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The loathly lady from archaic to modern tales

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My first introduction to the Loathly Lady is due to my first meeting with Geoffrey Chaucer and his popular (possibly the most popular) Loathly Lady tale, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales*. The Loathly Lady archetype is characterized as a woman who at first appears as a hideous crone or hag. She requests a kiss or promise of marriage from a man, and when he agrees to it she transforms into a beautiful young woman. I made the connection of the Loathly Lady archetype to one of my favorite movies of all time, *Beauty and the Beast*, and to the character of the Enchantress as a Loathly Lady. I started to obsess. How could a character as archaic as the Loathly Lady survive as an allusion in a modern re-telling of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*? The relationship between the Enchantress and the Loathly Lady intrigued me, piquing my interest and first drawing me to the idea of an in-depth analysis of the archetype. I now feel a desire, nay, a compulsion to study how the archetype translates from the older versions into current modern day tales, and to present the Loathly Lady in a different light, as an archetype with overlapping characteristics to that of the trickster archetype.

While studying the evolution of the character I found a common characteristic in the tales, the characteristic of transformation. Tales that incorporate the Loathly Lady include the act of transformation, the most obvious and useful of her many characteristics, which will be explored throughout this thesis. The importance of transformation led me to William J. Hynes and William G. Doty's book *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms*. Thanks to their book I was able to first make the connection of trickster characteristics to characteristics found in the Loathly Lady. Doty and Hynes define six characteristics present in the trickster's basic

pattern. Of their six characteristics, four transfer best to the Loathly Lady archetype and provide obvious areas of overlap: 1) ambiguous, 2) deceiver/trick-player, 3) transformation, and 4) lewd bricoleur. I apply these four essential characteristics to the tales to better define and discover who she is. In my research, I have yet to encounter a Loathly Lady scholar who attempts to define the essential characteristics of the Loathly Lady archetype as Doty and Hynes do for the trickster. In this thesis I propose four characteristics in the Loathly Lady archetype: 1) nobility, 2) a forest setting, 3) transformation, and 4) a lesson learned. The Loathly Lady contains these essential four characteristics in any tales she appears. The Loathly Lady also contains the four characteristics found in the trickster archetype as detailed by Doty and Hynes, though depending on the story only one or two may be present. In my argument, I show the commonalities between the trickster and Loathly Lady archetypes through the application of overlapping characteristics found in the trickster archetype. This paper will concentrate on the relationship and similarities between four of Doty and Hynes trickster characteristics: ambiguous, deceiver/trick-player, transformation, and lewd bricoleur, and my four characteristics attributed the Loathly Lady archetype: nobility, a forest setting, transformation, and a lesson learned. In total, these eight characteristics involve the Loathly Lady and tales she appears in, stretching from the earliest ancient tales to current day tales.

The Loathly Lady has long been a topic popularized in prose, poetry, ballads and various forms of media. Recent examples of the Loathly Lady include the movies *Shrek* (2001) and *Penelope* (2006), both which tell of a girl cursed to a hideous appearance until she finds love and transforms. Neil Gaiman's novel *Stardust* (1997) includes a villainous

Loathly Lady desiring youth and beauty, also made into a movie in 2007. These recent tales, like others discussed in this paper, perpetuate the importance and continued use of the Loathly Lady archetype. Her characteristics and the lessons she teaches are lessons needed in current days. While found in modern day tales the Loathly Lady is mostly associated with ancient and medieval studies.

Scholarship on the Loathly Lady has taken place beneath the shadow of Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale," the work most commonly associated with the Loathly Lady. Chaucer's tale represents the Loathly Lady in cultural context and provides an alternate and profound influence on subsequent scholarship. While entirely entertaining, Chaucer's Loathly Lady tale does not highlight all there is to offer on this continuing archetype. To dispel the large shadow cast by "The Wife of Bath's Tale" I present multiple tales from before Chaucer's time. Tales such as "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," with no known author, to Chaucer's contemporary John Gower's "Tale of Florent," to tales from a time Chaucer never could have imagined like Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, all provide the Loathly Lady archetype. The inclusion of diverse Loathly Lady tales provides alternate plot summaries and contexts to view the Loathly Lady.

Scholars of the Loathly Lady focus on two main themes: the Loathly Lady's relationship to Arthurian Lore and her role as a goddess of sovereignty. With importance to Arthurian Lore, the Loathly Lady is discussed by many scholars in her interaction with notable figures such as King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, Morgana, and Sir Gawain. Tales introduced in this paper, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," and "Tale of Florent" incorporate

Arthurian characters. The second main theme is the role of sovereignty, which is an important characteristic for the Loathly Lady archetype when looking at her origin as a goddess, and therefore one of the primary themes researched by Loathly Lady scholars. While it is important to study the Loathly Lady in the early tales, the modern tales I examine do not necessarily carry the same meaning in their transformed Loathly Lady. Looking at other studies on the archetype, I believe that this focus draws away from the other qualities she portrays. Indeed, qualities of the trickster are often overlooked because her role as goddess of sovereignty pulls attention away from other important aspects contained within her archetype.

A review of the literature shows a diverse amount of scholarship centered on the Loathly Lady archetype. G. F. Dalton researches several Loathly Lady tales besides the ones analyzed in this paper, namely Lugaid Loigde (also referred to as Lugaid Laigde) and numerous renditions of the King Henry Ballads. The King Henry Ballads contain different versions of the Loathly Lady tales, based off original tales such as “Hrolfr Kraki” and “The Marriage of Sir Gawain.” Francis James Child was a scholar and folklorist who first took the Loathly Lady tale and created a ballad, “The Marriage of Sir Gawain,” which became part of the Child Ballads. The most studied Loathly Lady tale is Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Tale." G. H. Maynadier provides scholarship on the origin of the Loathly Lady as an Irish goddess first appearing in Irish tales, and shows the relationship and similar characteristics to Chaucer's Middle English tale "The Wife of Bath's Tale." Edward Vasta, Norman N. Holland, and Margaret Schlauch make available publications which focus on "The Wife of Bath's Tale." These Loathly Lady scholars provide articles which concentrate on the Loathly Lady's appearance in “The Wife of

Bath's Tale" and her transformation from hag to lady. Howard F. Huppe also evaluates "The Wife of Bath's Tale," but his focus is on the role sovereignty plays, especially in association with the rape that occurs in the beginning of the tale. Many of the Loathly Lady tales are a part of Holy Grail stories. John Matthews, Patricia Ingham, Douglas J. Wurtele, and Caitlin Matthews are just a few authors who examine the components of the tales in relation to Arthurian myth, along with the experiences of the knights heavily influenced by the Loathly Lady. A character associated with the Loathly Lady is the figure of the Cailleach. David Rankine and Sorita d'Este's book *Visions of the Cailleach: Exploring the Myths, Folklore and Legends of the Pre-Eminent Celtic Hag Goddess* tells of the shape-shifting crone goddess, and bestower of sovereignty. These scholars are just a small number of academics who study different elements and unique aspects of the Loathly Lady.

There are an abundance of authors who continue to provide scholarship on the Loathly Lady archetype. Yet, while the authors cited in this paper are extensive, none directly connect the trickster to the Loathly Lady. Characteristics studied within the trickster archetype have yet to be noticed or at least written about in direct correlation with the Loathly Lady. In this paper, I will provide evidence of the similarities between the Loathly Lady and trickster archetypes by showing their similar overlapping characteristics. The scholars mentioned below build a platform of knowledge and ideas, and offer steppingstones vital for my own research on the Loathly Lady: Carl Jung, Steven Walker, Susan Carter, Elizabeth Passmore, Manuel Aquirre, and Bruno Bettelheim.

As a focal point for discussing archetypes, I have chosen Carl Jung's book *Man and His Symbols*, followed from that a book by a devotee of Jung, Steven Walker and his book *Jung and the Jungians on Myth*. Carl Jung introduces his understanding of the term *archetype* in his book *Man and His Symbols*. Through psychology and his theories on symbolism and dreams, Jung shares his views on the history and use of *archetype*s. Jungian scholar Steven Walker's book *Jung and the Jungian's on Myth (*2002) traces Jung's theories and interprets Jung's more difficult concepts on archetypes to guide the reader into a clearer understanding of the psychology behind the word, and how to apply the term and its use in a range of cultural contexts. Other scholars whose insights on archetype are present in this paper are: Regis Boyer, Kenneth Thigpen, and Sebastiaan den Uijl.

Elizabeth Passmore and Susan Carter, along with additional research by Manual Aquirre, provide specific research centered entirely on the Loathly Lady. These scholars focus on the Loathly Lady as a goddess of sovereignty, the role marriage plays in her tales, along with various feminist research and criticism. Inside Elizabeth Passmore and Susan Carter's book *The English Loathly Lady Tales: Boundaries, Traditions, Motifs*, is a collection of essays written by several Loathly Lady scholars dedicated to explicating her different aspects. In addition to Susan Carter's book collaboration with Elizabeth Passmore, her article "Coupling the Beastly Bride and the Hunter Hunted: What Lies Behind Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale'" is also highlighted in this paper. Carter discusses the role of transformation, as she calls shape-shifting, as a means of tricking the protagonist. In addition to Passmore and Carter's research, Manuel Aquirre's article "The Riddle of Sovereignty" adds an additional dimension to Passmore and Carter's book when

he discusses the use of the stepmother as a projection of the Loathly Lady and the sovereignty she desires. Anada Coomaraswamy, Logan Greene, Marshall Leicester, Ruben Miyares, and David Sprunger also provide great insight to the characteristics and the importance of the Loathly Lady in the varieties of tales she appears.

My main resource to connect the overlap of the trickster archetype with the Loathly Lady archetype is *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms (1993)* by William Doty and William Hynes. Multiple authors contribute to their book and encompass all aspects of the trickster archetype. They provide an overview of the trickster figure and its application in cultural contexts, myths, and tales around the world. Doty and Hynes introduce six core characteristics found within the trickster archetype: the fundamentally ambiguous and anomalous personality of the trickster, deceiver/trick-player, shape-shifter, situation-inverter, messenger/imitator of the gods, and sacred/lewd bricoleur. Betsy Prioleau's seductively entertaining book, *Seductress: Women Who Ravished the World and Their Lost Art of Love* provides more information on the lewd temptress hidden within the Loathly Lady. Prioleau's book celebrates the feminist heroines that are uncommon as seductresses, such as the hag and old crone, and shares how seductresses without good looks and the advantage of youth win over men with their strong personalities and "little-known love arts." Prioleau also writes about particular seductresses as trickster figures and a tricky woman's use of seduction. Other scholars referenced in this paper for their research on tricksters and the different characteristics defined by Doty and Hynes are: Esther Clinton, Kimberly Nance, Jane Garry, and Sebastiaan den Uijl.

Another vital scholar is Bruno Bettelheim and his book the *Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales.* Bettelheim supplies many theories on fairy tales, both in the classical tales and modern retellings. Bettelheim analyzes traditional fairy tales to show the significant meaning found within their narratives, along with the cultural relevance and universality they contain. His research on the dark forest motif and the stepmother figure help collaborate the similar characteristics found in the original tales and the modern tales, showing the Loathly Lady's continued use into the 20th century. Along with Bettelheim's research, Eleanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan, Iona and Peter Opie, and Francisco Gentil Vaz da Silva deconstruct various fairy tale themes and motifs that influence the Loathly Lady archetype.

Evidence and research provided by these scholars offer insight and context to the connection and the importance of researching the Loathly Lady as an archetype who contains overlapping characteristics with the trickster archetype. These profound contributions have worked to reinvigorate the study of the Loathly Lady archetype and her future elements. A quick search of "Loathly Lady" on Amazon will bring up a plethora of sources and items, ranging from scholarly books, fiction stories, and children's books such as Selina Hastings' beautifully illustrated *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady*, and even MP3 downloads such as Llewellyn's song "Gawain and the Loathly Lady" or Donna L. Washington's song "The Loathly Lady." One of the most recent publications was published May 30, 2013 by Donna Quattrone and Virginia M. Mohlere, *As You Wish: The Loathly Lady*. I unfortunately discovered the newly added book too late to add its insights, but it does show the continued research on this popular archetype.

Chapter two begins by introducing the term *archetype.* Based on Jung's research, a clear understanding of the concept is provided to better comprehend why the Loathly Lady is categorized as an archetype. After a discussion on Jung's research, two important aspects of an archetype are proposed in relation to understanding the Loathly Lady. The first is the concept of the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious explains the Loathly Lady's wide-spread use and ability to appear in a variety of culturally different tales, which will be examined in this paper. The second concept is an archetype's basic pattern. This basic pattern outlines characteristics present in the varying figures of one archetype. It is here that I propose the four characteristics that form the Loathly Lady archetype: 1) the use of nobility, 2) a forest setting, 3) transformation, and 4) a lesson learned by the end of the tale. These four characteristics help provide a roadmap and organizational structure to write on the otherwise elusive figure.

Chapter three begins by introducing the meaning of the Loathly Lady. This chapter gives a brief background into the origin of the Loathly Lady, and her cultural use as a goddess of sovereignty. Associated with the implication of sovereignty is her relationship as goddess of the land. This is important when looking at her archetypal function to provide the land and people with a worthy king. This chapter identifies the Loathly Lady tale "Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," and provides a brief synopsis that will present examples and references throughout the rest of the paper to better relate the Loathly Lady and trickster archetypes.

