

ENCHANTED PEDAGOGY: ARCHETYPAL FORMS, MAGIC, AND THE  
TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN FANTASY LITERATURE

by

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Approved by the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date 21 October 2020

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in  
Teachers College, Columbia University

2020

## ABSTRACT

### ENCHANTED PEDAGOGY: ARCHETYPAL FORMS, MAGIC, AND THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN FANTASY LITERATURE

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This study examines pedagogical patterns associated with wizard, witch, and fairy archetypes in fantasy literature. The fact that magic exists in fantasy literature as a mysterious and elusive element allows narratives to maintain and validate various means of knowledge acquisition – one archetypal form, such as a wizard, pursues a radically different mode of pedagogical engagement with magic than another archetypal form, such as a fairy. According to Carl Jung, archetypes are anchored by ancient elements of mythological lore, yet continuously shape-shift in the present day. My qualitative research process involved close readings of selected passages in popular works of fantasy literature, selected for analysis based on their salient educational themes as well as a presence of witches, wizards, and fairies. I examine how archetypes in fantasy literature frame various approaches to education, investigating whether these pedagogical

multiplicities tend to re-codify magic itself. I investigate how these archetypes acquire, dispel, manipulate, and embody magic with opposing or unique tactics, while considering how each archetype confronts the unknown. I also reflect on the relevant folkloric and mythic dimensions of each archetype, examining the extent in which the magical discourse surrounding each archetype relates to ideas about teaching and learning. Each archetype presents pedagogic nuances, subtle parallels, layers, and metaphorical veins of meaning. How does education in fantasy literature establish broad and vexing challenges to the realities that we are familiar with or conscious of in the everyday contemporary educational field? Are there idiosyncratic pedagogical possibilities (and impossibilities) through archetypal representations in fantasy literature, allowing for multifaceted and meaningful representations of teaching and learning?

I find that each archetype's distinct pedagogical model includes variations as well as overlapping representations of creative agency, amplified possibilities, enhanced notions of growth, radical receptivity, calls for empathy, and visions of transformation. After examining each archetype in consecutive chapters, my conclusion summarizes the prismatic meaning of their pedagogical engagements, while reflecting on the implications and cross-pollination of education and magic. The intersection of praxis and knowledge for each archetype induces a mythopoeic imagination in relation to education, as each reconciles and renews significant transformational elements of pedagogy.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my advisor Professor John Broughton for encouraging depth of reflection and providing the guidance to pursue a systematic approach to interdisciplinary humanities and education research, while offering incredibly thoughtful commentary and dialogue throughout the mapping of ideas and writing process. It has been an honor, pleasure, and privilege to study and work with him. I'm also thankful for participating in and attending the many Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies and Film Academy student conferences organized by Professor Broughton over the years, which allowed me to encounter ideas and creative scholarship that I found to be marvels and sources of inspiration.

I thank profoundly Professor Patricia Zumhagen for providing rich insights during the proposal process, and for offering tremendous support – she provided a light, by furthering ideas, and generously giving forth the support that allowed me to progress. I couldn't be more grateful for her thoughts on mythic quests and mythic structures. Thank you to both Professor Broughton and Zumhagen for generosity of thought, encouragement, and for believing in me and encouraging meaningfulness.

Professor Richard Jochum was an immense pleasure to study with, as an accomplished artist and scholar, and I learned deeply from his classrooms and conversations. His exemplary courses provided the onset of inspiration for exploring archetypes and education in fantasy literature, and I consider him to be an extraordinary scholar, teacher, and artist. I am honored Professor Jochum participated on my dissertation committee as a reader.

I'm also grateful to other faculty at Teachers College of Columbia, including Professor David Hansen and Professor Megan Lavery for providing community and colloquia during my MA in Philosophy and Education. Professor Lavery was a joy to work with during my MA thesis on Lorine Niedecker and poetics of embodiment. Professor John Baldacchino was a remarkable model of a compassionate educator, artist, writer, and thinker. I also take great joy in having had dinner once with Maxine Greene at her home, allowing me to glimpse and experience her wisdom, orbit, and greatness of being, and I continue to glean inspiration from her work. I owe much gratitude to Dr. Renee Cherow O'Leary for her inspiring class and for introducing and supporting my doctoral path in Interdisciplinary Studies. Also, a special and emphatic thank you to Dana Klainberg in the Teachers College Office of Doctoral Studies for her continuous patience and steadfast guidance.

My interests in enchantment and the arts have enormously benefited from my community in the arts in the New York City area, including the SPRING/BREAK Art Show community, Jesse Bransford, Pam Grossman, Lauren Luloff, Vanessa Albury, Marthe Ramm Fortun, Nora Lynn Leech, Jac Lahav, Paola Oxo, Kiersten Fellrath, Katy Diamond Hamer, Juliet Jacobson, and the many folks I have worked with curating via the Sphinx Northeast, an itinerant curatorial project that I engage with along with my husband, Max Razdow. Max is my torchlight and four-leaf clover, and a beloved companion in traversing the fantastic (including attending the Icelandic Elf School with me). The beauty and mystery in his hand-drawn and painted chimeras, elves, fairies, wizards and witches provide much inspiration, and I am forever grateful for his imaginative conversations and wellspring of creative collaboration with me.

I am lucky for our son, Rowan, and take delight in his wonder, depths of love, humor, and imagination. Thank you to Darrel and Allen Razdow for helping cultivate Rowan's creativity and curiosity and for helping promote meaning and fulfillment through art and nature (and for nurturing us). Thank you to my family, including my sisters, Rachelle Gilbertson and Hillary Tenofsky, and parents, Brian and Debra Blowers, for encouraging the perception of beauty in the natural world, especially during childhood in Alaska and Minnesota, but also in the present-day – I learned to admire trees, fields, mountains, bodies of water, and to seek out enchanting landscapes, through their living example and their eyes.

Thank you to Kristofer Dolmen for kind companionship and journeys throughout Northern Norway during my time as an artist in residence, supported by the Nordland County Council of Art and Environment. I appreciate how the University of Iceland Professor of Folkloristics Terry Gunnell shared coffee and conversation with me about Icelandic elves and lore, in Reykjavik.

I also give deep thanks to my colleagues at the Columbia School of General Studies, and I draw much inspiration from the stories and extraordinary paths of GS students.

I am grateful for my old friendships, including with Erin Mahoney, and I take inspiration in her courageous fight for social justice through feminism and labor organizing. James Cortese, thank you for laughing with me and for loving Tolkien as much as I do. Mountains of thanks to the artists, musicians, writers, and poets who have illuminated this realm through selfhood and community, endlessly igniting my curiosity.

K. A. R.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION: “HOW DO YOU COME TO KNOW MAGIC?”

#### **Introduction**

The theme of learning “magic” is often central in fantasy literature, where archetypal characters regularly question and propose modes of inquiry related to its acquisition. In C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the White Witch asks a magician, “How do you come to know Magic?” (84). More than half a century later, a similar question was posed in Deborah Harkness’ *Shadow of Night*: “Who taught you these things. ... From whom did you learn your witchcraft?” (71). In Emily Croy Barker’s *The Thinking Woman’s Guide to Real Magic*, this pedagogical inquiry again emerges: “How did you become a magician? ... How hard is it to learn magic? How long before you get to be really good?” (207).

These questions bring to light a broad path of inquiry: the particularities of pedagogical models that exist within fantasy literature. The consideration of magic in fantasy literature, as these characters convey, is potentially linked with pedagogy and frequently leads to pedagogical questions. Given this, to what extent do multiple literary works of fantasy reveal hypothetical models of or assumptions about how learning takes

place? In the fantasy literature I have chosen, based on the presence of certain archetypal forms, I seek out examples of disciplined and undisciplined modes of power, alongside schooled and unschooled methods of learning. Through this exploration, I hope to encounter and closely examine portrayals of discovering and understanding the seemingly hidden tenets of magic while better understanding its potential of being wild and elusive or attainable and within control.

My study aims to demonstrate the potential of fantasy literature to provide insight into the experience of being a student both within and outside of the academy. As characters' attempts towards discovering magic and mastering magic are made, is it possible to glimpse an interplay of growth and failure? If so, to what end does magic itself become a particular kind of knowledge, and does it reflect the concerns and qualities of the fantasy world as well as reality?

Fantasy literature is rich with pedagogical questions and ruminations on education. Depictions of characters utilizing rituals, spells and other magical devices allow for an encounter with enchanted models of teaching and learning. Within this framework of learning magic, can one assume a pedagogical model that presents a sense of creative agency and a vision of transformation as one learns? In Harkness' *Shadow of Night*, a witch asserts that "Some spells begin with an idea, others with a question. ... Let the power move through you" (331). Teaching is continually emphasized in Harkness' trilogy, and learning outcomes are laid out with necessity in order to overcome malevolence and dramatic adversity, although often with vaguely extended and uncertain timelines: "We'll teach her what she needs to know. ... It will take her whole life. ... Magic isn't macramé. It takes time" (Harkness, "Discovery" 424).

In Lev Grossman's *The Magicians*, a professor stresses the craft and agency of magic:

The study of magic is not a science, it is not an art, and it is not a religion. Magic is a craft. When we do magic, we do not wish and we do not pray. We rely upon our will and our knowledge and our skill to make a specific change to the world. (48)

Does the craft of learning and practicing magic in fantasy literature present a metaphor for educational models that offer transformation and other possibilities of enacting change? In fantasy literature, we are presented with aspects of education that are hyper-real and heightened yet surreal, strange, impossible and mysterious. This study includes the analysis of speculations and claims made about teaching, learning, and the acquisition of knowledge, while exploring examples of educationally related events in a sampling of popular forms of fantasy literature. This qualitative research process involves identifying a selection of relevant passages through close readings and examining the extent to which such pedagogic discourse in the novels relates directly or indirectly to existing educational discourse about teaching and learning. This exploration also addresses the transmission of knowledge in fantasy literature, and its connection and relevance to magic. How does education in fantasy literature establish broad and vexing challenges to the realities that we are familiar with or conscious of in the everyday contemporary educational field?

My qualitative research process involved an exploration of the connection and relevance of magic, in fantasy literature, to pedagogy and education, as reflected in archetypal representations and images, but also entailed pre-selecting works of fantasy literature that focused on representations of pedagogy and education. This methodology involving a process of selecting fantasy literature in advance that thematically includes educational representations runs the risk of being viewed as a circular argument,

enclosed like an ouroboros swallowing its tail, but the initial research aims and questions and subsequent explorations led to the emergence of ideas with nuanced considerations of pedagogy. By focusing on and examining representations of archetypes, I found that their complex and subtle kaleidoscopic layers, constellations, and nuances allowed for discovery beyond my initial research intent. This examination destabilized my assumptions and allowed for possibilities and unforeseen findings to emerge that escaped my presumed or intuitive notions. While the connection of magic to knowledge has been investigated by Marcel Mauss and other scholars, upon exploring literature on fantasy and theories of magic, I found that the connection and relevance of pedagogy to magical knowledge, as reflected in archetypes of fantasy literature, had not yet been examined.

The purpose of this study is not to examine fantasy imagery and archetypes as clinical symptoms of a singular cause. There is a powerful contemporary explosion of fantasy in popular culture and this phenomenon, as a whole, certainly can warrant separate and multiple careful investigations. A limitation of this study is that it does not branch out to include an expansive variety of art and visual discourses, popular culture representations, or forms beyond literature. Future studies should explore these salient and unexplored dimensions and ephemera. Another limitation is that I exclude children's literature, which surely has many precious gems to mine, and I consider the line between adult and young adult literature to blur, without crystal-clear distinctions, as we see in the case of the Harry Potter series. I also neglect to commit to a particular publishing period, decade, or even century, and sometimes the works of literature I examine are contemporary while others, especially in the fairy chapter, include examinations of

literature from more bygone eras. I make an assumption that any time period is relevant, with the rationale that past representations and works of literature have influenced contemporary representations and works of literature. Lastly, it is worth noting that as an individual who belongs to the first-generation to be educated, and as a university admissions officer for more than a decade, my own perspective and stance is admittedly optimistic. Perhaps future studies may home in on how representations of pedagogy in fantasy literature offer a pessimistic look at education – in this case, is the purpose of fantasy to recover that which is lacking or compromised in the everyday?

### **Rationale for Investigating Metaphorical Spaces**

While pedagogy in fantasy literature often reflects modes of teaching and learning that at times seem familiar and even mimetic of everyday realities, these pedagogies are not ordinary; they are fantastical. I explore whether or not this allows for investigations of metaphorical spaces that engender enhanced notions of creativity, growth, and embodiment. These themes can be seen, for example, in *Magicians*, by Grossman:

You need to do more than memorize. ... You must learn the principles of magic with more than your head. You must learn them with your bones, with your blood, your liver, your heart. (144)

Fantasy literature, including Grossman's novel, stretches the possibilities of learning in terms of both techniques and outcomes, leading to metaphysical notions of the learning experience for students:

Can you imagine how boring it would be if casting a spell were like turning on an electric drill? But it's not. It's irregular and beautiful. It's not an artifact, it's

something else, something organic. It feels like a grown thing, not a made thing.  
(234)

As opposed to existing as an artificial construction, spellcasting in fantasy literature resemble something complex, mysterious, and animated. In fantasy literature, unanswerable questions are presented as both implicit tenets of inquiry and of critical thinking, as we see in Patrick Rothfuss' *The Wise Man's Fear*: "It's the questions we can't answer that teach us the most. They teach us how to think" (620). Knowledge, as a framework, is not expected to be factually based or fully resolved. This welcome sentiment of ease with complexity and questions is also seen in Harkness' *Shadow of Night*: "And so I discovered that the practice of magic wasn't finding the correct answers but formulating better questions" (340).

This array of examples, though a small sampling based on popular works, encourages us to infer that magic, as a mythopoeic kind of knowledge in fantasy literature, presents a consistent framework around which pedagogy can be focused. Is magic a metaphorical kind of knowledge that offers a critique of education? Fantasy, as a whole, seems wildly complex with no singular form, purpose or function, yet emerging from this pluralistic, often opaque and enchanting space are myriad characters or archetypes (such as witches, wizards, fairies, etc.), which often seem familiar. Archetypes, according to the Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, entertain and thrive on the timeless multiplicities derived from myth. Even though there aren't necessarily archetypes for knowledge, I aim to explore whether these unique characters embody or convey specific educational motifs and models with particular imagined pedagogical aims. How and under what circumstances do these archetypes engage in learning or teaching?

This study will look closely at some of the popular and primary archetypes found in fantasy literature, with a particular emphasis on categories of wizards, witches, and fairies, focusing on their relation to pedagogical themes. I consider the term pedagogy as a broad and open construct involving ideas of teaching and learning as well as growth, and John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* has deeply informed my thoughts about pedagogy as he reflects, "Education is thus a fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating, process. All of these words mean that it implies attention to the conditions of growth" (10). Dewey further reflects that the educational process should encourage and entail growth and even childlike growth:

The educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming. ... With respect to sympathetic curiosity, unbiased responsiveness, and openness of mind, we may say that an adult should be growing in childlikeness. (50)

Dewey further asserts, "If education is growth, it must progressively realize present possibilities. ... Growing is not something which is completed in odd moments; it is a continuous leading into the future" (56). Paulo Freire, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, also presents keen and critical thoughts on the possibilities for education to have generative and affirming qualities: "Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (84). Maxine Greene's scholarship on pedagogy and imagination also informs my thinking, and her work lassos my reverence, as she reflects, "The more we can actively and interestedly perceive, you see, the wider becomes the field on which our imaginations can work. It is imagination that enables us to reach beyond, to open up those possibilities" (74). Within the scope of this investigation, my understanding and utilization of the term pedagogy is not bound only by classroom



traditions of teaching and learning, but instead broadly involves commitments, engagements, and experiences which lead to growth, enhanced reflection, heightened imagination, and self-transformation. With this construct of pedagogy in mind, fantasy literature becomes a fruitful arena to investigate, as the metaphoric scope is widened to include the acquisition and transmission of magical knowledge.

To present a brief trajectory of this dissertation, following the introduction, literature review, and methodology chapters, I will examine the wizard, witch, and fairy archetypes in separate and consecutive chapters, exploring each archetype's pedagogical engagements. The fourth chapter on the wizard archetype includes an investigation of the popular literary concept of the wizard school and themes of mastery and a disciplined imagination. The fifth chapter on the witch archetype includes an investigation of how witches' knowledge and power is tied to the body, while exploring representations of inner magic and praxis. The sixth chapter on the fairy archetype includes an investigation of fairy magic and the concept of fairyland, a landscape represented as a riddle with unfixed boundaries and rules that must be heeded, but also paradoxically a place where freedom, reward, and imagination reign. My conclusion will examine and summarize the meaning of each archetype's pedagogical relevance, while bring up implications, remaining questions, and meditations on the neighborly admixture of education and magic.

## Chapter II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* provides a theory of archetypal criticism applied to works of literature, offering a methodology and framework for the inspection of pedagogical aspects of fantasy. Frye defines the archetype as "a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole" (365). By investigating literary patterns, forms, symbols, and images, Frye promotes an "archetypal view of literature" which emphasizes "a total form and literary experience as part of the continuum of life" ("Anatomy of Criticism" 115). Investigating archetypes within literature enables a "literary experience," offering passage into fantasy's proverbial forest of meaning.

According to Carl Jung, archetypes are anchored by ancient elements of mythological lore, yet continuously shape-shift in the current times, as provoked or conjured into existence by the collective unconscious. Jung reflects, "The 'witch' is a collective image" ("The Portable Jung" 130). For Jung, archetypal images are variable, manifesting not as fixed elements, but as rhizomes and forms of becoming, capable of

shaking off the dust of the past and arising anew. Jung considered archetypes as core elements or seeds, yet with an ability to grow into highly differentiated forms. He uses a metaphor of a crystal's axial system to allow for an apprehension of a system in which archetypes operate:

It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form. ... Its form, however ... might be compared to the axial system of a crystal. ... The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal ... a possibility of representation. ... Our comparison with the crystal is illuminating inasmuch as the axial system determines only the stereometric structure but not the concrete form of the individual crystal. ... The only thing that remains constant is the axial system, or rather, the invariable geometric proportions underlying it. The same is true of the archetype. In principle, it can be named and has an invariable nucleus of meaning – but always only in principle, never in regards its concrete manifestation. (“Four Archetypes” 13-14)

Jung's assertion allows archetypes to be approached from multiple facets in relation to their “axial systems”: form may be determined by an original patterning, but its outcome as a manifestation is endless. For Jung, archetypal images are not tied to resolute states, and the unknown and speculations proudly emerge. Engaging with archetypes engenders the possible as well as the engrained. When approaching a field as deep and still-forming as archetypal theory, an appreciation of the yet-to-be-perceived (or invisible) operates on equal footing with the familiar.

Jung's life-long inspection of archetypes includes what he calls a “primordial image,” or “archetypal image,” noting that these images may be both variable and “ever-enduring” (“Portable Jung” 321). An individual's creative and medium-like impulse of “activating them,” in the light of the present day, offers a wellspring of meaning, and their existence serves a purpose in counteracting that which may be lacking in culture:

The impact of an archetype, whether it takes the form of immediate experience or is expressed through the spoken word, stirs us because it summons up a voice

that is stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever- enduring. ... The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping the image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life. Therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. (“Portable Jung” 321)

For Jung, this chorus of “a thousand voices” is a lasting and sensible aspect of the collective mythic past. Yet, it also involves a sense of selfhood and agency, allowing one to transform the transitory into the ever enduring. Using Jungian modes, we may be selective in the infinite and changeable field of archetypal images, actively observing what is useful, gleaning what is tangible, and understanding that there is more than meets the eye to be reckoned with and possibly discovered.

Through the study of folklore, myth, dreams, and art, Jung’s lifelong studies of psychology often interface with fantasy; yet, his frameworks have not been applied to pedagogical models in fantasy literature in a systematic manner. Notably, the Jungian scholar of educational theory, Clifford Mayes, has derived a concept of “archetypal pedagogy,” and in his most recent work, *Archetypes, Culture, and the Individual in Education: Three Pedagogical Narratives*, his scholarship includes an exploration of a “synergistic joining of narrative theory with archetypal theory – two fields of study that are intimately involved with the question of meaning” (5). Mayes aims to discover “ever more meaningful ways of shaping, assessing, and improving educational processes so that they are the most deeply and broadly applicable to all the domains of the teacher’s and student’ lives” (5). He promotes the value of archetypal reflections of teaching and

learning within personal narratives in the classroom, but hasn't inspected theories of magic, enchantment, or fantasy literature as zones that offer opportunities for pedagogical reflexivity. In *Power, Intimacy, and the Life Story, Personological Inquiries into Identity*, Dan McAdams presents the idea of "life-story imagoes." According to McAdams, "The stories we tell ourselves in order to live are populated by characters whose roles personify profound identity truths" (176). He notes that these "identity truths" vary from person to person: "Unlike Jung's structural components of the collective unconscious, life-story imagoes are by definition personified ... highly personalized, idiosyncratic" (182-183).

In fantasy literature, illustrations of pedagogy are insistently present, and there are many possibilities for literary examples within the field. Ursula K. Le Guin and J.K. Rowling's works of fiction present the narrative of the wizard school, institutions where learning takes place, and we're granted insights into and glimpses of student experiences, ordinary and extraordinary administrative structures, and myriad supernatural distractions and disasters within and beyond the walls of the academy. Maxine Greene reflects on the Harry Potter series in her work, *Variations on a Blue Guitar*, noting that they belong to "a long tradition of story-telling and fairy stories and even myths" but with newness, and they "draw their readers into another world," as "journeys outward from the dull and the unkind" (124). Greene touches upon how these works allow traversals to other worlds, with momentum and purpose, while being connected to the past through mythic lore and story-telling traditions.

Rothfuss' *The Kingkillers Chronicle* also frames magical learning within a magician's academy, where chronic adversity occurs in terms of personal student

finances and complex administrative navigation. However, this work also navigates toward the realm of fairyland, and I will primarily be exploring its depiction of this space and the acquisition of fairy magic. Both George MacDonald's *Phantastes* and Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter* present narratives dealing with seeking out fairyland, allowing for glimpses of accessing and experiencing this enchanting realm. In the process, there is an encounter of boundaries (as barriers that can be sensed but not necessarily negotiated, let alone controlled). These texts present examples of how fairyland becomes a possible pedagogical space, while revealing particular requirements of engaging with this realm. Lev Grossman's *Magicians Trilogy* and Deborah Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy* each present examples of witches and their acquisition, knowledge, and application of magic.

Theories of fantasy literature are presented in Karl Kroeber's *Romantic Fantasy and Science Fiction*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Tree and Leaf*, and Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structuralist Approach to a Literary Genre*. Kroeber distinguishes fantasy from science fiction, discussing how science fiction "extrapolates scientifically" whereas fantasy "turns inward," recovering otherness and turning inward in a self-reflexive manner (9). He claims that "fantasy is a primary form of literary self-reflexivity," which seems observant and valid (Kroeber 9).

Todorov highlights how within fantasy the experience of hesitancy is both implied and provoked within fantasy. He breaks it down into three necessary conditions:

First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the

themes of the work. ... Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations. (33)

Todorov's idea of hesitancy within fantasy alludes to a sense of being neither here nor there, but rather stranded somewhere in between. This may imply a spirit of openness and provoked reflection. Prismatic hesitation allows for ambiguity. Perhaps the idea of being in between rather than firmly situated may be related to the idea of portals, which enable leaps of spatial separation. However, the idea of openness seems contradicted by Todorov's mandated conditions of a reader's engagement, when he asserts that the reader "must" adopt a particular attitude and stance (33). In *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, Jackson theorizes modes of fantasy through a multifaceted cultural lens including ideas surrounding desire, ideologies, absence, and experience. She points out "omissions" in Todorov's work, noting that "*The Fantastic* fails to consider the social and political implications of literary forms" (6). Therefore, she builds upon Todorov's scholarship by striving to "extend Todorov's investigation from being one limited to the *poetics* of the fantastic into one aware of the *politics* of its forms" (6). Her theory is useful since investigating pedagogical narratives goes hand in hand with socio-cultural and political implications. She reflects on the scope, complexity and allure of fantasy:

Fantasy, both in literature and out of it, is an enormous and seductive subject. Its association with imagination and with desire has made it an area difficult to articulate or to define, and indeed the 'value' of fantasy has seemed to reside in precisely this resistance to definition, in its 'free-floating' and escapist qualities.  
(1)

Although fantasy is elusive in terms of language, it is perhaps possible to inspect how it functions and what aspects it serves by the spectrum of forms that it takes on. One may *engage* with fantastic modes to better understand their purpose and the qualities of their ineffable yet powerful domain.

