

“A DIFFERENT KIND OF WITCH”:
REWRITING THE WITCH IN TERRY PRATCHETT’S DISCWORLD

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This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of John Howarth.

ABSTRACT

A being both real and fantastical, the witch is a tricky figure to pin down. Indeed, mention the word ‘witch’ to almost anyone today and they are likely to imagine a number of different figures, from cruel, ugly, old women dressed all in black to young, beautiful, kindly blondes. While the first part of this thesis will examine such stereotypes of the witch (for so these figures are) in terms of a wider examination of the witch and how this being has been represented over the centuries, the main focus of this thesis are the witch characters of the late great Sir Terry Pratchett’s (1948-2015) witch sub-series of Discworld fantasy novels. Through an analysis of these characters I will argue that, although the witches of the Disc may initially seem to conform to the various dominant witch stereotypes I identified earlier, Pratchett consistently overturns or rejects these stereotypes and, in so doing, writes into being a new type of witch: a powerful, heroic, moral being whose empowered status marks Pratchett out as a feminist in-line with the many others who, in recent years, have also attempted to rewrite the witch. However, where the witches of this latter set of writers and theorists often fall short in feminist terms, I argue that Pratchett succeeds to the extent that he could be said to have gone too far – in his focus on empowering the witches of the Disc, not only does Pratchett end up reducing his male wizards as characters, but he also renders them superfluous.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Full Title</u>	<u>Number in Witch Sub-Series</u>	<u>Number in the Discworld Series (Novels)</u>
<i>ER</i>	<i>Equal Rites</i>	1	3
<i>S</i>	<i>Sourcery</i>	N/A	5
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wyrd Sisters</i>	2	6
<i>WA</i>	<i>Witches Abroad</i>	3	12
<i>LL</i>	<i>Lords and Ladies</i>	4	14
<i>M</i>	<i>Maskerade</i>	5	18
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Carpe Jugulum</i>	6	23
“SF”	The Sea and Little Fishes	7	N/A (short story)
<i>WFM</i>	<i>The Wee Free Men</i>	8	30
<i>HFS</i>	<i>A Hat Full of Sky</i>	9	32
<i>W</i>	<i>Wintersmith</i>	10	35
<i>UA</i>	<i>Unseen Academicals</i>	N/A	37
<i>SWM</i>	<i>I Shall Wear Midnight</i>	11	38
<i>SC</i>	<i>The Shepherd’s Crown</i>	12	41

INTRODUCTION

Mention the word ‘witch’ to almost anyone today and they will likely be able to describe a number of very different figures. Some may talk about evil old women with thin skeletal hands, crooked teeth, long (often hooked) noses, claw-like fingernails, and hairy warts; women who dress in black with black capes and black pointy hats, fly around on broomsticks at the dead of night, keep many black cats, stir cauldrons of foul-looking bubbling liquids, and delight in scaring and harming young children. Many, either simultaneously or alternatively, may describe a woman akin to housewife-witch Samantha Stephens of *Bewitched* or Sabrina the teenaged witch from the television show of the same name: young, beautiful, and essentially well-meaning witches who, although their spells often backfire, generally try to do the right thing. Another set of figures likely to come to the forefront of people’s minds at a mention of the word ‘witch’ are those women who were accused of, and executed for, witchcraft in Europe in the early modern period – women who supposedly consorted with the Devil and (like the warty, long-nosed crone) were believed to steal away with and harm young children. Then again, many people may simply think of and describe what they imagine those modern-day women (and men) who have taken on (or aspire to) the title of ‘witch’ to look like and do: picturing hippy-esque, nature-loving feminists who spend most of their days dancing outdoors in the nude or performing intricate ceremonies and rituals indoors in front of a cluttered altar. The word ‘witch’ evokes all of these images because they are more than just images: each, in fact, constitutes a separate stereotype of the witch.

Although there exist numerous definitions, throughout this thesis I take ‘stereotypes’ to be beliefs about the attributes, behaviours, and/or characteristics of certain groups (Hilton and von Hippel 240) – beliefs which, in some cases, are capable of persisting for centuries (Stratton 23). The stereotype of the witch as a woman who consorts with the Devil constitutes one such stereotype, emerging, as it did, in Europe in the latter part of the fifteenth century (Neave 3; Maxwell-Stuart 11, 54). More than just the longest-lasting stereotype, however, the witch as a Devil-worshipping, child-murdering woman actually constitutes the original witch figure (Maxwell-Stuart 11). For while there were many women and female fictional characters (such as Circe and Medea) who existed or who were written into being prior to this period who are now often classed as witches, the witch is, according to P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, “a late medieval and early modern *construct* [emphasis added]” (11). I highlight this last word because, although the witch as a Devil-worshipping, child-murdering woman is a fantasy, the fact nevertheless remains that – during the early modern period – many women actively took on this label and believed themselves to be witches (Spoto 67), while (regardless of whether they accepted the label or not) many tens of thousands of men, women, and children were killed because their peers considered them to be witches (Levack 25). Hence the difficulty when it comes to writing about the figure of the witch: the witch is a being who flows effortlessly across the boundary between fact and fiction, a creature both real and fantastical at the same time. Since the witch is so fluid a figure – the word ‘witch’ itself “derive[s] from a root *wic*, or *weik*, meaning to bend or turn or twist” (Adler 42) – I shall not be attempting a definition. Instead, over the course of this thesis, I shall merely take

those beings (whether real or fictional) who are classed or who class themselves as witches at face value. I will not interrogate or attempt to take these figures apart to try and determine what constitutes a witch, nor shall I try and set up as a witch any being not already named as such (with the exception of a couple of characters who, although termed ‘old women’ or, even, ‘fairies’, are almost universally accepted as being witches).

While the four main stereotypes of the witch have survived many years and remain powerful constructs to this day, recently, the witch has experienced something of a feminist rebirth (Boyd 101). Indeed, beginning in the 1970s, the witch has been recast by radical feminists and feminist Witches (respectively) as an innocent, yet sensual, sexually-liberated healer-midwife, and an aspect of a being termed the Goddess; during this period of time, however, the witch also underwent (and is in fact still undergoing) a rewriting at the hands of various authors of fairy tale and fantasy – authors whose works often have a similarly feminist bent to them. One such author is Sir Terry Pratchett (1948-2015), and it is his rewriting of the figure of the witch in the witch sub-series of his Discworld fantasy series of novels that is the main focus of my thesis.

Beginning with *The Colour of Magic* in 1983 and ending, with Pratchett’s death in 2015, with *The Shepherd’s Crown*, the Discworld series consists of forty-one novels, a handful of short stories, and various other miscellaneous texts (such as diaries, cookbooks, and maps all based on or around the world of the Disc). While Pratchett is content for the series to be shelved as fantasy – since “[i]f it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then you might as well stick an orange in its bottom and eat it with green peas” (“Imaginary Worlds” 160) – according to David Buchbinder, the novels and short stories set on the Discworld are not just fantasy but (what he terms) “comic fantasy” (173). As for exactly what constitutes comic fantasy, Buchbinder offers little in the way of definition: fantasy is a tough enough genre to define in and of itself (Jackson 1), and Buchbinder seems to imply that the Discworld novels and short stories are “*comic* fantasy [emphasis added]” merely because they are works of fantasy which contain a great deal of humour (as, indeed, they do) (173).

In addition to copious amounts of humour, Pratchett’s Discworld series also features a large cast of characters. Although not every character is present in every book and we only meet some figures – such as Eric Thursley from *Faust-Eric* (1990) – once, others appear in numerous novels at various points throughout the series. In fact, according to John Clute, if one leaves aside the first two Discworld novels (*The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic* [1986]) which “go together to make one long introductory tale”, the remaining novels can be “grouped into several sequences” (or sub-series) depending on the characters that they feature (14). One of the three main sub-series of Pratchett’s Discworld series focuses on the Ankh-Morpork City Watch and the characters of Commander Samuel Vimes and Captain Carrot Ironfoundersson; another features the cowardly wizard Rincewind, who often appears alongside the Unseen University wizards; and the third is centred on the witches of the Disc, a set of characters who have “a zest for life, a clear-headed grasp of psychology, a gift for natural medicine, and an absolute refusal to be overawed by any situation” (“Imaginary Worlds” 162). While much could be written about any one of these three groups of characters, it is this latter set that is of most interest to me.

Over the course of Pratchett's witch sub-series – a collection of books which consists of eleven novels and one short story – we are introduced to a number of very different witch characters. There is silver-haired, stern, hook-nosed Esmerelda (Granny) Weatherwax who always dresses in black and, eventually, acquires a cat; dumpy, bandy-legged, eternally cheerful Gytha (Nanny) Ogg who loves all things male and demonic; and the frizzy-haired, rather wet, Magrat Garlick who wears floppy smocks, (quite literally) *tons* of jewellery, and works magic with as much ritual paraphernalia as she can lay her hands on. While the sub-series contains numerous other witch characters – from good-natured opera singer Agnes Nitt to (when we first meet her) nine-year-old dairy maid Tiffany Aching to the one-hundred-and-eleven-year-old deaf and blind Eumenides Treason – it is the former trio of Granny, Nanny, and Magrat who will occupy much of my attention. For, at first glance, each seems to conform to one of the four dominant witch stereotypes.

In addition to their seemingly stereotypical appearances, Pratchett portrays the witches of the Disc rendering their male counterparts, the wizards, a superfluous character set: not only does he depict the witches as being more powerful (magic-wise) than the wizards, but whereas he shows the witches going out and about doing good deeds in their local communities, Pratchett has the wizards spend most of their days cooped up indoors in the Unseen University engaged in petty squabbles amongst themselves. Indeed, the wizards of the Disc spend the vast majority of their time eating, drinking, arguing, and sleeping and, while some research does take place in the university, only a very few of the wizards seem to be actively involved in this and the only useful thing to have come out of their experiments so far is the computer, Hex. Whereas the rural communities of the Disc would very quickly cease to function without the input of the witches, it seems likely that few would so much as bat an eyelid if the Unseen University and all the wizards living within were removed from the city of Ankh-Morpork overnight (Boulding par. 10).

Thus, I shall argue that while the witches of the Disc may seem to conform to various dominant witch stereotypes, Pratchett consistently overturns or rejects these stereotypes and, in so doing, writes into being a new type of witch: a powerful, heroic, moral figure whose empowered status marks Pratchett out as a feminist in-line with the many others who, in recent years, have also attempted to rewrite the witch. However, where the witches of this latter set of writers and theorists often fall short in feminist terms, Pratchett succeeds to the extent that he could be said to have gone too far – in his focus on empowering the witches of the Disc not only does Pratchett end up reducing his male wizards as characters, but he also renders them superfluous.

While an analysis of the witches of Pratchett's Discworld will take up much of my thesis, Chapter One will be centred solely on the four dominant stereotypes of the witch and how these likely came about. In order to outline what I term the stereotypes of the early modern witch, the small screen witch, the Witch (the capital indicating a follower of one or other of the numerous forms of the contemporary Witchcraft movement), and the crone or fairy tale witch, I shall draw upon a wide variety of media – including art, fiction, texts written as fact, television, and film – from many different periods of history. While I adopt no specific critical framework or approach to guide my choice, I do restrict the works that I examine to

European and North American media (I leave it to another to discuss how the witch is typically represented in Africa or South America, for example). Indeed, the various films, texts, television series, and works of art that I analyse in my first chapter are merely those that I deem critical to the aim of this chapter, and I justify my inclusion of supposedly factual tracts (such as Kramer and Sprenger's 1486 treatise *Malleus Maleficarum*) in what is a predominantly fictional collection by regarding those texts as the works of fiction that they so evidently are.

Although I begin Chapter Two with a brief discussion on fantasy and the typical way witches tend to be represented in fantasy, the majority of this chapter is devoted to an in-depth analysis of three of the main witch characters of Pratchett's witch sub-series of Discworld fantasy novels. Indeed, in Chapter Two I make use of all that I previously outlined in Chapter One to argue that Granny Weatherwax appears to closely resemble the stereotype of the fairy tale witch, Nanny Ogg the early modern witch, and Magrat Garlick the modern-day adherent of Witchcraft. With the emphasis squarely on the word 'appears', I shall go on to argue that – with each of these three characters – Pratchett overturns or rejects any apparent similarity they may have had to one of the stereotypes outlined above and, hence, sets about writing “a different kind of witch” (WA 157).

In Chapter Three, I compare this new type of witch that Pratchett writes into being with various other attempted rewritings of the figure of the witch; although first appearances might seem to suggest otherwise, I argue that (ultimately) Pratchett's rewriting constitutes the most successful. As in Chapter One, I restrict my choice of texts in this chapter to those by European and North American authors, although this time all the works that I examine were written around the same period of time – that is, from the mid twentieth-century on – and were chosen because they all constitute attempts (with varying degrees of success) at rewriting the figure of the witch. Thus, in this chapter I will be comparing the witches of Pratchett's Discworld with the principal witch characters of several other fantasy texts (such as Marion Zimmer Bradley's 1983 novel *The Mists of Avalon*) with the accounts of the figure of the witch authored by radical feminists and Feminist Witches. While the latter are considered 'historical truth' by many adherents of these two movements, these accounts are, in fact, no less fantastical than those which sit explicitly within that genre. Thus, although I may seem, in Chapter Three, to be moving backwards and forwards between wildly disparate historical and fictional texts, I shall all the time have my feet planted firmly on fantastical soil, and will conclude this thesis by contrasting the witches of Pratchett's Discworld with their male counterparts, the wizards.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Stereotypes and Stereotyping

Although the consensus amongst the vast majority of social scientists is that stereotypes constitute beliefs about groups, the nature of these beliefs remains the subject of much debate (Hilton and von Hippel 240; Jussim, McCauley, and Lee 6; Fiske 623; Stroebe and Insko 5; McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears 5). While many theorists – such as English and English – argue that stereotypes are biased, oversimplified, and/or inaccurate beliefs (ctd. in Stroebe and Insko 4-5), Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee posit that stereotypes can be positive, or even accurate, perceptions about groups and group members (6). Indeed, Jussim, McCauley, and Lee argue that stereotypes have in fact been stereotyped, and that the “typical charges” brought against stereotypes (for being inaccurate, unhelpful, and/or unjustified beliefs) should be dropped as “the current state of our scientific knowledge cannot support [such] broad, sweeping statements” (15). However, while it is certainly true that many stereotypes may appear to be helpful or positive, such can rarely continue to be argued after the stereotype has been examined more closely. The apparently constructive stereotype that all women are good at parking, for example, gives rise to the negative implication that men are bad at parking, and puts unfair expectations on all women everywhere to fit this picture. Hence, throughout this thesis, whenever I refer to ‘stereotypes’ it is to “beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behavio[u]rs of [the] members of certain groups” that I am referring (Hilton and von Hippel 240) – beliefs which are often highly complex (neither merely ‘positive’ nor ‘negative’), and are capable of persisting for many hundreds of years (Stratton 23).

In contrast to stereotype definitions – which are fairly coherent – there are numerous theories regarding how and why stereotypes form (Stroebe and Insko 12). The most frequently cited of these theories is that stereotypes are a means of simplifying the complex world in which we live: Susan T. Fiske, for example, argues that stereotypes are shortcuts, and that people create and use them when their cognitive capacity is limited in some way – when they are distracted or overburdened with information (624). Similarly, Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, and Russell Spears posit that people form stereotypes in order to save themselves time and effort: they argue that by stereotyping – by “treat[ing] people [not as distinct human beings, but] as group members” – a person is able to “ignore all of the diverse and detailed information that is associated with individuals” and, hence, reduce or prevent information overload (4). For many other researchers, however, single theories – such as that of stereotypes as a tool for simplifying the information-rich world around us – are inadequate as a means of describing how and why stereotypes form. Indeed, after examining conflict theories, the social learning theory, and scapegoat theory; noting the effect that an authoritarian personality might have; and discussing the cognitive approach that many researchers take, Wolfgang Stroebe and Chester A. Insko come to the conclusion that no single approach to the question of how and why stereotypes form is satisfactory – it is a view that, they argue, is “now widely accepted by stereotype researchers” (28).

Similarly, when it comes down to why so many people both within and across cultures have the same stereotypes, there exist a number of different theories. McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears argue that stereotype commonality can either be seen as a result of the way in which “a common environment provides similar stimulus experience to different people”, or the consequence of the existence of a “shared cultural pool of knowledge, social representations, [and] ideology” (different people sample from this pool but, as they are all sharing the same repository of information, they leave with similar stereotypes) (5-6). Stroebe and Insko, however, argue that “the historic and cultural stability in stereotypes” is due to the fact that stereotypes – “[e]ven though they may be modified by experience” – “are mostly acquired through channels of socialization such as parents, school, and mass media”: stereotype commonality, they posit, is best explained via the “social learning theory” (29).

Attempting to answer why so many people share the same stereotypes of the witch, and how and why these stereotypes may have formed in the first place, is, however, not central to this thesis. Hence, in this first chapter, as I outline the various witch stereotypes – those beliefs about witches – that have survived (in some cases) many centuries to persist to this day, I shall not be attempting a theoretical explanation as to how they came about or may have spread. Instead, I intend to give a real-world suggestion as to what it was that likely sowed the seeds for that particular stereotype to emerge. Indeed, as I go on to outline the stereotypes of the early modern witch; the good, beautiful witch of the small screen; the Witch (a follower of one of the numerous forms of the contemporary Witchcraft movement); and the crone or fairy tale witch, I intend to reference and draw upon various examples of these stereotypes in literature, art, television, and film. But first, although, as P. G. Maxwell-Stuart notes, “a witch, as conceived by Western historical record, is essentially a late medieval and early modern construct”, since “certain ideas about magical workers ... were passed on from the ancient to the medieval world, ... any description of the Western witch must begin with that earlier period during which, strictly speaking, she did not exist” (11). Hence, I shall begin this thesis by examining the ‘witches’ of the ancient world.

‘Witches’ in Classical Literature

While the witch is an early modern construct (Maxwell-Stuart 11), the ancient Greek and Roman worlds were not without magic and magic practitioners (22). Indeed, according to Roman encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD), magic in the ancient world was “a practical art” which arose from medicine – magic was used as an alternative to, or in a way that complemented, the “purely natural skills of the physician or herbalist” (ctd. in Maxwell-Stuart 12). Although magic went on to “embrace religion and astrology” (12), Maxwell-Stuart argues that, in the ancient world, magic “did not ... constitute anything like a pseudo- or unofficial religious cult”, being, as it was at the time, without “a coherent theology of its own” (22). While there is currently much debate surrounding how magic is or should be defined, Matthew W. Dickie writes that, “by the latter part of the fifth century BC[,] magic was ... characterized by an ability, real or pretended, to upset the course of nature” (46), with the practitioner of magic seen as someone who, in contrast to the reverent priest or worshipper, “treated [the gods] as creatures who could be bent to his [or her] will” (26). As for just who those magic practitioners were, Kimberly B. Stratton notes that archaeological

evidence indicates that there was substantial male involvement in magic in the ancient world (24). Indeed, writes Stratton, ancient curse tablets show that “[a]pproximately 86 percent of erotic binding spells [we]re performed by or on the behalf of men” (24), and Michael James Winkelman notes that the figure of the shaman – the magico-religious practitioner of nomadic hunter-gatherer societies throughout the globe from Babylonian times through to and beyond the ancient world (310, 313) – was (and still is) predominantly male (333). While men thus “contributed their fair share to the magic arts” (Stratton 24), Daniel Ogden writes that, when it comes to mainstream classical literature, women who work magic “are far more prominent than their male counterparts” (78). This, according to Stratton, is due to the fact that, by the fourth century BC, magic had become a powerful discourse of alterity (44, 40): “[m]agic [emphasis removed] came to signify the threatening Other” (41), and that ‘Other’, in patriarchal ancient Greece and Rome, comprised slaves, non-citizen males and, most significantly, *women* (Maxwell-Stuart 13). In the pages of classical literature, “[t]he association of women with magic is axiomatic” (Stratton 24), and it is to this literature and an examination of how women who work magic are portrayed that I now turn.

Written in the eighth century BC, the tenth book of Homer’s *Odyssey* details Odysseus’ encounter with the beautiful, powerful Circe (Luck 110). Since Circe is the daughter of a Titan (she is one of the children of Helios, the Sun) she needs no assistance to perform magic (Luck 110) – Circe is able to “upset the course of nature” (Dickie 46) without having to appeal to, or bend the will of, the immortals (26). Indeed, armed with only an “enchancing wand” and various “pois’nous drugs”, Circe is able to transform humans into animals (Homer lines 285-97). However, not only does Circe turn all but one of Odysseus’ men into pigs, but Homer also heavily implies that the lions and mountain-wolves that live around Circe’s home may once have been human too (Ogden 98) – approached by Odysseus’ men, the animals “aris[e] on their hind[er] feet” and paw at the sailors as if attempting to warn them (Homer 258-69). Later on in the book, Circe returns Odysseus’ men to their original form: she anoints each ‘pig’ with “an unctuous antidote” and, “at the wholesome touch”, the ‘animals’ “shed the[ir] swinish bristles” and become men again (474-78). Although, as one of the daughters of the Sun, Circe is no mere mortal, Homer nevertheless depicts her throughout the text as an attractive, seductive woman (Luck 110): Circe is “amber-hair’d” (166), “beauteous” (380), and “graceful” (551); has a sweet singing voice (272); and her immediate impulse, when Odysseus proves unaffected by her magic, is to invite him into her bed (386-409). One of the earliest literary portraits of a female magic practitioner, Homer’s Circe is beautiful, seductive, and powerful (Maxwell-Stuart 22).

While Circe changes Odysseus’ men into pigs seemingly on a whim, her close relation, Medea, uses magic to further the cause of the man she loves. In the third book of Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica*, written in the third century BC (Ogden 83), Medea (the granddaughter of Helios, the Sun) uses magic to help her beloved Jason even though, in doing so, she is effectively betraying her family and country (Luck 110). Like Circe, Medea “handle[s] magic herbs with exceeding skill” (lines 523-39); however, where Circe appears to have an innate magical ability, Apollonius writes that Medea has learnt the craft “under the guidance of [the goddess] Hecate” (475-83). Despite such differences, Medea, like Circe, is

described as being both powerful and beautiful: Medea is “divinely fair” with “golden tresses” (828-90), and is capable of “stay[ing] the course of rivers ... and check[ing] the stars and the paths of the sacred moon” (523-39). Moreover, where Circe is quick to invite Odysseus, a man she has only just met, into her bed, Medea (albeit a Medea who has been pierced by Eros’ arrow) becomes similarly instantly infatuated with a complete stranger. So completely does Medea fall for this stranger – Jason, the leader of the Argonauts – that, had he asked it of her, “she would ... have drawn out all her soul from her breast and given it to him” (1008-25).

A retelling of the Medea myth is included in the seventh book of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, written in the first century AD (Ogden 87). In Ovid’s retelling we are left to assume Medea’s youth and beauty – we are not given much of a physical description of Medea beyond the fact that she has long hair (258); however, where Apollonius only briefly depicts Medea practicing magic, Ovid goes into great detail. Indeed, early on in the second fable of the seventh book, Ovid describes the rite that Medea performs to summon down her dragon-drawn chariot from heaven: “clothed in garments flowing loose, with bare feet, and ... unadorned hair hanging over her shoulders”, Ovid details how Medea “direct[s] her wandering steps through the still silence of midnight” before, “holding up her arms”, she turns herself about three times, “besprinkles her hair with water taken from the stream” three times, and, “with three yells[,] ... opens her mouth” (258). In his analysis of this passage, Maxwell-Stuart emphasises the fact that, as Medea goes about her magical rite, “[e]verything is set free from the expected ties which govern proper – that is officially-approved – behaviour”: Medea wears a loose, flowing gown instead of the customary tightly bound dress; where “[r]espectable women [would] w[ear] their hair braided or crimped and ornamented” Medea lets hers fall naturally about her shoulders; instead of setting out, as is usual, for a specific destination, Medea wanders wherever her feet take her; and, where people would normally open their mouth in order to speak and make themselves understood, Medea gives voice only to sounds (24). However, not only does Ovid’s Medea disregard normal social convention, but where the Medea in Apollonius’ *Argonautica* is able to stop rivers and slow the course of the stars and moon (lines 523-39), the former proclaims that, with the help of the “three-faced” goddess Hecate, she is powerful enough to “command the mountains ... to quake, ... the Earth to groan, and the ghosts to come forth from their tombs” (Ovid 258-59). More powerful – and boastful – than Apollonius’ character, Ovid’s Medea is also depicted as being more ruthless: Medea kills King Pelias by severing his throat and plunging him into a boiling cauldron (265), and gets her revenge on Jason (who has spurned her and married another woman) by drugging his new wife, setting fire to their house, and putting the sons that she (Medea) bore Jason to the sword (268).