Chapter four will introduce the trickster archetype based on Doty and Hynes' book *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms.* I will concentrate on the four characteristics best associated with the Loathly Lady. The first characteristic

is the trickster's ambiguous nature, which is seen in the unknown aspects of the Loathly Lady. The second trickster characteristic is as a deceiver and trick-player. The Loathly Lady deceives with her elusive character and the simple fact that she pretends to be someone she is not. The third characteristic is transformation. This is a visually obvious characteristic essential in any Loathly Lady tale. Finally, the fourth characteristic is lewdness. This characteristic relates to the sexual advances perpetrated by the Loathly Lady.

Chapter five provides summaries of five ancient tales from the 4th-15th centuries. One of the earliest recorded of the Loathly Lady tales is found the Irish tale "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" (4th-5th C), *Ancient Irish Tales* edited by Tom Cross and Clark Slover. *Sagas and Myths of the Northman* provides the ancient Scandinavian legend "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki" (1230-1450) translated by Jesse Byock. Many Loathly Lady tales develop from the Middle Ages centering on King Arthur's court. The first of the two Middle English authors is John Gower (c. 1330-1408), an English poet who wrote *Confessio Amantis*, which contains his Loathly Lady tale, "Tale of Florent" (1390). Gower's contemporary, Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1343-1400), also wrote a Loathly Lady tale very similar to the plot of "Tale of Florent" called "The Wife of Bath's Tale" (1387-1400) in his popular work *The Canterbury Tales*. Lastly, "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" (15th C) will be studied. Each tale is accompanied with details containing the four trickster characteristics and the four Loathly Lady characteristics found within its story line.

Lastly, chapter six discusses the modern day versions of the Loathly Lady. In the concluding chapter of this paper I will introduce modern Disney movie allusions of the

Loathly Lady: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and *Tangled* (2010). Insight is provided to the evolution of her archetype, the changes seen from the original tales to the modern day versions, along with similarities, such as the relevance of the evil stepmother figure. The organization for each Disney movie is similar to the original tales by providing a synopsis, examples of the four Loathly Lady characteristics and examples of the trickster characteristics.

Chapter 2: Archetype

Archetypes abound in prose and poetry around the world. They can take the form of a wise old man, trickster, jester, rebel, hero or damsel in distress. The damsel in distress is an archetype. Classical Greece's Andromeda chained to a rock as a sacrifice, Charles Perrault's fairy tale of "Sleeping Beauty" (1697) and the cursed sleeping maiden, the beautiful lady kidnapped by *King Kong* (1933), and even the character of Peach (1985) in the video games "Mario and Luigi" are all examples of the archetypal damsel in distress. What exactly makes the damsel in distress, or any archetype, an archetype? While there is no clear definition of *archetype*, details and examples provide an overall picture of the term.

The term *archetype* may have its origins in ancient Greek, but it is Carl Gustav Jung who popularizes it. Carl Jung is known best for his studies and in-depth research on archetypes. Jung says that to define *archetype* is impossible. The extent to which an archetype can be comprehended is through discussion of the elements it carries and in the image portrayed. An archetype can be a person, personality, or behavior, which has evolved from man's psyche, "The psyche, too, has 'evolved'; and some contents of modern man's unconsciousness reassemble products of the mind of ancient man" (Jung 66), present in the modern world, although initiated from the ancient world. This relates to the collective unconscious, the ability to transfer images and thoughts through time without someone realizing that they are even producing an archetype that is frequently and continually used.

Jung associates archetype with a basic image. This image translates the author's message, yet can reoccur throughout other pieces of literature by authors who have never

read or heard of it previous to what they themselves express through a character. How is this? Jung believes that archetypes come from the collective unconscious. Archetypes are "inherited like genetic traits are inherited" (Thigpen 20), or as Jung terms part of the "collective unconscious," shared ideas and values that unconsciously appear to everyone. Regis Boyer calls this idea a "vast spiritual reservoir," that is “accessible to all those of a particular culture – and, to a certain extent, to any human being” (110). This reservoir or archetype holds a connection of thoughts and ideas that can be used by a community to organize the way they live and experience life, that may have once been repressed or forgotten and unconsciously considered.

In *Jung and the Jungians on Myth*, Steven Walker provides detailed analysis on Jung’s teachings of archetype. While archetypes are difficult to find, and often times go unrecognized, the image they create can help, along with the results or purpose they carry: "they are known indirectly through their effects. . . images they produce in the mind. These images are their psychological 'effects' in the same way that actions are the natural effects of instinctual, physiological urges" (Walker 6). An image, to Jung a symbolic image, is a key feature to understanding archetypes. The closest Jung comes to defining *archetype* is in the following quote from *Man and His Symbols*:

> But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world . . . . (58)

A symbolic image stands for more than what appears on the surface, in the physical appearance. The image contains a deeper meaning that comes to be expressed through the

tale. What the symbolic image stands for differs in the variety of archetypes. Archetypes have no known origin and cannot be traced to their original beginning. The very first mention of an archetype is impossible to locate. For the damsel in distress archetype, three different countries mention her in their tales: France's "Sleeping Beauty" tale by Charles Perrault's, Greece's mythic Andromeda, and the US movie *King Kong*. Even though the archetype is spread throughout many continents, her image is reproduced with slight differences, but with a basic pattern that allows each to be connected under the umbrella of the damsel in distress archetype. The pattern the damsel in distress follows is: a beautiful young maiden, placed in an unwanted predicament and in need of rescue by a hero. These aspects are present in all the damsel in distress figures. The pattern the damsel in distress follows is what Jung calls a basic pattern, "representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern" (58). These constant and unchanging characteristics allow an archetype to be identifiable and to remain under the classification of an archetype. These characteristics are needed because of the constant reformulation and evolution an archetype goes through.

The Loathly Lady is an archetype and follows the elements of an archetype introduced by Jung. The Loathly Lady is a symbolic image. Her physical appearance is symbolic of her true character, as will be discussed in the section on her transformation. Another essential trait of an archetype is having no origin. The Loathly Lady's origin is unknown, though scholars continue to search and assert that they have found her true origin. A basic pattern of the Loathly Lady must be present in a text to be considered an archetype. The Loathly Lady has four core characteristics which form a pattern in tales where she appears. The characteristics always present to some degree in the Old English

and Modern versions are: 1) nobility, 2) a forest setting, 3) transformation, and 4) the teaching of a lesson.

The first basic characteristic of the Loathly Lady archetype is her interaction with nobility. Nobility can appear in three ways: the protagonist is a king or queen, the protagonist is a child or relative of a king or queen, along with the Loathly Lady being a noble personage, a princess or queen depending on the tale. Kings and queens, and other forms of nobility are important as they have the responsibility to protect the people and land. Nobility is exalted and powerful. By tricking the characters, she becomes the puppet master holding the strings of the future princes and their potential rule. The Loathly Lady becomes more powerful than the rulers of the land. The noble protagonist first encounters the Loathly Lady in a forest setting.

The second characteristic is the forest setting in which the Loathly Lady first appears. A forest often represents fear, mystery, and adventure in legends and fairy tales. Children are warned about going out into the wild environment where there is limited protection and wild beasts, such as the warning of the grandmother to "Little Red Riding Hood," or the townspeople in the "Boy Who Cried Wolf." For the protagonist of the tales their adventure begins in the forest setting when they first encounter the Loathly Lady. She turns up by a tree stump, on the road next to the forest, or in a hidden sanctuary deep within. In fairy tales the dark forest is the first encounter that a protagonist has with the antagonist of the tale. Bruno Bettelheim terms the dark forest antagonist "the witch" in his book *The Uses of Enchantment*: *The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. When the protagonist in a Loathly Lady tale traverses into or near the wooded area, he first encounters the crone. In the forest the heroes are put to a test or compelled to agree to the

crone's terms. Bettelheim states that it is while in the forest that the hero "encounters an irresistibly attractive witch who, at first, satisfies all his desires during their relation" (94). Though Bettelheim refers to the figure found in the forest as a witch, there are significant similarities in the roles both magical women play in relation to the protagonist and their meeting of the forest setting, namely the conflict they create for the protagonist. This is seen when the Loathly Lady (not physically attractive, but attractive in what she offers) either gives the protagonist an answer he has been searching for or else some other form of aid he requires to complete his journey. Her attractive offer is at first irresistible to the protagonist, but he soon finds it comes with strings attached and he is loath to complete whatever he originally promised the old crone.

The third characteristic, transformation, is the most obvious and easily found quality of the Loathly Lady. The reason she alters her appearance is different depending on the conditions in the tale. In most tales the main reason for the transformation is the promise of marriage and act of consummation between husband and wife. The representation of the transformation in marriage in fact shows a transformation not only of the physical, but an emotional change, which must occur for both parties to make a marriage work, an important lesson taught through the transformation of the Loathly Lady herself.

Finally, the last characteristic of the Loathly Lady archetype is a lesson. In all Loathly Lady tales the protagonists and audience learn a lesson. While each tale contains a lesson, the message and moral of the lesson is different depending on many factors: the author’s gender, time period, and culture. In the archaic tales her involvement in the tale

is either to help develop the protagonists' character, prepare them for the weight of the crown, or save them from a certain death.

There is no static or fixed number of archetypes in the world. They can overlap and combine at any time, as the Loathly Lady and trickster archetypes do. The Loathly Lady has slight changes to her character depending on the tale she appears in. She changes and evolves with the time, the author, audience, and culture. This is one of the difficulties of studying archetypes, as they "will never cease to give birth to new versions of themselves" (Boyer 111). Though the future of the Loathly Lady is unknown, one can be sure that she will infect the minds of writers and artist and continue to be spread throughout literature. The Loathly Lady archetype transcends time and culture in writings from sagas, legends, myth and fairy tales, because she carries a universal archetypal quality.

Chapter 3: Who is the Lady?

The root word "loath" derives from Old English, *lað*, meaning hostile or hateful (“loath”), and accurately defines a part of the Loathly Lady's personality. Due to her looks and her actions she is first deemed loathly. In traditional tales the Loathly Lady may seem like the antagonist. While she can be viewed as a hostile antagonist on the surface, she proves that it is for a good reason and not just to be loathly that she challenges the characters. This changes later when she becomes the aid to the protagonist, while modern tales provide a truly evil Loathly Lady who is the antagonist of the tale due to her cruel and selfish nature. “Lady” also derives from Old English, *hl□fdigan,* meaning lady. The term “lady” has several differing meanings, three which fit within the context of the Loathly Lady’s character. The first definition is a woman who rules over subjects and to whom respect is due. The Loathly Lady often turns out to be a queen and is deserving of the protagonist's respect. In the second definition of a lady, an honorific title is prefix to a goddess. Her transformative ability, magical aspects, and her origin are descriptions often correlated with a goddess. Lastly, the Loathly Lady is the object of chivalrous love, a third definition of "lady" (“lady”). This is identified in her hag state when the protagonist either kisses or consummates the marriage she requests. For some of these protagonists either before or after her transformation, there is an amorous love-at-first-sight, seeming instantaneous love the protagonists feels for her. The meaning hidden within her name foreshadows the multiple personas she contains.

The quality of her loathliness and ladyship are seen in a quick synopsis of "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon." The “Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon” originated in Ireland and is one of the earliest tales found representing the

Loathly Lady. The tale begins when Niall of the Nine Hostages, the youngest son of the High King Eochaid, and his brothers are out wandering in a forest and come across a well to drink from. At this well is a crone who demands a kiss in return for a drink of water from the well. Of the brothers Niall is the only one willing to pay the price and is afterward rewarded sovereignty of Ireland, the future King, when the Loathly Lady reveals her true self by turning into the beautiful goddess of sovereignty, Erin.

Niall's brothers view the crone as loathly and hateful because they find the idea of kissing such a hideous woman a price too high for a sip of water, "'I give my word,' he answered, 'that I would rather perish of thirst than give thee a kiss" (Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon, 511). This could be due to the grotesque description accompanying her introduction into the tale with, "Dark smoky eyes she had: a nose crooked and hollow. She had a middle fibrous, spotted with pustules, diseased, sand shins distorted and awry. Her ankles were think, her shoulder-blades were broad, her knees were big, and her nails were green" ("Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," 511). This is just a brief look at the page-long description of the Loathly Lady's physical attributes seen by the princes. Yet, there is one prince willing to look past her surface looks, and when Niall kisses the Loathly Lady she becomes a beautiful lady, "there was not in the world a damsel whose figure or appearance was more loveable than hers!" ("Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," 511). She then loses her loathly persona and becomes a goddess, "I am the Sovereignty of Erin" ("Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon, 512), bestowing the Kingship on Niall.

In "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" the Loathly Lady declares herself Erin, a goddess of sovereignty. Manuel Aquirre makes this connection in his essay, “The Riddle of Sovereignty." In early Irish tales the Loathly Lady is referenced

specifically as the Goddess Erin, who is the Irish deity of sovereignty, who symbolizes "the symbolical marriage of an Irish king with the deity representing the land itself" (Aquirre 275). While there is no literal marriage between the Loathly Lady and Niall, she does symbolically marry him when she approves him as the future king. The kiss she seeks seals the deal, much like the first kiss between a husband and wife at a wedding. Niall receives the kingship of Ireland. For Niall this is unlikely because his is youngest of his brothers and the illegitimate son, seemingly the least likely to be king. The Loathly Lady deems Niall worthy after he goes above and beyond what she expects, proving his worth. Niall proves his worth when the Loathly Lady requests a kiss in return for water, "I will grant it," said she; 'but give me a kiss" (511), a request none of his brothers would comply with. He goes above and beyond her request when he offers to also give her his body, "Besides give thee a kiss, I will lie with thee!" (“Eochaid Mugmedon” 511). In this act Niall willingly agrees to the crone's request, giving her sovereignty and power and earning the crown. This tale is a prime example of the importance of testing nobility, the first of the four basic Loathly Lady archetype's characteristics.

