



Gloria Withalm:

Witches in Television: Magic – Nature – Body

This is the written version of the talk I gave in the series “feminismen diskutieren” on 2 November 2021 at the Depot in Vienna.

Though the talk was in German, Sabine Prokop agreed that I can write it in English as all texts mentioned and quoted are in English. It is a first draft and thus not yet open for citation.

To follow the text more easily in case you haven’t watched the movies/television shows, a pdf-file of the original powerpoint presentation is added at the end.

1. ‘What else is there?’ \ ‘More than you could imagine.’ [TB 1x10] — Supernatural Beings in Movies/Television & Books

Hundreds and hundreds of books, television shows and movies on preter- and supernatural beings, like witches, vampires, d(a)emons, faeries/fay, shifters etc., were published since the 1990s. They have in common that the creatures are living among us here and now and not long ago, or in a fantasy world. A few examples from the past some 25 years would be: *The Craft* of 1996 (the earliest example of a movie about teenage witches); *Charmed* (1998–2005; the first primetime show on three witches = sisters from an old witch family constantly fighting demons in present day San Francisco); the *Harry Potter Saga* in seven books, eight movies plus the prequel spin-off with (as of 2022) three *Fantastic Beasts* films, and on stage (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*); the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003) and the spin-off *Angel* (1999–2004); seven seasons of *True Blood* (2008–2014), based on Charlaine Harris’s series *Sookie Stackhouse Novels/Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001–2013); or her three “Midnight Texas” novels and the two seasons of the television show; Lev Grossman’s three *Magicians* novels (2009–2014) and five seasons of the show (2015–2020); *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–2017) plus the two spin-offs, *The Originals* (2013–2018) and *Legacies* (2018–2022); Jim Butcher’s *Harry Dresden* books, so far seventeen (2000–2020) and one season of a TV show (2007); *Motherland: Fort Salem* (2020—), an alternate history plot; and, finally, four novels by Deborah Harkness, and three seasons of the show *A Discovery of Witches*, based on her *All Souls Trilogy* (2018–2022).

2. “Magic and witchcraft are but two paths that cross in the wood.” [SoN: 327] — Are they different... ?

Some texts clearly distinguish between *magic* and *the craft*. For our benefit, Jim Butcher lets his Harry Dresden describe *magic* at length,

Magic is like a lot of other disciplines that people have recently begun developing, in historic terms. Working with magic is a way of understanding the universe and how it functions. You can approach it from a lot of different angles, applying a lot of different theories and mental models to it. You can get to the same place through a lot of different lines of theory and reasoning, kind of

like really advanced mathematics. There's no truly right or wrong way to get there, either — there are just *different* ways, some more or less useful than others for a given application. And new vistas of thought, theory, and application open up on a pretty regular basis, as the Art develops and expands through the participation of multiple brilliant minds. [HD14 CD: 179]

As to possible differences between magic and witchcraft, I will simplify a bit and neglect the differentiations between the two. No matter whether we talk about sorcery, witchcraft or magic, in almost all texts they incorporate materiality in these supposedly immaterial processes.

2.1. *This book [...] contains the witches 'first spells' [ADoW 1.02] — On some characteristics of magic incantations*

Whenever you think of magic and witchcraft, spells are most probably the first thing that comes into your mind — witches casting or working their spells.

What are these characteristics or traits mentioned above in the chapter title?

In general, a spell consists of (i) an *incantation* (vocalized or silent); (ii) the *intent* to cast a spell; (iii) and the *effect* or result.

Spells seem to have somehow a life of their own; they continue to have a connection to the date when they were first cast (the witch Peter Knox says that 'spells become volatile around the anniversaries of their casting. '[ADoW: 218]); they are part of the tradition, "Spells were passed from generation to generation, within families and among coven members" [SoN: 322]; examining a spell, a skilled witch can read the signature of the person who casted it; a spell is not always permanent, it 'might wear off in a day or two' [ThH4 StoN: 170], a witch can't be sure "how long she had until the spell wore off; not long, she figured" [MidTx1 MC: 262]; however, it may have 'been reinforced over time' as Freya Michaelsen (Riley Voekel) observes [TO 4x02]; and a spell can even be killed, as Sarah explains to Diana when she causes the words of a spell written in the family Grimoire to dissolve into "splatters of ink":

'Now what do we do?' I always thought of spells as living, breathing creations. [...]

'I'm not sure there's much we *can* do.' Sarah took my left hand and flipped it over, revealing a black-stained thumb.

'I got ink on it,' I said.

Sarah shook her head. 'That's not ink. That's the color of death. You killed the spell.'

[TBoL: 145]

Spells can be categorized according to their aim and usage, for instance: healing spells, protection spells, binding spells, tracking or locator spells, cloaking spells... Another differentiation would be as to the type of the spell: charm, jink, hex, curse. Whatever term, specification or categorial system is used, spells often have a corporeal quality as mentioned.

2.1.1. *"Most spells were written in rhyme." [TBoL: 141] — Language and the structure of spells*

Another way to look at spells would be their linguistic traits, starting from the metre and the language used.

Many of the texts (both literary and filmic) use “old” languages for the incantations, preferably Latin. One of the examples would be J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and the films based on the novels (which is remarkable given that their target readers are children or young adults who not necessarily have a knowledge of Latin). Among the spells used we find *Accio*, *Aguamenti*, *Confundo*, *Expecto Patronum*, *Expelliarmus*, *Incendio*, *Lumos*, *Nox*, or *Wingardium Leviosa*, plus the Unforgivable Curses: *Crucio* and *Imperio* (the famous third one, *Avada kedavra*, is, of course, a play on, or variation of, the traditional Abracadabra). Harry Dresden is another wizard who casts his spells in Latin, two of his signature incantations are *Fulsare* and *Fuego*. And the same goes for the half-witch/half-archangel Callie in the “Thorne Hill” series who most of the time chants Latin spells, from single words like *Somnum* to longer formulations: *Invoco elementum aqua*, or *Converte hoc maledictio* [ThH5 CoN: 277] to a chain of spells like *Clausus sonare. Angustos lux. Hoc aspectu in domum custodire ab omni malo* [ThH2 DoN: 268]. Some of the incantations used in *The Vampire Diaries* and its spin-offs *The Originals* and *Legacies* are some sort of Latinesque language with some Greek words in between plus some phantasy words, like *pnesmatos* that according to Julie Plec, the co-creator and writer of the show, is their “witch language” for “spirits”.’ [julieplec, Twitter 2012-06-05]

Callie Martin King uses yet another ancient language, though we never actually read it in the books. Because of her specific descent (her father is the Archangel Michael, and Lucifer is her uncle), she speaks to her dog (or rather disguised hellhound — a wedding present from Lucifer) in *Enochian* (the alleged language of angels, spoken also by Edward Kelley in his conversations with angels for John Dee).

The language used by witches can also come from local idioms, as with the nine New Orleans covens in *The Originals* who chant in *French* or in *Louisiana Creole* respectively: ‘*Ou fé konfyans cherche de l’aide*’ (~ *we who trust you seek help*) is for instance uttered to channel a French Quarter witch in *TO* 4x07; one of the chants in the Harvest ritual in the same episode is ‘*Resisite chonje vos elus*’ (something like *resurrect the memory of your elect*).

Finally, the language witches chose can be their *first language*. The Finnish witch Satu Järvinen (Malin Buska) uses some words of her first language, like ‘*Avata*’ when she tries to get inside Diana after capturing her, to literally “open” her [ADoW 1x06]. Throughout *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Originals*, both Freya and her mother Esther Mikaelson (Alice Evans) who were born in the 10th century CE in Norway use Old Norse in their spells (and, as we will see, runes to write names for their incantations).

Spells need not be verbalized in ancient languages, however. In some of the (English) texts the witches use their own English language to cast a spell, though quite often they’re in verse or even in rhyme.

Within the time frame of my samples, the first to use spells in English was *The Craft* [US: Columbia 1996]. Early in the film, the three girls – Bonnie (Neve Campbell), Nancy (Fairuza Balk) and Rochelle (Rachel True) – are glad to have finally found a fourth girl they presume to be a witch and initiate Sarah (Robin Tunney) into their coven. The words that accompany the ritual of pointing the athame toward another girl’s chest, and then drinking from a goblet in which they dissolved a drop of their blood in water, are not in rhyme, but highly stylized in the call-and-response repeated by each and every girl,

*'It is better that you should rush upon this blade...
than enter the circle with fear in your heart.
How do you enter?'
'With perfect love and perfect trust.'*

Later, while staying at the new apartment of Nancy and her mom, Sarah shows the other three how to work a glamour on her eyes and her hair, and this time her spell is rhymed:

*'This is to feel. This is to be.
Shape and form it for all to see.
By the power of three times three...
as I will it so shall it be.'*

In the film adaptation of Alice Hoffman's *Practical Magic* [US: Warner Bros. 1998], Sally (Sandra Bullock) and her sister Gillian (Nicole Kidman) perform a ritual following their aunts' Grimoire to resurrect Gilli's accidentally killed boyfriend.

*'Black as night,
Erase death from our sight.
White as light,
Mighty Hectate make it right.'*

Willow Rosenberg (Alyson Hannigan), the teenage witch in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, also chants her spells in rhymes, like in "Something Blue" (4x09, 1999) when she's desperate to get control over her life again (however, the spell goes awfully wrong by fulfilling to the word whatever Willow says: Giles gets blind and Buffy wants to marry Spikes):

*'Control the outside, control within. Land and sea, fire and wind.
Out of my passions, a web be spun. From this eve forth, my will be done.'*

Though they sometimes use spells in ancient languages, the incantations of the "Charmed Ones" in the television show *Charmed* (US: WB/CBS 1998–2006) are almost entirely in rhymed English (for a comprehensive list: https://charmed.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_Spells). One example is the spell, Piper (Holly Marie Combs) uses to summon Phoebe's boyfriend Cole (Julian McMahon) in his demon form after Phoebe (Alyssa Milano) turned into a banshee (3x21, "Look Who's Barking", 2001)

*'Magic forces black and white,
reaching out through space and light,
be he far or be he near,
bring us the demon Belthazor here.'*

In at least two episodes, the specific wording of the spells is explicitly mentioned. In "Death Takes a Halliwell" (3x16, 2001) Prue (Shannen Doherty) wants to speak to the Angel of Death and chants a self-reflexive spell:

*'Spirits of air, sand, and sea,
converge to set the Angel free.
In the wind, I send this rhyme.
Bring Death before me, before my time.'*

At the beginning of season 4 (4x01, "Charmed Again, Part 1", 2001), their cop friend Darryl (Dorian Gregory) knocks his colleague out because he threatens to harass and expose the sisters. Penny Halliwell (Jennifer Rhodes), their grandmother "Grams", urges Phoebe to do something, 'Well, what are you waiting for? Just write a spell. Get rid of him.' When the girl doesn't follow right away, she continues,

‘Well, you know what I mean. Dump him somewhere. Anywhere.
With all the witches in this room, we oughta be able to do something with him.
I mean, just start rhyming.’

In the case of Deborah Harkness’s *All Souls* series this particular style of putting spells into words so that another witch can use them too has a special name: *Gramarye*.¹ Although she comes back from 16th century London with her powers fully developed, Diana is nevertheless still not completely satisfied with her skills. Before explaining it to her aunt Sarah (and to us readers), Diana thinks about it for herself,

The London witches had taught me a great deal, but the spells I wrote tended to lie flat on the page, inert on anyone’s tongue but mine. Most spells were written in rhyme, which made them easier to remember as well as livelier. [...]

‘My gramarye sucks,’ I confessed, lowering my voice.

‘If I had the slightest idea what that was, I’d feel sorry for you,’ Sarah said drily.

‘Gramarye is how a weaver puts magic into words. I can construct spells and perform them myself, but without gramarye they won’t work for other witches.’ I pointed to the Bishop grimoire. ‘Hundreds and hundreds of weavers came up with the words for those spells, and other witches passed them down through the ages. Even now the spells retain their power.’ [TBoL: 141]

After creating dream pillows for children, she sits down to write the sleeping spell to accompany them [TBoL: 150]:

I returned to the worktable and dipped my mother’s quill pen into the ink. It smelled of blackberries and walnuts. Thanks to my experience with Elizabethan writing implements, I was able to write out the charm for Sarah’s dream pillows without a single splotch.

*Mirror
Shimmers
Monsters Shake
Banish Nightmares
Until We
Wake*

Less than three weeks later, she used this very spell to help her adoptive (vampire) son Jack to sleep after a blood rage bout, and it works: “My spell had knocked him out cold.” [TBoL: 257]

2.1.2. “What drives magic is [...] sheer will.” [HD14 CD: 356] — On desire and intention in witchcraft

Diana Bishop (played by Teresa Palmer in the TV adaptation) is a witch from an old witch family, dating back at least to the 16th century. However, she renounced her powers after her parents were murdered, presumably by humans. Close to the end of the first book in the series, *A Discovery of Witches*, and the first season respectively, she starts her magical training over again. And she has to begin like most of the teenage witches with lighting a candle, but despite using the correct incantation and gestures, she fails. In the book, aunt Sarah tells her

‘You can’t just say the words, Diana,’ Sarah lectured once she’d extinguished the flames. ‘You have to concentrate. Do it again.’ [ADoW: 503]

In the show, Sarah (Alex Kingston) is even more precise in her corrections,

‘Look, you don’t just say the words, okay? You have to concentrate on what you desire. You feel it. Set your power alight.’ [ADoW 1x07]

This is of course also true for magic. In several passages in Harkness's books as well as in the show Diana quotes a saying of her aunts, 'Magic is desire made real' [ADoW: 180].

Witches who know how to work magic only need to wish for, or desire, something to cause it to happen, as Diana explains to Matthew:

'Much of what qualified as magic was simply desire in action. Witchcraft was different – that took spells and rituals. But magic? A wish, a need, a hunger too strong to be denied – these could turn into deeds when they crossed a witch's mind.' [ADoW: 180]

In a similar way Fiji Cavanaugh describes magic to a friend who isn't a witch:

'Magic is will, my great-aunt always told me. You may have a set of words to say, but you may not.' At first this had been incomprehensible to Fiji, but now she got it. If you had the magic, the will and intent would form the words, or the sounds, to bend the magic to do what you wanted. [MidTx3 NS: 173].

Already in the first book of Charlaine Harris's "Midnight Texas" series Fiji recalled her aunt's explanation of what is needed to work magic – here against the guy who had her kidnapped, handcuffed and gagged with duct tape.

That doesn't mean I'm powerless, she told herself sternly. *I can still work magic without a voice. Or hands. Or the cat.* Great-Aunt Mildred had told her that spoken spells and hand gestures were only tools to the witch, that what mattered most was intent. 'Focus and intent,' she'd said. [MidTx1 MC: 252–253]

It's only when she starts her training with Goody Alsop in 1590's London after time-walking that Diana realizes posing the right question is enough to set her magic in motion.

'Some spells begin with an idea, others with a question. There are many ways to think about what comes next: tying a knot, twisting a rope, even forging a chain like the one that you made between you and your *wearh*,' Goody Alsop said, her tone low and soothing. 'Let the power move through you.' [SoN: 364]

The central role of the intention to cause something can be shown in two quite different examples. Both in the novel and in the adaptation, Emily (Valarie Pettiford), her aunt's partner, helps Diana with her training in timewalking. When Diana fails, Em explains why – once again stressing need and desire, but also the strong feeling to do it.

