (1997) considers the agentive participant an animate being with control over the happening. This echoes the definition of the agentive participant from Quirk et al. (1985: 741), who define the agentive participant as the "animate being instigating or causing the happening denoted by the verb". In addition to the notion of control, the concepts of the agentive participant as an animate being, as well as causation, can be seen in these definitions. However, Cruse (1973: 21) defines the agentive as a feature "present in any sentence referring to an action performed by an object which is regarded as using its own energy in carrying out the action." This definition differs from the one provided by Yang and Quirk et al., respectively, primarily in the lack of a required animate being, with Cruse (1973: 16) pointing to what he calls "natural agents" as evidence of agentive features being attributed to inanimate nouns, for example *the wind* in *the wind blew the windows out*.

Furthermore, Kalaga (2016) notes that the agentive must be identifiable as the ultimate cause of a happening, echoing the similar sentiment of Cruse's notion of the agentive participant using its own energy. Both definitions highlight that causation is a central property of agentivity. Additionally, Kalaga (2016) notes that volition is a central property of agentivity. Cruse (1973) also points to volition as a highly relevant property, although one that is separate from agentivity, as well as discussing *effective* and *initiative*. Effective is defined by Cruse (1973: 19) as a feature "present in a sentence which refers to something which exerts a force (literally or metaphorically), not by virtue of an internal energy source, but because of its position, motion, etc." If agentive forces exhibit causation, the effective property is not an agentive property, as it instigates an action by the effect of something else. Effective will therefore not be further elaborated on. From this brief overview the properties to highlight are animacy, volition, initiative, causation,

and controllability, as they define the semantic category of agentivity. The following subsections elaborate on these semantic properties.

2.1.1 Animacy

According to Lowder and Gordon (2015: 85), a fundamental distinction between animate and inanimate entities is regarded as important for language processing. While that discussion is not going to be covered further, it does highlight a fundamental distinction between animate and inanimate participants. The ODEG (1994, *s.v. animate*) defines animate as "denoting a living being… particularly used in the classification of nouns". An animate being is a living entity, and definitions of agentivity such as the one provided by Yang (1997) highlight the agentive participant as a living being. Consider the sentence in example [3]:

[3] We ate dinner at 7:30 because that's when Dad got home from work (*CoCA*)

The agentive participant *we* in [3] denotes animate beings. However, as noted by Cruse (1973), there are nouns that seem to be used agentively, the so-called natural agents, without being traditionally animate. Lowder and Gordon (2015: 86) make a similar statement about 'natural forces' being semantically inanimate but behaving in ways more closely associated with animate entities. Kalaga (2016: 52) points to complex machines with high degrees of automatization as being semantically close to human agents. Dalton-Puffer (1994: 49) notes that there are inanimate agents (although without giving any examples), even if agents are typically animate.

These observations indicate that animacy may not necessarily be an obligatory, isolating feature of agentivity. Cruse (1973: 16) refers to inanimate nouns being able to acquire "temporary 'agentivity' by virtue of their (kinetic) energy". It could be argued that these apparently inanimate agents are an extension of the notion of animacy to usually inanimate concepts. In other words, they are given animate properties, allowing for a contextual agentive interpretation. It is therefore possible, if not typical, for there to be agentive inanimate participants. Animacy is therefore a property that is closely tied to agentivity, and defines its most prototypical members, however it cannot be considered

an isolating feature of agentivity; animacy is for example also exhibited by recipients (Quirk et al., 1985: 741).

2.1.2 Volition

Volition is associated with modality and modal auxiliaries, as pointed out by Aijmer (1985: 11), who refers to volition as a "modal notion" in the traditional view of modal auxiliaries. While that is a discussion not of relevance to the theoretical framework of this thesis, the notion of *willing* seems to be an appropriate description of volition as it relates to agentivity. Volition is defined by the ODEG (1994, *s.v. volition*) as "the action of willing something", with the entry also including features such as intention and promise as shades of volition.

Volition can be understood in terms of an action being intentional, rather than accidental or coincidental. Its allocation to agentivity is noticeable in that the agentive is associated with a controlled action, and a volitional action involves the intentional wanting of that action to be instigated. To illustrate, consider the sentence in example [4]:

[4] They built houses upon houses upon houses upon houses (*CoCA*)

The expectation from the example in [4] is that *they* wanted and intended to build houses. However, volition as an obligatory feature of agentivity is not a universally agreed upon notion. Cruse (1973) considers agentivity and volitivity to be separate, if often co-occurring, while also defining volitivity as a property present if an act of will is stated or implied. The volitive is exhibited insofar as that the agentive participant is assumed to perform the denoted action willingly. Unlike the property of animacy, volition is a property which can limit the category of agentivity from other semantic categories, although it must co-exist with other semantic properties, as simply intending or wanting for an action to occur is not sufficient unless this action is actually performed.

2.1.3 Initiative

As concerns the initiative, Cruse (1973: 20) defines it as "initiation of an action by giving a command". It is related to the idea of an initiator that sets an action into motion, although the initiator does not necessarily perform the action denoted by the verb itself. It can be

associated with taking any type of control over the actions of someone or something, such as in [5]:

[5] The social workers walked the children and Ace's wife out onto the sidewalk (*CoCA*)

In [5], *the social workers* are initiating the walking of *the children* and *Ace's wife* and are thus initiating the action even though they may not fully perform it. However, it also illustrates more generally that initiative is a property that expresses how the agentive participant is the instigator of the action taking place.

2.1.4   Causation

Causation involves being the force behind an event. The ODEG defines the causative as "expressing causation" (1994, *s.v. causative*) and cause as "giving rise to an event or state" (1994, *s.v. cause*). Causation is distinct from initiative in that initiative refers to instigating an action, while causation involves being the ultimate reason for that action being initiated. Returning to the definition of the agentive given by Cruse (1973), the agentive is defined in terms of being the ultimate cause of an event. This separates those initiators that are agentive from others, where being the ultimate cause of an action means that the initiator is not relying on someone or some other force to instigate the action. This property may be especially highlighted in the examples of inanimate agents such as natural forces and sophisticated machinery, where what may separate them from instrumentality is the lack of 'being used' by anyone or anything else. Consider examples [6] and [7] in light of an understanding of causation as a property of agentivity:

[6] The rain drowned me in my sleep. (*CoCA*) [+causative]

[7] The survey asked for demographic information. (*CoCA*) [-causative]

In example [6], *the rain* is an instigator that knocked over something, an event it caused as a natural phenomenon. In [7], however, it is implied that if *the survey* asked any questions it only did so by virtue of having been designed by someone to include those questions. The verb, *asked,* might still be considered an agentive verb, even though its

agentive participant would only be implied in the sentence. Example [6] is causative, whereas example [7] is not. As such, *the rain* is eligible as being an agentive participant in [6] while the same does not appear to be the case with *the survey* in [7], which is then more appropriately classified as instrumental (see subsection 2.2.2).

2.1.5 Controllability

Controllability is not given an entry in the ODEG. Otherwise it is briefly referred to by Kalaga (2016) without any in-depth definition provided, and it seems implied by the definition of agentivity provided by Yang (1997). Otherwise it appears to be seldom discussed in the literature. Perhaps the notion is somewhat implied by the other properties of animacy, causation, and volition. However, controllability appears to be a distinctive property in defining the agentive category, as it expresses a degree of control over the action happening. Consider the example in [8]:

[8] Then she kicked the ball hard to Rosa (*CoCA*)

In [8] the agentive subject *she* exhibits the semantic properties of initiative, volition, causation and animacy, as well as controllability, as *she* is in control of the action of kicking as well as the manner in which the ball is kicked.

Considering these properties in a hierarchy of more and less delimiting agentive properties does not seem necessary, as the category is made up of multiple properties. Rather, a distinction should be made between those properties that are central to defining and limiting the agentive category on the one hand, and animacy on the other. As has been seen, animacy is a prototypically co-occurring property but not defining or limiting in itself.

2.1.6 Defining agentivity

With the brief overview of how agentivity is understood, and what properties it is defined by, the present discussion turns to an understanding of agentivity as a distinct semantic category, one which is characterized by these semantic properties. A primary distinction can be made between defining agentivity as a dichotomy where an element is either agentive or not on the one hand, or in terms of degree on the other. If category-

membership of agentivity is considered a dichotomy, the semantic properties outlined in the previous subsections would be fully isolating agentive properties, where all members of the agentive category exhibited all features. However, as the overview given in the preceding sections indicates, this appears to not be a satisfactory interpretation. The latter approach allows for more inclusivity of elements that become difficult to classify in a dichotomy, and is the approach utilized in this thesis.

Aarts (2007: 27) points out that cognitive linguists have advocated for category membership to be a case of more or less typical exemplars of the category, with the most typical member being the prototype. The more-or-less understanding of category membership relates to the notion of gradience, which Aarts (2007: 34) notes as usually characterized as blurred boundaries between two categories, however also noting that an element can be "a more or less typical member of a category without *necessarily* [emphasis in the original] becoming more or less like another word class" (Aarts, 2007: 234). In other words, there can be gradience within a category between more or less typical members, not just between different categories. This means that we can speak of a gradient relationship of more or less typical elements.

Coates (1983: 231) points out that agentivity is a relational feature between a verb and a noun that seems to be fuzzy, there being no clear cut-off point between what is and is not agentive. Lowder and Gordon (2015) note the possibility of the Proto-Agent, an ideal that shares all the properties typically associated with thematic agents, where an argument may be assigned the agent role to the extent it resembles the prototype. Kalaga (2016: 98) takes a similar approach to categorization in terms of derived nouns, claiming that whether or not an item can be considered a member of the agentive category is a matter of degree. Categorizing agentive elements this way can be rather inclusive, with prototypical agents that are 'better' representatives joined by less typical, more peripheral representatives. If it is established that category-membership in agentivity is gradable, there remains a question of how to define these degrees. The similarity between the category-members depends on the presence of the agentive semantic properties. Where an agentive element would belong on this category-membership scale depends on the presence or absence of the agentive semantic properties outlines in the previous subsections. The prototypical agent will exhibit all of these semantic properties, whereas more peripheral agents will exhibit some but not all.

In the view of agentivity employed in this thesis, whether a given noun or verb is prototypically or peripherally agentive depends on the number of agentive properties that element exhibits. The prototypical agentive verb implies a prototypical agent as the instigator of the action, and the agentive participant of an agentive verb is the agent, and the prototypical agent is therefore an animate being acting with volition and controllability, who is both the initiator and ultimate cause of the action.

Dalton-Puffer (1994) suggests that for semantic interpretations of elements identified in language use we can indicate factors that contribute equally to our interpretation. While her suggestion is primarily focused on deverbal derivatives, these factors can also be relevant to interpretations of the relational semantic properties. The relevant factors mentioned by Dalton-Puffer (1994: 51) are immediate linguistic context, as well as our knowledge of the world and lexical meanings. Lexical meaning includes our knowledge of lexicalizations, which can be generally understood as it is in Lipka, Handl, and Falkner (1994: 7) as the incorporation of complex lexemes into single units with specific content, where idiomaticization concerns the semantic change involved in the process. Dalton-Puffer (1994) and Heyvaert (2003) note on the topic of interpreting derived concrete nouns, respectively, that the agentive is often considered the 'default' reading. Essentially, in applying these principles to the identification of agentive elements, the factors of context, our worldly knowledge, or a lexical meaning must be considered, as they may suggest a different reading.

To summarize, agentivity is a semantic category where membership is a matter of degree. The category, as well as to which degree something is a typical representative of the category, is defined and limited by the exhibition of agentive semantic properties. The prototypical agentive element exhibits all the associated semantic properties, while more peripheral elements exhibit some but not all. The expectation is that the semantic category will be limited by an interplay of multiple semantic agentive properties. At least one of these semantic properties must be a delimiting property, which excludes animacy, which is instead considered a co-occurring property of agentivity rather than a delimiting property. I also recognize that the agentive interpretation is dependent on the factors of linguistic context, as well as knowledge of the world and lexicalizations, and that agentive participants especially are dependent on the properties of the agentive verb. The next section covers the morphological derivation of agent nouns.

2.2   Derivation

This section discusses derived agent nouns as well as more general theoretical concerns regarding derivation. An important distinction must be made between agentivity as a semantic category that is located in the syntactic context in relation between a verb and a noun on the one hand, and derived agent nouns on the other hand. Agent nouns are a type of nominalization that express the agentive meaning. Essentially, the assumption would be that a deverbal derived agent noun is formed from an agentive verb, and 'compartmentalize' this agentive meaning in a noun denoting the agentive participant of that verb, e.g. a *baker* is derived from the verb *bake* and refers to 'one who bakes', the participant of the verb. However, agent noun derivatives' relationship to their bases is not necessarily that straight-forward.

Derivational morphology is a type of word-formation. The ODEG (1994, *s.v. derivation*) defines it as the process of "forming a new word by adding an affix to an existing word; contrasted with COMPOUNDING". Derivation is separate from the process of compounding, and its distinguishing word-formation feature is that of forming new words through affixation, whereas compounding involves the combination of free lexemes. However, this distinction is not always easily recognizable. Burnley (2001: 440) notes that the boundary between compounds and derivations may be obscured. A cause for this can be lexicalization and changes in productivity, which is discussed later in this section. Similarly, derivational morphology is distinguished from inflectional morphology. The difference can be understood as suggested by Kastovsky (2006: 151), namely that derivational morphology is the creation of new lexemes, whereas inflectional morphology concerns the creation of word-forms of the same lexeme from uninflected bases. While the relationship between derivational and inflectional morphology can be problematized further, a rough distinction is sufficient for the concerns of this thesis.

A derivative is a new word formed through derivation – agent nouns are a type of derivative. In addition to derivation by affix, we can also recognize *conversion*, which Bauer (2004: 36) refers to as a "presumed derivational process" where a word in one word-class takes on the characteristics of a different one without a change of form. Some characterize these in terms of affixation by a *zero-affix* (Ø), see for example the overview of affixes provided by Kastovsky (1985). Whether one postulates a zero-morpheme as regards conversion or not is not of great relevance to this thesis. For the present purposes,

the primary point is that both conversion and affixation are processes which derive new lexemes.

Compounding is a different type of word formation, but the nature of synthetic compounds means that some of them can be closely related to derived agent nouns. Synthetic compounds can be understood as they are defined by Lieber (2005: 375), as compounds where the second stem is derived from a verb, e.g. *dream reader* and *truck driver*. Synthetic compounds can in such instances be considered agent nouns as the second stem is a deverbal agent noun, and these synthetic compounds may modify the agentive interpretation of a derivative – a *dream reader* will imply different semantic readings than *reader*, since another argument of the verbal base is included in the structure.

Another type of word-formation to mention is back-formation, also called back-derivation. Kastovsky (2006: 153) notes that it involves a direction of derivation that goes against the normal direction, such as the formation of *edit* from *editor* through the removal of the suffix *-or*, that in a diachronic view can be reinterpreted as being based on the normal pattern. When analyzing a historical language, what seems like a potential base for a derived noun may in fact be a later back-formation that looks like a base when analyzed from a present-day view. Also worth mentioning is the distinction between native and non-native bases for word-formation. Kastovsky (2006: 158-159) also remarks that non-native derivation may exhibit properties not shared by native derivation, while emphasizing that this is a structural question due to originally non-native lexemes and patterns being potentially nativized. The co-existence of both native and non-native patterns may be a cause for synchronic variation (or competition, see subsection 2.2.1) in derivational morphology.

The specific type of derivation that is of interest in this thesis would be nominalization. Derived agent nouns are a type of nominalization and are prototypically, but not exclusively, deverbal. Bauer, Lieber, and Plag (2013) call nominalizations semantic categories represented by derivational morphology, which highlights that they are derivatives exhibiting certain semantic properties. Nominalization is defined by The ODEG (1994, *s.v. nominalization*) as a "noun or noun phrase derived from, or corresponding to, another part of speech or a clause" while also noting that "the derivation of single nouns from words belonging to other parts of speech is also called

nominalization" (ODEG 1994, *s.v. nominalization*). It is this latter understanding of nominalization as a way of deriving new nouns that is utilized in this thesis. Since the agentive category is defined and limited by the agentive semantic properties, derived agent nominalizations would exhibit these properties.