The Loathly Lady facilitates the relationship of the king to the land. As the goddess of sovereignty, the Loathly Lady represents the land; and as goddess of the land it is her job to test and declare a worthy ruler. Some Loathly Lady tales work directly with her testing and preparing the future king. When the man is deemed worthy and accepts the Loathly Lady, "She reveals herself as the personified Sovereignty of Ireland, and the hero's acceptance of her wins him (or his descendants) the kingship of Ireland" (Sprunger 206) and he is literally married to the land when she sleeps with or marries him, or as detailed in "Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," Niall kisses her in order to endorse

his kingship. This transformation of looks is compared to the transformation of royal rule: "And as thou hast seen me loathsome, bestial, horrible at first and beautiful at last, so is the sovereignty; for seldom it is gained without battles and conflicts; but at last to anyone it is beautiful and goodly" ("Eochaid Mugmedon" 512). Here she advises Niall in a lesson of kingship. The Loathly Lady describes how royal rule can be ugly at first, but through work and improvement, it can become a beautiful thing. Not only does she share the lesson with him, but she goes through it. Like beginning royalty she is ugly at first and after Niall completes her test, she transforms and becomes a beautiful woman. Niall, and his now regretful brothers, have learned a lesson in sovereignty and that good things come to those who fight for them.

The Loathly Lady's relationship to the land as a goddess, the Irish goddess of sovereignty, and a king's connection to the land due to its people, makes her the most qualified to test any potential rulers: "ancient Celtic traditions of kingship, such as the connection of the king to the land itself and the dependence of the king on the judgment of a woman" (Greene 3). Land is often feminine, relating to the term *Mother Earth*. The fertility of the land, and the nurture it provides to keep the human race alive, relates to the Loathly Lady and her connection with the land and her trusted judgment of a king worthy of rule. Power over the land and people relates to the Loathly Lady's lesson in sovereignty found in many of the tales:

> Sovereignty means royal rule in the one, domestic rule in the others . . . The Sovereignty theme in the Irish story has to do not only with land and kingship but also with woman herself; once we acknowledge this we cannot fail to recognize the essential similarity between the different

> versions: while only some of them relate to the theme of territorial rule, all of them contain a statement about woman and her symbolic nature. (Aquirre 278)

In this statement Aquirre notes that he believes different versions of the Loathly Lady all have the essential quality of discussing women and what they stand for. In the older tales sovereignty is directly given to the Loathly Lady. This is seen when the protagonist agrees to her terms, usually with a focus of kingship. This importance evolves in the modern tales as opposed to traditional tales. In modern tales the Loathly Lady has no desire to find a worthy king and gain sovereignty over him, but instead she seeks the power of beauty and youth over all.

The older Loathly Lady tales provide three instances of the protagonist being questioned and tested on his ability to relinquish sovereignty, seen in the following tales: “Tale of Florent,” “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” and “The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell.” The basic structures of the tales are different from "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" and instead involve the Loathly Lady who tests the protagonists, who must redeem himself or a friend. The only way he can accomplish this is by attaining the aid of the hag or crone. Whether it is a kiss, marriage, and/or sex, the protagonist must agree to her price to save lives. After completing two tests by correctly answering the questions, the hero is rewarded when the Loathly Lady transforms into a beautiful young lady.

The first question is asked not by the Loathly Lady, but by another character to which the protagonist owes something or else must redeem themselves in the eyes of the character who is asking the question. The first test presented to the protagonist is

answering the question, "What is it women most desire?" The question that the protagonist must answer is a seemingly impossible question that brings fear to the heart of men even in modern times. This is the perfect question for the male protagonists to receive, and it is only right that the answer comes from the ultimate female power, the Loathly Lady and goddess of sovereignty. There is a correct response and when he discovers it, he begins his quest. In the "Tale of Florent," "Wife of Bath's Tale," and "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" the question “What is it women most desire?” must be answered correctly in order for the protagonist to live, it becomes a question of life and death. When the protagonist starts out on his journey (he is usually provided 12 months to find the answer to the question) he begins by going from village to village asking every woman “What is it women most desire?” The difficulty lies in the responses from the women, all of them having different opinions of what women desire. Because of this, the hero becomes distressed and despairs he will never know the answer. At this time the Loathly Lady makes her appearance offering him the answer he seeks, but with the warning that it comes with a price. Once in agreement with her terms and conditions of marriage, he receives the necessary answer—what women most desire is sovereignty over their husbands and lovers. At this point in the tale the protagonist has learned the importance of sovereignty, which is his big clue when he is tested a second time directly from the Loathly Lady.

The second test to appear is a question asked directly by the Loathly Lady, seen in the "Tale of Florent," "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell." The protagonist must choose between her appearances, a trick question by a tricky lady. Once the first test has been successfully completed and the protagonist is

bound to the Loathly Lady, the second test appears, foreshadowed by the first question on sovereignty. At this point in the tale, the bedchamber scene, the Loathly Lady has transformed into a beautiful maiden in front of the protagonist. When the Loathly Lady transforms she “becomes 'sovranty,' the goddess who bestows the right of kingship, the goddess who represents the land" (Greene 3), and offers him a choice, one that can decide his future as ruler. The second test differs slightly depending on the tale and can be asked in two different versions. The first version of the question asked by the Loathly Lady is if the protagonist would rather have her beautiful by day when everyone can see her and ugly at night, or beautiful at night when he can be with her and ugly during the day when others see her. The second version of the question asked by the Loathly Lady is if the protagonist would rather her be beautiful or ugly for the remainder of her life. While this version of the question seems like an easy response, the Loathly Lady warns the protagonist that beauty sometimes comes at the price of unfaithfulness. Whichever version of the question the protagonist is asked, the correct answer is to pick neither option. Instead he responds that she, the Loathly Lady, can choose if or when she should appear beautiful. With his successful completion, the hero proves his acceptance of the Loathly Lady by handing over sovereignty and letting her make the decision of how and when she is appealing. When the protagonist can finally embrace the lady in the physical and mental sense, he proves that he can also embrace the land and be a fit ruler. The first test teaches the protagonist the importance of sovereignty, while the second test of him actually provides it.

Once the protagonist has been tested and deemed worthy by the Loathly Lady through his understanding of the importance of sovereignty she rewards him. When he

gives her sovereignty and power she deems him worthy. Here the protagonist has learned his lesson with regards to the importance of sovereignty, “What women most desire,” and earns the faithfulness and beauty of the Loathly Lady bride. The reward is either his ability to continue his journey towards kingship, as we see in “The Adventures in the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon,” or she rewards him by giving herself to him through marriage, and of course in her beautifully transformed state, as seen in "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "Tale of Florent," and "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell." What greater reward for a king than marriage to a powerful goddess, and what greater reward to a man than marriage to a beautiful, faithful woman.

Chapter 4: A Tricky Lady

Just as the term archetype can be associated with the Loathly Lady, so can the trickster figure. As archetypes, the similarities between the two open a door for a stronger understanding of the Loathly Lady archetype. In *Man and His Symbols*, Jung examines the role of the trickster in relation to its archetypal application. According to Jung, the

> Trickster is a figure whose *physical appetites* dominate his behavior; he has the mentality of an infant. Lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary needs, he is *cruel,* cynical, and unfeeling. . . . This figure, which at the outset assumes the form of an animal, passes from one mischievous exploit to another. But, as he does so, a change comes over him. At the end of his rogue's progress he is beginning to take on the *physical likeness* of a grown man. (103-104, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Jung provides a general definition of the trickster archetype in its behavior, role, and some main characteristics. Three main points of a trickster figure are mentioned that correlate within the Loathly Lady archetype: cruelty, physical appetite, and transformation from animal to man. The Loathly Lady found in earlier tales cannot be termed cynical and unfeeling, as detailed in the origin of the term loath. When she transforms she provides a reward, a prize for the protagonist. The reward is her transformation; the prize is no longer having to look on such a ugly figure, but instead a beautiful woman. This is a different case than what is viewed in the modern tales— a Loathly Lady with selfish desires willing to do anything and harm anyone to get what she wants. When it comes to a physical appetite, she desires a buffet of kisses. This will be examined in more depth as the trickster's fourth characteristic of a lewd bricoleur. The

final main point that Jung provides on the trickster archetype is the change that comes over tricksters, much like the transformative ability of the Loathly Lady, also described below as the third characteristic of the trickster archetype. The Loathly Lady's transformation from the crone—often described with animal features and with an otherworldly ugliness— to lady matches the evolution of the trickster's encounter. Jung's definition of a trickster matches up with several qualities discussed in Doty and Hyne's book, namely the lewdness and transformational ability found in the archetype.

As Jung does, Esther Clinton provides collaboration on Doty and Hynes research on the trickster archetype, and helps to contextualize the qualities of the archetype in relation to the Loathly Lady. Clinton examines the various motifs found within the trickster archetype describing who it is and what it does: "The term *trickster,* when used by social scientists, refers to more than simply a deceptive character. Tricksters are destroyers and creators, heroes and villains, often even both male and female" (472). First, it is essential to note that Clinton does refer to tricksters as being either male or female. A common misconception is that tricksters are all male. Secondly, as Clinton details, a trickster can be a hero or a villain. Often times the Loathly Lady is at first viewed as a villain in the tales when hated and outcast by the protagonist because she demands sexual favors in return for answering a question. This negative view of her changes by the end of the tale when it is found that the Loathly Lady is doing everything for the right reasons and in the end comes away with a valuable lesson and a reward that pleases the protagonist. The earlier tales exemplify the Loathly Lady as heroic, or at least non-villain, by the end of the tale. For many trickster figures, they are deceptive because they seem villainous, but like the Loathly Lady in early tales, they turn out to be more of

a heroic figure whose role is to guide the protagonist, though in unconventional means. Some trickster figures are the antagonist of the story. Modern Loathly Lady tales tend to produce a villainess Loathly Lady who turns out to be the antagonist, often portrayed as the evil stepmother figure.

In her simplest form, the Loathly Lady is tricking the characters and readers by pretending to be something she is not; she is not really a repugnant old crone. A comparison to the trickster archetype leads to a deeper understanding of the all around function and benefit of the Loathly Lady and the characteristics present in her archetype.

William Doty and William Hynes' expansive book *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* excavate essential qualities found in the archetype of the trickster figure. They narrow down and strengthen the understanding of all the trickster incorporates by mapping the characteristics of the mythic trickster from its oldest predecessor to recent references. Doty and Hynes avoid providing a definition of the trickster archetype because the variations of the archetype are impossible to pin-point exactly, "In fact, to define (de-finies) is to draw borders around phenomena, and tricksters seem amazingly resistant to such capture; they are notorious border breakers" (33). This idea dates back to what Jung says regarding the inability to define archetype. Along with this similar concept, Sebastian den Uijl looks at the inability of the trickster archetype to be defined as it is constantly evolving and moving, "While we endeavor to trace the trickster to his origin, he continues to play his tricks on us, always evasive, always crossing our conceptual boundaries of definition in which we try to confine him" (Uijl 73). There are unlimited studies and examples of the trickster archetype, and it is rare if not impossible to find any that are exactly identical. Instead, Doty and Hynes

provide a road map of the trickster's role and purpose in a tale through analysis of the six common characteristics present in the archetype.

Before detailing the common characteristics part of the trickster's basic pattern, it is important to look at the frequent roles the trickster plays in the tales and how they are relatable to the Loathly Lady. A trickster's varying purposes or roles in the tales is best summed up by Hynes:

> Trickster materials would be analyzed primarily or exclusively for the extent to which they *reduce chaos* or provide means of dealing with social disorder, how they graph *normative sexual behaviors* (by displaying the results of their inversion), or how they vent *frustration with social restrictiveness*, or provide *entertainment*, or how they become sources of metaphor creation and hence creativity in general, or how they lead to *reaffirmation of belief systems*, and so forth. (32, emphasis added)

This massive statement serves several different rationales from which to view the purpose of the trickster figure, thus the Loathly Lady. Of these above mentioned uses of the trickster archetype, three stand-out in relation to the use of the Loathly Lady in tales: how she reduces chaos, as a graph of normative sexual behaviors, and to voice social concerns.

One of the purposes of the trickster archetype in relation to the Loathly Lady is to reduce chaos by creating chaos**,** "The trickster in archaic society serves primarily 'to add disorder to order and so make a whole, to render possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted'" (Hynes 16). In "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," Niall becoming king is chaotic because

he is the last to be considered due to his standing as the youngest brother and illegitimate son. For the Loathly Lady, this chaotic choice stands for the importance of character, rather than age and legitimacy. Marriage, kisses, and consummation are heavily emphasized within the older versions of the Loathly Lady. As a trickster, the Loathly Lady creates chaos to teach the knight a lesson and reinforce the values that he broke. The lesson taught by the trickster and learned by the protagonist provides meaning for the choices made by the Loathly Lady: "Every time the trickster breaks a taboo or boundary, the same taboo or boundary is underlined for non-tricksters"(Hynes 208). A large portion of who the Loathly Lady is resides in her lewd requests. Her demanding kisses and insistence of consummating the marriage serve a greater purpose than just to disgust the hero. Rather, "Trickster myths are ritual vents for social frustrations . . . through which pressures engendered by a system of beliefs and behaviors can be dissipated" (Hynes 206). The sexual behavior of the Loathly Lady is not normal, discussed further as one of the six characteristics of a trickster.

