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DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„Irish Folklore and Mythology in Irish Young Adult Fantasy Literature:
Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman*, and
O.R. Melling's *The Hunter's Moon.*"

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Monika Kraigher

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To my grandmother,

for her love, guidance and support...

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Wöhrer for his exceptional guidance and patience.

Thank you to my mother who has supported and motivated me unconditionally during my studies and in my everyday life.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues, notably the "gang" from the Australian literature room, who were a great mental support during the work on this diploma thesis.

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this Diploma Thesis in English all by myself: Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references, either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

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1. Introduction

> Ireland is a land of mists and mystic shadows; of cloudwraiths on the purple mountains; of weird silences in the lonely hills, and fitfull skies of deepest gloom alternating with gorgeous sunset splendour [sic]. All this fantastic caprice of an ever-varying atmosphere stirs the imagination, and makes the Irish people strangely sensitive to spiritual influences.[1]

To Lady Wilde, who was one of the collectors of Irish mythology of the *Irish Literary Revival,* Ireland's landscape and weather, and the mentality of the Irish population were the ideal prerequisites for tales on mythical deities and creatures, such as fairies, the Banshee and leprechauns. While the old Pagan beliefs and traditions have gradually been lost in Ireland, they tend to live on in superstition, and in retellings of old ancient myths. Although originally addressed to adults, Irish myths today are rather embedded in Irish children's literature, notably in Irish young adult fantasy literature. In this thesis we shall analyze the integration of ancient Irish myths and folklore in two novels: Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman*, and O.R. Melling's *The Hunter's Moon*.

The theoretical part of the thesis will, on the one hand, focus on the general definitions and historical background of the genre of children's and young adult literature. This will place Irish children's and young adult literature in a broader context, and help to highlight the conservatism of Irish young adult literature. On the other hand, an overview of characteristics of the fantasy genre will be provided so that it will be possible to identify aspects of fantasy and of mythology. An essential part of the theoretical part is dedicated to the *Irish Literary Revival,* a period in which a large amount of Irish myths was collected and recorded. Since Irish folklore was part of an oral tradition for more than thousand years, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to trace down original myths. In addition, Ireland comprises two languages, the Irish and the English, which makes it even more complex to analyze Irish folklore. Thus, a chapter on the "problem" of orality and language will be provided.

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[1] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. Volume 1.* London: Ward and Downey, 1887. 279.

In the practical part of the thesis characteristics of the genres *Young Adult Fiction* and *Fantasy Literature* will be considered. In addition, a major focus of the analysis will be placed on the setting. In order to be able to consider the relation between time and place, Bramwell[2] suggests the application of the theory of the *literary chronotope*, which was coined by the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. In the context of Irish folklore, the transition of characters from the human world to a fantasy world, such as the Land of Perpetual Youth, Tír na nÓg, involves specific temporal and local prerequisites. As Bramwell's *Pagan chronotope* allows to investigate the relation between time and space that enables the transfer, it is applied in the analysis of the setting of the novels.

Irish mythology and folklore is analyzed on various levels. As the ancient tales are frequently presented as a story-within-a-story, the distinct narrative levels and their specific functions in the novels are considered. In regard to the content level, the myths incorporated in the novels are compared to texts of the collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*, such as Lady Wilde, Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats. As several Irish myths include graphic portrayals of violence and sex, a focus will be on the changes made in order to adapt them to a younger readership. Since characters of Irish folklore, such as Aengus Óg, Finvarra and Midir, assume the role of major and minor protagonists, their representation in the novels will be of importance. As Irish mythology and folklore is only one aspect of Irish cultural identity incorporated in the novels, other related aspects of Irishness, such as superstition and the dichotomy between Christian beliefs and the Pagan heritage, will be considered.

[2] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction: Green Man, Shamanism, Earth Mysteries*. Basinstoke, and New York: Belgrave Macmillan, 2009.

2. Irish Children's and Young Adult Literature

2.1. Children's Literature: Towards a Definition

If passers-by on a street were asked about the meaning of the term *children's literature* (CL), most of them would probably not hesitate to give a simple answer: It is literature that is specifically written for young people, i.e. for children or young adults, and read by these.[3] However, scholars in the field of CL have entered complex academic discussions on possible definitions of the term. Indeed, in her frequently quoted volume *The Case of Peter Pan: The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984) Jacqueline Rose went so far as to lament the "impossibility" of a children's fiction which limits the adult to the clear-cut role of "author, maker [and] giver" and the child to the "reader, product [and] receiver" without either of them interfering in the "space in between".[4] Accordingly, Rose roots the difficulty to define CL in the relationship between the adult author and the child reader:

> Children's fiction rests on the idea that there is a child who is simply there to be addressed and that speaking to it might be simple. It is an idea whose innocent generality covers up a multitude of sins. (…) Children's fiction is impossible, not in the sense that it cannot be written (what would be nonsense), but in that it hangs on an impossibility, one which it rarely ventures to speak. This is the impossible relation between adult and child. (…) Children's fiction sets up the child as an outsider to its own process, and then aims, unashamedly, to take the child *in*."[5]

To Rose, CL is not necessarily connected to real childhood and real children as it is written by adults and thus, solely relies on an adult perspective of childhood, children and on what children would like to read.[6] Therefore, it is adults who predominantly determine the creative and economic production of CL. As suggested by Grenby, CL is the only genre which is often defined by its "intended readership"[7]. To illustrate his point, he argues that Canadian literature or crime fiction, for instance, are not only

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[3] cf. Reynolds, Kimberly. *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. 1.
[4] Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan: The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. London: MacMillan, 1984. 1-2.
[5] Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan: The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. 1-2.
[6] cf. Maybin, Janet, and Watson, Nicola J. Eds. *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. New York: Pelgrave, 2009. 3.
cf. Gannon, Susan R. "Report from Limbo: Reading Historical Children's Literature Today". *Considering Children's Literature: A Reader*. Eds. Schwenke Wyile, Andrea, and Rosenberg, Teya. Toronto: Broadview, 2008. 78.
[7] Grenby, Matthew. *Children's Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008. 199.

purchased and read by Canadians or criminals and subsequently, are not defined by their readership. CL, on the other hand,

> is not children's literature because it is written *by* children, nor because it is *about* children, but only because of who it was ostensibly written *for*.[8]

Thus, the backbone of a definition for CL is based on the assumption that it is literature written *for* children. However, considering the criticism of Rose who argued that adult authors could not completely relate to children, i.e. their potential readership, the definition seems vague. Even more problematic is the reduction of the readership of CL to only children. In this respect, John Rowe Townsend suggested:

> Surely *Robinson Crusoe* was not written for children, and do not the *Alice* books appeal at least as much to grown ups?; If *Tom Sawyer* is children's literature, what about *Huckleberry Finn?*; if the *Jungle Books* are children's literature, what about *Kim* or *Stalky*? and if *The Wind in the Willows* is children's literature, what about *The Golden Age*?; and so on.[9]

Subsequently, more questions arise: What about children's books which are read by adults? What about books written by children? And what about books originally written for adults but enjoyed by children?[10] Thus, a definition that is only based on its assumed readership becomes even more questionable.

In reference to Rose, Reynolds suggests that it is *impossible* to define CL not only because it relies on a readership which is constructed by the adult, but also because it is often observed as a whole and not in regard to its sub-genres. But defining CL as a whole would equal defining adult literature without taking the distinct genres into account.[11] In addition, the vast body of CL comprises a considerable amount of different text types, including novels, picture books, oral forms, multimedia, internet, movies and so on.[12] As a result, definitions for CL tend to be superficial and, in some cases, even inadequate. In connection to the question of which genres should be included in the body of CL, the most delicate point of disagreement is linked to works which are didactic or fulfill the purpose to morally educate. Although most scholars

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[8] Grenby, Matthew. *Children's Literature*. 199.
[9] Townsend, John Rowe. 1980. 196.; quoted in: Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Ed. Hunt, Peter. London, and New York: Routledge, 1998. 17.
[10] Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 17.
[11] Reynolds, Kimberly. *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. 1.
[12] Hunt, Peter. "Instruction and Delight". *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. Eds. Maybin, Janet, and Watson, Nicola J. New York: Pelgrave, 2009. 12-26.

seem to agree on that CL should only comprise books which *entertain*, others argue differently.[13] (see chapter 2.1.1)

Definitions become more ambiguous when they are expanded by the distinction between *good* and *bad* books as literary critics frequently tend to do. As argued by Marcus Crouch, CL does not actually exist and is a construction of society:

> I come more and more to the view that there are no children's books. They are a concept invented for commercial reasons, and kept alive by the human instinct for classification and categorization. The honest writer… writes what is inside him and must out. Sometimes what he writes will chime with the instincts and interests of young people, sometimes it will not… if you must have a classification it is into books good and bad.[14]

But who is in the position to judge what is a good children's book and what distinguishes a good book from a bad book? As asserted by Hunt, 'good' is an abstract which in relation to CL should rather be substituted by 'good for'. He writes:

> What is regarded as a 'good' book might be 'good' in the sense which the currently dominant literary/academic establishment prescribes; 'good' in terms of effectiveness for education, language acquisition, or socialization/acculturization or for entertainment for a specific child or group of children in general or specific circumstances; or 'good' in some moral or religious or political sense; or 'good' in a therapeutic sense. 'Good' as an abstract and 'good for' as a practical application are constantly in conflict in judgments about children's literature.[15]

Similarly, Lesnik-Oberstein suggests that 'good' CL usually refers to books which adults *consider* as 'good for' children. Consequently, there are different viewpoints in terms of what is regarded as 'good for' children.[16] According to Chambers, it is primarily the publishing industry that selects certain individuals who function as *care-takers,* and decides on material worth being published. They choose the 'good' books in terms of two criteria: On the one hand, books have to fulfill certain demands in regard to the representation of gender roles, moral standards and similar. On the other hand, books naturally must have the potential to sell well so that parents will evaluate them as suitable for their children and children will find them enjoyable.[17] However, regardless of how 'good' a work of CL is evaluated, it is usually seen as inferior, i.e. of poorer quality, to adult literature. One of the advocates of this view is James Steele Smith who argues that

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[13] Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 23.
[14] Crouch, Marcus. *The Nesbit Tradition*; quoted in: Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991. 42.
[15] Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 43.
[16] Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 20.
[17] Chambers, Aidan. "Axes for Frozen Seas". *Considering Children's Literature: A Reader*. Eds. Schwenke Wyile, Andrea, and Rosenberg, Teya. Toronto: Broadview, 2008. 9.

> we can still get involved in the mistaken view that children's literature involves the same criteria of literary excellence as adult literature does.[18]

The point of view taken by Smith and others relates to a more general discussion, namely to the distinction between literature as *high culture* and *popular culture*. If CL lacks the literary brilliance characteristic for the works of high culture, then the term as such is problematic. Indeed, Lesnik-Oberstein points out that the term presents a challenge, as it cannot be divided into its constituent terms, namely *children* and *literature*:

> In short: the 'children' of 'children's literature' are constituted as specialised [sic] ideas of 'children', not necessarily related in any way to other 'children' (for instance those of education, psychology, sociology, history, art, or literature), and the 'literature' of 'children's literature' is a special idea of 'literature', not necessarily related to any other 'literature' (most particularly 'adult literature').[19]

According to Lesnik-Oberstein, it is hardly possible to find a definition of CL that is based on a close study of the meaning of the constituents which form the term, because the definition of 'literature' in *children's literature* is a definition by its own terms. It is a *special* literature, namely a literature that affects and educates children.[20] By contrast, the already mentioned critic John Rowe Townsend opposes the view according to which CL has to be seen separately from other literatures. He argues:

> Yet children are part of mankind and children's books are part of literature, and any line which is drawn to confine children or their books to their own special corner is an artificial one…. The only practical definition of a children's book today – absurd as it sounds – is 'a book which appears on the children's list of a publisher'.[21]

Townsend's description of the term leads back to the very first definition presented in this chapter according to which CL can only be defined by its intended readership. But while Townsend suggests that it is the publisher who defines what books form part of CL, those books may also show text-intrinsic characteristics which allow the reader to recognize for whom the text was written. Some of these characteristics have been described by McDowell:

> Children's books are generally shorter; they tend to flavour [sic] an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism which much adult fiction ignores; children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is child-orientated; plots are of a distinctive

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[18] Smith, James Steele; quoted in: Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 43.
[19] Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 18.
[20] Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 23.
[21] Townsend, John Rowe. 1980. 196.; quoted in: Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 62f.

> order, probability is often disregarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, and fantasy, and simplicity, and adventure.[22]

The characteristics formulated by McDowell are opposed by Natalie Babbitt who claims that children's books do not differ greatly from adult books as far as content, themes and emotions are concerned.[23] According to Babbitt, it is a frequent misconception that CL is only meant to "amuse", whereas adult fiction is "serious".[24] Moreover, children's books include "adult emotions", such as "love, pride, grief, fear of death, violence, the yearning for success and so on."[25] This point can be exemplified with *The Wind and the Willows,* which deals with the supposedly adult emotion of love, or with *Charlotte's Web,* which describes the fear of death in a very intriguing way.[26] Finally, Babbitt points out that also in terms of vocabulary and style not all children's books can be painted with a broad brush. For example, Kipling provides a wide and rich range of vocabulary in his children's books comparable with most adult writers, including Hemingway.[27]

Concluding, it becomes apparent that due to the great diversity of children's books, it is difficult to define CL in terms of text-intrinsic characteristics. At the same time, a definition based on the intended readership of CL is problematic since this readership was constructed by adults and publishing houses. However, Meek offers a solution for the impossibility to define CL satisfactorily. She points out that

> children's literature appears not as something which requires definition in order to be recognised [sic] or to survive, but a 'total text', (…) a diverse complexity of themes, rites and images.[28]

In other words: even without a universal definition, CL can lead to, and this is even more important, a great diversity in content, themes, motifs, characters, places and emotions. Thus, the "imperfect situation"[29] of a broad and ambiguous definition of CL does not necessarily have to be seen as a disadvantage, but as a great source for creativity.

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[22] McDowell, Myles. 1973. 51; quoted in: Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 25.
[23] cf. Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. "Defining Children's Literature and Childhood". 25f.
[24] Babbit, Natalie. "Happy Endings? Of Course, and also Joy". *Considering Children's Literature: A Reader*. Eds. Schwenke Wyile, Andrea, and Rosenberg, Teya. Toronto: Broadview, 2008. 4.
[25] Babbit, Natalie. "Happy Endings? Of Course, and also Joy". 5.
[26] Babbit, Natalie. "Happy Endings? Of Course, and also Joy". 5.
[27] Babbit, Natalie. "Happy Endings? Of Course, and also Joy". 6.
[28] Meek, Margaret. "Introduction". *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Ed. Hunt, Peter. London, and New York: Routledge, 1998. 2.
[29] Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 64.

2.1.1. A Historic Overview of *Children's Literature*

The aforementioned problems with finding an appropriate definition for CL also relate to the disagreement of scholars to pinpoint the historical period when *CL* was first established as a distinct literary genre. As argued by Darton and Hunt[30], children's books became a "clear but subordinate branch of English literature"[31] in 1744 when John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book,* generally regarded as the first modern children's book, was published in England. Yet other researchers [cf. Adams, Gillian/ Kinnell, Margaret/ Grenby, Matthew et al.] assert that CL was established long before; even ancient civilizations like the Egyptians or the Sumer, as well as the Romans and the Greeks had some sort of CL.[32] The reason that the birth of CL is usually determined in the middle of the eighteenth century intertwines with the assumption that the principal function of CL is to *entertain.* By appointing this main function to CL, a grand body of earlier works starting from the Middle Ages, is automatically excluded from the definition par excellence.

In addition, Gillian Adams suggests in her essay *Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibility and Actuality* (1998) that medieval books for the young are not recognized as CL for two fundamental misconceptions: Firstly, it is assumed that traditional medieval conceptions of the child differed fundamentally from those of today and that childhood was not regarded as "separate stage of life"[33]. As childhood did supposedly not exist, scholars have argued that medieval society did not need a literature which was exclusively devoted to children. Secondly, research is based on the assumption (formulated inter alia by Bennett Brockman) that literature for children in the Middle Ages was limited to

> pedagogical texts designed to teach them to read, to write, to cipher, and to behave civilly.[34]

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[30] Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 62.
[31] Darton, Harvey. *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*; quoted in: Eds. Schwenke Wyile, Andrea, and Rosenberg, Teya, *Considering children's literature: A reader*. 41.
[32] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. Eds. Maybin, Janet, and Watson, Nicola J. New York: Pelgrave, 2009. 42.
[33] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". *Considering Children's Literature: A Reader*. Eds. Schwenke Wyile, Andrea, and Rosenberg, Teya. Toronto: Broadview, 2008. 45.
[34] Brockman, Bennett. "The Juvenile Audiences of Sir Orfeo". *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. 10.1. (Spring 1985). 18-20; quoted in: Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 43.

Returning to the first misconception, Adams proposes that scholars fail to recognize the actual medieval conceptions of childhood, because the so-called *Ariès-thesis* still prevails. In a nutshell, the Ariès thesis, formulated by Philippe Ariès and first published in 1960 in France, claims that childhood was only "discovered"[35] in the seventeenth century. According to Ariès, the conception of childhood of societies and cultures before the seventeenth century was characterized by "neglect, abuse, or indifference to children", whereas children today are regarded as an "emotional or economic investment".[36] However, by the end of the twentieth century most scholars interested in the Middle Ages had rejected the thesis arguing that despite previous opinion parental love was indeed highly valued. Furthermore, Ariès' remark that children were seen as "*miniature adults*", could only be refuted by studies of the representation of children in medieval art. Similarly, while it is claimed in the Ariès thesis that childhood was not considered a separate stage of life, medieval scholars actually defined various phases in the life of a human being, such as

> *infantia* (birth to six or seven years), *pueritia* (seven to twelve for girls, to fourteen for boys), *adolescentia* (the period between biological and social puberty and legal and social majority), and *juventus*.[37]

Likewise, Lerer promotes the idea that childhood was by no means an invention of modern societies from the seventeenth century onwards:

> Greeks and Romans, Byzantines and Anglo-Saxons, Renaissance and Revolutionary cultures all had clearly defined concepts of the child and, in turn, canons of children's literature.[38]

Clearly, the question of the origin of CL as a distinct genre is closely linked to the culturally determined conception of childhood at a certain period of time. This means that the conception of childhood relates to the attention granted to children at a given point of time and if children are valued more highly, it is more likely that a distinct branch of literature is devoted to them. Admittedly, since most scholars today seem to agree on the existence of medieval conceptions of childhood, it only seems logical that societies in the Middle Ages presented their children with at least some sort of CL.

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[35] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 44.
[36] Lerer, Seth. *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008. 2.
[37] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 44.
[38] Lerer, Seth. *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. 2.

Moving on to the aforementioned second misconception, namely that medieval CL only comprises pedagogical texts, Adams contradicts Brockman who claims that medieval literature for children is only nonfictional and only consists of "instruction manuals and courtesy books".[39] Adams rejects Brockman's theory for two reasons: The first reason is that she aims at proving in terms of internal (or textual) and external evidence that fictional children's books existed in the Middle Ages and before. For example, upon a close examination of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim's playlets written in Latin in the late 10th century it becomes apparent that they show an evidently easier rhetoric than her letters to the king or to other members of nobility. Since we know that Hrotswitha of Gandersheim taught in a school for female students of high German nobility, it is generally assumed that these playlets were the basis for school performances.[40] Most of the medieval texts for children are indeed pedagogical and follow didactic objectives, though, and the second reason why Adams rejects Brockman's claim refers to the exclusion of pedagogical texts from the study of CL:

> Nevertheless, from its beginnings in the ancient world, children's literature has been intimately related to pedagogics and remains so today. (…) There is no logical reason why texts used for educational purposes should not also qualify as literature, whether they appeal to us or not.[41]

The exclusion of pedagogic texts from the body of CL also relates to the prevailing attitude towards didacticism. In this context, Adams refers to periods in the European past when didacticism was of high value, including the time of the classic poet Horace and his *ars poetica*, as well as of Chaucer and Dante in the High Middle Ages. The two latter produced fictional texts which clearly aim at providing the reader with life lessons. Despite the didactic character of the texts by Chaucer and Dante, they form part of the literary canon. For that reason, Adams appropriately asks why pedagogic texts of CL are not to be considered literature when the mentioned classic texts are clearly not excluded from the canon.[42]

Be it as it may, if one were to move away from this rigid definition of a CL which only pleases or entertains children, this would give rise to a whole new corpus of CL written in the centuries between the invention of printing and *A Little Pretty Pocket*

[39] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 46.
[40] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 53.
[41] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 48.
[42] Adams, Gillian. "Medieval Children's Literature: Its Possibilities and Actuality". 47.

Book. The CL of the centuries before the 1740ies would then have to include "courtesy books, school books and religious texts".[43]

Regardless of the sub-genre, the children's books did not address a specific audience yet, but were read by children and young adults alike. While the production and distribution of children's books was naturally facilitated by the invention of printing, there are also some examples of early children's books which originate from an oral tradition or were found on manuscripts. For instance, manuscripts of the tale *Bevis of Southampton* describing a battle against a giant called Ascapart date back to the thirteenth century and were first published in 1565. Other early examples are *George on Horseback*, *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (1596), *Tom Hickathrift, Old Mother Shipton* and *The King and the Cobbler*.[44]

Although there were tales in the sixteenth century that were addressed to children, it has to be mentioned that the majority of the books read by children at that time were adult books. For example, journals and memoires of that time demonstrate that children had a keen interest in fables, courtesy books, chapbooks, chivalric novels and the *Gesta Romanorum* which comprises legends telling about saints or heroes. Furthermore, it is assumed that children also enjoyed Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. In 1510, Wynkyn de Worde finally published Francis Kirkman's *The Friar and the Boy* which had first appeared as manuscript in the fifteenth century and is claimed to be the first tale specifically addressed to children.[45]

As mentioned before, early children's books were predominantly school or courtesy books. While the latter had the purpose to instruct both, children and adults, school books consisted of "Latin and Greek grammars, spelling books, arithmetic books and so forth".[46] While the early schoolbooks (e.g. *A Methode, or Comfortable Beginning for All Unlearned,* 1570*,* or *Petie Schole,* 1576) usually included short verses for children, the publication of *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* by John Amos Comenius in 1659 revolutionized the market. Although today Comenius' schoolbook would hardly be considered modern, it was the first encyclopedia including illustrations. Increasingly,

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[43] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Ed. Hunt, Peter. London, and New York: Routledge, 1998. 141.
[44] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". 141.
[45] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 42.
[46] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 42.

the attitude was established that children found it easier to learn if they were stimulated by good material. For this reason, old fables were increasingly used in schools. Probably the most popular collection of fables was the *Aesop Fables*, which were first published in 1484 by Caxton and used for many centuries. The fables were not only effective because children seemed to like them, but also because they taught moral lessons. Other popular fables were those of Phaedrus, Avian und La Fontaine.[47]

Also Puritan writers were influential for the development of CL when they became aware of the possibility of morally educating children with books. Most books of the first half of the seventeenth century aimed at encouraging children to turn away from "ballads and foolish books"[48] and read the Bible and religious texts instead. In 1672, *A Token for Children* by James Janeway was published which is regarded as one of the most influential Puritan children's books. As suggested by the subtitle *Being an Exact Account of the Conversation, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children*, Janeway wrote a moral tale about children who died from illnesses such as the Plague and reproached their family and friends for their lack of religiousness. Not surprisingly, the lecture of *A Token for Children* was supposed to teach the children moral codes and strengthen their religious belief. Another important work for Puritan children with the same moral purpose was *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (1678).[49]

While Janeway and Bunyan's books were clearly addressed to children, they did not appear under the label *children's literature* since the term did not exist then. In addition, while the stories fulfilled the primary purpose to morally educate the youth, they were also supposed to *entertain*. The conception of literature as entertainment for children was increasingly emphasized in the middle of the eighteenth century and coincides with the publication of John Newbery's children's books. From the 1740ies onwards, writers and publishers also discovered that the sale of children's books was lucrative. Towards the end of the eighteenth century CL could be purchased at exclusive shops and had a separate place in libraries. Moreover, literary journals started publishing articles on CL. In 1802 the first periodical about CL, Sarah Trimmer's *Guardian of Education,* was published for the first time. Also writers like Sarah

[47] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". 143.
[48] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". 143.
[49] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". 144.

Fielding turned their back on adult literature when she wrote *The Governess,* a story about a girls' school, in order to profit from the new market. Similarly, William Godwin, who worked as author and publisher, professionally chose CL "to establish a more secure income".[50]

The increasing success of CL cannot be boiled down to a single reason, but to various, including economic and demographic changes, a lower mortality rate and "a greater willingness to invest in children".[51] The growing importance that was placed on CL also intersected with an increasing emphasis on education and even more so, maternal education. The latter can be seen as consolidation of processes that had been practiced for centuries: Mothers teaching their children with the help of "home-made texts" or "pictorial ceramic tiles".[52] The method to persuade parents to buy books recommended by educationalists was discovered at that time and their words of approval were increasingly integrated in the peritext[53], which includes everything that surrounds the text.[54]

The economic and pedagogic changes gave rise to a variety of different texts in the second half of the eighteenth century. However, the best-sold genres were still instructional or devotional books, as well as moral tales. The most influential representatives of the latter genre were *The Governess* by Sarah Fielding (1749), *Lessons for Children* by Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1778) and *Sandford and Merton* by Thomas Day (1783-1789). A further example is *Fabulous Histories* by Sarah Trimmer (1786), an animal story which was later published as *The History of the Robins.*[55] Apart from these moral tales, also shorter interrelated stories enjoyed great popularity. For instance, in 1796 Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (later known by various different names), a compilation of stories surrounding the children Rosamond and Frank, or Harry and Lucy was published. The best-known story of this collection is probably 'The Purple Jar' in which Rosamond is encouraged to choose a gift from her mother. Although her mother recommends her to choose a new pair of shoes, she selects a purple jar. However, soon she notices that her old shoes are worn down and she learns

[50] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 44.
[51] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 44.
[52] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 45.
[53] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 45.
[54] Hunt, Peter. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. 47.
[55] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 45.

her lesson. This story like many others at that particular time, relate to the approach taken by Rousseau who thought "that children learn best through acting out a lesson".[56]

The following decades were characterized by moral tales and especially after the foundation of the *Religious Tract Society* in 1799, by religious tracts. While these religious tracts were originally for adults, soon some of the "cheap" and "pious publications"[57] were dedicated to only children. The religious publications usually lacked the fantastic or the supernatural. However, characters known from fairytales, such as giants, speaking animals, dragons, witches, fairies and leprechauns, were never excluded entirely from CL. Supernatural characters and places became even more important in the nineteenth century. It was at this point that Benjamin Tabart published tales taken from the *Arabian Nights* and, finally, in 1823 the fairy tales of Jacob and William Grimm were first published in Great Britain.[58]

The middle of the 19th century marks a period of change in the history of CL, usually referred to as *The First Golden Age.* As implied by the term, the period is characterized by "much innovative, successful and enduring children's literature"[59]. The innovations of the literature written during that time refer to a change of attitude towards society, but especially towards children. While the highly influential philosophers of the Enlightenment, Locke and Rousseau, had regarded children as *miniature adults* who would show characteristics and traits of a responsible adult if they were bread properly, they were now attributed the ability to imagine and think of their own. One of the pioneers of this new view on childhood was William Wordsworth who asserted in his poems *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* (1807) and *Lyrical Ballads* (1816) that adults could profit and even learn from the thoughts of children as they were closer to God and the spiritual world due to their proximity to birth.[60] The first novel embodying this new conception of childhood was Catherine Sinclair's *The Holiday House* (1839) in which the naughtiness and disobedience of the child characters is openly appreciated. It is known that C.L. Dodgson, which is the birth name of Lewis

[56] Kinnell, Margaret. "Early Texts Used by Children". 149.
[57] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 51.
[58] Grenby, Matthew. "Children's Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity". 53.
[59] Grenby, Matthew. *Children's Literature*. 209.
[60] Carpenter, Humphrey. "The First Golden Age". *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. Eds. Maybin, Janet, and Watson, Nicola J. New York: Pelgrave, 2009. 57f.

Carroll, gave a copy of the novel to Alice Liddell for Christmas in 1861, shortly before he started writing *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* Thus, the influence of *The Holiday House* on the novel that sparked off the First Golden Age is hardly indisputable.[61] Other trailblazers of the First Golden Age were *Struwwelpeter* by Heinrich Hoffmann (appearing in the first English translation in 1848) and *A Book of Nonsense* by Edward Lear (1846). The latter is a compilation of limericks (a comic verse form of five lines, following the rhyme structure aabba)[62] reflecting Lear's doubts regarding Christian religious beliefs and his estrangement from society.[63] However, it was primarily the political changes during the First Golden Age, such as the Crimean and the Boar War, the publication of *Das Kapital* by Marx or the Education Act and the foundation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies that triggered a more general shift in literature. According to Hunt, especially three books were influential in the process of the "empowerment of the child"[64]: *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott and, naturally, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is usually considered the beginning of the First Golden Age which continues until the beginning of World War I. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was revolutionary on various levels. Probably the greatest invention of Carroll's work relates to the conceptions of childhood and to the introduction of the "implied child reader"[65] who is no longer regarded as subordinate of the adult, but as equal. Thus, instead of a dominant adult narrator, the child, Alice, is the main focalizer and the story is a reflection of her experiences and thoughts. Furthermore, the subversion of a pious power and the view that death was unpredictable and challenging, were revolutionary.[66]

Several children's books following *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* show similar lively heroines and gradually make use of more open endings or sometimes even deprive the reader of a happy ending. Moreover, the heroines tend to be motherless or,

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[61] Carpenter, Humphrey. "The First Golden Age". 58f.
[62] Grenby, Matthew. *Children's Literature*. 210.
[63] Carpenter, Humphrey. "The First Golden Age". 62f.
[64] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*. Eds. Maybin, Janet, and Watson, Nicola J. New York: Pelgrave, 2009. 75.
[65] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 71.
[66] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 72-75.

in some cases, orphans. The one place shielding them from the cold, cruel world is the garden, which functions as "mini-Arcadia"[67] in the midst of the insecurities caused by the economic, political and social changes. Arcadian gardens and utopias are also reflected in the increasing number of fantasy literature which also emerged at that time. Authors dedicating themselves to this genre were Lewis Carroll, Beatrix Potter, J.M Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, Charles Kingsley, and Edith Nesbit.[68]

The Railway Children by Edith Nesbit (1906) is probably the best example of a children's book combining all characteristics of the typical children's book of the First Golden Age: The young heroine Bobby grows up without a father, but with an independent mother, the rural countryside is seen in opposition to the city and the children's ideas on politics and class conflict are stressed.[69]

The period between the two world wars is sometimes seen as a step backwards from the new conventions of the First Golden Age. In fact, many works show a gender division typical for the nineteenth century. Yet also the *Dr Dolittle* series by Hugh Lofting (1920-) and *Winnie-the-Pooh* by Alan Alexander Milne (1926 and 1928) came into being at that time. Especially these two texts present

> redemptive, rural retreats, where the talking animals or the idealised [sic] child –and the adult writers and readers, too – can be safe.[70]

Thus, similar to some representatives of the First Golden Age, children's books were seen as sanctuaries from the cruelties of the world. Also J.R.R. Tolkiens *The Hobbit* (1937) presents an Arcadia-like world, the Shire, which - like Europe at that time – eventually becomes insecure, suggesting that such a place like a safe haven does not exist anymore. Thus, it is not surprising that some works like, for instance, *Mary Poppins* by Pamela Lyndon Travers (1934) show a certain melancholy for a safer past and praise the Englishness from the glory days of the British Empire.[71]

The *Second Golden Age*, starting after World War II, especially promoted two genres: Young Adult literature and fantasy literature (both genres will be discussed in

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[67] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 76.
[68] Carpenter, Humphrey. "The First Golden Age". 66.
[69] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 77.
[70] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 78.
[71] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 79.

greater detail in following chapters). Popular authors of this period were C.S. Lewis, Mary Norton and Lucy Boston. In addition, Roald Dahl revolutionized the field by introducing a new sense of black humor. As the Second Golden Age took place after the Second World War, it can be expected that the tone of the books was dark. In fact, the heroes and heroines experience angst and anxiety at a new level and a happy ending is no longer obligatory. Moreover, the sexual revolution has reached CL, bringing forward works like Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975).

Even more revolutionary was the now implemented idea that childhood was not necessarily a pleasant time of life, which contrasts sharply with conceptions of childhood from forty years before.[72] However, although tendencies for more open forms of CL were clearly perceptible, the field did not exactly turn by 180 degrees. The circular shape of the novels was largely maintained so that at the beginning of most works children found themselves in a secure place to which they could return at the end of the story.[73]

Although not officially established as such, the period after 2000 is sometimes referred to as the *Third Golden Age* of CL. While the periods before were marked by changes in literary conventions, the Third Golden Age is primarily concerned with publishing and the book market. As remarked by Hunt, "the cart of marketing is driving the horse of creativity."[74] That means that publishing houses print what sells best and what provides the reader with "comfort reading"[75], that is texts including norms which readers have come to appreciate from previous reading experiences. However, clearly also some literary and stylistic conventions of the Third Golden Age can be identified. For instance, it is remarkable that intertextuality is a feature of the majority of the texts. Another similarity of children's books after 2000 is the combination of the radical with the traditional. A classic example for this blend is the bestselling *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling. Although the series starts off as a circular story in which the protagonist Harry leaves home, the house of the Dursleys in Privet Drive, at the beginning of every book, and returns to it at the end, this changes as the series progresses. Towards the end

[72] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 81.
[73] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 81.
[74] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 82.
[75] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 82.

of the series, the protagonist faces an uncertain future when he is deprived of his return to Privet Drive or even Hogwarts and is forced to hide in the woods. While Harry's homelessness and uncertainty resolves after the final battle against the evil wizard Voldemort, some questions remain unanswered and considering the death of various protagonists one cannot speak of a happy ending in the narrow sense.[76] Additionally, the story is a lot darker than most of its predecessors and confronts the reader with extremely graphic descriptions of violence such as the murder of loved-ones, torture and the like.

The future of CL is obviously uncertain. However, predictions point to the virtualization of the field, meaning that the reader will be able to get involved in the process of story telling by accessing multimedia online platforms. The new CL will most likely borrow patterns from old forms and integrate them in all kinds of media.[77] Yet again, the *Harry Potter* series serves as a good example. Back in 2011, J.K. Rowling launched the website *Pottermore*[78] dedicated to the adventures of the young wizard. The website is not only a place where readers can buy e-books of the series, but also dive into an interactive reading process. After being placed in one of the four houses of Hogwarts, they can mix potions, collect points for the house cup, interact with other fans and access additional information about the characters and places of the world of Harry Potter.

