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Folklore, Fantasy, and Fiction:

The Function of Supernatural Folklore in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century British Prose Narratives of the Literary Fantastic.

by

Jason Marc Harris

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Chair of Supervisory Committee:

Marshall Brown

Reading Committee:

Joseph Butwin

William Dunlop

Thomas DuBois

Date: 6/1/01

University of Washington

Abstract

Folklore, Fantasy, and Fiction:
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Jason Marc Harris

Chair of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Marshall Brown, Department of English

This dissertation reveals the important role of folk beliefs and motifs, adapted from traditional legends and fairy tales, in Victorian and Edwardian fantastic prose. Literary fairy tales and legends appropriate and reshape folkloric elements into texts that demonstrate the cultural instability of their historical eras. These hybrid literary forms indicate the self-consciousness of the literary culture that produced them; the very hesitation of the fantastic mode of writing highlights conflicts between ideological progressivism and social introspection. The adoption of folk tales casts both glamour and a shadow upon the pretensions of utopian visions.

Superstition challenges reason throughout the narratives of folkloric fantasy. British bourgeois and elite culture scrutinizes both the implications of social reform--liberating an unruly underclass and its traditions--and of anthropological insights into global interconnections that erode the illusion of English superiority. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, portrays the ties between native folklore and British imperialism. Similarly, writers of the Celtic Renaissance, like William Sharp, negotiate with Irish and Scottish folk traditions, attempting to create an aesthetic that could defy English cultural imperialism without succumbing to nationalistic insularity.

Walking the writer's tightrope between preternatural folklore and literary respectability results in a variety of rhetorical strategies that produce multiple forms of the fantastic. Authors of Victorian and Edwardian literary fairy tales and fantasies

find or formulate through folk motifs the optimistic or pessimistic images of socio-economic and domestic reform that they envision, while ironically dismissing the marvellous details of folk narratives that threaten to trivialize their prophetic or satirical voices. As for the realistic appropriations of legends and folk beliefs, gaps appear between the worldview of the narrator and folk informants in the works of William Carleton, Sheridan Le Fanu, and James Hogg. Narrative authority itself lies suspended in cultural uncertainty--dangling between two competing views of reality. Psychological and metaphysical explanations for the fantastic frequently clash within these texts, just as competing cultural and political perceptions from England, Ireland, Scotland, India, and the South Seas Islands lead to crises of interpretation. The logic of folk superstitions subverts--and expands--the borders of British literary culture.

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Preface

"Ignorance and superstition, so opposite to the real interests of human society, are the parents of imagination."[1] The words of the literary historian, Thomas Warton, in The History of English Poetry (1790) concern the influence of "customs, institutions, traditions and religion of the Middle Ages" on "poetry"; however, his observations also serve to express the tensions between British folklore and fiction in the nineteenth century as well. While political, religious, and scholarly voices throughout the nineteenth century railed against the influence of folklore, anthropologists, antiquarians, painters, psychologists, and writers adopted and transformed folk beliefs and motifs for particular aesthetic, historical, and scientific ends.

Recent definitions of folklore limit the study of folklore to the context of oral performance, yet it is foolish to ignore the rich vitality and manifold associations that folklore has in a literary context. And, if folklorists are now chiefly occupied with analyzing only contemporary folklore, then literary critics should not neglect what is--or was--folkloric about literary works. Folk narratives constitute that subversive answer to cultural and political hegemony that so many critics have been searching for within literary and cultural studies. Knowing the native and international aspects

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[1] René Wellek, The Rise of English Literary History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941) 192.

of many folk beliefs, motifs, and tale-types also provides a nexus for analyzing world literature that is indispensable to the scholar of comparative literature, English, and interdisciplinary studies in general.

This study, however, does not propose to explore all the myriad forms of folklore in British literature in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Such a task would be impossible if one were to accept the tremendous breadth that constitutes folklore as a field, which like many academic areas of inquiry constantly involves ongoing re-evaluation: "After beginning in the nineteenth century as a broad inquiry covering lower-class tradition, folklore studies [. . .]. [. . .] has moved from a societal preoccupation with the past to one with the present and now with the future. [. . .] folklorists predict the shape of tradition [. . .]."[2]

Certain borders must immediately be set to orient the reader as to where this analysis will proceed:

> Folklore is the traditional, unofficial, noninstitutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples. [. . .] Folklore manifests itself in many oral and verbal forms ("mentifacts"), in kinesiological forms (customary behavior, or "sociofacts"), and in material forms ("artifacts"), but folklore itself is the whole traditional complex of thought, content, and process which ultimately can never be fixed or

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[2] Simon J. Bronner, American folklore studies: An intellectual history (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1986) 122-128.

recorded in its entirety; it lives on in its performance or communication as people interact with one another.[3]

Jan Harold Brunvand's definition of folklore clearly extends far beyond the margins of the literary text to dances, crafts, and the complicated synchronic dynamics between storytellers and their audience. According to his summation, only a trace of folklore could even exist in a printed record, and folk narrative is simply one of many branches of the exchange of traditions that is the underlying basis of folklore as a whole.

What then of the "folk"? While the nineteenth-century antiquarians and anthropologists were chiefly concerned with the "peasantry," folklorists of our era have broadened the definition of "folk." In the estimation of Alan Dundes, the term "folk" may "refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. [. . .] what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own"; and, folklore comprises, according to Dan Ben-Amos, merely "artistic communication in small groups."[4] For this project, an acknowledgement of the strong role of the peasantry in the nineteenth-century imagination is important to a working definition of folklore. Authors imitated, transformed, and condemned what they perceived as peasant lore, as well as experimenting with the literary tradition of fairy tales. However, country people--

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[3] Jan Harold Brunvand, The study of American folklore: An introduction (New York: Norton, 1986) 4.

[4] Bronner 110-111.

peasants or not--are not the only tradition bearers, nor are literary texts merely folkloric fossils where dead tales rest forever. Folklore is alive--not dead--in texts of the literary fantastic where traditional beliefs and motifs compete for narrative authority with normative and elite standards.

This analysis limits itself to one main area of folklore: the folk narrative, and only two genres of folk narrative in particular--legend and fairy tale (märchen). Yet, as Brunvand explains, by broaching a segment of communicative folklore one intersects with a "whole traditional complex of thought." The main aspect of this "traditional complex of thought" that is the query and quarry here is the role of the supernatural in folklore: how do authors interrogate, synthesize, and transform the dynamics of folk metaphysics into prose narratives?

Chapter one explores the general cultural context for supernatural folklore--including anthropology, psychology, spiritualism, and the prevailing attitudes among folklorists--in Victorian Britain and clarifies the distinguishing narrative dynamics of fantasy, folklore, and the fantastic. Distrust of fantasy and in particular the fairy tale matched the disdain and unease which moral watchdogs felt for popular superstitions. Writers of Victorian literary fairy tales faced not only rationalist disparaging of fantasy, but the censorious moral disapproval of the likes of Sarah Trimmer who was convinced that fairy-tales "injure the tender minds of children [. . .]."[5] Perhaps it is no wonder then that authors such as Charles Dickens, Kenneth Grahame, Edith Nesbit,

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[5] For a fuller examination of didactic attitudes, such as Trimmer's, against fairy-tale literature see chapter two. Karen Michalson, Victorian Fantasy Literature—Literary Battles With Church and Empire (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) 25.

and William Thackeray used humor in their fairy tales to generate ironic distance that defended them from charges of earnest espousal of the value of the marvelous. In fact many Victorian authors of literary fairy tales used numerous strategies to produce irony--from introducing obvious anachronisms to constructing a dream-vision frame that rationalized the narrative of fantasy.

Yet other writers of literary fairy tales, such as George Cruikshank, Laurence Houseman, George Macdonald, and Oscar Wilde, used the very cloak of condescension that the fairy tale was treated with to clothe ideological agendas and spiritual visions. While traditional audiences had understood the märchen to be a fiction that needed no apology, these writers seemed to feel it necessary to apologize with a blush of earnestness, a nod of irony, or a wink of satire at every turn. Chapters two and three analyze the various strategies Victorian authors use to negotiate with cultural tensions over folklore and fantasy, as well as examining how these authors deploy folkloric motifs and patterns to present controversial ideas and moral visions.

Many Victorian fantasies derive largely from the märchen, although the greater length of the fantasy entails greater flexibility and results in divergence from the conventional motifs and structure of the fairy tale. It is particularly Macdonald who experiments with the potential of the fairy-tale fantasy; he wrote such fantasies for both children and adults. J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan serves as an interesting companion for MacDonald's work in the analysis of such fantasies. Both writers combine elements of legends and märchen in their narratives and present visions that while Victorian and Edwardian also reflect numerous components of folk

imagination. Chapters four and five focus on the function of folkloric elements in these fantasies.

While fantasy is the most obvious mode for literary appropriations of the märchen, many realistic works also employ fairy-tale motifs and tale-types. For instance, everyone can recognize elements of "Cinderella" in Mansfield Park or "Beauty and the Beast" in Pride and Prejudice and Jane Eyre. However, it is the legend that especially is significant for realistic depictions of the supernatural. This is not the contradiction that it seems to be; indeed, realism is the hallmark of the legend--its effectiveness depends on how convincing the narrative's presentation is.

As part of the multiple perspectives presented in the realistic, yet fantastic, novel, supernatural folklore figures as another cultural strand that adds to the overall narrative authority. In texts such as Stevenson's The Master of Ballantrae and Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner and The Three Perils of Man--War, Women, and Witchcraft the fantastic aspects of embedded legends and folk beliefs constitute the exemplary core of the ambiguous narrative.

Likewise in Le Fanu's supernatural short stories, rationalism directly competes with manifest folk beliefs--realism conflicts with its cultural alternatives in a metaphysical contact zone.[6] The conventional definitions of what is real, and what is

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[6] My term "metaphysical contact zone" is further explained in Chapter 6. It partly derives from Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" which she uses "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery [. . .]." Pratt includes folklore in her investigations of these cultural conflicts, particularly between the colonialist ethnographers and the native autoethnographers who are "the so-defined others [who] construct [texts] *in response to* or in dialogue with those [ethnographic] texts." Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," Profession 91. (New York: Modern Language Association)

natural, are strained by the assertive voices of a cultural legacy not so easily dispelled by either the scientific attitudes of the Enlightenment, or the technological thinking of industrialism. Chapters six, seven, eight, and nine demonstrate that instead of mundane realism holding an aesthetic monopoly, the contemporary concerns of the Victorians, from Empire to family respectability, in fact find representations through the folkloric fantastic.

Chapters ten and eleven examine writers of the Celtic Renaissance, particularly William Carleton and William Sharp, who emphasize the traditional and ethnically native in opposition to the rational and hierarchical conventions imposed on Ireland and Scotland by English imperialism. These two authors epitomize the cultural tension that the literary appropriation of folklore represents. Carleton, like Hogg, is at once a member of the folk culture as well as the literary elite, and his writing shows intense signs of struggling with this dual identity. His very personal hesitation adds to the dynamics of the literary fantastic in his works. Sharp, by adopting a female authorial persona, Fiona Macleod, underscores in his Celtic works the degree to which social assumptions contribute to the split between conventional rationality and folkloric mysticism.

Sharp concentrates on refocusing Scottish identity not in political struggles, but in articulating Scots-Gaelic traditions and perspectives through an aesthetic permeation of English culture. Carleton's and Sharp's presentation of the literary fantastic is tightly interwoven with their conception of what folklore represents. For

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33-40. See also: Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial eyes : travel writing and transculturation (New York : Routledge, 1992).

both of them folklore is a crucial cultural heritage, but folk beliefs especially embarrass their pretensions to count themselves among the educated elite. While Carleton defends himself from possible contempt for his intimacy with superstitions by using ironic distance and sophisticated arguments, Sharp hides behind his persona and makes no apologies. However, Sharp's use of the folkloric fantastic also includes rhetorical sophistication; his presentation of folk beliefs as often being closer to a tradition-bearer's passionate experiential perceptions of the uncanny, rather than the marvelous, suggests an attempt to unify scientific modes of thinking--particularly psychology--with the logic of folkloric associations.

Authors such as William Carleton, Charles Dickens, James Hogg, Sheridan Le Fanu, George MacDonald, Fiona Macleod (William Sharp), Edith Nesbit, and Robert Louis Stevenson use folklore to articulate the profound cultural ambivalence of the Victorians towards issues of class, domesticity, education, economics, gender, imperialism, nationalism, race, religion, and metaphysics. Thus, the cultural tensions operating in literary applications of folklore in the nineteenth century emphasize those areas of greatest importance to the Victorians. The presence of a supernatural folk belief or motif in a Victorian--and Edwardian--literary text stages a cultural clash between the rationalistic presumptions of the educated elite and the superstitions of the ignorant underclass.

However, the presentation by many of these texts synthesizes--rather than fragments-- such polarities as elite vs. folk, literate vs. illiterate, oral vs. written, upper class vs. lower class, English vs. Scottish or Irish, into a deeply connected

cultural interaction between folklore and literature. The self-consciousness of these writers reveals the uneasy recognition of Britain's own native traditional connection to elements that the Enlightenment had declared barbaric, delusional, and exotic. Narrators who presume rational condescension towards the "folk" belie their own cultural connections to a tradition that enlarges rather than negates bourgeois and upper class perspectives. This dissertation shows how the tension between folk metaphysics and rationalism produces the literary fantastic, and demonstrates that narrative and ideological negotiation with folklore was central to the canon, as well as popular in the margins of British literature. In folkloric fiction that invokes the supernatural the demands of aesthetics, class, morality, superstition, and skepticism compete for authority--producing a dynamic rhetoric characterized by multiple cultural voices and defined by moments of interpretative hesitation.

To sum up, consider the following exchange between a reporter and a current popular voice of literary history. J.K. Rowling is the writer of the record-breaking Harry Potter series: "[Interviewer] 'Why are the English so good at writing fantasy?' [Rowling] [*Chuckles*] 'Britain has the most incredible mix of folklore traditions because we were invaded by so many people.'" [7] Rowling's reply underscores historical reality--international contacts promote the communication of folklore--and the cultural dependency of fantasy writing upon folkloric precedents. Furthermore, the theme of invasion characterizes the intense rhetorical and ideological struggle present within literary texts that involve supernatural folklore. Peasants as plague-like bearers of idle tales, natives as ignorant barbarians grasping at straws of irrational

demonism, aristocrats as both morally corrupting to their superstitious feudal charges and vulnerable to their diabolic overlords, the British as rational, mystical, fearful, and violent--all are recurring themes throughout the works of folkloric fiction. Dreams and visions of multiple realities, signifying deep social divisions, clash mightily and then coalesce within one dark consciousness lit by the writing of authors whose words are partly reflections of the glowing ghosts of unofficial culture around and within them.

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[7] Malcolm Jones, "The Return of Harry Potter!" Newsweek 10, July. 2000: 57-60.

Chapter One

An Introduction to Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth Century British Literature

While the nineteenth century is famous for the profusion of realistic fiction, the Victorian era also witnessed the creation of a tremendous amount of literature that is often referred to as "fantasy." Without a doubt, folk tales have had a significant impact on nineteenth century literary works of fantasy and the fantastic. Supernatural folklore in particular has contributed not merely to the motifs that writers have used and the structural aspects of narrative, but has helped shape the metaphysical and moral discourse of multiple narratives. To analyze how nineteenth century writers imitate, revise, and transform preternatural folkloric material into narratives of the literary fantastic is the substantive focus of this project.

The term *fantasy* is misleading, for to many people it chiefly suggests delusion, escapism, and irrelevance. To others, however, fantasy literature is essentially meaningful. Fantasy is often perceived as having the significance of dreams: full of latent meanings waiting for the light of analysis--psychological and cultural projections of real desires and fears. Neither view is altogether right nor wrong, nor do they between them represent the totality of perspectives on what constitutes fantasy.

It is especially through folk narratives and beliefs that the Victorians produced fantasies, and it is also partly through folklore that nineteenth-century psychologists,

most notably Sigmund Freud, explored the unconscious mind of humanity. Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) uses examples from fairy tales, and his familiarity with tale-types is one prominent example of the cultural influence of folklore in the nineteenth century. Jung and his disciples would do far more extensive studies with fairy tales, but Freud's correlation between dreams and fairy tales laid the groundwork for psychoanalytic approaches to the märchen for decades to come: "There can be no doubt that the connections between our typical dreams and fairy tales [. . .] are neither few nor accidental."[1] The interrogation of dreams, fairy tales, and superstitions that developed in the nineteenth century represented a growing interest in something beyond dry empiricism--inquiring minds wished to know more about the mysteries of subjective experiences, just as they desired more from narrative than imitations of bourgeois or upper-class standards of reality. Fantasy and folklore presented new frontiers that provoked objections from all sides: the stakes were political, religious, and personal.

In addition to fantasy, folklore is another term that inspires great confusion and debate. Many people today are aware that urban legends are folklore, but would never consider that jokes passed on in conversation are as well. In addition, some consider old stories about ghosts and fairies the province of folklore, but would be surprised to learn that educated people still tell tales of personal encounters with the fairies as well as ghosts in this technologically advanced age.[2] This brings us to yet

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[1] Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams Ed. and Trans. James Strachey. (New York: Avon Books, 1965) 279.

[2] I have interviewed college students who have claimed to see fairies as well as ghosts. "Experiences With the Fairies: Tradition, Imagination, and the Media" Northwest

another confusing term--*fairy tales*. Stories of meeting the fairies that people tell as though they are believable--folk legends about fairies--are not the same thing at all as those *fairy tales* that so many heard as children read from books by the brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, Charles Perrault or Hans Christian Andersen. And, what then is a *folk tale*? To understand how folk narratives and beliefs influenced nineteenth and early-twentieth century--especially Victorian and Edwardian--writings of the literary fantastic, necessitates exploring the conceptual context of folklore in the nineteenth century, and then defining reasonably secure terms as tools for analysis.

The Historical and Ideological Context for the Literary Fantastic and Folklore

Nineteenth-century literary representations of fairy tales, folk legends, and superstitions are the culmination of a gradual evolution of attitudes towards the supernatural in general and folklore in particular. However, the historical movement towards scientific thought and skepticism in Western Civilization did not produce a homogenous mindset in Britain; the Enlightenment's emphasis on empirical reality

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Folklore 13:7 (Autumn 1999): 10-26. "Shadows of Tradition: 'We Never Really Believed It, But It Was Definitely There'--The Role of Belief and the Mechanics of Legend in Tales of the Spirit World" Northwest Folklore 14:1 (Summer 2000): 15-55. In fact, education appears to increase belief in spiritual beings here in America, as David Hufford notes, a "1982 Gallup" poll "related the belief that it is 'possible to contact the dead' to educational background. He [Gallup] found that the belief was held by 9 percent of those with only grade school education, 25 percent of those who had graduated from high school, and 28 percent of those with college educations. [. . .] the best empirical data from the past several decades shows that modern education does *not* eradicate spiritual belief." David Hufford, "Beings Without Bodies: An Experience-Centered Theory of the Belief in Spirits," Out of the Ordinary--

did not uniformly alter the consciousness of every individual. While philosophers and scientists alike claimed to have the power to banish superstition, the attraction of folk metaphysics--the rules, behaviors, powers, tendencies, and borders of the spiritual world implied by popular beliefs--persisted. Sukumar Dutt, as he explores the ideological context of reason and imagination in The Supernatural in English Romantic Poetry 1780-1830, attests to the fervor with which the newly enlightened argued for the potency of rationalism:

> "The Devil," said Collins, "is entirely banished [in] the United Provinces where free-thinking is in the greatest perfection, whereas all round about that Commonwealth, he appears in various shapes, sometimes in the shape of an old black gentleman, sometimes in that of a dead man, sometimes in that of a cat." (13)

Besides championing "free-thinking," Anthony Collins's statement from Discourse of Free Thinking (1713) reveals both the folkloric quality of perspectives on the Devil--note the myriad of traditional incarnations, which are not part of religious orthodoxy--as well as underscoring the vitality of such beliefs. Thus, in this very manifesto for orchestrating a rational, orderly mode of thought among a large populace, the seeds of clear dissent are shown by the very hybrid nature of folk beliefs, which here conjoin unofficial and official perspectives.

Nevertheless, despite the endurance of folk traditions on the popular level, the theories of the likes of Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke were highly influential in

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Folklore and the Supernatural, ed. Barbara Walker. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995).

determining a shift in literary representations of reality. In fact, it is due to the predominance of rationalism that the literary fantastic could be born. For, fixed laws of reality needed to be established before a narrative could reverse or challenge those principles. First realism and then its alternative emerged, as Day observes:

> With the publication of Newton's Principia in 1686-87, a new system of thought came into existence that defined the real as material objects and forces, acting under invariable laws [. . .]. Indeed, science banished the marvelous and fantastic from reality, and the immeasurable became the unreal. [. . .] Romance, which had been a representation of reality, ceased to be [. . .]. As romance and allegory lost claim to a transcendent reality, they decayed. [. . .] In the eighteenth, and particularly the nineteenth, century, people would find their acceptable fables of identity in realistic fiction. Fantasy could not tell the truth about the world since it referred to a world that did not really exist. Since the fantasy world did not really exist, it could not offer moral truths either. As romance and allegory turned into fantasy, they turned into pure entertainment. Those qualities that made a piece of fiction art in the nineteenth century--the capacity to tell the truth about the world, to express moral truth--were reserved for realistic fiction. Despite the fact that it was perceived as mere entertainment, the Gothic fantasy retained the symbolic qualities of the romance. [. . .] The Gothic fantasy began, not as a popular genre, but as the private

> fantasies of two eccentric aristocrats, Horace Walpole and William Beckford [. . .] . [3]

According to Day's formulation then, fantasy as a genre derives from the materialist vision of the Enlightenment: art must offer clear and distinct representations of the empirical world--mimesis--rather than cloud the mind with shadows of allegory. Realism most generally then entails, in George Levine's words, the artistic and "moral enterprise of truth telling and extending the limits of human sympathy, to make literature appear to be describing [. . .] reality itself [. . .]."[4] Day's generalization about realism having a monopoly on morality is not wholly accurate, for many literary fairy tales and fantasies were understood to offer moral instruction to young and old Victorians alike, and for that reason the morals of these works were scrutinized. Also, Day does not address the debt that the Gothic owes to popular lore.

Granted, Day's description does present the challenge fantasists had to face: making the unreal meaningful in an increasingly scientific, skeptical, and technological world. One tactic taken by fantasists was to avoid the supernatural altogether in a fantasy, as Julius Kagarlitski insists in "Realism and Fantasy" that Jules Verne did: "Jules Verne mechanically separated the "material fantasy" [. . .] of Edgar Allan Poe and other American romanticists from the sinister and the unknowable, and having made use of the former, he rejected or reinterpreted the latter

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[3] William Patrick Day, In the Circles of Fear and Desire (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985) 9-10.

[4] George Levine, The Realistic Imagination—English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1981) 8.

in a directly realistic spirit."[5] Verne was a pioneer of what we now consider science fiction. His avoidance of the "sinister and the unknowable" does not converge with fantasy narratives that depend on supernatural folk motifs and metaphysics that are at issue here.

In a world where the natural had become everything--what was the supernatural, now to be? There was for some people, of course, still room for God. For example, Thomas Hobbes explains in "Of Darknesse from Vain Philosophy and Fabulous Traditions" (Chapter XLVI of Leviathan) that "true philosophy" is compatible with spirituality; however, he strongly differentiates between the "light of the Scriptures" and the dark folly of superstition:

> The Enemy has been here in the Night of our naturall Ignorance, and sown the tares of spirituall Errors; and that, First by abusing, and putting out the light of the Scriptures: For we erre, not knowing the Scriptures. Secondly, by introducing the Daemonology of the Heathen Poets, that is to say, their fabulous Doctrine concerning Daemons, which are but Idols, or Phantasms of the braine, without any reall nature of their own, distinct from human fancy; such as are dead mens Ghosts, and Fairies, and other matter of old Wives Tales. Etc.[6]

Thus, in addition to philosophy and science, religious orthodoxy warred against folk beliefs. But neither the "dead mens Ghosts" nor the "Heathen Poets" were to be

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[5] Julius Kagarlitski, "Realism and Fantasy," SF: The Other Side of Realism, ed. Thomas D. Clareson (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971) 31.

[6] Hobbes is quoted here from Dutt 12.

dispelled to oblivion by the rationalistic hue and cry of the Enlightenment. The Romantic poets found new "Daemons" in their combined vision of German philosophy and the rustic sublime. Similarly Robert Burns, James Hogg, and Sir Walter Scott listened to the tales of the folk and incorporated supernatural folklore into literary works that did not altogether dismiss such traditions as "Phantasms of the braine."

Yet, these writers did not escape the voices of the Enlightenment entirely, and the discourse of skepticism interacts with the subversive spirituality of folk culture within these authors' works. A similar dual consciousness is manifest in the works of Victorians who integrate folk beliefs and narratives into their literary creations. The Victorians as a whole, like Hobbes, also wished to sustain piety alongside science: "one of the primary efforts of Victorian thought was to reconcile empirical science with metaphysical truth."[7] Yet, doctrine often seemed at odds with popular beliefs, as well as scientific evidence. A writer of literary fairy tales or legend-like narratives could not fail to be aware of the legacy of both rational and religious resistance to such material.

In the dawn of folklore studies, when the field was made up of collectors of ballads and "popular antiquities," a common justification for gathering superstitions, besides historical interest, was to thereby expose the deplorable spiritual ignorance of the peasants and correct such errors. For example, we find in Richard Dorson's historical compendium, The British Folklorists, titles such as Henry Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares; or the Antiquities of the Common People. Giving an Account

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[7] Levine 10.

of several of their Opinions and Ceremonie. With proper Reflections upon each of them; shewing which may be retain'd and which ought to be laid aside [1725] (10-11). Bourne almost exactly echoes Hobbes's judgment against apparitions as "Phantasms of the braine." According to Bourne it is "'Fears and Fancies and weak Brains of Men" which are responsible for the majority of ghosts and such (12).

Most significant is the realization of antiquarians like Bourne that, as Dorson articulates, "the interwoven strands of folk tradition formed a separate culture from the rational, sober, and pious ways of learned men" (12). This alternative culture persisted into the nineteenth century, even in urban districts, which so many folklorists were certain would lose all their traditions to industrial intrusions.[8] Thus,

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[8] Examples of English urban folklore are explored in Donald McKelvie's "Aspects of Oral Tradition and Belief in an Industrial Region." McKelvie offers evidence from "Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield" (81) for how "the urge to tell stories may be as strong in these urban communities as it was in less sophisticated communities in times past, and that folklore may be found in contemporary guise in our cities" (91). Studies on the urban legend have clearly verified McKelvie's claim for urban storytelling; however, more to the point of folk beliefs is that McKelvie also discovered "still omnipresent [. . .] the thread of belief in good and bad luck; in the power of amulet and talisman; in divination and omen--an amorphous body of superstitions of all kinds" (92). Donald McKelvie, "Aspects of Oral Tradition and Belief in an Industrial Region," Folk Life 1 (1963) 91-92.

McKelvie, as well as Richard Dorson--whose British Folklorists mentions both these sources--refers to Henry Mayhew's four-volume ethnographic study (100 years prior to McKelvie) of London's poor as containing urban folklore: London Labour and the London Poor. Unfortunately, neither Dorson nor McKelvie specify exactly what they find folkloric in Mayhew's analysis. Mayhew's close attention to the various street occupations does include ballad singers and other kinds of oral performers. However, supernatural folklore is not clearly in evidence in his study, other than the fanciful influence of the märchen on the performance of pantomimes--such fairy-tale characters as Bluebeard, elves, and fairies figure within some of them (vol.3 121-127). The closest item to a metaphysical folk belief is implied by the conjurer's self-description; he distinguishes himself--although somewhat ambiguously--from the idea of a "fortune-teller" (vol.3 107) In passing, other folkloric material includes the May Day celebration (vol. 2, 371) and, more impressively, there is a striking "strange tale in existence among the shore-workers" concerning "a race of wild hogs inhabiting the sewers in the neighbourhood of Hampstead" that obviously qualifies as an urban legend (vol. 2, 154). Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 4 vols. (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Company, 1861) 154.

when Elizabeth Gaskell emphasizes the cultural disparity between rich and poor in North and South (as does Benjamin Disraeli in Sybil or the Two Nations), she uses a folkloric example. The protagonist, Margaret Hale, encounters " one of the savage country superstitions"--specifically the idea that burning a cat "compelled (as it were) the powers of darkness to fulfil the wishes of the executioner" (391-392). The discovery of this "practical paganism" serves as an argument for educating the younger generation in rural, as well as urban, environments--to defend them from such follies.

Cultures in Conflict--Complications with Class, Nation, Race, and Folk Beliefs

If we rely on the early antiquarians, the few citations from Enlightenment philosophers, and that particular use of folk beliefs by Elizabeth Gaskell, the lines seem deeply drawn between educated, official perspectives on religion and nature on the one hand, and ignorant, unofficial delusions and superstitions, on the other. But, was this really the case? Rather than wholly consistent hostility, contempt, or simply idle curiosity towards the preternatural concepts of folk culture, we find instead a varied dialogue among nineteenth century writers and scholars.

Despite the dominant rational discourses of realism in art, utilitarianism in philosophy, and pragmatism in industry, Victorian society revealed a taste for unorthodox forms of spirituality, most evident in a preoccupation with seances and a

general fascination with ghosts in general, manifest in its literary productions. Culturally, nineteenth-century Englishmen were not as emancipated from superstition as one would believe--particularly if one considers the practice of spiritualism to be simply new clothes for older traditions concerning ghosts. Nor did there seem to be a clear anthropological theory of development that could explain Victorian and Edwardian British interest in ghosts. In fact, as Dorson reports of Andrew Lang, his "original evolutionary thesis [folkloric "survivals" were analogous to prehistoric relics or fossils in that they represented and preserved the psyche of primitive humanity.] tended to fade before the realization that ghost stories seemed more congenial to Englishmen than to savages" (216).

While folklorists were collecting ghostly legends from the peasantry, high class, educated men and women engaged in spiritualist activities, generating what one might call "salon lore" from their supposed encounters with rapping, tapping, levitating, and ectoplasmic apparitions. According to Katherine Porter's study of Victorian spiritualism, Through a Glass Darkly--Spiritualism in the Browning Circle, the influence of spiritualism should not be underestimated, particularly among literary quarters :

> Some were as much affected by it as their contemporaries were by the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, by secularism, rationalism, transcendentalism. Some scoffed; some doubted. All had this in common--they were professional people; they were sensitive,

> artistic people: the Brownings; the Tennysons; the two Bulwer-Lyttons, father and son; Thackeray; Dickens; Tom Trollope.[9]

Just as folk beliefs and legends compel a variety of reactions from tradition-bearers and their communities, likewise the culturally elite Victorians reacted in multiple ways to spiritualist claims and experiences.

Some of the skeptical reactions to spiritualism in fact demonstrated the tenacity of folk beliefs. While spiritualist mediums claimed to communicate with the human spirits of the dead, Alfred, Lord Tennyson believed that table rapping resulted from "Pucks not the spirits of dead men" (123) and similarly Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton suggested that "brownies or fairies" were being mistaken for "spirits of the dead" (11). Notably, these two aristocrats--both barons--are familiar enough with folk traditions to advance an alternative to the standard spiritualist metaphysics. Spiritualism itself did not have the status of an official religion. Thus, the link between salon and lower class folklore is further strengthened by the fact that spiritualism was a "rejection of the rigidly orthodox views"--spiritualist salon tales, like other folkloric belief legends, represented experience-based interactions with the numinous (8).

In addition, the common literary division between the ignorant peasantry and the educated elite in literary representations of supernatural folk beliefs is belied culturally by the findings of Victorian folklorists, despite the popularity of the theory of survivalism. Survivalism, developed from Lord Raglan's idea of ritual origins to

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[9] Katherine Porter, Through a Glass Darkly—Spiritualism in the Browning Circle. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1959) Preface.

folk motifs in fairy-tales (176), and was refined and established by "Sir Edward Burnet Tylor, the father of anthropology" in Primitive Culture [1871] (187).[10] The proponents of survivalism asserted that "the irrational beliefs and practices of the European peasantry, so at variance with the enlightened views of the educated classes, preserve the fragments of an ancient, lower culture, the culture of primitive man" (193).

However, the boundary of this primitive culture in fact crossed class lines. Robert Chambers in his collecting for The Book of Days. A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities in connection with the Calendar including Anecdote, Biography, & History, Curiosities of Literature and Oddities of Human Life and Character [1863-4] discovered that many supernatural "family legends, while they circulated among the villagers, originated with, and persisted among the aristocracy" (134-136). Perhaps then Tennyson and Bulwer-Lytton's familiarity with folk beliefs comes as little surprise, because of--rather than despite--the fact they were aristocrats. Similarly, Charlotte Burne in her fieldwork for Shropshire Folk-Lore [1883] found, as Dorson observes, that the "rich and well-born often saw ghosts where certain country folks sniffed their disbelief" (329). William Henderson in Notes on the Folk Lore of the Northern counties of England and the Borders [1866] made a virtual equation between upper class spiritualism and lower class folk beliefs, as Dorson reports: "Henderson viewed [. . .] class versions of the same basic superstition; peasants resort to the wizard or wise woman, while the gentry hie to the spirit-rapper. And he related

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[10] References concerning survivalism here are from Dorson.

an instance of a wealthy gentleman who on the advice of his spirit rapper dug in a garden for stolen wealth, and was reported by a policeman" (329).

The fieldwork of Burne, Chambers, and Henderson demonstrates that there was not a clear separation between the supposed primitive survivals of the peasantry and the refined enlightenment of the educated classes. If the peasantry had more folk beliefs it was not because of simple ignorance. Rather, the peasantry retained more of Britain's native culture--the so-called folk had not been so fully subject to the rigid cultural assimilation that official institutions such as standardized education, socialization, and religion brings. Similarly, rural districts were not so easily put under the yoke of externally imposed conventions as urban centers.

The theory of survivalism was not wholly divisive; it contributed not only to viewing the peasant as an alien Other living the midst of civilized England, but also led to a unifying view bridging the gap between British culture and non-European nations. Tylor asserted in Primitive Culture that the "European peasant" showed the closeness of seemingly alien cultures:

> hear his tale of the ghost in the nearest haunted house, and of the farmer's niece who was bewitched with knots in her inside till she fell into fits and died. If we choose out in this way things which altered little in a long course of centuries, we may draw a picture where there shall be scarce a hand's breadth of difference between an English ploughman and a negro of Central Africa. (193-194)

Survivalism combined with theories of dissemination of folk tales originated from India--advanced by Theodor Benfey and other India-based Diffusionists starting in

1859--added to a sense of almost multicultural pride, although under paternalistic and imperial control, in the rich folkloric heritage of the British Empire.[11]

What is especially significant about these developments in a social and historical consciousness of global folklore is the impact it had on writers of the folkloric fantastic. Writers such as Le Fanu, Sharp, and Stevenson represented the interactions between the folklore of disparate classes, cultures, races, and nations. Le Fanu offers his literary fairy legends that express class tensions and imperial xenophobia, while both Sharp and Stevenson portray how exploitative individuals and institutions may manipulate folk beliefs for their own advantage--using credulity in supernatural lore for mercenary ends. In fact, criminals used folk beliefs to their advantage. William Hone, a collector of popular antiquities active in the 1820's and 30's, reported how "Joe Brown impersonated" a spirit. Explaining beliefs about "St. Mark's Eve," which was traditionally the night when "spirits of those who are to die in the coming year will approach the church door," he "frightened the villagers out of their wits, and robbed their homes."[12]

Within the developing field of folklore--it wasn't until 1846 that William Thoms coined the term--there were conflicting attitudes towards the merit of studying folk beliefs that mirrored the diversity of perspectives in Victorian culture on superstitions or survivals. Commenting on Bourne's horror at popular superstitions, John Brand in Observations on Popular Antiquities: including the whole of Mr.

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[11] Dorson points out that Alfred Nutt presented his folktale series in 1892 as "'Folktales of the British Empire'" 340.

[12] Dorson 40.

Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares (1777) asserts that Bourne was mistaken "to *complain* of that which he ought always to despise" (14). Superstitions were not necessarily morally dangerous; they were merely despicable. Ironically, because of his implication that one should know better than to accept superstitious follies, Brand demonstrated just how pervasive superstitions were among all segments of society--educated and otherwise. Brand delighted in showing how "the royal touch for the King's Evil, is to be referred to the head of Physical Charms, evincing that no order of Men escaped the antient contagion of Supersittion" (20). Brand in particular, like Bourne, attributed British superstitions to "Papal Rome" which "borrowed her Rites, Notions, and Ceremonies [. . .] from ancient and Heathen Rome" (14).

Clearly folklore is a field of numerous tensions in the nineteenth century, around which circulated old prejudices of class, education, race, and religion, new theories of anthropology, and ethnological evidence that often contradicted both conventional doctrine and innovative theories. The Victorians were learning that pagan and Christian beliefs were nestled together closely in their own countryside, and realizing that the exotic barbarisms discovered in foreign lands were little different than their own traditions. Politically, folklore could be used either to unite or divide cultural distinctions of class. Instead of a testament to growing respect for the underclass's vital culture, or the upper class's inextricable ties to the peasantry, nineteenth-century folklore studies are debatably an effort at containment of an unruly class:

> It can be argued, indeed, that the folk-lore movement, whose growth ran exactly parallel to the emergence of working-class radicalism,

> represented a reaction against the political threat mounted from below. The study of popular culture and its oral traditions was a means of bringing the classes together on ground emptied of conflict.[13]

The tones of nineteenth-century folklorists, pregnant with class and religious tensions, hardly is "emptied of conflict"; furthermore, the fictional applications of folk beliefs, fairy tales, and folk legends, repeatedly convey conflicts between the worldviews, practices, and virtues of the upper and lower classes.

Critical Terms--Fantasy, the Fantastic, Fairy Tale, and Legend

Having demonstrated the complex variety of Victorian cultural stances towards folklore, it remains now to examine how folklore fits into the narrative mechanics of writings of fantasy and the fantastic. In recent years, literary criticism has tried to categorize--with varying success--what exactly *fantasy* is and its relation to *the fantastic*.[14] Even more recently, some critics have also considered the dynamics between folklore and the fantastic, although these studies have largely focused on identifying folkloric functions within fantastic texts, without considering

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[13] David Vincent, "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture," Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 35.

[14] The most complete and succinct discussion of different theories on the fantastic is: Neil Cornwell, The Literary Fantastic--From Gothic to Postmodernism. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990). The most influential definition of the fantastic remains that of Todorov found in: Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

how folklore complicates the discourse of the fantastic.[15] From the range of critical inquiry into the terms of fantasy and the fantastic, one may adopt features and definitions that will help narrow the field of inquiry here, without digressing into a debate that would distract from the focus.

Tolkien defines Fantasy in his well-known essay "On Fairy-Stories" as "the making or glimpsing of Other-worlds"(64).[16] That is to say, a work of literary fantasy presents a "Secondary World", which is not simply a mimetic representation of the "Primary World" or what we consider to be reality, but an articulation of "images of things [. . .] not to be found in our primary world at all, or are generally believed not to be found there" (69-70). Tolkien explains that his definition combines the "older and higher" use of the word fantasy "as an equivalent of Imagination"--"'the power of giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of reality'"--with the idea of the unreal: "unlikeness to the Primary World [. . .]" (68-69). Literary fantasy is a consistent presentation of the unreal: the unreal becomes the real in the context of the narrative.

The question of fantasy of course does not stop there, for what is the unreal? Jackson asserts that "all literary works are fantasies" in the most general conception of the term (25). Such leveling conceptions of genre or mode are usually unproductive; they lead only to familiar truisms of deconstruction: the world of the

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[15] Two such recent studies of the use of folklore in fantastic texts come from the same series: Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy. Donald E Morse and Csilla Bertha. Ed. More Real Than Reality—The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts (London: Greenwood Press, 1991). Marguerite Quintelli-Neary, Folklore and the Fantastic in Twelve Modern Irish Novels (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997).

[16] J. R. R. Tolkien, The Tolkien Reader (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966).

narrative is always an imaginative and subjective representation of a "reality" which can never refer to anything essential beyond the borders of the text's limited world of language. It is easy to assimilate all categories into one broad generalization. However, generalizing also serves as a rhetorical defense against reductive analysis. To counter depreciatory estimations of fantasy as mere escapism, Cornwell quotes from Linda Hutcheon's book Narcissistic Narrative: The metafictional paradox: "'All literature could be said to be "escape" literature: readers as well as authors want to create worlds as real as, but other than, the world that is'" (33). For purposes of exact classification it is imprecise to reduce fantasy to a matter of escapism, as Cornwell notes, referring to Kathryn Hume's distinction in Fantasy and Mimesis: "escape may be subdivided into 'mimetic escape' and 'fantastic escape'" (33).

Critical unrest over the vague boundaries between fantasy and realism are nothing new--they were part of the literary dialogue of the Victorians, and folklore inevitably entered into them. In "The Science of Fiction" Thomas Hardy criticizes the pretensions of realists to portray an objective reality. Hardy contrasts a version of the folk storyteller, the "old gossip," with the adherent of realism: "The most devoted apostle of realism, the sheerest naturalist, cannot escape, any more than the withered old gossip over her fire, the exercise of Art in his labour or pleasure of telling a tale."[17] This is no idle analogy, for what Hardy is implicitly evaluating necessarily evokes the clash between two narrative traditions--the ancient conventions of oral narrative and the modern discourse of realism. Many of the motifs and stylistic

features of oral narratives, such as the legend and märchen, gave shape to the romance, particularly the Gothic variety, but, according to Hardy industrial society seemed to be leaving such "old illusions" behind and realism provided a " more natural magic" (74).

Hardy's statement emphasizes that the tactics of realism are a matter of degree, not kind; realism is "an artificiality distilled from the fruits of closest observation" (74). In other words, the inspiration for realism may be empirical, but because it is a literary mode, Hardy asserts that any claims to absolute duplication of objective reality are misguided. By invoking such terms as "magic" and "illusions," Hardy rhetorically maintains the "impossiblity of reproducing in its entirety the phantasmagoria of experience with infinite and atomic truth" (74).

Regardless of the claim that any literary text is ultimately a fantasy, in that it does not present a universally and empirically verifiable vision of observed experience, readers typically comply, negotiate, or are immersed in the staging of the text's "reality." Readers intuit the laws of the narrative reality that they read, just as they infer guiding principles about the nature of their everyday world. When the world of the literary narrative diverges from the laws of the Primary World in ways that are incompatible, not simply improbable, to known physical laws, one is dealing with the unreal.

Regarding reality, Tolkien offered an important insight--reality depends upon consensus, what is "generally believed." Kathryn Hume, in fact defines fantasy as "any departure from consensus reality" (20). However, fantasy does not interrogate

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[17] Miriam Allott, Novelists on the Novel (New York: Columbia University Press,

consensus reality; fantasy replaces reality naively with a new consensus within the parameters of the narrative world. In general, once we are presented with fire-breathing dragons, and see that the characters in the book believe in such things, we quickly readjust to what sort of world we are in.

Literary criticism in recent years has focused more attention on the fantastic than fantasy. Or rather, criticism of fantasy has largely emphasized its subversive elements, which by their very antagonism to conventional standards are essentially fantastic. The fantastic is largely a mode rather than a genre, though a work characterized by such a mode might be considered generically fantastic. Whenever the system of reality in a literary work is called into question, however temporary that interrogation may be, this operation evokes hesitation.

Hesitation is the hallmark of the fantastic, as Tzvetan Todorov insists in The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre: "The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (25). Todorov positions the fantastic between the genres of the marvelous (the truly supernatural) and the uncanny (bizarre events which are ultimately explainable by recourse to existing laws of nature--not to be confused with the standard definition that denotes events or people that are disquieting and mysterious, perhaps even supernatural). Such categories are more existential--they describe interpretations of reality--than formally generic--like the novel or short story. However, the fundamental continuum that Todorov presents is useful in describing the contextual dynamics of the literary fantastic. Neil Cornwell,

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1959) 73.

in his discussion of various theoreticians of the fantastic, The Literary Fantastic, proposes "further extensions" to "Todorov's linear model" (38-39). Cornwell's analysis of his updated version of Todorov's continuum of the fantastic demonstrates that fantasy and the fantastic are not narrowly generic; these narrative dynamics are not isolated to particular stereotypes of genre-fiction, but instead are complicated modes that connect to disparate forms of literary creation.[18] The widespread presence of fantasy and the fantastic testifies to their narrative power.

The functions of fantasy and the fantastic, however, are just as debatable as their definitions. Eric Rabkin qualifies and quantifies Todorov's fundamental definition in The Fantastic in Literature. Rabkin stipulates that such reversals of "the laws of nature" must reach a critical point to be considered "truly fantastic": "The truly fantastic occurs when the ground rules of a narrative are forced to make a 180° reversal, when prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted. This is true, even if the effect lasts only a moment" (12). Rabkin's restrictive definition of the fantastic, while not entirely accepted by theorists of the literary fantastic, is a useful diagnostic tool: the presence of a "180° reversal" certainly serves well as an indication of the fantastic within a text.

In contrast, Rosemary Jackson, in Fantasy--Literature of Subversion, defines fantasy, which for her includes the fantastic, in such broad terms that it might be attributed to most literature in general: "fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraint" (3). When Jackson refers to

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[18] Neil Cornwell, The Literary Fantastic—From Gothic to Postmodernism (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) 41.

"cultural constraint" she means the oppressive power of "capitalist and patriarchal order" (176) and "bourgeois ideals" (35), which fantasy literature militates against by showing "the resistance of the unconscious mind to those laws" (6-7).

To insist on subversion being the hallmark of fantasy may seem dubious, particularly for Victorian fantasies which arguably disclaim any power to transform cultural conditions. Such stories often end with the proclamation that it was "all a dream." On the other hand, in our post-Freudian age, the phrase "just a dream" certainly does not preclude analysis. Rather, it invites scrutiny. The comparison between dreams and wonder tales is neither trivial nor pedantic; both creations have received various interpretations over the years that reflect cultural assumptions about narrative, history, the psyche, and the supernatural.

Victorian culture displayed various attitudes towards dreaming, from serious study to outright dismissal, just as it did towards fairy tales and other folk narratives. Dreams and fairy tales share the feature of being irrelevant nonsense or "idle tales" to some, while being full of significance, whether magical or psychoanalytic, to others. Freud was not the first nineteenth century scientist to study dreams. In England, the Society for Psychical Research--of which Andrew Lang was its most famous member--recorded thousands of dreams from its participating researchers. Frederic W.H. Myers, "a classical scholar at Cambridge" and one of the founders of the aforesaid organization argued in 1887 that dreams were important enough to approach with willfulness--to attempt to gain control over the events (lucid dreaming)--and then "to prompt us to psychological inquiry."[19]

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[19] Stephen LaBerge, Lucid Dreaming (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985) 28.

The world of legends, fairy tales, and folk beliefs offers what has seemed to many as a vision that has more in common with dreaming life than waking life. Presenting a vision that generally disrupts daily standards of realism, dreams and fairy tales constitute arenas of disruption where things are not as they are generally perceived to be. One might argue that such violations of normalcy constitute circumscribed moments of the fantastic that are subordinated to the mundane. Indeed, as Andrew Lang observes in 1897, what is anomalous is when dream-like events occur outside of their familiar domain: "the alleged events of ghostdom--apparitions of all sorts--are precisely identical with the every-night phenomena of dreaming, except for the avowed element of sleep in dreams."[20] Both dreams and marvellous folk tales are arguably paradoxical mediums, presenting to an audience either an ordered symbolical structure or a merely irrational parade of nonsense--fancy liberated from reason.