While Erictho, who appears in the sixth book of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (first century AD), is similarly ruthless and skilled at magic, she is, in contrast to the youthful Circe and Medea, an ugly, old woman (Ogden 121). Erictho has a “cadaverous-lean” face, unkempt hair, and breath which poisons the “salubrious” air (Lucan lines 516-22). Although portrayed by Lucan as a hideous “darling of ... hell” (512), Erictho nevertheless shares Circe and Medea’s magical prowess – with the assistance of the immortals, she (Erictho) is able to thrust the

“still quickening / limbs” of “[s]ouls still alive” into the grave, and bring back to life those long since dead (529-32). What’s more, Erictho is able to see into the future; however, in order to do so, she has to gather together some particularly horrible items. Despite the fact that Ovid’s Medea also makes use of a number of unpleasant ingredients – including ram’s blood, the “wings [and flesh] of a screech owl”, the entrails of a werewolf, the skin of a “Cinyphian water-snake”, “the liver of a long-lived stag”, and “the bill and head of a crow” that has lived for nine ages (260-62) – such items pale in comparison to those amassed by Erictho. Not only does Erictho collect the “rubbery orbs [eyes]” of corpses, “the clotted pus” which oozes down the limbs of crucified men, and “the living blood” as it gushes from freshly-slit throats, but she also gathers babies – babies which she has cut out of the wombs of pregnant women (Lucan 541-57). While the items accumulated by Erictho are the more gruesome of the pair, both sets of ingredients bring to mind, and likely set the stage for, later litanies of horrors. The blood-curdling list recited by Shakespeare’s witches in his *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (1606) is one such example – a list which includes the mummified flesh of a shark, the “[l]iver of [a] blaspheming Jew”, and “[f]inger of [a] birth-strangled babe” (4.1.24-31).

Canidia, a recurring character in the work of Horace, has many similarities with Lucan’s Erictho. Like Erictho, Canidia is an old, “hideous[ly]” ugly woman: she is pale, has hair which is “a tortured mess”, nails that are so long and powerful that she is able to use them in place of spades to “claw[ing] up the dirt”, and teeth that are sharp enough to tear apart a whole lamb’s carcass (Horace, “Satire 8” lines 34-42). Physical similarities aside, when working magic, not only does Canidia, like Erictho, require the assistance of the gods, but she also makes use of some rather gruesome ingredients. Indeed, at various points in Horace’s “Satire 8” and “Epode V” – both of which were written during the first century BC (Ogden 115) – Canidia makes use of the blood of a “mournful lamb”, a wolf’s beard, the “fang of [a] speckled viper” (“Satire 8” 40-60), the “eggs and feathers of ... [a] screech-owl”, “the blood of loathsome toads”, and – like baby-murdering Erictho – the marrow and liver of a young boy (“Epode V” 19-40). Every bit as ruthless as Lucan’s “darling of ... hell” (512), Canidia (who needs the organs for a love potion) extracts the young boy’s marrow and liver in a particularly cruel way: Canidia has the boy buried up to his neck and three times each day shows him a variety of “rich fare” so that, not only does the boy die slowly from starvation, but he dies with “the pupils of his eyes ... fixed on food” (Horace, “Epode V” 31-40).

Although they may seem to be split into two distinct groups based on physical appearances, a number of key similarities underlie the portrayal of these four classical ‘witch’ characters. Indeed, despite the fact that Circe and Medea are beautiful young women, and Erictho and Canidia ugly old hags, all four characters are portrayed as having a great deal of power: Circe needs no assistance from any god or goddess to work her shape-shifting magic and, although Medea, Erictho, and Canidia all call upon the immortals (most often the goddess Hecate) to aid them in their magical endeavours, that the gods and goddesses respond and do their bidding is evidence that these women have an innate power above and beyond that of ordinary men and women. While it may thus seem incongruous that these four female characters are powerful in and of their own right when each is the imaginative creation of a

male author writing from within an ancient, patriarchal society, it is worth noting that Circe, Medea, Erichtho, and Canidia are not only immensely powerful, but they are also cruel and ruthless. Indeed, three of the four women are depicted murdering babies and young children (a trope that we will see echoed in the stereotypes of the early modern and fairy tale witches), and the only character who does not commit infanticide – Circe – is nevertheless equally ruthless in the way that she changes Odysseus’ men into pigs on a whim. Thus, although it may seem progressive that each of these four female characters is powerful, as a result of being depicted as simultaneously powerful *and* cruel, we, as readers, are given the impression that women with power – especially women with *magical* power – are dangerous and a threat to society (the association of women and magic with danger and illegitimate power is one that has lingered on throughout the centuries and, in fact, persists to this day) (Stratton 62). However, not only are Circe, Medea, Erichtho, and Canidia depicted as being powerful, ruthless, and cruel, but they are also (with the exception of Lucan’s Erichtho) associated with sex, love, or seduction in some way: when Circe’s magic does not succeed she immediately tries to appease Odysseus (who knows that Circe has attempted to put some sort of spell on him) by inviting him into her bed; Medea only agrees to use her magic to assist Jason because she has fallen in love with him; and Canidia spends most of “Epode V” concocting a love potion. Ruthless, powerful, and frequently associated with sex, love, or seduction, characters such as Circe, Medea, Erichtho, and Canidia are forerunners of the stereotype of the early modern witch (with Circe and, to a lesser extent, Medea, also influential in later years in inspiring the renewed interest in magic in poetry and art in the nineteenth century).

The Re-Interpretation of Magic and the Emergence of the Witch

A broomstick-riding, child-sacrificing, Devil-worshipping, sexually-insatiable *woman*, the early modern stereotype of the witch continues to constitute many people’s association with the word (Maxwell-Stuart 11). While this image of the witch emerged in Europe in the latter part of the fifteenth century (54), the arrival of Christianity in ancient Rome resulted in a significant shift in how magic and magic practitioners were perceived, a shift which would go on to inform much early modern thinking on the subject (30).

As the relatively new religion of Christianity began to make its mark on the Roman world, magic proved to be both a help and a hindrance (Maxwell-Stuart 33). On the one hand, due to what Fritz Graf describes as the “omnipresen[ce]” of the practice of magic at this time (1), there was a “willingness to accept, more or less without reservation, the possibility of the miraculous” (Maxwell-Stuart 33). This ready acceptance, however, meant that the Church had to explain why Christian miracles were genuine, whilst the magic and rites of others were fraudulent (33). According to Maxwell-Stuart, daimones – semi-divine entities who were believed to act as “intermediaries between human beings and gods and goddesses”, and who consequently played a large part in “enabl[ing] workers of magic to achieve their effects and wonders” – were central to the Church’s explanation (33). Indeed, Maxwell-Stuart writes that the Church latched onto these beings, transforming them from benign spirit-intermediaries into evil spirits, whose graded powers and organization mirrored that of the angelic hierarchy (34, 36). With Christian angels and classical daimones thus constituting “opposing armies in a continual war between good and evil”, those who practised magic were clearly “on the side

of evil”, since the magic that they worked (according to the Church’s argument) could only be “the effect of a diabolical alliance” with Satan or some other evil spirit (35-36).

Despite women’s association with magic in the pages of classical literature (Stratton 24), outside such texts women – prior to the latter part of the fifteenth century – were thought no more likely to practice magic than their male counterparts (Brauner 3). This all changed, however, with the emergence of a particular line of reasoning that developed out of the way women were perceived at the time: a line of reasoning expressed most succinctly by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger in 1486 in their hugely successful treatise *Malleus Maleficarum* (in English: *The Hammer of Women who work Harmful Magic*) (Brauner 7; Maxwell-Stuart 54-55; Neave 3). In the treatise, which “bec[ame] one of the most reprinted works in the early history of printing” (Brauner 7), Kramer and Sprenger reiterate the Christian Church’s argument that those who work magic have “enter[ed] into a pact with the [D]evil” (pt. 2 chap. 11); however, they also make use of the then unquestioned belief in the mental and physical inferiority of women. While Kramer and Sprenger put this belief to use in their treatise, Joanna Ludwikowska writes that it was the Church fathers – she cites “Jerome, Tertullian, Augustine, [and] Aquinas” – who, following “a careful analysis” of the Scriptures, the human body, and various other theological and ancient texts, actually instigated this belief (83-84). Indeed, according to Ludwikowska, it was the Church fathers who supposedly proved that – “[f]rom patristic, moralist, and scientific angles alike” – “women were physically weaker, emotionally less stable, less intelligent, and less rational than men” (84). Kramer and Sprenger then took these supposed truths and pushed them one step further, arguing that such ‘facts’ indicate that, of the two sexes, it is women who are the most likely to make a pact with the Devil. Indeed, in their treatise, Kramer and Sprenger posit that since women are less intelligent than men they are more likely to be taken in by the Devil and, since women are more carnal (physically weaker) than men, they (women) are more likely to be driven to seek out the Devil in order to participate in various sexual acts with him and his other demons (pt. 1 question 6; Levack 137-38). Thus, although the Christian Church had long preached that the ability to work magic was dependent on the practitioner having made a pact with the Devil, it was not until the latter part of the fifteenth century – with the writing and distribution of such works as Kramer and Sprenger’s *Malleus Maleficarum* – that women came to be seen as more likely to make such a pact; the practitioner of magic came to be viewed as distinctively female; and the figure of the witch as a Devil-worshipping, sexually-insatiable *woman* came into existence (Neave 3; Maxwell-Stuart 54).

The Stereotype of the Early Modern Witch

Before I go on to describe the stereotype of the early modern witch in more detail, it is worth noting the magical feats of which witches (with the aid of the Devil) were thought capable. According to Kramer and Sprenger in their *Malleus Maleficarum*, witches can:

raise hailstorms and hurtful tempests and lightnings; cause sterility in men and animals; ... make horses go mad under their riders; ... transport themselves from place to place through the air, either in body or in imagination; ... affect Judges and Magistrates so that they cannot hurt them; ... cause themselves and others to keep silence under torture; ... bring about a great trembling in the hands and horror

in the minds of those who would arrest them; ... show to others occult things and certain future events[;] ... see absent things as if they were present; ... turn the minds of men to inordinate love or hatred; ... strike whom they will with lightning, and even kill some men and animals; ... make of no effect the generative desires, and even the power of copulation[;] cause abortion[;] kill infants in the mother's womb by a mere exterior touch; ... [and] bewitch men and animals with a mere look, without touching them. (pt. 2 chap. 2)

Kramer and Sprenger also accuse witches of being able to “remove men’s members”, “either actually ... or through some prestige or glamour” (pt. 1 question 9).

Although I have already briefly mentioned several characteristics of the early modern witch, there is more to this stereotype than Devil worship and an insatiable sexual appetite. Indeed, in the early modern period, witches were believed to be able to fly, and were thought to attend a meeting, or Sabbath, at which they would (amongst a number of other activities) sacrifice or dedicate children to the Devil (Maxwell-Stuart 11). While much of the magic performed by witches was believed to be the result of considerable assistance from the Devil, witches’ ability to fly was thought to be due to an unguent that they made without the help of the Devil from the rendered fat of unbaptized babies (and other revolting ingredients) (Hults 253; Maxwell-Stuart 11). Once made, witches would smear this unguent on to “a staff of some kind”, such as a broomstick, and take off into the night (Maxwell-Stuart 11). In German artist Hans Baldung Grien’s (circa 1484-1545) many woodcuts and drawings featuring witches, “oven stick[s]” are the staff of choice (Hults 258), although Baldung does depict one witch soaring through the night sky on the back of a goat (252). That particular woodcut, entitled *Witches Preparing for the Sabbath Flight* (1510), features, in addition to a witch astride a flying goat, a young witch holding a wooden spoon with a jar on the ground between her legs, an elderly witch holding aloft a platter of sausages, and, in the background, a cat and (another) goat (Hults 252). With the jar and platter of sausages, Baldung refers (respectively) to the flying unguent that witches were believed to make, and the “penis-theft or magical castration that witches were supposed to commit” (see the list of magical deeds compiled by Kramer and Sprenger) (Hults 254). With the cat and the goat, however, not only does Baldung allude to the sexual appetites of the witches that he depicts (for cats and goats symbolize lust), but he also references the idea of the witch’s familiar (Hults 254). Demons that resembled animals (Purkiss 135), familiars were thought to both mother and be mothered by witches (137). Indeed, the ‘witchmark’ – the mark on a witch’s body that supposedly identified her as a witch (Spoto 59), and on which trials of witchcraft so often turned (Purkiss 246) – was believed to be “a conduit which opened the witch’s body and made it a source of food for familiars” (135). In addition to familiars, Baldung’s works depicting witches often include children. While Levack notes that, in the early modern period, children were occasionally accused, tried, and executed for witchcraft (144), it is likely that the children that Baldung depicts are not witches. Rather, Baldung likely includes infants in his work to allude to the commonly held belief that for witches – as we have seen previously with Erictho and Canidia – children were an important magical ingredient (Hults 257). However, not only were children in the early modern period believed to constitute the “raw material” of witches’

flying unguents, but they were also thought to comprise “food, and sacrifices to and converts for the [D]evil” (Hults 257).

The stereotype of the early modern witch as a Devil-worshipping, child-murdering, broomstick-riding, sexually insatiable woman also permeates the literature of the period. In Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur* (1469-70), for example, the character of Morgan le Fay – although not explicitly referred to as a witch (the text is a few years too early for that) – is, nevertheless, an evil, sexually insatiable female worker of magic. Not only does Morgan try to kill Arthur (her brother) and her husband (King Uriens), but she also

seduces Accolon, ... imprisons Lancelot and assaults him sexually, tricks Tristram into becoming her delivery-boy, drugs Alexander so that his wounds won’t heal, tortures an innocent woman, steals Arthur’s sword and scabbard, and perpetuates a custom at her castle of forcing single knights into combat against two or three knights (and imprisoning those who lose). (Breuer 167)

As for Morgan’s magical prowess, Malory depicts her as being highly skilled at working transformations: Morgan, having stolen the scabbard of Excalibur, hides herself from the pursuing Arthur by “shap[ing] herself, horse and man ... unto a great marble stone” (vol. 1 bk. 4 chap. 14). Moreover it is Morgan, Malory reveals, who is the magical force behind the enchanted ship in which King Arthur, King Uriens, and Accolon fall asleep only to awaken and find themselves “in a dark prison” (King Arthur), “in Camelot abed in his wife’s [Morgan’s] arms” (King Uriens), and “by a deep well-side ... in great peril of death” (Accolon) (vol. 1 bk. 4 chaps. 6-8). This episode involving the ship culminates with Morgan’s attempted beheading of King Uriens – something she would have done without any hesitation had not her son, Sir Uwaine, leapt in and stayed her hand. When Morgan is questioned by Uwaine as to why she attempted to murder Uriens, Malory has Morgan make the telling remark that “[she] was tempted ... [to do so by] a devil” (vol. 1 bk. 4 chap. 13). Although Morgan does not worship the Devil; is able to work magic without the assistance of the Devil; travels by conventional methods (she does not use a broomstick); and, as far as we know, does not use children as magical ingredients, Morgan nevertheless constitutes a literary example of the stereotype of the early modern witch: Morgan is a cruel, evil female worker of magic with a vast sexual appetite and an association (however brief) with the Devil.

Whereas Morgan has very little involvement with the Devil, such is far from being the case when it comes to the three principle witch characters of Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (1606). Indeed, immediately following their first appearance in the text, Shakespeare associates his witches with the Devil: when the witches’ prophecy in Act One Scene Three that Macbeth will be Thane of Cawdor comes true in that self-same scene, Shakespeare has Banquo puzzle over how “the devil [read: the witches]” is able to speak the truth (line 105), and depicts him (Banquo) going on to refer to the witches as “[t]he instruments of darkness” (Banquo warns Macbeth that “oftentimes to win us to our harm / [t]he instruments of darkness tell us truths”) (121-22). Moreover – where Morgan is capable of performing magic on her own – Shakespeare’s witches need assistance to work magic and, although that assistance does not come directly from the Devil himself, the witches are nevertheless aided by what Heidi Jo Breuer argues *must* be “*infernal* spirits [emphasis

added]” (for the witches, according to Breuer, “show no obvious signs of Christianity throughout the play” and, hence, can have “no access to Christian spirits” to aid them in working magic) (183-84). As for the other aspects of the early modern stereotype of the witch: while, in some later adaptations of the play (as in Roman Polanski’s 1971 film version – also entitled *Macbeth*) the witches are associated with sex and exhibit strong sexual appetites, such is not the case in the original text (where the witches do not engage in any sexual acts and have no such carnal association or appetite). However, where Shakespeare’s witches lack the sexual insatiability of the stereotypical early modern witch, they are nevertheless cruelly evil after the fashion of this witch type: their prophecies result in the spilling of much innocent blood, and many of the ingredients of their hellish brew at the start of Act Four reveal that the witches must have done terrible things in order to gather them. Indeed, one of the items that goes into their cauldron is the “[f]inger of [a] birth-strangled babe” – an ingredient which not only shows the cruelty of the witches, but also aligns them with the early modern belief that, for witches, children are an important magical ingredient (1386; Hults 257). Thus, although the witches of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* do not exhibit all the characteristics of the early modern witch, they nevertheless constitute another literary example: they are evil women who need the assistance of devilish spirits in order to work their magic.

Despite the fact that, today, we may not be able to recall the finer details of all that was believed of her at the time, the stereotype of the early modern witch as a Devil-worshipping, child-murdering, broomstick-riding, sexually insatiable woman persists to this day and is likely to constitute one of our immediate associations with the word ‘witch’ (Maxwell-Stuart 11). Moreover – powerful, ruthless, and depicted as having an insatiable appetite for sex – the stereotype of the early modern witch has much in common with her literary classical counterparts. Indeed, the early modern witch is every bit as magically powerful as Circe, Medea, Erichtho, and Canidia; is as cruel and ruthless as even the throat-slitting, house-burning, filicidal Medea; and, with her insatiable sexual appetite, shares such characters’ frequent association with sex.

As something of a footnote to this section, and before moving on to discuss the two twentieth-century stereotypes of the witch, I feel I should draw attention to the fact that not all of the media that I analysed in this section to build up a picture of the stereotype of the early modern witch were works of fiction: Kramer and Sprenger’s *Malleus Maleficarum* is a supposedly factual tract which may, hence, have seemed somewhat out of place in the midst of my analysis of such fantastical works as Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Macbeth* and Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*. Factual, historical texts are, however – in the way that they are written documents (as opposed to a mere collection or archive of dates and facts) – closer to fiction than might have been first thought. For not only does the process of writing, of turning an archive into historical discourse, necessarily involve literary, fictional techniques, but the facts contained within the text end up being coloured by the writer’s position (and, hence, subjected to varying degrees of fantasy) (Korhonen 12). Thus, even if Kramer and Sprenger’s *Malleus Maleficarum* was not the work of fantasy it so clearly is – for there were no such beings as those that they describe in their treatise – it would not have been all that

out of place amongst the other media that I examine in this section of my first chapter. As it is, I see no issue in moving from the *Malleus Maleficarum* to Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* and so on to the other fantastical media I reference in my discussion of the early modern witch.

Two Twentieth-Century Witches

Although the stereotype of the evil, Devil-worshipping early modern witch persists to this day (Maxwell-Stuart 11), lately the witch has undergone something of an image overhaul (Boyd 98). Indeed, not only has she been recast on the small screen as a good, beautiful, young woman (think *Bewitched*'s Samantha Stephens or Sabrina the teenage witch) (Boyd 102), but, with the birth and rise of Witchcraft as a religion, the word 'witch' today is as likely to conjure up an image of a nature-loving, hippy-esque young woman as it is to prompt thoughts of a ne'er-do-well on a broomstick (Maxwell-Stuart 142). The "turning point" – according to Michelle Boyd – with regard to the emergence of these new witch stereotypes was the 1899 publication of Frank L. Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, as the novel includes, alongside two bad witches, two witches who use their magic to do good and help those around them (101). Despite the fact that there have been numerous female characters prior to Baum's good witches who (although not always referred to as 'witches') have used magic kindly and wisely – the Lady of the Lake from Arthurian legend, the fairy godmother in Perrault's "Cinderella or The Little Glass Slipper", and the twelve wise women of the Grimms' "Brier Rose", to name but a few – Boyd nevertheless argues that it was Baum's "Witches of the North and South [who] put forth the idea that witches [could be good and] could use spells for purposes other than evil" (101).

Kind and, if not young and pretty, then at least dressed in beautiful clothes, the Witches of the North and South use their magic to help those around them. The first to greet Dorothy on her arrival in Oz, the Witch of the North is an old woman with a face "covered with wrinkles", "nearly white" hair, and a white gown over which is "sprinkled little stars that glisten[ed] in the sun" (Baum chap. 2). By her own admission, the Witch of the North is not the most powerful witch in Oz (otherwise the Munchkins enslaved by the Wicked Witch of the East would have been freed long before Dorothy's arrival), but the old woman describes herself as "a good witch" and, indeed, her actions prove this to be the case: she generously gifts Dorothy the Wicked Witch of the East's charmed silver shoes; bestows a kiss on the girl which keeps Dorothy (and, as it turns out, Toto too) from being physically harmed or injured in any way; and uses what little magic she has in order to point Dorothy in the right direction (chap. 2).

While the Witch of the North has wrinkles, hair that is almost white, and very little magical power, Glinda, the good Witch of the South, is her complete opposite. Glinda has blue eyes, "rich red" hair that "[falls] in flowing ringlets over her shoulders" (chap. 23), and is "the most powerful of all the Witches [in Oz]" (chap. 18). Despite the fact that the only magic that we see Glinda work is facilitated by the "Golden Cap" of the Wicked Witch of the West (chap. 23), Glinda's appearance as a young, beautiful woman is likely the result of some powerful magic as Glinda, although she looks young, is actually an old woman (chap. 18). While

Glinda is thus (in all probability) highly skilled at magic, she is, nevertheless, like her northerly counterpart, kind and helpful – power has not gone to her (Glinda’s) head. This is evident in the way that, in addition to telling Dorothy and Toto about the secret charm of the silver shoes, which enables them both to return to Kansas, Glinda uses up the three commands granted to her by the Golden Cap of the Wicked Witch of the West in order to help the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion return to their respective homes (chap. 23). Although Glinda was not obliged to do any of these things (she could have seized the silver shoes for herself and used the Golden Cap to do anything she so desired) Glinda nevertheless lives up to her name and chooses to assist Dorothy and her friends – she is, indeed, a “Good Witch” (chap. 18).

The Witches of the North and South are, thus, a far cry from the stereotype of the early modern witch: not only are they able to work magic without diabolical assistance (and make no mention of any kind of sexual appetite), but they are also caring and generous and do all that they can to help Dorothy and her friends. As for twentieth-century witch stereotypes, it will become evident that, of Baum’s two good witches, it is beautiful, young-looking, powerful, and kind Glinda who has had the most impact.

The Witch of the Small Screen

The first of the two twentieth-century stereotypes of the witch is the figure I shall term, and continue to refer to as, the small screen witch. Since she has not been with us for very long, the behaviours and characteristics that comprise this stereotype are not as many or as well-defined as those that constitute her early modern counterpart. Hence, in order to detail the stereotype of the small screen witch, I will begin by describing two of her most well-known incarnations – *Bewitched*’s Samantha Stephens and Sabrina the teenage witch (from the television series of the same name).

The protagonist of the American television series *Bewitched* (1964-72), Samantha Stephens is a young, beautiful witch who, although she has made an agreement with her mortal husband (Darrin) never to use magic, frequently breaks her word as she tries to help those around her. On one occasion, in “The Witches Are Out”, Samantha uses her magic to torment Mr Brinkman, one of the clients at the advertising agency where Darrin works, into changing his mind about the image of the witch that he wants to use to promote his brand of Halloween sweets. Mr Brinkman tells Darrin to draw (what I shall go on to outline as) the stereotype of the crone – Mr Brinkman wants an ugly old witch with a long nose, warts on her chin, a mouth full of broken teeth, a tall black hat, and a broomstick. While such a misrepresentation merely makes blonde-haired, green-eyed, always immaculately dressed Samantha cross, it causes terrible upset amongst the rest of her family: Endora (Samantha’s red-haired, rather imperious-looking mother) flies to the south of France every year at Halloween to try and avoid such images, and we learn that every time Samantha’s Aunt Mary (who has dark brown hair and eyes and is a rather gentle type) “see[s] a picture of those ugly old crones[, she] fl[ies] right home and cr[ies her]self to sleep”. Since the image that Mr Brinkman wishes to promote further causes her loved ones so much distress, Samantha decides to do something about it. Although at first she tries not to use magic and merely persuades Darrin to draw Mr

Brinkman a witch more akin to Glinda, when Mr Brinkman has Darrin fired and gets someone else to draw him what he wants, Samantha resorts to using witchcraft to scare Mr Brinkman into reinstating Darrin and using Darrin's glamorous witch as his (Mr Brinkman's) product's logo. While Samantha thus uses her powers as a witch to help people, in this case the whole witch community, she also has a tendency to act selfishly, using magic for her own personal gain: in "I, Darrin, Take This Witch, Samantha", for example, Samantha uses magic to be revenged upon Darrin's ex-girlfriend, while, in "Be It Ever So Mortgaged", Samantha uses her powers to perfectly ice a cake in order to impress Darrin.