In *Tree and Leaf*, Tolkien discusses fairy stories, the realm of faerie, enchantment, and desire as these themes relate to what he describes as the endlessly boiling and ever changing “cauldron of story” (27). Tolkien describes stories as timeless and timely, with ancient aspects tied together with present-day concerns.

Bruno Bettelheim’s 1976 work, *The Uses of Enchantment* promotes achieving or arriving at psychoanalytic insight via “a proper understanding of the unique merits of fairy tales” (6). Bettelheim reflects on the application of “the psychoanalytic model of the human personality,” noting that “fairy tales carry important messages to the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious mind, on whatever level each is functioning at the time (6). His idea of what constitutes “a proper understanding” deserves questioning, as surely there are many possibilities of interpretation and numerous levels of understanding, but he dives into the fairy tales and points out moments and opportunities for enchantment, enlightenment, delight, and wonder (12). He seems overly specific, though, in framing particular ideas of “personality development,” by *using* or employing fairy tales as if reduced to a tool for a certain purpose. However, fairy tales, as works of art, do evoke opportunities for introspection, conjuring both response and “meaning on so many different levels” (12). Bettelheim reflects, “Like all great art, fairy tales both delight and instruct” (53).

Marina Warner’s vibrant insights on the storytelling of imaginary realms of enchantment and “secondary worlds” abound in her works:

Enchanted territories and their fantasy populations are the givens of fairy stories, even when those narrative features are not explicitly present or active. The premise of a Secondary World beyond this one acts like the live culture necessary to turn milk into yoghurt, or the ‘mother’ that transforms wine into vinegar. (“Once Upon a Time” 18)



Warner presents metaphors and tenets of transformational possibilities, observing that “Fairylands are zones of enchantment” (“Once Upon a Time” 5). In *Wonder Tales*, she writes, “Magic expresses itself above all in shape-shifting” (5). Jung also reflects on the shapeshifting nature of archetypes: “The archetypes are the imperishable elements of the unconscious, but they change their shape continually” (“The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious” 179). Warner writes about how magical realms and “acts of imagination” serve as a bridge leading to the satisfaction of desire: “To put it in fairytale terms, there is more magic in inaugurating a different reality, to meet the hunger of hope and desire” (“Once Upon a Time” 18). Warner’s insights on the rich and strange stomping grounds of “the imaginary place and an imaginary time, constituted by magic and wonders performed by beings who have powers to enchant,” act as a wellspring deriving from “a magical elsewhere of possibility” where “wonders are commonplace and desires are fulfilled” (“Once Upon a Time” xxiv-xxv). Warner also contemplates the term “fairy tale” and suggests that “magic tale” or “wonder tale” may capture “the idea of the form better,” while also acknowledging that enchantment “has its own changing history, its own tides and currents, from medieval faerie to Romantic possession and hauntedness” (“Once Upon a Time” 20). She reflects on how the “vital current” of nature is powerful and inextinguishable: “No power of witches or gnomes or goblins or ogres or beasts, however, can completely extinguish the intrinsic good of the life force that runs through nature” (“Once Upon a Time” 29). Nature, after all, harbors non-human denizens, carries rhythms of renewal to counteract depletion, and is home to the unseen, potentially sparking wonder: “This is the elemental landscape of wonder, humming with invisible forces and other-than-human creatures” (“Once Upon a Time” 33).

There are plentiful scholars who in the past and present cast an eye on the folklore of “other-than-human creatures,” including Carole Silver’s work, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, where she reflects, “In different forms, the fairies have always been among us” (9). She comments on their staying power, despite being elusive: “They have inhabited the British Isles for at least fifteen hundred years; though sometimes forced underground, they have always reemerged” (9). She further reflects “The ‘hidden people,’ strange and secret, always leaving us yet never gone, have simply used their everlasting ‘glamour’ to transform themselves once more” (212). Robert Kirk’s late seventeenth century work, with research based in the Scottish Highlands, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies*, describes “invisible weights,” “subterranean inhabitants,” that exist in another state but may be discovered (44). The prolific fantasist, Neil Gaiman, writes in *Stardust*, “You can find places in Faerie, but not in your world, save for Wall, and that’s a boundary” (87). In *Stardust*, “Wall” is the name of the village which borders the land of Faerie.

Since many works of fantasy deal with techniques of magic and the complexity of magical thinking and learning, I will explore some prominent works that engage with the history and theory of magic. Many of these texts are referenced in Michael Taussig’s anthropological research, including Marcel Mauss’ *A General Theory of Magic* and E.E. Evans-Pritchard’s *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. I will also explore scholarship that examines the history of witches and fairies, and their observed historical connection to one another, with deep reliance on Katharine Briggs’ works, such as *Fairies in Tradition and Literature*, *Pale Hecate’s Team*, and *The Anatomy of Puck*, along with Lewis Spence’s *Fairy Tradition in Britain*. Keith Thomas’ work, *Religion*

*and the Decline of Magic* includes historical insights on wizards, fairies and witches, as well. To further elaborate the identities of fairies and elves, which have a deep cultural presence in Iceland, I will also become familiar with Icelandic folklore, such as J.M. Bedel's *Hildur, Queen of the Elves, and Other Icelandic Legends* and Jacqueline Simpson's *Icelandic Folktales and Legends*. This Icelandic lore provides insights and examples about how elves and fairies are connected to the natural world, and also conjoined to rules and explanations of nature and natural forces. Beyond relying upon examples of fairies and witches in fantasy literature alone, I will augment this by examining historical references to witches, witchcraft and the trials as they relate to pedagogy found in Margaret Murray's *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* along with Murray's work that deals with folk beliefs surrounding fairies as well as witches, *The God of the Witches*.

### **The Roots and Scope of Fantasy and Magic**

To shed light on the manner in which fantasy arises as a term, it is useful to examine its etymology. Fanfan Chen muses on the meaning of the term "fantastic" while also offering some extensions of meaning based upon its linguistic roots:

The English word[s] fantastic and fantasy are indeed derived from the French word, fantastique, which in turn is from Latin and Greek. ... The term fantastic is essentially related to imagination, the imaginary and the creation of visions. Fantasy, besides the meanings of imagination and creation of visions, also focuses on the features of illusion, appearance, and desire. ... This same root gives words like 'phantasm', 'phantasmagoria', 'fantasy' and 'phantom', all that belongs to the field of apparition, imagination, and spectre. ... Rooted in the meanings of 'imaginary,' 'visionary' and 'unbelievable,' the word fantastique or fantastic is

concerned with imagining vain things, as opposed to reality and reason, thus related to madness and strangeness. It makes the nonexistent come to light and renders the invisible visible. (20)

Thus, the words fantastic and fantasy relate to the imagination and the imaginary, along with a host of phantoms rather than any singular form. Overall, because of the quality of its inexhaustible constituent parts, its totality remains elusive and changeable. In some cases, fantasy may shed light on truth, meaning, and desire, as they relate to the normal or the everyday. Perhaps fantasy is a mirror of reality, revealing truths and an enhanced way of seeing and understanding. In other cases, fantasy may carry us far away from reality, transporting us to other worlds, towards strangeness and subversive planes, full of pleasure and profundity, or potentially full of terror. The latter, dealing with being transported, is less of a mirror than a portal.

The correlation between fantasy and phantasms is addressed in Howard Pearce's essay, "Dislocating the Fantastic: Can This Old Genre Be Mobilized?," and the meaning behind the Greek root, *phanein* is discussed:

The word fantastic comes from the Greek root *phanein*, 'to show,' as do fancy and phantasm, and all three terms have to do with the essential problematic relationship between the actual, material dimension and that of the supernatural, spiritual, or ideal. If fantastic usually refers to insubstantial, noncorporeal, or nonexistent objectivities, phantasm can refer inversely, as in Platonic thought, to the inferior material world. At the level of perception what 'shows' is mere sense impression, and it is distorted, phantasmic. (95-96)

That which reveals itself is distorted, problematic and phantasmic. However, beyond distortion, truth may also be revealed, stripped of illusion (a conceit of the Enlightenment). To engage with a field that is made inherently problematic by its "inferiority to the material world" requires that one put aside certain traditions of discourse. To engage with fantasy is to engage with the unreal, to watch for the phantom,

to chase the will o' the wisp, and observe the play of the shadow. Quite comparably, Lance Olsen reflects on ambiguity:

The word [fantasy] derives from the Latin phantasticus, which in turn derives from the Greek phantastikos, a word that simply – and ambiguously – means that which is presented to the mind, made visible or visionary. (14)

The consequent disorientation serves a distinct purpose:

The fantastic is a mode designed to surprise, to question, to put into doubt, to create anxiety, to make active, to make uncomfortable, to disgust, to repel, to rebel, to subvert, to pervert, to make ambiguous, to make discontinuous, to deform. (Olsen 22)

Despite its antipathy to definition, the fantastic does not escape reality entirely, and in fact is dependent upon reality to provoke interpretation. It oscillates between realms:

As Todorov pointed out, fantasy is located uneasily between 'reality' and 'literature,' unable to accept either, with the result that a fantastic mode is situated between the 'realistic' and the 'marvellous,' stranded between this world and the next. (Olsen 180)

This concept of the in-between tendency of fantasy leads to a unifying idea that fantasy allows us to reach towards and embrace the unknowable, despite persisting uncertainty.

Fantasy occupies an ontological space that enables us to undo the boundaries of reality, carrying us to *other* orders of experience and other worlds, allowing us to see deeper truths within our own. The momentum of traversing the fantastic is not without impact on reality, and is hardly folly, according to fantasy writer Ursula Le Guin. It may be commonly associated with the child-like, but it should be taken dead seriously, as opposed to being considered solely a light-footed journey of capricious and arbitrary escapism:

What is fantasy? On one level, of course, it is a game: a pure pretense with no ulterior motive whatever. It is one child saying to another child, 'Let's be dragons,'

and then they're dragons for an hour or two. It is escapism at the most admirable kind – the game played for the game's sake. On another level, it is still a game, but a game played for very high stakes. Seen thus, as art, not spontaneous play, its affinity is not with daydream, but with dream. It is a different approach to reality, an alternative technique for apprehending and coping with existence. It is not antirational but pararational; not realistic, but surrealistic, superrealistic, a heightening of reality. ... It employs archetypes, which, Jung warned us, are dangerous things ... Fantasy is nearer to poetry, mysticism, and to insanity than naturalistic fiction is. It is a real wilderness, and those who go there should not feel too safe. ("From Elfland to Poughkeepsie" 145)

Le Guin states concern with the instantiation of a path through this so-called wilderness, seeing the fantastic as a place of great gravity, not just a place of play. It is also not simply a means of escape; it involves engaging with reality on deep and profound terms, or perhaps just enables coping. Le Guin presents a list of correlations that are not playful, but interplay with contemporary reality, such as surrealism. She also asserts that it exists on many levels, heightening reality and providing deep and alternative modes of apprehension.

### **Magic as a Property of the Fantastic**

The current study will concentrate in particular on archetypes that arise consistently in fantasy literature, across young adult and adult genres. In doing so, we will be compelled to consider the substance of fantasy, on its own grounds. This study invokes the investigation of a primary mechanism of fantasy: the mysterious entity known as magic, which gives the stories and worlds of fantasy their structure and momentum. Literature on magic is vast, and there is much in prior research in anthropology, history of magic, etc., that is vitally useful. Another possible avenue is to approach magic as a mechanism of the literature of fantasy itself.

One possible way to illuminate the meaning of the term “magic” in the genre of fantasy is to compare fantasy with its non-magical sibling, science fiction. By looking at the two forms side by side, it is possible to see what is particularly unique about each, casting further light on the utility, usage, and especially the meaning of magic. Kroeber lends a crucial voice that illuminates the complex correlations and oppositions of these two forms:

The genres of science fiction and fantasy overlap and interpenetrate. All literary genres are impure, each partaking of diverse formal modalities, but fantasy and science fiction are especially intertwined because they have a common origin. ... The writer of science fiction extends or projects or draws inferences from what is known and accepted (and the primary known fact of the modern world is that humanity dominates our globe). The science fiction writer extrapolates scientifically, of course, which means that he or she employs the basic style of a scientific discourse – analytical, reportorial exposition: his basic form is scientific reportage. Fantasy responds to the same circumstance of humanity’s technological triumph differently, leading some critics to think of fantasy simply as a looking backward. But fantasy, although it may try to recover a lost sense for otherness, turns inward rather than backward. Fantasy is a primary form of literary self-reflexivity. ... Fantasy involves its author in self-enchancement, which leads the fantasist toward a discourse distinct from the realistic, rationalistic, expository forms that undergird science fiction. Fantasy tends toward self-involuting procedures, and these often result in complex structures parallel to, though totally distinct from, the intricacies of earlier narrational modes. (9-10)

While Kroeber maintains that the two genres entertain slippages in many ways, cross-pollinating each other significantly, he is resolute in his notion that there are stark differences between science fiction and fantasy. Science fiction, he claims, is a literature born of scientific processes allowing for scientific extrapolations. Fantasy, on the other hand, is a discourse of “self-involuting,” turning inward; it engages in enchantment and self-enchancement.

If the primary substance of science fiction is science (a rational examination of the world), then the primary substance of fantasy is magic, which is, in many senses, the

antithesis of science: it is the irrational commandeering of the natural world. However, paradoxically, the anthropologist Marcel Mauss produced a broad-based theory and history of magic in *A General Theory of Magic*, shedding light on how the history of magic is in fact linked to science, in terms of its shared quest to understand nature:

Magic is linked to science in the same way as it is linked to technology. It is not only a practical art, it is also a storehouse of ideas. It attaches great importance to knowledge – one of its mainsprings. In fact, we have seen over and over again, as far as magic is concerned, knowledge is power. ... Magic ... is concerned with understanding nature. It quickly set up a kind of index of plants, metaphs, phenomena, beings and life in general, and became an early store of information for the astronomical, physical, and natural sciences. (176-177)

The alignment of magic with the quest for knowledge and depth of understanding is precisely what leads to the rich pedagogical implications in fantasy literature. As Mauss points out, *knowledge is power*, and magic is a multi-faceted pedagogical element: we see magic as an acquired technical skill as well as a conduit to further knowledge about the natural and supernatural world. It is also a lexicon; a storehouse of information. Mauss asserts that magicians attempted to systematize knowledge in so called “magician colleges.” We see this actual historical tenet fictionalized in fantasy literature:

Magicians have sometimes even attempted to systematize their knowledge and, by so doing, derive principles. When such theories are elaborated in magician colleges, it is done by rational and individual procedures. In their doctrinal studies magicians tried to discard as many mystical elements as they could, and thus it was that magic took on the character of a genuine science. (177)

This systematization of a magician’s knowledge gave it an association with science, but, in the process of doing so, stripped it of mysticism. Fantasy literature presents this science/magic dichotomy within the archetype of wizard and wizard schools, but also presents counterpoints to magical learning in other archetypes that I will examine. To further this idea, Mauss shows the manner in which the magical



practitioner's acquisition of knowledge arrives in many forms:

The magician is a person who, through his gifts, his experience or through revelation, understands nature and natures; his practice depends on this knowledge. It is here that magic most approximates science. From this point of view, magic can be very knowledgeable even if it is not truly scientific. A good deal of knowledge we have mentioned here has been acquired and verified through experiment. ... The laws of magic ... are really a kind of magical philosophy. They were a series of empty, hollow forms bringing in laws of causality which were always poorly formulated. (94)

Mauss shows that although there is a correlation between magical knowledge acquisition and science, taking on a multifaceted approach, akin to “magical philosophy.” He details the practice of the magician through gifts, experience and/or revelation, ushering the knowledge they acquire into laws of causality, in an open manner. This reveals the way in which magic acquisition entertains a more broadly based metaphorical space of pedagogy than merely science alone.

### **Magic and the Transmission of Knowledge**

Not only does magic deal with experimentation, but it also deals with the transmission of knowledge. According to Mauss, this carries political implications related to the distribution of power:

In some cases the transmission of very serious details of magical lore is preceded by a kind of cosmological revelation on which it appears to depend. Often magical secrets are imparted only under certain conditions. Even a person who has bought a charm cannot dispose of it at will outside the contract. A charm which is transferred improperly to another person loses any powers it had or reacts on the person who has it. Folklore all over the world provides an infinite number of such examples. In these practices we have hints of a state of mind which exists each time magical knowledge is transmitted from one person to another, even magic of the most common kind. The way this kind of lore – this

pact – is transmitted shows that even if the secrets do pass from hand to hand, the knowledge is really the prerogative of a closed group. Revelation, initiation, and the handing down of traditional lore are, from this point of view, equivalent. (53)

Magic is not a public free-for-all for anyone to acquire and dispel; it is guarded aggressively and often withheld. Mauss reveals the way in which charms and other physical objects change their properties depending on how they are transmitted from person to person. The substance of magical pedagogy is mutable by the form of pedagogy itself. The fact that “knowledge is really the prerogative of a closed group” has implications of power and powerlessness, with a striking resemblance to disparities at large. Unlike quotidian pedagogical structures, the hierarchy or manner of the transmission of knowledge is often embedded in learning outcomes. In fantasy literature, metaphorical stories of magical transmission allow for numerous ways to both deal with and circumvent this aspect of pedagogy.

Science fiction casts science and scientific extrapolations into the future, with certain concrete outcomes. In comparison with fantasy, it is stricter in its treatment of consequence and cause/effect relations. Fantasy depends on magic, oftentimes unwieldy, and frequently this magic is transmitted from sources of lore, with archaic and deep connections to the past. According to Mauss, portrayals of wizard and magician schools found within fantasy literature are not solely an imaginative invention; they have actual historical roots in terms of the transmission of magical knowledge:

Magical knowledge seems to have been passed on from individual to individual, just as in teaching of science and techniques. The means of transmitting magical rites among the Cherokee are instructive on this score. There existed a whole body of magical scholarship and schools of magicians. In order to pass on magical knowledge to individuals, magic had to make it intelligible to individuals. Then there developed experimental or dialectical theory which naturally enough neglected the unconscious collective facts. The Greek alchemists and their successors, our modern magicians, tried to deduce it from philosophical

principles. Moreover, all magical systems, even the most primitive or popular, justify their remedies by reference to past experience. And magical systems have developed through objective researches and genuine experiences. They have progressively benefitted from discoveries which have been both true and false. In this way, the relative role of collectivity in magic has been whittled down. It diminished because the collectivity banished everything of an irrational or an a priori nature. In this way, magic began to approximate to the sciences and finally came to resemble them in so far as it claimed to result from experimental researches and logical deductions made by individuals. In this as well, magic more and more came to resemble technology, which itself responds to the same positive and individual needs. Except for its traditional character, magic has tried to cast off all collective aspects. Everything involving theoretical and practical achievements now becomes the work of individuals, and it is exploited only by individuals. (172-173)

Mauss reveals that the practice and study of magic, by practitioners has changed drastically over time. In its evolution, it has tried to match the progress of scientific research and rhythms. Perhaps this development entailed the deterioration of its systems. In fantasy literature, we find a sense of a desire for reclamation of magical principles that escape scientific processes. Magic in fantasy literature does not fully align itself with science; it remains an autonomous entity and seeks a reunification with more distant or lost forms of magic and the pedagogy of magic. This vital act of recovery is described in Terry Pratchett's *The Colour of Magic*:

Magic had indeed once been wild and lawless, but had been tamed back in the mists of time by the Olden Ones, who had bound it to obey among other things the Law of Conservation of Reality. ... Some of the ancient magic could still be found in its raw state, recognizable – to the initiated – by the eight-fold shape it made in the crystalline structure of space-time. There was the metal octiron, for example, and the gas octogen. Both radiated dangerous amounts of raw enchantment. (60)

Pratchett's imagined mutated history of magic reveals an issue of grappling with an implicit sense of loss in fantasy literature. The "taming" and "binding" of magic by the Olden Ones metaphorically restates the complex relationship between science and magic. While magic was augmented by its interface with science, which seemed to organize and impart a sense of

geometrical efficiency to the raw “wild and lawless” substance of old, this order came at a cost of making it perilous and esoterically concealed.

Within fantasy literature, lost, pre-scientific forms of knowledge acquisition are often presented as effective modes of learning, functioning even more effectively than the modernized, structured system that Mauss identifies as correlating with scientific practice. Kroeber sheds light on how fantasy elevates the magical sensibility and sentiments, and allows for a gaze inward, thus distinguishing the genre of fantasy from science fiction:

Fantasy emerges out of enlightenment culture, which excluded anything fantastic from civilized life. ... Fantasy celebrates the magical in a society for which magic had become only benighted superstition. The essential mode of Romantic fantastic discourse, therefore, derives from the trope of oxymoron – an impossible possibility. Use of this mode necessarily involves the fantastist in an art of intense self-reflexivity, enchanting himself so that he may enchant others. This inwardness distinguishes fantasy from its nonidentical twin, science fiction. Science fiction appears when the supernatural has been driven out of enlightened society, but instead of seeking to recover otherness and magicality, science fiction extrapolates consequences of the scientific-technological progress that destroyed superstition. (1)

Kroeber discusses the means by which the self, or the idea of the individual, becomes a plane of examination for the magical practitioner. Self-reflexivity and a turning inward denies the strict, physical empiricism of scientific study and a rationalist reverence to cause and effect. Kroeber notes that fantasy seeks to recover and recapture magicality and lost aspects of life. Quite apart from any specific physical instantiation that magic may or may not have, it is useful in a literary sense as a way to propose a re-engagement with lost aspects of culture and the self. In this way, it becomes a lynchpin for a kind of revolutionary action. In regards to science fiction, Kroeber identifies a lack of empathy with aspects of traditional selfhood, which makes clear the urgency of our need for a re-

inspection of magic. He reveals the way that magic operates as an antithesis to science, reflecting a desire that is also present in science fiction, yet which operates quite differently:

My distinction between science fiction and fantasy exalts neither at the expense of the other. The forms embody two responses to the same historical circumstance, humankind's domination of the natural world so completely that it becomes difficult to conceive of beings other than humans, or of nonhuman modes of existence, or even to imagine what might be termed 'magic,' in the sense of occurrences not answerable to humankind's rational analyses and naturalistic explanations. (24)

Kroeber argues that magic requires a perspective that has become distant to the experience of humankind due to its domination of the natural world. These visions, of beings *other* than humans and of nonhuman modes of existence are necessities that have been lost sight of. Magic allows for recovery of a lost vision of humankind's relationship with the natural world. Although this desire is also reflected in science fiction, in its imagination of other futures, the commonality between the two remains only a framework, to imagine new "modes of existence," while their solutions remain worlds apart. Kroeber sheds light on how fantasy possesses a unique ability to engender the transformative through language, which becomes an element of enchantment:

Inwardness, self-reflexivity, and the exploration of self-recursive modes are the characteristics of fantasy. Fantasy responds to the modern conditions of rationalized civilization, culture deprived of enchantment, by seeking to uncover magic possibilities, especially in the processes of linguistic articulation and narratives in themselves. ... To cast a spell, fantasy must be a spell, the texture of its enunciation must be magical, in the sense of bringing forward the amazingly transformative, because self-transformative, powers of language, exactly what science, and so science fiction, seeks to exorcise. (29-30)

Unlike the physical matter of science, magic is a substance that is highly permeable by language. Spell casting, as Kroeber notes, requires magical enunciation,

and within this process linguistic texture, narrative, and articulation become modes of creation. In this mode, magic closely resembles pedagogy, but allows transformation to occur in a self-reflexive manner. Because it is charged by and with language, magic is powerful in the sense of its ability to interface thought with nature, and this is a recursive process that allows for the self to be transformed.