Many critics have viewed literary fantasy itself as a dream of idle irrelevance, emotive escape, or deep subversion. The function of fantasy has been often aligned with psychoanalytic assumptions about the function of dreaming. Many theories of fantasy and the fantastic are occupied with "the fantastic as the outlet for the exclusions and taboos, the estrangements and alienation of bourgeois society."[21] Such conceptions of fantasy texts as dreams giving form to cultural repression are similar to William Patrick Day's description of the Gothic found in In the Circles of Fear and

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[20] Andrew Lang, The Book of Dreams and Ghosts (New York: Causeway Books, 1974) 2.

[21] Cornwell 26.

Desire. Day insists that the Gothic serves to "externalize" in general the fears and desires that the "human imagination [. . .] finds in itself" (42) and that the "Gothic cosmology" of the Victorian age in particular "refers only to [. . .] the human act of fantasizing" and is essentially then the "imaginative projection of the nineteenth-century" (41).

Thus, many critics have largely relegated fantasy, the fantastic, and the Gothic to the status of collective, cultural day-dreams--and, in fact, these genres are simply the last in a long-line of such collective "fantasizing." From religion and romance, to the märchen and legend, "fantasizing" is a term that is equally applicable to each category. Not surprisingly, emerging from a century of psychoanalysis, literary evaluations of folk narratives, such as fairy tales and urban legends, have often relied on similar assumptions about fantastic narratives being projections of cultural anxieties and desires. For example, much has been said of the adolescent sexual tensions that make "The Hook" so popular among teenagers. In "The Hook" urban legend, a teenage couple narrowly escapes from a murderous man with a hook for a hand. Psychoanalytic folklorists have deemed this narrative to express "'adolescent fears about sexuality and anxiety at violating social moral standards.'"[22] One can quickly move from there to generalizations about tales of alien abductions from the bedside, fairy and demon lovers, ghosts, etc.--quickly all inhabitants of the spiritual world become sexually repressive bogeymen like the deformed psychopath in "The Hook." Therefore, while psychoanalytic approaches may prove revealing, one must

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[22] Sue Samuelson, whose interpretation is equated with those of Alan Dundes and Linda Dégh, is qtd. in: Bill Ellis, "Why 'The Hook' is Not a Contemporary Legend," Folklore Forum 24.2 (1991): 65.

be on guard against reductive interpretations that obscure other cultural forces at work in producing a folk narrative or literary work of the fantastic.

To analyze thoroughly literary innovations means first knowing folkloric tradition, as well as literary precedents; the Gothic and other literary traditions of fantasy and the fantastic have extended and stylized motifs and metaphysics that were long-standing in folklore to begin with. Day's anatomization of the Gothic unintentionally indicates the degree to which so much of the Gothic depends upon folklore: "Another convention of Gothic atmosphere is the presence of the supernatural or the monstrous; we know we have entered the gothic world when we begin to encounter vampires and demons" (34). Gothic atmosphere in many respects is a rendering of the fantastic that emphasizes both terror and the picturesque usually centered around a particular location--often an impressive building, such as a castle or manor, juxtaposed with a wild frontier, such as a moor. This dynamic of topographic tensions, as we shall see later, is largely adapted from the implicit metaphysical dynamics of folk legends. Day suggests that Gothic "atmosphere" is essentially "the sensation that one is in the presence of that which suspends and calls into doubt the laws of the universe that is essential to the Gothic, even if this effect is later explained away" (35). In other words, Gothic atmosphere is the emotional and aesthetic response to the "fantastic"--even though retrospectively the moment of hesitation may prove to be merely uncanny according to Todorovian terms.

Despite Day's entire neglect of folk beliefs and metaphysics as cultural entities outside of the Gothic tradition, other critics have in passing noted the influence of folk traditions on the Gothic, and the essence of Romanticism itself for that matter.

G. Malcolm Laws, Jr. in The British Literary Ballad briefly underscores this point: "many of those qualities by which we identify romantic literature (supernaturalism, emotionalism, emphasis on adventure, Gothicism, and so on) are perfectly embodied in certain of the most memorable folk ballads" (58). Granted, to examine the interaction between folklore and the Gothic is far beyond the scope of this study, but it would be a natural sequel to this project. Our concern here is the function of supernatural folk beliefs and folk narratives in nineteenth-century literary representations of fantasy and the fantastic, which may not necessarily be Gothic at all.

A final wrinkle in theories of fantasy and the fantastic is magical realism, which this dissertation does not examine. So-called magical realism differs from fantasy and the fantastic because it displays everyday reality alongside the marvellous without hesitation and is thereby "characterized [. . .] by two conflicting, but autonomously coherent, perspectives, one based on an 'enlightened' and rational view of reality, and the other on the acceptance as part of everyday reality."[23] Chanady further explains that "the supernatural is not presented as problematic" in magical realism, and thus involves no hesitation.[24] If the "supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader" and is "integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictitious world," magical realism could not describe any stories involving dual perspectives with skeptical narrators, such as those in Le

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[23] Amaryll Beatrice Chanady, Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985) 21-22.

[24] Chanady 23.

Fanu, Hogg, and Carleton.[25] However, Chanady's claim for the aesthetic aims of magical realism, presenting the "supernatural [. . .] juxtaposed with everyday reality in order to create a more complete picture of the world" does resonate with the rhetorical strategies of narratives of the folkloric fantastic that utilize the emotive force and metaphorical power of folk beliefs and motifs, integrating unofficial worldviews with mainstream--but incomplete--representations of human subjectivity.[26]

In a nutshell, a story of the fantastic differs from a fantasy in its presentation of the unreal. It is the matter of consensus that constitutes stability in literary fantasy and instability in the literary fantastic. Works of the fantastic exert pressure on *consensus reality* by staging the illusion of a consistent world--one that a reader may even associate with the "Primary World"--within the text and then testing the assumptions of what the reader, and potentially the characters as well, believe about that narrative reality. Thus, while fantasy focuses on the "inner consistency" of the "reality" that it presents, the fantastic is antithetical to the single unified vision that fantasy tends towards.

This narrative distinction between the dynamics of fantasy and the fantastic will generally hold for the purposes of this study. That is not to say that a work cannot be both a fantasy and have elements of the fantastic in it. Such a hybrid formulation is exactly consistent with Tolkien's definition, as well as Cornwell's observation: "in more Todorovian terms, the fantastic may be present in a work which

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[25] Chanady 23-24.

[26] Chanady 27.

turns out ultimately to belong (with the resolution of the fantastic issue--or the issue or quality of the fantastic) to the uncanny or the marvellous" (31). What the critical review of the terms *fantasy* and the *fantastic* indicates, besides questioning whether either term constitutes a genre, mode, or some hybrid--and what sort--is that a literary work may adhere to both categories, as well as the Gothic.

But, to be practical, in many cases one can distinguish a work of fantasy from that of the fantastic, according to the overall tendency of the narrative dynamics. The fantastic stresses generic and metaphysical hesitation, undermining, and even diametrically reversing, a seemingly stable narrative reality. A story of fantasy tends, as William Irwin asserts in The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy, towards a "persuasive establishment and development of an impossibility" by being "continuous and coherent" in its presentation (9).

Thus, one must qualify Rabkin's description of a fairy tale, which offers a "highly conventionalized alternative to the real world," as "truly fantastic literature."[27] Overall the fairy tale (märchen), *wonder tale*, or one of the "Tales of Magic" (according to Stith Thompson's terminology)--and this dissertation will use those terms equivalently--tends towards fantasy. The fairy tale is a sustained presentation of this secondary world; a reader, once immersed in this medium, "experiences no more fantastic reversals."[28] The folk legend (sage), on the other hand, is closer to the fantastic, since the everyday world clashes with the numinous one; in fact, the

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[27] Eric Rabkin, ed., Fantastic Worlds--Myths, Tales and Stories (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 162.

[28] Eric Rabkin 162.

abstract metaphysical purpose of the legend narrative is arguably to reveal the immanence of the so-called supernatural in the sphere of real experience.

The tendencies of the fairy tale and legend in terms of fantasy and the fantastic provide a framework for structural and generic analysis for literary texts. Works of fantasy are primarily extensions of the narrative dynamics of the fairy tale, while works of the fantastic employ similar strategies to the folk legend. Works which adhere closest to the purely fantastic defy a simple alignment with either the fairy tale or legend. For example, Hoffmann's "The Golden Pot" startles the reader by its ambiguous presentation that suggests Anselmus, the protagonist, may or may not be deluded and constantly invites interpretative scrutiny as to what genre one is reading: a madman's tale, an allegory, a fairy-tale, or a legend. A work such as Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings adheres more closely to pure fantasy: it presents a consistent world where monsters and magic exist without question, even though readers don't believe such things are real in their world. Carroll's Alice in Wonderland is also a fantasy. For, even though it makes use of the fantastic by constantly upsetting conventional expectations of reality, the action also takes place in a secondary world--down the rabbit hole--whose law is reversal of the world above. There is order in such chaos. Moreover, despite the rationalization at the end of the work that it was but a dream, it is the sustained presentation of a world of "an impossibility" that characterizes the narrative. Tolkien's work then is a sustained fantasy that doesn't use the literary fantastic; Carroll's story is full of the fantastic, but through its paradoxically coherent chaos is a fantasy as well.

The Function and Nature of Fairy Tales, Legends, and Folk Beliefs

Tolkien would probably have objected to my inclusion of Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass among fantasies; he clearly subjugates them as "not fairy-stories" due to their "dream-frame and dream-transitions" (42). For Tolkien, what he calls a "fairy-story" does not "tolerate any frame or machinery suggesting that the whole story in which they occur is a figment or illusion" (42). Tolkien uses a very particular aesthetic definition of what a fairy-story is; he stresses an elemental ethos rather than specific motifs:

> The magic of Faërie is not an end in itself, its virtue is in its operations: among these are the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires. One of these desires is to survey the depths of space and time. Another is (as will be seen) to hold communion with other living things. A story may thus deal with the satisfaction of these desires, with or without the operation of either machine or magic, and in proportion as it succeeds it will approach the quality and have the flavour of fairy-story" (41).

Just as the continental Romantics found in the märchen the image of their own artistic ideals, Tolkien formulates a category, the "fairy-story," by abstracting values from the volksmärchen that do not always cohere generically in oral tradition. His definition is hardly folkloric--he is not limiting his focus to tradition--but does represent his own personal aesthetic. The folkloric definition of a "fairy tale," or märchen (for "fairies" are not a requirement), is a folk tale--traditional prose narrative--that, according to Stith Thompson canonical work, The Folktale, "is a tale of some length involving a

succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and is filled with the marvelous" (8).

For Tolkien, the highest function of the "true form of fairy-tale" is the "Eucatastrophe"--the "consolation of the Happy Ending" which offers "a sudden and miraculous grace" and "denies [. . .] universal final defeat [. . .] giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world" (86-87). Though the transcendent religious aesthetic here is clear and reveals Tolkien's spiritual bias, his perspective is not a theoretically isolated one. His idea of eucatastrophe resonates with psychoanalytic theories of wish-fulfillment in private dreams and fantasies, a dynamic which may extend collectively to a whole culture's wishes that are expressed through a traditional narrative.

In fact, emphasizing the expressive license of symbolism in fairy tales constitutes the basic thesis of Bengt Holbek in his thorough response to over one hundred years of fairy-tale interpretations, Interpretation of Fairy Tales--Danish Folklore in a European Perspective. While Holbek distinguishes fairy-tales from the involuntary creation of dreams, he does not altogether wish to sidestep Freudian assumptions about how the subconscious works in symbols as an evasion of censorship: "According to his [Freud's] view, we ban from our conscious awareness wishes that our internal "censorship" cannot permit for one reason or another. Such wishes do not cease to exist. They live on in our unconscious, forever trying to get past the "censor" even in disguise" (261-262). What Holbek does is to abstract the idea of the "censor" from the internalized authority in an individual's mind to the folkloric community.

In other words, fairy-tale symbolism, according to Holbek, works in part as an evasion of oppressive political authority--frustrations with tyrannical landowners become tales of cruel ogres, and such narratives may be discussed freely. Thus, although such "tales are regarded as "lies," i.e., as fiction" Holbek asserts their eucatastrophic function for real communities--fairy tales maintain moral ideals:

> in traditional communities, fairy tales provided a means of collective daydreaming. We do not use the word "daydreaming" in a pejorative sense. The tales were escape fantasies in one sense, but fantasies in which wrongs were righted and the poor and powerless justly recognized for their true worth. They thus kept alive a keen sense of justice and rightness, as attested by many collectors of folktales. They depicted a true world, i.e., the world as it should be (406).

Holbek's thesis on the function of the marvelous aspects of many fairy-tale motifs interprets their symbolism as a creative strategy for meaningful communication in an oppressive world: "The symbolic elements of fairy tales convey emotional impressions of beings, phenomena and events in the real world, organized in the form of fictional narrative sequences which allow the narrator to speak of the problems, hopes and ideals of the community" (435). It is his contention that these supernatural symbols are produced through seven rules of formulation: split, particularization, projection, externalization, hyperbole, quantification, and contraction (435-448). In short, the marvelous elements in fairy-tales serve rhetorical functions in a synchronic context. Regardless of the many latent features of ancient myths and rituals, a theory

of fairy-tale symbolism must take into account the social milieu in which it is currently performed.

To understand the function of the fairy tale in its hybrid form as articulated by narratives of the literary fantastic, one must first consider briefly the stylistic and structural aspects that characterize this folk genre, and traditional attitudes towards it. In general, fairy tales are folktales in which the marvelous is a given: seven-league-boots, magical beings, and, above all, enchantment--particularly transforming humans into other forms--all are expected elements in this world. There is no hesitation at the marvelous components of the fairy tale, except for perhaps wonder at the creative aesthetic that produces such motifs.

While nineteenth century anthropological folklorists argued for the diachronic importance of fairy tales--what they meant in the past--their relation to historical rituals and mythology do not generally interest the traditional audience. Rather, fairy tales in a storytelling community are considered fiction. Linda Dégh in Folktales and Society explains how "folktales" (and by this she means the fairy tale or märchen) have always "borne the stamp of the "not true" (86):

> "I lied for they listened to me," ends one of the concluding fomulae. "Let us lie a little," his comrade assents and starts to tell a story. János Nagy, a storyteller from Sára, thinks that "Every man has to have a hundred lies in his pocket, but of the very best, so that everybody will believe them." [. . .] Berze Nagy is right when he says, "The folktale is only considered a beautiful lie by our people." [. . .] There is a strange ambiguity in folktale naration: the storyteller has recourse to

> all the tricks of the trade to make his listeners believe what both he himself and his listeners know are lies; but at the same time they are trapped by the effect of the tale and will live through it, reacting with tears and laughter to the individual situations (86).

The phrase which might leap to mind is "willing suspension of disbelief," but as Tolkien emphasizes about the power of the Secondary world to enthrall readers, the belief is more earnest than an intermission from skepticism--it is an issue of aesthetic immersion:

> A real enthusiast for cricket is in the enchanted state: Secondary Belief. I, when I watch a match, am on the lower level [willing suspension of disbelief]. I can believe (more or less) willing suspension of disbelief, when I am held there and supported by some other motive that will keep away boredom: for instance, a wild, heraldic, preference for dark blue rather than light. This suspension of disbelief may thus be a somewhat tired, shabby, or sentimental state of mind, and so lean to the "adult." I fancy it is often the state of adults in the presence of a fairy-story. (61)

Tolkien's comment on "the state of adults" does not apply to traditional audiences by and large, given Dégh's fieldwork. However, the lack of immersion in the tale by adults in an enlightened and industrial culture is a significant point to consider, for the many ironic literary strategies of Victorian writers of "fairy tales" derive from a similar difficulty with achieving an aesthetic engagement that inspires belief.

The core content that audiences generally respond to is that the fairy tale is often a narrative of maturation. The model of Holbek expresses the hierarchical opposition of class which is overcome in the course of the tale as well as presenting the basic episodes in the fairy tale pattern of the courtship variety. In other words, the model applies to those fairy tales where a low status, young male rises up to marry a high status young female, though the genders may sometimes be reversed. Holbek bases his structural paradigm on the Syntagmatic Model of Eleasar Meletinskij , the Paradigmatic Model of Kongas Maranda, and the division of the fairy tale into structural functions by Vladimir Propp.[29] Holbek's use of Propp's syntagmatic model

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[29] Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale (1928) was one of the most influential works on the structural components of the folk tale, though his tactics have been both criticized and revised. Propp asserted that there would be no progress in the historical-geographic approach--tracing the dissemination of folktales across the world--without devising structural models with which to break up the tales into distinct elements which could be then compared with other tales: "We shall insist that as long as no correct morphological study exists, there can be no correct historical study. If we are incapable of breaking the tale into its components, we will not be able to make a correct comparison" (15). V. Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

Propp's morphology focuses on the characters and events as significant in terms of their functions in the tale--functions that he insists are universally constant. Thus, ethnographic concerns, the particular features observed in folktales which are culturally specific, are not considered as interesting or important. Propp's rigid structuralism leaves no room for interest in variation, rather all folktales are reduced to a single pattern, as Propp's fourth thesis affirms, "All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure" (23). Thus, it is dubious whether "comparison" was really the ultimate project of Propp.

However, despite the reductive tendency of Propp, his structural observations are acute and largely applicable to many folktales, particularly the märchen (fairy tale). Propp has a list of "31 "canonical" functions" (Holbek 334) which are generally descriptive of the events of fairy tales. Holbek makes productive use of these 31 canonical functions in his revised syntagmatic model.

Eleasar Meletinskij, besides asserting that some fairy tales "are still informed by a 'mythical' code," while others are guided by a "ritual code' (239), Meletinskij has devised a structural model which is "like a hierarchy of binary blocks, each consisting of two terms. And the last block [. . .] contains a plus sign. The hierarchy is defined by the initial block [. . .] and the terminal one [. . .] while between them are significant thematic juxtapositions"--in essence this model accounts for the structure of the fairy tale in terms of a lack which is introduced early on that must be liquidated by the end of the tale; each episode is evaluated in

of the fairy tale patterns provides us with a thematic blueprint to refer to in the course of this study:

> Let us compare the initial and final situations in the fairy tale pattern described by Propp. In the initial situation (Pf1), which he has given the signum a, the hero(ine) is dependent, often abused or ridiculed, poor, unrecognized, deprived of friendship and love; in the final situation, the wedding (Pf 31), which we may correspondingly give the signum w, the hero(ine) is independent of parental authority, fully recognized, rich and powerful and has found a spouse. The wedding is the crowning achievement of efforts at three levels: that of gaining independence from parents and other authorities of the preceding generation; that of winning the love of a person of the opposite sex; and that of securing the future of the new family. These efforts are, then, dominated by three sets of thematic oppositions: (1) that of the conflict between generations, (2) that of the meetings of the sexes, (3) that of the social opposition between the "haves" and the "have nots" (410-411).

It is significant to note that in Victorian literary fairy tales some of these thematic oppositions are either not emphasized or deleted altogether. For instance, because fairy tales were predominantly considered children's fare by the nineteenth century,

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terms of moving from the initial negative position to the final positive position (361). Meltinskij has also identified characteristics which divide fairy tales from myth.

Kongas Maranda, a Soviet Structuralist, devised her paradigmatic model as a tool for teaching children about the general pattern of fairy tales: the hierarchical opposition of class which is overcome in the narrative.

writers of new tales chose to focus on prepubescent characters rather than young people on the threshold of economic, romantic, and sexual union. In addition, other writers, such as John Ruskin emphasized "social opposition" while ignoring gender interactions completely in "The King of the Golden River."[30]

Besides the structural components of the märchen referred to by Holbek, its dominant tendencies of character and metaphysical dynamics are well-expressed by Max Lüthi, although his observations are far from absolute because he depreciates the importance of individual performers and variants.[31] For the purposes of this analytic study, comparing literary divergence from and conservation of fantastic folk narratives, it is Lüthi's emphasis in The European Folktale on certain formal aspects of the folktale's "abstract style"--such as isolation, one-dimensionality and universal interconnection--that is most pertinent. Though translators have rendered the word "folktale," Lüthi used the word "volksmärchen," and it is clearly the fairy tale that he is concerned with, rather than legend which he contrasts with the "folktale":

> In legends, if a person sees a white woman [a ghost] sitting in a meadow or hears of a farmer at the plough who is given an inexhaustible supply of bread by underworld beings, he broods over

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[30] U.C. Knoepflmacher specifically addresses the question of Ruskin's treatment of gender in "The King of the Golden River." U. C. Knoepflmacher, Ventures into Childland--Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[31] Lüthi's emphasis on general characteristics of the folktale identifies him as a superorganic critic: this categorization includes scholars who are more interested in generalizing about *the folktale* as an abstraction or the collective unconscious that the folktales reveal. Thus, Jungian and Freudian scholars who use folktales to speculate about the

> these strange events. He is more concerned with their mystery than their practical effects. But the folktale hero sees and experiences things far more fantastic [let us say: divergent from consensus reality] than these and never bats an eye. [. . .] similarly, if the folktale hero is afraid, his fear is of an everyday kind. He is afraid of dangers, not of the uncanny [ditto]. [. . .] He is even calmed when a wild beast begins to speak, for a wild beast frightens him--it could tear him apart--while he finds nothing uncanny about an animal who speaks. (6-7)

Lüthi is describing the one-dimensionality of the fairy tale, by which he means that the supernatural world is fully aligned with the natural world: there are no alternate dimensions. In the folk legend, while there is arguably no supernatural--since in this genre spiritual beings do exist and penetrate the everyday world--there is still a recognizable alien quality to such beings, as well as fantastic events. In the legend, the otherworld exists and its interactions with the everyday sphere are part of the natural--as in actual--order of things: no metaphysical law is broken by spiritual manifestation; what occurs is simply a more intense essence of nature than the mundane. The fairy tale is the world of the marvelous--and this is why we will be focusing on literary fairy tales and fantasies in the next four chapters: they tend to adhere to the same basic narrative metaphysics of the marvelous as traditional fairy tales do.

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human mind, but who are not interested particularly in the meaning of an individual folktale in of itself, can be included in this category.

Lüthi's "universal interconnection" refers to the "harmonious cooperation" between folk tale characters and the rest of the world (51). The law of universal interconnection covers temporal and spatial aspects as well as the interpersonal: "As though drawn by a magnet, he, the isolated one, pursues his confident course and follows the precise line of conduct that the framework of his cosmos demands of him" (57). The hero finds whatever he needs to succeed; helpers present themselves. This underlying "invisible hand" of cooperative metaphysics enables the isolation of fairy tale characters to work: "isolation derives its meaning only from the capacity for extensive interconnections" (51).

Besides being largely conserved by Victorian literary fairy tales, this consistent metaphysical law of interconnection has impacted fiction in the form of surprising coincidences that both cause and resolve many a crisis in the plot of a novel or short story. Bakhtin's comments in The Dialogic Imagination concerning "adventure-time" in the novel underscores the link between folkloric metaphysics and this literary device:

> We may take it for granted that moments of adventure-time, all these "suddenlys" and "at just that moments," cannot be foreseen with the help of analysis, study, wise foresight, experience, etc., alone. Such things are better understood through fortune-telling, omens, legends, oracular predictions, prophetic dreams and premonitions. (95)

Thus, we see that folk beliefs, such as "omens," provide both aesthetic shape and a metaphysical rationale to literary narratives.

These "rules" for the märchen, discussed by Holbek, Lüthi, and other critics, differ significantly from the narrative tendencies of the folk legend. While listeners and readers may sympathize with what the symbolic narratives of fairy-tales imply, the legend offers a story whose interest to an audience is not simply aesthetic, nor is the realism refracted by a symbolic presentation. Instead, the legend narrative is directly connected to a historical and local sense of reality. That is not to say, that legends do not have their own "codes" of meaning, but their texture is tangible to the degree that an audience may adopt an attitude of naive belief.

While fairy tales are folktales in which the marvelous is given without hesitation, legends purport to be historical and are meant to startle and provoke with their accounts of supernatural intrusions into the mundane world. Like the märchen, legends perform a communal function, articulating a range of traditional beliefs, as Timothy Tangherlini explains in Interpreting Legend—Danish Storytellers and Their Repertoires:

> Legend, typically is a traditional, (mono)episodic, highly ecotypified, localized and historicized narrative of past events told as believable in a conversational mode. Psychologically, legend is a symbolic representation of folk belief and reflects the collective experiences and values of the group to whose tradition it belongs. (22)

. Legends deal with real people--here we do not have anonymous princes and princesses but local heroes or common folk. We are not dealing here with heroic legends or hero tales in the sense of national mythological heritages such as Ireland's Cuchulain or Finn--such legends are nearly sacred, representing a glorified cultural

ethos, rather than the evolving traditions of local experience. Tangherlini's term "ecotypified" refers to how legends may adapt highly specific features which are particular to a specific region. Although studies such as Reidar Christiansen's The Migratory Legends have demonstrated that legends spread internationally, as of course märchen also do, certain legends are unique or so "highly ecotypified" that connecting them to the larger circulation of legends is dubious.

Closely associated with the legend is the memorat, which according to Reimund Kvideland and Henning Sehmsdorf's Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend "is defined as a personal story about a supranormal experience told by either the individual or a third person quoting him or her" (19). Some folklorists, such as Kvideland and Sehmsdorf, debate whether memorats eventually emerge as legends, but the process seems plausible enough.[32] Tell a memorat to enough people who repeat the story in their own words: the memorat becomes a legend, perhaps passing to a new generation.

It is in legends and memorats that we encounter what are often called superstitions and referred to as folk beliefs by folklorists. Folk beliefs are "unofficial" articles of faith in the invisible mechanics of reality. Thus, a superstition is a metaphysical belief that is not officially sanctioned by the authority of a dominant religion or secular power; indeed, many folk beliefs run counter to orthodox positions of Church, Empire, and University.

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[32] Kvideland and Sehmsdorf assert that "there is no empirical evidence documenting the evolution fromone genre to another." Reimund Kvideland, and Henning K. Sehmsdorf, Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1988) 20.

It is incorrect to assume that legends necessarily represent wholesale belief by an entire community in a particular folk belief--despite Tangherlini's assertion that a legend "reflects the collective experiences and values of the group [. . .]." In fact, in a single community there tends to be a variety of stances towards a single folk belief. In Patricia Lysaght's analysis of a storyteller, Jenny, in "Fairylore from the Midlands of Ireland" we see this dynamic clearly:

> For Jenny stories of supernatural phenomena such as the Pooka [. . .] were only myths told to frighten children in order to get them in out of the dark and to keep them away from dangerous places. [. . .] There are, however, certain aspects of the supernatural which she believes implicitly. These include the [. . .] banshee [. . .] she is convinced she has experienced both aural and visual manifestations of this death-messenger.[33]

Tradition-bearers express belief and disbelief over different folk beliefs based on their own particular critical discourse.

Skepticism is not unknown at a legend-telling session, which is a dialogic, rather than a monologic performance, as the märchen often is. Even Lady Gregory, who was known to censor what she considered overly graphic content from folk narratives, represents this dialogic component:

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[33] Patricia Lysaght, "Fairylore from the Midlands of Ireland," The Good People—New Fairylore Essays. ed. Peter Narváez, (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997) 28.

> Mr. Kelleher: [. . .] I saw one of them outside, and I brought him in and put him on the dresser, and he stopped in the house for a while, for about a week.
>
> Mrs. Kelleher: It was more than that, it was two or three weeks.
>
> Mr. Kelleher: Ah! maybe it was—I'm not sure. He was about fifteen inches high [. . .]. "[34]

The very disagreement over what seem to be minor details is fundamental to the nature of legend narrative, which Timothy Tangherlini in his analysis of legends asserts is a genre whose validity depends upon being "told as believable" (14). The debate over even the most petty details contributes to the realism of this "unofficial history of past events important to the tradition participants" (22).

In recordings of legend-telling sessions informants may contradict each other, but it is their very dialectic which ultimately contributes to the totality of the legend narrative, which may constantly expand with new rumors. The contribution of multiple voices and points of view works to establish authenticity for the supernatural in folk legends because it makes the standard for reality a discursive one--if a ghost is being discussed it becomes possible for that community. Lysaght's analysis of the storyteller, Jenny, provides explicit evidence that the discursive field of a legend-telling session does not have a clear standard of belief: "Jenny acknowledges that the lack of belief or ambivalent belief on her part, acts as a catalyst for, or a challenge to

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[34]This legend is presented in Henry Glassie's Irish Folk Tales, but is originally from Lady Gregory's Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland (1920).

her ability, because in many narrating situations, she is unsure about the belief position of her audience."[35]

Unfortunately, in the nineteenth century, collectors of fairy tales and legends were often less concerned with representing the voice and attitudes of the folk communities and more intent on accumulating the narrative plots and beliefs, rather than rendering the oral performance of these materials. More recent transcriptions of collectors represent the interaction of different voices in a legend-telling session. For example, in one account of the fairies from 1955 we find first the husband of a family tells of seeing a fairy, then the wife, and "Other Voices" interrupt to assert "The Sma' Glen" when Bella Higgins falters in her recollection of the spot.[36] The legend text therefore represents the voices of several informants and these different voices comprise a composite narration through their dialogue, expanding, even through contradictions, the narrative body. Fiction influenced by legend narratives continue this dialogue by offering numerous characters' perspectives on the supernatural within a single story.

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[35] Lysaght 37.

[36] This legend is from Katherine Briggs's Dictionary of British Folk-Tales—Part B Folk Legends (Vol.1, p. 389)--"True" Stories about Fairies: III.

The Relevance of Fairy Tales and Legends to Fantasy and the Literary Fantastic

The tension between the anomalous and the banal in legends clearly identifies the folk genre as the traditional root for the literary fantastic. Similar to a legend's proof of the supernatural through attention to details of the natural, when nineteenth century writers of the literary fantastic turned to supernatural materials calculated to disturb their audiences, they often sought an analogous realism through epistolary and documentary styles. In Frankenstein we have the journal-like letters of Captain Walton sent to his sister which contain the further narratives of Frankenstein and the monster. Mary Shelley's device of the frame-story of the explorer, who appears disinterested in the forbidden knowledge that Frankenstein cultivates and the monster exemplifies, adds credibility to these internal voices. In Dracula, Bram Stoker achieves a greater step in narrative verisimilitude by including, as Clive Leatherdale in Dracula--The Novel and the Legend reports: "a compendium of diary entries, letters, ship's logs, newspaper reports, and spoken testimony recorded on to a phonograph" (79).

Just as "realistic" fantastic narratives display rhetorical features of legends, so too do Victorian fairy tales and other literary appropriations of märchen (and indeed märchen themselves) present the fantastic for specific rhetorical purposes. In order to appreciate the nuances of these narrative choices, one must view such texts in relation to their folkloric precedents that have helped shape their present discursive

form, no matter how parodic or sentimental. As Bakhtin remarks in "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," "'autographed' literature is a mere drop in an ocean of anonymous folk literature."[37] These unofficial anonymous works comprise a legacy of aesthetic and cultural standards that complicate and challenge the status of canonical claims to narrative sovereignty. The sheer size of this tradition is not to be underestimated; Richard Dorson points out that in Ireland alone the "archives of the Irish Folklore Commission" hold "a million and a half manuscript pages of traditions taken directly from the lips of their tellers."[38] Consider then the international armies of storytellers whose lips have never reached the modern preservation of folk collectors who wielded pen and tape recorder. Those performers have had an immense impact on their listeners' conceptions of what a popular narrative is, as well as helping to shape official literary genres and styles.

If one is turned away from considering the role of folklore in post-Renaissance literature by Walter Benjamin's assertion in "The Storyteller" that the novel "neither comes from oral tradition nor goes into it," one risks ignoring the dialogic aspects of literary prose that commune with traditional culture.[39] Bakhtin in fact asserts in "Epic and Novel" that the "novel's roots must ultimately be sought in

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[37] M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 160.

[38] Dorson qtd. in forward to O'Sullivan, Sean, trans., Folktales of Ireland (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) v.

[39] Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968) 87.

folklore."[40] Bakhtin emphasizes the impact of folk culture's forms of parody, folkloric conceptions of space, time, and identity, and the diversity of folk language on the development of the novel. His claim that the "novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" underscores the hybrid nature of language and meaning in the novel (262).

In fact, any prose which engages in "double-voiced discourse" (324) by representing the "speech" of another (308), enacts a similar rendering of novelistic "social stratification"(290)--the authoritative author channels multiple voices, of diverse social classes and cultures, which undermine the stability of his or her own discursive rule. Such subversion challenges the universal applicability of Bakhtin's assertion that a writer "can make use of language without wholly giving himself up to it, he may treat it as semi-alien or completely alien to himself, while compelling language ultimately to serve all his own intentions" (299). Writers who seek to appropriate folklore for their own intentions may unwittingly invoke specific folk beliefs and motifs of folk narratives that exert such an ideological force upon the work that they may not be wholly dispelled by ironic distance.

The subversive power of folklore furthers its discursive link with fantasy, despite William Bascom's insistence that folklore is conformist in "Four Functions of Folklore":

> folklore operates within a society to insure conformity to the accepted cultural norms, and continuity from generation through its role in

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[40] Bakhtin 38.

> education and the extent to which it mirrors culture. To the extent to which folklore contrasts with the accepted norms and offers socially acceptable forms of release through amusement or humor and through creative imagination and fantasy, it tends to preserve the institutions form direct attack and change. There is no difficulty of course in finding instances in folklore where laziness, complacency or the lack of ambition and initiative are condemned, but are there any which suggest that the individual destroy or even disregard the institutions and conventions of his society?[41]

The answer to Bascom's question is yes. Not only do many British folk tales include "instances" of "laziness" being rewarded, but they also feature marriages which are not endorsed conventionally--people of the lower class marrying far above them. In addition, there are examples of regicide, patricide, matricide, and pacts with the devil that result in profits without punishment. Do such cases not indicate a theoretical disregard for the absolute authority of ruling social conventions? Bascom offers a closed system similar to New Historical models of subversion and containment wherein artistic representations seeming to rebel against official power are dismissed as ultimately conformist, since art, the view is, comprises an "outlet" that, as Bascom, asserts "tends to preserve the institutions from direct attack and change." There are numerous instances of using folklore for subversive purposes; Brian Attebery mentions two such occasions in "The Politics (If Any) of Fantasy":

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[41] Bascom, William. "Four Functions of Folklore," Journal of American Folklore 167 (1954): 349.

> Is the use of folk beliefs in a fantasy a political act? It certainly seems to be when the beliefs in question are currently held by millions of Moslems and the use is in a fantasy called *The Satanic Verses*. [. . .] Before the overthrow of Ceauçescu in Romania, practically the only sign that a rebellion was brewing was the existence of a cycle of "Our Leader" jokes.[42]

Regardless of one's position on folklore's ultimate relation to institutional authorities, the use of folkloric material in literature presents a significant challenge to authorial authority and aesthetic unity. Bakhtin describes the speaker in a novel as an "*ideologue*, and his words are always *ideologemes*. A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world"--we may extend this view in particular to the integration of folklore in prose (333). The inclusion of folkloric material that clashes with the prevailing view of the speaker or narrator orchestrates a symphony of fragmentation. Like so many shards of different-colored glass these folk beliefs and motifs offer a kaleidoscope of ideologemes--variegated perspective of "the world"--and readers, depending on their familiarity with such ideologemes, will find themselves beholding new visions, perhaps unsought and unseen by the author. Regardless of authorial intentions, when appropriated elements of folklore conflict ideologically to a sufficient degree with their literary context the instability results in the literary fantastic. What ensues is an interpretive crisis that poses diverse cultural

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[42] Brian Attebery, "The Politics (If Any) of Fantasy," Modes of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Twelfth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts eds. Collins, Robert A. and Robert A. Latham (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991) 2-3.

belief systems against each other. To analyze this "interpretative crisis" is in effect to answer the fundamental question: how does supernatural folklore function in a narrative of the literary fantastic?

Answering this question demands close scrutiny of particular treatments of folk narratives in 19th century narratives of the fantastic. A completely thorough examination of the folkloric dynamics of every instance of the literary fantastic is of course beyond the scope of this study. Instead, we will focus on a significant sample of authorial appropriations of the main categories of folk narrative that have been adapted to the literary fantastic--märchen and legend. Such a project provides a sufficiently broad range of examples from which to abstract general features of these culturally dialogic productions, as well as offering enough variety to reveal divergent aspects by specific authors.

Thus, the structural presentation of the dissertation follows a generic division that intends first to separate the major categories of supernatural folk narratives and proceed--by observing the incarnations of märchen and legend in literature--from the theoretical definition of the "marvelous" to the more ambiguous "uncanny" and "fantastic." Inevitably, however, this study reveals the breakdown of strict generic categories as well as the explosion of absolute cultural identities. What is unreal and real in these narratives becomes just as complicated as what folk beliefs are espoused or rejected in low, mainstream, and elite Victorian society. First we look at Victorian literary fairy-tales and fantasies--both of which are modeled after the marvelous tendencies of the märchen, though the fantasies also include features of the legend

(Chapters 2-5). Second, we consider primarily how writers have integrated the narrative dynamics of legends and the metaphysical aspects of folk beliefs (Chapters 6-9). Third, having analyzed multiple currents at work in the writing of the folkloric fantastic, we turn to the Celtic literary Renaissance (Chapters 10-11), and assess the impact of nationalism on the literary rendering of folklore.

Ideologies, Interpretation, and Rhetoric of the Folkloric Fantastic

Hermeneutically, what constitutes fantasy is complicated by a reader's perspective, and perspectives of what is possible, probable, and real inevitably vary considerably. For instance the miracles of the Bible are pure fantasy or symbolic representations to many non-Christians, or skeptical Christians, but a historical record to other groups of believers. Clearly one's cultural and temporal environments have much bearing on one's interpretative positions. While the presentation of demonology in performances of Marlowe's Faustus caused "real" concerns and hallucinations among some of his contemporary audience members, "on at least one occasion [. . .] spectators reported seeing an extra (and implicitly "real") devil appear," modern presentations of the play carry no such anxiety, except perhaps to certain fundamentalist viewers.[43] Likewise, much that could be greeted with entertained reactions in the city, would be treated with fear and suspicion in the

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[43] Emily C. Bartels, "Authorizing Subversion: Strategies of Power in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus," Renaissance Papers 1989, ed. Joseph A. Porter and Dale B.J. Randall (Kentucky: Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1989) 66.

Victorian rural districts; this no longer holds as true today due to mass media outlets that exert assimilative effects on popular beliefs.[44]

Besides the influence of cultural, historical and social positions on one's perspective of the fantastic, what is "unreal" also depends on the developmental, geographical, and national positions of the postulated object in relation to the observer, as Tolkien points out regarding belief in ogres:

> A child may well believe a report that there are ogres in the next county; many grown-up persons find it easy to believe of another country; and as for another planet, very few adults seem to imagine it as peopled, if at all, by anything but monsters of iniquity (62).

Similarly, in literary stories involving supernatural folklore, a lack of metaphysical consensus contributes to the literary fantastic. Thus, the literary fantastic is often an interpretative crisis that results from the narrative's staging of conflicted cultural perspectives. In narratives of the folkloric fantastic, these cultural tensions are often polarized by class because folk beliefs were generally believed to be only subscribed to by the working classes--particularly the rural workers: the peasantry. Rationalism was generally regarded as one of the defining features of the

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[44] Frances Dolan suggests a similar point regarding Richard Broome's and Thomas Heywood's The Late Lancashire Witches (1634); the play "may have helped an urban elite define itself through its ability to laugh at what the vulgar might find threatening." Frances Dolan, Dangerous Familiars--Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 223. However, Nathaniel Tomkyns, a contemporary spectator of the play in 1634, observation of "a greater apparance of fine folke gentmen and gentweomen then I had thought" at the play may also indicate that rural folk culture transcends class. Tomkyns discovers men and women of a higher class than the "rude multitude" are interested in witches because they're familiar with the belief system. Further empirical research will help settle such questions. Herbert Berry, "The Globe Bewitched and

educated upper and middle classes; peasants were superstitious creatures due to their ignorance. Representations of supernatural folklore in Victorian literature often figure as a class-based dichotomy between lower-class ignorance and upper class sophistication, although aforementioned evidence indicates that there were beliefs that transcended class in actuality.

Religious partisanship as well as intellectual condescension influenced not only the tone of folklorists, but writers who appropriated folklore for their literary narratives. The divided mind of a folklorist like "Hone the rationalist, disgusted with superstitious credulities" who Dorson explains found himself at odds with "Hone the ethnologist, intrigued by popular antiquities" is a personality model that appears again and again in folkloric literature of the fantastic (39). Self-consciousness that there was something immoral, ignorant, irrational, or simply unrespectable in contemplating supernatural folklore permeates the majority of authors who most obviously deal with the fairy tale and legend. Examples range from Sheridan Le Fanu's reluctant rationalist narrators who are confounded with supernatural manifestations of folk beliefs, to William Carleton's argument against a contemporary legend about a ghost on the grounds that the supposed reason for the apparition's manifestation ran counter to "becoming notions of God."[45]

El Hombre Fiel" Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England--An Annual Gathering of Research Criticism, and Reviews (New York: AMS Press, 1984) 212-214.

[45] See chapter five for a more detailed discussion of this episode and Carleton's complex attitudes towards his own native traditions. William Carleton, Tales and Sketches, Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of the Irish Peasantry. 1845. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980) 70.

Ultimately the various literary productions of the fantastic drawing from folk narratives are examples of an unstable cultural synthesis. Industrialism, economics, empire, politics--virtually the whole of Victorian society--is engaged in these narratives, shaped both by the innovative artistic vision of an individual author and the chorus of implied voices from folkloric tradition. Just as Andrew Lang sought to find scientific evidence for the experiential dynamics that led to a memorat--a position that David Hufford would later suggest is not only respectable but essential for greater cultural understanding--so Le Fanu presents his "scientific" metaphysician, Dr. Hesselius, who systematically combats irrationally perplexing spiritual beliefs. In other words science and spirituality mixed in both theoretical and artistic formulations in the Victorian era in an effort to construct authoritative representations and interpretations of anomalous experiences.

Science did not rout superstition any more than industrialism altogether destroyed folklore or realism destroyed fantasy; in literature, as well as occultism, science and reason interacted with popular belief. Just as literary fairy tales melded traditional motifs and beliefs with ironic sophistication that depended on a sense of reality so too ghost stories, like those by Le Fanu or Carleton, evoked the literary fantastic by posing folk beliefs against elite conventions of rationality. Occultism and the folkloric fantastic were both attempts to focus on a new cultural equilibrium by first revealing disruptions in official paradigms. For example, Bulwer-Lytton's interest in spiritualism was largely driven by a desire to see the church "reconcile its teachings concerning the supernatural phenomena of the universe with the revelations of science" (Porter 83). Likewise, just as Bulwer-Lytton hoped in spiritualism to

remedy the divisive split between science and religion, Dickens believed the form of the fairy-tale offered balance to a nation that in "an utilitarian age" risked losing its imagination.[46]

The tensions between unofficial and official culture that manifest in these works of the folkloric fantastic are fundamentally issues of social power. Similarly, the opposition to experiential spiritualism--the underlying discourse of folk beliefs--is the result of the dynamics of social power, as David Hufford explains in "Beings Without Bodies: An Experience-Centered Theory of the Belief in Spirits:

> official culture in the Western world has been increasingly opposed to spiritual beliefs [. . .] since the Enlightenment. [. . .] folk belief has been under even greater official pressure than institutional religion, because folk belief consistently refers to spiritual events erupting into the everyday world: ghostly visits, angelic assistance, answers to prayer" (25-26).

Hufford emphasizes that despite charges of irrationality and official contempt personal supernatural folk narratives--memorats--are still highly frequent. He asserts that this prevalent narrative phenomenon despite censorious pressures supports his "experiential source theory" against the "cultural source hypothesis" (28). Hufford claims the continuity of memorats suggest they depend on "core experiences" that belie derivation from cultural influences alone--particularly in a culture that ostensibly condemns such beliefs.(28). Hufford points out that many memorats of supernatural experience narrate cross-cultural phenomena--whether subjective or not-

-such as out-of-body experiences, the incubus or "Mara," and visits by ghosts of relatives. In addition Hufford cites examples of optical theories that support sightings of mermaids and mermen--discussed in his study of the Mara: The Terror That Comes in the Night (ix-xiv).

Andrew Lang, in his "Protest of a Psycho-Folklorist" insisted like Hufford on the need to consider the possible experience-centered aspects of folklore: "As soon as contemporary evidence of honourable men avers that the belief reposes on a fact, Folklore drops the subject. [. . .] I don't care what the cause is, from sleight of hand to the action of demons. [. . .] If Mr. Clod explains all by a disordered liver, then a disordered liver is the origin of a picturesque piece of folklore" (215). Inquiring minds such as Hufford and Lang's wish to know--and this very preoccupation with the causes of "picturesque" traditions is an influential strand in nineteenth century literary treatments of supernatural traditions. Discerning the truth of these strange matters motivates many a narrator in Le Fanu's ghost stories as well as Carleton's long analysis of rational causes for apparitions.

The primary result of all these writers' use of folklore to produce the literary fantastic is that the supernatural folklore of legends and memorats complicates the literary fantastic by rendering "ground rules" indeterminate because of folklore's challenge to the ideologies of the official cultural perspectives of Britain. Furthermore, folklore alters the very framework of the definition of the fantastic because the "supernatural" is something altogether conceptually different in folk metaphysics than in the dominant secular or religious systems. Similarly, literary

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[46] Charles Dickens, "Frauds on the Fairies," Household Words 1 Oct. 1853: 97.

fairy tales and fantasies modeled on the "marvelous" aspects of the märchen create aesthetic instability. Uneasy with the marvelous--particularly because of its association with folk metaphysics--Victorian writers used humor and strategic distance to adapt the patterns of folk fairy tales to their own authorial and ideological ends. All these works of the literary fantastic use aspects of supernatural folklore and, by so doing, present voices and perspectives of unofficial culture--imaginative, political, and spiritual claims that contradict the mindset of rational, religious, and imperial power.

The literary fantastic itself with its profound ambiguity serves as a model for the divided mind of the Victorian era--caught between decaying faith and uneasy enthusiasm for the juggernaut of industrial and scientific progress that thunders ever onward. The hesitation of the fantastic in these texts extends beyond the borders of the page. While the authors of these texts of the folkloric fantastic tend to stage conflicts between normative reality and fantasy, as well as folk belief and enlightened rationalism, the dialogic components of the narratives work against such reductive dualism. Instead of a strict dichotomy between the ignorance of the folk and the wisdom of the culturally elite, what emerges is a picture of the Victorian mind at odds, or rather, in animated conversation with itself.

The folkloric elements of these fantastic narratives express the many fissures in the Victorian mind that were splitting open from the shock of cultural changes that had struck since the Enlightenment. The range of representations in these stories varies from broad cultural concerns such as class tensions, domestic harmony, political uncertainty, imperialism, xenophobia, the spiritual significance of a nature of

"red in tooth and claw," and the destructiveness of industrialism, to specific aesthetic questions of what constitutes valuable narrative art. These folkloric narratives offer both familiar and startling threads of discourse that are woven inextricably into the Victorian tapestry. These are not escapist dreams that deny or displace repressed fears and anxieties; these are stories that represent focused articulations of concerns close to the Victorian heart, mind, and soul.