Universal features attributed to the trickster are contradictoriness, complexity, deceptiveness, and trickery, which can be seen within the language of the tales. Relating to these are six common characteristics of the trickster archetype, mapped out by Doty and Hynes. The characteristics of a trickster are: 1) the fundamentally ambiguous and anomalous personality of the trickster, flowing from this are other features such as, 2) deceiver/trick-player, 3) shape-shifter, 4) situation-inverter, 5) messenger/imitator of the gods, and 6) sacred/lewd bricoleur (Hynes 34). Not all these characteristics must be present in a trickster figure for it to be considered an archetype, "As long as a number of shared characteristics are found in a large number of instances, it is possible to speak,

albeit carefully of 'a trickster figure’" (Hynes 211). In agreement with this, I will only focus on four of Doty and Hynes trickster characteristic which are most relatable to the Loathly Lady: 1) ambiguous and anomalous personality, 2) deceiver/trick-player, 3) shape-shifter, and I will add transformation, and 4) a lewd bricoleur. All these characteristics can be applied to her in multiple ways, though they don't all necessarily show up in one particular tale. There is an undeniable combination of characteristics relating to the trickster showing not only the trickster's range, but that of the Loathly Lady.

The first trickster characteristic detailed by Doty and Hynes is the ability to be ambiguous or anomalous. Looking at the Loathly Lady— within the trickster characteristic of being ambiguous—the physical descriptions we get of her are all too clear, with grotesque, cringe-worthy descriptions of warts, bits of hair, and teeth that can gnash through bones. What remains unclear is exactly who she is. Some tales share a brief background of her life, if she is a relative of someone else in the tale or for some reason enchanted, but other than that her background and the mysteries surrounding her character are never revealed. Being ambiguous is important for the trickster archetype. For the Loathly Lady being ambiguous means she is vague in her true identity and that it is at first unclear why she creates conflict in the tale. The Loathly Lady's ambiguity allows her to create surprises and seamlessly moves around the tale to complete her purpose. Under the umbrella of ambiguity is the idea of being anomalous. As an anomalous trickster archetype, the Loathly Lady is strange, unrealistic. Hynes defines anomalous in this way:

> Anomalous, a-nomos, without normativity, the trickster appears on the edge of just beyond *existing borders*, classifications, and categories . . . . Breaking down division lines, the trickster characteristically moves swiftly and impulsively back and forth across all borders with virtual impunity. Visitor everywhere, especially to those places that are off limits, the trickster seems to dwell in no single place but to be in continual transit through all realms marginal and liminal. (34-35, emphasis added)

An important aspect of the Loathly Lady as a trickster archetype is that she does exist at boarders, classifications, and categories by being elusive because she is so many different things.

Among the numerous descriptive attributes of the anomalous trickster, the most frequently occurring one is of the Loathly Lady as a boundary breaker. The Loathly Lady breaks through a number of boundaries, rules, and social conduct to bring forth her lesson. Because of this it is impossible to limit who she is, in a way making it so she herself has no boundaries of her own. When it comes to the Loathly Lady she breaks many boundaries, through the restrictions of what are considered the normal limits:

> By breaking the patterns of a culture the trickster helps define those patterns. By acting irresponsibly he helps define responsibility. He threatens, yet he teaches, too. He throws *doubt on realities* but helps concentrate attention on realities. He crossed unbreakable boundaries between *culture and nature*, life and death, and thereby draws attention to those boundaries. (Hynes 106, emphasis added)

After experiencing a total shift in looks and providing her dual traits, the Loathly Lady lends a sense of doubt to what else is not real in the tale. What other imposters or hidden agendas abound within the tales? Reality is no more when fantasy, the Loathly Lady, is released into the world and anything is possible. As a boundary breaker the Loathly Lady/trickster metaphorically crosses from one side to another, crossing an area that is off-limits. Metaphorically, it's easiest to associate this with the occurrence of a citizen crossing and gaining access to a marked off yellow police tape area that is supposed to be a forbidden zone. The citizen's prohibited entry can alter circumstances and cause chaos for law enforcement trying to handle the situation, just as the protagonist must acclimate to the changes brought with the Loathly Lady. As a trickster, the Loathly Lady crosses several boundaries; two she is most familiar with are the boundaries of societal norms, and reality versus fantasy.

The first of the boundaries often broken by the Loathly Lady is the norms of society. In several accounts "the trickster is cast as an 'out' person, and his activities are often outlawish, outlandish, outrageous, out-of-bounds, and out-of-order" (Hynes 34). The Loathly Lady is often portrayed in an outcast state. She is usually apart from society, first encountered in a forest environment surrounded only by the woods and wild. This is the second unwavering characteristic of the Loathly Lady archetype, and appears in "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" when he first encounters the Loathly Lady while walking in the forest and chances upon her guarding a well. Her outcast state is one side of the yellow warning tape while the other side contains the norms of society, civilization. The Loathly Lady is an outcast until she breaks through, attaching herself to the protagonist, and breaking through the divide as an in-person. In the tales

incorporating her marriage to the protagonist, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "Tale of Florent," and "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," the Loathly Lady enters society when she marries and leaves her forest. She breaks through societies hierarchal boundaries when she goes from societal outcast to a woman of nobility. As one of the four characteristics of the Loathly Lady's basic pattern, it is no surprise to see the importance of the forest setting appear in relation to the trickster archetype. Not only the setting, but also the grisly appearance, almost beast-like looks she carries, "every joint and limb of her, from the top of her head to the earth, was as black as coal. Like the tail of a wild horse was the gray bristly main that came through the upper part of her head-crown" (Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon, 510), before her transformation, reveals her outcast condition.

She is not only out-cast by her physical distance from society, but in the looks and values she possesses. Characters and readers find the Loathly Lady's behavior and requests outrageous and unexpected. Whether she desires a kiss and/or marriage to one of the most respected knights (Sir Gawain), the old crone form of the Loathly Lady requires commitments that surprise all. An instance of this is when she first demands that a handsome young knight or prince kiss or marry her, such as requested of Niall, an unrealistic request of any woman who is a stranger, even stranger when there is a major age gap and difference in societal status. Her desires are judged unfair by the other characters, whether it is the hero in question or King Arthur's court pitying the poor man who must fall to such an ugly hag.

The second major boundary she breaks is when she crosses the boundary from reality to fantasy. This boundary connection between the original tales and modern tales

is essential for her transformation. When there are no rules or boundary of what is possible, anything is possible, bringing in the fanciful to an otherwise "real" world. The Loathly Lady sweeps into the plot bringing fantasy into an otherwise realistic tale. Just as the Loathly Lady portrays the binaries of ugly to beautiful, old to young, she exemplifies the boundaries of fact or reality to fiction or fantasy: "The trickster shows us a way to see the world by opening our minds to the spontaneous transformations of a reality that is always open and creative" (Hynes 200). When it comes to the Loathly Lady she breaks many boundaries, breaking the limits of what is considered "normal" or realistic in that world.

When looking at the boundary of reality, I am looking at the state or quality of being real, tangible, what is found in the real world, the society that humans live in, and what is possible. The tales are realistic, often with a historical setting, mentioning some real characters (for those scholars who believe there was a King Arthur, I like to think so), with real world problems. A hag is real, people that deceive are real, extremely beautiful women are real, but transforming through physical changes is not a part of our reality. The boundary line repeatedly broken in all true Loathly Lady tales is that of reality. This is seen during the Loathly Lady's transformation. In most tales it is only when the Loathly Lady becomes her true self, removing the veil of ugliness, when supernatural events happen and her magical aspects shine through an otherwise realistic world. The magic that she introduces to a tale enables her to break the realistic boundary of physically appearing as one seems, and as we see she is not a simple crone. Humans do not have the power to magically transform into someone completely different right in front of another's eyes. This ability allows her test the character of protagonist; to learn

about their true personality and motive when not trying to impress a beautiful woman with a chivalrous attitude. The Loathly Lady proves that boundaries are no problem and feels the least hesitation of breaking through them with a sledgehammer of transformative power:

> Many of the tales take the loathly lady a step up in fantasy, and further step out of the reality realm, by constructing her transformation as that of a magical creature such as an elf. Starting off as a hag, a realistic character/personality that can be seen even in modern-day times, then not only magically transforming, but taking it to the next level and becoming a mythological creature, shows how far the archetype of the loathly lady is willing to go in order to break through the boundaries. (Leicester 147)

Just as a boundary from one yard to another has a sort of doorway through to the other side, the Loathly Lady opens the doorway from the side of reality and glides through to the other side of fantasy.

The second of the four characteristics common in the trickster archetype is the deceiver, trick-player. The term *trickste*r relates to the French concept "*jouer de tours"* this translates to 'player of tricks' (Hynes 225). Deception is important for the Loathly Lady because she often has to deceive or trick the protagonist to teach a lesson. In its simplest form the trickster is a figure designated as one who "morally deceives or cheats" (Hynes 14), and we can clearly see the deception of the Loathly Lady as she pretends to be just an ordinary old hag.

The third trickster characteristic (and most relatable) is ability to transform. This characteristic is also the third characteristics in the basic pattern of the Loathly Lady

archetype. Transformation is prominent in many trickster tales. Whether they alter their appearance into an animal, the other sex, or some inanimate object, it is an attractive way for a trickster to easily fool someone simply by altering their appearance. As mentioned at the beginning of the paper, the transformation is essential in any Loathly Lady tale in order for it to be considered a Loathly Lady archetype. Transformation can be anything from alterations to the physical appearance to something as simple as a disguise of clothing that hides one's true identity. This vital characteristic is present no matter the tale; yet, why it occurs can differ slightly.

Doty and Hynes often refer to a trickster's transformation or metamorphosis as shape-shifting. Both transformation and shape-shifting occur in the Loathly Lady tales. This physical change is dependent on the Loathly Lady's circumstances, if she transforms by choice or because of enchantment. Transformation is differentiated from shape-shifting as it is sometimes an unwilling, or forced, change often because of an enchantment. Francisco Silva notes in *Metamorphosis: the dynamics of symbolism in European Fairy tales* that this is significant "because fairy tales deal consistently with enchantments and disenchantments—and rejuvenation of a hag into a bride" (6). On the other hand, while transformation often relates to a forced change, shape-shifting is seen as a specialized skill, one's ability to alter his or her body: "As shape-shifter, the trickster can alter his shape or bodily appearance in order to facilitate deception. Not even the boundaries of species or sexuality are safe, for they can be readily dissolved by the trickster's disguises and transmorphism" (Hynes 36). A Loathly Lady with shape-shifting ability is that much more devilish than a Loathly Lady who has been enchanted, though not always with harmful intent. She has the desire to fool somebody, while those

transformed by somebody else through enchantment are not tricking characters because they have a choice. Though a Loathly Lady may be enchanted, she is still being deceptive even if it is not of her choosing.

Either the hag transforms because she wants to in order teach, reward, or warn the protagonist, or she is finally able to after being previously enchanted, and it's not necessarily out of desire, but need. As discussed in chapter one, the Loathly Lady transforms from her hag to lady appearance when the protagonist passes her tests. Only after the consummation, or else correctly answering the Loathly Lady's test, a question of when she should be beautiful, does the Loathly Lady show her true self. In "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" the Loathly Lady transforms after Niall has thrown himself on her in her crone appearance and kisses her, "Then he threw himself down upon her and gave her a kiss. But then, when he looked at her, there was not in the world a damsel whose figure or appearance was more loveable than hers!" (511). In other Loathly Lady tales she reveals her beautiful side to the protagonist, then asks him the question regarding if she should be beautiful by night or by day.

Regardless if the transformative change is her choice or due to an enchantment, there is a similarity in the horrendously descriptive imagery the authors provide for the Loathly Lady in her crone appearance. She herself is on the boundary of looking like a beast, as she is often described as beastly. Whether she has warts, green skin or nails, a balding head, beak-like nose, or hoarse guttural voice, the hag-like appearance stretches many different grotesque features. As a hag, the Loathly Lady's common characteristic is her hooked or "a nose crooked and hollow" ("Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon," 511), a feature often representative of magical witches drawing readers into the realm of fantasy.

The hag or crone appearance goes against female beauty ideals, which, according to Jan Ziolkowski's article "Avatars of Ugliness in Medieval Literature," allowed authors to liberate themselves and their audience from the "oppressive weight of beauty" and instead let them "indulge in the medieval passion for the outlandish" (5), whereas beauty limited writers, trampling individual expressions of beauty.

The Loathly Lady's transformation from hideous to beautiful brings drastic changes. When it comes to her beauty she can resemble anything from a goddess to an elfin queen, with pure features, blond or brown hair, or a crown upon her head. In "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" her transformed beautiful state is described as "Plump and queenly forearms she had: fingers long and slender: calves straight and beautifully colored" (511) and the description goes on to describe the changed appearance of her clothing which is now regal and queenly, "Two blunt shoes and white bronze between her little, soft-white feet and the ground. A costly full-purple mantle she wore, with a brooch of bright silver in the clothing of the mantle" (512). A comparison to the hideousness of the hag to the exquisite beauty of her counterpart shows the importance of the character's transformation. The physical appearance of the hag and lady vary, along with the emotional values associated with the appearance. Indeed, when the Loathly Lady obtains her sovereignty, she seems to become more human: "loathly women become beautiful, they revert to their conventional roles, seemingly losing their power" (Passmore, and Carter xix). While most tales do not have an afterward regarding the relationship between the Loathly Lady and her prey, “The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell” and “Tale of Florent” do share her life after transformation. Both

these instances illustrate added human qualities with her changed appearance to the beautiful, stereotypical lady:

> Change becomes an anomaly wrought by wickedness, while the female figure is split into two clearly distinguished types: the wicked type is willful, shrewish, prone to wantonness, unpredictable and contradictory, false, whereas the 'good' type is submissive, steadfast, unwilling to change. (Aquirre 278)

The Loathly Lady has two polar opposite appearances. The first is seen in her appearance as a hideous woman versus as a beautiful woman. The second is the aspect of her age, her appearance as an old woman versus as a young woman. These contrary appearances show a separation of values in beauty and age from which the male protagonists first evaluate the Loathly Lady in their first encounter. The men dismiss her as a person and as an aid to their quest purely because of how she looks. The protagonists' view of women shows why the Loathly Lady must teach them the value of sovereignty, and that no matter beauty or age range of a woman, she deserves sovereignty and respect.