Agent nouns in the English language have been and continue to be formed through derivation using certain suffixes (see Kastovsky 1985). An overview of relevant agentive suffixes is presented in subsection 2.2.4. Different suffixes attach themselves to different bases. Plag and Baayen (2009: 109) note that derivational affixes only attach to bases with certain properties, be they phonological, morphological, semantic or syntactic properties. These base-restrictions raise a concern, namely whether agent nouns can be derived from bases that do not exhibit agentive semantic properties, or if the process is restricted by these particular properties. This concern will discussed in light of the results in chapter 5.

2.2.1 Productivity

Productivity in word-formation relates to the extent such processes are utilized by speakers. Bauer (2004: 87) refers to it as the "extent to which new words may be coined by any particular morphological process", and Baayen and Renouf (1996: 73) understand it as "the statistical readiness with which a word formation is used to coin or understand new words". Both understandings highlight that the productivity of a word-formation process is based on its degree of use in the creation of new words. What is also of note is the difference between whether a process is available or not, and to which extent it is actually used. Productivity therefore involves the question of whether or not a given way of forming a new word is available, and if it is, to which extent it is actually used. Bauer et al. (2013: 32) note availability and productivity as being descriptive of a process which can still be exploited in a speech community to create new words. An example of a productive and available process in PDE is the forming of nominal derivatives by using the nominalizing suffix *-er,* exemplified by agent nouns concerning computer-related activities and professions[5], e.g. *Youtuber,* 'someone who produced videos on Youtube'; *blogger*, 'someone who blogs'. This indicates two aspects of productive word-formation,

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[5] According to the OED, *Youtuber* was first attested in 2006 and *Blogger* in 1999

namely the productivity of a type of word-formation process, as well as which patterns of this process are available.

Innovative word-formation can be viewed in contrast with lexicalized or idiomaticized expressions, which may have been formed through a process that has since ceased to be productive, and the compositional structure of a word may become obscured as it enters the lexicon with a fixed meaning. We therefore may have words that are used in a synchronic speech community where the formative patterns of the words have become opaque to the speakers. A lexicalized expression may not necessarily contain an unproductive pattern. Heyvaert (2003) for example distinguishes lexicalized *-er* formations that are 'fixed expressions' from ad hoc *-er* formations that use the productive schema to form nominalizations for discourse purposes. Lexicalizations may constitute still-productive word formation patterns, but not necessarily. Say for example that *-er* nominalization ceased to be productive. If that were the case, the lexicalized *-er* formations would remain, but later nominalizations would be formed through a different, productive pattern. Bauer (2006: 177) similarly claims it might be fair to say that processes that become unavailable do not vanish entirely, as they leave traces behind in the form of lexicalizations.

A phenomenon intrinsically linked to productivity is blocking. Plag (1999: 50) points to two related concepts that belong to this larger notion, that is the non-existence of a complex form due to the existence of a synonymous form on the one hand, and non-existence of a form due to a homonymous form on the other. The larger notion that is indicated here is that blocking involves the non-existence of a form because of an existing form. The implication of this is that while a general word-formation process may be productive, it may not be available in specific instances due to blocking. This is reflected in what Bauer (2001: 204) refers to as the productivity of one process being able to restrict the productivity of another process., i.e. the non-existence of a process because of the existence of another one. Blocking may therefore restrict the productivity of a given process or form, e.g. the existence of *thief* blocking the common adaptation of *stealer,* which would otherwise be in-line with productive *-er* agent noun derivation.

However, two similar patterns of a given derivational process may seemingly co-exist and perform the same job, in which case they can be said to be in competition. This links back to the fact that different ways of fulfilling a productive word-formation process

may have different levels of productivity. Bauer (2006) brings up the notion of individual derivational patterns competing with each other to fill 'slots' in the derivational system, giving early competition between *-ster* and *-ess* as female-denoting agent suffixes, such as *singeress* versus *singster,* as an example. There are multiple derivational patterns that perform a similar function in the larger productive derivational system, and they compete over performing this function. Competition in word-formation between multiple processes may end with specialization, however it may also result in simply one process remaining productive while another becomes unavailable.

A suggested explanation for the competition between word formation patterns in a diachronic perspective of English nominalizations suggested by Bauer (2006: 189) is that the influx of loanwords into the language were analyzed as complex forms, and thus made available new potential nominalization suffixes. We then have new patterns competing with existing patterns. Competition between word formation patterns can therefore arise because of reanalyzed loanwords 'giving' their structural properties to the larger derivational system of the language, resulting in new formations within the language system which are structured on the borrowed items.

2.2.2   Differentiating derived agents and instruments

There are other semantic categories that can be considered closely related to the derived agent nouns. As this thesis concerns agentivity and derived agent nouns, a thorough overview of other semantic categories is not necessary. However, the semantic category of instrumentality, which can be expressed by derived nouns of similar form to agent nouns, warrants further elaboration. Multiple studies have discussed a hierarchy of semantic readings of nominalizations (see Dalton-Puffer 1994; Ryder 1999; Heyvaert 2003; Lieber 2005), and a common suggestion is that agentive is the default interpretation of a derived concrete noun, and if it is not agentive the other suggested readings are *instrument*, followed by *locative* and *patient*. Instrument is thus closely related to the agent in this hierarchy. The aforementioned factors of context, worldly knowledge, and lexicalizations can suggest these other readings. This subsection will provide an overview of instrumentality and what constitutes the difference between instrumental derivatives and agentive derivatives.

The ODEG (1994, *s.v. Instrumental*) defines the instrumental as an element that "indicates the implement or other inanimate thing used in performing the action of a verb" and that it "contrasts with AGENTIVE". Roughly, it can be generalized that agents instigate/perform an action while the instrument is what they use to do it. Consider the example in [9]:

[9] She then began to dig with a shovel (*CoCA*)

 In [9], *a shovel* is the instrument used by the agent *she* to begin digging. In this case, the difference between the instrument and agent seems quite clear. However, the difference between the instrumental and agentive nominalizations is not necessarily that straightforward.

As regards the similarities between instrumental and agentive derivatives, Kalaga (2016: 52-55) notes that the English morphological system does not possess purely instrumental suffixes, instead sharing the same formative as the agent-forming one. McCloy (2013: 1) makes a similar point in noting that the nominalizing suffix *-er* has both an agentive and instrumental interpretation. Booij (2007: 337) refers to *-er* derivatives as polysemic, i.e. being receptive of multiple accepted meanings, listing agent and instrument as two possible interpretations. There is therefore a formal similarity between instrumental and agentive derivatives, and we cannot isolate the two meanings based on suffix, particularly since the suffix *-er* appears to be the most common suffix for both types of derivative.

Derived instruments and agents thus share formal and semantic similarities. Luschützky and Rainer (2011: 287) claim that this has led linguists to believe there is an affinity between these two semantic categories. A proposal for this type of affinity is provided by Ryder (1999: 288), who points out that a base + suffix derivative that is primarily agentive may be expanded to be instrumental, perhaps implying that an instrumental reading is possible of any agent noun formation. Dalton-Puffer (1994: 50) makes a similar point that many derivatives allow multiple readings, where only context can provide disambiguation. Consider the synthetic compound *coffeemaker*. It could mean 'person who makes coffee', which is agentive, or 'a machine used to make coffee', which is instrumental. Both lexical meanings are acceptable in isolation, but we would

need contextual information to be able to confidently distinguish the two. Consider example [10] and [11] in terms of the word being agentive or instrumental:

[10] You go after the poor coffeemakers?... Well, no. But the reason its a B.S. job is that… (*CoCA*) [agentive]

[11] I washed the dishes, prepared the coffeemaker to turn itself on at six a.m. (*CoCA*) [instrumental]

This highlights the possibility of an instrumental interpretation of a seemingly agentive formation, with example [10] being agentive and denoting a person who prepares coffee, and [11] being instrumental as it denotes the appliance used to make coffee, where some other force must utilize it.

A suggested development that accounts for this similarity between instrumental and agentive derivatives is that instrumental derivatives developed from agentive derivatives. McCloy (2013: 8) notes that a potential explanation for the development of instrumental suffix *-er* derivatives is that the interpretation has developed from the agentive interpretation through semantic extension. That is, the categories associated with *-er* has expanded to include the instrumental category. Dalton-Puffer (1994: 49-50) discusses a hierarchy of the semantic categories in a unidirectional implicational relationship, where an instrument implies an agent, but not vice-versa, and therefore the agentive reading is the default one.

The main concern is that derived agentive and instrumental nouns are formed through similar formal exponents. It is the case that agent is the default interpretation, but to determine whether a given observed derivative is an instrument or an agent one must also rely on immediate linguistic context and knowledge of lexicalized meanings. A word could have been an agentive derivation at one point in time but later become lexicalized with an instrumental interpretation. Dalton-Puffer (1994: 50) uses the example of *tooth-drawer*, which is more likely to receive an instrumental reading in PDE as a receptacle into which one could store dentures, whereas the default reading according to the implicational hierarchy would be a 'a person who draws out teeth', a meaning which is

supported by evidence presented from the Shakespeare corpus. It is therefore necessary to consider the context in which a derivative is used.

2.2.3   Defining the agent noun

The semantic properties of agentivity and its role in nominal derivation are the bases for an understanding of what defines the derived agent noun. Firstly, the agent noun is derived through suffixation which produces a concrete nominal derivative. Its base is prototypically verbal, but agent nouns may also be derived from nouns and even adjectives. Secondly, there is a semantic component, where the derivative exhibits the agentive properties and is thus agentive. In a way, derived agent nouns 'compartmentalize' the content of an agentive relation between an agentive verb and its participant. However, whether this agentive relation can be encoded by the suffix or whether it must be present in the structure of the base is uncertain, as there may be agent nouns formed from non-agentive bases. As an example of agent noun derivation, consider the agentive verb *kicked,* from which the agent noun *kicker* can be derived, which would denote the participant who kicks in that specific scenario. However, an agent noun is not necessarily an agentive participant of the verb in the sentence that it appears in. Consider the example in [12]:

[12] The police arrested the killer (*CoCA*)

In [12], *killer* is not an agentive participant of the verb *arrested. Killer* is the participant being affected by the action performed by *the police*, the agentive participant of the verb in that sentence. However, *killer* expresses the agentivity of the verbal base in the clausal structure implied by its meaning, i.e. 'one who kills'. This highlights the distinction between agentivity expressed in a syntactic structure, such as *the police* being the agentive participant of the verb *arrested* in [12], and the agentivity expressed by derived agent nouns.

At this point it is also necessary to take synthetic compounds into account, as they provide additional information about the relational agentive structure. As an example, say the synthetic compound *ballkicker* was formed from *ball + kicker,* which would contain the information not only of who kicks, but what they kick. Synthetic compounds therefore

contain more information about the internal structure of the scenario expressed by the agent noun.

As for the different types of agent nouns, a main distinction in usage of agent nouns have been identified in the literature (see for example Heyvaert 2003), namely occasional on the one hand and habitual on the other. Additionally, a third type of agent noun may be specified, referred to as agentive experiencers. This type categorizes certain experiencers as peripheral agent nouns. Agentive experiencer refers generally to subjects of experience verbs that contain some properties of agentivity. Experiencers are tied to verbs relating to feeling and experiencing. Kalaga (2016: 64) refers to experiencers as subjects of mental or state verbs, whereas agents are associated with actions. Booij (2007) notes that a very general understanding of agent would include the subject of experience and belief verbs.

There are attempts at explaining why some experiencers may be considered agents. An explanation is provided by Schlesinger (1992: 317), who notes that experiencers having agent-like characteristics makes sense due to common perceptions that people have some measure of control over their feelings. This indicates that to a certain extent, experiencers can exhibit controllability and volition. Additionally, Kalaga (2016: 64) notes that experiencers and agents share morphosyntactic properties (such as being derived through the same suffixes, such as *-er*). Therefore, certain experiencers may exhibit agentive properties and be considered peripheral agent nouns.

Where agentive experiencer is a way of categorizing certain peripheral agent noun formations, the distinction of habitual and occasional agents refers to usage. The difference between occasional and habitual use is, as stated by Kalaga (2016: 68), that some agent derivatives are interpreted as performers of actions while others express habituality. The former may be called actual or occasional agents, while the latter may be called habitual agents. Habitual agents are also sometimes referred to as professional agents, since they are often used to denote professions. Professional agents may not necessarily involve the performance of an agentive action at all – one can be an *engineer* by meeting the formal requirements to obtain the title. Habituality is associated with repetition, although some individual actions may suffice to characterize the use as habitual. For example, a *betrayer* only needs to perform the action of betrayal once to be habitually characterized as a someone who betrays.

Different from the habitual agent derivatives are the so-called actual or occasional agents. I will primarily use the latter term, occasional agent. This usage is more directly associated with performing the action implied by the base, without being habitually characteristic of the performer. It is the individual performing of an action and the use of derivational systems for an immediate discourse purpose. Kalaga (2016: 69) mentions that you can paraphrase the occasional uses as "somebody who is V-ing at the moment". This may also be why these agents are sometimes referred to as actual agents, since there is a clearer correspondence to an immediate action.

The distinction of habitual and occasional, unlike the fundamental distinction of agents and instruments as distinct derivatives formed through similar patterns, refers to a difference in terms of usage. It is not in reference to different morphological patterns, but instead a way of reckoning with different uses of these derivatives. Additionally, the notion of agentive experiencers concerns peripheral agent nouns which relate to mental and experiencer verbs.

2.2.4 Agentive suffixes

Now that a basis for the more general theoretical concerns regarding agent nouns has been provided, this section focuses on providing an overview of nominalizing suffixes recognized as being the predominant agent noun-deriving suffixes. The overview comprises suffixes that continue to be productive or have been historically productive before or during the periods of relevance to this thesis. Some of these now unproductive suffixes remain in the modern lexicon. The suffixes and formations I take into consideration in this section are those that have already been frequently included in the literature concerning morphology, word formation and semantics, both in terms of synchronic and diachronic derivation (see Kastovsky 1985; Dalton-Puffer 1994; Ryder 1999; Heyvaert 2003; Lieber 2005; Kemenade and Los 2006; Dalton-Puffer 2011; Bauer, Lieber, and Plag 2013; Kalaga 2016). The overview will include relevant information relating to etymology, productivity and function.

2.2.4.1   -er

The nominalizing suffix *-er* is perhaps the most productive agentive suffix, being one of the "most productive derivational morphemes in English" (Ryder, 1999: 269). The expectation is that this will be reflected in the data analyzed in this thesis, which will be

returned to in chapters 4 and 5. The suffix is of Old English (OE) origin, originating from the OE suffix *-ere,* and has remained a productive nominalizing suffix. Ryder (1999: 270) notes that the referents of the OE *-ere* forms are overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, human, which is contrasted to PDE *-er* derivatives which have a wide variety of referents. An exemplification of this is its usage in deriving both agents and instruments. However, the primary function of *-er,* as noted by Kastovsky (1985: 224), is still deriving agent nouns. Ryder (1999: 271) similarly makes note of the fact that agents and instruments are still the most common semantic properties of *-er* derivatives. In PDE, it can be considered the primary agentive suffix.

In addition to the common suffix *-er*, there is an agentive suffix that is frequently considered an orthographic variant of the suffix *-er,* namely the suffix *-ar*. In The OED (*s.v. -ar*) the suffix is glossed as a variant of *-er*, and a suffix of agent nouns, while noting that the variant was common in northern dialects. Kalaga (2016: 74) notes that agent nouns ending in *-ar* entered as "Latinising refashionings of an earlier *-er* form", such as *scholar* from earlier *scoler.* The relation between *-er* and *-ar* derivatives in the data of this present thesis will be an aspect of the basic analyses in this thesis, assuming that such derivatives are present in the data.

2.2.4.2   *- or/our*

The suffix *-or/our* came into English from French. It formed agent nouns in ME and Early Modern English (EModE). Several agent nouns ending in *-or/our* remain in use in PDE, although the suffix itself is, according to the OED (*s.v. -or*), no longer productive. Several borrowings that had the ending in the French original that could be called agentive semantically while not being a true derivation also survive. Examples include *traitor, dictator, savior, warrior*. Some agent nouns may have ended in *-or/our* but another spelling variant become the common form with the *-or* ending becoming obsolete, e.g. *barbour,* whereas in PDE *barber* is preferred. Note that many of these examples cannot be called truly derived agent nouns, as they are themselves loanwords rather than native words formed upon assimilated non-native structures. Chapter 3 further clarifies this issue of categorization.