Like Samantha, Sabrina the teenage witch from the eponymous television series (1996-2003) is young, blonde, and beautiful. While Sabrina similarly uses her magic to help those around her, her acts of apparent magical kindness have a tendency to backfire. In "Terrible Things", for example, Sabrina's friend Jenny desperately wants to become class president so that she can make some changes to the way their school is run; however, when Sabrina magically fixes it so that her friend wins the election, Jenny is bitterly disappointed to discover that she cannot actually make a difference and so gives up her position (Projansky and Berg 20). In the same episode, Sabrina uses magic to ensure that her eventual boyfriend Harvey gets his wish and is on the starting line-up of his next football game; however, once again, Sabrina's magic ends up causing her friend more pain than pleasure – only moments into the game Harvey is trampled on by the bigger, better, stronger players around him and ends up with his arm in a sling and unable to train (Projansky and Berg 20). Although Jenny and Harvey thus suffer as a result of Sabrina's magic, in the long-term they are both better off as Jenny realizes her naiveté in thinking that being class president is about more than lunch food and dances, and Harvey discovers that, without training, he has more time to study and will likely end up getting better grades (Projansky and Berg 20). However, not only does Sabrina, like Samantha, try and help others, but she (Sabrina) has a similar tendency to use magic to help herself: Sabrina uses magic for everything from cloning herself so that she can attend two parties at once ("A Halloween Story"), changing her outfit so that she fits in with her peers ("Terrible Things"), and ensuring that she gets sufficient adulation ("And the Sabrina Goes To ...").

By combining the characters of Samantha Stephens and Sabrina Spellman we end up with the figure of a young, beautiful, powerful witch who, although she might occasionally use magic selfishly, and sometimes cast spells that have unintended consequences, generally means well and ultimately tries to do the right thing. This figure – this young, beautiful, powerful and (mostly) good, kind woman – I argue, constitutes the stereotype of the small screen witch. In naming the stereotype thus, and describing it only using the characters of Samantha Stephens and Sabrina Spellman, I do not intend to suggest that this new, twentieth-century stereotype of the witch is *solely* the result of the television series *Bewitched* and *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*. I named this stereotype the 'small screen witch' as I believe that recent television shows (such as the two previously mentioned) *have* had an impact on how we conceive of the figure of the witch (as, indeed, this stereotype proves); however, I could just as easily have illustrated or described the figure of the small screen witch using the Halliwell sisters from *Charmed* (1998-2006), Willow and Tara from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), or

Cassie and Grace from *Good Witch* (2015-). Moreover, it should also be noted that, while recent television series have had a considerable impact with regard to the emergence of this new stereotype of the witch, looking back, we can see traces of this figure not only at the turn of the twentieth-century with Baum's Glinda, but also during classical times with such characters as Circe and Medea (Maxwell-Stuart 139). Although these latter two women could not really be described as being 'good' or 'well-meaning' (both are, in fact, ruthless and cruel), Circe and Medea are, nevertheless, similarly young and attractive women who are skilled at magic (Maxwell-Stuart 139).

The Witch

The small screen witch is, however, not the only new stereotype of the witch to have emerged in recent years. Indeed, as likely as we are today to picture a Devil-worshipping child murderer or some young, beautiful, kind-hearted woman, the figure of what I shall term the Witch (capitalized so as to indicate a follower of one or other of the numerous forms of the contemporary Witchcraft movement) is equally as likely to spring to mind. Although the vast majority of those who adhere to Witchcraft seldom capitalize either 'witch' or 'witchcraft' – since they feel that capitalization “fix[es] and formalize[s]” (Rountree 10) both their identity as witches and the movement itself (of which “change is an integral part” [Maxwell-Stuart 145]) – I shall continue to do so. This is, in part, to aid differentiation between the many different witch stereotypes that I discuss, but mainly to indicate when it is to the modern-day Witchcraft movement that I am referring, as opposed to witchcraft more generally.

Once thought to be the ancient religion of the whole of Western Europe (Murray 12), Witchcraft, one part of the larger Pagan movement (Berger and Ezzy 24), is, in fact, a modern invention (Purkiss 32). Although most Witches today consider the idea of Witchcraft as a “universal Old Religion” – a notion popularized by Margaret Murray (Adler 46) – to be “more ... metaphor than ... literal reality” (84), many continue to cling to and cite Murray's claim concerning Witchcraft's supposed antecedents (Berger and Ezzy 26). Still more go on to cite Murray's argument that the witch trials of early modern Europe were an “attempt by first the Catholic Church[,] and ultimately by both Catholic and Protestant Churches[,] to eliminate the practitioners of [this supposedly ancient religion]” (Berger and Ezzy 26). However, if such was as Murray and her supporters would have us believe, the trials were not a success: in 1939, an English civil servant named Gerald Gardner claimed that he had been initiated into, and trained by, a coven of witches that had not only survived the trials (Adler 46), but had actually “been in existence since before the advent of Christianity” (Berger and Ezzy 26). Although his claim has since been discredited (as, I should add, has much of Murray's writing on Witchcraft), Gardner – through the many books he wrote about his experiences of Witchcraft and the coven of Witches he established in Hertfordshire (Maxwell-Stuart 144) – has, however, been “credited with creating Wicca, the most influential subset of [the Witchcraft movement]” (Berger and Ezzy 26). Markedly different from Witchcraft as described by Murray, Gardnerian Wicca is “a peaceful, happy nature religion” whose adherents seek to “attune themselves to nature” and often perform their rituals in the nude (Adler 62). While many people continue to practice Gardnerian Wicca, Witchcraft is a fluid system, and the form organized by Gardner not only changed itself quite

rapidly, but also gave rise to numerous other versions (Maxwell-Stuart 145). Today, according to Diane Purkiss, “[t]here are almost as many different sects and groups [of Witches] as there are believers”, and anyone wishing to find out more about Witchcraft “can easily get lost among the Gardnerians, Dianics, radical faeries, Alexandrians, hedge-witches[,] ... ‘famtrads’ [family witches]”, and individuals who do not adhere to any of these traditions or belong to any specific coven, but who follow their own path (32). Indeed, Witchcraft is now something of an umbrella-term for a large, and ever-increasing, number of sects and covens and individual adherents. The reason that it has become so is the fact that “[n]o one person is in charge” of the movement (Purkiss 32): there is “no centralizing authority ... [that] impose[s] a single theology or set of rituals on anyone practising [W]itchcraft”, and, as a result, change has become “an integral [and inevitable] part of the whole religion” (Maxwell-Stuart 145).

Although Witchcraft, unlike most other major religions, does not comprise a unified set of beliefs, Witches do have a number of commonalities (Purkiss 32). Indeed, according to Purkiss,

all [Witches] worship a Mother Goddess and her male consort ...; all see the natural world as invested with spiritual significance ...; all have adopted some form of ‘ancient’ festive calendar which marks their feasts; [and] all emphasise ritual, though some groups deal in formal rituals and others make it up as they go along. (32-33)

From these commonalities, it is evident that Witchcraft is not solely based around the occult: with its concern for nature and a woman (the Goddess) at its centre, Witchcraft has something of an affinity with both the environmental and women’s movements (Adler 6; Berger and Ezzy 28). Indeed, although the original form of Witchcraft, as invented by Gardner in England, was (and still is) a “nature religion” whose adherents worship a female deity (Adler 62), Helen A. Berger and Douglas Ezzy argue that, as Witchcraft spread from England to the United States of America in the 1960s and to Australia and New Zealand in the 70s (at which places and times environmentalism and feminism were on the rise), Witchcraft became even more closely interwoven with the aims and ideals of these social movements (27-28). The term ‘Witchcraft’, however, refers to many different groups and sects, and it is that particular subset of the religion known as ‘Goddess spirituality’ or ‘feminist Witchcraft’ (which I shall go on to write about in more detail later) which has been the most heavily influenced by environmentalism and feminism (although it is worth noting that not all those who practice Witchcraft, in whichever form that may be, are environmentalists and/or feminists).

As for how and why people come to identify themselves as Witches, Adler writes that the majority of those who become Witches do so because the principles and beliefs of their chosen form of Witchcraft are not dissimilar to those that they already hold (175). Berger and Ezzy note that many Witches talk of being “drawn to the religion because it spoke to their political and lifestyle choices, for example, environmentalism and feminism” (33), while Adler emphasises that for many people – and here I should note that Witches are far from being predominantly female (Maxwell-Stuart 147) – Witchcraft “felt like home” (Adler 175). Since Witches rarely proselytize, “word of mouth, a discussion between friends, a lecture, a

book, or an article” often provides an entry point for those who eventually go on to become Witches (Adler 14). Or, at least, such used to be the case. Nowadays, write Berger and Ezzy, Witchcraft is so “deeply entwined with the media of late modernity” that the internet, films such as *The Craft* (1996), and television shows like *Charmed* (1998-2006) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) have taken over as the major disseminators of information about the religion (xiv-xv). Indeed, the vast majority of the ninety Australian, American, and British teenaged Witches interviewed by Berger and Ezzy had found out about Witchcraft from the mass media, and nearly every single one was “familiar with representations of Witchcraft in ... *Charmed* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*” (39).

Although the Halliwell sisters from *Charmed* are witches, it is only Willow and Tara (two members of the Scooby gang) from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, who explicitly identify as Witches in the sense of being adherents of Witchcraft as a religion. Despite this, both the Halliwells and Scoobies are shown engaging in rituals that, while dismissed by many of the teenaged Witches interviewed by Berger and Ezzy as fake, stupid, Hollywood Witchcraft (40), were equally commended by a large number of their interviewees who maintained that they had learned a great deal by watching the rites of these two groups of characters (39). Currently the subject of much debate amongst Witches, the degree to which the Witchcraft (or witchcraft) practiced by these two sets of characters is authentic and valid does not concern me (Berger and Ezzy 44); rather, I am interested in the paraphernalia that typically surrounds both groups when they are working magic, for it is fairly consistent. Indeed, where Samantha only has to wriggle her nose to perfectly ice a cake (“Be It Ever So Mortgaged”), and Sabrina point her finger to reverse the results of a class election (“Terrible Things”), the Halliwell and Scooby witches are generally only able to effect whatever magical change it is that they are after by undertaking some sort of ritual. For both sets of characters, these rituals typically involve candles; old books; steaming brass-coloured cauldrons (in which there is often a violent explosion when the last ingredient for the spell has been dropped in); athamés (or ceremonial daggers); crystals; various bits of plant matter; and numerous glass vials, bottles, and jars containing all manner of weird- and unusual-looking ingredients.

Whereas the small screen witch is an amalgam of the physical and behavioural characteristics of Samantha from *Bewitched* and the teenaged Sabrina, the same cannot be said for the stereotype of the Witch with regard to the *Charmed* Halliwell sisters, and Willow and Tara from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Indeed, these two sets of characters align more closely with the stereotype of the small screen witch than the figure I am about to outline as the Witch, for the Halliwell and Scooby witches are (like Samantha and Sabrina) young, beautiful, and powerful women who (mostly) use their magic for good. While it might thus seem as if these two sets of characters are out of place, I have included Willow and Tara and the four Halliwell sisters in this part of the chapter due to the paraphernalia that nearly always seems to surround them when they are working magic. This assorted collection of old books, candles, and curiously-filled glass bottles constitutes a significant part of the stereotype of the Witch, as do the nude rituals of Gardnerian Wicca and the feminist and nature-loving aspects of Witchcraft more generally. Indeed, I argue that the stereotype of the Witch is that of a hippy-esque, nature-loving feminist who, when she is not dancing outdoors in the nude, is

performing some sort of ritual or spell at an altar cluttered with candles, goblets, ceremonial daggers, old books, and numerous glass vials and bottles. While this stereotype of the witch has not been with us for very long, with “interest in the occult, which has waxed and waned in Western culture, ... on the rise” again, it is likely to become more prominent as a stereotype (Berger and Ezzy 33).

The Crone or Fairy Tale Witch

Although any one of the stereotypical figures that I have hitherto outlined may constitute our instant association with the word ‘witch’, the stereotype most likely to spring to mind is that of the crone or fairy tale witch (Maxwell-Stuart 11). An ugly old woman dressed in black with a long nose, warts on her chin, a mouth full of broken teeth, a broomstick, black cat, bubbling cauldron, and a penchant for harming children, the crone is the first (and only) type of witch that Mr Brinkman, in the *Bewitched* episode “The Witches Are Out”, is able to bring to mind. While the crone, as a stereotype, owes much to the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, in which she is a recurring character, the crone’s detailed, distinctive image and contemporary popularity is, in fact, primarily the result of her many appearances on the big screen – most significantly as the Evil Queen in Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and the Wicked Witch of the West in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) (Schimmelpfennig par. 10). Although it is perhaps too soon to determine the longevity of more recent Hollywood crones – such as the character, played by Meryl Streep, in Walt Disney’s 2014 adaptation of Stephen Sondheim’s 1986 musical *Into the Woods* – the Evil Queen and Wicked Witch of the West have stood the test of time to become touchstones for the figure of the crone or (what I shall generally continue to refer to as) the fairy tale witch, cementing her image as an old, ugly, and cruel woman dressed in black (Kawin 109).

While the fairy tale witch, as we know her today, is a fairly recent stereotype, we can track various aspects of her appearance back to the more distant past. Indeed, in this picture we have of the fairy tale witch as a cruel, ugly, old woman, we can see traces of such characters as Erichtho and Canidia from classical literature – like the fairy tale witch, these women are ruthless, old, and hideously ugly. Moving forward in time, the fairy tale witch also has many similarities with her early modern counterpart: both are often visualized flying, whether on a broomstick or, as is more often the case with regard to the early modern witch, some other household implement; tending to familiars, with a black cat being the familiar of choice of the crone; mixing potions, which tend to be flying unguents in the case of the early modern witch; and harming children – both witches being partial to the taste of child-flesh. What’s more, according to Levack, the stereotype of the fairy tale witch as an old woman “ha[s] a firm foundation in the prosecutions of the early modern period”, for a “solid majority” of those who were prosecuted in that period were “older than fifty, which ... [at that time] was considered to be a[n] ... advanced age” (141).

Classical and early modern similarities aside, the fairy tale witch, unsurprisingly, owes much to her genre – the fairy tale (Schimmelpfennig par. 10). Although not all fairy and folk tale witches are as clear-cut in terms of their character and appearance as is the figure of the crone – the witch Baba Yaga, for example, who appears in much eastern European folklore is an

ambiguous figure who sometimes provides aid to the protagonist and sometimes acts as villain (Johns 1, 3) – evil, ugly, old witches feature in numerous collections of fairy tales, including the many differently-coloured fairy books of Andrew Lang (1844-1912) and, most significantly, the stories attributed to the Brothers Grimm. Neither original works by the two brothers nor “‘genuine’ oral folk tales” (Zipes, *Happily Ever After* 42), the Grimms’ fairy tales are a mixture of oral and literary tales collected, and subsequently edited and reshaped, by the brothers during the early nineteenth century (Zipes, “Origins and Reception” 26-31). While the brothers initially only made amendments to the stories in order to improve their readability (Zipes, “Origins and Reception” 30), after the first edition of their collected tales was published the Grimms (following the advice of friends) went about “alter[ing] the style of the tales” so that the stories, which they had originally intended for an audience of scholars, “address[ed] young readers” (Zipes, *Happily Ever After* 46-47). In addition to changing the style of many of the tales, however, not only did the brothers (in subsequent editions of their work) omit many of the more vulgar stories that they had collected (46-47), but they also incorporated “Christian and patriarchal messages” into the narratives “to make them more instructional and moral” and, hence, “more appropriate” for their new intended audience (4-5).

While Rüdiger Steinlein cites the work done by the Grimms to harmonize their tales with the expectations and norms of their (primarily bourgeois) audience as the brothers’ greatest achievement (ctd. in Zipes, *Happily Ever After* 51), Annette Schimmelpfennig writes that this harmonization is a poor second to the influence that the Grimms have had on the figure of the witch (par. 10). For, according to Schimmelpfennig, it is as a result of the tales of the Brothers Grimm that the stereotype of the fairy tale witch is so popular today, as, although not always termed a ‘witch’, an old woman who works magic and delights in hurting young people is a recurring character in many of their stories (par. 10). The tale of “Jorinda and Joringel”, for example, includes “[a]n old woman” who is able to “turn[ed] herself into a cat or ... night owl” and who does all that is in her power to separate the two young lovers, Jorinda and Joringel (Grimm 269); the thirteenth “wise woman” who comes to the feast held in honour of the birth of Brier Rose, in the story of the same name, revenges herself upon the king (who did not issue her an invitation to the festivities) by telling him that his new-born daughter will, “[i]n her fifteenth year”, “prick herself with a spindle and fall down dead” (186); and, in the tale of “Hansel and Gretel”, there is “an old woman” who has built a house of bread, cake, and sugar to lure children to her – children who will eventually end up as her dinner (61-62). Cruel old women who work magic also appear in “Rapunzel”, “Sweetheart Roland”, “The Blue Light”, and “Brother and Sister”; however, in each of these fairy tales the old-woman-witch character is described in very little detail – beyond being told her age and maybe one other identifying detail (we learn that the witch in “Hansel and Gretel”, for example, has red eyes [Grimm 62]), it is generally left up to us to imagine what these characters look like (Schimmelpfennig par. 5). Thus, while Schimmelpfennig argues that the fairy tale witch owes much of her current popularity to the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, her highly recognisable image is, in fact, largely the result of her appearances on the big screen (par. 10).

Indeed, according to Bruce F. Kawin, the image we have today of the fairy tale witch is due, in large part, to two films: Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) (109). Although animation and live action, respectively, both films are adaptations of an original literary work in which character description, particularly with regard to the figure of the witch, is minimal. In "Snow White" by the Brothers Grimm, the tale from which Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is adapted, the only description we are given of the Evil Queen after she has transformed herself into a crone is that she is an "old woman" who looks like "a peasant" (200-01). Similarly, in Frank L. Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1899), the novel from which Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's film of (almost) the same name is adapted, all that we know about the Wicked Witch of the West appearance-wise is that she only has one eye (chap. 12). On-screen, however, these characters become, respectively, an old woman in a black cloak with a hunched back, grey hair, missing teeth, a hooked nose, warts, long nails, skeletal fingers, and grey shadows around her eyes, and a green-skinned old woman who carries around a broomstick and dresses in black, and has a long nose, long fingernails, and a wart. Hence, in both films, not only has the appearance of the witch character been expanded upon quite considerably from the few meagre details provided in the original texts, but these two expanded characters are rather similar: both are ugly, old women dressed in black with long noses, long fingernails, and warts. In other words, both characters exemplify the figure of the fairy tale witch as we imagine her today – old, ugly, and dressed all in black. Thus, while the stereotype of the fairy tale witch may owe much of her current popularity to the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, it is Hollywood that gave the crone her distinct, highly recognisable appearance (Schimmelpfennig par. 10). Indeed, according to Kawin, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *The Wizard of Oz* continue to result in many children and adults taking, as their image of the witch, one or other of the crones featured in these films (109). Consequently, the first witch figure that many people are likely to bring to mind today is that of the fairy tale witch.

Beauty and the Crone

While the stereotype of the crone is of an *old* and *ugly* evil woman, youth and beauty are not completely divorced from this figure. The Evil Queen of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, for example, who has become something of an archetype for the figure of the fairy tale witch, actually spends the vast majority of the film as a young, beautiful woman. Similarly, although the transformation process occurs the other way around, the cruel, ugly, old witch-queen Morwanned of Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess' novel *Stardust: Being a Romance Within the Realms of Faerie* (1998) turns herself into, and spends a significant portion of the novel as, a tall, handsome, young woman with black hair, dark eyes, "and red, red lips" (66). Despite the fact that Morwanned's good looks do not last – over the course of the novel she gradually regresses back to her original fairy tale witch form – again, we see that beauty is not completely separate from the figure of the crone. Indeed, many witches with the exceptionally cruel and evil nature of the fairy tale witch are depicted not as ugly, old crones, but young, beautiful women (for the crone can all too easily become a figure of fun). However, although these witches may seem to have come out on top in the beauty

stakes, their apparently natural good looks are frequently shown to be the result of magic (perhaps because the authors of such characters could not bring themselves to write into being a wholly evil, wholly beautiful female worker of magic).

One such witch who is often portrayed thus, and who I have already briefly examined (although that was in relation to the stereotype of the early modern witch, not the crone), is Morgan le Fay – a recurring character in many of the works based on the Arthurian legend. While early texts (such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini*, which was likely written sometime around 1150 [Lawrence-Mathers 49]) depict Morgan as a naturally beautiful, kind-hearted woman skilled in the art of healing and able to change shape at will, from the thirteenth century onwards, Morgan is a very different character (Fries 1-3). Indeed, in later versions of the legend Morgan is only beautiful as the result of various enchantments and even, occasionally, has to resort to cosmetics to keep up appearances (Fries 5). No longer innately attractive, Morgan's character also undergoes considerable transformation: where, in the *Vita Merlini* and other such early versions of the myth, Morgan is the “nurturing ruler of a sea-girt paradise”, in later texts Morgan has a crone's cruel temperament and evil character (Fries 4). The Morgan of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1469-70), for example, is “a destructive sorceress [read: witch] who seeks to entrap [men] for her sexual pleasure and their ruin rather than[, as was once her sole aim,] restore them to health and vigo[u]r” (Fries 4).

Another cruel, evil witch with apparently natural good looks is the White Witch Jadis, the principle antagonist of the first two books (in terms of the chronology of the events described within) of C. S. Lewis' seven chronicles of Narnia. When we first meet Jadis in the ruins of the city of Charn in *The Magician's Nephew* (1955), Lewis describes her as “dazzlingly beautiful” (61): Jadis is tall, “richly dressed”, and has “a look of such fierceness and pride that it [would fain] t[ake] your breath away” (48). On leaving Charn and entering the “Wood between the Worlds”, however, Jadis changes – she “stoop[s]” and turns “so pale that hardly any of her beauty [i]s left” (65-66). In addition to losing her looks, Jadis loses all of her previously immense power: where once she was able to destroy the city of Charn with a single word (60), in the Wood, not only is Jadis unable to magic herself an escape route, but Lewis shows her being reduced to *begging* Polly and Digory to “[t]ake [her] with [them]” (66). Hence, Lewis seems to suggest that, in order to appear beautiful, Jadis constantly has to perform some sort of magic, for, on losing her power on entering “the Wood between the Worlds” (65), Jadis also loses her beauty (although it is perhaps worth noting that, with only some of her power restored, Jadis is able to regain her looks in Victorian London and retain them when she is returned, later on in the tale, to Narnia).

Similarly, in Ursula K. Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), it seems likely that the good-looking, evil witch Serret has used magic to make herself appear beautiful, for, when Serret and Ged meet for the first time as children, Ged thinks the young Serret unattractive (28). As a child, Serret is tall and sallow-skinned with long, black hair and, while Ged finds that he “ha[s] a desire to please her ... [and] win her admiration”, he nevertheless thinks the girl “very ugly” (28). Although Serret may have grown into her looks – when Ged and Serret encounter each other as adults Ged considers her “beautiful” (105) – it is more likely that

Serret has used magic to appear thus, for she has a scheme which depends on her appearing as desirable as possible. Indeed, Serret plans to use her looks to seduce Ged into using the Terrenon, an ancient magic stone which can grant its master the “power of his [or her] own destiny: strength to crush any enemy, mortal or of the other world: foresight, knowledge, wealth, dominion, and a wizardry at his [or her] command that could humble the Archmage [of Earthsea] himself” (111). With Ged enslaved by the Stone, Serret would be able to use Ged and the Stone to get rid of her wizard husband and, eventually, in all likelihood, rule Earthsea. Although Serret’s attempt to seduce Ged is unsuccessful, her beauty nevertheless “confuse[s Ged’s] mind” (107), and it is only a sudden chance revelation on Ged’s part that results in his avoiding the fate that Serret had planned for him (112).

As something of a side note: although there may exist a case for arguing that Serret is not evil – Serret’s plan could be said to be the result of personal desperation to be rid of her husband or due to her own enthrallment to the dark power of the Terrenon – I would argue that such is not the case and that Serret *is*, in fact, evil. As a child, Serret dares Ged to perform a spell which almost costs him his life and, whether one argues that this was as part of a childish prank or because Serret’s evil enchantress mother was working through her daughter (29-31), Le Guin nevertheless seems to imply that Serret *is* wholly evil – so far gone down the path to darkness is she, that Serret believes that “[o]nly shadow can fight shadow” (when, of course, “[i]t is light that defeats the dark”) (112).

While these cruel, young, *only apparently* beautiful witches all attempt to hide the fact that they are naturally unattractive, there are many cruel, young, *naturally* attractive witches who do the exact opposite and – like the Evil Queen of Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* – take on a secondary (quite literally) physically monstrous form. The Lady of the Green Kirtle in Lewis’ sixth Narnian novel *The Silver Chair* (1953), for example – she who is outwardly sweetness and light and “lovel[y]” to look at (72), but who has plans to violently conquer and rule Narnia (126-27) – alternates between woman and green serpent, and the handsome but evil witch Maleficent who curses the Princess Aurora in Walt Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) becomes, near the end of the film, a huge black dragon. Although these two witches change form (rather than merely improve their human appearance), and go from beautiful to hideous (rather than the other way round), both the Lady of the Green Kirtle and Maleficent belong with the other witches in this section. This is due to the fact that, while these two wicked witches are naturally good-looking, they nevertheless use magic to alter their respective appearances and reveal (as do most of the witches mentioned here at some point) an ugly, repulsive exterior to match their cold, callous interior.

