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Broomsticks for witches? The development of the role and portrayal of the witch in children's literature from 1927 to the present day

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Broomsticks for Witches ? :
the development of the role and portrayal of the witch
in children's literature from 1927 to the present day.

by

Louise K. Doyle BA

A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
Master of Arts degree of the
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Abstract

The decline of childhood has resulted in the modern child having access to 'adult' knowledge. The suggestion of censorship leads to a discussion on a child's psychological needs in relation to fear and evil; dimensions of the witch. Using fairy tales as a model shows that children do need fear for a healthy psychological development. The symbolic meanings of the witch are analyzed revealing a beneficial effect. It is found that the stereotyped witch image emerged from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Using three major themes (isolated by Ann and Barry Ulanov) fundamental to the witch image in fairy tales; five children's 'witch' novels are analyzed for correlations. The resulting archetypal witch is found to be manifest in 1927, less apparent mid-century, and reappearing in the 1960s. The stereotyped witch image has undergone a steady decline since 1927. Analyzing relevant social trends it is found that feminism promotes the portrayal of the archetypal witch, and social awareness has led to the portrayal of innocuous witches. It conclusion, irony is found in a child's increased access to 'adult' knowledge when fear and evil in his literature are decreasing. It is also found that the witch presented in an archetypal form can provide psychological benefits; innocuous witches cannot. The archetypal witch does not promote feminism. The innocuous witch often maintains the stereotyped image, prolonging a negative attitude towards females.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: to my husband for nobly typing it and seeing me through the bad times, and to my children for maintaining their childhood whilst temporarily losing their mother.

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Introduction

The aims of this dissertation are to establish whether fear and evil are a necessary part of children's literature and whether this is reflected in their novels. These aims will be discussed in connection to the portrayal and role of the witch - an accepted figure of evil, with fear-inducing capabilities. To this end the concept of childhood needs to be analyzed, including the modern approach. Following this will be a discussion on fear and evil in children's books, with particular reference to fairy tales, to determine whether these emotions are psychologically important to a child's development.

Two important facets of the witch image also need to be established; that of the witch as a symbolic figure, incorporating the various meanings that can ensue; and the source of the stereotyped witch image.

A substantial section of this dissertation will discuss a selection of children's novels which contain a witch as a principal character, to determine if, and in what ways, the witch image has developed throughout the twentieth century. The selection results from a random choice of novels which satisfy set criteria. Assuming there have been some developments, the author will endeavour to determine the causes, looking primarily at relevant social trends, especially that of feminism. This is to discover if any correlations exist between the portrayal of the witch in children's novels and social trends.

Chapter 1. Childhood and fear

1 i) The essence of childhood

In recent years much debate has centred on controversial elements in children's literature; and the effect they can have on the child readers. Catherine Storr suggests that the concern has evolved from a growing psychological awareness that is now prevalent in our society,

" I suppose our anxiety about this problem is at least partly due to the psychoanalytical approach to everything, literature and children included, which has grown in this century. " ¹

In analyzing theories of what children should and should not be exposed to, it must be remembered that, as Bette P. Goldstone says, " Children's literature is a transmitter of cultural values. It is an agent for socialization. " ² Ultimately, therefore, children's literature is a reflection of the society in which it was created. Goldstone continues, " What we decide to teach our children in regard to ethical, social, and academic matters depends on how we view the child, how we define childhood. " ³

A definition of childhood is therefore necessary in order to discuss the psychological effect on children of certain controversial matters. Goldstone argues that childhood is a product of society, rather than a product of nature,

Where childhood begins and ends is determined by the culture:
by interweaving economic factors, philosophical and religious

issues, and social-historic events. The concept of childhood is dynamic, changing to fit the needs of the community. Likewise children's literature changes to meet the needs and interests of its youthful readership. 4

In concordance, Neil Postman in The disappearance of childhood isolates three factors that need to be present in a society for childhood to exist: literacy, education, and shame. He argues that with the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth century the idea of the literate person evolved. In order to become literate children had to undergo rigorous education and self-discipline. Because of this the young became separated from the rest of society. Literacy was the means by which they entered adulthood, for " ... in a literate world to be an adult implies having access to cultural secrets codified in unnatural symbols. In a literate world children must *become* adults. " 5

This progresses to the idea of shame; for in a literate world the illiterate are restricted in their knowledge. Adults can control what the children know, and at what stage in their development they are made aware of it. Postman feels it would be 'shameful' to allow children to have uncontrolled access to knowledge. " In the modern world, as children move towards adulthood, we reveal these secrets to them, in what we believe to be a psychologically assimilable way. " 6

However, Postman goes on to argue that with the invention of the telegraph by Samuel Morse in 1837 events took a downward turn for, " ... the telegraph began the process of making information

uncontrollable " 7 with its speed and indiscriminate range of recipients. Other means of electric communication followed culminating in the advent of television, an immediate image-filled medium. Television has perhaps had the most detrimental effect on the erosion of childhood for with television it is extremely difficult to control the information that children have access to. The problem is compounded because the imagery is symbolic and equally accessible by all. In contrast oral language can be used on different levels thereby controlling the information it conveys. Postman summarizes the destructive effect television has had on the concept of childhood,

We may conclude, then, that television erodes the dividing line between childhood and adulthood in three ways, all having to do with its undifferentiated accessibility: first, because it requires no instruction to grasp its form; second, because it does not make complex demands on either mind or behaviour; and third, because it does not segregate its audience. 8

Unless strictly controlled, children now have access to what was previously forbidden knowledge; they often know as much as adults; and as a result become indistinguishable from them, excepting size and other physical signs of maturity. This premise stems from what Postman refers to as 'a fundamental principle of social structure' that is, " A group is largely defined by the exclusivity of the information its members share. " 9 If all individuals in society have the same information, then the separate groups become redundant.

Although the author has used Postman's arguments heavily in this dissertation, his views are not isolated, but enforced by Goldstone, for example. The author feels they present a crucial social phenomenon, the consequences of which are likely to have a disastrous effect on the concept of childhood as we know it. It must be borne in mind, however, that Postman is referring to American television and American children; and that the situation in Britain is not as far advanced as that in America. Despite this, when discussing children's literature it is worth remembering that the modern child *can* have access to what might be called 'adult' information.

To put this into perspective it must be noted that the Victorians were not averse to covering what we might consider to be controversial subject matter in children's literature. Death, for example, featured prominently, along with, " ... extreme poverty, brutality, idiocy, alcoholism and injustice ... " ¹⁰. Sex, of course was definitely a taboo subject for the Victorians, and so was never mentioned. The Victorians felt they were justified in exposing their children to the stark realities of life, since they were didactic in their approach. As Storr remarks, " ... the early Georgian and Victorian attitude was that it was quite permissible to shock children in order to frighten them into good behaviour. " ¹¹

Storr goes on to argue, in agreement with Postman, that with the advent of television and the simultaneous decline in the importance of literacy, the situation for the modern child has changed dramatically, pointing to censorship as an area for concern.

Before they can read, our children have the opportunity to

learn about the topics which engross the adult world, and to absorb the prevalent attitudes towards those topics. Are they disturbed by them. If not, we must ask whether perhaps they ought to be ? So our problem of censorship becomes extended: we have to consider not only what will frighten children and make them anxious, but also whether we are going to allow this to happen. And, if we are, in what terms we shall speak to them of terror and fear. ¹²

The questions raised by Storr are useful points of discussion. Any discussion on the portrayal and role of witches in children's literature necessarily includes a discussion on fear: an emotion traditionally evoked by witches. With fear comes evil; another dimension of the witch. To this end it is necessary to discuss fear and evil in relation to the psychological needs of the child, and to what extent he should be allowed to experience fear in terms of children's literature. Against this it must be acknowledged that children often experience televised fear which affects how they react to literary fear.

1 ii) The Quest for Fear

Although this dissertation is not concerned directly with fairy tales, they are a valuable starting point when discussing fear and evil in children's literature: firstly, because they have instigated immense debate on the subject; and secondly, because witches are " a primary symbol of evil " ¹ in fairy tales. As a result they have been included in this study. It should be noted that Chapter 2 also incorporates a discussion on fairy tales, but in specific relation to the symbolism of the witch.

Ann Trousdale in her article, "Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf ?" cites violence and brutality in fairy tales as the cause of debate; remarking that many argue this makes them 'harmful' to children, and that some protesters even wish to deny children access to fairy tales in public libraries. She goes on to say that,

" A number of parents have told me that, in choosing reading matter for their children, they have "protected" their children from the tales because of the violence and fearful elements contained in them. " ²

Bruno Bettelheim, who has written extensively on the importance of fairy tales, reiterates this observation,

Many parents believe that only conscious reality or pleasant and wish-fulfilling images should be presented to the child - that he should be exposed only to the sunny side of things. But such one-sided fare nourishes the mind only in a one-sided way, and real life is not at all sunny. ³

It seems to be a common opinion among parents that children should be protected from distressing and frightening reading matter (perhaps as a result of increased psychological awareness in the twentieth century); although they conveniently ignore the fact that good always prevails over evil in the tales.

However, removing a frightening climax to a fairy tale can be more detrimental to the peace of mind of a child than leaving it untouched. For example, Trousdale describes the reaction of a small girl to whom she reads the sanitized Walt Disney version of The three little pigs . In this particular version the wolf is never killed, leaving him free and dangerous, and consequently causing the child to have nightmares. Trousdale concludes,

"An element of gruesomeness has been deleted from the story, but along with it has been lost the security of knowing that in the end the danger is resolved for good. " 4

This is one possible benefit of allowing children access to unexpurgated fairy tales. Trousdale cites other opinions on the benefits of fairy tales. F.Andre Favat, for example " ... points out that the retributive justice contained in the tales is compatible with the young child's morality of constraint. " 5 Bettelheim, in his turn feels that " ... the certainty of the punishment of the villain is a necessary element in the tales for children, it has a salutary effect on their psyches as well as on their moral development. " 6 Finally C.S.Lewis observes that, " ... while the tales may indeed occasion fear they do not *cause* fear. What the tales do teach children, says Lewis, is the courage that wars against such fear. " 7

To illuminate this point further C.S.Lewis identifies two

different types of fear in his essay "On three ways of writing for children". The first type he describes as " ... haunting, disabling, pathological fears against which ordinary courage is helpless: in fact, phobias. " ⁸ These, he feels, are detrimental to the well-being of the child, and should not be encouraged through literature, or indeed through other means. The second type of fear, says Lewis, can arise from " ... the knowledge that he [the child] is born into a world of death, violence, wounds, adventure, heroism and cowardice, good and evil. " ⁹ To deny the child access to the second type of fear, Lewis feels, would " ... give children a false impression and feed them on escapism in the bad sense. " ¹⁰

Thus learning about fear through fairy tales can enable a child to come to terms with and cope with his own personal fears, including those of his imagination and subconscious. Learning about fear in this way can prepare a child for what the world holds for him in the future and allow him ultimately to embrace reality.

Storr also identifies two different types of fear that can be produced through literature, referring in general to children's books. The first she describes as a "sick fear" such as that produced by believing " ... there is a murderer lurking on the stairs for you. " ¹¹ She feels that this 'sick fear' is not conducive to a child's healthy state of mind, and should be avoided. Instead, she says,

We should show them that evil is something they already know about or half know. It's not something right outside themselves and this immediately puts it, not only into their comprehension, but it also gives them a degree of power, and

even if the danger comes from outside, like the hand of fate ... the child doesn't feel isolated. It feels that it's at one with the human race - that this could happen to anybody. ¹²

This causes a more universal fear pertinent to the human race; the ultimate fear being death. However, in a later discussion Storr slightly retracts her observations concerning her first category,

" However much one would like not to give children a sort of haunting sick fear that goes on for years, one must admit one is going to give it to them for moments anyway. " ¹³ This is in response to Frederic Smith's comments in the discussion. He uses the term 'real fear' to describe Storr's 'sick fear' saying, " By avoiding the moments of real fear in [children's] novels, you will be avoiding the fear in their own lives. " ¹⁴

There seems to be some confusion here. Storr, I feel, spoke, before retraction, along similar lines to C.S.Lewis; her 'sick fear' is similar to that of Lewis's 'phobias'. They are pathologically based and can be psychologically damaging. It is right that they should be avoided. The other type of fear can enable the child to come to terms with the human condition. These fears need to be encouraged. Smith has confused the issue with his definition of 'real fear' which, when analyzed, is nearer to describing Storr's universal fear.

Although Lewis is referring to fairy tales, Storr is referring to any children's novels which contain fear and evil. However, many modern children's novels can appear innocuous in comparison. This may be partly due to constraints which modern authors can feel, particularly in this age of psychological awareness. Nicholas Tucker,

in The child and the book suggests that in modern literature children may find it difficult,

" ... to find any adequate reflection in them of the more aggressive parts of their fantasy life. Stories about a few, fairly innocuously 'naughty' children are not enough ... ". 15

Lewis reinforces this idea saying,

" ... I think it possible that, by confining your child to blameless stories of child life in which nothing at all alarming ever happens, you would fail to banish the terrors and would succeed in banishing all that can enable him to endure them. " 16

It can be concluded that children do need to experience fear in their literature (excluding, of course, the pathological sick fear), and indeed often enjoy being frightened. If they are denied this then the quality of life is diminished.