'Magic's in the heart, not the mind. It's not about words and following a procedure, like witchcraft. You have to feel it.' [ADoW: 553]

'Honey, you need to think about Matthew. You want to be with him. Magic's in the heart not the mind. Try again.' [ADoW 1x08]

After Bellatrix Lestrange (played by Helena Bonham Carter in the film adaptation) has killed Harry's godfather Sirius Black in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry (in the film Daniel Radcliffe) tries the Cruciatus Curse on her, that is the Unforgivable Curse to inflict pain on the victim. When nothing happens, Bellatrix tells him why,

'Never used an Unforgivable Curse before, have you, boy?' she yelled. She had abandoned her baby voice now. 'You need to *mean* them, Potter! You need to really want to cause pain – to enjoy it – righteous anger won't hurt me for long' [HP5 OotP: 891].

In the film *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the explanation is given by the voice of Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) inside Harry's head:

Bellatrix: *[laughing]* I killed Sirius Black! You coming to get me?
Harry: Crucio!

[Bellatrix falls to the ground]

Voldemort: [inside Harry's head]

You've got to mean it Harry. She killed him, she deserves it. You know the spell, Harry.

[Voldemort appears behind Harry]

Voldemort: Do it!

[Harry turns around and is easily disarmed by Voldemort]

Voldemort: So weak! [Yates 2007]

2.1.3. "My spell had knocked him out cold" [TBoL: 257] – On the effects of spells

A witch who casts a spell/works magic wants to cause something, to produce an effect on something or someone. How they use their magic and the extent of the effects depend of course on the narrative universe in question, on the specific witch lore present in a text.

As mentioned above, spells themselves often have a corporeal quality, thus to some extent they are also confined by the laws of the physical world.

[T]echnology doesn't get along with wizards. Put any kind of intricate machine in a wizard's presence, and suddenly everything that might go wrong with the machine does go wrong. And that's when we're not even trying to make it happen. Electronics generally get hit the hardest. [HD14 CD: 216]

Some of the very physical results are described in the Harry Potter saga. Most of the summoned objects seem to emerge from the tip of the wand, like the jet of water produced by *Aguamenti* to put out the fire on Hagrid's hut [HP6 H-BP: 714]. The most common effect is a flash of light shooting from the wand. When in the first book, Harry finally finds his own personal wand, "a stream of red and gold sparks shot from the end like a firework" [HP1 PS: 96]. The light jets come in different colors for different spells: silver (*Rictusempra*), red (*Expelliarmus* or *Stupefy*), and in the case of the Killing Curse *Avada Kedavra* the jet is green.

When Severus Snape and Narcissa Malfoy take the *Unbreakable Vow* in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, they linked their right hands together.

A thin tongue of brilliant flame issued from the wand [of Bellatrix Lestrange, Narcissa's sister who acts as *Bonder*; GWit] and wound its way around their hands like a red-hot wire. [...] A second tongue of flame shot from the wand and interlinked with the first, making a fine glowing chain. [HP6 H-BP: 49]

As soon as Snape finalized the vow, saying 'I will,'

Bellatrix's astounded face glowed red in the blue of a third tongue of flame, which shot from the wand, twisted with the others and bound itself thickly around their clasped hands, like a rope, like a fiery snake. [HP6 H-BP: 50]

The wand can also be used for decoration purposes: "Hermione made purple and gold streamers erupt from the end of her wand and drape themselves artistically over the trees and bushes" (HP7 DH: 135); when the incantation *Orchideous* is spoken, a "bunch of flowers burst from the wand tip" (HP4 GoF: 338); and both in the last book and in the movie, Hermione conjures a wreath of Christmas roses when they visit the grave of Harry's parents in Godric's Hollow [cf. HP7 DH: 365].

However, the tip of the wand can be used also in a less amiable way, as with the *Incarcerous* spell that makes ropes fly "out of midair like thick snakes and wrapping themselves tightly around" the targeted person [HP5 OotP: 826; cf. HP7 DH: 187]. The incantation *Expecto Patronum* within the Potterverse – if you're trained to cast this spell – produces something extremely powerful that erupts from the wand tip:

the *Patronus* of the witch or wizard who conjures it – a shining silvery ‘guardian which acts as a shield’ against a Dementor according to Remus Lupin [HP3 *PoA*: 257]. Everyone has their own unique Patronus in the shape of an animal, in Harry’s case it’s a stag, like his father’s [cf. HP3 *PoA*: 443, 456]. Harry has learned the Patronus Charm in his private lessons with Lupin in the *Prisoner of Azkaban*, and later on he teaches his friends in the *Order of the Phoenix* [cf. HP5 *OotP*: 667–668].

2.2. “The point where the spells collided.” [HP7 *DH*: 814] – On the materiality of magic

After we’ve just discussed the effects of spells, what other facets of magic/witchcraft are there that need to be considered with the focus on materiality? In a first approach, we could distinguish three different aspects:

- the *materiality of the process* as such;
- the *objects used to work magic*,
be it the practitioners’ tools or e.g. the ingredients to make potions; and
- the *materiality of the results*.

These features, however, can’t be analyzed as separate and clearly distinguishable categories, but rather as moments in an ongoing process. Hence, the following examples merely present snapshots on the interconnection of material and sign aspects in the different phases or stages of magic.

The well-known quote in the heading refers to the ultimate duel between Harry Potter and Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* when both in the book and in the film Harry’s (red) signature spell – *Expelliarmus* – is finally stronger and keeps pushing back Voldemort’s (green) killing spell until the most powerful wand (the Elder Wand that once belonged to Dumbledore) is kicked out of Voldemort’s hand:

Harry saw Voldemort’s green jet meet his own spell, saw the Elder Wand fly high, dark against the sunrise, [...] spinning through the air towards the master it would not kill, who had come to take full possession of it at last. And Harry, with the unerring skill of the Seeker, caught the wand in his free hand as Voldemort fell backwards, arms splayed, the slit pupils of the scarlet eyes rolling upwards. Tom Riddle hit the floor with a mundane finality, his body feeble and shrunken, the white hands empty, the snake-like face vacant and unknowing. Voldemort was dead, killed by his own rebounding curse, and Harry stood with two wands in his hand, staring down at his enemy’s shell. [HP7 *DH*: 814–815]

Throughout the texts, we find vivid descriptions of the corporeal aspect of spells and spell-casting – just a few verbs from the Potterverse describing what spells can do and how counteract them: You “*aim*” and “*shoot*” a spell at somebody; if you do not “*dodge*” or “*leap aside*” to avoid the spell, it will “*hit*” you – the worst is to get “hit squarely in the chest” – and you will experience or even suffer the result: from a tickle (*Rictusempra*); to confusion (*Confundo*); losing the own wand (*Expelliarmus*); being unable to move (*Impedimenta* or *Petrificus Totalus*); being “*stunned*” and unconscious (*Stupefy*); feeling unbearable pain (the *Cruciatus* Curse); or in the worst case: to die (the Killing Curse = *Avada Kedavra*). However, you can “*block*”, “*repell*” or “*deflect*” a spell and it can “*rebound*” on a wall and “*bounce back*”, or hit an object and smash it.

All these formulations, like “throwing magic at” someone [HD14 *CD*: 126], look at magic as a source of energy. For instance in Emily Goodwin’s “Thorne Hill” series it is explicitly called so. When Callie is fighting a demon, she is able to “throw the [conjured; GWit] energy ball, hitting him square in the chest.” [TH5 *CoN*: 419] Since

Diana is a very gifted and very special witch, she can even conjure *witchfire* (for more details on witchfire, cf. ch. 3.3.3.), shoot it at an attacking vampire and “blow a hole straight through her chest,” [SoN: 203]. Though, hitting someone with a spell need not be an attack but can rather be a life-saving procedure, in some way the magical equivalent of defibrillation after a cardiac arrest. When her vampire boyfriend Lucas is under the spell of a malign witch, Callie throws “out a hand, sending a small pulse of blue magic through the air. It hits him in the chest, burning his flesh and absorbing into his body. It’s all he needs to come back to me.” [TH5 CoN: 433]

In *Cold Days* Harry Dresden even equals these two – energy and magic:

I felt it when the dawn broke, [...]. Something subtle and profound simply shifted in the air around me. Even if I’d been blindfolded, I would have felt the transition, the way that the winds and currents of energy broadly known as magic began to gust and shift, driven by the light of the oncoming sun. [HD14 CD: 208]

The energy after a spell is performed is even perceivable and shown on screen. We can see rippling airwaves when Satu beats her tiny Sámi drum [ADoW 1x06], or concentric waves appear as if emanating from Bonnie Bennett (Kat Graham) [TVD 8x11] after Stefan (Paul Wesley) has killed her vampire boyfriend Enzo St. John (Michael Malarkey). Peter Knox (Owen Teale), one of the bad guys in the *All Souls* universe, uses a particular artifact in the television adaptation (cf. 2.2.3.) to enhance his spell and, again, airwaves seem to radiate from it [cf. ADoW 1x04, 2x08, 3x04]. When Diana casts her first spell inside the protective fiery circle, “the buffeting wave of energy was replaced by something that tingled and snapped like a thousand witchy glances” [SoN: 362].

Throughout the *All Souls* novels, Diana’s magic is described as closely related to electric energy. The connection was first mentioned when Matthew sneaked into her rooms at New College and saw her *chatoiement* for the first time, “he smelled electricity and froze” [ADoW: 28]. Later, they will talk about the “little arcs of fire” shooting from her fingers [ADoW: 193]. In the television adaptation this connection was brilliantly shown about nine minutes into the first episode [ADoW 1x01]: Seconds after Diana touched the stubs where the three pages were cut out of the enchanted manuscript Ashmole 782, all lights on the tables went out in this part of the Bodleian, except for the small spotlights.

2.2.1. ‘What on earth possessed you to conjure up a griffin, Diana?’ [TC: 114] – How to materialize objects or animals out of thin air

In the fourth installment of the *All Souls* series (and as of 2022 the last book – two more are in the pipeline, so to speak, but not yet finished), all of a sudden a griffin appears in the Limousin castle Les Revenant where the vampire-and-witch couple Matthew and Diana live with their twin babies. Sarah is the first to encounter him “on the second-floor landing” and she’s definitely

‘not talking about Ysabeau’s old carpet.’ Sarah held out a bleeding index finger. ‘I mean a live griffin. It’s small, but its beak works.’ [...]

The griffin who had taken a bite out of Sarah was sitting before the tapestry, cooing and chattering to its much larger woven sister. [TC: 109, 110]

Matthew is, of course, more than irritated. However, it's not his wife who is responsible for the latest addition to the household, but actually their baby boy Philip who completely on his own has obviously cast his forspell and got his familiar.²

Now, when we try to be precise, we may establish a slight difference between conjuring vs. telekinesis. Whereas the object called up in telekinesis is actually present in this moment and near, though not necessarily visible or in close vicinity, everything a witch conjures really does come "out of thin air". (In some narrative universes, though, "*conjunction*" is also defined as "the ability to summon an object from anywhere", like in <https://thecraft.fandom.com/wiki/Category:Powers>, or *The Material Instruments*, cf. below. In *Charmed* conjuring is exactly this "ability to instantly create matter from nothing", [https://charmed.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_Powers].)

So, let's start with a look at telekinesis. In *ADoW* 2x05 Diana is harassed by a witch – he tries to get into her head and "extract", or rather steal her memories and her powers. Matthew just came home, hears her scream and runs into her rooms. To defend herself, she summons Matthew's dagger out of the sheath on his belt and stabs the witch Champier. Another example of a Summoning Charm can be found in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, when Harry has to grab the dragon's egg in order to fulfill the first task of the Triwizard Tournament.

It was time to do what he had to do ... to focus his mind, entirely and absolutely, upon the thing that was his only chance ...
 He raised his wand.
 'Accio Firebolt!' he shouted.
 He waited, every fibre of him hoping, praying ... [...]
 And then he heard it, speeding through the air behind him; he turned and saw his Firebolt hurtling towards him around the edge of the woods [HP4 *GoF*: 388]

What kind of objects and how many items (or how much of something) a witch is able to conjure depends on the narrative universe – in many texts this type of magic is ruled by strict laws. In the *Harry Potter* saga, for instance, conjuring is limited by *Gamp's Law of Elemental Transfiguration* which contains five *Principal Exceptions*. One of them is *food*, as Hermione corrects Ron when he says that Molly Weasley 'can make good food appear out of thin air':

'Your mother can't produce food out of thin air. No one can. [...]
 It's impossible to make good food out of nothing! You can Summon it if you know where it is, you can transform it, you can increase the quantity if you've already got some—' [HP7 *DH*: 325]

The second exception is money [cf. "Magic in *Harry Potter*", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_in_Harry_Potter; Rowling 2000-07-08], as shown by the mere existence of Gringott's.

In *The Mortal Instruments* some of the objects Magnus Bane, the Grand Warlock of Brooklyn, conjures are actually rather transposed, like a large table from an antiques reproduction shop, than actually materialized out of nowhere, since, according to Magnus this is not possible,

In the living room Magnus conjured up an enormous circular table surrounded by five high-backed wooden chairs. 'That's, amazing,' Clary said, [...] 'How can you create something out of nothing like that?'
 'You can't,' said Magnus. 'Everything comes from somewhere.' [TM12 *CoA*: 138]

When it comes to creating some sort of magical boundaries through a spell – let's call it conjuring, one group of protective measures that appear quite often should be

mentioned: shields and barriers. These wards are generally invisible, but are full of energy. One example is the barrier that holds an ancient dangerous vampire underground in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* [1x01]: whenever he touches it, it quivers like streams of hot air. Equally invisible – except for another witch – is the protection spell the witch Marnie (Fiona Shaw) erected around her shop, the Moon Goddess Emporium, in season 4 of *True Blood*. Moreover, since she harnessed ‘the power of the sun’, it is deadly to vampires [TB 4x11]. Also made of light but visible is the protective barrier Diana puts up around herself and Matthew while allowing him to drink her blood after he is lethally wounded by another vampire [ADoW 1x08].

2.2.2. “With a small gesture, she released her spell...” [ADoW: 373] – Movements of hands and fingers

In some cases witches accompany the spell casting with particular gestures. In the case of *Harry Potter* these specific movements are magnified by the wand they all use. Two months after the young witches and wizards come to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, they have their first lesson to levitate an object – a feather, and Professor Flitwick reminded them of the proper procedure with regard both to the words and the gestures.

‘Now, don’t forget that nice wrist movement we’ve been practising!’ squeaked Professor Flitwick, perched on top of his pile of books as usual. ‘Swish and flick, remember, swish and flick. And saying the magic words properly is very important, too [...]’ [HP1 PS: 186]

Even without any incantation witches are able to light a candle (well, except for Diana before she completed her training, as we’ve seen). There are several scenes in the television show *A Discovery of Witches* that show how it is done, be it by Susanne Norman in 1590 [ADoW 2x01], or Emily when she tries to contact the spirit of Diana’s mother Rebecca (Sophia Myles) to learn more about the enchanted book [ADoW 2x04, 2x08]. Tragically, Diana has to make the same twist of the hand when she ignites the four purple candles around Emily’s wicker coffin during her witch burial service in the television adaptation [ADoW 3x01].

In several examples, however, a flick of the hand is used for causing harm: In *Buffy* a bad witch named Catherine (Robin Ryker) constricts Xander’s (Nicholas Brendon) windpipes with a tiny switch of her hand [Buffy 1.03]. Satu, another malign witch, tortures Diana by lifting her up in the air and with a rapid thrash of her arm throws her down onto the stony ground [ADoW 1x06]. When Marnie in *True Blood* is put into prison, she immobilizes the vampire guard with gestures of her two hands [TB 4x06]. Vincent (Yusuf Gatewood), one of the New Orleans witches in *The Originals* has unique gestures when working magic: he blows on his thumb and fingers while rubbing them and chants his spell [TO 2x10].