2.2.4.3 -ary

While the suffix *-ary* may be mostly associated with forming adjectives, it may also be a nominalizing suffix and can derive agent nouns, such as *adversary.* According to the entry found in the OED (*s.v. -ary*), the suffix is of Latin and French origin, and its use in deriving agent nouns appears to have been limited in productivity.

2.2.4.4 -ess

The suffix *-ess* was historically productive in forming female personal nouns, which would include female personal agent nouns. It is of French origin, and it had "great productivity in the Middle English period, when many coinages on native nominal bases were formed" (Kalaga, 2016: 80). The fact that it would attach itself to native bases showcases its productive assimilation into the native derivational systems. The suffix as an agent noun-forming suffix primarily derives from another agent noun, and inherits the agentive structure denoted by that agent noun.

2.2.4.5 -ant

The suffix *-ant* entered English through borrowing. The OED (*s.v. -ant*) lists it as partially borrowed from French and partially borrowed from Latin, while Kastovsky (1985: 223) refers to it as being borrowed from French and deriving primarily on a Neo-Latin basis of coining. According to the OED, borrowings ending in *-ant* are attested from the 13th century onwards, while native *-ant* formations are attested from the 15th century.

2.2.4.6 -ster

The suffix *-ster* is of Germanic origin. Kastovsky (1985: 225) and Bauer (2006: 179) claim, respectively, that *-ster* originally had a female-denoting meaning, a female 'alternative' to *-ere* formations, but that this gender-specific connotation was later lost. Also noted by Bauer (2006: 179) is the fact that *-ster* derivatives came to denote professions, with this general meaning being attested since the 14th century, for example *seamster* (from which female *seamstress* is derived, highlighting how *-ster* became a gender-neutral suffix).

2.2.4.7 Ø/conversion

The final form of derivation discussed in this subsection is conversion/zero-affixation. As previously mentioned in section 2.2.1, this process has been referred to as both an instance

of affixation with a zero-affix (Ø) and as an instance of conversion. The process is productive in PDE, although its productivity regarding specifically modern agent noun derivation is not a question this thesis intends to answer. These concerns aside, several agent nouns have been derived through conversion, e.g. *spy* and *cook*.

This brief overview of the suffixes should provide a general picture of what type of suffixation one should expect when investigating agent nouns. The proceeding section will provide diachronic overviews of previous studies, as well as language-historical details that are of relevance to the aims of the thesis.

2.3   A diachronic overview

There are mainly two previous studies on noun derivation and the development of suffixation that are the central inspiration for this thesis. These studies are the investigation of agent nouns in the language of Shakespearian drama by Kalaga (2016), and the study on ME derivation in Dalton-Puffer (1994). These two studies will be briefly elaborated on. Dalton-Puffer (1994) compares derived concrete nouns of ME to derived concrete nouns found in Shakespeare. In so doing, she presents an overview of agent-forming derivational suffixes from both ME and the language of Shakespeare, which represents EModE. The term *derived concrete nouns* is used since it focuses on multiple different semantic possibilities (such as agent, instrument, and location) and the hierarchical relations between them. Based on the study, Dalton-Puffer (1994: 56) concludes that certain tendencies can be observed, namely "shifts in the morphosemantics of concrete noun derivation from Middle English to Early Modern English" and that "the realization of the Agent and/or Attributive categories are enriched considerably, not least through loans from French and Latin" (1994: 56). The study's timeframe and aims inform this thesis in the way that it concerns itself with agent nouns both before and after the time of the publication of *LMD*. It is therefore of interest to see how these findings compare to the tendencies observed in that study.

Kalaga (2016) studies agent nouns in Shakespearian drama, and the study builds on an understanding of agentivity and agent nouns so as to be able to present a comprehensive synchronic account of Shakespearean agent nouns. In connection with doing so it presents a model for a framework in order to cover the "complex interrelations

of the formal and semantic properties of nominalisations" (Kalaga, 2016: 137). This approach opts for a graded category membership, as well as an inclusive method of classification of the agent nouns. Kalaga (2016) concludes that the suffixes *-er, -ist,* and *-ess* are the most productive suffixes in Shakespeare's word-formation, while noting that Shakespeare made use of almost all available Agent-forming suffixes. The present classification of agent nouns used in the present study was principally inspired by the system used by Kalaga (2016). How the methods of classification in that study have been adapted for this thesis is elaborated on in chapter 3.

2.3.1 William Caxton and the Middle English period

William Caxton's edition of *LMD* is perhaps the most well-known edition of that particular narrative, and it was for a long time the only known edition. However, it is not the only version of Malory's *LMD* that we know of. In 1934, a manuscript was discovered at Winchester college, and it is neither an original version penned by Malory, nor is it Caxton's printed edition. Sandved (1968) points out that this Winchester Manuscript is assumed to have been composed a little earlier than Caxton's edition, but that it is roughly contemporary to it, and that they are different versions of a common original.

In addition to choices made regarding the language of the main narrative, Caxton's edition includes his own preface and table of contents. Sandved (1968) notes that there are parts of Caxton's text to which there is no parallel in the Winchester manuscript. Additionally, as pointed out by Blake (2001: 531), Caxton revised *LMD,* avoiding alliteration and replacing Malory's vocabulary with general rather than specific words, usually of French origin. This highlights two things. Firstly, it must be kept in mind that Caxton's edition is not the only available version of *LMD*. Secondly, it remains the case that Caxton's printing contains enough unique revision choices to be a worthwhile object of language study on its own.

Furthermore, William Caxton is an oft-mentioned figure when it comes to the historical development of the English language. Caxton's establishing of his printing press in London in the late 15th century is considered by the *Cambridge History of the English Language* as the start of the transition from ME to EModE, the reason being that printing played a vital role in establishing a later written standard. The publications of Caxton thus embody a point in the development of the English language between the

older ME conventions and the later standardization of EModE and beyond. In his translations from French, Caxton would "increase the number of words of French origin by adding doublets to the words in the original" (Blake, 2001: 531). It is also noted by Blake (2001) that the prose style now referred to as 'clergial' or 'curial' was popularized by Caxton, a style which is characterized by amongst other things, and most importantly for the present purposes, Latinate constructions. The supposed dominance of Latinate constructions and the increase of French-origin vocabulary are of interest as far as the stylistic choices made by Caxton go. It is interesting to see whether the dominance of Latinate constructions and French loans will also apply to the distribution of agent nouns.

Turning the focus to the language period generally, the relevant language period as concerns this thesis is ME (c. 1150–1500) and EModE (c. 1500–1776). The period of Late ME as it moved toward EModE is characterized not only by the impact of French in ME, but an even more increased influx of non-native words and patterns from Latin. Kastovsky (2006: 167) notes that this transformed the homogeneous vocabulary into the system we have today, with a suggested 80 percent of PDE vocabulary being non-native. Additionally, as Kastovsky (1985: 223) points out regarding ME, the period is characterized by the loss of older suffixes and the introduction of new ones, often through borrowing, such as the adoption of suffixes from loanwords, such as the suffix *-ery,* borrowed from French, being used in native word-formation, e.g. *eatery, fishery*. ME can therefore be partially characterized as a mid-point between the native-dominated vocabulary of OE and the dominant vocabulary of non-native origin in PDE.

From the early ME period to the EModE period, as pointed out by Fikkert, Dresher, and Lahiri (2006: 145, 147), the vocabulary changed considerably, and there was a reduction in morphological endings. This reduction applies especially to inflectional endings – as already noted, there was an influx of borrowed derivational endings even though older ones were lost. As noted by Burnley (2001), in the later period of ME, English reasserted itself in discourse fields that had been dominated by Latin and French. Naturally, the co-existence of English alongside Latin and French would influence and change the vocabulary. This gradual development from a predominantly native vocabulary to predominantly non-native vocabulary is one aspect that characterizes the variation of ME. Another aspect is orthographic variation.

Burnley (2001: 410) notes that writing practices of the time preserve variations of a sort common in spoken language. This results in orthographic variation because of varying pronunciation or different methods from scribe to scribe for representing spoken language. However, variation may have occurred also because of inconsistency in rendering speech in writing. This reflects a lack of a national written standard, and results in a written system where forms are variable and the meanings of recognizable forms unpredictable. In terms of agent noun derivation, this could be observed in for example variation in the use of seemingly different suffixes that are indeed only orthographic variants – frequently recognized as such are the suffixes *-er* and *-ar,* an issue which is covered in section 4.4.

As concerns other foreign influences on the changes and variation, Burnley (2001: 438) notes that a few words from a large number of languages were transmitted into ME through Latin and French, as well as the direct foreign influence upon ME from Dutch and Flemish. In terms of derivational suffixes, Burnley (2001: 449) notes that French and Latin were the most prolific sources of new suffixes, a substantial number of which were fully assimilated in ME. The large degree of assimilation of French and Latin derivational affixes reflects the generally large influx of French and Latin vocabulary, as it is through vocabulary that borrowed derivational forms tend to enter the native system of the language.

As regards word formation, the influx of non-native influences is expected to have resulted in new available derivational forms. The adoption of new word forms from other languages is accompanied by, as Burnley (2001: 445) notes, a process of analysis that identifies the structure and, while retaining the stem, attaches to it the inflectional morphemes of the recipient language. However, it may also be the case that the adopted form is analyzed into a base and affixal morphemes, in which case the word and the identified morpheme may become assimilated into the native language systems. This means that adopted foreign words could contain affixes which may become productive, and the influx of foreign vocabulary thus meant that ME had a large supply of derivational agentive suffixes, both native and non-native. As regards agent noun derivation and the concerns of this thesis, it can be expected that there will be observed both native and non-native lexemes, suffixes, and bases.

2.4   Summary

This chapter has provided the theoretical outline for the aims of this thesis. The overview has been threefold, with a focus on agentivity, agent noun derivation, as well as a diachronic overview. The first section discussed the understanding of agentivity for the purposes of this thesis. The second section built upon this understanding as well as the principles of derivation to provide a definition and understanding of what constitutes a derived agent noun. Finally, the last section provided an overview of relevant studies and concerns regarding the historical language of ME, as well as historical information relevant to the primary interest of this thesis – the language of William Caxton's publication of *LMD*. The next chapter will provide information about the data and methodology used to conduct the present study, as well as certain preliminary results from the data collection.

3   Data & Method

This chapter presents the data of the thesis, as well as the method employed to retrieve an inventory of agent nouns from this data and the method employed for the analysis. Additionally, it will present a preliminary overview of the collected and categorized data.

3.1   The Data: *Le Morte Darthur*

The primary data is the language of the 1485 edition of Thomas Malory's *LMD*, printed and published by William Caxton, and includes Caxton's own preface and table of contents. It is a literary text and it represents a historical language, namely late ME.

Furthermore, it must be noted that we can expect a great deal of orthographic variation in the text. As mentioned in section 2.3, spelling variation was common in Late ME. This variation can be problematic when analyzing nominalizations. Orthographic variation can give the impression of different lexemes within the text, even if this is not actually the case. This is expected to be especially apparent with the suffixes *-ar* and *-er*, which are generally considered orthographic variant of the same suffix. They were considered distinct for the purposes of simplifying the inventory collection process. The basic analysis of the usage of agent nouns will determine if they constitute orthographic variation, or if they in any cases represent distinct lexemes.

To get access to *LMD*, a digital copy was retrieved from the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse (CMEPV). The corpus, according to the description on the website, is a collection of Middle English texts made searchable. It is a component of the Middle English Compendium, published by the University of Michigan. The corpus contains *LMD* in its entirety, but it is not a suitable corpus for the further concordance searches that will be necessary for the analysis, due to its more basic search functionalities.

The software AntConc was used to facilitate further concordance searches. The software, a concordance program that allows for the input of a directory of text files to

essentially create a searchable corpus, was central to limiting the inventory of this thesis. The copy of *LMD* retrieved from CMEPV consists of 9 857 word types and 352 647 tokens, according to the AntConc-generated word list. I downloaded the entirety of *LMD* as text files, which was then used as a directory in AntConc. It allowed for easy 'double-checking' of each item collected manually. In addition, agentive suffixes one could expect in a Late ME text, as based on previous studies (see subsection 2.2.4), were searched for.

In addition to reviewing the inventory of agent nouns using the AntConc software, I consulted a modern paperback edition of *LMD*, published in 1996, for cases that were unclear due to orthographic variation. The editors have mainly regularized the spelling to fit modern conventions, while otherwise keeping the vocabulary and syntactic structure of the ME original. Any modern reader would likely still consider the language archaic, but it is the regularized spelling that is the motivation for taking a modern edition into consideration for the inventory collection. The choices made by the editors of this paperback edition were used as aids in cases were spelling variation caused uncertainty. An example of this would be the nouns *lower* 'someone of a lower rank' and *lover* 'someone who loves', both frequently spelled as *louer* in Caxton's edition, and appearing in similar contexts of someone's person or character being described. It would then have to be decided whether or not a given word was *lover*, which would be included in the inventory, or *lower*, which would not be. The paperback edition was used as a supporting tool in such uncertain cases, but only in regard to spelling variation, as it was not utilized for any of the PDE translations.

3.1.1 Supplemental dictionaries: OED and MED

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the Middle English Dictionary (MED) were used for etymological information, and they would also give some indication of what the meaning of a given word was in ME. It is also the case that the bases of derived agent nouns cannot necessarily be expected to appear in *LMD,* and therefore I had to rely primarily on other sources for information about them. The OED and MED provide sufficient information in this regard. Both dictionaries are employed to further provide solid etymological information, as one dictionary might provide information where another is lacking.

The OED is generally viewed as the accepted authority on the English language. It provides historical information for all its individual entries. Firstly, this historical information provides insight into the origins of each word. Secondly, since it gives a description of the different meanings of a word, quotations found therein allow a certain glimpse into how the word may have been used in the relevant language period. The OED provides information about spelling forms, etymology, language of origin, first attestations, and indications of a word's different meanings at different points in time over quite large timespans.

The MED is another component of the Middle English Compendium, and it is a searchable dictionary of Middle English. It is the world's largest searchable database of Middle English lexicon, covering the period of 1100 to 1500. An immediate advantage of using the MED is that it recognizes a greater variety of the spelling variations that appear in *LMD*. The varied forms are sometimes challenging to look up in the OED, since it does not necessarily recognize them. However, an OED search could be more easily facilitated by using alternate spellings provided by an MED. The MED also links directly to the OED as a relevant dictionary for most word entries. A limitation of the MED interface is that its etymological information tends to be more limited than that of the OED. The MED provides information about spelling forms, etymology, meaning definitions, and its quotations. Looking up agent nouns and their proposed bases in both the OED and the MED provides well-covered background for etymological information.

3.2   Method: Inventory collection and analyses

The method of collection was centered on being able to retrieve each agent noun lexeme that appears in *LMD*. The criteria used for collecting items are based on the understanding of agentivity and agent nouns that was outlined in chapter 2. I retrieved potentially eligible lexemes manually by reading through the text. While it is a time-consuming undertaking, it is also thorough. An initial larger inventory was collected, which was then double-checked using the AntConc software. Each item would also be looked up in the OED and the MED. This meant that I could include more items, since it was possible to later verify them, and potentially discard those that did not meet the criteria for being agent nouns. Collecting the inventory this way was also more efficient than looking up each word individually while going through the text.

In addition to the manual cataloguing, agentive suffixes were searched for using AntConc. These suffixes were gathered from previous studies (see Kastovsky 1985, Dalton-Puffer 1994, Dalton-Puffer 2011, Kalaga 2016). However, relying entirely on searching for this selection of suffixes could mean excluding words of interest that do not fit into that schema. On the other hand, manually extracting items by reading the text has the disadvantage of possible human errors. Therefore, a combination of the two methods seemed to be the most rigid way of retrieving an inventory that is representative of all agent nouns in *LMD*. The selection of eligible suffixes was searched for, and these findings could then be compared to the inventory of agent nouns, lest an occurrence of an agent noun should be missed. After doing this it became apparent that there were no items from this 'suffix-inventory' that did not appear in the manually-selected agent noun inventory. There remains of course a possibility, if a very small one, that something may have been missed.