Walter de la Mare is credited with the belief " ... that children were impoverished if they were protected from everything that might frighten them. He said that the child who hadn't known fear could never be a poet. " 17

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Chapter 2. The Development of the image of the witch

2 i) The psychoanalytical view

The witch can be described as a primordial image which accounts for its universal presence. This is substantiated by The Oxford companion to children's literature which states that " Witches feature in the folklore of all countries ... " ¹. This is due to their symbolic nature and it is interesting to note that children are capable of producing such symbolic images even when unaware of the relevant literature. As the psychoanalyst Ernest Jones has stated,

We find that young children *spontaneously* create in their imagination, both consciously and still more unconsciously, the same images of horror and terror [as found in fairy tales], and that they suffer from nightmares without ever having listened to a fairy story. ²

Carl G. Jung explains this in terms of archetypal figures; the witch being a prime example. He argues that the archetypal figure is an innate image which exists in the collective human unconscious. As such the image of the witch is of universal significance.

Alison Lurie points out that the figure of the witch in fairy tales is closely related to the fairy godmother, the stepmother, and occasionally the mother ³. This gives an indication as to the psychological interpretation of the witch in fairy tale and fantasy. As Tucker says, " It is the witch or evil stepmother who stands in for

negative fantasies about the mother ... " 4 . Psychoanalysts have pointed to various sources of these negative fantasies. The major theories will be briefly mentioned.

Melanie Klein, a child psychoanalyst, has written on the ability of the child to segregate disparate traits of the individual parent. When viewed in terms of the fairy tale these traits are rendered symbolically in various stock figures, who are necessarily diametrically opposed.

The reasons behind this segregation, says Klein, stem from birth. The baby is usually dependent on one person, often it's mother, for it's basic human needs. But the mother can be both 'giving *and* denying' in the words of Tucker 5; seeing to the baby's basic needs but not granting all it's wishes; generating ambivalent emotions of the baby towards her. To be able to deal with this psychologically the infant can transmit his negative feelings concerning his mother onto a fantasy witch or wicked step-mother, for example; and his positive emotions onto perhaps a fairy godmother or princess. These opposing figures are, of course, prevalent in fairy tales. Klein feels that the segregation is beneficial to the child.

By this splitting, Melanie Klein argues, children's fantasy image of the 'good mother', necessary for their psychological security, is in no way threatened, since all really negative impressions of her can instead be projected on to a convenient, hateful villain, who may come back in nightmares, where dreams about witches still tend to be very common, especially at a young age. 6

As the child matures he will come to terms with the fact that one person can embody both positive and negative traits and dispense with the need to project them onto fantasy figures.

Freudians, in their turn, see the witch in fairy tales in relation to a child's Oedipal desires. Tucker describes the Oedipus complex according to psychoanalysts as,

" ... the result of a stage when young children go through a period of possessive, erotic attachment to the parent of the opposite sex. They can also, at the time, become very jealous and resentful of their parental rival of the same sex. " 7

By using the witch as a symbol for the child's Oedipal rival the child can find an escape route for it's feelings, and assimilate them. Obviously only girls will see the witch or evil stepmother in fairy tales in this symbolic light; a boy's Oedipal feelings would necessitate a male monster of some description.

Bettelheim endorses this view,

In a girl's Oedipal fantasy, the mother is split into two figures: the pre-oedipal wonderful good mother and the oedipal evil stepmother. ... The good mother, so the fantasy goes, would never have been jealous of her daughter or have prevented the prince (father) and the girl from living happily together. So for the oedipal girl, belief and trust in the goodness of the pre-oedipal mother, and deep loyalty to her, tend to reduce the guilt about what the girl wishes would happen to the step(mother) who stands in her way. 8

Bettelheim goes on to suggest that the child can live out her fantasy in fairy tales thus preserving actual family relationships.

These are perhaps the primary symbolic meanings of the witch in fairy tales and as such what may be relevant to one child will not necessarily be so to another, if at all. Whatever the symbolism of the witch, one factor remains constant: she is always a figure to be wary of. There are different types of witches in fairy tales; however, as Sara Miller says,

... when a witch enters a story there is no doubt that someone to be feared has entered. The witch is a being with special powers, who is most assuredly not on the side of the main characters in the story. She makes her appearance in order to thwart the good. 9

Such a formidable figure can pose problems for the child. Bettelheim believes ¹⁰ that fairy tales can give the child the ability to destroy his fantasy witch and benefit as a result. He cites Hansel and Gretel as an example suggesting that among other things the witch can represent the child's anxious fears in life. By destroying the witch as in Hansel and Gretel the child can overcome his immature fears.

To conclude, the witch in fairy tales can have many symbolic meanings for the child reader representing important facets of his imagination. When applicable, the child can use the symbol of the witch to enable him to resolve his own personal fears and fantasies.

2 ii) The witch in a cultural context

Marina Warner, in her article "The children who love to spell", writes that fairy tales have been and continue to be, a prime source of information about witches, which are accessible to children. She also points to the fact that the derivations with which we are familiar with in Europe, were penned by the Grimm Brothers in the nineteenth century. She goes on to say that the tales,

... belonged to an oral tradition in a part of the world that had experienced the reality of the witch-hunt, and they repeat exactly the most fundamental terror of the witch-hunters: child murder.

Witches were supposed to gather together at Sabbaths to worship the devil and offer him babies as human sacrifices. ¹

Women apparently were the prime perpetrators of such supposed occurrences. There are various reasons for the linkage of women with witchcraft; the most obvious being that the supposition was founded in fact. Women were often actually involved in witchcraft since their social position was of little consequence. As Georgess McHargue argues,

" The witch cults of medieval Europe appealed principally to the powerless, the individualists, the outcast, and those who had no other socially sanctioned outlet for their energies (the prime example of the latter being women). " ²

Warner point to this factor being reinforced by the religious view prevalent at the time.

The fear of witchcraft and the more usual identification of women with witches reproduces in a particularly savage way the church's long commitment to the view that women were more frail and therefore more susceptible to evil, especially through sexual seduction. Through their very weakness, they became infinitely more dangerous than their male counterparts. ³

This attitude absolved the witch-hunters of their persecutions of innocent women and their reign of terror.

Another reason for the linkage of women with witchcraft was as Warner suggests, that women's very role in society made them obvious candidates, due to the fact that " Witchcraft all over the world is essentially about inverting natural practices and tampering with nature. " ⁴ Their role in society predetermined their ability to have some influence in these areas. Women were often involved in midwifery and care of the sick, and particularly in the feeding of the family. These duties gave them the opportunity of influencing the outcome, through witchcraft or other means if so desired.

The stereotyped image of the witch has its foundations during these witch-hunt years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tucker sees a direct link between the "literary stereotype of the witch - a bent old lady with a cat" and the witch-hunt period when " confused, older women, living on their own, were picked on and tortured, ... as scapegoats for general discontent with society. " ⁵

When viewed in this light the correlation undermines and ridicules any fear or aversion caused by the now stereotyped image.

Warner adds another dimension to the source of the stereotyped witch image,

[The witch's] powers lie in her cauldron, the ordinary cooking pot of the time of the witch-hunt. The broomstick is the prime emblem of woman as drudge, but because a witch inverts what is right and proper, it frees her from the home, and gives her the ultimate release - flight. ⁶

This hypothesis shows how such mundane objects can become bestowed with so much significance resulting in the words 'cauldron' and 'broomstick' being synonymous with the word 'witch'.

To conclude, a combination of fact and fiction led to the emergence of women as prime suspects of witchcraft. The actual targets of persecution and their associated effects led to the emergence of the stereotyped witch image.

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Chapter 3. Analysis of Novels

3 i) Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the portrayal and effect of the witch in each of the chosen novels. They will be discussed in chronological order so that any trends can be observed.

In their book, The witch and the clown: two archetypes of human sexuality, the Ulanovs discuss three major themes, fundamental to the witch image in fairy tales. These are, " ... a witch's tremendous appetite, her placement at great distance from the human community, and her keen interest in sex and power. " ¹

The witch, however, has no ordinary appetite, " A witch's appetite craves to feed on the human- its blood, its flesh, its soul. " ² The flesh preferred is that of children. The Ulanovs go on to describe the dwelling of a fairy-tale witch,

Fairy-tale descriptions of a witch's abode abound in symbols of remoteness. She lives in the depths of a forest, or on the edge of a distant mountain, or at the farthest reach of ocean. Often her house is surrounded by symbols of death: skulls mounted on fence pikes, burnt-out vegetation, and grasping tendrils hanging from stunted trees. Body wastes, bloody refuse, decaying carcasses with noxious gases and fetid smells cling to the atmosphere that surrounds the witch's dwelling. Nothing grows around her. ³

This vile image may appear extreme compared to other images presented to us throughout literature, but it gives a clear indication of what can be expected.

The power of the witch can take many forms, usually associated with spell-making. She can destroy all that is human, psychologically and physically. " The witch infects our human values with her alien touch, often aiming to spoil health with a fatal sickness ... friendliness with malice and hatred ... human shape with animal forms. " ⁴ The Ulanovs continue, " She is not to be educated or reformed or touched by human culture. The closest she comes to human affect is in her irritability, fretfulness, bad temper, and malevolence. " ⁵ As far as her interest in sex goes we are told that, " She often indulges in tremendous bouts of sexual envy. " ⁶

Although the Ulanovs were writing with reference to fairy-tales, the points are valid when discussing witches in children's novels since, " Fairy tales present us with the phenomenon of the witch. " ⁷

The three themes are a useful barometer by which to gauge the presentation of witches in the chosen novels, and consequently to analyse whether the presentation has changed during this century; and whether, for example , the witch image has been sanitized for the modern child reader.

The witch described by the Ulanovs can be called the traditional, archetypal witch.

In addition, the image of the witch will be examined in relation to her physical appearance, and again whether any trends can be observed. The examination will be with particular reference to the witch's age, hair (including facial hair), teeth, limbs, hands, voice

and clothes; and whether she has the anticipated tools of the trade-broomstick, cauldron, wand and cat.

Included will be a discussion of the illustrations (if any) to determine whether they reinforce the image of the witch. The expected image can be called the stereotyped image.

Finally I shall discuss attitudes towards the witch in the novels. This will be with particular reference to the attitude of other characters to the witch and to witchcraft.

Although this analysis is superficial in some ways, the author is more concerned with the obvious portrayal of witches, than whether individual characters have witch-like qualities.

3 ii) Criteria for selection of novels

The author's aim has been to select well-written, recognized novels featuring a witch (or witches) as a main character; resulting in representative works throughout the twentieth century.

The selection has been limited to novels by British writers, suited to approximately the eight to twelve age range, written in a contemporary British setting. In some cases they are part of a series, in this instance only the first has been selected.

The earliest appropriate novel the author has found is John Masfield's The midnight folk therefore the starting point will be 1927.

It should be noted that the 1930s do not appear to have produced any 'witch' novels which fit the above criteria, whilst the 1950s saw the beginnings of a steady rise of examples.

As a result the author has selected the most appropriate, representative novels. However, the limitations of this dissertation have meant that some works inevitably cannot be included.

3 iii) The Midnight Folk

First published in 1927, The midnight folk by John Masefield, presents the story of a young boy (Kay Harker), and his search for lost treasure which will restore his family's reputation. He encounters the midnight folk along with magic and adventure; but he also encounters the witches, who have the same quest.

Comparison to the Ulanovs' three themes

From the beginning Kay is treated harshly by his governess, who unbeknown to him is Mrs. Pouncer, the witch. It is not untypical of her to strike him, " In a very pouncing way she spanked at his knuckles with the slipper. " ¹ She is cruel and vindictive and often punishes Kay with denial of food. She stifles his boyhood, ostensibly to protect him, " That afternoon the governess took him into the village, where he had ... to wait outside the butcher's (and not to play in the water of the gutter there, because there was blood in it) ... " ²

When he discovers that she is a witch, she poses a real and more dangerous threat to his boyhood for he overhears her saying, " "... I'd a very good mind to tom-tit him [Kay] there and then. " " ³

Mrs. Pouncer shows little regard for human life, particularly that of Kay, and would not be averse to destroying it completely, of which Kay is fully aware, " " I'm going straight to where all the witches are, " Kay thought; " they will bewitch me into a mouse and set the cat at me. O dear, O dear. " " ⁴

Her persecution and mistreatment of Kay abates her witch's appetite.

Moving on to the second theme; although Mrs. Pouncer lives in Seekings, the Harker ancestral home, her rooms are far removed, being situated at the end of a gloomy corridor. Her study appears neat and tidy, but there are incongruities, for example, Tarot cards, a book containing heiroglyphics, a witch's bag. The only similarity with the Ulanovs' second theme is in it's remoteness from the rest of the house. Her dwelling is very unlike that of a traditional witch but this is because she is living as a governess in a foreign environment. Her own choice of habitat is unknown.

Mrs. Pouncer, along with her colleagues has immense power, in line with the Ulanovs' final theme. As already mentioned she is quite prepared to 'tom-tit' Kay, and to wear him down psychologically.