When returning from 16th century London, Diana has fully come into her powers, as Matthew’s brother Baldwin learns the hard way when he threatens Jack, Matthew and Diana’s adoptive son from the 16th century. In the book Diana

straightened, splayed out her left hand with the palm facing down, and directed her fingers at the floor. The wooden planks shattered and split, re-forming into thick canes that rose up and wound themselves around Baldwin’s feet, keeping him in place. Lethally long, sharp thorns sprang out of the shoots, digging through his clothes and into flesh. [TBoL. 283]

In the television show Baldwin (Peter McDonald) also disciplines Jack (Toby Regbo) by biting into his neck and taking his blood. But here Diana uses a different piece of furniture to chastise Baldwin and to save the young man from his clutches: With a

swift flick of her right hand she makes the central staircase lantern fall down, its chain comes off, curls up and wraps itself tightly around Baldwin's neck. With another turn of her hand, she screws the chain even tighter, almost strangling the vampire [ADoW 3x02].

2.2.3. 'Do you have a wand?' [TBoL: 169] — Tools of the craft

Wands are probably the objects that, apart from brooms and pointed hats, are most closely connected to our image of a witch, an image we learned from our childhood days — Halloween costumes and decorations prove it every year. In my texts, however, not all witches need a wand to work the craft.

Within the *Harry Potter* saga they are embedded in an intricate wandlore, a whole set of rules and traditions. The books know two famous wand makers. In present day London, Harry gets his first wand at Ollivanders in Diagon Alley, according to the inscription over the door of the shop "Makers of Fine Wands since 382 BC". In the Potterverse wands are only made from particular woods (like holly, yew, ebony, willow, oak or cherry), and bear a core that is the source of the power (examples are phoenix feathers, unicorn hair, or dragon heartstring). Ollivander explains that 'the wand chooses the wizard' and in Harry's case it is made of holly with a phoenix feather, and, indeed, we immediately learn what he means: The boy

took the wand [and] felt a sudden warmth in his fingers. He raised the wand above his head, brought it swishing down through the dusty air and a stream of red and gold sparks shot from the end like a firework, throwing dancing spots of light on to the walls. [HP1 PS: 96]

Throughout the saga we learn more about wandlore (that for instance the wand still carries the information of the last spell performed, *priori incantatem*). The special connections between a wizard and their wand, the 'subtle laws [that] govern wand ownership' are explained in the final book [HP7 DH: 544]. The second wand maker named in the saga is Gregorovitch who came into the possession of the legendary Elder Wand (one of the three Deathly Hallows), later owned by Dumbledore.

Some of the witches and wizards in the world of Harry Dresden use wands too. Molly Carpenter (Harry's apprentice and the daughter of his best friend Michael) has even two wands with ivory tips [HD12 Ch: 399]. Most of the wizards, however, use long staffs, like Harry himself, who carries an oaken quarterstaff carved with runes and sigils [HD14 CD: 498] that sometimes burst into light. His maternal grandfather, Ebenezer McCoy, carries a similar staff. Both Harry's staff and the blasting rod help him to "focus my magic a lot more precisely" [HD5 DM: 35]

Given all the wands used by witches, it is no wonder that as soon as Chris learns that his friend and Yale university colleague Diana is 'an abracadabra spell-casting potion-making witch', he immediately asks her, 'Do you have a wand?' [TBoL: 169]

But wands aren't the only tools witches use to perform spells. Centuries ago, poppets sawn from fabric were used to focus while casting spells. In *A Discovery of Witches* a poppet owned by Diana's ancestor Bridget Bishop³ turns up,

made of rough-spun fabric that had faded to an indiscriminate grayish brown. In addition to its four limbs, it had a lump where the head belonged, adorned with faded tufts of hair. Someone had stitched an X where the heart should be. [ADoW: 544]

When it comes apart, a golden earring that was hidden inside appears – the long lost earring of Matthew's mother that eventually will help them to timewalk to 1590's London [cf. ADoW: 544–545; 1x08]

Some magical accessories used both to focus and amplify powers are related to the origin of the witch. Satu Järvinen's tiny Sámi drum that she beats to concentrate her power while chanting was already mentioned [ADoW 1x06], as was the *petrosphere* of Peter Knox in the television adaptation of the *All Souls* trilogy. Knox is described to be of Scottish origin. Accordingly, he gets a prehistoric artefact almost exclusively found on mainland Scotland and the isles. Since the actual purpose of these carved balls is unknown [cf. Anderson-Wymark 2021; Anderson-Wymark & Hall 2020] it could be used in magical rituals and here Knox rotates it in his hand to enhance his nasty powers on others [ADoW 1x04, 2x08, 3x04].

Another group of items often quoted with regard to witchcraft and magic are *potions* – for instance to evoke love, like the one made by the aunts in Hoffman's *Practical Magic*:

Though the girl hadn't much money, they gave her the strongest potion they could, with exact instructions on how to make another woman's husband fall in love with her. Then they warned her that what was done could never be undone, and so she must be sure. [Hoffman 1995: 16]

In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, several girls have a crush on Harry, and one of them gives him Chocolate Cauldrons laced with a love potion. When Ron gets hungry and eats the whole box, he's immediately infatuated with a girl he doesn't even know [HP6 *H-BP*: 464–471]. Earlier in this book, Harry gets a second hand text book for Potion Class, and thanks to the extensive notes in the margins (the book belonged to Severus Snape when he was a boy), Harry excels at potion making and wins a phial of *Felix Felicis*, liquid luck.

Many of the ingredients used in potions, ointments and tisanes are *herbs and various parts of plants*. Sarah, Diana's aunt, "is an expert in the craft, with encyclopedic knowledge of herbs and the healing arts" [TWoAS: 75], and keeps both a teaching and her own witch's garden, but right outside the garden at a crossroads are more plants, and they are "baneful or associated with the darker aspects of the craft" [TBoL: 155]. One day, when the two women and Matthew visited this grove, Diana heard many voices that

had captured my attention: my mother and Emily, my father and my grandmother, and others unknown to me. *Wolfsbane*, the voices whispered. *Skullcap*. *Devil's bit*. *Adder's tongue*. *Witch's broom*. Their chant was punctuated with warnings and suggestions, and their litany of spells included plants that featured in fairy tales.

Gather cinquefoil when the moon is full to extend the reach of your power.

Hellebore makes any disguising spell more effective.

Mistletoe will bring you love and many children.

To see the future more clearly, use black henbane. [TBoL: 156]

Herbs and various plants are the components *smudge sticks* are made of, yet another item frequently depicted/described in texts, like in *The Craft* or in an episode of *The Originals* when Freya moves a smoking smudge stick during the incantation to render her aunt Dahlia (Claudia Black) mortal again [TO 2x20]. During the already mentioned ritual to resuscitate Gilli's boyfriend in the movie *Practical Magic* the two sisters also have to use one, 'Touch bounded smudge of blue sage with braided wheat straw.' Though they are not mentioned in the novels, in the television adaptation Emily uses a smudge stick both before scrying [ADoW 1x03, 1x06] and in the ritual to contact Rebecca [ADoW 2x04, 2x08].

Crystals appear in several different contexts. In *Charmed*, e.g. in 4x03 to name but one, a crystal held over a map is used for a locator spells, and during certain rituals crystals are arranged in a circle. Callie and her witch friends also use a crystal

in certain rituals [cf. ThH1 *DoN*: 111-112, or ThN4 *StoN*: 43] and she has crystals as an additional ward around her house.

Throughout the *Harry Potter* saga a great variety of objects enters the magical practice. The most frequently used is definitely the *broom* which is, again, a common attribute associated with witches since more than five hundred years at least. Other tools or gadgets that are described/depicted are the *Portkey* (a bewitched object that transports you to a pre-defined destination); Dumbledore's *Deluminator* to catch the light from a source; *Floo Powder* is yet another way to travel via fireplaces; in her third year, Hermione gets the exceptional permission to use a *Time-Turner* which allows her to revisit the past to attend more classes than normally possible; and the *Pensieve* – a bowl to view the memories of other people preserved in glass phials.

As widely known as a wand is the final object of this chapter – the *Pentagram* that is almost *the* symbol of witchcraft, in Harry Dresden's words, "The five-pointed star within the circle was the ancient sign of white wizardry," and his is a pendant with a red stone in the center, the only thing he still has from his witch mother [HD1 *SF*: 317-318].

3. 'When you're a witch, you can change the natural' [MidTx 1x09] – Witches and their relations to nature

Far from attributing women a "special" connection to nature because they are women, this chapter rather tries to locate the connection of witches to nature in their magical powers as described in the texts. In many works and explicitly presented in the world of *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Originals* witches are ascribed such a particular connection. At one point, Bonnie Bennett who descended from an old Salem witch family explains it to a friend, 'Witches have a connection to the Earth. We can literally feel nature' [TVD 3x17], and their task is 'to maintain the balance of nature' [TVD 2x21], 'to be the keeper of the balance' [TO 3.21], because as another witch says, 'You can't upset the balance of nature without a price.' [TVD 3x06]

To uphold this equilibrium in nature is also one of the deeds of the witches in the *All Souls* universe, and this includes their own powers. Even though Diana can use witchfire and witchwind and witchwater, these powers are not really hers, as her teacher Goody Alsop explains,

'The goddess has given you her blessing to borrow the powers you need but not to command any of them absolutely.' [...]

'No witch could hold so much power within her without upsetting the balance of the worlds.' [SoN: 326].

This is particularly true for a small group among the witches, the *weavers*, who hold the power of the world in their hands when they grasp the "filaments of magic" [SoN: 362], the "threads of the universe" [ADoW 2x09] and tie them into knots.

3.1. 'Give this tulip a little nudge.' [MidTx 1x09] – When witches make plants grow and blossom...

Both in books and in movies/television shows we see witches who have the special ability to channel the forces of nature. They are able to make plants grow, dormant bulbs bud in midwinter and even start to blossom.

I've already quoted Bonnie Bennett. When Caroline doesn't understand what Bonnie's mom means when she mourned she can no longer feel her garden after she was turned into a vampire against her will (she was a witch), Bonnie actually shows her friend Caroline (Candice Accola) what a witch can do. While explaining the witches' connection to the Earth, Bonnie puts her hands around a dry and withered plant, works a spell, and slowly the plant starts to bloom again a beautiful purple flower.

As a young woman, Fiji Cavanaugh (Parisa Fitz-Henley) was not yet fully aware of her powers. In "Riders On the Storm" of *Midnight Texas* she remembers in a flash-back her Aunt Mildred's (Belinda Logan) training back then. Inside the greenhouse, Mildred explains the power of witches over nature.

'Bulbs are dormant in the winter. That's natural.
But ... When you're a witch, You can change the natural. Powers come from our emotions.
Make your feelings intentions.
Give this tulip a little nudge.
Think spring and rebirth.' [MidTx 1x09]

Fiji ticks off some moments of spring, like 'Trees; Easter! Hay fever; mowed lawns,' until Mildred interrupts, 'No, not just words. Feel something.' At that moment, Fiji sees a handsome young man passing by before concentrating on the bulbs in the pots. The shoots start to grow, to blossom into tulips, and keep on growing. Mildred screams, 'Fiji, stop', but too late, they shatter the glass roof and burst through it. According to Mildred Fiji's emotions were to blame, she'd better control them.

Diana is another witch who had no idea about the extent of her powers. When in 1590's London Susanna Norman (played by Aisling Loftus in the adaptation) wants to check whether she is a witch who deserves to be trained, Diana has

'to get the contents of that egg into the bowl without using your hands. It requires two spells: a motion spell and a simple opening charm. [...] If the egg isn't in the bowl when I return, no one can help you, [...] if your power is so weak that you cannot even crack an egg.' [SoN: 306]

Diana indeed couldn't put the egg into the bowl. However, by thinking about her pregnancy and seeing with her "third eye" (a witch's sight) that the egg is fertilized, she continues to think about her unborn child, until – she realized after hearing a peep that she sort of hatched the egg... [cf. SoN: 307–308 & ADoW 2x02].

Bringing something to life is not restricted to natural entities. Also in *Shadow of Night*, shortly before this egg episode, Diana visits the poet and alchemist Mary Sidney Countess of Pembroke (Amanda Hale). While looking at the animals on her beautifully embroidered shoes, Diana manages – both in the novel and in the adaptation – to give life to a bee and a snake, both made of yarn.

And the bee on her right toe looked as though it might fly away at any moment. A faint buzzing filled my ears as the silver-and-black bee detached itself from the Countess of Pembroke's shoe and took to the air. 'Oh, no,' I gasped. 'What a strange bee,' Henry commented, swatting at it as it flew past.

But I was looking instead at the snake that was slithering off Mary's foot and into the rushes. [SoN: 254; cf. ADoW 2x02]

In a later episode, Diana meets Emperor Rudolf II (Michael Jibson). He shows her one of the treasures of his *Wunderkammer*, an exquisite glass goblet with a glass

serpent winding around it, ‘It represents the serpent in the Garden, reminding us to be watchful for the poison tongue of flatterers and deceivers.’ [ADoW 2x07] However, after he gets angry and calls her a ‘prying English spy and charlatan’, Diana makes this very snake detach itself from the glass and wind up the Emperor’s hand.

3.2. “The sun [...] left the quince, traveling into my fingers.” [SoN: 61] – Flowers and fruits withering away ...

But when a witch is untrained the contrary can happen, too. Before she has mastered to control her abilities, Diana learned the hard way that – just like the witch Widow Beaton explained – ‘a witch’s true power comes from being a creature between life and death, light and darkness.’ [SoN: 58]: already before the witch comes to test her, all the flowers she rearranges in a vase wilt. Widow Beaton asks Diana to light a candle, and she fails just like she did 20 years ago in her local Madison coven. But she wants to prove that she *is* a witch and concentrates on a bowl of quince.

One by one I took hold of the fruit’s secrets. There was a worm at its core, munching its way through the soft flesh. My attention was caught by the power trapped there, and warmth tingled across my tongue in a taste of sunshine. The skin between my brows fluttered with pleasure as I drank in the light of the invisible sun. So much power, I thought. Life. Death. My audience faded into insignificance. The only thing that mattered now was the limitless possibility for knowledge resting in my hand.

The sun responded to some silent invitation and left the quince, traveling into my fingers. Instinctively I tried to resist the approaching sunlight and keep it where it belonged – in the fruit – but the quince turned brown, shriveling and sinking into itself. [SoN: 60–61]

While Diana makes the flowers and fruit die by accident, Dahlia (Claudia Black) does it on purpose in the episode “When the Levee Break” [TO 2x19]. Aiden (Colin Woodell), a werewolf, comes out of a flower shop with a bouquet of red roses. Suddenly he hears a whistled tune and his roses have wilted and turned brown. With a malicious smile, Dahlia comments, ‘Too bad. They were almost as young and beautiful as you!’, right before she kills him in an alley.

3.3. ‘Invoco elementum ...’ [ThH2 DoN: 81] – Elemental Magic

Whenever elements are mentioned in the context of magic, witchcraft, or alchemy, it’s about the four ancient elements fire, water, air, and earth.

Witches seek to get in touch with the elements to enhance their power, like Satu does while tapping on her tiny drum, ‘I call upon the elements’, in order to see what Diana is hiding from her.

When her vampire husband Lucas gets sick because of a curse, Callie needs all the strength she can get to help him:

‘I call upon the forces of light. I bind this curse and bind it tight.’ I use my own blood to draw the sigil on Lucas’s chest. ‘I take in the power of earth, air, water, and fire into me, and bind this curse, so mote it be.’ I press my hand down on the sigil, and the flames in the candle shoot up. [ThH5 CoN: 28].