2.2. Young Adult Literature

Young adult literature (YAL) is also referred to as *young adult fiction*, *adolescent literature*, *teenage books*, *teen literature*, *teen fiction*, *juvenile literature*, *junior novel*, *teen novel*, and *juvie*. The last four terms imply negative connotations, though, and are hardly used today. The intended readership of YAL varies according to the literary tradition at a given time. Depending on when a work of YAL was written, or, in fact, on

[76] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 83.
[77] Hunt, Peter. "The Same But Different: Conservatism and Revolution in Children's Fiction". 84.
[78] *Pottermore*. Rowling, J.K. 2011. <http://www.pottermore.com/>.

who is judging, the intended readership can include twelve to eighteen-year-olds, eighteen to twenty-two-year-olds or even twenty-one to twenty-five-year-olds. However, today it is probably most common to specify the readership of YAL between twelve and eighteen. While YAL is usually regarded as a subcategory of CL, another sub-genre derives from it, the so-called *tweeners*, which aim at students of lower secondary, i.e. middle school or junior high.[79]

Before discussing some of the characteristics of today's YAL, it is essential to look at the history of the genre whose development was much slower than that of CL. This circumstance can be traced back to the fact that young adulthood was not regarded as a separate stage of life before the Great Depression of the 1930s in the U.S. Before that time, children were transformed directly to adults when they accepted their first job out of the necessity to make a living. Only as a result of the decrease of the labor market in the 1930s, young adults became increasingly interested in higher education and the enrollment in high schools amplified considerably.[80] As noted by Eccleshare, in 1802 the educationalist Sarah Trimmer had already promoted the idea that fourteen to twenty-one-year-olds needed to be regarded as *young adults* and addressed separately from children. Although the publishing market did not react immediately to this proposal, there were obviously literary works which had a special appeal to young adults. For instance, Robert Louise Stevenson dedicated his works to his stepson, Lloyd, who was an adolescent when *Treasure Island* (1883), *Kidnapped* (1886) and *The Black Arrow* (1889) were published. In America, *Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel *Huckleberry Finn* (1889) by Mark Twain gained comparable popularity amongst adolescents.[81]

While the increased enrollment in high schools led to the formation of a youth culture in the U.S., YAL was established relatively late as distinct literary genre. However, there were several early examples of

> a new book that was too mature to be regarded as a traditional children's book but not sufficiently sophisticated for adults.[82]

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[79] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 62.
[80] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". *The Continuum of Young Adult Literature*. Eds. Cullinan, Bernice E., and, Kunzel, Bonnie L et al. New York and London: Continuum, 2005. 783-788.
[81] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Ed. Hunt, Peter. London, and New York: Routledge, 1998. 387.
[82] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 783.

These examples include *Sue Barton, Student Nurse* by Helen Boylston (1936) and *The Iron Duke* by John R. Dunis (1938), which have sometimes been called the first young adult novels. Only in 1942, *Seventeenth Summer* by Maureen Daly, a semi-autobiographical novel written by the author when she was like the protagonist seventeen years old, was published. As the novel is written in first-person and has a strong focus on teenage romance, which are characteristics of many young adult novels, *Seventeenth Summer* is more convincingly claimed to be the first young adult novel than its two predecessors by Boylston and Dunis. Daly's novel unleashed a flood of similar romance novels in the following ten years. Most notably were works by Janet Lambert, Betty Cavanna, and Rosamund DuJardin. What had changed was that the novels were now referred to as *junior novels* which was a term coined by the publisher Longmans Green at the beginning of the 1930s.[83]

Approximately at the same time of the first junior novels the two magazines *Seventeen* (1945) and *Hot Rod* (1948) were created. While the first is to this day a popular source of information on fashion trends and celebrity gossip for girls, *Hot Rod* was a magazine about cars, addressed to boys, which led to a series of novels for boys centered on means of transportation. In 1947, Robert A. Heinlein published *Rocket Ship Galileo*, which is regarded as a pioneer of the new emerging *science fiction* genre.

The 1950s are generally known for their conformity and seriousness and a similar attitude is also reflected in the YAL of this decade. Romance remained the dominant genre for adolescent girls and also some career novels came into being. Adolescent boys, by contrast, predominantly read sports or adventure stories.[84] However, two novels which were originally published for adults broke the conventions of the 1950ies. The first was William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), which was considered radical, since it rejected the illusion that childhood was completely innocent. Of even greater impact was *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger as it presented the reader with the stream-of-consciousness of adolescent Holden Caulfield who critically opposed the adult world and alienated from it.[85] The approach of the rebelling and alienated teenager was imitated in *Rebel without a Cause*, a classic teen movie released

[83] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 783.
[84] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784.
[85] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 387f.

in 1955. Also Henry Gregor Falsen's *Two and the Town* (1952) is an example of a revolutionary novel of the 1950s as it dealt realistically with teenage sexuality.[86]

The social and political changes of the 1960s also impacted on the topics and themes of YAL. Sex and teenage pregnancy were increasingly addressed in teenage novels. While Honor Arundel's probably biggest success *Emma's Island* (1968) and its sequel *Emma in Love* (1970) aim at replicating the great love stories portrayed in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, it is her novel *The Longest Weekend* which is remarkable for its honest portrayal of teenage sexuality and single parenthood.[87] In her authentic young adult novel *The Outsiders* (1967), S.E Hinton depicted the rivalry of two teenage gangs in the streets of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Other landmarks were *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte (1967), *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel (1968) and *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* (1969) by John Donovan. The latter was the first young adult novel to address homosexuality.

The 1970s are sometimes referred to as the beginning *First Golden Age* of YAL. As pointed out by Michael Cart, the First Golden Age commenced with the publication of a particular novel, namely Michael Cormier's *The Chocolate War*, in 1974. Although acknowledging that Cormier's novels have been criticized sharply by other scholars, Cart emphasizes the remarkable impact of the novel on the genre and states that it is a "landmark" whose "publication was a defining moment for the genre".[88] According to Cart, the novelty of *The Chocolate War* was a blend of "authenticity, authorial honesty and relevance"[89] and its ending was more open and by no means happy. Julia Eccleshare, by contrast, is clearly less impressed by Cormier's work and laments the novel's "almost unremitting bleak[ness of] both style and content." To her, the novel offers a "legitimate thrill" for those teenagers who "clearly like to be frightened".[90] To other readers the novel might only be an open demonstration of violence which teenagers are capable of inflicting on each other. Furthermore, she asserts that the "danger lies in the chilling amorality of the story".[91] While Cormier inserts some sort of

[86] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784.
[87] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 389.
[88] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784.
[89] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784.
[90] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 393.
[91] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 393f.

morality in the sequel *Beyond the Chocolate War* (1985) and in *We All Fall Down* (1992), the bleak violence remains and the writing style does not necessarily improve.[92]

Apart from Cormier, the 1970ies also brought forward an author whose contribution to the genre might be less controversial. The novel *Forever* by Judy Blume was published in 1975 and explicitly addresses sex among teenagers. On her personal webpage, Judy Blume writes in 2007 about her novel which she published three decades earlier:

> This book was first published in 1975. My daughter Randy asked for a story about two nice kids who have sex without either of them having to die. She had read several novels about teenagers in love. If they had sex the girl was always punished—an unplanned pregnancy, a hasty trip to a relative in another state, a grisly abortion (illegal in the U.S. until the 1970's), sometimes even death. Lies. Secrets. At least one life ruined. Girls in these books had no sexual feelings and boys had no feelings other than sexual. Neither took responsibility for their actions. I wanted to present another kind of story—one in which two seniors in high school fall in love, decide together to have sex, and act responsibly. [93]

As reflected by the quote, Judy Blume created a story unlike the norm of the time in which the two protagonists Katherine and Michael fall in love and have first sexual experiences with each other without having to face any consequences such as teen pregnancy or decease.[94] Since the sexual scenes described in *Forever* are explicit and frank, it is not surprising that the novel was met with criticism on the part of critics and, above all, concerned parents.[95] In the same decade also the so-called *problem novel* came into being. This highly formulaic novel concentrated on the problems presented in newspapers at that particular time, without paying much attention to "characterization, style, setting, and other literary considerations."[96]

In the 1980s *series* novels became fashionable which were usually addressed to girls and had a strong focus on romance. These works appeared in paperback and included famous series like *Wildfire, Wishing Star, First Love* and *Sweet Dreams*.[97] Equally, the well-known *Sweet Valley High* series dates back to that period.[98] At the same time, some young adult novels started to mirror changes of attitude in regard to

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[92] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 393f.
[93] *Judy Blume on the Web*. Ed. Blume, Judy. 2007. "Forever".
<http://www.judyblume.com/books/ya/forever.php>.
[94] cf. Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784.
[95] Eccleshare, Julia. "Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels". 393.
[96] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 784 f.
[97] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. 62.
[98] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 785.

social issues. For instance, Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982) centers on a lesbian teenage couple. Although originally addressed to adults, another example is *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisnero (1984) which depicts the life of a teenage girl in a Mexican-American neighborhood. In addition, a first compilation of short stories for young adults was edited by Don Gallo and published under the name *Sixteen: Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults*[99] in 1984, including stories by Robert Lipsyte, Robert Cormier and Joan Aiken.[100]

By the end of the century, the genre had experienced a drastic "youthening"[101] due to its designated space in the children's section of bookshops, leading to protagonists who were usually not older than twelve, whereas the average protagonist of the decade before had been seventeen. An exception was formed by novels addressed to the so-called *crossover* audience who were aged fifteen to twenty-five. This age group coincides with the target group also predominantly relevant to the music channel MTV and, not surprisingly, literature directed at the crossover audience focused on the life of families in music or film business.[102]

In an attempt to separate the young adult novel from CL, two basic initiatives were taken in the 1990s: Firstly, the genre was granted a separate corner in bookshops and libraries. Secondly, covers were redesigned so that they resembled those of adult novels. Examples of these teenage books disguised as adult novels were Cecily Von Ziegesar's *Gossip Girl* series or Zoey Dean's *The A List*. In this connection, it has also to be noted that at that time the boundaries between young adult and adult literature began to blur due to various reasons. On the one hand, several established authors of adult books, such as Joyce Carol Oates or Isabel Allende, began to devote their works to young adults. On the other hand, young adult books, which were clearly addressed to teenagers, were published as adult books. Quite an obvious example for this phenomenon is *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. [103]

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[99] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. 62.
[100] Gallo, Donald R. *Sixteen: Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group,G 1984.
[101] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 785.
[102] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 785f.
[103] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 785f.

The middle of the 1990s also marks the period of the *Second Golden Age of Young Adult Literature*. This label was assigned to titles of the genre during that time as a result of the new openness and authenticity of authors to address teenage problems.[104] The dominant genre of this period was *realistic fiction*. Important landmarks of this genre were *Somewhere in the Darkness* by Walter Dean Myer (1992) about a teenage runaway, or *When she Hollers* by Cyntia Voigt (1994), which describes the struggles of a teenage mother who is convinced by her mother to have a second abortion in order not to have another baby. Moreover, several novels were part of the sci-fi or fantasy genre. Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass,* as well as its sequels, for example, are fantasy novels which are sometimes regarded as the predecessors of the *Harry Potter* series.[105]

While the emergence of young adult fantasy literature began in the 1990s, this particular genre would experience an incredible boom in the 21st century. The sudden explosion of the genre after 2000 is usually claimed to be a result of the huge success of the *Harry Potter* series. Another genre experiencing new popularity was the *historical novel*. It is supposed that the success of the genre was in part due to the new interest in the past caused by the transgress to a new century, and the *Dear America* books, a series of diary entries depicting the lives of teenage immigrants. However, as pointed out by Cart,

> there seems to have been no single catalyst for the spate of excellent historical fiction that suddenly began appearing in the early twenty-first century.[106]

As mentioned before, YAL was first established in the U.S. However, also authors of other nations have developed a keen interest in the genre.[107] For the sake of the focus of this thesis, it is essential to discuss aspects of Irish YAL which will be elaborated in chapter 2.3.3. However, in order to specify what separates Irish YAL from the international norm, it is necessary to look at the most crucial characteristics of the genre, which will be done in the following section.

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[104] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 785f.
[105] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 63.
[106] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 786f.
[107] Cart, Michael. "YA Literature". 787.

2.2.1. Characteristics of Young Adult Literature[108]

In their frequently cited volume *Literature For Today's Young Adults*, Alleen Pace Nilsen, James Blasingame et al. have enumerated the basic characteristics of YAL. The characteristics as identified by these authors are the following:

1. YAL is told from the perspective of adolescents: Young adult novels are often written in the first person so that the reader gets the impression that the novel is told from the point of view of an adolescent. The first person narrative equips the story with "immediacy" and "serves as narrative hook to grab readers' attention."[109] In order to reduce the limits of the first person narrative, several authors of YAL cleverly interweave an omniscient narrator with the first person narrative, or tell the story by switching between various points of views. For instance, Australian author Marianne Curley makes use of various first person narrators in her *Guardian of Time* series (2002)[110]. While the first part is restricted to the thoughts of Ethan and Isabel, the focus of the two sequels eventually shifts to the point of view of the other protagonists Arkarian, Matt and Rochelle. Furthermore, in each of the three parts of the series the prologue is told from the perspective of an omniscient third person narrator.

2. "Please Mother, I want the Credit"[111]: Teenagers are the ones responsible for great achievements: The adolescent protagonists of YAL are usually isolated from their parents, guardians or advisors at the beginning of the story so that it is only them who can take the credit for outstanding achievements. For instance, in the *Harry Potter* series[112] the protagonist is increasingly stripped from the support and advice of his friends, family and advisors, and when he engages in the epic battle with his dark foe he completely does so in his own right. Consequently, it is him and only him who can take the credit for his foe's downfall.

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[108] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 28-37.
[109] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 28.
[110] Curley, Marianne. *The Named*. London: Bloomsbury, 2002.
[111] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 30.
[112] Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.* London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

3. YAL is optimistic and the characters make "worthy accomplishments":[113] Teenage characters of young adult books usually set out flawed and unreliable, and experience some maturation in the course of the story, and finally turn into reliable, responsible characters at the end of their journey. The basic catalyst for their maturation process is a series of challenging accomplishments that cannot be overcome too easily and need to be achieved by them in their own right, i.e. without the support of an adult. This characteristic can be exemplified by one of the central novels discussed in this thesis, namely *The New Policeman* by Kate Thompson (2005)[114]. While the young protagonist sets out as an irresponsible teenager, ditching his mother's music concert in order to go to a club unauthorized, he recalls his family bonds in the course of the novel and even manages to turn against the peer pressure placed upon him by his friend, when he tells the truth about the reason why he does not accompany them to a club.

4. YAL is "fast-paced"[115] **and resembles the rapid video editing of MTV music clips**: The story segments of young adult books imitate the rapid video editing characteristic for the MTV style, meaning that the action develops swiftly and involves "narrative hooks, secrecy, surprise and tension."[116] While YAL is of course a pre-internet phenomenon, the establishment of the world wide web has eventually led to certain innovations such as new "unconventional formats" with an "emphasis on strong images."[117] The most obvious novelty of the young adult books is that they are now available on kindle or audio book. Another crucial innovation is the establishment of web pages, such as the aforementioned *Pottermore*, which act as platforms to interactively involve the readers in the story telling process. Another example of this kind of platform is the webpage to the *House of Night* series which features an interactive online campus where readers can immerse into the supernatural world created by the authors P.C. and Kristen Cast.[118]

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[113] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 31.
[114] Thompson, Kate. *The New Policeman*. London: Red Fox, 2005.
[115] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 32.
[116] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 32.
[117] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 32.
[118] *The House of Night Series*. 2012. St. Martin's Press. <http://www.houseofnightseries.com/>.

5. YAL is broad in terms of "genres, subjects and levels of sophistication"[119]: Young adult books usually include a great variety of topics and themes, often centering on teen issues, such as presented in the *problem novel*[120]. By addressing the issues that sometimes torment the dreams of adolescents, it has been argued that literature "can help save lives."[121] Whether literature can have such a powerful impact on teenagers is open for discussion. It cannot be refuted, however, that the discussion of teenage problems in young adult books can provide the adolescents with a feeling of not being alone. As can be observed in the historic overview of the genre, YAL used to be single-edged in the past with a strong focus on dull romance novels for girls and adventure stories for boys. Recent works, by contrast, include a more diverse variety of innovative and realistic topics and themes. For instance, in Angela Johnson's *The First Part Last* (2003) teenage pregnancy is explored from the perspective of a teenage father who is of African America origin and decides to take care of his little baby girl after his girlfriend has fallen into a coma upon giving birth. Another example is Cris Crutcher's *Athletic Shorts* (2001), a compilation of short stories, dealing with teenage issues. One of the stories entitled "In the Time I Get" focuses on a young high school jock whose position as one of the popular kids is jeopardized by his affection for a young man dying of AIDS since he lives in a society which rejects homosexuality.[122] The variety of topics seems endless, but what is hardly ever tackled explicitly in YAL is religion. This might be due to the reluctance of most publishers to reject a certain religion in favor of another. As far as genres are concerned, the history of YAL shows that not all genres were of equal importance at a given point of time. While the preceding century predominantly focused on realistic fiction, readers currently experience the undisputed dominance of fantasy and historic fiction. Genres of YAL are as ambiguous as literature for adults. Naturally the same is true of their level of sophistication.

6. YAL includes characters who are of various ethnic and/or cultural groups: Young adult stories until the 1960s were rather rigid in their selection of characters,

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[119] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. 31.
[120] A *problem novel* (or *social problem novel*) is concerned with a problem characteristic of a society. The problem can be a result of gender, class, race and similar. (*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. 2012. "Social Problem Novel". <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/664323/social-problem-novel>.)
[121] Milner Halls, Kelly. "Teen Issues". *The Continuum of Young Adult Literature*. Eds. Cullinan, Bernice E., and, Kunzel, Bonnie L et al. New York and London: Continuum, 2005. 698.
[122] Milner Halls, Kelly. "Teen Issues". 699.

themes and points of view. From the 1960s onwards, the genre experienced a drastic modernization, causing the breach of various taboos, such as "taboos on profanity, divorce, sexuality, drinking, racial unrest, abortion, pregnancy, and drugs".[123] Consequently, the genre moved away from the single-edged focus on white, middle class teenagers and became open to include the stories of those who had been excluded before.

7. Series books gain increasing popularity: Historically series books have suffered from a negative reputation. However, with the publication of well-acclaimed series books, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) or Lloyd Alexander's *The Chronicles of Prydain* (1964-1968), it has been stated that not the length of a books is responsible for its good or bad quality, but the author's "skill and dedication."[124] Several series books published as individual titles, such as Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* (1995) or Ann Brashares's *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants* (2003-2011) contributed to the reevaluation of series books as a whole. Finally, the great success of the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), as well as Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2008) or Elizabeth Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) cemented the newly obtained prestige. In fact, in February 2012, the library journal *VOYA* (*Voice of Youth Advocates*) published a list comprising the twenty-four best young adult books of the preceding year. Interestingly enough, ten of these twenty-four teenage novels were part of a series.[125]

2.3. Irish Children's and Young Adult Literature

2.3.1. The Tradition of Irish Children's Literature

As described in chapter 2.1., it is considered a rather complicated task to define *CL*. Similarly, it is of equal complexity to find an appropriate definition for *Irish Children's Literature*, since it is not only the concept of children's literature that causes problems, but also the term "Irish". As asserted by Dunbar,

[123] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 35.
[124] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 37.
[125] Nilsen, Alleen Pace, and Blasingame, James. *Literature for Today's Young Adults.* 37.

> history and politics of Ireland have been such that nothing prefixed by the adjective "Irish" allows for easy definition: this consideration applies to "Irish children's literature" as much as to most other things.[126]

The problems with the prefix "Irish" as addressed by Dunbar are caused by various circumstances, notably Irish history, including the political situation, immigration and emigration, the two co-existing languages English and Irish, and, last but not least, the separation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In regard to Irish CL, the main controversy roots in the subject of its origin, which is closely linked to the question of what is actually to be understood by the term *Irish literature*. Irish CL (and Irish adult literature alike) was largely dependent on the British and American market until the middle of the 1990s. Although Irish publishing houses did exist, most children's books authors opted (and in part still do) for British or American publishers in order to make their books available on a bigger market to increase financial benefits. Only when Irish publishers started to engage in co-productions with foreign publishing houses, Irish titles became accessible to a readership outside Ireland and on a global scale.

Although Dunbar suggests that the Irish tradition of CL started already approximately three centuries ago, the question of what is to be regarded as Irish CL has resulted in "curious consequences of inclusion and omission".[127] For instance, Valerie Coghlan and Celia Keenan's *The Big Guide to Irish Children's Books* focuses on works which were published in Ireland and thus, excludes the majority of the picture books written by Martin Waddell, alongside his young adult novels which he published under his pen name, Catherine Sefton. By contrast, the American picture books by Rosemary Wells, and teenage fiction by the Australian Judith Clarke are included in the *The Big Guide to Irish Children's Books* since the publishing rights of their books have been purchased by Irish publishing houses.[128] This consideration is relevant for the present thesis as also one of the authors of the two books discussed, namely O.R. Melling, does not write Irish books in the strict sense. Although born in Ireland, Melling immigrated to Canada when she was four years old and, not surprisingly, most of her work was printed by Canadian or American publishers. Thus, the question arises whether her

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[126] Dunbar, Robert. "Rarely Pure and Never Simple: The World of Irish Children's Literature." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21.3 (1997): 309.
[127] Dunbar, Robert. "Rarely Pure and Never Simple". 310.
[128] Dunbar, Robert. "Rarely Pure and Never Simple". 309-310.

work can actually be regarded as Irish YAL. In addition to the author's origins and the fact that her young adult fantasy novel *The Hunter's Moon* is set on Irish soil and is based on Irish mythology and folklore, the present paper assumes that her work can be regarded as part of the body of Irish YAL. This claim is supported by remarks in the anthology *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*, edited by Valerie Coghlan and Keith O'Sullivan, in which Melling is described as one of the most prolific authors of Irish YAL centered on folklore and myth.[129]

Dunbar also postulates a more open definition of Irish CL which does not exclude Irish authors publishing their work in other countries, or, in fact, foreign authors who have immigrated to Ireland. As an example of the latter category he names Maria Edgeworth, who was born in England and whose children's stories were described by Frank Flanagan as "written by an English lady of the 19th century who happened to live in Ireland."[130] This description seems misleading since already a century earlier, C.A Read had expressed his opinion in regard to the *Irishness* of Edgeworth's work:

> Although born out of Ireland, yet the life and works of Maria Edgeworth are so closely connected with that country as to entitle her to a place in our pages.[131]

Finally, also literature written by authors born or living in Northern Ireland has to be mentioned. The most obvious example of a representative of these authors is C.S. Lewis whose *Narnia* series is regarded as one of the best-known pieces of Irish CL of all times. C.S. Lewis was born in Belfast, but spent most of his life outside of Ireland, the affiliation of his work with the body of Irish CL is undisputed. Thus, Dunbar's critique on the "curious consequences of inclusion and omission" characteristic for Irish CL seems comprehensible. Needless to say that like the case of a definition of a general notion of CL, Irish CL cannot be clearly defined either. In reference to Dunbar it can be concluded that Irish CL does not only include titles published in Ireland but also works which have been written by Irish authors opting for foreign publishing houses, and by Irish authors who immigrated to other countries, as well as non-Irish authors who immigrated to Ireland at one point of their life.

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[129] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. New York, and Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 17, 20-22, 23, 24.
[130] Flanagan, Frank. "Children's Literature in the Republic of Ireland: Historical Background." *European Children's Literature*. Ed. Penni Cotton. Kingston upon Thames: Kingston UP, 1996: 68; quoted in: Dunbar, Robert. "Rarely Pure and Never Simple". 314.
[131] Read, C. A. *The Cabinet of Irish Literature. Vol. 2*. London: Blackie, 1880. 254; quoted in: Dunbar, Robert. "Rarely Pure and Never Simple". 314.

Regardless of the problems caused by publication details and questions of kinship, it is a fact that Irish CL has always been associated with the British and the American market. Only recently – that is to say, from the 1980ies onwards – it has increased in number, which eventually led to the establishment of Irish CL as an "academic discipline".[132] Like the history of the term CL, Irish children enjoyed books which were not specifically intended for them and, in this respect, reading habits of Irish children reflected the "literary diet"[133] also imposed on children in England. For instance, although originally not published as a children's book, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) was read by British and Irish children alike and is sometimes referred to as the first children's book written by an Irish author. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Maria Edgeworth's novels *The Parent's Assistant* and *Early Lessons* became fashionable. The chapbooks published by John Newbery and his successors also played an essential part in the life of the literate Irish child, but it was especially the *Kildare Place Society* who made an impact on the education of the still illiterate children of poorer social classes. With the intention to educate less privileged children in Ireland, the society formed the first Irish publishing house to print works which were exclusively intended for a young readership. While these first stories also had the function to inform the uneducated children of lower social classes about natural history and geography, Irish myths and legends had always been a major ingredient for thrilling bedtime stories. Initially passed on by story-tellers – the so-called *seanchaí* – in an exclusively oral tradition, original Irish myths are usually difficult to trace down. In fact, only in the 19th century authors captured the Celtic folklore for posterity in the form of retellings. Two of the outstanding authors dedicating their work to these retellings were William Butler Yeats with his *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892) and Ella Young with the *Celtic Wonder Tales* (1910). The retellings also gave rise to a corpus of historical fiction, in which historical facts and legends of the magical and supernatural intersected. This genre gained special popularity between about 1880 and 1920, a period characterized by the beginning of Ireland's transition from colonial to post-colonial

[132] Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. "Introduction". *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. New York, and Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 1.
[133] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Ed. Hunt, Peter. London, and New York: Routledge, 1998. 695.

state and frequently described as the *Irish Literary Revival* (see chapter 3.3.).[134] Until this day retellings of Irish myths enjoy great popularity among Ireland's CL authors, which has led to a considerable corpus of young adult fantasy fiction based on Irish myths and folklore.[135] As the retellings form the basis of the analysis of this diploma thesis, no further information will be offered at this point and a more in-depth description of the revival of Irish mythology, as well as its impact on Irish YAL will be provided in the following chapters.

Obviously the small Irish book market has caused limitations in regard to the genres of CL published predominantly. Especially "poetry, picture books and non-fiction"[136] have been pushed back in favor of fantasy literature and historic fiction. Therefore, it is not surprising that the works of the popular illustrator P.J. Lynch or the poetry collections of Matthew Sweeney were printed in Great Britain.

Apart from the rootedness in the Celtic heritage, Irish CL is also concerned with the personal and political conflict characteristic for the history of Ireland. While historic literature is a popular genre in the CL of most countries, it is of special importance in Ireland. This is so because it is a "country where dissension, emigration and exile have featured so largely in our history."[137] The dichotomy between Celtic heritage and Christian beliefs, the British rule, the Great Famine, the Easter rebellion and other historic events, were, in part, responsible for the preference of some authors to place history at the heart of their stories. However, again history is continuously intertwined with the ancient tales which have been mentioned before. Yet more recent works sometimes give a more "human dimension"[138] to historic CL and thus, focus on historic events and occurrences instead of the supernatural. As argued by Dunbar, "we encounter in these new books new ways of seeing the past, free from the sort of facile and sentimental clichés."[139]

What Dunbar is referring to is a tendency of certain authors to describe Ireland from a telescopic point of view which stereotypically reduces the country to the magical place of the Paddy, the Irishman, who drinks bad whiskey, is illiterate and fears the

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[134] Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". *Children's Literature and National Identity*. Ed. Meek, Margaret. Trent, and Sterling: Trentham Books, 2001. 81.
[135] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 696.
[136] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 697.
[137] Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". 81.
[138] Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". 83.
[139] Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". 83.

pranks of the leprechauns or the revenge of the fairies.[140] More modern and open works of historic Irish CL, by contrast, relate to major landmarks of Irish history like the Great Famine, the transition from colonial to post-colonial state and, most recently, the conflict in Northern Ireland. Especially in regard to the potato famine one novel, namely Marisa Conlon-McKenna's *Under the Hawthorn Tree* (1990*)*, is of tremendous importance and was honored with the *International Reading Association Award* for its honest depiction of the great misery brought upon the Irish population during the years of the Great Hunger. More recently, Irish CL has also been inspired by ideas of environmentalism.[141]

An important consideration of Irish CL also needs to be assigned to the question of language. While the number of the Irish speakers has decreased dramatically in the last centuries[142], Irish CL was established in both languages, English and Irish, simultaneously. The first publishing house devoted to works in the Irish language was established in 1945 and also printed a limited number of titles intended for children. However, while also Irish CL in English was conservative at that time, it was still more modern than its Gaelic counterparts. The latter tended to focus on a "very traditional way of life"[143] and only owing to the establishment of publishing houses like Cló Iar-Chonnachta in 1980, Irish CL adopted a new openness for more contemporary topics. In the same decade, an increased internalization of Irish CL in English could be observed since a considerable number of Irish titles was placed on markets outside of Ireland. In this process also foreign authors discovered Irish history, geography and mythology as a tempting breeding ground for their work.[144]

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[140] cf. Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". 80.
[141] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 696.
[142] **Irish language (or Gaelic):** It was in about 500 BC that the Celts arrived in Ireland and until the 15th century the Irish (or Gaelic language) was dominant. The situation changed with the arrival of British settlers. As a result of Cromwell's policies, as well as the Penal Laws, English became the dominant language, whereas Irish became the language of the poor. In 1800, there were about 2 million Irish speakers, 1,5 English speakers and 1,5 million bilinguals in Ireland. With the Great Famine, which had a disastrous effect on Ireland's poor population, the number of Irish-speakers decreased to 1,5 million, yet only 12.6 per cent were under ten years old. In the following centuries this number reduced dramatically to 3.5 per cent. In addition, the language was only spoken in the coastal areas of Ireland, known as the *Gaeltacht*. Movements like the *Gaelic League* aimed at ensuring the survival of the language. Although Irish is an official language in Ireland, it is estimated that presently there are only about 5000 inhabitants that have Irish as their first language. At the same time about 30 per cent of the Irish population claim to have at least "some fluency in the language." (Goodby, John. Ed. *Irish Studies: The Essential Glossary*. Oxford: Arnold, 2003. 116f.)
[143] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 697.
[144] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 697.

As asserted by Coghlan, the slow and dragging development of Irish CL could, in part, be rooted in the Irish school curriculum which does not exactly encourage the reading activity of pupils. On the contrary, school libraries are generally "underresourced".[145]

2.3.2. The Conservatism of Irish Children's Literature

> Being Catholic or Protestant has been fundamental to what Irish people have done and said over the past two hundred years. It has been central to family life, education, health care and social welfare and has influenced the schools people attended, the friends they had and who they married.[146] (…) Being religious – that is, identifying with and belonging to a church, accepting its beliefs and engaging in its practices – has been, and still remains, a major feature of modern Irish social life.[147]

Stereotypically, the Republic of Ireland is portrayed as a Catholic country whose population is deeply religious and tends to follow the strict moral code imposed by the Catholic Church. Indeed, certain laws were enforced relatively late as a result of the deep inclination of the Irish with religious beliefs. For instance, in 1995 only a small majority of 50.28 percent of the Irish population was in favor of divorce, leading to its legalization.[148] Two years before, homosexuality had been decriminalized.[149] Although the regular church attendance has decreased in the last decades, Ireland still has the image of a conservative country. Corresponding to the conservative attitude and slow social changes connected to Irishness, the still very limited body of CL comprises various metadiscourses centering on the traditional notions of "nation, childhood and family".[150] These notions inevitably relate to the already mentioned indebtedness of Irish CL in its factual and mythical past. However, they also refer to preferences and hesitancy in terms of the models of family depicted in the individual works. In fact, as suggested by Pádraic Whyte, Irish CL shows a tendency to stick to the representation of the "traditional Irish family", consisting of mother, father, children and optional grandparents. This traditional model of family is especially dominant in stories set in

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[145] Coghlan, Valerie. "Ireland". 698.
[146] Inglis, Tom. "Religion, Identity, State and Society." *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture.* Eds. Clearly, Joe, and Connolly, Claire. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 59.
[147] Inglis, Tom. "Religion, Identity, State and Society." 74.
[148] Goodby, John. Ed. *Irish Studies: The Essential Glossary*. Oxford: Arnold, 2003. 45f.
[149] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 72.
[150] Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. "Introduction". 3.

the rural areas of Ireland. In spite of the *Civil Partnership Act*, which was passed in 2010, this tendency has not declined until this day and "gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people [are still] underrepresented in young adult fiction", and most certainly in CL. However, the genres in which "more radical models of family and kinship" are described are *fantasy* and *speculative fiction*.[151]

As conservative Irish CL may seem, interestingly enough, religion hardly plays a role in the great majority of the works. This seems surprising, considering that religion is still an essential part of Irish cultural identity. Although it may be true that the religious belief of young people in Ireland has decreased in recent years, still about 95 per cent of the Irish are Catholic.[152] While this high percentage does not equal the number of regular churchgoers, it is yet an indication that Catholicism is still a marker of Irish cultural identity. In fact, even among the younger population, being Irish is sometimes still considered as a synonym for being Catholic. Consequently, young Protestants in Independent Ireland might still feel a sensation of "otherness".[153] While religion may still be of greater importance in Ireland than in other European countries, the power of the Catholic Church has decreased considerably in the last couple of decades. Only in 1974 article 44 of the Constitution, which "affirmed the dominant position of the Roman Catholic church",[154] was deleted and "other religious denominations" were "recognized".[155] Before that, the Catholic Church did not only withhold a special position within the State, but especially in regard to the supervision of education. In this relation, the *Talbot Press*, a sister firm of the *Educational Company of Ireland* formed in 1910, was of tremendous importance. While the Talbot Press specialized in publications ranging from educational books to fiction concerned with Ireland or written by Irish authors, religious publications formed the great majority of the books printed.[156] However, the Talbot Press operated at a time when the life of the Irish population was dominated by religious practices. Thus, it is only logical that

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[151] Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. "Introduction". 4.
[152] Eagleton, Terry. *The Truth about the Irish*. Dublin: New Island Books, 2006. 87-90.
[153] Crawford, Heather. *Outside the Glow: Protestants and Irishness in Independent Ireland*. Dublin: University College Press Dublin, 2010. 2.
[154] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children". *Studies in Children's Literature. 1500-2000*. Eds. Keenan, Celia, and Thompson Mary Shine. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004. 103.
[155] The Constitution of Ireland. 2.
[156] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children". 103.