She has an abundance of magical apparatus with which to exert her power: Invisible Mixture, magic lenses, Pouncer's Best Bewitching Mixture, " Ointment for turning little boys into tom-tits.", magic baskets, pairs of one league shoes and so on. She also has "bowls of gums and herbs for incantations. " ⁵ The incantations reveal a more serious and sinister aspect of witchcraft,

" Blackmalkin appeared, bearing a red light. After him came Mrs. Pouncer, crowned and wearing a long robe covered with magic signs; She bore a staff or wand. After her came Greymalkin, bearing a smoking dish. ... The smoke from Greymalkin's dish was sweet to smell and gave one an excited feeling. " ⁶, hinting at the possible use of drugs.

It is not clear who Mrs. Pouncer calls in her incantations; Kay assumes they are 'familiar friends' and indeed they appear to be linked to the spiritual world, " There came a rushing noise, the

hall-door opened with a clang; Kay felt the cool night air in a blast about him. Looking down at the hall, he saw a glittering child enter from the garden. " 7

It is suffice to say that the noise of the incantation frightens the listening Kay.

Mrs. Pouncer is portrayed in a subtle way, her words and actions speak for themselves. This can be seen in her treatment of Kay, " Presently the governess came down, [and] glowered at him to show that she had not forgotten, ... " 8 and, " " If you go contradicting me, " the governess said, " I shall write a letter to the schoolmaster and ask him to bring his cane. ... " " 9 She is also prepared to take any necessary steps to deal with her adversaries, " " We will make an incantation to-night to find out who it was ... and then short shrift. " " 10

There are no hints as to Mrs. Pouncer's interest in sexual matters, Masfield has steered clear of this area.

To summarize, Mrs. Pouncer has many of the attributes listed in the Ulanovs' three themes: although her habitat is very different. She can still be seen as a traditional, archetypal terrifying witch, who induces fear and has immense power which Masfield hints at, but does not delve into, so that his readers can feel fear but not be submerged and overwhelmed by it.

The physical appearance of the witch

Kay gives an accurate description of Mrs. Pouncer,

" " She has a hooky nose, a hooky chin, very bright black eyes, long dingle-dangle ear-rings which click, a poke-bonnet, a red cloak,

a stick with a hooky handle, and pointy, black shiny shoes. And although in a way she looks old, in another way she looks very young.
... " " 11

This last sentence gives a clue as to the authenticity of this highly stereotyped image, for when Kay examines his governess's powdering chamber he discovers her secret,

There was a row of seven crooked pegs.

From each peg there hung a witch's complete outfit; thus:

1 long scarlet cloak.

1 black stick with a crooky handle.

1 tall, black, pointed shiny hat.

And attached to each hat there was something ... he had to turn up the nearest hat to see what it was. It was marked inside Sylvia Daisy. The outside was a marvellous wax face of Mrs. Pouncer. 12

Mrs. Pouncer and her friends have conformed to the stereotyped image expected of them. However, the truth is more terrifying; appearances can be deceptive; for the governess is described as big and handsome with " a very beautiful voice " 13 to accompany her piano playing. Conversely Mrs. Pouncer has a 'sharp' voice.

Mrs. Pouncer has two cats, Blackmalkin and Greymalkin; a traditional besom broom-stick (the other witches have kitchen brooms, a stable broom, and so on); a wand or staff; but no cauldron, although she does have bowls for incantations.

Wearing her 'costume' Mrs. Pouncer is the image of a stereotyped

witch (her limbs and hands, of course, are those of the governess, so will be incongruous). But as the governess she appears to be an ordinary, indeed handsome-looking woman. Masfield is perhaps suggesting that the stereotyped image is an archetypal symbol only necessary to aid recognition, and that illusion and reality are interchangeable. It brings in an element of fear for the child reader for he realizes that one does not have to look like a witch to be a witch.

There is only one relevant illustration which portrays a stereotyped witch figure, reinforcing the description of Mrs. Pouncer in her witch costume. See illustration i).

Attitudes

The attitude towards Mrs. Pouncer the witch, by humans is difficult to assess since they only know her as the governess. As such she is part of the local community indulging in gossip and for appearances sake, attending church.

Kay has a typical child-like fascination with magic. He happily mounts and rides the broom-stick on Nibbins' instructions, " It was merry to be so high in the air. " ¹⁴ It is, in fact, reminiscent of a child playing with a hobbyhorse.

Later Kay takes some Invisible Mixture and innocently proclaims, " " I say, what fun, " ... " ¹⁵ He is quite eager to get involved and gets the opportunity when he finds Mrs. Pouncer's powdering chamber. He shows no fear, just a child's insatiable curiosity and temptation to dress up and pretend. He uses Mrs. Pouncer's costume to enact his fantasy, " " I say, " he said, " I look exactly like her. Now I will just

watch myself conjure. " " 16

Kay finds that he has to become actively involved in witchcraft (although not for the first time) to rescue his friends and immediately arms himself with the necessary magical apparatus. He has no qualms about doing so.

Nibbins, an ex-witch's cat, sums up the attitude towards witchcraft; " " ... I do love to see them at magic. It's terrifying, but I can't resist it. " " 17 However, he later reveals a far more sinister side to witchcraft than the innocent dabbling with magic,

" ... First they tried all the simple witchcraft. A fellow wouldn't object to that. There's nothing in that, it's rather fun. But when that didn't do any good, they said that they'd have to use stronger measures. "" ... They tried things that make my blood run cold, awful things; but they could get no clue. ..." 18

Nibbins reveals the two levels of witchcraft: the superficial level which is fun, Kay has tried it too; and the other more sinister and frightening level - the real witchcraft. Masfield is purposefully vague about what it involves, perhaps so as not to frighten his readers. It has succeeded in deterring Nibbins from any more involvement; and he acknowledges the detrimental effect that witchcraft can have, " " ... Now Blackmalkin has not been dependable for a long time. This magic business is very bad for a fellow, and he is in it deeply, with a very bad set, all the Pouncer Seven. ... " " 19

The message is brought home to Kay by Grandmamma Harker's portrait which speaks directly to him, urging him to take action

against Mrs. Pouncer, " " ... search her room, bless us and save us. You must be the master in your own house. Don't let a witch take the charge of Seekings. This is a house where upright people have lived. ... " " 20

Kay, courageously, performs this task, exerting his mastery.

Conclusions

Mrs. Pouncer is a traditional, evil witch combined with the illusion of a stereotyped witch to aid recognition and confirm beliefs.

Masefield has elaborated on the superficial magical witchcraft which fascinates children, but has not dwelt on the sinister evil aspect; only hinted at it's existence so that Mrs. Pouncer induces a measure of fear but not absolute terror.

She is a powerful enemy who is ultimately thwarted by Kay and the midnight folk.



Illustration i)

3 iv) The People in the Garden

First published in 1954 The people in the garden by Lorna Wood, tells the story of eight-year-old Caroline who goes to stay with her Great-aunt Sophia during the school holidays. Here she meets the people in the garden including the Hag Dowsabel, the witch. The novel subsequently recounts Caroline's adventures in the South of France where she meets such characters as the Witch Merlaine, Mr. Raven and Mrs. Rabbit.

Comparison to the Ulanovs' three themes

The first reference to the Hag Dowsabel displays her attitude to children. Bill Pettigrew, the gardener, tells Caroline that he is, in fact, a changeling,

' ... All along of the Hag Dowsabel liking children. Nipped the baby that should have been me out of its cradle and put me there instead. ' ... ' Sometimes ', he went on thoughtfully, ' I'm a bit sorry. For the other fellow, I mean. There he is, a real Pettigrew if ever there was one, living in a hut and having to shred deadly nightshade leaves and feed the bats and learn simple spells - a fish out of water, as you might say. It all comes terribly hard to him. ' 1

The Hag Dowsabel 'likes' children to fulfill her needs. Here the witch feeds on the soul of a child, subjecting him to a miserable life of imprisonment. Caroline discovers that she is the godchild of the

Hag Dowsabel, and as such is granted superior status and consequently is well-treated. It is perhaps a contradiction in terms for a witch to have a godchild, but it shows that the Hag Dowsabel does have some human qualities.

Moving on to the second theme; the habitat of the Hag Dowsabel has some of the features described, but again there are discrepancies. She does however favour remoteness, as Caroline says,

" I gathered from what Bill said that the Hag Dowsabel preferred to live in obscure bits of country (the hut, being on legs, could hike whenever she felt inclined) amongst dock leaves and nettles and deadly nightshade, and that she preferred to keep herself to herself. "

2

Later Caroline enters an old wood with the witch to visit her hut, she, " ... noticed that it was mounted on hen's legs and had a line of washing outside, with a few flannel petticoats and white socks on it. There was also a cauldron with a neat fire laid underneath it ... " 3

The image presented here is very different from that suggested by the Ulanovs. There are certainly no "symbols of death", and instead of refuse and decay there is a line of washing with petticoats and *white* socks. The image is untypical and incongruous; it is more of a humorous version of an eccentric witch's hut.

The Witch Merlaine's hut (the Hag Dowsabel's French counterpart) is even further removed from the Ulanovs' description. Her abode is " neat, gay, and colourful. " 4 She is a modern witch. In her hall, " Stuffed black cats stared at one another from every corner, magic wands and antique broom-sticks were arranged in enormous glass cases, and right in the centre of the room there was an old cauldron

with a palm growing in it. " ⁵ Wood obviously has no regard for the Witch Merlaine's taste in decor: "gimcrack" and "common" are words used by Caroline and Bill respectively to describe her home. It is in sharp contrast to the Hag Dowsabel's hut. The reader is given the impression that although the Witch Merlaine can perform magic she is not a 'real' witch as the Hag Dowsabel is.

Moving on to the Ulanovs' final theme of power, the Hag Dowsabel has many of the attributes listed. She is quite prepared, for example, to turn people into other physical forms. The Witch Merlaine tells Caroline that, " ' The Hag Dowsabel will not let you be harmed ', she said soothingly. ' Rather than that, she will turn your Great-aunt Sophia into a slug and Ethel into a bird. Then the bird will eat the slug and all will be well. ... ' " ⁶

This 'matter-of-fact' attitude undermines the true horror of such magic and suggests that the Hag Dowsabel is capable of murder.

The Hag Dowsabel has many powerful tools of the trade: invisible pills, forgettory pills, the ability to grant wishes, spells, wands and so on. She offers Caroline " ' ... A wand that turns people into toads - it's pocket size, very convenient. ... ' " ⁷ The humour has the effect again of removing the concept of it's power and fear-inducing capacities.

The Hag Dowsabel's personality also has many of the suggested traits. She is described as 'angry', 'furious', 'irritable', 'impatient'. She is often rude and uncaring; " ' Who cares ? ' snorted the Hag Dowsabel ... " ⁸ and " ' Idiot ! ' " hissed the Hag Dowsabel " ⁹ are typical retorts.

However, there is another side to the witch. For example, she

shows a fondness towards her broom-stick, " patting it affectionately " ¹⁰, and bestows a warm, friendly smile upon Mrs. Rabbit when she has earned praise.

Wood has endowed the Hag Dowsabel with a sprinkling of human qualities which has the effect of showing that she is not a totally evil witch.

The Hag Dowsabel does not display any sexual envy but she hints at her power in that direction by offering Caroline a love-potion. The inappropriateness of this offering to an eight-year-old girl and the fact that it is one of many hopeful offerings, suggests that she is more ignorant than wise in these matters.

To summarize, Wood has used many of the traits described by the Ulanovs in their three themes. This gives the Hag Dowsabel an air of authenticity as a traditional archetypal witch. She has been endowed with various human qualities to make her more accessible to the child reader, and to lessen her terrifying image. As the novel is a humorous one, the resulting witch is a combination of traditional and eccentric; who one would laugh with but not dare to laugh at.

The physical appearance of the witch

Caroline describes the Hag Dowsabel as, " An old lady, wearing a rather peculiar pointed hat and a long black cloak ... " ¹¹ Here, however, the stereotyped image ends for the Hag Dowsabel has her own eccentric additions, " ... her tall hat, for instance, had been made of tweed, and she had worn stout buckskin brogues with steel studs in them. " ¹² When she rescues the travellers in the desert she is wearing a " pith sun-helmet. " ¹³ She has a cauldron, a broom-stick,

wands, but no cat. Although these are the typical trappings of a witch, Wood brings in the unexpected and humourous. For when the Hag Dowsabel goes to the seaside, Caroline notes, " ... certainly lots of rather funny-looking people go bathing, but few of them wear ankle-length swimming-suits embroidered with sea-serpents, and pointed rubber caps trimmed with limpets. " 14

As to physical attributes, the Hag is toothless, bony, and has " long bony fingers. " 15 Her laugh is unusual, " She laughed and chuckled until she sounded like a hen that had just laid an egg. " 16

Again the Hag Dowsabel has many of the typical stereotyped qualities one would expect from a witch but combined with eccentric trappings for humourous effect.

With reference to the illustrations, those concerned with the Hag Dowsabel, appear benign and unthreatening. The drawing of the Hag's hut appears positively cosy. See illustration ii). They are true in detail to the descriptions in the text but the drawn image of the witch could certainly not induce fear. One drawing in particular, portrays the Hag Dowsabel as no more out of place than the other characters. See illustration iii).

The illustrations have the effect of further minimizing any fear which the reader may feel.