The final characteristic representing the trickster archetype is that of the lewd bricoleur. The Loathly Lady has power, and she chooses to use that power through a concentration on sexuality as a lewd bricoleur. Doty and Hynes define bricoleur as a "tinker or fix-it person, noted for his ingenuity in transforming anything at hand in order to form a creative solution . . . the trickster manifests a distinctive transformative ability" (42). This is obvious in the Loathly Lady who creates opportunities when available, including transformation or lewd actions. This tricky lusty lady takes advantage of the situation to force handsome youths to fulfill her desires, which come with a lesson in

sovereignty. The two lewd desires/requests of the loathly lady are a kiss, "provided there come from thee one kiss on my cheek" (Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon, 511), or consummation of the relationship as seen in "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "Tale of Florent," "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." When it comes to her lewdness you would be hard pressed to find a Loathly Lady archetype not interested in getting physical. Sprunger notes that, "In most tales, the loathly lady offers to grant a wish to the hero, but only on the condition that he will have some sort of sexual contact with her, the request ranging from a kiss to a consummated marriage" (206). To add another archetype to the melting pot of qualities, the Loathly Lady is also a seductress in how she lures and uses men.

Sex is the next step for the Loathly Lady and her lewd tendencies. Marriage is often a demand and with that the expectation of consummation. In *Seductress: Women Who Ravished the World and Their Lost Art of Love*, Betsy Prioleau discusses the role of seductresses in real life and literature, not necessarily as negative characters, but as aids to troubled men, "Yet paradoxically seductresses are often the best thing to happen to a man. Contrary to fable, they're usually *femmes vitales* who put air in a man's tank, conferring growth, creativity, happiness, and authentic masculinity" (2). This is seen in the tales when the protagonist experiences some sort of growth of character and becomes better off than before meeting the lady. The lewd quality of the Loathly Lady does relate to the role of teaching a lesson on sovereignty. Prioleau's research on the art of seduction and seductresses, relates the Loathly Lady in her teaching of a lesson and repeated concentration on feminine sexual sovereignty, "She's a threshold role model who can reinstate feminine sexual sovereignty and holistic happiness and remap the future. And

she's not the least as we—or the Internet—imagine" (X). This argument connects the seductress and the Loathly Lady to the trickster characteristic of ambiguity and as a threshold, or boundary breaker who re-maps the future.

The libidinous trait of the Loathly Lady fits well with the trickster archetype because she is able to unite the deceptive attribute of the trickster with its lewdness through seduction. Kimberly Nance looks at the theme of 'Seduction or Deceptive Marriage':

> In Stith Thompson's taxonomy, seduction or deceptive marriage is a subcategory of the larger theme of Deception and he remarks that 'there has always been a greater interest in deception connected with sex conduct than any other . . . include the seduction of mortals by gods (K1301), seduction through disguise or substitution (K1310), tricking the object of the seduction into entering a room . . . . (283)

Deception is an essential tool for the Loathly Lady when seducing men: "The French call them *belles laides*, homely women whose charisma, fire, and charms of character transform them into beautiful sirens" (Prioleau 50). *Belles Laides*, also known as beautiful ugly women, women who are physically ugly but with a charismatic personality, use their charming character to make themselves more beautiful in the eyes of men. Inner beauty rather than outer beauty is an important trait to a woman who can't entice men with her physical appearance. While she may be a truly generous person with a lovely character, she is still deceptive in the fact that her beautiful personality does not match her ugly exterior. For the Loathly Lady, without her well-meaning personality (finding a rightful ruler or helping with character growth) and deceptive ability, she

would not be able to entrap the protagonist so easily with her hag look. Yet, she seduces them, not with her looks at first, but with the promise of continued living, a sip of water from a well, or other such reward. The physical seduction begins when she transforms into a physical beauty. In most cases the transformation happens in the bedroom either before or after having relations with the protagonist. Jane Garry discusses an area of seduction called "The Transformative Bedtrick" in *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature*: “You go to bed with someone you think you know, and when you wake up you discover that it was someone else—another man or another woman, or a man instead of a woman, or a woman instead of a man, or a god[dess]” (129). In four of the five original tales (excluding “The Sons of Eochaid Mugmuden”) the Loathly Lady transforms into her beautiful state after tricking him into bed and deceiving him with her looks, alerting the protagonist that he is with no mere ugly hag.

Chapter 5: An Archaic Lady

As discussed in the beginning of this paper, there are at least four characteristics that constitute the basic pattern of the Loathly Lady archetype: nobility, forest settings, transformation, and teaching a lesson. Within these qualities, and in addition to them, are the four trickster archetype characteristics: ambiguous, deceiver, transformation, and lewdness. This chapter will introduce six of the original Loathly Lady tales chronologically: "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki," "Tale of Florent," "The Wife of Bath's Tale," "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," focusing on the four unwavering characteristics in the Loathly Lady's basic pattern, while alluding to the trickster's archetypal characteristics that are present in many of her tales.

"The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki"

The "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki" introduces the archetype of the Loathly Lady when she enters the bed chamber of King Helgi. She taps on the King's bedroom door asking for a place to stay for the night. When the King, out of kindness, says she may sleep in his bed she gets under the covers and transforms into an elfish queen. Once the King sees her beauty, "What he saw was a sleeping woman so fair that he thought he had never seen anyone so beautiful"(58), he refuses to let her go until she shows her "gratitude." She says that it is his decision to make, and they spend the night together. In the morning she informs him that he will have a child, and he must show up at the same place the following year to take responsibility for their daughter. Instead, King Helgi forgets and brings the downfall of his kin.

The forest setting is not found directly in the section involving the Loathly Lady, but it is an important section for King Helgi and the saga. At the beginning of the saga, Helgi and his brother Hroar find sanctuary on the forest island Vifil. Because "the island was half-covered in forest" (Hrolf Kraki 2) Helgi was able to survive and meet the Loathly Lady. This Loathly Lady has direct involvement with the King, the highest form of nobility in a land. The importance of her appearing to the king is in the fact that she even manages to get into his bedchamber, when there are surely easier rooms to get to and “lesser” citizens to bunk with for the night. But being the Loathly Lady and due to her important role with royalty, she finds the king. The importance of nobility in this tale is unique compared to the others as there is a child produced between the king and Loathly Lady after her transformation and their union that night. When the ugly hag transforms in "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki" she opens the doorway to fantasy. Not only does she transform into a beautiful woman, it is also discovered that she is an elf queen, "Skuld's mother was an elfin woman"(59). After her transformation, King Helgi learns that the elf queen was enchanted: "You have released me from a terrible bondage, which was my stepmother's curse. I have visited many kings, but none of them accepted me, because of my looks" (58). In "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki" it occurs that the Loathly Lady did not choose to be a hag, but was forced into it.

The trickster characteristic of being an anomalous boundary breaker is elaborate in “The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki,” as it provides one of the best examples of the transformation opening a doorway to the supernatural. This is shown in two distinct ways, firstly by the magical being that is the Loathly Lady as mentioned above, and secondly by the child they produce. The union of the elf queen and human king produce a

daughter, Skuld, who becomes a sorceress with highly magical abilities. She is the only example of the Loathly Lady having any children. Skuld becomes a doorway, liminal space, between reality and fantasy, the mixing of a human and magical being.

The lesson provided by this Loathly Lady version is more complicated than the other tales mentioned. The saga is a destructive narrative telling of the tragedy and courage of Denmark's royalty when a curse is placed on King Helgi's kinsmen by the Loathly Lady. She places this curse on King Helgi when he abandons his daughter Skuld, breaking his promise to the Loathly Lady. She shows her gratitude to him for releasing her from the curse by rewarding him with his life, "your kinsmen will pay for your ignoring my request. Nevertheless, you will reap a benefit from having released me form the curse" ("Hrolf Kraki" 23), while his kinsmen pay the price. By the end of the saga, King Helgi loses his son Hrolf Kraki, Skuld's brother, when his daughter kills him. He doesn't heed the warning of the Loathly Lady, and though he made the right choice when they first met by letting her "sleep" in his room, he fails the second test of accepting the daughter and taking responsibility for his actions. This results in his punishment, the death of his son, a lesson learned in controlling one's lust and taking responsibility for the products of it.

"Tale of Florent"

The "Tale of Florent" begins when the knight Florent accidentally kills Branchus, heir to a castle. He is then taken captive and given the ultimatum to find the answer that plagues the race of man: ""What alle wommen most desire" (Gower 1480), or to fail and be killed. The knight ventures out into the world to find the answer. After many failed answers, he knight stumbles across a hag beneath a tree in the forest he is traveling

through. She offers him the answer he seeks, but only if he swears to marry her. After he agrees she tells him that what women most desire is "That alle wommen lievest wolde / Be soverein of mannes love: / For what womman is so above, / Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille" (Gower 1608-12). Finding that her answer is correct, he returns to her in the forest and they marry. In the evening the knight is compelled by the hag to consummate the marriage. While it is unclear if the act of consummation has occurred or not, the fact that he is even trying to be with her is enough for the hag and she transforms into the beautiful young maiden. In this state she asks him a question, "Wher he wol have hire such on nyht, / Or elles upon daies lyht, / For he schal noght have bothe tuo" (Gower 1810-1813). He tells her that it is a decision that she can make, which is the correct answer, giving his woman sovereignty. As his reward she remains beautiful for life "For of this word that ye now sein, / That ye have mad me sovereign / Mi beaute, which that I now have, / Til I be take into my grave; / Bot nyht and day as I am now" (Gower 1833-39), a fitting reward for a worthy knight.

Nobility stands out when Florent accidentally kills the king's heir, starting his journey to encounter the Loathly Lady. The knight is nephew to the King "He was Nevoeu to themperour" (Gower 1409). As a nephew to the king, and with little background on his family and any potential cousins, the knight has a chance of becoming royalty. Again, it is in a forest that protagonist and Loathly Lady meet for the first time. The forest is also where he must return to claim her, signaling their future life together as husband and wife.

The "Tale of Florent" provides one of the most visually appeasing transformation scenes. When the ugly hag transforms, "The chambre was al full of lyhte" (Gower 1786)

and she shifts from "the lothlieste what / That evere man caste on his yhe" (Gower 1676-77), into the beautiful maiden. Similar to "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki" the hag's transformation enlightens the fact that she was enchanted, transformed, by her evil stepmother. She did not transform on purpose, but was conditioned to when she could find someone to love her and give her sovereignty, as the knight does when letting her decide when to be beautiful.

Through transformation she is able to teach a lesson to the knight, the classical point of the importance of sovereignty. In order to atone for his crime, though accidental, the knight is sent on a quest in which he must find the answer of what women desire most. His promise to the Loathly Lady and their bound marriage comes with a second question asked by the loathly woman herself, and his correct response of letting her choose how/when to look beautiful proves that he has come away more knowledgeable in the use and sharing of sovereignty.

"The Wife of Bath's Tale"

"The Wife of Bath's Tale" is one of the medieval King Arthur based Loathly Lady tales seen also in "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." This grouping of tales contains well-known, popular characters from medieval legend surrounding the tales of Camelot, King Arthur, and his knights. In these tales we find allusions to: King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, Sir Gawain, and Morgana, all nobility, if not royalty. In "The Wife of Bath's Tale" the highest source of human female power in the land is Queen Guinevere; it comes as no surprise she is the one to ask the knight "What is it women most desire?" as a ruler and woman she fits in perfectly with the image of sovereignty.

Chaucer's tale, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," begins when a knight of King Arthur's court commits the crime of raping a maiden. His punishment, provided by Queen Guinevere, is to find the answer to the question "What is it women most desire?" He must correctly answer this question, or else he is sentenced to death. While searching the kingdom and asking every female the question, he comes across the Loathly Lady in the woods. With the promise of marriage, she agrees to give him the answer the queen is looking for, that women desire sovereignty above all else. Holding up to his end of the bargain, they marry, to his utter disgust. The knight is then tested a second time with the following question asked by the Loathly Lady, would he rather she remains old and faithful, or else young and beautiful with the possibility of cheating on him? At this point he hands over the choice to her, making the correct choice by giving her sovereignty. The hag then transforms into a beautiful and faithful woman, his reward for making the right choice.

While searching for the answer to the questions "What is it women most desire" the knight first comes across the Loathly Lady as a hag in the forest "Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf— / A fouler wight ther may no mand devyse." (998-999). A unique aspect of this first encounter is that the knight comes across her right after he comes across a group of women dancing together in a circle who suddenly disappear: "Vanysshed was this daunce, he nyste where" (996). When the girls notice him they disappear in front of his eyes, and he turns to see the hag who has seemingly appeared out of nowhere, sitting on a rock.

The disappearing girls and appearing hag create a mystical quality in the setting. One may consider that due to her setting, mystery, and transformation, the Loathly Lady

is herself an elf, relating to the elf queen also seen in “The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki.” Marshall Leicester makes the argument in his book *The Disenchanted Self: Representing the Subject in the Canterbury Tales* that this hag was from the group of women who were most likely elves based on their looks and the setting, "The four-and-twenty dancing ladies partake of this moment in their connection with the dance of feminine freedom . . . a freedom associated with the elf queen and her 'joly compaignye' at the dawn of time and the beginning to the tale" (147). Viewing the hag as an elfish creature leads deeper into the crossed boundary of fantasy.