In some texts witches have the rare ability to control the elements, though they never command all of them – as Goody Alsop told Diana in the already quoted ex-

planation that ‘No witch could hold so much power within her without upsetting the balance of the worlds.’ [SoN: 326]

But even when they *are* able to work with an element, they are nevertheless bound by the law of physics, as Harry Dresden remarks in *Blood Rites*,

Even wizards cannot escape the consequences of physics. You can call up a storm of fire, but it won’t burn without fuel and air. [HD6 BR: 376]

3.3.1. ‘That was a witchwind’ [ADoW: 216] — *Elemental Magic (i): Air*

Air is one of the ancient elements, and Diana Bishop is one of those nowadays rare witches who can summon the elements. Her first encounter with this ability she never knew that it exists, let alone that *she* can do that was in her rooms at New College in Oxford. To intimidate her, Peter Knox has sent color photographs of her parents’ dead bodies who were killed by witches. She reacted with a panic attack and Matthew helped her to get some sleep. When she wakes up, both the shock and the feeling of being cornered have not yet subsided, and she reacts with her first *witchwind*.

The air began to stir around me as if trying to drive off the feeling of being trapped. Chilly wisps edged up the legs of my trousers. The air crept up my body, lifting the hair around my face in a gentle breeze. Matthew swore and stepped toward me, his arm outstretched. The breeze increased into gusts of wind that ruffled the bedclothes and the curtains. [...]

The force of the wind kept rising, and with it my arms rose, too, shaping the air into a column that enclosed me as protectively as the duvet. [...]

[ADoW: 215]

‘That was a witchwind,’ Matthew explained, not moving. [...]

‘Some witches have inherited the ability to control the element of air. You’re one of them,’ he said. [ADoW: 216]

In the show, she unknowingly summons witchwind in the library after she gets angry that the witch Peter Knox has attacked her librarian friend with a spell. The storm hits Knox so hard that he flies over the tables of the Bodleian Reading Room.

One of the “works” of the military witches in *Motherland: Fort Salem* is the manipulation of weather, including creating cyclones, other storm phenomena, and the *Windstrike* by sounds they make with the additional vocal chords witches possess in this narrative universe.

Even without the actual ability to invoke a storm, witches sense and to a certain extent can influence the air around them. When Harry Dresden activates a protective circle, he feels how the air changes:

I leaned down, touched the circle with the tip of my staff, and willed power into it, to shut the creature out. The circle sprang up around us, a silent and invisible tension in the air.

[HD1 SF: 189].

Even before she ever summoned witchwind, Diana experienced how the air feels under the influence of magic right inside the Bodleian Library. After she returns the bewitched manuscript *Ashmole 782* – the one that sets the entire trilogy in motion – to the stacks,

the air around me constricted, as if the library were squeezing me tight. The air shimmered for a split second, just as the pages of the manuscript had shimmered on Sean’s desk. [ADoW: 14]

This must have been the reenacting of the spell, since (protection or binding) spells obviously act on the air, as we learn later in *Shadow of Night* when it was lifted after

Diana's forspell, "Goody Alsop gestured with her hand. The air thickened, then relaxed." [SoN: 368]

Only about a year later, Diana has mastery over her powers. Back from Chelm where she killed both the witch Peter Knox and the vampire Benjamin Fuchs in order to rescue her husband Matthew whom they tortured and mutilated for weeks, she wanted as much normalcy for him as possible, so she needed to get him into their bedroom – with the help of her magic, even making a joke.

I marshaled the air to support my hastily woven levitation spell. 'Stand back, I'm going to try magic.' Matthew made a faint sound that might have been an attempt at laughter. [TBoL: 552].

3.3.2. "The water was coming out of me." [ADoW: 295] – *Elemental Magic (ii): Water*

Using *water* in magic is nothing extraordinary for a witch. Harry Potter's *Aguamenti* producing a jet of water was already mentioned, just as Em's praxis of scrying with a bowl of water. There is, however, a difference between these ways of using water and the phenomenon described in the *All Souls* universe as *witchwater* – another ancient power that hardly any witch has today. Just like with witchwind, she had no idea that she actually has this ability until she found out.

After the panic attack episode Matthew has taken her to his family castle in the Auvergne. They obviously have fallen in love, though they not yet admit it neither to themselves nor the other – their relationship is strictly forbidden by the covenant, a set of rules established by the Congregation, the ruling body of vampires, witches and daemons⁴, and they get a serious warning from the Congregation.

When Matthew obeys their injunction, ends his relationship to Diana before it has even started and returns to Oxford to check the break-in at his laboratory, Diana feels all alone and abandoned. Up on one of the towers, she watches Matthew drive away and "gave in to her tears" [ADoW: 294], but it was more than crying...

Soon there was water everywhere. I was sitting in a puddle of it, and the level just kept rising.

It wasn't raining, despite the cloudy skies.

The water was coming out of me.

My tears fell normally but swelled as they dropped into globules the size of snowballs that hit the stone roof of the watchtower with a splash. My hair snaked over my shoulders in sheets of water that poured over the curves of my body. I opened my mouth to take a breath because the water streaming down my face was blocking my nose, and water gushed out in a torrent that tasted of the sea. [...]

Even more water cascaded from my fingertips. [...]

As the water poured forth, my control slipped further. [ADoW: 295]

Without the help of Matthew's mother Ysabeau, an ancient vampire who was a seer before she was turned against her will, Diana would have surrendered herself to the element and been lost.

Like with all her other powers, Diana has also learned to control witchwater. Back from the 16th century she and Matthew return briefly to her family home in Madison NY, where she gets in touch with other witches of the local coven. Back from the Lughnasadh celebrations, they all gather in the Bishop house. Suddenly, a little girl is in danger to fall into the burning fireplace, Diana has to act quickly.

But there was no time for spells, either. Instead I acted on pure instinct and rooted my feet into the floor. Water was all around us, trickling through deep arteries that crisscrossed the Bishop land. It was within me, too, and in an effort to focus its raw, elemental power I isolated the fila-

ments of blue, green, and silver that highlighted everything in the kitchen and the stillroom that was tied to water.

In a quicksilver flash, I directed a bolt of water at the fireplace. A spout of steam erupted, coals hissed, and Grace hit the slurry of ash and water on the hearth with a thud. [TBoL: 128]

Diana's first attempt to understand her connection to water and to control it, occurred when she and Matthew went to Madison after Satu had abducted and tortured her in one of Gerbert's Cantal castle ruins. Matthew set her up in a healing posture and she stopped thinking and opened up to all the water that surrounded her in the garden.

My mind remained resolutely blank, unconcerned that I might be engulfed in witchwater even as the level of water in my hands slowly rose. [...]

Calmly I breathed in and out. The water level in my palms rose and fell in response to the changing tides within and underneath me. When I could control the water no longer, the mudras broke open, water cascading from my flattened palms. I was left standing in the middle of the backyard, eyes open and arms outstretched, a small puddle on the ground under each hand. [ADoW: 451]

3.3.3. 'Witchfire is lethal. No spell can ward it off [ADoW: 434] — Elemental Magic (iii): Fire

Working with *fire* is one of the basic skills any witch learns as a young girl. Igniting candles without a match or a lighter is one of the standard tests. As mentioned in the passage about gestures, Diana fails when Widow Beaton asks her to light the candle just like she failed when presented to the Madison coven at the age of thirteen [cf. SoN: 59]. This is the more interesting since Diana's hands tend to shoot blueish sparks when she gets angry and loses control as will be discussed in 4.2.3.

Throughout the texts witches ignite candles in preparation for a ritual,⁵ like for instance Tabatha (Callie's elective witch mother) who "sets a white candle on either side of the nightstand and ignites them with magic." [ThH3 CoN: 254] In preparation for the locator spell to find T.J. Weston who bought the third and still missing page from the Book of Life, each of the four witches who represent the four elements ignites the brown candle in front of them with a flick of the thumb [ADoW 3x04]. According to the respective passage in the third book of the series,

[b]rown was a propitious color for finding lost objects. It had the added benefit of grounding the spell – which I was sorely in need of, given my inexperience. Each witch took her place outside the ring of county maps, and they all lit their candles with whispered spells. The flames were unnaturally large and bright – true witch's candles. [TBoL: 361]

Harry Dresden often summons fire to fight demons or murderous vampires, and 'Fuego!' is one of his signature spells, usually accompanied either by raising his long staff, his rod or just his right hand.

Already in the first book of the *Harry Potter* saga we witness that Hermione "had conjured them up a bright blue fire which could be carried around in a jam jar." [HP1 PS: 197]. When she suspects Snape to jinx Harry's broom, this spell comes in handy: "Reaching Snape, she crouched down, pulled out her wand and whispered a few, well chosen words. Bright blue flames shot from her wand on to the hem of Snape's robes." [HP1 PS: 207] In "Riders On the Storm", Fiji can also conjure fire in her palms and thrusts it at a demon harassing her – or so she thinks: in reality she's sleepwalking and throws the flames at her friends Manfred and Bobo [MidnTX 1x09].

But whenever a witch is about to conjure fire, it'd be wise to check whether anyone can watch... In *ADoW* 3x05 a woman comes out of a club in Berlin, she searches her purse for a lighter but can't find any. Muttering 'Scheisse', she fakes to take something out and lights her cigarette with a snip of her fingers. A second later, Lena (Edyta Budnik) sees Benjamin (Jacob Ifan), Matthew's disavowed son, and most probably realizes that he's a vampire who has seen what she did. Cut. We see a car driving first on a Berlin urban freeway, then along a road in the woods in the Lublin Voivodeship – Benjamin has abducted her.

Fire is often used in rituals to circumscribe a circle around the witches working magic, like before Diana's forspell.

Goody Alsop and I took up our positions at the center of the circle. Though its boundaries were invisible, that would change when the other witches took their appointed places. Once they had, Catherine murmured a spell and a curved line of fire traveled from witch to witch, binding the circle.

Power surged in its center. Goody Alsop had warned me that what we were doing this night invoked ancient magics. Soon the buffeting wave of energy was replaced by something that tingled and snapped like a thousand witchy glances. [SoN: 362]

However, such a fire circle is also evoked for less benign reasons, as for instance in *True Blood* when Marnie (Fiona Shaw) tortures Sookie (Anna Paquin) by confining her in a circle of flames [TB 4x11], or the three adjacent rings of fire holding the *doppelgänger* Elena (Nina Dobrev), the new vampire Jenna (Sara Canning) and the werewolf Jules (Michaela McManus) [TVD 2x21] ready for the sacrifice to break the curse of Klaus Mikaelson (Joseph Morgan). After Satu has suspended Diana upside down in midair, she draws a fire circle around them (like she did in *ADoW* 1x01 with the unlucky local hunter Knox has put up to look for the witch in the woods), and, using her fingers like a laser scalpel, Satu tries to open her up and brand her back with Matthew's insignia – a six-pointed star above a crescent moon [ADoW 1x06].

The witch muttered, and my body spun around and then flattened against the floor, facedown. [...] A circle of fire licked up from the cold stones, the flames green and noxious.

Something white-hot seared my back. It curved from shoulder to shoulder like a shooting star, descended to the small of my back, then curved again before climbing once again to where it had started. Satu's magic held me fast, making it impossible to wriggle away. The pain was unspeakable, but before the welcoming blackness could take me, she held off. When the darkness receded, the pain began again.

It was then that I realized with a sickening lurch of my stomach that she was opening me up, just as she'd promised. She was drawing a magical circle – onto me. [ADoW: 380]

Within the *All Souls* universe actual *witchfire* is different from all these manifestations of fire, as painful as they might be for a person. Possibly the rarest of the powers, witchfire is the most lethal element, because 'no witchcraft can heal the burns.' [ADoW: 434]

Diana summoned her first witchfire in Sarah's kitchen when she believed her aunt was about to threaten Matthew and put a spell on him. Suddenly, she "saw a bow in [her] left hand, an arrow in [her] right". Emily recognized it immediately and asked her 'to put the fire down. [...] If you want to unleash witchfire, we'll go outside.' [ADoW: 431] Later, Em told them that she remembered how

'a witch on Cape Cod summoned it when I was a child. She must have been seventy,' Em said. 'I never forget what she looks like or what it felt to be near that kind of power.' [ADoW: 434]

Although Sarah has never experienced witchfire, she knew the signs of it quite well:

‘My mother taught me to recognize the signs for my own protection – the smell of sulfur, the way a witch’s arm moved,’ said Sarah.

However, Sarah ‘never expected my niece to unleash it once in my own kitchen.’ [ADoW: 434] And her mother, Joanna Bishop, gave her another bit of information that in retrospect explains a lot about Diana’s powers and how she got them: Sarah was told that ‘the goddess is present when witchfire is called.’ [ADoW: 434] However, as later explained by Goody Alsop,

‘A firewitch has no need of arrows. The fire leaves her and arrives at its target in an instant. [...] These were but simple weavings, my child, fashioned from grief and love. The goddess has given you her blessing to borrow the powers you need but not to command any of them absolutely.’ [SoN: 325]

And it is the goddess that appears to Diana again during her forspell right after she shaped the firedrake Corra, her familiar, who immediately ignited the rowan tree Diana also conjured. Diana felt the fiery arrow in her hand again, shot it at the burning tree and a second later she meets the goddess atop a mountain under the crescent moon.

As a wedding gift, Philippe presented Diana many pieces of jewelry, among them an ancient “unusually shaped golden arrowhead, its edges softened with age.” [SoN: 192] Prior to the wedding ceremony, Philippe has taken Diana to the temple of her namesake on the grounds of Sept-Tours and from his incantations it became clear that he had deep and ancient knowledge of the goddess... When Diana meets the goddess again after she got hold of all three pages from the Book of Life, and refuses to take the offered silver arrow, the goddess doesn’t take no for an answer, and shoots this arrow without an arrowhead at her. It enters Diana’s body and inside her it unites with Philippe’s ancient golden arrowhead. Before parting, the goddess explains,

‘You cannot outrun my arrow. No creature can. It is part of you now. [...] Even those born to strength should carry weapons.’

I searched the ground around my feet, looking for Philippe’s jewel. When I straightened, I could feel its point pressing into my ribs. I stared at the goddess in astonishment.

‘My arrow never misses its target,’ the goddess said. ‘When you have need of it, do not hesitate. And aim true.’ [TBoL: 383]

In the final battle at Chelm, Diana draws this very arrow, aims, shoots it through the blazing ring of the tenth knot of destruction and creation, and kills Benjamin who has tortured Matthew for weeks. In the last episode of the television adaptation Diana works all the knots she has learned and weaves a rather big tenth knot out of fiery filaments. Stretching the circle transforms it into bow and arrow, and she shoots Benjamin [ADoW 3x07].

The arrow disappeared with Benjamin’s death, but close to the end of the book, Diana starts to see Philippe’s ghost – and the mystery about the arrowhead and the goddess gets partly solved. After joking about *more grandchildren*,

Philippe’s expression sobered. *Your work is not done, daughter. The goddess asked me to give this back to you.* He held out the same gold-and-silver arrow that I had shot into Benjamin’s heart.

‘I don’t want it.’ I backed away, my hand raised to ward off this unwanted gift.

I didn’t want it either, and yet someone must see that justice is done. His arm extended farther. [...]

The moment my flesh made contact with it, the arrow vanished and I felt its heavy weight at my back once more. [TBoL: 568]

4. 'Magic's not just emotional and mental — it's physical, too.' [ADoW: 451] — Reactions of and changes to the body

And Matthew is right when he explains this to Diana: As already discussed with regard to spells, there's always and necessarily a material/corporeal share in these allegedly immaterial processes of magic/witchcraft.

Diana knows quite well that and how her body reacts when other creatures look at her and she has these sensations because she is a witch. When the eyes of *another witch* are on her, the "skin tingled" [ADoW: 2]. This tingling, however, is not confined to a witch of flesh and blood, but is also evoked by an enchanted object, like *Ashmole 782*, the alchemical manuscript Diana touches at the very onset of the novel *A Discovery of Witches*. As soon as she touches the leather of the cover, Diana's skin starts to prickle [ADoW: 2], and when the book first resisted to be opened, she put her hand on it and her "palm tingled" [ADoW: 11].