Chapter Two

Victorian Literary Fairy Tales: Their Folklore and Function

What distinguishes Victorian literary fairy tales above all from the folk fairy tale tradition is that these works are national and contemporary. This may seem like a patently obvious point; however, one of the main features of volksmärchen is that their exact cultural space and era are abstract and "timeless." At least, other than a tendency towards a vague medieval era, they do not always discernibly belong to a clearly specific epoch, culture, or nation.[1] Instead, the majority of these Victorian stories present issues of their time: industrialism, utilitarianism, the Woman Question, religious and moral didacticism, socialism--the same oft-discussed topics that figure in the many novels and essays addressing the social conditions of the Victorians. Thus, writers of Victorian literary fairy tales invest ideological agendas in the märchen form, merging magic with modernity.

The convergence of the marvels of the fairy tale tradition and the divisive social issues of contemporary life produces fantastic results. Victorian writers of the fairy tale are earnest about their ideologies and aesthetics, but uncomfortably aware of the arguably nonsensical trappings of the fairy tale medium. Perhaps inevitably,

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[1] Linda Dégh emphasizes underlying medieval social structure in folk tales: "The most striking characteristic of the traditional tale lies in the fact that the social institutions and concepts which we discover in it reflect the age of feudalism." Linda Dégh, Folktales and Society—Story-Telling in a Hungarian Peasant Community. trans. Emily M. Schossberger. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989) 65.

using an ancient and traditional genre leads to anachronisms, humor, and a general tendency towards the absurd. Victorian fairy tales most often adhere to at least the superficial aspects of the medieval and feudal ambiance which pervades the folk fairy tale tradition--and their generic conventions often clash with the ideological designs of the writers. To resolve the tension between innovation and tradition, Victorian writers of fairy tales use various narrative strategies to emphasize the relevance and timeliness of a genre burdened with traditional baggage, or worse-- inviting charges of immorality and merely juvenile interest.

The Two Traditions--Volksmärchen and Kunstmärchen

The Victorian Era experienced an intensification of interest in folk narratives that was part of a longer cycle of interest in folklore that manifested in two primary ways: collecting oral narratives and imitating or rewriting oral narratives. The folk and broadside ballads that had helped shaped the Gothic movement had continued to stimulate poets and writers of the Romantic and the macabre all over Western Europe.[2] Goethe, Chamisso, Hoffmann, Novalis, and other French and German

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[2] G. Malcolm Laws, Jr. in The British Literary Ballad--A Study in Poetic Imitation asserts that features generally associated with Gothicism and Romanticism are in fact aspects of archaic balladry, which were adopted by the two literary schools: "In fact, many of those qualities by which we identify romantic literature (supernaturalism, emotionalism, emphasis on adventure, Gothicism, and so on) are perfectly embodied in certain of the most memorable folk ballads)" (58). Neil Cornwell in The Literary Fantastic fails to address the role of traditional ballads on the Storm and Stress movement and the Gothic; instead he credits the motif of the revenant bridegroom to Bürger. While Bürger certainly popularized this figure in literary circles, he did not originate it by any means: "The latter's ballad *Lenore*

Romantics had experimented with some of the motifs of the fairy tale in their kunstmärchen, but the British literati had little to do with this movement. For instance, Sir Walter Scott, while praising Hoffmann's literary talent, objected to what he considered the undisciplined fantastic qualities of Hoffmann; in Scott's opinion Hoffmann's creations bordered on madness and affronted "'English severity of taste.'"[3]

The English mindset was not about to accept the new medium of the Continental Romantic avant garde--the kunstmärchen were generally intentionally subversive of bourgeois ideals and psychologically disturbing with their elaborate hyperbolic descriptions which far exceeded in sheer volubility the more concise actual folk tales.[4] Zipes asserts in Breaking the Magic Spell that the kunstmärchen often is concerned with a rebellion against the prevailing social order: "[the]

(1773) provided European and American Gothic with the archetypal figure of the revenant-bridegroom" (59).

[3] Neil Cornwell, The Literary Fantastic: From Gothic to Postmodernism (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) 5.

[4] Jack Zipes asserts six distinguishing aspects between the kunstmärchen of the German Romantic tradition and "the folk tale" Jack Zipes, Breaking the Magic Spell—Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979) 65. Zipes claims that "there is no prescribed form of style" for a kunstmärchen and the "narrative is often multi-dimensional in contrast to the one-dimensional concrete perspective" of the volksmärchen and the "impossibility of bridging the gap between self and existence is stressed" (65). Thus, the kunstmärchen of the German Romantics subverts the organization of the volksmärchen as though it were a classical form against which they were rebelling, even as they paradoxically were adopting what they considered its creative essence. The alienation of the hero in the kunstmärchen is directly opposed to the universal integration of "interconnectedness" which Lüthi hails as one of the hallmarks of the volksmärchen: "The hero is the lucky one. It is as if invisible ties linked him with the secret powers or mechanisms that shape the world and fate" (57). Rather than being an exile from "existence" the folk hero is a charged particle of destiny, ultimately united with whatever numinous powers control the world of the volksmärchen.

protagonist, generally a male, is displaced, becomes homeless without community. His goal is to transcend the alienating world [. . .] even create a new world more responsive to his needs" (65). The romantic vision of a "new world" clashed with the self-satisfied ideology of utilitarian progress: "the utilitarians did indeed view the Romantics as "enemies of the Enlightenment" [. . .] because they questioned the Protestant ethos and the prescriptions of order conceived by the utilitarians to establish the good society on earth."[5] Thus, the political subversion of the kunstmärchen was doubly distasteful to the culture of British enlightenment that already eschewed folk fairy tales. In When Dreams Came True--Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition Zipes identifies "Puritan hostility towards amusement" as a primary characteristic of the late blooming of the "fairy tale as a genre" in England (11).

Utilitarians attacked the fantasy content as dangerously irrational and Puritans railed against the lack of Christian values; Puritanical Utilitarians inveighed against both features. As Karen Michalson observes in Victorian Fantasy Literature--Literary Battles With Church and Empire it was these evangelicals who were most hostile to works of fantasy and fairy tales--which represented imaginative excesses even beyond the "dangers of novel reading" (23):

> The single major objection to novels underlying nearly all evangelical ranting against them was that novels presented a false vision of life. In this sense evangelicals shared common ground with the more secular

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[5] Jack Zipes, ed., Victorian Fairy Tales--the Revolt of the Fairies and Elves (New York: Methuen, 1987) xv.

> Whig and Tory reviewers when these reviewers used Enlightenment ideas of truth and rationality as standards of literary excellence. [. . .] Besides their fantasy elements, moralists objected to their patent amorality. Fairy tale protagonists tend to acquire worldly success through luck, obedience to an otherworldly being such as an ogre, or through cunning and trickery, but almost never through Christian virtue. The ethical content of such tales is embodied in the two blatantly cynical *moralités* which Perrault chose to add to his 1697 version of "Cinderella." It pays to have charm and it helps one's prospects for advancement to have a fairy godmother. (24-25)

In emphasizing the tension between fairy tale morality and Christian virtue Michalson partly misrepresents the folk fairy tale, by insisting that the genre entirely lacks anything resembling Christian morality. Zipes makes a similar misrepresentation in Breaking the Magic Spell. Perhaps due to his objection to the bourgeoisie's imposition of its own values--"order, discipline, industry, modesty, cleanliness" (17)--on the fairy tale form, Zipes makes the sweeping generalization that the fairy-tale world is a "realm without morals" (29):

> In essence, the meaning of the fairy tales can only be fully grasped if the magic spell of commodity production is broken and if the politics and utopian impulse of the narratives are related to the socio-historical forces which distinguished them first as a pre-capitalist folk form (volksmärchen) in an oral tradition and which then gave rise in

> Germany at the end of the eighteenth century to a bourgeois art form (kunstmärchen) that has it own modern literary tradition. (20)

In fact morality is one of the primary features of folk narratives, though folk morality, like folk metaphysics, is often misunderstood and demands further analysis. The demonstration of such charitable qualities as compassion and hospitality is a common feature of the hero or heroine of fairy tales. Indeed, in Bengt Holbek's Interpretation of Fairy Tales—Danish Folklore in a European Perspective, he points out the importance of the hero's maturity being tested in Move II, the donor sequence: "In the donor sequence, the hero reacts to the test as a mature and responsible person and is rewarded accordingly" (414).[6] And, part of this maturity often depends on the outward display of compassion: "The hero is put to a test; he passes the test, showing generosity; he is rewarded" (334). Certainly, there are many folk tales which include examples of guile and cleverness rewarded, or even sloth for that matter, but those features are generic to a degree, and should not obscure the fact that magnanimity is often the sole quality which the fairy-tale hero must display.

To clarify for readers how protagonists in volksmärchen demonstrate maturity through compassion and often as a result are rewarded by a high-status marriage, here is an English folktale,"The Little Red Hairy Man," collected in the late nineteenth century from Wensely, Derbyshire:

> Once upon a time there was a lead miner in Derbyshire who had three sons, and he was very poor. One day the eldest son said he would go and seek his fortune, so he packed up his kit, and took

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[6] A summary of Holbek's structural "moves" is outlined later in this chapter.

something to eat with him and set off. After he had walked a long way he came to a wood, and being very tired he sat down upon a large stone by the wayside, and began to eat the bread and cheese that he had brought with him. Whilst he was eating he thought he heard a voice. So he looked about him and saw a little red man coming out of the wood covered with hair, and about the height of nine penn'orth of copper. He came close up to the eldest son, and asked for something to eat. But instead of giving him food the eldest son told him to be off, and kicked his foot out at the little man and hurt him, so that he went back limping into the wood.

Then the eldest son went on his way, and after a long time came home again as poor as he had left.

After the eldest son had returned, the second son said that he would go out and seek his fortune. When he came to the wood he sat down to rest and eat, and whilst he was eating the little red hairy man came out and begged for some food. But the second son went on eating until he had done, and threw the little man the crumbs and bits that were left. Then the little man told the second son to go and try his luck in a mine that he would find in the middle of the wood.

So the second son went to look for the mine, and when he had found it he said to himself, "Why, it's only an old worn-out mine, and I'm not going to waste my time over that." so he set off on his way, and after a long time came home again as poor as he had left.

Now by this time Jack, the youngest son, had grown up, and when the second son came home he said to his father, "I will go now and seek my fortune." So when he was ready he left home in the same way that his brothers had done. And when he came to the wood and saw the stone on the wayside, he sat down on it, and pulled out his bread and cheese and began to eat, and in a few minutes he heard somebody say, "Jack, Jack." So he looked about him and saw the same little red hairy man that his brothers had seen. The little man said he was hungry, and asked Jack to give him some of his bread and cheese, and Jack said he would and welcome. So he cut him a good lump and told him he could have more if he wanted. Then the little man came close up to Jack and told him that he only wanted to try him to see what sort he was.

"And now," said the little man, "I will help thee to get thy fortune, but thou must do as I tell thee." So then he told Jack to go and find the old mine in the middle of the wood.

So Jack went, and when he got to the mine he found the little man had got there before him.

The opening of the mine was inside an old hut, and over the pit, in the middle of the floor, was a windlass. So the little man told Jack to get into the bucket, and began to let him down. So Jack went down, and down, and down, till at last he came to the bottom, when he got out and found himself in a beautiful country.

Whilst he was looking round about him the little man stood by him and gave him a sword and armour, and told him to go and set free a princess who was imprisoned in a copper castle in that country. And then the little man threw a small copper ball on the ground, and it rolled away, and Jack followed it until it came to a castle made of copper, and flew against the door. Then a giant comes out of the castle, and Jack fought with him and killed him, and set the princess free, and she went back to her own home.

When Jack came back the little man told him that he must go to a silver castle and set another princess free. So the little man threw down a silver ball, and Jack followed it till it came to a splendid silver castle, and struck against the door so loudly that the giant who lived there came out to see what it was. And then Jack fought with him and killed him, and set the princess free.

Now some time after Jack had set free the princess in the silver castle, the little man said that he must now try to set another princess free who lived in a golden castle. So Jack said he would, and the little man threw down a golden ball, and it began to roll away, and Jack followed it until it came in sight of a magnificent gold castle, and then it went faster and faster until it struck the castle door, and made the giant who lived there come out to see what was the matter. Then Jack and the giant fought, and the giant nearly killed Jack, but at last Jack killed the giant and then went into the castle and found a beautiful lady

there. Jack fell in love with her, and brought her to the little man, and he married them, and helped Jack to get as much gold from the gold castle as he wanted. And then he helped Jack and his wife up the mine, and they went to Jack's home.

Jack built a fine house for himself and another for his father and mother. But his two brothers were envious, and went off to the mine to see if they could not get some gold as well as Jack. And when they got into the hut they quarreled as to who should go down first, and as they were struggling to get into the bucket the rope broke, and they both fell to the bottom of the pit. As they did not come back Jack and his father went to seek them. And when they got to the mine they saw that the sides of the pit had given way, and blocked it up. And the hut had fallen down, and the place was covered up for ever.[7]

This is a fairly modest folktale in terms of rhetorical prowess; there are Irish wonder tales that cover tens of pages full of rich descriptions and complicated incidents. Yet, this English tale illustrates the primary patterns of how a folktale hero once he has proven his compassion is guaranteed to be successful. Jack succeeds by the quality that W.H. Auden calls "the very unmilitant virtue of humble good nature. He [the fairy tale hero] is the one who stops to share his crust with the old beggar woman or free the trapped beast, thereby securing magical aid, when his proud and

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[7] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Part A Folk Narratives Vol.1 (London: Routledge, 1991) 393-394. As Briggs acknowledges, the tale first appeared in Sidney Oldall Addy's Household Tales, with other Traditional Remains collected from York, Lincoln, Derby, and Nottinghab counties and published in 1895.

impatient rivals pass by and in consequence come to grief."[8] Such is the case here. This Helper, to whom Jack proves himself by giving him bread and cheese in the donor sequence, not only shows Jack the road to fortune, but supplies him with armaments, tools for guidance, all the riches he desires, and marries him to the woman he loves.

Jack is not passive despite his agreement to do what the little man tells him; his acceptance of this strange being and other marvelous events merely identifies the genre as truly that of the märchen where wonders are not questioned when they occur. Not one of the brothers considers it peculiar that a little man "covered with hair, and about the height of nine penn'orth of copper" should ask for food. Nor does Jack question how this little man knows his name; we know that it's because the helper has singled out the chosen hero. Once sanctioned morally by this helper Jack is galvanized towards impressive physical actions: he fights for the cause of liberating princesses and fights well.

In this tale the romantic relations are barely present; the hero does not rely on a maiden to offer him supernatural aid, for he has the little man, who gives all that is needed to the morally validated hero. The marginal female role is also an example of the "princess locked in a tower" genre that generates contemporary protests to representations of the feminine in fairy tales, yet observe that the first two princesses have no trouble getting home by themselves once they're released. These two princesses that Jack releases are not prizes for Jack at all; there is the implication,

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[8] W.H. Auden, "Interlude: The Wish Game," The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1962) 211-212.

however, that they were potentially the wives for his brothers, had they been of better character. The magnanimous rescue of these maidens highlights Jack's own good will, for he was promised no specific reward at all for risking his life three times, other than the vague promise of the little man to "help thee to get thy fortune [. . .]."

Jack comes of age; "Jack, the youngest son, had grown up," not only in the physical aspect, but mentally, emotionally, and vocationally as well. He demonstrates his skills to replace his father as a breadwinner for the family, who we learn is a "lead miner," "was very poor," and thus not of ideal sufficient socio-economic status. The adventures of Jack in the otherworld in the mine, even though they are marvelous details, underscore the fact that Jack himself is a miner's son, and he gets his fortune from a mine. In other words, the tale doesn't lose focus of the basic reality motivating the development of wish-fulfilling events that follow. Jack not only builds a "fine house for himself" but one "for his father and mother" as well; Jack shows his maturity by giving back to his personal communal sphere. He acts responsibly after reaping the rewards of recognizing that hospitality should be extended to those who need it, regardless of what use they might be to you. In fact, part of the role of the fantastic in this fairy tale is to supersede normative expectations of where success can be found: the miniscule man and the "old worn-out mine" contain possibilities that belie their meager exteriors. The tale subordinates material appearances to morality, reshaping reality according to a metaphysical system based on essential ethical values.

Clearly, folk fairy tales have ethical dimensions, yet puritanical concern with the supposed deficiency of morality in fairy tales has generated many of the revisions which critics from Dickens to Zipes have decried. Maria Tatar in The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales remarks that "Snow White became progressively sweeter and tidier as her story was translated into print and made its way from Germany to the United States"--where, we know that cleanliness is next to godliness (xix). The Grimms sanitized the rough materials of the "folk" in order to expand the market of their folk tale collection. The result of extensive editing was a "hybrid form of folklore and literature" which had "transformed adult folk materials" into bourgeois moralities (xxii). This alteration was the result of the Grimm's reaction to reviewers such as Albert Ludwig Grimm (not a relative, but a rival "collector of fairy tales") who had lambasted the Grimms' first edition as a "collection" that's "impossible to think [. . .] can be put in the hands of children" (16-17). Compare the ethos of the first edition, "to collect these tales in as pure a form as possible," and the accompanying *for mature audiences only* warning that "this or that might prove embarrassing and would be unsuitable for children" with the vanilla testament of the second edition: "it was also our intention that [. . .]the book serve as a manual of manners [. . .]we have carefully eliminated every phrase not appropriate for children" (214-217).

Not only do the Grimms take out the sex, and actually increase the violence, but they, as Zipes's inclusion of "industry" in his list of bourgeois values indicates above, "seized nearly every available opportunity to emphasize the virtue of hard work" (30). In other words the Grimms' heroes and heroines work harder than is

typical in folk tales. As for "compassion" Tatar insists that it is the hallmark of the heroes who are simpletons in the Grimms' tales who possess "compassion" which she claims is "typically reserved for the natural allies and benefactors of fairy-tale heroes" (88). Because Tatar, like Michalson and Zipes, is focusing on how redactors and editors--in this case the Grimms--have imposed bourgeois values, she misrepresents the fairy-tale protagonist as a hero traditionally distinguished only by brawn or brains:

> Although male fairy-tale figures have customarily been celebrated for their heroic feats, their greatest achievement actually rests on the passing of a character test. By enshrining compassion and humility, which --unlike intelligence and brute strength--are acquired characteristics rather than innate traits, the Grimms' tales make it clear to their implied audience (which gradually came to be adolescents) that even the least talented youth can rise to the top. (89-90)

Tatar's analysis of the implicit moralizing of the Grimms here is rhetorically persuasive, but should not efface the fact that folk tales included emphasis on compassion and humility long before the Grimms' interpolations.

The values of hospitality and gratitude that "The Little Red Hairy Man" (published in 1895) aptly demonstrates are part of a wide-ranging tradition internationally and historically. Examples range from Greek mythology where Hera appears "to Jason in the winter in the form of an old woman so as to put his kindness to a test. Like Saint Christopher with the Christ Child, he puts her on his shoulders

and carries her across the stream."[9] Animals, like the gods, fairies, and humans, also respond to compassion (tale-type 554 "The Grateful Animals"). Similarly to "The Little Red Hairy Man," in tales of grateful animals, as Stith Thompson reports--"the youngest of three brothers" is "the hero."[10] Punishments for unkindness are also international motifs (Q2 *Kind and Unkind*): the mother of Apollo and Artemis, Leto, turns rude villagers into frogs for their cruel treatment of her--muddying the waters so she can't drink. How can Tatar credibly claim that the Grimms are responsible for the primacy of the hero's " compassion and humility " when these elements clearly already existed in folk narratives? One specific example of a British folk tale demonstrating generosity preceding the Grimms' influence in Britain (1812) is "The Three Heads," where the good daughter of a king offers her rations to an old man and receives his magical advice, while her cruel step-sister earns his curse, due to her rudeness.[11] This Scottish tale was recorded in 1789 and demonstrates not only a clear precedent, but clarifies that British folk heroines were rewarded for charity and kindess as well as their male counterparts.

Regardless of the moral features of fairy tales of the oral tradition, it is true that Puritans denied any such value to these stories. Indeed, Zipes in his introduction to Victorian Fairy Tales—the Revolt of the Fairies and Elves asserts that the "social enforcement of the Puritan cultural code [. . .] led to the suppression of the literary fairy tale in England" which delayed the "flowering of the literary fairy tale for

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[9] Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951) 280.

[10] Thompson 56.

[11] Briggs 517-520.

children" in England "until the middle of the nineteenth century," in contrast to the eighteenth-century popularity of fairy tales in "France and Germany" (xiii). As mentioned earlier in Michalson's analysis of evangelical opposition to the irrationality of fairy tales, Zipes points out that "the literary institutionalization of the fairy-tale genre had to wait until the Romantic movement asserted the value of the imagination and fantasy at the end of the eighteenth century" (xiv).

It should come as little surprise that the translation of the Grimms' Kinder-und Hausmärchen (1812) led to the acceptance of the fairy tale form--for here were tales which had been specially treated for middle-class morality. In 1823 Edgar Taylor translated a section of the Grimms' work, replete with illustrations by George Cruikshank--who later makes his own moralizing fairy tales which Dickens assails. Zipes identifies this work of Taylor's as "the most important publication to stimulate an awakened interest in fairy tales for children *and* adults [. . .] German Popular Stories" (xvii). Taylor confronted Enlightenment prejudices against the imagination, and fairy tales in particular, in his introduction:

> The popular tales of England have been too much neglected . [. . .] Philosophy is made the companion of the nursery: we have lisping chemists and leading-string mathematicians; this is the age of reason, not of imagination; and the loveliest dreams of fairy innocence are considered as vain and frivolous. Much might be urged against this rigid and philosophic (or rather unphilosophic) exclusion of works of fancy and fiction. Our imagination is surely as susceptible of improvement by exercise, as our judgement or our memory; and so

> long as such fictions only are presented to the young mind as do not interfere with the important department of moral education, a beneficial effect must be produced by the pleasurable employment of a faculty in which so much of our happiness in every period of life consists. (xvii)

Taylor's defense of fairy tales underscores the deep cultural impression utilitarianism has made. Yet, despite his resistance to Enlightenment Reason, Taylor himself appeals to the utility of harnessing the imagination: he refers to the "beneficial effect" of this "faculty" and, like Bentham himself, he invokes collective wellbeing as a standard of value--"our happiness."

Furthermore, Taylor's perception of the "popular tales of England" seems tainted by a misplaced precious vision of fairy tales--probably partly the result of willful sentimentality as well as having read the Grimms' second edition, which while including plenty of violence emphasizes middle-class values and is basically devoid of sexuality. For instance, in the first edition, not only does the prince climb Rapunzel's golden hair, but we hear her later ask her custodial fairy why "my clothes are so tight and whey they don't fit me any longer"--the tale shamelessly reveals her pregnancy.[12] The fairy knows immediately at a glance exactly what has transformed Rapunzel. In contrast, as Tatar notes, in the second edition, "there is no indication that conception took place in the tower or, for that matter, that it took place at all."[13] But, as censorship in our contemporary culture continues to demonstrate, it is easier

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[12] Tatar 197.

[13] Tatar 45.

for moralists to overlook violence than sex. To use such a term as "fairy innocence" is clearly not to be reflecting on the fact, aptly observed by Tatar that in "fairy tales nearly every character--from the most hardened criminal to the Virgin Mary--is capable of cruel behavior" (5). Despite the importance of compassion in proving the worth of the hero or heroine, when it comes to the administration of punishment in a traditional tale, folk justice is inexorable.

Suffice to say, that debate over the morality of fairy tales raged within the early nineteenth century in England. One of the most vocal adversaries to fairy tales was Mrs. Trimmer, whom Michalson describes here:

> Sarah Trimmer, who advocated burning all fairy stories, used her *Guardian of Education* to review a new printing of "Cinderella," and stated that:
>
> > The terrific image which tales of this nature present to the imagination [. . .] injure the tender minds of children, by exciting unreasonable and groundless fears. Neither do the generality of tales of this kind supply any moral instruction level to the infantine capacity. (25)

Sarah Trimmer's hostility towards the imagination is typical of the post-Enlightenment emphasis on rationality; she overtly criticizes not the generation of "fears," but fears that are "unreasonable." In other words, the "image" of fairy tales does not conform to Trimmer's morally utilitarian and evangelical mindset. Trimmer, as Michalson points out, is not really opposed to scaring children. She herself wrote cautionary tales. Trimmer approves of using fear for what she considers a moral end:

> Acceptable evangelical children's literature was full of hell fire and dire warnings of the eternal torments which awaited naughty children, and it was often considered necessary to show young people realistic portraits of the darker aspects of life lest they take too much joy in the world around them and forget to adopt more sober Christian habits. (26)

Such overt moralizing within a realistic environment or a conventional theology was accepted as rational and moral, while the morally subversive fairy tales were to be burned.

As Michalson observes, Christian virtue is hardly the most distinguishable feature of fairy tales--and her perception resonates with the judgments of Sarah Trimmer and other so-called "champions of the anti-fairy-tale school" as described by Zipes, such as Mary Sherwood:

> Instruction when conveyed through the medium of some beautiful story or pleasant tale, more easily insinuates itself into the youthful mind than any thing of a drier nature; yet the greatest care is necessary that the kind of instruction should be perfectly agreeable to the Christian dispensation. Fairy-tales therefore are in general an improper medium of instruction because it would be absurd in such tales to introduce Christian principles as motives of action [. . .]. On this account such tales should be very sparingly used, it being

> extremely difficult, if not impossible, from the reason I have specified, to render them really useful.[14]

Once again we see that in the conception of Enlightenment evangelicals what is "useful" to a reader's moral understanding depends upon the degree to which material is subordinated to Christian values.

However, one must choose one's rhetorical propaganda carefully--that is what Sherwood is saying in so many words: the fairy tale is not the right sweetener to use for making students swallow the bitter pill of moral instruction. Do not make the mistake of believing that Sherwood is made of less stern stuff than Trimmer. Indeed, Michalson shows these two censorious Puritans are cut from the same cloth: "Mrs. Trimmer greatly admired Mary Martha Sherwood, whose extremely popular The Fairchild Family (1818) features a father showing decaying corpses to his children as a means of demonstrating the brevity of life" (26). Fear and horror are perfectly acceptable means of instruction if the end be a righteous one.

Besides Puritan and utilitarian hostility, Zipes points out in When Dreams Came True--Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition, that Romanticism came to Britain later than the continent. Likewise, he argues, that Romanticism's spirit of reform thus came later to Britain, which motivated English writers to create utopian worlds in fairy tales to criticize the real one: "Writers like Charles Dickens, Thomas Hood, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and William Thackeray were among the first to criticize the deleterious effects of the industrial revolution. [. . .] they all employed the fairy tale [. . .] to question the injustice and inequalities engendered by the social

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[14] Zipes, Victorian Fairy Tales xvii.

upheaval in England." (115). Thus, the English kunstmärchen was often the experimental and didactic vessel of reform.

While asserting the subversive potential of the literary fairy tale, Zipes does not fully consider how the volksmärchen represent at least as subtle a relation to the conventional power structure as the kunstmärchen. Zipes's oversight is somewhat puzzling given the general assertion in the very same book that folk tales may be either subversive or conservative: "Oral tales have served to stabilize, conserve, or challenge the common beliefs, laws, values, and norms of a group" (6). Though volksmärchen may not advocate revolution or insist that a hero actually relocate to the otherworld, they do illustrate the arbitrary and unjust exercise of power by authority figures, as well as advocating practically any means necessary for a deserving hero to overcome opposing worldly powers.

Thus, although the young hero or heroine may begin a tale alienated from the social structure at large, simply because the tale usually ends in a position of social harmony does not mean the volksmärchen endorses the submission of the downtrodden. The frequent marriages between the lower and upper classes in folk tales are one example of the inherent social subversion in the narrative ethics. Additionally, there is the common reversal of "the rules of male primogeniture that operate in a social organization," which U.C. Knoepflmacher identifies in Ventures into Childland--Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity as the theoretical resonance of the third and youngest son's incredible luck that is typical in folk tales (54). Volksmärchen offer hope and humor to those inextricably bound in a feudal system while the kunstmärchen stages a visionary repudiation of bourgeois conformity.

It was not until the Grimm brothers presented their collection of heavily edited and altered folktales, packaged for adults and children with intrusive bourgeois morality, that British readers and writers saw the fairy tale as a possible medium for new artistic expansion. Hans Christian Andersen set a further example how an author might invent his own fairy tales. While the Grimms maintained the guise of editors, Andersen was frank enough in his avowal of authorship. He was happy to acknowledge there was more of Andersen and less of the folk in his tales. Victorian authors soon began to try their hand at fashioning literary fairy tales which were acceptable to Victorian sensibilities and yet recognizable as part of the fairy tale tradition.

Before analyzing particular texts, one must first further consider the historical development of these various "traditions" involved in the creation of Victorian literary fairy tales. On the one hand, there are the folk fairy tales or wonder tales themselves (the volksmärchen or zaubermärchen--both are commonly called fairy tales) which constitute the folk tradition and have developed over a few thousand years. On the other hand, there are the numerous literary fairy tales, which by the eighteenth century had solidified into an elite tradition of their own.

These two "traditions" are not wholly distinct; historically the literary fairy tales and folk tales have mutually enriched each other--individual tales, as well as motifs, have gradually slipped from one category into the other. Many literary fairy tales take much of their plots from folk sources and graft contemporary morals and environs onto them. In turn, literary fairy tales have often found their way back into oral circulation through the medium of chapbooks as was the case with Perrault's

tales.[15] On the whole, it seems that many writers of Victorian literary fairy tales were only familiar with fairy tales as they had been presented in book form.

However, fairy tales and superstitions were still a living oral tradition. Dickens heard stories from his nurse. The Brontës--according to Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of the family--heard folk tales from their servants; and, we have evidence in Gaskell's own North and South that some wonder tales from Ireland were well known in England.[16] However, by and large, these writers have not autobiographically represented their ties to oral fairy tales and we are mainly limited to their use of earlier "book tales."

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[15] Zipes relates how the French literary fairy tales found their way into oral circulation and consequently generated demand for more printed versions: "Soon after the publication of the tales by D'Aulnoy, Perrault, L'Héritier, Galland, and others, they were reprinted in a series of chapbooks called the Bibliothèque Bleue, inexpensive volumes distributed by peddlers called *colporteurs* throughout France and central Europe to the lower classes. The fairy tales were often abridged; the language was changed and made more simple; and there were multiple versions, which were read to children and nonliterates. Many of these tales were then appropriated by oral storytellers so that the literary tradition became a source for the oral tradition. As a result of the increased popularity of the literary fairy tale as a chapbook, which had first been prepared by the acceptance of the genre at court, the literary fairy tale for children began to be cultivated." Jack Zipes, When Dreams Came True—Classical Fairy Tales and Their Traditions (New York: Routledge, 1999) 15.

[16] Dickens presents his "Nurse's Stories" in chapter fifteen of The Uncommercial Traveller. Q. D. Leavis refers briefly to the Brontë's exposure to folklore in her note to the twelfth chapter of Jane Eyre where Jane mistakes Rochester for the "Gytrash"--the spectral hound: "Mrs Gaskell tells us that 'All the grim superstitions of the North had been implanted in her [Charlotte] during her childhood by the servants who believed in them.' Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, ed. Q.D. Leavis (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 484. In North and South, Elizabeth Gaskell alludes to the tale of "Daniel O'Rourke" and his encounter with "the man-in-the-moon"--variants of this tale were collected by the famous folklore collector Thomas Croker in. Gaskell's usage suggests a wide recognition for this tale: "Margaret poured out the tea in silence, trying to think of something agreeable to say; but her thoughts made answer something like Daniel O'Rourke, when the man-in-the-moon asked him to get off his reaping-hook. The more you ax us, the more we won't stir.' Elizabeth Gaskell, North and South. (London: Everyman, 1993) 225.

But, this is not to leave folklore out of the picture. On the contrary, the book tales by the likes of Grimm, Perrault, Andersen, etc., contain motifs and larger narrative patterns which are part of the traditional matrix. This is because Andersen, Grimm and Perrault collected tales from the folk and then later revised or created additional ones. Thus, we may certainly analyze how folktale patterns are used in their literary counterparts.

A New Victorian Tradition?

Various critics have contested what the Victorian Tradition of literary fairy tales represents. The results of these studies are informative, but heavily biased and ultimately reductive. While Jack Zipes has focused on the Marxist aspects of Victorian literary fairy tales, and U.C. Knoepflmacher, along with Nina Auerbach, has claimed to resurrect a specifically female tradition of storytelling, neither presentation examines what happens to the marvelous in these new treatments of folk motifs. Not only does Zipes run into contradictions because of his claims for the Marxist aspects of fairy tales, but Auerbach and Knoepflmacher distort the historical reality of storytelling by ignoring the importance of male raconteurs.

Auerbach and Knoepflmacher in Forbidden Journeys--Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers claim the following:

> the earlier oral tradition of the *contes de vieilles*, or old wives' tales, continued to be regarded as crude and subliterary. Not until the Romantic fascination with primitivism, childhood, and peasant

> folklore redirected collectors like the Grimms to female informants such as Dorothea Viehmann, did the genre's rich mythical veins again become accessible, and its female origins become fully apparent to a dominant literary culture. (12)

While it may be rhetorically effective to refer to the oral tradition as "old wives' tales" in this argument, it does not prove "female origins" at the root of the tradition of oral storytelling. On the contrary, there is substantial evidence for the leading role of males in traditional storytelling, as Elaine Petrie observes in "Odd Characters: Traditional Informants in James Hogg's Family," where she directly responds to the mistaken conclusions based on female informants such as Viehmann:

> Despite famous examples of women informants such as Anna Brown, examples of whose repertoire were published by Scott and Child, the Grimms' Frau Viehmann and Linda Dégh's Zsuzsánna Palkó, fieldwork studies show that proficient storytelling is usually the preserve of men, often because the storytelling occasions are linked with male communal work.[17]

In all fairness Knoepflmacher is less positive on this point of "female origins" of storytelling in his later book, Ventures into Childland--Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity: "Whether these lower-class spinners of tales--presented as informants, witnesses, narrators [. . .] were not themselves a literary invention matters less than the new authority such a personage seemed to confer on women writers" (13). He

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[17] Elaine E. Petrie, "Odd Characters: Traditional Informants in James Hogg's Family," Scottish Literary Journal 10:1 (May 1983): 37.

moves from arguing that folk narrative is exclusively a female tradition to suggesting that it seemed so to the Victorians; however, this important point is never actually proven through documented evidence. Instead Knoepflmacher merely asserts that women writers of Victorian fairy tales sought "to reclaim what they considered to be a female tradition of fantasies and fairy tales" without ever demonstrating that such a perspective truly existed (6).

In fact, both genders have participated in storytelling, in communal situations of work and recreation, as well as the nursery. Any judicious analysis of gender and folklore in the nineteenth century needs to recognize that both men and women were telling tales; what differs is perhaps the genre, as Petrie notes: "[the] prestigious traditional narrative and ballad culture is different from the kind of stories that would be told [by women] specifically for children: '[. . .] stories destined mainly for children [. . .] are told by women [Dégh]."[18] True, storytelling declined during communal work because of the mechanical, noisy, and uncommunicative performances of factory labor, but it was not only female nurses who were raconteurs during the nineteenth century. Nor--as Petrie's quotation of a statement by Linda Dégh seems to imply--were ballads in Britain performed only by men. For example, both William Carleton and William Sharp had male and female informants. Carleton's mother was a ballad-singer and his father was a raconteur of legends and tales; Sharp had a "highland nurse" from whom he heard tales as a child and then later he met "an old fisherman, Seumas Macleod [. . .] whose surname Sharp eventually selected for

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[18] Petrie 37.

his pseudonym [Fiona Macleod]."[19] Sharp also spent some of his early life among the gypsies--or Travellers--where both male and female storytellers are respected.[20]

If Auerbach and Knoepflmacher misrepresent folklore on account of their exclusively feminist perspective, Zipes does the same with regard to Marxism. Zipes insists in Breaking the Magic Spell that "fairy tale" were originally "a pre-capitalist folk form" (20) and anti-utilitarian in spirit (14), yet by doing so he ignores--at least in the context of that argument--how often the attainment of wealth and status is a major focus of folk tales. The wondrous items help the heroes and heroines achieve rich possessions, land, and the social stability of a marriage, usually above one's station. In other words, the magical objects in folk tales are chiefly utilitarian--they exist to bring about specific results: in a word, power.

Zipes's Marxist interpretation does not clearly explain the fundamental vision of fairy tales: "Originally the folk tale was [. . .] an oral narrative form cultivated by the common people to express the manner in which they perceived nature and their social order and their wish to satisfy their needs and wants" (5). To refer only to the "common" people as those who have "cultivated" the "folk tale" ignores the more complicated social relations among the bardic, courtly, rural, and urban traditions that

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[19] Flavia Alaya, William Sharp--"Fiona Macleod" 1855-1905 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) 21.

[20] "During the summer of 1874, when he was eighteen, he 'took,' as he says, 'to the heather,' joining a troupe of gypsies, and wandering all over the countryside with them for three months. It is even possible that he intended this excursion somehow to be a permanent escape. Elizabeth [Sharp's wife] speaks of the 'truant' [. . .] having to be recaptured." Flavia 20. Auerbach and Knoepflmacher might find Traveller traditions useful in supporting claims for female storytelling; for instance, the English raconteur of "The Gypsy Smith" testifies to maternal exchange of this story going back several generations. Diane Tong, Gypsy Folk Tales (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1989) 161.

have intersected in the production of folk tales. But most contradictory is the unacknowledged tension between perception and volition. How can the tale at once constitute the "manner in which they perceived nature" and also represent the "wish to satisfy their needs and wants"?

The function of folk narratives rests on just this tension between the real and the ideal, but not in the fashion Zipes accounts for it. Zipes quotes from Dieter Richter and Johannes Merkel to proclaim that the folktale hero is an inactive being--as powerless as the audience that identifies with him: "the passivity of the hero is to be seen in relation to the objectively hopeless situation of the folk-tale audiences" (7). To designate as passive the folktale hero, who confronts magical beings, slays beasts, steals items, changes shapes, etc., is to employ a term which uncritically submits to the ideology that the "agrarian lower classes" are by definition oppressed. Zipes and his fellow Marxists undeniably espouse this view. Zipes admires the folktale because it was once "communal property" and deplores its commodification. While Zipes offers evidence for the kunstmärchen representing "a change in values and ideological conflicts in the transitional period from feudalism to early capitalism" he does not offer convincing details to support his statement that "the folk [. . .] nurtured their own forms of culture in opposition to that of the ruling classes and yet often reflecting the same ideology, even if from a different class perspective" (6).

On the contrary, examining "Beauty and the Beast" shows the difference in the socio-economic "ideology" of aristocratic fairy tales from folk fairy tales. Zipes asserts that aristocratic writers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries appropriated folklore to attack the bourgeois and promote their own hegemony. A

tale such as Madame Leprince de Beaumont's "Beauty and the Beast" (1761) offers confirmation of Zipes's view. The merchant's family is punished for his daughters' aspiration to marry men from the upper classes: "They gave themselves ridiculous airs and would not visit other merchants' daughters, nor keep company with any but persons of quality."[21] The overt moralizing is clear here: mercantile families should accept the beastly behavior of aristocratic suitors and be happy for it, but the bourgeoisie should not aspire above itself.

Beaumont's endorsement of social hierarchy is directly opposed to the pattern of the volksmärchen that typically depicts a male or female of the lower class gaining a throne and a prince or princess as well. Folk tales acknowledge there are walls separating the different socio-economic classes, but the successful transcendence of those barriers constitutes the core plots of many tales. Examples of such cases abound--everyone has heard of the "Brave Tailor" stories for instance. "John Glaick, the Brave Tailor" wants an occupation that "would lead to honour and fame." So, he turns to "basking idly in the sun," daydreaming, and one day he happens to kill many flies. By serendipity and boldness, John uses that boast of slaughter to conquer giants and finally a kingdom, including a "king's daughter in marriage."[22]

Thus, one should qualify Zipes's declaration. Folk tales initially depict the "manner" in which people "perceived nature" and social realities--John detested the tedium and lack of status of his job--but develop by events that transform the initial

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[21] John and Caitlín Matthews, A Fairy Tale Reader—A Collection of Story, Lore and Vision. (London: The Aquarian Press, 1993) 23.

[22] This version of The Brave Tailor AT 1640 is from Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Part A Folk Narratives vol.1 342.

situation into one that may "satisfy [. . .] needs and wants." There is no punishment here for the tailor's ambition or lies to achieve a vertical movement in his social position. This folktale and many others represent an ideology of mercenary merit, not a mirror of upper class hierarchical standards.

To return to the tailor's case, it is his own wits which create the marvelous--a boast whose hyperbolic claim seems magical in its potency to others--but more often than not victory is achieved when the protagonist makes an alliance with spiritual powers. The hero or heroine typically gains the assistance of beings whose influence transcends human and natural laws, such as the little red haired man who helps Jack and magically arrives ahead of Jack when he sets off to the mine. These magical beings represent a system of valuation which supersedes the "might makes right" world which Zipes insists is the "central theme of all folk tales."[23] For example in "Two Moons in May" the tale makes an explicit attack on the greed of official authority, secular and religious.[24] The Lawyer and Parson claim their rent and tithe from a poor couple especially down on their luck and a fairy--identifiable by its green garb--punishes these two social administrators while rewarding the loyal poor couple who always leave out cream as an offering to the fairies. Such evidence does not support Zipes's claim that fairy tales exist in a "realm without morals, where class and power determine social relations."[25] All power in fairy tales is not socio-economic.

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[23] Jack Zipes, Breaking the Magic Spell—Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales 29.

[24] Briggs 543-545.

[25] Jack Zipes, Breaking the Magic Spell—Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales 29.

Zipes's analysis of the lack of "morals" within the fairy-tale realm is reminiscent of the primary criticism of eighteenth century censors of the genre. Because of such scrutiny, new writers of fairy tales were committed to morality in a particularly self-conscious way; they knew they were being watched by the likes of Mrs. Trimmer. Victorian writers were concerned with the message of their fairy tales--and this meant overt moralizing, whether about economics, gender, or politics. Many Victorian revisionists of fairy tales felt the tales in their original forms were amoral or immoral.

Aesthetically the imposition of Victorian morality, manners, and modes of thinking on the fairy-tale tradition resulted in an obvious didacticism that manifested itself through authorial commentary, where before the tales were implicitly moral. In folktales actions literally speak louder than words--and the marvelous speaks the loudest. The acquisition of power in folk fairy tales was generally only achieved through moral contracts. When Bengt Holbek describes the "donor test" which protagonists undergo in volksmärchen before receiving either "magical" power or the distinction of social recognition, what he presents is essentially a moral test and the moral license they receive as a consequence of passing:

> The protagonist shows kindness, gratitude, helpfulness, generosity, courage, faithfulness in service [. . .] follows good advice and spurns bad advice, is neither a drunkard, a wanton nor a slut; on the other hand, the protagonists also take what is their due, they will not let themselves be fenced in by prohibitions which deny their basic needs

> and they know how to trick or fight their opponents. They are rewarded with "magic" advice [. . .] implements [. . .] helpers. (420)

Instead of the tacit recognition of a protagonist's worth by the events of the tale, Victorian writers felt compelled to explain why their characters were rewarded or punished. John Ruskin's "dwarf" in "The King of the Golden River" for instance presents a mini-sermon justifying his punishment of Gluck's two "rascally brothers" who lacked compassion: "the water which has been refused to the cry of the weary and dying is unholy, though it had been blessed by every saint in heaven."[26] There is no such explication for the punishment that befalls Jack's brothers when they are buried in the mine for their quarrelsome, contemptuous, and inhospitable natures.

Folk justice is unapologetic; Victorian middle-class morality is didactic. More coyly than Ruskin, yet all the more obtrusively, we have Dinah Maria Mulock Craik in "The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling-Cloak" interrupt the narrative to hint to a "reader, big or little" that "there is a meaning in this story deeper than that of an ordinary fairy tale."[27] The texts of both writers--Craik and Ruskin--underscore three important points distinguishing Victorian literary fairy tales from folk fairy tales: the Victorians inserted Christian morality, they considered children specifically in their audience, and they considered "an ordinary fairy tale" to lack "deeper" meaning.

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[26] Hearn 22.

[27] Hearn 156.

Fairy Tales, Didacticism, and the Nursery--Authorial Attitudes and Alterations

It is striking, the degree to which writers sympathetic to Romanticism such as Coleridge, Dickens, and Ruskin claimed that the fairy tale should be devoid of didactic concerns. However, the practice of these writers belies their emphatic concern for not disturbing the "unquestioning innocence" of children--considered in the nineteenth century to be the "prime audience" of fairy tales--with a writer's "favourite doctrines".[28] Such writers tended uncritically to glorify the virtues of the imagination and view fairy tales through an idealistic haze that censored their violent and sexual qualities even without the offices of Mrs. Trimmer. Writing to Coleridge, Charles Lamb asks, "Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history?"[29] Lamb confirms the view that fairy tales were sustenance for children, and nothing more fit could be found. Ruskin proclaims that "Nursery Songs, Grimms' Popular Stories, and the like" are "an innocent" literature.[30] Ruskin was apparently unaware that Jacob and Wilhelm removed references to

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[28] Knoepflmacher quotes from John Ruskin's essay on "Fairy Stories" where Ruskin argues against authorial didacticism. Knoepflmacher 41.

[29] Knoepflmacher 76.

[30] Ruskin is quoted in Knoepflmacher 70.

premarital sex, pregnancy, and incest in their popular stories. Thus, this "innocent" literature is an illusion and a truncated lie of what folk imagination actually is.[31]

Writing from such assumptions as Ruskin's and Lamb's, many Victorian authors fashioned a sterile and puerile tradition of fairy tales. Rather than fantastic presentations of psychological, social, and spiritual struggles to mature within a both helpful and hostile world whose metaphysics are consistent with its morals, Victorian literary fairy tales tended to circumscribe fairy tales within a playground for children. Or authors presented ideas that were the "children" of the writer--they had yet to be tested and to mature: utopian fancies whose day might come, even if they had never truly been once upon a time. Rather than wholly a liberating genre then, the fairy tale became in some literary incarnations a parade for immature ideologies.

Out of all of the authors in this analysis it is only MacDonald who ever writes "fairy tales" exclusively for adults. The Curdie books are chiefly intended for children; the majority, if not all, of MacDonald's fairy-tale short stories are oriented towards both adults and children. However, the fairy-tale novels Lilith and Phantastes are not intended for children at all.

Oscar Wilde's orientation towards his audience is comparable to MacDonald's. Wilde wrote for both children and adults in his literary fairy tales, while his fantasy, The Picture of Dorian Gray, is an adult work. Writing to the poet George Herbert Kersley in 1888, Wilde describes his stories in The Happy Prince: "They are studies

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[31] Maria Tatar. The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987) 7-8. Examples of such sexual expurgations are examined throughout her book.

in prose, put for Romance's sake into fanciful form: meant partly for children, and partly for those who have kept the childlike faculties of wonder and joy, and who find simplicity in a subtle strangeness."[32] Wilde's description here evokes the Romantic ideal concerning the hope of preserving the "childlike faculties of wonder and joy"; for example, think of the creative importance of "joy" in Coleridge's famous "Dejection" ode.