Hence, although these witches – these young, (usually only apparently) beautiful, evil witches – comprise another witch type, their similarity to the fairy tale witch means that I do not consider them to constitute a separate stereotype. This is due to the fact that not only are these witches inherently wicked (like the crone), but where the fairy tale witch is an old, *ugly* woman, these witches are either similarly naturally unattractive or spend a considerable length of time in the guise of someone, or something, physically repulsive. (Despite this, these witches often share the classical and early modern witches’ association with sex, love, or seduction: Morgan le Fay, for example, repeatedly seeks to entrap men for her own

personal pleasure, whilst Serret makes a determined attempt to seduce Ged to get him to use the Terrenon.)

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction: Fantasy and the Witch in Fantasy

With the four stereotypes of the witch thus in place, I now turn to examine the witch characters of Pratchett's Discworld fantasy series of novels and the way in which Pratchett engages with these stereotypes over the course of his witch sub-series. Before I do so, however, I shall spend some time looking at fantasy more generally, and how the witches of these texts are typically represented.

Although, as characters, the four witch stereotypes that I have outlined typically feature – as evidenced by the examples that I have given – in a particular medium or genre, there are no hard and fast rules; the good, beautiful witch of the small screen, for example, is not limited to her genre any more than the fairy tale witch is to hers. Indeed, the fairy tale witch is a frequent character, not only in fairy and folk tales, but in fantasy, a genre which emerged in the late eighteenth century “in response (and contemporaneous to) the emergence of [realism]” (Mendlesohn and James 7). While fantasy (as a genre) is thus a fairly recent phenomenon, as a mode, fantasy has been the norm “for much of the history of Western fiction (and art)”: “the ancient Greek and Roman novel, the medieval romance, and early modern verse and prose texts”, for example, all precede the emergence of fantasy as a genre yet frequently make use of tropes (such as strange monsters and magical transformations) that we now class as being indicative of fantasy (Mendlesohn and James 7). Since fantasy is often cited as being a difficult genre to define – fantasy theorist Rosemary Jackson even goes so far as to suggest that the value of the genre lies in its resistance to such articulations (1) – I will not be attempting a definition. Rather, I will note Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James, who argue that fantasy is a “literary braid” – a braid made up of the genre's many taproot texts (117). A term coined by John Clute to indicate “originating text[s] that continue[s] to serve as a reference point” for a particular genre (Mendlesohn and James 3), fantasy taproots include, alongside those previously mentioned, “myth, ... the novel of chivalry, the picaresque, the gothic novel, mysteries, science fiction”, and, most significantly, folk and fairy tales (Nikolajeva 139). As a result of the latter, fantasy has, unsurprisingly, inherited not only the “system of characters” and “basic plot” of these stories, but also “many [other] superficial attributes”: genies, dragons, swords, talking animals, and, although the list could go on, *witches* (Nikolajeva 140). Since fantasy is so closely related to fairy tale, fantasy witches generally have much in common with their stereotypical fairy tale counterparts. Indeed, according to Terry Pratchett in his 1985 talk entitled “Why Gandalf Never Married”, not only are witches in the consensus fantasy universe similarly “evil” and “bad-tempered” (96), but – so he goes on to argue – the magic that these witches work tends to be of a similar, poor quality: it is “cheap and nasty” (94), “third-rate, negative stuff” (92).

Despite the fact that the vast majority of the witches that feature in fairy tales are old women, and it may therefore seem likely that, to have survived for so long without being hunted down and vanquished by the forces of goodness, they must have a great deal of magical power, such is not the case. Indeed, although the old, red-eyed witch of the Grimms' version of “Hansel and Gretel” clearly has a long history of killing and eating children (for such

occasions have become the equivalent of “feast day[s]” for her), we do not see her performing any magic: the Grimms write that she has simply “*built* the house of bread [emphasis added]” (she has not used magic to conjure it into existence), and they show her to be incapable of coming up with any sort of spell to save herself once she has been pushed into the oven by Gretel (62-63). Similarly, although the “old woman” (read: witch) of “Jorinda and Joringel” (another Grimms’ fairy tale) has, over the years, transformed seven thousand “innocent maiden[s]” into birds and, over the course of the story itself, is shown freezing Joringel to the spot and turning Jorinda into a nightingale, her subsequent acts of magic are all either reversed or negated with nothing more magical than a blood-red flower: simply by holding the flower in his hand, Joringel is able to enter the (once magically protected) fairy’s castle; prevent the old woman from approaching him; and turn his beloved Jorinda, along with the seven thousand other ‘birds’ in cages that adorn the fairy’s court, back into human form (269-72).

While witches in fairy tales exist as obstacles to be beaten or overcome by the protagonist – and so, by definition, cannot be so powerful that they cannot be defeated – most fairy tale witches are, even when this is taken into consideration, depicted as being remarkably unskilled at magic. In Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Wild Swans”, for example, the evil witch-queen is incapable of magically transforming the appearance of her beautiful step-daughter Eliza: it is only when the witch-queen abandons magic and simply “rub[s] Eliza’s face with walnut juice”, “tangle[s] Eliza’s beautiful hair[,] and smear[s] it with disgusting ointment” that she (the witch-queen) succeeds in rendering Eliza completely unrecognisable (42-43). Similarly, in Charles Perrault’s “The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood”, not only is the magical curse of the old Fairy (read: witch) so weak that it is able to be softened by another fairy in attendance on the Princess (so that instead of dying the Princess merely sleeps for a hundred years), but the old Fairy’s magic is of such poor quality that she is unable to do anything about it – the old Fairy is unable to counter the counteracting magic of the good, young Fairy (50-51). Moreover, while the “old, bearded hag” (361) who features in “Esben and the Witch” (a tale collected by Andrew Lang) is described as being a witch, we never actually see her performing any magic – she verbally threatens Esben and confines him in “a little dark hole” (363), but does not put so much as a single spell or enchantment on him or any other of his eleven brothers. Likewise, in “The Witch” – one of the stories in W. R. S. Ralston’s collection of Russian fairy tales – the titular character performs no magic: she orders a smith to forge her a new voice instead of enchanting her own, and uses her teeth, rather than a spell, to fell the trees Ivashko hides himself within (173-74). Although there are exceptions – the ambiguous witch-figure of Baba Yaga who appears in a myriad of folk and fairy tales is undeniably powerful – the stereotypical fairy tale witch is only capable of poor quality, third-rate magic (when she is shown to be capable of performing any magic at all). Thus, to the image of the stereotypical fairy tale witch that we built up in the previous chapter as an old, ugly, cruel woman dressed in black, we can add that she is a figure lacking in magical ability.

With this extra detail added to the figure of the crone, I will now move away from fairy tales to examine the witch characters of fantasy. Since fairy tales constitute one of the genre’s

many taproot texts, fantasy witches often have much in common with their stereotypical fairy tale counterparts. Nowhere is this perhaps more evident than in the first of the various works of fantasy that I shall investigate: Fritz Leiber's 1943 fantasy novel *Conjure Wife*. For not only are the witches (and here I am discounting Tansy) that we are introduced to in *Conjure Wife* cruel women who work third-rate, poor quality magic, but they also each bear a close physical resemblance to the stereotypical fairy tale witch: Flora Carr has silver hair, a "network of heavy wrinkles" (41), and actually looks exactly like "the Wicked Witch in Snow White" as she appears in her guise as crone (77); Evelyn Sawtelle has "flat cheeks" (59), "malicious, small-socketed eyes" (63), and a grotesque smile (87); and Hulda Gunnison, with her "brutish eyes" (72), is likened to "a big, oozy, tough-skinned slug" (89). In addition to being old and ugly, after the fashion of the stereotypical fairy tale witch, these three women are also petty and cruel – they use their magic as a means to elevate themselves socially, and are quite prepared to "hurt or torment or kill" anyone who gets in their way (156). Moreover, while Flora Carr, Evelyn Sawtelle, and Hulda Gunnison are undeniably powerful – they animate a stone dragon, cause an attempt on Norman's life, and steal Tansy's soul – they are nevertheless defeated by Norman and Tansy, both of whom spend the majority of the novel not really believing in magic. Indeed, despite the fact that Flora Carr, Evelyn Sawtelle, and Hulda Gunnison have fully embraced both black and white magic, know magic to be a reality rather than a fantasy, and are prepared to go to any length to get what they want, they come unstuck when faced by a professor of sociology who regards magic as being "on the same level as the mental operations of a child or neurotic adult who religiously steps on, or avoids, sidewalk cracks" (142), and his wife who has "never really been sure" as to whether magic is real or not (21). Thus, not only are Flora Carr, Evelyn Sawtelle, and Hulda Gunnison – like the stereotypical fairy tale witch – old, ugly, and evil women, but they also have the corresponding lack of magical ability: the three women work, and are only capable of working, third-rate, "cheap and nasty" magic (Pratchett, "Why Gandalf Never Married" 94).

Similarly, the first three novels of Ursula K. Le Guin's Earthsea fantasy series – *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), *The Tombs of Atuan* (1970), and *The Farthest Shore* (1971) – feature witches that, like those in *Conjure Wife*, could have been drawn straight out of a fairy tale. For, as is the case with the witches that Leiber depicts in his tale, the witch characters (with the exception of Serret) that Le Guin portrays in these three novels are only capable of poor quality magic: while they can successfully perform common spells, such as those of "finding, binding, mending, unsealing and revealing", they are incapable of anything more complex (*Wizard of Earthsea* 17). However, not only are the witches in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, *The Tombs of Atuan*, and *The Farthest Shore* typically poor at magic, but they also have a tendency towards wickedness. This is due to the fact that, unlike their male counterparts the wizards, the witches of these novels know nothing of "the Balance and the Pattern" that underlies all magical acts and, as a result, frequently end up "us[ing their] crafts to foolish and dubious ends" (*Wizard of Earthsea* 16). While, in *Conjure Wife*, we see one woman (Tansy) using powerful magic for good, women's magic in these Earthsea novels is so inherently "cheap and nasty" (Pratchett, "Why Gandalf Never Married" 94) that the population even has a saying – "[w]eak as woman's magic, wicked as woman's magic

[emphases removed]” – a saying that the middle-aged Tenar, one of the main characters of the series, professes to have heard “a hundred times” (Le Guin, *Tehanu* 511). Despite the fact that not all of the witches that Le Guin depicts in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, *The Tombs of Atuan*, and *The Farthest Shore* are crones – Serret, for example, is “young and tall”, has long black hair, and is as beautiful as “the white new moon” (*Wizard of Earthsea* 105) – they are, nevertheless, typically evil workers of third-rate magic and, hence, still bear a close resemblance to the stereotypical fairy tale witch.

Although I have already briefly analysed the character of Morwanned from Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess’ 1998 fantasy novel *Stardust: Being a Romance Within the Realms of Faerie* in relation to the stereotype of the crone, Morwanned is worth re-examining – this time alongside the other main witch character in the novel, Mistress Semele. For not only are both Morwanned and Mistress Semele evil and poor at magic, but both bear a close resemblance to Disney’s Evil Queen as she appears in fairy tale witch form: Mistress Semele has “sharp ... eyes”, and “a gap-toothed grin” (Gaiman and Vess 173), and Morwanned is an old woman with a hairy chin and “hollow eyes” (67). Old and ugly, Mistress Semele and Morwanned also resemble fairy tale witches in terms of their nature: both women spend the majority of the novel in pursuit of a beautiful young woman named Yvaine (who is actually a fallen star) whose heart they profess that they will, when they catch up with her, not only cut out, but cut out whilst she is still living (115). While neither manages to do so, the two witches are nevertheless wicked: Mistress Semele has kept a young woman as a slave for over seventeen years, and Morwanned (over the course of the novel) murders two men and a unicorn (and almost succeeds in murdering Tristran). What’s more, as for their respective magical prowess, although both witches are capable of working some impressive magical transformations and are prepared to do anything to get Yvaine’s heart, the fact that neither succeeds suggests that ultimately their magic (like that of the stereotypical fairy tale witch) is not all that powerful. As in *Conjure Wife*, in Gaiman and Vess’ *Stardust* we see old, apparently powerful, but nevertheless wicked witches being beaten by two young people with negligible magical abilities.

Thus, in the consensus fantasy universe – as in the worlds of *Conjure Wife*, the first three novels of Ursula K. Le Guin’s Earthsea series, and *Stardust* – witches typically have much in common with their fairy tale counterparts. Despite the fact that fantasy witches are not always old and ugly in appearance, as in Le Guin’s Earthsea, and do not always dress in the requisite black cloak and hat, or have the mandatory broomstick, cat, and bubbling cauldron, they *are*, nevertheless, typically an evil group of women whose acts of magic are cruel and wicked. Although, according to Pratchett, witches in fantasy texts will continue to be portrayed in much the same way as fairy tale witches – as malevolent workers of poor quality magic – for many years to come, since Pratchett has drawn attention to the issue it seems sensible to assume that he might attempt to challenge it (“Why Gandalf Never Married” 96.). Hence, I shall now turn to examine the witches of Pratchett’s Discworld.

The Discworld

Balanced on top of four elephants atop a Giant Star Turtle named Great A'Tuin, Terry Pratchett's aptly-named Discworld is the setting for all forty-one novels in his fantasy series of the same name and home, like the worlds of the texts discussed above, to a number of witch characters. While the series consists of several sequences, each following a (primarily) distinct cast of characters (Clute 15), all of Pratchett's forty-one Discworld novels contain humour potent enough "to make ... reader[s] fall off ... [their] chair[s] laughing" (Croft, "Nice, Good, or Right" 151). Such is the consistently humorous quality of the Discworld series that, according to David Buchbinder, the forty-one novels are not simply works of fantasy, but "belong to a comparatively new sub-genre in fantasy fiction, namely ... [that of] comic fantasy" (173). However, although all forty-one novels are consistently funny and contain humour – "from the worst sort of pun to high comedy" (Buchbinder 173) – the primary target of the many comedic techniques that Pratchett employs has changed a great deal over the years (Langford 3-4). While the early novels set on the Disc constitute "a series of parodies" of various giants of the fantasy genre (Mendlesohn and James 179), the humour of later texts is more frequently aimed at "the 'givens' of *our* own world [emphasis added]", than at the literary creations of others (181). Thus, where the first novel in the Discworld series, *The Colour of Magic* (1983), "opens with a parody of Fritz Leiber's classic Lankhmar series of fantasy novels" and introduces the Luggage, a chest of sapient pearwood that "is reminiscent of the magical chests and boxes that feature in [the] children's fantasy stories ... [of] Enid Blyton" (Buchbinder 175), by the time we reach the twenty-second novel in the series it is evident that the target of Pratchett's humour has changed. Indeed, that novel – *The Last Continent* (1998) – includes "a parody of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras" (Buchbinder 172) and has, as one of its main protagonists, the orang-utan librarian of the Unseen University – a character which Pratchett uses to parody "not only ... librarians themselves, but also ... their patrons and the worlds in which they live" (Sawyer 69). While humour in the Discworld series thus shifts from fantasy parody to a "much wider pastiche, parody, satirising and lampooning of society" (Butler 36), Pratchett nevertheless continues to engage with, and draw attention to, the tropes, clichés, and stereotypes of various specific fantasy texts and, indeed, to the tropes, clichés, and stereotypes of the genre as a whole (Lüthi 132). Nowhere is this perhaps more evident than in his eleven novels and one short story centred on the witches of the Disc, where, as I shall go on to argue, Pratchett simultaneously makes use of and subverts many of the witch stereotypes that I outlined in Chapter One. While the Disc is home to many witches, I shall focus on the characters of Esmerelda (Granny) Weatherwax, Gytha (Nanny) Ogg, and Magrat Garlick. Although, at first glance, all three of these characters seem to adhere to a particular witch type, I will argue that Pratchett ultimately overturns or rejects each of these stereotypes and – while this is something that I will deal with in Chapter Three – that, in so doing, Pratchett writes into being a new type of witch.

Esmerelda (Esme or ‘Granny’) Weatherwax

The only character to appear in every novel and short story of the witch sub-series of the Discworld, Esmerelda, or, as she is more commonly known, ‘Granny’ Weatherwax seems, at first glance, to be a typical fairy tale witch. Not only does Pratchett describe Granny as bearing a close physical resemblance to the stereotype of the crone – he depicts her as being a thin (*HFS* 271), tall (*LL* 315), old woman with a hooked nose (*CJ* 410), lined face (*HFS* 270), silver hair (*ER* 60), and gimlet-like eyes (*LL* 109) – but he also portrays her as wearing, for the vast majority of the stories in which she appears, the typical garb of the fairy tale witch. Indeed, over the course of several Discworld tales, we find out that Granny’s everyday outfit consists of a black pointy hat (*WS* 150; *HFS* 337); “a dress as black as night” (*HFS* 270); a black cloak (which doubles up as “a blanket for sick goats when not otherwise employed”) (*WS* 151); and a pair of “good strong boots, with hobnails and crescent-shaped scads” (181). Although, in contrast to the stereotypical fairy tale witch, Granny is without a familiar for most of the novels in which she features, in *Wintersmith* (2006) she is given a little white kitten by Tiffany Aching and the cat (which she names ‘You’) quickly becomes her (Granny’s) constant companion: by the time the events of *I Shall Wear Midnight* (2010) take place, Granny and You have become so close that not only does You make the long journey to the Chalk with Granny to attend the funeral of the old Baron, but Granny even allows the little cat to spend the occasion “lying across her [Granny’s] shoulders like a scarf” (349).

In addition to seemingly bearing a close physical resemblance to the stereotypical fairy tale witch, Granny’s character also appears to be that of the evil, nasty, bad-tempered crone. Indeed, we learn from Nanny Ogg that not only does Granny exist in an almost permanent state of anger, but she is, in fact, “only Granny Weatherwax when she [i]s angry” (*M* 14) and, when she gets really worked up, is capable of “some [truly] terrible things” (“SF” 114) – “cross Granny Weatherwax on a bad day”, thinks Nanny to herself, “and you’d be like a blossom in the frost” (*M* 20). From Nanny’s conversation with Magrat in *Witches Abroad* (1991) we find out that, in addition to being permanently angry, Granny is nasty – so nasty, says Nanny to Magrat, that “[y]ou’d have to go a long day’s journey to find someone basically nastier” (108). Granny’s reputation for nastiness is such that when, in his 1998 short story “The Sea and Little Fishes”, Pratchett has Granny decide to try out being nice for a change, everyone she meets assumes that her kind words and actions mean that she is about to do something *really* terrible: after being thanked by Granny, Percy Hopcroft slams the door to his cottage and tells his wife to “start packing right now” as it is better to leave the village at a run than a hop (114-15); William Poorchick’s immediate reaction to Granny asking after Daphne (his best cow) is to “take Daphne down to the market” (116); and, when Granny recommends that Mister Hampicker dig for water “in the hollow by the chestnut tree”, Hampicker stays resolutely away from that area as (so he tells Nanny) “[t]here’s no telling *what* she [Granny] wanted us to find there” (117). It is not only humans who fear Granny, however; in *Maskerade* (1995), we find out that the dwarves call Granny “*K’ez’rek d’b’duz*” or “Go Around the Other Side of the Mountain”, and that the trolls have christened her “Aaoograha hoa”, which means “She Who Must Be Avoided” (200-01). While Granny’s apparent fairy tale witch temperament thus means that most species on the Disc do their best

to keep out of her way, in “The Sea and Little Fishes” we learn that Granny’s funeral would most likely draw a large crowd – a large crowd, that is, of people wanting to make sure that she was dead (114).

As for Granny’s magical prowess, again, Pratchett *seems* to have created Granny as a prime example of the stereotypical fairy tale witch. For although Granny successfully summons a demon (with Nanny and Magrat) in *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), she (Granny) does so not with the magical paraphernalia – the cauldron, octogram, and various precious spices – that one might expect of a witch, but with ordinary, everyday household objects: a “bleached copper stick”, a handful of “old washing soda”, “some extremely hard soap flakes”, a “balding scrubbing brush”, and a washboard whose wringer attachment falls off just moments into the summoning (105-06). Similarly, when, later on in *Wyrd Sisters*, Granny decides to magically check up on Tomjon in far-off Ankh-Morpork, she makes use of a very ordinary object – a hazy and distorting “greenish glass fishing float” – rather than, as one might have envisaged, a crystal ball (274). Although, as with her summoning of the demon, Granny gets results with the fishing float, by having her work her acts of magic with “whatever [she’s] got” lying around (*WS* 106), rather than the more usual assortment of specialist magical paraphernalia, Pratchett makes Granny’s magic *seem* “as ordinary as housekeeping” (144) and, thus, appears to align her with the stereotypical fairy tale witch and her third-rate, “cheap and nasty” magic (“Why Gandalf Never Married” 94).

However, not only does Pratchett appear to present Granny’s magic as fairy tale witch-esque in terms of its quality, but also through the way in which much of what Granny classes and performs as magic is in fact not really magic at all. For example, although Granny mixes up a multitude of apparently magical potions, the “funny-coloured and sticky” (*M* 27) liquids that the bottles contain are, more often than not, nothing more magical than boiled water which has been coloured “with a bit of berry juice” (*ER* 61). Nevertheless, these potions always work, and they do so as a result of the ‘magic’ of “knowing ... the ways of people”, or, what Granny terms and continues to refer to as, ‘headology’ (*ER* 56). As a concept, headology is perhaps best outlined by Granny near the start of *Equal Rites* when she instructs her apprentice, Esk, in the art, telling her that “[i]f you give someone a bottle of red jollop for their wind it may work, right, but if you want it to work for sure then you let their mind *make* it work for them” – you employ headology and inform them that the phial contains “moonbeams bottled in fairy wine” (or something along those lines) and then “[m]umble over it a bit” (60). While placebos have mixed results in our world, on the Disc, Granny’s potions are nearly always successful (*WA* 80), and they are nearly always successful for, as she goes on to tell Esk, “[m]ost people’ll get over most things if they put their minds to it, you just have to give them an interest” (*ER* 61). The ‘magic’ of headology does not only work with regard to potions, however; indeed, Granny also employs headology when cursing, and she tells Esk that, even if you make the curse up, provided it is loud and long and complicated “it’ll work all right” as, the “[n]ext day, when they hit their thumb or they fall off a ladder or their dog drops dead, they’ll remember you ... [and will] behave better next time” (*ER* 60-61). Headology is thus further evidence of the apparent poor quality of Granny’s magic, for

although Granny considers it to be magic and teaches it to Esk as such, ‘headology’ is nothing more than simple psychology.

While Pratchett thus seems to depict Granny as a stereotypical fairy tale witch, he frequently undercuts this image that he builds up of her. Indeed, although Pratchett describes Granny as an old woman with the hooked nose and sharp eyes that are a feature of so many fairy tale witches, he goes on to write that she is lacking in several other key characteristics: Granny has no warts, “a complexion like a rosy apple”, all her own teeth, and is, actually, quite “handsome” in appearance (WS 41). What’s more, her eyes are not, as we might initially have expected, an evil green, scary black, or (as are the witch’s eyes in the Grimms’ “Hansel and Gretel”) a sinister red, but are, rather, a beautiful blue that Pratchett frequently has his other characters liken to a pair of sapphires (WA 232; “SF” 120). Although Granny thus differs in various ways, in terms of her physical appearance, from the stereotype of the fairy tale witch, Pratchett further undercuts the picture that we, in all likelihood, first built up of Granny by suggesting that Granny actively tries to conform to the fairy tale witch image. While the black pointy hat and cloak present Granny with little difficulty, and she dresses in these clothes quite deliberately and “with as much ceremony” as a samurai or questing knight (WS 150), her attempts to alter and make her physical features more crone-like have not met with much success: “[n]o amount of charms ... [have been able to] persuade a wart to take root” on her face and “vast intakes of sugar” (aimed at rotting all her disappointingly persistently healthy teeth) have “only served to give her boundless energy” (WS 41). Granny’s desire to look the part of the stereotypical fairy tale witch may initially seem rather odd, but “crone-credibility” is in fact another essential component of her acts of headology (ER 196). People need to know that Granny is a witch: they need to “see [her] coming in the [pointy black] hat and the [black] cloak” for her headological ‘magic’ to have its full desired effect (ER 60).