With *daemons*, Diana describes entirely different perceptions:

When a daemon takes a look, I feel the slight, unnerving pressure of a kiss. [ADoW: 17]

'The daemons are the worst – when they stare at me, it's like being kissed.' [ADoW: 88]

Two nudges pressed against my cheekbones, as gentle and fleeting as a kiss. I looked up into the face of another daemon. [ADoW: 56]

And then there are the vampires, "when a vampire stares, it feels cold, focused, and dangerous." [ADoW: 17]. While drinking tea at the gatehouse of Matthew's Tudor manor after their yoga class, Diana opens up a bit for the first time and tells Matthew how it feels when the different creatures look at her, including his gaze. 'It feels ... cold, [...] like ice growing under my skin' [ADoW: 88], the passage is verbatim used in the show [ADoW 1x03]. However, as soon as they know each other better, both Matthew's gaze and the response of her body to it have changed:

When Matthew came into the Selden End, without warning or sound, no icy patches announced his arrival. Instead there were touches of snowflakes all along my hair, shoulders, and back, as if he were checking quickly to make sure I was all in one piece. [ADoW: 131]

Even though according to the Covenant the three groups of creatures aren't supposed to mingle, some do so on rare occasions, like in Amira's yoga class at Matthew's Old Lodge in Woodstock, and Diana feels three gaze varieties all at once the moment Matthew "pulled open the door. Dozens of curious eyes nudged, tingled, and froze in my direction. The room was full of daemons, witches, and vampires." [ADoW: 80]

4.1. *Witch power is in your blood and it's in your bones.* [ADoW 1x03] — Genetic markers of magic in the DNA of witches

As alluded to in the heading, some of the texts offer the deepest possible explanation for the materiality of magic or being able to work the craft by relating it to the witch's DNA.

In the world of *All Souls* that Deborah Harkness has created, she uses DNA to explicate the fundamental difference between the creatures. Based on all his previous research, the physician and geneticist Matthew Clairmont tells Diana even be-

fore her blood was closely analyzed, that being a witch‘ is who you are. It’s in your blood. It’s in your bones. You were born a witch, just as you were born to have blond hair and blue eyes.’ [ADoW: 88], these remarks have found their way into the TV show [ADoW 1x03].

In *The Originals* [TO 1x17], the vampire Josh (Steven Krueger) tells his witch friend (Danielle Campbell) practically the same thing. ‘You’re a witch, Davina. You can’t change your DNA any more than I can, so you might as well embrace it.’

During Diana’s first visit of Matthew’s lab (both in the book and in the show), she gets a crash course in creature DNA – because that’s exactly what he and his brilliant vampire lab manager, Dr Miriam Shephard (Aiysha Hart), are studying by extracting DNA from specimens mostly found in burial sites. The three types of creatures are different from humans on the chromosome level: whereas daemons have only one extra chromosome, both witches and vampires have an additional 24th pair of chromosomes, in the case of witches this is the *locus* where all the genetic markers of their magic are situated [cf. ADoW: 162–163]. To visualize the differences, Diana is shown the “hoop-shaped and brilliantly colored” graphic charts of the mitochondrial DNA and the black-and-white nuclear DNA graphs of two witches – Benvenguda from seventh century Brittany and her latest descendant Beatrice Good [ADoW: 161–162 & 1x02]. For those who can read them, the graphs clearly show that

‘Beatrice’s nuclear DNA has fewer markers common among witches. This indicates that her ancestors, as the centuries passed, relied less and less on magic and witchcraft as they struggled to survive. Those changing needs began to force mutations in her DNA – mutations that pushed the magic aside.’ [ADoW: 162; cf. 1x02],

After Matthew analyzed Diana’s blood sample, together with his son Marcus Whitmore (Edward Bluemel) and his colleague Miriam, they find out that she ‘possesses nearly every genetic marker we’ve ever seen in a witch.’ [ADoW: 206] The results show not only her aptitude to cast spells, charms and curses, but also rare features like telekinesis, precognition, mind-reading, telepathy, transfiguration, talking with the dead, and flight as well as the markers for earth and more aspects of elemental magic she summoned at various moments: air, water, and fire – Diana’s DNA shows the combination of ‘powerful magical abilities’ and ‘an innate talent for witchcraft’ [cf. ADoW: 253, 254].

To include the DNA question touches upon the basic nature-vs-nurture concept, or, with regard to witchcraft: is magic inherited or can it be acquired... As we’ve seen, both in the world of *All Souls* and in *The Vampire Diaries* universe the question whether witch powers are innate or can simply be learned seems to be solved.

4.2. “Does she always have such a bright glaem about her?” [SoN: 68] – When Magic becomes perceivable on the body...

Deliberately or involuntarily, working magic seems to alter the chemistry of the body, its metabolism – the witch undergoes massive corporeal changes. One of the characteristics of these changes is the different scent. Matthew is able to smell it from the beginning – he always registers when Diana is using magic [cf. ADoW: 218],.

‘What are you doing?’

‘Nothing,’ I said, too quickly.

‘You’re using magic,’ he said, putting his tea down. ‘I can smell it. See it, too. You’re shimmering.’ [ADoW: 218]

Later we learn that it was Lady’s Mantle and Ambergris he smelled when Diana saved him after striking a deal with the goddess [ADoW: 522].

The same goes for both Lucas and Eliza (Lucas’s vampire daughter), the main vampires in the “Thorne Hill” series, when Callie performs spells. On several occasions, Eliza tells Callie to get out of the bar, because she can smell ‘the magic in the air’ [ThH4 StoN: 75], ‘the magic coming off you from across the bar. You’re like a walking Happy Meal for vampires.’ [ThH7 RoN: 103] Since Lucas can smell her magic, Callie asks whether all vampires can

‘tell who’s a witch or not?’

‘They’ll know you’re different because you smell different, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they know you’re a witch. Becoming a vampire makes you open to the supernatural – obviously – but it doesn’t give you knowledge about the other supernaturals. They might not even know witches are real.’ [ThH6 QoN: 132].

Another trait was mentioned in Matthew’s above quoted remark: the shimmering, the *chatoiement*, called *glaem* in the 16th century. Already when he first watched Diana in her sleep, he noted the powers she must have.

Light was seeping from Diana Bishop’s body – all around the edges, escaping from her pores. The light was a blue so pale it was almost white, and at first it formed a cloudlike shroud that clung to her for a few seconds. For a moment she seemed to shimmer. Matthew shook his head in disbelief. It was impossible. It had been centuries since he’d seen such a luminous outpouring from a witch. [ADoW: 28]

When he visited his best friend, the daemon Hamish [Greg McHugh in the show] in Scotland, he tells him that the witch he met says she doesn’t use magic.

‘I’ve been watching her, though, and she’s using it more than that. I can smell it,’ he said, his voice frank and open for the first time since his arrival. ‘The scent is like an electrical storm about to break, or summer lightning. There are times when I can see it, too. Diana shimmers when she’s angry or lost in her work.’ And when she’s asleep, he thought, frowning. ‘Christ, there are times when I think I can even taste it.’

‘She shimmers?’

‘It’s nothing you would see, though you might sense the energy some other way. The *chatoiement* – her witch’s shimmer – is very faint. Even when I was a young vampire, only the most powerful witches emitted these tiny pulses of light. It’s rare to see it today. Diana’s unaware she’s doing it, and she’s oblivious to its significance’ [ADoW: 96]

Both in the book and in the show, this shimmer appears as evidence of her magic. One evening at Sept-Tours she’s dancing with Matthew, and Ysabeau noticed it, “‘Matthew. Ysabeau’s voice held a note of caution. ‘*Le chatoiement*.’” [ADoW: 266]

In the show, we see this light pulsing off her body during the dance. But in the book, however, there is more... Since the novel is with a few exceptions told from Diana’s perspective, we only realize after the dance that she was actually floating “several inches above the floor” [ADoW: 267], the first time ever that she was able to defy gravity – just a few days later she’ll even be able to fly.

As to the *glaem*, it seems that timetraveling back to the 16th century further unlocks her magic as observed by Gallowglass (Steven Cree in the show), Matthew’s nephew, when he first sees her at the Old Lodge in Woodstock near Oxford. Especially in the television adaptation the light seeping off Diana’s body is a strong visualization of her magic. When she was trained to timewalk, she failed first until Em told her to think less of the destination but of Matthew, because ‘Magic’s in the heart, not the mind.’ [ADoW 1x08]. At that moment she starts to shimmer and it works –

she reappears in the stillroom. In 1590, Matthew and Diana visit his father Philippe de Clermont at Sept-Tours, the family castle, and Diana and Philippe don't exactly see eye to eye. When she confronts him about the way he treats his son, she begins not only to shimmer but to sparkle [ADoW 2x06]. Philippe is awestruck and concedes that she is truly powerful. Back in the present, she gives birth to her and Matthew's twins. The christening takes place at the family church in the Auvergne, but Baldwin (Peter McDonald), Matthew's brother and Philippe's only surviving full-blooded son, threatens to take the babies away. After a few seconds of fight between the brothers, she interferes. Fiery flares flicker all over her body and both the ceiling and the walls of the church crack from her power – the first time her power is seen in public, be it among friends and family only [ADoW 3x06].

But working magic excessively can also lead to negative effects on the witch's body, even if she's experienced like Callie who compares it to the morning after drinking too much.

I plug in the coffee pot first and sink down at the island counter with my head in my hands. Man, I feel like shit. The last time I felt a magic-hangover like this was when I used the hellfire to kill the demon. Last night was intense, but nowhere near the level of *I'm going to die* as the night in the woods. [ThH3 CoN: 221]

Earlier in the same book, students at the Grim Gate Academy of the local coven admire Callie's power and talk about the effects of working magic.

I rub my thumb over my fingers, conjuring another string of magic. This one glows bright blue, sizzling and sparking around my hand.

'Holy shit,' one of the students mumbles. 'You just astral projected and can still conjure raw magic?'

'She's pretty impressive, isn't she?' Naomi winks at me, [...]

'I feel a little weak,' one of the other students confesses.

'That's normal,' Nicole tells her. 'That kind of magic can take a lot out of you, and you were a little jittery before things started. The adrenaline is wearing off.' [ThH3 CoN: 37]

Some witches experience even worse consequences, like the grave nosebleed some feel after difficult and strenuous spells. Willow gets it in *Buffy* [5x13] after teleporting the deity Glory into outer space, and so does Bonnie when she chants to lift the spell off a tomb [TVD 2x10]. It even happens to old and practiced wizards. When Magnus Bane, the former High Warlock of Brooklyn, loses his magic, he goes to his successor for help. Lorenzo does give him 'one top-of-the-line dose of High Warlock magic', but this has a price: not only Magnus's luxurious apartment, but also a nosebleed when he uses the magic too much and too often [Shadowhunters 3x14].

4.2.1. "Tiny sparks of blue-green were arcing between my fingertips" [ADoW: 118] — Hands glowing in blue and red and orange

The *chatoiement* as such may be rare, but several witches here and in other narrative universes share another trait: their hands glow when they work magic.

In Diana's case – and, as we will see later on, throughout this universe and throughout the centuries in the *All Souls* world – hands are glowing in a yellowish-orange whenever magic is present, at least in the television adaptation. But let's start with the description of her hands in the books. We have already discussed the connection between magic and energy, even electricity to be precise. Obviously, she had experienced these blue sparks already in her teen years, when they even caused a fire at home and "the fire department had to be called to extinguish the

blaze in the kitchen” [ADoW: 119]. Twenty years later, when she felt reprimanded by Miriam in the Bod, this very sensation came back.

My fingers itched as if hundreds of insects were crawling under the skin. Tiny sparks of blue-green were arcing between my fingertips, leaving traces of energy as they erupted from the edges of my body. I clenched my hands and quickly sat on top of them.

This was *not* good. Like all members of the university, I'd sworn an oath not to bring fire or flame into Bodley's Library. [ADoW: 118–119]

And just a few days later, when she felt cornered by Matthew, her hands acted accordingly. “My fingers were brilliant blue and shooting out little arcs of fire that sputtered at the edges like the sparklers on birthday cakes” [ADoW: 193] Only when Matthew prevented her to use water and after the sparks faded, she noticed the “definite smell of bad electrical wiring” [ADoW: 194].

Almost at the beginning of the first episode of the show, Diana is on her way to the university to give a talk on her research project about illustrations in alchemical manuscripts. While chaining her bike, her papers fall out of the basket and are blown away. Her involuntary and startled ‘Stop’ causes them to rearrange in a neat pile, and – for the first time she sees the glowing of her hands [ADoW 1x01]. After the confrontation with Peter Knox during the Dean's reception, he keeps harassing her with silent speech and in self-defence she yells at him in the same way, ‘Get the hell out of my head’, and obviously casts an elemental spell on him that causes the window pane to shatter, and, much to her distress, her hands glow again [ADoW 1x02].

After she timewalked to 1590, learns that she's a weaver (a rare kind of witch), and finds a powerful witch to teach her, Diana is accepted by the members of the London Rede – the heads of all covens/gatherings – into their midst. And here she sees that they all share this orange-yellowish glow of the hands when they reveal their magic in a welcome. From that moment on, the shine of her hands is a sure sign that she works magic, like in a scene at Sept-Tours when she alters the marks of covens on a map of Burgundy to interfere with Ysabeau's next witch hunts. The glowing hands as such are just a corporeal manifestation of magic and independent of the goal a witch seeks. Accordingly, we see the same glow when the Lyonesse witch Champier (Paul Brennen) tries to steal Diana's memories and powers out of her head [ADoW 2x05], or when at the very end of season 2 Peter Knox kills Emily because she refuses to hand over the page from the Book of Life [ADoW 2x10].

Kai Parker (Chris Wood) in *The Vampire Diaries* is also a special kind of a witch: he is a Siphoner which means he can absorb magic from other witches but also from the earth. When he is chained (after he tried to kill his sister), he soaks up all the magic that surrounds Mystic Falls because of a huge spell cast upon the city – and his hands and the earth beneath turn red [TVD 6.10].

In the television adaptation of Jim Butcher's *The Dresden Files*, the ancient spirit Hrothbert “Bob” of Bainbridge (Terrence Mann) is not only an orange-glowing spirit residing in a skull in Harry's (Paul Blackthorne) basement like in the books, but he can also appear as a person. In the episode “Hair of the Dog” [TDF 1x03] he helps Harry to find out the identity of a supernatural perpetrator: he puts his hand over faint traces of blood at a crime scene and it starts to glow orange.

Callie, the heroine of the “Thorne Hill” book series, is another witch with glowing hands:

I plant one foot hard on the ground, holding steady as it races toward me. The energy in my hands glows brighter, and my heart hammers. [ThH2 *DaoN*: 185].

I sit up and straddle him, grabbing his hand. Magic sizzles at my fingertips [ThH1 *DeoN*: 182].

And in several passages her fingers show blueish sparks, especially when she worked magic while being angry,

I stand and hold my hands to my side, not caring that blue magic is sparking around my fingers. 'And stay out of Thorne Hill.' [ThH3 *CoN*: 69]

4.2.2. '*... but then we saw practically the whole town's got these eyes.*' [TB 2x10] — *Eyes in all different colors*

The corporeal changes caused by magic (be it on the bodies of the witches themselves or created by a witch on someone else) that I've just discussed can be much less subtle and alterations can be visible also to humans. One example are the observable variations of the color of eyes.

After her girlfriend Tara (Amber Benson) is shot in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* [6x19], Willow's eyes first turn scarlet red when she realizes her lover was brutally murdered, and while she summons [6x20] Osiris with Tara's dead body in her lap, they go completely black and rest black until the end, when Xander (Nicholas Brendon) succeeds to get through to her, reminds her of their friendship, and that he will stay even if she kills him too when she destroys the world.