For Kroeber, the close tie between language and creation found in magic reasserts a lost aspect of humanity and its relationships with environment and will. Kroeber asserts how this recovery is an ongoing process in fantasy:

Today ... it is fantasy that most rapidly allows us to recover the power of thus using language creatively, to reassert our human power to overcome the strength of human creations which function to dehumanize us by confining us within reified structures of our own making. Fantasy is an enabling mode because it recovers for us a necessary sense that there is something other than ourselves for us to wonder at together. Fantasy opens the marvelous possibility of sharing an expanded sense that there may be more than us and our creations on this earth, that 'more' calling forth the utmost strength of our imagining, such strength being manifested in the necessary complexities of effective human communication. ... It manifests the human power to conceive the inconceivable, the inconceivable being, most simply, whatever is different from the conceiver. And only to the degree that the inconceivable can be communicated, thus becoming common property, can the potency of the truly human be enhanced. (139)

Fantasy's use of magic, consistent within its own structure, becomes a way to open up the possible. Magic becomes a pursuit of fantasy, and in its flowering becomes not only a reminder of the potential to grasp the inconceivable, but even more functions as a road-map for how one can arrive at enchantment.

## Research Questions

In this study, I sought out pedagogical patterns associated with wizard, witch, and fairy archetypes in the genre of fantasy literature. The purpose of this study is to unearth how archetypes frame various approaches to education, specifically teaching and learning. The hope is that this would lead to discovering whether or not these pedagogical multiplicities tend to re-codify the substance of magic itself, i.e., do various archetypes, such as the witch or magician, acquire, manipulate and embody magic in different ways? If so, do they acquire and dispel magic with opposing or unique tactics? The intention is to explore how the unknown is confronted by each of these character types, investigating whether it is possible to find specific mechanisms as well as patterns of commonality. Where does each archetype's magical knowledge and skills come from, and how are these tenets passed on? Within this framework of knowledge transmission, are there distinct pedagogical possibilities (and impossibilities) which allow for multifaceted and meaningful representations of teaching and learning?

Within the scope of fantasy literature, are there particular and curious pedagogical patterns that convey meaning? Does each archetype within fantasy reveal distinct principles of education as well as ideals of flourishing and examples of failure? Do these specific archetypes within fantasy frame clear and highly diverse relationships to education, perhaps embodying a mythopoeic imagination that can be significant and applied to education? How do the nuances of the wizard school reveal epiphanies of power relationships, creative agency, imagination, and experimentation? Does the

wizard archetype in fantasy literature establish the importance of students taking leaps of personal insight, amidst a course of rote learning, to succeed? How does a witch's matrix of power inform his or her particular relationship to the value and meaning of both systematic and intuitive forms of knowledge? How does one seek out fairyland and how is knowledge transmitted or bestowed by the fairy archetype? Is it possible to understand why freedom and pleasure in fairyland seem to occur only on a temporary basis and often with harsh consequences and penalties involving the passage of time and bodily or material deterioration once outside a fairy's realm of enchantment? Overall, I explored the ways in which these pedagogical motifs and questions are embedded within fantasy literature, but are also elaborated in folk tales, myths and even superstitions in the places where they abound.



### Chapter III

## METHODOLOGY

In recent years, there has been an undeniable explosion of fantasy literature dealing with the fantasy images of fairies, witches, and wizards, and I have selected popular literary works, from both the contemporary and classical fields, that are especially salient in presenting pedagogical themes. This includes but is not limited to Ursula Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, Deborah Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy*, Patrick Rothfuss' *The Kingkiller Chronicles*, George MacDonald's *Phantastes*, Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, and Lev Grossman's *Magicians Trilogy*. Often, the works of fiction I selected for their representations of witches, wizards, and fairies are widely popular, leading to recent and forthcoming film and television adaptations, as a result of their resonance across a wide audience. I have limited my analysis to works of literature, as opposed to other forms of art and media, allowing for a focused approach to selecting and analyzing the material. Furthermore, I have chosen these three particular archetypes (wizards, witches, and fairies) since they are quite common, and even in vogue, allowing for a selection of works from a wide range of readily available material in popular culture, rather than hunting down esoteric characters or arcane images. These archetypes aren't conjured from a dry and rusty

cauldron, but abound in works of fantasy literature in bookstores (airport bookstores even), public libraries, and countless personal bookshelves.

Within the categories of popular archetypes that I have selected, I examined how representations of magic interface with pedagogy, exploring whether or how this becomes a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and power. In addition, I examined whether or how the recovery of magic and the unknown reconciles and reseats significant transformational elements of education. My qualitative process included sorting through the selected popular literary material which included a strong presence of teaching and learning narratives, identifying themes and recurring patterns of pedagogy through close readings, and making connections across works.

In fantasy literature, there is undeniably an endless amount of material, and the process of selecting primary and secondary sources on a mindfully strategic and fruitful basis for analysis is essential to prevent dizzy entrapment in a proverbial rabbit hole of inquiry. When exploring an array of works in fantasy literature, I sought out relevant passages with pedagogical implications and analysed them, gleaning meaning, and seeking patterns.

This study aims to cover an expansive amount of multifaceted literary, historical and theoretical materials. While focusing on the exploration of pedagogy within fantasy, we will be dealing with concepts that are both abstract and whimsical (magic, elves, fairyland, etc.). Given these challenges, there is a sustained dose of poetic speculation and an execution of a methodology that involves approaching material with a mythopoeic interpretation aligned with the elusive spirit of the fantastic, as archetypes of fantasy are examined. The methodology required by investigating a multiplicity of archetypes in

fantasy literature will require a poetic sensibility, and this study aims to identify the nuances and potential outcomes of pedagogical models in fantasy literature. Each of these opportunities for archetypal exploration will potentially yield pedagogical insights and meaning.

My systematic act of selecting and interpreting archetypes in fantasy literature to understand or yield insights based on their various pedagogical representations is a fairly subjective and poetic process. However, archetypal literary theory supports this subjective endeavor, establishing that poetic interpretation and personal dynamics are vital to literary interpretations and experiences. In *Subjective Criticism*, David Bleich reflects on the manner in which subjectivity intertwines with language via symbolization to beget “new knowledge”:

Linguistic articulation—naming and identification—is the symbolization of experience; interpretation is a resymbolization motivated by the demand that the knowledge thus symbolized be explained, or converted into a more subjectively satisfying form. In this way all explanations are interpretive and may be understood

as the construction of new knowledge. (261)

Bleich’s idea of critically extracting, examining, and musing on the embedded symbols embedded within a narrative may include archetypes and archetypal images. Bleich’s stance on the subjectivity of textual interpretation suggests adopting a role of literary sleuthing to unbury and bring forth knowledge, but also to create knowledge. An “objective viewpoint,” he says, would assert that “literary interpretation finds, rather than makes, knowledge” but subjective agency carries this further to “knowledge-making” possibilities (262). When considering these investigative and creative acts of subjective criticism, Bleich notes that one may engage with “assembling collective interests” while relying on an “awareness of one’s own language system as the agency

of consciousness and self-direction” (358). The agency presented by Bleich through the interpretation of symbol implies possibilities of discovery.

The methodological approach I apply in this study involves examining education in literature with a blending of literary and Jungian archetypal theories in mind. My process involves initially searching for works of literature that included the trope of education (or representations of teaching and learning), and I also sought the simultaneous presence of fairies, witches, and wizards, because of their idiosyncratic models of knowledge transmission. Since fairies, witches, and wizards were present in the selected works of fantasy literature, magic and magical knowledge were also present, allowing for analysis. In addition, notions of educational experiences also needed to be central and consistently thematic in the works. I selected many sections from each chosen work, and after extracting relevant pedagogical passages, I proceeded to examine differences, parallels, and veins of meaning. In this process, I left many passages aside that were initially selected and focused on the ones that included more direct pedagogical engagements and activities, focusing particularly on themes and patterns that overlapped across texts. In the works I selected, the metaphorical and literal presentations of education were salient. The fantastical archetypes that I focused on were named and explicit in the works of literature I selected, rather than presumed, suggested, or hinted at, even though their archetypal existence may simultaneously be perceived as symbolic, poetic, or metaphorical.

In *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, Norman Holland suggests that textual readings benefit from a blending of both psychoanalytic and critical perspectives:

Both a ‘new critical’ reading and a psychoanalytic reading will arrive at something central to a work, some general entity represented at any given point

in the text by particular language. What, then, is the relation between these two central entities, one a statement, the other a fantasy? Most critics, I think, would say they are simply two different ways of looking at the text, each valid in its own way. (7)

For Holland, it is possible that representations within a text may be framed as a statement and/or a fantasy. Each framework, or a blending of them, offers valid routes to examining the “general entity” and the particularities of a text. Investigating archetypes allows for recognition of the perseverance of these entities while welcoming subjectivity, as archetypes are omnipresent and changeable.

While I perceived witches, wizards, and fairies as archetypes, I viewed education as a trope. Susan Stanford Friedman’s compelling and complex contributions to literary theory involve the methodological practice of exploring literary tropes, or recurring images in literature, promoting the invocation of various and distinct strategies to imagine and achieve insight, without an opposition to blending narrative theories. She asserts, “tropes occur cross-culturally and transhistorically in much narrative, since figural cognition is a universal feature of human language and storytelling” (9). Her scholarship also highlights and acknowledges “interdisciplinary turns in narrative theory” with recent shifts in literary theory that emphasize “building connections among those in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences for whom narrative is a key conceptual and methodological category of research” (3). Furthermore, she establishes “the way narrative embeds tropes” which she describes as “implied stories” or hidden constellations that arise and persevere. According to Friedman, “implied stories” within literature may entail an “unnarrated figuration,” suggesting a “back story, indeed many possible back stories” that may be discovered, mapped, and drawn out by readers (7). Friedman provides an ecological analogy of mycological interconnectedness and/or

disconnectedness of stories, highlighting how stories may pop up, like mushrooms, and come into focus on their own terms, seemingly isolated, but with possible “parallels and distinctions” to trace:

Stories can also spring up disconnected like mushrooms, with no known routes for us readers to follow. ... in this case, we as readers use strategies of re-vision and collage that bring into focus parallels and distinctions across time and space. (23)

The methodological act of exploring and discovering “parallels and distinctions across time and space” within works of literature may involve the creative examination and interpretation of both tropes and archetypal images, and my methodological approach entails framing education and pedagogy as tropes, with the witch, wizard, and fairy as archetypes (Friedman 23). Education, as a literary manifestation, may be considered as a trope with a back story or many back stories, and I aimed to examine works of literature that included both archetypes and the trope of pedagogy.

Northrop Frye’s literary analysis and investigation of symbolism is enacted in his own works of literary criticism, which at times bridges disciplines. In *The Educated Imagination*, he notes, “the theory of literature is what I mean by criticism, the activity of uniting literature with society” (127). His act of “uniting literature with society,” within his own critical practice includes examining the symbols, poetic images, and structural features found within the Bible, in his work, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. This work of scholarship includes an attentive study and interpretations of the tropes embedded within the Bible: “The natural images of the Bible are a primarily poetic feature of it” (139). Frye’s investigation of these images is panoramic and expansive, while also homing in on the poetic nuances of metaphor, language, and tropes, paving the way for pluralistic insight into both the study of religion and the study of literature, as he

investigates “metaphorical vision, or the application of metaphors to human experience” (“The Great Code” 100-101). Frye mines the “structure of imagery” to imply or suggest meaning:

The Bible’s structure of imagery, then, contains, among other things, the imagery of sheep and pasture, the imagery of harvest and vintage, the imagery of cities and temples, all contained in and infused by the oasis imagery of trees and water that suggests a higher mode of life altogether. (“The Great Code” 139)

Frye also unveils the connection between literature and magic:

The long-standing connection between the written book and the arts of magic, and the way that the poetic impulse seems to begin in the renunciation of magic, or at least, of its practical aims. . . . The written word is far more powerful than simply a reminder: it re-creates the past in the present, and gives us, not the familiar remembered thing, but the glittering intensity of the summoned-up hallucination. (“The Great Code” 227)

Frye’s practice of examining literature through its embedded imagery becomes poetically expanded in his claims about magic, which he sees as strengthened in its abandonment of “practical aims.” By indicating that magic summons up a hallucination and reclaims the past, he elevates the mythopoetic as a determinant of intensity and creative agency.

Frye suggests that recurring images in literature are archetypes with familiar associative properties capable of being both recognized and communicated:

Archetypes are associative clusters, and differ from signs in being complex variables. Within the complex is often a large number of specific learned associations which are communicable because a large number of people in a given culture happen to be familiar with them. (“Anatomy of Criticism” 102)

His vision of archetypes extends beyond familiarity and popular culture. He perceives mythic structures as markers for the limits of possible imaginings, illustrating desire within a culture:

We begin our study of archetypes, then, with a world of myth, an abstract or purely literary world of fictional and thematic design, unaffected by canons of plausible adaptation to familiar experience. In terms of narrative, myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire. (136)

Through this archetypal lens, we may investigate the manner in which pedagogical motifs within works of fantasy relate to an interplay of myth, desire, and cultural unfamiliarity, as described by Frye. Because they operate, as Frye says, near the “limits of conceivable desire,” archetypes allow for radical departures from normative models, and fantasy literature provides an experimental field wherein the needs of students or teachers might leave behind the shackles of the merely convenient, routine, or realistic.

Since this study traverses an ultimately ephemeral discourse of mutable archetypal forms, Jung’s approach to inquiry is an essential model. Jung notes that “an archetypal content expresses itself, first and foremost, in metaphors” (“The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious” 156). He reflects on the nuances of how they manifest and take on importance in the past and present day: “Archetypes were, and still are, living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously, and they have a strange way of making sure of their effect” (“The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious” 156-157).

The Jungian process of entering into and interpreting an open terrain of dream, myth, personal, and collective imagery is useful when interpreting fantasy literature, rather than trying to reduce fantasy literature to a singular maxim or meaning.

Clear-cut distinctions and strict formulations are quite impossible in this field, seeing that a kind of fluid interpenetration belongs to the very nature of all archetypes. They can only be roughly circumscribed at best. Their living meaning comes out more from their presentation as a whole than from a single formulation. Every attempt to focus them more sharply is immediately punished by the intangible core of meaning losing its luminosity. No archetype can be reduced to a simple formula. It is a vessel which we can never empty, and never fill. It has a potential existence only, and when it takes shape in matter it is no



longer what it was. It persists throughout the ages and requires interpreting ever anew. (Jung, "The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious" 179)

This investigative approach necessitates and reinforces openness in exploring whether archetypes each present their own models and limits as to the manner in which education forms or defines them. Perhaps the spirit of this investigation, to borrow a phrase from Jung, is aligned with the quest of "ferreting out possibilities" of each archetypal subject and its potential connection to magic and education (224).

My inquiry will occasionally expand beyond the world(s) of fantasy literature and into historical accounts and folktales involving the archetypes I have chosen. At times, a more holistic image of an archetype in literature can be attained by finding insights within historical and mythical materials.

## Chapter IV

### THE WIZARD ARCHETYPE AND WIZARD SCHOOLS: KNOWLEDGE, MAGIC AND THE DISCIPLINED IMAGINATION

#### **Introduction**

This chapter offers an exploration of the theme of the wizard school as a primary space of pedagogy in modern fantasy literature and how that illuminates educational codes and culture. The wizard school occupies a unique space in the field of pedagogy because it reveals a tension between control and freedom when dealing with a body of knowledge that is viewed as widely impactful and powerful via its magical, transformative potential. The wizard school maintains close ties to the realities of contemporary education, and it illuminates challenging aspects of educational relationships between students and teachers as well as the problematic nature of the methods of rote learning.

At the same time, the wizard school induces a mythopoeic imagination in relation to education, with archetypal representations woven into its pedagogical model, allowing for a departure from the academy. In dealing with magic, the wizard school is deeply concerned with a traditional basis for learning, and this lens becomes a primary vocational formation

for a wizard's life trajectory. This focus also acts as a metaphor for the coherent development of the creative process as a result of the combination of discipline and imagination.

In this chapter, I will concentrate primarily on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin and J.K. Rowling, both of whom developed complex and nuanced visions of wizard schools: the school of Roke in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* series and Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.

### **The Roke School in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* series**

In Le Guin's *Earthsea* series, we are cautioned that "Roke keeps its secrets" ("The Other Wind" 131) but we are also offered insights on the history, mission, and structure of the wizard school:

The School on Roke: The school was founded in about 650...The Nine Masters or master-teachers of Roke were originally: Windkey, the master of the spells controlling weather. Hand, master of all illusions. Herbal, master of the arts of healing. Changer, master of the spells that transform matter and bodies. Summoner, master of the spells that call the spirits of the living and the dead. Namer, master of the knowledge of the True Speech. Patterner, dweller in the Immanent Grove, master of meaning and intent. Finder, master of the spells of finding, binding and returning. Doorkeeper, master of the entering and leaving of the Great House. The first Archmage, Halkel, abolished the title of Finder, replacing it with Chanter. The Chanter's task is the preservation of teaching of all the oral deeds, lays, songs, etc...and the sung spells. ("Tales From Earthsea" 276-277)

The Roke School has a rich history, with a tightly structured administration. The enormous curriculum unveils esoteric areas of study, with the scholarly mission of attempting to control forces of nature and reality. Similar to alchemy, the portrayed pathways of knowledge are vast yet impenetrable. This quest for preservation of teaching,

and mastery of subjects, is an administrative effort that executes control over both the natural world and unnatural forces, such as illusion and necromancy. The term preservation indicates that these areas of study are not means for endless experiment and inquiry, but rather fixed knowledge sources that are carefully passed on, without changes of state. This aspect of pedagogy compromises transformation. Yet, there is mystery surrounding the content of the areas of study. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, we learn what the educational subject of illusion, and the art of the Master Changer, entail:

Illusion fools the beholder's senses; it makes him see and hear and feel that the thing is changed. But it does not change the thing. To change this rock into a jewel, you must change its true name. And to do that, my son, even to so small a scrap of the world, is to change the world. It can be done. Indeed it can be done. It *is* the art of the Master Changer, and you will learn it, when you are ready to learn it. But you must not change one thing, one pebble, one grain of sand, until you know what good and evil will follow on that act. The world is in balance, in Equilibrium. A wizard's power of Changing and of Summoning can shake the balance of the world. It is dangerous, that power. It is most perilous. It must follow knowledge, and serve need. To light a candle is to cast a shadow. (Le Guin, "A Wizard of Earthsea" 44)

The wizard assigns readiness as a prerequisite to the act of learning, warning of consequences of changing a true name; balance must not be tampered with. The act of learning is cast into the future: "You *will* learn it." Creative impulse is neutralized and secondary to caution and withdrawal: "You *must not* change one thing." In Le Guin's work, a central narrative theme is correcting the unforeseen consequences that follow naïve intention, as a result of incomplete knowledge or undeveloped training. Light is balanced by darkness, danger surrounds power, and error leads to ruin. Le Guin reflects on this sense of balance and ethical imperative:

Most great fantasies contain a very strong, striking moral dialectic, often expressed as a struggle between the Darkness and the Light. ... The ethics of the unconscious ... are not simple at all. They are, indeed, very strange. (Le Guin, "The Child and the Shadow" 66)

The wizard, Ogion, warns Ged how sorcery is not a game, and action must be abandoned without full knowledge:

Ged listen to me now. Have you never thought how danger must surround power as shadow does light? This sorcery is not a game we play for pleasure or for praise. Think of this: that every word, every act of our Art is said and done for either good, or for evil. Before you speak or do you must know the price that is to pay! (Le Guin, "A Wizard of Earthsea" 23)

Taking the action of speaking or doing without knowing what is to follow is portrayed as deviant. In *The Magic Art*, T.A. Shippy describes this tension as part of an apprenticeship: "The temptation which runs as a thread through the account of Ged's apprenticeship is to act, to exploit his power, to reject the wise passivity of the true mage" (104).

Unformed knowledge, partially formed ideas, and uncontrolled or hasty means of experiment are considered arrogant:

You have great power in-born in you, and you used that power wrongly, to work a spell over which you had no control, not knowing how that spell affects the balance of light and dark, life and death, good and evil. And you were moved to do this by pride and by hate. Is it any wonder the result was ruin? You summoned a spirit from the dead, but with it came one of the Powers of unlife. Uncalled it came from a place where there are no names. Evil, it wills to work evil through you. ... It is the shadow of your arrogance, the shadow of your ignorance, that shadow you cast. Has shadow a name? (Le Guin, "A Wizard of Earthsea" 66)

With great power comes the need for great responsibility, as the saying goes; summoning that which lies outside of the realm of knowledge and control unveils not only ignorance but, in the worst case scenario, it also unleashes evil. In wizardry, there are the dichotomies of right and wrong, good and evil, knowing and unknowing. The shadow has no name, and therefore is unknowable and uncontrollable. The quest, in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, is to unravel the mystery of this shadow, restoring order and control:

From the Masters and from ancient lore-books Ged learned what he could about such beings as this shadow he had loosed; little was there to learn. No such creature was described or spoken of directly. There were at best hints here and there in the old books of things that might be like the shadow-beast. It was not a ghost of human man, nor was it a creature of the Old Powers of the Earth, and yet it seemed it might have some link with these. ... And the Masters did not know where such a shadow might come from: from unlife, the Archmage had said; from the wrong side of the world, said the Master Changer; and the Master Summoner said, 'I do not know.' (Le Guin, "A Wizard of Earthsea" 70-71)

This shadow creature embodies absence and escapes definition. "Little was there to learn" is a misconception; rather, there's a need for discovery. The shadow creature's initial lack of precise identification wreaks havoc for the protagonist in the narrative. The act of not knowing brings imbalance; it destabilizes the fixed tradition of knowledge being passed down, entailing instead the emergence of new experience, new imagination, and new questions.

Epiphanies in narratives involving wizards surface only when mistakes occur, allowing for experiment, trial and error. Resolution occurs not only by knowing, but by doing. Many works of fantasy involve wizards not quite getting the spell right, and clumsy magic leads to unseemly consequences that must be overcome. Even an expert wizard teacher cannot ensure for their apprentice that flawless learning may take place. For example, in *The Last Unicorn* by Peter Beagle the wizard Schmendrick is described by his mighty teacher as inept and incompetent, beyond a scale previously known, and thus time is stopped for him to learn lessons that his teacher could not successfully reinforce:

'I will tell you a story,' Schmendrick said. 'As a child I was apprenticed to the mightiest magician of all, the great Nikos, whom I have spoken of before. But even Nikos, who could turn cats into cattle, snowflakes into snowdrops, and unicorns into men, could not change me into so much as a carnival cardsharp. At last he said to me, 'My son, your ineptitude is so vast, your incompetence so profound, that I am certain you are inhabited by greater power than I have ever

known. Unfortunately, it seems to be working backward at the moment, and even I can find no way to set it right. It must be that you are meant to find your way to reach your power in time; but frankly, you should live so long as that will take you. Therefore I grant it that you shall not age from this day forth, but will travel the world round and round, eternally inefficient, until at last you come to yourself and know what you are. Don't thank me. I tremble at your doom.' (127-128)

Schmendrick narrates his educational trajectory as a story but he accepts it as a truth.

From his teacher's perspective, there is little hope: "I can find no way to set it right." A curse is placed on the student to live as long as it takes to reach a sense of understanding. The mythic dimension of education is presented with an ultimatum of finding oneself, and achieving self-knowledge, or of being forlorn and potentially doomed.