Words were noted as relevant based on several factors. Firstly, there was the form. Secondly, I considered the immediate linguistic context the noun occurred in, to rule out other possible interpretations. A third consideration was that sometimes the words simply looked recognizable as agent nouns, due to similarity in shape to agent nouns that continue to be used in PDE. The size of the initial collection and the number of the discarded words will be provided in section 3.3.

3.2.1 Classifying the inventory of agent nouns

To classify the agent nouns, a system of categorization used by Kalaga (2016) was adopted, where identified agent nouns are organized into three categories in terms of analyzability, namely unanalyzable borrowings, analyzable borrowings, and true derivatives. I modified it slightly, by expanding the *unanalyzable borrowing* classification to a *unanalyzable items* classification, which includes any potential native items that were unanalyzable in addition to borrowings. The system of classification means the inclusion of items that are not morphologically analyzable but bear a resemblance to such item both in shape and in meaning, even if only as a point of comparison. An overview of the categories is provided in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1*: System of classification for agent nouns*

Unanalyzable items	Analyzable Borrowings	True Derivative
Agent noun in terms of semantic features, but not analyzable as a derived agent noun, no potential synchronic base.	Agent noun that can be analyzed synchronically as a derived agent noun, but are etymologically borrowings	Agent noun derived within English.
e.g. *traytour, carpenter*	e.g. *juster, conquerour*	e.g. *huntresse, accusar*

Unanalyzable items are included in an attempt to deal with the task of deciding "whether particular words could be considered to bear the affix in question" (Bauer et al., 2013: 42), as well as in the interest of being inclusive as concerns meaning and usage. An example is *traytour* 'traitor', meaning 'one who betrays', which looks like a derived noun with an *-our* suffix, is not actually divisible into a *trayt* base + *-or* suffix[6]. It is not a derived agent noun, even though it looks like one at first and its meaning of 'one who betrays' is consistent with agent noun semantics. The semantic and deceptive formal similarities necessitate consideration in terms of being a semantic agent noun, although only as concerns distribution and usage, as these items are unanalyzable in morphosemantic terms.

Analyzable borrowings are items that are analyzable as derived agent nouns in terms of their form and meaning, but etymologically speaking they are not a base + suffix derivation formed within English. However, the possibility of a synchronic base exists – they may have been formed within English, either in the ME period or earlier. For example, *conquerour* is listed as a borrowing in the OED and the MED, but it is theoretically possible for it to be analyzable as *conquer + our*, since the verb *conquer* was also a borrowed verb that co-existed synchronically with *conquerour* in ME. However, derivatives where we might recognize a potential base now, but where that base would not have been synchronically available, are not considered analyzable. An example is *dictator*, which to a modern speaker may be analyzable as *dictate + -or*. But the verb *dictate*, a later borrowing from Latin, is not attested in the OED before 1577 and is not

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[6] According to the OED and the MED, the English word *traitor/traitour* originates from Old French *traitor/traitre*

attested in the MED at all. *Dictator* is therefore synchronically unanalyzable, since no base seems to have been theoretically or actually available in ME. This also means that any base that entered later as a result of back-formation is excluded from this category. The analyzable borrowings are perhaps especially interesting if the suffix they can be analyzed as carrying is also attested as being used in native derivation, as they might then give indications of potential restrictions on how non-native suffixes are adopted.

Finally, the classification of 'true derivative' constitutes those agent nouns that are native agent nominalizations. They are analyzable as derivatives, and the etymological information provided by the OED and the MED described the etymology as being native derivation. This would include agent nouns such as *talker*, derived in English from the verbal base *talk*, first attested in 1386. True derivatives and analyzable borrowings are similar categories, the differentiation is key however as the true derivatives are the agent nouns where conclusions concerning morphosemantic analysis can be confidently drawn, whereas analyzable borrowings necessitate a degree of speculation in this regard.

3.2.2 Method: Analyzing the inventory of agent nouns

To answer the research questions, the analyses have to provide information about the distribution of the agent nouns on the one hand, and test the theoretical aims concerning morphosemantic make-up and agentive properties of the agent nouns and their bases on the other. A categorized inventory is presented in section 3.3. The inventory is considered in terms of the characteristics of analyzability, suffixes, etymological origins, and the syntactic category of the bases of the analyzable items. The bases are also categorized in terms of etymological origin and syntactic category. I also consider the frequencies of agent nouns in *LMD*, while keeping in mind that which words are most frequent in a literary story is probably mostly dependent on what the plot requires.

The entire inventory of agent nouns is analyzed in terms of usage, i.e. each token is considered in order to retrieve information regarding its usage and lexical meaning. Additionally, all analyzable items are analyzed on a basic morphological level in terms of base + suffix.

Following this basic analysis of the inventory in terms of usage, the basic morphological structure and lexical meaning are the background that the morphosemantic

analysis builds upon. This analysis considers the agentive semantic properties exhibited or not exhibited by the bases and by the agent derivatives. This analysis considers these properties (see section 2.1) and the question whether there is a difference between the properties of bases, as well as those of the derivatives, in terms of the different suffixes.

3.3   A preliminary overview of the collected data

This section will provide an overview of collected data, including how it has been catalogued and organized in terms of analyzability, as a preliminary overview for further analysis. The initial manual collection consisted of 121 lexemes, of which 32 items were discarded as they did not meet the criteria after further checking. The preliminary inventory thus consists of 89 agent nouns, with 521 tokens. In referring to the items one orthographic form will be used to represent each item. For example, while *traytour* occurs as *tratour*, *traytour* and *traitour*, they are all considered to be representative of one lexeme, *traitour,* and one form will be used to refer the lexeme, and if spelling variation is referred to it will be specified as such. The general overview of the agent nouns in terms of analyzability is provided in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: *Overview of agent noun inventory*

Corpus info	Unanalyzable items	Analyzable borrowings	True derivatives	Total
N. of types	14	30	45	89
Frequency	139	230	152	521

As can be seen, there are more analyzable items than unanalyzable items. 14 lexemes were classified as unanalyzable, and 75 were classified as analyzable – 30 as analyzable borrowings, and 45 as true derivatives, the largest group of lexemes. Concerning frequency, the total number of tokens is 521, with the analyzable items being the most frequent overall. There are 139 tokens of unanalyzable items, and 382 tokens of analyzable items, with analyzable borrowings being the most frequent group with 230 tokens. These items are discussed in-depth in chapter 4. This is for preliminary purposes the overall distribution of the agent nouns, classified by analyzability, in *LMD*.

An important thing to note is that some *-ar* and *-er* suffix items appear be the same lexeme (see subsection 2.2.4). For example, both *kepar* and *keper* can be found in the

inventory. If they can be considered separate in any meaningful way, or simply orthographic variants, will have to be determined by the contextual analysis, even though the expected outcome is that they are orthographic variants.

Another aspect of the analyzable agent nouns is the bases from which they are derived, either actually or potentially. While agent nouns are prototypically deverbal, they can also be derived from nominal and adjectival bases. The preliminary overview is not a presentation of the number of bases that occur in the corpus. It is an overview of the bases that the agent nouns were derived from, either actually or potentially, since there is no expectation that the bases will occur in the corpus. This also means that several different agent nouns may be derived from the same base, for example *seruant* 'servant' and *seruytor* 'servitor' both being analyzable borrowings where *serve* is in both cases the possible analyzable verbal base. Table 3.3 presents an overview of the bases organized by syntactic category:

Table 3.3*: Overview of the syntactic categories of bases*

	Verbal	Nominal	Adjectival	**Total**
Number of types	46	20	1	67

From this overview it is clear that most of the agent nouns are, as expected based on what characterizes the typical derived agent noun, deverbal. Only one base could truly be called an adjectival base, and that is *adverse* (analyzable as the base of *aduersarye* 'adversary'). Some items are harder to classify. *Housholder* 'householder' could be analyzed as both a synthetic compound, *hous + holder*, or a nominalization based on a nominal compound, *household + -er*. The latter interpretation is given by the MED as the etymologically correct development, so at this point I classified it as denominal. Another item of interest is *fyssher* 'fisher', which seems like it could be deverbal, but is according to the OED and the MED denominal from the noun *fish*, rather than derived from the verb *fish*. Uncertainties such as these are bound to occur when dealing with a historical language.

To conclude this chapter, I provide an overview of the distribution of native and non-native items and bases. The divide is rather general, with the only concern being whether an item is of English origin or a borrowing. The overview of the language of origin of the agent nouns is provided in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4: *Etymological origins of the agent nouns*

	Native	Non-native	**Total**
Number of types	49	40	89
Frequency	154	367	521

What can be noted from the overview in Table 3.4 is that there are more native agent nouns than non-native agent nouns, but that the non-native agent nouns are the most frequent. A similar overview as given of the agent nouns is given of the bases in Table 3.5. The bases are categorized in terms of syntactic category:

Table 3.5: *Etymological origins of the bases*

	Native	Non-Native	**Total**
Verbal bases	21	25	46
Nominal bases	5	15	20
Adjectival bases	0	1	1
Total	26	41	67

In total, there are more non-native bases than native bases. This is primarily reflected in the nominal bases, where the majority are non-native, with 15 non-native bases versus 5 native ones. The distribution of verbal bases is different, with 21 native and 25 non-native bases. The one adjectival base is non-native, and by nature of the type being so infrequent it is not a variable that lends itself well to any comparisons beyond being an exception to the nominal and verbal bases.

This preliminary overview of the collected data is meant to be a simple presentation of the inventory as it has been collected and classified. It highlights the fact that there is variation in analyzability, language of origin, form, and type of base in agent nouns in *LMD*.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the data of the thesis and the methodology employed. Firstly, the method and criteria for retrieving and classifying an inventory of the agent nouns from the language of *LMD*. Secondly, the methods of two distinct analyses – on the one hand

the basic analysis of usage, lexical meaning, as well as the basic morphological structure where it is applicable, and on the other hand he morphosemantic analysis of the derived agent nouns. Finally, a preliminary overview was given of the collected data as classified after it has been retrieved from the raw text was presented. The next chapter presents an overview of usage and meaning of each agent noun in this inventory, as well a basic morphological analysis of the analyzable items.

4 Complete overview and Basic Analysis

This chapter contains an overview of each item in the collected inventory of agent nouns. The chapter is sectioned according to the 'suffix' categories identified in the preliminary inventory, namely *-our, -esse, -ar, -er,* as well as *-aunt, -ary* and an 'other' category which is allocated to one section. The analyses in this chapter investigate the meaning of each individual agent noun, as well as basic morphological structure of the analyzable items. These analyses do not cover the relation between derivative and base in terms of agentive properties. All the information outside of the *LMD* corpus concerning etymology, bases, and first attestations was retrieved from the OED and the MED.

4.1 Overview of the *-our* agent nouns

An overview of *-our* items is provided in Table 4.1:

*Table 4.1: Overview of -*our *agent nouns*

Lexeme	Freq.	L. of origin	1st att.	Analyzability	Base
barbour	1	French	1330	Unanalyzable	-
conquerour	9	French	1307	An. borrowing[7]	*conquer (v)*
currour	2	French	1382	Unanalyzable	-
dictatour	1	French	1387	Unanalyzable	-
embassatour	2	French, Latin	1374	An. borrowing	*embassade (n)*
emperour	29	French, Latin	1393	An. borrowing	*empire (n)*
gouernour	7	French, Latin	1325	An. borrowing	*gouern (v)*
herbegeour	1	French, Latin	1386	An. borrowing	*herberge (n)*
procurour	2	EDF[8]	1325	True derivative	*procure (v)*
senatour	10	French, Latin	1387	An. borrowing	*senate (n)*
saueour	8	French	1382	An. borrowing	*saue (v)*
seruytour	1	French, Latin	1330	An. borrowing	*serue (v)*
socour	1	French, Latin	1366	Unanalyzable	-
traytour	55	French	1225	Unanalyzable	-
warryour	3	French	1297	An. borrowing	*warray (v)*

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[7] An. borrowing = Analyzable borrowing
[8] EDF = English Derived Form, i.e. native formation

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that most of the words are either of French or Latin origin. Some items are labeled both French and Latin, if the OED or MED note both languages as possible etymological origins. There is one native formation, *procurour* 'procurer'[9], derived from the verbal base *procure*, which is of French origin. There were no cases of *-our* formations of native bases. There are 10 analyzable *-our* agent nouns, of which 3 have available nominal bases, 6 have available verbal bases, and 1 is a native deverbal agent noun. Both occurrences of *procurour* appear in the same chapter, in the context of leadership among *Romans* and *Rome*, and its concordant usage with *dictatour* indicates a denotation of leadership. Indeed, this is supported by the OED (*s.v. procurour*) as meaning 'the procurator of a province'. In *LMD, procurour* refers to someone who manages the affairs of a province in the context of Roman history.

An agent noun that needs further elaboration is *socour* 'succor'. It is classified as an *-our* derivative as per the criteria set for preliminary inventory organization, but as a *soc + -our* suffixed derivative it is unanalyzable. Interestingly, *socour* comes from the earlier *socours,* which was borrowed from French, and was taken as the plural, thus making *socour* the understood singular. This could indicate a parallel to other agent and instrumental nouns with *-our* endings available to speakers at that time. As regards analyzability however, it is only potentially analyzable as a case of conversion of the synchronically available verb *socoure*, 'to help, assist, aid'[10]. Therefore, *socour* may be considered an analyzable borrowing in terms of conversion/zero-affixation, but not in terms of *-our* suffixation, although one can speculate that it being analyzed by speakers as a singular of *socours* suggests some analogy to agent nouns ending in *-our.* The noun itself has a frequency of 1 in *LMD* where this agent noun-meaning is clearly visible, as shown in example [13]:

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[9] While *procurour* is formed within English, it is modeled on a French lexical item, *procurer,*
[10] This definition of *socoure* (v) is from the OED. The MED defines *socouren* as 'to render assistance, provide aid'.

[13] *for now haue ye lost the best knyght of oure blood / and he that was alle oure leder and oure* **socour**

'For now we have lost the best knight of our blood / and he was our leader and our socour'

<div align="right">1485(a1470)Malory <i>wks.</i> (Caxton: Vinavei) 585/9 (CMEPV).</div>

In chapter 2 it was noted how context must sometimes be relied on to decode whether a given derivative is an instrument or an agent, since form alone is not always sufficient, in a hierarchy where agent is the default interpretation. Therefore, as it refers to an animate being, the interpretation is that it is used in the same way as an agent noun, meaning 'one who helps, aids, provides assistance'. Concerning the other lexemes, the following meanings are proposed:

barbour   'one employed to shave beards and cut hair'
conquerour 'one who rules a conquered area'
currour   'one who carries messages'
dictatour   'a chief ruler with absolute power'
emperour   'a sovereign ruler of an empire'
embassatour'an official messenger'
gouernour   'one who governs over someone else'
herbegeour 'one who purveys for lodgings (esp, for an army)'
procurour   'one who procures: a procurator of Roman society'
senatour   'a member of the senate'
servitour   'one who serves as a means of employment'
saueour   'one who saves from peril, also religious reference to Jesus Christ'
socour   'one who helps or provides aid'
traitour   'one who betrayed someone else'
warryour   'one who conducts, or participates in, warfare'

Quite a few of the *-our* agent nouns denote professions, often in relation to political rule and executive power, often related to the Romans.

    As concerns the analyzable bases of these agent nouns, an overview is provided in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: *Overview of analyzable* -our *bases*

Base	L. of origin	1st att.	Synt. Category
conquer	French	1297	Verb
empire	French	1340	Noun
embassade	French	1450	Noun
govern	French	1300	Verb
herberge	French	1475	Noun
procure	French	1325	Verb
save	French	1225	Verb
senate	French, Latin	1275	Noun
serve	French	1303	Verb
werrei	French	1340	Verb

Out of the 10 analyzable *-our* lexemes, 6 have available verbal bases and 4 have available nominal bases. It can be noted all of the potential bases are of French origin, or of partially French and Latin origin. This is not unexpected, since the *-our* suffix entered the English language through loans from French.