Attitudes

The Witch Merlaine, like the Hag Dowsabel, has a combination of a stereotyped image and other qualities. She is, however, different from the Hag Dowsabel, " ... having a hooked nose, a slight beard, and no teeth, but she was very smart. " 17 She is seen as a modern witch,

Mr. Raven describes her as " ' Modern to a fault ... ' " 18

Although the Witch Merlaine may like to think of herself as modern, Wood portrays her as cheap and gimmicky, " She took down from the wall a pointed hat with stars and moons on it, and carefully adjusted it on her curled hair; then, from an umbrella-stand shaped like a gnarled tree, she produced a magic wand decorated with ribbon rosettes. " 19

Although the Witch Merlaine is capable of magic, she appears almost to be 'dressing-up' as a witch. However, Wood suggests that perhaps this 'modern image is more acceptable to some; Mr. Raven, for example, looked " ... proud of knowing the Witch Merlaine. " 20 Conversely, both Caroline and Bill, as mentioned previously, showed little regard for the Witch Merlaine's home.

The Hag Dowsabel, on the other hand, is closer to a traditional witch, inducing fear in some, not pride. When Caroline worries that her Great-aunt Sophia may evict Bill from his cottage, he retorts, " ' She wouldn't do anything like that, ' ... ' Too scared of the Hag Dowsabel. Always was, *and* her mother and *her* mother's mother before her. ... ' " 21

Mrs. Pettigrew has more of a 'down-to-earth' attitude, " ' - and what with spells and charms and the Hag Dowsabel's broom-stick parked at the door when she comes to call, ' fluttered on Mrs. Pettigrew ... ' whatever people will think, I don't know. ' " 22

Here the frightening reality of being in everyday contact with a witch is minimized, possibly trivialized, by this 'what will the neighbours say' attitude.

Caroline takes witches and spells in her stride as though nothing

is amiss. Early on in the novel she performs her first spell - to awaken Ethel the maid from her spell-induced sleep. It comes naturally to Caroline who in fact says, " I felt rather proud of my first piece of magic. " 23

She is also quite prepared to have Basil (a boy whom she meets and dislikes at the seaside) bewitched, " I hoped Basil wouldn't mind, but I intended to arrange for him to be a toad for the afternoon, while I played with my friends. " 24

It all seems perfectly natural to Caroline with no hint of the sinister. The only occasion when she has doubts about her involvement in witchcraft is when she thinks her new friends have abandoned her,

" I was very angry with all of them. I thought I had behaved quite well on a journey which I hadn't really wanted to go on anyway, and now they had all dropped me. Very well. It served me right for getting entangled in magic. I would know better next time. " 25

As it happens Caroline discovers that she has not been abandoned after all, but it is the closest Wood gets to moralizing on the drawbacks of magic.

Conclusions

The Hag Dowsabel is a combination of the traditional archetypal witch, the stereotyped witch, and an eccentric old woman. The more unpalatable aspects of the traditional witch have been removed; and the use of humour and the unexpected have minimized the fear-inducing concepts used in the book.

The Hag Dowsabel is not an enemy and therefore does not need to

be 'beaten'. She is more of a catalyst by whose witchcraft events occur and adventures take place.

Above all, Wood shows that without witchcraft, the Hag Dowsabel is impotent. For when they are imprisoned and the Hag is devoid of her spells and wands and the use of her broom-stick; it is the quick-thinking and initiative of the other characters which enables them to escape. She is rendered redundant, thereby showing the inadequacy of the witch.



Illustration ii)



Illustration iii)

3 v) Bedknob and Broomstick

Bedknob and broomstick by Mary Norton was originally published as two separate volumes; The magic bed-knob and Bonfires and broomsticks in 1945 and 1947 respectively. They were then reillustrated and revised, and republished as one complete novel in 1957, which is the edition the author is using for the purpose of this analysis.

Three siblings; Carey, Charles and Paul, are dispatched to their aunt's house during the summer holidays where they meet Miss Price; a trainee witch. With the help of a magic bed-knob they have various perilous adventures, culminating in the ultimate destination of Miss Price.

Comparison to the Ulanovs' three themes

The children have a progressive relationship with Miss Price stemming from a polite and cordial beginning. However there are setbacks; for example; when Price assimilates the implications of the children's discovery of her 'hobby', her attitude towards them changes dramatically,

There was a wild light in her eyes and her lips moved quietly, as if she were reciting. ' There must be some way ', she was saying slowly. ' There-must-be-some-way ... '

' Some way of what ? ' asked Charles, after a moment's uncomfortable silence.

Miss Price smiled, showing her long yellow teeth.

' Of keeping your mouths shut, ' she rapped out.

Carey was shocked. This was far from ladylike. ' Oh, Miss Price ! ' she exclaimed unhappily.

' Of keeping your mouths shut ', repeated Miss Price slowly, smiling more unpleasantly than ever. ¹

The method Miss Price is contemplating is not divulged but it nevertheless has threatening, sinister undertones; frightening the children and altering them to her 'other side'.

Carey persuades Miss Price to use an acceptable method of ensuring their silence, and the witch then shows motherly concern for the children.

By the end of the novel the children have become emotionally attached to Miss Price, " Nothing seemed to matter in the world except Miss Price and her safety. " ² The feeling is mutual, " ' ... I've been frightened out of my wits about you. Out of my wits ... ' " ³ Miss Price admits after their last perilous adventure. She is described by the children as 'gentle' and 'kind' and cries when she says her final good-bye to them.

Miss Price is obviously not the kind of witch who has an insatiable appetite for children, or adults; but she does have a darker side of which the children need to be aware.

Miss Price's abode is very different from that described in the Ulanovs' second theme, " She lived in a neat little house which stood in a lane at the bottom of the garden ... " ⁴ boasting a path " gaily bordered with flowers. " ⁵

The only similarity with the Ulanovs' theme is that the house is somewhat apart from others. Likewise Miss Price's locked workroom is removed from the rest of the house, " down two or three steps into a short dark passage. " ⁶ But even here nothing is out of place, " The first thing Carey noticed were the glass jars, each with its typewritten label. " ⁷ The rest of the house also reflects her fastidiousness, for example, her bedroom is " Very clean, very neat, very fragrant, " ⁸ and when the children come to stay Miss Price ensures that they respect this, " ' ... Careful of the step, Paul, it's just been cleaned. ' " ⁹

The reason Miss Price gives for this comfortable lifestyle is that she inherited sufficient wealth, whereas other witches have to live in 'hovels' not through choice but because they do not have the wherewithal. Conversely the indication from the Ulanovs is that witches favour decaying, filthy dwellings.

Moving on to the final theme Miss Price has a keen interest in power. This is apparent when her skills are pitched against those of a witch-doctor on the island of Ueepe. The two battle over supremacy of the witch's broomstick, using what appears to be telekinesis. Miss Price triumphs, and turns the witch-doctor into a frog when it becomes apparent that he is a sore loser. She leaves him in this physical form.

Although Miss Price is capable of transforming humans into other physical forms, she finds it difficult to be malicious; a fact she finds distressing. When Paul proclaims, " ' I don't think you're a wicked witch, ' " Miss Price replies,

' I know, Paul, ' she admitted in a low voice. ' You're quite right. I started too late in life. That's the whole trouble. '

' Is being wicked the hardest part ? ' asked Carey.

' It is for me ', Miss Price told her rather sadly. ¹⁰

She is well supplied with magical apparatus much of it in connection with her correspondence course. She also has many of the anticipated spell ingredients, " ' Toads, hares' feet, bats' wings -oh, dear ! ' She picked up an empty jar to which a few damp balls still clung. ' I'm out of newts' eyes ! ' " ¹¹ The humour and matter-of-factness minimizes any revulsion that the child reader may feel. The incongruities add to the effect; for example, Miss Price stores poisoned dragon's liver under " a spotless piece of butter muslin. " ¹²

Miss Price's characterization is very unlike that of the Ulanovs' fairytale witch. She is described as truthful and " ... she visited the sick and taught the piano. " ¹³ However, she can also be strict and angry when the occasion demands.

There is also a suggestion that Miss Price indulges in sexual envy. Paul peers at her open book saying, " ' Chapter Six ', he read aloud slowly. ' Another Man's Wife. ' Miss Price shut the book on her finger. " ¹⁴

To summarize, Miss Price has few of the attributes listed by the Ulanovs. Although a trainee witch, she is proficient at her craft and claims, " ' We have progressed a *little* since the Middle Ages. Method and prophylactics have revolutionized modern witchcraft. ' " ¹⁵ This break with tradition apparently accounts for the incongruous life that

she leads. The humour created by the incongruities combined with the emanating respectability of Miss Price results in her being far from an example of a traditional, archetypal witch.

The physical appearance of the witch

Maintaining the incongruities and respectability Miss Price, " ... wore grey coats and skirts and had a long thin neck with a scarf round it made of Liberty silk with a Paisley pattern. ... In all the village there was none so ladylike as Miss Price. " ¹⁶ She even conducts her experiments wearing a white boiler suit which is suggestive of a science laboratory rather than a witch's workroom, see illustration iv).

Her features are partly witch-like, for example, 'long yellow teeth' as already mentioned, and a tendency towards the bony. But it is a well-scrubbed bonyness, " clean, bony fingers. " ¹⁷ Her nose is long and pointed but not hooked, which gives her a friendly rather than a menacing appearance, see illustration v). Her laugh is far from a cackle, she " laughed quite gaily " ¹⁸; and her face can equally give the appearance of being " tight and stern " ¹⁹ or " fresh and smiling, and rather flushed " ²⁰ depending on the occasion.

Referring to the anticipated tools of the trade, the only concession Norton has made, is in furnishing Miss Price with a broomstick; which is in fact a garden broom. As far as Miss Price is concerned flying on a broomstick is acceptable and respectable, " ' ... That's accepted- witches have always flown on broomsticks. ' " ²¹ Ironically the only illustration showing Miss Price *actually* riding on her broomstick shows her with bare feet, wearing a jungle-type sun

helmet, and accompanied by three passengers; another incongruous and humorous image, see illustration vi).

The only occasion when Miss Price might be said to conform to any stereotypical imagery is when she prepares to rescue Emelius, a necromancer from the 17th century, " She has gone off, wrapped in her black cloak, broomstick in one hand and sword in the other, to see what could be done for Emelius. " 22

Ironically again, the only illustration which portrays the semblance of a stereotyped witch is not in fact Miss Price but " ' ... a particularly apposite use of intrasubstantiary-locomotion.' " 23 , a spell which gives clothes the appearance of containing a body, see illustration vii).

The numerous illustrations confirm and reinforce the text.

Apart from the broomstick, and the solitary use of a black cloak (only worn as a disguise for travelling back to the 17th century), Miss Price has little stereotyped imagery attached to her. Norton deliberately presents and emphasizes the incongruous, creating humorous situations and a respectable friendly witch, who it cannot be forgotten, has a darker side.

Attitudes

Bedknob and broomstick presents the reader with two alternative attitudes towards witches and witchcraft: 17th century England can be compared to mid-twentieth century England. In the former witches were hanged if convicted. Emelius, however, endures the ducking-stool and comes close to being burnt at the stake. The depth of feeling evoked by witches can be seen when Miss Price uses

intrasubstantiary-locomotion to rescue him, " People were pushing, screaming, rushing to get out of reach. ... The boys jumped down off the railing. ' A witch, a witch ! ' they screamed hoarsely. ' A witch on a broomstick ! ' " 24

This fear culminates in the 'murder' of the non-existent witch,

" People ran out of doorways, out of yards, out of alleys. Some were armed with staves, some with clubs; they saw one man, a butcher he must have been, with a large and shining chopper. All these people made for the spot where the broomstick had fallen. " 25

This attitude can be compared to the children's attitude towards Miss Price. On learning of her attempts at flight, Carey proclaimed, " ' ... I think it's wonderful to ride on a broomstick ': " 26 and for Paul, watching Miss Price in flight was " his nightly joy. " 27

On observing Miss Price casting spells, the children are overwhelmed. Carey, for example, " ... felt breathless and almost afraid, magic-a spell -she had seen it with her own eyes. " 28 Likewise when the witch casts a spell on Paul's bed-knob, " He took it reverently. ' Is it done ? ' he asked in an awe-stricken voice. " 29

The difference in attitudes is summed up by Emelius when he compares his fate with his modern counterpart,

If it had been Miss Price - that would have been fairer, she was a witch, a real one, but no one would dare burn her. No one would pull Miss Price out of her tidy little house and drag her down the High Street to the village green. If she paid her taxes, observed the English Sunday, and worked for the Red Cross, no one bothered what she did with the rest of her time. 30

The respectability of Miss Price ensures that her private life goes unquestioned.

The children willingly become involved in witchcraft although do not actually cast any spells themselves. Dangerous situations ensue from the adventures with the magic bed-knob; and the children use their own initiatives, and that of Miss Price combined with her witchcraft, to extricate themselves.

Although Miss Price uses her witchcraft to rescue the children and herself from cannibals, and Emelius from the stake; Norton shows that it can be used for deceptive purposes as well. Carey questions Miss Price's use of magic to enhance her entry for a flower show. Later Miss Price decides, " ' ... that magic may be a kind of cheating. It looks good to start with, but perhaps it doesn't bring good results in the end. ' " 31

However, this argument is unconvincing and needs to be modified; for only through witchcraft does Miss Price meet Emelius and travel back to the 17th century to spend the rest of her life with him. Any negativity Norton associates with witchcraft is outweighed by the positive effects, including ultimately the happiness of Miss Price herself.