Unlike “The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki,” Chaucer's Loathly Lady contains a shape-shifting ability as she transforms by choice. Carter views Chaucer’s use of his shape-shifting lady as a "foregrounding of gender exploits the shapeshifting loathly lady motif as a vehicle for examining the sphere of heterosexual power contestation" (330). Similarly Greene says of Chaucer’s use of transformation, or shape-shifting, "The Celtic archetype in the Wife's Tale, an image of transformation, was transformed by Chaucer so that it contributed to the ongoing arguments throughout the Tales about marriage and the nature of women" (2). A unique trait in “The Wife of Bath’s Tales” is the dishonor of the knight and his horrendous crime of raping a young maiden. Chaucer was creative in using this devastating scenario in a lesson of sovereignty, by having the knight first take away sovereignty from the maiden and forced to learn from his mistake. With the rape that occurs at the beginning of the tale and the knight's forced marriage to the Loathly Lady, the situation has been inverted for the knight. He starts by raping a beautiful young maiden, and now he, the handsome young man, is in a way being raped by the Loathly Lady, in that he is being forced, blackmailed with the answer to what women most desire,

to have relations with her: "The hubris of the knight's act of rape invokes the nemesis by which his own flesh is surrendered to the humiliating role of sex object, obliged to fulfill the 'queynte fantasye' of a wise and powerful old fairy-woman" (Carter 336-337). The knight does not give sovereignty to the maiden that he rapes. This shows a blatant force of male dominance and withholding sovereignty. By the end of the tale this changes when the knight gives sovereignty to the Loathly Lady, proven by her transformation.

One of the roles of the trickster archetype mentioned is to create chaos by reducing chaos, or add disorder to make something whole. This is surely the case for the protagonist in the “The Wife of Bath.” She creates chaos for the knight by making him marry her, and in the end she creates order by establishing he has learned his lesson regarding the rights of women, and the anxiety of losing his life is extinguished. Order has been created when rights have been wronged by the end of the tale. While it is slightly disappointing that the knight gets away without any sort of punishment for his crime, in fact he is rewarded with a beautiful and faithful wife, the tale provides a "step toward demonstrating thesis that sovereignty should rest with the wife, for rape necessitates domination, and certainly it is a crime against female sovereignty" (Roppolo 268). The knight is indebted to the Loathly Lady, because he can now keep his life and has a future with a beautiful, faithful wife.

"The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell"

In "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," Dame Ragnell is the sister to Sir Gromer Somer Joure, King Arthur’s nemesis. While hunting one day, Arthur runs into Gromer who instead of killing him in a cowardly way (Arthur is unarmed), gives Arthur a riddle to solve. In order to keep his life he must find the correct answer within 12 months.

The riddle Arthur must find the answer to is "to shew me [Gromer] at thy coming what women love best in field and town" ("Wedding of Sir Gawain" 5).When King Arthur meets the Loathly Lady she offers him the answer he seeks, but with the promise of marriage to the handsome, young knight Sir Gawain. Sir Gawain agrees and Arthur's life is saved when he gives the correct answer provided by the Loathly Lady. Women most desire:

> …above all manner of things, to have the sovereignty of all, both high and low, without deceit; for where we have sovereignty all is ours, tho a knight be never so fierce and ever win the mastery: our desire is for the manliest—to have the sovereignty of such a lord, such is our craft and contrivance. ("Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" 15)

Sovereignty is the answer sought. Her continued details on women desiring the manliest man explains her specific request that it be Sir Gawain that she marry. Having never met, his renown and chivalry are well-known to Dame Ragnell. Sir Gawain then marries Dame Ragnell who turns out to be the sister of Sir Gromer, and had previously been enchanted by necromancy performed by her stepmother—a familiar plot.

Again we are provided a King Arthur tale involving nobility. Sir Gawain is princely not just in his chivalrous character, but as a relative of King Arthur and potential future ruler, now deemed worthy by the Loathly Lady. While riding into Inglewood (a forest) King Arthur first notices the ugly crone by the path. Here they bargain and come to an agreement, Sir Gawain for Arthur's life—the question that he seeks. After discovering that it is in fact the correct answer, Sir Arthur returns to the forest path to pick up the hag and introduce her to her future husband.

The Loathly Lady/Dame Ragnell is considered a seductress of sorts by Prioleau, as discussed as the fourth trickster characteristic. In "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" the Loathly Lady reminds Sir Gawain of his duties to his lord, convincing him of the importance of kissing her, " . . . yet, for Arthur's sake, at least kiss me—I pray you do this at my request . . . " (23). She is very tricky, using Gawain's weakness as a loyal knight to coerce him into kissing her. Gawain replies, "I will do more than kiss, and before God!" (23), implying he will go all the way. This scene serves two influential purposes. Firstly, it shows the lewdness of the Loathly Lady, using the name of his liege lord based on the honor and sacrifice she knew he would feel duty bound to, thus leading him into agreeing to kiss her. Secondly, it shows Gawain's character when he goes above and beyond what she asks for, keeping in mind she is still in the form of the crone. The lewdness of the Loathly Lady is specifically geared towards Gawain:

> She's [she being the belles laides] the Loathly Lady of the folktale that preserved her myth through the ages, the ugly Lady Ragnell, who zeroes in on the handsomest knight, subjects him to character tests, then turns into a nubile beauty when he measures up and grants her sovereignty. (Prioleau 82)

Dame Ragnell knows of Sir Gawain just through his reputation, "I am no evil wight; thou must grant me a knight to wed—his name is Sir Gawain…allow me to be his wife" ("Wedding of Sir Gawain" 10-11), and is determined to marry him and no one else.

Dame Ragnell is able to transform into her normal, beautiful appearance after Sir Gawain is tested and judged worthy by correctly answering her question, "Choose of the one…whether ye will have me fair by night and as foul by day in the sight of all men, or

else have me fair by day and by night one of the foulest wives" ("Wedding of Sir Gawain" 24). Gawain leaves the choice to her, handing her sovereignty to the highest degree, "I put the choice in your hand: even as ye will, I put in your hand; loose me when ye list, for I am bound; I put the choice on you; both body and goods, heart, and every bit is all your own" ("Wedding of Sir Gawain" 24). Not only is Gawain allowing the Loathly Lady control over her appearance, but he hands her complete control over every part of him, "every bit is all your own."

A unique characteristic seen in "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell" is the afterward detailing a happy ending between Gawain and Dame Ragnell, which only otherwise occurs in the sad ending shared in "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki." Gawain and Dame Ragnell lived a joyful five years together, ending only with what is assumed to be her death, "She lived with Sir Gawain but five years; that grieved Gawain all his life…therefore was never woman liefer to him" ("Wedding of Sir Gawain" 29). Even after she had passed away, Gawain could not forget the impact she had on his life and the love he had for her. Gower's ending makes the Loathly Lady more realistic and human; she is an integral part of the tale affecting the characters long after she's gone.

"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"

"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" strays from the path seen in the previous Loathly Lady tales, with a much more complex plot and elusive Loathly Lady, but still deserving of honorable mention. In "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" the importance of nobility is again seen in the figures of Sir Gawain and King Arthur. To protect the honor of King Arthur, Sir Gawain agrees to fight the monstrous Green Knight, and after a tricky challenge, he must travel to find the home of the green beast-man. While searching for

his residence, Sir Gawain stumbles upon a beautiful forested area with a castle nestled in its protective circle. Here in this magical forest, Sir Gawain encounters the Loathly Lady in the character of Morgana, a witch or sorceress in Arthurian lore. When Gawain enters Morgana's lair he walks through a forest suspiciously beautiful and with a magical air around it.

Gawain's first view of the Loathly Lady is set next to the young woman, and though you don't see a transformation it is implied:

> Another lady led her by the left hand
> That was older than she-an ancient, it seemed,
> and held in high honor by all men about.
> But unlike to look upon, those ladies were,
> For if the one was fresh, the other was faded . . . . (223)

In “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” the Loathly Lady is extra deceptive as she never fully reveals that she is the Loathly Lady, and there is no recognized transformation. In the article "Sir Gawain and the Great Goddess" Ruben Miyres concentrates on the different views of the Loathly Lady and the role of women in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." For Miyares, Morgan (or Morgana) portrays the loathly lady by being the old hag and beautiful temptress as seen at the beginning of the tale, "it may not be possible to interpret the female mythology of SGGK . . . We cannot even decide whether the old lady in the castle is Morgan or not, though her presence as a loathly lady, as Wilson suggested, must be a reflection of the hero's fears and taboos about women" (195). If Morgana is indeed the old hag in the beginning of the tale and also the provocative temptress, she is an extra tricky trickster archetype.

Morgana tests Sir Gawain's honesty and chivalry first when he encounters the Green Knight threatening King Arthur and steps in to fight for him. Gawain's journey is due to his honesty and quest to find the Green Knight, knowing that his death will occur with the beheading, “Morgan le Fay, Arthur's half-sister and Gawain's aunt (a figure embodying aspects of both the Loathly Lady and the hostile stepmother); that she had bewitched Bertilak into the monstrous Green Knight in order to test Gawain's courage"(Aquirre 281). She also tests Gawain through the act of seduction, a trickster trait. Morgana tests Gawain by seducing him while she is in the character of the lady of the house, Bertilak's wife. This test also relates to the forest as the seduction of Morgana parallel Bertilak's hunting missions, each prey he kills equaling the harder Morgana fights to get Gawain to fall victim to her advances. Gawain passes Morgana and Bertilak's tests by refusing to commit adultery, and refusing her sexual advances.

In "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," the deceiver trait is present by playing a game. The all important games played between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Sir Gawain and the temptress show how deceitful Morgana is as the Loathly Lady, the game-master, "For Morgan and Bertilak's wife, however, it is all rather a practical joke—a Christmas game" (Miyares 190). She doesn't care about the life and death situation as long as she can deceive Gawain and play with him.

These original tales introduce the archetype of the Loathly Lady, carrying the four characteristics essential to her archetype's basic pattern, along with similarities to the four characteristics of the trickster archetype. Further research will only prove a deeper relationship between the Loathly Lady archetype and the trickster, and show how she grows from the earliest tale to one seen in Middle English. This comparison and

evolution only adds to the deeper understanding of her continued use in the Modern tales, and the Disney ones discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: A Modern Lady

Authors refer to older tales, folk and fairy, because the lessons learned are still vital and viable in modern times. Aspects that the Loathly Lady portrays are, ironically, transformed through the ages. Because of the extensive list of Loathly Lady versions and references, Disney will be the focus as it is most frequently referenced. Disney has several movies adapted from ancient fairy tales and myths that incorporate allusions, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the Loathly Lady archetype. Three tales that exemplify the different uses of the Loathly Lady adapted by Disney are *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Tangled,* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

One reason that changes in the Loathly Lady occur can pertain to the evolution of the audience. The more ancient tales were orally shared by an adult audience, thus the more adult content such as seduction, lewdness, and rape. Needless to say, the degrees of these qualities found in the original tales are not present in Disney movies that use the Loathly Lady. The story line and archetype are adapted to fit an audience of innocent, young children. The tales are not only geared for the juvenile generation, but for girls in particular who are beginning to look at the aspects of beauty, applying makeup, judging others by how they look, rather than a desire over men that pertains more to adult women. Differences exist between the more archaic versions of the Loathly Lady to the modern day interpretations seen in Disney movies. While most the differences are slight and exist within similarities, there are a few major differences in the modern day tales we see. The first is the female protagonist, the lost element of seduction, and the evolution into a purely villainess figure and the eventual (and often hoped for) death of the Loathly Lady herself.

With the change in audience to a concentration on drawing in young children, most often young girls, it makes sense that Disney would change the sex of the protagonist. Instead of a knight or prince, the hero becomes a female princess, keeping with the theme of the protagonist as royalty. By changing the gender of the protagonist, the audiences of girls feel a stronger connection with the main character and are drawn further into the story line. With this gender change to the tale, the Loathly Lady must change in her interaction with the character. One element that is lost due to this is the Loathly Lady's art of seduction.

During the course of evolution the Loathly Lady loses not only the desire to seduce, but the need to. The lesson on handing power over to women, an element within seduction, is no longer necessary. Rather, the Loathly Lady seems frightened of losing her ability to seduce, as the fear of ageing and looking old overpowers any rational thoughts she may have had.

A frightening criminal element appears in the modern day tales. This will be discussed more in the section on the evil stepmother. Along with the stepmother persona, the Loathly Lady gains an evil guise relatable to that of the villain archetype. The Loathly Lady is viewed as being evil, or at the very least mean, when forcing the male protagonist into her affections, but again, by the end of the tale it comes to light that everything was for a purpose and she turns into a women who rewards, gaining favor not only of the hero, but other characters in the tales. Coincidentally, in modern tales she is just viewed as evil and her death is hoped for, and often granted in the end. This death takes away the aspect of her divinity and goddess qualities also associated with the origin tales.

While there are many differences, one can catch references of the Loathly Lady archetype in modern day tales precisely because of the direct similarities that connect her with her more archaic counterpart. The similarities that stay with her through character evolution are: her relationship to royalty, the transformation, the importance of looks and age, and the important lesson learned through her. While these essential characteristics carry on into her modern archetype.

As seen in the earlier tales of the Loathly Lady, the involvement of royalty or nobility is a standard. This is carried into the modern tales as well. Being that most of the tales have become fairytales catering to young imaginations, it makes sense that she still appears in the tales continually interacting with nobility, sometimes being noble herself.