### **Wizardry and the Practiced Art of Naming and Knowing**

In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, the power derived from knowing names and finding names is a practice that takes a lifetime. This skill is part of a wizard's vocation:

Knowing names is my job. My art. To weave the magic of a thing, you see, one must find its true name out. In my lands we keep our true names hidden all our lives long, from all but those whom we trust utterly; for there is great power, and great peril, in a name. Once, at the beginning of time, when Segoy raised the isles of Earthsea from the ocean deeps, all things bore their own true names. And all doing of magic, all wizardry, hangs still upon the knowledge – the relearning, the remembering – of that true and ancient language of the Making. There are spells to learn, of course, ways to use the words; and one must know the consequences, too. But what a wizard spends his life at is finding out the names of things, and finding out how to find out the names of things. (Le Guin, "The Tombs of Atuan" 131)

The power of naming is both an art and a livelihood. A wizard's power is dependent on relearning and remembering an ancient language. This knowledge is not created or recreated; rather, it is retrieved.

The act of learning names is different than casting spells, as it involves discovering what is hidden. Le Guin frames “all doing of magic” as contingent upon knowledge, noting that knowing is just as powerful as doing, and “one must know the consequences.” This ethos echoes Paulo Freire’s insights, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

Apart from inquiry, apart from praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (72)

Freire unites inquiry with praxis. For a wizard, the task of relearning and remembering is not a brief stint but a lifelong endeavor, and experience is mitigated at times by the skill of first mastering passed down knowledge even though this type of knowledge may be fixed -- unless failure creeps in to destabilize it, allowing for wisdom.

In the Roke School, education is presented as a rigorous process, and while it provides a young wizard with depth of knowledge, it discourages the manipulation of this knowledge in ways that may disrupt balance. For Ged, the Roke School is arduous and intense. A wizard’s magic is earned through “dusty and fathomless matter of learning” in cold, half-darkness and silence (Le Guin, “A Wizard of Earthsea” 46). It involves memorization and a vision of gaining power as an end reward to academic toiling. The act of recalling information overrides the act of creating, and the task of memorization is inexhaustible. There is little sound, little light, and little resistance. In C.S. Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the White Witch scorns this magical, yet rote, type of learning that depends on rules and books, which she claims entered extinction, in her world:

I see ... you are a Magician – of a sort... You are a little, peddling Magician who works by rules and books. There is no real Magic in your blood and heart. Your kind was made an end of in my world a thousand years ago. (84)



For the White Witch, real magic seems to need some element of freedom, with an abandonment of rules. In contrast, in *A Wizard of Earthsea* real magic involves mastery along the road to creative freedom:

But magic, true magic, is worked only by those beings who speak the Hardic tongue of Earthsea, or the Old Speech from which it grew. . . . That is the language dragons speak, and the language Segoy spoke who made the islands of the world, and the language of our lays and songs, spells, enchantments, and invocations. Its words lie hidden and changed among our Hardic words. We call the foam on waves *sukien*: that word is made from two words of the Old Speech, *suk*, feather, and *inien*, the sea. Feather of the sea is foam. But you cannot charm the foam calling it *sukien*; you must use its own true name in the Old Speech, which is *essa*. Any witch knows a few of these words in the Old Speech, and a mage knows many. But there are many more, and some have been lost over the ages, and some have been hidden, and some are known only to dragons and to the Old Powers of Earth, and some are known to no living creature; and no man could learn them all. For there is no end to that language. (Le Guin, "A Wizard of Earthsea" 47)

Wizards know true magic through Old Speech, a hidden language, and yet these words may be lost or changed, allowing for potential manipulation within the apparently systematic pedagogy. Freire reflects on transformation and nourishment by "true words":

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. (88)

Songs, spells, enchantments, and invocations are language based, and it is impossible to learn their infinite scope.

The art of learning magic is presented with necessary limits. The act of naming allows rupture from rote memorization, since it entails discovery and change, but this is discouraged. A wizard may have the power to change the world, through Old Speech, but only at a cost of disrupting balance. Even so, learning the Old Speech allows the act of choosing to take place. Bernard Selinger notes that language becomes the fulcrum of possibility in Le Guin's work:

The potential of naming, of language of art, to change the world is always present and we are predisposed to take some comfort in that possibility. Although any change means some degree of disruption to the self, some loss of continuity, it can also mean the kind of rebirth that strengthens identity. Learning the Old Speech, the language in which things are named with their true names, means having the option to change things or to let them remain the same. (34-35)

A wizard must negotiate change, and reflect on the consequences of shattering the continuous flow of things. Learning magic bears options, yet is entrapped by the rigidity of a fixed structure. In Le Guin's work, memorization is used to maintain order and control, which are central to a wizard's training, beyond the learning of gaudy tricks:

Diamond, instead of learning spells and illusions and transformations and all such gaudy tricks ... sat in a narrow room at the back of the wizard's narrow house on a narrow back street of the old city, memorizing long, long lists of words, words of power in the Language of the Making. Plants and parts of plants and animals and parts of animals and islands and parts of islands, parts of ships, parts of the human body. The words never made sense, never made sentences, only lists. Long, long lists. ... 'Memory, memory,' Hemlock said. 'Talent's no good without memory!' He was not harsh, but he was unyielding. ... The wizard sometimes had him come with him to his work, mostly laying spells of safety on ships and houses, purifying wells, and sitting on the councils of the city, seldom speaking but always listening... 'Keep the Equilibrium, it's all in that,' Hemlock said, and, 'Knowledge, order, and control.' Those words he said so often that they made a tune in Diamond's head and sang themselves over and over. (Le Guin, "Tales From Earthsea" 112)

The rote memorization of lists keeps equilibrium and involves conformity and complacency. Transformation is denounced as dangerous, and the world is left static.

At Roke, wizardry is shaped into a curriculum, for training purposes, but also to work against chaos and maintain peace:

Under Roke's steady growing influence, wizardry was shaped into a coherent body of knowledge, its use increasingly controlled by moral and political purpose. Wizards trained at the school went to other islands of the Archipelago to work against warlords, pirates, and feuding nobles, preventing raids and forays, imposing penalties and settlements, enforcing boundaries, and protecting individuals, forms, towns, cities, and shipping, until social order was re-established. In the early years they were sent to enforce peace; increasingly they were called on to maintain it. (Le Guin, "Tales From Earthsea" 271)

The academic shaping of a coherent body of knowledge is for training wizards to control magic. Education is used to re-establish and maintain social order. At Roke, a wizard's staff is received from a teacher after training, and one's power is expected to be used benevolently to help protect communities:

A wizard ... was a man who received his staff from a teacher, himself a wizard, who had taken special responsibility for his training. It was usually the Archmage who gave a student his staff and made him wizard. This kind of teaching and succession occurred elsewhere than Roke ... but the Masters of Roke came to regard with suspicion a student of anyone not trained on Roke. Mage remained an essentially undefined term: a wizard of great power. The name and office of archmage were invented. ... A vital ethical and intellectual force, the archmage also exerted considerable political power. On the whole this power was used benevolently. Maintaining Roke as a strong centralising, normalising, pacific element in Archipelagan society, the archmages sent out sorcerers and wizards trained to understand the ethical practice of magic and to protect communities from drought, plague, invaders, dragons, and the unscrupulous use of their art. (Le Guin, "Tales From Earthsea" 278)

The wizard school's curriculum is designed to train wizards to understand the purpose and practice of magic. Le Guin also offers insights on a time when lack of control led to widespread misuse of magic:

Magic was a wild talent before the time of Morred, who as both king and mage established intellectual and moral discipline for the art magic, gathering wizards to work together at the court for the general good and to study the ethical bases and constraints of their practice. ... In the Dark Time, with no control over wizardly powers and wide-spread misuse of them, magic came into general disrepute. (Le Guin, "Tales From Earthsea" 276)

Magic, as a so-called wild talent, is framed as unethical; magic required discipline to become an art and must be constrained and controlled. In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince*, this control is reinforced by Dumbledore: "At Hogwarts ... we teach you not only to use magic, but to control it. ... All new wizards must accept that, in entering our world, they abide by our laws" (273). Harry acknowledges the nuances

and complexity that coincides with learning magic: “There was a lot more to magic ... than waving your wand and saying a few funny words” (Rowling, “Sorcerer’s Stone” 133).

### **The Disciplined Imagination**

In Le Guin’s body of critical essays, *The Language of the Night*, she muses upon the value and purpose of a disciplined imagination:

By ‘imagination,’ then, I personally mean the free play of the mind, both intellectually and sensory. By ‘play’ I mean recreation, re-creation, the recombination of what is known into what is new. By ‘free’ I mean that the action is done without an immediate object of profit – spontaneously. That does not mean, however, that there may not be a purpose behind the free play of the mind, a goal; and the goal may be a very serious object indeed ... To be free, after all, is not to be undisciplined. I should say that the discipline of the imagination may in fact be the essential method or technique of both art and science. It is our Puritanism, insisting that discipline means repression or punishment, which confuses the subject. To discipline something, in the proper sense of the word, does not mean to repress it, but to train it – to encourage it to grow, and act, and be fruitful, whether it is a peach tree or a human mind. I think that a great many American men have been taught just the opposite. They have learned to repress their imagination, to reject it as something childish or effeminate, unprofitable, and probably sinful. They have learned to fear it. But they have never learned to discipline it at all. (41-42)

Le Guin’s concept of the disciplined imagination has significant pedagogical implications: talent must be cultivated. Imagination must be trained on an intellectual level – not repressed -- for personal growth. Le Guin notes that the art of wizardry in her work is a metaphor for the creative process:

The trilogy is, in one aspect, about the artist. The artist as magician. ... That is the only allegorical aspect it has of which I am conscious. ... Wizardry is artistry. The trilogy is then, in this sense, about art, the creative experience, the creative process. (qtd. In Donna White, “Dancing with Dragons” 53)

The creative experience must be fostered as an art, not forsaken as ineffable, without the possibility of mastery. However, there must be balance between discipline and the free-play of imagination; there must be room for error and an expectation of contradictions in order to enhance creativity and lessen the claws of fixity. At the Roke School, we perceive a tension between discipline and imagination, since control is instilled and at times inevitably abandoned in order for the pupil to flourish.

At Hogwarts, the curriculum is also structured and controlled. Youngsters who display the proper signs of magic are educated in a controlled environment. In Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, we learn of the history of Hogwarts, in light of this mission, through the voice of Professor Binns:

You all know, of course, that Hogwarts was founded over a thousand years ago – the precise date is uncertain – by the four greatest witches and wizards of the age. The four school Houses are named after them: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin. They built this castle together, far from prying Muggle eyes, for it was an age when magic was feared by common people, and witches and wizards suffered much persecution. ... For a few years, the founders worked in harmony together, seeking out youngsters who showed signs of magic and bringing them to the castle to be educated. But then disagreements spring up between them. A rift began to grow between Slytherin and the others. Slytherin wished to be more *selective* about the students admitted to Hogwarts. He believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families. He disliked taking students of Muggle parentage, believing them to be untrustworthy. After a while, there was a serious argument on the subject between Slytherin and Gryffindor, and Slytherin left the school. (150)

We are offered insights on conflict among the four greatest witches and wizards based on admissions selectivity and exclusiveness of keeping “magical learning” within “all-magic families,” and this is not tied to abilities, but to legacies and academies. This political tension lingers without resolve, after a thousand years. Hermione Granger falls into the category of being first-generation-to-be-educated at a wizard school:

Nobody in my family's magic at all, it was ever such a surprise when I got my letter, but I was ever so pleased, of course, I mean, it's the very best school of witchcraft there is, I've heard – I've learned all our course books by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough. (Rowling, "Sorcerer's Stone" 106)

Throughout Rowling's work, Hermione is portrayed as an archetype of a model student, achieving high grades, memorizing books, and going above and beyond in her studies with unmatched discipline, perhaps to compensate for her lack of magical legacy with extraordinary scholarly merit. In *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*, Hermione bends time and space to over-achieve in her studies, which is sanctioned by the Ministry of Magic:

'Where did you get that hourglass thing?' 'It's called a Time-Turner,' Hermione whispered, 'and I got it from Professor Gonagall on our first day back. I've been using it all year to get to all my lessons. Professor McGonagall made me swear I wouldn't tell anyone. She had to write all sorts of letters to the Ministry of Magic so I could have one. She had to tell them that I was a model student, and that I'd never, ever use it for anything except my studies. ... I've been turning it back so I could do hours over again, that's how I've been doing several lessons at once, see?' (Rowling 396)

Hermione is nearly a caricature of an obsessive student, quickly mastering material beyond other students, and controlling time to absorb more lessons. Her subversive act is sanctioned but initially kept secret.

In contrast to Roke, Hogwarts mimics many of the administrative functions and rhythms of ordinary colleges and universities. For example, Hogwarts students receive official letters of admission. Harry's letter is quotidian and succinct:

Dear Mr. Potter, We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment. Term begins on September 1. We await your owl by no later than July 31. (Rowling, "Sorcerer's Stone" 51)

The admissions letter presents mandatory books and equipment as well as a mandatory response date, without any flowery, congratulatory accolades.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Professor Umbridge provides a speech about the importance of educating young witches and wizards with *careful* instruction:

The Ministry of Magic has always considered the education of young witches and wizards to be of vital importance. The rare gifts with which you were born may come to nothing if not nurtured and honed by careful instruction. The ancient skills unique to the Wizarding community must be passed down through the generations lest we lose them forever. The treasure trove of magical knowledge amassed by our ancestors must be guarded, replenished, and polished by those who have been called to the noble profession of teaching. ... Every headmaster and headmistress of Hogwarts has brought something new to the weighty task of governing this historic school, and that is as it should be, for without progress there will be stagnation and decay. There again, progress for progress's sake must be discouraged, for our tried and tested traditions often require no tinkering. A balance, then, between old and new, between permanence and change, between tradition and innovation...because some changes will be for the better, while others will come, in the fullness of time, to be recognized as errors of judgment. Meanwhile, some old habits will be retained, and rightly so, whereas others, outmoded and outworn, must be abandoned. Let us move forward then, into a new era of openness, effectiveness, and accountability, intent on preserving what ought to be preserved, perfecting what needs to be perfected, and pruning wherever we find practices that ought to be prohibited. (212-214)

The administrative formality of effectiveness and accountability overshadow any illusion of openness. Tinkering with tradition is hardly encouraged, and urgency is assigned to the task of passing down “the treasure trove of magical knowledge.” Similar to *A Wizard of Earthsea*, knowledge is ancient, transmitted, and preserved. The clients of this valuable training are only those born with rare gifts. To the outside world, Hogwarts is inaccessible and undetectable:

‘Hogwarts is hidden. ... It’s bewitched,’ said Hermione. ‘If a Muggle looks at it, all they see is a moldering old ruin with a sign over the entrance saying DANGER, DO NOT ENTER, UNSAFE.’ (Rowling, “Goblet of Fire” 166)

The art of illusion wards off the public. Hogwarts trains wizards presumably to protect the world from evil, but it does not serve as an accessible, community learning center; it

is exclusive, as Dumbledore notes: “‘Hogwarts ... is a school for people with special abilities’” (Rowling, “Goblet of Fire” 270).

Honing and developing special abilities are perhaps distinct from believing one is special. As Professor Snape says to Harry: “You are neither special nor important” (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 591). Pride and entitlement, surrounding the idea of *being* special, lead the wizard Voldemort (Tom Riddle) to the dark side, according to Dumbledore: “Riddle was perfectly ready to believe that he was – to use his word – ‘special’ ... I had no idea that he was to grow up to be what he is” (Rowling, “Half-Blood Prince” 276). In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, a flashback to a young version of Voldemort allows for a glimpse of his feelings of self-importance: “knew I was different .... I knew I was special. Always knew there was something” (Rowling 271). According to Dumbledore, Voldemort was in fact a distinctly talented student:

He was probably the most brilliant student Hogwarts has ever seen. ...Very few people know that Lord Voldemort was once called Tom Riddle. I taught him myself, fifty years ago, at Hogwarts. He disappeared after leaving the school ... traveled far and wide ... sank so deeply into the Dark Arts, consorted with the very worst of our kind, underwent so many dangerous, magical transformations, that when he resurfaced as Lord Voldemort, he was barely recognizable. Hardly anyone connected Lord Voldemort with the clever, handsome boy who was once Head Boy here. (Rowling, “Prisoner of Azkaban” 329)

Mystery surrounds Voldemort’s trajectory, beyond Hogwarts’ school walls. He underwent transformation that was unsanctioned by the academy; this growth is cast as unnatural, like a mutation. Voldemort’s shadowy and independent engagement with the dark arts, and exotic travels, amounts to a mutation of appearance and name. Disappearance after school leads to waywardness. Upon leaving Hogwarts, his renegade curiosity about the Dark Arts carries the consequence of terrible, and uncontrollable,



transfiguration. Although once “head boy” at Hogwarts, outside of the academy, he became monstrous. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, we learn that

Voldemort’s vision and desire was to never leave Hogwarts, according to Dumbledore:

Voldemort was, I believe, more attached to this school than he has ever been to a person. Hogwarts was where he had been happiest; the first and only place he had felt at home. ... Secondly, the castle is a stronghold of ancient magic. Undoubtedly Voldemort had penetrated many more of its secrets than most of the students who pass through the place, but he may have felt that there were still mysteries to unravel, stores of magic to tap. And thirdly, as a teacher, he would have had great power and influence over young witches and wizards. ... I do not imagine for an instant that Voldemort envisaged spending the rest of his life at Hogwarts, but I do think that he saw it as a useful recruiting ground, and a place where he might begin to build himself an army. (432)

Voldemort envisioned himself as a teacher, hoping to influence young witches and wizards, and perhaps summoning followers serve his own unseemly purposes. During the final battle in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Voldemort expresses sincere reverence for Hogwarts and faculty:

I know that you are preparing to fight. ... Your efforts are futile. You cannot fight me. I do not want to kill you. I have great respect for the teachers of Hogwarts. I do not want to spill magical blood. ... Give me Harry Potter, and I shall leave the school untouched. (Rowling 609-610)

Voldemort attests to having admiration for teachers, claiming to want to spare them from violence, and promising to leave Hogwarts unchanged. Perhaps, based on his testimonial along with Dumbledore’s reflections on him, this claim is sincere.

### **Wizardry and Rites of Passage Through Pain**

Not all teachers at Hogwarts are admirable. The pedagogical methodology at wizard schools is at times fraught with negative learning experiences. Professor

Umbridge is portrayed as a lousy villain and misanthropic beast of a person. She unapologetically inflicts pain on Harry:

I want you to write, ‘I must not tell lies,’ she told him softly. ‘How many times?’ Harry asked, with a creditable imitation of politeness. ‘Oh, as long as it takes for the message to sink in,’ said Umbridge sweetly. ... Harry raised the sharp black quill and then realized what was missing. ‘You haven’t given me any ink,’ he said. ‘Oh, you won’t need ink,’ said Professor Umbridge with the merest suggestion of a laugh in her voice. Harry placed the point of the quill on the paper and wrote I must not tell lies. He let out a gasp of pain. The words had appeared on the parchment in what appeared to be shining red ink. At the same time, the words had appeared on the back of Harry’s right hand, cut into his skin as though traced there by a scalpel – yet even as he stared at the shining cut, the skin healed over again, leaving the place where it had been slightly redder than before but quite smooth... And on it went. Again and again Harry wrote the words on the parchment in what he soon came to realize was not ink, but his own blood. And again and again the words were cut into the back of his hand, healed, and then reappeared the next time he set quill to parchment. Darkness fell outside Umbridge’s window. Harry did not ask when he would be allowed to stop. He did not even check his watch. He knew she was watching him for signs of weakness and he was not going to show any, not even if he had to sit here all night, cutting open his own hand with his quill. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 266-267)

This blatant abuse by a teacher matches even Voldemort’s malice. Harry is scrutinized by his teacher, and he endures, but not without suffering. His blood is shed, but he resists showing signs of weakness, persevering through pain.

Le Guin reflects on the bridging virtue of pain:

Nothing is more personal, more unshareable, than pain. ... Pain, the loneliest experience, gives rise to sympathy ... the bridge between the self and other, the means of communication. (“Myth and Archetype in Science Fiction” 78)

Le Guin also describes pain as part of being human:

All the pain and suffering and waste and loss and injustice we will meet all our lives long, and must face and cope with over and over and over, and admit, and live with, in order to live human lives at all. (“The Child and the Shadow” 69)

Enduring pain and surviving adversity is also a theme, with educational outcomes of growth, in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, as a Bene Gesserit witch conveys her intentions of pain infliction and observation to Paul:

I observed you in pain, lad. Pain's merely the axis of the test. Your mother's told you about our ways of observing. I see the signs of her teaching in you. Our test is crisis and observation. (22)

Pain is inflicted on the student, by the teacher, and then observed with distance. The Bene Gesserit witches are trained for this task at an ancient Bene Gesserit school:

'Why do you test for humans?' he asked. 'To set you free.' 'Free?' ... 'Schools were started to train human talents.' 'Bene Gesserit schools?' She nodded. (Herbert 23)

Paul's test is simply to keep his hand in a box, permitting fear and pain to pass:

'You pass the first test. Now, here's the way of the rest of it: If you withdraw your hand from the box you die. This is the only rule. Keep your hand in the box and live. Withdraw it and die.' ... Curiosity reduced Paul's fear to a manageable level. He heard truth in the old woman's voice, no denying it. If his mother stood guard out there ... if this were truly a test. ... And whatever it was, he knew himself caught in it, trapped by that hand at his neck: the gom jabbar. He recalled the response from the Litany against Fear as his mother had taught him out of the Bene Gesserit rite. 'I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.' (Herbert 19)

Paul's test, with one rule of not withdrawing his hand, forces him to face fear. He avoids a swift death by enduring pain:

'You will feel pain in this hand within the box. Pain. But! Withdraw the hand and I'll touch your neck with my gom jabbar – the death so swift it's like the fall of the headsman's axe. Withdraw your hand and the gom jabbar takes you. Understand?' 'What's in the box?' 'Pain.' He felt an increasing tingling in his hand, pressed his lips together. How could this be a test? he wondered. The tingling became an itch ... Pain throbbed up his arm. ... His world emptied of everything except that hand immersed in agony, the ancient face inches away staring at him.' (Herbert 20)

Paul passes the test, but eventually revolts against the Bene Gesserit witch, reversing the role of observer:

‘Try your old tricks on me, old witch,’ Paul said. ‘Where’s your gom jabbar? Try looking into that place where you dare not look! You’ll find me there staring out at you!’ ... ‘Observe her, comrades! This is a Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother, patient in a patient cause. ... Observe her! ... Here I stand ... but ... I ... will ... never ... do ... her ... bidding!’ (Herbert 548-549)

For Paul, foreshadowing the experience of Harry Potter, pain becomes an internal aspect of the student experience, manifested later in strength and resolve to overcome adversity found in the school’s compromised structures and in the greater world.