However, Wilde is after all a Victorian known for his *fin de siecle* tastes and a decadent new aestheticism that the comment "subtle strangeness" seems to evoke. Wilde's comments on his literary fairy tales imply a marriage between the Romantic ideal of maintaining imagination and compassion in the child--stimulating these qualities in the adult--and appealing to a somewhat decadent sensibility. This aesthetic decadence is presumably made wholesome by its appearance in the fairy tale genre, which the Victorian moral watchdogs had supposedly sanitized. Though Wilde was well exposed to the oral tradition--his parents were folklorists--his individual fairy tales have an artificiality which abstracts them from the normative standard of folk wonder tales. Wilde's tales with their elaborate exotic descriptions have an oriental flavor, and with their lack of action are more reminiscent of Romantic kunstmärchen, which are more philosophically, psychologically, and socially contemplative than any folk wonder tales.

Victorian authors edge away from the traditional focus of the märchen on sexual maturation and concentrate instead on prepubescent societies and individuals.

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[32] Zipes 135.

Victorian fairy tale protagonists have not "grown up" like Jack, who is ready to be generous, fight, make money, fall in love, marry, and provide for his parents. In other words, Victorian heroes and heroines in Victorian fairy tales are usually young children, and the societies they depict, in their ideal form, are nascent--they are not fully developed. Rather, the seeds of philanthropy and compassion that the utopian writers hope to foster in these fairy tale visions suggest a blossoming of a child-like world where neither sex nor violence will play a major role. There is a sanitizing involved in these stories--represented best perhaps in the image of Nesbit's "the Deliverers of Our Country" in the next chapter where virtually all the world's dragons are washed literally down a drain.

The New Fairy Tale--A Reaction Against Middle-Class Morality, Rigid Gender Roles, and Conservative Politics?

In "Frauds on the Fairies" Dickens decries the absurd degrees to which Victorian writers sometimes subordinated fairy tale patterns and motifs to their ideological agendas--particularly middle-class notions of education and morality. The introduction of middle-class morality into fairy tales is not a Victorian innovation, since the Grimms shaping and redacting of tales according to German bourgeois ethics and the Household Tales were the main example to imitators of the genre in Britain. Thus, readers were left with little that was overtly subversive or critical of the domestic, economic, and political power structures that folk fairy tales often turn on their heads.

Victorian writers were following an international (at least as far as France, Germany, Britain and Norway were concerned) precedent of shaping fairy tales for a respectable, and, increasingly, a young audience. Naturally, folk tales continued to be told and collected, but the forms that usually found themselves in print were altered to meet the standards of respectability. Writers of the fairy tale in Britain create their stories with a full consciousness of these moral expectations. Some texts display a curious moral ambiguity either through ironic rhetoric or through an almost destructive tendency to violate conventional literary fairy tale patterns and implicitly the bourgeois morality that helped to standardize those patterns.

There seems to be a notable absence among the Victorian literary fairy tales: the folk character of the lazy youth whose cleverness, idiocy, or some combination thereof wins him fame and fortune. Fortune gained in Victorian tales is either a reward for moral conduct or a further test. If gold is passed over--at least according to writers with socialist sympathies such as Laurence Housman, John Ruskin, and Henry Morley--the heroes and heroines are better off without much money and, even rank.

Perhaps even more prevalent than a criticism of the socio-economic status-seeking pattern of fairy tales, is the self-consciousness of female gender in Victorian literary fairy tales. It is no secret that Victorian women created a range of fairy tales, from the rather conventional to the more ambiguous and contentious. However, the very assertion of female power in Victorian fairy tales by both women and men should not obscure the fact that it was commonplace--rather than cause for surprise or feminist rejoicing--in the precedents of the folk tradition for heroines to have

significant powers. Thus, while U. C. Knoepflmacher and Nina Auerbach may well be correct to interpret many Victorian fairy tales by women as subversive of patriarchal standards, these critics mistakenly believe that these literary tales are criticizing a folkloric tradition that emphasizes female passivity.

Literary critics and the general public miscomprehend the role of women in fairy tales because readers have conflated the literary with the oral tradition. Rather than promoting female weakness many folk tales that involve the meeting of the sexes present a girl or woman who often has the knowledge and power to defeat the enemy which the hero confronts. Granted, there may well be a kind of sexism in the way fairy tales have been studied. For, to identify the male as necessarily the "hero" is perhaps to subordinate the status of the female character. Thus, AT (Aarne-Thompson) tale-type 313 "The girl as helper of the hero on his flight" suggests a subsidiary position for the girl, when in context her role is absolutely indispensable. But, other tale-types include titles that suggest the female role is the central one, such as (AT 311) "Rescue by their sister," (AT 451) "The maiden who seeks her brother," and (425) "The search for the lost husband."

One might further argue that these heroines only occupy a central role when the subject matter emphasizes domestic drama, whether romantic or fraternal. And it is true, for example, that we find fewer tales of heroines confronting supernatural forces out of pure "heroism" than heroes. There is more than one reason for this gap in gender representation and a thorough investigation cannot be accomplished within the confines of this study, nor is that the primary aim here. It seems to be precisely the close connection between female and supernatural power in fairy tales that tends

simultaneously to isolate the male and to endow him with the central role of protagonist. The female is not necessarily the Other, as critics have often insisted is the case in folk fairy tales, and literature in general, but rather, where magic is the normative condition of the fairy tale world, it is the male who typically begins the tale without magic.[33] Thus the male hero in this fundamental way is initially alienated from both power and knowledge; he lacks what the female and the supernatural world already has and is.

The analogy between magic and power is overt; thus, we can see now that female characters in fairy tales are far from powerless. If we are used to thinking of princesses waiting in their towers for princes to rescue them, it is not the folk tradition to which we chiefly owe this stereotype. Rather it is the alteration of the fairy tale by aristocratic bourgeois writers of the 18th and 19th centuries and popularization through print and film that has presented us with this distorted view of fairy tale heroines. Cinderella in the folk tradition does not weakly rely on the fairy godmother of Perrault.

Feminist appraisals of fairy tales have largely ignored the folk tradition--and there is arguably a certain rationale for this oversight. As Huang Mei points out in Transforming the Cinderella Dream--From Francis Burney to Charlotte Brontë it is "Perrault, who gave the story the form in which it is known throughout the world today" (2). Well, perhaps not the entire "world," but certainly--as Mei asserts--it is the literary version of "Cinderella" that influenced the English novel. But the

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[33] Carol Silver concentrates much of her fifth chapter on the significance of the Victorians emphasis on female incarnations of evil. Carol G. Silver, Strange and Secret Peoples--Fairies and Victorian Consciousness (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

problem with such a limited scope of study--one that ignores folk tales--is that cultural perspectives are not only found in literary narratives but folk narratives as well. To make sweeping generalizations about what English--or any other--people believe based only on literary examples is incomplete scholarship. In folk fairy tales there are examples of clever and competent young women such as the heroine of "Mossy Coat"--who exploits an unwanted suitor in order to gain riches, deftly manipulates rude and jealous fellow servants, and ultimately marries her master by her own choice.[34] Such tales belie the notion that the Cinderella-figure is always passive, or victimized through romance. However, as Mei reports: "some feminists assert the stories about docile girls like the Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, or Cinderella help to 'perpetuate the patriarchal status quo by making female subordination seem a romantically desirable, indeed an inescapable fate' (Rowe, "Feminism and Fairy Tales" 237)" (Mei viii). The female assertiveness in "Mossy Coat" is no mere exception either--though one might argue so because it is part of the Gypsy or Traveler tradition extant in England--for there are other similar tales such as "The Three Feathers" also collected in England, but not evidently from Travelers.[35]

I wish to stress features of Victorian literary fairy tales that go beyond the modes outlined by critics such as Auerbach, Cott, Knoepflmacher, Silver, and Zipes. While these critics observe the comic and sentimental tones, utopian tendencies, and female subversions, they neglect to establish what is happening on the level of

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[34] Briggs 416-424.

[35] The major similarity between the tales is the heroine's exploitation of unwanted suitors. Briggs 511-512.

narrative patterns. The discourse that defines the fairy tale as a genre is precisely the set of motifs constituted in patterns that have historically fulfilled communal expectations in storytelling. Part of the response of the Victorian writers has been to change these fairy tale patterns, which appears to follow cultural logic--if communal expectations can no longer be satisfied through existing narrative patterns then new ones must be formed.

This conclusion of course begs the question whether the narrative patterns of folk fairy tales were not fulfilling the expectations of the Victorian communities. Yet that objection is only partly true, since the fairy tales that the Victorian communities received were literary alterations to begin with from the Grimms and virtual innovations by Andersen. The task here is to see what patterns are changing in these literary fairy tales and then to suggest why these changes are taking place--and, what they mean.

Chapter Three

Victorian Innovation and Ideology: New Plans for Old Tales

Victorian writers faced a significant narrative challenge when adopting the form and motifs of the märchen. How may a writer speak with authority when surrounded by incarnations of the unreal that have been rendered clichés or juvenile fare by earlier literary appropriations of volksmärchen? The most prevalent attempts at achieving a credible voice within these Victorian literary fairy tales are--ironically enough--using humor, irony, realism, and satire to demystify the pretensions of the marvelous or, alternately, to emphasize sentimentally the moral dimensions of the narratives.

As for the restriction of fairy tales to the nursery, Victorian writers faced this literary circumscription in a variety of ways. Some writers, like George Cruikshank, sought to edify morally the young through their new fairy tales. Others, for example Ford Maddox Ford, employ the puerile associations of the fairy tale as a cloak of innocuousness for subversive and utopian visions. George MacDonald and Oscar Wilde confront the issue of maturity in the audience of fairy tales; both present aesthetic theories for the role of the childlike in the adult imagination.

All these artistic strategies are clearly symptoms of the self-consciousness of authors within an increasingly scientific and skeptical culture. The Victorians were concerned with pragmatism, progress, and moral improvement. Thus, the occupation of reciting fanciful "lies" that had a well-established role in small, rural, and

communal societies world-wide was fraught with tensions when refashioned to withstand the scrutiny of an urbane, industrialized, Victorian readership.

Writers of literary fairy tales negotiated between the generic patterns of traditional märchen and their own agendas amidst a dynamic, industrial, and utilitarian culture where roles and forms--from gender to politics--were coming into question. The literary fantastic in these works emerges as a narrative sign of the conflicted expectations and demands that audiences and authors were making upon the fairy tale as a literary form in the nineteenth century. Following the survey of particular texts that are representative of the main ideological currents running through the wave of Victorian literary fairy tales is an examination of George MacDonald's fairy tales in Adela Cathcart. That novel presents a dialogic perspective on storytelling among the Victorians--we see adults telling and discussing literary fairy tales. Cultural and literary insights will therefore accumulate by exploring the articulation of the literary fantastic among Victorian literary fairy tales.

The organization of this analysis is based on the impact of ideology upon narrative strategies, rather than presenting a straightforward chronology. Cott and Zipes--among other critics--have already indicated certain major tendencies of the Victorian fairy tale over the nineteenth century. Cott identifies the 1840's-1890's as the period of greatest production of both children's and fairy tale literature.[1] Zipes proclaims the "general trend" of this fairy tale-writing period was "to use the fairy-tale form in innovative ways to raise social consciousness about the disparities among

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[1] Jonathan Cott, Beyond the Looking Glass--Extraordinary Works of Fairy Tale & Fantasy: Novels, Stories & Poetry from the Victorian Era (New York: Pocket Books, 1973) xlv-xlvi.

the different social classes and the problems faced by the oppressed due to the industrial revolution."[2] Basically dividing the ideological tenor of Victorian fairy tales into two periods, 1840's-1850's and 1860's-1900, Zipes remarks on the former as devoted towards "allegorical forms to make a statement about Christian goodness in contrast to [. .] greed and materialism" while the latter include examples of both "conventionalism and utopianism."[3]

Zipes's generalizations do not acknowledge the progression towards parody and satire that developed after the mainstream acceptance of the fairy tale genre. Victorian fairy-tale burlesque is a new development in the context of Western literature, but not because these writers were the first to satirize social conventions using the fairy-tale medium, as Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695) and other French writers had done in the 17th and 18th centuries. Rather, the Victorians began to mock the fairy tale form itself. Thus, Victorian fairy-tale parodies introduced a new aspect of provocation in the fairy tale genre just when the tales seemed to have become innocuous; by 1888 fairy tales were not considered subversive to the general public: "by the queen's fiftieth jubilee fairy tales were no longer regarded as the engines of mischief Mrs. Trimmer had called them [. . .]."[4]

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[2] Jack Zipes, ed. Victorian Fairy Tales—the Revolt of the Fairies and Elves (New York: Methuen, 1987) xix.

[3] Zipes xx-xxiii.

[4] Michael Patrick Hearn, The Victorian Fairy Tale Book (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) xix.

Beyond this neglect of fairy-tale satire, a further oversight is that no critic has closely analyzed the impact of ideology on märchen style and structure. The introduction of humor into the fairy tale made fantastic incisions into the coherence of the fairy tale medium, and represents one of many narrative tools used by Victorian authors to reshape the märchen to reinforce a particular ideology or aesthetic. From biting irony to earnest sentimentality, evocative symbolism to explicit didacticism, Victorian writers employed a number of strategies to reform fairy tales into vehicles best fitted to their agendas and their audience: children, adults, or both.

Holbek's model for structural analysis provides a basic pattern with which to gauge literary innovations.[5] His revised paradigmatic model emphasizes the development of the folktale hero or heroine, the LYM (low-status young male) or LYF (low-status young female), into the HAM (high-status adult male) or HAF (high-status adult female). Holbek divides the type of fairy tale that emphasizes the meeting, courtship, tasks, and marriage of heterosexual adolescents into five different structural phases or moves that correspond to Propp's analysis of different episodes in the fairy tale providing thirty-one different functions. Each Move constitutes an episode whereby the hero(ine) comes closer to his/her eventual goal of maturity and status. For instance, Move I is characterized by a lack or desire (Proppian function 8a-Pf8a). In Move II the hero(ine) faces a test and receives from a Donor or Helper a gift which is an outward sign of the inner development symbolized by the episode. The purpose of Move II is for the hero(ine) to socially mature in order to be an

eligible prospect for the hero(ine) whom he/she meets in Move III. Move IV entails further tasks for the hero and heroine to overcome in order to have a respectful union and Move V is the marriage itself which is a validation of the couple's social worth and power. If either hero or heroine was an outsider or part of the underclass they are now fully integrated into society. Holbek notes that the sequence of Moves does not necessarily have to be chronologically ordered: for example, Move III may precede Move II.

Regardless, this is the basic pattern of this important set of folk fairy tales that are fundamentally examples of a folk bildungsroman--a narrative of social maturation which tracks the evolution of the hero(ine)'s personal identity and relation to his/her community. It will pay us to keep Holbek's pattern in mind, as well as Lüthi's observations when observing how Victorian literary fairy tales depart from the general tendencies of traditional precedents as well as examining appropriations and changes of folk beliefs.

A Socialist Fairy Tale--Imposing Marx and the Mundane Upon the Marvelous

Not all British literary fairy tales followed the bourgeois models of the Grimms. Indeed, we find in Laurence Housman's "A Rooted Lover" (1894) that the princess, after finally noticing the lower-class youth in the garden, then decides to marry him despite being deprived of all economic livelihood by her father, the king.

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[5] The synopsis here is distilled from Holbek's book. Bengt Holbek, Interpretation of Fairy Tales—Danish Folklore in a European Perspective. FF Communications No.

Housman, a socialist, sees no need to reward the happy lovers with anything more than they need--and they are left "happily ever after" in a cottage with a garden: a sort of microcosmic utopia.[6]

Housman is one writer who not only defied capitalism, but also went against the prudish grain as well; he did not comply in the convention of weeding sex out of fairy tale gardens. Thus, he is closer to the roots of the folk fairy tale tradition--which included sex--because of his defiance of the literary tradition. Indeed, Housman, according to Zipes,"wrote erotic tales" in the fairy tale collection The Blue Moon (1904) and in "1900 his book An Englishwoman's Love-Letters, published under a pseudonym, caused a sensation because it attacked the stringent sexual code of Victorian society" (317).

Despite Housman's obvious socio-political agenda in "A Rooted Lover," he incorporates some traditional fairy-tale motifs, while he discards others that are antithetical to his particular bias. The set of arguably related tale-types AT 850-859, "The Princess's Hand is Won," do not directly correspond to this story other than the result: marriage. However, AT 407 "The Girl as Flower" is very close indeed, if one reverses the genders: "A maiden is transformed into a flower [D212]. A man breaks a stalk of the flower and she becomes human again [D711.4]. He takes her as his wife [T101]." Rather than the suggestion of a carnal disenchantment of an ideal, or

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239. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1987) 419-435.

[6] Zipes notes that "Housman was drawn to socialism, and his early works of the 1890s reflect a strong interest in questions of injustice and self-fulfillment." Jack Zipes, ed., Victorian Fairy Tales—the Revolt of the Fairies and Elves. (New York: Methuen, 1987) 319.

virginally static object of desire, as seems implicit in AT 407, in "The Rooted Lover" the suitor chooses his passive transformation into a flower. The hero is "but a ploughboy" and an orphan--thus, he is poor, already absented (to allude to Propp's term "absentation" as one of the necessary conditions for the hero) and full of desire for a seemingly unattainable princess. The red-haired boy seeks a "wise woman. " The term "wise woman" is a sign of Housman's social sympathies perhaps, he hesitates to use an epithet of prejudice to degrade a member of the ideal agrarian community that he idealizes; the more common and literary term would simply be "witch." This young ploughboy chooses to be turned into a poppy so he can represent himself to the princess in her garden.

Multiple features differentiate this story from a folk fairy tale. Housman's ploughboy is introspective and his deliberateness determines the course of the story rather than the more impersonal forces that govern the volksmärchen: "To think at all of the Princess was the sign of either a knave or a fool. No knave, but perhaps a fool, he thought himself to be. 'I will go [. . .]to the wise woman who tells fortunes and works strange cures, and ask her to help me'" (321). Thus, the ploughboy encounters his Helper by seeking her out, rather than simply meeting the Helper or Donor by chance, or what Lüthi calls "interconnectedness," as occurs in folk fairy tales. The difference may seem like a small one but it is not. Housman's deliberate hero represents a shift in attitude towards narrative and life; individuals--when they do act--affect their future and fiction should express that fact. Thus, there are signs of the discourse of realism in a slight shift in the paradigm of the fairy tale. In addition, Housman's emphasis on individual autonomy contradicts the traditional mode of

characterization presented by Lüthi's theory of "depthlessness" and the sovereignty of impersonal forces in Bakhtin's description of "adventure-time."

Not only does Housman endow his protagonist with both autonomy and passivity, but he also alters the interpersonal dynamics between hero and Helper, besides violating the idea of interconnectedness. The ploughboy's Helper accepts payment in the form of money, rather than the natural courtesy that is typically how a hero earns the aid of an ally. According to the implications of the fairy tale pattern, one should read any item that is received through an intentional meeting and payment as an ill-omened purchase. It cannot prove ultimately useful since it is does not figure as a sign of the hero's compassionate conduct. Thus, Housman may well be manipulating these semi-conscious expectations, derived from tradition, as he shows the problematic results of the ploughboy's wish.

How this ploughboy wins the princess is unprecedented. In AT 850-869 "The Princess's Hand is Won" penniless suitors only succeed through guile, not the sentimental earnestness of this ploughboy. Guile would hardly be condoned by Victorian morals--particularly for material assumed to be designed for the nursery. Nor is the disguised eroticism of Housman's tale childish fare. The ploughboy's action is to choose passivity, locking himself up in what is arguably a conventionally feminine role of immobile beauty, awaiting ravishment and rapture.

The feminization and paralysis of the hero appears to be a result of Victorian sensibilities. Such passivity does not exist among male suitors in folk tales. However, George Levine emphasizes in The Realistic Imagination that passivity characterizes "the realist hero" of the Victorians: "it is one of the curious facts about the most

virtuous heroes and heroines of nineteenth-century English realist fiction that they are inefficacious, inactive people" (33). Similar to Housman's stationary ploughboy, we find Wilde's "Happy Prince" also unable to move and ultimately at the mercy of people's reactions to him. This lack of outer action corresponds to the choice of Victorian writers to make their fairy tale heroes and heroines thinkers rather than doers. This is a far cry from the folk fairy tale, which Roland Barthes, like Lüthi, identifies as a "genre of action."[7] Thus, we find in the Victorian fairy tale indicators of changes in the approach to fiction: the hero is being refashioned, as are assumptions about the relation between psychology and destiny.

The transformation into a poppy changes nothing essentially--the poppy is perceived as being "too common" by the chorus of maids who accompany the princess and discover the new growth in the garden (322). And, though the princess takes a fancy to this poppy, she gratifies her whim by having many more planted--thus, the ploughboy is just one of the masses. The analogy to social perceptions is clear: there are many laborers and they seem the same to the upper classes; if you admire a representative of the lower classes you admire a particular type rather than a individual.

Indeed, Housman overtly emphasizes that the enemy in this tale is the dominance of social institutions over individuals. The importance of this issue is made clear by the very utterance of details concerning the princess's social indoctrination to the purpose of royal marriage. When the Princess is about to meet

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[7] This quotation from Roland Barthes is cited in: Bruce A. Rosenberg, Folklore and Literature—Rival Siblings. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991) 144.

her suitor, a rich Prince--who is of course the rival to the ploughboy--we learn that: "the Princess being bred to the understanding that princesses must marry for the good of nations according to the bidding of their parents, was willing, since the King her father wished it, to look upon his suit with favour" (324).

Unlike many Victorian fairy tales, Housman's "The Rooted Lover" introduces a decided erotic element, though it is closer to the conventions of courtly love poetry than to the more earthy romance of folk tales. The erotic charge of the intimate contact described is not meant for an audience of children. There is a degree of sensual masochism in the hero's desire, from the "thorns" that "pieced into his flesh" as he worked at the hedge that divided him from the princess to the ecstasy of passivity that characterizes the courtship.[8] The ploughboy is unable to confront actively this prince and his victory over his rival is achieved through passive behavior. He is picked and "almost fainted for bliss" at the prospect of being worn by the princess, for: "If she puts me in her breast she must some time touch me with her lips; and then!" The hope of the ploughboy is that the kiss will fulfill the conditions outlined by the wise woman: "if before you die the Princess touches you with her lips and lays you as a flower her bosom, you shall become a man again and win her love" (321).

The turning point in "The Rooted Lover" relies on the marvelous detail of the witch's machinations coming true, which one can interpret as a shift in the princess's consciousness. We do not see the ploughboy appear before the princess when her lips

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[8] Such a divisive hedge itself is an international motif--D1967.1 Person in magic sleep surrounded by protecting hedge--found, among other tales, in the popular "Sleeping Beauty" AT 410.

brush the poppy "to and fro [. . .] to conceal her smiles" as she coyly dallies with her suitor (325). She runs away with the image of "the man with the red face, and the strong black eyes" emblazoned in her perception and it is not till she barricades herself in her room that the ploughboy is discovered in the palace (325). One may interpret this chain of events "realistically" by recourse to symbolism--imagining that the ploughboy has merely somehow presented himself in view of the princess and her own eroticism has compelled her to reject the aristocrat and go forth to seek a proletariat husband. It is as though there are two competing texts in this fairy tale: one--the more innocent marvelous narrative; the other-- a story concerned with an upper class woman having an affair with a common laborer: "In the palace there was the greatest confusion: everybody was running about and shaking heads at everybody else. "Heads and tails! Has it come to his?" cried the King, as he saw a party of serving men turning out a ploughboy who by some unheard-of means had found his way into the palace" (325-326).

The expression "Heads and tails" signals the reversal that is the hallmark of the fantastic--according to Rabkin--and indeed the subversive potential of social reversals is evident here. The wise woman can be read as a pander who has arranged trysts between princess and ploughboy. Such speculation is not unwarranted, since Housman's ambiguous representation of the marvelous invites alternative explanations. Why did no one witness the ploughboy's transformation from flower to laborer--disenchantment usually is witnessed in a folk tale--unless no transformation ever truly took place? Thus, in his literary fairy tale, Housman injects details that

work against the integrity of the marvelous, while highlighting the socio-economic basis of the story.

Vision, Realism, and Revision

Scrutinizing Victorian treatment of the marvelous details in the fairy tale genre, reveals that the ambiguous representation of the supernatural, which basically constitutes the "literary fantastic," is a distinguishing feature shared by numerous texts. When the marvelous becomes the fantastic in Victorian literary fairy tales, that in itself is a departure from the standards of the traditions of the folk genre, where there is no hesitation. Analyzing why and where this occurs is necessary to understanding the mechanics and philosophy at work in these texts.

In many Victorian literary fairy tales the advent of the supernatural is often depicted in terms of the fantastic and the marvelous is often dismissed as a dream or mundanely materialized. Indeed, one of the strategies of realism has been to extract plots from more romantic or fantasy oriented material and denude those narratives of marvelous details. Like Jane Austen, who in Northanger Abbey satirically deflates the pretensions and suspense of Gothic fiction, Anne Isabella Ritchie presents fairy tales which are wholly barren of the marvelous.

Analyzing the treatment of a tale involving well-known narrative patterns and motifs, such as Cinderella, with particular emphasis on the handling of the supernatural, discloses the guiding lights behind Victorian experiments in the fairy tale genre. The Cinderella story has moved from a folk tale-type to a familiar pattern

in the novel. The rise of a young woman or man from a position of poverty to a higher social rank through the aid of a kindly benefactor is a plot that we find elements of in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park and Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. [9]

George Cruikshank's "Cinderella and the Glass Slipper" which follows Perrault fairly closely with the household being of "high family" and involves the fairy godmother and ends with a long digression on the evils of alcohol and preaches abstinence. Dickens specifically singled out Cruikshank for attack in his essay "Frauds on the Fairies," where he criticizes subordinating fairy tales to utilitarian or didactic standards. Dickens himself, though, was not above deploying fairy tale motifs for his own particular sentimental and didactic purposes--"The Magic Fishbone" is one example. On the other hand, Anne Isabella Ritchie's "Cinderella" contains no instances of the marvelous at all. The fairy godmother role is translated into the offices of the Lady Jane whose efforts to introduce the young Ella to higher society are just as solicitous as Perrault's character but completely naturalistic.

Ritchie uses the Cinderella fairy tale pattern as a metaphor with which she dusts and shines features of Victorian contemporary life to render them if not

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[9] Folklorists have long contended over what particular motifs in fact are essential to the Cinderella story, and have in the last consensus, Cinderella-A Casebook, offered multiple categories which in Alan Dundes's words constitute "a veritable complex of different tales which apparently belong under one single rubric" (viii). To assess the Cinderella tradition that the Victorians interacted with, we do not need to focus on the numerous folk versions of the tale. The Cinderella that authors of the Victorian literary fairy tale responded to was the literary precedent already set by "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper" by Charles Perrault and Ash Girl by the Grimm brothers.

marvelous at least recognizable as fitting neatly into the pattern of a fairy tale.[10] Instead of the royal palace, we find Ella's sisters go the "Crystal Palace"--the center par excellence of Victorian industrialism and wizardry. Instead of the mice driving the pumpkin coach (like the fairy godmother a device of Perrault) we have "workhouse boys" who were once "thin and starved as church mice"--Lady Jane has hired them to transport Ella in a coach of more mundane design.

The magic here is purely personality and social status, embodied by the enterprising and sparkling Lady Jane--the Helper or Donor; notably she is "very rich" and "had never married. " Ritchie's creation of Jane is consistent with other boisterous female characters in Victorian fiction, whose vitality and ability to manipulate whether for good or evil depends upon their economic independence. Examples include Dorothea in her widowed state in Middlemarch or Lady Havisham of Great Expectations and Mrs. Greenow of Can You Forgive Her? What remains in Ritchie's "Cinderella" then, despite the absence of the marvelous, is an occupation with social and economic mobility. How can a friendless woman navigate successfully in a world of high status?

The answer: a woman must be rich or have wealthy friends. It is through her material influence that Lady Jane is able to transform both Ella and such other miscellaneous protegees as the workhouse boys. Normally in fairy tales it is magic which is the means for transformation, whether it be social status, physiognomy, or wealth. Magic itself is an encoded symbol of various sorts of power in fairy tales--whether elemental, spiritual, social, sexual, or economic. Ritchie's story is therefore

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[10] Zipes, Victorian Fairy Tales 103-126.

in harmony with the power dynamics of the fairy tale. She presents forms of social and economic power and however brief her examination may be, it is a telling one.

A familiar commonplace of folk fairy tales is the positive ending--some form of "happily ever after" usually referring to the harmony of a marriage made comfortable by land and wealth. One of the intriguing Victorian violations of the narrative structure of the fairy tale is the either satirical or sober criticism of such complacence. Victorian literary fairy tales of both the comic and the sober variety chip away at the stability that often ends folk wonder tales. The Victorians' frequent departure from the optimistic closing formula sharpens the subversive focus on contemporary social issues, while distancing the seemingly complacent closure of the traditional märchen.

The fairy tale of the folk is not overtly concerned with the world beyond the borders of the tale--the end of the tale is the end of whatever issues have been raised, at least for that storytelling session. However, the narrative discourse of the Victorian fairy tale either dismisses the marvelous as a dream or suggests that the peculiar rules that govern the tale govern the world outside the tale, if not in absolute empirical data, at least in the spiritual tendencies. For the Victorians perpetual happiness invokes the utopian ideal.

Thus, "happily ever after" is not simply a matter of spiritual optimism, conventional narrative discourse, or naieveté, but a central issue of social and political import. In tales like "The Rooted Lover" heroes and heroines can live happily ever after. The optimistic ending for the writer of the utopian fairy tale depends upon the

writer's view of how to influence consciousness toward social reform. Housman's characters have staged a revolution by defying the king and may live happily as model communists, mindless of wealth and status.

Housman was not alone among the ranks of Victorians who shaped the fairy tale into a utopian and apocalyptic form for their own political--and religious--concerns. Just as Housman's happy couple serves as a Marxist model to attentive Victorians, so Henry Morley tells in "Melilot" a story that exemplifies Christian Socialism. Morley sympathized with the ideals of Christian socialism and the attendant Cooperative Movement that sought to challenge the "mode of production" by pitting a "broadly based co-operative union" of stores against capitalist hegemony.[11] Morley was committed to his vision of Christian social amelioration of the world. He not only edited the examination of Christianity's role in English culture and literature, Illustrations of English Religion, and contributed the paper "Co-operation among Christians" to the Christian Socialist sphere, but wanted his fairy tales to be "'stories of redemption'" as well.[12] Thus, he alters folk beliefs as he sees fit, to make the metaphysics of this particular fairy tale conform to his brand of Christian didacticism

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[11] Philip N. Backstrom, Christian Socialism and Co-operation in Victorian England: Edward Vansittart Neale and the Co-operative Movement (London: Croom Helm, 1974) 3.

[12] The quote regarding "redemption" is from a contemporary biographer of Morley: Henry Solly. Henry Shaen Solly, The Life of Henry Morley, LL.D. (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 244. The paper is mentioned on 383. The conference is referred to by Solly as the "Christian Conference," which Morley attended in the "spring" of "1890." Considering the title of the paper, "Co-operation among Christians" and the fact that in May of 1890 the Co-operative Congress of the Christian Socialists was held, it is likely indeed that this was the same conference that Morley participated in. Backstrom 194.

In "Melilot," an ideal spiritual orphan becomes a proselytizer. After tasks and dangers she joins with Sir Crucifer and descends from Eden, as it were, "to the plains" to spread their message and example of social good works.[13] Morley's morality appears influenced by Christian socialism: "But in all their long after-lives of love and labour, neither of them remembered the worth of an empire in stones that they left unguarded in a corner of a hut" (127). Ignoring wealth, the gain of which would have meant a reversal in fortune in a traditional fairy tale, here is used as a sign of high moral value--clearly the fairy tale has found a new ideology here.

Melilot is at least as good a Christian as she is a socialist. While the importance of "hospitality" is valued in various international folk cultures that are not characterized by Christian morality, Morley emphasizes such charitable behavior as specifically Christian. Thus, Melilot treats her guests well due to "sacred thoughts of hospitality" and includes "prayers" in her behavior (121). Similarly, when Melilot has expressed her remorse that she has "no supper to offer" to her frog-like guests bread and milk appear, from the graves of her father and mother respectively, these odd visitors insist the food is "from the good angels" (120-121). The reference to angels is jarring since the food appears to be the gift of the three fairy beings. Yet Morley's later depictions of these fairies suggest their equivalence to angels. The "three youths, dressed in white" that stand near Melilot during her encounter with the soldier in the battlefield are a stock representation of angels--white is a color more

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[13] Hearn 127.

often associated with angelic robes rather than fairy vestments.[14] What Morley has done is to merge fairies with angels to construct a world ruled by Providence.

His fairies portray a moral duality that is largely alien to fairy lore, and their height of purity constitutes a radical change from the behavior of the beings traditionally.[15] There is a precious quality to Morley's fancies, which is almost unrelieved in its bloodless refinement. Addressing the young girl after her defeat by a kiss of the evil fairy Frogbit, the three fairies tell her:

> An innocent kiss is the charm that breaks all evil spells, and you have with a kiss broken the spell that raised in her a clod of earth into a creature of mischief. We of the torrent will direct the waters that they wash that clod of earth from which evil is banned to a place where it may yield lilies and violets, of which good Fairies shall be born. (126)

The kiss itself that breaks the spell is a folkloric motif (*Disenchantment by Kiss* D735) and would be popularly known to a Victorian audience through tales such as Sleeping Beauty from both the Grimm and Perrault versions as well as the many fairy

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[14] Generally green, red, and sometimes blue are the most prevalent colors for the fairies' clothes in Britain. However, there is some ambiguity with the being known as the "lady in white," as well as the accounts of white fairy hounds, hares, and harts. Lewis Spence concedes in partial agreement with L.C. Wimberley 's statement that "green, [is] a colour, indeed that is pretty generally characteristic of fairies" (136). But, Spence also includes exceptions, including brown and black, as well as the more common colors.
Lewis Spence, The Fairy Tradition in Britain. (Kila: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, n.d.), 136-137.

[15] Traditionally British fairies are highly unpredictable as moral creatures; however there are some distinctions between the "good" and "bad" fairies in the Scottish Highlands and in parts of English and Irish lore as well. Katharine Briggs, Fairies in Tradition and Literature (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) 60, 108-114.

ballets popularly staged during the Victorian era.[16] One cannot ignore the reference here to the images of creation with "the waters" and especially the "clod of earth" (Morley repeats the phrase twice)--evoking the biblical passage of Genesis describing the creation of the world and in particular the human race. Rather than outcast angels, spirits of the dead, or children of Lilith these fairies are sentimental parrots of dogma.

Morley does not only alter traditional fairy tale motifs due to his Christian Socialist additions, he also includes narrative intrusions or asides that reveal he shares the self-consciousness of Victorian modernity concerning the supernatural. For example, the narrator's rhetoric appeals to Victorian rationalism for dismissal of the uncanny: "there was a chill wind; and though it was foolishness to think so it did really seem to have come with a black raven that was sitting on the roof" (124). Yet, the raven is not an ordinary bird, but an evil fairy; the "foolishness" turns out to be truth. This fantastic revelation--reversing expectations--however, does not change the fact that the very consideration of the impossibility of the phenomenon is remarked upon in a way that it never is in folk wonder tales. The narrator's skeptical rhetoric appears arbitrary, since he does not question the gifts of sentimental fairies or benign angels. Such hesitant asides underscore Morley's participation in a culture that is ill

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[16] "The same preoccupation with the elfin peoples is manifested in the constant staging, throughout the era, of spectacular productions of Shakespeare's fairy plays *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, as well as in repeated performances of romantic fairy ballets (including *La Sylphide* and *Giselle*), operas, and children's plays and pantomines, some derived from the Bard, others from actual folklore or from literary fairy tales--and all immensely popular." Silver 4.

at ease with folk beliefs that are not tamed by mainstream religious conventions or literary cliches.

On the structural level, Morley protracts his tale; he extends the story far beyond the fulfillment of the expectations associated with particular motifs. The traditional task of disenchanting transformed beings through sewing them new clothes, as Melilot does for the three fairies that have been turned into frog-like beings, is accomplished in "Part I" of the tale.[17] Most folk wonder tales would end after the achievement of that pattern or launch into a new circuit of motifs--which often constitute a different tale-type altogether. Morley instead suddenly introduces the evil fairy Frogbit only to quickly dispatch her and then continue with Melilot's career, which is closer to that of a saint than a fairy tale heroine. And, it is not until nearly the very end that Melilot even meets her mate--the wounded soldier she protects in the battlefield (an event which as we shall see below is likely a signifier of Morley's particular agenda.)

Indeed, it is largely Morley's Christian notions that motivate a disruption in the fairy structure of the fairy tale. The Helper, who generally gives no aid until the recipient has proven him or herself by passing the Donor Test, in this case gives help freely to the young Melilot, as though in recognition of her essential spiritual purity. The offer of seemingly gratuitous aid from a Helper is more often a sign that the Helper is a villain who is attempting to make the hero or heroine beholden.[18]

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[17] The common motif here is: *Disenchantment by Sewing Shirts for Enchanted Brothers* D753.1.

[18] Offers of help meant to entrap should be familiar from such stories as Grimm's Rumpelstiltskin or the English version "Tom Tit Tot" (AT 500 *The Name of the Helper*) A

Another violation of the fairy tale pattern similarly is a result of Morley's emphasis here on divine innocence and good deeds. There is no meeting of the sexes here, as in Holbek's Move III. Nor are there any tasks to overcome to achieve the union of marriage; rather, Morley deals with this sequence anachronistically and humorously, as though he wishes to convey that the romance of the fairy tale is not what he is concerned with. Not Morley--he is intent on representing a paragon of Christian Socialism. Thus, young Melilot marries her noble knight through the machinations of the frog beings, who turn out to be fairies, and whom Morley refers to as "match-makers" (127). Morley's Christian sympathies further color his descriptions of the romantic pairing; it is far more of a spiritual union than it is a fleshly one: "Who is this, with a dress that has passed unstained through blood and mire, and with a face so holy. " There he dreamt, all the night through, sacred dreams of her by whose side he spent all his days" (126-127). Eroticism is diluted into pious adoration.

Though Morley discards the tasks that face suitors normally in a folk wonder tale, his fairy tale does depict the emancipation of a pubescent hero or heroine from parental care and authority. Though Melilot's parents have died, food continued to appear on their graves for Melilot until the coming of this Sir Crucifer--the sudden absence of parental sustenance Melilot takes as a sign: "I have a sign [. . .]. It is time that I also take my part in the struggle of which you have told me. Let us go down together to the plains" (127). Melilot's call to missionary action acts supersedes her

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common motif of magical entrapment through offered help or attention is: *Magic Sleep by Combing Hero's Hair* D 1962.3.1.

previous conviction that "The angels of my father and mother feed me still [. . .] I must abide under the shelter of their wings" (124). Never mind the fact that the mysterious graveyard offerings seemed to be the work of the fairies. Morley elides the boundaries between fairies and angels to make what he considers the more important point--all caring and kindness ultimately is of the same essence and is reducible to the simple formula: give and thou shalt receive. The parental cycle of nurturing has ended and the cycle of romantic love and worldly duty must begin. Thus, heading east of Eden, as it were, these lovers leave the "bower" which had provided parental nourishment to bring their own spiritual fertility to the "plains" where a world implicitly far closer to the Victorian one awaits salvation.

Morley's blend of marvelous fairy tale motifs and Christian Socialism may seem a far cry from Ritchie's suppression of fantasy in her tale of the ash maiden of modernity. Yet, both writers are united by their fundamental method of reshaping the märchen into a form that best represents a particular social ideology. Ritchie, by removing aspects of the marvelous, emphasizes the nearly magical power of a high status woman's social influence to transform the life of a younger protegee. Her story is at once feminist, sentimental, and conservative. Her "Cinderella" ultimately underscores neither the rewards for passive female endurance, nor the necessity of women's reliance on each other. Instead the social dynamics of the story reveals how power is located not with one heroic or benign individual, but comprises a system of socio-economic competition where conventions severely limit many young women's resources. Ella's step-sisters and step-mother prevent her from entering the social market for they fear her own assets depreciate their own. Ritchie remarks that girls

"are condemned to walk through life for the most part quietly," and her tale offers no escape save through marriage or widowhood (109). Lady Jane, despite her generous solicitude for Ella's happiness, is opposed to larger social change: "One's obliged to keep up a certain dignity in these Chartist days--universal reform--suffrage--vote by ballot" (116). Her charity is an example of compassionate conservatism--a selective handout to the few she deems worthy.

Morley, on the other hand, wishes to change a world of disenfranchised orphans into an army of Christian activists. Morley stresses those motifs of the fairy tale tradition that evoke the heroine's compassion--and beg the reader's compassion as well for the orphan Melilot--then redirects the thematic meeting of the lovers towards a quest for general social welfare, rather than domestic contentment alone. The visionary task of Morley's "Melilot" requires the fantastic features of fairy tale motifs because the Christian Socialist agenda for large-scale transformation clashes with the selfish pragmatic tendencies of social reality. The social sympathies of Ritchie are tempered by urbanity: her comprehension of the abuses against young women and poor relatives also encompasses the notion that there are few problems a romantic marriage can not fix, at least in a few cases where the couple may live happily ever after. And perhaps it is Ritchie's skepticism of such predicaments being ideally resolved that motivates her to use the title, allusions, and illusions of a fairy tale.

Fairyland from an Ironic, Puerile, and Victorian Distance--The Use and Impact of Anachronisms, Didacticism, Industrialism, and the Nursery

While anachronisms do occur in folk tales collected during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly intrusions of technology, the choices are in harmony with the overall tone of the tale. For instance in "The Three Feathers or Jack and the Puddock II" (recorded in 1956 in Glasgow) we learn that Jack "found himself in a fine dwelling all lit with electric light" when he enters the dwelling of the frogs.[19] This electric light while not what one would expect in a otherwise feudally flavored tale involving a King's son fits the magical nature of these talking frogs--it is a fantastic anachronism which serves the function of signaling the power of enchantment associated with the frogs. The electric light is the only obvious departure from a presumably medieval world in the tale. In contrast, anachronisms in Victorian literary fairy tales obtrusively draw attention to themselves as signs of the current age. Morley wrote that "everybody knows that fairy tales and other compositions of that kind represent the spirit of the age and nation out of which they spring."[20] Those words apply in particular to Victorian literary fairy tales rather than volksmärchen.

Industrialism is one of the primary Victorian anachronisms superimposed on the generally medieval and feudal ambiance of folk fairy tales. In some cases actual technological anachronisms are injected into the medieval milieu of these tales while

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[19] Briggs 515.

[20] Hearn xxvii.

in other cases the influence of industrialism is confined to metaphor. Certain tales, like "Melilot" for instance, contain both industrial anachronisms and metaphorical implications. In "Melilot" the fairies tell Melilot that the "white bale" that she receives is "from the Fairy Muslin Works"--not only do we have the imposition of modern industry upon the backs of the fairies but there is the suggestion that magic is itself connected to technology (124). Rather than being an innovation, a clever modern perspective on magic, the idea of an equivalency between magic and technology is arguably a feature of folk wonder tales as well. For example, in Folklore and Society Linda Dégh states: "we realized how right Maxim Gorki was when he saw the reason for the development of magic things in folktales in the technological thinking of man" (188).

Irony is also a hallmark of literary fairy tales in the 1890's--the genre had been well established since the 1860's and was now a cliché in literary circles. To justify the relevance of the genre, Victorian writers inserted more details of contemporary life. The sober ideology of Morley was a feature of the 1860's when writers turned with greater earnestness to fairy tales, once the appeal of the genre to the reading public was evident by the many sales of Andersen and the Grimms. Indeed it was only those with sober ideologies that pursued the fairy tale with much solemnity into the 1890's; writers less obviously driven to grind a particular Marxist axe (like Morley and Housman) largely turned to humorous treatment.

Kenneth Grahame and Edith Nesbit are in good company with each other: their tales are both mock-heroics. This move towards a more satirical tone corresponds to an attendant relaxing of narrative tightness--the traditional patterns of

episodic confrontation became less clear as the backbones of fairy tale narratives by the 1890's. There are more literary allusions, more anachronisms, and less correspondence to the tale-types of folk wonder tales. What's more, the medieval milieu is sometimes dropped altogether and tales like "The Reluctant Dragon" (1898) by Grahame and "The Deliverers of the Their Country" (1899) by Nesbit are set within the Victorian era itself.

Another reason for the comedic treatment of the fairy tale is that the genre had largely become material oriented towards the nursery by the end of the 19th century. The emphasis on literary fairy tales as "nursery literature" results in various disruptions to the structure and motifs that are the common stock of traditional wonder tales. The lack of sexual and romantic tensions is the most obvious factor--the meeting of Holbek's Move III and the complications of the suitor's tasks are largely nonexistent in these nursery tales.

In the case of Laurence Housman, who at times includes decidedly erotic elements in his tales, his "Rocking Horse Land"--which is devoid of mature sexuality--seems to register a prepubescent diversion of libido into a sort of spiritual imagination.[21] Notably, the young prince Fredolin at age 5 becomes dissatisfied with his magical toy "which would never be two things at the same time" (319). Like Coleridge's definition of the secondary imagination, which dissolves in order to refuse shapes into new forms, the prince has a magic toy given to him by his "fairy godmother" that promises, "Break me and I shall turn into something else" (319). The breaking commences and different forms follow the dissolution of the old, but this

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[21] Hearn 319-324.

playing is not truly imaginative in the Colridgean sense since, as Fredolin complains, "his fairy godmother ought to have sent him two toys, out of which he could make combinations" (319).

This tradition of fairy godmothers bearing gifts is derived from Perrault rather than the patterns of folk tales, where gifts are earned through demonstrations of such qualities as cleverness, compassion, courage and physical skill.[22] Prince Fredolin's gifts are unearned and thus unappreciated. Psycho-symbolically, the gifts that Fredolin disdains are not the effects of his actions and only reflect his own inner development if one grants the interpretation of the imagination's genesis that I suggested. Folk fairy tale gifts arguably represent outward projection of inner qualities that develop in the course of the protagonist's maturation process. Unlike the unasked for endowment of the protean gifts that Fredolin contemns, the timing of the black rocking-horse, that appears during one of the prince's fits of pettish destruction, does seem linked to Fredolin's personal expression: "Then he went to look at the rest of the presents, and found it quite refreshing to break a few that did not send him giddy by turning into something else. Suddenly his eyes became fixed with delight; alone, right at the end of the room, stood a great black rocking-horse" (320).

It is significant that this rocking horse appears in the midst of a temper tantrum. The horse as a symbol in fairy tales is usually associated with masculine power, and according to archetypal interpretations, might well be considered the

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[22] According to Briggs, "with Perrault the Fairy Godmother entered England." Katharine Briggs, The Fairies in Tradition and Literature 176.

animus. In many versions of the magical flight motif (D670) it is the horse that advises and provides for the hero. In this case, the prince is merely 5 years old; thus, to argue for a surge of libido seems dubious. Instead, the horse figures as a synergistic connection between mind and body--a signifier of a more intense engagement with the inner and outer worlds than Fredolin has previously experienced: "In his sleep Fredolin still felt his black rocking-horse swinging to and fro under him [. . .] in the land of dreams, saw a great country open before him, full of the sound of the battle-cry and the hunting-horn calling him to strange perils and triumphs" (320).