"prayer books, missals, breviaries and hymnals"[157] were an important source of income for the publisher. Whereas most of the publications were addressed to adults, a considerable number of religious books was also intended for children. As argued by Flynn, the publications for children "were strongly focused on the formation of mind, character and person."[158] Furthermore, the religious publications maintained a conservative tone and God was described as a "moral policeman"[159] who would punish children if they did not behave according to his will. Similar to Puritan moral books for children, the religious publication of the Talbot press reflected strict moral codes of God-worthy behavior. More so, they instigated their readership to live a selfless life characterized by suffering and by resisting the evil temptations placed in their way. In this connection, Flynn suggests that

> children's prayer books, religious manuals and religious storybooks applauded suffering, self-denial and self-deprecation, and children were discouraged from celebrating their lives, gifts or talents.[160]

Although the Talbot press no longer operates, it is indeed remarkable that the country's strong historic affiliation with religion is of so little importance in its CL. In fact, those works associated with a religious undertone tend to be contemporary and modern, reflecting a change in attitude. For instance, Siobhan Dowd's *A Swift Pure Cry* (2006) is revolutionary for two reasons: Firstly, for its portrayal of a single teenage mother in a rural area of Ireland in 1984, a time when single parenthood was still frowned upon and when divorce was not even possible yet. Secondly, the allusions to incest, clerical abuse, and the Catholic Church's refusal to legalize abortion and contraception were also radical subjects in the novel.[161] As mentioned before, *A Swift Pure Cry* is a rather modern novel and it has been noted by McWilliams that "God seems to have made a comeback in CL"[162] in the new millennium after three decades of almost complete absence. In fact, the only religious publisher in Ireland is Veritas, which was created by the *Catholic Truth Society*. However, authors do not show much

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[157] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children". 111.
[158] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children". 111.
[159] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children".111.
[160] Flynn, Mary. "The Talbot Press and Its Religious Publications for Children".111.
[161] Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. New York, and Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 55f.
[162] McWilliams, David. *The Pope's Children: Ireland's New Elite*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005; quoted in: Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 58.

motivation to dwell on religious topics either. In this respect, publisher Michael O'Brien remarked that submissions usually lacked a distinctive portrayal of religious faith or practice due to the "self-censorship on part of the author."[163] When asked about this phenomenon, author Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, who publishes her children's stories under the pseudonym Elizabeth O'Hara, wrote in a personal E-Mail to Valerie Coghlan:

> Irish writers of my generation have a tendency to ignore or underplay religion in their works, even when they are historical, because the writers tend to be secular now (i.e. non-practicing, or half-believers, non-believers, agnostics, atheists, etc.) and to underestimate the key place of religion in life in the past (unless they are complaining about it, that is).[164]

As expressed by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, the reason for the neglect of the portrayal of religious faith roots in a lack of interest and devotion on part of the authors. While religious topics tend to be more popular in Irish adult literature, it needs to be mentioned that the attitude towards the church taken by the authors is usually one of rejection and critique fuelled by recent scandals within the Catholic Church. In Irish CL Siobhán Parkinson is probably the only author challenging and parodying religious habit. For example, in her novel *Sisters…No Way!* (1996) she addresses the reluctance of Catholics to get a divorce[165] and places her characters in a mixed school which is remarkable since "single schools are still the unmarked form" in Ireland, whereas "in Germany it is the other way around."[166] Another example of novels where religious signifiers might be mentioned, yet not openly and rather in disguise, are children's and young adult fantasy novels. Here, C.S. Lewis and his *Narnia* series, which includes various religious allusions, must be mentioned.[167]

However, it has to be clarified that the lack of the portrayal of religious faith refers to CL produced in the Republic of Ireland. CL in Northern Ireland, by comparison, does address religion. For instance, Joan Lingard's *The Twelfth Day of July* (1970) is one of the stories centering on the conflict between Catholics and Protestants

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[163] Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 58.
[164] Dhuibhne, Éilís Ní in a private E-Mail; quoted in: Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 59.
[165] Divorce was officially legalized after the referendum in 1995. One year later, during the time of the publication of the novel, divorce was still unusual. (Goodby, John. Ed. *Irish studies: The Essential Glossary*. Oxford: Arnold, 2003. 72)
[166] Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 61.
[167] Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 58.

in a Romeo and Juliet-like fashion.[168] Lingard is not the only author dedicated to this topic: Martin Waddell mentioned in a talk at a seminar in 2000 that various authors have depicted the conflict in Northern Ireland by "falling into the Romeo-and-Juliet-trap."[169] The topic of Northern Ireland and its CL could fill another diploma thesis, however, and, therefore, this topic will be left aside at this point.

Returning to the question of absence of religious topics, Coghlan concludes that Irish children's authors generally show a tendency to avoid employing social realism in their works. She writes:

> Irish children's publishing and writing tends to be conservative – even timid- when it comes to social realism. That Ireland is still struggling with aspects of modernity is evident in writing in publishing for young people: any depiction of religion, including its positive and negative connotations, seems to be one aspect of this.

As suggested by Coghlan, authors still do not possess the audacity to depict the cruel and harsh reality as it is. This includes recent incidents in the Catholic Church involving child abuse, sexual insult, and children pornography, as well as other areas of Irish life where reality might not be as pleasant as desirable. Another aspect of this lack of representation relates to cultural groups having immigrated to Ireland in the last century or so. While it has been suggested in chapter 2.1.1 that CL in general has experienced a new open-mindedness in regard to topics and themes presented to children, as well as in terms of the minority groups which are increasingly included, Irish CL seems to be lacking behind. It may be true that several authors, including Siobhán Parkinson, Marita Conlon-McKenna and Siobhan Dowd, try to portray a more secular and versatile Ireland, but the majority of the works restrict themselves to a conservative world view where the aforementioned themes of nation, childhood and family are still placed at the center, whereas cultural diversity, as well as homosexual or transgendered teenagers are underrepresented.[170] This is partly also true of Irish YAL which will be the focus of the following section.

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[168] Coghlan, Valerie. "'What Foot Does He Dig With?' Inscriptions of Religious and Cultural Identity". 61.

[169] Waddell, Martin at a seminar; quoted in: Keenan, Celia. "The Troubled Fiction of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland." *The Big Guide 2: Irish Children's Books.* Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and Keenan, Celia. Dublin: Children's Books Ireland, 2000. 111-116.

[170] cf. Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. New York and London: Routledge, 2011. 72.

2.3.3. Irish Young Adult Literature

Considering the slow and late development of Irish CL, it may be of no surprise that "there is no established tradition of publishing for young adults"[171] in Ireland. In this respect, one of the few scholars dedicated to this field of study, namely Pádraic Whyte, mentions various possible reasons for this phenomenon, including "economic concerns, a limited children's publishing industry, the lingering influence of the Catholic Church, and conservative ideologies."[172] While all of these reasons have already been mentioned in reference to Irish CL in previous chapters, they are of even greater importance in Irish YAL. As pointed out in the general overview of YAL, the genre has developed considerably in the last couple of decades and its stories have repeatedly broken taboos. As stated by John Fahy, Irish YAL, by contrast, was still in an "embryonic state"[173] in the 1990s. In fact, only in 1994 Jane Mitchell won the Bistro Award for her teen novel *When Stars Stop Spinning,* which was a first indication that Irish YAL was gaining international recognition. Since that year and especially in the period of the *Celtic Tiger*[174], various authors have attempted to depict Irish teenage life in a realistic way. In reference to Kimberley Reynolds and her volume *Radical Children's Literature*, Whyte asserts that Irish YAL can be divided into three basic categories (as described by Reynolds):

> Books that trivialize adolescence; nihilistic fiction; and, books that celebrate adolescent creativity and agency.[175]

The first category can be described as teenage versions of *chick-lit* novels in which the female protagonists show an embellished affiliation with image, fashion and consumerism and which rather address popular culture than youth culture. In part, Melling's *The Hunter's Moon* can be seen as representative work of this first category. For example, one of the two protagonists, the young American Gwen, seems obsessed

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[171] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 71.
[172] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 71.
[173] Fahy, John. "Teen Fiction". *The Big Guide to Irish Children's Books*. Coghlan, Valerie, and Keenan, Celia. Eds. Dublin: Irish Children's Book Trust. 50.
[174] **Celtic tiger:** The term forms an analogy with the term 'Asian tiger' and describes the period of unprecedented economic growth in Ireland, which lasted from 1994 until 2007. During these years the growth of the GDP in Ireland was 9.4 per cent, whereas the average of the EU was 2.6 per cent. (Goodby, John. Ed. *Irish Studies: The Essential Glossary*. Oxford: Arnold, 2003. 45f.)
[175] Reynolds, Kimberley. *Radical Children's Literature: Future Visions and Aesthetic Transformations in Juvenile Fiction*. Basingstoke, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 77.

with her Irish cousin's remarkable body, they discuss popular culture, reciting movies and rock bands, and are "crazy about boys, shopping, makeup."[176]

Teenage novels of the other two categories tend to focus on more complex topics of adolescence and can be regarded as element of youth culture. However, although Irish YAL has become more open in the discussion of certain taboo topics, it has to be considered that its development is still considerably slower than in other English speaking countries, most importantly in the U.S. While groundbreaking landmarks like *Forever* were already published in the 1970ies, Irish YAL shows a hesitancy even today to explore teen sexuality and, in particular, homosexuality. Although the number of young adult titles increased considerably during the period of the Celtic tiger in the 1990s, hardly any attention was paid to these issues. The only two novels directly linked to homosexuality are Tom Lennon's *When Love Comes to Town* (1993) and Tatiana Strelkoff's *Allison: A Story of First Love* (1998). The former was published in the same year in which homosexuality was legalized in Ireland and depicts the love story of two boys. Strelkoff's novel, on the other hand, is an account of the love story of two girls.[177] The fact that the former novel first appeared as an adult title and is now available in the young adult section of bookshops indicates a change in attitude in Irish society. Although it is now easier to publish a book that is concerned with sexuality or even homosexuality, Whyte argues that Irish society is still hesitant to discuss these topics:

> Although the narrative makes visible the reality of gay teen experiences in a contemporary Ireland, the fact that the novel is one of the two texts for teenagers that engage with such issues also suggests a continued repression of these themes.[178]

In fact, also in the novels discussed in this diploma thesis, not a single homosexual character is mentioned, and sexuality hardly plays a role in the depiction of any of the relationships. Even in *The Hunter's Moon*, in which love between mortals and immortals is a central theme, sexual desires are described in a very superficial and innocent way. On the one hand, this reluctance and even shyness is surprising, on the other hand, it ties in with the tradition of the retellings of the *Irish Literary Revival* as also authors such as Yeats, Young and Lady Gregory down-stripped the original myths of their violence and sexuality in order to make them suitable for their audience.

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[176] Melling, O.R. *The Hunter's Moon*. New York: Amulet, 2005. 11.
[177] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 72.
[178] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 73.

However, as asserted by the author Cormac Mac Raois, the original myths were initially addressed to adults and were explicit as far as sexuality and violence was concerned:

> The tales' forthright sexuality reflects a pre-Christian lack of inhibition. While, for example, Cú Chulainn is receiving advanced training in the martial arts from Scáthach, her prophetic daughter Uathach gives him an equally good grounding in the art of love-making.[179]

As exemplified by the mythic character Cú Chulainn of the Ulster cycle (see chapter 3.5.2.), original Gaelic myths were not bound to religious values of pre-marital chastity and the suppression of sexual desires. However, although both novels were published in the new millennium and include strong references to antique Irish myths and their characters, the authors renounced the graphic portrayal of sexuality characteristic for original Irish myths and kept the relationships G-rated.

Another example of a young adult novel which attempts to grand a realistic view on taboo topics and themes concerning adolescence is Mark O'Sullivan's *White Lies* (1997). Set in a small town in Ireland, the story focuses on four teenagers struggling with different aspects of their personality. The novel tackles issues like "race, class, sexuality, and abuse."[180] Moreover, the story expresses an overt critique on "the inadequacies of the Irish Constitution in protecting the rights of children"[181] who suffer from abuse and neglect. Similarly, the aforementioned *A Swift Pure Cry* by Siobhan Dowd criticizes Irish society, as well as the state and the Catholic Church for failing to provide resources and information on teenage pregnancy and sexual health. Another novel to tackle a taboo topic is *Breaking the Wishbone* by Siobhán Parkinson (1999), which portrays homelessness of teenagers.[182]

While the works mentioned are clearly good examples of novels which are straightforward and modern in their portrayal of taboo topics, it is striking that most of them were either written in the 1990s or depict stories set in Ireland's past. Especially because the number of publishing houses for both, CL and YAL, has decreased in recent years, Whyte is not all too optimistic as far as the future of the genre is concerned. However, he argues that

> it is necessary that young adults in Ireland have access to a generous supply of well-written and sophisticated texts that engage with a multitude of themes. Most importantly, as with

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[179] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21.3 (1997): 332.
[180] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 74.
[181] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 74f.
[182] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 76-79.

> all good story-telling, for those young people that are often excluded from or forgotten by the mainstream, such novels can provide them with a sense that they are not alone.[183]

The wide range of themes seems also essential in terms of the large number of non-Irish nationals[184] in Ireland whose teenagers are still waiting to be represented in contemporary Irish YAL.[185]

Concluding, it can be stated that Irish CL and especially its YAL does not fully meet the standards set by international CL, and in particular by English speaking CL. Due to its late establishment, several taboo topics are still not addressed, and parts of society, such as the large number of ethnic minorities, are underrepresented or still excluded. While sexuality among teenagers was already depicted by American author Judy Blume in the 1970s, sexual revolution has yet to reach Irish YAL. Also in regard to the portrayal of homosexual or transgendered teenagers, Irish CL is restricted to a very limited body of works, all of them set in Ireland's past or written in the 1990s when homosexuality was officially legalized and the issue was of current importance. One area where CL does not differ from the international standard is religion. Like American or British CL, Irish CL and YAL almost completely ignores religious practice or belief in its works.

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[183] Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 80.
[184] According to the results of the Census 2011, 12% of the Irish population are non-Irish nationals. This percentage accounts for 544,357 non-Irish inhabitants of 199 different nations. (*Central Statistics Office*. 2012."Census 2011 results. Profile 6. Migration and Diversity." <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile6/Profile%206%20Migration%20and%20Diversity%20entire%20doc.pdf>.)
[185] cf. Whyte, Pádraic. "Young Adult Fiction and Youth Culture". 80.

3. Irish Mythology and Folklore in *Irish Fantasy Literature*

3.1. Fantasy Literature

Fantasy literature or *fantasy fiction* (FF) is often simply referred to as *fantasy,* which is not unproblematic since this term has several different meanings. According to the *Collins Dictionary*, the term *fantasy* (or *phantasy*) has seven different meanings, ranging from general definitions, such as "imagination unrestricted by reality", or "an illusion, hallucination, or phantom", to the psychological meaning of "a series of pleasing mental images, usually serving to fulfill a need not gratified in reality"[186]. As a consequence, Dieter Petzold suggests to use the term *fantasy literature* or *fantasy fiction*[187]*,* which is done in this thesis.

As asserted by Maria Nikolajeva, FF is an

> eclectic genre, since it borrows traits not just from fairy tales, but from myth, romance, the novel of chivalry, the picaresque, the gothic novel, mysteries, science fiction, and other genres, blending seemingly incompatible elements within one and the same narrative, for instance, pagan and Christian images, magic wands and laser guns.[188]

As a result of the eclecticism of the genre, it is difficult to identify, and to define the exact borders between FF and related genres. While a distinction might not always be necessary, the analysis of the two novels under discussion demands at least an attempt at categorization. Hence, those related genres, which are essential for the second and practical part of this thesis, are discussed in the following sub-chapters.

FF is characterized by the creation of a world that does not exactly reflect the real world, but imitates it and allows some crucial changes. Thus, it offers a *secondary world* "which includes something impossible, some breach of natural law as we know it."[189] In order to distinguish between the real and the imaginary world, J.R.R. Tolkien introduced the terms *Primary* and *Secondary World* in his famous essay *On Fairy Stories*. In contrast to fairytales where there is no link to reality, the protagonists in FF are often transported from the primary to the secondary world, and vice versa.[190]

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[186] "Fantasy." *Collins Dictionary*. Sixth edition. Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2003. 591.
[187] Petzold, Dieter. "Fantasy Fiction and Related Genres". *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 31.1 (1986): 12f.
[188] Nikolajeva, Maria. "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern". *Marvels & Tales* 17.1 (2003): 139.
[189] O'Keefe, Deborah. "Fantasy". *The Continuum of Young Adult Literature*. Eds. Cullinan, Bernice E., and, Kunzel, Bonnie L et al. New York and London: Continuum, 2005. 232.
[190] Nikolajeva, Maria. "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern". 142.

This transfer between the two worlds sometimes involves not only a change of location, but also of time. According to Nikolajeva, protagonists of FF are "displaced from modern, linear time", the *chronos*, and find themselves placed in *kairos*, the "mythical, archaic cyclical time" during the main part, until they are finally brought back to "linearity"[191] at the end of the story. For instance, in *The New Policeman*, the protagonist JJ is detached from *chronos*, when he is shown the entrance to Tír na nÓg in the souterraine and enters the secondary world where time follows other rules than in the real world. Bound to the cyclical time of the Land of Youth, JJ does not realize that time passes considerably more slowly than in the primary world and upon his return, he is only informed by his mother that he was absent longer than he thought.[192] In order to analyze the link between setting and time in the primary and secondary worlds, and the transition between the two worlds, scholars have suggested the theory of the *chronotope*, coined by the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. According to the concept "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole."[193] As a result of the fusion of time and space in literature, a fictional world (or chronotope) is created. In *The Hunter's Moon* one of the protagonists, Findabhair, is abducted by fairies while staying in Tara, a location which exists in Ireland, and taken to the magical realm *Faerie*. In the attempt to save her kidnapped cousin, Gwen finds an entrance to the world of the fairies with the help of her new-found companion Dara. Similar to JJ in *The New Policeman*, the youngsters only realize that they have been away longer than expected only when they return to the primary world.

> How long they stood in that netherworld of despair they couldn't be certain. The change that took place was as slow and subtle as the arrival of dawn. It was the absence of pain, they registered first. Their injuries had vanished, leaving them fully restored.[194]

Consequently, the *chronotope* created in *The Hunter's Moon* does not only involve the transition from the real world, i.e. contemporary Ireland, to the magical realm of the fairies, but also a detachment from the linear time which characterizes reality. Like the human protagonists who intervene in *Faerie*, also the magical creatures enter the real world when they abduct Findabhair. Only at the end, the balance is restored and the humans and the magical creature return to their rightful worlds.

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[191] Nikolajeva, Maria. "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern". 141.
[192] Thompson, Kate. *The New Policeman*. London: Red Fox, 2005. 388.
[193] Bemong, Nele, and Borghart, Pieter. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope*. 3f.
[194] Melling, O.R. *The Hunter's Moon*. New York: Amulet, 2005. 262.

Similarly, the imagined realities created in FF usually forbid the characters to transfer objects from the secondary to the primary world so that the rules of logic in the latter are maintained. In this aspect, FF differs from related genres, such as the fairy tale or the myth, which do not make this claim.[195] As JJ is able to take the magical flute of the fairies back to the primary world, it becomes apparent that the borders of FF and other related genres become blurred and that Thompson's novel incorporates various fantastic genres.

While the transition between two different worlds is an essential part of the two novels discussed, *The New Policeman* and *The Hunter's Moon*, other works of FF are set entirely in a fantasy world. This imaginary world is usually described in great detail and is as important to the story as plot, characters and magical activities. For instance, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is set exclusively in Middle Earth and no transition between a primary and a secondary world takes place. The fantasy world of Tolkien and others is described on various levels and presents "complex societies, with histories, geographies, sometimes languages", whereas "groups of inhabitants are defined by race or species or location or supernatural activities."[196] In Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, the characters are grouped according to their race or species, including hobbits, dwarfs and elves, but also in regard to location (e.g. wood elves, Rivendell elves). A further distinction among the representatives of one race or species is related to supernatural traits. For example, humans are divided into two groups: humans who are characterized by the absence of any magical potential; and the men of the west, also called the *Dúnedain,* who experience a proximity to magic and are blessed with a particularly long life.

While *Children's Fantasy Literature* (CFF) and *Young Adult Fantasy Literature* (YAFF) have mainly the same characteristics as adult FF, these genres underwent their own development in the course of the past sixty years. As asserted by Catherine Butler, today's CFF is

[195] Nikolajeva, Maria. "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern". 142.
[196] O'Keefe, Deborah. "Fantasy". 233.

> in favour [sic] of fantasies set in secondary worlds, or in which real-world protagonists are decisively removed from their familiar surrounding and transported to another time or reality. (…) The fantasy quest may then become one of *self*-restoration or return.[197]

In this connection, the return does not necessarily imply the restoration of normality. While CFF in the 1960s and 1970s always concluded with the child's return from the world of fantasy and magic, the protagonist's personal growth as a result of the life-changing experiences made during the quest seems to be of greater importance in contemporary works. Consequently, the author leaves open the possibility to write sequels or series which have been extremely popular after the great success of the *Harry Potter*. Moreover, the genre is no longer bound to old conventions according to which the children were detached from the adult, and might be supported by their parents or guardians on their quest. While the setting of CFF was restricted to rural communities in the past, the cities increasingly function as starting point for fantastic adventures. In this respect, also popular culture and technical devices, such as mobile phones and the internet, are increasingly tied in with the story line. Due to social and political developments in society, contemporary CFF also integrates environmentalism and the fear of an environmental catastrophe, resulting in the creation of dystopian[198] fantasy worlds. Also, the representation of witches and witchcraft has changed in the course of the years. While witches were traditionally described as the embodiment of evil forces in early CFF, they now evoke principally positive associations. Also the "politicization of mythology has become an increasingly prominent feature", leading to the inclusion of "raw material"[199] provided by mythology and folklore in CFF. Especially the Celtic culture has proven as a rich source.[200] Due to the popularity of mythology and folklore in CFF, as well as in FF, another genre has been suggested, namely *mythic fiction*.

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[197] Butler, Catherine. "Modern Children's Fantasy". *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Eds. James, Edward, and Mendlesohn, Farah. Cambride: Cambridge UP, 2012. 225.

[198] **Dystopia**: In contrast to *utopia*, *dystopia* evokes negative connotations and means „imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives". For instance, the imaginary world of Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* is a dystopian fantasy world since children are forced to fight each other to the death in order to survive the cruel game imposed by the *Capitol*. (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*. 2012. Merriam Webster. "Dystopia". <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dystopia>.)

[199] Butler, Catherine. "Modern Children's Fantasy". 226.

[200] Butler, Catherine. "Modern Children's Fantasy". 225-226.

3.1.1. Mythic Fiction

Mythic Fiction is sometimes confused with *urban fantasy*, although an urban setting is possible but by no means obligatory. In a nutshell, mythic fiction is a subgenre of FF that encompasses elements, symbols, images, language, and metaphors from myth, folklore, fairy tale, and legend. Furthermore, it can integrate characteristics of other sub-genres of FF including horror, historical FF, or high FF. The secondary world presented in mythic fiction usually relates to the real or primary world and provides a telescopic view which makes it possible to critically assess it. The majority of FF including secondary worlds, or the transition from the primary to the secondary world is predominantly purely imaginary, but works of mythic fiction are set entirely in mythical places and draw from locations of old mythology and folklore.[201] Thompson's *The New Policeman* is an obvious example of mythic fiction, as it is predominantly set in Tír na nÓg, the land of eternal youth, as described in Celtic mythology. Also *The Hunter's Moon* draws from Celtic mythology and folklore by introducing the Celtic Otherworld, named *Faerie*, which is – as suggested by the name- inhabited by fairies. Furthermore, the plot involves the abduction of one of the protagonists, Findabhair, which in part reflects the myth of *The Stolen Bride*.

Apart from the rootedness in mythology and folklore, mythic fiction shares a set of characteristics with the FF genre, such as the use of magic and the adventurous quest.[202]

3.1.2. Fairy Tale versus Folktale

To distinguish the *fairy tale* from the *folktale*, it is sometimes called the *literary* fairy tale. According to the German scholar Jens Tismar, the literary fairly tale (das *Kunstmärchen*) is "written by a single identifiable author" and "artificial, and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folk tale" (das *Volksmärchen*).[203] Moreover, it is a genre that can only be understood by reference to oral tales, legends,

[201] Bartel, Julie. "Mythic fiction". 519.
[202] Bartel, Julie. "Mythic fiction". 519.
[203] Zipes, Jack. "Introduction: Towards a Definition of the Literary Fairy Tale." *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Zipes, Jack. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. xv.

novels and other literary fairy tales, which are adapted and retold. It originates from an oral form of storytelling, namely the *wonder tale*, and combines elements of this form with the folktale and other literary genres. While written forms of the Egyptian and Indian wonder tale date back thousands of years, the literary fairy tale is a fairly young genre. It was established at the end of the 17th century. While the literary fairy tale was initially addressed to adults, it was only established as a genre for children between 1830 and 1900. By the 20th century classics, including *Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Rapunzel, Rumpelstiltskin, Aladdin and the Lamb*, and many more, formed the canon of the literary fairy tale.[204]

The *folktale*, on the other hand, emerges from an exclusively oral tradition and is an anonymous narrative which has the purpose to entertain and to convey certain values and cultural heritage. The audience acknowledges that the events recorded have never occurred and consequently, fantastic or legendary characteristics are inserted generously. In addition, characters are typified so that they are not addressed by their names, but by their position in society, such as the Queen, the Prince and the Witch.[205]

3.1.3. Myth versus Legend

The term *myth* derives from the Greek word *mythos*, which means "a spoken story"[206] and is set in a time that is not historical. Thus, the presence of magical creatures like "deities, mortals [sic] heroes, semi-divine beings, and fantastic creatures" is made possible. Traditionally, myths did not have a specific author and were passed on orally. Another essential aspect of myths is that those societies that created them thought that they were true. At one point in history, many myths were written down, whereas every author gave the story their personal spin, depending on their cultural and social background. Moreover, a frequent point of discussion relates to the question if myths are told straightforwardly or if they have a symbolic meaning or are conceived as an allegory. In any case, the myth relates to the world around us, "speaking to some universal experience of question shared by all humans."[207] Hence, myths aim at

[204] Zipes, Jack. "Introduction: Towards a Definition of the Literary Fairy Tale." xvi-xxx.
[205] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 522.
[206] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 522.
[207] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 522.

explaining the world by indicating the "state of the natural world and the behavior of humans and animals."[208]

Legends (Latin: *legenda*, meaning "select", "read", "gather") share certain characteristics with myths as they were passed on orally and do not go back to a specific author. However, they differ from myths in that they are about persons who were believed to have been historical and not magical or divine. However, the events recorded tend to be exaggerated and dramatized, and fantastic or magic elements are often included. Although the people who told legends believed that their essence was true, they were usually aware of the fact that they were not verifiable. The setting of a legend can usually be pinpointed to a specific period of history and to a specific place in real life.

YAL usually does not distinguish between fairy tale, folktale, myth or legend in collections, retellings or fantasy literature incorporating any of the types mentioned, and, if it does, the labels are often applied arbitrarily. However, distinctions might be essential "to understand how and why stories are created, in what circumstances they were told, and for what purpose."[209]

While folklore from several parts of the world is increasingly integrated in YAL, it is especially Greek and Latin mythology that has attracted the attention of writers. The retellings of ancient myths in YAL are usually straightforward and unique in regard to their approach toward the particular myth. According to Julie Bartel "Celtic mythology offers another frequently-minded treasure of classical material for modern writers."[210] The works focusing on Celtic mythology often involve modern characters who are transported to ancient Ireland. The most popular cycle of legends in YAL is concerned with legends surrounding King Arthur.[211]

[208] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 522.
[209] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 522.
[210] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 523.
[211] Bartel, Julie. "Mythology and Legend". 523f.

3.2. Irish Folklore

The term *folklore* was borrowed from French in the nineteenth century and means "picturesque aspect but without importance or without deep significance", whereas the phrase "c'est du folklore"[212] expresses that something is not to be taken seriously. Furthermore, it evokes the association of "element of local colour [sic]" and accordingly, it denotes elements of "national and regional heritage", such as "folk song, regional costume and festival."[213] Anne Markey claims that the term *folklore* was first coined in a letter written by William John Thoms and published in *The Athenaeum,* an English periodical, in 1823. While the Brothers Grimm had already made a name of themselves in Germany as collectors of fairy tales and folk-tradition, Thoms wished to achieve the same in England and introduced "a good Saxon compound, Folk-lore- the Lore of the People" in order to refer to "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, of the olden time."[214] Accordingly, folklore refers to the past and predominantly the folk-tradition of the countryside. In Ireland, folklore is primarily associated with the West, i.e. the regions of the *Gaeltacht*. Thus, it is about Ireland's cultural heritage and not necessarily about its modernity. In his volume *Locating Irish Folklore*, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin describes folklore as follows:

> If it plays music it is pipes or fiddle rather than electric guitar. If it tells stories it is orally and in intimate settings. It belongs more under a thatched roof than a slated roof, by a turf fire rather than a radiator, in a humble kitchen as opposed to elegant drawing-room. If it travels on land it is by donkey, bicycle or – perhaps – Morris Minor. If it travels by sea it is by currach rather than by yacht. If it travels by air it is on its way to a folk festival.[215]

Hence, folklore is linked to tradition. However, it was "predicated on the death of tradition" and it "appeared when it was disappearing."[216] In fact, Irish folklore recovered in the nineteenth century when the authors and poets of the *Irish Literary Revival* (see chapter 3.3.) collected old myths, ballads and other forms of oral narratives from the Irish peasantry and published them in collections. While the academic studies of Irish folklore in the Republic of Ireland have had a strong focus on narratives rooted in the oral tradition of storytelling in Gaeltacht areas, folkloric research in Northern

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[212] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. Cork: Cork UP, 2000. 1.
[213] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 1.
[214] Thoms's letter of 22 August 1846 is reprinted in: Dundes, Alan. *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968; 4f.; quoted in: Markey, Anne. "The Discovery of Irish Folklore." 21.
[215] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 2.
[216] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 1.

Ireland has been about "material culture, customs, and folklife in general."[217] The focus of study in the Republic of Ireland resulted in the "Gaelicisation of Irish folklore"[218], which points to the connection of Irish folklore and the Gaelic language. As will be pointed out in great detail in the following chapters, Gaelic folklore and mythology have been an essential source for Irish literature since the *Irish Literary Revival* in the nineteenth century. In regard to the relation between Irish folklore and literature, Ó Giolláin suggests that

> folklore, then, can be understood as representing a world-view alternative to the official conception of the world.[219]

This world-view reflects Irish superstition related to the fear of the revenge of the fairies and the leprechauns, which marks a sharp contrast to the reality where these magical creatures are not presumed to exist. However, the alternative world-views offer a good starting point for secondary worlds as a characteristic of fantasy novels.[220]

3.3. The *Irish Literary Revival*, or, the Period of the Retellings of Irish Myths

Originally addressed to adults primarily, fairy tales "were often gruesome, cruel and not for children."[221] Apart from the graphic depiction of violence, the stories did not always end happily and only when childhood was assigned a greater significance in the Victorian Era, fairy tales changed their audience. However, in order to make them enjoyable for children, they had to be adapted and *retold*. Retellings of original myths remain popular to this day. For instance, one of the most frequently retold fairy tales is *Cinderella*. While in the original version Cinderella escapes her miserable life by using her intellect and will power, in later retellings she receives help from magical creatures, leading to famous scenes like the transformation of the pumpkin which eventually becomes a coach. Retellings of fairy tales come in all sorts of forms, including parody,

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[217] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 57.
cf. Markey, Anne. "The discovery of Irish folklore." *New Hibernia Review*. 10.4. (Winter 2006) 22.
[218] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 114f.
[219] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. "An Béaloideas agus an Stát." *Béaloideas*, 57, 1989. 163; quoted in: Markey, Anne. "The Discovery of Irish Folklore." 24.
[220] Quintelli-Neary. *Folklore and the Fantastic in Twelve Modern Irish Novels*. Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1997. 2.
[221] Rawlins, Sharon. "Fairy Tale Retellings". *The Continuum of Young Adult Literature*. Eds. Cullinan, Bernice E., and, Kunzel, Bonnie L. New York, and London: Continuum, 2005. 227.

novel-length adaptations, graphic novels, poetry and picture books and starting from the 20th century authors have started to apply their own imagination, creating altered forms of the original myths. For instance, in one adaptation of the Cinderella fairy tale, Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skin*, the protagonist ends up running away with her godmother, who is a fairy, and not – as the reader would expect – a prince.[222]

In an Irish context, retellings of original Gaelic myths are of great importance, inasmuch as they are closely connected to a movement in Irish literature known as the *Irish Literary Revival* or *The Irish Renaissance*. As pointed out by Fallis, the term is only explicable upon a look at the tradition of *Anglo-Irish literature*. To begin with, it has to be noted that Anglo-Irish literature comprises two languages: The Irish or Gaelic language, on the one hand; the English language, on the other. While the first has a long history of precious literature, it is English that has been the dominant language for more than two centuries. The term *Anglo-Irish* is usually used for authors who write in English, but it also serves to "remind us that the writers in English belong to two literary traditions, the general one of the English-speaking world and the more specific one of Ireland."[223]

The *Irish Literary Revival* primarily refers to Anglo-Irish writers and is historically defined as a movement between approximately 1885 and 1940, in which a significant number of important works of distinct literary genres was written. A particularly influential figure of the movement was William Butler Yeats, who advanced to one of the most important poets of the entire English-speaking world. Similarly, Lady Augusta Gregory, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey produced outstanding plays, James Joyce created significant and innovative works of fiction and Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain became famous for their realistic short fiction.[224] The upheaval of Irish literature coincides with a widespread aspiration to strengthen Ireland's national identity in a political and social sense, leading to the *Home Rule*

[222] Rawlins, Sharon. "Fairy Tale Retellings". 227-229.
[223] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. Syracuse, New York: Gill and Macmillan, 1977. xi.
[224] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. xi.

Movement[225] and the *Land League*[226], as well as the foundation of the *Gaelic Athletic Association*. The latter founded a paper called *The Gael,* whose editor John O'Leary convinced his friend William Butler Yeats to contribute to it. The paper only existed for a year, but Yeats would make a come-back in 1888 when he and other young poets in their twenties, including Katharine Tynan and Douglas Hyde, published *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland*. As pointed out by McHugh and Harmon the volume "appear[ed] as the focus of many interests; scholarship and translation, Irish legend, history, language and landscape."[227]

Apart from the various aspects related to Irish national identity, the young poets who had planned the volume, differed as far as their religion and political views were concerned, which was naturally reflected in their works. Clearly, the volume showed that a new wave of poets was in the making. While Yeats was still one of many during that time, he became the center of the emerging literary movement when *The Wandering of Oisin* was published in 1889. The formal birth of the movement can be pinpointed to December 28, 1891, when poets and members of the *Southwark Literary Club* gathered at Yeats's house and officially formed the *London Irish Literary Society* which had as an objective to foster Irish works of literature.[228] The movement had a strong interest in Ireland's past and its Celticism, whereas a focus was particularly placed on the ancient Celtic myths passed on by the Irish peasantry. What was to be understood by the Celtic imagination became one of the central questions asked by the group of poets who all were no Celts, but Anglo-Irish. Especially after the Parnell tragedy[229] the poets lost faith in the politics of the nation and in order to compensate for

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[225] **Home Rule Movement:** The Homerule Movement started at the beginning of the 19th century and describes the political attempts of the Irish to self-govern the state. In this context, Charles Steward Parnell (see next page) was an influential figure who first attempted to introduce the *Home Rule Bill*, but failed. The Home Rule finally became reality in 1912, four years before the *Irish War of Independence* (1916-1921). (McConnel, James. 2011. BBC. "Irish Home Rule: An Imagined Future". <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/home_rule_movement_01.shtml>.)