4.2 Overview of *-aunt* agent nouns

There is a total of 3 relevant lexemes identified that end in *-aunt*, and those lexemes are *tyraunt* 'tyrant', *seruaunt* 'servant', and *waraunt* 'warrant'. *Tyraunt* is an unanalyzable item, while *seruaunt* and *waraunt* are classified as analyzable borrowings. An overview of *-aunt* items is provided in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: *Overview of* -aunt *agent nouns*

Lexeme	Freq.	L. of origin	1st att.	Analyzability	Base
seruaunt	36	French	1225	An. borrowing	*serve* (v)
tyraunt	7	French	1297	Unanalyzable	-
waraunt	7	French	1225	Unanalyzable	-

Seruaunt has an analyzable base in *serve*. While *waraunt* is classified as unanalyzable, it could be analyzable as conversion of the verb *waraunt*, 'to act as a protector', although it is unanalyzable as *war* + *-aunt* suffix. The denotation of profession is the most common usage of *seruaunt*. *Waraunt* has a general meaning of 'one who protects', as seen in example [14]:

[14] *I promysed her to be her **waraunt** / and to helpe her to entyere her lord*
'I promised her to be her warrant / and to help her bury her lord'

                        1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 415/2 (CMEPV).

The meanings of the *-aunt* agent nouns are therefore the following:

tyraunt   'a ruler who exercises his power unjustly'
seruaunt 'one who is employed to serve a master or mistress'
waraunt 'one who protects'

4.3   Overview of the *-ess* agent nouns

There are in total 5 identified agent nouns ending in *-ess,* and an overview is provided in Table 4.4:

***Table 4.4**: Overview of -esse agent nouns*

Lexeme	Freq.	L. of origin	1st att.	Analyzability	Base
enchauntress	3	French	1374	An. borrowing	*enchaunter (n)*
huntresse	4	EDF	1405	True derivative	*hunter (n)*
maystresse	1	French	1330	An. borrowing	*mayster (n)*
sorceress	9	Anglo-Norman	1384	An. borrowing	*sorcer (n)*
traitresse[11]	12	French	1369	An. borrowing	*traitour (n)*

As can be seen, all of the *-ess* agents are analyzable, with two native derivatives and three analyzable borrowings. *Sorceress* has the available non-native base *sorcer*[12]*,* while the native derivative *huntresse* is derived from the native base *hunter.* This overview also highlights what is expected of *-ess* agent nouns – namely, they denote female versions of masculine agent nouns, and that the suffix is assimilated into the native derivational system, as it derives both from non-native and native bases. Concerning the analyzable borrowings, all have a corresponding male agent noun as a potential base. The use of

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[11] There is a rare predicative usage of *traitresse* in *LMD,* which is excluded from this overview:

[15] *ye are the falsest lady of the world and the most **traitresse** vnto the kynges person*
'you are the world's falsest lady and the most traitorous unto the king's person'
                        1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 67/26 (CMEPV).

[12]According to the OED (*s.v. sorcerer*), *sorcerer* is formed from *sorcer* (borrowing from French) + -*er,* with *sorcer* being considered an equivalent in meaning to *sorcerer,* although both these masculine agent nouns are attested later than *sorceress.*

maystresse 'mistress' is interesting as it is used in reference to an abstract noun, namely *loue* 'love' rather than a person, as seen in [16]:

[16] *I wote that loue is a grete **maystresse***
'I know that love is a great mistress'
$\qquad$ 1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 538/3 (CMEPV).

This usage has the agent noun used to denote an inanimate participant.

$\qquad$ The agent noun *enchauntress* 'enchantress' is not a native derivative, however its available analyzable base, *enchaunter* 'enchanter', is a native derivative modeled on the French lexical item, *enchaunteor.* Finally, *traitresse,* analyzable with the unanalyzable borrowing *traitor* as a base, is used in a way similar to its available base, as these agent nouns denote the act of betrayal. The following meanings are proposed of the *-ess* agent nouns:

enchauntress 'a female enchanter; a woman who enchants, employs magic'
huntresse 'a woman who hunts animals'
maystresse 'a woman who is in charge'
sorceress 'a woman who practices sorcery'
traytresse 'a woman who betrayed; a female traitor'

All of the meanings are consistent with the expectations of *-ess* agent nouns, in that they form female counterparts to masculine agent nouns. However, as in the case of *sorceress,* the female counterpart can in some cases be attested earlier than the masculine form (see footnote 12). Another exception to note regarding *sorceress* is its concordance with *enchaunter* in [17]:

[17] *I hate them / For they be **sorceresses** and **enchaunters** many of them*
'I hate them / because many of them are sorceresses and enchanters'
$\qquad$ 1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 143/18 (CMEPV).

As *them* and *they* refer to *ladyes* 'ladies' and *damoyseles* 'damsels', it seems both a female and a male agent noun is used here, indicating that the divide between the *-esse* agents and the *-er* agent in terms of gender-reference was also subject to variation[13]. Table 4.5 contains an overview of available agent noun bases of analyzable *-esse* items:

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[13] For further discussion on the suffix *-esse*, see Bauer (2006)

Table 4.5: *Overview of available bases for analyzable* -esse *agent nouns*

Base	L. of origin	1st att.	Syntactic category
enchaunter	EDF[14]	1297	Noun
hunter	EDF	1325	Noun
mayster	Latin, French	OE	Noun
sorcer	French	1400	Noun
traytour	French	1225	Noun

As can be seen from the table, *hunter* is the only a native base, while *enchaunter* is of native origin but modeled on a French lexical item. All the potential bases are *-er* agent nouns that can be considered counterparts to the *-esse* agent nouns. All the *-esse* items are analyzable, of which only *hunter* is a native derivative with a native base, an example of the assimilation of the suffix into the English derivational system.

4.4 Overview of *-ar* (and *-er*) agent nouns

There are several *-ar* and *-er* derivatives with the same base, and the two suffixes are often considered merely orthographic variants of the same suffix. Whether this assumption is confirmed to be the case in *LMD* as well is clarified in this analysis. An overview of the *-ar* agent nouns and the corresponding *-er* nouns with the same bases are presented in the Table 4.6:

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[14] The OED notes the *-er* form of *enchaunter* as a native formation, but also that ME *-ur, -or, -our* etc. forms are formally from the French *enchanteor*.

Table 4.6: *Overview of* -ar *agent nouns and* -er *counterparts*

Lexeme	Freq	L. of origin	1st att.	Analyzability	Base
accusar	1	EDF	1382	True derivative	*accuse (v)*
beggar	1	EDF	1250	True derivative	*beg (v)*
iustar (-er)	1	French	1330	An. borrowing	*iust (v)*
kepar (-er)	1	EDF	1300	True derivative	*kep (v)*
louar (-er)	1	EDF	1250	True derivative	*loue (v)*
lyar (-er)	3	EDF	950	True derivative	*lie (v)*
pyllar	1	EDF	1385	True derivative	*pill (v)*
rular (-er)	2	EDF	1382	True derivative	*rule (v)*
rydar	4	EDF	OE	True derivative	*ride (v)*
synnar (-er)	1	EDF	1325	True derivative	*sinn (v)*
wel wyllar (-er)	1	EDF	1443	True derivative	*will (v)*
-er counterparts					
iuster	3	French	1330	An. borrowing	*iust (v)*
keper	2	EDF	1300	True derivative	*kep (v)*
louer	9	EDF	1250	True derivative	*loue (v)*
lyer	2	EDF	950	True derivative	*lie (v)*
ruler	1	EDF	1382	True derivative	*rule (v)*
sinner	11	EDF	1325	True derivative	*sinn (v)*
wel willer	1	EDF	1443	True derivative	*will (v)*

All of the *-ar* agent nouns are analyzable, and the majority are true derivatives. The exception is *iustar* 'jouster', which is classified as an analyzable borrowing of French origin. Of the 11 agent nouns, 7 have a similar *-er* counterpart in the corpus. It should be noted that the dates given for first attestations are the same of both counterparts, as they are listed as variants of the same lexical entry in the OED, and therefore a first attestation is provided for that one lexeme. Concerning the usage of *-er* and *-ar* variants in *LMD,* the contextual analyses support the commonly accepted notion of orthographic variation rather than any distinct derivatives. Examples [18] and [19] show the *-ar* and *-er* agent nouns *rular* and *ruler,* which have the same base, used in similar contexts.

[18] *Syr Mordred was **rular** of alle englond*
'Sir Mordred was the ruler of all of England'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 839/1 (CMEPV).

[19] *kynge Arthur made sir Mordred chyef **ruler** of alle Englond*
'King Arthur made Sir Mordred the chief ruler of all of England'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 830/28 (CMEPV).

In both [18] and [19], *rular* and *ruler* refers to Sir Mordred as the one who rules England, which highlights the fact that the two forms are used interchangeably. Another example is the *iustar/iuster* variation, as it is an analyzable borrowing where it is unlikely that two so similar lexemes would be borrowed, when a more reasonable interpretation is that an analyzable borrowing is also subject to *-ar/-er* variation. On the background of these analyses, *-ar* is in the final overview considered an orthographic variant of *-er,* and the variation of lexemes such as *ruler/rular* is considered one lexeme with orthographic variation.

    Moving on to the usage of these agent nouns, a thing to note is that most of the lexemes have low frequencies, many being used only once in *LMD*. There is a great deal of variation in the meanings of these agent nouns, as is perhaps expected since *-er/-ar* derivation is a productive native process. The following list contains the proposed meanings for each agent noun:

accuser	'one who accuses or criticizes'
beggar	'one who begs; one who lives by begging'
iustar (-er)	'one who jousts; fights on horseback'
kepar (-er)	'one who keeps oversight'
louar (-er)	'one who loves another; as a friend or sexually'
lyar (-er)	'one who lies or slander'
pyllar	'one who pills; steals from others'
rular (-er)	'one who rules (with supreme control)'
rydar	'one who rides a horse'
synnar (-er)	'one who sins'
wel wyllar (-er)	'a supporter; one who desires another well'

Wel wyllar 'well-willer', and *louar* 'lover' seem to be peripheral agent nouns compared to the other lexemes. Primarily, this is the case because neither agent noun necessarily denotes an instigator of actions. *Louar* is derived from the verb *love*, which is mainly a verb of emotion, unless the situation is one of physical love, in which case it could be interpreted as an action. As for *wel wyllar,* it refers to some kind of 'supporter', as seen in [20] and [21]:

[20] *He thoughte to slee hym / and alle his **wel wyllars** / in that countrey*
'He thought about slaying him / and all his well-willers / in that country'

> 1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 465/15 (CMEPV).

[21] *they were of Scotland outher of syr Gawayns kynne / outher **wel willers** to his bretheren*
'They were from Scotland, either of Sir Gawayn's kin / or well-willers to his brethren'

> 1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 799/35 (CMEPV).

Wel wyllar is a synthetic compound, made up of *well + wyllar,* with *wyllar* being a deverbal noun with *wyll* as the base, and means 'one who desires; a wisher'. A *wel wyllar* could therefore be interpreted as someone who wants the best for someone else, and therefore supports them, hence 'supporter'. The verbal base of *wyllar*, *will,* is considered a modal in PDE (Quirk et al., 1985: 120), although it developed from a lexical verb that had a meaning of 'desiring, wishing for'[15], i.e. a mental verb.

As concerns the bases of the *-ar* agent nouns, an overview is provided in Table 4.7, with of course no distinction being made regarding *-ar/-er* bases as they would be the same in light of the conclusion that the suffixes are merely orthographic variants:

*Table 4.7: Overview of the bases of -*ar *agent nouns*

Lexeme	L. of origin	1st att.	Syntactic category
accuse	French, Latin	OE	Verb
beg	Uncertain; AF[16]	1225	Verb
joust	French	1330	Verb
keep	Germanic	1000	Verb
lie	Germanic	971	Verb
love	Germanic	OE	Verb
pill	French, Latin	1225	Verb
ride	Germanic	OE	Verb
rule	French	1340	Verb
sin	Germanic	825	Verb
will	Germanic	825	Verb

From this table, it can be observed that of the 11 bases, 6 are of native origin, 4 are of French/Latin origin, and 1, *beg,* is of uncertain origin, but likely of French/Latin origin. There are 6 native bases and 5 non-native bases. This is not unexpected, since the suffix

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[15]For further literature on the development of *will,* see for example Plank (1984) or Aijmer (1985)

[16]AF = Anglo-French. MED lists *beg (beggen)* as being of AF origin, related to *begart,* while the OED notes it as being of uncertain origin, most likely related to French *begart*/Latin *beghard*. It is therefore classified as non-native.

is and was very productive, and derives agent nouns from both native and non-native bases.

4.5 Overview of *-er* agent nouns

This section covers the *-er* agent nouns. In the overview of the data provided in the final section of chapter 3, it was shown that the *-er* category of agent nouns is the largest group of agent nouns. Items that were included as variants of the suffix *-ar* in the analyses in section 4.4 will be excluded from this section, as they have already been analyzed. As there is quite a large number of lexemes to analyze, rather than presenting a complete overview of all the *-er* agent nouns first, I will go through them in accordance with their classification in terms of analyzability. Table 4.8 contains an overview of the unanalyzable *-er* agent nouns:

Table 4.8*: Overview of unanalyzable* -er *agent nouns*

Lexeme	Frequency	Language of origin	1st attestation
archer[17]	5	French	1297
butler	22	French	1300
carpenter	2	French	1325
mayster	29	Latin, French	OE

There are four unanalyzable *-er* agent nouns, 3 of which are of French origin and entered during the earlier ME period. *Mayster* 'master' is of multiple origins – the MED (s.v. *mayster*) point to origins in the French word *maistre,* as well as from the OE word *magister,* which originates from Latin. Based on the analyses of the tokens and the dictionary entries, the following meanings can be assigned to the nouns:

archer   'one who shoots with a bow and arrow'
butler   'a royal supervisor of the king'
carpenter 'one who works in construction as a trade'
mayster   'a high official – leader of high authority'

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[17] There are in total 6 tokens for *archer,* but in 1 of these usages *archer* means 'arrows':

[22] and one with a bowe an **archer** smote syr gauayne thurȝ the arme
 'and one with a bow and arrows smote sir Gawain through the arm'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 108/15 (CMEPV).

The usage of *butler* in *LMD* differs from the PDE meaning of 'a head servant'. *Butler* is primarily used in reference to *Syr Lucan the butler* (sometimes written as *Lucas*), a character who is a servant of king Arthur but a member of the knights of the roundtable, as in [23]. However, there is also a context where *butler* is used in reference more akin to 'head servant', as in [24]:

[23] *Telle your lord that my name is syr Lucan the **botteler** a knyghte of the round table*
'Tell your lord that my name is sir Lucan the buttler, a knight of the round table'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 398/16 (CMEPV).

[24] *syr Perymonyes praide sir gareth to graunte hym to be his chyef **botteler** at that hyghe feest*
'Sir Perymonyes prayed for sir Gareth to let him be his chief butler at the high feast'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 270/32 (CMEPV).

In [24], the word is used with reference to a role at a feast, while [23] is in reference to a specific main character, which also accounts for the lexeme's high frequency. Furthermore, *archer* denotes one who fires arrows using a bow, especially someone who does so in an army, which can be seen in [25]:

[25] *He purueyed hym a xx men of armes and an honderd **archers** for to destroye the quene*.
'He prepared for him twenty armed men and a hundred archers in order to destroy the queen'
                    1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 773/27 (CMEPV).

These agent nouns are unanalyzable, and therefore no further analyses of their relation to a base is possible. The focus now shifts to analyzable items, first the analyzable borrowings, which are presented in Table 4.9:

Table 4.9*: Overview of -*er *agent nouns classified as analyzable borrowings*

Lexeme	Freq.	L. of origin	1st att.	Base
bourder	2	French	1330	*bourd* (v)
defender	1	French	1325	*defend* (v)
foster	8	AN, French	1405	*forest* (n)
fayter	1	French	1340	*fait* (v)
mayntener	1	French	1395	*maynten* (v)
maronner	10	French	1300	*marine* (n)
messager	45	French	1225	*message* (n)
officer	2	French	1380	*office* (n)
philosopher	2	French, Latin	1330	*philosophy* (n)
porter	15	French	1300	*port* (n)
robber	1	French	1175	*rob* (v)
tresorer	1	French	1290	*tresour* (n)

There are 12 *-er* agent nouns that are classified as analyzable borrowings. All are of French, or partially French, origin. As concerns the possible bases, there are 5 verbal and 7 nominal ones. *Foster* is noted by the OED as being used in Anglo-Norman as a shortened variant of *forester,* which is of French origin.