The eyes of another Tara (Rutina Wesley) – Sookie's best friend in *True Blood* – and those of the entire townsfolk of Bon Temps turn black when throughout the second season they are under the influence of the Maenad Maryanne Forrester (Michelle Forbes). Black eyes as the physical manifestation of a person being possessed by someone occur also in the Travelers story arc of *The Vampire Diaries* (season 5) when Matt Donovan (Zach Roerig) is used for periods of time by the Traveler/Passenger Gregor.

While she corners Diana on her run and tries to look inside her [ADoW 1x02], Satu's eyes roll completely back until they are only white. The same happens to Bonnie's eyes during a ritual [TVD 4x17]. Bonnie is in the grip of Shane/Silas (David Alpay) and does his bidding, up to (assisting in) killing an entire coven of twelve witches in season 4. In the episode "Because the Night" Aja (Cynthia Addai-Robinson) tries to cleanse her from the dangerous dealings with black *Expression* magic by stabbing her. During the ritual, Bonnie's eyes turn white. In the attempt to save her friend – without being aware what's actually going on, Caroline (Candice Accola) kills Aja with the dagger, not knowing that all twelve witches are linked, and consequently die simultaneously.

4.2.3. "*A second later, [Tonk's] hair had turned bubble-gum pink.*" [HP5 *OotP*: 63] — *A witch doesn't need a hairdresser and cosmetic products for her hair...*

Using witchcraft for styling the hair is obviously a common fact, at least when we believe Hamish, as this is his first question when Matthew tells him that

'[Diana] claims she doesn't use magic.'

There were two threads in that brief sentence that needed pulling. Hamish tugged on the easier one first. 'What, not for anything? Finding a lost earring? Coloring her hair?' Hamish

sounded doubtful.

'She's not the earrings and colored hair type.' [ADoW: 96]

Hamish is right, and he knows quite well as he has his hair done by a witch – with or without witchcraft [ADoW: 105], and Callie does her hair all the time with magic, instead of using a curling iron like the rest of us...: "I finish eating, take a fast shower, and use magic to braid my hair." [ThH3 CoN: 58].

Willow's hair has different colors over the last two seasons. Naturally, she's a redhead, but when Tara is killed and her eyes go black, so does her hair as soon as she absorbed all the contents of all the books on Black Magic – until Xander can reconnect to her in the final episode [Buffy 6x22] and *she corporeally returns to her self*. However, at the end of the last season, there occurs another change. Finally, she has learned to handle magic, witchcraft and her powers, and with the help of one of the potential slayers, Kennedy (Iyari Limon), she manages a rather intricate spell using the magic powers enclosed in a scythe to transform all the girls who are potentials into actual slayers, thus raising an army of powerful young women to battle and successfully defeat The First and this deadly minions. During this spell, she starts to shine in a glowing white light and also her hair turns white until the spell is done – Kennedy is in awe, 'You – are a goddess.' [Buffy 7x22]

Nymphadora Tonks (Natalia Tina in the movie), whose changing hair color has provided the quote in the heading, can alter the color in a second, and explains her abilities to Harry:

'I'm a Metamorphmagus,' she said, looking back at her reflection and turning her head so that she could see her hair from all directions. 'It means I can change my appearance at will,' she added, spotting Harry's puzzled expression in the mirror behind her. 'I was born one. I got top marks in Concealment and Disguise during Auror training without any study at all, it was great.' [HP5 OotP: 63]

Diana, on the other hand, always had trouble with her hair. Her aunt Sarah explains it with Diana's pent-up magic, which only comes out when she's completely absorbed in something, like during her studies at the college's theater department, when she delivered wonderful performances.

The first indication that these metamorphoses might not have been the result of theatrical talent came while I was playing Ophelia in *Hamlet*. As soon as I was cast in the role, my hair started growing at an unnatural rate, tumbling down from shoulders to waist. I sat for hours beside the college's lake, irresistibly drawn to its shining surface, with my new hair streaming all around me. [ADoW: 8]

Throughout the trilogy, her hair changes twice, the first time after she timewalked to 1590's London, "Instead of my usual shoulder-length, straw-colored hair, [my hands] found unexpectedly springy reddish-gold locks reaching down to my waist" [SoN: 7]. Going back to the present gives her hair yet another color. "I glanced down to find not the strawberry blond curls I'd grown accustomed to but straight, silky strands that were a brighter reddish gold – just like my mother's hair." [SoN: 616]

The topic of DNA was mentioned earlier. However, also with regard to hair (and other cut-off parts of the body, like nail clippings) DNA comes into play.

After returning to Sept-Tours, Matthew talks about the Oxford break-in both in the lab and in Diana's rooms at New College to find a DNA sample. But Diana reassures Ysabeau and Matthew that they won't find anything in her rooms:

'My mother insisted that I clean my hairbrush before leaving for school each morning. It's an ingrained habit. She made me flush the hair down the toilet – my nail clippings, too.' Matthew now appeared stunned. Ysabeau didn't look surprised at all. [ADoW: 339]

After asking what Rebecca has told her, it dawned at him,

‘What could she have been thinking’ Matthew mused out loud. ‘Hair and fingernails carry a lot of genetic information.’ [ADoW: 339]

When Diana doubts whether her mother was really sane, Ysabeau comforts her:

‘Your mother was not mad, Diana, and not everything can be explained by your modern science, Matthew. Witches have believed for centuries that hair and fingernails had power,’ said Ysabeau. Marthe muttered in agreement and rolled her eyes at the ignorance of youth.

‘Witches use them to work spells,’ Ysabeau continued. ‘Binding spells, love magic – they depend on such things. [...] I have known many witches over the years. Not one of them would leave a strand of her hair or scrap of her nails for fear that another witch would find them.’ [ADoW: 340]

Harry Dresden is another witch/wizard who’s familiar with this ancient knowledge.

My brown hair hung down past my jawline, clean but shaggy. I hadn’t cut it or asked for a barber. Things that know magic can do awful stuff to you if they get hold of a lock of your hair, so I’d decided to hang on to mine. [HD14 CD: 14]

Even outside of magic circles, the lock of a person can bear a special importance – kept in a medallion as a memory for a child’s early years, or an old lover.

4.2.4. “Letters [...] ran just under my skin.” [TBoL: 520] — When writings and signs appear on the body

Among the texts I used, there are several quite spectacular moments when magic literally changes a witch’s body. The first one features again Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. We’ve already seen that she goes to the Dark Side after her girlfriend Tara was killed. At one point [Buffy 6.20], she summons all dark art books available at the Magic Shop onto a table and plunges her hands into a book. All words move off the pages, scrolling up her hands, to her chest and her face, until the books are completely empty.

Diana is the second witch who literally becomes a book, in this case the Book of Life, considered to bear the history of the vampires or to be the first grimoire and known also under its present library signature, *Ashmole 782*.

At the very beginning of the trilogy we meet Diana at the Bodleian Library after she called up this manuscript. Even before examining it and noticing “that three leaves had been cut neatly out the binding” [ADoW: 11]. Throughout the trilogy, she’s on a quest for the manuscript and the three pages to make the ancient book whole again and finally understand its message to all creatures. About three quarters in to the third novel, aptly called *The Book of Life*, she inserts the lost illuminations. The folios magically glued themselves into the manuscript, and Diana tries to read the text about the history of the children born from weavers and blood-raged vampires – her children, until the book claps shut. However, when she opened it again, it is empty because it has entered her body, “I was the *Book of Life*” [TBoL: 485]

Even though he’d been warned of the change, Marcus was visibly shocked when I climbed out of the car at Sept-Tours. [...]

‘No questions, Marcus,’ Hamish said, taking my elbow. He’d seen on the plane what questions did to me. No disguising spell could hide the way my eyes went milky white and displayed letters and symbols at even the hint of a query, more letters appearing on my forearms and the backs of my hands. [TBoL: 491]

The television adaptation foreshadowed this unique relation of the book to Diana's body already in the first episode. The second she touched the contours of the image of the alchemical child in an upside-down vessel, the fast moving dark spidery words float up her fingers [ADoW 1x01]. Only when she clasped her hands on the illumination, the words re-enter the book, but the outlines of the vessel are burned on her palm. In view of the story of the Bright Born this, again, could be interpreted as cataphoric: since the vessel with the baby resembles a uterus, it could indicate that the manuscript already knows that Diana is able to carry the "alchemical child" – the synthesis of opposites. Even though the setting differs from the novel, Diana finds the manuscript again in the sixth episode. The three pages seal themselves back into the manuscript and cause first just a flicker of the lights, but with the third folio a blast of energy was emitted that every creature in Oxford could feel. When Diana tries to stop the book from rapidly flipping the pages all the letters and images turn white and enter her hands. But not only her hands: While she recites the story of the Bright Born, words and images all in white crawl up her neck and along her cheeks up to her hairline.

In the book, her body is not only covered with words, a "palimpsest under the surface of her own skin" [TWOAS: 29].

"When my body had absorbed the Book of Life, a tree had appeared on it as well. Its trunk covered the back of my neck, perfectly aligned with the column of my spine. Its roots spread across my shoulders. The tree's branches fanned out under my hair, covering my scalp. The tips of the branches peeked out along my hairline, behind my ears, and around the edges of my face."
[TBoL: 492]

Earlier in the books, her familiar, the firedrake Corra, has left a shadowy picture of herself on Diana's back [cf. TBoL: 33], and the colored weaver strands she got from her teacher Goody Alsop in London, appear on her hands [cf. TBoL: 129, 132].

And there's something else on Diana's back. Both in the first book and in the first season of the show Diana is abducted and held prison by Satu Järvinen. She literally wants to open up Diana, when she doesn't succeed, she's magically branded Diana with Matthew's insignia – a six-pointed star inside a crescent moon [cf. ADoW: 380–381 & 1x06; ADoW: 430; TBoL: 33].

The triskelion, the triple spiral, is another very old sign, often associated with Celtic or Nordic culture. In *The Originals*, the witch Lenore (Sonja Sohn) casts a soul-branding spell to make sure that a mark is left on the body of the person Esther Mikaelson (Alice Evans) has just jumped into to inhabit them. When *she* herself turns out to be the next person Esther jumped into, Lenore's spell works and the triskelion appears on her right hand [TO 2x03].

There are yet other signs on the body of a witch. In *The Originals* [TO 2x07] a line of Nordic Runes appear on Kol/Kaleb's (Daniel Sharman) arm as if branded onto his skin.

However, we may also include the effect a spell has on the body of a vampire, as is the case with Elijah Mikaelson (David Gillies) in *The Originals*. At one point, he receives a message from the witch Celeste, his 18th century lover. After she casts a spell, his whole body is covered with the names of all witches she had inhabited over the centuries and he has to figure out the names and persons [TO 1x14].

4.3. *'Is that fuckin' demon face gonna come back?' [TB 4.11] – How to modify parts of the body*

Some male and female witches have the ability to alter parts of their body. One of them is Jesús (Kevin Alejandro) in *True Blood*. He comes from a family of Mexican brujas/brujos who work their magic with the aid of their family demon. Whenever Jesús taps very deep into his magic, his face changes into this demon, as seen in two episodes. To help Sookie and his friends, he needs to break through the protective shield Marnie has conjured around her shop in Shreveport. Using his family's magic his face becomes the blueish demon face [TB 4x10]. In the following episode [TB 4x11] he has to break the connection between Marnie and the 16th century witch Antonia who gives her the power. But he needs the help of his boyfriend Lafayette (Nelsan Ellis) and warns him in advance what might happen:

- [J] 'Lafayette, where we're goin' right now, it's deep. And you may hear and see things that you really don't want to.'
- [L] 'Oh, that ship has fuckin' sailed.'
- [J] 'Listen. I'm gonna be using a very dark part of myself. Whatever happens, however I may talk to you and whatever you see, please don't take it personally.'
- [L] 'Is that fuckin' demon face gonna come back?'
- [J] 'It's part of my family's magic. It might manifest, I just don't know.'

After she was killed, Marnie comes back and possesses Lafayette. She forces him to murder his lover Jesús to gain his powers and "inherit" his brujo face [TB 4x12].

Changing parts of the body can also be found in the *All Souls* Trilogy. After Diana mastered her forspell (she got her familiar – the fire-drake who allowed her to be called Corra, conjured a Rowan tree, and met the goddess), she is of course exhausted.

Goody Alsop reached me first, her thin arms reaching around to gather me close. 'You did well, child, you did well,' she whispered. Elizabeth cupped her hand and with a few words transformed it into a shallow silver dipper full of water. I drank from it, and when the cup was empty, it went back to being nothing more than a hand. [SoN: 366].

Diana herself is also quite capable to change her hands and arms. In Prague, Diana and Matthew visit Edward Kelley, John Dee's assistant and scryer. After a dispute about the Book of Life he had stolen from Dee, Matthew dangled him briefly out of the open window at the Donkey and Cradle. Back inside, Kelley lifted

his staff to strike someone. What was he up to?

Then I realized: he was planning on striking me. An unintelligible sound broke free from my mouth, and when I held out my hand, Kelley's staff flew straight into it. My arm transformed into a branch for a moment before returning to its normal outlines. I prayed that it had all happened too fast for Kelley to perceive the change. The look on his face told me my hopes were in vain.

'Don't let the emperor see you do that,' Kelley smirked, 'or he'll have you locked away, yet another curiosity for him to savor.' [SoN: 452]

More humorous is the way, Tonks shows her special aptitudes as a *Metamorph-magus* at the dinner table after the meeting of the Order of the Phoenix:

Opposite Harry, Tonks was entertaining Hermione and Ginny by transforming her nose between mouthfuls. Screwing up her eyes each time with the same pained expression she had worn back in Harry's bedroom, her nose swelled to a beak-like protuberance that resembled Snape's, shrank to the size of a button mushroom and then sprouted a great deal of hair from each nostril. Apparently this was a regular mealtime entertainment, because Hermione and Ginny were soon requesting their favourite noses.

'Do that one like a pig snout, Tonks.'

Tonks obliged, and Harry, looking up, had the fleeting impression that a female Dudley was grinning at him from across the table. [HP5 OotP: 123]

4.4. “Transfiguration is complicated magic” [ThH2 DoN: 109] – When a witch can transform into something else...

The ultimate and deepest material alteration of the body, is certainly the ability to change the whole body and voluntarily become someone/something else, or turn another human into an animal/object. We know the latter plot point from numerous fairy tales where the curse is often used as a punishment for a previous wrong doing or in revenge. Examples would be the *Beauty and the Beast*, the Brother Grimm’s *The Frog Prince*; or, *Iron Heinrich*, and several other fairy tales from their collections. On the other hand, the topos can already be found in the various animal and other disguises Zeus uses to seduce his love interests. Basically, it’s always the same: the complete transformation from a human into something else – be it an animal or an object. Depending on the literary/filmic universe the texts belong to, it has different names, like transfiguration or transmogrification or animagus.

We can distinguish this ability of transfiguration as done by a witch from glamouring, turning into an animal as done by shifters and werewolves/weretigers etc., or even into another person – a special faculty of a shifter who after having killed another human becomes a skinwalker. *Glamouring*⁶ was briefly discussed in ch. 2.1.1. as making others believe that you look differently, like in *The Craft* when Sarah changed the color of her eyes and her hair, or later when Nancy made a young man believe that he’s having sex with Sarah, the girl he has a crush on.

When the students in *The Magicians* are about to go to the Antarctic branch of the Brakebills College, they are transformed into geese to be capable to fly [cf. *Mag*: 169–170]. After the special training they can transform themselves into animals and fly back to Upstate New York (in the television adaptation, we see that they learned to change into animals, but they walk back through a portal [cf. *Mag* 1x06/1x07]).