As well as undercutting her physical appearance, Pratchett also works to subvert the initial impression that he gave us of Granny’s magic. He does so, ironically, in the same way and at the same time that he apparently shows Granny’s magic to be of poor quality – when he portrays Granny making use of ordinary, everyday objects to work her acts of magic. For although – when he depicts Granny using such items to cast her spells – Pratchett appears to show Granny’s magic to be (like that performed by the fairy tale witch) “cheap and nasty” (“Why Gandalf Never Married” 94), he simultaneously proves the quality, and indeed powerful, nature of the magic that Granny works as, so he has Agnes think to herself: “[a]ny fool c[an] be a witch with a runic knife, but it t[akes real] skill to be one with [an ordinary item like] an apple-corer” (CJ 117). We see further evidence that Granny is, in fact, highly skilled at magic when Pratchett depicts her magically lighting the bonfire at the witch trials in “The Sea and Little Fishes” (136); Borrowing, in *Equal Rites*, the mind of the Unseen University building (189); and, in *Wintersmith*, externalising the pain of an old man (232). While such feats are impressive in and of themselves, when Granny lights the bonfire in “The Sea and Little Fishes” she does not simply set the fuel alight but produces a “blue-white flame” in which “figures and castles and scenes from famous battles” can be seen (136); we learn, from Miss Level in *A Hat Full of Sky* (2004), that Borrowing (or “rid[ing] the minds of animals and birds” and, on occasion, apparently inanimate objects [LL 76]) is something that

not one witch in a hundred has been able to master (175); and, while most witches on the Disc can externalize pain, Granny is “the champion” at it and no witch is too proud to ask for her help (*W* 232).

Not only is the magic that Granny works in fact the opposite of that of the fairy tale witch, but so too, on closer inspection, is her character. Although Granny, at first glance, *seems* to be the epitome of the angry, nasty, evil, bad-tempered crone, this is largely due to the fact that what we know about Granny’s temperament we have had to glean from the thoughts, reactions, and conversations of others – Pratchett rarely tells us directly. Thus, Granny appears to be nasty and thoroughly bad-tempered because that is the perception that others around her – such as Percy Hopcroft – have, and that is what they tell to other people. However, according to Janet Brennan Croft, Granny also *appears* to have the temperament of a crone because, as Croft argues, Granny is not a nice person, but a *right* one (“Nice, Good, or Right” 160). Nice characters, writes Croft, quoting Victoria Martin, are “weak”, “don’t want anyone to be hurt”, “refus[e] to face facts”, and “shrink from making ... hard decisions” (qtd. in “Nice, Good, or Right” 156). On Pratchett’s Discworld, however, to be a witch is to be the opposite of nice, for witchcraft, on the Disc, “requires the strength to see the facts clearly and make the hard decisions that have to be made” (Croft, “Nice, Good, or Right” 156). Thus, for example, when old Pollitt dislocates one of his joints falling off his horse and comes to Granny for help, Pratchett has Granny decide, immediately, to “pop[ped] the joint back into place”, even though such a decision means that poor old Pollitt has to endure a “few seconds of agony” (“SF” 112). While Granny thus succeeds, in hardly any time at all, in alleviating Pollitt’s pain, she does so not by doing what Pollitt wants or, in fact, what a nice person (using Croft’s definition of the term) would have done – she does not give Pollitt a painkiller and send him away. Consequently, Granny comes out of the situation as a nasty old witch, for all that Pollitt remembers of the experience is not the feeling of relief after his joint has clicked back into place, but the “few seconds of agony” that he has undergone in order to feel that way (“SF” 112). Thus, although Granny – as a result of the above and other similar situations – ends up with a reputation (like that of the fairy tale witch) for being angry and nasty, this is due to the fact that she (Granny) does not go for the nice, easy solutions to problems but the right ones: Granny “d[oesn’t] do good for people, she d[oes] right by them”, and “people don’t always appreciate right” (“SF” 112).

While rightness is, on Pratchett’s Discworld, an essential quality in a witch, it is, nevertheless, a dangerous one (Croft, “Nice, Good, or Right” 161). As Croft notes, rightness often “sit[s] on the knife-edge between right and wrong” (“Nice, Good, or Right” 159) and, indeed, “[f]rom *Witches Abroad* onwards we know that Granny Weatherwax could be evil should she so choose” (Mendlesohn 147). Granny’s capacity for evil is made evident through the figure of Black Aliss, who, as we find out from the slightly muddled accounts of her given by Nanny Ogg, was the ultimate fairy tale witch: Black Aliss “[l]ived in a real gingerbread cottage”; had disgustingly dirty black fingernails and rotten teeth; and “liked nothing better than Girl meets Frog”, poisoning spinning wheels, and sending whole palaces to sleep for hundreds of years (*WS* 203-04). Although Aliss differs slightly from the fairy tale witch stereotype in that Pratchett describes her as having been an incredibly powerful witch –

Aliss, we learn, could make steel swords bounce off her skin (*M* 10-11) and, as everyone on the Disc knows, you “can’t magic iron and steel” (353) – she was nevertheless a textbook crone in terms of her character (and demise): Black Aliss was “a wicked ole witch” (347) who, before she was “[p]ushed into her own stove by a couple of kids”, “terrorized the [whole of the] Ramtops” (10-11). Despite being long since dead by the time the events of *Equal Rites* (the first book to feature the witches of the Disc) take place, Black Aliss haunts Granny throughout much of the Discworld witch sub-series: not only do “Aliss’s abilities always foreshadow [Granny’s]” – we learn of Aliss’s sword trick, for example, near the start of *Witches Abroad* only to see Granny perform the self-same act at the close of the book – but “Granny Weatherwax always knows more than [the other witches] about Black Aliss” (Sayer 88-89). Consequently, over the course of the sub-series, “the relationship between Granny and Aliss becomes closer and closer” to the point where it is evident that Granny does not have all that much further to go to develop into another Black Aliss (into, in other words, a fairy tale witch) (Sayer 89-90). This is especially evident when, towards the end of *Maskerade*, Granny gives a “deprecating little chuckle” that is, we are told, more unnerving than any “evil little giggle from some crazed vampyre [sic]” or “side-splitting guffaw from the most inventive torturer” (347). While disturbing laughter may not seem to prove much, when a witch starts to cackle on the Discworld it is a sure sign that she is not far off fairy tale witch status: cackling is the first step on a road which leads to “thinking that right and wrong [a]re negotiable” and, eventually, to “poisoned spinning-wheels and gingerbread cottages” (*W* 29).

Although Granny gets perilously close, she does not ever actually become a fairy tale witch. Indeed, despite the fact that she has started cackling, a worrying sign in a Discworld witch, Granny is not and does not become another Black Aliss for, where Aliss “didn’t know Right from Wrong” (and so “got all twisted up”), Granny does and, as she tells Walter in *Maskerade*:

if you *do* know Right from Wrong you can’t choose Wrong. You just can’t do it and live. So ... if I was a bad witch I could make Mister Salzella’s muscles turn against his bones and break them where he stood ... if I was bad. I could do things inside his head, change the shape he thinks he is, and he’d be down on what’d been his knees and *begging* to be turned into a frog ... if I was bad. I could leave him with a mind like a scrambled egg, listening to colours and hearing smells ... if I was bad. [...] But I can’t do none of that stuff. It wouldn’t be Right. (347)

Granny has “a highly developed sense of Right and Wrong” (*M* 180) – she is, according to Helen Lewis, one of the “moral cores” of the Discworld series – and it is this quality that enables Granny to resist becoming the fairy tale witch that we originally mistake her to be. Thus, although, at the start of each book of the Discworld witch sub-series, Pratchett sets Granny up as the stereotypical fairy tale witch – and even has her using this stereotype (and Disc inhabitants’ knowledge of it) to her advantage – not only does he continually subvert this image that he builds up of Granny, but he also shows that Granny could never, in fact, become such a witch as she has too strong a sense of right and wrong.

Gytha ('Nanny') Ogg

Whereas Granny is a tall, handsome old woman, Pratchett describes the witch Gytha Ogg – who happens to be Granny’s best friend (*W* 207) – as being her (Granny’s) complete physical opposite. Gytha, who goes more frequently by the epithet ‘Nanny’, is “dumpy and bandy-legged” (*LL* 21) where Granny is thin and tall; has, in contrast to the “rosy apple” complexion of Granny (*WS* 41), “a face like an apple that’s been left for too long” (*LL* 21); and, where Granny has a “robustly healthy” full set of teeth (*ER* 196), Nanny is “as gummy as a baby” (*WS* 50). Moreover, whereas Granny’s hair is long (*LL* 374), silver in colour, and kept permanently tied up in a tight bun (*ER* 60), Pratchett writes that Nanny has a “thatch of white curls” so short and thick that, on seeing her for the first time, you might have thought that she was “wearing a helmet” (*WS* 12). Although Nanny could not be described as being beautiful in any way – she does not even have the handsome, striking features of Granny (*LL* 21) – she is, nonetheless, “an attractive lady” who is successful with the opposite sex (236): we find out, for example, in “The Sea and Little Fishes”, that Nanny “ha[s] had many husbands” (only three of which were her own) (103), and we see her, in *Witches Abroad*, succeeding in attracting the attention of the dwarf Casanunda. The Discworld’s second greatest lover (*WA* 252), Casanunda (a parody of Casanova) is so smitten with Nanny that, in *Lords and Ladies*, he even undertakes the long journey from Genua to Lancre in order to see her again and take her out to dinner.

In addition to being complete physical opposites, Nanny and Granny also have markedly different personalities. Whereas Granny Weatherwax exists in an almost permanent state of anger, Nanny Ogg is amiable (*LL* 24), easy-going (5), and “one of life’s great optimists” (*WA* 162). Consequently, where people endeavour to keep out of Granny’s way and are always on their best behaviour when she is present, Nanny Ogg’s “perpetual[ly radiating] field of It’ll-be-all-rightness” (*CJ* 260) means that the folk of the Ramtops are “generally glad to see [her]” (*M* 35) and find her “an incredibly comfortable person to be around” (*LL* 236). Such is the comforting, non-threatening presence that Nanny exudes that, in *Maskerade*, after only a few hours spent backstage at Ankh-Morpork’s Opera House, not only does Nanny “kn[o]w the names, family histories, birthdays, and favourite topics of conversation of half the people [t]here”, but also “the vital wedge that would cause them to open up” (260). Nanny’s ability to “G[e]t On with people” and at getting complete strangers to tell her things is so potent that, according to Granny, “Nanny could get a statue to cry on her shoulder and tell her what it really thought about pigeons” (*M* 260). While Nanny may seem a simple, friendly, easy-going character – she even “pride[s] herself on being as common as muck” (*WA* 158) – there is more to her than meets the eye (Croft, “Nice, Good, or Right” 160). Indeed, although Nanny wears an “expression of near-terminal good nature” (*LL* 21) and looks like an ordinary “little old lad[y]” (*M* 176), Pratchett writes that she has “a mind like a buzzsaw” (176) and is capable of “think[ing] her way through a corkscrew in a tornado without touching the sides” (319). Not only is Nanny clever, but rumour has it that she is even cleverer than Granny Weatherwax – something which Nanny is wise enough to keep well hidden from her friend (*SWM* 349-50).

While she is more intelligent than Granny, Nanny cannot, however, match her friend in terms of power and magical ability. Unlike Granny, Nanny does not have the strength that is needed to externalize a whole body's worth of pain (*W* 232), and does not have the self-discipline required to Borrow as often or as extensively as does Granny (*CJ* 138) (who is not only capable of Borrowing the mind of a building [*ER* 189], but also the collective mind of a swarm of bees [*LL* 359]). Nevertheless, we learn that Nanny *can* externalize pain – “for small stuff, toothaches and the like” (*W* 232) – and, despite it being something that she avoids doing, Nanny is capable of Borrowing: we discover, in *Carpe Jugulum* (1998), that Nanny once “[Borrowed] a rabbit for three whole days” (138). Thus, although Granny is “the most powerful witch alive” on the Disc (*HFS* 269), Nanny is still a witch of considerable power and skill: Vlad (a member of the vampire family that tries to take control of Lancre) refers to her as “one of the most powerful witches in the mountains” (*CJ* 107), and even Granny Weatherwax is envious of the “occult” ability that Nanny has for getting people to open up (*M* 260). What's more, Nanny, like Granny, works her acts of magic in fairy tale witch clothes – in a black dress (*W* 209), “pointed black hat” (*CJ* 40), and “heavy iron-nailed boots” (*LL* 245). In contrast to Granny, however, Nanny has made a number of modifications to her outfit: indeed, where Granny's hat is a “very battered” old thing that she has made herself (*HFS* 316, 337), Nanny's is two-foot tall (*CJ* 40), store-bought, and has “willow reinforcing all the way up to the point and eighteen pockets inside” (*WA* 44). Moreover, where Granny's boots are, presumably, a dull black or brown, Nanny's are bright red, a colour that horrifies Granny as (so she tells Nanny) red is “no colour for a witch's boots” (*WA* 44).

Although Nanny, like Granny, wears the typical garb of the fairy tale witch (albeit with some slight modifications), where Granny correspondingly initially appears to be an evil, nasty, bad-tempered crone, Nanny rather seems to align with the stereotype of the early modern witch. Indeed, Pratchett appears to depict Nanny – as was believed of the witches of that period – as a woman with an insatiable sexual appetite: Nanny, we learn from Granny, spent most of her youth horizontally (*WS* 138); “ha[s] had many husbands” (“SF” 103); and is the main reason why many of the more elderly Discworld witches are not married (for, by the time these women had got to a marriageable age, all the eligible men had already been “used up” by Nanny [*SWM* 8]). Alongside frequently hinting at Nanny's numerous sexual encounters with the men of the Ramtops, Pratchett illustrates Nanny's voracious sexual appetite through the books she consumes and work she produces: Nanny reads erotic novels – Marjory J. Boddice's “*PASSION'S PLAYTHING*” is under the pillow of the bed in her spare room (*W* 233) – and she (Nanny) writes, in *Maskerade*, a cookery book in which every single recipe (even that for porridge) relates to “goings-on” (53). Nanny's preoccupation with sex is so great that it even filters through into her speech in the form of frequent creative and risqué word-play – Nanny, we are told, “could find an innuendo in ‘Good morning’” (*CJ* 115), and “ha[s] a tendency to come out [not] with [double, but] ... single entendres” (*WA* 32). Consequently, as we learn in *I Shall Wear Midnight*, those who are easily shocked should put their hands over their ears before anything that Nanny says (357) – something which Tiffany Aching finds out when she asks Nanny, in *The Shepherd's Crown*, how many husbands she has had, and Nanny's reply to this innocuous question is: “[t]hree of my own, and let's just say I've run out of fingers on the rest, as it were” (67).

However, not only does Pratchett suggest that Nanny has frequent sexual relations with the men of the Disc, but also – again, in-line with the stereotype of the early modern witch – demons. Although the former are more readily available – for it takes all three witches to summon the demon in *Wyrd Sisters* – it is Nanny who puts forward the summons as an idea and it is just prior to the commencement of the “Invocation” (105) that we learn of Nanny’s tastes – that, in addition to liking men, “Nanny quite liked demons, who were male, or apparently so” (107). Nanny’s love of all things male and demonic even extends to Greebo, whom, although he is a one-eyed tomcat and not actually a demon, Pratchett frequently describes as “*evil-smelling* [emphasis added]” (WS 141), as having an eye and eye-socket that narrow into “two yellow slits of easy-going *malevolence* [emphasis added]” (123), and a ‘good’ eye that “open[s] ... like a yellow window into *Hell* [emphasis added]” (74). Pratchett’s descriptions of Greebo continue to be full of satanic allusion even when he (Greebo) has been transformed into a human: indeed, as a fully-grown adult man, Greebo’s good eye “glitter[s] like the sins of angels”, his smile “[i]s the downfall of saints”, and he “broadcast[s] a kind of greasy diabolic sexuality in the megawatt range” (WA 209-10). Nevertheless, despite his devilish appearance, his “built-in villainy” (WS 123), and the fact that he will (when in cat form) “attempt to fight or rape absolutely anything, up to and including a four-horse logging wagon” (WA 45), Nanny still loves Greebo: all she can see when she looks at him is “the small fluffy kitten [that] he had been decades before” (WS 141). Unlike Granny, who only acquires a cat in *Wintersmith* (the ninth book in the eleven full-length Discworld witch novels), Nanny and Greebo have been together since the very beginning of the sub-series and the pair spend a lot of time in each other’s company – Greebo even travels with Nanny to far-off Ankh-Morpork in *Maskerade*, and to even-further-off Genua in *Witches Abroad*. Despite the fact that Greebo is a cat, his frequent association with all things demonic and the amount of time that Nanny spends with him adds to the picture that Pratchett builds up of Nanny as an early modern witch, since, as mentioned in the previous chapter, consorting with demons (as Nanny does in both meanings of the term) constitutes a significant part of the stereotype.

Moreover, although she is not the one to put forward the idea, or the only one of the three witches to attend, Nanny’s attitude towards the Sabbaths that the Discworld witches decide to hold also appears to mark her as an early modern witch. For, despite the fact that it is Magrat who suggests that they (Granny, Nanny, and Magrat) should form a coven and have regular Sabbaths, where Granny is exceedingly reluctant to attend, and Magrat pictures the Sabbaths as Wiccan-esque gatherings involving “wise discussions of natural energies” (WS 143), Pratchett (through Granny) has Nanny hope that the meetings will resemble those supposedly held by witches in the early modern period. Indeed, when discussing Magrat’s idea of holding regular Sabbaths, the very first thing that Pratchett has Granny tell Nanny is that she (Granny) “do[esn’t] hold with ... getting over-excited or ... messing about with ointments” (WS 13) – thus implying that these two activities (sexual promiscuity and the concocting of unguents) that were supposed to go on at early modern witches’ Sabbaths are what Nanny hopes will take place at the Sabbaths that Magrat proposes to hold. Although the Discworld witches’ Sabbaths do not actually end up being the orgiastic feasts – the “knees up[s]” (WS 13) – that Nanny hopes for, the fact that Pratchett implies that such is what immediately springs to

Nanny's mind on hearing the words 'coven' and 'Sabbath' is another way in which Pratchett aligns Nanny with the stereotype of the early modern witch: Nanny's hope for a rowdy orgiastic "knees up" complements the image of Nanny that Pratchett appears to build up of her as a sexually insatiable woman who frequently summons and consorts with demons (including her demon-esque cat) (WS 13).

Despite all the evidence that seems to point to Nanny as being a prime example of the stereotypical early modern witch, such is not, in fact, the case: over the course of the witch sub-series of the Discworld, Pratchett – much as he does with Granny and the figure of the crone – describes Nanny as a stereotypical early modern witch only to continually subvert that image. Indeed, although, like the early modern witch, Pratchett depicts Nanny as having a familiar, being proficient at riding a broomstick, and (semi-regularly) attending Sabbaths, the latter events that Pratchett describes do not come close to the supposed witches' Sabbaths of the early modern period. At the Sabbath that begins *Wyrd Sisters*, for example, the witches drink tea and eat scones instead of the flesh of children and babies; bicker amongst themselves rather than engaging in sexual acts; and, instead of sacrificing and/or dedicating children to the Devil (who does not ever make an appearance at their gatherings), the witches actually end up saving (rather than curtailing) the life of a baby. Although such does not change Nanny's implied initial early modern witch attitude to Magrat's suggestion of holding regular Sabbaths, the fact that Nanny does not try and impose her version of a witches' Sabbath on Granny and Magrat is the first hint we get that Nanny is not all that she initially appears. This becomes even more evident when, a few days after the Sabbath of *Wyrd Sisters*, Nanny summons a demon (with Granny and Magrat) not – as witches in the early modern period were believed to do – in order to worship or have sex with him, but to gain information regarding the magical disturbance that Granny has sensed in Lancre. Despite the fact that, during the demon-summoning scene, Pratchett goes on to suggest that Nanny (like the stereotypical early modern witch) *does* usually regularly summon demons in order to have sex with them (WS 107), in all of the texts in which Nanny is a main character we never once see or hear about this again – Pratchett does not even hint at such having happened or as being about to take place.

As for Nanny's supposed frequent sexual encounters with the men of the Disc, much like Nanny's demon-summoning, these seem to be nothing more than hot air. For, despite continually referring to and emphasizing the fact that Nanny enjoys and frequently engages in lots of sex, Pratchett never actually shows or hints at anything like this taking place in any of the Discworld novels of the witch sub-series. Indeed, although the subject of Nanny's many and varied sexual exploits is a recurring theme in and amongst the conversations of the Discworld witches, and although Nanny herself frequently refers to her sexual prowess and experience, that is all it seems to be – talk. As Lorraine Andersson notes: despite the fact that Nanny, with all her innuendo and bravado, seems to "exude[s] sexuality in one sense, it is a safe sexuality in that it is essentially spent" (39). While Nanny may have been highly sexually active in the past (and the fact that she has fifteen children seems to uphold this conclusion [WS 37]) such is no longer the case – even when out on a date with the Discworld's second greatest lover, Nanny goes no further than dinner.

Thus, over the course of the witch sub-series of his Discworld novels, Pratchett – much as he does with Granny Weatherwax and the figure of the crone – presents Nanny as a particular witch figure only to continually subvert each aspect of that stereotype. Indeed, although Pratchett initially seems to align Nanny with the Sabbath-attending, Devil-worshipping, sexually-insatiable stereotype of the early modern witch, Pratchett continually undercuts this image of Nanny that he presents to us, showing the Sabbaths that Nanny attends to be little more than glorified tea-parties, the demon that Nanny summons to be a one-off, and Nanny’s sexual activities as restricted to the long-gone past. Neither a crone – as are many fantasy witches – nor an early modern witch, Nanny Ogg (like her best friend Granny Weatherwax) is, rather, “a different kind of witch” (WA 157) – something which I shall go on to explore and explain in the following chapter.

Magrat Garlick

The most junior member of the coven of three, Magrat Garlick is a young woman who, in the presence of the highly conspicuous Nanny Ogg and Granny Weatherwax, often goes unnoticed. Indeed, when Gammer Bevis (another senior Discworld witch) tries to conjure up a picture of Magrat (whom we would now be referring to as Margaret were it not for her mother’s dreadful misspelling [*CJ* 72-73]) in her mind, all Gammer can recall is, not a face or any other aspect of Magrat’s physical appearance, but “a slightly watery-eyed expression of hopeless goodwill” (WA 22). Eventually, however, we find out that Magrat is thin, with “a body like a maypole” (WA 22); has a pointy, often red, nose (WS 129); and “long, thick and blond” hair (74). Although neat and tidy first thing in the morning, Pratchett describes the normal resting state of Magrat’s hair as a “worried frizz” and goes on to write that, no matter what Magrat does to try and “ameliorate the effect” (WS 74), “it t[akes her hair only] about three minutes to tangle itself up again, like a garden hosepipe left in a shed” (*LL* 25) – even the “violets and cowslips” that Magrat has taken to plaiting into her hair in an attempt to control its natural frizz have not been all that successful: all the flowers do is make it look as though “a window box ha[s] fallen on her head” (WS 74). With such wild hair it is hardly surprising, therefore, that “Magrat shun[s] the traditional [witches’] pointed hat” (WS 130); however, not only does Magrat not wear the hat, but she also eschews the rest of the fairy tale witch getup worn by Nanny and Granny, choosing to wear, instead, “startlingly green” (151), “floppy” smocks (*CJ* 41), and “lots of silver jewellery” (WS 130). Smothered with “octograms, bats, spiders, dragons and other symbols of everyday mysticism” (WS 130), Magrat typically wears “enough silverware to make a full-sized dinner service” (152) and “would ... paint[ed] her fingernails black” were it not for the thought of “Granny’s withering scorn” (130).

In addition to her distinctive dress sense, Magrat’s character is also markedly different from the two older witches. Neither generally bad-tempered like Granny, nor endowed with Nanny Ogg’s cheerful, easy-going optimism, Magrat is described by Pratchett as “soft-hearted” and “a compulsive daydreamer” and is, consequently, in Granny Weatherwax’s books, something of a “wet hen” (WA 238). While Magrat does have a “tendency to be soppy about raindrops and roses and whiskers on kittens” (*LL* 5), is “[t]he kind of person who rescue[s] small lost baby birds” (WA 22) and “thinks you can lead your life as if fairy stories work and folk songs

are really true” (LL 49), deep down, Magrat actually has a great deal of strength. Indeed, of the three witches it is Magrat who kills the two snake women in *Witches Abroad*; rides out, on her own, in *Lords and Ladies*, to save her future husband from the elves (one of whom she shoots through the eyes with a crossbow); and, in the self-same novel, even succeeds in laying her hands on and injuring the immensely powerful Queen of the Elves (although she [Magrat] does so only with considerable assistance from Granny). Thus, although Magrat – in spite of all her apparently soppy tendencies – has always been inwardly strong and courageous (for Discworld elves are nothing like the naturally good, wise, and honourable race that inhabit Tolkien’s Middle Earth [Clement 8-9]), when Magrat becomes a mother in *Carpe Jugulum* she undergoes something of a transformation: once a full-blown wet hen, as a mother, Magrat is described by Agnes Nitt (another witch) as being “only slightly damp” (CJ 170). Indeed, by the time the events of *The Shepherd’s Crown* (2015) take place, Magrat – who once thought of her herself as the “third witch”: “[t]he soft one” who has “never been much good at [witchcraft]” (LL 56) – has the confidence in herself and her abilities to announce to fellow witch Tiffany Aching that she (Magrat) will be of use in the battle with the elves as she is, in fact, “a pretty good witch” (SC 234).