Conclusions

Miss Price is an unconventional witch. Norton suggest that this is merely because she is a modern witch and as such does not require *all* of the paraphernalia and physical characteristics attached to the stereotyped witch. Likewise, she has only selected 'Ulanov attributes'

resulting in an interest in sex and power but not the archetypal temperament and lifestyle.

The continuous incongruities give rise to humorous effect and the overall result is a friendly and respectable witch, whose use of witchcraft broadens and enriches the children's lives. The child reader is more likely to be frightened by the situations that the children find themselves in than by the witch herself. She is a friend not foe, and perhaps as Emelius thinks, an emulative heroine, " Miss Price was here. She would save him. Miss Price never undertook a thing she did not finish, and Miss Price did everything so well. " 32



Illustration iv)

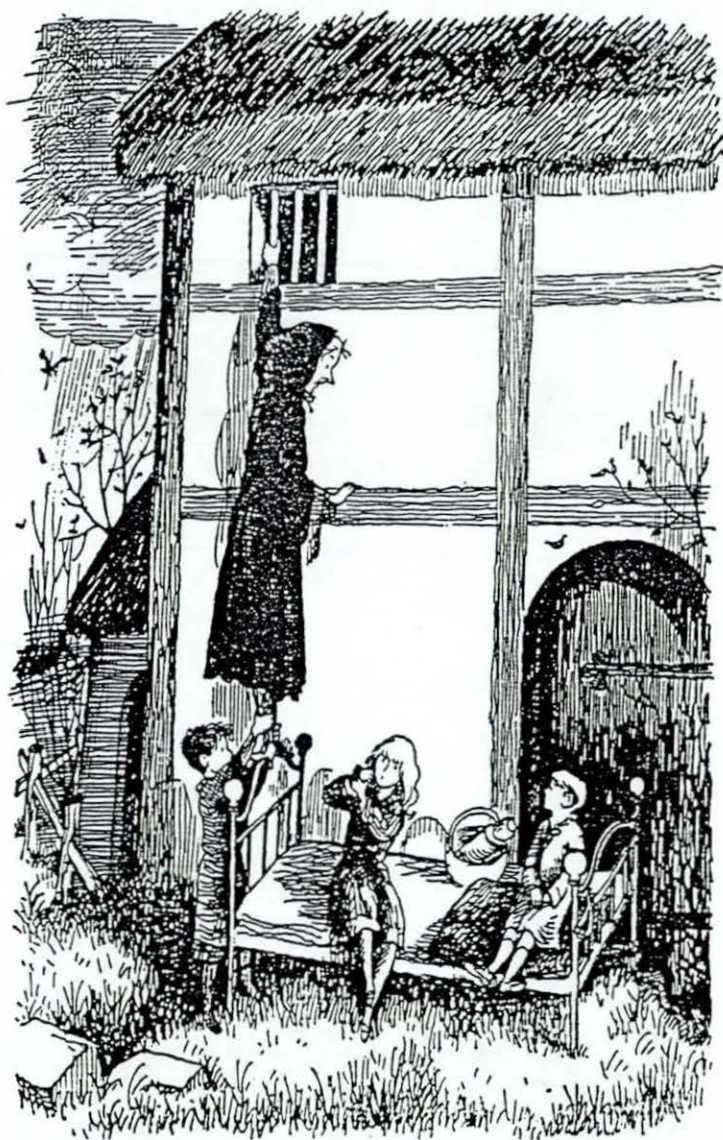


Illustration v)

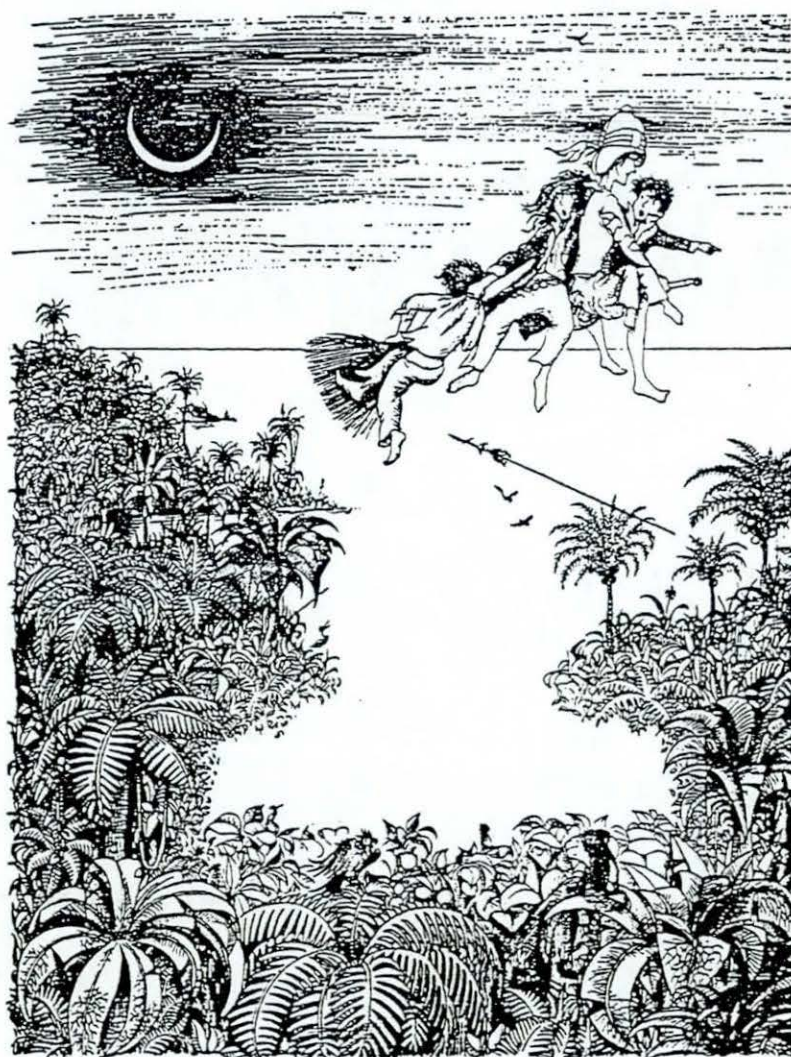


Illustration vi)

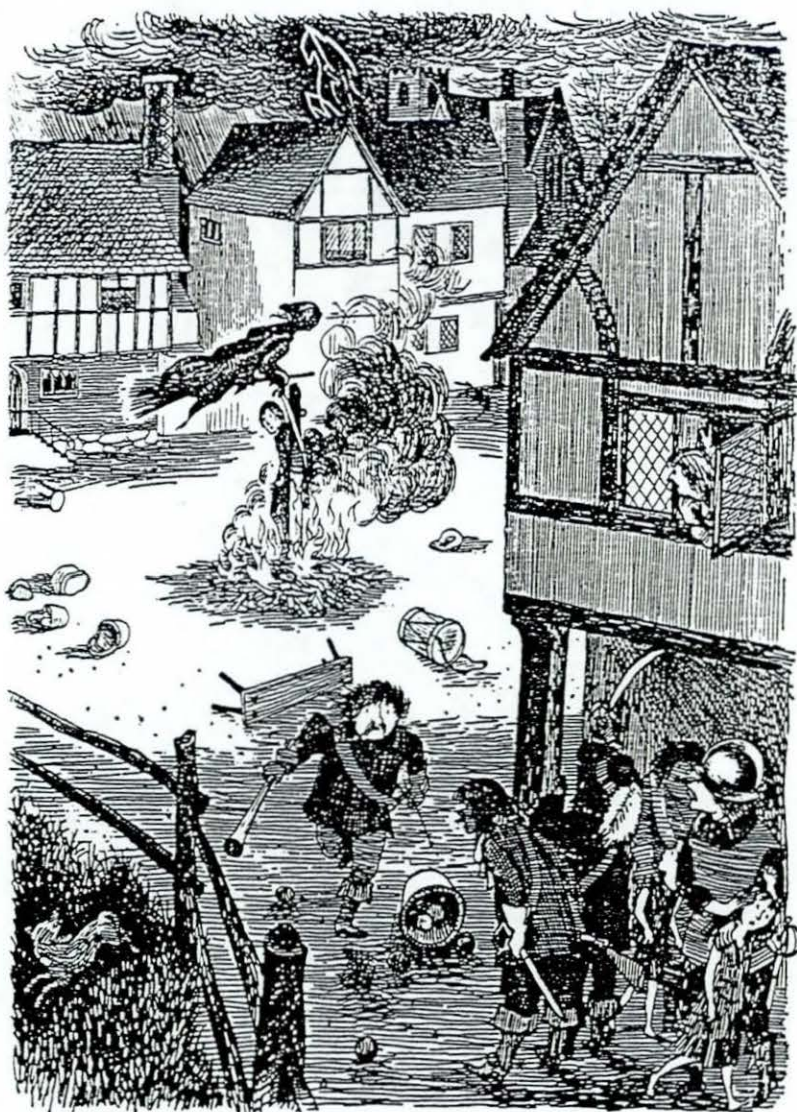


Illustration vii)

3 vi) An Enemy at Green Knowe

First published in 1964, An enemy at Green Knowe by Lucy M. Boston is an exception to the selection criteria in that it is not the first in the Green Knowe series. It is, however, the first in the series to contain a witch as a principal character, and as such is a justifiable inclusion.

Two boys, Tolly and Ping, who have appeared separately in other Green Knowe books, battle together against the witch, Miss Melanie Powers, to prevent her from usurping Green Knowe, the home of Mrs. Oldknow.

Comparison to the Ulanovs' three themes.

From the outset, Miss Powers treats Tolly and Ping in a patronizing manner and makes no attempt to hide her feelings, " But as soon as she was alone with him [Tolly] ... the visitor [Miss Powers] became arch and condescending. She bent down and poked Tolly in the ribs. " 1

As Miss Powers becomes more desperate to usurp Green Knowe, the boys realize that she will go to any lengths. As Ping confides in Tolly,

" ' Do you know what I thought, from what she said? I thought she was going to make us look in the glass and see something frightful happen to Grand Mother. She does hate her so. But I suppose we are at least as bad as the birds. Bad enough to be got rid of.' " 2

It is worth noting here that Miss Powers had had the birds executed by her cats. She treats neither children nor adults with

respect, they are merely obstacles in her path, to be removed if necessary.

As far as her appetite is concerned, Boston suggests that she perhaps has a preference for children, shown in the gruesome curse she attaches to the entrance of Green Knowe,

On the centre of the door, nailed with four tacks, was hanging what looked like the palm side of a child's leather glove. But it was paper-stiff like dried skin, and showed the lines of a real hand. Across the palm was written:

RUIN FALL ON YOU³

Mrs Oldknow's response leaves the reader in doubt that it is a real hand and we are left in ignorance as to the fate of the rest of the child, and whether Miss Powers fed on it's blood, or it's flesh or it's soul, or all three.

Moving on to the second theme, Miss Powers' abode is very much in line with that described by the Ulnavos. She has temporarily rented 'The Firs', " a desolate-looking house entirely surrounded by high untidy hedges. " ⁴ The boys eventually venture into the grounds,

" The garden was not only neglected, it gave the impression of being fouled and blasted. A bonfire smouldered in the middle of the grass, giving off a bad smell of burning offal. The surrounding hedge was curled and singed, the grass trampled. There were no flowers. " ⁵

This is in addition to the washing line, on which the boys see Miss Powers " pegging up dead birds by the tail " ⁶: the executed birds.

With reference to the final theme, the witch has tremendous power, which she wields maliciously. After her attempt to hypnotize Mrs. Oldknow into selling Green Knowe fails, she sends a plague of revolting maggots to destroy the old lady's precious garden. She does not, however, anticipate the hunger of the birds, and sends a plague of cats to destroy them in turn, " ... the known and loved song-birds, Mrs Oldknow's darlings, ... " 7

With the first two plagues Miss Powers uses psychological warfare against Mrs. Oldknow; with the third, a plague of snakes, she intends to harm Mrs. Oldknow physically as well, for Tolly finds two reptiles in her chair.

Miss Powers' final attempt to usurp Green Knowe occurs during an eclipse of the sun. She sends 'fingers' to pull the house apart in the hope of finding 'The Ten Powers of Moses', an ancient book of magic left by a previous inhabitant, and the only copy in existence.

" It was almost too dark to see, but they looked like fingers, without hand or arm. Fingers of some dreadful unknown substance, sub-physical or super-physical, projectible grey matter. If hatred could be seen at work, it might look like that. " 8

This evil and powerful witch is not surprisingly involved in black magic. Tolly and Ping find a wooden pole in her garden shed with " ... two goats' horns stuck in the top. ... They recognized it at once as absolutely evil. " 9 On this pole is carved what they call Miss Powers's ' true secret name ' which the boys decipher as Melusine Demogorgona Phosphor; names all strongly linked to the devil. She is, in fact, possessed by a demon and at the climax of the novel the boys use her true secret name to perform an exorcism,

" With a last convulsion the writhing form, now on the ground, broke up into two. Melanie lay sobbing, and an abomination that the mind refuses to acknowledge stood over her and spurned her, and sped away hidden by a line of hedge. "10

There is no mention of any magical apparatus apart from the horned pole and a sinister mask found alongside it.