Within the Harry Potter world, witches who have mastered this kind of transformation are called *Animagi*. One of them, Minerva McGonagall, appears already at the beginning. After Mr Dursley left his house one day, he is startled by “a cat reading a map” and “reading the sign that said *Privet Drive*” [HP1 PS: 8, 9]. Later that night, Professor Dumbledore arrived at Privet Drive, and he also

looked up suddenly at the cat, which was still staring at him from the other end of the street. For some reason, the sight of the cat seemed to amuse him. He chuckled and muttered, ‘I should have known.’ [HP1 PS: 15]

After putting out all the lights in the street,

he sat down on the wall next to the cat. He didn’t look at it, but after a moment he spoke to it. ‘Fancy seeing you here, Professor McGonagall.’

He turned to smile at the tabby, but it had gone. Instead he was smiling at a rather severe-looking woman who was wearing square glasses exactly the shape of the markings the cat had had around its eyes. [HP1 PS: 16]

Minerva McGonagall is an *Animagus* – a witch who can change into an animal at will, in her case a tabby cat. In the movie *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* [Columbus 2001], we can watch how she does it. When Ron and Harry are late for their very first Transfiguration class, the desk is empty except for a cat sitting very

still. Satisfied that they escaped a reprimand, Ron panted, ‘Whew! We made it! Can you imagine the look on McGonagall’s face if we were late?’ A split second later he realized how wrong he was. With an elegant leap the cat jumped from the table and turned instantly back into Professor McGonagall.

Becoming an Animagus requires long studying and training. Moreover, you have to register at the Ministry of Magic, naming your animal. However, there are at least four Animagi who aren’t officially known, one is the journalist Rita Skeeter (Miranda Richardson). Throughout *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* she loves to spy on the subjects of her articles by changing into a beetle.

The three others were James Potter (Adrian Rawlins) = Harry’s father, Sirius Black (Gary Oldman) and Peter Pettigrew (Timothy Spall). Together with Remus Lupin (David Thewlis) they were a quartet of friends who studied at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry decades before Harry. Their story can show the difference between werewolf/shifter and animagus: When James, Sirius and Peter find out that Remus was bitten by a werewolf as a child and thus has to change into a werewolf every month on the full moon, they studied hard for three years to become Animagi in order to accompany their friend during these difficult hours (unlike a werewolf, an animagus keeps their human abilities of thinking and their memories when transformed). Peter transforms into a rat, Sirius can become a black dog, and James turns into a stag. Hence their names on the Marauder’s Map: Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot & Prongs.

In the Harry Potter universe, transfiguration is not confined to other living beings. Later in the saga, we can watch Horace Slughorn (Jim Broadbent) changing from an “overstuffed armchair” [HP6 *H-BP*: 81] back into himself.

Unlike my attempt to keep a witch’s transfiguration and a shapeshifter’s turning into an animal apart just for the sake of keeping this paper to witches only, Callie in the “Thorne Hill” series considers the two ways of turning into an animal related.

‘Transfiguration is a type of magic. It’s the way werewolves shift and the way my familiars can take on the form of a regular animal.’

‘And you can transfigure people?’ Her eyes are as wide as saucers.

‘And objects. It’s not my strongest area of magic. I’m better at conjuring.’ [ThH3 *CoN*: 89–90]

In a previous book in the series, she explains it to Eliza in the same way, ‘It’s the same principles as shape shifting, using the basic magical formulas that cause a werewolf to shift shape.’ [ThH2 *DoN*: 117] But like in all the other texts, it requires excessive studying – more than Callie ever did, hence when he angered her more than usual, she turns her brother Scott into an orange cat, just by accident:

I have no idea what I did. I had no idea I could even do that.

Transfiguration is complicated magic. I spent some time studying it during my university years, but my main focus was on conjuring. The same magic that causes werewolves to shift goes into the basics of transfiguration, and a spell gone wrong can result in serious disfiguration or death. [ThH2 *DoN*: 109–110]

However, thanks to her own power and to that of her friends, Scott becomes human again.

And, to end with the moral of this story, never ever try spells you aren’t sure about, or, even better, follow the advice Anthony Stewart Head’s gives in his 2014 song *Don’t mess with magic*:

No you can’t

No you can’t mess with magic

No you can't
 Take the curse of a witch's spell
 Well once the die is cast
 You better hope
 Your luck will last
 Because if you try to mess with magic
 You will fall [...]
[\https://open.spotify.com/track/5DqeivHQP3aRtraSXGXd3o;
[http://www.songlyrics.com/anthony-stewart-head/don-t-mess-with-magic-lyrics/\]](http://www.songlyrics.com/anthony-stewart-head/don-t-mess-with-magic-lyrics/)

Endnotes

- 1 “*Gramarye* ‘occult learning’ is a doublet of *grammar*, and both derive via Old French *gramaire* and Latin *gramatica* from Ancient Greek *grammatikḗ (téchne)* ‘grammatical (art),’ from *grammatikós* ‘knowing one’s letters’ and earlier *grámma* ‘letter, something drawn; small weight.’ The story of how an ancient word for ‘letter’ evolved into *gramarye*, *grammar*, and even *glamour* (via Scots) is full of semantic twists and turns. The sense ‘knowledge of letters’ shifted to the broader definition of ‘the study of how a language’s sentences are constructed,’ and this is the definition of *grammar* today. In the Middle Ages, because grammar was taught only among the upper classes, *grammar* became a symbol of general ‘higher’ learning, which also included subjects such as astrology, magic, and the occult at the time. *Glamour* and *gramarye* are simply variants of *grammar* that kept this connection to magic, though *glamour* later shifted again to refer to enchantingly good looks. *Gramarye* was first recorded in English in early 1300s.”
[\[https://www.dictionary.com/e/word-of-the-day/gramarye-2021-10-06; retrieved: 2021-10-07\].](https://www.dictionary.com/e/word-of-the-day/gramarye-2021-10-06)
 As to its history and etymology, *Merriam-Webster* also establishes a close connection to magic:
 “Middle English *gramarye*, *gramarie*, modification of Middle French *gramaire* grammar, grammar book, book of sorcery.” [\[https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gramarye; visited: 2021-06-10\].](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gramarye)
 Most of the dictionaries agree that it was revived in the early 1800s by Sir Walter Scott [cf. <https://en.wiktionary.org/w/index.php?title=gramarye&oldid=61112938>; retrieved: 2021-06-10; cf. also <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80548?redirectedFrom=gramarye&print>; retrieved: 2021-06-11].
- 2 Just a sidenote on the “familiar”. Unlike in other witch stories, or witch lore in general – just think of the legions of black cats, in the *All Souls* universe the *familiar spirit* is a feature limited to one special group of witches, the weavers. When Diana, a weaver who had no idea that she is one, first heard that she will have a “familiar”, she protested vehemently,
 ‘Witches don’t have familiars.’ This was another human conceit, like worshipping the devil.
 ‘Weavers do,’ Goody Alsop said serenely, motioning toward her fetch. ‘This is mine. Like all familiars, she is an extension of my talents.’ [SoN: 344]
 Diana is a weaver, and she got a fire Drake named Corra in her forspell [SoN: 363–367], her father Stephen was also a weaver, his familiar is Bennu, a heron [SoN: 577], and her 16th century teacher Goody Alsop has a gray fetch for her familiar [SoN: 321].
 This scene in *Time’s Convert* is the first hint that Philip is actually a weaver like his mother.
- 3 Actually, Bridget Bishop is a historical figure, she was the first woman sentenced to death for witchcraft during the witch trials in Salem, and hanged on 10 June 1692.
- 4 *Daemons* are the third type of creatures in Deborah Harkness’s *All Souls* universe. Obviously in order to get them not confounded with the type of beings we usually associate with “demon” and to stress her view of the lineage of these creatures, Harkness has chosen the term “*daemon*” which we know from classical Greek mythology (δαίμων). (Just as a sidenote: Philip Pullman’s *daemons* are entirely different beings.)
- 5 Within the *All Souls* world, it is mostly Em who uses candles both while scrying [ADoW 1x03, 1x06] and when she tries to contact her dead friend Rebecca, Diana’s mother and Sarah’s sister [ADoW 2x03, 2x04, 2x08, 2x10].
 In several texts, candles are arranged in a circle or at the points of a pentagram to serve their purpose in a ritual. Willow for instance sits in the middle of a circle of burning red candles that flare up high when she casts a spell to gain more control over her life [Buffy 4x09]. Callie and her friends often use candles in many rituals, mostly five, strengthening the pentagram, or when Callie invokes Hecate on her own [ThH1 DoN: 113].
- 6 The ability to *glamour* is not restricted to witches. In several texts vampires can apply this technique to make the other believe what they want them to see/know/remember – examples would be the Red Court of Vampires in *The Dresden Files*, *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and *The Mortal Instruments* [CoLS]/*Shadowhunters*. They share this with the fae/fairies/faeries/Fair Folk/Seelie: again in *The Dresden Files*, *True Blood*, and *The Mortal Instruments* [CoLS]/*Shadowhunters*, and in the latter group of verbal and audiovisual texts, both *Shadowhunters* and demons are able to glamour themselves and objects. To shapeshift into another human appearance is also a feature of the Whitelighters in the original *Charmed*.

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- HP7 *DH* = Rowling 2007
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Hexen im Fernsehen. Magie — Natur — Körper

Gloria Withalm (Wien)

feminismen diskutieren — Depot, 2. November 2021

Hexen im Fernsehen. Magie – Natur – Körper

1. ***“What else is there?” \ “More than you could imagine.”*** — Übernatürlichen Wesen in Film/ Fernsehen und Büchern
2. ***“Magic and witchcraft are but two paths that cross in the wood.”*** — Magie und/vs. Hexenkünste
 - 2.1. *“This book [...] contains the witches’ first spells”* — Über einige Charakteristika von Zaubersprüchen
 - 2.2. *“The point where the spells collided.”* — Über die Materialität von Zauberei
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 - 3.1. *“Give this tulip a little nudge.”* — Wenn Hexen Pflanzen wachsen lassen...
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 - 3.3. *“Invoco elementum ...”* — Elementare Magie
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 - 4.4. *“Transfiguration is complicated magic.”* — Wenn sich Hexen in etwas anderes verwandeln können...

1. "What else is there?" – Übernatürlichen Wesen



The Craft 1997



Harry Potter saga 1997–2008 +
Harry Potter movies 2001–11



The Vampire Diaries 2009–17



The Originals 2013–18 / *Legacies* 2018–21



Buffy ... 1997–2003



Charmed 1998–2005



The Dresden Files 2000–2020



Southern Vampire Mysteries 2001–2013



True Blood 2008–2014



A Discovery of Witches 2018–22



The Magicians 2015–2020



Midnight, Texas 2017–18

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

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 - 2.1.2. "What drives magic is [...] sheer will." — Über Absicht und Intention in den Hexenkünsten
 - 2.1.3. "My spell had knocked him out cold" — Zur Wirkung von Zaubersprüchen
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2.1. “This book [...] contains the witches’ first spells.” — Zaubersprüche



Knox “said that spells become volatile around the anniversaries of their casting.” [ADoW: 218]

Spells were passed from generation to generation, within families and among coven members.

[SoN: 322]

“...the spell might wear off in a day or two.”

[ThH4 Still of Night: 170]

“That’s the color of death. You killed the spell.”

[TBoL: 145]

Mostly, a spell consists of

- an *incantation* (vocalized or silent);
- the *intent* to cast a spell;
- and the *effect* / result.

Types of spells:

charm/enchantment / jinx / hex / curse, ...

healing spells, protection spell, binding spells, tracking/locator spells, cloaking spells, ...

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.1.1. “Most spells were written in rhyme.” — Sprache und Struktur

Harry Potter:

Accio, Aguamenti, Confundo, Expecto Patronum, Expelliarmus, Incendio, Lumos, Nox, ... Crucio, Imperio, ...

I raised my right hand and snarled, “Fuego!”

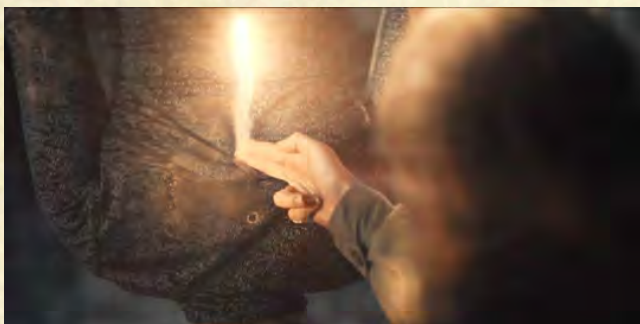
[HD14 Cold Days: 267]

“*Converte hoc maledictio*,” I chant, and Betty gasps. [ThH5 Curse of Night: 277]

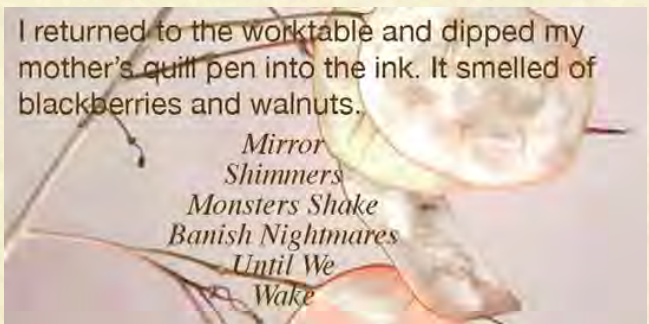
“*Resisite chonje vos elus [...] Ou fê konfyans cherche de l’aide. [...] Sacré sang du père. Sacré sang de la mère.*” [The Originals 4x07]

“*Light of the moon, dark of the night, I cloak you from all, and hide you from sight.*” I feel the magic pulse through me. “*Other angels may seek but won’t be able to find, this spell of invisibility to you I do bind.*”

[Callie speaks in Enochian; ThH8 Heir of Night: 45]



ADoW 1x06, Satu Järvinen opens up Diana, “*Avata!* Show me what you’re hiding inside of you.”



I returned to the worktable and dipped my mother’s quill pen into the ink. It smelled of blackberries and walnuts.

*Mirror
Shimmers
Monsters Shake
Banish Nightmares
Until We
Wake*

Diana uses Gramarye to write a sleeping spell for children [TBoL: 150]

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.1.2. “What drives magic is sheer will.” – Intention in den Zauberkünsten



ADoW 1x07, “Look, you don’t just say the words, okay? You have to concentrate on what you desire.”

“Much of what qualified as magic was simply desire in action. Witchcraft was different – that took spells and rituals. But magic? A wish, a need, a hunger too strong to be denied – these could turn into deeds when they crossed a witch’s mind.”

[ADoW: 180]

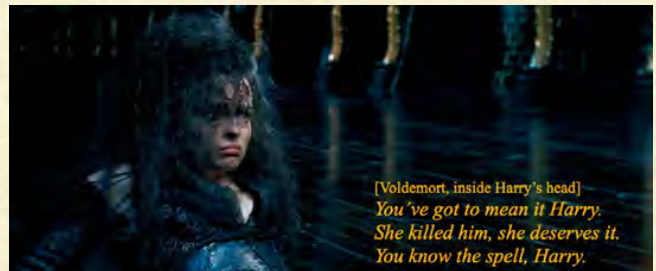
* * *

“Magic is will, my great-aunt always told me. You may have a set of words to say, but you may not.”

[Fiji in MidnTX3, Night Shift: 89]



ADoW 1x08, “Honey, you need to think about Matthew. You want to be with him. Magic’s in the heart not the mind.”



Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix: Harry tries the Cruciatus Curse on Bellatrix

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.1.3. “My spell had knocked him out cold” — Wirkung von Zaubersprüchen

“[T]echnology doesn’t get along with wizards. Put any kind of intricate machine in a wizard’s presence, and suddenly everything that might go wrong with the machine does go wrong. And that’s when we’re not even trying to make it happen. Electronics generally get hit the hardest.”