As noted, a vital trait of the Loathly Lady and the trickster archetype is that of transformation. As a necessary quality, it is obviously seen in any of the modern day tales, and like the trickster, the metamorphosis varies from transformation by enchantment or shape-shifting ability. The degree can be anything from a witch with powerful spells altering her physical appearance, to a cloak and hat being thrown together to create the alternate persona, "Relatively minor shape-shifting through disguise may involve nothing more than changing clothes with another" (Hynes 35). Beauty and youth are seen within the transformation, and are important in the eyes of the earlier protagonist who at first believes he is doomed to be physical with a hideous old crone.

Concerning the transformation, a slight change from the original tales to the modern tales is that Loathly Lady is at first introduced as a beautiful woman who then transforms into a hag, whereas the older tales always have the Loathly Lady appearing hideous at first then transforming into a beautiful young lady. This rearrangement of

transformation lends to an even deeper look at the trickster archetype as she must go through two transformations rather than one, transforming into a crone, and then back to her “natural” state.

In the modern tale, looks and age become even more prominent in importance, not for the protagonist, but for the Loathly Lady herself. Rather, it is the Loathly Lady who craves youth and beauty, and the consequences of her actions that teach a lesson. In this sense, the importance of sovereignty evolves from the power men have over women, to the power women have over themselves, or other women. In the earlier tales the Loathly Lady desires, as do the women, sovereignty over her lover. In modern tales such as the Disney ones discussed in this paper, the importance of sovereignty in regards to the land and kingship, is pushed to the side, and instead the importance of youth and beauty are essential to the Loathly Lady. Youth is often associated with beauty. If the modern age has taught us anything, one can be older and still be beautiful.

The more archaic tales incorporating the Loathly Lady still consider beauty and youth important. Beauty and youth are identified in “The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell” when one of the women reply to the question “what women love best in field and town,” with the response "we desire another kind of thing—to be held not old, but fresh and young" (15). Wanting to be viewed as beautiful and young is nothing new. Society today craves the indulgences of transforming human flesh through surgeries into something superior, more beautiful and more youthful looking. Disney includes a lesson on outer versus inner beauty to combat the struggles young girls go through. Whether it is criticism on Barbie dolls or America’s Next Top Model, images are constantly being scrutinized on what beauty is and why or if it’s important.

A lesson is always taught by the Loathly Lady to the protagonist. Without her in the tale, there would be no conflict, no story, no lesson learned. Though she still teaches a lesson, the lesson being learned is different. While this fact does not change, the lesson taught is altered. The modern Loathly Lady moves away from the importance of sovereignty in the idea of having power over men, to wanting the power over women by existing as the most beautiful in all the land. The importance of beauty is an important lesson for the young female protagonist in the tale. The Loathly Lady creates a situation and overwhelms with her need to be young and beautiful.

By the end of the tale this lesson teaches her through her mistaken desires that physical beauty and youth are not what counts; it is what's inside that counts. The lesson and the consequences of her actions relate directly to the Loathly Lady, whereas in older tales it was the hero who received the punishments. The first lesson is seen in the earlier, more archaic legends, in which a lesson in sovereignty is being taught to a knight or noble personage. The second is seen in the modern interpretations where the Loathly Lady teaches about the value of true beauty. It's what is on the inside that counts. The Loathly Lady is used to teach a lesson on how not to act; she exemplifies negative values of beauty and ageing. Loathly Lady tales are valuable not just for entertainment values, but essential as moral tales with the trickster Loathly Lady exemplifying what not to do, "so the trickster's punishment reminds the listener of the consequences of breaking taboos" (Clinton 474). In the modern tales the Loathly Lady is usually punished, killed, at the end of the tale, to add emphasis to the negative actions of those seeking beauty and youth.

The Loathly Lady as the stepmother is seen in many old tales and is prominent in modern retellings, specifically when looking at *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This brings in yet another archetype, the evil stepmother. Aquirre notes that the stepmother's goal is to oppose the heroine, once again showing how the Loathly Lady has evolved into a villain who not only opposes the protagonist but wishes the worst for them:

> In traditional tales, the wicked mother or stepmother opposes the hero's or heroine's fulfillment. She keeps Cinderella covered in rags, thus hiding her true beauty and preventing her from living out her destiny; she tries to kill Snow-White and succeeds in keeping her in a state of suspended life, as she does with Sleeping Beauty. (277)

This aspect is very different from the Loathly Lady in archaic tales who opposes the hero, but in the end wants them to become a better person…not a dead person. Aquirre goes on to comment that the hostile stepmother is a "projection" of the Loathly Lady, used to express the hostile nature lurking within her (277).

While the original figure of the Loathly Lady is wicked enough, adding on the archetype of the stepmother, an evil one, adds much more dimension to the evolution of her character. The original tales that incorporate an evil stepmother have her as a completely different character than the Loathly Lady, whereas in the modern versions she is played by the evil stepmother. More research would need to be done to trace the reasoning for this character evolution, but one can infer it has to do with the change in audience, from adults to children, children who are provided frightening characters to learn what not to do or how to act. Three traditional tales that incorporate an evil stepmother are "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki," "Tale of Florent," and "The Wedding of

Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell." There are no details on why the Loathly Lady is enchanted by her stepmother in "The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki," or "The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell." One can assume it is simply out of spite as is seen in the stepmother figure. Similarly, "In the Tale of Florent**"** the stepmother is also to blame for the enchantment on the Loathly Lady: "That my Stepmoder for an hate, / Which toward me sche hath begonne, / Forschop me, til I hadde wonne / The love and sovereinete" (Gower 1844-47). The stepmother in these tales acts as the antagonist to the Loathly Lady, who has been transformed against her will. The evil stepmother has hate for the lady and the magic to change her. This early version of the stepmother in archaic Loathly Lady tales foreshadows the jealousy and rage that the Loathly Lady gains in her evolved archetype. In modern tales she is not affected by the stepmother; she is the stepmother.

Modern tales further the role of the stepmother by firstly making the Loathly Lady the stepmother to the protagonist. This is most exemplified in Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The stepmother of Snow White becomes spiteful because what she desires most in the world is not sovereignty over men, but beauty over women, "The story, a morality, perhaps, on the spitefulness of which beauty queens are capable" (Opie 227). The French term for stepmother is belle-*mere*, or "beautiful mother" (Byrne and McQuillan 61). This attractive stepmother disturbs the protagonists of Disney's movies, and becomes an exile of the tale, much like the outcast trickster. Likewise, Disney's *Tangled* provides a Loathly Lady in the form of a guardian carrying stepmother qualities.

Continuing the tradition of taking a great tale and making changes to adapt it for a different audience, Disney does this through its popular modern day fairy-tales. Three Disney movies that contain the archetype of the Loathly Lady, and show the above

mentioned differentiated characteristics of her evolution from the original tales to current times, are best illustrated through the following fairy tales: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Tangled*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Each of these adaptations contains similarities and differences evolved from the origin of the Loathly Lady.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

The most clearly distinguished modern archetype of the Loathly Lady is found within the vain, evil stepmother-queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, after the king dies the stepmother is left the kingdom and the young princess to take care of. Snow White soon grows into a lovely young woman as wished for by her birthmother. In order to stay the "fairest of them all," the loathly queen first tries to have Snow White murdered by a huntsman, who instead falls victim to her innocence and lets her go. Snow White seeks refuge in a forest, which at first attacks her in a nightmarish state, until she comes across a cottage and makes friends with the seven dwarfs. The Queen discovers her hideout and successfully tricks Snow White into eating a bite of an apple, and Snow White is placed in a deep sleep, a sleep that can only be broken with true love's kiss. Luckily for Snow White, this is a Disney movie and the prince comes along quickly to awaken her. Meanwhile, the Queen falls to her death while running from the seven dwarfs who want revenge for their princess and friend.

In this tale the four unwavering characteristics are seen. Nobility is easily encountered with the character of Snow White, the protagonist and princess, and in the wicked Queen, who is both the Loathly Lady and ruler of the land. The forest appears at first as the dark forest motif, with evil and nightmarish creatures that are really anthropomorphized trees. Yet, with the help of the animals of the forest, she soon finds

sanctuary in its hidden depths. This changes when the Queen, transformed into the ugly hag, discovers the cabin and entices Snow White to her sleeping coma. The forest setting acts both as a means of escape and a way to get caught. As seen in the older tales, the Loathly Lady (at least in her hag state) is first encountered in the forest.

The transformation of the Queen is unique as a Loathly Lady tale. She starts off beautiful in the tale— “fairest in all the land”— as declared by the magic mirror at her disposal, though she soon finds that she is no longer the fairest. Because of her narcissism, the Queen must devise a trick to kill Snow White and once again be the most beautiful woman in the kingdom. The Queen transforms herself into the opposite of what she considers herself, an ugly old hag (once again showing her narcissism), in order to trick Snow White into taking the apple from someone completely different from her stepmother, the woman trying to take her life. As a sorceress, the Queen is able to transform after drinking a magic potion that makes her shorter, hunched, adds wrinkles, scraggily hair, a long bulbous nose, and of course a couple of moles. This witch-like appearance contains common features attributed to the hag version of the Loathly Lady, "the queen disguised as a peddler woman, enter the dwarfs' dwelling" (Bettelheim 211). Once her mission is complete and Snow White falls into a deep sleep, the Queen transforms back into her beautiful form, once again the most beautiful in all the land. The transformation in this tale is essential as it leads to Snow White finding her true love, the prince, and ultimately living happily-ever-after. Because of the affects of the transformation, both the protagonist, Snow White, and the antagonist, the Queen/Loathly Lady, learn two very different lessons.

From this experience Snow White learns the age old warning, do not take candy/apples from strangers, and do not be too trusting. Snow White is repeatedly warned by the dwarfs watching out for her that the Queen wants her dead and is will trick her to her death. However, she doesn't want to offend the "kind" old woman offering the delicious treat. She becomes a victim to the trickery. The Queen will go through whichever means necessary to deceive the naïve princess. For the mischievous, evil Queen, a lesson is narcissism and vanity is taught.

In the original tales, the question "What do Women Most Desire?" is asked. If the Queen were to be asked this, her response would not be to have sovereignty over men, but rather sovereignty over women, the power of being the most beautiful. She shows this when she transforms the original question into, "Magic mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?" (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) which she asks her magic mirror, with the intended response of, "Why you are my queen." The day Snow White comes of age the Queen finds that the mirror no longer counts her as the most beautiful. Rather, the mirror shows Snow White, "A lovely maid I see. Rags cannot hide her gentle grace. Alas, she is more fair then thee" *(Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). This change in power is the day the Queen loses her superiority, thus inspiring her evil intentions towards Snow White, "The stepmother's narcissism is demonstrated by her seeking reassurance about her beauty from the magic mirror long before Snow White's beauty eclipses hers" (Bettelheim 202). Bettelheim examines the function of this competition of looks: "The central motif of 'Snow White' is the pubertal girl's surpassing in every way the evil stepmother who, out of jealousy**,** denies her an independent existence—symbolically represented by the stepmother's trying to see Snow White destroyed" (Bettelheim 16).

When she begins to feel threatened by Snow White's beauty, she acts on her jealousy with the belief that the only way to get rid of the threat and feeling is to eliminate Snow White. The lesson learned from the evil stepmother, Loathly Lady, is best summed up by Bettelheim: "But before the 'happy' life can begin, the evil and destructive aspects of our personality must be brought under our control" (214).

The lewd, seductive aspect associated with the trickster archetype is seen to some degree in this tale, though altered to a level that would fit a younger audience. The Loathly Lady doesn't demand a kiss or marriage between herself and another character in the tale, but she does make it a necessity for the protagonist. Why would the Queen use a spell that requires true love's kiss to break the spell? Isn't it much easier to just have Snow White killed as she tried in the beginning? Because the Queen is the Loathly Lady archetype, and because she carries trickster characteristics, it comes as no surprise that a kiss is essential to the tale. Along with the kiss, the Loathly Lady's seduction can also relate to the use of the apple as the means-to-an-end:

> In many myths as well as fairy tales, the apple stands for love and sex, in both its benevolent and its dangerous aspect. An apple given to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, showing she was preferred to chaste goddesses, led to the Trojan War. It was the Biblical apple with which man was seduced to forswear his innocence in order to gain knowledge and sexuality. (Bettelheim 213)

The innocent audience primarily watching Disney movies cannot (and should not) be victim to the true lewdness of the Loathly Lady as is seen in the original tales and bedroom scenes. Instead, she takes a much subtler approach to physicality or else

symbolizes it in something such as an apple with deeper meaning than a young audience would know. The other change of indecency seen in the original tales is the switch of kissing between the prince and much older woman, instead to a kiss between the prince and adequately aged princess who seemingly fall in love together at the beginning of the tale, creating a happy ending with their kiss.

There are several different versions and adaptations arising from the original German fairy tale “Snow White,” first popularized by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. The Loathly Lady's death in "Snow White" is one of the few (if only) cases where the Loathly Lady is killed. In the Brothers Grimm version, considered the original tale, the vain destructive queen, or Loathly Lady, is forced to wear red-hot iron shoes and dance until she dies. This punishment makes it clear she is the villain and antagonist, and humanizes her at the same time. An in-depth look at Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the Queen’s evolution from the original Brothers Grimm fairy tale would be a beneficial statement to the archetype of the Loathly Lady.