Miss Powers has many of the anticipated flaws in her character in addition to the maliciousness already mentioned. She is often filled with rage and hate and after failing in her hypnotism of Mrs. Oldknow, " ... the words that she said, falling like the slow drip of a tap, were more venomous than mere anger would have been. " 11 On another occasion, " The little voice was sickly and careful, but her listeners could sense a bite of malice and an undershake of anger. " 12 This depth of feeling inevitably has an effect on Green Knowe, as Mrs Oldknow remarks, " ' ... ever since that woman came the place is besieged by nastiness. ' " 13

No reference is made to the witch's interest in sex.

To summarize, Miss Powers has virtually all the traits mentioned by the Ulanovs in their three themes. She is a traditional, archetypal witch with no redeeming features, who is capable of inducing real and well-founded fear in the child reader.

The physical appearance of the witch

There is no stereotyped imagery attached to Miss Powers. She looks extremely ordinary although it is merely a facade to hide her true nature. She is constantly striving to maintain this facade and consequently Ping observes that,

... her face was like a mask. ... It could have been machine made. Her features were small and regular, her eyes large under heavy lids. A dimple appeared duly on each side of her face when she turned up her smile, as Ping phrased it to himself, though her expression seemed fixed at the point on the dial that said 'Pure and Holy'. ¹⁴

The only illustration of Miss Powers shows her in an unguarded moment revealing her evil inner self. " As she recognized the symbols of ancient holy things, a sneer twisted her mask into something lively and real. " ¹⁵ See illustration viii).

Her voice, likewise, is in contrast to content, " Miss Powers continued her cooing flow of talk, as cultivated in voice as it was impertinent in matter. " ¹⁶

Elsewhere, her expressions and voice conflict, in an attempt to disguise the signal, " Miss Powers made a sound like polite laughter, though her look was sharp. " ¹⁷

She maintains her facade in an attempt to obtain her objective, that of usurping Green Knowe and taking possession of the book within. The facade, however, is cracked in the ways mentioned above, and the truth seeps out.

Although Miss Powers keeps cats to assist in her evil schemes, she has no broomstick, cauldron or wand. These are merely 'play-things' to the diabolical, sinister witch; and Boston is more concerned with the effect of her evil than how she has produced it.

Attitudes

Miss Powers becomes the subject of gossip around Green Knowe as a result of drawing attention to herself in a small community. As a neighbour remarks to Mrs. Oldknow, " ' That Miss Powers is getting herself very unpopular in the village. Too full of herself. And nosey ... She's a real snooper. ... ' " ¹⁸ This unpopularity provokes what is possibly only idle gossip, " ' ... The story is that she spat at the dog, and that it died ... ' " ¹⁹ Knowing Miss Powers as the reader does, this account, however, is quite feasible; and the inference is that the villagers suspect her of having unnatural powers; although it may also be their way of dealing with her strange and antisocial behaviour.

Both Tolly and Ping are prepared to get involved in witchcraft to save Green Knowe. To defeat the plague of cats Ping summons up the spirit of Hanno, the gorilla, whom he had befriended in a previous Green Knowe novel, and who chases the cats away. Although it was successful, " ... Ping had been deeply disturbed by what he had done, and his sleep was fitful. " ²⁰ The plague of snakes is defeated by Ping and Tolly together with much courage and initiative. They discover the spell's source and dispose of it, quashing their fear of snakes in the process.

By the end of the novel Ping has realized that the only way to ultimately defeat the witch is by witchcraft. It has now become a more acceptable method, " ' ... Oh dear, I wish Melanie would go. Tolly? We could make a spell with her secret name. ' " ²¹ This idea eventually leads to the boys performing an exorcism on Melanie Powers.

Boston leaves the reader in doubt as to the effect that black

magic can have on the perpetrator, for when she has been exorcised, " Melanie dragged herself up. She was now known, exposed, a failure, and cast off by her demon lord. An empty, powerless woman, crumpled

up and distracted. " 22

She also shows, through Ping's and Tolly's efforts, that witchcraft can have a beneficial effect.

Conclusions

Miss Powers is portrayed as a traditional, archetypal witch, totally evil and immersed in black magic. There is no stereotyping of the witch image; this would simply ridicule the sinister Miss Powers. It is imperative that she is taken seriously.

The witch is capable of inducing considerable fear in the child reader; but Ping and Tolly continually thwart her efforts so that the reader knows that even intense evil and hatred can be ultimately defeated.

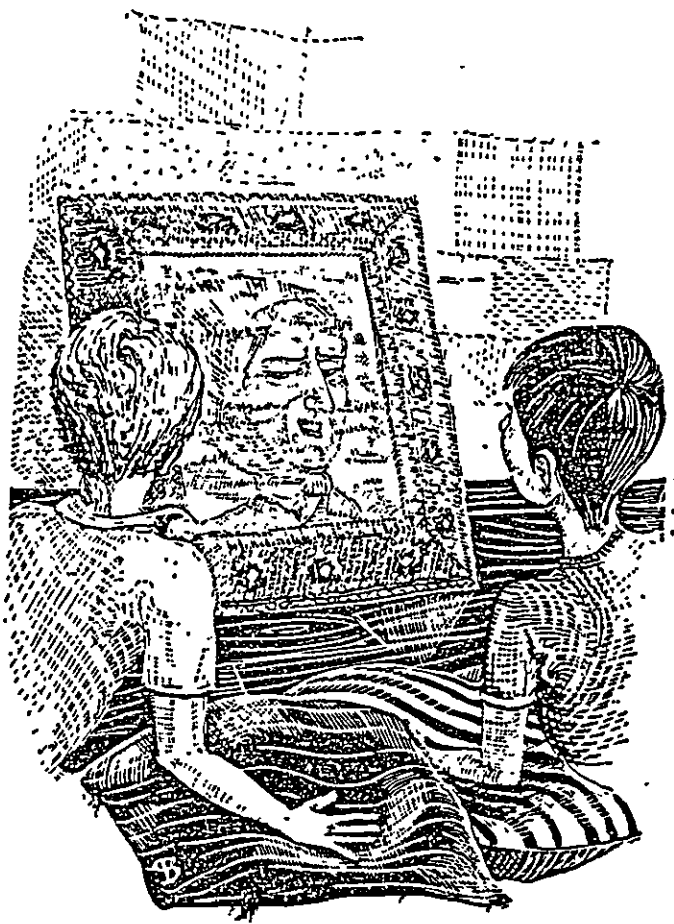


Illustration viii)

3 vii) The Witches

The witches, by Roald Dahl, was first published in 1983. The novel is primarily concerned with a group of witches led by The Grand High Witch Of All The World. The un-named author, who shall be called the hero, battles almost single-handedly against the witches, despite the inconvenience of being turned into a mouse.

Comparison to the Ulanovs' three themes

Dahl leaves the reader in no doubt as to the fanatical hatred felt by the witches towards all children,

A REAL WITCH hates children with a red-hot sizzling hatred that is more sizzling and red-hot than any hatred you can possibly imagine.

A REAL WITCH spends all her time plotting to get rid of all the children in her particular territory. Her passion is to do away with them, one by one. ¹

He also leaves the reader in no doubt as to the methods that might be employed. For example, the hero's grandmother tells him, " " I've known English witches " ... " who have turned children into pheasants and then sneaked the pheasants up into the woods the very day before the pheasant-shooting season opened. " ... " And then they get plucked and roasted and eaten for supper. " " ²

The Grand High Witch herself is more than happy to devour a child, though not in his own physical form; perhaps she finds this

unappetizing. Referring to the hero, she tells her fellow witches, " " Leave him to me. I shall smell him out and turn him into a mackerel and have him dished up for supper. " " 3

Their sadism towards children is absolute. There is nothing they enjoy more, says the hero's grandmother, than " " ... to stand back and watch the grown-ups doing away with their own children. " " 4 Murders which they, of course, have instigated.

Their intense hatred of children and cannibalistic tendencies towards them are summed up in the opening lines of a song delivered by The Grand High Witch in her heavy foreign accent,

" Down with children ! Do them in !
Boil their bones and fry their skin !
Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them !
Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them !
... " 5

In the above ways, Dahl's witches conform to the first of the Ulanovs' themes.

The witches' habitat is more difficult to assess for the reader only sees them in the hotel where they have gathered for their Annual Meeting.

The hero, in his mouse-form, sneaks into The Grand High Witch's hotel room, and finds that although it is neat (apart from three imprisoned frogs hopping miserably about), all is not well, " There was the same musty smell about the place that I had noticed in the Ballroom. It was the stench of witches. It reminded me of the smell

inside the men's public lavatory at our local railway-station. " 6

The hero and his grandmother later discover the whereabouts of The Grand High Witch's Headquarters; a castle, " " High up in the mountains above a small village, " " 7 in Norway. These factors combined lead one to speculate that the witches in the castle *may* have a similar habitat to that described by the Ulanovs. We are told that the other witches live in 'ordinary houses' but again the interior is unknown.

Moving on to the final theme of power; Dahl's witches again excel, particularly The Grand High Witch. The hero's grandmother describes how witches are capable of turning children into any physical form, for example, a chicken or a stone statue. The English witches, who we are told are particularly nasty, have a preference for turning children into slugs, " " ... Then the grown-ups step on the slug and squish it without knowing it's a child. " " 8

The most outrageous and preposterous plan is revealed by The Grand High Witch at the Annual Meeting. She demands that the witches of England murder every child in the country before the year is out. This is to be achieved by turning all the children into mice using 'Formula 86 Delayed Action Mouse-Maker', and then setting mouse traps.

The Grand High Witch, who mesmerizes her audience, has additional powers; capable of murder with a glance, even of her own kind; a murder witnessed by the hero,

A moment later, a stream of sparks that looked like tiny white-hot metal-filings came shooting out of The Grand High

Witch's eyes and flew straight towards the one who had dared to speak. I saw the sparks striking against her and burrowing into her and she screamed a horrible howling scream and a puff of smoke rose up around her. A smell of burning meat filled the room. ⁹

The magical apparatus seems to consist solely of formulas and potions. The ingredients of Formula 86 include a telescope, mice (tails and bodies cooked separately), an alarm clock, the yolk of a gruntle's egg, and so on. Using these absurd and imaginary ingredients produces a humorous effect and allays any fears the reader may have.

The Grand High Witch, not surprisingly, instills terror in her fellow witches. The reader is informed that she 'snaps' and " was clearly in an ugly mood " ¹⁰ and at one point goes " rigid with rage. " ¹¹ No mention is made of her interest in sexual matters.

Dahl's witches have a somewhat over-zealous abundance of the traits described in the Ulanovs' themes, and therefore can be called traditional, archetypal witches. As such they should be terrifying to the child reader, but Dahl caricatures them, minimizing the realism and undermining their threatening capabilities.

The physical appearance of the witch

Dahl immediately starts his novel with a denial of stereotyped imagery,

" In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks.

But this is not a fairy-tale. This is about REAL WITCHES. "12

It is an arguable point that The witches is not a fairy-tale, but not one within the confines of this dissertation; but this nevertheless adds to his dissension and provocative style. It goes without saying that Dahl's witches do not have broomstick, cauldron, wand or cat.

The reader is informed that, " REAL witches dress in ordinary clothes and look very much like ordinary women. They live in ordinary houses and they work in ORDINARY JOBS. " 13 This is an acceptable premise but not one without qualification. The reader is given detailed descriptions of certain peculiarities common to all witches, which aid recognition. They are listed below:

a) a real witch has claws rather than finger-nails, therefore constantly wears gloves.

b) a real witch is bald, so likewise constantly wears a wig. This leads to itchy 'wig-rash' as it is known, producing " nasty sores on the head. " 14

c) a real witch's nose is unusual, " " Witches have slightly larger nose-holes than ordinary people. The rim of each nose-hole is pink and curvy ... " ". 15 This enables them to " " ... smell out a child who is standing on the other side of the street on a pitch-black night. " " 16 To a witch the smell of a child is repungnant, to them it is like 'dogs' droppings.'

d) the eyes are also unusual; the pupils " " ... will keep changing colour, and you will see fire and you will see ice dancing right in the very centre of the coloured dot ... " " 17

e) real witches do not have toes but wear dainty shoes to conceal their huge feet.

f) lastly real witches have blue saliva, which tints their teeth.

Dahl has created physically repulsive and physically ridiculous witches, who may only be recognized if the beholder is aware of their peculiarities.

The Grand High Witch is more extreme in appearance than her minions. She has the semblance of a young and attractive woman; but the hero watches her removing her mask to reveal a hideous face (see illustrations ix) and x)),

It was so crumpled and wizened, so shrunken and shrivelled, it looked as though it had been pickled in vinegar. It was a fearsome and ghastly sight. There was something terribly wrong with it, something foul and putrid and decayed. It seemed quite literally to be rotting away at the edges, and in the middle of the face, around the mouth and cheeks, I could see the skin all cankered and worm-eaten, as though maggots were working away in there. ¹⁸

The illustration (x) depicting the real face of The Grand High Witch is not nearly as detailed as the description, this would probably be too terrifying for the child reader. It creates an impression, leaving the rest to the reader's imagination.