The act of accepting and enduring pain is framed as an integral aspect of education; but, at times, it also results in a rupture of hierarchy, resulting in student rebellion:

‘She’s an awful woman,’ said Hermione in a small voice. ‘Awful. You know, I was just saying to Ron when you came in ... we’ve got to do something about her ... something about what a dreadful teacher she is, and how we’re not going to learn any defense from her at all ... maybe the time’s come when we should just – just do it ourselves ... learn Defense Against the Dark Arts ourselves. ... We need a teacher, a proper one, who can show us how to use the spells and correct us if we’re going wrong. ... I’m talking about you, Harry. ... I’m talking about you teaching us Defense Against the Dark Arts. ... Harry, you’re the best in the year at Defense Against the Dark Arts.’ (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 325-326)

The students collectively revolt against the dreadful teacher, taking action to learn outside of the academy, or at least outside of the classroom. The students set up a defense against their teacher, not just the dark arts. This rebellion uplifts Harry’s spirits, serving as a beacon of hope for agency:

The knowledge that they were doing something to resist Umbridge and the Ministry, and that he was a key part of the rebellion, gave Harry a feeling of immense satisfaction. He kept reliving Saturday’s meeting in his mind: all those people, coming to him to learn Defense Against the Dark Arts ... and the looks on their faces as they had heard some of the things he had done. ... The knowledge that all those people did not think him a lying weirdo, but someone to be admired,

buoyed him up so much that he was still cheerful on Monday morning, despite the imminent prospect of all his least favorite classes. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 350-351)

In a subversive manner, the student adopts the role and authority of teacher. Even Freire communicates the value surrounding this fluidity:

Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. (72)

The triumph of Harry’s role as a teacher, however, is short-lasting and stymied by existing administrative powers. The disciplinary action of expulsion is imposed on unsanctioned student groups:

By Order of the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts: All Student Organizations, Societies, Teams, Groups, and Clubs are henceforth disbanded. An Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club is hereby defined as a regular meeting of three or more students. Permission to re-form may be sought from the High Inquisitor (Professor Umbridge). No Student Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club may exist without the knowledge and approval of the High Inquisitor. Any student found to have formed, or to belong to, an Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club that has not been approved by the High Inquisitor will be expelled. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 351-352)

The subversive freedom of learning that students sought, outside of the classroom, is euphoric but short-lived, once disciplinary threats are bandied about. The students’ dissatisfaction with Professor Umbridge is attributed to her unyielding use of the “Ministry-approved curriculum,” to an extreme at the compromise of learning outcomes:

Professor Umbridge opened her handbag, extracted her own wand, which was an unusually short one, and tapped the blackboard sharply with it; words appeared on the blackboard at once: *Defense Against the Dark Arts. A Return to Basic Principles*. ‘Well now, your teaching in this subject has been rather disrupted and fragmented, hasn’t it?’ stated Professor Umbridge, turning to face the class with her hands clasped neatly in front of her. ‘The constant changing of teachers, many of whom do not seem to have followed any Ministry-approved curriculum, has unfortunately resulted in your being far below the standard we would expect to see in your O.W.L. year. You will be pleased to know, however, that these problems are now to be rectified. We will be following a carefully structured,

theory-centered, Ministry-approved course of defensive magic this year. Copy down the following, please.’ She rapped the blackboard again; the first message vanished and was replaced by: Course aims: 1. Understanding the principles underlying defensive magic. 2. Learning to recognize situations in which defensive magic can legally be used. 3. Placing the use of defensive magic in a context for practical use. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 239-240)

Professor Umbridge’s idea of rectifying the problem of teacher turnover leads to a rigid and structured course of study. The Ministry-approved course provides an illusion of assuaging problems, and learning outcomes are to be measured by standardized exams. Theory is prioritized over practice, and magic is contextualized for practical use, but not practiced.

This problem of theory overriding praxis also surfaces in Le Guin’s *A Wizard of Earthsea*: “Ged had learned all he could of dragons at the School, but it is one thing to read about dragons and another to meet them” (77). In wizard schools, there is tension between learning versus doing, and theory versus practice. Professor Umbridge prioritizes standardized exam results over learning outcomes, stressing how school is *not* the real world:

‘As long as you have studied theory hard enough, there is no reason why you should not be able to perform the spells under carefully controlled examination conditions.’ ... ‘And what good’s theory going to be in the real world?’ said Harry loudly...Professor Umbridge looked up. ‘This is school, Mr. Potter, not the real world.’ (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 244)

While Professor Umbridge’s voice reflects pedagogical tensions that actually have a foothold in reality, in the novel we are offered a fantastical and visceral student reaction to her views, transforming the structured classroom into a ghoulish freak-show:

Umbridge only had to enter her classroom for the students assembled there to faint, vomit, develop dangerous fevers, or else spout blood from both nostrils. Shrieking with rage and frustration she attempted to trace the mysterious symptoms to their source, but the students told her stubbornly they were suffering ‘Umbridge-itis.’ After putting four successive classes in detention and failing to

discover their secret she was forced to give up and allow the bleeding, swooning, sweating, and vomiting students to leave her classes in droves. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 678)

The students’ collective efforts are eventually successful in driving Umbridge out of Hogwarts. Along with the aid of magic and bodily fluids, the students’ revolt is quite effective.

### **Wizardry and Breaking the Shackles of the Routine**

The wizard archetype deals with the routine, but also entails breaking the shackles of the routine. Throughout Rowling’s work, we learn of mediocre classes that are endured:

Divination was Harry’s least favorite class after Potions, which was due mainly to Professor Trelawney’s habit of predicting his premature death every few lessons. A thin woman, heavily draped in shawls and glittering with strings of beads, she always reminded Harry of some kind of insect, with her glasses hugely magnifying her eyes. (Rowling, “Order of the Phoenix” 236)

While the Potions class professor reminded Harry of something bug-like, many of Harry’s professors are beyond human. Teachers not only fall across a spectrum of good and evil, but they are also chimerical and fantastical. This also holds true in Rick Riordan’s *The Lightning Thief*: “The next few days I settled into a routine that felt almost normal, if you don’t count the fact that I was getting lessons from satyrs, nymphs, and a centaur” (107). The teachers are not neutral beings amid pandemonium; they are gods and monsters:

Mrs. Dodds was this little math teacher from Georgia who always wore a black leather jacket, even though she was fifty years old. She looked mean enough to ride a Harley right into your locker. ... The look in her eyes was beyond mad. It was evil. She’s a teacher, I thought nervously. It’s not like she’s going to hurt me

... Then the weirdest thing happened. Her eyes began to glow like barbecue coals. Her fingers stretched, turning into talons. Her jacket melted into large, leathery wings. She wasn't human. She was a shriveled hag with bat wings and claws and a mouth full of yellow fangs, and she was about to slice me to ribbons. Then things got even stranger. (Riordan 4-12)

Not only does Mrs. Dodds look sinister, she is biologically a non-human, sinister creature.

As a threat, she becomes more and more lurid, shifting from a cruel teacher to a red-eyed harpy. The presentation of teachers as nonhuman metaphorically injects a mythopoeic portal, allowing for an explanation apart from and greater than the academy.

These departures from realism also become vital conduits for characters to circumvent hierarchical structures. Le Guin acknowledges how metaphorical devices are more effective than realism in portraying contemporary social conditions:

At this point, realism is perhaps the least adequate means of understanding or portraying the incredible realities of our existence. A scientist who creates a monster in his laboratory; a librarian in the library of Babel; a wizard unable to cast a spell; a space ship having trouble in getting to Alpha Centauri: all these may be precise and profound metaphors of the human condition. The fantasist, whether he uses the ancient archetype of myth and legend or the younger ones of science and technology, may be talking as seriously as any sociologist – and a good deal more directly – about human life as it is lived, and as it might be lived, and as it ought to be lived. For after all, as great scientists have said and as all children know, it is above all by the imagination that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope. (“National Book Award Acceptance Speech” 58)

Imagination is an antidote to and a defense against difficult realities. The transformation of a teacher into a monstrous caricature carries the reader to the realm of strangeness, but also reflects reality. The threat of being destroyed by a teacher is reduced to a level of absurdity, but the scenario holds truth. The narrative is not only unreal but also mimetic, imitating educational tropes:

Fantastic narratives confound elements of both the marvelous and the mimetic. They assert that what they are telling is real – relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so – and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what – within those terms – is manifestly unreal. They pull



the reader from the apparent familiarity and security of the known and everyday world into something more strange. (Jackson 34)

Not all fantastical teachers cause a classroom to be brimming with threat or excitement.

At Hogwarts, the subject of the History of Magic is taught by a ghost, and this is described as dreadfully dull. One would assume that having a phantom teacher would be strange and extraordinary, but it is framed as unbearably boring:

History of Magic was by common consent the most boring subject ever devised by Wizard-kind. Professor Binns, their ghost teacher, had a wheezy, droning voice that was almost guaranteed to cause severe drowsiness within ten minutes, five in warm weather. He never varied the form of their lessons, but lectured them without pausing while they took notes, or rather, gazed sleepily into space. Harry and Ron had so far managed to scrape passes in this subject only by copying Hermione's notes before exams; she alone seemed able to resist the soporific power of Binn's voice. (Rowling, "Order of the Phoenix" 228-229)

Only Hermione seems able to flourish under the pedagogy of a phantom teacher, as someone who seems to achieve top assessment marks no matter the teaching format, educational conditions, or subject.

Throughout Rowling's work, there are depictions of students negotiating how to learn under unusual circumstances. Even the architecture and navigation of Hogwarts are described as disorienting, with trick doors, fake walls, and vanishing stairways that are impossible to master:

There were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide, sweeping ones; narrow, rickety ones; some that led somewhere different on a Friday; some with a vanishing step halfway up that you had to remember to jump. Then there were doors that wouldn't open unless you asked politely or tickled them in exactly the right place, and doors that weren't really doors at all, but solid walls just pretending. It was also very hard to remember where anything was, because it all seemed to move around a lot. (Rowling, "Sorcerer's Stone" 132)

Hogwarts, as a space, lacks a fixed state and provokes wandering; it is longstanding as an institution, but as a castle it is in a state of flux. At Hogwarts, there is posturing and

illusion: walls pretending to be doors and staircases that vanish. The inner workings of Hogwarts are impenetrable, perhaps not meant to be mastered. Students are required to negotiate this labyrinth anticipating disorientation.

At times, disorientation even becomes an aspect of the curriculum. For example, at Hogwarts, a Divination class is taught by a revelling centaur:

‘I know that you have learned the names of the planets and their moons in Astronomy. ... I, however, am here to explain the wisdom of centaurs, which is impersonal and impartial. We watch the skies for the great tides of evil or change that are sometimes marked there. It may take ten years to be sure of what we are seeing.’ ... It was the most unusual lesson Harry had ever attended. They did indeed burn sage and mallowsweet there on the classroom floor, and Firenze told them to look for certain shapes and symbols in the pungent fumes, but he seemed perfectly unconcerned that not one of them could see any of the signs he described. ... He was nothing like any human teacher Harry had ever had. His priority did not seem to be to teach them what he knew, but rather to impress upon them that nothing, not even centaurs’ knowledge, was foolproof. (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 604)

The centaur’s “most unusual” lesson is based on observation of the natural world and its marvels, but without certainty and conclusion. Unlike many teachers, the centaur does not dispense didactic tenets to students, but rather revels in the unfixed nature of knowledge, expressing the inability to teach how to see deeply. Snape also shares this pedagogical outlook, when teaching The Dark Arts:

‘You have had five teachers in this subject so far, I believe. ... Naturally, these teachers will all have had their own methods and priorities.’ ... ‘The Dark Arts,’ said Snape, ‘are many, varied, ever-changing, and eternal. Fighting them is like fighting a many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before. You are fighting that which is unfixed, mutating, indestructible. ... Your defences ... must therefore be as flexible and inventive as the arts you seek to undo.’ (Rowling, “*Half-Blood Prince*” 178)

Snape acknowledges the high turnover of teachers, and the disruption of learning outcomes based on this instability, introducing this as a positive preparation for the “unfixed” reality of the students’ future foes. The subject, The Dark Arts, is described as

requiring flexibility and inventiveness, as opposed to structure and a rigidly theoretical or disciplined approach. The metaphor of the hydra restates the vitality of mythopoeic forms in their ability to connect the hyper-structured world of the academy to the un-tethered nature of the world at large.

### **Conclusion**

Wizard schools, such as Hogwarts, provide a glimpse of the manner in which humdrum realities and extraordinary circumstances intersect in pedagogy. The fantastic, as a genre, allows for possibility to emerge in settings that are a part of reality's daily rhythms, yet also wildly distant from the routine. Jackson reflects on this distance: "Narratives which claim to imitate an external reality, which are mimetic (imitating), also distance experience by shaping it into meaningful patterns and sequences" (33-34). Students' experiences at Roke and at Hogwarts make clear the contemporary tensions in education between imagination (metaphorically presented as magic) and structure.

These fantastic schools elegantly extend the quotidian realities of educational systems with mythic dimensions, enabling creativity, agency, and imagination. Le Guin lauds myth for its relationship and proximity to truth:

Wouldn't you say any attempt to tell a story is an attempt to tell the truth? ... Sometimes the most direct way to tell the truth is to tell a totally implausible story, like a myth. (qtd. in Jonathan White, "Coming Back From the Silence" 92)

In Le Guin and Rowling's works, the wizard schools' missions may be to cultivate and foster systematically the mastery of magic, but we also see narratives of growth that occur solely on a condition of a wizard taking the leap – whether with courage or naivety

or scrappily somewhere in between – of breaking rules and applying creative measures that are not sanctioned by the so-called academy. Discovering common threads amongst narratives of students' experiences in wizard schools reveals the progression of disciplined learning and adherence to the academy's ethos, with an eventual blooming of the students' own confidence, self-reliance, creativity and imagination. A wizard's mandatory and often agonizing apprenticeship and studies at an academy may be painstaking; yet, experiences of failure enable their magical power and abilities to flourish. While the wizard school is one model of pedagogy, among many models within fantasy literature, it uniquely portrays knowledge structures as best engaged with by students, as agents, who can confidently experiment, confront the unknown, and learn the vast possibility of magic.

## Chapter V

### THE WITCH ARCHETYPE AND THE BODY AS A LOCUS OF MAGIC: AN INTERSECTION OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND PRAXIS

#### Introduction

The archetype of the witch establishes a pedagogy that relies on the wielder's body as a locus of magic, and the consistency of this phenomenon allows for a tracing of representations of the witch's power and embodiment from historical accounts to contemporary fantasy literature. In this chapter, I will examine two primary sources of contemporary fantasy literature focused on the witch: Deborah Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy* and Lev Grossman's *Magicians Trilogy*, and I will also utilize accounts of historical witch trials collected by Margaret Murray, to provide evidence of the manner in which some contemporary traits of the witch are both reflections of and reactions to the history of accusation and persecution.

Unlike the wizard archetype, the witch archetype does not emphasize control or harness a disciplined approach to magic, but instead negotiates self-knowledge and self-realization through bodily transformation, embodiment of lineage and the interpretation of felt signs. The sublimated quality of a witch's magic allows for a balance between

origination myths and the articulation of self-reliance, self-understanding and magical belief. Less prone to rote learning than the wizard-pupil, a witch's power arrives from understanding how selfhood and praxis are intertwined.

### **Radical Receptivity in Deborah Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy***

In Deborah Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy*, the protagonist, Diana Bishop, inherits her powers as a witch from birth, but she also receives instruction from her aunts, with nurturing guidance in order for her to grow into and realize her powers. Throughout the *All Souls Trilogy* narrative, there are salient themes of embodiment, as Diana's application of magic transforms her body and changes her visual appearance.

Diana's raw abilities are innate. We learn she that inherited her talents as a witch, as opposed to solely a systematic acquisition of skill, but she still needs to learn through instruction from other witches, such as her relatives:

Sarah gave me all sorts of instructions about the plants in the grove. Her words went in one ear and out the other, flowing through me in a way that would have made my father proud. My aunt could recite all the common and botanical names for every wildflower, weed, root, and herb as well as their uses, both benign and baneful. But her mastery was born of reading and study. I had learned the limits of book-based knowledge. ... I had discovered that being able to cite alchemical texts was nothing when weighed against experience. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 150)

Preferring experience as a pedagogical method over theory, Diana is skeptical of the value of "book-based knowledge," recognizing its limits and asserting how memorization and recitation (or rote learning) fall short in comparison to moving through the world, reflecting and learning, and applying intelligent reasoning as she goes. Nonetheless, there

are examples of fruitful learning outcomes through formal modes of one-on-one instruction, especially upon learning how and when to apply caution and restraint:

My aunt had taught me how to recognize enchanted and bewitched objects – and what to do with them. You were to avoid touching or moving them until you knew how their magic worked. Spells could be delicate, and many had protective mechanisms built into them. (Harkness, “A Discovery of Witches” 112)

Through one-on-one instruction, Diana learns the praxis of when to take action and “when not to,” in other words, to skilfully step back, pause, and refrain from engagement when the unknown is encountered. Even if this limits hands-on experience (“avoid touching or moving”), the learning process unfolds by prioritizing reflection.

Diana often counters her skepticism about learning through instruction by being mentored by her aunt Sarah who lauds her “natural talent,” but warns her of wasting these abilities:

Listen to your teachers – whoever they are. Don’t say no without hearing them out first. ... You’ve got more natural talent than any witch I’ve ever seen – maybe more than any witch who’s lived for many, many years. ... I’m glad you’re not going to waste it. Magic is a gift. (Harkness, “A Discovery of Witches” 560)

Diana’s innate talents, as a witch, are credited primarily to inheritance, and her magical abilities are honed by collective familial training efforts and among fellow coven members. Spells are passed within and among coven members and families, and thus safeguarded:

Witches learn spells. We don’t invent them. Spells were passed from generation to generation, within families and among coven members. We jealously guarded that knowledge, recording words and procedures in grimoires along with the names of the witches who mastered their accompanying magic. More experienced witches trained the youngest members of the coven to follow in their footsteps, mindful of the nuances of each spell and every witch’s past experience with it. (Harkness, “Shadow of Night” 293)

Spells, in themselves, are framed as fixed sources of knowledge if not fixed entities; they are not invented out of thin air. They are already in existence with formulaic exactness, requiring step by step adherence, without improvisation or deviation. Witchcraft requires a heedful nod to the past, and there's a negotiation between rote and constructive learning. There are pre-existing guidelines that must be understood and followed with precision and mindfulness of "every witch's past experience" that accompanies each spell; the cauldron's orthodox ingredients must be heeded and not altered. This notion of pre-existing (non-invented) spells relates to how the identity of a witch is also pre-existing (from or even before birth and non-invented). The allegiance to history qualifies and dignifies rote aspects of learning. There's an adherence to tradition, and a loyal sense of carrying out old ways. Upon investigating allegiance and adherence, this level of fixity leads to some questioning of creativity, negotiation and agency when considering this element of witchery on its own. Nonetheless, the task of learning spells (and applying knowledge) does not just rely on memorization and reverence to the past, but also requires a deep understanding of one's own power. Furthermore, attaining a holistic knowledge involving collective experiences are just as relevant as individuality and selfhood.

When magic is practiced, self-knowledge and embodiment are crucial. Magic is treated as an agent-of-sorts that moves through the body, requiring recognition of its presence, mindfulness of the body, and creative enactment:

We haven't the time to seek answers to all your questions now but must focus instead on teaching you to manage the magic as it moves through you. (Harkness, "Shadow of Night" 298)



Managing magic as it moves through the body is not contingent upon control, according to Diana's aunt, but it does involve self-understanding and self-knowledge. Questions and mysteries may remain and linger as untended to or altogether unanswered. More importantly, there is an emphasis on embodiment and a negotiated resolve to "manage the magic as it moves through you." Magic arrives and dwells, triggering oneself to be enchanted, whether desired or not. Magic is framed as an agent that leads to a sense of stirring; it takes hold or takes residence on the inside.

The recognition of a selfhood that subversively accepts inner magic and accepts *being* a witch must be cultivated, tended to, understood and activated: "Diana had begun the lifelong process of growing into her powers as a witch" (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 16). Magic is not dormant in its existence, but naturally dwells within, requiring acknowledgement, and an activation of sorts, to flourish. It is not merely passive or compliant; it is recognized, harnessed, and reckoned with. The activation of that which already lies within involves the act of being true to one's self as a primary aspect of how learning occurs. Praxis comes into play, and mastery entails an ongoing process of learning by doing, alongside reflecting on selfhood: "It turned out that the challenge lay not in knowing what to do but in actually doing it. After working for years to become an expert, I was a student again" (Harkness, "Shadow of Night" 32). In Harkness' work, a witches' power seems to present an intersection of self-knowledge and praxis. The body pre-determines natural dispositions and abilities, albeit via a pendulum of possibilities, not just based on just raw potential or mimesis but by growth through experience:

A witch by descent, I was still unsure of the full extent of my inherited powers. ... Scientific tests had revealed genetic markers for the magic potential in my blood, but there were no guarantees when or if these possibilities would ever be realized. (Harkness, "Shadow of Night" 7)

The witch is sometimes bound to the past and undergoes learning trajectories that reflect ability as innate to a degree, yet quixotic. Control or manifestation of magical knowledge is revealed through self-examination and trust in the inherent qualities buried within the self.

### **Embodiment, Self-Knowledge and the Stimuli of Magic**

In Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy*, Diana detects magic through bodily reaction.

Magic acts as a stimulus no matter how faint its traces:

My blood responded to the faint vestiges of magic that clung to this solitary page from the Book of Life, and my wrists burned as a faint, familiar scent of must and age filled the room. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 252)

While not altogether invasive, the described bodily sensations are not familiar, and

Diana's response to the stimulus of magic, as it moves through her, is reflexive:

The air began to stir around me as if trying to drive off the feeling of being trapped. ... The air crept up my body, lifting the hair around my face in a gentle breeze. ... The force of the wind kept rising, and with it my arms rose, too, shaping the air into a column that enclosed me. ... 'What is happening to me?' Every day I ran and rowed and did yoga, and my body did what I told it to. Now it was doing unimaginable things. I looked down to make sure my hands weren't sparkling with electricity and my feet weren't still being buffeted by winds. 'That was witchwind.' ... 'Witchwinds and blue fingers are rare these days. There's magic inside you, Diana, and it wants to get out, whether you ask for it or not.' (Harkness, "A Discovery of Witches" 210-211)

The act of self-questioning, and the endurance of discomfort in accommodating a lack of control is met with a simple response: "There's magic inside you." Magic does not invade the body, nor does it arrive momentarily. Instead, it lurks in residence, inchoate from the beginning; yet, even so, its tenets must be learned, imagined, and constructed.

If recognized and reckoned with in order to reach a point of understanding, magic enhances sensory experiences and enhances knowledge itself:

‘I can’t light a candle. And no one has been able to teach me how to open a book or stop a bell from ringing. But if I am powerless, how do you explain this?’ A bowl of fruit sat nearby. More quinces, freshly picked from the garden, glowed golden in the bleak light. I selected one and balanced it on my palm where everyone could see it. The skin on my palm tingled as I focused on the fruit nestled there. Its pulpy flesh was clear to me through the quince’s tough skin as though the fruit were made of glass. My eyes drifted closed, while my witch’s eye opened and began its search for information. Awareness crept from the center of my forehead, down my arm, and through my fingertips. It extended like the roots of a tree, its fibers snaking into the quince. One by one I took hold of the fruit’s secrets. There was a worm at its core, munching its way through the soft flesh. My attention was caught by the power trapped there, and warmth tingled across my tongue in a taste of sunshine. The skin between my brows fluttered with pleasure as I drank in the light of the invisible sun. ... The only thing that mattered now was the limitless possibility for knowledge resting in my hand. (Harkness, “Shadow of Night” 54)

There are recognizable limits to one’s abilities, and while self-doubt may loom large, self-knowledge opens a pathway to magical knowledge, through the body.

This self-knowledge is more than awareness and more than identity; it involves embodiment: “It is just who you are. It’s in your blood. It’s in your bones” (Harkness Discovery 86). Arriving at a state where self-knowledge prevails is not a passive process solely dependent on instinct, but requires training:

My eyes circled the forest. ... Closing my eyes, I began to breathe deeply. ... There was a tightness between my eyes. I breathed into it. ... The tightness turned into tingling and the tingling to a sense of possibility as my mind’s eye – a witch’s third eye—opened for the first time. It took in everything that was alive in the forest – the vegetation, the energy in the earth, the water moving underneath the ground – each vital force distinct in color and shade. (Harkness, “A Discovery of Witches” 431)

The acknowledgement of the “mind’s eye” leads to a heightened awareness of external natural ephemera. The enactment of turning inward opens a doorway to empathy and a manifold cognizance of “everything that was alive.” The sense of taking in everything

implies embodiment and of processing and filtering with sensitivity, beyond observing materiality and fact from a safe distance. It suggests sensitivity that reaches a territory of radical receptivity and amplified empathy (including empathy for the natural world).