[226] **The Land League:** The Land league was an Irish agrarian organization which aimed at reforming the landlord system enforced by the British. It was founded in 1879 by Michael Davitt. Charles Steward Parnell was asked to preside. The land league also had an essential impact on the national movement. (*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. 2012. Encyclopedia Britannica. "Land League". <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/329147/Land-League>.)

[227] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature: From Its Origins to the Present Day*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1982. 126.

[228] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 130.

[229] **The Parnell tragedy:** As asserted by Callanan, Charles Steward Parnell was the greatest Irish nationalist leader of the nineteenth century owing to his achievement to introduce the Home Rule. However, the event that should mean his downfall was the public accusation of having an affair with the

the damaged self-confidence, they started to relate to the Celtic heritage. By doing so they strived for finding "what it meant to be an Irish writer."[230] The interest in Irish folklore and Celticism was not a new phenomenon, though. Influenced by the French Revolution (1789), the Irish had developed a longing for freedom, and along with it, a sense of nationality in the eighteenth century. It was in the year of the French Revolution that Charlotte Brooke published *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. She did not remain the only writer interested in the old Gaelic poetry; in 1760 the Scottish poet James Macpherson[231] published his *Ossianic poems*, translations from old Celtic poems which sparked off a series of imitators and eventually resulted in the first *Celtic Revival* (1780-1880). The idea was

> to find in culture the basis for (…) 'the common name of Irishman' without extending this in the political real, where the threat of revolutionary separatist republicanism lingered, a repressed but residually powerful force.[232]

This was to be achieved by a rediscovery of the Gaelic language and its mythology. However, the translations were often inaccurate and the historical theories tended to be eccentric, which was a result of various factors. For example, the old Irish myths were part of an oral tradition and had only been written down in part, there was a sense of excessive antiquarianism and the authors often opted for distorted and humoristic versions of the originals.[233] The authors not only translated poems, but also combined poetic language with Celtic music, leading to the rise of popular ballads.[234] One writer was assigned special significance during the first *Celtic Revival*, namely

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wife of Captain W.H. O'Shea. Although he tried to reclaim his leadership and even married Katharine O'Shea, the criticism by a great majority of the Irish Parliamentary Party, as well as by the Catholic Church, was too strong. He died in Oct. 1891, aged forty-five, due to his poor health during the election campaign. Especially because Ireland had strived for finding a national identity during that time, he was worshipped as a national hero after his death. (Callanan, Frank. *The Parnell Split, 1890-91*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1992. 1-2.)

[230] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance. An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 58.

[231] Owing to a shared Celtic background, similar processes of reviving the Gaelic literature and language took place in Scottland and Ireland. Although MacPherson was a Scottish poet and, subsequently, concerned with Scottish literature, he inspired authors of the *Irish Literary Revival*. As it became evident after MacPherson's death, his translations of Celtic ballads were mainly invented by him and are not based on historic sources. However, due to his work other authors rediscovered the ancient Scottish oral tradition. (*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. 2012. Encyclopedia Britannica. "James MacPherson". <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/355276/James-Macpherson>.
University of Delaware. 2013. "James MacPherson and the Ossian Poems". <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/forgery/ossian.htm>.)

[232] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. London, and Melbourne: Hutchinson & Co, 1986. 62.

[233] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. 62

[234] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. 63.

Standish O'Grady. Although he was largely ignorant of the Gaelic language, his volumes *History of Ireland: The Historic Period* (1878) and *Cuchulain and His Contemporaries* had an enormous impact on the poets of the second Celtic Revival, including Yeats, and for that reason he is sometimes called "the Father of the Irish Revival".[235]

At the time of the publication of *Cuchulain and His Contemporaries,* Matthew Arnold attempted to describe Celticism in his Oxford lectures about the first Celtic revival. As asserted by Fallis, Arnold was by no means a specialist in Celtic literature, yet managed to describe Irish imagination appropriately:

> Arnold, though oddly ignorant of real Celtic literature, had found certain basic characteristics in the Celtic imagination: a sense of natural magic and the mystery of life, melancholy titanism coupled with a love for lightness and brightness, generosity, and a continuing rebellion against the despotism of fact.[236]

Although Arnold used his theory to rebel against the monotony he detected in the imagination of his compatriots, he probably also regarded the Irish as "imaginative and inept people who needed to be ruled by the Saxons."[237] Nevertheless his definition was widespread at the end of the nineteenth century and for the fact that it could be interpreted in different ways it gained great popularity among the Irish poets.

However, while Hyde who – like Yeats – engaged in collecting old myths from the Irish peasantry, believed that the cultural revival of Ireland could not take place unless the Irish or Gaelic language was revived, Yeats was rather reluctant to share his opinion. For that reason, Hyde went his own way and founded the *Gaelic League* which set out to protect and restore the Gaelic language.[238] While his primary goal was just that, the protection of the Gaelic language, he decided to publish an English volume called *Beside the Fire*, since he felt responsible to convey an accurate interpretation of the Irish myths also to an English-speaking audience. His translations are remarkable because they reflect an Irish dialect actually spoken by the Irish and not a distorted version which mocked the population like frequently practiced during the first *Celtic Revival*.[239]

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[235] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. 85.
[236] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 60.
[237] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 60.
[238] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 133.
[239] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 63.

As the leader of the literary movement, Yeats found new allies in Lionel Johnson and George William Russell (also known by his pseudonym A.E) after the separation from Hyde. Described as "specifically Celtic mystic", A.E's works "search for spiritual perfection which took mystical, transcendental and theosophical forms."[240] While A.E. was not necessarily interested in literary perfection, it was his kindness, patience and tolerance that made younger writers of that time look up to him. With that, he was the counterpart to Yeats who strived for perfection of style and form and was admired for it.[241] Both believed that the Celtic population had a special relation to the supernatural and that the pureness of the thoughts and the imagination of the Celts allowed them to access it. Deeply indulged in his belief in the supernatural, in 1896 A.E informed Yeats in a letter about his conviction that the old Celtic Gods were about to return and that the apocalypse was near. For that reason, Yeats and A.E planned to perform a séance in Lough Key, yet with no notable outcome. However, the event indicates the writers' attitude towards the supernatural and Irish folklore. To Yeats "fairies and the banshee were no joke or quaint survival, but part of the living imagination of the country."[242] This attitude is also reflected in Yeats' collections of Irish myths, such as *The Celtic Twilight*. Yeats, as well as A.E. inspired a whole wave of authors, such as Padraic Colum, who indulged in

> a tradition of writing on Irish themes, of using older Irish literature and tradition, contemporary Irish speech, folklore and folk-song in their work, and of linking the Irish landscape with its older associations.[243]

For this portrayal of indebtedness in Irish history and soil, the movement was soon assigned the names the *Celtic School, the Celtic Renaissance* and the *Celtic Twilight*, the latter referring to one of Yeats's collections of myths. It has also been argued that these names are more appropriate than the *Irish Literary Movement* or even *Irish Literary Revival*. Later also the term *Celtic Revival* was suggested, but Yeats showed some hesitancy in accepting it.[244]

It was often criticized that although Yeats was an outstanding poet himself, he had created an eclectic school of poets whose work was too standardized and formulaic. After 1904 the influence of Yeats and Russell declined substantially and individual

[240] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 133.
[241] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 134.
[242] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 64.
[243] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 135.
[244] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 136.

authors, including Thomas MacDonagh, James Joyce and Joseph Plunkett, produced poems and literary works with a more personal note.[245]

While the retellings and the poetry of the ancient myths may be flawed (see further details in the following chapter), they are still an appealing source to several Irish and non-Irish authors. Especially authors of the fantasy genre draw from the ancient mythology which was collected, translated and retold by authors of the Celtic Revival. In that respect, Kate Thompson even acknowledges Lady Augusta Gregory, Lady Wilde and James Stephens as sources for her young adult novel *The New Policeman*.

3.4. Language and Orality: The Difficulty to Trace Down Original Irish Myths

As asserted by Cormac Mac Raois, the ancient Irish myths date back about thirteen centuries and considering that they are relics of an exclusively oral tradition passed on by wandering story-tellers, the *seanchaí*, their endurance over time seems remarkable. Several of these old Irish myths are part of the old mythologies of the Celts who settled in Ireland before 1000 BC. Hence, it is not surprising that the myths have undergone substantial metamorphoses over the centuries and it is an incredible challenge to trace down original myths. In modern times, the old myths predominantly survive in CL, yet their representation in popular culture is in many cases anything but satisfying.[246] Owing to the authors' lack of knowledge about Irish history, culture and folklore, as well as their ignorance in regard to the Gaelic language, they rely on secondary sources, leading to "weak and fatally flawed"[247] retellings of old myths. This phenomenon can especially be observed in the growing genre of *Celtic fantasy,* which is also the main focus of the present diploma thesis.

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[245] McHugh, Roger, and Harmon, Maurice. *Anglo-Irish Literature.* 141f.
[246] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21.3 (1997): 330f.
[247] Scott, Michael. "By Imagination We Live: Some Thoughts on Irish Children's Fantasy". *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21.3 (1997): 323.

In the tradition of a *folklorist approach*, researchers tend to gather all available sources of a particular fairy tale, myth or legend and extract the parallels and differences in order to make hypotheses about a possible original version.[248] With Irish myths –and this is naturally not an uncommon problem concerning texts of ancient cultures and civilizations– folklorists face a fundamental difficulty: language and a grand corpus of untranslated material. As mentioned before, the Irish literary heritage comprises two languages, namely the Gaelic and the Irish. The ancient Gaelic literature encompassed several genres, including poems, sagas, tales and according to Fallis, "Gaelic literature is a remarkable story of survival and achievement under intense pressure."[249] Its beginnings date back to the pre-literate Celtic history when the *seanchaí* wandered Ireland and were taught the skill of remembrance and of oral composition. Their skill to remember the tales and to pass them on to succeeding generations was of utmost importance and the storytellers were taught certain techniques that would allow them to keep the tales and poems in their memory. For instance, a *bardic poem* usually consisted of fifty quatrains, and each of the quatrains followed a complicated pattern of alliterations and assonating syllables.

The mnemonic devices were remarkable, but as far as the conservation of any body of thought is concerned, they naturally could not compare to written documents. The Celts had only a primitive script, the so-called *Ogham*, which served merely to record plain inscriptions.[250] Folklore tales were only collected and written down in the sixth and seventh centuries by Catholic monks. Although one might suppose that the integration of the Pagan heritage into Christian belief was somehow problematic, it "was remarkably peaceful and comparatively swift."[251]

The eighth and ninth centuries were regarded as the *Golden Age of Gaelic Literature* as a significant number of poems and other forms of old oral Celtic literature were written. However, as a result of the raids of the Vikings, most manuscripts of that time were destroyed or got lost so that the traditional documents still available today date back no earlier than the eleventh century. Accordingly, large parts of the tales and myths were only recovered partially and the monks "often made a mess of what they

[248] McCallum, Robyn. "Approaches to the Literary Fairy Tale". Ed. Zipes, Jack. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 17f.
[249] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish literature*. 33.
[250] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish literature*. 33f.
[251] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. London, and Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1986. 11.

preserved."[252] This was due to the lack of sources, as well as to the fact that the Christian representatives altered the Pagan heritage in order to adapt it for a Christian readership.

Another obstacle in the process of collecting myths and legends relates to the fact that they existed in great numbers. Most tales date back to prehistoric times and include

> miraculous and sometimes grotesque motifs common to many kinds of folklore: magical weapons, supernatural births, exaggerated genitalia, fantastic physical strength, special charms and incantations.[253]

The language was usually formulaic and reflected the oral tradition which was passed on by the *seanchaí*. Contentwise, the tales incorporated a blend of the ordinary and the supernatural so that they would appeal to a mundane readership.[254] Today the massive body of old Irish myths and tales is usually divided into four main cycles, namely the (1) *Mythological Cycle* (also called The Invasion, or *Dé Danann* Tales), the (2) *Ulster Cycle* (or *Rudhraigheacht*), the (3) *Fianna Cycle* (or *Fiannaíocht*) and the (4) *Cycle of the Kings*.[255] (A brief overview of these four cycles will be provided in the next chapter.) Most of the stories clustered in the four main cycles originate between 1200 and 1600. As a result of the ascendency in Ireland, the "Gaelic literature after about 1690 became that of an oppressed peasantry and a dispossessed aristocracy."[256] Simultaneously, the number of Irish native speakers continued to decline and the old Gaelic myths, although still passed on from generation to generation, were hardly written down anymore. Especially after the famine the number of speakers of the old Gaelic language had decreased so dramatically, that hardly anybody was able to understand the old tales and only with the rediscovery of the Celtic poems and tales and their retellings in English, they regained prominence.[257]

While the first Celtic Revival and its writers, including Thomas Crofton Croker, made an important contribution to the conservation of the old Celtic myths and legends, the quality of their literary work is often controversial. The main point of discussion does not necessarily relate to style and form, but the humoristic and somehow pejorative undertone of their work. Especial Thomas Crofton Croker's translations of poems and

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[252] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 35.
[253] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 39.
[254] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 39.
[255] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 335-340.
[256] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 46.
[257] Fallis, Richard. *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature*. 46f.

tales "provoked various controversial reactions."[258] His best-known work, *The Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, was originally published anonymously and without the acknowledgement of the majority of sources. For that reason, he was later accused of plagiarism and it was criticized that he had included questionable sources. Especially because he apparently lost the manuscripts on which his work was based, his methodology became dubious. In addition, Croker was accused

> of (real or imagined) condescension towards the Irish country population, especially a tendency towards comic simplification and the attempt to ingratiate himself with his English readership at the expense of his Irish subjects.[259]

Thus, it is assumed that Croker mocked the Irish population in order to affirm prevailing stereotypes, including an inclination to heavy drinking and superstition and a predilection for fairy tales and the supernatural. As a result, the lack of authenticity of his work is sometimes stressed. Also Yeats devotes a few lines to Croker and Lover, another collector, in the introduction to his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*:

> Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not – mainly for political reasons – take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist's Arcadia; its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing of. What they did was not wholly false ; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen's servants, into the type of a whole nation, and created the stage Irishman.[260]

As asserted by Yeats, Croker wrote his tales out of the desire to amuse and to please the British gentility. In addition, he claims that Croker did not have a substantial knowledge about Irish culture and history so that his work is an idealized product of single-edged sources.

Apart from the supposed lack of knowledge about Irish culture and folklore, Croker was accused of altering the original tone of the myths and legends in favor of literary and stylistic merits. The circumstance that he changed the original Gaelic version in his translations becomes apparent as he opts for a third-person narration instead of a first-person narration characteristic for the oral tradition of the Celtic myths. While acknowledging that Croker's folklorist practice might have been flawed, Kosok suggests that his work still has to be appreciated as it was a

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[258] Kosok, Heinz. *Explorations in Irish Literature*. Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008. 77.
[259] Kosok, Heinz. *Explorations in Irish Literature*. 78.
[260] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. London: Walter Scott, 1888. xv.

> spadework to create a generally accepted awareness of an independent national identity in Ireland which was, despite all subsequent dissensions, one of the great achievements of the Renaissance movement.[261]

Thus, neither authenticity, nor reliable sources are decisive criteria to reevaluate Croker's translations or, in fact, all work related to Irish myths and legends. What is important is the effect of the revival on the creation of an Irish national identity.

Like Croker, other writers opted for literary perfection instead of 'historic' accuracy. While the use of similes or metaphors point to a focus on literary merits, "the borderline between collected material and fictionalised [sic] texts"[262] often becomes blurred. According to Yeats, the choice of many authors to produce works of literature instead of accurate descriptions has positive and negative effects. He writes:

> The various collectors of Irish folk-lore have, from our point of view, one great merit, and from the point of view of others, one great fault. They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive religion of mankind, or whatever else the folk-lorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocer's bills – item the fairy king, item the queen. Instead of this they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day.[263]

As pointed out by Yeats, writers differ from folklorists as they do not objectively describe, but interpret the tales passed on by the Irish population. By doing so, they might not achieve the accuracy expected from science, but they can capture the essentials of Irish life and relate to what is important to the people at a given point of time.

As illustrated in this chapter, Irish folklore as presented in the retellings of Irish mythology is not necessarily noteworthy for its accuracy. The origins of the ancient tales date back to prehistoric times and the identification of the original myth is virtually impossible. Also the invasion of the Vikings and the Normans, as well as the dramatic decline of speakers of the Irish language after the Great Famine have made it an incredible challenge to unearth and to understand original sources. Even in today's Ireland, people who can understand the native Celtic tongue are a minority and it is up to a limited number of skilled authors and folklorists, such as Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, to recover the still untranslated corpus of Irish myths. However, authors of the first and

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[261] Kosok, Heinz. *Explorations in Irish literature*. 85.
[262] Kosok, Heinz. *Explorations in Irish literature*. 85.
[263] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. xiv.

second Celtic Revival made a great effort in translating the ancient material and although their translations may not always be accurate, their achievement is remarkable. Nobody could express it more precisely as Yeats himself when he wrote that the literates of the revival period "have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life"[264] of Irish mythology.

3.5. The Four Main Cycles of Irish Mythology

As mentioned before, Irish mythology has been traditionally divided into four main cycles. These are described briefly in the following. A main focus is assigned to the myths which are also relevant for the analysis of the two novels in the second part of the present thesis.

3.5.1. The Mythological Cycle (The Invasion, or Dé Danann Tales)

The main focus of this cycle is on the "conflict between the divine and the demonic that parallels similar themes in Norse, Vedic, and Greek literature."[265] More precisely, the cycle describes the clashes between the Tuatha Dé Danann, the divine race connected to the goddess Danu, and the Fomhóire, ancestors of dark fairies and evil folk, including leprechauns.[266] The core of the myth is formed by descriptions of two epic battles between the supernatural races, both taking place in Magh Tuireadh (or Moytirra/Moytura). After their downfall, the Tuatha Dé Danann

> were driven underground and continued to reside, not as gods, but as sídhe, associated in the popular imagination with fairies of folklore.[267]

Written documents of the battles date back to the eighth century AD, and as a result of the attempts by monks to Christianize the Celts, Paganisms were often omitted in the tales. This might also be the reason why the side story of the *Children of Lir*, which is much more compatible with the Christian belief, has been a far more popular

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[264] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. xiv.
[265] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 336.
[266] *Sacred Fire*. Ed. Fáilte, Ceád Mile. 1998. "Mythological Ancestors". <http://www.sacredfire.net/peoples.html> .
[267] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 9.

choice for retellings, poems and cover illustrations.[268] While the *Fate of the Children of Lir* is said to be two thousand years old, the oldest written version that survived is from the fifteenth century. This version may have originated from Dutch or French medieval legends about enchanted swan children, but it also includes parts of the Tuatha Dé Danann mythology. In most versions the children either convert to Christianity or have some sort of Christian epiphany before they are turned back to their human form, indicating the imprint left by the monks who wrote down the earliest documents. Moreover, the older versions end with the tragic death of the children, whereas more contemporary retellings for children provide a happy-ending.[269]

The mythological cycle comprises several characters which have been used in modern retellings and novel adaptations, such as the king of the Tuatha Dé Danann, Nuadhu, or the evil eye Balor, a gigantic leader of the Fomhóire. Two further characters are of great importance for the present thesis, namely the Dagdha and Aonghus, as both of them appear in Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman*.

The Dagdha (spelt the *Dagda* in *The New Policeman*) is a God known for his "hugeness, generosity and large appetite."[270] In order to satisfy his unlimited hunger, he is able to pull out food from his magic cauldron. Furthermore, he is in possession of a club which can pierce nine men at the same time, and also has healing powers. Aongus (or *Aengus*), Dagdha's son with Boinn, described as the goddess of the river Boyne, is usually linked to youth and love.[271]

3.5.2. The Ulster Cycle (Gaelic: Rudhraigheacht)

Named after the *Ulaidh*, from which the name Ulster, the province in the North of Ireland, derives, this cycle comprises a considerable number of heroic tales. The Gaelic term originated from the name given to the Ulaidh by themselves, namely *Rudhraighe*. According to Mac Raois,

[268] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 10.
[269] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 10f.
[270] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 336.
[271] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 336.

> [t]hese tales involve incredible feats of military prowess, shape changing, magical prohibitions (*geis*), interventions by Lugh, the Morrigan and Badhbh, boasting, disputes about honor and explicit sexuality.[272]

Thus, the aforementioned tales, which had to be adapted in order to make them suitable for a younger readership, are predominantly taken from this cycle. Its most popular story is *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, or *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*, an epic tale "of great carnage in which military prowess is celebrated and human life expendable."[273] Today the Táin epic is frequently incorporated in Irish YAL. The epic also involves a large body of preparatory tales, including the begetting of Cú Chulainn and his training, as well as the assassination of his own son. The Táin itself focuses on the invasion of the Queen of Connacht, Meadhbh, who wants to steal the Brown Bull of Cooley. While the warriors of Ulster are befallen by a magical illness, it is up to Cú Chulainn to defend the land.

3.5.3. The Fianna Cycle (Gaelic: Fiannaíocht)

This cycle is mainly concerned with the warrior-seer, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, who commands a band of hunters and warriors called *Fianna*. The Fianna roam the land, protecting it from invaders, such as the Vikings, and

> dealing with other world intrusions or themselves intruding into the other world, rescuing the distressed, quarreling among themselves and generally expecting hospitality from whomever they met.[274]

The Fianna usually enter the Celtic Otherworld while hunting deer and the portrayal of Fionn varies from story to story. While in some retellings he is depicted as a great warrior, poet or visionary, in others he is described as trickster. In fact, he appears as round character in Irish mythology, going through various stages in the course of his life: "from wondrous youth, through heroic manhood, to sad, even embittered, old age."[275] For instance, the tale *Fionn and the Salmon of Knowledge* Fionn narrates an incident of Fionn's boyhood when he is left to watch a magical salmon caught by the seer Finneageas. After burning his finger, he puts it into his mouth

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[272] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 337.
[273] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 14.
[274] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 338.
[275] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 339.

in order to ease the pain and as a reward for his ingenuity he receives "the gift of wisdom".[276] From that moment on, he sucks his thumb whenever he needs to make a decision. Fionn, then, achieves maturity in *How Fionn Takes Command of the Fianna* as he overwhelms Aillen who is able to spy fire and has burned down the palace of Tara during Samhain. In order to express his gratitude, the High King Conn Céadchathach leaves him in charge of the Fianna. With his troop of warriors he fights many battles, including one against The King of the World, whom he defeats with the help of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Other true companions are his two hounds, Bran and Sceolain. Finally, in *Tóraíocht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (or, *The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne*) Fionne is depicted as jealous, old man whose fiancée, the daughter of King Cormac Mac Airt Gráinne, chooses the young Fianna warrior Diarmaid Ua Duibhne over him. Fionn follows the young couple through Ireland and Diarmaid is eventually killed.[277] According to Bhroin, the tales surrounding the Fianna and Fionn Mac Cumhaill are hardly retold in CL.[278] However, Fionn's dog Bran is one of the central figures in Thompson's *The New Policeman*.

By contrast, a tale which is indeed frequently retold in CL is *Oisín i dTír na nÓg* (*Oisín in the Land of Youth*). It narrates the story of the son of Fionn, Oisín, who is lured to the Land of Youth by the Goddess Niamh. But since it is the land of eternal youth, nobody ever grows old and time does not pass, which results in Oisín's staying for three hundred years at the side of the daughter of the fairy king. However, after that time he feels sorrow and the desire to return to the real world to unite with the other Fianna. In order to help him to fulfill his wish, he is given a horse, but with the clear instruction not to step on the ground. Back in the human world, his saddle girth breaks and when falling to the ground, he starts to age[279]. As an aging man, he travels the land in search for his fellow Fianna, but the time of the great warrior band has long passed. At the end of his journey, Oisín encounters Saint Patrick and they engage in a discussion about Christianity and the virtues of the Fianna. Like in *The Children of Lir*, the dichotomy between Christian belief and Pagan heritage is stressed, whereas in more modern retellings Oisín does not convert to Christianity, but laments the loss of the

[276] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 339.
[277] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 339.
[278] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 14.
[279] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 339.

glory of the Fianna.[280] The tale of Oisín functions as a story-within-a-story in Thompson's *The New Policeman*.

3.5.4. The Cycle of the Kings

As implied by the name, this cycle is concerned with the mythical or semi-mythical kings and rulers of Ireland during about 300BC and 700AD. For instance, the tales surround the life stories of the ancestors of people from Leinster, including Lorc who was known for his horse ears. Another tale depicts the reign of the grandson of Cormac Mac Airt who is regarded as the most glorious of all kings.[281]

3.6. Irish Mythology and Folklore in Irish Fantasy Literature

While folklore and ancient mythology have been an essential source for children's novels all over the world, the rise of the Irish mythology in CL is usually said to be a phenomenon related to the time of the *Celtic tiger*. In fact, several of Irish children's novels incorporating ancient myths and legends, as well as folklorist characters like fairies, ghosts, demons and leprechauns were written during that time.[282] However, one of the pioneers of the stories relating to Irish folklore, namely Patricia Lynch's *The Turf Cutters' Donkey,* was published long before that, in 1934.[283] At the time of the publication of Lynch's novel, CL associated with Irish mythology and folklore came in the form of retellings, but recently Celtic tales and legends have predominantly been inserted in FF. Owing to the fact that the ancient Celtic myths and legends were addressed to an adult audience and passed on orally, the transfer into another genre is not entirely unproblematic. Especially because "violence and physical suffering are described in graphic, even glory details" and "forthright sexuality"[284] is common, the original myths are not suitable for children and need to be adapted. As argued by Mac

[280] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 12.
[281] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 339.
[282] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 7.
[283] Scott, Michael. "By Imagination We Live: Some Thoughts on Irish Children's Fantasy". 322f.
[284] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 332.

Raois, the essence of the ancient myths might get lost if adaptations and reductions of the material are too radical. Hence, he concludes that

> some tales would be better reserved for older readers, who might be able to deal with more robust versions. Our young readers' appetite for mythology could be spoiled by too thin a gruel served too soon.[285]

Yet the majority of CL "[has] been generally characterized by a tendency to recycle the same narrow selection of tales."[286] These include stories like the *Children of Lir, Cú Chulainn* and the story of his name, *Fionn*, and *Oisín* and his journey to *Tír na nÓg*, the Land of Youth. Only contemporary Irish FF tends to draw from a more diverse selection of myths.[287] Equally popular in retellings and FF is the portrayal of the Celtic Otherworld, whereas the story of Oisín who travels to *Tír na nÓg*, the land of never-ending youth, is probably the most popular. Tír na nÓg is often depicted as an "idealized mirror image of the human world [where] there is no death or disease but abundance, perpetual feasting, and enchanted music."[288] Tír na nÓg is not the only setting in which the supernatural exists. As pointed out by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, so-called *borderlands* are places where the supernatural and the real intersect. For instance, according to ancient oral legends and myths, "supernatural beings (fairy, ghost, demon, or the like)" often sojourn at "fences, ditches, streams, or beaches" which form "borders between the real and the numinous."[289] For superstitious people the borderlands are places of danger and high risk and they believe that the encounters between humans and the supernatural function as warning not to linger at such places.[290] Accordingly, the landscape is often romanticized and Ireland is portrayed as a country where the magical prevails over the real. As asserted by Dunbar the stereotypical image "that emerges is of a terrain where the possibilities of magical and marvelous experiences lay around every corner."[291] In fact, in reference to Hazel Greenham's *Ann and Peter* in Ireland, Dunbar suggests that in literature Ireland tends to be described as a country where "anything can happen."[292]

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[285] Mac Raois, Cormac. "Old Tales for New People: Irish Mythology Retold for Children". 332.
[286] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 8.
[287] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 8, 24.
[288] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 12.
[289] Dhuibhne, Éilís Ní. "Borderlands: Dead Bog and Living Landscape." *Irish Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Coghlan, Valerie, and O'Sullivan, Keith. New York, and Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 30.
[290] Dhuibhne, Éilís Ní. "Borderlands: Dead Bog and Living Landscape." 30.
[291] Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and Its Children's Literature". 82.
[292] Greenham, Hazel. *Ann and Peter in Ireland.* London: Frederick Muller, 1966; quoted in: Dunbar, Robert. "Ireland and its children's literature". 79.

Yet the supernatural is sometimes not only close in a spatial sense, but also in a temporal one. For instance, the story time of ancient myths, as well as retellings and FF incorporating Irish folklore and mythology repeatedly takes place "when the boundaries between the earthly and supernatural become more permeable."[293]

According to Bramwell one of the most frequent aspects of Paganism in CL, is related to the *eight-spoke Wheel of the Year*. Four of the spokes are usually referred to by their Celtic names, namely

> Imbolc (Candlemass, 1/2 February), Beltane (May Day), Lughnasadh (1/2 August) and Samhain (Hallowe'en).[294]

These quarter days are separated by "summer and winter solstices, and spring and autumn equinoxes."[295] Due to the supposed proximity to the supernatural on quarter days, it is not surprising that many legends and, subsequently, also retellings, FF and mythic fiction are set during these special times of the year. In order to be able to investigate the relation between time and space in contemporary CL drawing from Pagan heritage, Bramwell suggests to apply Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the *literary chronotope*.[296] (see chapter 3.1.)

[293] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 13.
[294] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction: Green Man, Shamanism, Earth Mysteries*. Basinstoke, and New York: Belgrave Macmillan, 2009. 4.
[295] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 4.
[296] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 4.

4. Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman* (2005)

4.1. Plot

A time leak between the human and the fairy world, *Tír na nÓg*, troubles the population of Kinvara in the County Galway in Ireland. Also the Liddy family laments the loss of time, but this is by far not the only problem of the teenage protagonist JJ: He is mocked by his classmates for his love of music and dancing and his late grandfather is accused of having murdered a priest. When JJ confides in the German Anne Korff, she shows him the secret passage through a souterrain to *Tír na nÓg*, the land of perpetual youth. Entering the magical realm, JJ not only discovers that fairies and leprechauns exist for real, but also finds out that the priest whom his grandfather supposedly killed, is still alive and responsible for the time leak. In an attempt to erase the fairy folk, the Christian priest has placed a flute in the time skin which has caused the time from the human world to leak into the fairy world. For that reason, time has suddenly commenced to pass in Tír na nÓg and, as a result, the fairies have started to age. With the help of the Celtic god of love Aengus Óg and accompanied by Fionn's fighting hound Bran, JJ is able to stop the time leak and restores order in Tír na nÓg, as well as in his world. After returning to Kinvara he discovers that Aengus Óg is in fact his grandfather, which explains his exceptional musical talent.

4.2. Genre – An Irish Young Adult Fantasy Novel

Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman* (*TNP*) can be regarded as a representative of a young adult novel for various reasons. First of all, the story is the prequel to *The Last of the High Kings* (2008) and *The White Horse's Trick* (2010) and thus, the first installment of a series. In addition, the main character is the fifteen-year-old Irish teenager, JJ, and the story is mainly narrated from his point of view. While several novels of the genre are told in the first person, Thompson opted for a figural third person narrative in which JJ functions as the main focalizer. The chapters told from his perspective tend to be longer than those of other focalizers, including the new policeman Larry O'Dwyer, JJ's parents or Anne Korff. By making use of variable

focalization the author provides a more versatile look on the happenings in Kinvara and Tír na nÓg and is able to describe activities in the primary and the secondary world simultaneously. Furthermore, the novel is fast-paced and depicts the events taking place in the period of one month, whereas the action jumps back and forth between the primary and the secondary world. Thus, not only the effects of the time leak in Tír na nÓg are described, but also the impact of the time loss in Kinvara, and even more importantly, of the disappearances of the human characters JJ, Anne Korff, Séadna Tobín and Thomas O'Neill. Although the story frequently inserts thoughts and feelings of the focalizers, dialogue prevails over inner reflection or narration which speeds up the action.

Moreover, the story is in line with the tendency of YAL to place a young hero at the center who achieves a heroic deed on his own and without the help of adult characters, such as parents, advisors or friends. In fact, although Aengus Óg accompanies JJ on his journey through Tír na nÓg, he is absent during the climax of the story when the teenage protagonist faces the Christian priest, Reverend Doherty, who is responsible for the time leak between the primary and the secondary world. Equally characteristic of a novel of the genre, the protagonist starts out as an irresponsible character who changes his surname to his father's name (Byrne) to distance himself from his mother's family, the Liddys, and wants to ditch his mother's music *céilí*[297] in order to go clubbing with his friend. Only in the course of the story he recalls his family bondage, changes his name back to its original form and commences to appreciate the family heritage, which is predominantly defined by a shared fondness for traditional Irish music.

Similar to other Irish YAL novels, *TNP* portrays a conservative and single-edged worldview which only includes Irish characters and does not represent ethnic minorities. Indeed, the only non-Irish person included in the novel is Anne Korff, a German immigrant, who exists in real life and to whom Kate Thompson had promised that she would name a character after her in one of her novels.[298] Yet Anne Korff is well assimilated to Irish customs and folklore as she seems to be the only character who knows about the entrance to Tír na nÓg and has visited the Celtic Otherworld on various occasions. Apart from Anne Korff, the exclusively white Irish characters work

[297] A dance, or music concert with traditional Irish instruments. (Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 407.)
[298] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. Foreword.

as farmers and submit to a traditional way of life. In addition, the reader is presented with a nuclear family, consisting of parents and the two children, JJ and Marian. However, as indicated in the following quotation their parents are not married as Helen wants to honor her ancestor's surname:

> 'Everyone in school uses their father's name. Why shouldn't I?'
> 'Because you are a Liddy,' said Helen. 'That's why.' He could hear the tension in her voice. She didn't need to remind him of how important the name was to her, but she did it anyway. 'There have always been Liddys in the house. You know that. You know it's one of the reasons Ciaran and I didn't get married. So you and Marian would have my name. You're a Liddy, JJ. Ciaran doesn't mind, so why should you?'[299]

As reflected in the quote, all of JJ's classmates bear their father's name which indicates the high value of marriage within the community that is depicted in the novel. In spite of possible social expectations, JJ's parents chose not to get married as Helen Liddy intends to secure the succession of the family line of her ancestors. The Liddys' proximity to Irish folklore and traditional Irish music and the rejection of Christian belief is also evident in the frequent disagreements with the local priest, Reverend Doherty, who used to sabotage the *céilís* of JJ Liddy senior. In addition, there is no indication in the text that the family engages in religious practices which ties in with the refusal of Irish CL authors to engage in any form of religious discourse. (see chapter 2.3.2.) Another indication of the low value of Christian morals relates to the family's attitude towards Helen's mother who was a single parent. Although she was frowned upon by society, the family did not reproach her and showed her unconditioned support. However, like in other Irish YAL novels, the portrayal of sexual promiscuity in *TNP* is set in Ireland's past. Thus, the clash between single parenthood and the moral standards imposed on the society by the Catholic Church is emphasized.