Since Magrat is the most junior witch of the coven of three we do not often see her perform magic: when some act of witchcraft is required it is generally one of the two older witches (Nanny or Granny) who steps forward and carries it out. What’s more, although we are not explicitly told that Magrat is incapable of externalizing pain (something at which both Nanny and Granny are proficient), we do find out that Magrat cannot Borrow – she “refuse[s, in fact,] even to give it a try” (LL 75). Nevertheless, despite her deficiencies in Borrowing, Magrat *is* capable of magic, and powerful magic at that: she aids Granny and Nanny with the summoning of the demon in *Wyrd Sisters* (106-11); forces her way through an old, thick oak door, in the same novel, by tricking the wooden planks into thinking that it is springtime (167-69); and, a little later on, casts a successful “Change spell” on herself to alter her mental attitude (211). In addition, we learn that Magrat “is one of the best there is when it comes to potions”, especially medicinal potions, as Magrat – in contrast to Granny and Nanny – is what is known on the Discworld as a ‘research witch’ (SWM 316). Whereas most witches on the Disc are apprenticed to an older witch from whom they are taught the craft, research witches tend to learn about witchcraft exclusively through reading books (WS 22), “notic[ing] things[,] and wr[it]ing things down” (“[w]hich herbs were better than others for headaches, fragments of old stories, [and other] odds and ends like that”) (LL 158). The reading, observing, and (eventual) testing that research witches like Magrat do is the reason why Magrat is much better than Granny and Nanny at potions. For although “in [most acts of] witchcraft it d[oes]n’t matter a damn which [of the thirty-seven common plants called Love-in-idleness a spell calls for]”, when brewing medicinal tonics such details matter a great deal as the success (or otherwise) of the tonic depends on getting them right (LL 158).

While Pratchett thus presents Magrat as a ‘research witch’, he also describes her as being a seminal example of the stereotype of the Witch – portraying her as a hippy-esque, nature-loving feminist who works magic with a copious amount of ritualistic paraphernalia. Indeed, although Magrat is no pacifist and dons armour and carries weapons – in both *Lords and*

Ladies and *The Shepherd's Crown* – to go and do battle with the elves, Pratchett describes Magrat as having an abundance of hippy-esque qualities: Magrat wears long, brightly-coloured floppy dresses (CJ 41); twines flowers into her hair (WS 74); and loves all the animals and plants of the natural world (even the mice that infest her kitchen) (CJ 51). Moreover, we learn that Magrat is, like many hippies, a vegetarian: she orders a vegetarian meal for herself in Genua (WA 155); gives Tomjon (the heir to the throne of Lancre) a lecture on how “[m]eat is extremely bad for the digestive system” (WS 291); and her “idea of sustaining food” is described, by a rather disappointed Granny, as being “two rounds of egg and cress sandwiches with the crusts cut off” (212). Alongside her vegetarianism, Pratchett also depicts Magrat as being a practitioner of alternative forms of medicine, curiosity for which blossomed during the hippie era (McCleary 253): Magrat, we learn in *Wyrd Sisters*, prescribes “ear-massage and flower-based homeopathic remedies for everything short of actual decapitation” and, while such treatments are not always successful in our world, since Magrat is a witch, her alternative methods work every time (101).

In addition to endowing her with a number of hippy-esque qualities, Pratchett also aligns Magrat with the stereotype of the Witch by portraying her as something of a feminist. Being an adherent of the latter movement, like being a hippy, constitutes a significant aspect of the Witch stereotype and, although Magrat never explicitly identifies herself as such, Magrat *is* a feminist – Magrat attempts to empower the women of her community and, in fact, tries to do so in a number of different ways. In *Witches Abroad*, Magrat leads a self-defence class for women on “the Path of the Scorpion” which, in addition to offering “cosmic harmony” and “inner one-ness”, instructs its followers on how to “knock[ing] an attacker’s kidneys out through his ears” (23, 33); sets an example for her contemporaries by resisting marrying King Verence until she (Magrat) is certain that she can do so on her own terms: without losing her identity and becoming nothing more than a “sex object” (WA 23); and, later on in the sub-series, encourages Baroness Letitia Keepsake not to stifle her natural witch abilities and to go and join the fight against the elves (SC 266-70). However, not only does Pratchett show Magrat to be a feminist through her varied attempts to empower the women of Lancre, but also through her disregard for societal convention regarding traditional gender roles and her bid to raise her children to do the same. Although women are traditionally conceived of as occupying the domestic, caring role, in *Lords and Ladies*, *Carpe Jugulum*, and *The Shepherd's Crown* it is Magrat – not her husband, King Verence – whom Pratchett depicts leaving the relative safety of their castle home to go out and do battle against the various supernatural beings threatening Lancre. While Verence, in *The Shepherd's Crown*, admits that he finds it “shaming” that he has to stay at home and look after their children whilst Magrat is off fighting (297), Pratchett has Magrat reassure her husband that it is in the best interests of their children for her “to be a good role model” for them (233): to show them that women do not always have to be stay-at-home carers.

Pratchett also makes Magrat’s status as the stereotypical Witch evident through the way in which he depicts her working magic: Magrat, unlike Nanny and Granny, performs magic with an abundance of specialist magical paraphernalia. Indeed, whereas Nanny and Granny use whatever objects that they have around them, Pratchett has Magrat believe that, in order

to be able to do any sort of magic, you have “to create the right magical ambience” and need the right equipment (WS 60): at the very least, thinks Magrat to herself, “[y]ou need a cauldron, ... a magic sword”, “an octagram”, “[a]nd spices” (105). Thus, when Nanny and Granny propose – and indeed succeed (with a reluctant Magrat’s help) – in summoning a demon in Nanny’s washhouse with only what they find there, Magrat is somewhat taken aback. Left to her own devices, or if the witches had gone about summoning a demon in Magrat’s cottage, it is likely that Magrat would have made full use of all her “Tools of the Craft” (WS 152). These include – but are not restricted to – numerous “coloured candles”, a “bottle of extremely thaumaturgical incense” (WS 61), a white-handled knife for “the preparation of magical ingredients”, a black-handled knife for “the magical workings themselves” (152), “mystic coloured cords”, and various “assorted grails and crucibles” (LL 41). While, with this vast quantity of magical paraphernalia, Pratchett thus clearly marks Magrat out as a seminal example of the stereotypical Witch – for the figure comprising this stereotype always seems to perform her various rituals and spells in front of an altar cluttered with all sorts of candles, goblets, ceremonial daggers, old books, vials, and bottles – he also indicates that such is the case through Magrat’s thoughts regarding the Sabbaths that she arranges. Where Nanny desires a rowdy orgiastic “knees up[s]” after the fashion of early modern witches’ Sabbaths (WS 13), Pratchett has Magrat hope for Wiccan-esque gatherings at which those assembled would be able to have “wise discussions of natural energies” and maybe even “try a few of the old dances” (although Magrat is not so sure about performing these in the nude) (143).

In contrast to Nanny Ogg and Granny Weatherwax, both of whom Pratchett continually aligns with a specific witch stereotype in order to continually overturn it, Pratchett sets up Magrat as the stereotypical Witch and depicts her rejecting that position outright. Indeed, near the beginning of *Lords and Ladies* (the fourth book of the witch sub-series), Pratchett describes Magrat putting all her magical paraphernalia into a sack and throwing it off the bridge into the river at the bottom of the Lancre Gorge. While Magrat’s “Tools of the Craft” (WS 152) are not the only things to mark her out as the stereotypical Witch, they are the most physically significant, recognisable aspects of the stereotype and, indeed, having thrown the items away, it becomes clear just how important those tools were, for, waking up the next day, not only does Magrat feel that she is no longer a Witch, but that she is no longer a witch full-stop (LL 56). Although Magrat imagines her “witchcraft level” to be “00.00” after having thrown away her magical paraphernalia (LL 56), such is not, in fact, the case. Without her tools Magrat is no longer a Witch, yet she *is* still a witch: “magic ha[s] not retired from [Magrat]” (SC 41) and, in *Carpe Jugulum* and *The Shepherd’s Crown*, we see Magrat being more than willing to put on her metaphorical witch’s hat to help out her fellow witches with the (respective) vampire and elf invasions. Her role as queen may come first, but “Queen Magrat of Lancre is[, nevertheless, still] a witch” (SWM 316). Thus, as with Nanny and Granny, although Pratchett initially presents Magrat in-line with a specific witch stereotype, he ultimately rejects this and depicts Magrat (along with Nanny and Granny) as an entirely different type of witch, which I shall now go on to detail.

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

While Pratchett's frequent setting up and overturning (and rejecting outright, in the case of Magrat Garlick and the figure of the Witch) of various witch stereotypes can be seen in light of his ongoing project of humour, Pratchett's playfulness has a more serious side. Although Pratchett aims to make his readers laugh by continually subverting their expectations, he does so, ultimately, in a bid to re-represent the figure of the witch. Pratchett is, however, not alone in attempting to reclaim the witch from the various stereotypes I outlined in Chapter One: in the work of various radical feminists and feminist Witches of the 1970s (almost two decades before the first of Pratchett's witch sub-series of Discworld novels was published in 1987), the witch experienced what Michelle Boyd terms a "feminist rebirth" (101). Since then, numerous other authors (such as Ursula K. Le Guin and Marion Zimmer Bradley) who do not always explicitly identify themselves as feminists, but whose work often deals with feminist themes or concerns, have also taken it upon themselves to re-represent the witch in a similar, feminist vein. Pratchett himself actually falls into this latter category: the new type of witch that he writes into being in his Discworld books – empowered and heroic – marks him out as a member of this cohort. Thus, although the witches of Pratchett's Discworld series are the main focus of this chapter, I shall also reference the work of those other writers and theorists who, beginning with the radical feminists and feminist Witches of the seventies, have also attempted to rewrite the witch. While it may thus seem as though Pratchett's rewriting constitutes one of many, successful, feminist re-representations of the figure of the witch, this is not so. Indeed, although the witches that these various feminist authors and theorists write into being have some admirable, empowering qualities, they typically fall short in feminist terms. Pratchett, however, I shall argue, succeeds in his rewriting to the extent that he may perhaps be said to have gone too far, for, in empowering his witches as characters, Pratchett renders his male wizards superfluous.

Despite all that I have just written about Pratchett as a feminist writer, the first part of this chapter – in which I will detail how Pratchett's witch characters are all healer-midwives and frequently associated with nature – may seem to imply the opposite. Feminism, as a theory and social movement, is concerned with women's ability to flourish and live well (Frye 195) and, in creating healer-midwife witches who have a close connection to nature and the natural world, not only does Pratchett depict his witches occupying stereotypically feminine, caring roles, but he also portrays his witches using an association which has long been used as an argument "to subordinate, not to say oppress, [women]" (Ortner 73). Nevertheless, Pratchett *is* a feminist and his rewriting *is* an empowering one and, later on in this chapter when I re-examine Granny and the rest of the Discworld witches as a group, I hope to show this.

First Glance: The Witches of the Disc as a Failed Rewriting

Although the title of Pratchett's very first Discworld novel centred on the witches of the Disc – *Equal Rites* – is a pun on one of the central tenets of liberal feminism, there is little equality on the Disc in terms of the jobs carried out by Pratchett's female witches and male wizards. The wizards of the Disc are all academics – a traditionally male occupation – and the witches are healers and midwives – stereotypically female roles. Hence, whereas the wizards are rarely seen venturing outside the Unseen University, Pratchett frequently shows the witches out and about in their local communities, using their skills to help others. In *Maskerade* and *Carpe Jugulum*, for example, we see Granny Weatherwax healing Jarge Weaver's bad back and being called out to assist with Mrs Ivy's labour (respectively); we are told, in *Lords and Ladies*, that “there were plenty of people in Lancre for whom Nanny Ogg's face had been the first ... thing they'd ever seen” (48) and Pratchett depicts her, in *Wintersmith*, aiding “a man with a very nasty leg injury” (229); and, as for Magrat, although we never actually see her assisting at a birth, Pratchett writes that she *has* been taught midwifery (WS 57) and, in *Lords and Ladies*, it is Magrat whom Granny calls upon to help her tend to the badly-injured Diamanda (156). Although there is nothing inherently ‘wrong’ with these roles (of healer and midwife), nor are women who enter any such profession diminished in any way, it nevertheless seems somewhat paradoxical for Pratchett – whom I argue is rewriting the witch from a feminist perspective – to write into being witches who do those jobs that are traditionally assigned to, and expected of, women (Purkiss 21-22): the witches of the Disc could have been written into being as having a far more subversive occupation.

However, not only does Pratchett present his witch characters occupying stereotypical female roles, but he also describes his witches using an association which devalues them. Indeed, whereas Pratchett aligns the wizards of the Disc with culture – they reside in the big, bustling city of Ankh-Morpork and “are ... [all] academics and scientists” – he associates the witches with nature and “ties ... [them] to the earth”: the witches of the Disc are “midwives, herbalists, and healers ... [who] liv[e out] in [the] rural areas” of the Discworld (Sillanpää 61) and have such a strong connection to the natural world that Pratchett frequently describes them as having been “grow[n]” rather than born (WFM 10). Although, as we learn in *I Shall Wear Midnight*, the Disc *is* home to a few city witches, these women are very much in the minority and, even though they live in an urban environment, they remain close to nature: just as Granny Weatherwax is “sensitive to ... [the] moods” of “the trees and the rocks and the soil” of her home in the rural country of Lancre (LL 171), so can city witch Mrs Proust sense life in the stones beneath the cobbles of her residence in Ankh-Morpork and, when lying down on one of the city's ancient flagstones, she “feel[s] the power of the rock [beneath her] buoying [her] up” (SWM 142). In addition to their work as herbalists, healers, and midwives; their typical place of abode; and environmental sensitivity, Pratchett associates his witch characters with nature through the fact that, unlike the wizards, the witches of the Disc are rarely hampered or inconvenienced by the (often troublesome) forces of the natural world. Indeed, whereas Archchancellor Cutangle is completely drenched by the torrential downpour that occurs towards the end of *Equal Rites* – so much so that he even sighs “wetly” – Granny Weatherwax (although she has spent the same amount of time

outside) is “merely damp[ened]” (245). Consequently (by associating his witch characters with nature and wizards with culture) Pratchett ends up reconstructing the dualism whereby women are connected with nature and men with culture. In this way, Pratchett renders his witches passive and significantly reduced as characters for culture is, in our Westernized society, deemed to be “superior to nature”, and the wizards of the Disc, through their association with culture, end up the seemingly superior set of magic practitioners (Ortner 72-73). However, not only are the witches of the Disc thus reduced, but since, as Sherry B. Ortner notes, the devaluation of women is largely the result of woman’s association with nature, for Pratchett to write his witches as women who are similarly connected to the natural world seems – much like the typically feminine occupation of his witches – somewhat paradoxical. Rather than being radical, empowered figures, the witches of the Disc are thus merely presented how women have been presented for centuries, using an association which has long been used to oppress women (Ortner 73).

Alongside the witches and wizards themselves, Pratchett also puts in place a nature/culture split on the magic that they perform. Thus, where the magic of the wizards revolves around “numbers and angles and edges and [knowing] what the stars are doing” (*ER* 82), Pratchett describes the magic of the Disc’s witches as being earth-based – it is “magic out of the ground” (*ER* 20) – and something that is best learned not (as is the wizards’ cultural magic) by reading books, but by studying the environment. Indeed, as Granny informs Esk, witches’ magic is all about “knowing the right herbs”, “watch[ing] the weather”, and “finding out the ways of animals” (and of people, too) (*ER* 56): “[g]et your mind right”, says Granny, “and you can [even] make a stick your wand[,] ... the sky your hat and a puddle your magic [goblet]” (*HFS* 340). While there are some witches in the Discworld series whose magic leans towards the cultural magic of the wizards in terms of being book-oriented – research witch Magrat Garlick, witch-finder Miss Tick, Diamanda, Annagramma Hawkin, and Mrs Earwig all fall into this category – Pratchett generally portrays these women (with the exception of Magrat and Miss Tick) unfavourably, and as witches in name only. Diamanda – with her books and candles and cards and magic circles – is merely “[p]laying at witches [emphasis added]” (*LL* 86), and the “tall[,] ... thin[,] and rather chilly” Mrs Earwig does what Pratchett has Granny describe as “wizard magic with a dress on” (*W* 122).

Thus, at first glance, the witches of the Disc constitute anything but a successful rewriting: not only does Pratchett write into being witches who do all the jobs that are traditionally assigned to and expected of women, but he also associates his characters (and the magic that they perform) with nature – an association which reduces both the witches themselves and their magical abilities. For someone whom I argue is successful in rewriting the witch, such would not seem to be an ideal starting point. Indeed, it could hardly be much worse. Nevertheless, Pratchett *is* successful: his witches are heroic and powerful women who do a great deal of good work in their respective communities. Before I go on to discuss this, however, I shall first analyse two other attempted rewritings: the witch of the Burning Times and the Goddess. Both of these figures have a number of similarities with the witches of the Disc and, hence, I shall go on to consider the possibility that the Myth-witch and the Goddess – alongside Pratchett’s witches – comprise a new witch stereotype.

The Witch of the Burning Times

As healer-midwives with a close connection to nature, Pratchett's witches bear a strong resemblance to the central character of a story first told almost two decades before *Equal Rites* was published. "Once upon a time", so the story goes,

there was a woman who lived on the edge of a village. She lived alone, in her own house surrounded by her garden, in which she grew all manner of herbs and other healing plants. Though she was alone, she was never lonely; she had her garden and her animals for company, she took lovers when she wished, and she was always busy. The woman was a healer and midwife; she had practical knowledge taught her by her mother, and mystical knowledge derived from her closeness to nature, or from a half-submerged pagan religion. She helped women give birth, and she had healing hands; she used her knowledge of herbs and her common sense to help the sick. However, her peaceful existence was disrupted. Even though this woman was harmless, she posed a threat to the fearful. Her medical knowledge threatened the doctor. Her simple, true spiritual values threatened the superstitious nonsense of the Catholic [C]hurch, as did her affirmation of the sensuous body. Her independence and freedom threatened men. So the Inquisition descended on her, and cruelly tortured her into confessing to lies about the devil. She was burned alive by men who hated women, along with millions of others just like her. (Purkiss 7)

This tale, which Diane Purkiss terms, and which I shall continue to refer to as, "the [M]yth of the Burning Times" (13), is a rough approximation of the story set down in the 1970s in the writings of various adherents of radical feminism in their bid to reclaim the figure of the witch from her numerous stereotyped forms – in particular, from her early modern configuration (15, 22). In the Myth, the central figure (who is in fact never actually referred to as a witch – we are meant to infer this) is someone who does her best to help those around her; has simple, peaceful values; and takes lovers from the nearby village only when she feels so inclined. She is, thus, a far cry from the inherently evil, Devil-worshipping, sexually-insatiable, child-murdering early modern representation of the witch who, as such, constitutes the most negative – in terms of her depraved behaviours – of the four witch stereotypes I outlined in Chapter One.

While the Myth of the Burning Times is thus a successful rewriting of the stereotype of the early modern witch, when it comes to the witch more generally, the Myth is only a *partial* success. This is due to the fact that not only is the witch of the Myth – like the witches of Pratchett's Discworld – a healer-midwife, but she is also associated with nature. Indeed, in the Myth we are explicitly told that the witch "[i]s a healer and midwife" and that much of her skill in these subjects derives from the fact that she has a mystical "closeness to nature" (Purkiss 7). Hence, while the Myth is successful at confronting and overturning many of the depraved behaviours (such as her penchant for harming children) of the early modern witch, the Myth is disempowering in terms of offering a central character with whom female readers might wish to identify with or model themselves upon: through her association with nature the witch of the Myth is, like Pratchett's witches, reduced as a character, and the work that the witch of the Myth does is (again, like Pratchett's witches) merely the work that women have been doing for centuries.

Around the same time that radical feminists crafted their Burning Times Myth, followers of the invented religion that is modern-day Witchcraft – in particular, those who adhere to the subset of the movement known variously as ‘feminist Witchcraft’ or ‘Goddess spirituality’ – also set about reclaiming the witch: attempting to do so by reinstating her (the witch) as an aspect of the Goddess (Rountree 3), the deity whom, according to Purkiss, all Witches worship (32). While the Goddess today is merely the deity of those who adhere to Witchcraft as a movement, according to feminist Witches, the Goddess was once the principle deity of the whole of Europe (“the evidence for which they say stretches from 30,000 to around 4,000 years ago” and “correspond[s] with a period of pre-patriarchal social relations when women were valued as highly as men and both sexes participated fully in society”) (Rountree 4). In those days, write feminist Witches, the Goddess constituted “a model of women’s nature in all its fullness”: she was an irrational, destructive seductress; a sweet, kind, innocent maiden; a gentle, nurturing mother; a death-dealing old crone; and all of the many other feminine types in between (Gadon qtd. in Rountree 4). With the “shift to patriarchy and patriarchal religions in Western societies ... [and] the eventual dominance of Judaeo-Christian monotheism” (Rountree 4), however, the dark, seductive, destructive, chaotic, and irrational side of the Goddess came to be “split off from divinity” (Gadon qtd. in Rountree 4). Whereas the sweet, innocent maiden and gentle, nurturing mother aspects of the Goddess “appeal[ed] to patriarchy” and so were “incorporated into Christianity in the figure of Mary, the virgin Mother of God” (Rountree 47), the dark, destructive traits of the Goddess as crone inspired fear and so came to be imaged rather differently – indeed, write feminist Witches, these traits coalesced to form the figure of the early modern witch (4). Thus, while the words ‘goddess’ and ‘witch’ are likely to conjure up very different images today, feminist Witches argue that, “far from being opposites, the witch and the goddess [a]re one” and, by rewriting the Goddess (which simultaneously constitutes a rewriting of the witch), they are attempting to restore this state of affairs (Rountree 3-4). Hence, I shall now move on to examine the Goddess and her several aspects of Maiden, Mother, and Crone.

The Goddess

The Goddess as rewritten into being by feminist Witches today is a complex, paradoxical figure. Feminist Witches believe that she is simultaneously within all people (women and men), a part of them, and outside, looking in; that she both exists independently and as an invented being; and that, in addition to being singular, she has many, very different, names and forms (Eller qtd. in Rountree 132-33). Indeed, amongst thousands of others, they believe that the Goddess is Sekmet, the Egyptian sun goddess, who is strong, graceful, and dignified; Lakshmi, the Indian goddess of wealth and abundance; the Slavic fertility goddess Siva; the Babylonian Tiamet who offers power, magic, and protection; and the Greek goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite (Alexander 38-39). In addition to being a singular figure and simultaneously having thousands of different names and forms, the Goddess has many aspects (Alexander 35); however, where the Goddess of prehistorical Europe constituted “a model of women’s nature in *all* its fullness [emphasis added]”, and was thus maiden, mother, seductress, crone, and more besides (Gadon qtd. in Rountree 4), the Goddess as rewritten by

feminist Witches has only three aspects – Maiden, Mother, and Crone – representing the three main stages of a woman’s life (Rountree 47). While the Maiden is often depicted, by those who do not adhere to Witchcraft, as a “fleet-footed, pony-tailed[,] chaste young [woman]” (Griffin 42), most feminist Witches describe the Maiden aspect of the Goddess as a confident, hopeful, and courageous woman (Alexander 35) – a woman who is a maiden in the “sense of being independent of her lovers, not ... necessarily ... [because she is] sexually inactive” (Griffin 43). In contrast, the Goddess as Mother is generally portrayed by feminist Witches as a creative and nurturing (and usually more mature) individual; however, not only is she typically described by these followers of Witchcraft as a comforting, reassuring figure, but also as someone who is sensual, strong, and powerful (Alexander 36). As for the Crone, this “aging ... postmenopausal wom[a]n” is generally depicted in terms of her wisdom, patience, and fortitude, but she is also described as having a close association with death and destruction (Alexander 36). Indeed, it was she (the Crone) who, constituting the “dark side of the feminine”, was split off from the Goddess, and her dark, destructive attributes imaged as the figure of the early modern witch (Gadon qtd. in Rountree 4). Thus, although it may seem that, by reinstating the Crone as an aspect of the Goddess and restoring her pre-patriarchal attributes alongside her dark qualities, feminist Witches are writing the witch out of existence, these women argue that even before the destructive, death-dealing traits of the Crone were diabolized and became the early modern witch, “the crone aspect of the Goddess [was a witch]” (Rountree 186). Hence, by reinstating the Crone as the third aspect of the Goddess and restoring her (the Crone’s) pre-patriarchal qualities and attributes, feminist Witches are reclaiming the witch as Goddess: with the Crone, in their rewriting, reincorporated into the figure of the Goddess, the witch and the Goddess become one *whole* being (which I shall continue to refer to as the Goddess).