The marvelous fairy-tale motif of comprehensible animal speech figures didactically, psychologically, and morally within the story. The rocking horse's speech to the Prince, concerning the beast's longing to return to "Rocking-Horse Land" figures, as it were, as an awaking of moral conscience. Thus, rather than the animus, one might point to the rocking horse as a kind of superego--not wholly unlike Jimminy Cricket in Disney's Pinnochio. In truth, there is no clear correlative between the horse and any aspect of the young boy's mind or experience; rather, there are several associations that revolve around the rocking horse, and all contribute to the overall evocations of the story.

The moral dilemma occurs when Fredolin neglects the rocking horse's request for complete freedom because of his infatuation with an actual horse his father bestows upon him. One of the few relations this story has with the traditional motifs of wonder tales is the traditional magic that is a part of this nursery story. The rocking-horse instructs the Prince to take the white hair from its mane and to 'wind it

upon one' of his fingers as a sign of control over the magical being. Realizing his neglect of his charge, the Prince ultimately gives up the white hair as a sign of 'mea culpa'--and releases Rollonde, the rocking horse, forever.

Housman universalizes this moral example by making the story encompass the next generation. Fredolin's son mysteriously receives a rocking-horse, which clearly is the offspring of Rollonde, and thus Housman reverses the usual fairy-tale pattern, by making the gift ultimately the test of the protagonist, rather than the reward for passing one or more trials. Housman also suggests a form of social optimism as well, by implying that Fredolin's son will heed his father's behest to be "ever a kind master to Rollonde's son"--asserting that moral improvement is possible and, in effect, the sins and guilt of the father may be redeemed by the son. Thus, within the familial frame of the exchange of gifts Housman presents a model for societal amelioration where social ties are strengthened according to greater moral awareness.

Nesbit like Housman also focuses on the developing autonomy of prepubescents and in her literary fairy tales she stages their drama of emerging selfhood on the stage of the marvelous. Nesbit's "The Deliverers of Their Country" (1899) is an example of the anachronistic Victorian fairy tale as well as the tendency towards puerile representations. The heroes of the tale are young children who are obviously pre-pubescent. There is no meeting of the sexes here; indeed there is no need for it, since the two are brother and sister. Thus, there can be no romance. However, rather than suggesting that her child heroes are moving toward an ideal adulthood of potent sophistication, Nesbit presents these children as ultimately more

competent then the societal institutions of their elders--who appear quite Victorian in many respects. It is through anachronistic violations of the typical fairy-tale world that Nesbit characterizes Victorian ineptitude to confront incarnations of the marvelous: dragons.

Instead of perhaps a medieval craftsman or tavern keeper, we discover the children's father is a doctor who is looking through his microscope (a token of industrialism) at what is revealed to be a miniscule dragon. There is a king and a princess who are referred to in passing, but Nesbit only invokes the feudal world to dismiss it and the conventions of the fairy tale itself as matters which are passé:

> Of course, the County Council and the police did everything that could be done: it was no use offering the hand of the princess to anyone who killed a dragon. This was all very well in olden times--when there was only one dragon and one Princess; but now there were far more dragons than princesses--although the Royal Family was a large one. And besides, It would have been mere waste of princesses to offer rewards for killing dragons, because everybody killed as many dragons as they could quite out of their own heads and without rewards at all, just to get the nasty things out of the way. (349)

The glibness of this passage is partly a result of subjecting the stereotypes of the fairy tale to the strictures of utilitarian rhetoric. Sacrificing princesses through marriage is "no use" and "mere waste" in this era of a superfluity of dragons and a gratuity of dragon killers who need no incentive since irritation serves as a motivating self-interest. The solution is ultimately an industrial one. St. George, the fabled dragon-

killer is of little help--another stinging slap to British folk tradition--while a knowledge of plumbing and waste disposal comes in handy.

The placement of the miniature dragon under a microscope is a fine symbol for how the fairy tale genre itself is treated in the later fairy tale fiction of the 1890's. No longer are the materials of fairyland capable of awe on their own terms, at least according to the satirical aesthetics of the new school of authors trying their hand at the genre; now, the standards of Victorian progress must confront the genre in order for it to live at all. The father's friend, who is a professor, is another telling example of how the stock roles of the fairy tale have slipped into the stereotypes of Victorian fiction. The doctor and professor by the 1890's are cultural archetypes: from Casaubon and Dr. Lydgate in Middlemarch to van Helsing and Dr. Seward in Dracula the two professions connote Victorian progress in science, which as Vladimir notes in The Secret Agent is the fetish of the Victorians. The doctor uses that newfound knowledge to address human bodily ills and the professor develops a storehouse of facts and theories with which to guide the ignorant. The microscope asserts the dominance of science over the superstition and fantasy of fairy tales.

Indeed it is through industrialism that these dragons are combated and it is by a kind of industrial metaphysics that they are ultimately defeated. Nesbit has these dragons washed off the face of the earth by a system of valves and drains that suggests a modern plumbing or sewer system:

> "I wonder what this old thing's for," said Harry. He had found a rusty old tap which seemed as thought it had not been used for ages. Its china label was quite coated over with dirt and cobwebs. When Effie

> had cleaned it [. . .] she found that the label said "*Waste.*" "Let's turn it on," she said, "it might carry off the dragons." (355-356)

Effie is quite right; this strangely modern and imperial artifact with a "china label" is true to its manufactured promise. Ironical and humorous as this treatment of dragons is, one can not dismiss the implication that the marvelous itself is labeled as "waste" even though it's the primary product of Nesbit's own narrative. Indeed the very irony and humor constitute a tone which suggests superfluity--this is not material to be treated seriously: it is all for fun and play.

Nesbit's chief form of play is her use of anachronism: "How did they get home again? By the Snowdon railway, of course" (356). It is not a plague of dragons, but the discourse of industrialism that has truly invaded the domain of the literary fairy tale. Nesbit's very metaphors to describe one of the dragons is colored by industry: "spreading his great yellow wings, he rose into the air, rattling like a third-class carriage when the brake is hard on" (353). St. George himself when he refers the children to checking "the taps" which control the weather confesses that "things have changed since my time. St. Andrew told me about it. They woke him up over the engineers' strike [. . .]. He says everything is done by machinery now" (352).

Nesbit, despite or rather through her humorous industrial rhetoric, suggests technological advances and an economically centered value system efface the marvelous. After the children have used the "*Universal Taps*" to flush away the dragons Nesbit tells us: "And by the time the nation had got dry again it was interested in the new invention for toasting muffins by electricity, and all the dragons were almost forgotten. Dragons do not seem so important when they are dead and

gone, and, you know, there never was a reward offered" (356). Not merely has the latest technological advance eclipsed the advent of the plague of dragons, but the lack of financial focus on the extermination of the dragons renders the event ahistorical in a social network framed on an economic standard.

Nesbit's ironic treatment seems to show irreverence for the genre, yet she maintains some of the functions of folk wonder tales. Even with a writer of fairy tales who seems to have distorted and mocked the genre, the very genre exerts an influence upon the narrative's discourse. Most obviously she gives a nod to the folk genre of the origin legend. The children make a slight adjustment in the weather of England through their manipulation of the "taps": "So then they turned off the tap named "Waste," and they half-turned off the one labelled "Sunshine"--it was broken, so that they could not turn it off altogether--and they turned on "Fair to moderate" and "Showery" and both taps stuck, so that they could not be turned off, which accounts for our climate" (356). This matter is not related at the absolute end of the tale, which is also consistent with many folk wonder tales, which when they include an origin legend often it is not the main focus of the narrative.

Humor such as Nesbit's irony and play erodes the integrity of the marvelous. Comedy, although not alien to folk wonder tales, is not used as a criticism of supernatural elements. Traditionally the objective reality was never a feature that needed to be questioned since the oral genre of märchen was recognized by the community as a fictional medium. Absurdity and exaggeration were part of the performance. However, the exaggeration in these Victorian literary fairy tales is excessively hyperbolic as well as often paradoxical and anticlimactic. For example,

Nesbit absurdly combines anachronism with exaggeration when she mentions that some of the dragons "lived on bricks, and three of them ate two-thirds of the South Lambeth Infirmary in one afternoon" (350). By making some of these dragons eaters not only of buildings but an immense section of a modern one at that, Nesbit simultaneously modernizes and trivializes the potency of the dragon, which traditionally ate flesh.

Among her industrial references, Nesbit's invocation of science serves as an anachronistic influence which derides--albeit humorously--traditional conceptions of dragons. Besides such technological marvels as "anti-dragon soap" and "dragon-proof curtains" Nesbit also invokes zoology (350). The microscopic scrutiny of the insect-sized dragon centralizes the scientific method, and Nesbit's division of dragons into various classes according to their eating habits is reminiscent of taxonomy, which is the scientific system of biological classification. Science in fact has the last word in the story when Effie's father, the doctor, laments:

> "I should have liked to preserve a specimen. I threw away the one I got out of Effie's eye. [. . .] I did not anticipate this immediate extinction of the species." The professor said nothing, but he rubbed his hands. He had kept his specimen--the one the size of an earwig that he gave Harry half a crown for--and he has it to this day. You must get him to show it to you! (357)

Words like "specimen" and "extinction" emphasize the scientific world in which Nesbit is writing, while at the same time the preserved miniature dragon fulfills the role of a legendary artifact.

Partly by mixing the conventions of the legend with the wonder tale Nesbit has clearly written a story which is not meant to be believed. One of the common endings of a legend is the assertion of a witnessed artifact that serves as an indicator of the veracity of the tale. The artifact may be organic (such as a bodily feature, like a numb limb from the curse of the fairies), or inorganic (like a cup stolen from a fairy mound, a Black Dog, or even a dragon). The competition over a "specimen" between a "doctor" and a "professor" is unheard of in a traditional folk wonder tale, but these particular anachronisms do not ultimately efface the narrative bonds that derive from folk narratives. Yet, the emotional impact is antithetical to the sense of verisimilitude inspired by legends. The ending of the story is a mere device, not an assertion of belief. The suggestion of getting "him to show it to you" is a mere formality without the value of communal belief. The narrator clearly does not know the characters in the tale as other than characters.

Similarly, the tale itself has changed nothing--it is not a fictional form that carries ritual significance through depicting a social process. Zipes asserts social education is a hallmark of folk fairy tales: "They are obviously connected to initiation rites that introduce listeners to the 'proper' way to become a member of a particular community."[23] There is no social model of the maturation of these young children: they are children still, and prepubescent at that. Nesbit's brand of fairy tale is an early example of the "what if" fantasy genre, which we see partly derives from a rather

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[23] Jack Zipes, ed, The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales--The Western Fairy Tale Tradition from Medieval to Modern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) xvii.

flippant treatment of the marvelous in fairy tales without much regard to the deeper psychological and social functions of the folk genre.

The same ironic distance Nesbit displays in her manipulation of folk genres is likewise manifest in her style. The flippant glibness of Nesbit's enunciation of the dining habits of different dragons dallies playfully with nonsense and fear--at least as far as some young children might be concerned: "The largest kind ate elephants as long as there were any, and then went on with horses and cows. Another size ate nothing but lilies of the valley, and a third size ate only Prime Ministers if they were to be had, and, if not, would feed freely on boys in buttons" (350). Nesbit's anticlimax of "boys in buttons" may be a hierarchical decrease from "Prime Ministers" but the effect is an increase in anxiety for the assumed nursery audience.

Nesbit alters fairy-tale expectations because of her rhetorical emphasis on anxiety; Ford Maddox Ford uses a similar technique with his humorous disruption of logic in a series in "The Brown Owl' when he violates the expectation of exoticism and unity of place and time. After Ford explains that his fairy-tale kingdom is long ago and far away he asserts the following: "Merrymineral [. . .] had been inciting the people of far-off lands such as Mesopotamia and Padan Aram and Ireland to rebel [. . .]" (278).[24] On the one hand, Ireland is not logically one of the "far-off lands" to the British audience reading this story. Yet, on the other hand the Irish were considered by many English to be barbaric and backward; they may as well be called one of the "far-off lands" for the Irish were generally conceived of as alienated from the respectable English mind. Irish rebellion was a contemporary fear. Ford published

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[24] Heam 261-316.

his story in 1891, merely a few years after the first--and failing--Irish Home Rule (1886) bill pushed by Charles Parnell whose death by fever in 1891 was regarded as a virtual martyrdom at the hands of his political enemies.[25] Shortly before Parnell's death he was not only accused of the seduction of Mrs. O'Shea, upsetting charges which may have led to his poor health, but also attacked for threatening open revolution against England. Thus Ford's inclusion of Ireland, though an anachronism in the context of his tale, is a revealing indicator of British political anxieties of his era, as well as evidence for Ford's own need to update the fairy-tale milieu.

The use of humor and irony is just one of the many ways that Victorian writers of literary fairy tales betray self-conscious doubts of the validity of their subject matter. A range of stylistic features, such as the "aside" of the narrator and direct address towards a youthful audience, suggest authorial discomfort with the fairy-tale narrative. Such hesitancy is atypical of the oral storyteller, and might be a "literary tick" of the author writing in the age of utility. For instance, in "the Magic Fishbone" Charles Dickens implies that there is a distinction between digression and necessary exposition:

> There was once a King, and he had a Queen, and he was the manliest of his sex, and she was the loveliest of hers. The King was, in his private profession, Under Government. The Queen's father had been a medical man out of town. They had nineteen children, and were always having more. Seventeen of these children took care of the

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[25] Malcolm Brown, The Politics of Irish Literature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972) 342-348.

> baby, and Alicia, the eldest, took care of them all. Their ages varied from seven years to seven months. Let us now resume our story. One day [. . .].[26]

The obvious fairy-tale features are here--the importance of the number seven, the hyperbolic characterizations of masculine and feminine qualities, and the loaded transition of "One day" which signals a complicating action, similar to the "then" of legend narratives.[27] In Holbekian terms the "One day" would announce the beginning of the "Move 1" cycle.

What is jarring though in terms of narrative style is Dickens's interjection of "Let us now resume our story." A folk storyteller would not distinguish between any background associated with the tale's characters and events and the "story." Where exactly Dickens is drawing the line is also unclear. Indeed, his very exhortation to "resume our story" may constitute little more than a false discrimination--what Dickens really means to do is to heighten the sense of suspense by asserting an impetus in the narrative by indicating that the subsequent details are highly significant: "story."

In addition to the blatant marker of narrative self-consciousness in the previous aside, a reader quickly becomes aware of subject matter that is alien to the conventions of royal characterization in a fairy tale. In particular, Dickens's royal family with their propensity for reproductive excess, "They had nineteen children,

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[26] Hearn 107.

[27] Among other topics, I demonstrate the link between the word "then" and the idea of a complicating action in "Shadows of Tradition" Northwest Folklore 14.1 (Summer 2000).

and were always having more," begs for Malthusian restraints, and associates this family with the large Victorian families, and the attendant economic strains that tended to accompany such circumstances. It is only in the next paragraph that we learn that the Queen is a "careful housekeeper" and that the King is "in a melancholy mood, for Quarter-Day was such a long way off, and several of the dear children were growing out of their clothes" (107). Thus, this royal family is little more than a struggling middle-class Victorian family in disguise--with all the accompanying anxieties of frugal housekeeping and budgeting resources for a large family.

Indeed, thrift and the judicious exercise of power comprise the overt morale of this literary fairy tale. Dickens's construction of the royal family's economic strains helps prepare for the didactic utterance from the king's eldest daughter: "When we have done our very very best, papa, and that is not enough, then I think the right time must have come for asking help of others" (113). Alicia becomes the steward of the "magic fishbone" of the story's title--a gift from the "Good Fairy Grandmarina"--which grants one wish when rubbed. Alicia's wish is a conservative one; her father, as the family encounters one hardship after another, often inquires about the magical fishbone, but she always applies her own ingenuity and care and postpones magic until her father has absolutely no money at all and then "gave it one little kiss and wished it was Quarter-Day. And immediately it *was* Quarter-Day, and the king's quarter's salary came rattling down the chimney, and bounced into the middle of the floor" (113). Thus Dickens imposes the wage-earning bonds of capitalism upon his king, as well as browbeating from the fairy godmother of his daughter Alicia.

Dickens's Didacticism and Its Consequences

Dickens tends to lecture adults, rather than children. From Scrooge in A Christmas Carol to the hapless sexton in "The Goblins who Stole a Sexton" and in "The Magic Fish-bone" we find supernatural beings chastising adults. The Fairy Grandmarina harangues the King, from matters of conduct, "Don't be impatient, sir [. . .]. Don't catch people short, before they have done speaking. Just the way with you grown-up persons. You are always doing it" (108), to matters of perspicuity: "I suppose you know the reason, *now*, why my goddaughter here [. . .] did not apply to the fish-bone sooner?" (113).[28]

Dickens is responding to the prevailing practice of using literary fairy tales as a medium for policing children; didactic though his tales may be, through his satirical approach he appears to subvert Victorian authoritarian attitudes towards children. However, the project is not wholly successful in its rhetorical logic. For, though the Fairy Grandmarina criticizes the king for needing a "reason" ("I am sick of your grown-up reasons"), ultimately Alicia did have her "reason" and it is the Fairy Grandmarina who underscores this fact: "I suppose you know the reason, *now* [. . .] " (113).

Thus, Dickens's criticism of utilitarian and rational models of relating to the world in this story lacks philosophical and artistic harmony. His own antipathy here towards utilitarianism and logic is both inconsistent and strident, not unlike the Fairy Grandmarina. Granted, it is not an easy matter to balance the sentiments and ethics

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[28] Hearn 107-115.

of Hard Times with the caprice and marvels of fairies. In Gradmarina's attack on "reasons" one can hear the echo of Gradgrind's demand for "Facts." Clearly, Dickens intends his fairy-godmother to be anti-utilitarian. In fact Dickens opposed the discourse of fairy tales against utilitarianism before when he depicted Gradgrind's appearance to his children as "a dry Ogre chalking ghastly white figures" on a "large blackboard," while stressing that in a household devoid of imagination, fairy tales were unknown to them.[29] However, by including Grandmarina's diatribe against adult reasons--when the plot and moral hinges on the quite rational decisions of Alicia--Dickens's inclusion of this anti-utilitarian rhetoric seems forced. The point here is not to attack Dickens for a small slip of logical inconsistency, rather it is to underscore the tension between his fervent ideological agenda and his use of the fairy tale medium. It is precisely such a tension that characterizes many Victorian writers of literary fairy tales from Morley to Ruskin.

Indeed, "The Magic Fish-Bone" displays signs of overstraining to harmonize the demands of the fairy tale genre, his satirical tone, and sentimental temperament. Though Dickens, as we have seen, argued against the subordination of the fairy tale genre to the concerns of didactic agendas, he is far from advocating in practice a sacred approach--his own satirical treatment of the genre in "The Magic-Bone" mocks the conventions of the fairy tale. Besides the overt anachronism of the Fairy Grandmarina proclaiming "Be good then [. . .] and live happy ever afterwards," a few pages before the story comes to a true close, Dickens arranges a wedding which is

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[29] Charles Dickens, Hard Times 1854, ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966) 1-7.

clearly present only to fit the expectations in a "fairy tale." Having made the necessary transformations of the Princess Alicia's quarters and wardrobe, the Fairy Grandmarina announces to the young woman's parents: "We are going in search of Prince Certainpersonio. The pleasure of your company is requested at church in half-an-hour precisely" (114).

Without obstacles between the "lovers" the gender dynamics become unbalanced. The focus of the tale has been on Alicia's maturity; Prince Certainpersonio "was sitting by himself, eating barley-sugar and waiting to be ninety" and the marriage merely happens to him (114). If the princesses of literary fairy tales were generally assumed to be languishing in towers, Dickens effectively turns that literary cliché on its head with this young aristocrat who, no doubt, would be ridiculed by Carlyle for his lack of industry.

The hyperbolic details of the wedding are just as rushed and largely meaningless as the presence of the wedding itself in the tale: "there was everything and more to eat, and everything and more to drink. The wedding cake was delicately ornamented with white satin ribbons, frosted silver and white lilies, and was forty-two yards round" (114). The words of the Fairy Grandmarina at the wedding are also absurd and reinforce the anachronism of this Victorian fantasy realm: "The hair of the whole of your children will curl naturally. They will never have the measles, and will have recovered from the whooping-cough before being born" (115). Dickens thus alludes to both the petty and substantial fears of parents in the modern world, where the vanity of personal appearance is juxtaposed with the very serious threat of

disease. Dickens's satire of adult attitudes towards children in his literary fairy tales is much like Lewis Carroll's, whose fantasies are well known for their scrutiny of the behavior of adults rather than the antics of children.

Dickens's plotting is achieved through his proxy, the Fairy Grandmarina. By the end of the story, it is as though Dickens has removed the distance between this character and his own narrative asides: "'It only remains,' said Grandmarina in conclusion, 'to make an end of the fish-bone.' So she took it from the hand of the Princess Alicia, and it instantly flew down the throat of the dreadful little snapping pug-dog next door and choked him, and he expired in convulsions" (115). Again, this ending is a nod to fairy tale conventions, which, as particularly is the case with the standards of cruel revenge set by the Grimm brothers, include graphic retributive justice. However, the pug-dog has not offended, apart from being aesthetically despicable.

Structurally then, we find Dickens mocking some of the conventional phases of the literary fairy tale, but one organizational device he does integrate is the tripartite sequence. After the king has inquired on three separate occasions why Alicia has not used the fishbone, the fourth travail--having no money--stimulates her full advocacy of the magic talisman. In conclusion, we can see that rather than being a tradition bearer of a culturally meaningful form, Dickens feels he must alter the form in order to make it pertinent to contemporary audiences, and it is through his alterations and anachronisms that the particularly Victorian elements develop. It is didacticism which appears to be the controlling purpose of his tale, the fairy tale the

vehicle--made more palpable through humor--and satire the result of this hybrid genre.

Feminism and Paternalism in Victorian Fairy Tales

The Victorian Woman Question--inquiry into the socio-economic status of women--is, not surprisingly, a feature of certain Victorian fairy tales. The era itself was characterized by "an exaggerated sympathy for women"; at "no other time, before or since, was it deemed so necessary to indemnify women for the cultural subjection in which they had so long been held."[30] There is an overt self-consciousness among many writers of the Victorian fairy tale to emphasize the importance of a heroine's abilities, as though a female character in a fairy tale needs such defense. In folk tales one is hard pressed to find a heroine who does not have magical powers or knowledge. Indeed, in many cases the male protagonist owes his life and successes to the advice and aid of a woman, whether she is young or old, beautiful or ugly. Nevertheless, many Victorian writers felt it incumbent upon themselves to declare the utility and competence of a heroine, which of course reveals far more about the conventional attitudes towards women in the Victorian era, than it suggests about feminism or the lack thereof in traditional fairy tales.

Examples of defending female prowess in Victorian literary fairy tales abound. In Edith Nesbit's "The Deliverers of Their Country" Effie's assertion that the

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[30] Flavia Alaya, William Sharp--"Fiona MacLeod" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) 116.

place to find St. George is "St. George's Church, of course" elicits the revelation from her brother: "Um, " said Harry, wishing he had thought of it for himself, you have a little sense sometimes, for a girl" (351). Nesbit clearly means such grudging male chauvinism to be the expression of Harry's own insecurity. It is also Effie who figures out the logic and utility of the Universal Taps: "So Effie said, 'Dragons do not like cold.' And she tried to turn off the sunshine [. . .]" (355). Effie's esoteric knowledge associates her with the traditional fairy tale heroine, whose familiarity with magic often is central to surmounting various obstacles. Thus, even while Nesbit's self-conscious response to Victorian sexism is alien to the portrayal of gender in the traditional folk tale heroine, Nesbit's presentation of Effie's quick wits and resourcefulness is consistent with tradition.

However, Nesbit's little Effie --a young girl who largely depends upon her brother, and achieves neither pubescence nor social independence--is a more muted heroine than the vast majority of those in folk wonder tales. For example the heroine in "Mally Whuppie" the "youngest of the three strange lassies was called Mally Whuppie, and she was very clever" succeeds in performing tasks--outwitting a giant--that win wealth and princes for herself and her sisters.[31] Mally depends on no one, and provides for all. Abandoned along with her two sisters by her impoverished mother, Mally not only escapes danger through her wits, but becomes a mercenary for the king, stealing the giant's treasures in exchange for elevating her sisters and herself to great riches and power by marrying the king's sons. Mally, as opposed to Effie, transforms herself over the course of the narrative. Without the aid of anyone, based

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[31] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary 400-403.

on native ability and daring alone, she overcomes her initial socio-economic limitations. Clearly the British folk tradition does not lack examples of the rewards for female ingenuity and self-assertion, but unfortunately such tales have not achieved the influence of the more passive models popularized through the literary fairy tale canon by Grimm and Perrault.

Victorian men writing fairy tales seem just as likely as women to include a spirited assertion of feminist principles. Indeed the men's claims for feminism appear even more self-conscious and insistent than the women's. However, the presentation of gender power dynamics is a complicated one in fairy tales, particularly where the marvelous allows for a secondary language of symbol in addition to the literal word. Not surprisingly, there is more explication and overt translation of symbolism in Victorian literary fairy tales than folk wonder tales, and in the presentation of gender differentiation and maturation we find various authors guiding a reader's interpretation.

One example of such heavy-handed didacticism regarding gender is Morley's "Melilot." Among the other anachronisms that Morley injects into the fairy tale genre is the Victorian ideal of femininity. Melilot's depiction as a savior resembles many other Victorian heroines. Dickens's Rose (Oliver Twist), Eliot's Dorothea and Dinah (Middlemarch and Adam Bede), Disraeli's Sybil (Sybil), and even the likes of Jane Eyre, are self-sacrificing and thereby inspiring to their male counterparts who are in need of spiritual direction. Melilot is likewise such a helpmate to her soldier, Sir Crucifer. She is: "a companion whose thoughts purified his zeal and made his aspirations happier and more unbounded" (127). Notably, Melilot is also an orphan--

the Victorians loved stories of orphans and had plenty of them in their society. The idealism of Melilot is implicit in her very name, which ostensibly derives from melior (Latin--better); she is at once the epitome of hopes for a better world and an ideal symbol of femininity--a visionary partner to the developing Victorian modern world.

Besides such authoritative explication and linguistic labeling of ideal womanhood, are the symbolic strategies of authors like Ford Maddox Ford. Refusing in "The Brown Owl" to subordinate his princess to male characters, Ford literally disguises the influence of the princess's father. Thus, Ford pushes gender dynamics into the subtext of symbol.

Ford's use of the fairy tale motif of the magical being as a proxy parent casts a suggestively psychoanalytic gaze upon the young princess's maturation and relationship to her father. When the king appears to be dying, he exhorts his daughter to "cherish the owl," a plea that puzzles the princess until the brown owl presents itself. The owl is the king in disguise; it is the magic trick of the greatest of magicians in the kingdom. Even before the overt revelation of the brown owl as the king, there are several suggestive passages that imply this substitution, such as when she is grieving over the death of her father:

> Everything seemed joyful at the sight of the beautiful morning except the Princess, and she felt oh so on lonely, for it seemed as if her only friend had gone forever. And at the thought her tears began to flow [. . .] she suddenly felt a weight [. . .] her face was covered in the soft brown feathers of the Owl, who had perched on her shoulder. [. . .] it

> seemed as if the Owl had become a companion to her that would take the place of her father; so she leaned her head against the Owl, and her golden hair mixed with the dusky brown feathers, till each streak of golden hair shone again in the bright sunlight. (266-267)

Not only does Ford clearly present the owl as a father surrogate, but also there is almost an erotic element in this mingling of "golden hair" and "brown feathers." While not quite Leda and the swan, the mingling of hair is an erotic motif that we see even the realist George Eliot using in her *Romola*: "The faces just met, and the dark curls mingled for an instant with the rippling gold."[32] Clearly, Ford makes fully explicit the doubling between parent and animal Helper that is often implicit in the folk wonder tale. Thus the ambiguity lies not in the equation between king and owl, but in Ford's message regarding paternal influence over a young woman.

One does not need to insist upon a sexual rapport between this daughter and father. Yet, there is the implication here that the daughter's maturation does not rely only on her competence as a ruler. Her recognition of her father as the primary male figure in her life is an unusual orientation for a young woman who has just turned nineteen: "Now in the thousandth year of her father's reign the Princess was eighteen, and in that country she was already of age. Three days before her nineteenth birthday, however her father fell sick and gradually weakened [. . .] "(262). This scene seems to suggest the father's waning influence in his daughter's life as she is "already of age," but Ford's tale concerns the power of this "brown owl" who at the end chooses to depart but also to "come [. . .] every seven years" to visit his daughter

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[32] George Eliot, Romola (London: Penguin Books, 1980) 173.

and the husband, the Prince of India. Thus, besides the emphasis on the importance of the guiding influence of a father in a post-pubescent young woman's life, Ford's tales enacts a fairy-tale romance between Britain and its Jewel in the Crown.

Ford's use of Proppian fairy tale functions, such as "absentation" and "prohibition" further reflects the inversion of the regular progression of a folktale. Absentation occurs--the removal of one of the members of a family from home--through the apparent death of the father. But the prohibition that the daughter should go out of the "sight" of the brown owl nullifies the absentation. In actuality, the daughter is never far from the protection of her father; thus, her maturation is only a kind of "play." As a seemingly independent woman she is truly only in an exercise to prepare her for actual maturity. Thus, though "The Brown Owl" focuses on a post pubescent young heroine, Ford has only extended the bounds of the nursery education rather than transcended them. It is necessary to qualify the preceding statement, however, with the acknowledgment that, Ford's tale contains some of the elements of an adult courtship and flirtation. And, though one can read the narrative as a play directed by the father, it results in the father's actual replacement by a male, rather than the illusion of substitution by the brown owl.

Despite the emphasis on the importance of the father-daughter relationship, Ford also stresses the independence of his heroine. Ford's princess is not free from convention, but she keeps her own counsel. When her advisor, Lord Licec, counsels her to hold a tournament of "the handsome knights in the world" to vie for her hand in marriage, the Princess accepts the proposal for its entertainment, rather than

submitting to the oppressive possibilities of the outcome: "the Princess [. . .]was [. . .] in a great fever of excitement thinking about who the knight would be. One thing she was sure about, and that was, that if she did not like him she would not have anything to do with him, even if she had to forfeit her kingdom" (295).

Ford makes his Princess something of a feminist, who defies the Victorian gender roles that implicitly present themselves. When the Prince of India tells here that the "battle field is no place for a girl" she refuses to be swayed from keeping her "place [. . .]with the army" (279). Later, the Princess, albeit with humor not hostility, also rebels against the counsel of Lord Licec:

> I will not be bullied by you, my lord, even though you are old enough to be my father. I know what you were going to say--that the battlefield is no place for girls. Now I won't be called a girl, for I'm nineteen, you know. His Majesty the Emperor of India there insulted me by calling me a girl, and I have not forgiven him yet. (283)

Ford's princess is a lively character; rather than being a bland paragon of virtue, she is, to Ford's credit, more interesting than that. A rather humorless critic might argue that the Princess is not a serious representative of female independence precisely because of her irony and capriciousness, which make her interesting as a character. The Princess's virtues dally with vice, so to speak. She laughs at Merrymineral in a mocking manner before she even realizes he is a villain; thus, her irreverence may be viewed as a sign of insight. She admires her own appearance, but Ford informs us that this is an aesthetic appreciation, not vanity: "she was a very artistic Princess, and liked looking at beautiful things, and so she liked sometimes to look at herself in the

glass. Not that she was in the least conceited" (267). Ford's commentary on the Princess's aesthetics reveals his own awareness to the Pre-Raphaelites, and this characterization of his heroine contrasts with the motif of the vain woman who worships her image.[33] Notably, Ford was eighteen when he wrote "The Brown Owl" in 1891, when "art for art's sake" was well known among the educated of the *fin du siécle*.

Ford's sympathy for female independence is no fluke in "The Brown Owl." In one of his later works, Parade's End, a "tetralogy," he has a character, "Valentine" who "is a classicist of the highest order, who has nonetheless worked as a scullery maid to maintain financial independence. As an active women's suffragist, she represents the best of progressivism without the moral decay of the politicians."[34] Perhaps the conflicted presentation of a female bildungsroman in "The Brown Owl" is an early example of Ford's preoccupation with his allegiance to conservative values while also being aware of the need for sober progression: "Ford [. . .] considered himself the last Tory in England. The resultant novels are forward-looking yet nostalgic" (820). Perhaps the paternalism of "The Brown Owl" is Ford's own longing for fairy-tale visionary traditions of chivalric Britain.

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[33] While there is no exact motif for "woman worships self in the mirror" in Thompson's motif-index--the example of the vain queen in "Snow White" is one example from Grimms' collection. In addition, more locally--in Northumberland--Baughman records the following motif: *Devil Appears in Mirror of Vain Girl* G3.3.6.1.4.1(a).

[34] David Galef, "Forster, Ford, and the New Novel of Manners," The Columbia History of the British Novel ed., John Richetti, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 838.

If "The Brown Owl" is an endorsement of a paternalistic government--"conservative values"-- on the political and domestic level, it is a model that is complicated by the force of "sober progression." Ford, using the devices of fairy-tale characterization and structure, presents the potential dark side of paternalism--the obsessive control that is incestuous, predatory, and oppressive--as well as a more enlightened paradigm of independence achieved through paternal guidance. Merrymineral--ridiculous and harmless as the name sounds--is the antisocial double of the Princess's father. He may not be the more than 1000 years old that the king is, but he is definitely an old man and, like the king, a great magician: "Now of all the magicians in the country the King was the greatest, and no one approached him in magic power but the Chancellor, who was called Merrymineral, and he even was no match for the King" (261). Ford uses the technique of the split described by Holbek, and employed in folk wonder tales, where two characters reflect diverse qualities which are meant to be compared and contrasted and often are fragments of a whole persona.[35]

Magic figures as an explicit metaphor for social and political power in "The Brown Owl": "the people were divided into two classes--those who were magicians and those who weren't. The magicians called themselves Aristocrats [. . .] "(261). Merrymineral is thus the closest in status to the king, the Princess's father, and he attempts to coerce her into marrying him in order to gain absolute power in the kingdom. This villain then, is the opposite of the old man as a protector; he represents the misuse of patriarchal power, both political and sexual. The Princess,

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[35] Holbek 435-438.

with the aid of the brown owl and the Prince of India ultimately defeats the potential usurper.

Notably, an early victory in the struggle is achieved not by overt combat but by diplomacy, suggesting a feminine alternative to the ways of masculine warfare. In fact, the dynamic between the Princess and the men in the tale is often one where feminine tact and wisdom reforms masculine delinquency. The Princess personally addresses the rebellious subjects who joined Merrymineral in his attack on the crown and by appealing to their honor and forgiving them for their weakness regains their allegiance. It is unusual in a folk wonder tale for a conflict to be won through diplomacy; Ford's story implies by example that the British Empire would be best off following the Princess's lead of pacification rather than belligerence.

Lastly, like other Victorian writers of fairy tales, the comic ones especially, Ford 's "The Brown Owl" is replete with allusions to the economic, industrial, and political institutions of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Through a variety of anachronistic details Ford compares Britain to the ancient magic kingdom which "contained, among other things, the whole of the western half of the world" (261). From the presentation of Ireland as a distant and backward country, to the marriage between the Princess of the nameless kingdom and the Prince of India, Ford belies the assertion that this kingdom is truly "long before Egypt" (261).

George MacDonald's Adela Cathcart: Aesthetics, Audience, and Metaphysics

Having explored a range of different narrative strategies and ideologies that characterized the Victorian fairy tale tradition, it remains to further investigate the writer, George MacDonald, whose use of the fairy tale medium was most ambitious. MacDonald crafted his fairy tales while consciously developing a theory of the aesthetics of fantasy and spirituality. The book in which many of MacDonald's most successful fairy tales first appeared is Adela Cathcart (1864). The fairy tales occupy center stage in this narrative drama of a depressed young woman in a respectable household of Victorian England. This particular novel displays some of the prevalent attitudes towards fairy-tales in Victorian England, as well as MacDonald's contribution to the literary fantastic using fairy-tale motifs. In Adela Cathcart, MacDonald offers statements concerning how aesthetics, spirituality, and ideology ideally blend within an author's fairy tale narrative.

In MacDonald's essay "The Fantastic Imagination," he asserts that his goal in writing fairy tales is not "logical conviction" but "to move by suggestion":

> If a writer's aim be logical conviction he must spare no logical pains, not merely to be understood, but to escape being misunderstood; where his object is to move by suggestion, to cause to imagine, then let him assail the soul of his reader as the wind assails an aeolian harp. If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it. (10)

A "latter-day Romantic" (as U. C. Knoepflmacher identifies him in The Complete Fairy Tales viii), MacDonald invokes the image and operation of the aeolian harp to

illustrate how he hopes to awaken readers, by his literary artistry, to spiritual truths that reside within them. MacDonald makes several comparisons between music and literature--in particular between a "sonata" and a "fairy tale'--in order to assert the importance of evoking feeling as opposed to communicating a static meaning:

> if two or three men sat down to write each what the sonata meant to him, what approximation to definite idea would be the result? Little enough--and that little more than needful. We should find it had roused related, if not identical, feelings, but probably not one common thought. (8)

Far from dismissing the importance of thought, MacDonald in fact emphasizes that the more an artistic work generates a multiplicity of thoughts that were unintended by the creator, the more truly artistic the work in fact is. MacDonald sees truth as infinite, since, for him, truth is divine, and the Creator is infinite.

Using a dialogic style, not unlike the examination and repartee of Oscar Wilde in "The Critic as Artist," MacDonald's interrogator demands: "But a man may then, imagine in your work what he pleases, what you never meant!" MacDonald responds to this objection with the caveat that the audience must be "a true man" ("fit audience [. . .] though few" as Milton wrote in Paradise Lost VII--31)), otherwise corrupt perceptions will result: "he will draw evil out of the best [. . .]. If he be a true man, he will imagine true things; what matter whether I meant them or not?" (9). Like Blake then, MacDonald believes the imaginative faculty is the means by which

the divine laws may best be apprehended. Thus, the imagination for MacDonald depends on moral absolutism.

Speaking of what constitutes creations of fantasy, MacDonald asserts that when "such forms are new embodiments of old truths, we call them products of the Imagination" (6). For MacDonald a true fantasy or fairy tale involves constructing "a little world" which is harmonious with respect to its invented laws and must respect the "old truths" of morality:

> It were no offence to suppose a world in which everything repelled instead of attracting the things around it; it would be wicked to write a tale representing a man it called good as always doing bad things [. . .]. In physical things a man may invent; in moral things he must obey--and take their laws with him into his invented world as well." (6-7)

A statement of moral absolutism could be little clearer than that.

Thus, for MacDonald the literary fantastic must only exist as an illusion--what seems anomalous will prove to be the sign of an entrance into another "little world" where different physical laws exist or, alternately, a revelation of laws which previously were unknown. Regardless, the fantastic must ultimately be the marvelous for MacDonald, and an affirmation of moral absolutism. Borrowing perhaps from the idiom of Thomas Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, MacDonald characterizes the artist as one who may clothe truth in forms of beauty: "Law is the soil in which alone beauty will grow; beauty is the only stuff in which Truth can be clothed; and you may, if you will, call Imagination the tailor that cuts her garments to fit her [. . .] " (6). Writing a fairy tale for MacDonald is therefore a mystical and highly wrought art a project.

Where, one may ask, does folklore fit into MacDonald's work? Notably MacDonald calls Undine "the most beautiful" of fairy tales--suggesting that it is not the folk tales that appeal to him so much as the künstmärchen--Romantic literary precedents of experimenting with the fairy tale genre. MacDonald's debt to German Romanticism in particular is unmistakable--significantly, he quotes from Novalis at the close of his two best known adult fantasies: Lilith and Phantastes.[36]

Yet, MacDonald does include issues that are particularly folkloric--both his use of folk beliefs and his experimentation with traditional motifs and structure reveal a familiarity with wonder tales and legends. The fairy tale may largely be a stepping stone to transcendent truths for MacDonald, but the substantial form and meaning of these steps must be understood if one is to ascend. And, while one cannot hope to assemble the infinite number of thoughts that MacDonald hoped his works would inspire, one can delineate some of the forms that he imbued with ideological fervor. Some of his "new embodiments" that clothe "old truths" are visible to analysis, as well as new truths concerning Victorian literary fairy tales and their use of old traditions and beliefs.

To find these "new truths" one must return then to Adela Cathcart. The frame story of this novel concerns Adela Cathcart-- a young woman who is suffering from a certain world-weariness and fears that at the root of things is a bleak negativity:

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[36] Knoepflmacher observes that MacDonald's "playful irreverence towards the traditional form of the fairy tale [. . .] may owe more to the Romantic irony of German irony of German writers such as E. T. A. Hoffmann [. . .]." U. C. Knoepflmacher, Ventures into Childland--Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) 118.

> "Some six weeks ago, I woke suddenly one morning [. . .] with an overpowering sense of blackness and misery. Everything I thought of seemed to have a core of wretchedness in it. [. . .] I said to myself: 'They say "morning thoughts are true." What if this should be the true way of looking at things?' [. . .] And so it has gone ever since. I wake wretched every morning. I am crowded with wretched, if not wicked thoughts, all day. Nothing seems worth anything. I don't care for anything." (25)

It is the narrator's plan to heal Miss Cathcart's malaise by appealing to her spiritual and aesthetic faculties, which he feels stories will engage. He finds fairy-tales particularly suited to this purpose: "I remembered that, as a child, she had always liked better to be told a story than to have any other amusement whatever" (29). Apparently the narrator, like MacDonald himself, believes that the multiple interpretations of fairy tales stimulates intellectual, moral, and spiritual contemplation. Notably, after each fairy tale is told, the audience offers various interpretations, which the narrator, Mr. Smith, never canonizes as the authoritative one. This discourse is all meant to provide "some nourishment of the spiritual life" of Adela: "My conviction is [. . .] all our ailments have a moral cause. I think that if we were all good, disease would, in the course of generations, disappear utterly from the face of the earth" (110). The clergyman Mr. Armstrong, brother to the doctor, Henry Armstrong, who later marries Adela, supports Mr. Smith's thoughts: "'by what I know about women. I believe that many of them go into a consumption just from discontent. [. . .] And without good spiritual food to keep the spiritual senses healthy

and true, they cannot see the things about them as they really are. They cannot find interest in them, because they cannot find their *own* place amongst them'" (52-53). Thus, any female speculation that seems philosophically or metaphysically pessimistic is merely a diseased spiritual vision.

George MacDonald is a writer whose brand of spiritual idealism attempts to restrain the force of the psychological discontents, which his fantasies evoke, within a semi-Christian patriarchal system. MacDonald is more patriarchal than feminist, nor can he be considered pre-Freudian. However, MacDonald's narrative does have feminist and psychoanalytic components. Indeed, part of the solution to the grief of Adela is her marriage to the young doctor (old enough to be a father figure) who tends to her depression. This very project of healing Adela's spiritual malaise is comparable to Lilith, where by the grace of patriarchal sympathy (and torture) the archetypal disobedient female is brought into line and redeemed (see chapter five). Mr. Smith says of Adela that "Her soul was asleep" and that "these girls are God's work and only half made yet"--the implication is that it is men who complete the job; men such as the doctor, Henry Armstrong, who is portrayed as a veritable savior (313). Not only does the narrator identify Mr. Armstrong as a significant influence in the "cure" of Adela, but he presents the doctor as a physically active heroic figure who performs mighty feats of horsemanship in order to rush off and bandage up victims of a gunpowder accident.

Mr. Smith's idolization of this doctor synthesizes Henry Armstrong's heroic masculinity with Christian virtue: "the true Christian muscle [. . .] real muscular Christianity [. . .] which pours in a life-giving torrent from the devotion of the heart"

(424). In the surreal ending of Adela Cathcart, which takes the form of a dream, Mr. Smith beholds the world "of the dead" (461). Unlike the dismissive gesture of the dream in most other instances of Victorian fiction this dream is the revelation of spiritual truth--which is no surprise given MacDonald's declaration of a Blakian metaphysical aesthetic regarding the imagination. In the dream Mr. Smith sees his friends and family have not attained the ideal spiritual forms which he had imagined they would develop into; they remain tainted by the sins of their past lives and have become more "worldly" rather than "glorious" (461-461). Into the midst of this scene of metaphysical disappointment enters a guide who does transform these dead spirits into "marble faces"--the forms which the dreaming Mr. Smith had imagined them "glorified" as (461-462). To some tastes this transfiguration may seem a disconcertingly morbid conception of ideal spirituality. There is no room for life or movement here in this vision of spiritual perfection. To Mr. Smith however, this is the ideal itself grasped in a vision, and though he is elusive about the identity of the guide--we know it is the doctor Mr. Armstrong: "And I will not say here whose face the face of my guide was like" (462). For George MacDonald, science best joins spirituality in the occupation of the healer--the doctor, Henry Armstrong, is an incarnation of Christ.

What then of the literary fairy-tales that are included in these story-telling sessions to "cure" Adela of "moral atrophy" (110)? And, how is George MacDonald's vision of spiritual amelioration relevant to his other literary fairy tales beyond Adela Cathcart? To begin with, it must be noted that George MacDonald himself must have considered the frame-story of Adela as largely irrelevant to the interpretation of the

literary fairy tales themselves which are included in the volume, for they were all extracted for later publication by MacDonald. In fact, MacDonald had "started to peddle the manuscript of "The Light Princess" in 1862" but did not "attract a single London publisher."[37] Furthermore, there are only three literary fairy tales out of the twelve stories told in Adela Cathcart. "The Cruel Painter" is also of folkloric significance, but it involves folk beliefs and legend--not the märchen genre. What makes Adela Cathcart important to the analysis of MacDonald's use of folklore is both the representation of the Victorian context of upper-middle class storytelling--particularly the reactions to the fairy tales--and the overtly stated spiritual views of Mr. Smith which resonate throughout MacDonald's other fantastic works.

Adela Cathcart is a diplomatic attempt to cultivate a mature reading public for literary fairy tales. U. C. Knoepflmacher explains MacDonald's goal in his introduction to The Complete Fairy Tales of MacDonald: "To regain the adult audiences that folk and fairy tales had commanded for such a long time before Perrault and the Grimms domesticated them into fare for middle- and upper-class juveniles was clearly one of George MacDonald's primary goals" (xvi). Knoepflmacher is not wholly accurate in his analysis of why fairy tales ended up in the nursery, for Perrault's parlor-tales with their overt emphasis on socio-economic concerns and witty moral commentaries are not devoid of adult material. However, it is precisely because of such ethical ambiguity or subversion of conventional Christian middle-class values that fairy tales were under moral scrutiny.

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[37] George MacDonald, The Complete Fairy Tales, ed. U. C. Knoepflmacher (New York: Penguin Books, 1999) xiii.