> 'When the priest – a different one, obviously [not Reverend Doherty] – found out that my mother was pregnant he tried to persuade her parents to send her away and have the baby put up for adoption. Single mothers were not acceptable in those days.
> JJ nodded. The Magdalene Laundries had been all over the news recently. A lot of innocent girls had been locked up to keep them hidden away from society.
> 'My grandparents wouldn't hear of it, thank God,' said Helen. 'So there was another reason for the Liddys to be scored by some of the locals. An unmarried mother in the family.'[300]

It is stated in the text that in former times the so-called *Magdalene Laundries* were centers for 'fallen women'. Although the novel subtly criticizes the society for its rejection of single parenthood, the author does not present alternative family models in

[299] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 27.
[300] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 104.

the text. Similarly, the text portrays relationships in a traditional and innocent way which might be an indication that the target age group is younger than the fifteen-year-old protagonist. For instance, although Thompson insinuates the sexual escapades of Angus Óg, he is not even depicted flirting with any of the women in Kinvara. Similarly, JJ does not seem to be interested in girls at all. In addition, the novel does not address any taboo topics, neither does it include any homosexual, bisexual or transgendered characters. Consequently, *TNP* presents itself as a YAL novel, which proceeds with the tendency of Irish CL authors to limit their works to only conservative portrayals of characters and themes.

Apart from the characteristics of Irish YAL, *TNP* is also a work of mythic fiction. In fact, the novel is not only set in the Celtic Otherworld, *Tír na nÓg*, but also inserts mythic characters on various narrative levels. The characters can either appear in a story-within-a-story (Diarmuid and Grainne, Oisín, Fionn), or assume the role of protagonists (Aengus Óg, Bran) or minor characters (the Dagda, Cormac mac Cumhaill). Furthermore, creatures from Irish folklore, such as fairies, notably the púka and leprechauns, are incorporated in the story line.

Lastly, *TNP* fulfills certain characteristics of FF, including the quest, the transition of the main character between the primary and the secondary world and the impossibility to transfer magical objects. In reference to the latter, one exception has to be mentioned: Tír na nÓg seems to be the place where all single socks of this world are transferred and get lost there forever. Since most of these characteristics will be treated in greater detail in the following chapters, no further information will be added at this point.

4.3. Setting and the Pagan Chronotope

As suggested by Bramwell, Pagan motifs are usually set in rural areas[301] and, accordingly, also the action of *TNP* takes place in the small sea port village Kinvara, which is located in the County Galway. Moreover, it is within close proximity of the Burren, a kart landscape in the County Clare. While Kinvara functions as primary world

[301] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.

in the novel, the secondary world is constituted by *Tír na nÓg*, the land of perpetual youth, which derives from Irish mythology and is a frequent setting of many tales. The primary and the secondary world share certain geographical characteristics, such as their size and the majority of the flora and fauna, yet they also show some crucial differences. For instance, when JJ first enters the magical realm of Tír na nÓg, he is immediately struck by the unusually bright weather and the Arcadia-like condition of the landscape.

> Anne led the way through the two chambers; to JJ it appeared to be the same way that they had come in. But when they emerged into the daylight the world was not the way it had been when they left it. The sky that had been grey was blue. The fields and trees were no longer wearing their early autumn colours [sic] but were lush and green.[302]

The two worlds are not only separated by location, but also by time which suggests the application of Mikhail Bakhtin's *literary chronotope*. (see chapter 3.1.) According to the concept, time and place which constitute the fantasy world can be examined as a fused whole. With the transition between primary and secondary world, the protagonist of *TNP* enters the Pagan chronotope in which the world order is bound to altered local and temporal rules. The dislocation from the primary world entails the entrance to *kairos*, a cyclical time which is not made up by seconds, minutes and hours, but by the non-existence of time. Consequently, the sidhe of Tír na nÓg are not tied to the progression of time which is the reason for their incapability of aging and as a result they cannot die. By entering the secondary world, JJ abides to the world order of the fantasy world and for that reason, he is not aware of the fact that time is passing rapidly in the primary world. Thus, upon coming back to Kinvara, he is shocked that he has been absent for a whole month.

The chronotope not only relates to the objective description of local and temporal characteristics, but also to the subjective perception of the world order through the eyes of the protagonists. The so-called "perception of place"[303] of the young hero JJ permits a subjective view on Tír na nÓg, which unmasks the differences to the primary world:

> He had never imagined that it was possible to walk out of a place and arrive into it at the same time. But that appeared to be exactly what had happened. The room was exactly the same in every respect. The only difference that JJ could perceive lay not in his surroundings but in himself. The sense of urgency that had pervaded his every walking minute for as long as he could remember was suddenly gone.[304]

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[302] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 136.
[303] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.
[304] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 135.

The differing rules of time in the secondary world have a comforting effect on JJ. The indication that haste and the lack of time only characterize a modern consumer society as represented by the people of Kinvara, might also be a covert critique on the society as we know it as a whole. Life in Tír na nÓg is peaceful and joyful and seems only to comprise feasting, dancing and music. The lack of industriousness of the fairies contributes to their happiness and carelessness. These particular characteristics of the secondary world attribute to its *genius loci*, "the spirit of the place."[305] It is considered that some locations have a special significance as they possess an inherent power which differentiates them from others. Within the context of the Pagan chronotope, this so-called "topophilia"[306] can point to historic sites, monuments, hills, caves or hawthorn trees. A special relation between place and time is also achieved when the history of a certain location is considered. For instance, in *TNP* the Dagda stands on the plains of the Burren in Tír na nÓg, looking at the ocean and lamenting the deaths of the sidhe, who are buried beneath his feet. The location is of special significance to him as each of the sidhe soldiers carried a stone to the place before going into battle against the men of Ireland. Thus, the location is assigned an essential significance, which roots in the past, but has not been deprived of its importance in the present.

The fairy rath, i.e. a fairy ring fort, functions as link between the two worlds. While primary and secondary world are parallel worlds which coexist in the constructed fantasy universe of *TNP*, the trespassing from one to the other requires certain conditions of place and time. For instance, Tír na nÓg can only be entered through the souterrain in a ring fort. In addition, crossroads are regarded as places where the magical and the real intersect and where the borders between the two worlds are particularly permeable. Thus, céilís were often held at crossroads which is also mentioned in the novel and indicates the particular significance of a certain place. Crossroads and other special locations are also places where music leaks from one world to the other. In fact, only when JJ hears his mother's concertina leaking from the primary to the secondary world, he is able to expose Aengus's lie and returns home.

> 'What are you looking for?' JJ asked him.
> 'Nothing in particular,' said Aengus. 'But crossroads are leaky places. You never know what you might find.'
> 'Is that why we used to have dances at the crossroads?' said JJ.

[305] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.
[306] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.

> ‘It is,’ said Aengus. ‘You’re catching on at last.’[307]

The main action of the novel relates to a time leak which permits the existing time of the primary world to leak into the secondary world. Thus, the seal, which secured the boundary between the two worlds, has been broken and has turned the natural laws of Tír na nÓg upside down.

> ‘OK,’ said JJ. ‘For thousands of years – our years, that is – the two worlds have been perfectly sealed from each other.’
> ‘By the time skin,’ said Aengus. ‘The fluid wall between the worlds.’
> ‘And now,’ said JJ, ‘all of a sudden there’s a leak.’[308]

The changed conditions of time leads to what Bramwell calls an “apocalyptic mode”[309] as the world, as the sidhe knew it, ceases to exist. The time, which leaks from the human world into Tír na nÓg, is an external factor which interferes with the natural condition and sets various signal into motion which indicate that the time has started to pass. For instance, the sidhe are shocked about the death of a fly since normally nobody and nothing ages in Tír na nÓg and, subsequently, nobody or nothing dies. Furthermore, the fact that the sun changes its position in the sky causes discomfort:

> Devaney thumped the bodhrán with the wrench and the struggle, for the moment at least, ended. ‘We have a desperate problem,’ he said.
> ‘It’s called Time,’ said Maggie.
> Aengus looked up at the sky, as he had done several times since JJ had arrived. ‘You see the sun?’
> ‘I do,’ said JJ. ‘It’s lovely, isn’t it?’
> ‘It is,’ said Aengus. He pointed to a spot in the sky, almost overheard. ‘But it used to be there.’ (…)
> Aengus pointed upwards again. ‘That’s where the sun belongs. In this world.’
> ‘What? Always?’ said JJ.
> Maggie sighed wearily. ‘We never used to have any “always”,’ she said. ‘There was only ever “now”.’[310]

Thus, the movement of the sun is associated with aging and dying. By contrast, when the time leak is revealed and closed by JJ, the effects can be perceived by the inhabitants of the primary and the secondary world alike. More so, it is indicated in the text that even scientists are aware of the changed conditions.

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[307] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 238.
[308] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 209.
[309] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children’s Fiction.* 15.
[310] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 184f.

4.4. Mythology and Folklore in *TNP*

In *TNP* the events of Irish myths and folklore are presented as part of a distant history to which only the sidhe can relate as the humans have lost the belief in the ancient Celtic heritage. At the beginning of the novel, the younger and older generations mark a sharp contrast in regard to the level of belief in the old myths, as well as to their superstitions. While JJ does not believe in the existence of folkloric creatures, his mother represents a more superstitious perspective as the generation that preceded hers was still characterized by an utmost respect towards mythical Gods and creatures. As indicated in the text, the belief in Irish folklore and the recollection of the Celtic heritage has been decreasing considerably from generation to generation, yet certain superstitions are still perceptible:

> 'Of course,' said Anne. 'I can see that. I was just interested to see how careful they were to preserve the fort. People in those days had such a respect.'
> 'Not just in those days,' said Helen. 'I don't know of any farmers who would touch a fairy ring. They'd know it would bring bad luck down upon them.'
> 'They still believe that?' said Anne.
> 'Any that I know,' said Helen.[311]

The recovery of the belief in Irish mythology is enforced on various narrative levels in *TNP*. For instance, the protagonist JJ enters the mythical realm of Tír na nÓg and encounters the magical characters and creatures he only knew from bedtime stories which reinforces his belief in the Celtic tradition. Thus, he perceives the magical and supernatural through his own eyes and naturally, this affects his perspective on the mythical stories that are presented to him by characters like Aengus Óg or the Dagda. As a consequence, the old myths also become JJ's personal history since it turns out that his grandfather is no other than Aengus Óg himself.

Interestingly enough, the mode of presenting the original myths reflects the old tradition of story telling and most of the myths are embedded in the dialogue. Unlike the Celtic audience that traditionally believed that the myths narrated by the *seanchaí* were based on historic events (see chapter 3.1.3), JJ rejects their true essence at the beginning of the story which reflects his initially mundane point of view.

> 'There were older more primitive beliefs in Ireland that went back even further than the Church. They went back thousands, not hundreds of years. In some small ways they are still with us today.'
> 'Like what?' asked JJ.

[311] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 58.

> 'The fairy folk,' said Helen, 'and all the stories and superstitions that surround them.'
> 'But that's not still with us,' said JJ. 'Nobody believes in any of that these days.'[312]

Hence, the introduction to the mythical world happens in the form of a bedtime-like story whose content is regarded as an invention and its survival is only secured by superstition. However, while all Irish characters in the novel seem to have lost the belief in the ancient myths, it is the German Anne Korff who has found the way to Tír na nÓg and informs JJ about its existence. When she is asked why she did not confide in anybody else, Anne Korff answers:

> 'I don't know. I never felt like telling anyone I'd been to Tír na nÓg. The chances are they wouldn't believe me. And what would happen if they did?'[313]

As reflected in the statement of Anne Korff, the Irish have distanced themselves from the magical. However, the German would perceive its rediscovery with mixed feelings since she is very keen on protecting the pureness of Tír na nÓg. In her statements a sense of environmentalism, as well as critique on the present societies' trend to disrespect nature becomes evident. Thus, she concludes that it is probably for the best not to inform anybody about the existence of the passage to Tír na nÓg. The only exception is JJ, as she places her hope in him.

Upon entering the magical realm of the land of eternal youth, a whole new respect for the creatures awakes in JJ:

> What kind of people lived in Tír na nÓg anyway? Fairies? Leprechauns? Gods? He experienced a little shiver of apprehension but it didn't swell into fear.[314]

At this point JJ becomes aware of the fact that the myths he has heard in elementary school are true and he experiences an expansion of awareness. He, then, remembers projects from his school days centered on the collection of old myths, which might also refer to the collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*.

> In his primary school they had done a huge project, gathering together folklore from the old people in the village and the surrounding farms. They had collected dozens of fairy stories, several of them about changelings. It had never occurred to him that there could be anything other than imagination behind them.[315]

Consequently, the ancient myths are revived on various levels in *TNP*. On the one hand, they appear in the shape of real-life characters (e.g. Aengus Óg, the Dagda) and can be perceived by JJ after he has entered Tír na nÓg. On the other hand, they are kept

[312] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 79.
[313] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 140.
[314] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 146f.
[315] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 235.

alive through superstitions and accounts about the tradition of story telling and of the collection of original myths.

4.4.1. Narrative Levels

The incorporation of Irish mythology and folklore in *TNP* takes place on various narrative levels. While the inclusion of mythic characters, such as Aengus Óg or the Dagda may take place in the *first-degree narrative*, the *TNP* also embeds stories-within-stories and thus, provides a second narrative level, the so-called *second-degree narrative*.[316] For example, the quest in JJ to Tír na nÓg and his encounters with the magical creatures are not embedded in any other narrative and must be seen as the first-degree narrative, also termed *matrix narrative*.[317] The first-degree narrative of *TNP* incorporates second-degree narratives, namely ancient myths and legends, as well as tales on Irish folklore which are also defined as *hyponarratives*. These embedded narratives may come in different forms and have various functions. For instance, the hyponarratives are either narrated as *story-within-a-story* by characters and integrated in the dialogue, or are reflections of the thoughts of the focalizer JJ. They may serve as *actional integration, exposition, distraction, obstruction* or *retardation*, and as *analogy*.[318] As will be demonstrated in the following, *TNP* mainly embeds hyponarratives which function as actional integration, exposition and analogy.

Although Kate Thompson acknowledges Lady Gregory and her collection of mythic tales *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the*

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[316] Jahn, Manfred. *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. English Department, University of Cologne, 2005. <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm#> N2.4.

[317] The term *matrix* originates from the Latin word „mater" (mother or womb) and defines something that incorporates something else. (Jahn, Manfred. *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. N2.4.)

[318] **Actional integration:** The actional integration of a hyponarrative indicates that its message or theme is important for the plot of the matrix narrative. For example, the story or tale told may help the character make a decision or function as a warning.
Exposition: The hypernarrative *exposes* certain information about actions and events which frequently occurred in the past and, consequently, the hypernarrative refers to history.
Distraction: According to Genette, hypernarratives function as distractions if they are told while the characters wait for something else to happen or want to distract from something else.
Obstruction or retardation: The hypernarrative is inserted in the middle of the action of the matrix narrative in order to create suspense.
Analogy: The hypernarrative is used to refer to actions and events in the matrix narrative and is used for comparison.
(Jahn, Manfred. *Narratology. A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*: N2.4.6.)

Fianna of Ireland as source, her hyponarrative of *Oisín's Story*, which is taken from the Fianna Cycle, differs in various aspects from its original.

> Of course he remembered Oisín. He was Fionn Mac Cumhaill's son, who fell in love with a woman of the sidhe and went to live in Tír na nÓg. He was happy there – here – until he got a yearning to see his beloved Ireland again. His friends in Tír na nÓg advised him against it, and when he insisted on going they lent him a white horse and warned him that he must never get down from its back as long as he was in Ireland.
> When he got there, Oisín found that hundreds of years had passed. Everything had changed. He knew no one and no one knew him. He stayed on his horse, but he encountered a group of men trying to move a huge rock that was in the middle of a field. They asked for his help, and when he leaned from the horse to put a hand to the rock he slipped and fell. The moment he touched the soil of Ireland, he disintegrated into dust.[319]

In the quotation, JJ reflects on the story of Oisín, which serves as an analogy that is supposed to refer to the present happenings in the matrix narrative. Since JJ does not understand why it should be impossible to take the dog Bran to a vet, Aengus reminds him of what happened to Oisín. JJ, who heard the story of Oisín as a child, recapitulates it in his brain and eventually concludes that Bran would suffer the same fate as the ancient Fianna warrior if he took her back to Ireland. Thus, the reference to the tale of Oisín can be understood as a warning for JJ which foreshadows that also his retreat from Tír na nÓg might not be accomplished effortlessly. As a consequence, the hyponarrative serves as an important tool to press ahead with the action so that it can also be understood as actional integration. This function becomes even more obvious when Aengus aims at keeping JJ in Tír na nÓg:

> 'I'd better go home.'
> 'You're free to do as you like,' said Aengus, 'but I'd advice against it.'
> 'Why?'
> 'What makes you think you're any different from Oisín and Bran and Father Doherty?'[320]

Although Aengus asserts that it is JJ's decision whether he places his trust in his advice, it becomes apparent that the choice is really no choice at all. Accordingly, the hyponarrative can even be described as a thread since JJ's disregard of Aengus' advice might result in his immediate death.

By contrast, the insinuation of the myth *The Pigs of Angus* is embedded in the dialogue and is a hidden exposition of events which happened in the mythical past. A similar function is attributed to the myth of the Fianna and of *Diarmud and Gráinne*.

> He looked down at Bran, still battling on behind him. If she was who Aengus said she was, did that mean that Fionn was here as well? Were the Fianna walking around in these grey hills with their broadswords and their beards? JJ had read all those old stories in primary

[319] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 365.
[320] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 367.

> school but he couldn't remember any of them now, apart from his favourite [sic] one, about Diarmud and Gráinne. There were sights scattered all over the country that were supposed to have been beds where the two lovers had lain together. Was there a chance that they could still be out there somewhere, condemned to spend eternity fleeing the wrath of Fionn?[321]

As revealed in the quotation, JJ heard the myths in primary school, whereas he only remembers one in detail. While a certain ignorance towards the old myths is indicated, they are still regarded as important enough to discuss them in primary school and thus, the focalizer JJ is able to recall their thematic outline. Furthermore, upon getting to know Aengus and Bran, JJ wonders if also other characters from mythology exist for real. As a consequence of the real existence of mythic characters, the myths would become factual history in *TNP*. The conversion of a myth to history is apparent as far as the personal accounts of the Dagda are concerned. *The Battle of Magh Tuirreadh* is inserted in the dialogue and narrated by the Dagda. The fact that the battle is a personal and subjective account is highlighted by the emotional involvement displayed by the Celtic god: "JJ looked at the Dagda. Tears were running into his beard."[322]

Lastly, the mythical God Aengus Óg, and Fionn's hound Bran are integrated in the storyline as protagonists who accompany JJ during his quest. Their knowledge about Tír na nÓg and their presence in the story are essential for the plot so that their presence is an instance of actional integration. A further character who also appears in the novel is the Dagda. He functions as the main source of information that helps JJ to find out more about the cause of the time leak.

4.4.2. Content Level

4.4.2.1. Oisín in Tír na nÓg

As indicated before, the hyponarrative in Thompson's novel does not strictly follow the depiction of the tale as presented in the source by Lady Gregory, which the author indicates at the end of her novel. The differences relate to the circumstances which cause Oisín to fall from his white horse. In Lady Gregory's version, he wants to

[321] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 241.
[322] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 301.

touch a stone in Almhoun of Leinster, which was the place where Finn's great hall had stood:

> I saw the stone through that the Fianna used to be putting their hands in and it full of water [sic]. And when I saw it I had such a feeling for it that I forgot what I was told, and I got off the horse. And in the minute all the years came on me, and I was lying on the ground, and the horse took fright and went away and left me there, and old man, weak and spent, without sight, without shape, without comeliness, without strength or understanding, without respect.[323]

Different to Kate Thompson's version in which Oisín immediately turns to dust, Lady Gregory describes his commencing aging process. As he does no die right away, he has the opportunity to encounter Saint Patrick. In his conversation with the Christian missionary, he tries to emphasize the strength of the Fianna, whereas Patrick highlights the positive aspects of Christian belief. As pointed out by Ciara Ní Bhroin, in modern retellings Oisín frequently has a conversation with Patrick in which the dichotomy between Pagan and Christian belief is discussed. However, Oisín does not convert to Christianity and the tales "end on a note of loss."[324] While the inclusion of the Christian reference might indicate the influence of the Christian monks who wrote down the myths in the 6th and 7th centuries, its exclusion might point to Thompson's aspiration to place a focus on the Paganisms of the myth.

4.4.2.2. The Pigs of Angus

Another myth featured in *TNP* surrounds Aengus Óg[325] and is referred to as *The Pigs of Angus* in Lady *Gregory's Gods and Fighting Men*. In *TNP* the character Aengus Óg states that fairies can only enchant a limited number of two or three people into animals or objects.

> 'For some reason, there seems to be a limit to the number of people we can turn into pigs.'
> 'Pigs?' said JJ
> 'At any given time, that is,' said Aengus. 'One or two at a time seems to be the most we can do. It doesn't work with armies.'[326]

By contrast, the myth *The Pigs of Angus* describes an epic battle between a herd of enchanted pigs and the hounds of the Fianna, including Finn's dogs Bran and

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[323] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland. Arranged and Put into English by Lady Gregory. With a Preface by W.B. Yeats*. London: John Murray, 1910. 442.
[324] Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 12.
[325] *Aengus* is spelt 'Angus' in Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men.*
[326] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 204.

Sceolan. A year before the battle, Angus and Finn had an argument about the virtues of life while they were feasting in Brugh na Boinne:

> And Angus said out in a loud voice that every one could hear: "It is a better life this is than to be hunting." There was anger on Finn then, and he said: "It is a worse life than hunting to be here, without hounds, without horses, without battalions, without the shouting of armies."[327]

In order to challenge Aengus, Finn claims that the hounds of the Fianna would kill any of Aengus' pigs, suggesting that they were of no other use than to give meat and to be eaten. With the intention to prove him wrong, Aengus challenges him to battle one year later, but naturally the pigs do not stand a chance against the fighting dogs of the Fianna. Especially Bran is assigned a special position, as she is not only the first hound to attack, but also the one that kills the biggest pig, which seems to be the leader of the animal army. Not only are the pigs killed, but they are also burned. After their dreadful deaths it is revealed that the pigs were in fact enchanted men:

> But Angus said: "Although you think bad of the loss of your fine people that you have the sway over, yet, O Finn, father of Oisin, it is sorrowful to me the loss of my own good son is. For as to the black pig that came before you on the plain," he said, "it was no common pig was in it, but my own son. And there fell along with him," he said, "the son of the King of the Narrow Sea, and of the King of the Sea of Gulls, and the son of Ilbrehc, son of Manannan, and seven score[328] of the comely sons of kings and queens."[329]

As indicated in the passage, Angus turned a large number of men into an army of pigs, which conflicts with the character's statement in *TNP,* on which he claims that he cannot turn more than two or three men into animals at the time. It may be true that Lady Gregory's version of the myth is not specific in its indications about how many fairies turn the men into pigs, let alone on which day (two or three every day during the past year or all on one day). However, it can be assumed that Thompson changed the original myth either to contribute to a more positive characterization of Aengus Óg in her story, or to emphasize the character's tendency to bend the truth.

Furthermore, the relation between Bran and Aengus in the myth is noteworthy. As Bran was the dog that killed Aengus's son, the relationship between the hound and the god should be problematic and although it is claimed in mythology that they made peace, it is unlikely that the two of them would engage in a quest together. In fact, no

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[327] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 303.
[328] 'Score' means *twenty*.
[329] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 305.

reference to a shared past between Fionn's hound and the god of love is indicated in the text which makes it possible that they accompany JJ on his quest together.

In addition, the myth not only describes the gruesome death of a herd of enchanted pigs, but also depicts the disrespect of the Fianna for their opponents as they burn the corpses. In order to make the myth suitable for a younger audience, Thompson may have renounced to give the full portrayal of the merciless violence described by Lady Gregory. As a consequence, the character Aengus Óg is not blamed for his irresponsible behavior and stupidity: After all, he turned his son and the other sidhe into defenseless pigs which – similar to tale of Don Quijote against the windmills – had no chance of victory against the fighting hounds. By excluding records of Aengus's irresponsible behavior, the positive portrayal of the fairy characters in *TNP* remains intact.

4.4.2.3. The Death of Bran

While Bran appears badly wounded throughout the novel, Lady Gregory's volume includes a myth that is concerned with the supposed death of Finn's[330] hound. Since Bran intended to slay an enchanted fawn about which "some said that it was Finn's mother the fawn was"[331], Finn told the fawn to walk through his legs. When Bran followed, Finn squeezed her to death with his legs. As described in the myth, Finn probably killed his beloved hound since the enchanted fawn was in fact Oisín's mother.

Although Lady Gregory describes the death of Bran, Thompson includes her as a character in *TNP*. Although her wound is frequently discussed in the novel, nobody seems to know when and where she was injured. Yet the wound could be a result of Finn's protection of the fawn. Thompson in turn might have taken advantage of the last strand of the myth which leaves open whether Bran is actually really dead or wanders the hill of Almhuin as a ghost:

> But some say Bran and Sceolan are still seen to start at night out of the thicket on the hill of Almhuin.[332]

[330] *Finn* is named 'Fionn' in *TNP*.
[331] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 431.
[332] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 431.

In Thompson's interpretation, Bran has been in a severe state of health for a long time. As a result of the time leak, her injury has deteriorated, though, so that her imminent death seems inevitable. While Lady Gregory's depiction of Bran's death is concise and subtle, Thompson opts for a more graphic description.

> The injury, when JJ bent down to inspect it more closely, was truly horrendous. The lower part of the leg was hanging on by a thin cord of skin and sinew. Bone showed trough on both parts of the leg. A drop of blood fell from it and soaked into the dust.[333]

The illustration of Bran's injury is the only explicitly graphic element in *TNP* and does not tie in with the general tone of the novel. Not even the death of the priest, which follows the climax of the story, is depicted in great detail. The question arises why the author opts for the graphic description of the injury and passing away of one of the protagonists to whom the reader might have started to relate, whereas the death of the foe, i.e. the priest, is not granted equal attention. Yet the graphic depiction of the severity of the injury might serve as a justification that allows Thompson to break the unwritten pact between author and child reader by which it is determined that the protagonists survive and find a way back into a happy life at the end of the novel. Furthermore, the death of Bran suggests JJ's incapacity to interfere with the world order of Tír na nÓg. For instance, when JJ proposes to cut off Bran's injured leg, he is told by Aengus that there is nothing he can do for her.

> 'How would we cut it off?' said Aengus.
> 'I have a knife. I'll do it if you can hold her still.'
> Aengus looked into the wolfhound's grey eyes. 'I don't think she'd let us do that,' he said. 'She might misunderstand our intentions.'
> 'It would be over before she knew it,' said JJ.
> 'At your end it might,' said Aengus. 'I'm not so sure about my end, though. Have you seen her teeth?'
> (…)
> 'I'll take her with me,' he said. 'I'll bring her to the vet in the village, give her a bit of time to recover and then bring her back.'
> Aengus didn't stop or even turn round, but his words left no room for doubt in JJ's mind. 'That my young ploddy friend, is one thing that you can't do.'[334]

As the rules of Tír na nÓg forbid it to change unlimitedly between the two worlds, Bran's translocation to Ireland would result in her immediate death. However, as the pain is insufferable for her, it is a step she is willing to take. Thus, the reader is told that the prolongation of a life cannot be enforced unconditionally.

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[333] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 149.
[334] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 293f.

4.5. The Representation of Mythic Characters and Creatures

As mentioned before, characters from Irish mythology and folklore appear as characters in *TNP*. Their representations and functions are described in the following. A grouping has been realized according to Yeats' distinction between *trooping* and *solitary fairies*.

4.5.1. Trooping Fairies

Yeats divides the sidhe into two groups: trooping fairies and solitary fairies. The Gaelic word for fairy is "sheehogue" or "sidheóg" and its diminutive "shee" is part of the name "banshee"[335]. As described by Yeats there are various points of view concerning the cultural and spiritual significance of the sidhe:

> Who are they? "Fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost," say the peasantry. "The gods of the earth," says the Book of Armagh. "The gods of Pagan Ireland," say the Irish antiquarians, "the *Tuatha de Danan*", who, when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high."[336]

In spite of the different opinions of the anchoring of the sidhe in Irish folklore, they are primarily associated with the Pagan past. Consequently, already in 1888 when Yeats's volume *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* was published, the belief of the peasantry in the fairy gods had been continuously substituted by the faith in a Christian god. However, while the sidhe may not be worshipped anymore, the superstitious fear of the revenge of the fairies remains enshrined in the mind of many Irish to this day. Hence, superstition is also an essential theme in many myths surrounding the sidhe. In this connection, Lady Wilde writes:

> Their favourite [sic] camp and resting-place is under the hawthorn tree, and a peasant would die sooner than cut down one of the ancient hawthorns sacred to the fairies, and which generally stands in the centre of a fairy ring.[337]

While in some myths the sidhe are described as "little", it is assumed in popular belief that they can take on any form and shape. Furthermore, their "chief occupations

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[335] **Banshee:** A banshee is a female spirit of Irish folklore that appears when a member of the family is about to die. (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*. 2012. Merriam Webster. "Banshee". <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/banshee>.)

[336] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. 1.

[337] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. Vol. 1.* 70.

are feasting, fighting, and making love, and playing the most beautiful music."[338] Moreover, they live in palaces beneath the hills and in mountain caves and enjoy their immortal lives.[339]

> They can assume all forms, and will never know death until the last comes, when their doom is to vanish away- to be annihilated forever. But they are very jealous of the human race who are so tall and strong, and to whom has been promised immortality.[340]

In a way, the representation of the "ever-living ones"[341] in *TNP* resembles their portrayal in the mythological texts by Yeats, Lady Gregory and Lady Wilde. For instance, their infatuation with feasting, leisure and music is pointed out in great detail. However, the representation of the sidhe in the novel has been modernized and altered by the author. Especially in their relationship to humans, Thompson's representation of the sidhe differs from that of the collectors of the Celtic revival. While Lady Wilde describes that the sidhe are jealous of humans for their height and strength, the fairies in *TNP* do not seem to differ from humans as far as their bodies are concerned. However, their sense of fashion seems to raise JJ's awareness and he perceives their clothes as out fashioned and bizarre:

> To JJ's disappointment, they appeared to be neither leprechauns nor gods. The clothes they were wearing were representative of the changing fashions of several centuries, giving JJ the vague impression that he had stumbled upon some kind of fancy dress party. Other than that the people on the quay appeared little different from the population of any Irish village.[342]

JJ's perception of the sidhe also ties in with the way they refer to themselves. The only character that sees himself as a god is the Dagda. Indeed, he is assigned a special role by the other sidhe who think that his death would entail their own passing away. Apart from that, they refer to themselves as people who are not even exactly immortal since they can die in battle. However, owing to the fact that they are the only ones who can freely move between Ireland and Tír na nÓg without turning into dust, it can be assumed that they have immortal powers. Moreover, they negatively comment on the primary world as the "land of dying"[343] and they use the pejorative term "ploddy" in order to refer to humans. This external designation is understood as slightly offensive by JJ:

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[338] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. 2.
[339] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. Vol. 1.* 69.
[340] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. Vol. 1.* 69.
[341] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 291.
[342] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 161.
[343] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 299.

> ‘A ploddy,’ said Aengus. ‘You have a name for us. Did you think we wouldn’t have one for you?’
> ‘But…ploddy?’
> ‘Is it any worse than fairy?’ said Aengus.[344]

While it is indicated in *TNP* that the belief in fairies is diminishing, it is also claimed that especially farmers still have a deep respect for the gentry. For instance, as expressed by JJ’s mother, farmers still do not remove or destroy old fairy ring forts in order to avoid the revenge of the fairies. As suggested by Lady Wilde the Irish leave milk outside the house to win the benevolence of the fairies. However, as a result of the attitude displayed by the sidhe in *TNP*, JJ cannot imagine that Aengus or any of the other sidhe would be pleased about receiving milk:

> Yet so easily pleased, they will do their best to keep misfortune away from you, if you leave a little milk for them on the window-sill over night.[345]

> Milk? JJ couldn’t imagine Aengus getting shirty about a glass of milk.[346]

In addition, the sidhe represent tradition and mark a sharp contrast to modernity in *TNP*. As it appears, the protection of their realm – that is, their pure and unspoiled Arcadia – is of utmost importance to them. Furthermore, they antagonize modernity, greed and capitalism and seem to appreciate nature which also reveals a covert environmentalism.While the protection of the land is a quality ascribed to the sidhe, humans are characterized by consumerism and greediness.[347] Thus, Thompson appears to use the opposition between the god-like fairy race and the humans to outline the problems of modern society:

> Aengus glanced at him. ‘We’ve watched you over the centuries,’ he said. ‘If this goes on we’ll start getting hungry. When we stop being hungry we’ll start getting greedy. Can you see us, JJ? Enslaved by time, driven by greed? Destroying the land that we love? Even if our bloodlines survived our spirit wouldn’t. Industry isn’t out nature, you know? Those future generations would bear no resemblance to us.’[348]

Accordingly, the sidhe oppose any concept of profit and do not charge for drinks in a pub or, when JJ wants to buy time from them, they only ask him for a song in return. While the humans are criticized for capitalism and the violation of nature, the sidhe, by contrast, are condemned for their tendency to only enjoy the pleasures of life:

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[344] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 252.
[345] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. 1f.
[346] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 241.
[347] cf. Bhroin, Ciara Ní. “Mythologizing Ireland”. 22f.
[348] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 310.