As a rewriting of the witch, the Goddess is, in many ways, successful. This is because, much like the witch of the Burning Times, depictions of the Goddess tackle and overturn many of the less-than-appealing – and often downright horrible – characteristics of the various witch stereotypes that exist today. Indeed, whereas the fairy tale and early modern witches are stereotyped as taking great delight in harming children, one of the three aspects of the Goddess is of the ideal mother figure and, consequently, from descriptions of her as a nurturing, comforting woman who always provides for her children, we sense that the Goddess would never be able to bring herself to harm, much less take delight in harming, any child in any way. Moreover, where the crone or fairy tale witch is portrayed as being inherently evil, the Goddess as Crone is merely the archetypal wise, patient, and resilient woman in the latter stages of her life – she is, thus, a far cry from the wicked witch of fairy tale fame (Alexander 36). Furthermore, while the Maiden Goddess is a young woman much like the beautiful, youthful witch of the small screen, where the latter figure frequently causes major problems as a result of her not-fully-thought-through spells and potions, the Maiden is no wrecker of havoc, but an ideally independent and confident young woman (Alexander 35).

The Goddess also constitutes a successful rewriting of the witch in the way that the Goddess is, unlike the other witch types, a *whole* figure. Indeed, whereas the early modern witch is merely a sexually-insatiable, inherently evil woman, and the small screen witch is a (mostly)

good, well-meaning girl, the Goddess has both dark *and* light aspects: she is a nurturing, gentle mother *and* a destructive old crone (Rountree 136). Thus, in terms of being a figure with whom women might wish to identify, the Goddess is “enormously liberating” as she “affirms not only women’s procreative and nurturing aspects, but also helps them to reconnect with [what Kathryn Rountree terms] the ‘dark feminine’” (136-37).

Although partly successful, the Goddess is not an unproblematic figure. Despite being Maiden, Mother, and Crone, the Goddess tends to be foregrounded in her aspect as Mother whenever she (the Goddess) is written about or described. Feminist Witch Elisabeth Brooke, for example, depicts the Goddess first and foremost as “the Cosmic Mother Of All” who “birth[s] new stars” and “pour[s] milk into the firmament” (qtd. in Purkiss 33); author Marion Zimmer Bradley – for a time a member of the Goddess-worshipping “Darkmoon Circle” (Paxson 114) – uses ‘Mother’ as a synonym for the Goddess throughout her 1983 feminist retelling of the Arthurian legend *The Mists of Avalon*; and self-proclaimed “witch and ... magician” Skye Alexander argues that “the most profound and omnipresent symbol” of the Goddess is that of her as “*Mother* Earth [emphasis added]” (xii, 35). While, as Purkiss notes, the emphasis placed on the Goddess as a mother is, in many ways, positive for female adherents of feminist Witchcraft – as “it celebrates the female body sidelined by the Religions of the Book (Judeo-Christianity and Islam)” – at the same time, argues Purkiss, grounding the identity of the Goddess in the maternal body is problematic, for the image of the mother is not necessarily a positive, appealing, or empowering one for all women of all cultures (33-34). What’s more, Sally Binford argues that, by frequently asserting that the Goddess is a *mother*, feminist Witches “oppress all women and rationalize the status quo” (qtd. in Rountree 61). Binford sees in feminist Witches’ emphasis on the maternal aspect of the Goddess a perpetuation of the essentialist reasoning whereby “women are by nature sensitive, loving, and nurturing, while men are aggressive brutal, and violent”, and she argues that such clichés are far from being helpful – to her mind, they merely encourage women to “dream of and long for a mythic past and waste precious time attempting to document its reality” (qtd. in Rountree 61). The feminist Witchcraft movement as a whole is often represented by critics (such as Binford) as constituting some sort of ‘Golden Age’, utopian project, with the (supposedly) Goddess-worshipping, matriarchal past constituting the utopia that many feminist Witches yearn to return to today (Rountree 61). Utopias are, however, rarely idyllic for all and, while men and women may contribute equally in the society of this “mythic ideal world”, women nevertheless remain associated with motherhood and nurturance in a way that is, many critics argue, ultimately disempowering and unhelpful (Rountree 61). Thus, as a rewriting of the witch, the Goddess is similarly problematic: although she is no healer-midwife – as are the witches of the Disc and the witch of the Burning Times – the Goddess is nevertheless frequently depicted occupying a similarly stereotypically female role. While her persistent portrayal as a mother may be positive for some, this depiction is – ultimately – not an empowering one.

Moreover, as with the witches of the Disc and the Myth-witch of radical feminism, the Goddess is repeatedly associated with nature. Indeed, almost as often as she (the Goddess) is portrayed as a mother, she is allied with the natural world: Margot Adler writes of the

Goddess as “the lady of the wild plants and growing things” (213); for Brooke, the “curved and luscious body” of the Goddess is “the very earth [we] tr[e]d on” (qtd. in Purkiss 33); and, as has already been briefly mentioned, the most pervasive symbol of the Goddess is “Mother Earth herself” (Alexander 35). Consequently, as a result of this now familiar reconstruction of the dualism whereby women are associated with nature and men with culture, the Goddess – like Pratchett’s witches and the witch of the Burning Times – is similarly rendered passive and significantly reduced as a figure.

Although Pratchett, radical feminists, and feminist Witches – in their respective rewritings of the figure of the witch – are attempting to combat or overturn one or more of the various dominant witch stereotypes that exist today, in so doing they seem to have created an entirely new stereotype: that of the witch as a woman with a close association to the natural world who is skilled at healing-midwifery or who occupies some other such caring, nurturing role (such as being a mother). Thus, I shall now go on to detail several other examples of this new stereotype, beginning with the witch Aunty Moss who features in Ursula K. Le Guin’s 1990 Earthsea novel *Tehanu*.

We are first introduced to Moss in Chapter Three of *Tehanu* when she joins Tenar and the other inhabitants of Re Albi, a small village on the island of Gont, in a vigil for their dying mage, Ogion. Moss, we learn from Tenar, is an “ordinary village witch” and, as such, has “a solid experiential training in midwifery, bonesetting, and [the] curing [of] animal and human ailments” (511). Thus, when a seriously injured Ged arrives in Re Albi, it is Aunty Moss whom protagonist Tenar calls for help. Although Moss does not care for Ged alone – Tenar does some of the nursing – ultimately it is the “skilful though appallingly unclean” Moss who, with her meat and herb brew, succeeds in getting Ged back on his feet (531): Moss, Le Guin writes, “spoon[s] life [back] into [Ged]” (533). Alongside nursing Ged, Moss also helps the physically- and mentally-scarred Therru – the young girl raped, beaten, pushed into a campfire, and left for dead in Chapter One – along the road to recovery by taking her on little excursions out “into the fields” of Re Albi and showing her the wonders of the natural world (510). While such an activity clearly associates Moss with nature – she shows Therru where the larks nest and where “to gather white hallows, wild mint, and blueberries” (510) – Moss’ connection to the natural world goes much deeper: indeed, we find out that “[a]ll [Moss’] learning’s in the earth” (529).

Alongside Aunty Moss, Morgaine, one of the principle witch characters of Marion Zimmer Bradley’s *The Mists of Avalon* (1983), is also a prime example of this new stereotype. Although no midwife, as is Aunty Moss (Bradley 289), Morgaine is a skilled healer and, when a spring fever takes hold at Arthur’s court, Morgaine’s knowledge “of herb lore and healing” means that – while many die in the surrounding countryside – there are no deaths at court (496). However, not only is Morgaine “a notable mistress of healing arts” (380), but she also has a close connection to the natural world: Morgaine “kn[o]w[s] every rise and knoll, every path and almost every tree” of Avalon (257) and, save for the few occasions in the novel when Bradley depicts her forsaking her Avalon training, Morgaine is in touch with, and can feel, “the great tides and rhythms of the earth” (459). Thus, while a more positive

stereotype than, say, that of the early modern or fairy tale witch, in feminist terms, the witch as a nurturing woman who is close to nature is not all that much of an improvement: through her association with nature the healer-midwife witch is reduced and rendered passive, and – as a nurturing, caring woman – this new witch type is limited in character to those qualities which are most appealing to patriarchy (Rountree 47).

Fantasy and Fact

At this point – before I go on to examine the witches of Pratchett’s Discworld in more detail – I should, perhaps, clarify a few issues in terms of the texts and narratives that I am moving between for, at first glance, they may seem impossible to reconcile. This is due to the fact that, whereas Pratchett, Le Guin, and Bradley all write fantasy and acknowledge their work as such, feminist Witches and radical feminists set down what they argue is historical truth: for a great number of feminist Witches the Goddess was the “supreme deity” (Rountree 58) of prehistoric Europe (62, 69), while many radical feminists argue that all those women burned (and hanged) in early modern Europe for being Devil-worshipping, child-harming witches were actually executed because they were sexually liberated and skilled at healing (Purkiss 8). Both of these stories are, however, just that: stories. Indeed, according to Kathryn Rountree, most archaeologists agree that there is no evidence that prehistorical Europe was made up of matriarchal and matrifocal societies who worshipped a deity called the Goddess (67) – it is a version of the past that, writes Rountree, was “dreamed up” by feminist Witches (61). As for the Myth of the Burning Times, although it does contain some slight truths, it is, ultimately, a similar product of fantasy and invention. For despite the fact that, as Diane Purkiss notes, “[t]housands of women *were* executed as witches [emphasis added]”; torture *was* used, in various parts of Europe, to get a confession out of them; their gender *did* “often ha[ve] a great deal to do with [their persecution]”; and oftentimes their judges and accusers *were* misogynists, “the women who died [in this period] were not quite like the woman of the story, and they were not killed for quite the same reasons” (7-8). Thus, before I return to examine the witches of the Disc, I shall first set about clarifying what is fantasy, and what fact, in the radical feminists’ Myth of the Burning Times.

Fantasy and Fact in the Myth of the Burning Times

In the Myth of the Burning Times, the central character is a healer and a midwife, and – according to the Myth – this is one of the main reasons behind her eventual destruction: her knowledge of herbs and healing and of how the female body works threatens the (it is implied) *male* doctor, who uses an accusation of witchcraft as a means to remove her, as his main competition, from the community (Purkiss 19). However, while it is true that Kramer and Sprenger’s *Malleus Maleficarum* explicitly singles out “witch midwives” as prime objects for attack – since “[n]o one does more harm to the Catholic Faith than midwives” (pt. 1 question 11) – Purkiss notes that there is “no evidence [to suppose] that the majority of those accused [of witchcraft in Europe in the early modern period] were [in fact] healers and midwives” (8). Indeed, Brian P. Levack writes that these “wise women” (as he terms them) were “generally tolerated by their neighbours” as they “served a useful function in their

communities” and, while he goes on to note that, undoubtedly, some of these women *were* convicted of witchcraft – for their position as healers “made them [especially] vulnerable to the charge that they practised sorcery” – the number is probably not as high as was once believed and is, thus, nowhere near as high as the Myth would have us believe (138-39). What’s more, according to Purkiss, while the Myth paints them solely as victims, many midwives actually aided their supposed persecutors during the craze: midwives often searched for witchmarks on the bodies of victims (21) – blemishes on which trials of witchcraft often turned (246) – and were consulted when it was necessary to “determin[e] whether a convicted woman was pregnant [or not]”, and whether she “might thus be granted a stay of execution” (21).

However, not only is it highly doubtful that every woman killed as a witch in the early modern period was either a healer or a midwife, but there is also little evidence to suggest that the majority of these women were sexually liberated in some way (Purkiss 8). Indeed, Purkiss writes that “evidence that convicted witches were invariably unmarried or ... lesbian” is thin on the ground, and she goes on to note that, in fact, “many (though not most) of those accused were married women with young families” (8). Thus, the claim of the Myth that sexual “independence and freedom” was a major factor in convicting a woman of witchcraft also seems highly unlikely (Purkiss 7); even more so when Levack’s argument – that any widowed or unmarried woman who did end up being convicted of witchcraft was accused not because she lacked a husband, but because she was poor – is taken into account (147). Indeed, according to Levack, it was the economic, and not marital, status of these women that was far more significant in terms of their being suspected of witchcraft (148), and he writes that the

general comments made by authors of witchcraft treatises, the allegations that witches made pacts with the Devil in exchange for very little material gain, the motives attributed to witches for taking action against their neighbours, and the mere fact that so many witches were unattached women of no apparent social distinction all point to this conclusion. (149)

Alongside economic status, gender was also a significant factor with regard to witchcraft allegations – only in Russia and Estonia did men constitute the majority of those accused of the crime (Levack 135); however, while the Myth suggests that this was due to the fact that men held a monopoly on allegations of witchcraft, Purkiss argues that this was not so (8). According to Purkiss, “many, perhaps even most, witches were accused by women”, and the majority of witchcraft cases “depend[ed,] at least partly[,] on the evidence given by women witnesses” (8) since (unsurprisingly, given that they make up the vast majority of those accused) women were “thought to have better insight into the crimes of witchcraft” than their male counterparts (Spoto 56). However, not only did women accuse and give evidence against their own sex, but their involvement in witchcraft trials actually increased over the years: “their percentages grew from 38%, during the final years of Elizabeth’s reign, to 53% during the Restoration” (Spoto 56). Thus, “the idea that witch-prosecutions reflected a war between the sexes [as suggested in the Myth of the Burning Times] must [also] be

discounted”, since “victims and witnesses [of witchcraft] were themselves as likely to be women as men” (Holmes qtd. in Spoto 55).

Another falsity contained within the Myth surrounds the implied severity of the Inquisition. For, writes Purkiss, excluding the “few areas where the local inquisitor was especially zealous”, the Inquisition “was [in fact far] more lenient about witchcraft cases than the secular courts” (8). In Spain, for example, a country in which the Inquisition was very strong, very few people were executed for witchcraft (Purkiss 8), and the country is not even awarded a place on Levack’s table illustrating regional rates of executions in witchcraft trials (23). Not only was the Inquisition more lenient, but P. G. Maxwell-Stuart writes that “a suspect witch ... coming before a tribunal of the Inquisition was quite likely to receive a *fairer* hearing than in many other courts [emphasis added]” (75). According to Maxwell-Stuart, this was because “the Holy Office instituted[,] and did its best to maintain[,] strict guidelines for the trials of witches ... and [other] workers of harmful magic”: inquisitors were primarily interested whether the charges brought against a person for using witchcraft involved heresy and, “[i]f they did not, the inquisitors were more than likely to treat the magical content of the accusations as evidence of the defendant’s silliness or ignorance, and dismiss her or him with an explanation of why these magical acts were undesirable, and a warning not to repeat them” (75). Such was the comparative leniency shown by the Inquisition in cases of witchcraft that, “in the mid-seventeenth century, secular courts were complaining that the Holy Office was far too lax in prosecuting witches” and, consequently, began “seeking to extend their own, far more severe[,] jurisdiction over such matters” (Maxwell-Stuart 76). Thus, in contrast to what is implied in the Myth of the Burning Times, the Inquisition actually acted as something of a “brake” for “popular ... demands for greater severity” with regard to prosecuting and punishing witches (Maxwell-Stuart 76). (It is also a fact that, contrary to what is asserted in the Myth, not all convicted witches were burned at the stake – “in England, witches were hanged” [Purkiss 8]).

Finally, as for the claim contained within the Myth that *millions* of women were executed for witchcraft, again, historical evidence suggests otherwise. Although Xavière Gauthier upholds the Myth, asserting that some “eight million [witches were burned over the course of] ... two centuries” in Europe (201), Purkiss writes that “there is little actual evidence for such figures” (17). Indeed, Levack’s research into early modern European witch-hunting leads him to believe that – taking into account and making allowances for “trial records that have been lost or destroyed” (22) – “[a] total of approximately 110,000 witchcraft prosecutions and 60,000 executions” is far more realistic (25). While these totals are considerably lower than those suggested by the Myth, Levack makes a point of emphasising that his estimates “still represent a grim reality, especially ... keep[ing] in mind that most witches were either tried for crimes they did not commit[,] or for crimes that were greatly exaggerated” (25). As an added caveat, Levack notes that his figures also “do not convey the full dimensions or the intensity” of the time: “[t]he number of persons brought to trial does not, for example, reveal how many people lived [in terror] under suspicion of witchcraft”, or the number of those who “became the object of informal accusations” and, consequently, suffered “social ostracism and continued suspicion [even] after the hunt ended” (25).

Thus, although I may seem to have been moving between wildly disparate historical and fictional texts, all the works that I have so far, and will continue to, discuss have been entirely fantastical (save for the few small grains of truth in the Myth of the Burning Times). Feminist Witches' account of prehistoric Europe as a group of matriarchal, Goddess-worshipping societies is merely the result of wishful thinking on their part (Rountree 67), while the Myth of the Burning Times is another example of the way in which – as I mentioned previously in relation to Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* – a collection of facts can become almost indistinguishable from fiction. For while the Myth of the Burning Times does contain the odd fact, these have been so coloured by the narrative which surrounds them as to be all but indistinguishable from the fiction; indeed, read as a whole, the Myth is fantastical, not factual. Thus, with the thread of fantasy connecting all these texts, I shall continue on in my discussion of the witch characters contained therein, beginning, once again, with Pratchett's Discworld witch sub-series. For although the witches that Pratchett depicts might seem to be little better (in terms of their constituting a rewriting of the witch) than the witch-victim of the Burning Times or the figure of the Goddess, this is not, in fact, the case.

The Witches of the Disc: A Successful Rewriting

While Pratchett seemingly reduces the witches of the Disc as characters and magic practitioners by associating both them as women and the magic that they work with nature, Pratchett inverts our expectations by showing the witches' earth-based magic to be more powerful than the cultural variety performed by the wizards. Indeed, it is Granny Weatherwax, not Archchancellor Cutangle, whom Pratchett implies would have won the duel that takes place between the two characters – who simultaneously agree to stop mid-fight and call it a draw – in *Equal Rights*. Pratchett makes this clear through the way that that not only does Cutangle “ha[ve] a nasty feeling that [if the duel had gone on for much longer] Granny would have won” (*ER* 241), but where Granny seems to feel no ill effects following their clash, Cutangle is “drained” and his hands shake as he assembles himself a cigarette (242). Similarly, in *Lords and Ladies*, whereas the wizards are completely incapacitated by the glamour that the Queen of the Elves places over all those who gaze upon her, Pratchett depicts the combined forces of Granny and Magrat as constituting enough power to overcome the enchantment (the two witches also being the ones who, with a little help from the Elf King, but absolutely none from the wizards, go on to defeat the Queen). While the wizards are shown to be capable of performing some high-quality magic – Pratchett depicts them summoning and questioning Death in *The Light Fantastic* (1986) – it is a witch (specifically, Granny Weatherwax) whom Pratchett portrays as having the power to go one step further: in *Maskerade*, Granny actually bargains with, and cheats Death out of, a life (all whilst managing to keep her own).

However, not only does Pratchett rewrite the figure of the witch – through his Discworld witch characters – as a magically powerful woman, but also as a hero. Indeed, in every Discworld novel in which they appear, the witches save the day. In *Equal Rites*, Granny and her apprentice Esk keep the Disc safe from the creatures of the Dungeon Dimensions; in *Wyrd Sisters* and *Witches Abroad*, Granny, Nanny, and Magrat overthrow tyrannical rulers; the same trio, in *Lords and Ladies*, succeed in preventing an elf invasion; *Maskerade* sees

Granny and Nanny catching a murderer and bringing him to justice; in *Carpe Jugulum*, Granny, Nanny, Magrat, and new witch Agnes Nitt defeat the family of vampires who intend to seize control of Lancre and terrorize the people who live there; and all the witches of the Disc – including Nanny, Magrat, and Agnes – are instrumental in the ultimate defeat of the elves that takes place in *The Shepherd's Crown*. Even nine-year-old witch Tiffany Aching is a hero and – before successfully rescuing both her brother, Wentworth, and the Baron's son, Roland, in *The Wee Free Men* – she battles and defeats (with some help from the Nac Mac Feegle) the “water-dwelling monster” Jenny Green-Teeth (29), a headless horseman, “[d]ogs with eyes of flame and teeth of razors” called grimhounds (117), dromes (dream-creatures), and the Queen of the Fairies herself. In later books Tiffany is similarly heroic and, aged eleven, she manages to defeat a hiver (a demon which “collects people” and “[t]ries to add them to itself” [HFS 242]); when thirteen she puts the Wintersmith (winter personified) back in his rightful place within the cycle of the seasons; and, a few years later, she succeeds (albeit only temporarily) in ridding the Discworld of the Cunning Man (a being who returns to the Disc every few centuries – his return stimulating a period of intense witch persecution). Neither eternal victims (like the witch of the Burning Times Myth) nor inherently evil (like the crone of fairy tale fame) (Sillanpää 18), Pratchett's witches regularly place themselves in danger to right wrongs, protect those less powerful than themselves, and keep the land that they love safe from harm.

While they may be heroes, Pratchett presents his witches as heroes who exercise their vast powers *responsibly*. Whereas their male counterparts the wizards “use magic without any control”, the witches of the Disc are sparing and careful in their usage (Sillanpää 62): they “find the ... point where a little change[s] ma[k]e[s] a lot of result” (“SF” 133). Thus, where the wizards would – if an avalanche was required – set about “shak[ing] the [whole] mountain” to get the snow moving, the witches' approach would be to “find exactly the right place to [magically produce and] drop a [single] snowflake” (“SF” 133). Since magic is “hard work[,] ... difficult to control” (WFM 35), and its use attracts the attention of the creatures from the Dungeon Dimensions (who will then use the person wielding the magic to try and break through into the real world) (ER 153), “[w]itches don't use magic unless they really have to” (WFM 35). In this, the witches of the Disc are much like the wizards of Le Guin's Earthsea, for, just as the witches know that there are consequences to working magic and so try and use as little as possible, so are all “true” Earthsea wizards aware that there is a “Balance and ... [a] Pattern” underlying magical acts which they must keep intact (*Wizard of Earthsea* 16-17): hence, Earthsea wizards and Discworld witches use magic only as a last resort. However, not only are the witches that Pratchett depicts in his Discworld series magically responsible in terms of using their powers prudently, but also in the way that they refrain from using magic for personal gain. In contrast to the wizards – who, in *Lords and Ladies*, conjure up 8,000 Ankh-Morpork dollars to pay for their gambling debts (114) – the witches do not use magic to give themselves an edge in life: even on a cold winter's evening they use matches, not magic, to light the fires in their homes (ER 42).

Alongside their responsible use of magic, Pratchett depicts the vast majority of his witch characters (in particular Granny Weatherwax) as highly moral women. The Disc's witches

have various central tenets – including giving those who ask for help what they need rather than want (WA 260), and never treating people as things (SWM 219) – and stick to them absolutely. However, not only are the Disc’s witches “unbending in their principles” (Lewis), but they also “consistently mak[e] correct choices, even in difficult situations and [sometimes] at great personal cost” (Noone 30). When, for example, in *Carpe Jugulum*, Granny has to choose between saving the life of Mrs Ivy (who has been kicked in the stomach by a cow) or her as yet unborn child, Pratchett shows Granny choosing to save Mrs Ivy and – although in this situation there is no right or wrong, and no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing to do – Granny’s choice comes across as being the lesser of the two evils (35-36). Granny knows how difficult it would be for Mr Ivy to work the steep lands of the Ramtops on his own, and how tough it would be for him to care for a new-born whilst stricken with grief, and so chooses the way she does (35-36). Indeed, being a witch on the Disc is all about “stand[ing] right on the edge, where the decisions ha[ve] to be made” and, while the witches of the Disc thus take away some of the choice and free will of those around them and, effectively, play God from time to time, all the decisions that the witches make are done out of kindness and with the best of intentions (48). As Granny tells Mrs Patternoster – the midwife who admonishes her (Granny) for not letting Mr Ivy choose who to save – “what’s he [Mr Ivy] ever done to *me*, that I should hurt him so?” (37).

The care that Pratchett depicts the witches of the Disc taking of the men, women, and children of their respective steadings functions to ground these (at times almost impossibly) brave, strong, superhero-esque characters (a stading being the area “that a witch thought of as her own, and for whose people she did what was needful” [SWM 3]). However, in addition to rendering his witch characters far more human, relatable, and likeable than they might otherwise have been, through emphasizing the way that the witches of the Disc provide a service of care to their communities, Pratchett equates his witches with modern-day district doctors and nurses (Boulding par.10). Indeed, at “the root and heart and soul and centre of witchcraft” is not the fight against evil, but a deep-seated concern for the well-being of others (HFS 250): being a witch is all about “helpin’ people when life is on the edge” (251) and, hence, the witches of the Disc spend the majority of their days paying house calls or, what they term, “going round the houses” (SWM 37). On their rounds, the witches of the Disc “[g]rasp for them as can’t bend, reach for them as can’t stretch, [and] wipe for them as can’t twist”, not to mention also “[f]eed[ing] them as is hungry, cloth[ing] them as is naked, and speak[ing] up for them as has no voice” (SWM 34). For Discworld witches, “giving an old lady a bath, ... look[ing] in on a woman who’s just had a baby, ... and [patching up] a man with a very nasty leg injury” constitute acts of witchcraft every bit as important as preventing an elf invasion or defeating a whole family of bloodthirsty vampires (W 229). Without the witches “going round the houses” (SWM 37), Lancre, the Ramtops, the Chalk, and the other rural communities of the Disc “would [very soon] cease to function” as, for many of the characters we meet over the course of the witch sub-series, the house calls that the witches make are a real lifeline (Boulding par. 10).