The reader is told that witches are " demons in human shape " ¹⁹ this presumerably accounts for their hideous repulsiveness. The outward appearance may also be a metaphorical indication of their

inner-being.

In the novel a typical witch's voice is exemplified by the first witch the hero meets, " Her voice had a curious rasping quality. It made a sort of metallic sound, as though her throat was full of drawing-pins. " ²⁰ The witches are, however, capable of a different voice when the situation dictates. For example, The Grand High Witch's voice changes to one " ... soft and gentle and absolutely dripping with syrup " ²¹ when trust of a child needs to be gained.

The witches appear to be of a variety of ages, they are not all old, for those who have reached seventy years of age are called the 'ancient ones.'

The numerous stylized illustrations reinforce the text. Those portraying the witches, are caricatures which reinforce the caricatures in the text, and consequently the image assimilated by the reader, minimizing any fear. Illustrations xi) and xii) show the witches with and without their disguises, and xiii) depicts the 'ancient ones'.

Dahl has rejected the stereotyped witch image completely, but feeling a need to distinguish witches from women he has produced his own set of characteristics to enable recognition.

Attitudes

The witches all live incognito and as such appear to be pillars of society. They stay at the hotel in the guise of members of the RSPCC (of particular irony) and as such are treated with respect. The hero's grandmother later tells him that The Grand High Witch was known " " ... as a kindly and very wealthy Baroness who gave large sums of

money to charity ... " " 22

Dahl suggests that as long as a person (or a witch) leads the semblance of a respectable life, then the remainder will go unquestioned; society does not delve any further.

The hero's grandmother, however, knows the true nature of The Grand High Witch, " " She's a murderer, " ... " She's the most evil woman in the entire world ! " " 23 The hero himself has sufficient knowledge to be terrified when he realizes he is trapped in a room full of witches and says, " My blood turned to ice. I began to shake all over. " 24 Despite this he remains sceptical as to the extent of their powers, until, witnessing the immensity of The Grand High Witch's capabilities. The hero subsequently risks his mouse-life to successfully destroy the witches of England including The Grand High Witch herself.

The hero and his grandmother then decide to dedicate the remainder of their lives to the destruction of *all* the witches in the world. To achieve this they need their own supply of Formula 86 and are happy to concoct it themselves, and accept it as the only available method.

Reactions to witchcraft vary, which Dahl attributes to differences in nationalities. Along with the hero, another little boy, Bruno Jenkins, is also turned into a mouse. The hero's grandmother says,

" " I can well understand your anger, Mr. Jenkins "" Any other English father would be just as cross as you are. But over in Norway where I come from, we are quite used to these sort of happenings. We have learnt to accept them as part of everyday life. " " 25

Although greatly saddened by her grandson's transformation, she receives the news acquiescently. Mr. Jenkins, on the other hand, threatens to sue the one responsible; and at the suggestion that he himself could be transformed, he retorts, " " I'd like to see her try ! " " 26 He does not seem surprised by the fact that witches exist or that they are capable of such feats.

The other hotel guests have a different reaction when confronted with the spectacle of eighty-four witches turning into mice. At first they have a natural curiosity, but then shock sets in and, " All over the Dining-Room women were screaming and strong men were turning white in the face and shouting, " It's crazy ! This can't happen ! Let's get the heck out of here quick ! " " 27 This is a more probable reaction than that of Mr. Jenkins.

Conclusions

Dahl's witches are good examples of the traditional, archetypal witch described by the Ulanovs.

They have no stereotyped imagery attached to them. This has been replaced by a set of characteristics devised by Dahl, to aid recognition.

He emphasizes the fact that witches can be mistaken for women, generating the re-thinking of preconceptions in the reader. It also results in the witch figure becoming more alarming and threatening to children. As a result the witches Dahl presents should be absolutely terrifying to the child reader, but he portrays them in such a way as to appear exaggerated and less credible, whose fear inducing capabilities are considerably reduced.



Illustration ix)



Illustration x)



Illustration xi)



Illustration xii)



Illustration xiii)

3 viii) Conclusions

There are various recurrent themes running through the novels that need to be highlighted. One such theme running consistently through, is that *all* the children have been placed in situations where they have been removed from parental control. This is a common characteristic of fairy tales, and allows the child recipient to come to terms with the world independently of his parents. It is also a feature found in many children's novels from the 1920s to the 1950s, allowing the reader to experience a true fantasy world without the hindrance of parents.

In terms of parental removal, there are strong links between The people in the garden and Bedknob and broomstick for all the children are sent to stay with a relative, Great-aunt and aunt respectively, during the summer holidays. In both cases the relative keeps a low profile and is seen as a disciplinary force. Kay (The midnight folk) is also removed from parental control being an orphan. He is looked after by an absent guardian and his governess which allows him freedom to pursue his adventures. In this sense he typifies the era as do the previous two examples.

There are similarities between An enemy at Green Knowe and The witches; Tolly and Ping go to stay with Tolly's grandmother, Mrs. Oldknow for a holiday; the hero in The witches becomes an orphan at the beginning of the novel and subsequently lives with his grandmother. In both of these examples the grandmother appears as a very positive force, representative of the good mother, as opposed to the witch who represents the negative mother. From this point of view, although modern, these two novels are more closely related to

fairy tales.

Another link between the novels is one of names. The witches proves an exception since all the main characters are anonymous. It is however an anomaly that three of the novels contain witches with the names of Mrs. Pouncer, Miss Price, and Miss Powers. However, apart from the fact that 'Pouncer' denotes the witch's actions, 'In a very pouncing way ...', and that 'Powers' can be seen as indicative of the witch's capabilities, no other connection can be found. It is interesting to note that the name 'Dowsabel' also appears in The midnight folk. Kay is told the story of a highwayman whose mare was called Dowsabel, which, the reader is informed, " ... is a French name, Douce et belle (meaning gentle and lovely) ... " ¹ Presumably Wood was aware of this when naming her hag, and though it an unlikely and humorous name for a witch.

Another recurrent theme is that of illusion and reality regarding the concept of real and assumed identities, incorporating the use of masks, whether tangible or not.

In The midnight folk Mrs. Pouncer has two identities: her true physical appearance is her assumed identity, and her assumed physical appearance (her 'witch-costume') is her true identity. Changing the perspective Dahl's witches hide their true physical appearance which is also their true identity by using various devices; and of course The Grand High Witch employs a mask which works in opposition to that of Mrs. Pouncer's wax face. An enemy at Green Knowe also incorporates the idea of a mask; referring to Miss Powers, Ping observes that 'her face was like a mask' which attempts to conceal her true nature. This occurs to a lesser extent in Bedknob

and broomstick where Miss Price's epitomization of the respectable, ladylike spinster masks her unconventional private life. The same theme can be seen in The people in the garden, although in an obtuse form. The Witch Merlaine is portrayed as a combination of stereotyped and modern images; and although she is capable of magic it is suggested that she is cheap and gimmicky and appears to be 'dressing-up' as a witch, and assuming a false identity.

This theme has been developed further in relation to society's attitudes. Emelius points out that if Miss Price, 'paid her taxes, observed the English Sunday, and worked for the Red Cross, no one bothered what she did with the rest of her time.' As long as she appears to be respectable then no one questions any further. This sentiment is echoed in The witches since The Grand High Witch had assumed the identity of a charitable Baroness; making her unrepachable. Using the guise of the RSPCC reiterates this point.

In many instances, therefore, illusion and reality are intertwined with the portrayal of the witch. This may have derived from the witch in fairy tales who often assumes different identities, some evil, some benign. In a broader sense, it is a comment upon society as a whole which sees only the superficial level of people, the outward appearance, and makes no attempt to delve further.

Moving on to discernible trends; the endowment of stereotypical imagery appears to have gone through a steady decline since 1927. Mrs. Pouncer has a removable stereotypical image; the Hag Dowsabel is partially stereotyped as is the Witch Merlaine, although the latter leans heavily towards the modern, so both witches differ in appearance. Miss Price is completely modern in her approach with

few stereotyped features. Miss Powers possesses none in conjunction with Dahl's witches. The latter have their own set of absurd physical characteristics, suggesting perhaps that the stereotyped image is also absurd.

Using the Ulanovs' three themes as a barometer, it seems that two distinct types of witches emerge. The first is the traditional, archetypal witch, who is an evil enemy and needs to be thwarted. Mrs. Pouncer, Miss Powers and Dahl's witches (who are all vanquished) conform to this type. They therefore descend from the fairy-tale pattern and as such have symbolic meaning for the child readers.

The modern Miss Price bears little resemblance to this type of witch, neither does the Witch Merlaine. The Hag Dowsabel is not so obviously of either type. She has various Ulanov traits, but she also has human qualities and is not considered an enemy. Her position is somewhat ambiguous. It is interesting that other factors are consistent with this pattern, namely the method of parental removal and moralistic tone. The people in the garden and Bedknob and broomstick both contain half-hearted attempts at moralizing on the drawbacks of witchcraft, whereas the other examples take a strong moralistic stand.

It can be concluded that the archetypal witch was manifest in 1927 but became less viable mid-century, only to reappear and intensify from the 1960s onwards. The following chapter will attempt to discover if there is any significance in this pattern.

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Chapter 4. Cause and Effect

4 i) Introduction

Using the premise that 'children's literature is a transmitter of cultural values' as mentioned in Chapter 1, and that " ... the writer for children is an interpreter of life, especially of contemporary life ... " ¹; relevant social conditions and trends during the twentieth century will be discussed to ascertain whether such influences are reflected in the chosen novels.

4 ii) Children's Literature, Feminism, and the Witch

One important trend which will be explored is that of feminism, to determine if any correlations exist between the movement and the portrayal of witches. The author is particularly interested in determining whether a period of feminist activity is paralleled with the creation of witches in children's literature particularly archetypal witches. The linking of feminism to the witch is not a new idea, indeed the Ulanovs cite one particular women's organization - the Witch's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (a somewhat excessive acronym) - who admire witch-like characteristics in women, " Their manifesto supports all the witch qualities of the female that patriarchal society proscribes. " ¹ This organization shuns the stereotyped image of women, favouring instead female independence and a masculine form of assertion. It is therefore a valid comparison.

It is well documented that the 1920s were impoverished in terms of children's literature. Britain was still reeling from the aftermath of World War I, during which many budding authors may have been killed. In practical terms the quality was generally poor, both in production and standard of writing. Few creditable realistic novels were written; in fact Gillian Avey points out that a period of great turmoil has the effect of producing secure and safe novels for children with the result that, " Children were being urged to escape into a fantasy world ... " ² Not surprisingly perhaps, the most notable novels produced in this period were fantasies. Marcus Crouch says that John Masefield, amongst others,

... turned to worlds of the imagination or to remote times. Such writers were not hiding from reality; they preferred to interpret timeless themes, like the necessity of courage and the truth of love, without relating them directly to the ills of contemporary society. ³

The midnight folk can be seen in these terms. Kay Harker's world is dreary and oppressive, similar to that of contemporary society. He escapes with the help of the midnight folk into a world of magic and adventure. Mrs. Pouncer can be seen to personify the ills of contemporary society. She is thwarted by Kay's courage giving an air of optimism and hope against such powers.

It is interesting to note that the 1920s was also a period of intense feminist activity in Britain. The suffrage movement had led to women aged thirty and over obtaining the vote in 1918. During the next decade, as Harold L. Smith says,

New feminist groups were created, an important feminist journal was established, an intense debate over the nature of feminism clarified some of the assumptions underlying feminist ideology, and significant legislation was enacted improving the status of wives and mothers. ⁴

This culminated in the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 granting women aged twenty-one and over the vote. However, Parliament was simultaneously trying to persuade women to stay at home

performing traditional functions, and hopefully boosting the birth rate which was urgently required after the war. By the close of the decade feminists were in dispute over basic ideology, and support for their cause was decreasing. They had begun to be seen in a new, disparaging light. Smith cites Vera Brittain (a contemporary writer) who " ... acknowledged that feminists were perceived as 'spectacled, embittered women, disappointed, childless, dowdy, and generally unloved.' " 5

This description is not unlike that of Mrs. Pouncer, and it is possible that this antipathy towards feminism, prevalent in the late 1920s, may have contributed to Masfield's creation and subsequent portrayal of his archetypal witch.

However, it can also be argued that Mrs. Pouncer was a necessary creation of Masfield's psyche. Masfield's mother died when he was aged six and shortly afterwards the children's valued nurse left the family's employ. This set of tragic circumstances was completed with the appointment of a governess, Mrs. Broers. She was hated by Masfield and his brothers and sisters.

Constance Babington Smith demonstrates this aversion in her biography of the writer, " Mrs. Broers was a large and somewhat loud young woman and the children detested her; Masfield later referred to her repeatedly as 'the vulgar woman.' " 6 No doubt Mrs. Pouncer is based on Mrs. Broers. Perhaps Masfield consciously fantasized that she was in fact a witch, which could explain the donning of the 'witch costume'. In addition the abrupt ending and consequent denial of a relationship with his mother may also have contributed to the creation of Mrs. Pouncer. For seen in psychoanalytical terms,

Masefield was also denied the right to fantasize about the negative aspects of his mother.