> Read the stories and you'll see. We're feckless, dreamy children; we live in a world of our own. And once we get here, well, you can see for yourself. We play music, we dance, we stroll about in the sunshine.'[349]

Furthermore, they turn out as unreliable, tricky people whose only purpose in life seems to be playing music in the pubs of Tír na nÓg:

> JJ was irritated with Aengus. It was all very well to be scornful of the Dagda and to criticize the ploddies and accuse them of being greedy. What entitled him and the others to drift around in perpetual bliss while on the other side of the time skin people slaved and died and suffered all the troubles associated with mortality?[350]

The representation of fairy musicians is similar to that of human musicians. Both races meet up for the céilís in the local pubs of Kinvara and Tír na nÓg to play traditional music instruments and to dance together. However, as stated in *TNP*, traditional Irish music has been created by fairies and human composers are only able to write songs because they have heard the tunes through a leak between Tír na nÓg and Ireland. Interestingly enough, some of the sidhe also represent traditional folk songs. For instance, the fairy character Drowsy Maggie, who keeps on falling asleep in the novel, is based on a folk song of the same name. Equally, the folksong *Devaney's goat* is represented by a fairy called Devaney and his enchanted goat which can be transformed into a bodhrán.[351]

4.5.1.1. Aengus Óg

The God of love of Celtic Mythology, Aengus Óg, appears as a character in *TNP*. He not only accompanies JJ during his quest in Tír na nÓg, but also moves frequently between primary and the secondary world. Also in Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men*, it is described that Aengus Óg frequently visited Ireland which might be an indication why Thompson chose him as the one character who connects the primary with the secondary world:

> And as to Angus Og, son of the Dagda, sometimes would come from Brugh na Boinn and let himself be seen upon the earth.[352]

Although the author provides hints throughout the novel, it is only revealed at the end that Aengus claims to be Larry O'Dwyer and assumes the position as the new

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[349] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 310.
[350] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 312.
[351] **Bodhrán:** A bodhrán is a traditional Irish drum made of goatskin (Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 407.)
[352] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 81.

policeman of the Garda Síochána of Kinvara. Accordingly, the novel owes its title to his representation and actions in the novel. Although Aengus Óg and Larry O'Dwyer are actually the same person, their attitude and function within the novel are slightly different.

Larry O'Dwyer functions as focalizer who provides the reader with insights into the happenings in the primary world. The new policeman unites all features which are also characteristic of the representation of Aengus in Irish mythology. For instance, although she does not know that she is referring to Larry O'Dwyer when she speaks about her father, JJs mother Helen describes his fairy like appearance:

> His mother smiled and shrugged. 'Bit of a wild man from what I can make out. A wandering musician. For a year or two he used to come and go. "Lad" they called him. If he had another name my mother never heard it. Just "Lad". A great fiddle player, though. The best my grandparents ever heard. And handsome enough to charm the birds out of the trees.'[353]

This description by JJ's mother is interesting since she uses the idiom *to charm the birds out of the trees*. The choice of words is relevant as it is stated in *Gods and Fighting Men* that Aengus Óg was always surrounded by four birds which represented his kisses and cast a magic spell on whoever met him. The new policeman's exceptional looks are perceived by men and women alike. As suggested by Lady Gregory, who wrote "[a]nd there were many women loved Angus"[354], females are drawn to his movie star-like look in *TNP*:

> 'Have you met our new policeman?' said Phil.
> 'No,' said Helen. (…)
> 'Some character,' said Phil.
> 'Haven't you seen him?' said Carol to Helen. 'He's gorgeous.'
> 'Is he?' said Phil gloomily. 'I was afraid he might be.'
> 'He certainly is,' said Carol. 'He should be in the movies, that one.'
> 'Some fiddle player, too,' said Phil.[355]

As becomes apparent in the dialogue between Carol, Helen and Phil, the new policeman's outer appearance is striking and exceeds an average level of attractiveness. In fact, also in Irish mythology, Aengus Óg is depicted as exceptionally attractive and charming. Like in *TNP*, the Celtic god is described in terms of *explicit figural characterization*[356] in Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men:*

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[353] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 103.
[354] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 81.
[355] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 118.
[356] Jahn, Manfred. *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. N7.

> "And he was a beautiful young man," he [King of Teamhair, Cormac] said, "with high looks, and his appearance was more beautiful than all beauty, and there were ornaments of gold on his dress; in his hand he held a silver harp with strings of red gold, and the sound of its strings was sweeter than all music under the sky; and over the harp were two birds that seemed to be playing on it. He sat beside me pleasantly and played his sweet music to me, and in the end he foretold things that put drunkenness on my wits."[357]

Indeed, the representation of Aengus Óg in *TNP* resembles his description in Lady Gregory's volume in various aspects: His looks, the blond hair, his talents as musician, the effect of his music on other people and on fairies. However, one striking difference relates to the music instrument which is associated with him. While in mythology he is usually described playing a silver harp, he is an exceptional fiddle player in *TNP*. In addition, Thompson's version of Aengus Óg might be more contemporary in the sense that his clothes do not seem to attract any attention in the primary world, and also in Tír na nÓg JJ does not pronounce any words of surprise when he meets him for the first time. Furthermore, his language does not suggest that it is uttered by an over a thousand-year-old god, which suggests that he has assimilated to the speech of the people in Kinvara. Apart from the language, he has also acquired some skills which he needs in order to pass as human, including the ability to drive a car. Another difference to his description in mythology is his status within the community of Tír na nÓg. While he is referred to as a god in Irish mythology, Thompson demotes his position as the other fairies seem to think of him as an equal:

> 'But I thought Aengus Óg was a god,' said JJ.
> 'Don't let him hear you say that', said Marcus. 'He has a high enough opinion of himself as it is.'
> 'He's not, then?' said JJ.
> 'No more than any of us,' said Jennie.
> 'If it's gods you're looking for, you've come to the wrong place,' said Marcus.[358]

Aengus seems very self-assured and he uses his charms and wits to trick and fool people to his own benefit. Thus, his actions reveal him as an unreliable character in various passages of the novel. For instance, he lies to Anne Korff about JJ's whereabouts and tricks everybody into believing that he is a human being. In order to keep up appearances, he lies to the old men in town who claim to have met him in the past. Naturally, since he has not aged since the day he last wandered the earth, he is recognized and almost exposed:

> 'I know you from somewhere,' he said.

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[357] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 81f.
[358] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 213.

> ‘Really?’, said Larry, smiling benignly and edging away at the same time. He had a horror of old people, especially those with good memories.
> ‘We’ve met’, said Thomas. ‘I can’t think where.’
> ‘I can’t think where either,’ said Larry. ‘But people often mistake me for someone else. I’m told I’m the spit of my father when he was my age.’[359]

Moreover, Aengus lies to JJ when he wants to leave Tír na nÓg, proving once more that his words cannot be trusted. In return, his trust in humans is not too high, either, and he frequently addresses the sorrows of the human aging process. In fact, he only shows trust in the humans when he joins the Garda, but his hopes are disappointed since the police do not have any information on the time leak. Furthermore, he does not take his human job too seriously and only carries out the works that are essential to keep up appearances. For instance, at the beginning of the novel he breaks off a music concert in a pub because the customers exceeded the curfew established by law. Although he clearly recognizes Anne Korff, he jots down the false name she tells him – Lucy Campbell – in his notebook and puts it in the washing machine so that the ink washes off. With this action, he makes clear that he has no intention to harm the humans and that he might be even fond of them.

The fondness for humans also becomes apparent in his descriptions about the woman with whom he has a daughter:

> ‘I knew a lovely woman once,’ Aengus went on. ‘I was mad about her, actually. But I went back to visit her again and… well… It was awful. You ploddies just don’t last.’[360]

Thus, Aengus wants to clarify that he had actually really been in love with the human girl whom he impregnated. He is repulsed by the aging process of the humans, though, and his disillusionment about the transience of youth might be the reason why the god of love does not seem to be drawn to any of the women in Kinvara. Furthermore, it is stressed in the novel that although Aengus might have been very much in love with a mortal, he is not willing to give up his own immortality in order to spend a human lifetime with her in Ireland. For that reason, he left her to raise her baby on her own. Apart from his romantic love towards JJ’s grandmother, he develops a fatherly fondness for the young hero since he supports him during his quest and also wants to trick him into staying in Tír na nÓg. However, in the last chapter of the book, Aengus does not function as focalizer when he meets his daughter, JJ’s mother for the first time, and his feelings towards her are not revealed.

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[359] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 198.
[360] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 375.

While Aengus Óg's representation in *TNP* is similar to the way he is described in Irish mythology, Thompson aimed at creating an overall positive image of the god of love. Instead of expressing an overt critique on his irresponsible behavior in regard to leaving JJ's grandmother to raise their baby on her own, his actions are vindicated by the description of his honest feelings for her. Furthermore, although his characterization in the novel is fairly detailed, his negative deeds are skipped entirely (for example concerning *The Pigs of Angus*, see chapter 4.4.2.1.). While he is exposed as an unreliable character, who frequently lies in order to pursue his goals, he manages to charm JJ into regaining his trust in him.

4.5.1.2. The Dagda

The Celtic God the Dagda is referred to as the "Red Man of all Knowledge".[361] He is one of the most popular characters in Irish mythology. Many of the tales surrounding his persona center on his position as commander of the sidhe in the war against Irish men and Christianity, or depict the fights and arguments with his son Aengus Óg. The tense relationship between the Dagda and his son Aengus Óg can also be seen in *TNP*. While the Dagda continuously calls his son "amadán", which is the Irish word for "fool"[362], it is not revealed in the novel what triggered this mutual feeling of hostility. The answer might be found in mythology which relates to an episode in which Aengus Óg took away his father's household at Brugh na Boinne with the support of the son of Lir, Manannan. However, in the myth, the Dagda does not take revenge on his son, although he is actually known as a character who is "revengeful and quick in his temper."[363] Aengus Óg, by contrast, fears his father and his quick temper and exhorts JJ to choose his words wisely when talking to him:

> 'Mind your tongue with this fellow, now,' said Aengus. 'He's the Dagda, and he really does think he's a god.'
> 'The what?' said JJ.
> 'The Dagda,' Aengus whispered. 'That's his name.'[364]

In contrast to Aengus Óg, the Dagda seems to regard himself as a god and it is essential to him to demonstrate his power. For instance, whenever Aengus Óg utters

[361] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 77.
[362] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 297.
[363] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 80.
[364] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 297.

something that does not please him, he roars at him and in one situation he even draws a sword in a sudden fit of rage. In addition, he proves that he is capable of producing magic when he blows up a breeze. His god-like portrayal is emphasized by his clothes which seem to differ from those of the other sidhe as they are the only ones which are described in depth in the novel:

> JJ, naturally enough, had expected Aengus's father to be a good deal older than his son, but as they drew closer he was put in mind of the fairy method of rearing their children. The Dagda looked very different; he was bearded for one thing, and he wore a heavy woollen cloak with a huge gold pin, but he appeared to be only a few years older than his son. He watched them as they approached but his face showed no emotion.[365]

In JJ's perception of the Dagda the sidhe's immunity to aging becomes apparent. Apart from his outer appearance, the rigid expression of his face separates him from the other sidhe and distances him from humans. Yet he seems capable of human emotions as he is described crying in ancient mythology and in *TNP*:

> And the place was called the Hill of Aileac, the Hill of Sighs and of a Stone, for it was tears of blood the Dagda shed on account of the death of his son.[366]

> JJ looked at the Dagda. Tears were running into his beard.[367]

The tears float in grief about the dead sidhe who gave their lives in the battle against Christianity. As depicted in *TNP*, the Dagda's opposition against humans has two reasons: On the one hand, owing to his desire to remain the god of Ireland, he blames the Catholic Church for his loss of power. On the other hand, he seems to antagonize all humans in general for their lack of magic and their mortality. Accordingly, he calls the primary world *the Land of Dying* because humans "are dying from the moment [they] are born"[368] and contrasts it with the *Land of Eternal Youth*. By establishing this opposition, he wants to assign a superior position to the sidhe. To him, the influence of human time caused by the time leak is an intrusion in the magical realm of Tír na nÓg which will cause its downfall.

> 'And now your filthy time is contaminating–' He broke off and made a sweeping gesture over the plain. 'All this. All that is left of us.'[369]

If regarded as a representation of the traditional, he might be seen as the character that criticizes modernity and the human's tendency to destroy everything that is pure

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[365] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 298.
[366] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 81.
[367] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 301.
[368] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 299.
[369] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 299.

and unspoiled. His sense of tradition is stressed by his melancholic retrospectives about the casualties of the war between sidhe and humans. Thus, he is also described as a lonely figure on the plains of the Burren whose gaze is fixed on the ocean. Although the battle took place many centuries before, he has not abandoned his position on the rocks:

> 'Why would you stay here?' he asked the Dagda. 'You must know that they'll never come back now.'
> 'I was their commander,' he said. 'It is not right that I should return and they should not.'
> He turned away and looked out to the sea again. 'How can I leave them?'

The longing for the old days is not only reflected in the persistency of his staying on the plains, but also in his harsh critique on modernity and humanity. In fact, he only starts to respect JJ when he realizes his talent to play the fiddle like a sidhe. Consequently, only when he discovers the magic in him, he reveals the information on the time leak to him. Also in mythology he is generally seen as a great source of knowledge. Indeed, he is not only in power of the knowledge about all things, but also controls the time skin and the passages between Ireland and Tír na nÓg. For instance, it is stated in *TNP* that he had to close the sky entrances to Tír na nÓg when the humans discovered how to fly.

While the Dagda claims that he maintains his position on the Burren due to his sorrows concerning the deaths of the sidhe soldiers, he is contradicted by Aengus Óg who characterizes him explicitly as follows:

> 'It's guilt, you know, that has him up there. It's his fault that we were all but wiped out. Him and his stupid conviction that he's a god.'
> 'I don't know about that,' said JJ. 'It seems to me that someone who can open and close gates in the sea and the sky can't be far off being a god.'[370]

Like Aengus Óg, the Dagda is not necessarily recognized as a god by the sidhe in *TNP*. By contrast, JJ associates the magical powers of the Dagda with god-like abilities.

4.5.2. Solitary Fairies

Solitary fairies are usually described as malign and evil and are seen in opposition to the good-spirited trooping fairies. As indicated by the name, they are rather encountered on their own than in groups. Yeats describes them as follows:

> They are withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable spirits of the first section. They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching,

[370] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 309.

> jeering, mischievous phantoms. They are the great practical jokers among the good people.[371]

For instance, leprechauns, púkas and the Banshee pertain to this group. As the first two are also mentioned in *TNP,* their representation in the novel is described in the following.

4.5.2.1. Leprechauns

The name *leprechaun*[372] derives from the Irish word *leith brog* which means "one shoemaker" as "he is generally seen working at a single shoe" continuously.[373] They are "merry, industrious and tricky little sprites"[374], who work as shoemakers, tailors and cobblers for the gentry, i.e. for fairies. Depending on how the leprechauns are treated by humans they can either lead them to their hidden treasures or bring great misfortune upon them as they tend to take revenge. Frequently, they are portrayed dressed in green and with a cocked hat on their heads.[375]

In *TNP* leprechauns are depicted in a similar way. While JJ never actually sees a leprechaun, he learns to fear them as a result of Aengus's remarks about them. For instance, Aengus warns JJ not to go into the woods as they are full of leprechauns and might "make shoes at [him] or something."[376] When JJ is alone, he recalls Aengus's warning and although he is curious about the little creatures, he suddenly experiences fear.

> [N]ow that he thought about it there was something sinister about these sharp little machine-gun bursts of hammering.[377]

The hammering is also to be seen as metaphor for the industrious character of the leprechauns which are driven by the desire for gold and reflect the consume society of the human world. Thus, apart from the time leak, the hammering is the only trait mirroring the human world that disturbs the Arcadia-like image of Tír na nÓg.[378]

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[371] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. 80.
[372] Spelt *leprecaun* in Yeats' *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*.
[373] Yeats, William Butler. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. 80.
[374] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 103.
[375] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 103ff.
[376] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 240.
[377] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 240.
[378] cf. Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 23.

In contrast to the sidhe, the leprechauns are perceived as tricky and greedy little creatures who seem to live as outcasts of the fairy society. In appearance and character they differ from the trooping fairies and are seen in opposition to them. Still they seem to be dependent on each other, since they perform certain works for each other, including the making of shoes and of gold.

> 'Can we go in?' said JJ.
> 'No, no.' Aengus took him by the elbow and steered him clear of the doorway. 'It's full of leprechauns. You don't wanna get mixed up with them.'
> 'Why not?'
> 'Tricky little people,' said Aengus. 'But pure mad about gold.'[379]

As indicated by Aengus, the sidhe distance themselves from the leprechauns and do not perceive them as equals. Thus, they do not trust them.

4.5.2.2. The púka

Unlike the leprechaun, the púka[380] makes an actual appearance as character in *TNP*. As indicated in the definition of the solitary fairies by Yeats, the púka is portrayed as evil and tricky creature who wants to harm JJ.

> He had seen more goat horns than most people, but he had never seen a pair of horns that size. They were as thick and long as his arms, and an awful lot more dangerous. (…) The goat's yellow eyes, their narrow, vertical pupils had him mesmerized. There was a sharp, dangerous intelligence in them.[381]

The goat turns out to be a shape shifter who first lures JJ to sleep with his deep voice and then transforms to a giant creature with "horns" and "cloven feet."[382] Although JJ is saved by Aengus and it is not evident whether the púka really wants to harm him, it clearly wants to frighten him. Furthermore, the creature expresses its lack of trust in the sidhe and also wants to stress their negative traits.

> 'Aengus Óg has filled your head with nonsense, I see. Well. That's the way with the sidhe.'
> (…)
> 'Tricky folk,' said the disembodied voice of the goat. 'Not to be trusted.'[383]

Similar to the relationship between leprechauns and trooping fairies, the púka is skeptical about the other race. Aengus, by contrast, seems to show a little more respect

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[379] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 190.
[380] There exist various spellings for púka, including púca, pooka, phookca, phouca. In this thesis, the spelling used by Thompson has been adopted.
[381] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 263.
[382] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 264.
[383] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 263.

for the ancient creatures and describes them austerely as "very old creatures" that are able to produce "powerful magic."[384]

In contrast to the representation of the púka in *TNP*, Lady Wilde offers a more positive image of the mythical creature. In fact, she describes the púka (spelt *phouka*) as a "friendly being" who "often helps the farmer with his work if it is treated kindly."[385] However, the representation by Thompson does not necessarily contradict Lady Wilde's account since the púka is provoked in *TNP* by JJ's rude behavior.

4.6. Aspects of Irishness

4.6.1. Modernity versus Tradition

The disparity between modernity and tradition is one of the major themes in *TNP*. Although it is stated explicitly in the novel that the story is set in 2005, the people in Kinvara seem to be largely independent of technical innovations and gadgets. For instance, there is no indication in the text that the young protagonist or any of the other characters use mobile phones, computers or play video games.[386] Indeed, the telephone used by the Liddy family is still placed on a hook which points to an old fashioned device. Apart from the absence of technical devices, the novel primarily focuses on traditional jobs. For instance, most of the characters in Kinvara are farmers, and even JJ is described as a farmer who possesses traditional skills associated with farm work:

> JJ wasn't squeamish. (…) Animals had accidents all the time around the farm. Usually the vet dealt with them but there were occasions when it wasn't practical or possible. One of their goats had fallen down a rock-face once and damaged a horn so badly that it had been, like Bran's leg, hanging on by a thread. JJ had cut it off with his penknife.[387]

In addition, the teenage protagonist is interested in traditional music and goes to hurling practice. However, as he fears to be mocked by his classmates, it is indicated that he has given up dancing:

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[384] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 279.
[385] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1*. 87.
[386] cf. Bhroin, Ciara Ní. "Mythologizing Ireland". 23.
[387] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 292f.

> Michael Flatley ad Riverdance might have wowed the whole country, the whole of the western world even, but they cut no ice among JJ's classmates in Gort. Dancing was uncool.[388]

The way of life depicted in *TNP* is perhaps a little more traditional than expected from a novel set in the new millennium. In fact, the focus on traditional skills and values, in combination with certain text signals might provide a covert critique of modernity. For instance, the Irish society is contrasted with other cultures, such as the U.S:

> 'What was it you expected, anyway?' said the sergeant. 'High-speed car chases? Gun battles? This isn't America, you know.'[389]

Especially in regard to the lack of time the farmers of Kinvara blame the mechanisms of modern society. In that sense, the time leak could not only be understood as tool to build up the action and to create suspense, but also as a metaphor for the fast-paced contemporary society in which one technical innovation hunts the next:

> ''Twas the EU started it,' said Patrick. 'There was all the time in the world before we joined Europe and started getting all the subsidies.'
> 'What have subsidies got to do with it?' said Laura.
> 'All the time-saving devices we bought with the new money,' said Patrick. 'Big fat tractors and bale wrappers and washing machines. And do we have more time on account of them all?'
> 'I think it was the Celtic Tiger,' said Jim. 'We sold our souls to the stock market.'[390]

Thus, the characters in *TNP* critically oppose political, economic and social changes within Irish society. Although the Celtic tiger marks a period of enormous economic growth, they – like the fairies – lament capitalism and consumerism and request to return to traditional Irish values. In this connection, there are also some indications of environmentalism in the text, claiming that global warming and the destruction of nature are a direct result of modernity.

4.6.2. Traditional Irish Music and Folk Dance

Traditional Irish music is the one overarching theme, which connect generations, as well as the different races featured in *TNP*. All of the characters in the primary and the secondary world seem to play a traditional music instrument and frequently hold so-

[388] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 49.
[389] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 274.
[390] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 274.

called *céilís*, i.e. traditional music concerts, in the local pub or, every second Saturday, in the house of the Liddys. The music concerts are not only lively get-togethers of the villagers and visitors from neighboring towns, but also markers of social integration. For instance, Larry O'Dwyer (alias Aengus Óg) is only accepted in the town community when he reveals himself as an outstanding fiddle player in one of the céilís. Thus, the capability of playing a traditional music instrument functions as a characteristic of Irish nationality, combining insiders and outsider within the town community and implementing social integration. Music is highly valued in the fairy world as well and the natural impetus of the fairies inevitably includes musical talent. Thus, JJ is assigned fairy-like qualities when he impresses with his outstanding skills in playing the fiddle.

Within the family community, music plays an equally important role. Especially JJ and his mother Helen share a particular closeness due to their love for music. The passion for music and dancing is also part of their family heritage which connects the younger Liddy generations with their ancestors of a recent past. In a personal account, Helen reveals her parents' and grandparents' musical talents and her grandfather's refusal to accept the *Public Dance Hall Act*. According to the act, which was enforced in 1935, the population was no longer permitted to hold public dances without an explicit official consent. It is claimed that as a result of the act the number of crossroad and house dances decreased dramatically.[391] In fact, as indicated in *TNP*, the Public Dance Hall Act was one of the most fundamental reasons for the decreased practice of traditional music in rural Ireland. The Liddy's opposition against the act not only portrays their refusal to conform to a state law, but also indicates a covert criticism on the Republic's attempts to secularize Ireland. Thus, music becomes a cultural signifier, liberating the oppressed Pagan cultural heritage.

The indispensable significance of music in *TNP* already becomes apparent during a superficial reading of the novel as every chapter concludes with a traditional tune, which has been transcribed, or in some cases, composed by the author. Although placed at the end of each chapter, the titles of the tunes indicate the main theme or argument and, subsequently, they can be described as chapter headings.

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[391] *Irish Statue Book*. "Public Dance Hall Act".
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1935/en/act/pub/0002/index.html>.

4.6.3. Superstition

As mentioned before, the majority of the population of the Republic of Ireland is Catholic and the belief in ancient Pagan gods has diminished dramatically over the centuries. However, a deep superstition in regard to fairies and other mythical creatures is still innate to many Irish. While superstition is clearly a character trait which is part of the stereotypical representation of the Irish, recent newspaper articles suggest that there is a true core to it. For instance, in 1999 the school master Eddie Lenihan launched a campaign to redirect a motorway because he wanted to save a hawthorn tree. In Irish folklore these trees are gathering places of the fairies and it is said that those who cut them down will be severely punished. Lenihan's campaign, which delayed the construction of the motorway for ten years, indicates the extent of Irish superstition.[392]

In *TNP* superstition is primarily assigned to farmers and elderly people. While JJ does not seem to know much about the old fairy stories and is not particularly interested in them, his mother points out that none of the farmers would touch a fairy ring fort. In addition, the superstitious practice to place milk on the windowsill in order to attract the good will of the fairies is mentioned. However, the depiction of the fairies in *TNP* does not suggest that the superstition of the farmers is justified as they do not even seem to take notice of the ongoings in the primary world.

4.6.4. Dichotomy between the Pagan Heritage and Christian Belief

With the arrival of the British in Ireland and especially after the Great Famine, the number of native speakers of the Gaelic language decreased dramatically. Hand in hand with the decline of the Irish language, Irish tradition diminished. One of the most central aspects of Irish tradition relates to religious practices, meaning that the Christian faith gradually superseded the belief in old Celtic gods.

> The resulting divide between conqueror and conquered, settler and native, over time normalized into the broad ethnic categories of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic', was to nuance all subsequent political and economical developments. The dispossession of the native secular and religious elite, the appropriation of its wealth and the plundering or destruction of much

[392] Monaghan, Patricia. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore*. New York: Facts on File, 2004. 179.

> of its material culture, legitimated by the law and by the religious ideology of the conquerors, had a profound impact on native culture.[393]

Thus, the predominance of the Christian Church resulted in the loss of influence of the Gaelic religion and of its representatives, such as the highly regarded druids. As pointed out by Ó Giolláin, the population adopted "new religious forms"[394] and gradually gave up the former popular religion. Naturally, the decline of the old Pagan religious practices also entailed the loss of knowledge about these, a phenomenon which is also discussed in *TNP*. While the young protagonist JJ does not seem particularly acquainted with Irish folklore, his mother aims at bridging the knowledge gap, which seems to separate the two generations.

> 'There were older, more primitive beliefs in Ireland that went back even further than the Church. They went back thousands, not hundreds of years. In some small ways they're still with us today.'[395]

In *TNP*, the ancient Pagan heritage predominantly survives in superstitions and traditional Irish folk music. However, the most obvious example of the dichotomy of the Pagan heritage and Christian faith presents itself in the portrayal of the relationship between JJ's grandfather, who was a passionate fiddle player, and the local Reverend Doherty. As described in the text, the Catholic priest was a designated objector of traditional Irish folk music and of superstitious practice.

> Father Doherty smiled, more to himself than to JJ. 'Stroke of genius, wasn't it to use the flute? I am achieving a lifetime ambition, JJ Byrne. I am ridding Ireland of the fairies and their insidious ways for ever.' (…) 'They have been a bane of Irish life for generation upon generation. They corrupt the people's minds with their music and their dancing and their deceitful ways. Don't you agree?'[396]

In the opinion of the Christian, the sidhe were malicious and lured the people with "devil's music"[397] which is a clear indication that the Pagan heritage was strongly condemned by the Catholic Church during the time of JJ's grandparents. More so, the priest claimed that the belief in the sidhe would result in an act of revenge by the Christian God.

As described in chapter 2.3.2., Christian belief and the internal structure of the Catholic Church are usually not challenged in CL and frequently omitted altogether. While Thompson's does not openly criticize Christian religious practice or belief, it is

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[393] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 16.
[394] Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*. 17.
[395] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 79.
[396] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 333.
[397] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 93.

still striking that the only antagonist in the novel is a Christian representative, namely Reverend Doherty. Furthermore, the character who openly opposes the Catholic Church, represented by Reverend Doherty, namely JJ's great-grandfather, is portrayed more positively than his antagonist. JJ Liddy senior is not only the one character that defies the Public Dance Act, but also readily accepts his daughter's pregnancy out of wedlock. Consequently, the older JJ Liddy and the rest of the family break away with the concept of Irish conservatism regarded as integral part of the Irish national identity. The Liddy's affiliation with fairy music, the opposition against the Catholic Reverend and the liaison of Helen's mother with Aengus Óg suggest the family's association with tradition. Since the Liddys are the central family in the novel with the young JJ Liddy as protagonist and hero, the novel opts for the relocation of Irish folklore and criticizes the Catholic Church's condemnation of the ancient Pagan heritage.

In addition, Christianity is brought into relation to modernity. The Reverend's hopes for the future[398] turn out to be reality already which indicates that the reduction of Celtic traditions is in line with Christian ideology:

> 'I have a vision of Ireland,' he went on. 'I see a god-fearing Catholic nation peopled with industrious citizens, each one of them determined to put the old, feckless ways behind them. I see an Ireland where every man has a motor car and spends his time improving his lot and the lot of his family, instead of wasting their time growing potatoes and his nights drinking and dancing. I see an Ireland that has grown wealthy and taken its rightful place among the great states of Europe.'
> 'But all that has happened already,' said JJ.[399]

Like the covert allusions to environmentalism in *TNP*, the novel also presents a subtle critique of the loss of tradition in favor of economic prosperity: The Reverend represents the only antagonistic character in the novel and, like his condemnation of tradition, his economic, social and religious visions of the future of Ireland are opposed by the hero.

[398] The Reverend has spent the past half a century in Tír na nÓg and consequently, he does not know about recent developments in Irish society.
[399] Thompson, Kate. *TNP*. 334.

5. O.R. Melling's *The Hunter's Moon* (2005)

5.1. Plot

Six-teen-year-old Findabhair and her American cousin Gwen decide to go on a discovery tour through mythical Ireland. Shortly after starting the trip, they encounter a leprechaun who takes them to Tara, a location near Dublin where they are supposed to meet fairies. Indeed, when they sleep in a mound on a hill in Tara, Findabhair is abducted by fairies and it is up to Gwen to start a rescue mission. With the help of the leprechaun and two humans, Mattie and Katie, she manages to be invited to a fairy banquet. However, during a brief reunion with Findabhair she learns that her cousin does not want to be saved as she has already become the queen of *Faerie* and is in love with its king Finvarra. Gwen's attempts to free her cousin provoke the fury of the fairy king and he issues an ultimatum: Gwen can either live in *Faerie* with her cousin or must leave it forever. When Gwen asks for time to think everything over, she is poisoned by a fairy dart and she is only found by chance by the High King of Inch Island, the youngster Dara, who takes her to his grandmother, a fairy doctor. During her recovery, Gwen falls in love with Dara, but the bliss is short lived as she soon discovers that the Hunter's Moon is about to begin and that the Crom Cruac, a giant worm, will soon aim at claiming a sacrifice. However, when she attempts to save Findabhair from being sacrificed, she learns that her cousin volunteered for the task. Gwen manages to convince her cousin and Finvarra to fight the giant worm, and together with Dara, Grania, Mattie and Katie, they form the Company of Seven and travel to *Faerie*. Although they fight bravely, they are defeated by Crom Cruac and Finvarra is taken as a sacrifice. A year later the remaining six return to Inch Island and come to know that the worm has not killed Finvarra, but only taken his immortality. Consequently, the former king of the fairies is able to start a life as a regular human being and is reunited with Findabhair.

5.2. Genre – An Irish Young Adult Fantasy novel

Like Thompson's *TNP*, *The Hunter's Moon* (*THM*) by O.R. Melling is the first installment of a series, which comprises four novels and appeared under the title *The Chronicles of Faerie*. The novel can be described as an Irish Young Adult Fantasy novel which units elements of FF with characteristics of mythic fiction. First of all, the story is mainly narrated from the point of view of a teenager. While Gwen is the main focalizer of the novel, some chapters are narrated from Findabhair's perspective. Two exceptions are the prologue and Chapter Twenty-six in which the fairy king Finvarra and the adult Katie function as focalizers. As the thoughts of the adults coincide with the point of view communicated by the teenage characters, their reliability is confirmed. Another characteristic of YAL which can be analyzed in *THM* relates to the personal development of the two female teenage protagonists. While Findabhair starts out as an irresponsible and reckless character who continuously propels on dangerous adventures, she regrets her actions at the end of the novel and apologizes for her selfish behavior. Equally, Gwen undergoes a substantial character development when she travels across Ireland and learns that she can make admirable achievements on her own. Moreover, while there are various references in the text that Gwen struggles with her weight, she comes to terms with the shape of her body towards the end of the novel which indicates that she has achieved a new level of maturation.

> Then she brightened as the truth struck home. "And you know what? I like being me. To hell with diets. Where's that chocolate mousse?"[400]

As is characteristic of novels of YAL, the teenage characters are those who are predominantly responsible for great achievements. For instance, the protagonist Gwen is the one character who develops the plan for Findabhair's rescue and is assigned the role as the leader of the Company of Seven, which goes into battle against the giant worm Crom Cruac. However, *THM* differs from other works of YAL in the sense that the teenage characters can rely on the help of adults throughout the novel. For example, the teenagers are not only supported by the elderly fairy doctress Grania, but also by the king of the fairies Finvarra. In addition, the king gives up his own immortality in order to save the life of his beloved queen Findabhair.

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[400] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 232.

As far as the narrative technique is concerned, it has to be stated that the novel comprises numerous dialogues and detailed descriptions of the setting, but also an abundance of introspective insights in the minds of the focalizers. In spite of the frequent instances of narrative presentation in the novel, it is fast-paced and the story time of the main action covers several weeks. Furthermore, the events are reported in a chronological order and for the dominance of the dialogue, the story time often reflects the discourse time.

Similar to Thompson's *TNP*, Melling's novel endorses a conservatism which has often been criticized in Irish YAL. The novel does not include any taboo topics, or unconventional family models, nor ethnic minorities. Although there is a strong emphasis on romance, the relationships are portrayed innocently and there are no indications of sexual desire in the entire novel. In addition, Ireland is portrayed as a traditional country where the magical is lurking behind every corner. Thus, the young protagonists have hardly left their home, when they effortlessly stumble across the first supernatural being, i.e. a leprechaun.

The intersection of elements of FF with elements of Irish mythology and folklore suggests that *THM* is to be classified as a representative work of mythic fiction. As is characteristic of FF, Gwen sets out on an epic quest in order to rescue her cousin in the Celtic Otherworld. Furthermore, the transition between primary and secondary world is an essential characteristic of FF. In terms of the secondary world described in *THM*, Melling draws from Irish mythology and inserts her interpretation of the Land of Perpetual Youth named *Faerie.*[401] Not only the magical realm of *Faerie* is adopted from Irish mythology, but also mythical characters like the fairy king Finvarra and Midir or solitary fairies, such as the Banshee and leprechauns. In addition, ancient myths about Aengus Óg, or Diarmuid and Gráinne are inserted as stories-within-stories or reflections of the focalizers. Lastly, protagonists of popular fairy tales, such as Cinderella or Red Riding Hood, are portrayed as real-life characters:

> "This is fabulous! I really feel like Cinderella."
> "A charming girl. I remember her well."
> "How could you? That's just a –"
> "Fairy tale?"
> They laughed together as they spun around the hall.[402]

[401] In Irish mythology *Faerie* is another name for *Tír na nÓg*, the Land of Perpetual Youth. (Melling, O.R. *THM*. 286.)
[402] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 93.