While Pratchett depicts his witches as rather domestic women, in terms of the tasks they carry out and the way they perform much of their magic (Sayer 84), at the same time, he has them

being heavily involved in politics. Indeed, despite the fact that the witches spend much of their time “practic[ing] ... traditional domestic mysteries” (such as butter- and cheese-making) (Croft, “Education of a Witch” 133), and although much of the witches’ magic is domestic (in the sense that they typically use “ordinary household objects” to work their spells rather than fancy runic knives and other such paraphernalia) (Sayer 84), Pratchett’s witches are nevertheless highly political beings: not only is Granny a midwife, gardener, and herbalist, but she is also a king- and queen-maker – she installs the fool Verence on the Lancre throne in *Wyrd Sisters*, and goes on to do the same for servant-girl Emberella in Genua in *Witches Abroad* (Sayer 93). Nanny too wields considerable political power; although, as Karen Sayer notes, “[Nanny’s] is not so much the power to ‘rule over’ as the power to rule with, the power of solidarity” (94). As a result of her large extended family – Nanny has “a [vast] tribe of children and grandchildren all over the kingdom [of Lancre]” (WS 39) – Nanny can assemble a mob in a matter of hours and sway whichever laws and policies she deems unfair (or as non-beneficial to her and her offspring). In *Carpe Jugulum*, for example, we learn that it was the scumble-making Nanny Ogg (scumble being the Discworld’s version of applejack) who was behind the crowd which formed to (successfully) protest King Verence’s plan to introduce a “tax on liquor exports” (rather than the protest being indicative of “the will of the people” as a whole) (208-09). However, while Granny and Nanny have considerable political influence in Lancre and out and about on the Ramtops, down on the Chalk it is Tiffany who holds sway: just as her Granny (Granny Aching) used to have the ear of the Baron and would tell him when he was “being a bloody fool”, so Tiffany advises the Baron’s son, Roland (*SWM* 76).

Thus, although Pratchett seemingly reduces the witches of the Disc as characters and magic practitioners by depicting them as healer-midwives with a close connection to the natural world, Pratchett subverts our expectations by simultaneously portraying his witch characters as powerful, heroic women. While Pratchett writes into being witches for whom the art or practice of witchcraft “is mostly about doing quite ordinary things” (*HFS* 115) – and who go “round the houses” and care for those they find there in much the same way as would a doctor or district nurse (*SWM* 37) – the witches of the Disc are nevertheless capable of exceedingly powerful magic and are quite willing to step up and do heroic battle with whatever creature (supernatural or otherwise) is threatening them, their people, country, and/or way of life. As such, Pratchett’s witches constitute a successful, feminist rewriting: the witches of the Disc are empowered women with considerable sway in their local communities who live well and are able to make a great deal of difference to the lives of those around them. Pratchett’s witches are, thus, a far cry from the witches of the rewritings I outlined earlier, for although the witch of the Burning Times, the Goddess, and characters such as Aunty Moss, Tenar, and Therru from Le Guin’s *Tehanu* and Morgaine who features in Bradley’s *The Mists of Avalon* occupy similar roles (in terms of being carers and healers), and while they are similarly associated with nature, these witches are no such strong, empowered heroes – as I shall now go on to outline.

There Are No Heroes Here

In Ursula K. Le Guin's *Tehanu*, for example, although the witch Aunty Moss has power enough to heal Ged and help Therru along the road to recovery, she (Moss) comes unstuck when faced with the misogynistic wizard, Aspen, who curses her and makes her flesh rot and shrivel (686). Where Granny, Nanny, and Magrat would have made short work of the wizard, Le Guin portrays Moss as being unable to reverse the curse or alleviate its effects in any way: Moss simply retreats to her hovel and waits for death (686). Moss is, however, not the only witch in the tale. Indeed, Le Guin reveals that both Tenar and Therru have the capacity to perform magic: we learn from Ged that Tenar "shone" with power in the dark Labyrinth at Atuan, and every single worker of magic who meets Therru tells Tenar that the young girl has a power beyond anything they have ever seen before (*Tehanu* 559). Although both Tenar and Therru are gifted magically, when the duo return to Re Albi, Tenar falls completely under the influence of Aspen's obedience spell and neither she nor Therru are able to do anything about it (681). Only with the arrival of the dragon Kalessin is the situation happily resolved – without Kalessin, Tenar would have jumped to her death, followed shortly by Ged; Aunty Moss, no longer useful to Aspen as bait, would have been finished off; and Therru would have been left without a home and with no one to care for her. Thus, in stark contrast to the situation on the Disc, none of the witches in Le Guin's *Tehanu* could be described as being heroic, empowered women. Although Therru is able to resist Aspen's spell and (as it turns out) is the one who summons Kalessin (thereby bringing about the happy ending to the tale), Therru does not have the power to take on the wizard herself and her summoning of the dragon Kalessin (who is in fact related to her) is, thus, little more than a desperate cry for help (685-89). Whereas the witches of Pratchett's Discworld save themselves and those around them through their own actions, Tenar, Therru, and Aunty Moss end up being "saved by a dragon *ex machina*" (McLean 115).

Alongside the Earthsea witches, the witches of Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* also lack the heroic, empowered nature of the Discworld witches. Although Viviane, Morgaine, and Morgause – the three main witch characters of the novel – are powerful and able to see (from time to time) future happenings, they are unable to alter these events and make what they wish come to pass: Viviane and Morgaine are not able to prevent Avalon from drifting off into the mists, and Morgause fails in her efforts to put one of her sons on the throne. What's more, as a result of their various attempts to alter the future, not one of these three central witch characters could be considered a hero – all three ruin lives with their respective plotting and scheming. Viviane, for example, breaks up the peaceably (if not happily) wedded Gorlois and Igraine, and causes Morgaine a great deal of pain and shame by making her take part in the Great Marriage with her brother, Arthur; Morgause ensures that Morgaine is not able to bond with her son, prevents Gwenhwyfar from conceiving a child by Arthur, and covers up Gydion's murder of Niniane; and Morgaine – although she determines never to end up like Viviane – is similarly cruel and plays with people's lives, as well as causing (albeit indirectly) the deaths of Avalloch, Accolon, Kevin, and Nimue.

As for the witches of the other two rewritings, the central character of the Myth of the Burning Times is similarly far from being an empowered, powerful hero. Although, in the

Myth, radical feminists free the witch from her dalliances with the Devil, quell her sexual appetite, and show her doing good (in that she is presented as a midwife and a healer) rather than harm, they also portray their witch as an eternally oppressed victim: the Myth offers no sense that things might change one day in the future with regard to female oppression, and no sense that the witch might have been able to escape her persecution (Purkiss 17-18). Every time the Myth is retold, the central character is accused, tortured and, eventually, destroyed – nothing changes, and there is no way out. Whereas, in Pratchett’s rewriting, his witches are heroes and always succeed in vanquishing their enemies, in the Myth of the Burning Times, “women a[re] nothing but the helpless victims of patriarchy, and the female body [i]s nothing but a site of torture and death” (Purkiss 17). Although written into being by radical feminists in the 1970s, the witch of the Burning Times does not constitute a successful feminist rewriting.

In addition, although the Goddess is a divine being, she too is too closely associated with motherhood to be considered an empowering new witch type. Indeed, despite Rountree’s argument that the maternal role does not necessarily mean “a patriarchal construction of maternity with its inferior status” (63), grounding the Goddess’ identity in her aspect as a mother is nevertheless essentialist and unhelpful: as a mother, the Goddess is a nurturing, caring, benign being and is thus, according to Purkiss, merely “a male fantasy about what femininity should be” (40). Moreover, writes Purkiss, not only does depicting the Goddess in this way encourage a “repression of characteristics traditionally considered unfeminine in patriarchy – anger, hate, aggression, desire for sex or money [emphasis removed]” – but “it also offers women no way to understand or deal with situations other than pacifically, which often means passively” (48). Like the witch of the Burning Times, the Goddess as written into being by feminist Witches falls short of being an empowering, feminist rewriting of the figure of the witch.

However, neither of these last two witches should be completely written off, for whereas Pratchett’s witches are powerful, empowered characters in and of themselves, the Myth-witch and the Goddess encourage and empower action in the real world. The witch of the Burning Times, for example, is successful as a means of persuading others to adhere to radical feminism (Purkiss 8), a form of feminist “thinking and action which maintains that the sex/gender system is the fundamental cause of women’s oppression” (Tong 419). As for how this witch manages to be so persuasive a figure, a closer look must be taken at the narrative which surrounds her. That narrative, the Myth of the Burning Times, was invented by radical feminists at a time when the feminist movement (as a whole) began to foreground sexual and domestic violence as representative of the crimes committed against their sex (Purkiss 15). Instead of public-sphere issues such as pay differentials and legal asymmetries – as had previously been the case – the women’s movement decided that “[r]ape, sexual violence, pornography, wife-battering and (eventually) child sexual abuse” should be “the central signifiers of patriarchy”: “[s]exuality was to be identified as the site of women’s oppression in the sense that property was for Marx the site of class oppression” (Purkiss 15). Thus, with sexuality at the fore, many radical feminist writers (such as Mary Daly and Andrea Dworkin) began to use the figure of the early modern witch – the woman whose inherently carnal

nature had led her to make a pact with the Devil and who, as a result, had been brutally killed – in their work as a stand-in “for the suffering woman-victim of pornography and rape” (Purkiss 15). However, so that she (the early modern witch) could “become a synecdoche of female victims of sexualised violence”, a few alterations had to be made to the stereotype and, thus, the witch of the Burning Times – the sensual, innocent, peaceful woman who is accused by, and who suffers at the hands of, two intensely misogynistic, male-dominated institutions – came into being (Purkiss 15). Although, as has been previously noted, much of the story in which this witch figure is embedded is false, the Myth of the Burning Times nevertheless continues to be believed and told for, just as the Holocaust makes it impossible to “deny the ... existence of racism and ethnocentrism”, so does the Burning Times Myth – with its inflated figures – make it impossible to deny the centuries of female oppression: with deaths in the millions, the Burning Times becomes an act of genocide (or ‘gynocide’) comparable in magnitude to that of the Holocaust and, hence, difficult to oppose or dismiss (Purkiss 15-16). Thus, the witch of the Burning Times should not simply be discarded or ignored as a figure, for the Myth-witch and the narrative in which she is contained are “crucial to the [radical feminist movement’s] effort to make men[,] and especially women[,] believe in women’s oppression” and, hence, to persuade them to join in the struggle against patriarchy (Purkiss 15).

The Goddess also inspires activism; however, where the Myth and the central witch character of the Myth function as a call to arms to join the fight to end female oppression, the Goddess motivates her followers to care for the planet. This is because, in the minds of feminist Witches, not only does the Goddess have a close connection to nature, but she is, in fact, “embodied in the earth and *all* earth life [emphasis added]” (Klassen 175): for these men and women the Goddess is the dandelion in their back-garden, the bottle-nosed dolphin they glimpse out to sea whilst on holiday, and everyone they meet as they go about their day to day business. Hence, since the body of the Goddess is “everything from rocks and trees to animals and human beings”, feminist Witches believe that the natural world “is sacred and must be treated as such” and, consequently, often become actively involved in the environmental movement (Klassen 175). Indeed, according to Chris Klassen, ecological responsibility is “integrally connected to [many feminist Witches’] religious identity” and, even when followers of the movement do not become environmental activists, they nevertheless tend to have an above average respect for the natural world (176). (Feminist Witchcraft is, in fact, essentially an ecofeminist mythology – ecofeminism being a distinct form of feminism which “insist[s] that nonhuman nature ... and the domination of nature are feminist issues” [Plumwood 151] – with the movement boasting, as one of its most well-known followers, the American Witch, activist, and eco-feminist Starhawk [1951-] [Berger and Ezzy 28].)

Thus, although the witch of the Burning Times and the Goddess inspire activism – with the former motivating men and women to work towards radical feminist goals – the characters, as with the witches of the other two rewritings discussed above, nevertheless fall short of being the empowered, powerful heroes that are the witches of the Disc. More than that, whereas Pratchett’s witches are able to flourish and are “overwhelmingly respected,

successful, and happy characters” (Sinclair 18), such could not be said of the witches of the other rewritings: the witch of the Burning Times is stuck in a cycle of destruction; the Goddess is rarely seen as anything other than a nurturing mother; all the plans of Bradley’s witch characters come to naught; and, were it not for the arrival of the dragon Kalessin, *Tehanu* would have ended in tragedy. Indeed, it is only Pratchett’s rewriting of the figure of the witch in his Discworld witch sub-series of fantasy novels which could be said to be wholly successful: although they may not inspire activism, Pratchett’s witch characters are powerful and heroic, yet simultaneously caring and grounded, women who live good lives and are able to make a positive difference to the lives of others. The witches of the Disc are, thus, a very “different kind of witch” (WA 157).

CONCLUSION

“Granny had never had much time for words. They were so insubstantial. Now she wished that she had found the time. Words were indeed insubstantial. They were as soft as water, but they were also as powerful as water ...” (311)

– Terry Pratchett, *Wyrd Sisters*

Over the past three chapters I have outlined what I consider to be the dominant stereotypes of the witch alongside various attempts that have been made at rewriting her. My main focus, however, has been the rewriting carried out by Sir Terry Pratchett in his Discworld witch sub-series of fantasy novels and, indeed, it is Pratchett’s rewriting – I argue, which constitutes the most successful of all those that I have examined. Although the witches of the Disc may initially appear to align with certain dominant witch stereotypes, over the course of his Discworld witch sub-series Pratchett continually overturns or rejects these stereotypes and, in so doing, writes into being a new type of witch: Pratchett’s witches are powerful, heroic, moral, grounded, and caring women who do a great deal of good work for the (mainly) rural communities in which they live. Since Pratchett’s witches are, thus, empowered women who live good, fulfilling lives, I argue that Pratchett’s rewriting of the figure of the witch in fact constitutes a successful *feminist* rewriting: Pratchett’s witches have all that they need in order to flourish as members of their various communities and, generally, command a great deal of respect wherever they go (Sinclair 18).

While Pratchett’s Discworld witch characters thus constitute a successful feminist rewriting of the figure of the witch, Pratchett’s fantasy series contains another type of magical practitioner: wizards. Indeed, the Disc is home to witches *and* wizards, and Pratchett – while he works hard to empower the witches – seems content to reduce his wizards as characters, something which seems at odds with the position he outlines in his 1985 talk entitled “Why Gandalf Never Married”. In this talk – a transcript of which was the starting point for this thesis – Pratchett expresses concern for the unequal way in which male and female magic practitioners are typically represented in fantasy: witches, says Pratchett, are usually “evil” and “bad-tempered” (96) women whose magic is “cheap and nasty” (94), “third-rate, negative stuff”, while wizards tend to be “cerebral, clever, powerful, and wise” men who (when compared with that performed by fantasy witches) work “a better class of magic” (92). When pondering why such a difference exists, Pratchett notes that most people will “take the view that of course this is the case, because if there is a dirty end of the stick then women will get it”: since women are often regarded as being “the second sex”, it is hardly surprising, therefore, that the magic performed by women in fantasy should be inferior to that performed by men (95-96). For Pratchett, however, “[t]he sex of the magic practitioner doesn’t really enter into it”; indeed, according to Pratchett, this inconsistency of representation is rather due to the fact that the stereotypical fantasy wizard “represents the ideal of magic – everything we hope we would be, if we had the power” – whereas the stereotypical fantasy witch “is everything we fear only too well that we would in fact become” (96). Although Pratchett posits that it will be a long time before witches and wizards achieve “equal rites [sic]” in the consensus fantasy universe in terms of how they are portrayed (96), Pratchett nevertheless attempts to lead the way: the witch characters of his fantasy universe are caring, heroic,

empowered women on whom a great many people rely and without whom a great many people would suffer. While we may thus have expected Pratchett to portray the male wizard characters of his Discworld series in a similar, positive, manner, this does not happen. Although Pratchett empowers his witches and endows them with admirable qualities, Pratchett presents his male wizard characters in a less than flattering light. Not only that, but the new type of witch that Pratchett writes into being leaves little space for the wizards – the witches of the Disc render the wizards surplus to requirements.

In contrast to the witches of the Disc – whom Pratchett describes as heroic, caring, and responsible women – the Discworld wizards are lazy, gluttonous, and irresponsible men. Indeed, where the witches spend their days going round the houses of their respective steadings, helping those they find there, the wizards merely wile away the hours of each day within the walls of the Unseen University. While this does not necessarily mean that the wizards are lazy – the wizards could be spending all their days indoors because they are busy teaching, researching, and conducting experiments – all the wizards do, in actuality, is “sleep[ing], eat[ing] and wait[ing] for the next meal” (Hill 56). Although we do occasionally see the wizards venturing beyond the walls of the university, the reason for their departure is usually revealed by Pratchett to be a selfish one: in *Unseen Academicals* (2009), for example, we learn that the wizards leave the Unseen University merely to watch, and eventually play in, a game of football. While the wizards would never normally do something so strenuous – they find it tough enough trying to be awake in time for lunch (*LL* 44) – their participation in at least one match is the condition of a particularly large bequest to the university, a bequest without which the wizards would be reduced to having only three meals a day and only three options of cheeses on their daily cheese-board (which, as the Lecturer in Recent Runes informs his colleagues, is not so much a choice as a penance) (*UA* 59).

The only task, other than eating or sleeping or meditating on food, a Discworld wizard may put some time and effort into is figuring out a way to be promoted (Hill 56). Promotion, in the wizarding world, is a dangerous business: the only way to move up the ranks is to get rid of the wizard just above you. Although it is a practice that, ironically, has all but died out by the time the events of *The Last Continent* take place, in the early days of the university wizards frequently used magic in a bid to assassinate one another and, if they were successful, move one step further up the ladder towards the position of Archchancellor: in those days “trick floorboards and exploding wallpaper” were all the rage (28-29). Thus, in addition to being lazy gluttons (and, quite possibly, mass murderers), the wizards of the Unseen University are irresponsible users of magic. Whereas the witches of the Disc use magic to help those around them, magic, for the wizards, is merely a quick and easy means of getting what they want: in *Lords and Ladies*, as I have already mentioned, the wizards use magic to pay for their gambling debts (114), while in *Unseen Academicals* we learn that the Archchancellor has used magic to make his surroundings more convivial (the Archchancellor, who is a keen hunter and fisherman, has magically constructed “half a mile of trout stream in his bathroom”) (33). The wizards – in contrast to the magically responsible and altruistic witches – use magic irresponsibly and selfishly.

While the wizards of the Disc are, thus, lazy, irresponsible gluttons, it is clear that they have become so because – with the new type of witch that Pratchett writes into being – there is little else left for them to do: the witches have taken all the roles that the wizards could usefully fill. Where the wizards might have been able to use their magical abilities to bring some relief to those in pain, the witches have the monopoly on healing and caring out in the rural areas of the Disc and, as we learn in *I Shall Wear Midnight*, the Discworld is even home to a number of city witches and so it is likely that – where witches like Granny care for those in the country – witches such as Mrs Proust have the city covered (in terms of providing medical assistance to the populace). Similarly, where the wizards might have been able to act in some political, advisory capacity to Disc royalty, since Granny and Magrat have King Verence of Lancre firmly under their thumb, and Tiffany has the ear of Baron Roland, Pratchett suggests that this role, too, is well and truly taken. Although, in *Unseen Academicals*, we learn that the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork – Lord Vetinari – has regular meetings with the Archchancellor of Unseen University (74), Vetinari is a dictator in all but name and, hence, the only advice he takes is his own – even the formidable Granny Weatherwax would have a hard time trying to advise him. As for magical experimentation, although the wizards have all the resources at their fingertips to be the Disc’s leaders in this area, again, the witches appear to have taken over this role: the only useful thing to have come out of the wizards’ ‘research’ at the Unseen University is the computer, Hex, while the work of research witch Miss Tick alone occupies the space of many rows of shelves (SC 112). Indeed, whereas the witches carry out so many vital tasks that there would be a great hue and cry if they were to suddenly vanish off the face of the Disc – not to mention a great deal of suffering – few would so much as bat an eyelid were the wizards and the Unseen University to disappear overnight.

What’s more, Pratchett even goes so far as to suggest that, of the two types of magic practitioner, it is the witches who are the only ones to use magic correctly, for, whereas the wizards appear tired after having performed an act of magic, the witches feel no ill side-effects. We see this most clearly following the duel of then-Archchancellor Cutangle and Granny Weatherwax in *Equal Rites* (when Cutangle’s hands shake but Granny is completely unaffected) (242), but there is further evidence for this fact in *Lords and Ladies* when Archchancellor Ridcully magically transports himself and Granny away from the party at Lancre Castle to Lancre Bridge: Ridcully is unable to transport Granny back straight away (223) and, even after having had a long, restful conversation with Granny, says that the most magic he would be able to manage is a meagre fireball (268). Witches, however, feel no side effects: the blind Miss Treason has, for over fifty years, used magic to see – Borrowing the eyes of animals and “reading what they saw right out of their minds” – and, having gone deaf fifteen years later, has had to spend the last thirty-six years of her life not only Borrowing in order to be able to see, but also to hear (W 38-39). As for the side effects of using so much magic – Miss Treason feels none. While some witches may, after Borrowing for a long time, try and act like the creature they have just Borrowed (Granny Weatherwax, for example, returns from Borrowing a crow only to try and glide down the stairs in her cottage [ER 37]), they are nevertheless capable of performing consecutive (and even continuous) acts of magic – they do not get tired, like the wizards.

Thus, while Pratchett successfully rewrites the figure of the witch in his Discworld fantasy series, he seems to do so at the expense of his male wizard characters. Not only does Pratchett depict the wizards of the Disc in an unflattering light as lazy, gluttonous academics, but he also leaves them very little space to participate in, and live well on, the Disc. Moreover, whereas Pratchett's Discworld series ends with the wizards cooped up inside the Unseen University, barely contributing to Disc society, by the time the events of *The Shepherd's Crown* (the final Discworld novel) draw to a close, the Discworld is well on the way to getting its first male witch: Pratchett contains the wizards, but sets about extending the boundaries of what it means to be a witch. Although Pratchett tried, earlier on in the series, to do something similar – he attempted, in *Equal Rites*, to create a female wizard – the attempt was a tentative one and not a success. Eskarina Smith (the supposed female wizard) may have been given a wizard's staff and allowed inside the Unseen University, but Pratchett shows the staff having been gifted to Esk in error and Esk only managing to gain entrance to the university as a cleaner – she is never actually formally accepted to study there. Moreover, twenty-three years after the events of *Equal Rites* we learn that “[she, Esk,] never really felt like a wizard” (SWM 201) and, despite Archchancellor Cutangle's promise to allow women into the university in the future – they will be allowed “[o]nce we get the plumbing sorted out”, says the Archchancellor (ER 281) – in subsequent Discworld novels (such as *Unseen Academicals*) the only women at the university are cooks and cleaners.

With Esk's counterpart, Geoffrey, however, Pratchett *is* successful. Indeed, whereas there was always a hint that nothing was going to change at the end of *Equal Rites* – for plumbing has often “been cited as a reason why equal opportunities, though theoretically desirable, may have to be delayed in practice” (Hill 55) – such is far from being the case by the time the events of *The Shepherd's Crown* draw to a close. Although Esk was always in two minds about being a wizard and “would fight to the death for witchcraft” if she heard anyone insult it, but “long[ed] for the cutting magic of wizardry” whenever witchcraft was discussed (ER 152), Geoffrey “really feel[s he] can be a witch” and, indeed, he is naturally talented at it (SC 148). Not only is Geoffrey good with people and “[c]rying babies begin to gurgle . . . , grown-ups stop[p]ed arguing, and . . . mothers bec[o]me more peaceful” when he is around, but he also has a way with animals: “young heifer[s] stand for him, rather than skitter off in fright”; cats immediately leap up onto his lap; and one time Tiffany even sees “a family of rabbits resting at his feet” while the farm dog is sat by his side (SC 166). Although Geoffrey does not reach witch status by the end of *The Shepherd's Crown*, since Geoffrey is so keen and determined – and the fashionable Mrs Earwig is on board with regard to the training of male witches – there is a much higher probability of success than there was with Esk in *Equal Rites*; moreover, it is highly likely that, one day, many other boys will follow in Geoffrey's footsteps.

Thus, although Pratchett successfully rewrites the figure of the witch in his Discworld fantasy series, he does so at the expense of his male wizard characters. Not only does Pratchett depict the wizards in a less than positive light, but he also leaves them very little space to participate in Disc society. Furthermore, where Pratchett's Discworld series ends with the wizards cooped up in the Unseen University and only the eighth son of an eighth son able to be a

wizard (S 11), *The Shepherd's Crown* shows the witches going about their daily work and hints at the likelihood that (with the advent of Geoffrey) there will be as many male as female witches in the future. With witchcraft now a possible career choice for men, wizards will probably move further into the background of life on the Disc and it is even possible that the art of wizardry may go into decline – for who, given the choice, would want to be an impotent, selfish, lazy wizard when one could be a witch with the power to change the world for the better?

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