In Harkness' work, the consequence of wielding magic typically leads to a visual marker on the body which serves as evidence of efficacy or transformation, whether fleeting or permanent.

'I didn't know you could wield waterbolts. ... Are you okay? You look different – shiny.' ... Each finger bore a strip of color down its center. My pinkie was streaked with brown, my ring finger yellow. A vivid blue marked my middle finger, and red blazed down my index finger in an imperious slash. The colored lines joined together on my palm, continuing on to the fleshy mound at its base in a braided, multicolored rope. There the rope met up with a strand of green that wandered down from my thumb. ... The five-colored twist traveled the short distance to my wrist and formed a knot with five crossings – the pentacle. 'My weaver's cords. They're ... inside me.' (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 123)

A recognition of magical power coincides with witnessing visual displays of magic upon the body and throughout the body. For Diana, her own hand must be studied, leading to epiphany not just of sustained heightened attention to the physical self (not just naval gazing), but of witnessing enchantment and other worlds:

I turned over my left palm and discovered the missing strands: black on my thumb, white on my pinkie, gold on my ring finger, and silver on my middle finger. The pointer finger bore no color at all. And the colors that twisted down to my left wrist created an ouroboros, a circle with no beginning and no end that looked like a snake with its tail in its mouth. ... Still staring at my hands, I flexed my fingers. An explosion of colored threads illuminated the air. ... Threads. They bind the worlds and govern magic. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 123)

The process of discovery, and learning, does not rely upon let alone make use of an academy, but the necessities of the craft are inherently located within the self, accessible at all times:

Sarah tapped my palm. ... 'Your hand is a magical primer, Diana ... with the four elements, the pentacle, and the goddess all inscribed on it. It's everything a witch needs to work the craft.' (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 126)

Spellcasting and the working of magic does not only affect external phenomena, but the body itself reacts:

I wrote out the spell I'd devised to set things alight, careful not to say the words to myself and thereby work the magic. When I was through, the index finger of my right hand was glowing red. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 135)

The physical display of magic allows the invisible and near-invisible to become undeniably distinct and detectable, albeit temporary and at times as fleeting as a will o' the wisp:

Diana's skin was gleaming, the subtle nimbus that was always visible without her disguising spell now appearing as a distinctive, prismatic light. Rainbows of color shot under her skin—not just the hands but up her arms, along the tendons of her neck, twisting and spiralling as though the cords in her fingers had extended through her whole body. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 276)

Power is channeled through the body, not simply acquired and dispelled.

The body acts as a conduit, transforming and reacting upon the detection of magic in an automatic and antenna-like manner: "When magic was in the air, my hands were every color of the rainbow" (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 208). The process of learning entails acknowledging and reflecting on sensations within the body, as information is received beyond typical sensory modes; the body's appendages detect and interpret information:

'Read with your fingers,' Sarah said, pushing the pulpit toward me. I ran my fingertips lightly over the words of the spell. My skin tingled in recognition as they encountered the ingredients woven into it: the air blowing around my ring finger, the sensation of liquid coursing under the nail of my middle finger, and the explosion of scents that clung to my little finger. (Harkness, "The Book of Life" 138)

As information is encountered, extrasensory abilities are honed and heightened, and learning entails transforming information into sensory data that resonate throughout the body, beyond the range of the traditional sensory parameters of sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing.

For Diana, the physical sensation of touch leads to an immediate intuitive type of knowing. Even though comprehension may only arrive as a momentary flicker, without a full resolve of understanding, an uncanny knowledge manifests throughout the body:

For a moment there was a flicker of color on my index finger, but it was gone before I could determine what it had been. Even without the missing hue, my hand gleamed with gold, silver, black, and white lines of power that pulsed under the skin. The streaks twisted and twined into the orobouros-shaped tenth knot that surrounded the prominent blue veins at my wrist. (Harkness, “The Book of Life” 351)

The art and act of practicing magic enables attention to turn inward, and magical enactments are filtered through a spectrum of bodily effects. In the following passage, a whole book is absorbed by the body, deviating from acquiring knowledge through traditional reading comprehension techniques:

When my body had absorbed the Book of Life, a tree had appeared on it as well. Its trunk covered the back of my neck, perfectly aligned with the column of my spine. Its roots spread across my shoulders. The tree’s branches fanned out under my hair, covering my scalp. The tips of the branches peeked out along my hairline, behind my ears, and around the edges of my face. Like the tree on my spell box, the roots and branches were strangely intertwined along the sides of my neck in a pattern resembling Celtic knotwork. (Harkness, “The Book of Life” 477)

The body is a conduit, absorbing and owning knowledge, and as magic is acquired, one’s physicality is altered. Taking in knowledge through intuitive and radical receptivity makes a mark upon the body – on various scales – throughout the body: a book becomes a tree

entwined in flesh, and there's an alignment that merges human and non-human form. The body becomes betwixt, existing between human and non-human states.

Magic interacts with and possesses the body, and although it may frequently exist unnoticed or only partially recognized, it is there from the start, from birth, and passed on through generations. Uncanny knowledge is passed on through flesh and blood, and in a similar manner to magic, absorbed physically. Unlike the wizard archetype, there's not an emphasis on controlling magic or cultivating a disciplined imagination, but instead there's an emphasis on self-understanding when negotiating magical occurrences, and an emphasis on understanding one's own power in relation to these surges. Pedagogy entails learning how to process and recognize power in residence and understanding the bodily interaction of enchantment. Failure coincides with blindness to one's own authentic abilities and power: "She doesn't seem to recognize her own power. It puts her at risk" (Harkness, "A Discovery of Witches" 100). Failure involves not seeing oneself clearly and not sensing one's innate abilities, as well as ignoring one's growth potential.

Nonetheless, ignorance of one's magical abilities does not render magic fully idle or altogether dormant: "I've never kept the magic out of my life. I've been using it in my work, without realizing it. It's in everything. I've been fooling myself for years" (Harkness, "A Discovery of Witches" 131). There's a delicate balance between empowerment and receptivity: one may actively harness magic and knowledge and one must be a conduit of magic and knowledge. This receptivity should not be mistaken for passivity; at-will embodiment comes into play. Magic is on the inside and described as pervasive ("it's in everything"), and the effects of it come forth whether called upon or not; the body is the wellspring, and pedagogy simply encourages a deep understanding of

self-hood. Teachers provide guidance on the praxis of self-empowerment: “You want to use your magic, but it’s now using you. You need a teacher” (Harkness, “A Discovery of Witches” 520). Self-understanding and self-empowerment equate to the ability to practice, realize and exercise magical power that dwells implicitly within, from birth.

### **The Hedge Witch’s Bodily Transformation and Interaction with Divinity in Lev Grossman’s *Magicians Trilogy***

In Lev Grossman’s *Magicians Trilogy*, we may perceive a similar notion of magic learned through the observation of selfhood and the body, but we are also led to hyper-sensual realities stemming not just from the self, but from interfacing with the divine other. Grossman’s protagonist Julia has magical abilities but is denied admission to an elite, covert magician school, called Brakebills University. Despite rejection, she independently develops tremendous magical powers by training outside of the academy, through alternative, hidden underground educational settings. Julia’s subversive act of learning and her negotiated participation in a realm that she was intentionally barred from, renders her to be labelled as a so-called hedge witch, and she undergoes transformation as her power and abilities develop. Unlike wizards, her cultivation of magical powers (occurring on her own terms), leads to bodily transformation, and there’s discernible tensions as a new, magical version of body and divine personhood take hold, gradually eroding her previous body and personhood:

A funny thing happened to Julia. ... A magic trick, you might even call it: where once there had been only one Julia, there were now two Julias, one for each set of



memories. The Julia that went with the first set, the normal set, the one where she wrote the paper and went home and had dinner, did normal Julia things. She went to school. She did her homework. ... But there was a second, stranger Julia growing inside the first Julia, like a parasite, or a horrible tumor. At first it was tiny, the size of a bacterium, a single cell of doubt, but it divided and divided and grew and grew. ... The second Julia grew stronger and stronger, and every bit of strength she gained she took away from the first Julia, who got weaker and weaker and thinner and thinner, to the point where she was practically transparent, and the parasite behind the mask of her face became almost visible. (Grossman, "The Magician King" 76-77)

Julia's identity as her normal self is fissured and eventually replaced by a stranger self: a magical self, a so-called hedge witch, and the mutation or ascension is partially parasitic; yet, she becomes better, stronger, and changed.

As Julia gains power, her appearance is transformed, even including an increase in height. The act of acquiring power imparts a physical mark or change upon her body:

She was recognizably her old self, still the Julia of Brooklyn, or directly descended from her. ... But at the same time she was unmistakably divine: her height had been somewhat variable in the past, but at the moment she was seven feet tall. (Grossman, "The Magician's Land" 385-386)

As magic takes hold through her action of experimenting, her "old self" subversively gives birth to a new self. There's a distinct negotiation of reconciling selfhoods (the new and the old), juggling identities, and coming to terms with an identity of in-betweenness and a betwixt knowledge. As this transformation occurs, a third quality of being is invoked, that of the external Goddess, which becomes an aspect of magic's origination in the witch:

'I was stuck in between for so long. ... I couldn't go back – I wanted to, for a long time. A long time.' ... 'You said you were a dryad.' 'I am. We're the daughters of the goddess. That makes me a demigoddess... We take care of the trees, and the goddess takes care of us.' ... Sitting this close to Julia, he could see how inhuman she was now. Her flesh was like pale wood. ... She was out of the game, the living and dying game, that the rest of them were trapped in. She was different. She wasn't kludgy, rickety flesh and blood anymore. She was magic. (Grossman, "The Magician King" 380-381)

Julia's flesh and blood are hijacked by and overtaken by magic, but her transformation is credited to being one of the "daughters of the goddess," attributing the acquisition of power through ascribed lineage as opposed to learning initiatives. Julia's own desire and agency in advancing magical knowledge, combined with the act of conjuring magic are, however, the catalysts for her transformation:

And I wanted this. And when I called Her, the goddess came. 'I feel so powerful. ... It's like there's a sun inside me, or a star, that will burn forever.'  
(Grossman, "The Magician King" 380-381)

The process of coming to terms with and embracing a magical selfhood and divinity of being entail *feeling* powerful, and recognizing magic on the interior, in the body.

### **The Witch's Mark, Familiars and Bodily Enchantment in Margaret Murray's**

#### ***The God of Witches and The Witch Cult in Western Europe***

The images and aspects of the witch archetype and the embodiment of magic detailed in Grossman and Harkness' work correlate to historical accounts of witchcraft in terms of the relationships between magic and the body, but the trials suggest sinister implications of a bodily mark as evidence of witchery. In Margaret Murray's works, *The God of the Witches* and *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, references to the early modern witch trials and folk beliefs illuminate how the body was perceived as physically marked or altered, if entanglements with enchantment, witchcraft and magic occurred. Suspicion about bodily marks took reign and served as proof of witchcraft. Traditionally and historically, as revealed in witch trials, a physical mark upon the body was believed to be an indication of an individual's initiation to a coven:

When the child was old enough to understand, an age which varied from nine to thirteen years, he made a public profession of faith. ... Homage was then rendered to the god, and the novice was marked on some part of the person so that he might be known by others as a full member. The mark was either a scar or a tattoo. (Murray, "The God of the Witches" 96)

This mark was ripe with suspicion and wrought with imagination, and it served as a source of speculation of unnatural and supernatural influences.

The bodily mark was used as evidence of witchcraft by "the recorders" of the witchcraft trials, leading to condemnation:

The marking of the new convert was another ceremony which appealed to the imagination of the recorders, and is therefore described in some detail. *The Myserie of Witchcraft*, written in 1617, tells us that 'the Devil sets his seale upon them. This is commonly some sure marke in some secret place of their bodies, which shall remain sore and unhealed until his next meeting with them, and then for afterwards prove ever insensible.' (Murray, "The God of the Witches" 99)

Unlike contemporary fantasy literature, which indicates that a witch's abilities were passed on primarily from birth, the witchcraft trials suggest that an initiation ceremony occurred, leading to bodily and spiritual transformation.

The passage-hood and pathway to becoming a witch was not considered as a birthright, but was believed to occur as a result of a ceremonial conversion, after a consent, of "body and soul":

The ceremony for the admission of adults who were converts to the witch religion from Christianity follow certain main lines. These are (1) the free consent of the candidate, (2) the explicit denial and rejection of a previous religion, (3) the absolute and entire dedication of body and soul to the service and commands of the new Master and God. (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 42-43)

The idea that the body (and soul) were dedicated with absolution and entirety suggests transformation, but this transformation was traced to the mark:

They got that Mark with their own consent. ... This Mark is given to them, as is alledg'd, by a Nip in any part of the body, and it is blew. (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 43)

The transformation of becoming a witch also at times included a “new name” alongside a mark:

Among the Scotch witches gave her a new name by which she was known afterwards at the Sabbaths and other meetings. The ceremony concluded by giving the witch a mark or ‘flesh-brand’ on some part of the body. (Murray, “The Witch Cult in Western Europe” 44)

Murray brings to light how the body was perceived as a vessel of service and object of devotion amongst members of a coven:

The English witches merely took the vow of fealty and obedience, devoting themselves body and soul to him; sometimes only the soul, however, it is mentioned: but the Scotch witches of both sexes laid one hand on the crown of the head, the other on the sole of the foot, and dedicated all that was between the two hands to the service of the Master. (Murray, “The Witch Cult in Western Europe” 45)

Although personal agency as well as a witch’s consent are required leading up to initiation rites, the depiction of devotion boils down to a mark upon the body as the most potent sign of enchantment:

The Witches’ Mark ... is one of the most important points in the identification of a witch, as the infliction of it was often the final rite in the admission ceremonies. The fact that any person bore such a mark was taken as incontrovertible proof that the bearer was a witch. (Murray, “The Witch Cult in Western Europe” 48)

### **Scrutiny, Repulsion and Abomination of the Witch’s Body**

In the witch trials, the bodily mark served not only as evidence for the sway of nefarious elements upon the witch, but also as physical cause for judgment and thereby persecution. Historical accounts of the witch trials suggest that the witches’ bodies were

aggressively searched and prodded in pursuit of the witch's mark, seeking aspects that evoke qualities of repulsion:

There were several cases in Yorkshire: In 1649 'they searched the body of the saide Mary Sikes, and founde upon the side of her seate a red lumpe about the biggnes of a nutt, being wett, and that, when they wrung it with theire fingers, moisture came out of it like lee. And they founde upon her left side neare her arme a little lumpe like a wart, and being puld out it stretcht about half an inch. And they further say that they never sawe the like upon anie other weoman.' In 1650 Frances Ward 'saith that she was one of the fower that searched Margaret Morton, and found upon her two black spots between her thighs and her body; they were like a wart, but it was none. And the other was black on both sides, an inch bread, and blew in the midstest.' (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 51-52)

Often these marks were labelled as warts but their visual appearance was observed with invasively nuanced attention (including an obsessive scrutiny of size, color, location, and reaction to being touched and squeezed). Black spots upon the thighs were not simply seen as ordinary moles, and warts were prodded, "stretcht," and measured. No bodily marks were dismissed, and the imperfection of body posed a risk.

This aggressive scrutiny of the body was perilous, and any bodily mark whatsoever could be unforgivingly rendered supernatural, as seen in the following account:

Alice Gooderidge and her mother, Elizabeth Wright, of Stapenhill near Burton-on-Trent, were tried in 1597: 'The old woman they stript, and found behind her right sholder a thing much like the vddr of an ewe that giueth sucke with two teats, like vnto two great wartes, the one behind vnder her armehole, the other a hand off towards the top of her shoulder. Being demanded how long she had those teats, she answered she was borne so. Then did they search Alice Goodrige, and found vpon her belly, a hole of the bignesse of two pence, fresh and bloody, as though some great wart had beene cut off the place.' (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 51)

Bodily marks that didn't fall under the category of warts were interpreted as unnatural

teats, mutated and out of place, existing as abominations on one's shoulders, under a tongue, or in a "secret place":

The Kentish witch, Mary Read of Lenham, in 1652, 'had a visible Teat, under her tongue, and did show it to many, and it was likewise seen by this Observator.' In the case of the Salisbury witch, Anne Bodenham, in 1652, 'Women searched the Witch in the Goal, and they delivered on their oaths at the Assises, that they found on her shoulder a certain mark or Teat, about the length and bignesse of the Niple of a Womans breast, and hollow and soft as a Niple, with a hole on the top of it: And searching further, they likewise found in her secret place another Teat, soft, and like the former on her shoulder.' (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 52)

These teats, escaping classifications related to mutation or illness, were perceived instead as unholy food sources for a witch's familiar or imp:

The other form of the mark was the 'little Teat.' It occurred on various parts of the body; was said to secrete milk and to give such to the familiars, both human and animal; and was sometimes cut off by the witch before being searched. (Murray, "The Witch Cult in Western Europe" 50)

Suspicion about the body included the belief that a witch's familiar or imp was fed blood and thereby nourished by the body in order to become tame and entwined with the familiar's owner:

The Domestic Familiar was always a little creature – a little dog, a small cat, a rat, a mole, a toad, or a mouse – which could be kept in the house in some small receptacle like a box or a pot. The creature was fed by its owner, originally that it might become tame and return to her after it had worked its magic. In the food was mixed a drop of the witch's blood so that the animal became in a sense a part of the owner. A name was always given to it, and in every way it was regarded as a creature of magical powers though under the control of its owner. It was used only for working magic, never for divining. This fact was known to the recorders. In 1587 Giffard states that 'the witches have their spirits, some hath one, some hath more, as two, three, foure, five, some in one likenesse, and some in another, as like cats, weasils, toades, or mice, whom they nourish with milke or with a chicken, or by letting them suck now and then a drop of blood.' (Murray, "The God of the Witches" 83-84)

Women and men alike were accused of having marks or supernatural teats, including the following depiction of a so called “man-witch”:

At St. Albans, about 1660, there was a man-witch, who ‘had like a Breast on his side.’ In the same year at Kidderminster a widow, her two daughters, and a many were brought to trial; none were visible; one advised to lay them on their backs, and keep open their mouths, and they would appear, and so they presently appeared in sight.’ (Murray, “The Witch Cult in Western Europe” 52)

And, the supernatural teats could appear and disappear, based on the following account:

Bridget Bishop, one of the New England witches, was tried in 1692: ‘A Jury of Women found a preternatural Teat upon her Body; But upon a second search, within 3 or 4 hours, there was no such thing to be seen.’ Elizabeth Horner, another Devon witch, tried in 1696, ‘had something like a Nipple on her Shoulder, which the Children [who gave evidence] said it was sucked by a Toad.’ (Murray, “The Witch Cult in Western Europe” 52)

The fantastical quality of the witch’s body elaborates the sense in which, as an archetype, she or he uses the transitory nature of the physical self as a means to instantiate possible outcomes.

In historical persecutory representations, these morphic qualities often manifest as monstrous or repulsive, while in contemporary witch fiction the body often becomes more intriguing or beautiful, but in either case it remains true that, for the witch, the physical self retains the locus of magical power for the witch.

## **Conclusion**

In contemporary fantasy literature, the body is represented as a vessel for magical power, but there’s also a sense of empowerment that coincides with the acquisition of magic (as opposed to trials, where there’s no escape of accusatory judgment if any superficial blemish on the body is found).

Through the lenses of historical accounts of witch persecution as well as contemporary fantasy literature, it becomes apparent that the archetype of the witch has undergone considerable changes over time. Although each version carries reflections of the other, which can provide contrasts, one can also see basic principles of magical pedagogy within the archetype as consistent concerns, elaborating some of the more primary qualities of the archetype dealing with embodiment. Particularly inward and body focused, learning magic for the witch involves physical and mental transformation, sometimes aligned with external forces such as deities or divine actors, but retaining a willingness to consider selfhood as a constituent element of magic as a whole.

While historical accounts often concentrate on repulsion attended to bodily transformation, contemporary literature instead finds beauty in empowerment, owning power and owning bodily transformation. Witches, perhaps just as much now as in the murky past, must align themselves with their body's presence in the world to articulate their magical powers. In contemporary fantasy, an acknowledgement of the possession of magical power must take place along with a self-understanding. The witch archetype presents magical power and abilities as innate, but in need of self-realization, and a life-long cultivation and activation of powers must occur beyond recognition of powers alone. Within the witch archetype's enchanted domain, pedagogical tactics are successful when integrated to align with and enhance one's selfhood as well as to encourage a radical and sensitive receptivity beyond the self, bringing the outer world into acute focus to spell-cast and enact change.



## Chapter VI

### THE FAIRY ARCHETYPE AND FAIRYLAND AS A REALM OF ENCHANTMENT

#### Introduction

This chapter will investigate the particular and peculiar kind of magical knowledge that is learned by entering or interacting with fairyland. Unlike the archetypes of wizards and witches, the fairy archetype in literature tends not to be personified as an identity or vocation, but instead is typically a space that human protagonists may detect, enter and be changed by. Stories about fairies or elves (and the multitudes of names ascribed to such beings) may be best summarized by Tolkien in *Tree and Leaf*. As he describes this fantastical terrain and the denizens therein, he uses the term “Faerie,” identifying it on a holistic and broad basis as a realm that deals with states of enchantment:

Stories about Fairy, that is Faerie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. Faerie contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted. (9)

This realm of enchantment includes not just nature spirits or phantasmic dwellers of elfland rarely glimpsed, but also our very selves when under a state of enchantment. In this chapter, I will discuss the pedagogical recurring themes dealing with the boundaries

of fairyland, including the trope of how to find fairyland. I will explore depictions of the desirous and fleeting realm of fairyland as it is detected, glimpsed, or experienced, and explore how it hastily disappears or fades across fixed boundaries, along with the consequences commonly associated with trespassing its boundaries.

These consequences of boundary crossing often deal with a mutation of the passage of time (whether accelerated, slowed down, paused or altogether halted), the deterioration of the physical body (rapidly withering away to old age upon one's exit), madness, or death (such as the body drastically crumbling to dust). I will also explore themes dealing with the transmission of knowledge or gifts bestowed upon man from the fairies, with both historical investigations of examples of fairies teaching skills and magic, along with modern fictive representations in Patrick Rothfuss' *The Kingkiller Chronicle*.

Fairyland, elfland, and the realm at large of fairy lore presents an arsenal of strict and rigid rules, including essential steps and mandatory courses of action, albeit mostly nonsensical, weird and non sequitur. These rules are employed upon engagement with the natural world, accompanied by anecdotes and imaginative explanations used to describe or decode nature and natural forces. These rules include employing methods of protection against fairies along with executing actions in order to gain beneficent favors, blessings, and magical gifts -- including knowledge and skill-sets, practical and creative alike. Furthermore, I will investigate the idea of enchantment as it deals with illusion, glamour and the trickery aligned with the transmission of material gifts from fairies. Objects in fairyland instantly lose their appearance or structure once carried outside the borders of enchantment.

Through this investigation of the particularities of the realm of fairies, as folkloric entities and archetypes of fantasy, I will elaborate the manner in which they allow and withhold the transference of knowledge, acting as a metaphor for pedagogy which mitigates the space between ourselves and our conception of and experience of time and nature.