The usage of the analyzable borrowing *-er* agent nouns taken into consideration, the following meanings can be assigned to them:

bourder	'one who bourds; jests'
defender	'one who defends'
fayter	'a deceiver – one who faits'
foster	'an official keeping watch of the forest'
maronner	'one who works on a ship'
mayntener	'one who maintains'
messager	'one who delivers official messages'
officer	'a person holding official office'
philosopher	'an expert of philosophy'
porter	'one who watches the gate; a gatekeeper'
robber	'one who robs'
tresorer	'an official overseeing a treasury'

The meaning of *fayter* 'faitour' in *LMD* indicates deception, as seen when it occurs in the context in [26]:

[26] *This **fayter** with his prophecye hath mocked me*
'This faitour with his prophecy has mocked me'

         1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 87/14 (CMEPV).

The potential base is *fayt,* 'to speak falsely', however this was formed through back-formation from *fayter,* which shows that while this analyzability is not etymologically supported it is an analysis that was available to speakers at the time. As for the other items, the agent nouns with a possible verbal base all have a fairly direct link to the synchronically available verbal base. This is illustrated with the example of *robber* in [27]:

[27] *that **pyllars** and **robbers** were comen in to the felde To pylle and robbe*
'That pillers[18] and robbers came in to the field to pill and rob'

         1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 847/27 (CMEPV).

In [27], both *pyllars* 'pillers' and *robbers* are used in connection with the action of *pylle* 'pill' and *robbe* 'rob', showing the connection between the borrowed agent noun and the borrowed verb. Of the agent nouns with possible nominal bases, many relate to official titles, positions, and roles, as well as professions, such as *messager, maronner* 'mariner', *porter, officer, tresorer* 'treasurer', *philosopher*. As concerns the bases, an overview is provided in Table 4.10:

Table 4.10: *Overview of bases for* -er *agent nouns classified as analyzable borrowings*

Base	Language of origin	1st att.	Synt. category
bourd	French	1303	Verb
defend	French	1250	Verb
forest	French	1297	Noun
fayt	French	1330	Verb
marine	French	1313	Noun
maynten	French	1325	Verb
message	French	1300	Noun
office	French	1300	Noun
philosophy	French	1325	Noun
port	French, Latin	OE	Noun
rob	French	1225	Verb
tresour	French	1154	Noun

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[18]*Piller* is the suggested modern spelling in the OED, although the word is classified as being obsolete, though it is an equivalent to PDE *pillager*.

As can be expected, the possible bases are also of French origin. A partial exception is *port*, which is attested first in the OE period, and which the OED notes as being of Latin origin, but reinforced/borrowed in ME from French.

The focus now turns to the *-er* agent nouns that are classified as true derivatives. Table 4.11 presents an overview of these lexemes:

Table 4.11: Overview of the native derivative -er *agent nouns*

Lexeme	Frequency	1st att.	Base
beginner	3	1400	begin (v)
bitrayer	1	1526	betray (v)
carter	6	1250	cart (n)
causer	10	1386	cause (v)
clymber	1	1423	climb (v)
deuourer	1	1385	devour (v)
destroyer	12	1382	destroy (v)
dreme reder	1	1387	read (v)
enchaunter	2	1297	enchaunt (v)
fighter	3	1300	fight (v)
fyssher	6	893	fyssh (n)
harper	16	800	harp (v)
householder	1	1382	household (n)
hunter	2	1325	hunt (v)
iaper	4	1362	iape (v)
labourer	1	1393	labour (v)
leder	4	1300	led (v)
maker	5	1297	make (v)
murtherer	13	1340	murther (v)
multyplyer	1	1470	multiply (v)
mysbyleuer	1	1470	misbelieve (v)
offenser	1	1470[19]	offense (n)
pryker	1	1325	pryk (v)
scoffer	1	1470	scoff (v)
shoter	2	1297	shot (v)
speker	1	1303	spek (v)
talker	1	1386	talk (v)

There are 27 *-er* agent nouns classified as true derivatives, meaning that the largest group of *-er* agent nouns are native formations. This is expected, since *-er* derivation is a very productive process (see subsection 2.2.4). Of these agent nouns, 4 are denominal and 23 are deverbal.

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[19] This first attestation is retrieved from the MED, based on a quotation from the Winchester manuscript of *LMD*. It is not attested in the OED.

Two lexemes that need further attention are *offenser* and *bitrayer* 'betrayer'. *Offenser* appears to be a lexeme unique to *LMD,* attested in the Winchester manuscript as well as in Caxton's edition. It is not attested in the OED, and its only quotation in the MED is from the Winchester manuscript. In other words, it appears to be a formation that occurs in this text but never gained productive use in the language generally. A possible explanation could be its similarity to *offender* blocking it from gaining productivity, with offender being first attested in 1425 in the OED. It could also be possible that *offenser* is an orthographic variant of *offender* that only occurred once. Since the MED provides a distinct entry on *offenser* as derived from *offense,* it is considered a separate lexeme.

The other lexeme, *bitrayer,* is attested in the OED but only first attested in 1526, which is later than the publication of *LMD,* and it is not attested in the MED, indicating that perhaps *LMD* is where the word is first attested. *Bitrayer* only has a frequency of 1, compared to the similarly used *traitor,* which is the most frequent agent noun in *LMD* with 55 tokens. This, as well as the lack of an earlier attestation in the OED, indicates that *bitrayer* was not a commonly used form at that time. In [28] and [29] the textual context in which these *offenser* and *bitrayer* respectively occur in *LMD* is provided:

[28] *For swete lord Ihesu sayd the fayre mayden I take the to record / on the I was neuer grete **offenser** ageynst thy lawes.*
'For sweet lord Jesus, said the fair maiden, I take you to record / that I was never a great offenser against your laws'
<div align="right">1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 760/12 (CMEPV).</div>

[29] *I slewe hym / for he was a fals knyghte and a **bitrayer** of ladyes and of good knyghtes*
'I slew him / because he was a false knight and a betrayer of ladies and good knights'
<div align="right">1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 588/22 (CMEPV).</div>

From this, it can be seen that *offenser* has a meaning of 'one who offends the law'. As the laws in question are related to *Jesus*, it is related to 'sinner'. *Bitrayer* is 'one who betrays'. For the remaining true derivative *-er* agent nouns, the following meanings are proposed:

beginner	'one who begins; one who brings something into being'
causer	'one who causes something; produces an effect'
carter	'one who drives a cart'
clymber	'one who climbs'
deuourer	'one who devours'
destroyer	'one who destroys'
dreme reder	'one who reads dreams'
enchaunter	'one who enchants'
fighter	'one who fights'
fyssher	'one who catches fish'
harper	'one who harps; plays the harp'
householder	'one who holds control over the household'
hunter	'one who hunts'
iaper	'one who japes; a trickster'
labourer	'one who labors; a worker'
leder	'one who leads'
maker	'one who makes something'
murtherer	'one who murders'
multyplyer	'one who multiplies something'
mysbyleuer	'one who misbelieves, holds false beliefs – a heretic'
pryker	'one who pricks; one who spurs a horse'
scoffer	'one who scoffs'
shoter	'one who shoots arrows'
speker	'one who speaks'
talker	'one who talks'

As can be seen from this list, the direct meaning of 'one who V-s' is fairly prevalent with these deverbal agent nouns. *Pryker* 'pricker', is used of someone who spurs or rides a horse (a horseman), which is seen in [30]:

[30] *I had leuer to haue ben torn with wylde horses / than ony varlet had wonne suche loos / or ony page or **pryker** shold haue had prys on me*
'I would rather be torn by wild horses / than any varlet that won such a reputation, or any page or priker should have had a prize on me'

                      1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 178/3 (CMEPV).

Pryker is derived from the verb *prick,* 'to pierce slightly'. However, in *LMD* it has a meaning akin to *horseman* and *rider*, which are both also attested in the corpus. Another lexeme of note is *mysbyleuer* 'misbeliever', which is derived from the verb *misbelieve,* 'to believe wrongly', which appears to be non-agentive mental verb of believing something that is false. The derived agent noun in *LMD* refers to heretics, holding beliefs that go against God, seen in its concordance with *sinner* in [31]:

[31] *The way of a good true good lyuer / And the other wey betokeneth the way of **synners** and of **mysbyleuers***

'The way of a true liver / and the other way betokens the way of sinners and misbelievers'

1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 631/10 (CMEPV).

There is therefore an element of volition and controllability in the specific construction of this lexeme that makes the agent noun classification appropriate. As regards the bases of the true derivative *-er* agent nouns, an overview is provided in Table 4.12:

Table 4.12: *Overview of the bases of derived* -er *agent nouns*

Base	L. of origin	1st att.	Synt. category
begin	Germanic	1000	Verb
betray	EDF[20]	1275	Verb
cart	Germanic	800	Noun
cause	French	1340	Verb
climb	Germanic	1123	Verb
devour	French	1315	Verb
destroy	French, Latin	1297	Verb
enchant	French	1377	Verb
fight	Germanic	900	Verb
fish	Germanic	825	Noun
harp	Germanic	888	Verb
household	English compound	1382	Noun
hunt	Germanic	1000	Verb
jape	French	1362	Verb
labor	French	1390	Verb
led	Germanic	825	Verb
make	Germanic	1262	Verb
murder	Germanic	1200	Verb
multiply	French	1275	Verb
misbelieve	EDF	1300	Verb
offense	French, Latin	1382	Noun
prick	Germanic	OE	Verb
read	Germanic	OE	Verb
scoff	EDF[21]	1380	Verb
shot	Germanic	900	Verb
speak	Germanic	888	Verb
talk	Germanic	1225	Verb

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[20] English formation with prefix *be + traien,* which is of French origin

[21] According to the OED, the verb *scoff* is a conversion of the noun *scoff*

We see that the *-er* agent nouns in *LMD* are derived from both native and non-native bases, although the majority are from native ones, with 19 native and 8 non-native bases. As mentioned, most of the bases are verbal. One to note here is *reder* 'reader' that appears as an element of the synthetic compound *dreme reder* 'dream reader'. This is one of two synthetic compounds identified in the text, the other being *wel wyllar*. *Mysbyleuer* is one of the few to be derived from a complex verbal base – *misbelieve* – which consists of the prefix *mis-* + *believe*. The same is true for *bitray,* which consists of *bi-* + *tray*. All in all, there seems to be great variation among the *-er* agent noun, which is expected due to the productivity of this suffix in forming agent nouns in English, even in a diachronic perspective.

4.6   Overview of *-ard*, *-ary*, Ø and 'other' agent nouns

This section groups together multiple classifications of agent nouns. This is the approach chosen because, as shown in the data overview in chapter 3, they are fairly infrequent items with few types to analyze. Table 4.13 provides an overview of these agent nouns:

Table 4.13: Overview of 'other' agent nouns

Lexeme	Freq.	L. of origin	1st att.	Analyzability	Base
aduersarye	8	Latin	1350	Analyzable borrowing	*adverse (adj)*
espye	1	French	1325	Analyzable borrowing	*espye (v)*
horseman	4	ME	1400	Unanalyzable	-
herdman	1	OE	1000	Unanalyzable	-
steward	2	OE	1000	Unanalyzable	-

This category of agent nouns is one consisting primarily of peripheral members, which would be excluded by a less inclusive approach. Especially *horsman* 'horseman' and *herdman* 'herdsman' are debatable as whether or not they can be considered derived agent nouns depends on the category-membership of *man* in these instances. If *-man* can be analyzed as a suffix (Kalaga, 2016: 105), *horseman* and *herdman* could be analyzable as derived agent nouns; if *man* is a lexical noun, they would be compounds. To determine which was the case, I relied on the OED and the MED. The MED refers to *horsman* as a compound consisting of *horse* + *man*, whereas the OED provided no etymological

information[22]. This is therefore considered unanalyzable. As concerns *herdman,* both the OED and the MED list it as a compound, and it is therefore also classified as an unanalyzable item.

When it comes to the other lexemes, *steward* is included as an *-ard* item because those are the final letters of the lexeme. However as was mentioned in chapter 3, this classification is only applicable in a preliminary overview as the word is actually a shortening of the OE lexeme *stigweard*[23], and it is therefore unanalyzable and not in fact an *-ard* derivative, of which there are none in *LMD*. *Espye* 'spy' is an analyzable borrowing due to it being analyzable as a case of conversion of the verb *espye,* since both words were loaned into the language around the same time in the early 14th century. Lastly, there is *aduersarye,* which is interesting as it is the only agent noun in *LMD* where the possible base is an adjective. It is a borrowing, and according to the MED its origin is from the Latin word *adversarius*, both an adjective and a noun. An overview of the meanings of this set of agent nouns is provided in the following list:

aduersarye 'one who opposes another; a personal enemy'
espye   'someone who spies on people'
horseman 'one who rides on horseback'
herdman 'one who herds animals'
steward   'one who guards the affairs of a household'

Horsman has a similar meaning to *rider* and *pryker,* while *steward* has a related meaning to *seruaunt* and *seruytour,* namely that of being employed to render some kind of service. *Adusersarye* is one who is the enemy of another, exemplified in [32]:

[32] *And how he faught and ouercame hys **aduersarye***
'And how he fought and overcame his adversary'
                      1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 28/9 (CMEPV).

And finally, *herdman* refers to someone who herds animals. The compound *herdman* actually predates the attestation of the verb *herd*, with *herdman* being first attested in 1000 and the verb *herd* first attested in 1300.

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[22] The entry in the OED had not been updated since 1899, and since it offered no contradictory information, the entry in the MED had to suffice.

[23] While *stig* is of uncertain meaning according to the OED (possibly a cognate of *sty*), *weard* (*ward*) means 'warden, keeper, or guard' (OED, *s.v. ward*).

4.7   Overview and summary

Following these basic analyses of form and usage, certain observations can be made. Firstly, it has become clear that there are no analyzable cases of agent nouns with the suffix *-ard*. Secondly, certain classifications according to suffix are only analyzable as conversion, such as *waraunt*. Lastly, it has been shown that the suffixes *-ar* and *-er* are indeed orthographic variants and may therefore be considered the same suffix in terms of distinguishing agent noun lexemes. Taking these considerations into account, a refined overview of the agent nouns can be presented. Firstly, the analyzable borrowings that are only analyzable as cases of conversion can be excluded from the suffix-overviews and placed in the 'other' category, which will be considered unanalyzable for the sake of consistency and the fact that there were no native derivatives to 'anchor' the analysis in the etymological reality. Secondly, *-ar/-er* can be considered one suffix, being only variants of each other rather than distinct lexemes, and finally unanalyzable items are removed from the suffix-categories and are instead categorized generally under unanalyzable items.

Taking these new considerations into account, and to conclude this chapter, a complete overview of the agent nouns in *LMD* can be presented. Table 4.14 shows the overall distribution of all of the agent nouns as well as frequency classified by analyzability, and for the analyzable items, by suffix:

Table 4.14: *Number of agent nouns and their frequencies, by analyzability and suffix*

	-aunt	*-ary*	*-er*	*-esse*	*-our*	**Total**
Analyzable borrowing types	1	1	13	4	9	28
True derivative types	0	0	37	1	1	39
Unanalyzable item types						14
Total						81
Analyzable borrowing token freq.	36	8	90	25	71	230
True derivative token freq.	0	0	146	4	2	152
Unanalyzable item token freq.						139
Total						521

Firstly, the total rows and columns can be compared to the preliminary overview provided in chapter 3. The total number of agent noun lexemes is 81 rather than 89, due to the exclusion of a distinct *-ar* suffix-category. Secondly, we can see that the largest category of lexemes is the true derivatives, with 39 types, although the most frequently used agent

nouns are analyzable borrowings, with 230 tokens. The unanalyzable items comprise a relatively small category of lexemes with a lower frequency compared to the grouped classification of analyzable items, which means that the majority of agent nouns in *LMD* are analyzable as derived agent nouns.

Therefore, unanalyzable items comprise 27% of the tokens, while 73% of the tokens are the analyzable agent nouns, of which is the suffix *-er* is the most frequent in the corpus with 236 tokens, which comprises 45% of the total agent noun tokens. The other suffixes vary in frequency between 1% and 14%.