George MacDonald's Adela Cathcart realistically presents the Puritanical hostility to fairy tales, distrust of fantasy, and jealous stewardship of children's minds, although by MacDonald's era the furor over such fantasy material had cooled to merely a smug condescension, which we observe in the character of Mrs. Cathcart. Mrs. Cathcart, the aunt of Adela, is a veritable incarnation of Sarah Trimmer:[38]

> "This is Christmas-time, you know, and that is just the time for story-telling," I added. "I trust it is a story suitable to the season," said Mrs. Cathcart, smiling. "Yes, very," I said; "for it is a child's story--a fairy tale, namely; though I confess I think it fitter for grown than for young children. I hope it is funny, though. I think it is."
>
> "So you approve of fairy-tales for children, Mr. Smith?"
>
> "Not for children alone, madam; for everybody than can relish them."
>
> "But not at a sacred time like this?" And again she smiled an insinuating smile. "If I thought God did not approve of fairy-tales, I would never read, not to say write one, Sunday or Saturday. Would you, madam?"
>
> "I never do."
>
> "I feared not. But I must begin, notwithstanding." (56)

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[38] Apparently Ruskin fancied he was the model for Mrs. Cathcart; for, as Knoepflmacher reports, Ruskin read MacDonald's story and--like Mrs. Cathcart-- objected to scenes he considered improperly erotic (the "light" princess swimming with a prince): "You *did* make me into Mrs. Cathcart. She says the very thing I said about the fairy tale. It's the only time she's right in the book--you turned me into her first and then invented all the wrongs to choke up my poor little right with. I never knew anything so horrid." Knoepflmacher Ventures 142.

There is little that need be added here to explicate the general tone of this passage: MacDonald's attitude towards the distrust of fairy tales by smirking zealots is clear. He is also conscious that he must emphasize the respectability of the fairy tale for an adult audience as well as a juvenile one.

In addition, MacDonald, in the guise of Mr. Smith, displays his refusal to be somber in his presentation of morality. For, the tale that he presents, "The Light Princess," is in many ways a morality tale, but not the gruesome affair that Sherwood, Trimmer, or Mrs. Cathcart would recognize as edifying--it is far too humorous for that. Indeed, when questioned about the meaning of the tale, Mr. Smith's jests are reminiscent of the wit and irony of Perrault's moralité appended to his version of Cinderella: " It pays to have charm and it helps one's prospects for advancement to have a fairy godmother." Naturally, it is Mrs. Cathcart, who first inquires over the moral:

> "What is the moral of it?" drawled Mrs. Cathcart, with the first syllable of *moral* very long and very gentle. "That you need not be afraid of ill-natured aunts, though they are witches," said Adela. "No, my dear; that's not it," I said. "It is, that you need not mind forgetting your poor relations. No harm will come of it in the end." "I think the moral is," said the doctor, "that no girl is worth anything till she has cried a little." (104)

The story which they are discussing, "The Light Princess," in its parody of motifs from Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty" ("La Belle au bois dormant)" and elsewhere, has little in common with the more serious psychological impact of märchen. The force of

the story resides largely in its satirical mechanics. The basic plot is that a childless royal couple finally have a child, but are cursed by the king's own sister, whom he has forgotten to invite; the vengeful relative, a "witch" not the "wicked fairy" of Perrault, causes the newborn child to lack gravity: literally. U. C. Knoepflmacher is correct to question the obvious change from Perrault's precedent: "is he signifying his detachment from fairy-tale conventions by suggesting that we ought not to misread his original fable as a mere adaptation of Perrault?" (xiv).

Indeed, as is typical of almost any use of the fantastic, it is rules and conventions that MacDonald is concerned with. Although he may have insisted on the exigency of not violating the rules of the fairy-tale world that an author creates, he himself clearly means to draw attention to his own divergence from expectations while at the same time invoking those expectations. Why else qualify the very title of the story with a second title which states, "Second Title: A Fairy-Tale Without Fairies" (57), if not to underscore the falsity of so many expectations of fairy-tales, beginning with the term itself: fairy-tale. Indeed, many, if not most, so-called fairy tales do not have fairies in them at all.

What then does MacDonald accomplish with "The Light Princess," and what is the moral? MacDonald's John Smith takes obvious delight in self-conscious obfuscation in his explication. Clearly, the moral he gives above is tongue-in-cheek; however, the typology of the "witch" generates a negative connotation that his ironic treatment of this poor relation does little superficially to mitigate:

> But poor relations don't do anything to keep you in mind of them.
>
> Why don't they? The king could not see into the garret she lived in,

> could he? She was a sour, spiteful creature. The wrinkles of contempt crossed the wrinkles of peevishness, and made her face as full of wrinkles as a pat of butter. If ever a king could be justified in forgetting anybody, this king was justified in forgetting his sister, even at a christening. And then she was so disgracefully poor! (59)

I think, upon reflection, that we can now answer Knoepflmacher. MacDonald calls this poor relation a "witch" because the term has a more exact anthropological connotation than that of "fairy." In the European witchhunts frequently the poorer members of a community bore the brunt of accusations. The demonization through appearance was an easy device with which to attack those who were often disfigured as a consequence of old age and poverty. Unless we choose not to evaluate Mr. Smith's obviously rhetorical questions and interjections as indicators of MacDonald's intentions in his portrayal of this witch, then we must acknowledge that MacDonald is criticizing here the very tendency to dismiss and denigrate poor relations. His jocular moral asides are certainly a signal of this intent.

MacDonald's primary mode of fantastic narrative does not anchor itself in the whimsy that is prevalent in "The Light Princess"--he is usually more seriously engaged with establishing spiritual optimism despite rational doubts. But, common to this story and many of his other literary fairy tales is a consciousness of bending or breaking the conventional fairy tale rules of metaphysics and narrative. In this case, the discussion by the characters in Adela Cathcart overtly draws attention to some of the questions of "ground rules" that are, according to Rabkin, the hallmark of the fantastic.

A productive example of such a debate occurs after the witch's interference with the princess's baptism. The folkloric associations of baptism are important here--children were subject to attacks and kidnapping by fairies and other transgressive spiritual entities; we will explore this in greater detail in the seventh chapter with Le Fanu's "Laura Silver Bell." Thus, what is now a commonplace, from the literary fairy tale "Sleeping Beauty," of the wicked fairy at the baptism is derived from folk beliefs. However, the baptism is a protective service in folklore, and it is prior to that time when fairies would be interfering. Nor would there be any good fairies to offer gifts--that is the sentimental and sanitizing tendency of urbane writers who felt distanced from folklore as a living reality. Folk motifs became mere playthings for Victorian writers, to wield as they wished for whatever desired effect, and the literary fairy tale cemented this tendency.

Nevertheless, MacDonald, while self-consciously recognizing the comic and seemingly petty effects of fairy-tale motifs, also defends their potential potency. The very spell, and its consequence, that the witch casts exemplifies this dynamic: "They all thought she had lost her wits, and was repeating some foolish nursery rhyme; but a shudder went through the whole of them" (60). MacDonald is aware that many spells have been in rhyme form--for verse with its plethora of connective and repetitive features emphasizes the single-minded intent of magic--but he is also aware that spells are not necessarily impressive poetry. In addition, MacDonald is fully conscious of the degradation of fairy tales and folklore in general into a juvenile arena: the nursery. Yet, as even this parodic fairy tale makes clear, folklore crosses many boundaries, to which, naturally Mrs. Cathcart objects:

"One thing, " said Mrs. Cathcart with a smile, not a very sweet one, but a smile, "one thing, I must object to. That is, introducing church ceremonies into a fairy-tale." "Why, Mrs. Cathcart, "answered the clergyman, taking up the cudgels for me, "do you suppose the church to be such a cross-grained old lady, that she will not allow her children to take a few gentle liberties with their mother? She's able to stand that surely. They won't love her the less for that." "Besides, "I ventured to say, "if both church and fairy-tale belong to humanity, they may occasionally cross circles, without injury to either. They must have something in common. There is the *Fairy Queen*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, you know, Mrs. Cathcart. I can fancy the pope even telling his nephews a fairy tale."

"Ah, the pope! I daresay."

"And not the archbishop?"

"I don't think your reasoning quite correct, Mr. Smith," said the clergyman; "and I think moreover there is a real objection to that scene. It is, that no such charm could have had any effect where holy water was employed as the medium. In fact I doubt if the wickedness could have been wrought in a chapel at all." (60-61)

Mrs. Cathcart's objection, despite her priggishness, involves a legitimate issue: the difficulty of reconciling Christian metaphysics with the metaphysics of the fairy tale in general.

The established doctrines of neither the Catholic nor the Anglican Church are infallible in folklore. Indeed, many folk legends demonstrate pagan resilience. As far as the British märchen, orthodox Christianity--if it even has a presence--generally has limited authority metaphysically. Issues of "holy water" are matters of folk beliefs and legend, as are what can and can't be done inside a Church by a spirit. Suffice to say that the Devil is known to attend Church, and in Hogg's presentation of the "Legend of Auchtermuchty" in his Confessions demons on occasion preach there. As regards MacDonald's ethos, Mr. Smith's defense of the compatibility of fairy tales with piety is another testament to MacDonald's own confidence in literary fairy tales as instructive, and even sacred--certainly not profane--vessels. The clergyman's caricature of the Church as female is typical of MacDonald's own conceptions of divinity, which are usually maternal in their form, despite his underlying patriarchal system behind such figures. We shall meet such examples in Lilith, Phantastes, At the Back of the North Wind, and the Curdie books.

The criticism by the audience of Mr. Smith's tale, "The Light Princess," which most directly engages the issue of the fantastic is that which concerns the "reality of a fairy-tale" (66):

> "I think," said Mrs. Armstrong, "since criticism is the order of the evening, and Mr. Smith is so kind as not to mind it, that he makes the king and queen too silly. It takes away from the reality." "Right too, my dear madam," I answered. "The reality of a fairy-tale?" said Mrs. Cathcart, as if asking a question of herself. (66)

It is as though MacDonald is not wholly secure that his own work displays the ideals of the literary fairy tale which he outlines in his essay on "The Fantastic Imagination" "if he makes one law jar with another, he contradicts himself as an inventor, he is not an artist. He does not rightly consort his instruments, or he tunes them in different keys" (6). Perhaps MacDonald feels that his king and queen might be somewhat out of tune.

In addition to criticizing the development of characters, Mr. Smith's audience finds fault with the "laws" of the tale:

> "I am not sure about your physics, Mr. Smith," said the doctor. "If she had not gravity, no amount of muscular propulsion could have given her any momentum. And again, if she had not gravity, she must inevitably have ascended beyond the regions of the atmosphere."
> "Bottle your philosophy, Harry, with the rest of your physics," said the clergyman, laughing. "Don't you see that she must have had some weight, only if it wasn't worthy mentioning, being no greater than the ordinary weight of the atmosphere. Besides, you know very well that a law of nature could not be destroyed. Therefore, it was only witchcraft, you know; and the laws of that remain to be discovered--at least so far as my knowledge goes.--Mr. Smith, you have gone in for a fairy-tale; and if I were you, I would claim the immunities of Fairyland."
> "So I do, " I responded fiercely, and went on. (70)

To "claim the immunities of Fairyland" is for MacDonald to allow himself free license to actually abridge any of the physical realities of the natural world. The only restrictions are that he violates neither the new laws in his "little world of his own, with its own laws" (U.C. 6), nor--above all-- the moral absolutes: "In physical things a man may invent; in moral things he must obey--and take their laws with him into his invented world as well" (7).

Despite the apparent freedom of creation that MacDonald asserts is the prerogative of the writer of literary fairy tales he is often occupied with reconciling his new metaphysical systems--which rely on folklore and the fantastic--with the experiential, traditional, and theoretical ones of the "real" world. "The Shadows" in Adela Cathcart is an example of one of these metaphysical discourses, which he more expansively outlines in At the Back of the North Wind, Lilith, and Phantastes. MacDonald frequently turns to folklore to garner support for his unconventional metaphysics.

"The Shadows" is the second tale told by Mr. Smith and it is of a more indeterminate genre than "The Light Princess":

> "But [. . .] "interrupted Adela, "you said it was not to be a fairy-tale."
>
> "Well, I don't think you will call it one, when you have heard it [. . .][. . .] But I am not particular as to names. The fairies have not much to do with it anyhow." (187)

MacDonald uses folklore in this story humorously at first, similar to "The Light Princess": "Old Ralph Rinkelmann made his living by comic sketches and all but lost it again by tragic poems. So he was just the man to be chosen king of the fairies, for

in Fairy-land the sovereignty is elective" (186-187). Yet, even this seemingly haphazard turn of events contains something of the essence of the reversals of fortune that fairies are known to influence--so these are not simply idle words with no folkloric importance. However, the non sequitur is not to be dismissed, and the comment that "the sovereignty is elective" is an imposition of politics that is not clearly supported by tradition in the least. The story makes more use of folk beliefs than it does of märchen motifs, which is not surprising given that its pretensions to represent a "real" metaphysics exceeds the intentions of "The Light Princess." Furthermore, the "reality "of the marvelous in this story is in question since old Ralph is sick throughout much of the tale--like Diamond in At The Back of the North Wind his spiritual revelations may merely be delusions.[39]

The main focus of the story is the shadowy beings which, among many other spirits, are the subjects of this new king and attempt through their actions to instruct humans morally. Woven into the interactions between Ralph and the Shadows are a number of speeches which suggest that for MacDonald aesthetics and morality should be in harmony--as well as everything else in the universe. In other words, MacDonald is something of a Romantic and shares the moral and aesthetic pantheism of Wordsworth:

> "'We do not belong to the sunshine at all. We go through it unseen, and only by a passing chill do men recognize an unknown presence.'
>
> "'Ha!' said the king.

---

[39] "'The Shadows'" was MacDonald's first fairy tale, drafted when he was himself ill and was writing *Phantastes*." F. Hal Broome, "Dreams, Fairy Tales, and the Curing of Adela Cathcart," North Wind--Journal of the George MacDonald Society 13 (1994): 12.

> "It is only in the twilight of the fire, or when one man or woman is alone with a single candle, or when any number of people are all feeling the same thing at once, making them one, that we show ourselves and the truth of things.
>
> "'Can that be true that loves the night?' said the king.
>
> "'The Darkness is the nurse of the light.' answered the Shadow.
>
> "'Can that be true which mocks at forms?' said the king.
>
> "'Truth rides abroad in shapeless storms,' answered the Shadow.
>
> "'Ha! ha!' thought Ralph Rinkelmann, 'it rhymes. The shadow caps my questions with his answers.--Very strange!' And he grew thoughtful again. "(195-196)

Through the dialogic rhyming, which is a device reminiscent of embedded Shakespearean sonnets, such as in Romeo and Juliet, as well as in folk tales (usually in a competition with a spirit--and woe unto you if it has the last word), MacDonald implies the union between opposites. This harmony of contraries expressed through art--the rhyming lines--embodies what Michalson insists is the hallmark of what makes MacDonald subversive:

> MacDonald believed that *religion is manifest through aesthetics*, and this doctrine made him an extremely dangerous and subversive man of letters. [. . .] His aesthetics are in no way a mere substitute or rival to his Christianity, they *are* his Christianity. Period. [. . .] the world of imagination *is* the world of Reality, that is, the Kingdom of God, and

> what we usually think of as the "real world" is a "story," meaning a fiction in the sense of a falsehood." (75)

Michalson's interpretation may not apply to all of MacDonald's work, but she is right to emphasize yet another Blakian feature of MacDonald's aesthetics--the divine nature of the imagination where artistic visions are revealed truth. MacDonald did indeed claim in "The Imagination: Its Functions and Culture" that "to inquire into what God has made is the main function of the imagination" (82).

It is not only Christianity that figures within MacDonald's aesthetic renderings of course, but folklore as well. Similar to his harmonizing of opposites on the level of verse and image, MacDonald juxtaposes sensations and concepts as well: the chill that is traditionally known as the sign of a ghost with the sense of warmth and unity in the scene of either spiritual fellowship or contemplation. The king's exclamation upon hearing of that "passing chill" may well be a sign of recognition, but as is typical of MacDonald he invokes traditional beliefs and systems only to then take a turn away from what is generally understood. For, the Shadows are not ghosts at all, or at least not ghosts of any recognizable tradition outside of MacDonald's metaphysics: "'we don't like the creatures that live in the mirrors. You call them ghosts, don't you?'"[40] The Shadow's interrogation seems to demonstrate the separation in its identity from a ghost; however, the words of a "white-faced boy of fourteen" mentioned in one of the Shadow's anecdotes of moral reform asserts the following: "'they're body-ghosts; they're not soul ghosts'"(209).

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[40] MacDonald Adela Cathcart 203.

In fact, "The Shadows" verges on becoming a kind of metaphysical taxonomy. The conventional terms and conceptions of different spirits are renamed according to MacDonald's shadowy vision: "we were seized with such a longing to be Shadows no longer, but winged angels, which are the white shadows cast in heaven from the Light of Light" (216). If MacDonald owes much to Wordsworth for his assertion of unity between human fellowship, divine harmony, the imagination, and aesthetics, then he also owes something to Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," with his many spirits of the mind: "'But what were those other shadows, mysteries in the midst of mystery?'" persisted she. "'My dear, as the little child said shadows were the ghosts of the body, so I say these were the shadows of the mind.--Will that do?" (217). Like Blake, MacDonald seems intent on creating a new system since he is not satisfied with the representations of theology that he has received from orthodoxy, and thus he often turns to the materials of folklore that have not petrified into doctrine.

MacDonald is not alone in using the fairy-tale form as a vehicle for a particular ideology. Like Ford Maddox Ford, Edith Nesbit, Charles Dickens, Lawrence Housman and others, MacDonald subordinates the patterns of traditional märchen to contemporary contexts and concepts. These Victorian writers live in a self-consciously rational age, yet also an era preoccupied with reconciling piety with science. These cultural tensions manifest themselves in these writers' approach to the creation of literary fairy tales. Their works reveal the conflict of their mixed feelings and views; we see the engagement of politically progressive zealotry and religious enthusiasm with humorous skepticism and defensive irony. It is as though these writers recognize the importance of being earnest, but are uncomfortable with the

obvious fictive quality of the fairy tale genre, which simultaneously liberates and constrains by its ambiguous cultural role as children's literature. In a sense these authors are at play--using the imaginative potential of fantasy in the playground of literature and at times boldly stepping over the threshold of normalcy with a provocative reversal of a cultural norm through the fantastic.

Literary critics have not thoroughly analyzed how Victorian fairy tales use supernatural folklore and function as works of the literary fantastic. These tales are fantastic not primarily in the typical sense that they reverse or challenge the laws of realism, but rather that they intrude a realistic perspective into the fantasy metaphysics and motifs of the traditional pattern established by the folk fairy tale. Victorian fairy tales employ features of Victorian realism such as passive heroism, the proper roles for children, and reveal a preoccupation with emergent social issues, such as feminism and socialism. The style and presentation of these thematic concerns is a significant and contemporary change from the traditional emphasis of volksmärchen on the magical tasks associated with economic and social independence, heterosexual courtship, and marriage. Instead of soberly imitating folk precedents, many Victorian fairy tales treat the very mechanics that define the märchen as a narrative of magical events and active heroism with levity and skepticism.

Victorian writers' revisions of the fairy tale genre stress the metamorphic ambition of their aesthetics, ethics, and politics. They aim to transform the consciousness of their readership by proselytizing and entertaining, using what people believed to be a culturally stable form. But, as we have seen, what was assumed to be

common ground generically was constantly shifting by the provocative use of anachronism, didacticism, and irony to emphasize contemporary and progressive perspectives. As the next two chapters demonstrate, the longer, fairy-tale fantasy represents another step in this development of using the literary fantastic to appropriate the supernatural metaphysics and motifs of the oral tradition for literary innovation. We will continue this analysis of literary fairy tales by focusing on George MacDonald's fantasies in particular, for it is he who most thoroughly explored the possibilities of transforming the genre in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Four

Victorian Fairy-Tale Fantasies:

MacDonald's Fairyland and Barrie's Neverland

Victorian literary fairy tales take great liberties with the traditional treatment of magical motifs and metaphysics; the divergence of book-length fantasies from folk fairy tales is even greater in terms of form and genre. However, fantasy itself as a genre, is largely an extension of the standard metaphysics and narrative assumptions of the folk fairy tale--the reality underpinning the events of the tale is not typically to be questioned. Fantasy entails that its ground rules are sustained throughout the work for the effect of overall coherence.[1] Thus, unlike the fantastic, fantasy as a genre does not generate its interest and complexity through evoking hesitation, but by offering a protracted alternative vision to realism. This is particularly true for the sorts of contemporary fantasies available in any bookstore of the "sword and sorcery" variety, whose roots ultimately derive from fairy tales, as well as medieval Arthurian romance and medieval epics such as Beowulf.

Yet, J.M. Barrie's (1860-1937) and George MacDonald's (1824-1905) fantasies are not continuously sustained--hesitation, though certainly not the hallmark

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[1] This statement depends on Rabkin's definition of the fantastic and Irwin's definition of fantasy--both are discussed in chapter one. Rabkin stresses that in the fantastic the ground rules are reversed in the course of the narrative; thus, I'm insisting that in fantasy the ground rules are usually maintained and it is from that consistency that the effect of coherence derives, which Irwin identifies as a salient characteristic of fantasy. The ground rules of the fantasy narrative differ from literary realism and do not pretend to mimic empirical reality and there is generally no reversal of those rules in the course of the narrative for that would work towards disintegration rather than coherence.

of these books, is part of these works in various forms. Part of the hesitation in these fantasies derives from the same self-consciousness present in Victorian literary fairy tales. Realistic story lines, or at least highly suggestive psychological subtexts, interact with the fanciful images and events. In addition, new rules govern the fantasy world that are not necessarily found in either realism or traditional folk tales--and, the longer the work, the greater likelihood that there will be a correspondingly large amount of fresh laws governing the unreality of this strange world.

Readers encounter in fantasies much of the traditional supernatural machinery of fairy tales, but the narrative patterns and motifs do not necessarily result in the expected ending formulae, nor are clear fairy-tale patterns always discernible as the underlying backbones of the plots. In other words, the fantasy attempts to be freer from the constraints of tradition than the shorter literary fairy tale as well as striving for greater complexity--traditional symbols are often reoriented into new innovative systems of meaning that gain cumulative significance throughout the narrative. These authors of fantasy fashion their own enchanted worlds; they do not rely on the marvelous realm of fairy tales nor wholly lose sight of their contemporary sphere.

In book-length fantasies, writers may be presumed to have a bit more to say--or imagine that they do--than in a more concise imitation or approximation of a fairy tale. Such is the case with Barrie and MacDonald--both authors are intent on providing social criticism as well as earnest moral messages despite the seeming unreality of their creations. Thus, above all, the literary fantastic in their fantasies serves as a rhetorical tool--by departing from traditional and generic expectations of fairy-tale literature these authors stress their arguments. Examining closely moments

of fantastic departure from literary and folkloric precedents reveals particular ideological agendas.

MacDonald's and Barrie's children's literature reveals dystopian concerns--specifically the failure of human institutions to successfully integrate spiritual ideals. MacDonald's popular children's works, At the Back of the North Wind (1871), The Princess and the Goblin (1872), and The Princess and Curdie (1883), as well as J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan, show that these fantasists were injecting adult concerns with metaphysics, morality, and sexuality into works allegedly for children.

None of these works delivers the unequivocal "happy ending" expected in a fairy tale. This tendency to critically qualify "happily ever after" is also a patent feature in Macdonald's extended fairy tales for children, but it is particularly so in his two popular fantasies The Princess and the Goblin and The Princess and Curdie (often referred to as his two Curdie stories). The poor child who finishes reading these books finds not that a golden age is forever restored by the valiant efforts of the brave hero Curdie and the resourceful Princess but that corruption and dissipation ultimately produce the total negation of civilization. In Barrie's Peter Pan the moral fiber of children themselves and Victorian family solidarity comes under attack. Through emphasizing, discarding, and transforming particular motifs and tale-types in folklore and the literary tradition of fairy tales, Barrie and MacDonald present social portraits of the hypocritical, selfish, and highly limited nature of communal and individual happiness.

The Curdie Books--Metaphysics, Morality, Fairy-tale Motifs, and the Fantastic

MacDonald's two Curdie books are a mixture of the marvelous, the metaphysical, the mundane, the progressive, and the didactic. Contained in these two volumes are MacDonald's spiritual philosophies, social theories, fairy-tale motifs, and folk beliefs, as well as the condescending tone of Victorian manuals of conduct for children. The impact of folklore in these books is primarily evident in MacDonald's use of fairy-tale patterns and folk beliefs.

MacDonald's use of folklore has not been entirely ignored. In "Folklore in the Fantasies and Romances of George MacDonald," Aline Faben explores some folkloric influences on MacDonald's works, but her dissertation lacks analytic thoroughness despite attempting to encompass all of MacDonald's fantasies and romances.[2] Faben does not list Thompson's Motif Index among her sources and largely neglects the important question of what is significant about MacDonald's departure from traditional folk narratives and beliefs. Yet, she claims to distinguish between "when MacDonald is calling on a folk consciousness and when he is using a more literary approach" (5). Perhaps the most interesting examples of Faben identifying a "literary approach" are her considerations of MacDonald's possible debts to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Dante's Divine Comedy, and a medieval Bestiary. Faben's work also includes biographical details suggesting MacDonald's familiarity

[2] I do not mean to dismiss Faben's work; on the contrary I will refer to some of her observations in the following pages.

with folklore: "in one of his letters, he refers to his daughter Mary as 'Kelpie' because she has been naughty" (4). However, she also points out how few of these indications exist. Thus, there are scant details of MacDonald's knowledge of folklore to support the faith of Katharine Briggs that nobody "knew his folklore better than George MacDonald" and the admiration and critical perspective of MacDonald's son, Greville MacDonald: "'the inspiration of his fairy-tale was the spirit of the volk-märchen'" (4-5). In fact, MacDonald's uses of folklore go far beyond selectively employing the patterns of the "volk-märchen."

In The Princess and the Goblin MacDonald's explanation of the genesis of goblins and the bestial forms that human immorality may take is a peculiar mixture of folk beliefs and anthropological theories of folklore, combined with evolution and metaphysical anthropomorphism. The novel describes the adventures of a young miner boy, Curdie, and the young princess, Irene. Both characters transcend their class to become equals in terms of compassion, honor, and love. Curdie proves his worth primarily by defending the kingdom of Irene's father against the destructive predations of their goblin neighbors, who dwell underground and crave revenge for their historical disenfranchisement and banishment. MacDonald's account of the origin and history of goblins applies the resonance of legends to anthropological theories of folklore as well as invoking the dynamics of imperialism and emigration:

> Now in these subterranean caverns lived a strange race of beings, called by some gnomes, by some kobolds, by some goblins. There was a legend current in the country that at one time they lived above ground, and were very like other people. But for some reason or other,

> concerning which there were different legendary theories, the king had laid what they thought too severe taxes upon them [. . .] or had begun to [. . .] impose stricter laws [. . .]. According to the legend, however, instead of going to some other country, they had all taken refuge in the subterranean caverns. [. . .] they had greatly altered in the course of generations; and no wonder, seeing they lived away from the sun [. . .]. [. . .] as they grew misshapen in body they had grown in knowledge [. . .]. But as they grew in cunning, they grew in mischief [. . .]. [. . .] they so heartily cherished the ancestral grudge against those who occupied their former possessions, and especially against the descendants of the king who had caused their expulsion, that they sought every opportunity [. . .]. [. . .] to devise trouble for their neighbors. (3-5)

As fanciful as this account of the goblins may seem by presenting them as politically oppressed people there is resonance both among legends and anthropological theories for the belief that the fairy folk were in fact earlier inhabitants of Britain, who were overwhelmed by succeeding waves of invaders.

Faben notes the tensions of class, imperialism, and race in MacDonald's descriptions though she is apparently unaware of the anthropological theories to which MacDonald was likely alluding:

> The goblin royal family and their bickering, their desire to augment their power by marriage to their heir to a "sun princess," and their pitiful claims to superiority over the 'sun people' are a burlesque of

> aristocratic behavior, or, more generally, the racist paternalism of imperial Britain. (113-114)

Carol Silver's book Strange and Secret Peoples--Fairies and Victorian Consciousness presents many of the Victorian theories associating fairies with less "civilized" peoples past and present. Silver explores "the acceptance and popularization of ideas of biological, social, and ethnological evolution that linked dwarfs of all kinds to primordial humans, to primitive non-Caucasian, races and to apes" (128). Anthropologists such as Sir Harry Johnston offered testimonials as late as 1902 comparing traditional humanoids with these people of foreign lands, such as Pygmies: "in "The Pygmies and Ape-like Men of the Uganda Borderland," [Johnston] remarks that Pygmies remind him "over and over again of the traits attributed to the *brownies and goblins* of our fairy stories" (136). Silver also asserts that MacDonald's book, The Princess and the Goblin, is "influenced by evolutionary theory" (127). However Silver points out that Pygmies were not "front-page news" until Henry Morton Stanley's book *In Darkest Africa* appeared in 1890. MacDonald's book was published in 1872. And it was also not until 1890 that David MacRitchie "in *The Testimony of Tradition*" asserted the argument "that belief in fairies stemmed from folk memories of a vanished race [. . .]."[3] Although Stanley and MacRitchie's works were not published before MacDonald's own it is likely that such ideas were being discussed. Thus, given the evidence, it is at least plausible that MacDonald was aware of some

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[3] Richard M. Dorson, The British Folklorists—A History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) 214.

of the anthropological theories about goblins and views them wryly as more dubious material to be categorized among the other "legends."

It may strike a reader as somewhat surprising and innovative that MacDonald first renders these goblins as essentially oppressed people--a rather sympathetic view--yet, folk tales in Britain also give indications that such non-human beings or spirits -- "bogles"--are the victims of humankind's injustice.. Indeed, the complaint of one of the goblins, the Chancellor, who asserts that humans "look upon us as a degraded race, and make a mockery of all our finer feelings" resonates with traditional portrayals of tensions between boggles and humans (67).

Katharine Briggs herself is not altogether certain what bogles and bogies are: "It is sometimes difficult to decide whether a tale is told about a bogie, a black dog, a devil or a fairy. In Somerset, Bogie is one name for the devil, but in general bogies, bogles, bug-a-boos and so on are frightening and mischievous spirits--minor devils, if they are devils at all. [. . .] The mildest of them are boggarts, which are brownies gone to the bad."[4] Brownies are helpful household spirits, if you don't break the rules that govern their allegiance. MacDonald asserts that the surviving goblins, after the purge described, shortly, "grew milder in character, and indeed became very much like the Scotch Brownies" (241). Even the similarity between MacDonald and Briggs' description--based on the words "milder" and "mildest" and their relation to Brownies--suggest that MacDonald had local folklore in mind, and perhaps boggarts especially.

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[4] Katharine Briggs, British Folk-Tales—Part B Folk Legends Vol.1, (London: Routledge, 1991) 23.

Consider for example "The Farmer and the Boggart"--which is a common tale of the being's territorial competition with humans; this version was culled in 1886, a similar one appears in T. Sternberg's Dialect and Folk-lore of Northamptonshire (1851):

> T'boggart, a squat hairy man, strong as a six-year old horse, and with arms almost as long as tackle-poles, comes to a farmer who has just taken a bit of land, and declares that he is the proper owner, and the farmer must quit. The farmer proposes an appeal to the law, but boggart will have naught to do wi' law, which has never yet done him justice, and suggests that they share the produce equally."[5]

The farmer, as is typical of this tale-type (AT 1030 The Crop Division), bests his opponent in this struggle for economic resources and the poor boggart again has no justice. What is significant here is the hint of sympathy by the narrator who points out the law has not provided for boggarts; and, for all we know, the boggart may well have been the "proper owner" as he claims. The description of the boggart is also striking as a "squat hairy man." For, besides his great strength and length of his arms there is little evidence here to consider him other than some sort of human being entitled by virtual humanity if not legality to a livelihood as well as the Anglo-Saxon farmer. Given such stories collected from a long-standing oral tradition, one can perhaps appreciate the theory that there were indeed at some time similar territorial conflicts with other oppressed races--whether Picts, Celts, or otherwise--that influenced English tales like this one.

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[5] Briggs 28.

Despite precedents for sympathy towards the fairy-like races and his own overture in the direction of such compassion, MacDonald ultimately mocks such pretensions to "finer feelings" and presents what amounts to an apocalyptic genocide--a flood for this "degraded race." MacDonald's competition between the miners and goblins seems to be his own idea of a kind of racial war. MacDonald may possibly have been aware of traditions of spirits harassing miners (F456.12.1 *Knockers--Malicious Action Against Miners*), but the "knockers" are an ambiguous group, sometimes warning against cave-ins. In the end of the story, Curdie, the miner boy, tricks the goblins into inundating themselves with the water that they had meant to drown people in the mines and the castle.

Although MacDonald's major heresy was his belief that heathens might be spared, his presentation--based on tradition--of fairy beings that have no souls in this context makes him seem dogmatic, rather than simply folklorically authentic.[6] Curdie includes lyrics regarding their lack of souls in one of his songs against the goblins: "Why should their shoes have soles, sir, / When they've got no souls?" (146). Because MacDonald has naturalized the goblins as historically distorted humans the lore of lacking souls figures as a stigmatizing feature which further dismisses the goblins' past humanity.

Is MacDonald blindly contradicting his ethical position as a dissenter? Arguably, MacDonald is being a biblical apologist by imagining an occasion in which

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[6] There are many legends concerning fairy anxiety over salvation within the Christian world; usually such tales focus on the lack of fairy souls deriving from them not being of the race of Adam. Migratory Legend 5050 *The Fairies' Prospect of Salvation.*

the Flood would be appropriate, "it repenteth me that I created Man, for his imagination is evil" (Genesis 8.21 King James Version)--thus spake the Lord before the Flood. These goblins similarly are a flawed piece of moral evolution. In fact, the portrayal of the goblins as initially an oppressed people is merely one step in MacDonald's conception of a negative chain of being--his concern is to depict devolution. The goblins are an example of this dynamic, and serve to presage what humanity may potentially become.

MacDonald's presentation of this devolution however lacks justice, for the most intense vengeance is taken out not on the goblins themselves, though the intention was genocidal, but on their animals. MacDonald uses these animals as a rationalization for the outrageous accounts of the hideousness of the appearance of goblins: "I suspect those who said so had mistaken some of their animal companions for the goblins themselves" (4). The goblin animals "were, of course, household animals belonging to the goblins, whose ancestors had taken their ancestors many centuries before [. . .] into the lower regions of darkness" (100). Naturally, physical degeneration occurs in these animals as well as a sort of distorted mimesis of the human: "from constant [. . .] associations with the goblins, their countenances had grown in grotesque resemblance to the human. No one understands animals who does not see that every one of them, even amongst the fishes [. . .] yet shadows the human" (101). Thus, MacDonald asserts the human form is the pinnacle of earthly development in the great chain of being and animals represent imperfect attainments of that ideal.

If the goblins seem somewhat sympathetic, due to their history of turning from harassed to harassers, then the goblin animals are doubly so. Speaking of how the goblin animals "with the curiosity which had grown to a passion from the restraints of their unnatural circumstances, proceeded to explore the channel" and the royal garden, which lay beyond it, MacDonald sounds earnest in his portrait of the beasts as having been sorely beleaguered (102). Describing what "jolly fun" it was to "get out for a romp on a smooth lawn such as they had never seen in all their poor miserable lives" MacDonald shows these "goblin creatures" as pathetic caricatures of the goblins (102). Syllogistically, the goblin animals are parodies of the passions of humanity itself. Yet, being mere beasts, they have no significant intellectual or immoral strategy: "although they had partaken enough of the nature of their owners to delight in annoying and alarming any of the people whom they met on the mountain, they were, of course, incapable of designs of their own" (102).

It is morally perplexing why in the deluge of the goblins it is beings that are merely physically hideous, not morally--the goblins' animals--that receive no mercy:

> A good many of the goblins with their creatures escaped from the inundation out upon the mountain. But most of them soon left that part of the country, and most of those who remained grew milder in character, and indeed became very much like the Scotch Brownies. Their skulls became softer as well as their hearts [. . .] friendly [. . .] even with the miners. But the latter were merciless to any of the cobs' creatures that came in their way, until at length they all but disappeared. (241)

This passage approaches the morally grotesque--mixing sentimentality (the cant of the "softer hearts"), regional folklore (the allusion to "Scotch Brownies"), the suggestion of Victorian pseudoscience (using phrenology to explain racial and moral differences), and the matter-of-fact and understated mention of the virtual extinction of the guiltless animals. The juxtaposition of sentimental clichés with the unacknowledged cruelty of the miners is morally and aesthetically repulsive. Curdie himself kills a goblin animal, whose fault was merely being in the way (192). Could these miners, MacDonald's Carlylian working-army be guilty of ethical shortsightedness?

Beyond these unexamined ethics, the ideology of form that underpins the description is also a dubious prospect. The hint of phrenology (the fact that the "skulls became softer" reflects the development of civilized affections) indicates the evolutionary progression of the goblins--both morally and physically--while the presumably static ugliness of the animals serves as an excuse for their elimination. As the penultimate sentence of the book it is a disturbing synopsis of MacDonald's imposition of his peculiar brand of moral morphology on folklore--a goblin animal, a form that has become merely an animal reflection of the human must be destroyed.

MacDonald underscores this idea of the bestial representation of moral devolution in his presentation of the effects of the gift of preternatural perception that Curdie receives in the second book, The Princess and Curdie. In this novel Princess Irene fades into the background--her progressive faith in a higher spiritual power had been part of The Princess and the Goblin--and Curdie takes center stage in his quest to rid the kingdom of treacherous advisors, who have betrayed Irene's father. In order

to separate the sheep from the goats Curdie earns through suffering the power of moral discernment, and then proceeds to punish the iniquitous.

The magical gift is a primary fairy tale motif that generally is an externalized sign of an internal development of positive character. However, in this story Curdie receives no token; rather, he undergoes a literal "trial by fire" which bestows a special ability upon his hands. He is told by the Mother of Light--the same matriarchal divinity presented in The Princess and the Goblin as the Princess's Irene's great-great grandmother--that he must place his hands within a magical fire: "He held the pain as if it were a thing that would kill him if he let it go--as indeed it would have done [. . .]. [. . .] [he] thought his hands must be burned to cinders [. . .]" (70). The result of this painful gift is that Curdie by shaking someone's hand will "know at once the hand of a man who is growing into a beast" (73). As with the spindle wound that the Princess Irene suffers in the previous book (and the redemption of Lilith-- achieved partly through purgation), Curdie attains through pain greater spiritual heights. Curdie's improvement through suffering is similar to the edifying masochistic metaphysics of Christ on the cross. It is Curdie's task in this story to purge Irene's castle of the corrupt men who are manipulating her ailing father to gain political power, and so he needs this power of moral discernment gained from his trial by fire.[7]

MacDonald's handling of fairy-tale motifs reveals his primary agenda is didactic; he wishes to portray a system of ethics that transcends and unites pagan and

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[7] Faben has noted that MacDonald's The Princess and Curdie is "one of his most political, a story hardly for children, but rather, a dark commentary on the state of society." Aline Sidny Faben, "Folklore in the Fantasies and Romances of George MacDonald." diss., State University of New York, 1978, 143.

Christian elements. Thus, MacDonald's presentation of the fairy-tale motif of the hero's gift, Curdie's sensitive handshake, not only relates to Christian metaphysics, but also merges the science of evolution with classical mythology, weaving modernity, Christianity, and antiquity into a single pattern of morality and heroism. The Mother of Light's discourse to Curdie on how men turn into animals is MacDonald's metaphysical reversal of evolutionary theories:

> 'Have you ever heard what some philosophers say--that men were all animals once?'
>
> 'No, ma'am.'
>
> 'It is of no consequence. But there is another thing that is of the greatest consequence--this: that all men, if they do not take care, go down the hill to the animals' country; that many men are actually, all their lives, going to be beasts. People knew it once, but it is long since they forgot it.'
>
> 'I am not surprised to hear it, ma'am, when I think of some of our miners.' (72)

As the Mother of Light mentions, the idea of bestial devolution is nothing new--the most famous fictional account being the encounter with Circe in the Odyssey--but the invocation of "philosophers" who advocate the theory of evolution imbues the moral analogy with a sense of relevance. Thus, despite the anachronism of evolutionary discourse in MacDonald's medieval fairy-tale world, replete with goblins and something very like a fairy godmother, MacDonald succeeds in injecting new life into

an old tale, rather than accepting that the new science has destroyed the resonance of such stories forever.

Moral didacticism is MacDonald's primary motivation for altering fairy tale motifs. MacDonald evidently believing that he needs to diverge from what is expected in order to crystallize his message. While the lack of the physical token, which is usually present with a gift in a fairy tale, may seem trivial, in fact this alteration of the expected pattern underscores the developmental aspects of this fairy tale commonplace. The absence of an object highlights that the power of discernment is in Curdie himself. Thus, although the lack of definitive clarity in the symbols of a fairy tale has never stopped any critic from usually finding a compelling interpretation, MacDonald engages in fairly literal didacticism in this book, despite his avowals of prizing multiple meanings in "The Fantastic Imagination."

One of the main underpinnings of MacDonald's metaphysics in this story is Christian eschatology--apocalyptic vengeance against the corrupt--and much of the imagery and speeches in The Princess and Curdie supports this view. MacDonald's imposition of the values and motifs of the New Testament upon a fairy tale world in the two Curdie books implicitly seeks to harmonize pagan aspects of folklore with his own metaphysical and religious vision. The most explicit instance of this dynamic is the character of the Mother of Light. MacDonald's Mother of Light combines facets of a Celtic goddess, as well as the more general maternal helpers in fairy tales, into an image of Christian divinity and the externalized vision of moral conscience: "he hardly knew whether it was the old lady or his own heart that spoke" (26). Her appearance on the battlefield comprises divine vengeance on the battlefield. The

cleansing of the castle is an unmistakably apocalyptic scene where the corrupt are punished not only by monstrous--yet righteously vengeful--beings whose shapes are indicators of their past sins (and are commanded by Curdie) but "waterspouts and whirlwinds ranging every street of the city" (207).

MacDonald extends the messianic resonance of the New Testament to both his female divinity and Curdie through allusions to Christ in the dialogue, promoting an aura of sacred authority that validates the aforementioned descriptive signs of the Day of Judgment. For example, consider when Curdie has just realized he did not recognize one of the forms of the Mother of Light: "'Did I not tell you, Curdie, that it might be you would not know me when next you saw me?'" (252). This is a distinct echo of Christ's assertion to Peter that he would "deny me three times"--and, like Peter, Curdie weeps at this realization (Mark 14.72). Or even more blatant is Curdie's assertion that he is "'come to set things right in this house'" upon arriving at the castle--here is MacDonald's equivalent of Christ rebuke to the merchants in the temple (John. 2.13-22).

Arguably, MacDonald achieves some vicarious satisfaction, perhaps even imagining some particular enemies among the clergy he has known, in his vision of punishing the hypocritical. MacDonald's mask of unbiased narrator slips glaringly in the following description, where Curdie is puzzling over what sort of man "Ballbody" (one of the avenging monsters) had been before turning monstrous in shape: "he could only conjecture that he was a gluttonous alderman whom nature had treated homeopathically" (208). Both the diction and familiarity with clerical excess

suggests this sentiment is MacDonald's own satirical relish, not the earnest reflection of an uneducated miner boy barely past puberty.

MacDonald's moral agenda drives him to perform a complicated balancing act, juggling Christian themes with fairy-tale motifs, modern science, and racial tensions evoked by folk beliefs concerning subterranean semi-humans. His crusade of purification that dominates the Curdie books lacks harmony due to the conflicting voices of spiritual apocalypse on the one hand and unresolved social tensions on the other. While Curdie's gift of ethical discernment appears to subordinate scientific notions of human development to impose an ancient philosophy of spiritual amelioration the harnessing of evolution ultimately produces chaotic fragmentation of those ideals. The bestial degeneration of the goblins in The Princess and the Goblin is matched by the moral degradation of men in The Princess and Curdie; MacDonald's sequel completes a pessimistic cycle where human civilization dissipates despite the purging that occurs in each book. The imposition of the fairy-tale pattern on this disintegrating community serves to contrast the individual path of righteousness with the collective tendency of humanity towards perdition. Countering such destructive tendencies are only the maternal sympathies of MacDonald's vision of female divinity, which might nurture nascent Victorian heroes or heroines, one reader at a time.

Femininity, Folklore, and the Narrative Mechanics of Superstition in the Curdie Books

MacDonald's emphasis on the mysticism of women is neither simply an idealization of the feminine nor a representation of the numinous in a feminine form that is only particular to his imagination or metaphysics; he also is offering images of female power that are part of folk traditions. Not only is the portrayal of innately magical and wise women an international folkloric motif, but also there are British tale variants that may have influenced MacDonald's creation of his Mother of Light in particular.

The name given to this being by the miners' wives, Old Mother Wotherwop, seems rhythmically--as well as substantively--related to the Scottish "Habetrot" who Briggs asserts is "the fairy, or goddess, of spinning."[8] In addition there are the tales of "Whuppity Stoorie"--also Scottish and suggestive of Wotherwop--which involve spinning fairies by that name. Notably, in The Princess and the Goblin Wotherwop weaves Irene a magic thread from her spinning wheel. Thus, as it were, MacDonald weaves Wotherwop herself into the folk tradition.

MacDonald clothes Wotherwop, as a fairy matron, in traditional garb. In one version of "Whuppity Stoorie" the fairy--in this case she tries to gain possession of a woman's child through a spinning pact with his mother--wears green, the most

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[8] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Part A Folk Narratives Vol.1 (London: Routledge, 1991) 360.

common fairy color in Britain.[9] Wotherwop also wears green, as the passage of dialogue below shows, as well as red--the other most prevalent fairy color. MacDonald accentuates the implicit fairy association by describing the striking almost fantastic shift in color: "they saw [. . .] an old country-woman, in a cloak which they took for black. When they came close up to it, they saw it was red" (60). Curdie realizes this is yet another incarnation of Wotherwop likely enough because of the color identification. Since MacDonald is aware of fairy lore, these colors are not idle choices; the brushstrokes of tradition have designed such hues.

In his portrait of the Mother of Light MacDonald integrates multiple mythological aspects of female divinity:

> '[. . .] are you the Lady of the Silver Moon?'
>
> 'Yes, Curdie; you may call me that [. . .].'
>
> 'And now I see you [. . .] clothed in green, and the mother of all the light that dwells in the stones of the earth! And up there they call you Old Mother Wotherwop! And the Princess Irene told me you were her great-great-grandmother! And you spin the spider threads, and take care of a whole people of pigeons; and you are worn to a pale shadow with old age; and are as young as anybody can be, not to be too young [. . .].' (54-55)

The many facets of the character of Old Mother Wotherwop suggest the three aspects of "the goddess," who appears as a crone, a young woman, and a matron. Such divisions owe much to Celtic mythological figures such as the Morrigan who appears

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[9] Briggs 567-568.

in Old Irish literature as both a young woman and a hag. MacDonald applies the magical resonance of Wotherwop's many forms towards the mundane roles of women in general as the emphasis in this last line of the chapter that deals with Wotherwop's many identities indicates: "father and son went home to wife and mother--two persons in one rich, happy woman" (60). By announcing the dual role of the miner's wife, MacDonald hints at the omnipresence of the archetype of divine femininity among all women. Although the roles MacDonald specifies for women--wife and mother--are arguably subordinate ones in a patriarchal society, by giving a female face to spiritual and magical power MacDonald glorifies female authority.