Aside from Tolkien's assertion of faerie being a realm, Lewis Spence and Katherine Briggs shed light on fairy as a term and theme, examining the rich origins, lore, customs, stories, and creatures in the British Isles. Spence's systematic research in *Fairy Tradition in Britain* examines "a compendium of British fairy tradition" is extensive, and Briggs built upon this research in her folkloric investigations. Spence's engagement with lore, legend, and sources is thorough by his account:

I can truthfully say that no source has been neglected and no phase of lore of fairy life, custom or legend has been omitted in making my survey. Every element of popular tradition available has carefully been scrutinized. (11)

Spence examines the root of the term fairy:

The great majority of those writers who have faithfully examined the origin of the word 'fairy' are of opinion that it was distantly derived from the Latin noun *fatum*, or 'fate', that is the word which describes those goddesses, the *Fatae*, who were supposed to govern the trend of human affairs, and who are also known in Latin by the name *Parcae*, and to the ancient Greeks as *Moirai*. Some authorities believe that the Latin word *fatum* gave rise to the Italian *fata*, and, through Roman provincial influence in Spain, to the term *hada*; and that in later Roman Gaul it also took the form *fata*. There, in accordance with a law of Celtic phonetics, the 't' was slurred, or elided, which gave it the sound of 'fa'a', and in the plural 'fa'ae.' This, later, in early French, came to be pronounced as *fa'ee*, and still later as *fee*, from which again came the English 'fay', almost certainly the product of Norman-French influence. (114)

The fairly traceable origin of the word fairy does not encompass the origin of fairy stories themselves – this terrain is complex, and perhaps Tolkien's following reflection provides acceptance and ease in embracing uncertainty and the unknown:

What are the origins of ‘fairy-stories’? That must, of course, mean: the origin or origins of the fairy elements. To ask what is the origin of stories (however qualified) is to ask what is the origin of language and of the mind. (17)

Tolkien also reflects on the continuity and alterations of fairy-stories:

Speaking of the history of stories and especially of fairy-stories we may say that the Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story, has always been boiling, and to it have continually been added new bits, dainty and undainty. (27)

Briggs sheds light on how this aspect of storytelling takes on archetypal dimensions as beliefs are potentially altered and passed on:

The famous pronouncement of Friar Bacon’s Brazen head – ‘Time is, Time was, Time is past’ – might well be taken to apply to English fairy beliefs. .... The strange thing is that rare, tenuous and fragile as it is, the tradition is still there, and lingers on from generation to generation substantially unchanged. Every now and then poets and writers draw on the tradition, and make out of it something suitable to the spirits of their age. Sometimes this passes back into tradition, and perhaps alters it a little, it may be less than the critics and folklorists contend. (“Fairies in Tradition and Literature” 3-4)

This archetypal quality of tradition and ideas being passed on but slightly altered in the light of the present day allows for the investigation of pedagogical themes, as they emerge in contemporary works of fantasy.

### **Traversing the Boundaries of Fairyland**

Although fairyland may be considered a realm dealing with enchantment, it is worth investigating depictions of how we may stumble or attempt to deliberately come upon this space, let alone enter it. There are rules involved, and the process of examining folklore alongside works of fiction sheds light on the patterns of depictions of arriving at fairyland and encountering its boundaries. To begin, there isn’t a sense of control one may

execute when encountering fairyland, and Tolkien describes how a “crossing of the ways” is dependent upon chance:

Most good ‘fairy-stories’ are about the *adventures* of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marshes. Naturally so; for if elves are true, and really exist independently of our tales about them, then this also is certainly true: elves are not primarily concerned with us, nor we with them. Our fates are sundered, and our paths seldom meet. Even upon the borders of Faerie we encounter them only at some chance crossing of the ways. (9-10)

Control and deliberation are abandoned to enable enchantment. The process of encountering fairyland requires delicate and wondrous circumstances, and Tolkien furthermore reflects on how this realm reveals hardly any information about itself, instead releasing wonder:

I propose to speak about fairy-stories, though I am aware that it is a rash adventure. Faerie is a perilous land, and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold. And overbold I may be accounted, for though I have been a lover of fairy-stories since I learned to read, and have at times thought about them, I have not studied them professionally. I have been hardly more than a wandering explorer (or trespasser) in the land, full of wonder but not of information. The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manners of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords. In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveler who would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the keys be lost. (3)

This phrase, “the land full of wonder but not of information” implies that within the realm of fairyland, wonder is the dominant state of mind and curiosity is not quenched by conclusive answers.

Wandering to fairyland does not lead to the satisfaction of certainty or comprehension involving facts, and posing an excess of questions aiming for answers is framed as both unwise and potentially dangerous. This portrayal leads to a puzzling predicament of how one may exude curiosity without posing questions; and, in a sense,

involves not ignorance, but adopting a deliberately active sense of wonder and curiosity. Curiosity has no closure, in fairyland. Perhaps relinquishing oneself to the flow of experience replaces the need for systematic inquiry. This implies an avoidance of communicating experience, as Tolkien describes, “richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveler” (3). One must privately accept experience, and abide by the way things are however quirky or strange, but not question or communicate experience. This acts as both an intensely internal and intensely charged mode of experience.

This sentiment of abandoning making sense of fairyland, and relinquishing oneself to experience and wonder, is also reflected in George MacDonald’s 1858 work of fantasy literature, *Phantastes*:

It is no use trying to account for things in Fairy Land; and one who travels there soon learns to forget the very idea of doing so, and takes everything as it comes, like a child, who, being in a chronic condition of wonder, is surprised at nothing. (24)

Fairyland, in *Phantastes*, involves a child-like sense of wonder and invites the process of avoiding retention and even purpose.

In fairyland, passivity is enmeshed with intensity, and enchantment involves losing oneself:

I was in Fairy Land, where one does very much as he pleases...I seemed to lose myself in the great flow of sky above me, unbroken in its infinitude...Why are all reflections lovelier than what we call the reality? ... Yea, the reflecting ocean itself, reflected in the mirror, has a wondrousness about its waters that somewhat vanishes when I turn towards itself. All mirrors are magic mirrors. (MacDonald 66)

The intention of understanding things in fairyland *is no use*, and rather the voyager is carried to a space that encourages a labyrinthine sense of being lost or at minimum an

openness to losing oneself. This openness and an abandonment of a systematic understanding has perhaps pedagogical renderings promoting a mythopoeic imagination.

In the realm of fairyland, the idea of unlearning exists and habits of questioning and fact-gleaning are unravelled toward a state of child-like wonder. In fairyland, what is known is prone to collapse and reconstitute as something unknown; rules, rhythms and faculty of thought are reversed, and what is learned must become unlearned. Cast adrift from any preconceived notions, one may attempt to negotiate occurrences within fairyland although it is *no use* trying, due to enchantment: “all mirrors are magic mirrors.” The closest proximity to examination of the reality of fairyland is to examine the boundaries of fairyland, and even these boundaries shape-shift. The idea of openly accommodating wandering and traversing a space that is intensely experienced, only by chance, and is impossible to understand involves a momentum that carries us to new and unfamiliar territories as opposed to being landlocked within the narrative stillness of familiar and memorized notions of routine.

### **Fairyland Wanderings, Forgotten Experiences and Strange Perfection in George MacDonald’s *Phantastes***

The trope of timelessness and the notion of subverting time and space are quite common in the genre of fantastic literature, but in the setting of fairyland this theme is especially salient. For example, we see time flashing by, unmeasured and fleeting, in *Phantastes*:

The time passed by unheeded, for my thoughts were busy. ... I had no means of measuring time; and when I looked back, there was such a discrepancy between the decisions of my imagination and my judgment, as to the length of time that had passed, that I was bewildered, and gave up all attempts to arrive at any conclusion on the point. (124)

Judgment is placed on the back burner, and measurement is skewed as inconclusive and eventually abandoned. Jackson reflects on the topsy-turvy tenets of time in fantasy literature:

Classical unities of space, time and character are threatened with dissolution in fantastic texts. Perspectives and three-dimensionality no longer hold as ground rules: parameters of the field of vision tend towards indeterminacy. (46)

With the rules of so-called reality, including space and time collapsed, anything seems possible, and creation and existences can be newly encountered and grappled with. The protagonist in *Phantastes* revels in the strangeness of fairyland, albeit with hesitancy:

You see ... Fairy Land is full of oddities and all sorts of incredibly ridiculous things, which a man is compelled to meet and treat as real existences, although all the time he feels foolish for doing so. (173)

Although potentially absurd, encountering fairyland involves wildly accepting “incredibly ridiculous things,” and G.K. Chesterton writes, “If I have drunk of the fairies’ drink it is but just I should drink by the fairies’ rules” (73). And what are the fairies’ rules? Italo Calvino illuminates how “the pleasure of fantasy lies in the unraveling of a logic with rules or points of departure or solutions that keep some surprises up their sleeves” (134). In *Nameless Things and Thingless Names*, Lance Olsen muses upon the relationship between the fantastic and postmodern consciousness:

Our preconceptions of what constitutes the impossible are assaulted every day. In other words, postmodern art faces the problem of responding to a situation that is, literally, fantastic. No wonder, then, that fantasy becomes the vehicle for the postmodern consciousness. The fantastic becomes the realism our culture understands. (14)



The so-called sense of understanding, in the realm of the fantastic often entails not just a sense of wonder but a sense of stupor – of stepping back, forgetting and taking delight in the unknown and unresolved – and this is especially prominent in fairyland, as seen in

*Phantastes*:

I forgot I was in Fairy Land, and seemed to be walking in a perfect night of our own old nursing earth. Great stems rose about me, uplifting a thick multitudinous roof above me of branches, and twigs, and leaves – the bird and insect world uplifted over mine, with its own landscapes, its own thickets, and paths, and glades, and dwellings; its own bird-ways and insect-delights. (42)

This glamour or illusion presenting a façade of not simply perfection but *strange* perfection is common in fairy stories, and enchantment is entangled with seasons and an observation of nature.

In *Phantastes*, we are offered only glimpses of this realm, without certainty of an account of the passage of time:

I will not attempt to describe the environs, save by saying, that all the pleasures to be found in the most varied and artistic arrangement of wood and river, lawn and wild forest, garden and shrubbery, rocky hill and luxurious vale, in living creatures wild and tame, in gorgeous birds, scattered fountains, little streams, and reedy lakes – all were here. (71-72)

Within the fairyland environs of *Phantastes*, there is a foggy oscillation between an emphasis on hidden experiences (left unrevealed and only lightly touched upon) and partial divulgence of the encounter, occurrence or experience. The above passage suggests that effort isn't supposed to be summoned in attempting to communicate the experience to an outsider: "I will not attempt to describe the environs." Perhaps reflection for the purpose of retelling is not a course of action that necessarily follows suit upon experiencing fairyland: "One story I will try to reproduce. But, alas! It is like trying to reconstruct a forest out of broken branches and withered leaves. ... I cannot tell" (MacDonald 84). There is a subdued

sense of acceptance of the way things are, however strange: “everything was just as it should be.” But the recollection of moments is foggy, and reconstruction only leads to a haze of memory: “I can attempt no consecutive account of my wanderings and adventures” (MacDonald 58).

In Le Guin’s essay, *From Elfland to Poughkeepsie*, she injects meaning into this mysterious and private journey to Elfland, which entail solitude:

Elfland is what Lord Dunsany called the place. It is also known as Middle Earth, and Prydain, and the Forest of Broceliande, and Once Upon a Time; and by many other names. Let us consider Elfland a great national park, a vast and beautiful place where a person goes by himself, on foot, to get in touch with reality in a special, private, profound fashion. But what happens when it is considered merely as a place to ‘get away to’? ... A great many people want to go there, without knowing what it is they’re really looking for, driven by a vague hunger for something real. ... But the point is that you are not at home there. It’s not Poughkeepsie. It’s different. (144-145)

Le Guin illuminates how elfland or fairyland goes by many names, and considers it a realm that involves a heightened selfhood and “a vague hunger.” She describes it as “private, profound” and a destination where one person ventures in solitude without a preconceived aim in mind except to “get in touch with reality.”

Tolkien describes this type of desire as “The magic of Faerie”:

The magic of Faerie is not an end in itself, its virtue is in its operations: among these are the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires. One of these desires is to survey the depths of space and time. Another is (as will be seen) to hold communion with other living things. (13)

Tolkien suggests that “primordial human desires” may be quenched in this realm, but nonetheless there’s a looming question of how one accesses elfland or fairyland in the first place, to “hold communion with other living things.” Accessing this realm is hardly straightforward, but we are given hints.

**Encountering Boundaries of Fairyland in  
Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's Daughter***

In *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, Lord Dunsany describes where “Elfland touches Earth as far as poet has sung” (90). This intersection itself is rich, and the boundary of elfland harnesses desire, even though detecting it is typically unattainable:

The beautiful boundary of twilight had drawn his desires towards Elfland, next moment his hounds had turned him another way: it is hard for any of us to avoid the grip of external things. (Dunsany 144)

In *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, the boundary of fairyland is the muse (all the more so even than the daughter), endlessly chased and sought after, set apart beyond the fields we know, caught and lost in a series of occurrences:

So Alveric strode on through the luminous air of that land whose glimpses dimly remembered are inspirations here. And at once he felt less lonely. For there is a barrier in the fields we know, drawn sharply between men and all other life. (Dunsany 15)

Once passing beyond this barrier, the strangeness allows for a passageway to discover meaning. The dimness of recollection carries a sense of inspiration as opposed to discomfort or a desire for the full picture.

While recollection may be compromised, there is meaning, and an understanding that may be attained:

There was perhaps less mystery here than on our side of the boundary of twilight; for nothing lurked or seemed to lurk behind great boles of oak, as in certain lights and seasons things may lurk in the fields we know; no strangeness hid on the far side of ridges; nothing haunted deep woods; whatever might

possibly lurk was clearly there to be seen, whatever strangeness might be was spread in full sight of the traveler, whatever might haunt deep woods lived there in the open day. And, so strong lay the enchantment deep over all that land, that not only did beasts and men guess each other's meanings well, but there seemed to be an understanding even, that reached from men to trees and from trees to men. (Dunsany 15)

But understanding is entangled with enchantment, and enchantment is spread “deep over all that land.” Strangely enough, *guessing* meaning automatically equates to understanding, or at least *an understanding*, and the above passage also sheds light on a deep connection to nature: “an understanding ... that reached from men to trees and from trees to men.” Clarity lurks in the trees and acceptance is reached despite “whatever strangeness” presents itself in full sight, not hidden away but at last revealed, stripping away mystery during the moments of encounter. However, in *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, there's no clear method or roadmap for the traveler to find elfland. As far as finding fairyland or elfland goes, mystery reigns strong:

Was Elfland a mystery too great to be troubled by human voices? ... Or might a word said of the magical land bring it nearer, to make fantastic and elvish the fields we know? To all these ponderings of Alveric there was no answer. (Dunsany 89)

There are hints of a passageway to elfland, more mythopoeic than practical in terms of specific methods. No crystalline path is set out for the wanderer, but hope may help: “All men knew that to seek for Elfland one needed a strong hope, and without it one saw no gleam of the Elfin Mountains, serene with unchanging blue” (Dunsany 107).

Even though traversing the boundary of fairyland seems tenuous in *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, there is a depiction of a gravitational pull towards the realm and momentum is inspired by desire, hope and curiosity:

Go forth ... and pass the fields we know, till you see the lands that clearly pertain to faery; and cross their boundary, which is made of twilight, and come to that palace that is only told of in song. (Dunsany 2)

Elfland therefore presents a quest:

Go then with your face turned towards that light that beats from fairyland, and that faintly illumines the dusk between sunset and early stars, and this shall guide you till you come to the frontier and have passed the fields we know. (Dunsany 3)

This quest, however, involves enchantment of both nature and the self, along with a comfort in the speculation of nearness celebrating not the destination but of finding “the border”:

Just as thorn trees all lean away from the sea, so toadstools and every plant that has any touch of mystery, such as foxgloves, mulleins and certain kinds of orchids, when growing anywhere near it, all lean towards Elfland. By this one may know before one has heard a murmur of waves, or before one has guessed an influence of magical things, that one comes, as the case may be, to the sea or the border of Elfland. (Dunsany 66-67)

The act of arriving at fairyland is like guessing an influence, such as perceiving a particular slant of wildflowers or tuning into rhythmic sounds that sweep across a landscape: “by this one may know.” One is expected to turn attention inward, in solitude, as well as towards the natural world, and perceive, watch and listen to the landscape. The *idea* of arriving propels the traveller forward, moreso than the *act* of arriving, even if the border is impossibly hidden and typically inaccessible. In *The King of Elfland’s Daughter*, the point of access to elfland is depicted as a marsh, where boundaries are unfixed and in a constant state of flux, given the shift of water and land:

And soon he was come by unsure paths to the reeds and the thin rushes, to which a wind was telling tales that have no meaning to man, long histories of bleakness and ancient legends of rain; while on the high darkening land far off behind him he saw lights begin to blink where the houses were ... for the marsh ran right into Elfland. Between him and the nebulous border that divides Earth

from Elfland there was no man whatever, and yet the traveler walked on as one that has a grave errand. With every venerable step that he took bright mosses shook and the marsh seemed about to engulf him. (201-202)

This passage depicts elfland as an enclosure that has an engulfing pull that is irresistible, even though it exudes the enchantment of “tales that have no meaning to man.” Perhaps meaning is not owed to the wanderer, but the wanderer may glean meaning.

The borders of a marsh are as nebulous and there isn't a portal or classical gate for entry, only “venerable steps” towards the destination. This path is taken in solitude, without guidance or direction, and there's a sense of being honorific towards nature and relinquishing oneself to the flow of experience. This flow of experience resists being natural, but it is not necessarily unnatural either; rather, there's a state of enchantment.

This enchantment extends to the passage of time:

I have said that no time passed at all in Elfland. Yet the happening of events is in itself a manifestation of time, and no event can occur unless time passes. Now it is thus with time in Elfland: in the eternal beauty that dreams in that honied air nothing stirs or fades or dies, nothing seeks its happiness in movement of change or a new thing, but has its ecstasy in the perpetual contemplation of all the beauty that has ever been, and which always glows over those enchanted lawns as intense as when first created by incantation or song. Yet if the energies of the wizard's mind arose to meet a new thing, then that power that had laid its calm upon Elfland and held back time troubled the calm awhile, and time for awhile shook Elfland. Cast anything into a deep pool from a land strange to it, where some great fish dreams, and green weeds dream, and heavy colours dream, and light sleeps; the great fish stirs, the colours shift and change, the green weeds tremble, the light wakes, a myriad things know slow movement and change; and soon the whole pool is still again. It was the same when Alveric passed through the border of twilight and right through the enchanted wood, and the King was troubled and moved, and all Elfland trembled. (Dunsany 40)

This depiction of elfland suggests permanence of “eternal beauty” and a stubborn stillness that is immune if not fully resistant to interruption: nothing stirs, fades or dies and there's an intensity of changelessness. In fact, change makes elfland shudder and during a rare instance of stirring, the borders are porous, and passage is allowed.

However, this entry is only temporary: “He soon discovered, as sooner or later many a man must, that he had lost Elfland” (Dunsany 70). The consequence of this temporary intrusion involves undergoing the accelerated passage of time upon one’s return: “Quite ten years must have passed away during that one blue day he had spent in Elfland” (Dunsany 27).

This consequence involving the accelerated passage of time is a common theme associated with fairyland encounters, as depicted in folklore described by Spence:

One of the most pregnant and interesting phases in the folk-lore of Fairyland is associated with the belief which lays it down that the passage of time in the elfin world moves at a different tempo from that known to our own sphere, that time in that mysterious region is for some reason greatly accelerated, in the view of mortals at least, and that human intruders who have penetrated to it find on their release that what seems a night has actually occupied a year of human time, or, in certain instances, a generation. (303)

Given this predicament of time passing at an accelerated state, the amount of time spent in fairyland is typically quite short, as described by Briggs:

Encounters with the fairies are almost necessarily brief, for under ordinary circumstances men are supposed to see them only between one blink of the eye and the next. In old times children were often exhorted not to fix their eyes because this was taken as an attempt to see the fairies, or at least a condition in which they might be seen; and such sights were thought to be dangerous. (“Fairies in Tradition and Literature”155)

Even casting one’s eyes on fairies momentarily is considered an encounter that may have grave consequences: “To see, or to speak to fairies was in some cases regarded as unlucky or even fatal” (Spence 195).

Despite potential perils, Spence’s research reveals there are some rituals that may lead the way:

The process of laying the head on the knee was therefore a recognized ritual by which it was believed one could at least trace the path to Fairyland, and bespell one into an enchanted slumber. (160)

An enchanted slumber may also be influenced or induced by location: “Adults were often carried off if they chanced to sleep on a fairy mound” (Spence 256). Aside from chance, Spence provides another example of a ritual leading to intentional entrance:

In some parts of Scotland the manner of entering the round grassy eminences known as fairy hills was by circling one of these nine times ‘towards the left hand’, when a door would open and the mortal investigator would be admitted to the subterranean abode of the fays. (277)

Upon embarking on this admission, though, safeguards should be in place:

If a person found himself in a fairy dwelling he should stick a piece of steel, a knife or needle or fish-hook, in the door, then the underground denizens would be unable to close it until he went out again. ... guidance to Faerie was granted by a ball or apple which rolled automatically before one. (Spence 277)

This concept of what you should or should not do for safeguard against the fairies is common, and sometimes it involves not taking action but uttering a saying:

When speaking of the fairies one should always mention the day of the week ... no mention of fairies should be made on Mondays and Thursdays. If you do mention them on those days, you should say: ‘My back to them and my face from them.’ (Spence 311)

Feigning ignorance of fairies, if breaking rules, is considered a protective measure. There are other rules that apply to certain days of the week, such as Friday, involving not just speech but clothing: “In the Highlands, it was thought sinister to speak of fairies on a Friday nor must their colour of green be worn on that day” (Spence 311).

Another rule involving clothing mandates turning one’s clothes inside out to avoid the peril of encountering fairy folks:

An old English rhyme runs: Turn your cloakes, / For fairy folks / Are in old okes. One way of avoiding fairies in old England was to turn one’s coat or some other garment, inside out. (Spence 20)



At times, these rules may seem nonsensical, and lyrically weightless, such as turning a jacket inside out, or putting oatmeal in one's pockets, or spitting in a child's face: "To spit in a child's face when it yawned was regarded in the Highlands as a charm against fairy malevolence" (Spence 163). Sometimes these rules may even seem dangerous in themselves, such as throwing a knife in violent wind:

The fairy eddy or whirlwind can scarcely be considered without reference to the Sluagh, these traditions arising from a common source. Those eddies of wind which arise suddenly, sometimes even in the calmest weather, were formerly believed to be the media for fairy flights, and it was thought that mortals were frequently borne off in them by the elves. In order to avoid being caught up in them, people would cast earth from a mole-hill, a knife, a bonnet or a shoe at the eddy, in order to compel the fairies to restore their prey. ... If a knife be thrown, it is thought that it will wound the elfin riders on the whirlwind. (Spence 64)

Dealing with fairies does not involve trying to dominate or control nature, but there is a negotiation and a sense of engagement, however strange, such as indeterminately throwing an object – even a sharp object – in fierce storm winds. Spence notes that one saying that can be uttered as "a certain formula for securing any person or object which the elves may be bearing off" is "mine is yours and yours is mine" (258).

There's a sense of ritual that involves being honorific toward nature and of behaving in a manner which succumbs to being swept up in natural flow of experience, but with potential negotiation. Fairyland seems to be a place where you need to be giving and on guard, and this realm may give back to you. There is a discourse or conversation with nature that seems nonsensical and asks the participant to put away predispositions (for example, turning one's jacket inside out or throwing an object at an invisible target). Reason and control are stomped out.