[HD14 Cold Days: 216]

Lumos lights the tip of the wand; with *Orchideous* a “bunch of flowers burst from the wand tip”; *Aguamenti* produces a jet of water. [spells in *Harry Potter*]



The Unbreakable Vow:

“A thin tongue of brilliant flame issued from the wand and wound its way around their hands like a red-hot wire.”

[HP and the Half-Blood Prince 2006: 49]



“Hermione raised her wand, moved it in a circle through the air and a wreath of Christmas roses blossomed before them.”

[HP and the Deathly Hallows 2008: 365]

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2.2. *“The point where the spells collided”* — Materialität von Zauberei



HPatDH-2: Harry & Voldemort — the final battle: *Expelliarmus* vs *Avada Kedavra*

You *“aim”* and *“shoot”* a spell at somebody; if you do not *“dodge”* or *“leap aside”* to avoid the spell, it will *“hit”* you – the worst is to get *“hit squarely in the chest”*.

However, you can *“block”*, *“repell”* or *“deflect”* a spell and it can *“rebound”* on a wall and *“bounce back”*, or hit an object and smash it.



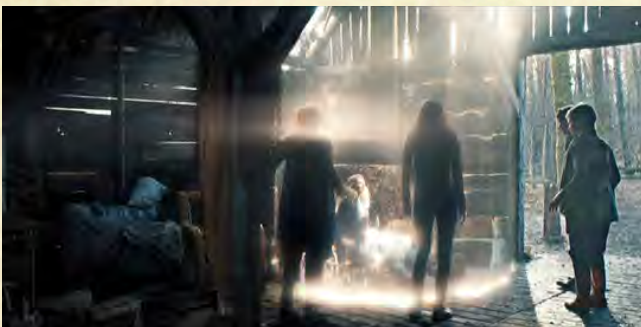
ADoW 1x06, Satu beating the tiny Sámi drum to concentrate her power

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.2.1. *“What on earth possessed you to conjure up a griffin, Diana?”*



ADoW 2x05, In self-defence, Diana summons Matthew's dagger to stab the witch Champier



ADoW 1x08, Diana shields herself and Matthew



True Blood 4x10, Jesús fights the protection spell

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.2.2. *“With a small gesture, she released her spell...”*



ADoW 2x01, Susanna works (with) a candle



Buffy 1x03, Catherine chokes Xander



ADoW 1x06, Satu lifts Diana off the ground



True Blood 4x06, Marnie hexes a vampire in prison

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.2.3. “Do you have a wand?” — Hexenwerkzeuge 1



HPatDH-1: Hermione performs a protection spell



ADoW 1x08, Diana examines the poppet of her ancestor Bridget Bishop



ADoW 2x08, Peter Knox uses his petrosphere to threaten Nathaniel and Sophie and the baby



HPatHBP: Harry wins the *Felix Felicis* potion

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

2.2.3. “Do you have a wand?” — Hexenwerkzeuge 2

“*Wolfsbane*, the voices whispered. *Skullcap*. *Devil’s bit*. *Adder’s tongue*. *Witch’s broom*. Their chant was punctuated with warnings and suggestions, and their litany of spells included plants that featured in fairy tales.

Gather cinquefoil when the moon is full to extend the reach of your power.

Hellebore makes any disguising spell more effective.

Mistletoe will bring you love and many children.

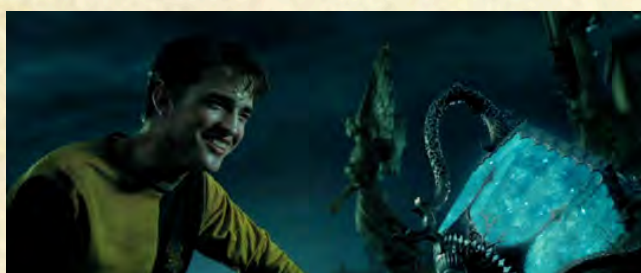
To see the future more clearly, use black henbane.”

[TBOL: 156]



“*Touch bounded smudge of blue sage with braided wheat straw.*”

Sally & Gillian perform a ritual according to their aunts’ Spell Book [*Practical Magic*]



“Cedric looked down at the Triwizard Cup and then up at Harry. ‘Did anyone tell you the Cup was a Portkey?’ he asked.” [*HP and the Goblet of Fire* 2004: 689]



TO 3x22: Freya uses her siblings’ names in Runes

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3.1. *“Give this tulip a little nudge.”* – die Natur zum Leben erwecken... 1



TVD 3x17, Bonnie Bennett, *“Witches have a connection to the Earth. We can literally feel nature. Life.”*



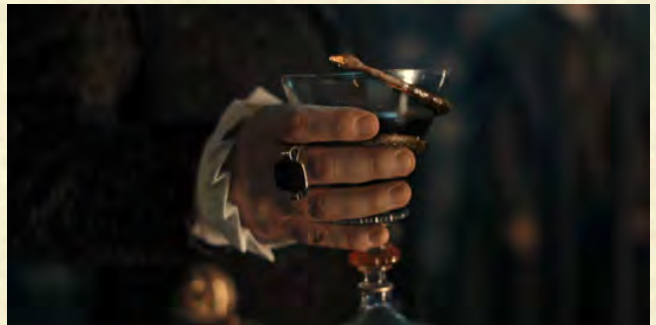
Midnight, Texas 1x09, Fiji Cavanaugh learns to grow flowers from dormant bulbs in midwinter — until she loses control...

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

3.1. *“Give this tulip a little nudge.”* – die Natur zum Leben erwecken... 1



ADoW 2x02, Diana admires the embroidered snake on the shoes of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke a bit too much...



ADoW 2x07, ...another snake, *“the serpent in the Garden”*, on the glass of Emperor Rudolf II in Bohemia — not even a Habsburg Emperor should ever doubt a witch...

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3.2. *"The sun [...] left the quince, traveling into my fingers" – Über das Vergehen...*



"Some say a witch's true power comes from being a creature between life and death [...]" — Since "the quince turned brown, shriveling and sinking into itself", Diana has this power [SoN: 58 & ADoW 2x01]



TO 2x19, Before she kills him, Dahlia makes Aiden's roses wilt, "Too bad. They were almost as young and beautiful as you!"

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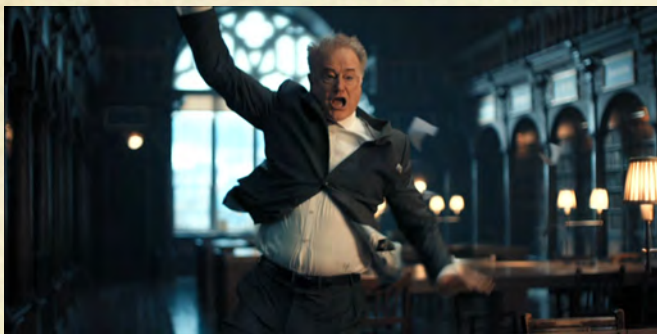
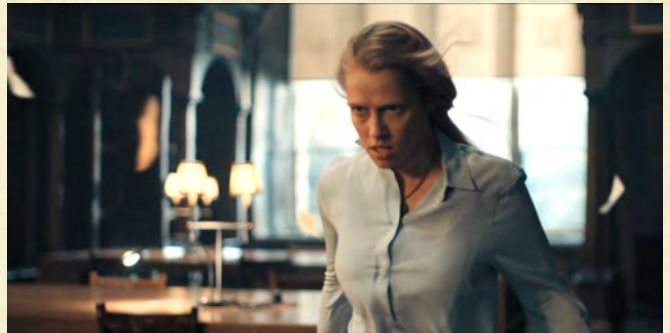
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The air began to stir around me as if trying to drive off the feeling of being trapped. Chilly wisps edged up the legs of my trousers. The air crept up my body, lifting the hair around my face in a gentle breeze. Matthew swore and stepped toward me, his arm outstretched. The breeze increased into gusts of wind that ruffled the bedclothes and the curtains.

[...]

The force of the wind kept rising, and with it my arms rose, too, shaping the air into a column that enclosed me as protectively as the duvet.

[ADoW: 215]



ADoW 1x03, Peter Knox should have known better than to provoke Diana and hurt Sean, the librarian at the Bodleian and a friend of hers...

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3.3.2. “The water was coming out of me” — Elementare Magie (ii): Wasser



ADoW 1x04, Diana feels alone, abandoned by Matthew. She “gives in to her tears” [ADoW: 294], but it was more than crying...

My tears fell normally but swelled as they dropped into globules the size of snowballs that hit the stone roof of the watchtower with a splash. My hair snaked over my shoulders in sheets of water that poured over the curves of my body. I opened my mouth to take a breath because the water streaming down my face was blocking my nose, and water gushed out in a torrent that tasted of the sea. [...]

I reached out, thinking that would help the water drain from me. Even more water cascaded from my fingertips. [...]

As the water poured forth, my control slipped further.

[ADoW: 295]

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

3.3.2. *"Witchfire is lethal. No spell can ward it off"* — Elementare Magie (iii): Feuer



Midnight, Texas 1x09, Fiji projects fire



ADoW 1x06, Satu creates a fire circle at La Pierre



ADoW 1x08, After Juliette threatened her and wounds Matthew lethally, Diana kills her with witchfire



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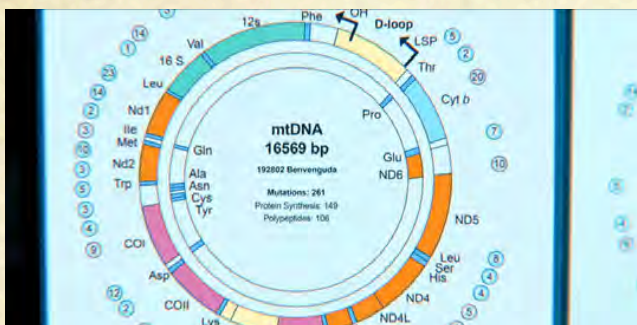
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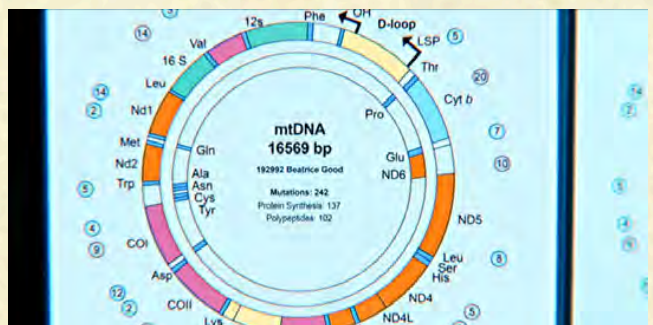
ADoW 1x03, “You were born to be a witch.”



ADoW 1x05, “You have every genetic marker we’ve ever seen in a witch.”



ADoW 1x02, mtDNA chart of a 7th century witch



ADoW 1x02, mtDNA chart of her descendant

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Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

4.2. *"Does she always have such a bright glaem about her?"* — wenn Magie am Körper sichtbar wird...



"Matthew." Ysabeau's voice held a note of caution.
"Le chatoiemment." [ADoW: 266]

"You're using magic," he said, putting his tea down. "I can smell it. See it, too. You're shimmering."

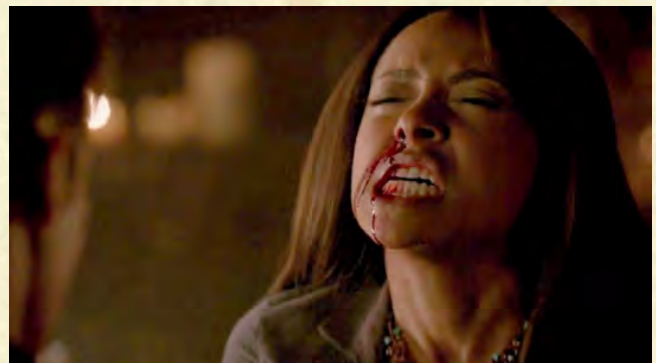
[ADoW: 218]

"I can smell the magic coming off you from across the bar," she tells me. "You're like a walking Happy Meal for vampires."

[ThH7 Reign of Night: 103]



Buffy 5x13, Willow's nose after a difficult spell



TVD 2x10, Bonnie's nose is bleeding, too

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4.2.1. *“Practically the whole town’s got these eyes”* – Augen in allen Farben



Buffy 6x19, Willow’s eyes turn red after her girlfriend shot



TVD 2x10, Tara is under the influence of the Maenad



ADoW 1x02, Satu tries to look inside Diana



TVD 4x17, Bonnie Bennett during a ritual

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

4.2.2. *“A second later, her hair had turned bubble-gum pink.”*



Buffy 6x20, Willow's hair turns black after she absorbs all books of Black Magic



Buffy 7x22, After Willow made all Potentials to Slay, Kennedy tells her, “You...are a goddess.”



Harry Potter Saga: Tonks is a Metamorphmagus

Diana's hair changed after timewalking to 1590: “Instead of my usual shoulder-length, straw-colored hair, [my hands] found unexpectedly springy reddish-gold locks reaching down to my waist”

[SoN: 7]

Going back to her own time makes her hair change again: “I glanced down to find not the strawberry blond curls I'd grown accustomed to but straight, silky strands that were a brighter reddish gold – just like my mother's hair.”

[SoN: 616]

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4.2.3. *“Tiny sparks of blue-green [at] my fingertips”* — Leuchtende Hände



ADoW 1x02, Diana's hands start to glow when she performed an elemental spell for the first time



ADoW 2x02, “This is not a test, Diana. This is a welcome” – The members of the London Rede accept Diana by showing their magic



ADoW 2x06, Diana changes the locations of witches on Ysabeau's map for her next witch hunt



TVD 6x10, Kai siphons the earth's magical energy

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]

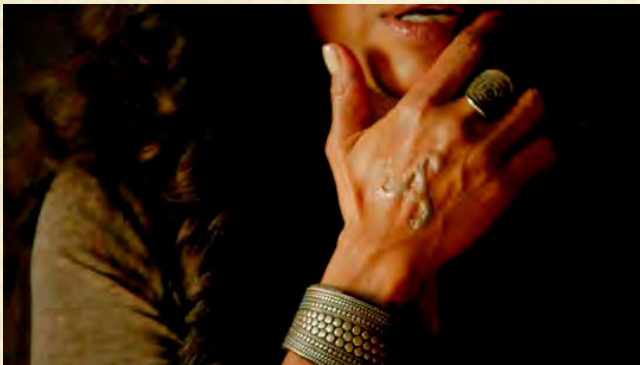
4.2.4. *“Letters [...] ran just under my skin”* — Zeichen auf dem Körper



ADoW 1x01, When Diana touches the Book of Life, spidery letters crawl along the backs of her hands



ADoW 1x06, Diana is branded with Matthew's insignia: a star inside a crescent moon



TO 2x03, Esther/Lenore has the triskelion mark on her



TO 2x07, Red runes appear on Kol/Kaleb's arm

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4.3. *"Is that fuckin' demon face gonna come back?"* — Körperteile ändern



TB 4x11, With the help of his magic, Jesús can break the connection between Marnie and Antonia



TB 4x12, After he killed Jesús, Lafayette "inherits" his brujo face



"Opposite Harry, Tonks was entertaining Hermione and Ginny by transforming her nose between mouthfuls." [HP and the Order of the Phoenix: 99]

Goody Alsop reached me first, her thin arms reaching around to gather me close. "You did well, child, you did well," she whispered. Elizabeth cupped her hand and with a few words transformed it into a shallow silver dipper full of water. I drank from it, and when the cup was empty, it went back to being nothing more than a hand.

[SoN: 366]

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4.4. "Transfiguration is complicated magic." – Totale Verwandlung



HPatPS: Transfiguration class with a cat — Professor Minerva McGonagall is an Animagus

Gloria Withalm: „Hexen im Fernsehen: Magie – Natur – Körper“ [feminismen diskutieren, Depot, 2021-11-02]



...thank you for your attention

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