Tangled

The most recent Loathly Lady allusion occurs in Disney’s 2010 Disney Princess movie, *Tangled*, which is loosely based on the German fairy tale, “Rapunzel.” In the Disney version, Mother Gothel, an enchantress and Loathly Lady, discovers a flower with properties to keep someone young for eternity. Before she has time to use it, it is given to the Queen who is in need of healing, and its magical properties are transferred to the baby girl, Rapunzel, inside of her. Due to this, Rapunzel is born with otherworldly beautiful gold hair and when sang to and touched keeps a person young. When the baby is born Mother Gothel steals her from the castle and squirrels her away in a forest tower,

raising her as her own daughter. Rapunzel is completely isolated from the world outside the tower and forests, until Flynn Rider appears and helps her leave her prison walls. They have many adventures in the outside world, but are followed by Mother Gothel who has slowly been transforming into her hag state; her true age begins to show, never intending to let Rapunzel leave her side. With Rapunzel back safely in the tower Mother Gothel gets her youth back, until Rapunzel is rescued by Flynn, who cuts off her hair, breaking its magical quality. With the loss of the spell, Mother Gothel completely reverts to her true form, which has now become a skeletal remain of an archaic woman, who then turns to dust. The tale ends happily, of course, when Rapunzel meets with her true parents, the King and Queen, and she and Flynn are married to become the future royalty of the kingdom.

In the tale, Gothel uses the forest setting to hide the existence of Rapunzel in fear of losing the result of her beauty. The hideout is really a forest within a forest, with a doorway hidden behind ferns and rocks making it almost impossible to find or reach. The first meeting with the Loathly Lady, Gothel in her hag state, is when she is searching the outskirts of the forest for the magical flower, which itself is part of the forest. The forest becomes the prison for the protagonist as she cannot leave the sheltered area, and also because it produced the very flower/magical power that makes her imprisonment a necessity.

The transformative aspect of the Loathly Lady in *Tangled* appears when the first view of Gothel is in the forest as an extremely old, hunched and wrinkled woman. She transforms once she has Rapunzel, and is able to keep the look of youth as long as she is within her clutches. More so than a desire for beauty (as seen in the evil Queen in Snow

White and the Seven Dwarfs), Gothel desires youth and living for as long as possible, a quality not easily achieved. Her need for youth and longevity makes her seem all that more mortal. Being a goddess, often seen in the original tales, does not always evolve into the modern tales with the Loathly Lady. By appearing to Rapunzel as a younger woman (Rapunzel was too young to realize that before touching her hair, Gothel was a much older woman) Gothel is able to deceive her into making her think she is her real daughter. This trickster characteristic of deception is used several times throughout the movie by Gothel in order to keep Rapunzel in line and wanting to return home to her "mother."

The lesson taught by the Loathly Lady in the character of Gothel is the importance of honesty and living your life. Rapunzel wants to escape from her tower prison and experience the world while she can. She wants to live life to the fullest. Gothel just wants to live. Gothel lives a life continually watching and being aware of her surroundings for fear of someone finding out about Rapunzel, constantly worrying. Gothel herself is the life that is trapped in a prison, a prison of fear of death. Through the Loathly Lady archetype a lesson is taught with regards to being honest. Gothel lies her way to a long life through dishonesty and the criminal act of kidnapping a child. These become the end of her when Rapunzel and Flynn discover the truth, and any sympathy for the Loathly Lady is gone when Flynn cuts Rapunzel's hair and ends Gothel's life.

Beauty and the Beast

Disney's 1991 adaptation of "Beauty and the Beast" from Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont's fairy tale *La Belle et la Bete* makes several additions to the story line, one of which adds the archetype, the Loathly Lady. The opening scene of the movie zooms in

through a forest setting to a beautiful castle and through the narrator and stained glass images, describes a prince's unwise, and selfish actions, and the punishment provided by the Loathly Lady:

> One winter's night, an old beggar woman came to the castle and offered him [the prince] a single rose in return for shelter from the bitter cold. Repulsed by her haggard appearance, the prince sneered at the gift and turned the old woman away. But she warned him not to be deceived by appearances and beauty is found within. When he dismissed her again, the old woman's ugliness melted away to reveal a beautiful Enchantress. The prince tried to apologize, but it was too late for she could see that there was no love in his heart. As punishment she transformed him into a hideous beast and placed a powerful spell on the castle and all who lived there. (*Beauty and the Beast,* prologue)

The Enchantress as the Loathly Lady in *Beauty and the Beast* differs from the other two mentioned modern tales in that the Loathly Lady is not a stepmother, the one most affected by her is a prince not princess, nor is she a villain as she helps with the hero's growth instead of having secretly selfish desires behind her actions. Rather, she is more related to Loathly Lady seen in the original tales, because she is an elfin Queen after her transformation and tests the protagonists for his right to rule.

Though not stated in the movie, it can be inferred that the Enchantress, Loathly Lady, is of nobility due to the gold crown that appears upon her head. One of the protagonists, the prince, is also introduced as royalty. The main setting of the castle in the woods is a large give away to the importance of nobility, the lesson he learns through the

Loathly Lady who tests his right to rule. As with the forest setting in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the forest first appears dark and unwelcoming when the other protagonist, Belle, arrives while seeking her father. She believes she has found sanctuary at the castle, until she discovers the Beast. Not only the Beast, but the forest also keeps her from escaping with wolves guarding the forest border.

The transformation found in the opening of *Beauty and the Beast* is one of the most obvious examples of the Loathly Lady's transformation from her haggish appearance into the beautiful Enchantress, partially due to the visual affects provided as a movie, but also due to her quick turn around and test. The entire scene actually containing the Loathly Lady, her transformation, the (failed) test, and the prince's punishment occurs in less than 3 minutes of the 91 minute movie. Unlike what is found in the original tales, the prince makes the wrong choice (in this case not about sovereignty, but of where true beauty and kindness lie), after failing in the eyes of the Enchantress. In denying the hag because he is too princely to accept something as simple as a rose, the prince proves he has a lot to learn. Because of his beastly personality, he is enchanted by the Enchantress into a form that resembles his inner-self— a beast. This explains why the Loathly Lady transforms into a beautiful woman, because her inner-self is not evil and ugly, but a woman with a purpose of helping teach a worthwhile lesson to a selfish prince. This double transformation, the hag/Enchantress and the prince-to Beast, is unique to *Beauty and the Beast*, in relation to Loathly Lady tales. The only way to transform back into his princely stature is to transform his personality and "If he could learn to love another and earn her love in return by the time the last petal fell, then the

spell would be broken. If not he would be doomed to remain a beast for all time" (*Beauty and the Beast*).

The prince learns a lesson when he is transformed by the Loathly Lady into a beastly appearance to match his beastly personality. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the prince is placed in the same predicament as the Loathly Lady experiences in her hag state— the want and need to be loved regardless of beastly looks. The prince learns this lesson when he too becomes unbearable to look at as an unnatural, beastly figure, even referred to as a monster by the townspeople. For Bettelheim, the great lesson learned in *Beauty and the Beast* is "that a thing must be loved before it is loveable" (Bettelheim 64). In the original tales, it is only when the Loathly Lady is loved (whether through a kiss or actually making love) that she transforms not only her looks, but into a more lovable personality, and similarly occurs with the prince in *Beauty and the Beast*.

Another way to view the reason for the prince's punishment and Loathly Lady's necessity in the tale is discussed by Byrne and McQuillian, relating to the idea of hospitality:

> …a scornful young prince refused hospitality to an old crone, only to discover that she was a beautiful Enchantress who subsequently turned him into a Beast because he put a price on hospitality (only the beautiful people were welcome at his palace). The Prince is 'doomed to remain a beast for all time' unless by his twenty-first birthday he discovers the meaning of true love. (49)

The prince doesn't appreciate the elderly, or those in need. His selfish character radiates from him as he rudely pushes away a loathly older woman in need. In the modern Disney

tale of *Beauty and the Beast*, all aspects encompassing the Loathly Lady archetype are present, with the inclusion of more transformation as a form of enchantment placed upon one of the protagonists.

While these modern Disney tales contain many differences in storylines, characters, and plots, due to the noticeable four basic patterns essential in the Loathly Lady archetype, the evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Gothel in *Tangled* and the Enchantress in *Beauty and the Beast* are loathly ladies exemplifying the qualities found in the archetype.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The research needed to complete an accurate and fully inclusive examination of the Loathly Lady archetype is extensive and worthy of time. The Loathly Lady is difficult to fully comprehend because of her polyvalent characteristics and because she is limited by scholars who view her as nothing more than a sovereign goddess, missing the other influential aspects of her character. She sneaks into tales through deception and transforms the thoughts of characters and readers when she leaves a lesson. Future studies of the Loathly Lady and her trickster characteristics will yield more results both in the relevance of her character and the depth of her archetypal reach.

While she is loathly to behold, it is hard to dismiss her once recognized. Though she is not often the protagonist of the tale and is sometimes the antagonist, the Loathly Lady does a lot of behind the scenes work, and without her involvement in the tale there would be no story, no conflict or plot. She is vital to the tales she appears in. Even if she is only briefly mentioned her impact may be great. The nine tales discussed above are just a small number of tales that contain allusions to the Loathly Lady and her counterpart of the trickster archetype. Without even realizing it, you have most likely encountered some version of the Loathly Lady in your lifetime. The Loathly Lady is easy to miss at first, especially when she is placed next to, in opposition to, popular characters such as the world renowned King Arthur, the courteous and handsome Sir Gawain, or the very first Disney princess, Snow White. This is more so when she is the evil villain and there is a tendency to ignore, not care about her and her destructive ways. Readers want her pushed to the side, killed and dead, so that the prince and princess can live happily ever after.

Consciously or unconsciously, this intriguing and perplexing archetype is still present in the 20th century. Her lessons, whether centered on sovereignty, beauty, or longevity, are warnings and worthy lessons to modern day society. Movies and television exude sexuality and lewdness, infomercials contain the best, most efficient way to lose weight and become stunning, billboards offer surgical processes to alter appearance and attain the "ideal" beauty, novels explore stem cell research and humans quest to live as long as possible. Are these tricks offered by the trickster archetype in man's quest to become youthful, gorgeous, and immortal as the modern Loathly Lady desires?

As many aspects of her lessons, such as the corruption of human beliefs mentioned above and the misguided values of many of the protagonists in the tales are still viable, I decided to test modern society as the Loathly Lady. Intrigued by the archaic culture she first originated from in her role as a goddess of sovereignty, I became curious as to how much the answer could have changed. To dispel my curiosity, on May 12, 2013 I asked both males and females of varying ages on Eastern Washington University's campus, "What is it women most desire?"

This is a question still fearful for men, who when asked the question would think back to how women in movies would answer, and wanted to call or text their girlfriend or wife so they knew the answer they provided me was correctly, as if their life was on the line. The men complied with my request and answered the question. Some responses were materialistic and stereotypical: "Women most desire shopping and talk," and "they [women] like to be appreciated and to receive chocolate," while some offered deep insights into the psyche of a relationship: "Women most desire a maximum of happiness and a minimum of suffering for their loved ones." To my surprise, the women seemed to

take the longest when answering the question. One would expect they would be better prepared to answer the question about women than the men. While most of the men's responses centered on what would make a woman happy, the women's responses centered on how to create a happy relationship. Someone said "Women most desire to love and be loved," "To be with someone who is a team player in a relationship," and "Women most desire to have stability in a relationship and companionship." While these three have a main focus, the content differs. Unsurprisingly, my quest for the answer to "What women most desire" ran into the same problem of the protagonist in the Loathly Lady tales, I did not get one similar answer.

If I was to encounter the Loathly Lady on campus sitting on a bench, of course under a tree, set off from the rest of the campus crowd, I believe that her response would not relate to sovereignty as she does in the traditional tales. Rather, as a theme in modern Disney tales, and a progressive conflict in modern society, I believe that the Loathly Lady would answer to the yearning of the evil stepmother in Snow White, “What women most desire is youth and beauty.” While the response did not come up during any of my interviews, nor did any of the women in the tales say they desire sovereignty over their lovers, youth and beauty are ever-growing desires in the general female population. The slight evolution of values and continued relevance of character makes the Loathly Lady interesting and addicting.

Steven Walker best describes my feelings of the Loathly Lady in the following quote from *Jung and the Jungians on Myth*, in which he summarizes how Jung feels about a person and their relationship to an archetype:

> Once an archetype has been constellated (activated, stimulated), it becomes numinous (divine or diabolical) for the person under its spell . . . the ideal procedure is to realize the archetype by establishing a relationship with it in which the ego is neither unconscious of the power of the archetype nor overwhelmed by it . . . Jung was fond of saying that it is not possible to realize an archetype without first identifying oneself with it to some degree; otherwise no real contact between ego and archetype can occur. (32)

The Loathly Lady archetype inspires my interest in transformative ability and the overlap of characteristics in the two archetypes. Her uses and references are numerous and diabolical. I have been enchanted by her, much like protagonists she encounters. I can account for identifying myself, to a degree, to the Loathly Lady, which can be a reason for my draw to her, as I think most of humanity can to some level. Just within the trickster characteristics, society can relate to her role. Personalities are often ambiguous. Using deception, users of internet dating sites pretend to be someone else, using descriptions or pictures they consider more physically attractive. People shape-shift all the time through: nose-jobs, breast augmentation, and cultural ceremonies such as the neck-rings. One doesn't need to look far to find sexuality and lewdness plastered in some advertisement or movie. These qualities and more are in the Loathly Lady, and in modern society. A connection with the Loathly Lady and trickster archetype provides a connection with us, and her lessons are lessons that are still viable and vital to this day. Consciously or unconsciously, this intriguing and perplexing archetype is still present in the world and will continue to be in future times to come. Together the Loathly Lady and

trickster archetype interact and form an indestructible Loathly Lady who can be traced from ancient Irish tales to an evolved figure in popular modern Disney films.

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