This chapter has considered each individual agent noun that was included in the preliminary overview in chapter 3. This process has involved a basic morphological analysis as well as a semantic analysis of their use in *LMD* to present lexical meanings. These analyses resulted in certain conclusions. Namely, that *-ar/-er* are confirmed to be orthographic variants, as well as the allocating of all unanalyzable items to a separate group. These analyses then produced a detailed overview of the distribution of agent nouns in terms of analyzability and suffix, presented in Table 4.14 and Figure 4.1. The questions that remain to be answered regarding the agent noun distribution concerns the relationship between the agent noun derivatives, which make up the majority of the agent noun lexemes in *LMD*, and their bases. The results of these morphosemantic analyses, as well the discussion of the findings, is presented in chapter 5.

5 Results of the Morphosemantic Analysis & Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of the agent nouns in terms of the agentive properties exhibited by derivatives and their bases. Essentially, as outlined in chapter 2, agentivity is a semantic category that encapsulates both the verb and its participants, and category membership is defined and limited by what semantic properties elements exhibit. The identified properties were animacy, volition, initiative, causation, and controllability. The properties and how they comprise and define agentivity was covered in section 2.1. In the previous chapter, basic analyses of the agent nouns in *LMD* were presented, consisting of lexical meaning and basic morphological structures in terms of suffix and base of the analyzable items. This provided a background for the morphosemantic analyses that are presented in this chapter.

This chapter will be sectioned according to the distinct suffixes observed in the data, namely *-aunt, -ary, -er, -esse,* and *-our.* Cases of conversion and the 'other' category are unanalyzable for these purposes and excluded in the interest of consistency and in order to limit ungrounded speculation. Of the suffixes, *-our, -esse* and *-er* are represented by true derivatives and analyzable borrowings, while *-aunt* and *-ary* are only represented by analyzable borrowings.

A theoretical concern that can be reiterated at this point is the differentiation between denominal and deverbal agent nouns. Identification of agentive properties has limited applicability as concerns the bases of denominal agent nouns. Deverbal agent nouns can in derivational terms be identified as 'one who V-s' (as noted in chapter 2, the way it is used may attach other meanings to the derivative, but that concern is outside the realm of derivation, and those meanings were covered in chapter 4), which makes the relationship between derivative and base more straight-forward to analyze. As an example, consider a verbal base such as *shoot* in *shoter* 'shooter', where a participant to do the shooting is required, which suggests what agentive properties are exhibited. However, the noun *fish,* the base of *fyssher* cannot be categorized as agentive or non-

agentive in isolation. These concerns are addressed in section 5.5 when the results are discussed. Identifying the agentive properties will thus be applicable to verbal bases only, with the exception of nominal deverbal bases, which is only relevant to the analysis of the *-ess* agent nouns. As noted in chapter 2 also, the agentive meaning can be replaced by another interpretation if other factors such as context or worldly and/or lexical knowledge suggests so. Of course, these agentive verbs could occur in a syntactic context where additional information would change which properties are exhibited.

Finally, it must be reiterated that regardless of how rigorous the theoretical aims and analytical parameters are, it is unavoidable that these conclusions are subjugated to my personal interpretations. The data does not always lead to obvious conclusions, perhaps especially when employing an inclusive system of classification, so some judgments cannot be considered absolute and could be open to differing interpretations.

The results will be presented by suffix. In the tables, a plus sign '+' in the property column means that the property is exhibited by the lexeme in the corresponding row, and a minus sign '-' means that it is not exhibited. Exhibiting a property is considered a binary distinction for these purposes. Not exhibiting a property does not indicate some sort of opposite being the case, it only means lack of exhibition. Nominal bases are included but marked as being nouns; they are allocated to the end of the table and are not marked either-way for the exhibition of limiting agentive properties.

5.1   Results of the morphosemantic analysis of *-aunt* and *-ary* agent noun

These two suffixes are presented together rather than separately for two reasons. First, they are each represented by only 1 type in the corpus, and thus constitute a small group of lexemes. Second, no native derivative was observed with either suffix. The results are provided in Table 5.1. As the proposed base of *aduersarye* is an adjective, it will be indicated as such and not marked for agentive properties:

Table 5.1: Analysis of -aunt and -ary agent nouns

Lexeme	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
aduersarye	+	+	+	+	+
seruaunt	+	-	+	+	+
Base					
adverse (adj)					
serve	+	-	+	+	+

As can be seen from the table, *aduersarye,* by virtue of denoting someone who is standing in opposition to someone else, exhibits causation. However, as was seen concerning usage in example [32], re-iterated here as example [33], usage of *aduersarye* in *LMD* does not imply causation:

[33] *And how he faught and ouercame hys **aduersarye***

'And how he fought and overcame his adversary'

1485(a1470)Malory wks. (Caxton: Vinavei) 28/9 (CMEPV).

This 'opposition' is implied by the other participant rather than the one denoted as an adversary. This shows a differentiation between syntactic contextual meaning and the morphosemantic meaning, although for the present purposes these are considered distinct. *Seruaunt* does not exhibit causation, as it denotes one who serves someone else. These same properties are exhibited by the verbal base *serve.*

5.2   Results of the morphosemantic analysis of *-our* agent nouns

There are 10 analyzable *-our* agent nouns, of which 1 is a true derivative. Table 5.2 presents the agentive properties of the *-our* agent nouns:

Table 5.2*: Agentive properties of* -our *agent nouns and their bases*

Derivative	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
conquerour	+	+	+	+	+
embassatour	+	-	+	-	+
emperour	+	-	+	+	+
gouernour	+	+	+	+	+
herbegeour	+	+	+	-	+
procurour	+	+	+	+	+
saueour	+	+	+	+	+
senatour	+	-	+	-	+
seruytour	+	-	+	-	+
warryour	+	-	+	+	+
Base					
conquer	+	+	+	+	+
govern	+	+	+	+	+
procure	+	+	+	+	+
save	+	+	+	+	+
serve	+	-	+	+	+
warray	+	+	+	+	+
embassade (n)	-				
empire (n)	-				
herberge (n)	-				
senate (n)	-				

Table 5.2 shows that all of the *-our* agent nouns exhibit animacy. The verbal bases are all classified as agentive, although there is some variation as to which properties are exhibited. Volition and controllability are exhibited by all the agent nouns, causation is exhibited by 5, namely *conquerour, gouernour* 'governor', *herbegeour* 'harbinger', *procurour, saueour* 'savior'. The nouns *embassatour* 'ambassador' and *senatour,* which both denote members of a governing institution rather than an action scenario, express controllability and volition, as they denote commanding institutional roles with commanding authority, but they are peripheral as they do not directly denote any action scenario. The other denominal agent nouns, *herbegeour* and *emperour*, do denote some action of which the nominal base is a participant of (see section 4.1).

Furthermore, 3 verbs – *conquer, procure,* and *warray* – exhibit all the agentive properties. The other verbal bases exhibit 4. *Seruytour* is similar to *seruaunt* in the properties exhibited and the relation to the base *serve*. Controllability and volition are exhibited by every derivative and base. *Warryour* 'warrior' denotes 'one who warrays', in a sense more akin to participating in warfare, while *warray* is considered primarily as 'to make war upon' and exhibits causation whereas *warryour* does not. This is an instance

of a derivative exhibiting fewer properties than the base, as it emphasizes participation. The native derivative, *procurour*, and its base *procure,* both exhibit all the agentive properties.

Overall, the properties exhibited by the *-our* agent nouns provide a picture of correspondence between verbal base and agent noun where they exhibit similar agentive properties, excluding the noted exceptions. The native derivative *procurour* is the only true derivative, the noun and its base exhibiting the same properties, making its morphosemantic makeup similar to the analyzable borrowings.

5.3   Results of the morphosemantic analysis of *-esse* agent nouns

All of the observed *-esse* agent nouns have bases that are *-er* agent nouns, although only one of these is an actual native derivative. All the bases of the *-esse* nouns are agent nouns with suffix *-er* and they can be analyzed as *-er* derivatives exhibiting agentive properties, except for *traitor* and *master,* which are unanalyzable, and must be considered as regular nominal bases. Table 5.3 presents the agentive properties exhibited by the *-esse* agent nouns and their bases:

Table 5.3*: Agentive properties exhibited by* -esse *agent nouns and the bases*

Lexeme	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
enchauntress	+	+	+	+	+
huntresse	+	+	+	+	+
maystresse	+	-	+	-	+
sorceress	+	+	+	+	+
traitresse	+	+	+	+	+
Base					
enchanter	+	+	+	+	+
hunter	+	+	+	+	+
sorcerer	+	+	+	+	+
master	+				
traitor	+				

From Table 5.3 it can be seen that controllability and animacy are exhibited by all the lexemes. Animacy is expected due to the suffix denoting female agents. All of the *-ess* agent noun exhibit all the 5 agentive properties with the exception of *maystresse,* which exhibits controllability and volition as it denotes someone who has control over someone

else, but it does not denote any action scenario which the agent can be the cause and/or initiator of.

Regarding the bases of *-ess* agent nouns, *master* and *traitor* are considered normal nominal bases as they are unanalyzable. These nominal bases are animate however, which was not the case with the nominal bases of the *-our* agents in section 5.2. The *-esse* agent nouns found in the corpus can be seen as denotations of feminine counterparts to masculine agents, and adapt the agentive marking of those agent noun bases.

5.4 Results of the morphosemantic analysis of *-er* agent nouns

As shown in section 4.5, *-er/-ar* are as expected confirmed to be orthographic variants. The analyzable borrowings and the true derivatives will be allocated to separate tables, Table 5.4 contains the results of the analysis of the analyzable borrowings:

Table 5.4: *Agentive properties exhibited by analyzable borrowing* -er *agents and bases*

Lexeme	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
bourder	+	+	+	+	+
defender	+	-	+	+	+
fayter	+	+	+	+	+
foster	+	-	+	-	+
iuster	+	+	+	+	+
maronner	+	+	+	-	+
mayntener	+	-	+	-	+
messager	+	+	+	-	+
officer	+	-	+	-	+
philosopher	+	-	+	-	+
porter	+	-	+	-	+
robber	+	+	+	+	+
tresorer	+	-	+	-	+
Base					
bourd	+	+	+	+	+
defend	+	-	+	+	+
fait	+	+	+	+	+
joust	+	+	+	+	+
rob	+	+	+	+	+
maintain	+	-	+	-	+
forest (n)	-				
message (n)	-				
marine (n)	-				
office (n)	-				
philosophy (n)	-				
port (n)	-				
treasure (n)	-				

All of the analyzable borrowing *-er* agent nouns exhibit animacy, controllability, and volition. *Philosopher* denotes characteristics of expertise more than an action, and so it does not exhibit causation or initiative. Many of these *-er* agent nouns denote the continuation of established actions, namely *tresorer, mayntener* 'maintainer'*, porter, officer,* and *foster* 'forester'. *Mayntener* literally denotes someone who maintains something. While the continuation of an established pattern can exhibit volition and controllability, it is not classified as causative. Additionally, *defender* involves a participant that is reacting to some sort of attack and is instigated mainly due to reaction and is therefore not ultimately caused by the agentive participant.

Of these 13 agent nouns, 6 of them are analyzable as having verbal bases. Generally, the properties exhibited by the derivative are the same as those exhibited by the bases. There is therefore a balance in the properties exhibited between the derivatives and their bases.

5.4.1   Native derivative *-er* agent nouns

The native derivative *-er* agent nouns comprise the largest set of agent noun lexemes, including a large set of deverbal agent nouns. The overview of the results of the analysis is provided in Table 5.5 and Table 5.6. The derivatives and the bases had to be allocated to separate tables due to the simple fact that they are quite large inventories. Table 5.5 contains the derivatives, while Table 5.6 contains the bases:

Table 5.5: *Agentive properties exhibited by true derivative -er agent nouns*

Lexeme	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
accuser	+	+	+	+	+
beggar	+	+	+	+	+
beginner	+	+	+	+	+
bitrayer	+	+	+	+	+
carter	+	-	+	+	+
causer	+	+	+	+	+
clymber	+	-	+	+	+
destroyer	+	+	+	+	+
deuourer	+	+	+	+	+
dreme reder	+	+	+	+	+
enchaunter	+	+	+	+	+
fighter	+	+	+	+	+
fyssher	+	+	+	-	+
harper	+	+	+	+	+
householder	+	-	+	-	+
hunter	+	+	+	+	+
iaper	+	+	+	+	+
keper	+	-	+	+	+
labourer	+	+	+	+	+
leder	+	+	+	+	+
louer	+	-	+	-	+
lyar	+	+	+	+	+
maker	+	+	+	+	+
multyplyer	+	+	+	+	+
murtherer	+	+	+	+	+
mysbyleuer	+	-	+	-	+
offenser	+	+	+	-	+
pryker	+	+	+	+	+
pyllar	+	+	+	+	+
ruler	+	+	+	+	+
rydar	+	+	+	+	+
scoffer	+	+	+	+	+
shoter	+	+	+	+	+
speker	+	+	+	+	+
sinner	+	+	+	+	+
talker	+	-	+	+	+
wel willer	+	-	+	+	+

Many of the agent nouns in Table 5.5. seem to be prototypical agent nouns, being deverbal and exhibiting all of the agentive properties. This indication of prototypicality is further supported by the properties exhibited by the bases, shown in Table 5.6:

Table 5.6: *Agentive properties of the bases of -er agent nouns*

Base	Animacy	Causation	Controllability	Initiative	Volition
accuse	+	+	+	+	+
beg	+	+	+	+	+
begin	-	+	-	+	-
bitray	+	+	+	+	+
cause	-	+	-	+	-
climb	+	+	+	+	+
destroy	+	+	+	+	+
devour	+	+	+	+	+
read (dreams)	+	+	+	+	+
enchant	+	+	+	+	+
fight	+	+	+	+	+
harp	+	+	+	+	+
hunt	+	+	+	+	+
jape	+	+	+	+	+
keep	+	-	+	-	+
labour	+	+	+	+	+
lead	+	+	+	+	+
love	+	-	-	-	-
lie	+	+	+	+	+
make	+	+	+	+	+
multiply	+	+	+	+	+
murder	+	+	+	+	+
misbelieve	+	-	-	-	-
prick	+	+	+	+	+
pill	+	+	+	+	+
rule	+	+	+	+	+
ride	+	+	+	+	+
scoff	+	+	+	+	+
shoot	+	+	+	+	+
speak	+	+	+	+	+
sin	+	+	+	+	+
talk	+	-	+	+	+
will (well)	+	-	-	-	+
cart (n)	-				
fish (n)	-				
household (n)	-				
offense (n)	-				

Similar to Table 5.5, it can be seen from Table 5.6 that most of the verbal bases of *-er* agent nouns are agentive verbs exhibiting all the agentive properties, confirming that many of the true derivative *-er* agent nouns are prototypical. Some lack an exhibition of one property; *talk* can be considered reactionary to other people talking as well, and therefore is not causative (in contrast to *speak¸* which does exhibit causation). There are also a few verbs which do not denote an animate participant, namely *begin* and *cause*. *Begin* and *cause* also do not exhibit volition, as it is just as plausible that something can

begin or be caused unintentionally as intentionally. The derivatives of these bases exhibit controllability and/or volition. There are also two synthetic compounds – *dream reder* and *wel wyllar* – where additional information is provided, namely that *read* refers to reading *dreams*, and that the *wel wyllar* is one who '*wills*' (wishes) someone well.

What is notable with these results is the fact that there are agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases. Specifically, *louer* (derived from *love), mysbyleuer* (derived from *misbelieve),* and *wel willer* (*willer* derived from *will*). *Love* and *misbelieve* do not exhibit any agentive properties, whereas *will* exhibits volition only, however their derivatives exhibit controllability and volition, and *wel willer* also exhibits initiative. Evidence for them being agent nouns based on how they are used was covered in the previous chapter (section 4.4 and 4.5). The bases can be classified as mental or experiencer verbs, expressing thoughts, wishes, feelings, etc. The derivatives may be considered agentive experiencers, i.e. experiencers that express some form of agentivity.