Finally, *THM* can in part be described as a teenage version of a novel of the chick lit genre. For instance, especially at the beginning of the story, the two protagonists show a strong affiliation with image and fashion, and discuss elements of popular culture, such as movies and rock bands:

> "Don't you just love *The Return of the King*?" said Gwen. "I watch it constantly."
> She was rummaging through her cousin's books, CDs, and DVDs. So many were identical to her own.
> "To die for!" Findabhair agreed. She sat at her dressing table and put on her makeup. "I can't believe I'm in love with a man over forty. When he sang at the end, I nearly swooned. My king, my king."
> "I thought you preferred Legolas?"
> "I did at first. The elves are fabulous, so like my idea of the fairy folk. But doesn't he seem kind of sexless to you?"[403]

Thus, the teenage protagonists reveal themselves as admirers of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, whereas the male characters featured seem more interesting to them than the movies. Furthermore, the "search for Mister Right"[404], which is central to works of the chick lit genre, is also an essential theme in *THM*. In fact, the search for Prince Charming is successful in the case of both female protagonists as they end up with charismatic and exceptionally good-looking partners at the end of the novel. Another characteristic of the chick-lit genre relates to the preoccupation with the character's self-image. Throughout the novel Gwen is occupied with her weight and envies her cousin for her flawless, slim body.

5.3. Setting and the Pagan Chronotope in *THM*

As is characteristic of works of FF, *THM* centers on the transition between a primary world, i.e. contemporary Ireland, and a magical secondary world, named *Faerie*. The primary world described in the novel is an idealized version of Ireland in which everything imaginable seems possible. Indeed, Melling paints the picture of an Ireland in which magic is lurking behind every corner and where the supernatural can be discovered easily if one strongly desires it. Accordingly, the two protagonists do not

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[403] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 10.
[404] Ryan Mary. "The Bodies of Chick Lit: Positive Representations of the Female Body in Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction." *Bold Inquiry: New Directions in Comparative Literature* 1.1 (January 2011): <http://inquire.streetmag.org/articles/13>.

stumble across an adventure by chance, but consciously make the decision to set out on a quest to discover the magical Ireland. Thus, Melling suggests that within the framework of her novel, the door to the supernatural world is open, but is not accessed by humans as they have lost their belief in the old Pagan heritage. In addition, the predominantly rural setting of the primary world is also characteristic of several other works of CL which draw from Pagan themes.[405] In *THM* the Irish landscape is romanticized and evaluated externally by the American protagonist Gwen:

> Despite the occasional spire of a town or village, the land had risen to claim its ascendancy. This was the Ireland she dreamed of: silence falling over sage-green fields, hedgerows scarved with mist, clouds rising behind the hills like pale hills themselves.[406]

While Gwen travels to several places in Ireland, the Burren in County of Clare seems to be of special significance. The solitude of the Burren with its deserted karst landscape is described as a location where the presence of fairies is likely:

> If ever a place was ideal for fairies, this terrain was it. So wild and forsaken, so strange and beautiful.[407]

In addition, the ancientness and pureness of the Burren is emphasized, and Gwen has to walk long distances until she encounters another human being. While the majority of the novel is narrated in the perspective of focalizers, the Burren is described by an omniscient narrator, who informs the reader about the changes in the landscape from spring to summer. While the forsakenness and solitude of the location is stressed, it is also stated that there are beautiful plants and little animals:

> The Burren was a craggy tableland embedded in the green countryside like a stone. Formed by glaciers aeons ago, the great terraces of limestone lay open for miles. Over time they had been scored and rilled by rain, till the fluted patterns of karren rippled like a sea of gray-blue stone. Rising above the lunar landscape were stepped hills, slippery steeps, the rugged defile of Glencolumkille, and the cliffs of Slievecarron. With the coming of spring, the rock garden bloomed. From every crack and crevice they peeped; blue gentian, mountain aven, the red bloody cranesbill, hart's-tongue, madder, purple helleborine, and a dazzling array of miniature orchids. By summer, the air was bright with butterflies.[408]

Thus, in *THM* the Burren becomes a place in contemporary Ireland where the pureness of nature is still perceivable and where no human being interferes with the natural order. The pureness and magical power of the rural landscape is contrasted with the hectic city where encounters with the supernatural seem unlikely. In fact, the novel

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[405] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 14.
[406] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 15.
[407] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 62.
[408] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 61.

differentiates between "two Irelands".[409] While in rural Ireland, tradition and myth are still very much part of the peoples' lives, the inhabitants of modern cities seem to have forgotten about ancient Celtic beliefs.

The secondary world, which is entered by the protagonists, is described as "Garden of Eden"[410] and is Melling's interpretation of the mythical Land of Perpetual Youth, *Tír na nÓg*, which is referred to as *Faerie* in *THM*. While in Irish mythology Faerie is also one of the names used to denote the Celtic Otherworld, Melling lists various synonyms in the novel and alludes to its mythic origin.

> *Tír Tairngire*. Land of Promise. *Magh Abhlach*. Plain of the Apple Trees. *Tír na nÓg*. Kingdom of the Forever-Young. It was a country that refreshed the spirits of all who journeyed there, delighting the mind and nourishing the soul. The fair flowering place where there is no grief or sickness or death. The many-colored land of dreams and enchantment. The far green country under a swift sunrise.[411]

In the novel, Faerie evokes a multitude of allusions. Although generally regarded as a positive place, parts of it are inhabited by evil forces, such as the giant worm *Crom Cruac*. Accordingly, in these deserted locations of Faerie eternal night prevails. Yet the magical realm of the sidhe is not only a physical place to which the protagonists travel, but frequently also appears in dreams. Especially in those parts of the story in which Gwen suffers from a lack of food, drink and sleep, she shows an ability to enter Faerie, and, as it seems, it is her dream-like state that makes encounters with supernatural creatures possible. Thus, in the story, the ability to perceive the supernatural coincides with the weak physical and mental state of the body. Consequently, Melling leaves open whether the protagonist actually perceives the supernatural for real or merely falls victim to an extensive imagination. But the ability to indulge in dreams about the supernatural also depends on the location where the protagonists find themselves. For instance, Gwen for the first time enters a dream-like state when she and Findabhair sleep in a fairy mound in Tara which suggests that the place has a profound significance. Already the way to Tara indicates the existence of fairies as several hawthorn trees grow beside the streets. In addition, the unusual growth of the branches contributes to the romanticized image of the location.

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[409] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 52.
[410] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 61.
[411] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 245.

> They heaved their knapsacks onto their backs and walked down the lane that led to Tara. The way was lined with tall hawthorn trees laden with white blossoms like brides. Bees hummed in the dense greenery. Branches met overhead to form an arched roof, like a leafy hall leading to a throne room.[412]

While Tara is described as a mere tourist center where souvenir shops, cafes and hostels can be found, the location has a deeper historical significance for Gwen and Findabhair. The *genius loci*, or the spirit of the place, is not only emphasized by the perception of the teenage protagonists, but also by the indication of the significance of the location to poets and ancient societies:

> For Gwen and Findabhair, there was so much more. This royal residence and center had been the pulse of Ireland for over two thousand years. *Bright-surfaced Teamhair*, the poets called her. Tara of Kings. The glory of the place was subtle and secret. It lingered in the shadows of the tall grasses that covered the mounds and earthwork.[413]

Apart from the cultural and historic significance of Tara, the two protagonists enter a location where the borders between primary and secondary world are particularly permeable. As pointed out by Bramwell, the belief that certain locations possess increased power has been referred to as "topophilia."[414] Within the framework of the Pagan chronotope, locations of increased spirituality are often "natural formations", such "mountains; seashore; springs; waterfalls; caves; and trees and groves"[415], i.e. places where two elements coincide. Indeed, the place where Gwen first hears fairy music and perceives the arrival of the sidhe in a dream-like state, is a cave in an old mount in Tara. The sanctuary of the location is emphasized by carvings on the wall which indicate the spiritual value of the cave.

> Findabhair played her flashlight over the biggest stone on the left. Circular designs whirled across the rock.
> "They're like spiral galaxies," Gwen said, awed.
> "We should lie with our heads against them," her cousin suggested.
> "That's what the Druids did," Gwen agreed.[416]

The designs in the cave authenticate the adolescents' imaginations about the existence of the supernatural spirit of the place and they mime the rites of Druids in order to attract fairies. The word "druid" is believed to mean "oak knower" or "knower of a great deal."[417] In former times the priests of Celtic societies were held in high

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[412] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 21f.
[413] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 24.
[414] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.
[415] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 9.
[416] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 32.
[417] Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 27.

esteem. Thus, every king relied on his own personal Druid until Christianity arrived in Ireland and they were replaced by Christian chaplains. While Druids represented a form of pre-Christian religion, it is believed that they did not stand for a unified doctrine.[418]

Yet, even more than the location, time plays a significant role in the Pagan chronotope:

> Neither sensed the changes outside the mound. As darkness met light in the dim borderland before dawn, the stillness over Tara began to shudder. To come alive. Before time could cross from night to day, one world was about to eclipse another.[419]

In this passage of the novel and in many others, the arrival of the fairies takes place during twilight. As asserted by Bramwell, an "intense concentration of sacred place and time, ritual and deity is typical of the Pagan chronotope."[420] In consideration of the chapter set in Tara, the world order in *THM* abides to the rules of the Pagan chronotope as described by Bramwell. Not only does the mound in Tara have spiritual, historical, cultural and religious significance, but the local characteristics coincide with a certain time, i.e. twilight. In other words, only because the protagonists are at a specific place during a specific time, they are able to meet fairies.

The time of the day or even of the year is of special significance for the proximity to supernatural forces. For instance, the fairies always appear during twilight and the Company of Seven sets out on their quest at that time. Although the Eight-spoke Wheel of the Year (see chapter 3.6.) is not explicitly mentioned, there are some indications in the text that the main action takes place during midsummer. For instance, just before Gwen joins the fairy banquet she is warned by the farmer Katie that a storm is coming and that they tend to be "pure wild in the summertime."[421] In addition, the reader is informed at the beginning of the novel that the two cousins Gwen and Findabhair will use their school summer holidays to go on a backpacking trip through Ireland. Since it is indicated at the end of the novel that Gwen has only a few days left to enjoy with her new-found love Dara, it can be supposed that the summer is almost over and that the main action, therefore, actually takes place in midsummer. In addition, the witch doctor Grania mentions the significance of May Eve as the plants that she collected on this particular date are particularly strong and effective and can keep the fairies away:

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[418] Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 27.
[419] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 35.
[420] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 9.
[421] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 73.

> "Wreathe the door and the windows. Then strew this bag of primroses over sill and threshold. They were gathered on May Eve, so they are very potent. These will keep out the Wee Folk. My only fear is that they will call up something older and more perilous."[422]

The importance of time within the Pagan chronotope is also essential as far as the transition between the primary and the secondary world is concerned. While it is indicated in the text that there are various secret passages that lead to Faerie, the transition does not necessarily involve a change in space, but rather a shift in time.

> "There are two gates to Faerie," the King told them, "which mark the borders of our territory in time, though not in space. The White Gates of Morning are the entrance to Faerie. The Black Gates of Night are the exit."[423]

When the human protagonists enter the realm of Faerie, they are bound to the order of time innate to the Celtic Otherworld. Since everything in the land of the Ever-living Ones is perpetual, time does not have any significance there and consequently, it does not exist. For that reason, when the protagonists step "over the threshold and into a fairy tale"[424], they enter a cyclical time, i.e. *kairos*. However, they are not aware of the fact that time passes significantly faster in the primary world, and they cannot pinpoint how much time they have spent in the Celtic Otherworld:

> Whether it took seconds or aeons to cross that beautiful kingdom, they couldn't know. Time meant nothing in a land suspended between morning and night, for it held the breadth of infinity within its borders.[425]

While time certainly follows other rules in Faerie, also the supernatural characters and creatures seem to be able to influence time. For example, the leprechaun that takes Gwen and Findabhair to Tara seems to speed through a time portal which reduces the journey time to the blink of an eye. Similarly, the fairies emphasize their supernatural power by moving the human characters trough time and space as they wish. When Gwen is invited to the banquet and the fairies start a heated argument about their right to keep her in Faerie, she is suddenly transferred back to the primary world by Midir who aims at protecting her:

> The last thing Gwen remembered was the dish of chocolate mousse sailing past her. As she strained for a scoop she, too, was hurled upward.
> Then she awoke.
> On top of the Burren's Glen of Clab.
> In the middle of the worst storm imaginable.[426]

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[422] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 166.
[423] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 239.
[424] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 229.
[425] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 244.
[426] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 104.

Although Gwen is saved from the immediate fury of the fairies, the effects of their revenge can be felt across the borders of Faerie and manifests itself in a raging storm in the primary world.

Moreover, the fairies are able to transfer humans from the primary world to Ireland's mythic and historic past if certain characteristics of the Pagan chronotope are fulfilled. When Gwen falls asleep by the ruins of an ancient monastery, she is moved backwards in time and wakes up in the midst of a scenery of the middle ages. In regard to the Pagan chronotope, not only the changes of the location are essential, but also Gwen's subjective perception of the place.[427] Since Gwen experiences her presence in the historic past in a dream-like state, she cannot fully understand the situation:

> "What's happening to me?"
> Even the question wavered in her mind. She felt like a ghost herself, pale and unsubstantial. Not quite there, not quite anywhere. The languor was difficult to fight, being strangely pleasant.

The state of trance is only broken when she is saved by Midir and taken back to the primary world.

While the fairies seem to be able to trespass between the worlds effortlessly, the human characters seem to suffer from the aftermaths of the transition. Since Findabhair has spent much time in Faerie during the story time of the novel, Gwen perceives process of dehumanization in her cousin and she comes to understand the impossibility to continuously switch between the two worlds:

> "(…) It's not possible to be in two places at the same time. You're only a visitor to our world now. You don't live here anymore."[428]

For that reason, the human protagonists return to their home in the primary world at the end of the novel. However, their stay in the Celtic Otherworld has irrevocably changed them. While Findabhair "had learned to live with the death of a loved one"[429], Gwen has become considerably more self-confident. Furthermore, both of them have returned with a new level of spirituality and Findabhair has even been rewarded with the musical talent of the fairies.

Towards the end of the novel, the order of the universe in *THM* is explained. While there are two worlds which exist in parallel and independently, they are also

[427] Bramwell, Peter. *Pagan Themes in Modern Children's Fiction.* 8.
[428] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 145.
[429] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 267.

interwoven. For instance, humans perceive the influence of the magical world on the human world in the form of dreams. However, in order to obtain the ability to dream, humans have to be willing to make a human sacrifice. The giant worm is the one who keeps the balance. As he does not have a mouth and uses telepathic communication, his statements are written in italics:

> *I lie curled on the branch of the Tree of Life that bears both Faerie and your world like golden apples. Two spheres, two moons that eclipse each other, one fantasy, one reality, balanced side by side. Humanity cannot exist without its dreams, but for any dream to exist there must be a sacrifice.*[430]

Accordingly, the novel insinuates that the humans' perception of the supernatural depends on their ability to dream. By suggesting that the supernatural might only live in the imagination of the protagonists, the accounts of the magical occurrences are integrated into the readers' human experience and appear more realistic. While in Thompson's *TNP* the disorder in Tír na nÓg has more global effects and the time leak threatens to destroy the primary and the secondary world, in Melling's novel the Hunter's Moon mainly affects Faerie. When no sacrifice for the giant worm is provided, it will bring the apocalypse to the fairyland, whereas humans will essentially be robbed of their ability to dream. Since dreaming is an integral part of human existence, the apocalyptic mode of the novel is given: If humans are no longer able to dream, they will die as well.

5.4. Mythology and Folklore in *THM*

In *THM* the population's inclination to believe in Irish mythology and folklore decisively depends on their location: While people from the city are portrayed as secular in regard to the belief in ancient deities and the supernatural, the rural population is depicted as traditional and superstitious. In Thompson's *TNP* the credence in Celtic folklore varies from generation to generation; in *THM,* by contrast, the characters, who believe in the sidhe, seem to be of all ages. In fact, in contrast to the adolescent protagonist in *TNP*, JJ, the teenage girls Gwen and Findabhair of *THM* seem to be well informed about Irish folklore. One the one hand, they positively comment on the

[430] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 261.

collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*, such as William Butler Yeats. On the other hand, they state that many traditional myths have been abused and stereotyped in popular culture:

> "If you mean wee things with wings and shoemakers with pointy ears – *no*. That's a load of commercial rubbish exploiting the true heart of the legends."
> As Findabhair warmed to her subject, exhorting on the abuses of Irish mythology, Gwen eyed the plethora of footwear around her.[431]

While a stereotypical and commercialized representation of folklore is criticized in the novel, original Irish myths are presented as reality or factual history. Consequently, they are used as instructions which provide information on how to enter the magical realm of *Faerie,* or on how to break a spell.

In spite of the elements of fantasy in the novel, Melling aims at maintaining a link to reality. For instance, the protagonists frequently find themselves in a situation where they have to cope with a lack of food, drink and sleep and consequently, they encounter the supernatural in a weak physical state of the body, or even in a dream-like state. By doing so, the author suggests that the ability to perceive paranormal phenomena is closely linked to dreaming or a state of trance. While supernatural events in the story are presented as if they actually occur to the protagonists, they could also be part of a dream.

Moreover, the myths are used to contrast a modern, secular and contemporary Ireland with its traditional Pagan past. In several parts of the novel, the proximity of the sidhe to nature is stressed, whereas modern civilizations are overtly criticized for their disrespect for nature and their loss of tradition. Thus, the ancient tales also fulfill the purpose to covertly insert ideas of environmentalism and feminism. For instance, on the first page of the novel Finvarra looks at the river Liffey in Dublin and laments its severe state of pollution:

> "Have you forgotten how to sing?" whispered the dark-eyed young man who leaned over the railings of the Ha'penny Bridge. His sloe-black eyes went darker still as he pondered the ancient river. "When we called you Rurthach you purled like a young stream. What have they done to you?"[432]

Rurthach is obviously the Irish word for the river Liffey. Like the decline of the Irish language, the dirty and polluted state of the river is associated with modernity.

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[431] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 20.
[432] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 1.

Thus, the novel criticizes the effects of modernity on nature and on cultural heritage, notably on the Irish language.

In regard to modern feminism, the novel suggests that Pagan cultures were much more open-minded as far as the inclusion of women in warfare was concerned; a privilege that was prohibited by Christian laws. Consequently, in *THM* the Pagan past is not only associated with a respect for nature, but also with an open-minded attitude towards women.

5.4.1. Narrative Levels

In contrast to *TNP*, where the majority of the Irish myths is embedded in hyponarratives, most of the tales in *THM* are integrated in the matrix narrative. Consequently, the protagonists meet most of the mythical characters in person or experience similar situations as the protagonists of the tales. In fact, especially Findabhair's experiences in the novel can in part be regarded as an adaptation of various myths centering on a mortal woman who is stolen by fairies, such as *The Stolen Bride* in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland.* In addition, a connection between the myths of the *Irish Literary Revival* and *THM* is insinuated at the beginning of the novel as the poem *The Stolen Child* by Yeats can be found there. Another clear reference to the myth is provided in the prologue set in a bookshop in Dublin since Finvarra shows Findabhair a poem, which bears a striking resemblance to that of Yeats:

> "It's lovely," Findabhair said when she had finished the poem. "A bit like Yeats' 'Stolen Child.'"[433]

Similarly, also some of Gwen's experiences mirror myths or are at least inspired by them. These tend to be incorporated in the matrix narrative. For instance, after Findabhair is stolen, Gwen searches for fairies and, finally, joins them at a fairy banquet. Her journey to the banquet might have been inspired by several myths concerned with fairy troops on flying horses, including *The Midnight Ride,* which is part of the aforementioned collection of tales by Lady Wilde. In addition, other myths, such as *The Changeling*, *The Fairy Doctor* and *The Fairy Dart* (see chapter 5.4.2.) might have served as inspiration for Gwen's quest in Melling's novel. However, by far

[433] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 5.

the most obvious example of the inclusion of a myth concerns *The Horned Women,* which is part of Lady Wilde's collection. The fact that even parts of the dialogue overlap in myth and novel (e.g. "Open, open!" or "I am the Witch of the One Horn"[434]) proves that Melling based her work on this ancient tale.

Indeed, while Gwen and Findabhair's quest is purely imaginary, most of the occurrences related to the supernatural draw from Irish mythology. Moreover, the great majority of the supernatural characters, which appear in the novel, are part of works of Irish folklore. While their characterization might contradict some of the original myths, they predominantly show the same character traits in tale and novel. For instance, Finvarra is not only the fairy king in mythology and novel, but is also associated with stealing beautiful mortal women. Another example is Crom Cruac, who is the great evil in the novel. Similar to its depiction in mythology, the god who appears in the form of a giant worm takes humans as a sacrifice.[435]

As pointed out before, most of the myths are embedded in the matrix narrative. However, some myths are also presented as hyponarratives and consequently, fulfill different purposes within the story. Although Gwen is an American, she seems to have an outstanding knowledge of Irish mythology, which is reflected in her thoughts. Accordingly, she does not only recognize leprechauns and other mythical creatures immediately when she sees them, but is also able to provide information on ancient tales. Most of the hyponarratives are either embedded in the dialogue or presented as inner reflections of the focalizer Gwen when she finds herself in a state of trance. The main functions of the hyponarratives range from exposition to analogy. However, the majority of the embedded myths are supposed to show that the mythic places and characters are part of factual history or reality.

For instance, during the ride on the flying horse Gwen notices a couple on the ground which turns out to be Diarmuid and Gráinne. Gwen recognizes the characters of Irish mythology instantly and an omniscient narrator briefly recapitulates the tale.

> When they reached the majestic Poulnabrone Dolmen, standing alone in a stony field, the fairies swooped down. Inside the sheltering walls of the cromlech, two young lovers lay asleep. Their beauty was marred by hunger and hardship, but they dreamed of a lasting

[434] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 168.
[435] cf. Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 22.

> future together. Neither regretted the love that had made them fugitives from the warriors of the Fianna and Finn MacCumhail.[436]

Although it seems that the protagonists of the myth Diarmuid and Gráinne actually exist in the universe constructed in the novel, Melling maintains a link to the reality of the reader. Like in other parts of the story in which Gwen encounters the supernatural, she finds herself in a dream-like state and cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy anymore. In addition, it is described that she has the "fairy sight"[437] which indicates that she might see things that are not really there. Thus, the author leaves open if the supernatural actually exists, or if it is just part of Gwen's vivid imagination. However, at one point of the novel it is stated that the teenagers have come across supernatural beings which "shouldn't exist"[438], but somehow do exist. Thus, the author insinuates that the supernatural might exist for real and is not only part of the imagination of the protagonists. Consequently, the inclusion of the myth of *Diarmuid and Gráinne* provides the presentation of events which are claimed to be real, i.e. factual history. Thus, Gwen learns that all of the tales that she heard as bedtime stories as a child are actually true. Similarly, fairy tale protagonists, such as Cinderella or Red Riding Hood, are presented as real life characters. In addition, tapestries in the fairy palace are supposed to prove the authenticity of the events, which are portrayed as factual history within the reality of the story. Thus, the tapestries show records of ancient battles, such as those on the fields of Culloden or Camlann.[439] Finally, exposition is also used to emphasize the mystic mood of the landscape. For instance, when Dara shows Gwen Inch Island, they pass Lough Swilly and he tells the legend of a sea serpent that is said to live in the lake:

> Where the sun struck the cold waters of Lough Swilly, a mist of light and shadow whispered over the surface.
> "Some people call it the Lake of Shadows," Dara told her, "but it's really the Lake of Eyes. Swilly is the English pronunciation for Súiligh. *Súil* is Irish for 'eye'. There's a legend about a sea serpent who dwells at the bottom of the lough, called Súileach- 'full of eyes'."[440]

While serpents may have been important creatures in the Pagan religion, they do not pertain to Ireland's wildlife and it is said that they have been banished by Saint

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[436] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 82.
[437] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 81.
[438] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 78.
[439] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 240.
[440] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 190.

Patrick. In addition, they were often confused with dragons.[441] Consequently, the references to the real existence of the serpent in the novel stress the significance of Pagan belief, and mystify the Irish landscape.

Moreover, several hyponarratives function as analogy which means that occurrences in the novel are juxtaposed with comparable events of Irish mythology. For instance, Dara narrates the myth of *Ethna the Bride* in order to relate it to his own situation. As Gwen is afraid that Finvarra might be able to capture her after all, Dara tries to reassure her by claiming that he would go through the same troubles to rescue her as the king in the myth:

> "Finvarra may not allow it," Gwen had said, worried.
> "He can't keep me out," Dara swore. "There is a tale of an Irish king who dug up a fairy rath to rescue his stolen queen. I'll do the same."[442]

A second example of an analogy in the novel is concerned with a myth on Celtic women warriors:

> *Cnoc na mBan-Laoch*. The Hill of the Women-Heroes. On this green knoll assembled the female warriors, golden torcs at their throats, slender spears in their hands. Not until the seventh century A.D. and the Christian laws of Cáin Adamnáin were women banned from warfare.[443]

While it is stated in the novel that female contribution in warfare was only abolished after the Christian religion was introduced in Ireland, Gwen and Findabhair assume the role of women warriors when they face Crom Cruac. A clear indication of the juxtaposition of Celtic warrior women and the two female teenagers is provided just before the battle against Crom Cruac. Since Gwen specifically assumes the role of the "Celtic Warrior-Queen"[444] it becomes apparent that her personal experience is meant to reflect that of ancient female warriors of Irish folklore.

5.4.2. Content Level

5.4.2.1. The Fairy Doctress

The fairy doctress Grania Harte alias Granny reveals that she not only lived in Faerie when she was young, but that she – like Findabhair – was abducted by the fairy

[441] Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 62.
[442] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 81.
[443] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 24.
[444] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 247.

king, Finvarra. Grania's personal account in the novel suggests that Melling based this part of the story on the myth *The Fairy Doctress* of Lady Wilde's volume *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland.* In the myth it is described "that Finvarra the king and his chosen band were on the watch to carry off the prettiest girls to the fairy mansions." As a result of the human aging process, the mortal was only kept for seven years since „fairies love nothing so much as youth and beauty."[445] However, when the women were sent back, they were often rewarded with the knowledge on herbs and cures, and became fairy doctresses:

> In that moment the others caught a glimpse of an old truth. Granny suddenly appeared as she had in her youth, Grania Harte, a dark-haired beauty who once was consort to the King of the Fairies. Then the image faded and there she stood, gray-haired and aged, yet tall and unbowed.[446]

Grania's account illustrates the difference between immortal fairies and mortal humans to a younger readership. While ordinary humans inevitably grow older, fairies are unaffected by the aging process. The fact that Finvarra was once Granny's lover and is now with the teenager Findabhair might be problematic from the point of view of a secular society. The morality of the fairy folk does not reflect moral codes of a modern society as in the human world it would probably not be accepted that an old man takes a teenager as a wife.

5.4.2.2. The Horned Women

The myth of *The Horned Women,* which is embedded in the matrix narrative of *THM*, is part of Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland.* The myth is about witch sisters who spin the thread of life of their victims around horns on their foreheads. The first witch has one horn, the second two horns, the third three and so on. In the myth there are twelve witches, whereas in the novel only three sisters come to spin Gwen's thread of life. Although the witches are described as very powerful, they are defeated or tricked by their victims in the novel and in the myth. While in the myth the rich lady, whose life is at stake, is saved by the spirit of the well, in the novel the fairy doctress Grania knows how to defeat the witch sisters.

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[445] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. Ed. Fáilte, Ceád Mile. 1998. *Sacred Fire*. "The Fairy Doctress". <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/ali/ali062.htm>.
[446] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 211.

Interestingly enough, Melling in part used the exact same words as Lady Wilde and made only little changes.

> **THM:** "OPEN! OPEN!"
> "Who goes there?" Granny called back. (…)
> "I am the Witch of the One Horn."
> **Myth:** "Open! open!"
> "Who is there?" said the woman of the house.
> "I am the Witch of the One Horn."
>
> **THM:** The she paused to cry out. "WHERE ARE MY SISTERS?"
> **Myth:** Suddenly she paused and! said aloud: "Where are the women? They delay too long."
>
> **THM:** "Give me place!" she screeched. „I am the Witch of the Two Horns."[447]
> **Myth:** "Give me place," she said; "I am the Witch of the Two Horns," and she began to spin as quick as lightning.[448]

In consideration of these quotations, it becomes obvious that Melling used Lady Wilde's volume as a source. Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that the myth has been adapted with great accuracy. In fact, most of the events and characters related to Irish folklore in the novel are clearly based on myths which can be found in the volumes of the collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*. Thus, Melling's choice to stick as closely as possible to the original myths might indicate that she aims at informing an uninformed (American or international) audience about Irish folklore.

5.4.2.3. The Changeling

Tales centered on the changeling are part of most collections of Irish mythology and folklore. According to superstitious beliefs, fairies steal mortal babies and leave a fairy child of hideous outer appearance instead.[449] In *THM* Gwen suspects that Findabhair might be a fairy changeling as she cannot recognize any traces of humanity in her cousin any more.

> "You're not Findabhair," she accused. "You're a changeling, like in the stories, a fairy pretending to be human."[450]

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[447] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 168.
[448] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. Ed. Fáilte, Ceád Mile. 1998. *Sacred Fire*. "The Horned Women". <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/ali/ali003.htm>.
[449] Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 17.
[450] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 143.

However, Gwen soon rejects her suspicions and acknowledges that Findabhair is simply in love with the king of Faerie. The changeling does not fulfill any purpose in the novel and might only have been mentioned to provide further information on central aspects of Irish mythology and folklore.

5.4.2.4. Diarmuid and Gráinne

Similar to the portrayal of the changeling, the myth of *Diarmuid and Gráinne* might only have been inserted in the storyline to inform the readership about Irish folklore. By showing that Diarmuid and Gráinne actually live in Faerie, Melling indicates that her portrayal of the fairy realm reflects its original depiction in Irish mythology. Consequently, characters of Irish mythology live in Faerie and their lives reflect the events recorded in the myths. Therefore, the myth of *Diarmuid and Gráinne* is presented as factual history within the universe of the novel.

5.5. The Representation of Mythic Characters and Creatures

5.5.1. Trooping Fairies

The characterization of fairies in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* reflects the representation of the sidhe in *THM*:

> All the traditions of the fairies show that they love beauty and splendour [sic], grace of movement, music and pleasure; everything, in fact, that is artistic, in contradistinction to violent, brutal enjoyment.[451]

As indicated in the quotation, the life of the fairies consists of feasting, music and dancing. While the fairies enjoy the pleasures of life, they do not take on jobs and everything they need in their every-day life is produced by their magic. However, as described in *THM*, fairies do not only differ from humans as far as their life-style is concerned, but also in regard to their incapability to feel human emotions. For instance,

[451] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 277.

they do not feel any regret and can kill humans or members of their own race in cold blood.

> "(…) They do not have the same kind of feelings. Guilt is something they know nothing about. That might be fine for some, but that means they can get away with murder without batting an eyelid."[452]

Thus, they do not hesitate to select a human girl, i.e. Gwen, in order to sacrifice her to the giant worm Crom Cruac. While they may not feel any regret or guilt, they abide to a hierarchy within their own ranks. Consequently, Midir, who is the second-in-command, "cannot cross [the fairy king] Finvarra directly."[453]

In terms of the explicit characterization of the sidhe, certain passages in *THM* are detailed and remind of the chapters dedicated to fairies in the volumes of the collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*. Especially at the beginning of the novel, Gwen contemplates descriptions and characterizations of fairies which she remembers from old tales. Since the novel was published in America, the detailed depiction of the sidhe does not seem surprising. In fact, the part of the novel in which the sidhe are described could be regarded as an introduction to Irish folklore for readers who do not possess any previous knowledge on the topic.

> What did she know about them? Behind the tales told to modern children was an old peasant belief in another race who lived alongside humans. They were called "The Good People," not because they were good, but because they needed to be appeased. *For when they were good, they were very very good, but when they were bad, they were horrid*. Some legends claimed that they were gods. Others said they were fallen angels; not good enough for heaven but not bad enough for hell. Descriptions varied in all the books and stories.[454]

The explicit altero characterization provided in *THM* in part strongly reminds of the first paragraphs in the chapter 'The Trooping Fairies' of *Fairy and Folktales of the Irish Peasantry* by Yeats (see chapter 4.5.1.) and it is very likely that Melling based her research on this work. By pointing out that most of the stories about the fairy folk differ in content, Melling creates a space for her own creativity. She lets the reader know that her interpretation of the sidhe is not necessarily the only, let alone the correct one, and that it will most certainly reflect some sources and contradict others.

The cultural significance of the fairies for the Irish population is expressed by the reaction of the Irish characters towards folklore. While Katie and Mattie state that most people have lost their belief in the old tales, mythology predominantly survives in the

[452] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 90.
[453] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 98.
[454] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 41.

countryside. As the power of the fairies in Ireland depends on whether humans believe in them, they are assigned more power in the rural regions. Consequently, Finvarra is not able to abduct Findabhair in Dublin, but must lure her to the solitary mound in Tara first. However, in the countryside the belief in fairies seems to remain strong as the farmer Katie and the rich businessman Mattie immediately believe Gwen's story and inform her about Irish superstition.

Gwen and Findabhair idealize the sidhe race before having met a fairy, but they quickly reevaluate their opinion when Findabhair is abducted. Although Findabhair goes with the sidhe voluntarily and willingly becomes their queen, she warns her cousin about their trickery. Indeed, they try to make use of the lures of fairy music and food in order to be able to keep Gwen in Faerie. As it is revealed later in the novel, they need a human whom they can sacrifice to Crom Cruac. Their true intentions are disguised by their charms and exceptional good looks. Thus, Gwen is immediately bewitched by the charming king of the fairies, Finvarra, and she forgets about her plan not to try fairy food.

In contrast to the representation of the sidhe in Thompson's *TNP*, the fairy characters in *THM* emphasize the otherness from humans and describe themselves as immortal. Consequently, in terms of attitude and way of dressing the sidhe differ considerably from humans. While they frequently use an archaic language when they communicate with humans, their choice of words also seems educated and sophisticated. In contrast to the human protagonists, they do not use contractions and frequently opt for French loan words. For instance, the following quotation uttered by Midir shows the waiver of contractions and the use of the French loan words *assist*, *grant* and *privy*:

> "I am of Faerie and the land of Faerie, and I am bound by its law. It is easy enough for me to assist you, for I have the read hair that by our custom grants aid. Yet I cannot cross Finvarra directly. Though I am aware that he schemes against you, I am not privy to his designs."[455]

Moreover, the fairies' way of dressing is not only elegant, but also reflects their proximity to nature. Thus, they seem to integrate themselves into the landscape seamlessly. For instance, when Gwen encounters the fairies in the woods of Sheegara

[455] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 98.

their clothes are made of flowers and herbs to mirror the landscape, which surrounds them.