## **The Transmission of Knowledge in Fairyland in**

### **Patrick Rothfuss' *The Wise Man's Fear***

In Rothfuss' *The Wise Man's Fear*, the protagonist, Kvothe, is drawn to fairyland from the lure of a song which leads to a sensation of detecting and acknowledging the pull of magic: "There was magic here, real magic" (700). Once arriving in the realm of fairyland, the process of learning magic from a fairy isn't straightforward:

'I was wondering,' I said carefully, 'if you would be willing to teach me.' She reached out to touch the side of my face gently. ... 'Have not I already begun?'... I realized that she did not intend to teach me magic. Or if she did, it was magic of a different kind. (Rothfuss, "The Wise Man's Fear" 723-724)

Questions directed to the fairy from Kvothe are presented with a necessary and prerequisite measure of sensitivity intermingled with subdued frustration, and an expectation of answers is abandoned:

I asked Felurian a few careful questions about magic, not wanting to offend her by prying at her secrets. Unfortunately, her answers were not particularly enlightening. Her magic came as naturally as breathing. I might as well have asked a farmer how seeds sprouted. When her answers weren't hopelessly nonchalant, they were puzzlingly cryptic. Still, I continued to ask, and she answered as best she could. And occasionally I felt a small spark of understanding. (Rothfuss, "The Wise Man's Fear" 725)

This depiction of a "small spark of understanding" seems to nod to the limit of learning in fairyland, no matter how many questions are presented, albeit "a few careful questions," a handful, or an arsenal of inquiries:

After a handful of questions ... I quickly learned it was better to follow along, quiet and confused, rather than try to winkle out every detail. ... You might think

these thousand facts gave me some insight into the Fae. That I somehow fit them together like puzzle pieces and discovered the true shape of things. A thousand facts is quite a lot, after all. ... But no. A thousand seems like a lot, but there are more stars than in the sky, and they make neither a map nor a mural. (Rothfuss, “The Wise Man’s Fear” 727)

The concept of learning something, however small, is sufficient, but this feat exists alongside confusion from the many things that can’t be resolved:

After our shadow-gathering expedition, I asked more pointed questions about Felurian’s magic. Most of her answers continued to be hopelessly matter-of-fact. How do you take hold of a shadow? She motioned with one hand, as if reaching for a piece of fruit. That was how, apparently. Other answers were nearly incomprehensible, filled with Fae words I didn’t understand. When she tried to describe those terms, our conversations became hopeless rhetorical tangles. ... Still, I learned a few scraps. What she was doing with the shadow was called grammerie. When I asked, she said it was ‘the art of making things be.’ This was distinct from glamourie, which was ‘the art of making things seem.’ I also learned that there aren’t directions of the usual sort in the Fae. Your trifoil compass is useless as a tin codpiece there. North does not exist. And when the sky is endless twilight, you cannot watch the sun rise in the east. (Rothfuss, “The Wise Man’s Fear” 738)

Kvothe experiences a complete sense of disconnect between teaching and learning as it relates to outcomes saturated with “hopeless rhetorical tangles.”

Learning involves process of negotiation: “Still, I learned a few scraps.” And what can be learned may not be retained, since memory is perhaps compromised in the realm of fairyland:

I have a good memory. That, perhaps more than anything else, sits in the center of what I am. It is the talent upon which so many of my other skills depend. I can only guess how I came by my memory. My early stage training, perhaps. ... Wherever it came from, my memory has always served me well. Sometimes it works much better than I’d like. That said, my memory is strangely patchy when I think of my time in the Fae. My conversations with Felurian are clear as glass. Her lessons may as well be written on my skin. ... But other things I cannot bring to mind at all. (Rothfuss, “The Wise Man’s Fear” 739)

This fogginess is a part of the experience of traversing fairyland and recollection is patchy, as opposed to lucid.

Most often, the depictions of fairies bestowing or granting knowledge and skill upon individuals does not entail a process of learning by practice, study, or trial and error. The gift of being taught magic, skills, and secrets is conferred magically and presumably instantaneously. Examples of this are plentiful in folklore:

Skill in various crafts is often a gift of the fairies. The chief of them is the gift of music. Finger Lock, a tale about the McCrimmon family collected by Hamish Henderson, is such a one, telling of the gift of miraculous skill in piping bestowed on an untalented and despised member of that famous family. In Campbell's story of the *Smith's Son Rescued from the Fairies* the boy is given skill with iron work, even though the fairies are frightened of cold iron. Evans Wentz collected a tale from a Barra piper of a fairy gift of skill in carpentry, which again shows the fairy habit of haunting dwellings and workshops. (Briggs "The Fairies in Tradition and Literature" 120)

The skill of musicianship is bestowed as opposed to taught. Acquisition is presumably instantaneous and this occurs on an all or nothing basis: an untalented individual suddenly acquires "miraculous skill." Examples of this sudden acquisition may occur in adulthood or during early childhood. Age seems irrelevant, as Spence notes how fairies also "preside over birth and can confer talents on children" (146).

Spence also points out how fairies themselves don't acquire magical power, but instead their magic is instilled by natural heritage:

The fairy race is inalienably associated with magic and illusion. ... No difference seems to exist between that species of magic practiced by the fairies and that employed by mortals; but magical power would seem to be the natural heritage of the fairy race, who do not have to acquire it as mortals do. (152)

As described above, once practiced, the magic of fairies and mortals is fully similar, but the manner of its acquisition is worlds apart.

Spence continues to provide characteristics about fairy magic as it relates to illusion, along with initiation:

The fairies were believed to initiate certain favoured folk into knowledge of the magical arts. ... The most characteristic among the arts of fairy magic, perhaps, is that of illusion, enchantment, or, to employ its expressive Scottish synonym, ‘glamourie.’ This, as the term imports, was a delusion of the senses of the beholder, the casting of a species of mirage over places and objects to make them seem other than they actually were. A hut or a shieling might, under the power of illusion, appear as a castle or palace, a puddle of water as its moat, rags as resplendent attire and leaves or beans as golden coin. In the event, the gorgeous scene usually vanished with extraordinary suddenness, leaving the disillusioned beholder in a moss or a ditch. The sudden casting of a mist over the landscape by a fairy when pursued is a notion having the same origin. (153)

This art of illusion is often applied to “riches composed of withered leaves and heath-flowers, tufts of hair, pebbles and thin slates,” but eventually the spell wears off, revealing rubbish (Spence 220). Spence also notes of tales of fairy money “fabricated by magic art” that appears quite real during transactions but later turns into fungus (219). Eventually, illusion erodes, allowing for truth to be revealed.

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps it is unsurprising that the land of fairy takes us farther afield from familiar or commonplace metaphors for learning. The land of fairy, itself a realm of illusion that is never quite apprehensible by its wanderers or observers, establishes a framework for learning which relates concepts quite removed from those we typically grapple with, such as the academy’s ways of advancing or failing students (reflected in wizard schools), or the life-long realization of one’s self as a being endowed with innate power (as in the archetype of the witch). To be in conversation with the fairies is perhaps primarily different because it does not place its subjectivity squarely on the pupil, but rather distributes it evenly in the environment as a perceived ulterior and often

impenetrable realm. To this end, the fairy themselves must receive as much benefit as the traveller in their realm who may attempt to learn their ways or gain gifts from them: “J.G. Campbell remarks that a peculiarity of fairy gifts is that ‘the benefit of the gift goes ultimately to the fairies themselves, or ... the fruit of it goes into their own bodies’” (Spence 211).

To communicate with or even observe this land, participant seekers must pay dues that are not always in primary service of the student learner, but in fact benefit the realm itself, letting one become subject to a reality quite apart from that which they will typically tread. Fairyland perhaps offers an ecologically transactional form of teaching and learning.

The land of fae is a space that is quintessentially other, apart not just from the seeker of its borders, but in fact from the entire assumed structure of one’s cultural or physical reality, and this makes any interaction with it fraught with illusion and peril that must be carefully navigated. We are taught by the fairies, through lore as well as recent fiction, that to successfully communicate or learn their ways one must display willingness to depart from normative behaviours (e.g., to turn one’s jacket inside out) as well as to grant homage or offerings to the non-human world. Fairyland and the fairy archetype codifies the need for generosity in order to gain knowledge and magical favour, as well as a relinquishment of empiric values and logic, and this presents a model for learning outside of the safety or comfort of inherent structures and values. Fairyland is presented as a fleeting experience in fantasy literature, full of heightened pleasures and perils, allowing it to exist as transformative alterity against the dominant experiences of students. Inherent in the transactional nature of this relationship with the fairies is a

realization of mankind's supplicant status to his or her environment, one which could turn from beneficent to hazardous in a heartbeat, perhaps as swift as a cat purr becomes a hiss and swipe. This is a status which remains as true today as it may have been in the times from which the fairy lore is sourced, and seeking the whimsical modes of learning that the fairies ask of us may still yield benefits for us now.

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSION: THE NEIGHBORLY ADMIXTURE OF MAGIC AND EDUCATION

In Katharine Briggs' work, *Pale Hecate's Team*, she observes archetypal and folkloric interconnectivity:

I have been increasingly impressed by the interconnection, though not the identity, of supernatural creatures in folklore, and by the way in which folklore and literature rise and sink into each other. So it is that a chapter on fairies is full of reference to witches, lost deities, and heroes of romance, that witches creep into demonology, fairy lore, and folk natural history, and that ghosts appear and disappear among the fairies devils and angels. Without assuming that identity of origin of which many have been convinced, one must admit that the strands of belief are almost inextricably tangled. (Briggs, "Pale Hecate's Team" 222)

Briggs suggests that folkloric beliefs are entangled; and, even if the identities of supernatural creatures are distinct, it seems possible that magic is the glue or mechanism of cohesion, allowing for a braiding of variable strands, no matter the archetype or pattern. Within fantasy literature, threads of enchantment emerge in the same way that myriad dream images emerge, with highly varied occurrences and prismatic meaning as well as prismatic hesitancy. But no matter the archetypal form or appearance, magic lurks, with the ability to be understood, harnessed, acquired, and passed on; magic adds momentum within a narrative quest, enabling a leap into the unknown, regardless of the particular fantastical world or narrative context. The discovery of and learning of magic



are salient themes in fantasy literature, and this process reclaims a lost territory that extends beyond the narratives of fantasy to hypothesize an enhancement of possible achievements and growth, melding inquiry with alternative visions of learning, doing, imagining and knowing. Magical knowledge becomes power on an accelerated basis, with properties that lead to transformation in a more rapid and profound manner. The presence of magic enhances pedagogical aims, growth, and outcomes no matter the means or process of acquisition (which can be messy, as in the case of a wizard, or natural, as in the case of a witch). Magic ties its practitioners into systems of learning that are full of tradition, rites of passage, and conceptions of mastery, while intertwining elements such as intuition, luck, imagination, creativity and empathy. In this realm, the pursuit of magic widens the field of pedagogy; and, as a metaphor for the acquisition of knowledge, opens up pathways for enhanced reflections of selfhood that could not be explored otherwise.

Magic binds the unknown with education, enabling the speculative to supersede the normative and familiar, purposefully enhancing notions of creative agency and empowerment. The idea of magic and the unknown can be framed as that which oftentimes exists beyond senses, hidden beyond the capacity of understanding, but the investigation of archetypal patterns reveal pedagogical patterns that can be meaningful. At its best, even without any element of magic, education involves enhanced forms of self-knowledge and transformation. And on its own, magic involves not simply esoteric systems of rites, spells, and supernatural creatures, but self-knowledge and transformation as well. Due to self-knowledge and transformation, the neighborly admixture of the two – education and magic – become harmoniously interconnected in

fantasy literature, while the normative shackles of the routine are eroded if not altogether changed. Magic and education enrich and cross-pollinate one another.

As revealed in fantasy literature, sometimes magical knowledge is handed down without rhyme or reason and sometimes it exists within, as innate or raw talents, requiring recognition. Other times, magical knowledge and skills are gifted implicitly or they are attained by happenstance. Another possibility is that magic is hard won after systematic toil and efforts. The fact that magic exists in fantasy literature as a mysterious and elusive element allows narratives to maintain and validate various means of knowledge acquisition – one archetypal form, such as a wizard, pursues a radically different mode of pedagogical engagement with magic than another archetypal form, such as a fairy.

Fantasy literature traverses a wide field of inquiry, yet does allow for and invite systematic interpretation. While fantasy is borderless and constantly shape-shifting, there are archetypal patterns to discern and draw meaning from, as well as depths of folkloric research with historical and cultural contexts to examine which have correlations with education. The investigation of archetypes allows for a deeper level of understanding of selfhood and an enhanced empathy for others – even if archetypes may be considered as metaphors for the learning process and educational journeys we take on. At minimum, they cast a torchlight upon the entanglement and mythopoeic relationship between the unknown and education. While the concept of magic may bind and make more succinct fantasy literature's presentation of creativity, growth, and knowledge acquisition, archetypal forms offer specific models, conditions, and pedagogical outcomes. Upon reflecting on the meaning of the relationship between magic and education, it seems vital

to understand that fantasy, with roots in folklore and myth, includes archetypal particularities that are meaningful.

The process of categorizing archetypes allows for a lens by which pedagogy and knowledge transmission can be explored and understood. Perhaps the wizard archetype is the most bound to the traditional academy, since there are portrayals of rigorous stints of mandated, mechanical conditioning that are endured before a wizard transcends the institution, coming into his or her own selfhood and power after a belly-flop at some point, or at least a banana-peel to slip on now and then. Wizards are faced with monolithic entities of education, such as the Wizard School, which appears in fantasy literature frequently, and its examples contain familiar concepts such as prerequisites, testing, barriers of access, burdens of rote learning, unending memorization, hefty tuition costs, academic pressures, etc. However, wizards typically make headway in these environments not only through managing the institutional requirements of the academy, but also by experiencing failure, tasting what it is like to be an outsider (or outcast), and indeed often by ignoring the rules, in order to flourish and attain power and wisdom. A hallmark of the wizard school narrative is that there is unstated or unsanctioned secret knowledge, sometimes only hinted at by the academy, and sometimes found far outside of its bounds, through experience. The pursuit of this will-o'-the-wisp of sorts is vital toward true mastery of one's wizardry and their disciplined imagination and craft.

For witches, knowledge is pointedly less external in its locus. Witches may or may not receive formalized training, and often the emphasis of their learning is on innate knowledge that is closer to the body, heritage or a natural current within the self that defies systems of classification, memorization, or craft. Witches are often assumed to be

predisposed to magical ability by lineage, and techniques of summoning and controlling their power are communicated in more intimate ways, and more bound to selfhood and self-actualization. Unlike the wizard archetype, the acts of controlling magic or of cultivating a disciplined imagination are more diminished priorities, while self-understanding and self-empowerment are forefront. Upon dealing with magical occurrences and surges, the body is the wellspring. Overall, a witch's power does not depend on wands and cauldrons, but relies on learning about and wielding one's own power, which is an intersection of self-knowledge and praxis.

Perhaps the most far flung example of knowledge acquisition among the common archetypes of fantasy literature is that of the fairy. Fairies are not emphasized in fantasy literature for the way they learn rites, but instead are assumed to inhabit a world fully vested with magic and magical power. However, human engagement with the fairies presupposes and presents magical outcomes, while also retaining procedurally arcane modes of locating the fairy realm that, in itself, is reminiscent of the pursuit of knowledge. Fairyland enables wandering, with an acute and wildly reverent attention to nature. Perhaps fairyland teaches us to romanticize hinterland, to curiously embark on quests beyond known boundaries, to respect nature, and to give reverence to (and never under-estimate) the power of nature and otherness. This type of attention and profound curiosity about nature and otherness enhances empathy. Fairies require a radical stance in terms of acknowledging the relationship of knowledge to the concept of empathy, imbuing nature with inhabitants that honor the power of the natural world. In fairyland, true engagements with nature and magic require wonder, innate, endless curiosity, and a relinquishing of the mundane. Fairy magic is radically reciprocal, and balance must

always be maintained in a careful and creative fashion, in order to bring forth the goal of gaining the favor of these beings; and, in return perhaps one may be bestowed with magic, luck, and knowledge. The realm of fairies is not simply about fairy dust and self-enchancement, but forefronts the importance of transaction, acknowledging the delicacy of give-and-take with a deep belief in the value of generosity. Traversing fairyland necessitates the idea of going forth and continuing on an enchanted journey, even if the destination is incomprehensible or impossibly distant, while keeping a strong hold on belief in the so-called quest in order to detect, identify, and eventually cross boundaries and transcend the everyday humdrum. Fairyland mandates the respect of rules, always on the fairies' terms, and elevates experiences that are not easily grasped, understood, or communicated beyond the self. Comprehension can be faint or loose and the fairyland traveller is owed nothing as far as the transmission of knowledge goes. Fairyland entails the enclosures of strange perfection in the natural world that can be participated in, and traversed, but sometimes at a steep cost, and sometimes with enchantment that eventually vanishes.

Overall, archetypes in fantasy literature are myriad, and further investigations could explore the pedagogical meaning and metaphors of other forms within its folds, as well as within other forms of art and media, beyond literature. The potency of the field of fantasy is that it allows for models of magical inquiry and learning to be present in vast varieties, where boundaries and borders are not fixed or beholden to consistency. However, witches, wizards, and fairies grant a significant divergence from educational models that can illuminate real-world potential for enhanced reflection, and can serve to make way for meaningful and abundant future inquiry into this rich field. Not only can

fantasy literature unveil patterns to be detected, but ideally personal meaning and enhanced empathy can be established to allow for humanistic reflection on education, magic, and pedagogy, with an opportunity to view education under an overall idiosyncratic lens. Magic is perhaps not harder won than other forms of knowledge, but it does allow for a mythopoeic imagination to be applied to education, amplifying ideas of transformation, empathy, selfhood, and creativity.

While locating and examining the hallmark attributes of some of the more primary archetypes (wizards, witches, fairies) of fantasy literature is revealing, it may be fruitful for further research to imagine the investigation of many lesser known archetypes, as they pertain to pedagogy. Each has its own historical roots and possibilities for contemporary reflections, and its own relationship to magic. Perhaps there is much to be revealed by chasing various will of the wisps and creatures, in search of illuminating patterns of knowledge acquisition and magical empowerment, whether this entails werewolves, zombies, nymphs, mermaids, giants, ghosts, vampires, doppelgangers, etc.

### **Implications**

In *The Educated Imagination*, Northrop Frye reflects, “Literature speaks the language of the imagination, and the study of literature is supposed to train and improve the imagination” (127). This study encourages the development of educational practices and creation of learning opportunities that leave room for non-domineering explorations of the natural world, encouraging immersion in nature with curiosity and purpose but without presupposed, clear cut rationales for investigation beyond encountering,

watching, listening, and experiencing the grand and diminutive marvels in the natural environment. Immersion in the natural world is a fairyland full of discovery and pleasures, fully deserving of attention and respect for seen and unseen rhythms and changing seasons. Also, this study's implications suggest that educational experiences at times may seem like fairyland, especially when pursuing opportunities outside of the classroom, outside of one's comfort zone, where one may wander and encounter the unknown.

Each archetype shows idiosyncratic educational commitments, priorities, and obstacles. The narrative of the wizard's educational trajectory and the process of learning often entails a rigorous apprenticeship and an intense process of coming to terms with one's limits, but these are milestones to eventually surpass. The narrative of applying a wizardly commitment to the quest for systematic knowledge ideally paves the way to a degree of future freedom that embraces and accommodates imaginative and more free-wheeling measures, with an eventual transcendence of an apprentice identity. Also, each archetype, especially the wizard, presents a narrative of how failure and control play a specific role in the acquisition of magic. Each archetype is a fine storytelling vessel for educational narratives, and further research may explore more specific pedagogical representations, such as the tropes of failure and control in fantasy literature.

The witch archetype suggests that power is innate, but must be recognized, realized, and tended to. The witch archetype forefronts self-empowerment and self-knowledge, but also harbors radical sensitivity and amplified empathy. The fairy archetype emphasizes endless curiosity, continuous wonder, and prioritizes idiosyncratic engagements with the nonhuman and the natural world. The acquisition of magic in

fairyland re-engages its practitioners with a lost vision of humankind's relationship with the environment, granting reverence to nonhuman beings, nature spirits, and whimsical modes of existence, while rejecting control and analysis.

Perhaps learners may consciously determine which archetypal model resonates and holds meaning for them, upon turning attention to their own paths, including past educational trajectories and desired roads ahead. Or, perhaps it is valuable to perceive these archetypes as needing to operate in equilibrium with one another, each surfacing and existing on their own terms, at certain times in an individual's educational trajectory. Perhaps individuals may strive to achieve a balance of more consciously accommodating each archetype's presence, promoting the witch's self-empowerment and radical receptivity, the wizard's reliance on bouts of formal training, and the fairy's pursuits of unfamiliar and strange quests. Our own archetypal identities may be a chimera of self-chosen qualities, with a pin-clasp on the collar of our removable wizard cloaks, a storage closet for our broomsticks, and a key to open the gates of our fairylands. Educators may promote how these artful and fantastical portals may open and close, at our choosing, through fantasy literature.

Future research may examine more fully educational theory, based on observations of archetypes and pedagogy in fantasy literature, determining whether specific theories may be derived or subverted. For instance, John Dewey reflects on the conditions of learning based on experience and interdisciplinary action:

To 'learn from experience' is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction – discovery of the connection of things. (Dewey 140)



In comparing Dewey's ideas of learning from experience to the wizard and witch archetype, both offer unique and specific pedagogical modes, but the wizard depends on experience that is formal and structured, whereas the witch archetype depends on experience that is personal and independent. The fairy archetype, however, subverts the idea of learning from experience, and instead welcomes ambiguity, accommodating a flow of experience that is open-ended and less dependent on time. Furthermore, the fairy archetype presents shifting boundaries, as opposed to perceiving 'the connection of things,' and learning outcomes are elusive and unmoored. While Dewey acknowledges the idea of uncertainty, and the process of interfacing with the unknown, which relates to the concepts of the fairy, witch, and wizard archetypes, he does not touch upon magic (or magical indeterminacy and possibility), or any of its catchphrases: "All thinking involves a risk. Certainty cannot be guaranteed in advance. The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance" (Dewey 148). Dewey further notes, "Only silly folk identify creative originality with the extraordinary and fanciful; others recognize that its measure lies in putting everyday things to uses which had not occurred to others" (Dewey 159). Without attention to magic and fantasy, Dewey does not seem to embrace the fanciful as a value interlinked with 'creative originality.'

Therefore, in Dewey's educational discourse, the fairy archetype's pedagogical possibilities are subdued or dismissed as 'silly.' Dewey encourages "inventiveness" in terms of cultivating "educative development," as opposed to considering "the static, cold-storage ideal of knowledge," but the wizard archetype suggests a sequence of first attaining static knowledge to later have creative agency (Dewey 158).

Further research may continue to investigate representations of archetypes and education in fantasy literature, examining the relationship (or diminishing relationship) between pedagogy and magic in the present-day classroom and educational settings. Additional inquiry may be helpful to determine whether fantasy literature is typically included, lightly touched upon, or omitted in K-12, secondary, and higher education curricula, and perhaps this study may promote its inclusion, championing it as essential rather than peripheral, based on its possibilities for introspection and enrichment. Also, is fantasy implicitly present or naturally embodied in educational practices beyond early childhood, and does magic lurk somewhere?

Future research may also explore how pedagogical tenets of the fairy, witch, and wizard archetype may be reflected in curricula. For example, curricula related to the wizard archetype may include a specific discipline, structured learning outcomes, clear timelines and expectations of progress, teacher supervision, and ways of measuring progress, but with moments of rupture to find freedom within this structure. Curricula related to the fairy archetype may include periods of immersion to gain experience and forefront learning opportunities with no structure, faint expectations, no supervision, and no means of measuring progress, since progress may be inconsistent or non-existent. The fairy archetype escapes the parameters of a formal, classroom setting, yet is learner centered and experiential. Curricula related to the witch archetype may include independent study or collaborative learning imperatives aligned with personal agency. The witch archetype's learning outcomes and educational opportunities may bridge disciplines, based on individualized background and interests. Each fantasy archetype

presents experimental and innovative curricula possibilities that have not yet been widely examined or practiced.

Since a limitation of this study is that it homes in on a sampling of fantasy literature, further research may branch out beyond the written word, spanning across popular culture and touching upon the vibrant and complex matrix of art, music, and film. Further research may also look more widely and attentively at the historical and cultural lore of various archetypes, through a more thorough investigation of primary sources, including researching archival resources. The fantasy genre contains multiplicities of possible forms referenced and examined in its folds, and as a whole it presents a nearly inexhaustible engine for engagements with variations of pedagogy. The magical transmission of knowledge in fantasy literature offers various radical models, presenting circumventions of traditional aspects of pedagogy. These representations of pedagogy and magic carry with them an urgent utility that cannot flourish easily in any other form.

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