The notable differentiation between the base and the derivative is the exhibition of controllability and volition. Whereas these verbs denote feelings typically not considered volitive or controllable, the derivatives assign a certain amount of control and intention onto the participant. Where *misbelieve* stands for holding false beliefs, a *mysbyleuer* deliberately choses to hold those beliefs. While *will* (as noted in section 4.4, lexical verb *will* meant 'to wish for, desire') refers to desiring and can be volitive, the *wel wyllar* is one who desires well for another and supports them, exhibiting controllability and initiative as well. Where *love* denotes a feeling of affection, *lover* denotes someone who acts upon these affections in some way. These derivatives show the derivation process marking derivatives for agentive properties that were not exhibited by the base verb.

5.5   Discussion

A general tendency that can be conceived for the agent nouns in the corpus is that there is a general correspondence in the properties exhibited by the agent noun derivative and the verbal base. The native derivatives formed with non-native suffixes – *procurour* from *procure* and *huntresse* from *hunter* – both exhibit all the agentive properties. A similar tendency is seen with the deverbal analyzable borrowings. Considering agentivity as defined and limited by an interplay of agentive properties, the data, while of course

limited in size, suggests that to be agentive the exhibition of at least two properties is necessary.

Another general tendency is that the most commonly exhibited agentive properties are controllability and volition – in fact, all natively derived agent nouns exhibit these properties, and all the agent nouns analyzed exhibit volition. This may be due to the general nature of the properties, denoting 'in control' and 'intentionally', making them applicable across a wider spectrum of expressions. Alternatively, it could also be more boldly suggested that these properties are carried by the agentive suffixes, as they are suffixes whose function is primarily to form agent nouns. While the dataset is much too limited and not diverse enough to make any inferences of that nature on a larger scale, some of the true derivative *-er* agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases do support this as a possibility.

A particular observation that arises from these analyses is the distinction between denominal and deverbal agent nouns. Deverbal agents derive from a verbal action in most cases, where the scenario can be understood as 'one who V-s'. However, denominal agent nouns, deriving from a noun, are not as easily characterized as a compartmentalization of an action and the instigator of it. There are two possible ways of handling this issue in the theoretical framework of this thesis. The first way is to say that the only reason denominal agent nouns can be classified as agent nouns is for the same reason that unanalyzable agent nouns can be – namely that their meanings and how they are used links them to the agent. The second way is to view denominal agent noun derivation as cases of agent noun derivation, and that agent-derivative suffixes can attach themselves to bases that are not agentive. This second way of viewing the issue is further supported by the fact that agent nouns derived from non-agentive verbs (*louer, wel wyllar, mysbyleuer*) have been observed.

A final concern regarding denominal agent nouns relates to those that are derived from nouns but do not denote these nouns as being participants of an agentive action. Whereas *fyssher* is derived from *fish* but denotes specifically 'one who catches fish', and thus concerns *fish* as the object of *catch, philosopher* denotes 'being an expert of philosophy', and does not denote an action. These agent nouns, of which a few occur in the corpus – *embassadour, senatour, philosopher, maystresse* - can only be considered peripheral agents. There are no examples of such denominal agents of the true derivative

kind, which in tandem with the lack of denotation of any action indicates that these formations would not occur in native derivational processes, being linked to agent nouns due to the fact that they show some agentive properties after all, as well as similarity in form and usage.

With these considerations in mind, the focus turns to what can be concluded in light of these analyses, both in this chapter and the basic analyses of chapter 4. For these purposes the hypotheses of the investigation are reiterated, as they can be tested in light of the collection, classification, and the analyses being complete. The hypotheses (referred to as H1-H6, see section 1.1) are addressed in individual subsections.

5.5.1 H1: There are more non-native than native agent nouns

H1 assumes that there are more non-native agent nouns than native agent nouns found in the corpus. This expectation is based on the theoretical outline of tendencies observed in the language period, given in section 2.3. Following the analyses, and including the unanalyzable items, there are 42 native and 39 non-native agent nouns.

Additionally, two native agent noun formations, namely *offenser* and *bitrayer,* are seemingly first attested in *LMD* (see section 4.5). These are derived using the native suffix *-er* from ultimately non-native bases (see Table 4.12). Only 2 lexemes, *procurour* and *huntresse*, are instances of the opposite: they are true derivatives formed through borrowed suffixes. The majority of true derivatives are formed with *-er.* These factors further indicate a preference for native agent noun formations over non-native agent nouns. H1 is therefore rejected.

5.5.2 H2: Many of the agentive suffixes found in Middle English are represented

H2 assumes that in the corpus of agent nouns retrieved from *LMD*, a variety of the suffixes that formed agent nouns before and during Middle English would be observed. This is based on the observed presence of a wider variety of concrete noun suffixes in Middle English by Dalton-Puffer (2011: 131-162) and later in Early Modern English observed in the language of Shakespeare by Kalaga (2016). The suffix *-er* is the one most represented by the true derivatives, with 37 types compared to 1 for *-our* and 1 for *-esse.* The suffixes *-aunt* and *-ary* are considered suffixes in terms of analyzable borrowings, they are also only represented by 1 type each. H2 is therefore rejected.

5.5.3   H3: The majority of the agent nouns will be prototypical agent nouns

H3 assumes that the majority of analyzable agent nouns will be classified as prototypical, i.e. they will be agent nouns exhibiting all of the agentive semantic properties, derived from a verbal base that also exhibits all these properties. The *-esse* agent nouns derived from *-er* agent nouns are therefore excluded, as while their bases are *-er* agent nouns which exhibit properties, they are not verbal bases. This hypothesis functions with 'less prototypical' as one category for the sake of a consistent dichotomy. Within this category however there is variation in the number of properties exhibited and thus the degree of agentivity. In total, 67 agent nouns were analyzable in these terms, and of these items, 34 are considered prototypical agent nouns by the criteria. This constitutes 51% of the agent noun inventory. H3 is therefore confirmed.

5.5.4   H4: There will be deverbal agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases.

H4 assumes that there are deverbal agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases in the corpus. This assumption is based primarily on the discussions of agentive experiencers (see subsection 2.2.3). True derivative agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases were observed in the corpus, namely *wel wyllar, mysbyleuer,* and *louer*. H4 is therefore confirmed.

5.5.5   H5: Different suffixes exhibit different properties and differ in what properties their bases exhibit

H5 assumes that, when observing the individual suffixes, a difference in which properties their produced derivatives exhibit can be observed. From the results of the analyses, it was noted that volition and controllability are exhibited by all of the agent noun derivatives. They are all also animate. It can also be seen that these properties are marked on the *-er* agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases, as well as *begin* and *cause,* which do not exhibit volition whereas *beginner* and *causer* do exhibit it. From the data, the suffix *-er* appears to be the only suffix that derives agent nouns exhibiting volition from verbal bases that do not exhibit it. This can indicate that *-er* is able to attach itself to verbs lacking these agentive properties and mark the derivative for them, whereas borrowed suffixes that are not as established are more restricted to more direct correspondence between the properties of derivative and verb. However, the data turned out to be insufficient to

confirm or reject this hypothesis due to the fact that other suffixes are not as well-represented. Of the suffixes that are represented, there are few true derivatives. H5 can therefore neither be confirmed nor rejected, although the impression from the data is that H5 is potentially correct.

5.5.6   Comparison to previous studies

To conclude this section, the discussed results are compared to the two previous studies on agent noun derivation in historical English that were the primary inspiration for this study, namely Dalton-Puffer (1994) and Kalaga (2016). These separate studies were presented in more detail in chapter 2. The question therefore is how the results of the investigation of this thesis compare to the findings of these studies. This is primarily done since these studies investigated language data from before and after *LMD*, and it is of interest to check how the agent nouns in *LMD* compare.

Kalaga (2016) investigated agent nouns in the language of Shakespeare. Unlike Dalton-Puffer (1994), inferences about tendencies from ME to EModE are not a focus. As noted in section 2.3, Kalaga (2016) concludes that the most productive suffixes in Shakespeare's agent noun formation are *-er, -ist,* and *-ess,* noting that he also made use of almost all available agent-forming suffixes. Compared to this observation, *LMD* contains no agent nouns with the *-ist* suffix. This is not unexpected, as the suffix was yet to become productive in ME. The *-esse* suffix is of limited use in *LMD*, represented by 5 lexemes, 1 of which is a true derivative and the other 4 being loans. The suffix being represented by both loans and one native derivative in *LMD* supports the notion of a later increase in productivity. In comparison to the conclusions regarding Shakespeare's agent noun formations, *-er* is definitely the most productive suffix in the language of *LMD.*

As noted in section 2.3, Dalton-Puffer (1994: 56) concludes among other things that from early ME to EmodE, "the realization of the Agent and/or Attributive categories are enriched considerably, not least through loans from French and Latin". The attributive is not of relevance, so the focus remains on the tendency toward an enrichment of realization of the agent category through non-native loans. This tendency does not seem to be corroborated by the agent nouns in *LMD,* where the agent is primarily realized through native derivational processes and non-native suffixes as used in native formations are rare. But, the relatively large number of non-native agent nouns means that the

findings of the present thesis do not contradict this tendency, although the lack of loaned suffixes used in native derivations suggests that they are not yet assimilated into the language system. Dalton-Puffer (1994) marks *-er* and *-our* as predominantly agent suffixes in Late ME, which is supported by the *LMD* data. The suffix *-esse* is denoted as not an agent suffix itself, rather that it forms agent noun by attaching itself "to nouns which already contain the element of agenthood" (Dalton-Puffer, 1994: 54). This conclusion is supported by the *-esse* agents that were discussed in this thesis, as they are analyzable as derived from *-er* agent nouns.

The findings of the present thesis mostly corroborate the tendencies observed by those studies to the extent that the data is comparable. The tendency of moving from more native patterns to a variation of native and adapted non-native patterns is supported by the data, where loanwords that can be analyzed as carrying non-native suffixes are present, but they have not been incorporated into the derivational system quite yet. Of course, since the size of this text and the corpus of agent nouns is small and contained, any larger inferences about the development cannot be drawn, but the textual data does not contradict the conclusions of Dalton-Puffer (1994) regarding the development of agent derivation from ME to EModE. However, as her conclusions do not concern the suffixes' relationship with agentive properties, comparisons in this regard were not possible.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has covered the morphosemantic analysis of the analyzable agent nouns observed in the language of *LMD*. The suffixes *-aunt, -ary, -our, -esse,* and *-er* have been analyzed. This analysis revealed that in most instances the derivatives and their bases exhibit the same properties, but a notable exception is the marking of volition and controllability on *-er* agents derived from bases that do not exhibit the properties. In terms of discussing the results and testing the hypotheses, both as concerns these results and the analyses of chapter 4, H1 and H2 were rejected, while H3 and H4 were confirmed. H5 cannot be confidently confirmed or rejected, although the suggested tendencies discovered through the analyses suggest that it might be the case that *-er* can attach itself to non-agentive bases and mark the derivative for volition and/or controllability. The discussed results were compared to the previous studies, and it was concluded that the

patterns discovered previously – namely, an enrichment of how the agent is realized, including the adoption of loans, when moving from Early ME to EModE – was mostly corroborated by the data. While there was little evidence of non-native suffixes being fully adapted into the native agent noun derivational pattern, this tendency seems to be supported by the data, as it contains many analyzable borrowed agent nouns.

5.7   Conclusion

Based on the data and analysis presented in this thesis, certain conclusions can be drawn:

- In the approach to categorizing agent nouns employed in this thesis, there are a total of 81 agent nouns with a frequency of 521 tokens in the *LMD* corpus. Of the 81 agent nouns, 14 were classified as unanalyzable, 28 as analyzable borrowings, and 39 as true derivatives. There are 42 native agent nouns, and 39 borrowings.

- A total of 5 agent suffixes are represented, and the most prominent agent suffix in the corpus is *-er,* with 40 agent noun types, Furthermore *-our* has 10 types, *-esse* has 5 types, while *-ary* and *-aunt* both have 1 type. There were no true derivatives with the suffixes *-ary* or *-aunt*.

- A majority of the analyzable agent nouns were prototypical, making up 51% of the analyzable agent nouns.

- *Louer, mysbyleuer,* and *wel willer* are agent nouns derived from non-agentive bases that are observed in the corpus. The analysis also indicated that the suffix *-er* can attach to bases not exhibiting controllability and/or volition and mark the derivative for those properties.

Following these conclusions, Table 5.7 summarizes the characteristics of the agent noun distribution in the *LMD* corpus:

Table 5.7: Summary of the distribution of agent nouns in LMD

Analyzability	Corpus characteristics			Syntactic category of bases				Base etymology	
	Suffix	Types	Freq.	N	Verb		Adj	Native	Non-native
					Agentive	Non-agentive			
True derivative	*-er*	37	146	4	30	3	0	26	11
	-esse	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0
	-our	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Analyzable borrowing	*-ary*	1	8	0	0	0	1	0	1
	-aunt	1	36	0	1	0	0	0	1
	-er	13	90	7	6	0	0	0	13
	-esse	4	25	4	0	0	0	1	3
	-our	9	71	4	5	0	0	0	9
Unanalyzable		14	139	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.7.1 Limitations & Further Research

There will always be limitations on a project of this scope. To finish I will briefly reflect on some of those, as well as the potential further research that could prove useful in light of the results of this investigation.

The data of this thesis was limited in size compared to the previous studies, and while this was initially not seen as a limitation (as it is indeed a qualitative analysis of agent nouns), the underrepresentation of a variety of agent nouns with suffixes other than *-er* did limit my ability to draw conclusions as regards the theoretical aims concerning the morphosemantic relationship between derivative and base. It would perhaps be of interest to employ these methods of classification and analysis in a larger dataset, such as incorporating more texts, and a wider range of agentive suffixes represented by more lexemes of each suffix. Additionally, it would interesting to see how these tendencies compare to the language in other Caxton publications, or other sets of language data from Late ME.

Another factor that proved challenging was that the theoretical framework concerning the potential connection between syntax and morphology regarding the meanings of derived agent nouns and what it is that makes them agent nouns. The thesis covered in chapter 2 the importance of context in recognizing agent nouns, while the morphosemantic properties of agent nouns and their syntactic usage were considered separate domains. However, I recognize that this data may be well-suited for exploring

such linguistic concerns further (for a discussion on the relation between argument structure & morphology, see Levin and Rappaport 1988). These theoretical issues are also discussed respectively by Heyvaert (2003), and Kalaga (2016), but it is not an issue I explored further in this project.

Finally, I note that while this analysis is greatly inspired by the previous studies, an explicit analysis of the exhibition of these much-discussed agentive properties as part of the derivation of agent nouns seemed harder to find in the literature, and one may want to incorporate elements of such an approach to future studies of agent nouns in different sets of data, both synchronic and diachronic.

Appendix I: Agent noun inventory with PDE translations

Agent noun	PDE Translation
barbour	barber
conquerour	conqueror
currour	courier
dictatour	dictator
gouernour	governor
herbegeour	harbinger
procurour	procurer
senatour	senator
saueour	savior
socour	succor
traytour	traitor
warryour	warrior
seuraunt	servant
tyraunt	tyrant
waraunt	warrant
enchauntress	enchantress
huntresse	huntress
maystresse	mistress
sorceress	sorceress
traitresse	traitress
accusar	accusar
beggar	beggar
iustar	jouster
kepar	keeper
louar	lover
lyar	lier
pyllar	piller
rular	ruler
rydar	rider
synnar	sinner
wel wyllar	well-willer
archer	archer
butler	butler
carpenter	carpenter
mayster	master
bourder	bourder
defender	defender
foster	forester
fayter	faitour
mayntener	maintainer
maronner	mariner
messager	messager
philosopher	philosopher

porter	porter
robber	robber
tresorer	treasurer
beginner	beginner
bitrayer	betrayer
carter	carter
causer	causer
clymber	climber
deuourer	devourer
destroyer	destroyer
dreme reder	dream reader
enchaunter	enchanter
fighter	fighter
fyssher	fisher
harper	harper
householder	householder
hunter	hunter
iaper	japer
labourer	laborer
leder	leader
maker	maker
murtherer	murderer
multyplyer	multiplier
mysbyleuer	misbeliever
offenser	offenser
pryker	pricker
scoffer	scoffer
shoter	shooter
speker	speaker
talker	talker
aduersarye	adversary
espye	spy
horseman	horseman
herdman	herdsman
steward	steward

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