Paradoxically, while MacDonald's very representation of Wotherwop relies on folklore he also criticizes the dynamics of superstition; his *Curdie* stories pretend to counter the confusion of folklore, as though he were separating the wheat from the chaff. Curdie first hears Wotherwop's name from the miners after he has in fact already met her and become convinced of the reality that she exists as well as her thorough goodness. Her first task for him is "never to laugh or make fun of [her]" and to "hold [. . .] [his] tongue , and not seem to side" with those who "sometimes tell very odd and in fact ridiculous stories of an old woman who watches what is going on, and occasionally interferes" (29).

In a congregation with the miners Curdie hears the name Wotherwop and must endure the frustration of hearing "ridiculous stories." In fact, Curdie is experiencing a legend-telling session that is fairly convincing as a representation of the dynamics of folklore. The legends are told during communal work: "when they were at work in the mine [. . .] began talking about all manner of wonderful tales that

were abroad in the country" (39). Communal work is considered one of the most common times for communication of the oral tradition. In addition there is verisimilitude in this presentation of the human interactions in a legend-telling session: the various competing versions offered and the presence of the skeptic--a role that is indeed often part of a legend performance (see Chapter One). This skeptic referring to Curdie, who has kept dutifully silent, as the speaker himself has, asserts: "he's thinking what a set of fools you are to talk such rubbish; as if ever there was or could be such an old woman as you say!" (42). This natural philosopher ultimately bursts Curdie's vow of restraint by his cynicism. He asserts that if Wotherwop is real she would not care to have the truth spoken of her any more than the rubbish: "I never knew a man that wouldn't go in a rage to be called the very thing he was" (43). Curdie replies by defending Wotherwop and is mocked accordingly.

The idea that these tales are part of a predominantly female tradition is MacDonald's own construction--a perspective that Auerbach and Knoepflmacher might wish to include in their argument for the Victorian perception of a female genesis of oral storytelling. For MacDonald, women are innately close to true mystical wisdom. Thus, the men have gleaned their material from the wives and mothers: "Their wives and mothers and grandmothers were their chief authorities" (39). Men distort into prejudice and superstition what is presented as feminine spirituality:

> At length they came to speak of a certain strange being they called Old Mother Wotherwop. Some said their wives had seen her [. . .]. [. . .]Some of their mothers and grandmothers . . . had seen her also, and

> they all had told them tales about her when they were children . . . . she was never seen except at night, and when something terrible had taken place, or was going to take place [. . .]. (39-40)

In their tales the men represent Mother Wotherwop as a dark and dangerous figure, especially to men. The consensus is that she is a poisoner of wells, a hideous creature, and a bad omen to behold: "To this, one of them, however, added that he remembered his mother saying that whoever in bad health drank of the well was sure to get better. But the majority agreed that the former was the right version of the story---for was she not a witch, an old hating witch, whose delight was to do mischief?" (40). MacDonald objects to the dynamics of bigotry in these legends of the miners, as the dialogue between Peter, Curdie's father, and the other miners makes clear: "Peter asked why they were so much more ready to believe the bad that was said of her than the good. They answered, because she was bad" (41).

This is the oft-maligned side of fairy tales and folklore--the persistent stereotype that the public imagination cannot clear its eyes from to behold what lies beyond the cataract of prejudice. Such is the derogatory psychology of superstition that Siebers discusses in The Romantic Fantastic: "The act of exclusion, as the Romantics understood, is an integral part of superstition, for it tells the lie that gives vitality and endurance to false differences among men" (56. This relation between superstition and prejudice is evident in another miner's interpretation of the death of his cow:

> 'When our cow died, ' said another, 'she [Wotherwop] was seen going round and round the cowhouse the same night. To be sure she left a

> fine calf behind her--I mean the cow did, not the witch. I wonder she didn't kill that, too, for she'll be a far finer cow than ever her mother was.' (42)

It is obvious to the reader, though not to this shortsighted miner, that Wotherwop clearly replaced the dying cow with a young one that would more than atone for the loss. Note how this miner interjects his interpretation into the legend episode--the bare description of the events--in order to assert dogmatically the negative view that the story he's telling in fact subverts.

MacDonald makes no secret of his moral judgment of the bigotry in the legend-telling session, which amounts to slander of his precious ideal matriarchal divinity--the narrator asserts that "they went on with one foolish tale after another" (43). Mother Wotherwop herself while not overtly condemning such persistent narrative rumors--which legends are--denies their metaphysical truth: "It is one thing the shape I choose to put on, and quite another the shape that foolish talk and nursery tale may please to put upon me" (56). Thus, MacDonald judges folk legends, performed by men, in The Princess and Curdie as the delusions of those who are infantile in their inability to comprehend a truth whose form is personified as female, maternal, and mystical. It is as though MacDonald is asserting here among these distortions of his supposed female folkloric tradition that men fail to comprehend the female aspect of divinity--that which is cyclical, not linear, and morally holistic not dualistic. Wotherwop is a nurturer even as she destroys: the cow dies after the calf is born.

Ultimately MacDonald addresses the question of spiritual perception in his presentation of the narrative and metaphysical dynamics of both fairy tales and legends. The ability to perceive such "fairy tale" realities as the truth about Wotherwop is essentially the same spiritual discernment that enables Curdie to detect the bestial devolution of the corrupt men he encounters. The following passage crystallizes this relationship between the dismissive attitude towards so-called superstition and the failure of ideal spiritual perception:

> 'I suppose you want me, ma'am, to warn every one whose hand tells me that he is growing a beast--because, as you say, he does not know it himself. The princess [Wotherwop] smiles.
>
> 'Much good that would do [. . .]. [. . .] To such a person there is in general no insult like the truth [. . .]. [. . .] he trots, or creeps, or swims, or flutters out of its way--call it a foolish feeling, a whim, an old wives' fable, a bit of priests' humbug, an effete superstition, and so on.' (74-75)

This is the other side of the coin of MacDonald's presentation of bigotry in folklore, such as the legends told by the miner--here what is called an "old wives' fable" or "superstition" may in fact clothe spiritual truth. In this light MacDonald's words on how he writes for the "childlike" gain a new significance, that of visionary capability. Before Curdie's education by Wotherwop, the narrator refers to him as devolving himself, in Wordsworthian terms he is losing the "visionary gleam," which for MacDonald is connected to ethical sensitivity as well as the perception of the sublime:

> [. . .] he was getting rather stupid--one of the chief signs of which was that he believed less and less in things he had never seen. [. . .] he took less and less notice of bees and butterflies [. . .] flowers and the brooks and the clouds. He was gradually changing into a commonplace man. There is this difference between the growth of some human beings and that of others: in the one case it is a continuous dying, in the other a continuous resurrection. (12)

Thus, Curdie's careless wounding of the dove and its subsequent "resurrection" by Wotherwop figures as the externalized representation of his own spiritual development. Curdie has shot his albatross, and like the Ancient Mariner must both repent and redeem himself.

The lesson of spiritual resurrection extends, MacDonald implies, to his own works. He wishes us to feel, that these are not mere fairy stories for children, but earnest proclamations of metaphysical truth--a new gospel, so to speak. Or rather, if that is too grandiose a claim, MacDonald asserts for his stories the view that they are true in principle, despite their fantasy, and thus just as important as if they were absolutely real in fact. This dynamic is similar to Curdie's father's response to Curdie's doubt that his meeting with Wotherwop might have been a dream: "Then dream often [. . .] for there must then be more truth in your dreams than in your waking thoughts" (37). This is essentially MacDonald's creed, which echoes the words with which he closes *Lilith*: "Novalis says, 'Our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one" (252). The ideal that is imagined must manifest as the law of reality, rather than being merely ephemeral and insubstantial on the margins of consciousness.

MacDonald presents in the Curdie stories a moral vision that asserts the values of dreams and superstitions as possible reflections of a unifying maternal spirit, nurturing earnestness and perspicuity in opposition to the bigotry and narrow-mindedness that sometime depreciate "old wives' tales" into merely vicious rumors. Joining compassion with aesthetics, MacDonald offers in Curdie and the Mother of Light a model for imagination and moral sensitivity that transcends materialism. However, the very instability of the truth of legends in The Princess and Curdie reveals the arbitrary didacticism of MacDonald's use of folk narratives; what is a true and what is false depends upon the values underpinning the tales--whether those values resonate with MacDonald's own agenda.

Märchen Morphology and Motifs in MacDonald's Curdie books.

The basic fairy-tale pattern is discernible in much of the plot of The Princess and the Goblin--the young miner boy, the low-status young male, saves the princess and her family by outwitting the goblins. The princess, in her own right, develops her spiritual vision with the aid of a maternal helper-figure, her "great-great grandmother"(14), who resembles both the mysterious wise women and fairies of märchen, as well as having associations with MacDonald's vision of a nurturing divinity. Some specific motifs include the use of the spinning wheel (D2183 *Magic Spinning*), which MacDonald uses to emphasize the importance of labor, as well as offering the allusion to the traditional wounding by the spindle (D1364.17 *Spindle causes magic sleep*). The Princess Irene "had never seen a spinning-wheel," which is

to say that she never really had to work (13). This changes, for MacDonald has the Carlylian spirit within his writing. The young hero is a miner, after all.[10] MacDonald uses the very term "princess" much like Dickens uses "gentleman" in *Great Expectations*; just as Pip learns that wealth and status do not a gentleman make, so Irene's good character is the sign of her true rank as a princess--a view that allows MacDonald frequent didacticism. This princess is concerned with being courageous, "Some little girls would have been afraid [. . .] but Irene was a princess" (85), and keeping her word about kissing a miner boy despite the prejudices of her class-conscious nurse:

> 'Lootie! Lootie! I promised a kiss,' cried Irene.
>
> 'A princess mustn't give kisses. It's not at all proper,' said Lootie.
>
> 'But I promised,' said the princess.
>
> 'There's no occasion; he's only a miner-boy.'
>
> 'He's a good boy, and a brave boy, and he has been very kind to us Lootie! Lootie! I *promised*.' (43)

Lootie, the nurse, emphasizes the class conflict that is typical of star-crossed lovers in fairy tales--obstacles that are always surmounted, and this literary one is no different in that respect.

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[10] MacDonald's idealization of mining might well have been a dubious prospect for his Victorian audience. Publicity from "blue books" on the grievous conditions of the working class in the 1830's produced much attention on the abuses of young children and women in mines, culminating in Lord Ashley's Act of 1842 "which forbade the employment of women in mines and restricted children's labor there to those over ten." Richard D. Altick, Victorian People and Ideas (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973) 46.

A further commonplace of fairy tales is that we learn in The Princess and Curdie that there is royal blood in Curdie's family. The Mother of Light (Irene's godmother-figure) has been cultivating that branch of the family through the "privilege" of poverty: "Things come to the poor that can't get in at the door of the rich. Their money somehow blocks it up. It is a great privilege to be poor" (53). Such sentimentalization of poverty's spiritual potential likely derives from MacDonald's theological background. One might hear the echo of the declaration of Jesus that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19.24). Or, MacDonald may be influenced by Dickens's many saintly but poor characters.

The Dickensian parallel is all the more apparent, when MacDonald, in his narrative persona, asserts that Irene's father was "a gentleman, as many kings have been" and would not want his daughter to break her word--MacDonald clearly indicates that it is conduct that he is concerned with not status. In this concern with bourgeois morality and behavior, MacDonald is in the tradition of the Grimm brothers and Hans Christian Andersen. MacDonald believes a true princess should get her hands dirty with labor as well as keeping her word to the underclass. She saves Curdie by removing a "huge heap of stones"--Curdie's reply "There's a princess!" follows her description of her work, underscoring by its very proximity on the page MacDonald's definition of an ideal princess (159).

Before the princess comes to be a good worker she accidentally pricks herself with the needle; thus, MacDonald satisfies the expectation raised by the associations

with Sleeping Beauty and such tales.[11] The healing of this wound by the "great-great grandmother" involves some mysterious ointment, and then--even more mysterious perhaps--the little girl sleeping with this mystical female figure. Though this lacks the conscious malice or sexual tension of the bedroom pairing of Geraldine with Christabel in Coleridge's poem, it is interesting psychologically that MacDonald chose to have this sleeping scene relate to the wound of the spindle, which is arguably a symbol of compromised female virginity. More to the point with MacDonald is that--in his stories--suffering leads to wisdom and goodness; thus, Irene must suffer a little. In Lilith, the archetypal female figure of evil and disobedience--Lilith--suffers greatly before she is purged of her evil. Lilith and Irene are wholly different representations of women, yet each is educated through suffering, as is the case with Curdie as well.

MacDonald's most blatant alteration of the standard fairy tale plot is his rejection of the typical optimism that follows the union of the maturing young man and woman. The forecast for the generations after Curdie and Irene is utter perdition. The mini-apocalypse that was staged in the castle, driving out the corrupt courtiers, is merely a prelude to the greater destruction that follows the couple's death. Notably, the marriage is an infertile one--there are no heirs: "As long as they lived Gwyntystorm was a better city, and good people grew in it. But they had no children, and when they died the people chose a king" (256). MacDonald's lack of faith in democracy is no greater than his admiration for capitalism, for the "new king went

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[11] Marion Lochhead also notes this obvious similarity with "Sleeping Beauty." "George MacDonald and the World of Faery," Seven: An-Anglo-American-Literary-Review 3 (1985): 65.

mining and mining" until literally the palace is undermined by the despot's unmitigated avarice for gold:

> when at last the ore began to fail, he caused the miners to reduce the pillars which Peter and they that followed him had left standing to bear the city [. . .]. [. . .] One day at noon [. . .] the whole city fell with a roaring crash [. . .]. Where the mighty rock once towered, crowned with homes [. . .] now rushes and raves a [. . .] river . All around spreads a wilderness of wild deer, and the very name of Gwyntystorm had ceased from the lips of men. (256)

So much for MacDonald's spiritual optimism where great cities are concerned. Thus ends The Princess and Curdie epic--that was literally the last line of the book--with no legacy out of MacDonald's castle of metaphysics in the sky except a bitter forecast for his materialist age. The kingdom of fairyland seems to have likewise evaporated--the medium devolved into homily, rather than a more complex visionary representation of the future or inspired treatment of the present. The traditional fairy-tale tasks seem performed in vain; there is no closure here with a reward well-earned; instead, a civilization disintegrates despite the best attempts of individuals.

The Curdie Books and the Fantastic

Although fantasies characteristically offer coherent visions of alternative worlds to reality, MacDonald's fairy-tale fantasies include moments of hesitation. For instance, the rapid healing of Irene's spindle wound serves as a fantastic demonstration of the great-great grandmother's existence--for, Irene questioned her reality previously. Moments of skepticism are a patent feature of Victorian literary fairy tales and a violation of traditional expectations of the folk genre. By introducing characters who do not readily accept all the marvels of their fairy-tale environments, MacDonald makes his fantasies resonate with Victorian disbelief and then not only erodes skepticism, but suggests that acceptance of fairy-tale miracles is connected to a greater matter of spiritual faith. To accomplish this blending of the marvelous and the fantastic MacDonald reverses selective fairy-tale motifs, and merges the narrative dynamics of legend with märchen.

One of MacDonald's strategies to produce hesitation is to violate the conventional assumptions of the fairy tale genre. For instance, MacDonald makes Irene disbelieve, at first, one of the most widely expected features of a literary fairy tale: the fairy godmother. Yet, despite Irene's early belief that "it must all be a dream" (78) she seeks out her mysterious "beautiful old grandmother" in "realliality" [sic], climbing the stairs to the room where she had seemingly vanished from, and rediscovers her (85). Irene's questioning of the reality of this fairy godmother emphasizes the fact that MacDonald is redesigning the meaning of the motif. As we have seen, this "grandmother" is a central figure in MacDonald's mythology, and he

imbues her with particular values that are not gleaned simply by association with the likes of Perrault.

Irene's doubt of her great-great grandmother's reality underscores the relativity of skepticism and the fantastic. Irene has no disbelief in goblins--even though she doesn't know the term "goblin" until meeting Curdie--such beings are literally part of her world. Great-great grandmothers that vanish and reappear mysteriously, along with other special powers, are another matter. Yet, goblins are not an accepted belief in MacDonald's mainstream reading public. Thus, he self-consciously makes the presentation of the goblins ambiguous during their first appearance, despite the fact that his opening chapter clearly presented goblins as part of his created world. MacDonald's suspenseful association of goblins with the imagination appears in this passage where Irene and her nurse, Lootie, have stayed out till twilight--a violation of the interface between the safety of the sunlit, civilized world, and the wild, supernatural world of night:

> 'Look, look, Lootie! Don't you see that funny man peeping over the rock?' Lootie only ran the faster. They had to pass the rock, and when they came nearer, the princess saw it was only a lump of the rock itself that she had taken for a man.
>
> 'Look, look, Lootie! There's *such* a curious creature at the foot of that old tree. Look at it, Lootie! It's making faces at us, I do think.' Lootie gave a stifled cry and ran faster still [. . .] Irene's little legs could not keep up [. . .] she fell with a crash [. . .]. [. . .] 'Who's that laughing at me?' said the princess [. . .]. [. . .] 'Nobody, child,' said the nurse,

> almost angrily. But that instant there came a burst of coarse tittering from somewhere near, and a hoarse indistinct voice that seemed to say: 'Lies! lies! lies!' (32-33)

In passing, it is interesting how the typical repetitive phrase which one encounters so often in volksmärchen--whose authenticity is usually accepted as a generic linguistic form rather than a close approximation of the discourse of everyday reality--is here associated with the insistent pattern of a child's speech. Thus, Irene's cry of "'look, look, Lootie'" at once evokes the rhetoric of a fairy tale, but this particular usage is also typical of real children. Who has not heard a child shout the same demand to "look" at something? MacDonald ties fairy tale conventions to commonplace reality, and by doing so in fact disturbs the generic integrity: it is somewhat disturbing to reflect that people in the real world might talk as they do in a fairy tale. To realize that indeed people do, is to blur the lines between the two realities: the circumscribed marvelous narrative and the experiential.

Further blurring the lines between narrative fantasy and realistic subjectivity is the treatment of this first meeting with goblins. In this passage, despite the fact that we know the goblins to truly exist in the text's reality, MacDonald succeeds in linking the goblin's mockery of Irene, and especially the nurse, with Lootie's own anxious conscience. Note that the "voice" is described in terms of "seemed"--the word "lies' is only the suggested interpretation, and this outburst is juxtaposed with the nurse's lie. Lootie is responsible for the princess's care, and has failed to protect her from the boundary of night, and its attendant goblins. And, she has kept Irene in the dark, so

to speak, of the truth of the goblins' existence and agenda--they have a grudge against the royal family.

Thus, MacDonald shows us how the literary fantastic can involve a certain hesitation even when the ground rules are not violated: we know that for goblins to exist in this fairy-tale world is merely a confirmation of the status quo. However, when two or more characters have a different understanding of what the ground rules are--and when psychological associations are added on top of empirical assumptions, ambiguity and anxiety results. This dynamic is unheard of in volksmärchen and is more typical of literary appropriations of legends, where a continuum of belief is a relevant feature to the nature of the legend, which is decidedly not the case for the volksmärchen. Yet, in Victorian kunstmärchen and fantasies the self-consciousness of the author and the awareness of the audience expectations of a nod to mainstream rationalism sometimes results in this blending of generic features from the two folk narratives: märchen and legend.

By using the fantastic to erode the border between fantasy and reality in his Curdie stories, MacDonald also undercuts the comfort of his audience's reliance on the virtue of materialism; perhaps their own dreams have a greater importance than their waking lives. Yet, if even after the change of consciousness that Irene and Curdie undergo in their moral quests--accepting the teachings of a mysterious maternal divinity--does not result in a lasting and shared common good, then MacDonald has also bitterly subverted the idealism of his fairy-tale adventures. By extension, he has also denied Victorians their utopian visions and left little hope for heroism in the world of the flesh.

At the Back of the North Wind-- Death, Reality, and Fantasy

Even more ambiguous than the largely sustained fantasy of the Curdie books is MacDonald's At The Back of the North Wind, which overtly mixes realism with fantasy. The story is not set primarily in a fairy-tale world, as is the case with Curdie's adventures, and the ontological status of Diamond's supernatural experiences is never fully clarified. Are his experiences with North Wind merely dreams? Are there such things as *mere* dreams? MacDonald's novel concerns a young Victorian boy, Diamond, who is slowly dying and experiences what seem to be otherworldly journeys and association with a supernatural yet benignant matriarchal figure, reminiscent of Princess Irene's grandmother from the Curdie books. MacDonald fashions Diamond as a fairy-tale hero, but does not allow him to come to maturity. MacDonald also turns to literary and fairy tale traditions of fairyland to construct Diamond's vision of the realm at the back of the north wind, blending vaguely Christian notions of purgatory with legends of fairy abductions to the otherworld. Just as MacDonald's use of the fairy-tale pattern in the Curdie stories disintegrates into social oblivion, so too the mystical experiences of Curdie leave no indelible traces on the material world except perhaps in the perspective of the fictional narrative persona.

The narrator is ostensibly a tutor who meets Diamond on a visit to his friend Mr. Raymond, a poet and man of property--both men sympathize with the earnestness and imagination of young Diamond and are the helpers in his brief fairy-tale

existence in the real world. MacDonald, as he does typically, harnesses the fairy-tale medium as a vessel for metaphysics and the narrator interprets Diamond's tales of the North Wind as a discourse in metaphysics:

> I should have been astonished at his being able even to report such conversations as he said he had had with Northwind, had I not known already that some children are profound in metaphysics [. . .]. [. . .] Happily for me, I was as much interested in metaphysics as Diamond himself [. . .]. " (367-368)

The narrator's exegesis superficially shifts the focus away from the fantastic nature of Diamond's accounts, yet his analysis does not destroy the essential consistency of Diamond's narratives. In fact, the narrator's interpretation of Diamond's death sustains the spirit of religious optimism and the language of the marvelous that Diamond had continually presented:

> I walked up the winding stair, and entered his room. A lovely figure, as white and almost as clear as alabaster, was lying on the bed. I saw at once how it was. They thought he was dead. I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind. (369)

However, there's ambiguity here. These last words of the story and the accompanying final conversations between Diamond and the narrator present a context in which the North Wind and her marvels are either visionary experiences granted by a benevolent divinity or a marvelous reality that is circumscribed to Diamond alone:

> 'Could it all be dreaming, do you think, sir?' he asked anxiously. 'I daren't say, Diamond,' I answered. But at least there is one thing you may be sure of, that there is a still better love than that of the wonderful being you call North Wind. Even if she be a dream, the dream of such a beautiful creature could not come to you by chance.' 'Yes, I know,' returned Diamond. 'I know.' Then he was silent, but I confess, appeared more thoughtful than satisfied. The next time I saw him, he looked paler than usual. 'Have you seen your friend again?' I asked him. 'Yes,' he answered solemnly. 'Did she take you out with her?' 'No. She did not speak to me. I woke all at once [. . .] there she was [. . .] sitting [. . .] as white as snow, and her eyes as blue as the heart of an iceberg [. . .]. ' [. . .] 'Weren't you afraid?' I asked. "No [. . .] I only felt a little cold.' (368)

Ultimately, this is a story about death. MacDonald synthesizes his beliefs in a Christian afterlife with tales of fairyland and presents the stewardess of death as a maternal and powerful figure. She is like many of MacDonald's ideal representations of metaphysical concepts as female. Some critics view her as an optimistic view of the possibilities after death: "Although the novels by Dickens point to the harsh realities of life in Victorian England, those by the Scottish writer George MacDonald are more hopeful and point to something more eternal" (vii). Despite the oversimplified, although earnest, declaration by Drew R. Thomas, the Assistant Editor to Bridge Publishing, MacDonald's portrayal of the tenderness and purity of

death probably tends to leave a reader, like Diamond, "more thoughtful than satisfied."

The fantasy of North Wind is not an idealistic escape from reality, but a comment on the soul-biting and destructive effects of poverty in London. Diamond's father is a poor coachman. MacDonald is just as adamant about the potential for any good man to be a "gentleman" here as he was in the *Curdie* books: "'We call your father a gentleman in our house,'" said North Wind" (29). Gentleman, or not, Joseph's fear for his family is of a fate that Dickens has made widely known among readers of Victorian literature: "'We shall all have to go to the workhouse, wife,' he said. "It would be better to go to the back of the north wind,' said Diamond dreamily, not intending to say it aloud'" (316). In other words, MacDonald is saying to the reader--though Diamond of course is unaware of this meaning--that some poor families are practically better off dead, given the hardships they must undergo in the slums of London. Is this optimism? Is going to the back of the North Wind the equivalent of "happily ever after"?

To answer this question involves balancing associations of death, dreams, illness, and madness, with MacDonald's metaphysics of the imagination and his use of folkloric motifs. To get at what is in back of the north wind, we must first follow a few trails into fairyland. The concept of Fairyland bridges the narrative genres of legend and fairy tale, for there are legendary accounts of visits to Fairyland as well as purely fictional märchen that have neither historical resonance nor involve the rhetoric of belief. In balladry, the most famous examples are "Thomas Rhymer" and perhaps "Tam Lin." Both protagonists, before escaping, are compelled into service in

fairyland by the fairy queen. Rhymer returns to earth according to contract after "seven years were gane and past" while Tam Lin had to turn to human aid during a narrow window of opportunity:

> With respect to Tam Lin's escape from fairyland in order to avoid being offered by the elves as payment of their 'teind to hell,' T. F. Henderson observes: 'Hallowe'en was the last night of the Celtic year; the "tiend to hell" would become due every seventh Hallowe'en; and apparently escape from fairyland was only possible when the old and new year met.'[12]

In common with these two abductions to fairyland, it is a seductress who compels the men; MacDonald's diamond is also lured to a fairyland by a female figure, although North Wind is primarily maternal rather than erotic. Nevertheless, the pattern of seduction whispers not far beyond the edge of the text and the consequences of Diamond's journey are just as dire as those of the ballad heroes.

There are other accounts of fairy abductions, which also help to cement ties between MacDonald's fairyland and that of tradition, with more historical authenticity than the ballads. One such is the legend of Robert Kirk's abduction to fairyland, which even has documented traces in institutional records: "details, including mention of his 'departure' are recorded in the *Fasti* or records of the Church of Scotland, a valuable compilation and one free from fantasy."[13] Kirk is a historically established

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[12] Charles Wimberly Lowrey, "The Ballad Fairy," A Fairy-Tale Reader. ed. John and Caitlín Matthews. (San Francisco: The Aquarian Press, 1993) 210.

[13] Lochhead 63.

figure: "he was a scholar, particularly in Gaelic [. . .] . He was a Master of Arts of Edinburgh University and a graduate in divinity of St Andrews."[14] Kirk's earnest study of the fairy peoples, The Secret Commonwealth, might well have led to the mystification of his disappearance or death, but more pertinent here is the traditional consistency of his legendary abduction and failed escape. Unlike Tam Lin, he was unable to receive the necessary human aid and his coffin is reputed to be empty, yet, if he's kept in fairyland he's as good as dead--never will he return. Clearly, the metaphysical link between the land of the dead and fairyland has many traditional precedents, long before MacDonald's treatment of the subject. Robert Kirk disappears from the visible world and Tam Lin risks damnation in hell; in other words, the body and soul are easily lost if one goes to fairyland.

Despite these numerous sources, MacDonald turns overtly to literary constructions of folklore for his descriptions of fairyland rather than the oral tradition. Instead of Tam Lin, Thomas Rhymer or Robert Kirk, it is James Hogg whom MacDonald invokes in particular for his conception of fairyland. After dismissing the authority of Herodotus on the land at the back of the north wind, and briefly mentioning the memorate of an "Italian of noble family, who died more than five hundred years ago"--Durante (arguably a pseudonym for Dante)--MacDonald offers a verbatim passage from Hogg:

> The peasant girl--Kilmeny was her name--could not report such grand things as Durante, for as the shepherd [Hogg--MacDonald doesn't refer

[14] Lochhead 63.

> to him by name, but the Ettrick Shepherd was his primary epithet] says, telling her story as I tell Diamond's:
>
> Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
> And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
> Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
> Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew . . .
> And a land where sin had never been
> [. . . . . .]
> The land of vision it would seem, and still an everlasting dream [38-51]
>
> The last two lines are the shepherd's own remark, and a matter of opinion. (105)

It is when Diamond sojourns for the first time at the back of the north wind, or imagines he does so, that MacDonald turns to Hogg's poem of "Kilmeny," a narrative of a peasant girl as "pure as pure could be" (4). The fairies presumably take Kilmeny to Fairyland because of her virtue, and there she witnesses prophetic visions. Hogg's poem depicts a version of fairyland that is platonically ideal; when Kilmeny pines for this otherworld she "left this world of sorrow and pain,/ And returned to the land of thought again" (329-330). In one of Diamond's many dialogues with the North Wind where he questions whether he's dreaming or not, she asserts: "I don't think you could dream anything that hadn't something real like it somewhere"--thereby making an allusion to a world of ideal forms much like Hogg's "land of thought." The ideological appeal to MacDonald is clear enough--since he considers revealed truth

and the imagination to overlap--the "land of thought" is his ideal fairyland, as well as a realm metaphysically compatible with a benign Christian divinity.

Hogg's poem, though largely denuding fairyland of its darker aspects does have traces of the many traditions of unwilling imprisonment with beings that are ghostly and not of the race of the Adam. Arguably it is the link to legends of fairy genesis based on the children of Lilith--"Adam's equal in every way [. . .]. They [her children] are without sin, and they stay there inside the hills [. . .]."--that explain why fairyland is a land of no sin and Kilmeny's return is conceivable as death.[15] Given the disturbing ambiguity of Kilmeny's return--the end of a pure person in an impure world--it is as though MacDonald is preparing Diamond's own grave in this mixture of Christian transcendence, platonic idealism, and folklore of fairyland.

The claim for the ending of Kilmeny's exposure to human suffering, "this world of sorrow and pain,"--and by extension Diamond as well--has the same euthanasic undertone of Yeats's tender, yet dark and seductive call, the refrain in fact, to a child by the fairies in "The Stolen Child." The refrain of Yeats's poem, which is virtually unaltered throughout, is: "Come away, O human child! / [. . .]/ For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand" (9-12). What changes in the poem is that the fair-seeming promises the fairies are making of what awaits the child become progressively more disturbing, as well as the moral nature of the beings themselves. The fairies are thieves, "vats, / Full of berries/ And of reddest stolen cherries"; tormenters, "We seek for slumbering trout /And whispering in their ears /

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[15] Reidar Christiansen, Folktales of Norway (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964) 90. Similar legends of fairy genesis were carried to the British isles, and Scotland in particular because of historical interactions with Scandinavia.

give them unquiet dreams"; and, kidnappers, who deprive the child of peace in life, if not life itself: "He'll hear no more [. . .] / [. . .] the kettle on the hob/ Sing peace into his breast" (6-47). In one of his explanatory notes, Yeats observes that the "locality" of Further Rosses, mentioned in the poem, includes a legend of fairies abducting souls: "There is here a little point of rocks where, if anyone falls asleep, there is a danger of their waking silly, the fairies having carried off their souls" (619).[16]

One might insist that this entire discussion to some degree begs the question whether MacDonald is portraying his version of fairyland at all. For, why does he not refer to the land at the back of the north wind as fairyland, when he feels free to use that term in Phantastes? For that matter, why does Hogg not use the term? The simple answer is that there was no need because the tradition of fairyland hovered behind these literary representations regardless of whether it was openly credited or not. While this is likely part of the case, the other issue for each of these writers is that they were presenting their own imaginative, moral, and metaphysical refinements upon the traditional concepts of the otherworld. Their concern was not disentangling the accumulated legends from their own particular vision, but maintaining the focus on their own agenda and they may have found leaving the name "fairyland' behind somewhat emancipating.

Granted, the question of fairies does arise specifically in At the Back of the North Wind. In a dialogue between North Wind and Diamond, she has taken a

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[16] Richard J. Finneran, ed. The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989) 619.

miniscule form and is hard pressed to convince Diamond that she is different from the fairies. North Wind explains that "a fairy can't grow big and little at will, though the nursery-tales do say so; they don't know better" (51). In a condescending rhetorical move, MacDonald implies that folklore consists of "nursery-tales" and depreciates the authority of such tales by emphasizing their puerile realm of discourse. A reader may find the statement ironic since MacDonald is writing his own "nursery tale," as it were, and once again--as he did in the Curdie books--MacDonald arbitrarily decides what in folklore is nonsense and what is orthodox.

Part of MacDonald's distancing from "nursery-tales" may derive from his motivation to present a metaphysical treatise that is chiefly in a literary, rather than folkloric tradition, as Stephen Prickett's essay "The Two Worlds of George MacDonald" suggests:

> When the little boy, Diamond, actually goes to "the back of the North Wind" we are told that one of the very few who had been there before him "was a great Italian of a noble family, who died more than five hundred years ago." [. . .] It is quite clear from the descriptions that follow that the back of the North Wind is none other than the Earthly Paradise (*Purgatorio* cantos xxviii-xxxiii). [. . .] he [MacDonald], like Chesterton, is seeking to establish himself within a literary tradition--a tradition not of folklore and primitive ritual, but of complex theological sophistication.[17]

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[17] Stephen Prickett, "The Two Worlds of George MacDonald," For the Childlike--George MacDonald's Fantasies for Children. (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992)

MacDonald offers supposed corrections of folkloric metaphysics and narratives. Yet the staged invocation and dismissal of such traditions does not dispel them--rather, a multitude of oral narratives circulate round the margins of MacDonald's stories, offering their own claims to authority.

In his presentation of Diamond's apparent return from the back of the north wind, MacDonald reverses the standard metaphysics of fairyland, where sojourners sadly discover that time has passed much quicker in the mundane world. Many such travelers have returned from fairyland many find their loved ones dead and gone, or risk falling to dust themselves (D1896 *Magic Aging by Contact with Earth After Otherworld Journey.*). Diamond, on the other hand, is told by North Wind that he has "just been seven days" behind her, while he thought he "had been a hundred years"--a clear reversal of the unfortunate time disparity that normally dooms visitors to the otherworld (112).

One might interpret this alteration by MacDonald as a merciful act; he is not going to make Diamond suffer the pains of familial loss that traditionally occurs in legends of visits to fairyland that wear out the soul and life itself. Yet, later North Wind insists that Diamond had seen a mere "picture" of the land "at my real back" and he "shall see it one day--perhaps before very long"--ominously suggesting that Diamond is sliding down the road to dusky death (355). Since, Diamond does die, according to natural observations, this foreshadowing of future death by the evocation of the sinister associations of fairyland is no mere fancy. Thus, even while MacDonald destabilizes the reliability of Diamond's experiences of the land behind the north wind, he brings the essential alignment between the mystical polar world

and traditional fairyland closer, despite the reversal of the standard motif of fairy time.

MacDonald does not fully liberate Diamond from the darker aspects of fairyland; the relation to the land of the dead remains, as does an echo of Yeats's soulless people rendered silly. Yet, rather than the sinister entrapment of the soul by the fairies of Rosses leaving a person "silly," MacDonald portrays Diamond as "silly" in the archaic sense of the word, as saintly and happiness in his innocence. The Anglo-Saxon word "saelig," from which "silly" derives, denotes happiness as well as blessedness, and fortune.[18] The narrator who meets Diamond reflects upon "the old meaning of the word *silly*" after Diamond has proclaimed that he's "silly" because he's "never frightened at things" (335). Here, it is the presence of a particular sensibility, and a blessed soul in MacDonald's view, that makes Diamond silly--definitely not a lack of spirit.

But, even with MacDonald's model of spiritual optimism, there is the implication that such silliness is not fit for everyday life. For example, Diamond wishes to be up in his treehouse during a storm, and asserts that the lightning can't kill him. After lightning has struck the tree, the street-wise Nanny uses the epithet of silly to indicate Diamond's naive faith in the benignity of nature: "If you had been up there you see what would have happened, you little silly!" (342). Yet even this fantastic coincidence may well indicate a sign that Diamond is to be called home, as it were, to spiritual security at the back of the north wind.

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[18] J. R. Clark Hall, A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960) 287.

Ultimately, like most, if not all, Victorian metaphysical presentations of death and spirituality, At the Back of the North Wind, fails to provide persuasive reassurance. The Victorians are a far cry from the tone typical of eighteenth century British spiritual complacency, such as Pope's proclamation in "Essay on Man", that "whatever is, is right" (IV.145). The stumbling words of North Wind risk collapsing into absurdity, as she presents the inherent moral problem with harmonizing ideal goodness with a divine prerogative to destroy:

> The people they say I drown, I only carry away to--to--to--well, the back of the North Wind--that is what they used to call it long ago [. . .]. [. . .] East Wind says [. . .] it is all managed by a baby; but whether she is good or naughty when she says that, I don't know. I just stick to my work. (53-54)

One must not ignore MacDonald's frequent inclusion of the spirit of Carlyle's Gospel of Work, even North Wind when confronted with the unknowable asserts that she can only stick to her work. And even the sentimental mention of this God-child as the archetype of which Diamond is the representative, is described as potentially spurious.

One can see the interlocking links of Victorian religious consciousness among such works as At the Back of the North Wind and the Curdie books. Questions of ethics, evolution, and faith mingle with utopian visions of transcendence. The chords of MacDonald's art indeed resonate with Tennyson's claim *In Memoriam*:

> Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
>
> At last he beat his music out.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,

Believe me, than in half the creeds. (96.9-12)

It is a tribute to MacDonald's "honest doubt" that even his otherworldly characters, such as the North Wind herself, channels the voice of Victorian perplexity. However, doubt is more than simply present; pessimism overpowers optimism in the negative closure of his fantasies.

MacDonald uses folklore in these works to design a heroic pattern of confrontation between devotion to spiritual ideals and desire for material gain. He portrays the ambiguous nature of legends and suggests that through cultivating moral discernment one can both see into the heart of humanity and separate idle tales from metaphysical truths. Then in each book, he retreats from representing a stable civilization reshaped according to spiritual insight and instead offers destructive apocalyptic visions. To finally know the truest, best conduct is to take your bow from the stage of the living, and to dwell in an isolated space, as alien to Victorian progress as fairyland itself. MacDonald's fairy-tale fantasies thus are rather grudging fleeting glimpses of ideal futurity that are eroded by pessimistic attitudes towards disappointing modernity.

Peter Pan--Shadows of Maturity in the Nursery: Amorality, Gender, and Sexuality in Neverland

If nothing else, MacDonald is a believer in the ideal of the child-like--the child heroes and heroines in his stories tend to have romantic imaginations and

spiritual sensitivity; if they are not perfectly pure, they are redeemable and humane. Diamond is motivated to return from his first adventures at what he trusts is the back of the north wind because he fears that his mother misses him; granted, he doesn't consider this until he has a vision of his mother crying (109-111). Diamond cares. Evidence of the sincerity of this feeling, besides his anxiety to return to his home, includes his willingness to work at his father's job as coachman when the man is ill, and his helpfulness in raising his baby brother.

The concern of Diamond for his family is a far cry from J.M. Barrie's representation of the callousness of children in Peter Pan: "children are gay and innocent and heartless" (242). What? Peter Pan, such a centerpiece for young children's popular culture--canonized by Disney--is critical of the amorality of children? Yes, it is so. In fact, the work is subversive of other cherished social perceptions and institutions as well, particularly the supposed harmony of the domestic sphere.

While MacDonald's conclusions to his Princess and Curdie series and At the Back of the North Wind may seem uncommonly pessimistic for a Victorian fantasy for children, in fact, the widely popular Peter Pan (1911) is at least as dark in its philosophical sentiments.[19] In its portrayal of the chaotic tendencies of children not moored to civilizing influences, Peter Pan may have influenced William Golding's retort to the model decorum of stranded children in R. M Ballantyne's The Coral

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[19] Barrie's first writing on Peter Pan was 1902, The Little White Bird, in 1906 he separated the sections on Peter Pan for a new book, Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, the play Peter Pan was produced in 1904, and in 1911 he wrote Peter and Wendy, which subsequent editions follow.

Island. Lord of the Flies (1955) and Peter Pan both feature children relegated to an island and the tribalism and violence that ensues from the isolation. Barrie's Edwardian fantasy uses the Victorian literary association of fairies with children to present his moral didacticism, which paradoxically relies upon folkloric beliefs in fairies and fairyland that have nothing to do with portraying children as fairies.

While Peter Pan is a sustained fantasy--there is quickly no real doubt of Peter Pan's existence in the story--it is also a work of the literary fantastic. In particular it is the ironic presentation by Barrie that arrests--and amuses--the reader frequently, which produces interpretative hesitation. For instance, Mr. Darling's courting of Mrs. Darling first appears to be mere exaggeration: "many gentlemen who had been boys when she was a girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her, and they all ran to her house to propose to her except Mr Darling, who took a cab and nipped in first, and so he got her" (8). This is as much to say that Mr. Darling was the wealthiest--he could afford a cab. However, one learns that such exaggeration and irony is not simply a manner of style but the predominant mode in the narrative: "As they were poor, owing to the amount of milk the children drank, this nurse was a prim Newfoundland dog, called Nana" (10).

This isn't merely figurative language comparing the attentions of a friendly dog to that of a nurse. On the contrary, we learn that Nana has particular opinions regarding physic, "believed to her last day in old-fashioned remedies like rhubarb leaf," and performs the duties of a human nurse "smoothed out Wendy and made a dash at John's hair" (11-12). In fact, the joke seems to be one of class, as though Barrie is emphasizing that members of the servant class are virtually regarded by their

betters as animals. One thinks of Siebers's argument once again, concerning the association of prejudice with verbal constructs of superstition--similarly what is made fantastic is arguably demeaned by its isolation from normalcy. There is further evidence for suggesting Barrie is criticizing class condescension by making Nana a dog. When it comes to the tales of Peter Pan, Mr. Darling suspects Nana of spreading the superstitions that are often attributed to peasants and the underclass: "it is some nonsense Nana has been putting into their heads; just the sort of idea a dog would have" (16).

The ironic and the fantastic continue to circulate through the narrative. When Nana captures Peter Pan's shadow, neither of the Darlings express surprise at the fact that a shadow could be caught. Mrs. Darling notes it is "quite the ordinary kind" (21) while Mr. Darling feigns greater social perceptiveness by remarking that the form "is nobody I know [. . .] but he does look a scoundrel" (27). Set beside the literary and folkloric traditions of the numerous dire consequences of losing one's shadow--often connected to trafficking with the devil--the Darlings' blasé reactions emphasize a bourgeois insensibility. Thus, in Peter Pan, even before the trip to Neverland, we are already dwelling in a secondary world, which though it seems very reminiscent of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, is a world of ironic fantasy.

Like numerous Victorian fantasists Barrie addresses the typical attribution of the fantastic to dreams, yet he dissolves this obstacle to fantasy on the same page that he invokes the possibility. A clump of green leaves have mysteriously appeared inside near the third-floor window and Wendy is certain that Peter Pan has been about the house:

> Mrs Darling did not know what to think, for it all seemed so natural to Wendy that you could not dismiss it by saying she had been dreaming . . . . Oh, surely she must have been dreaming. [. . .] Mrs Darling was sure they did not come from any tree that grew in England. [. . .] Certainly Wendy had been dreaming. But Wendy had not been dreaming, as the very next night showed, the night on which the extraordinary adventures of these children may be said to have begun. (17)

Barrie authoritatively declares that dreaming will not be a refuge in his story from the reality of fantasy, though Mrs. Darling wishes to believe that Wendy is only imagining things.

Not only does Barrie establish a fantasy secondary world to begin with in his story, but he also composes his own fictional legends that further challenge the reader's metaphysical assumptions of the narrative and have functional, stylistic, and thematic aspects in common with folk legends. The entire novel functions as a didactic legend in the sense that it is superficially a warning to parents to be responsible lest they be deprived of their children. Peter Pan's Neverland is composed of lost boys who are "children who fall out of their perambulators when the nurse is looking the other way. If they are not claimed in seven days they are sent far away to the Neverland" (44). Mr. and Mrs. Darling similarly lose their children due to irresponsibility--not only do they hire a nurse as a conforming status symbol, "Mr Darling had a passion for being exactly like his neighbours," but they are out at a party when their children are tempted away by Peter. And, Mr. Darling displays both

cowardice and mendacity by insisting to his son Michael that he will take some foul-tasting medicine as an example to the boy how to behave stoically (28). Certainly these are crimes that warrant the deprivation of one's children, are they not?

Admonitory folk legends do exist whose function is to persuade parents to be responsible. In fact, E. W. Baughman includes in his motif index *Type and Motif Index of the Folk-tales of England and North America* the motif F.361.1.16(b) *Fairies warn careless mother to take better care of children.* One pertinent example of this type of legend is "Betty Stogs and the Fairies," gathered from western England. Robert Hunt, the commentator, insists the tale is part of "a tradition of the "high countries"--the parishes of Morva, Zennor and Towednack--that the fairies often take away the children of lazy dirty mothers, and care for them tenderly before returning them."[20] There is no indication that there would be any such return of the child in this legend however. Regardless, in the legend, Betty Stogs is not only lazy but also dissipated, as is her husband: "they were nearly always drunk, and the baby was [. . .] neglected. Indeed, it was often left alone for more than half the day" (179). The consequence is that the child is missed, until the cat discovers it "on a patch of soft green moss [. . .] carefully wrapped up [. . .]. [. . .] The old people in the village said that the fairies had taken it, and that the sunrise had interrupted their long task of cleaning [. . .]. [. . .]the fright worked a change in Betty Stogs and her husband" (179).

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[20] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Folk Legends Vol. 1., (London: Routledge, 1991) 178.

Peter Pan however is not a homiletic legend simply against parental neglect; on the contrary, the most emphatic "moral" that Barrie concentrates on is the misconduct of the children, not the parents. Barrie utters numerous statements declaring the selfishness of children: "the most heartless things in the world, which is what children are but so attractive [. . .]. [. . .] children are ever ready, when novelty knocks to desert their dearest ones" (152-157). The children of the Darlings hardly consider the concerns of their parents for their absence. When the children are returning from Neverland Barrie injects his sarcastic reprimand: "Would it not serve them jolly well right if they came back and found that their parents were spending the weekend in the country? It would be the moral lesson they have been in need of ever since we met them [. . .] " (215). But the children learn no such lesson. When the children are adults we learn that "Mrs Darling was now dead and forgotten" (234). The violence in the careless amnesia of Peter Pan, "'I forget them after I kill them,'" is simply an exaggeration of the more common emotional alienation that Barrie suggests occurs with age and time (232).

Besides forgetfulness, Barrie's portrayal of his characters as adults implies that adults are not wholly superior to children developmentally; adults' imaginations are diminished as well as their spontaneity and their morality, if it seems improved, depends more on convention than compassion. These characters do not carry their childhood journeys into Neverland on through adulthood: "The bearded man who doesn't know any story to tell his children was once John" (234). Later visits by Peter Pan to Wendy find him just as impassioned against learning "solemn things," going to an "office," and adopting the rigidity of the expected adult roles (229). Discovering

Wendy has a child Peter "took a step towards the sleeping child with his dagger upraised. Of course he did not strike. He sat down on the floor instead and sobbed; and Wendy did not know how to comfort him, though she could have done it so easily once. She was only a woman now, and she ran out of the room to try to think" (240). Barrie declares of Peter Pan that "I don't believe he ever thought"--thus sentimentally Barrie depicts the artistically hackneyed and conventional idea that imagination and reason are irreconcilable (36).