It can be inferred then that Masefield's creation of Mrs. Pouncer sprang from his childhood experiences but the timing of his novel may have been influenced by a prevalent antipathy towards feminism.

The 1930s were altogether different from the previous decade. What has been called the 'down-to-brass-tacks movement' ⁷ in children's literature prevailed, inducing a tendency towards realism (in the sense of convincing children in convincing situations) and a faltering of fantasy. The most notable novels were family based which correlates with the domesticity movement in Britain. Traditional family life was being encouraged, feminism was not, and consequently the movement began a decline in the 1930s. Martin Pugh points to wide-spread unemployment and economic depression as factors in the decline, " ... the 1930s fostered a climate rather hostile for feminists, which was due, fundamentally, to the pervading sense of shrinking economic opportunities. " ⁸ Coinciding with this, the decade saw a growth in certain women's organizations notably the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds and the Women's Institute. These organizations championed the idea of domesticity and marriage and were paralleled with an upsurge of new women's magazines, for example, Womans Own, which " actively campaigned for domesticity. " ⁹

The disappearance of the 'witch' novel during the 1930s can be attributed to the preference of realism to fantasy, and also to the fact that the decline of feminism meant that it posed less of a

threat to the traditional role of women. Witches were not required.

The Second World War was understandably a difficult time for children's literature. As Crouch says, " ... the years of the Second World War were not productive of fine children's novels. The political and the economic climates alike were unfavourable. " ¹⁰ John Rowe Townsend points to a more practical reason, " Many authors were at the war, or on war work, some died, some deferred their start in authorship. " ¹¹

Although many women had to go out to work during the Second World War they were not particularly keen to do so. This was partially due to the fact that domesticity was still rife, and also because women continued to receive un-equal pay in the work place. The government introduced the Family Allowance Act in 1945 as an incentive for women to stay at home and boost the birth rate. The results can be seen in the post-war 'baby boom'. This period also saw the continued decline of feminism and the continued growth of domesticity. The situation persisted into the 1950s with " ... the reassertion of domesticity as never before. Amid the trend towards marriage and the baby boom the women's magazines threw themselves back into the task of discouraging women from seeking careers. " ¹² It should be noted that many married women did go to work in the 1950s, but only in the name of consumerism not for want of a career.

Against this climate Norton wrote The magic bed-knob (1945) and Bonfires and broomsticks (1947). Although the author is using the 1957 revised combined edition this does not effect the interpretation, for the social climate was similar during these two

decades.

It is interesting to note that whether conscious of the implications or not, both Townsend and Crouch liken Miss Price to a member of the Women's Institute. Townsend describes Miss Price as, " ... a demure and respectable maiden lady, attending to her spells as if they were Women's Institute recipes. " ¹³ Crouch, in turn, says, " Miss Price could pass for a member of the Women's Institute - indeed she is ideal for the office of Honorary Secretary although she lacks the indefinable quality which would make her a good President ... " ¹⁴

It is quite possible, therefore, that with the prevailing climate of domesticity, notions of the Women's Institute and similar organizations were uppermost in Norton's mind. The comparison, however, deepens the incongruities in Bedknob and broomstick even further, since the figure of the witch can be seen in feminist terms, and such organizations were definitely unfeminist. It can also be argued that with feminism out of the limelight during this period, women's traditional place in the home was no longer under any particular threat resulting in the creation of Miss Price: an unconventional and relatively harmless witch.

The people in the garden, published in 1954 is not so obviously influenced.

The Hag Dowsabel has many traditional traits which to some extent nullifies the supposition that the feminist movement may be linked to the portrayal of witches in the twentieth century. Nevertheless the bestowing of eccentric qualities upon the Hag Dowsabel produces a light-hearted atmosphere in the novel

minimizing the harshness and seriousness of the witch.

In addition the Witch Merlaine can be seen in terms similar to those of Miss Price. Although she possibly possesses many of the traits in common with the Hag (they attended the same college in their youth), she has a thoroughly modern approach. The Witch Merlaine is described as smart, with curled hair and a penchant for decorating her wand with ribbon rosettes. There are definite echoes of the women's domestic organizations in these tones. Therefore, to some extent, The people in the garden does correlate with the feminist/witch theory, but possibly affected by the changes which were already occurring.

The mid-1950s was the start of a period of great expansion in children's literature lasting until the mid-1970s and producing many new and gifted writers. It was also a time of changing attitudes. Avery described the 1950-1970 period as a time,

" ... when it seemed vitally important to all responsible adults that the child should be reared from the start on a robust literary style, and encouraged to come out from his cosy, thumb-sucking corner and look the world square in the face. " ¹⁵ Humphrey Carter confirms this by declaring that " ... the modern British children's author is actually encouraging children to grow up. " ¹⁶, citing Norton's The borrowers (1952) as an early example.

The feminist movement in turn gained more momentum in the 1960s; feminist groups strengthened considerably and joined forces with other women's groups, fighting particularly for improved work and pay conditions.

During this period of shifting perceptions towards childhood and

children's literature, and a growth in feminism, Boston wrote An enemy at Green Knowe in which the heroes definitely do look the world square in the face. It can be argued that the above combination led to the creation of Miss Powers (her name is perhaps indicative of prevailing attitudes towards feminism) who can be described as the most archetypal and disturbing of all the witches in the selected novels. In this instance the supposition that a correlation exists between feminism and the portrayal of witches is corroborated. It is also interesting to note that Jasper Rose, in his monograph on Boston,¹⁷ suggests that during the period of the first World War the author was uninspired by militant feminism. She certainly did not support the cause.

The 1970s saw the beginnings of the use of children's literature as a means of conveying social theory. Crouch wrote in 1972, "Today's climate is not particularly favourable to humour. Our self-conscious concern for Children's Literature either as a vehicle for social theory or as an art form gets in the way." ¹⁸

The importance of social theory in children's literature can not be under-estimated. It is reflected for example in the emergence of novels during the 1970s dealing with minority themes. This development is paralleled in the feminist movement; the Equal Pay Act of 1970 (which was made compulsory in 1975) and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 show an increased awareness of minority issues. Feminism had less success in the 1980s, for although both of the above acts were amended during this decade, the effect was not universal. The current position is that despite an awareness of feminism and feminist issues pervading many areas of

life, for example, in politics and academic circles; many inequalities, particularly in the work place, still exist. In children's literature the promotion of social theory has been further developed. The current phase in children's literature appears to be humanitarian. Writers are concerned to avoid sexism, racism and anti-environmentalism.

Dahl wrote The witches during this period of social awareness and pro-feminist legislation. Although Dahl's witches are caricatures, they do possess archetypal attributes, correlating with the feminist/witch theory. However the denial of the stereotyped imagery and the creation of his own ridiculous and absurd imagery reveals a humanitarian streak; for by doing so Dahl has removed any possible connections to real women. If this is to be taken at face-value then it undermines the correlation. It appears therefore that The witches only correlates on a superficial level, but perhaps this is to be expected from such an individual and non-conformist writer.

In conclusion a connection *can* be discerned between the rise and fall and subsequent rise of feminism and the portrayal of witches in children's literature. The archetypal traditional witch is prevalent during periods of intense feminist activity; whereas the modern, relatively harmless witch is prevalent during periods of domesticity. The people in the garden exemplifies the fact that other forces and trends can affect the correlation. To this end the next section deals with the effect of humanitarianism upon the 'witch' novel.

4 iii) Humanitarianism and the Witch

The increased social awareness pervading through children's literature has had a direct effect on the 'witch' novel, due to difficulties arising in the portrayal of evil. As Tucker says, " ... children's writers' greater social tolerance today sometimes makes it hard for them to create and then put the blame on any recognisable villain at all. " ¹ Although written in 1981, sensibilities have generally increased, intensifying the situation. This social tolerance, says Tucker, has resulted in a new strain of the 'witch' novel, which Pat Wynne Jones describes as, " ... countless quaint little witches who are harmless fun but do not fulfill the traditional role of witches. " ²

Warner points to another reason for the departure from the use of the traditional witch,

Increasingly, children no longer identify exclusively with the "giant-killers" or the eradicators of evil; they enjoy the witch's mischief-making powers, and invoke magic, to compensate for their own sense of puniness and inadequacy. ³

She observes that this is evident in various popular contemporary books which encourage children to identify with the witch, the ultimate identification is when the *child* is the witch. An example of this, although for younger readers, is Jill Murphy's series commencing with The worst witch (1974).

However, Tucker points to a positive side to the new strain of 'witch' novel in that,

"Continuing to picture decrepit old ladies as the *sole* feminine embodiment of evil could surely be seen as very offensive, and quite likely to go on influencing some children in an unpleasant way. " 4

On the other hand, Tucker goes on to warn that even if this particular version of evil is eradicated, children still need some form of evil in their books. The reasons behind this have already been discussed in Chapter 1.

Obviously not all novels follow the trends and Dahl's and Boston's works are relatively recent examples of those which do not. Their witches cannot be described as quaint and harmless fun. It is an interesting point that neither of the above use the stereotyped image of the witch in their novels, which could be due to the effect of humanitarianism. Tucker observes,

" ... there are other ways in which writers can reflect popular, powerful juvenile fears or prejudices in their fiction, without always having to dress them up in traditional stereotypes. " 5

Both Dahl and Boston have succeeded in maintaining archetypal characteristics whilst using alternative physical images. Although Dahl has revealed a humanitarian streak, as mentioned in the previous section, his witches still possess their archetypal characteristics and as such the end result between the two novels is comparable. Tucker elucidates by pointing to such writers as being able to " ... change the vessel but retain the concepts of magic, evil and punishment that have always run through children's thoughts " 6 and this can be seen in both examples.

It would seem that for many writers social forces have a strong influence on their work. It would also seem that at present the

effect of humanitarianism is felt more strongly than that of feminism. Despite this, there are writers who are individuals, who are not so susceptible to social forces and produce literature appealing to the child's inner self in a language they can understand.

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Chapter 5. Conclusions

The twentieth century has witnessed a change in the concept of childhood instigated by Morse's invention in 1837 and propelled by the advent of television. Postman himself isolates 1950 as a prominent year in terms of the merging of the adult and the child, " ... because by that year television had become firmly installed in American homes ... " ¹ As previously postulated, the situation in America is usually further advanced than in Britain. However, the 1950s in Britain was the start of a literary period in which children were being encouraged to grow up, corroborating Postman's hypothesis. It has culminated in a period where the only discernible trend is that founded in social tolerance. Carpenter feels that this has resulted in a lowering of literary standards and says,

" Probably the gradual disappearance of notable new fiction for children between seven and twelve reflects a loss of interest in that age group, or at least a failure to allow it any special identity " ² which he implies has a correlation to Postman's hypothesis. It can be argued that once the child has been encouraged to grow up, he has merged with the adult and is left to his own devices.

Twentieth-century psychological awareness has led to a concern for the effect on children of frightening reading matter. This has caused a movement away from such aspects, and is particularly apparent in the substitution of a sanitized ending in some traditional fairy tales. It is also apparent in many modern innocuous novels including those portraying the quaint and harmless witches. As Wynne

Jones points out,

Our vacuous twentieth century tales no longer chart a danger zone. They are no longer 'spiritual explorations' (as G.K. Chesterton called the old ones) as when witches and dragons were warnings of powerful forces of evil and of the fact that life includes danger. In order to protect children from such unpleasant truth dragons have become friendly playmates, witches lonely old ladies. ³

It seems that a great irony has occurred. As a child's access to 'adult' knowledge becomes easier and increasingly encompasses a wider range of material, through the medium of television; the concepts of fear and evil are disappearing from his literature. This is happening at the very time when he most needs it to cope with the new knowledge. The resulting innocuity in literature bears little reward.

It has been seen that sanitizing a fairy tale can have a detrimental effect on the child reader. If it is accepted that the witch in fairy tales is an archetypal figure and as such has universal significance in the human unconscious then the modern trend towards the innocuous witch (who is a descendant of the latter) must surely adversely affect the reader. It can be argued, therefore, that the witch should only be presented in an archetypal form; an enemy who is thwarted, resolving the child's innermost fears.

It is imperative that the modern child can still find fear and evil in his books, and it is possible to maintain the thread of the fairy

tale, with its archetypal traditional witch, without resorting to innocuity. An enemy at Green Knowe and The witches are two modern examples which appeal to children on a spiritual and subconscious level offering solutions to their fears. They have also succeeded in finding alternatives to the stereotyped image, thereby negating it. However, the maintaining of the archetypal witch provides no reassurances from the feminist's point of view since the feminist/witch theory reveals society's attitude towards them. In fact the Ulanovs suggest that,

" Having given up torturing witches, society can still use the exaggerated negative portrait of the witch to keep women from deviating from the norms of conventional femininity ... " 4

It has been mentioned that Tucker finds the 'quaint and harmless' witch image as preferable to the portrayal of 'decrepit old ladies as the *sole* feminine embodiment of evil'. However, it is paradoxical that the modern innocuous witch often maintains the stereotyped image thereby sustaining its past connotations. Therefore the continued use of the stereotyped image in whatever form; young or old, evil or benign; prolongs a negative, derogatory attitude towards females and should not be encouraged.

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