> Their clothes were flower petals and puffs of thistledown, yet their limbs seemed longer than the trunks of the trees. Holly and mistletoe circled their wrists like red-and-white bracelets. Berries dangled from their ears, bluebells crowned their hair. Where they had been silver against the Burren's gray stone, here they were of darker coloring –russet-brown, midnight-black, dark-green, and ruddy. Were they chameleons? Camouflaged by their surroundings? Was their glamour in the fairy hall but another guise? Truly they were wildish things, not of humanity, but nature's children.[456]

Although it is not clear whether the sidhe regard themselves as gods, they display a high degree of self-confidence and seem to feel superior to humans. However, if they are treated well, they grant help to humans. For instance, as Katie has always provided them with milk and cream, they regard her as a good neighbor so that occasionally "breaches in the walls are mended overnight"[457] or lambs, which are believed to be lost, surprisingly return. In addition, they show a great interest in "little children, beautiful youths, and generous adults."[458] As stated by Findabhair, they abduct mortals as they have lived for thousands of years and simply feel bored.

Similar to the sidhe in *TNP*, the fairy characters of *THM* have a great passion for music. Fairy music not only precedes the appearance of the sidhe, but also has the power to put humans into a state of trance. However, musical talent is also a fairy virtue gifted to humans who have visited the fairy world. For that reason, the mortal queen of the fairies, Findabhair, is gifted the ability to play music and sing like a fairy before she returns to the human world.

5.5.1.1. Midir

In Irish mythology Midir[459] is one of the leaders of the Tuatha Dé Danann[460] and tales center on his great efforts to conquer Etain. As his first wife Fuamach is exceedingly jealous, she asks for the help of the Druid Bresal Etarlaim, who puts a spell on Etain and drives her away. Aengus Óg, who is smitten by Etain's beauty, harbors her in his house in Brugh na Boinn. However, when Fuamach hears of Aengus' love for Etain, she again asks the Druid for help and he turns Midir's second wife into a fly.

[456] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 141.
[457] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 112.
[458] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 41.
[459] Midir is spelt *Midhir* by Lady Gregory.
[460] Coghlan, Ronan. *Pocket Dictionary of Irish Myth and Legend*. 52.

After seven unhappy years as a fly, Etain accidentally falls into the cup of Etar's wife and is swallowed by her. Nine months later she is reborn as Etar's child. When she is a grown woman, Midir tries to pursue her once more, but she is already married to Eochaid Feidlech, the High King of Ireland. Midir succeeds in stealing Etain, but she is soon recaptured by the High King.[461]

In *THM* the myth of Midir and Etain is completely omitted and there is no reference in the text that he is married or has children, although several myths mention Midir's sons. While in works of Irish folklore it is mentioned that Midir is a son of the Dagda and thus, a brother of Aengus Óg, he is not described as a god in *THM*. However, his high position within fairy society becomes evident when Crom Cruac removes Finvarra's immortality. Since he is second-in-command, or *Tánaiste*, he becomes the High King of Faerie after Finvarra has become a mortal. Like the other fairies, he is described as exceptionally handsome and charming and he is attracted to the human adolescent Gwen. In fact, he is also the first fairy to appear at the Burren in order to take Gwen on a midnight ride on flying horses:

> His red-gold hair fell to his shoulders. His eyes were as blue as a summery sea. His ears were pierced with silver rings. As if in a dream, she wondered why he seemed familiar and she was all the more confused when he spoke her name.[462]

While he is described as "Midhir of the Yellow Hair" in *Gods and Fighting Man*, his hair is of a reddish color in *THM*. This change in outer appearance is fundamental for the storyline of *THM* as it is stated in the novel that red hair "grants aid"[463] by fairy custom. Indeed, Midir proves to be helpful to Gwen as he rescues her in several dangerous situations. Thus, he is the one who continuously warns her not to try fairy food, and he confronts the High King of the fairies on her behalf.

Moreover, Midir's way of expressing himself reflects an archaic use of language which indicates that he has lived for several thousands of years. For instance, when he invites Gwen to the fairy banquet, he uses the following words: "Fair Gwenhyvar, wilst thou come to our banquet?"[464] While he uses the archaic language when he first speaks

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[461] Gregory, Isabella Augusta. *Gods and Fighting Men.* 88-100.
[462] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 76.
[463] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 261.
[464] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 76.

to Gwen at the beginning of the novel, he increasingly makes use of a more modern language.

5.5.1.2. Finvarra

In Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* Finvarra is mentioned several times and in various contexts. While he frequently shows himself as the leader of a fairy troop on flying horses, the fairy king also likes to surround himself with beautiful mortal women. Although he is a friend of many human kings, he has a tendency to steal their beautiful wives. Thus, one myth is concerned with the abduction of Ethna, the young wife of a lord.

> THE fairies, as we know, are greatly attracted by the beauty of mortal women, and Finvarra the king employs his numerous sprites to find out and carry off when possible the prettiest girls and brides in the country.[465]

The tendency of Finvarra to make young human women his brides is a major theme in *THM*. Although he is described as "Prince Charming"[466], it is revealed that he cannot settle for one bride only. Accordingly, Findabhair realizes that "fairies are not monogamous by any stretch of the imagination."[467] Furthermore, the abduction of Findabhair is not solely supposed to contribute to his personal pleasure, but also fulfills the necessity to find a sacrifice for Crom Cruac. As a consequence, it is not evident until the end of the book whether he is friend or foe. Accordingly, Midir and even Findabhair, who is very much in love with the High King of the Fairies, warn Gwen repeatedly that Finvarra is tricky and cannot be trusted:

> "Ha ha. But this is no joke, Gwen. He's a tricky divil. Don't underestimate him. He thinks he's God's gift to women, so I'm cooling his heels. It's not easy, I really fancy him, and I'm beginning to think the feeling is mutual. But I can tell he's not happy that you escaped him. He's plotting against you. I don't know what or how, but you've got to be careful."[468]

Indeed, he also aims at tricking Gwen into staying in Faerie. More so, when he realizes that Gwen is immune to his charms, he aims at killing her with a fairy dart and sends the horned witches after her.

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[465] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. Ed. Fáilte, Ceád Mile. 1998. *Sacred Fire*. "Ethna the Bride". <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/ali/ali015.htm>.
[466] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 97.
[467] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 88.
[468] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 90.

Only towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that Finvarra opposes Gwen for two reasons: Firstly, he wants to take revenge on her for rejecting him in the mound in Tara. And secondly, he does not want to sacrifice Findabhair and consequently, he needs to find another human to replace her. However, when Gwen and Findabhair make the decision to fight Crom Cruac, he immediately agrees to join in with them. Although he is far more experienced and skilled in battle than the teenagers, he places his trust in Gwen's leadership.

While in *THM* fairies are described as unfettered by scruples, Finvarra seems to honestly care for Findabhair. Already in the prologue he appears in the disguise of a common human, wearing a "jacket with jeans."[469] While he does not reveal his name and identity yet, this first appearance makes Findabhair recognize and eventually follow him in the mound in Tara. Although at this point of the story the two teenagers have already settled for a route through Ireland, Finvarra convinces the girls to change their plans and start their tour in Tara. Thus, it becomes evident that Finvarra has consciously chosen Findabhair and not abducted her because she was coincidentally at the right place at the right time. Similarly, Gwen seems to have seen him before as well, but she does not know where. However, already in the prologue Finvarra indicates that humans are able to "remember the future"[470] if the fairies want them to:

> As is the way of dreams, he was somehow familiar though she didn't know him. His features were hawklike, his eyes dark and piercing. His raven-black hair fell to his shoulders. Upon his forehead glittered a star.[471]

Owing to his loyalty to the fairy folk and to their magical realm, Faerie, Finvarra sacrifices himself to Crom Cruac at the end of the novel. In this last instance of his life, he is bruised and has lost the majority of his divine power:

> There was no time for farewells, no parting caresses for friends or beloved. The darkness had gathered around him to stake its claim. He had to go. Drawing himself up with the last gasp of his strength, he waded into the water. Behind him trailed the ragged wings of a fallen angel.[472]

As reflected in the quotation, Finvarra is represented as a fallen angel at the end of his immortal life. In fact, in some tales the sidhe are portrayed as angels who have been expulsed from heaven by God. The expulsion of the sidhe from heaven did not signify

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[469] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 4.
[470] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 4.
[471] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 36f.
[472] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 261.

their ultimate death, but only the beginning of life in another form. Although it appears that Finvarra is really dead when he is pulled into the waters by Crom Cruac, he reappears exactly one year after his supposed death on a crossroad in the form of an ordinary human being. Thus, his loss of immortality reflects the expulsion of the sidhe from heaven and signals the beginning of a new era of his life. His reappearance on earth is described as a rebirth: "Like a newborn babe I awoke in the gloaming, on a high hill, under a hawthorn tree."[473] Although Finvarra is reborn without his immortality and memories of his former life, his birthplace and his reappearance on the crossroad symbolize that he still possesses fairy-like qualities. In addition, he reveals himself as a "master fiddler"[474], which indicates that he has maintained the musical talent innate to the sidhe.

5.5.2. Solitary Fairies

Although in Irish folklore solitary fairies are associated with evil forces, *THM* is less unsympathetic with its judgment towards the mythic creatures. Like the representation of the sidhe in the novel, the solitary fairies seem to combine positive and negative character traits and cannot be regarded as foes only. In the following, leprechauns and the banshee, which are incorporated in the novel, are characterized.

5.5.2.1. The leprechaun

In *THM* a leprechaun makes an appearance as a character. His role in the novel is minor but not insignificant since he seems to support the sidhe in their efforts to kidnap Findabhair and Gwen. Accordingly, he suddenly appears after the bus which takes the teenagers to Brugh na Bóinne has crashed and convinces them to let him take them to Tara in his car. During this first meeting, he does not reveal himself as a leprechaun, but his outer appearance and, more importantly, the fact that he mentions leprechauns, gives his identity away:

> A wizened little man, he had a face like a dried apple and two bright beads for eyes. His suit was worn and frayed, of green tweed with brown stitching, and the jacket was closed

[473] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 273.
[474] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 272.

> with a big safety pin. On his head was a peaked cap, the same ruddy red color as his cheeks.[475]

In addition, he travels in a small green car which is full of old, single shoes and is as "dilapidated" as its owner. Moreover, the "moss on the carpet"[476] insinuates the leprechaun's closeness to nature.

While the leprechaun politely addresses the teenagers with "my fine ladys"[477], his conversational tone is rustic, and reflects an Irish dialect which contrasts with the sophisticated speech of the sidhe.

> "Sure what would ye want with the Brugh na Bóinne," the old man was saying. "There's nothing there but for eigners. Wouldn't ye druther go to Teamhair na Ríogh? If it's leprechauns and pots of gold ye want, Tara's your only man."[478]

For some reason, Findabhair and Gwen do not seem to believe in the existence of leprechauns and they state disparagingly that they are a result of the "load of commercial rubbish exploiting the true heart of the legends."[479] However, they start to doubt their rash judgment when the leprechaun speeds through a time portal with them. Although the leprechaun also assists Gwen in her search for Findabhair by taking her to Dublin and by pointing out to her that she is to trust a red-haired person whom she is going to meet in the near future, he never fully gains her trust. Accordingly, Gwen describes the leprechaun as "sinister"[480]. Within the safety of *Faerie*, he shows himself in the traditional and stereotypical outfit associated with leprechauns:

> Fancifully dressed in a green suit with tails and a vest with shamrocks. His feet were shod with black patent shoes clasped with silver buckles.
> "Why waste a perfectly good stereotype," he said, in a response to her look.[481]

While the stereotypical representation of the leprechaun in popular culture is refuted at the beginning of *THM*, Melling relativizes the critique when she presents the mythical creature in a stereotypical way herself at the end of the novel. In addition, the portrayal of the leprechaun in *THM* combines the majority of the characteristics described in the works of the collectors Yeats and Lady Wilde. (see chapter 4.5.2.1.) However, in Melling's novel the leprechaun is depicted in a more humanized way than the trooping fairies. For instance, he is interested in Irish politics and listens to a

[475] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 19.
[476] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 19.
[477] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 19.
[478] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 19f.
[479] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 20.
[480] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 43.
[481] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 231.

contemporary American rock band, the *Dropkick Murphys*. While he seems to fulfill a certain part in the sidhe society in Faerie, he is always on his own and does not seem to be fully accepted by the sidhe.

5.5.2.2. The Banshee

The name *banshee* derives from the word *van*, which means "the Woman – The Beautiful"[482] and in opposition to the spirit of life, the *Leanan-Sidhe*, the *Ban-Sidhe* is the spirit of death. The banshee is a female sidhe who is believed to either show herself in the form of "a sweet singing virgin" or of "a shrouded woman".[483] She is said to appear in order to warn a family about the death of one of its members. However, the banshee does not show herself to any family, but only families of historic lineage or those who have extraordinary musical talent.[484]

In *THM* the banshee does not make an actual appearance, but is one of the terrors that haunts Gwen's wild imagination and dreams after returning from the fairy banquet. While feeling "feverish" from spending too much time outside in a raging storm, she perceives the wind "like the wails of a banshee."[485] Thus, like in other instances of the story, Gwen's ability to perceive supernatural forces coincides with a state of trance. While in the proper text of the novel no explanation about the significance of the banshee is provided, a definition can be found in the glossary.

5.6. Aspects of Irishness

5.6.1. Old Ireland versus New Ireland

> There were two Irelands beyond her window, like layers of story on a palimpsest. One was a modern nation outfitted in technology, concrete and industry. The other was a timeless pagan place that hinted continually of its presence.[486]

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[482] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 259.
[483] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 259f
[484] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1.* 259.
[485] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 108.
[486] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 52.

As summarized in the quotation, *THM* creates the impression that there are two co-existing Irelands: On the one hand, the traditional, Pagan Ireland; on the other hand, the modern, secular Ireland. While the traditional Ireland can be found in the rural areas of the country, modernity is rather encountered in the cities, notably in Dublin. According to Smyth, Dublin comprises most characteristics of a modern city. Like other big cities, its criminality rate is considerably higher than in the country, it is stacked with tourists and fast food restaurant halls, and shows the social gap between wealthy upper or middle class citizens and peasants.[487] In *THM*, the city is assessed by the focalizer Finvarra in a similar way:

> A shudder passed through him as he regarded his surroundings. Concrete walls and the glare of glass towered over busy streets and traffic. In the crowds, dirty-faced children and the ragged homeless begged for money.
> How could they live this way?[488]

The fairy character Finvarra, who naturally represents Paganism and tradition, regards the changes in Dublin as negative and is shocked at the state of pollution of the city. By illustrating Finvarra's point of view, the author inserts ideas of environmentalism. While the fairies are associated with nature and seem to feel deeply connected to their native soil, modern societies are reproached for their lack of respect for nature. Thus, an old man in the pub in Sheegara laments the effects of forestry on the land: "There is new trees up there planted by the Forestry and making ruination of the land."[489]

Similarly, modernity is named as one of the reasons why tradition, and consequently, the belief in the sidhe have gradually been lost. In this connection, Gwen wonders whether the spread of cities would – similar to the destruction of the natural habitat of wild animals – also endanger the survival of the sidhe:

> Would the spread of towns eventually push them (the fairies) out altogether? Were they doomed, like so many other wild creatures, before the onslaught of man?[490]

In addition, the loss of tradition goes hand in hand with the decline of the Irish language and of other aspects of the former Irish cultural identity. For instance, the old

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[487] Smyth, Gerry. "The Right to the City: Re-presentations of Dublin in Contemporary Irish Fiction". *Contemporary Irish Fiction*. Eds. Liam Harte and Michael Parker. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 2000. 14.
[488] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 108.
[489] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 132.
[490] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 134.

man in the pub in Sheegara states that hardly anybody remembers the old place names which inevitably refers to the decline of the Irish language.

> "Sure none of ye would know the old place names anymore. They're all dead and buried with the rest of old Ireland. Gone with the black bicycles that used to lean against the hedgerows. Gone with the dancing at the crossroads and the bottled porter."[491]

However, modernity is not portrayed as an entirely negative development within Irish society. In reference to the Celtic Tiger and the European Union, Dara comments on the economic growth in the Republic of Ireland positively:

> "Business is booming with the new currency. Other Europeans can see what they're getting for their money."[492]

While Melling portrays a nostalgic yearning for the past throughout the novel, a conclusion is offered by the character Dara, who represents modern and traditional Ireland. Although he claims that he will always be deeply attached to his native soil, he also wants to study at university and accept a well-paid job:

> "Why does it always have to be either/or? Mundane or magic? Body or soul? I don't put things into separate boxes. I live with all of it."[493]

5.6.2. Superstition

> The very tendency to superstition, so marked in Irish nature, arises from an instinctive dislike to the narrow limitations of common sense. It is characterized by a passionate yearning towards the vague, the mystic, the invisible, and the boundless infinite of the realms of imagination.[494]

As pointed out by Lady Wilde in the last chapter of her volume *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*, the Irish are stereotypically superstitious since they possess a vivid imagination which exceeds the limits of reality. In *THM* the characters Katie and Mattie are highly superstitious and believe that they have to abide to certain rules in order to avoid the revenge of the fairies. Thus, Katie leaves milk or cream on the windowsill, and believes that the fairies "look out for [her]" in return.[495] In addition, Mattie is convinced that it was destiny that he encountered Gwen since a higher force wants him to help her.

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[491] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 130.
[492] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 191.
[493] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 191.
[494] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. *Vol. 1*. 280.
[495] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 108.

> "I was put in the right place at the right time to give you a hand. There are rules and traditions that govern the mingling of the fairy folk with our kind. (…) If you cross over into Faerie, take no food or drink or you'll come under their sway. Most of all, keep your wits about you. With the fey folk, you'll always get more than you bargained for."[496]

Mattie aims at offering pieces of advice to Gwen and makes use of the information provided in old myths and superstitions, describing how to handle fairies. Furthermore, Melling indicates that within the framework of her novel, superstition can affect all generations and social classes. Accordingly, Mattie is described as a wealthy, middle-aged businessman, whereas Katie is a farmer in her early twenties.

5.6.3. Hospitality

Irish hospitality is a further aspect of Irishness addressed in *THM*. For instance, the Quirke family immediately offers shelter to Gwen when she coincidentally reaches their farm. As she has just fled from an enchanted fox, the teenager is out of breath, and for the lack of sleep and food during her journey she is in a weak state of health:

> "The house isn't far. We'll soon fix you up. Lean on me and we'll go all the faster."
> "Sorry to be such a nuisance," Gwen said miserably.
> "Don't be silly. I'd be a poor Christian if it were a bother to help someone."[497]

As reflected in the quotation, the inclination to help somebody is associated with Christian belief. According to the Christian religion, believers are to assist others in need, and therefore, Katie sees it as her duty to invite Gwen to her house, although she does not know her.

Similarly, Granny offers Gwen to stay at her cottage after she has been injured by a fairy dart. However, the fairy doctress Grania is probably closer to old Pagan beliefs than to any Christian religion. Consequently, hospitality is not only associated with Christianity, but is also depicted as a marker of Irish cultural identity.

5.6.4. Pub culture

The Irish are stereotypically known for their fondness of whiskey and other strong drinks. However, a true core to the affiliation of the Irish with strong drinks becomes

[496] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 57.
[497] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 108.

apparent when the annual consumption of alcoholic substances in Ireland is compared to the rest of Europe:

> Across all age categories, 51% of Irish people are regular drinkers of alcohol, followed by 44% of British people and 43% of Danes. The EU average is 25%, while the Italians have the lowest rate at just 12%."[498]

As shown by these statistics of the European Union, more than half of the Irish population regularly drinks alcohol. Furthermore, pub culture is said to be central to Irish social culture. While none of the characters in *THM* is depicted drinking strong drinks, Irish pub culture is indicated repeatedly in the novel. For example, the pubs in Sheegara seem to be the central meeting places of the locals and Gwen visits two pubs in order to interrogate the people. As Gwen suspects an old man's fondness of *Guinness*, she decides to invite him for a beer in order to get him to speak to her:

> She saw that the old man was drinking Guinness, and she ordered a bottle and brought it over to him.[499]

In addition, the fairies choose a pub in Sheegara to play traditional Irish music. Since the pub is very crowded, Gwen has difficulties in getting through to Findabhair who is the singer of the fairy band. Like in Thompson's *TNP*, both, sidhe and humans, seem to be fond of traditional folk music. Similar to Aengus Óg in *TNP*, the leader of the sidhe, Finvarra, is the master fiddler.[500]

[498] *RTÉ News Online*. 2004. RTÉ. "Ireland Tops EU Alcohol Consumption Table". <http://www.rte.ie/news/2004/0309/alcohol.html>.
[499] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 131.
[500] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 128.

6. Conclusion

Michael Scott, Irish author of children's and young adult literature, points out that most works that draw from Irish folklore and mythology are of "only mediocre quality because their authors have only a nodding acquaintance with Irish folklore."[501] While this statement may be true of some authors, Kate Thompson and O.R. Melling certainly do not pertain to this group. On the contrary, both authors show a broad knowledge and great accuracy in regard to the embedded tales of Irish folklore and mythology in their works, *The New Policeman* and *The Hunter's Moon*. Thus, an enquiry into their use of folklore sources shows that both authors most likely based their work on collections of Irish myths by renowned collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival,* such as Lady Wilde, Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats. In fact, Thompson expressly acknowledges Lady Wilde, Lady Gregory and James Stephens as her major sources. Although Melling does not indicate her sources specifically, in some passages of the novel the source can indirectly be identified. For instance, *The Horned Women* of Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* is the source for the chapter on the three witch sisters who spin Gwen's thread of life around horns on their foreheads. As Melling even adopted parts of the dialogue of the myth (e.g. "OPEN! OPEN!"[502]), the reference to the ancient tale becomes evident.

In spite of the similarity in sources, the authors seem to pursue different objectives and, consequently, they differ in their inclination to change the original myth contentwise. While Thompson predominantly alludes to Irish myths and modifies them in order to integrate them in the storyline of her novel, O.R. Melling seems more reluctant to alter the contents of the ancient myths. Consequently, contentwise most of the embedded tales in Melling's *THM* stay true to the ancient myths. However, both novels tend to omit elements of Irish mythology which contrast with the representation of the mythic Pagan world the authors want to create. These omissions mainly relate to mythic characters, such as Aengus Óg, Finvarra and Midir, which have been adopted

[501] Scott, Michael. "By Imagination We Live: Some Thoughts on Irish Children's Fantasy". 323.
[502] Wilde, Francesca Speranza. *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*. Ed. Fáilte, Ceád Mile. 1998. *Sacred Fire*. "The Horned Women". <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/ali/ali003.htm>.
Melling, O.R. *THM*. 168.

from works of Irish folklore and function as protagonists in the novels. While both authors portray positive and negative character traits of the mythic protagonists, they aim at maintaining the positive image and reliability of the fairy characters. In Thompson's *TNP*, Aengus Óg's neglecting of responsibility in regard to his baby with JJ's grandmother is downplayed. In addition, the negative deeds of Aengus Óg as they are depicted in Irish mythology, are omitted entirely. Thus, the novel alludes to the myth *Aengus and the Pigs*, but conceals the gruesome truth behind the tale: He transformed his son and the sons of other sidhe kings into defenseless pigs which are slaughtered by the fighting hounds of the Fianna. Similarly, Melling renounces to elaborate on Irish myths which center on former wives of the fairy protagonists Finvarra and Midir. While Dara alludes to a tale about "an Irish king who dug up a fairy rath to rescue his stolen queen"[503], the novel fails to provide the essential information that the myth in question is *Ethna the Bride* and that the queen has, in fact, been stolen by Finvarra. Also, the myth of *Midir and Etain* is completely omitted and there is no reference in the text that he is married or has children, although Irish mythology includes several tales about Midir's sons. Consequently, the fairy protagonists remain single in the novel and function as suitable love interests for the teenage protagonists Gwen and Findabhair.

Irish folklore and mythology in Irish Young Adult Fantasy Literature comes in different forms and fulfills several purposes. In both novels, the quest of the protagonists can be regarded as a loose adaptation of the journey of a character of an ancient myth. While JJ's quest in *TNP* in part reflects the experiences of Oisín in Tír na nÓg, Findabhair's story in *THM* is based on myths concerned with the abduction of beautiful mortal women, such as *The Stolen Bride*. Thus, Irish mythology is an essential integral part of the matrix narrative of both novels. While both authors included a great variety of Irish myths in their novels, the mythic elements are interwoven with elements of FF. As it appears, Melling shows more reluctance to mix fantastic elements with mythology. Consequently, all events and characters in *THM* draw from works of Irish folklore and in most cases they are based on concrete myths. Thompson, by contrast, offers a blend of elements of Irish mythology and of her own imagination. Thus, while

[503] Melling, O.R. *THM*. 81.

the great evil in *THM*, Crom Cruac, is based on a mythic god, the antagonist in *TNP*, i.e. Reverend Doherty, is an invention of the author.

Apart from various references to Irish mythology in the matrix narrative, the novels incorporate several hyponarratives. In order to reflect the oral tradition of storytelling by the *seanchaí*, especially in *TNP* various myths are embedded in the dialogue. In *THM*, by contrast, the majority of the myths is recapitulated in the thoughts of the focalizers, or is narrated by an omniscient narrator who repeatedly informs an uninformed readership about Irish folklore. The main function of the hyponarratives ranges from actional integration to analogy and exposition in both novels. In the instances of actional integration or analogy, occurrences in the matrix narrative are juxtaposed with comparable events of Irish mythology. For instance, in *TNP* the myths are essentially narrated in order to warn JJ about the possible effects of his retreat from Tír na nÓg. By reminding JJ of the myth about Oisín, whose return to the primary world resulted in his immediate death, Aengus Óg aims at threatening the protagonist into staying in the Land of Perpetual Youth. The instances of exposition in the novels have the purpose to convert the mythic events into reality or factual history. Consequently, the authors make use of various strategies to verify the authenticity of the magical world and the supernatural characters: Encounters between the protagonists and characters from Irish mythology, such as the Dagda and Aengus Óg; tapestries on the wall depicting ancient battles; and emotional accounts referring to events in mythology which are presented as personal history of the characters who narrate them.

The embedded Pagan myths are presented as signifiers of Irish cultural identity. While it is stated in both novels that the belief in Pagan deities has continuously been substituted by the faith in a Christian God, the Pagan heritage is kept alive in mythology and superstition. Thus, it is described in *TNP* that farmers would not touch a fairy rath as they are afraid of the revenge of the sidhe. Similarly, in *THM* Katie provides the fairies with milk and cream and believes that she will experience the benevolence of the sidhe in return. In addition, a subtle feeling of nostalgia for the Celtic past is perceivable throughout both novels. In *THM* the focalizer Gwen distinguishes between two Irelands: on the one hand, the modern, secular Ireland; on the other hand, traditional Pagan

Ireland. While the modern Ireland is associated with pollution and bad living conditions in the cities, notably in Dublin, the traditional Ireland is characterized as pure, idealized Garden of Eden where the magical lurks behind every corner. The sidhe, who pertain to the traditional, Pagan Ireland, are savored for their proximity to nature. Similar ideas of environmentalism are also inserted in *TNP*. While the sidhe aim at protecting their pure, unspoilt Arcadia, human society is overtly criticized for its consumerism and greediness. By establishing an opposition between the god-like fairy race and the humans, Thompson outlines the problems of modern society.

In both novels, the protagonists experience a transition between a primary world, i.e. a rural setting in contemporary Ireland, to a magical secondary world. While the secondary worlds carry different names in the novels (*Tír na nÓg* in *TNP*, and *Faerie* in *THM*), they both relate to the Celtic Otherworld referred to as the Land of Perpetual Youth in Irish mythology. According to the theory of the Pagan chronotope, the magical realm can only be accessed when specific local and temporal prerequisites are fulfilled. Thus, in *THM* the protagonists can only enter Faerie at a specific place during a specific time. Accordingly, Gwen and Findabhair's first encounter with fairies takes place at a place of increased spirituality, i.e. a mound of historic and cultural significance in Tara, during twilight. While in *TNP* the entrance to Tír na nÓg is hidden in a fairy rath and can be accessed at all times, the ability to perceive mythic creatures is more likely at locations where the borders between the supernatural and the real are particularly permeable, i.e. crossroads or other places where two natural elements coincide. The transition from the primary world to the secondary world not only involves a change of location, but also a shift in time. In both novels the Land of Perpetual Youth is characterized by a cyclical time, i.e. *kairos*. Due to a complete absence of time in the secondary world, the sidhe are not affected by the human aging process and, therefore, they cannot die. However, the human protagonists are not aware of the fact that time passes considerably faster in the primary world, and consequently, they are not able to specify how much time they have spent in the Celtic Otherworld. In addition, the Eight-spoke Wheel of the Year is assigned special importance in both novels. For instance, herbs are said to be particularly powerful when they are collected on May Eve.

Finally, the two novels share a reluctance to portray taboo topics, unconventional family models and ethnic minorities. Similarly, both texts do not offer any references to sexuality, and hardly include portrayals of violence. Due to the lack of graphic illustrations, the authors ensure that the attention of the readership remains focused on the incorporated myths and on other markers of Irish cultural identity. Thus, several aspects of Irishness can be identified as major themes. An overarching theme in both novels, which relates to Irish cultural identity, refers to the dichotomy between Christian belief and Pagan heritage. In this regard, both novels suggest that the introduction of the Christian religion has gradually superseded the belief in old Celtic gods. The loss of Pagan tradition went hand in hand with the decline of the Irish language. As both authors appear to make a remarkable effort to recover Irish mythology and frequently make use of the Irish language, it can be supposed that they want to preserve the traditional Pagan cultural identity. In this connection, a conclusion is offered by the teenager Dara in *THM*, who represents tradition and modernity. As pointed out by Dara, the future of Ireland does not necessarily have to involve the complete loss of tradition, but can unite the best parts of modernity and tradition. The fact that both novels are addressed to adolescent readers suggests that the authors pursue an equivalent objective as the collectors of the *Irish Literary Revival*: The preservation of the ancient Pagan body of thought for generations to come.

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Abstract auf Deutsch

Irische Mythologie und Folklore liegen einer jahrtausendealten, mündlichen Tradition zugrunde. Ursprünglich durch reisende Geschichtenerzähler, die sogenannten *seanchaí*, weitergegeben, waren Irische Mythen ob ihrer expliziten Darstellung von Gewalt und Sexualität an ein erwachsenes Publikum gerichtet. Das Überleben der Irischen Folklore bis zum heutigen Tag ist unter anderem christlichen Mönchen zu verdanken, die ab dem 6. Jahrhundert Irische Mythen und Legenden verschriftlichten. Da Irische Mythologie allerdings dem keltischen Glauben unterliegt, wurden die Mythen oft durch den Einsatz von christlichen Motiven verfälscht. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts führten die Bemühungen einiger Irischer Autoren und Poeten, die Irische Sprache und Kultur wiederzubeleben und eine Irische Nationalidentität herauszubilden zur Entstehung einer literarischen Strömung, die als *Irish literary revival* (dt.: *Irische Renaissance*) bekannt wurde. Federführend war hierbei vor allem William Butler Yeats, aber auch Douglas Hyde, Standish O'Grady, George William Russell (A.E.), Lady Gregory und Lady Wilde wird im Zuge der literarischen Strömung besondere Wichtigkeit zugesprochen.

Heute sind Irische Mythen und Heldensagen hauptsächlich in Irischer Kinderliteratur integriert, vor allem aber in Irischer Fantasy Literatur für Junge Erwachsene (Irish young adult fantasy literature). Der Fokus dieser Diplomarbeit liegt auf der Analyse zweier Romane dieses Genres: Kate Thompson's *The New Policeman*, und O.R. Melling's *The Hunter's Moon*. In beiden Romanen ist Irische Mythologie oftmals in der Form einer *story-within-a-story*, also einer Geschichte in der Geschichte, eingebettet. Den Geschichten in den Geschichten kommen unterschiedliche Funktionen zu. Einerseits erfüllen viele integrierte Mythen die Aufgabe uninformierte Leserinnen und Leser in Irische Mythologie und Folklore einzuführen. Andererseits sind die Mythen oft als Analogien zu verstehen, die Auswirkungen auf den Plot haben und die Handlungen der Protagonistinnen und Protagonisten maßgeblich beeinflussen. Zudem fungieren mythische Figuren, wie etwa der keltische Gott der Liebe, Aengus Óg, oder der König der *sidhe* (Feen), Finvarra, als Protagonisten, die den Jugendlichen zur Seite gestellt werden. Neben der Analyse der mythologischen und fantastischen Elemente der beiden Romane, liegt ein großes Augenmerk auf dem Setting, welches mit Hilfe der Theorie

des *literary chronotope* von Mikhail Bakhtin, beziehungsweise des *Pagan chronotope* von Bramwell, der Erweiterung des Konzeptes durch einen keltischen Kontext, untersucht wird. Gemäß des *Pagan chronotope* ergibt sich in beiden Romanen aus der Symbiose von bestimmten Merkmalen von Zeit und Raum eine spirituelle und physische Nähe zu übersinnlichen Phänomenen. So kann ein Übertritt in das mythische *Land der ewigen Jugend*, *Tír na nÓg*, nur dann erfolgen, wenn zeitliche und örtliche Rahmenbedingungen erfüllt werden.

Neben dem tatsächlichen Aufeinandertreffen von jugendlichen Protagonistinnen und Protagonisten und Charakteren aus der Irischen Mythologie, wird das Überleben des alten keltischen Gedankengutes durch *folk music* und die Darstellung von Aberglauben implizierenden Praktiken realisiert. In beiden Romanen wird die Irische Landbevölkerung als stereotyp abergläubisch porträtiert, was sich in einer Vielzahl von Praktiken äußert: Farmer zeigen sich unwillig, *hawthorn trees* (Weißdorn) umzuschneiden, da sie die Rache der sidhe erwarten; nachts wird Milch oder Sahne auf das Fensterbrett gestellt, um sich die Hilfe der Feen zu sichern. Außerdem spiegelt sich in beiden Romanen eine Melancholie für die keltische Vergangenheit, wobei negativen Charakteristiken der modernen Gesellschaft des 21. Jahrhunderts, wie etwa Umweltverschmutzung, Kapitalismus und Konsum, kritisch gegenübergetreten wird. Letztendlich setzen sich beide Romane für die Wiederbelebung der alten gälischen Kultur und Sprache ein und verweisen auf positive Aspekte der keltischen Gesellschaft, wie etwa des fortschrittlichen Miteinbeziehens von Frauen im Kriegswesen.

Curriculum Vitae

Personal information

Name:	Monika Kraigher
	A-1180 Vienna
Date of birth:	30.08.1987

Education

2010 - 2013	English and Spanish (Lehramt)
2007 - 2013	Communication studies
2006 - 2013	English studies
	at University of Vienna
June 2006	School leaving examination (Matura)
1998 - 2006	Europagymnasium Klagenfurt

February - July 2010 Erasmus at University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Languages

German:	native language
English:	advanced
Spanish:	advanced
Italian:	intermediate
French:	beginner