Barrie, like MacDonald in The Princess and Curdie offers no vision here of ethical amelioration or reconciliation between the supposedly childish imagination and adult rationality. Human nature does not change--and in Peter Pan children and fairies are emblems of the psychological and moral continuum of humanity. Thus, I disagree with Carol Silver's contention that Barrie's "invention is mawkish, especially when he deliberately equates fairies and children" (188). Granted, Barrie's inventions of fairy dust that helps you fly and, especially, the genesis of fairies are almost nauseatingly precious: "when the first baby laughed for the first time, its laugh broke into a thousand pieces [. . .] that was the beginning of fairies" (42). However, the equation between children and fairies emphasizes the conflicted moral nature of children, not anything like ideal mawkish purity.

Fairies traditionally are not darling little cherubs--in their darker incarnations they steal women and children, they drive insane and kill men, blight cattle and crops, and are soulless parasites on the human race that drink human blood.[21] Notably,

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[21] There are numerous tales illustrating these folk beliefs and one can find synoptic discussions in both of the following: Katharine Briggs, Fairies in Tradition and Literature

Silver omits a key word in her citation of evidence that Barrie is presenting a "quasi-Wordsworthian vision of childhood, a person loses the ability to fly or participate in fairy life because she or he is 'no longer young and innocent'" (189). The missing word of course is "heartless": "gay and innocent and heartless" is what we're told children are several times throughout the story. [22]

One must temper Silver's judgments of Barrie's representation of children and fairies as "mawkish" with the recognition of the less juvenile and sentimental aspects of his depiction of childhood in his fully developed narrative of Peter Pan published in 1911 (188). Tinker Bell, with her coquettish outfit "cut low and square, through which her figure could be seen to the best advantage" (35), and sexual jealousy of Wendy's rapport with Peter, "Tink hated her with the fierce hatred of a very woman," makes perfectly clear that Barrie is not solely concerned with the innocent passions of children (70).

Tinker Bell's erotic and manipulative features have not gone unnoticed by all critics, such as Elizabeth Bell, whose gender identity in adolescence partly depended on being nicknamed after the Disney icon: "Tinker Bell invited me into a gendered sexuality that alternated between loyalty and spitefulness, indulgence and

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(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). Lewis Spence, The Fairy Tradition in Britain. (Kila: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, n.d.).

[22] In the context of her book Silver appears to be pointing to the "first version of Peter Pan, The Little White Bird in Kensington Garden(1902)." However, not only is there no title exactly matching this supposed source in her bibliography--or elsewhere apparently--but the explanation in The Little White Bird--the version of Peter Pan which is published in 1902--does not include the phrase "young and innocent." In The Little White Bird the explanation for not being able to fly is entirely different: "the moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease for ever to be able to do it. [. . .] to have faith is to have wings. J.M. Barrie, The Little White Bird (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902) 147.

insouciance."[23] Tinker Bell's role as a femme fatale--she literally tries to kill Wendy--despite the sentimentalizing of fairies that Carol Silver decries--is consistent with the potentially deadly sorts of fairy temptresses. The seductive caprice of Tinker Bell is shared by the mermaids that Wendy believes to be so beautiful. Although this quality is partly a regional matter, there are many traditional tales of British Mermaids capable of great cruelty (ML 4071 *Malevolent Mermaid*). And Barrie's mermaids show this tendency--one mermaid tries to drown Wendy (129). These overt hostilities between oversexed supernatural beings and Wendy crystallize the tensions between Wendy's adoption of the role of mother to Peter and her burgeoning sexuality, that is incompatible with Peter's preternatural preoccupation with childhood. When Tinker Bell first pulls Wendy's hair after Wendy and Peter kiss, "Peter could not understand why, but Wendy understood; and she was just slightly disappointed when he admitted that he came to the nursery window not to see her but to listen to stories" (47).

Barrie, as well as MacDonald, would have helped bolster Auerbach and Knoepflmacher's argument for the Victorian perception of a female tradition of storytelling. For, in Barrie's story, legends and experiences of Peter Pan circulate through the matrilineal line. It is significant that Mrs. Darling is analyzing the traces of leaves that supposedly point to Peter Pan's presence; despite her apparent skepticism, Mrs. Darling is intimately connected with the legend of Peter Pan:

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[23] Elizabeth Bell, "Do You Believe in Fairies?: Peter Pan, Walt Disney and Me," Women's Studies in Communication 19.2 (Summer 1996): 120.

> At first Mrs Darling did not know, but after thinking back into her childhood she just remembered a Peter Pan who was said to live with the fairies. There were odd stories about him; as that when children died he went part of the way with them, so that they should not be frightened. She had believed in him at the time, but now that she was married and full of sense she quite doubted whether there was any such person. (15)

Here, the legend of Peter Pan as a custodian for dead children has the flavor of folk legends, which emphasize negotiations between the otherworld and the everyday realm. But, Barrie's Peter Pan is not left to function as a chaperone between life and death, but between childhood and adulthood as well. He is a marker between the two worlds, or rather, he is a conflicted being that embodies aspects of both.

Barrie presents Mrs. Darling's disbelief as a symptom of both the attrition of the imagination that comes with adulthood and the lack of fulfillment in her own life as a woman. Mrs. Darling was once infatuated, like Wendy, with Peter Pan. Psychologically Peter Pan figures as the externalization of the repressed desires of women for selfhood that they are unable to achieve in a society that oppresses female potential. We witness Mrs. Darling in a marriage that lacks intimacy and a life that lacks autonomy and respect. Mr. Darling, despite his ineptitude, controls the family. The basis of his authority is financial: "he often said stocks were up and shares were down in a way that would have made any woman respect him" (8). Though Barrie is speaking ironically--he does not credit Mr. Darling's knowledge as substantial, "no one really knows, but he quite seemed to know"--the power differential between the

two adults rests on the demarcation of gender roles with regard to economy. Mrs. Darling once knew how to manage "the books perfectly, almost gleefully, as if it were a game" but preoccupied with maternity she composes "babies without faces" instead of "totting up" (8). Here, we see not only Mrs. Darling's devolution to total dependency on her husband's management of money, but also an elision between a woman and a child--Mrs. Darling's earlier attention to figures was "a game": a woman with a check book is a child at play.

Mrs. Darling's failure at balancing figures is no passing idle representation, but a running theme in Barrie's presentation of women's lack of economic and social autonomy. The words of Nibs, one of the lost boys of Neverland, crystallize the issue: "'All I remember about my mother [. . .] is that she often said to my father, "Oh, how I wish I had a cheque-book of my own" (80). Critics of gender representations in Peter Pan object to what they consider, as Lois Gibson claims, is a mere parade of either "madonnas or whores, chaste or common and profane"; such an insistence on gender dualism misses Barrie's significant nods towards the injustice of female disenfranchisement.[24] It is no wonder that one of Peter's most effective temptations of Wendy is his insistence that she will be respected--as a motherless child he values her maternity beyond any system of economics. Despite Peter's self-allegorizing assertion that "I'm youth, I'm joy," Peter Pan is emblematic of the unhappy ramifications of Victorian and Edwardian civilization and its discontents, particularly for women (206).

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[24] Lois Rauch Gibson, "Beyond the Apron: Archetypes, Stereotypes, and Alternative Portrayals of Mothers in Children's Literature," Children's Literature Association Quarterly 13.4 (Winter 1988) 178.

Peter Pan himself has much in common with the otherworldly figures of demon-lover ballads and romances, rather than simply youthful exuberance. Though commonly thought of in our contemporary culture as a figure of prepubescent carefree defiance, Peter Pan is actually a sly seducer of women: "'Wendy,' he continued in a voice that no woman has ever yet been able to resist, 'Wendy, one girl is more use than twenty boys" (40).[25] Here, one might say, Peter invokes utilitarian as well as feminist discourse, and the strategy is a compelling one against young Wendy who "was every inch a woman" (40). In other words, though a girl, Wendy is on the threshold of puberty, and while Peter may be forever prepubescent in his form and values, in Barrie's presentation Peter adopts the manners of a sexually mature seducer. The temptation of Eve is implicitly conjured as a shadow narrative behind the drama of Peter cajoling Wendy--who has sewn his shadow back on--to come with him to Neverland. It is Wendy's mention of her status as a storyteller that Barrie identifies as the initial incentive: "'Don't go Peter,' she entreated, 'I know such lots of stories.' Those were her precise words, so there can be no denying that it was she who first *tempted* [my italics] him" (47).

Peter's is a conflicting portrait of erotic innocence and experience. Jonathan Rutherford, for example, calls Peter Pan "the story of a mother's boy, faced with the

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[25] If Barrie seems preoccupied with seduction in this passage, one of the reasons may be the fact that he "discovered his wife's adultery" in 1909. Sandra Kemp, Charlotte Mitchell, and David Trotter Eds. Edwardian Fiction--an Oxford Companion. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 20.

troubling dilemma of his adult heterosexuality."[26] It is true that throughout the story Tinker Bell rebukes Peter for not understanding her decidedly amorous feelings for him (and her frustration expresses that of Wendy and Tiger Lily as well), yet he knows how to excite--and enjoys exciting-- a passionate response from women. It is difficult not to observe in the following passage a subtext of sexual seduction as Peter reduces the usually highly articulate Wendy to "wriggling her body" and outbursts of "oh" and "ooh" and an embrace:

> He came back and there was a greedy look in his eyes now which ought to have alarmed her, but did not. 'Oh, the stories I could tell to the boys!' she cried, and then Peter gripped her and began to draw her towards the window. 'Let me go!' she ordered him. 'Wendy, do come with me [. . .].'
>
> ' [. . .] I can't. Think of mummy! Besides, I can't fly.'
>
> 'I'll teach you.'
>
> 'Oh, how lovely to fly.'
>
> 'I'll teach you how to jump on the wind's back, and then away we go.'
>
> 'Oo!" she exclaimed rapturously.
>
> 'Wendy, Wendy, when you are sleeping in your silly bed you might be flying about with me [. . .].'
>
> 'Oo!'
>
> 'And, Wendy, there are mermaids.' [. . .]

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[26] Jonathan Rutherford, Forever England--Reflections on Masculinity and Empire. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997) 25.

'Oh,' cried Wendy, 'to see a mermaid!'

He had become frightfully cunning. 'Wendy,' he said, how we should all respect you.'

She was wriggling her body in distress. It was quite as if she were trying to remain on the nursery floor. But he had no pity for her.

'Wendy,' he said, the sly one, 'you could tuck us in at night.'

'Oo!'

'None of us has ever been tucked in at night.'

'Oo,' and her arms went out to him.' (48-49)

Wendy's protest that Peter and she should consider her "mummy" quickly crumbles. Nor is Wendy's "mummy" immune to Peter's charms.

Peter's attractiveness to women is not a matter of sensual appeal alone; rather, Peter captures the soul of women. We learn of Mrs. Darling that "Her romantic mind was like the tiny boxes [. . .] that come from the puzzling East, however many you discover there is always one more; and her sweet mocking mouth had one kiss on it that Wendy could never get" and that her husband "got all of her, except the innermost box and the kiss" (7-8). Here, the female psyche is associated with the mystery of the Eastern world, which while subject to territorial conquest by the British Empire did not reveal all its secrets. Similarly, Mr. Darling may possess his wife physically, but he does not know her as intimately as an ideal lover would. When Mrs. Darling beholds Peter Pan entering through an open window we learn not only that Mrs. Darling has a strangely accurate intuition "she knew at once that he was Peter Pan" but also that he "was very like Mrs [sic] Darling's kiss" (20). Peter

epitomizes the essential longing of Mrs. Darling, both emotionally and sexually--he is a symbol of natural fertility: "clad in skeleton leaves and the juices that ooze out of trees" (20). His last name is, after all, Pan--the amoral deity omnipresent in nature.

Peter is the spirit of adventure and freedom that Barrie believes all women crave, but are denied in their indentured domesticity. When Mrs. Darling meets Peter with Wendy near the close of the story and arranges for Wendy to "go to him for a week every year to do his spring cleaning," we receive a potent hint: "Of course Peter promised; and then he flew away. He took Mrs Darling's kiss with him. The kiss that had been for no one else Peter took quite easily. Funny. But she seemed satisfied" (231). Mrs. Darling is satisfied because her unrequited desire that makes her identity a conundrum has departed from her and been transferred to her daughter Wendy. Nor does the cycle stop there but continues with Wendy's own daughter Jane and beyond: "Jane is now a common grown-up with a daughter named Margaret [. . .]. [. . .] When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter's mother in turn; and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless" (242). This is the final line and epigrammatic "moral" of the story--what are we to make of it?

Criticism gives us little assistance with this last telling phrase. Most critics of Peter Pan have focused on the text and play as a superficial youthful fantasy of escape into a wilderness of adventure from parental authority, the tyranny of industry, and maturity itself.. Such criticism seems to be directed towards Peter Pan more as a cultural artifact or an evolving icon rather than a particular text. The name itself, Peter Pan, has become synonymous with people who refuse to grow up, and the

fantasy of Peter Pan serves as a touchstone for the Victorian and Edwardian protraction of childhood:

> The Peter Pan type of childhood, where maturity was delayed as long as possible and the child held back from reality, was [. . .]. [. . .] a final development of the separated, encapsulated childhood evolved by the Victorians [. . .] it was a recent phenomenon, exclusively English, and middle and upper class at that. A working-class childhood was very different.[27]

Certainly, the transient nature of childhood does figure as a sad reality in Peter Pan, and one of the alterations of folklore highlights this resonance. When Wendy, as a grown woman, asks Peter Pan how Tinker Bell is doing, Peter replies that he doesn't remember her, but supposes she is dead. The narrator agrees: "I expect he was right, for fairies don't live long, but they are so little that a short time seems a good while to them" (233). The reversal of the folk belief that in fact fairies live far longer than mortals--and that it is humans who imagine a long time with the fairies being only a short period--underscores the ephemeral nature of childhood's association with magic. The companions--living or imaginary--and neverlands of childhood die and are forgotten; they are as good as if they never had been. Yet, it is the child-fairy Peter whose oblivion of mind suggests callousness, not Wendy's nostalgia that prompts her inquiry. It is in children's minds, Barrie's narrative ultimately suggests, that events pass through without leaving a trace, while adult retrospection is powerless to do

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[27] Gillian Avery, "The Cult of Peter Pan," Word and Image--Children's Art and Literature 2.2 (1986) 184.

anything to recreate what once came naturally. Thus, Barrie repudiates Wordsworthian Romanticism--memory does not effectively transcend the distance between adulthood and childhood, nor rekindle even a faint flash of the vanished "visionary gleam."

Multiple claims for the underlying message of Peter Pan, particularly the play, have also centered on the plea to revive Tinker Bell--after her first brush with death when she drinks poison meant for Peter Pan--through an appeal to the audience's belief in fairies--to be demonstrated by clapping. This ceremony and interrogation, as John Goldthwaite contends, is a virtual sidestepping of the greater question of "existence of nonexistence of God".[28] Goldthwaite believes clapping for fairies at a performance of *Peter Pan* is equivalent to the Spiritualist movement and a poor sentimental substitute for religious faith: "Clapping if you believe in fairies is making believe in kind with reading horoscopes and table rapping for spirits and feeling good about ourselves when we think we have been left out in the cold as a race."[29] As for biographical criticism, many critics have claimed that Barrie used his story as a "catharsis" for his own frustrated feelings of not achieving contentment through maturity.[30] However, to read Peter Pan as the quintessential voice of the Victorian cult of the childlike, religious doubt, or to view the story solely in terms of Barrie's

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[28] John Goldthwaite, The Natural History of Make-Believe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 211.

[29] Goldthwaite 211.

[30] Goldthwaite 209. Other claims for Barrie's puerile obsessions include references to his diminutive height, regret for a dead sibling, and unsubstantiated charges of pedophilia. Mary Louis Ennis, "Peter Pan," The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales ed. Jack Zipes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 381-382.

own alleged identification with children is to utterly miss the text's ambivalence towards such idealization of children, which relies on folkloric ambiguity.

In Barrie's closing sentence the issues of the female, the maternal, the selfish, and the childlike are all combined-- in Peter Pan Barrie uses folklore and fantasy to focus on these subjects. Or rather, Barrie alters the assumptions that an audience has for literary appropriations of fairytales, and simultaneously unsettles social ideological complacency. The subversive and almost proverbial-sounding expression, "children are gay and innocent and heartless" and the general outcome of the story works against the structural expectations that this fairytale-like story will end "happily ever after," as well as conflicting with the superficial reading of the story as an admonitory legend.

For, rather than being threatened by fairy abduction, as the analogous folk legends are formulated, the children contain the negative, and even sinister, qualities of fairies themselves. In Barrie's critical vision, men, despite their economic potency and social preparations, are emotionally underdeveloped, Mr. Darling "might have passed for a boy" (216), and preoccupied with "good form" like Captain Hook--Mr. Darling's "classical education" only enables him to declare "mea culpa" when he loses his children (22). Women, disenfranchised in their own lives--their industry and sexuality sublimated into maternity--become perpetual caretakers, nursing the symbolic embodiment of frustrated desires that cannot be integrated into Victorian and Edwardian civilization: Peter Pan. For, only the egoistic and irresponsible are free from the burdens of a social conscience, as Wendy learns: "It is only the gay and innocent and heartless who can fly" (236).

Thus, the Neverland of Peter Pan is another dystopia, like that of MacDonald's Curdie fantasies and At the Back of the North Wind. All four narratives, rather than offering childish escapes from the duties and griefs of English civilization, employ the folkloric tradition in order to cast a thin veil of glamour over the darker shadows beneath. Fairies, princesses, and adventures beckon from the margins of these texts. Yet, at their essential core these fairy-tale fantasies repudiate contented closure and undermine social solidarity through subversive portraits of kingdoms divided by self-interest, xenophobia, inequality, and subject to attrition and death. Social structures prove destructive and corrupt rather than nurturing and constructive.

Each narrative ultimately erodes the idyllic vision of contentment that it first seems to offer. Curdie's marriage to Irene and defeat of evil in the forms of first goblins and then treacherous men is not a lasting conclusion to a period of energetic and righteous struggle, but only an illusory moment of victory in a larger scope of entropy and defeat. The fairy-tale frame that MacDonald appears to borrow as a vehicle for containing socio-political battles within a mold that traditionally resolves those tensions proves to be a passing form that disintegrates into narrative inertness.

Heroes and heroines may temporarily triumph, but as MacDonald's Curdie stories show, societies will perish despite the greatest efforts of the most devoted souls. Lasting contributions, according to MacDonald's ethos in his fairy-tale fantasies, must be spiritual--the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be found in earthly competitions. It is vain for Diamond to search for the land at the back of the north wind in life, for full immersion in a spiritual reality is incompatible with the material

demands of everyday life. Fairyland's highest sphere, in MacDonald's stories, intersects in the same space with the divine and the imaginary. Conquering one's enemies in fairyland narrows the gap between self-recognition and numinous apocalypse, but the destination is not reachable in the flesh.

The stories of these protagonists become part of the contours of a larger cycle of stasis rather than the vertical progression of volksmärchen. Wendy fades into the interminable dynamics between feminine self-sacrifice and masculine narcissism. Diamond escapes the specter of the workhouse in his reliance on a benignant maternal vision, which even he learns to doubt as an eternal comforter, and fades into oblivion with no legacy save for the vague optimism of an older spectator: the narrator. Curdie and Irene attempt to purify their world under the tutelage of the ideal Mother of Light, whose experiences together pass from the very recitation of history; Wotherwop may as well have been all a dream, considering how little positivist impact is made by her influence on a grand scale.

Unable to attain narrative closure, these stories largely ignore the fairy tale motifs of sexual courtship and maturation as well as basically abandoning the characters in a suspended adolescence as dubious and incomplete as the utopian potentials of the macroscopic cultures in which the characters and texts inhabit. Wendy and her brothers gain little from Neverland that enables them to transform their own world; their energy for adventure does not persist after their puberty and finds no translation in the world of industry and conformity. Wendy's marriage is no more fulfilling than her mother's. Diamond's sojourn at the Back of the North Wind

gives him little that he can communicate meaningfully to his family or to free them from poverty.

Unlike the case in folk tales, the chain of tasks performed and rewards won by the various protagonists brings no indelible results. The abstract style of fairy tales that is adopted by these fantasies is bled dry of its traditional significance. Each fantasy presents an adventurous land where beating enemies, traveling great distances, meeting a companion of the opposite gender, and doing generous deeds leaves the characters with nothing but knowledge of themselves, and they lose even that reward through eventual amnesia and death.

Using fairy tale motifs to provide alternative worlds of possible liberation from mundane materialism and tyrannical convention (such as Captain Hook's "good form"), MacDonald and Barrie's fantasies do not fulfill the expectations of the fairy tale genre, nor do they offer harmonious ideologies. Instead, their stories become enmeshed in folkloric associations that run counter to the optimistic mechanics of the märchen's resolution and the announced ideals of the literary narratives. The destruction of the goblins and their animals in The Princess and the Goblin rather than reinforcing the moral amelioration, that the Mother of Light champions in both books, perpetuates racial antipathy traditionally encoded in legend narratives detailing human interactions with the other beings of fairyland. Barrie's choice of flying to Neverland with all its fairy denizens does not hold up a purified mirror that glorifies the Edwardian equation of children with fairies in an idealistic amalgam of sacred innocence and the magic imagination of childhood. Rather this otherworld of Neverland distorts the fanciful aura of the childlike into an antisocial shape of chaos.

While a reader may grow to view Diamond as a fairy tale hero in his own right and expect him to emancipate himself and his family from the ever present fear of the Victorian workhouse, such a reader will be disappointed. What occurs is not a socio-economic success where Diamond lives up to his literal name, but his complete withdrawal from the very paradigm of social advancement that characterized the classic märchen. Nor, given the traditional associations of human abductions to fairyland with death--or a gradual decay of mind, body, and soul perhaps worse than death, which some fairy legends suggest--does MacDonald ever convince us that it is indeed "better to go to the back of the north wind." Mystical and transcendent Diamond may appear, but the proof is in the pudding.

The folkloric fantastic in these fairy-tale fantasies figures as a brief interruption in historical time and culture within both the texts and British modernity itself; the writers use traditional motifs to inquire into conventional assumptions about social unity, children, death, heaven, loyalty, and the very nature of civilization. After gazing into Neverland, fairyland, and the back of the north wind, normalcy returns and obliterates the other world. The door closes, the book shuts, and even before the last page is turned, the lights of fairyland are darkened, eclipsed by an intruding pessimism or a skeptical irony that drips venomous doubts into the fairy-tale world. If stories, written for children as well as adults, are opportunities for presenting the younger generation with models of the world into which they are emerging, the spirit of fun and adventure, which does exist in these books, is a laughing shadow to the darker reality that looms beyond.

Chapter Five

MacDonald's Lilith and Phantastes: In Pursuit of the Soul in Fairyland

Barrie's pessimistic yet humorous depictions of children and adults in his ironic fairytale fantasy while comparable to MacDonald's fantasies for children are a far cry from the generally sober earnestness of MacDonald's adult fantasies. MacDonald's adult fantasies use fairytale motifs, legendary dynamics, and folk beliefs to challenge fundamentalist representations of orthodox Christian metaphysics. While MacDonald's refusal to accept certain conventional Christian doctrines may make him appear to be free thinking, it does not mean that he is irreligious or not didactic. His are the claims of an artist to choose his medium, rather than the hostile demands of the radical revolutionary who insists on burning down the cathedral. MacDonald employs his imagination in what amounts to visionary preaching; the fantastic world that he creates using folklore and surrealism reshapes essential Christian beliefs in new forms.

Yet, MacDonald's heresy is certainly not to be dismissed; he was pressured to resign from the ministry--and this was a dissenting church--as C. S. Lewis reports in his introduction to Lilith (1895):

> In 1850 he received what is technically known as a 'Call' to become the Minister of a dissenting chapel in Arundel. By 1852 he was in trouble with the 'deacons' for heresy, the charges being that he had

> expressed belief in a future state of probation for heathens and that he was tainted with German theology. (viii)

It is significant that one the chief heresies of MacDonald is "belief in a future state of probation." For, in Lilith, this conviction in the generosity of divine mercy determines the fate of the archetype of the disobedient female--Lilith.

Lilith, Fairy Tales, and the Fantastic

The fairy-tale elements of Lilith are largely limited to the general career of the protagonist Mr. Vane. We know so little of him that his anonymity approximates the impersonality --or "depthlessness" emphasized by Lüthi--of the central figure of the standard märchen. Vane's emptiness (indicated etymologically by his very name) shifts the emphasis towards events rather than personal identity. Much of the story maintains the episodic nature of the märchen, with Vane gradually being introduced to the denizens of the other world that he ventures into through the mirror. Thus, at least at first, the "real world" is separated from the realm of the marvelous--though the very fact that there is more than one world is antithetical to the metaphysics of folk fairy tales where enchantment is possible everywhere. In folk tales there may be an "otherworld" of fairyland or the dead but the "real world" also contains such supernatural components dragons, witches, and magic. However, despite this initial distinction between the real world and the one beyond the mirror, MacDonald attempts to unify this secondary world with the everyday surroundings of Vane by

ultimately presenting the supernatural realm as the spiritual reality underlying the physical world that Vane normally perceives.

In the novel set in Victorian England Mr. Vane, who has recently completed his education at Oxford, assumes the duties of his estate, inherited from his dead parents. Soon Mr. Vane, who tells us that he was drawn by "wonder" towards the physical sciences but also "in the habit of falling" into "metaphysical dreams" and then analyzing the "strange analogies [. . .] between physical and metaphysical facts," enters through a mirror into another world where he continues such studies (5). Guided by Mr. Raven who is revealed to be not simply the ghost of a past librarian of his father's, but also the first man, Adam, Mr. Vane encounters a realm threatened by the immoral desires of Lilith, and the satanic Shadow that manipulates her.

Lilith, besides killing children and depriving the rest of the magical land of water, which provides both spiritual purity and life, rules the city of Bulika where the residents are devoted to the accumulation of further wealth. Mr. Vane meets Lilith without knowing who she is, becomes enamored of her, and gradually learns to overcome his own selfishness while striving to protect--then resurrect--Lilith's daughter, Lona, and the Little Ones, children dwelling in a state of peace and kindness. Hardly a model fairy-tale protagonist, Mr. Vane is full of self-doubts and undergoes various failures before accepting the teachings of Adam whereby he is able to help Lilith be conquered and reconciled to divine authority and a communal sense of good.

In the course of the story Vane meets various female archetypal figures, who serve as fairy-tale helpers, as well as multiple monstrous foes, instructive apparitions,

and landscapes suggestive of the unconscious mind. MacDonald's narrative maintains hesitation throughout whether Mr. Vane has truly experienced a trip to the otherworld, or whether he has been merely imagining the experiences. Ultimately, the novel asserts the essential spirituality of imagination and belies any essential difference between objective reality and subjective visions, with the implied qualification that those visions must be divinely inspired. The book ends promising imminent apocalypse where Mr. Vane and all of humanity will awaken into the greater world of immanent ethics that is eternal and omnipresent, yet hidden under humanity's short-sighted and self-interested mask of modernity.

Vane's frequent attempts to discover and rationalize this new reality defines the work as overtly fantastic: "Then it came to me that I was in a marvellous world, of which it was assuredly my business to discover the ways and laws" (67). Notably, the moral laws of this world are presumably harmonious with the normal one--a clear repetition of MacDonald's ideas in his essay "The Fantastic Imagination." Vane reads in a hidden compartment in his house the adventures his father had with the mysterious librarian (really Adam), who claims, "There is in your house a door, one step through which carries me into a world very much another than this. [. . .] so much another that most of its physical, and many of its mental laws are different [. . .]. As for moral laws, they must everywhere be fundamentally the same" (40).

With the audacity of Swift's Gulliver, Vane's role in this fairy-tale world is at first that of a curious sojourner. Vane is also, at first, a fairly reliable expositor, who interprets the implied allegory of what he beholds. For instance, when the colony of children (hiding from Lilith's predations) informs him of the "bad giants" who are

"proud of being fat," Vane returns: "So they are in my world," I said, only they do not say *fat* there, they say rich" (66). Thus, MacDonald's Lilith never truly sustains the reality of the fairy-tale world (such coherence is the hallmark of fantasy). Instead, interruptions abound--whether the analytic thoughts of Vane or the apparent returns to his home in mundane England. Whether these returns are literal, or if Vane never truly left, is never wholly clear--where ambiguity abides there is no sustained fantasy.

Besides the reality of magic and the episodic qualities of Vane's adventures in the secondary world, Lilith also includes typical structural components of the fairy-tale. Besides the helpers such as Mara, who aids Vane in his journey to Bulika; the "interdiction," Vane disobeys one of Adam's commands only to regret it; the very relationship between Vane and Lilith is at first reminiscent of the tale-type of the lover who is tested endlessly by his beloved. In particular tale-type 400 *The Man on a Quest for his Lost Wife* includes the series of episodes where the husband or lover must seek out the wife or mistress (motif H1385.3 Quest for vanished wife (mistress). After reviving Lilith because of his infatuated ministrations (653B *The Suitors Restore the Maiden to Life*), only to be rejected by her, Vane persists and pursues. Eventually--before Vane truly knows who she is--Lilith addresses him as though he were a prince who had passed the many tests a princess tends to exact upon suitors. Yet Vane must overcome more: "Many lovers have sought me [. . .]. I put you to the test; you stood it; your love was genuine!--It was, however, far from ideal [. . .] " (130).[1]

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[1] Motifs H310-H359 include Suitor Tests, and there are other related motifs as well, such as T75.0.1 *Suitors Ill-Treated.*

Despite Vane's persistence he never can earn the love of Lilith, for she does not love beyond her own narcissism; his task is as empty as his name; his role as fairy-tale protagonist underscores his status as a man whose development is in process. Vane's career as a hero results in neither a biological nor a social legacy. After his disillusionment with Lilith he also achieves no romantic union with Lona, who lies in the slumber of death waiting to be revived with Vane in some indefinite future. Romantic closure is deferred just as spiritual revelation and utopian realization are postponed. Vane's rescue of the Little Ones from the tyranny of Lilith imbues him with the rank of a protector, but does not validate him as a fully mature man. He remains isolated, wondering in his inherited estate what the future holds, and whether he can truly unite metaphysical truths with materials facts: "Was she [Lona} anywhere? had she ever been, save in the mouldering cells of my brain?" (237). Vane's search to perceive and grasp the ideal feminine is a theme that MacDonald also explores in Phantastes. In Lilith the emphasis is on removing those obstacles that disrupt perception of spiritual ideals and fairy-tale tasks represent the struggle against distractions to moral vision, while the fantastic clarifies those moments of crucial insight: physical laws change but ethics provides unity to the most disparate forms.

Lilith and Legend

To even include the figure of Lilith in what amounts to a theological fantasy is surely a startling action by a former man of the cloth. But, like Blake, MacDonald

found in Jewish folklore and mystical doctrines--particularly the Kabbalah--many of the maps for his own metaphysical system. Despite MacDonald's use of religious and mystical overtones--from the Old Testament, Kabbalah, and perhaps other legendary materials and commentaries such as the Talmud and Midrash--in many ways Lilith (1895) is a particularly Victorian work. Or rather it combines features of both the Romantic and Victorian literary epochs.

Between the opposing poles of idealistic reform and industrial greed MacDonald constructs a fantasy that depicts a universe of absolute ethics that dissolves perceptual differences through imposing a unified essence. MacDonald depreciates the many masks of human ambition as illusions distracting spiritual contemplation of divinity. Presenting Lilith as the primary image of arrogant self-interest, MacDonald aligns her purgatory and redemption with the spiritual education of his protagonist. To achieve this synthesis of legendary Jewish lore and Christian doctrine, MacDonald makes multiple alterations of traditional portrayals of Lilith to accentuate his metaphysical vision.

On the one hand in Lilith there is much manifest idealism--the hope for a utopian paradise, much akin to the new universe of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound." MacDonald envisions an idealistic realm where the essence of things will be directly perceivable as an answer both to the Platonic separation between truth and its representations (like "The Allegory of the Cave), and also an application of the Christian notion of the apocalyptic New Heaven and Earth: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth [. . .]." (Revelation 21:1) After the redemption of the evil of Lilith and the

destructive economy of Bulika Mr. Vane beholds in his fantasy world a vision that prefigures the promised apocalypse:

> It was a summer-day more like itself, that is, more ideal, than ever man that had not died found summer-day in any world. I walked on the new earth, under the new heaven, and found them the same as the old save that now they opened their minds to me, and I saw into them. Now, the soul of everything I met came out to greet me [. . .]. (245)

It is a world that MacDonald would insist the Goethe's Faust would be satisfied with--where the infinite is truly within one's grasp through the direct communion of mind and objects. This vision of the inner soul emerging from the physical is Blakian. Particularly it is reminiscent of the double vision that perceives both a "thistle" and "an old Man" in his lyric included in a letter to Thomas Butts (November 22, 1802), "With Happiness Stretched across the hills": "double vision is always with me. / With my inward Eye 'tis an old Man grey; / With my outward, a Thistle across my way." (27-30).[2] Suffice to say that MacDonald's representation of the imagination as a moral force is Romantic.

On the other hand, the form which the threat to this utopia takes is particularly Victorian. Lilith's rule of the city of Bulika, that is so occupied with trade--the city "had everything made for them in other towns" (120)--is an overt criticism of the Victorian era's obsession with capitalism, imperialism, and industrialization: "no legislation of their princess was more heartily approved of than

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[2] William Blake, Blake--Complete Writings. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 816-818.

what tended to make poverty subserve wealth" (118). There is no clearer jab than when Mr. Vane himself has the colonialist fantasy of selling the jewels from the world of Bulika to the "real world": "I confess also to an altogether foolish dream of opening a commerce in gems between the two worlds" (172-173). The fact that Lilith, the magnate of Bulika--the city of evil commerce--is a destroyer of children evokes the destructiveness of Victorian industrialism, where children work in factories, mines, and chimneys.

The redemption of Lilith is overtly linked to MacDonald's criticism of the primacy of economics; while Lilith lies in a tortured state of bitterness she gradually succumbs to the realization of the enormity of her choices: "She was what God could not have created. She had usurped beyond her share in self-creation, and her part had undone His! She saw now what she had made, and behold, it was not good [. . .]. [. . .] But with God all things are possible. He can save even the rich!" (206-207). Mr. Armstrong from Adela Cathcart might object to that final interjection for it adds humor to what is a somber didactic mode, and works against the "reality" of the story. Likewise, the negative echo of Genesis "it was not good" emphasizes the derivative nature of the work and a reader may feel the work tends in such moments towards burlesque rather than a vision of spiritual earnestness.

Besides being an industrial tyrant, Lilith is a threat to respectable Victorian domesticity; she is a child-killer, voraciously sexual, and anti-patriarchal--addressing Adam, the first man--and her first lover--she declares:

> "The evil thou meditatest," Adam resumed, "thou shalt never compass, Lilith, for Good and not Evil is the Universe. The battle between

> them may last for countless ages, but must end: how will it fare with thee when Time hath vanished in the dawn of the eternal morn? Repent, I beseech thee; repent, and be again an angel of God!" She rose [. . .] and said, "I will not repent. I will drink the blood of thy child." (149)

As is true in Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), which followed Lilith by two years, MacDonald also splits the female between innocent and maternal sexless child--here it is Lona, Lilith and Adam's daughter--and deceitful, dangerous, and sexually aware woman, Lilith herself. Such a split is common throughout the Western Tradition of literature, and owes little to folklore per se. Lilith's flirtations with Vane are vampiric--she sucks his blood--and Vane reacts to the realization of Lilith's evil like an obsessive--even masochistic--man who remains infatuated with a manipulative lover: "My frame quivered with conflicting consciousnesses, to analyze which I had no power. I was simultaneously attracted and repelled: each sensation seemed either" (127).[3]). Faben suggests the Baobhan Sith--among the most disagreeable Celtic fairies--might have served partly as a vampiric precedent for MacDonald's Lilith, for they "appeared to be beautiful women, but sucked the blood of the men who had intercourse with them" (173). The inability of Mr. Vane to confront evil in a seductive form underscores MacDonald's conception of wickedness as part of a larger dynamics of power.

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[3] Roderick McGillis points out several passages emphasizing the sexuality of MacDonald's narrative and asserts that Lilith "assumes the man's position" over Vane twice, indicating that MacDonald's Lilith has maintained her traditional choice of position in sexual intercourse. Roderick F. McGillis, "George MacDonald and the Lilith Legend in the XIXth Century." Mythlore 6 (Winter 1979): 7.

Indeed, MacDonald's alteration of the traditional accounts of Lilith exaggerate her lust for power and arrogance, as Adam's exposition of Lilith's origins makes clear:

> Mr. Vane, when God created me--not out of Nothing, as say the unwise, but out of His own endless glory--He brought me an angelic splendour to be my wife: there she lies! For her first thought was *power*; she counted it slavery to be one with me, and bear children for Him who gave her being. One child, indeed, she bore; then, puffed with the fancy that she had created her, would have me fall down and worship her! Finding, however, that I would but love and honour, never obey and worship her, she poured out her blood to escape me, fled to the army of the aliens, and soon had so ensnared the heart of the great Shadow, that he became her slave, wrought her will, and made her queen of Hell. (147-148)

Such is the history of Lilith that MacDonald presents. But, it does not exactly adhere to Kabbalah, and certainly the further events which occur in Lilith's career in the book are MacDonald's own inventions.

According to Raphael Patai's The Hebrew Goddess, Lilith had a diverse "career":

> No she-demon has ever achieved as fantastic a career as Lilith, who started out from the lowliest of origins, was a failure as Adam's intended wife, became the paramour of lascivious spirits, rose to be the

> bride of Samael the Demon King, ruled as Queen of Zemargad and Sheba, and ended up as the consort of God himself." (221)

Patai is speaking ironically of course, and the path of Lilith's career is fraught with debate and uncertainty: there are multiple--and significantly contradictory--accounts of her birth alone. The sources of information on Lilith include a vast array of artifacts and texts. Patai's conception of Lilith is comprised from a mixture of elite theories of theology and popular lore extending from the ancient to the contemporary: from the Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh and the Hulupu Tree* (ca. 2000 BCE), Aramaic inscriptions on Babylonian pottery, to the Talmud and Kabbalah. Furthermore, the construction of amulets of protection against Lilith is a folkloric practice that extends into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even if MacDonald's source was limited to the Kabbalah--which he credits in a quotation beneath his title (Lilith--A Romance: "Off, Lilith!"--The Kabala)--there remain many competing versions in that body of legends and commentaries concerning who Lilith is and what she did.

By analyzing the choices MacDonald made in his use, alteration, and "expansion" of Jewish legends, we will be closer to understanding MacDonald's aims in writing *Lilith*. Granted, it should be no surprise that MacDonald should engage Jewish tradition with his own particular ideology and aesthetics--even currently there are multiple attitudes towards Lilith as Judith Neulander explains in "Creating the Universe: A Study of Cosmos and Cognition":

> her status still remains lowly and threatening to some, as evidenced in the continuing posting of anti-Lilith wall-amulets in American Jewish hospitals. But for others, it is precisely her gender transgression that has

> elevated her status to the point where she has become the most esteemed emblem of American Jewish feminism; the name Lilith, for example is the current title of a major American Jewish feminist periodical.[4]

But, strangely enough, no analysis of MacDonald's Lilith so far has thoroughly detailed the traditions of Lilith that might have influenced MacDonald, and--more importantly--to have closely considered MacDonald's departures from such precedents. Faben asserts that the Kabbala only "provided a vague background" to MacDonald's Lilith (152). She also suggests how MacDonald may have learned such Jewish lore:

> The interest in spiritualism, the occult, and theosophy prevalent during the nineteenth century made some ideas from the Kabala [sic] available, if not well understood. MacDonald may have learned about the Kabala at Highbury, which had on its faculty a well-known Hebrew scholar." (152)

Jeanne Walker claims that to understand MacDonald's use of Lilith one must consult "Assyro-Babylonian, Sumerian, and Greek mythology" to trace the shape of this "demoness figure under a variety of names [. . .]."[5] Yet, Walker fails to answer some

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[4] Judith S. Neulander, " Creating the Universe: A Study of Cosmos and Cognition,' Folklore Forum 25:1 (1992): 5.

[5] Jeanne Murray Walker, "The Demoness and the Grail: Deciphering MacDonald's Lilith," First International Conference on the Fantastic in Literature and Film: The Scope of the Fantastic--Culture, Biography, Themes, Children's Literature (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985) 181.

of her own questions that she claims "the Hebrew version" does not address: "What of Lilith's vampirism? [. . .] Who is the character "Samoil" on whom Lilith calls?"[6]

The latter question Walker could have answered had she read one of the secondary sources preceding her own work, Roderick F. McGillis's "George MacDonald and the Lilith Legend in the XIXth Century." Besides offering an interpretation of MacDonald's *Lilith* and its literary sources, McGillis's essay provides a very informative survey of different writers' and artists' use of Lilith: "Goethe, Rossetti, Browning, Hugo, and France among others."[7] As for the "Samoil" quotation, his suggestion that the name is MacDonald's "own rendering of the *Zohar's* Sammael" is compelling.[8] In contrast to McGillis's complex representation of literary and traditional precedents, Walker simplistically reduces traditional distinctions. However, the conceptual core of Walker's argument--MacDonald's implied theology--is sound:

> To convey the force of his unorthodox argument, MacDonald reached for Lilith, a figure damned in centuries of well-known folk tales. If Lilith, the consort of Satan, can retrieve her form as "a spirit made in the image of God," logic dictates that all less evil spirits, ones whose

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[6] Walker 180-181.

[7] McGillis 3.

[8] McGillis 4.

> evil depends on Lilith's power to corrupt, must surely be capable of a return to goodness [. . .]."[9]

Walker does not ask the question of how MacDonald departs from tradition; for instance, is there any evidence of Lilith having such a daughter as Lona? McGillis does not address this question either. Robert Lee Wolff's The Golden Key--A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald, with a chapter completely devoted to Lilith only addresses the Hebrew tradition of Lilith in a cursory and haphazard fashion. Consider the following excerpt: "She steals and kills children; one of her symbols is the owl. Later in Jewish folklore she takes her place as the first wife of Adam, made of dust like him, and not taken from his rib as Eve had been" (345). Wolff offers no thoughts on MacDonald's use of such materials whatsoever; he gives no indication of the many variants of Lilith's origin and role in legend nor--most importantly--does he even remark on any discrepancy between the traditional Lilith and MacDonald's Lilith.

After one surveys the "career" of Lilith, from her Sumerian roots to her later Jewish manifestations, MacDonald's portrait of Lilith appears to be a Christianization of her nature. That is to say, whether or not Lilith can be "saved" is simply not an issue before MacDonald. The Zohar, "the *magnum opus* of 13th-century Spanish Kabbala," narrates how Lilith temporarily usurps the place of "the Matronit" as God's consort (93). As a result of this transgression Lilith is doomed to perish during the messianic apocalypse: "Gabriel and Michael will join forces to subdue and bring low the government of evil which will be in heaven and earth."[10] MacDonald, on the

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[9] Walker 188.

[10] Patai The Gates to the Old City 428.

other hand, imposes a slightly disguised version of the pattern of Christian redemption and apocalypse. In Christian orthodoxy, God's son--Jesus Christ--redeems the sins of the entire human race and metes out punishments and rewards. In the gospel of MacDonald, Lilith's daughter, Lona, is destined to alter the nature of her mother's evil: "Her hated daughter lives also, but beyond her evil ken, one day to be what she counts her destruction--for even Lilith shall be saved by her childbearing" (148). Lona, like the mythological conception of Christ, dies and is resurrected. Though the richness of the various traditions of Lilith is startlingly varied, there is no mention of a daughter who is comparable to Lona. In all accounts of Lilith she is known for spawning hordes of demons from sexual congress either with Adam, one of the lords of demons--Sammael or Ashmodai--or making use of the nocturnal emissions of single males. Nor, is there evidence of her infanticidal activities involving her own offspring--as MacDonald has it in his book.

Death is a redemptive process for MacDonald and Lilith must die to become what she was ideally created to be--this idea is in fact the crux of MacDonald's views on death's metaphysical value. Though he does not mention Lilith, Glenn Sadler could easily have alluded to her redemption to support his assertion that in "MacDonald's tales evil changes and is often given the chance to convert to good. In this way, support is given to the Protestant doctrine of conversion."[11] One also

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[11] Glenn Edward Sadler, "H.C. Andersen and George MacDonald: The Perilous Flight of Fantastic Opposites" The Dark Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Ninth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts ed. Sullivan, C.W. III. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988) 95.

wonders if this optimistic mystification of death derives not only from MacDonald's Christian beliefs but the fact that he had to confront the death of his young children near the time that he wrote Lilith.[12] His words of encouragement to his dying children that a "great good" awaited them are nearly identical in essence to his penultimate words in Lilith: "when I wake at last into that life which as a mother her child, carries this life in its bosom, I shall know that I wake, and shall doubt no more" (252). For MacDonald, all hesitation ends with death and the truth that is revealed is ultimately dependable, with no reversals of the fantastic or separation between the mind's reason and the mysticism of folklore and religion.

Besides creating Lona, who is Lilith and Adam's child, MacDonald altered other aspects of Lilith-lore in order to crystallize the particular dynamics of power and morality that he wished to emphasize. MacDonald's Lilith is satanic--she was originally an "angelic splendour," in contrast to Eve" not an angel but a woman" (147-148), and she becomes corrupted through her arrogance--commanding Adam to "worship her!" (147). The Talmudic account of Lilith has her reject Adam's demand for her to lie beneath him during intercourse--based on the claim that they are both "created from dust"; thus, her divorce from him is based on her refusal to be submissive--yet this is hardly the domineering character of MacDonald's Lilith.[13]

Granted, MacDonald may not have known the Talmudic version; but, it is the closest to his own scenario--where her first thought was of the issue of "power"--and

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[12] Wolff 327-328.

[13] Patai The Hebrew Goddess 223.

thus is most likely a source. If his knowledge was based solely on the Kabbalah then he might have read of Lilith being separated from the body of Adam (similar to Eve) or the androgynous birth of Lilith and Samael--in a negative mimicry of the union of Adam and Eve "from beneath the Throne of Glory. And the sin [of Adam] caused this evil"[14] That might provide the basis for MacDonald's pairing of Lilith with the Shadow--the diabolic companion in Lilith whose influence is pure negation and impersonal evil.

MacDonald's conception is that evil is a shadow that is imposed upon human nature, just as the light of divinity transcends individual autonomy. Thus, a state of grace is an overpowering of the will by abstract good, and a state of perdition is the usurpation of the will by abstract evil. Mara, called "Mother of Sorrow" (201), one of the archetypal female "helper" figures in the story, urges Lilith to surrender to this divine light: "that light can change your will, can make it truly yours and not another's --not the Shadow's. Into the created can pour itself the creating will, and so redeem it" (200). Wolff however does not detect any symbolism in this Shadow: "This shadow, so far from carrying any of the symbolic or allegorical connotations that Anodos' shadow carries in Phantastes, seems to be no more than a devil" (349). This is strangely dismissive since MacDonald makes the symbolic nature of the Shadow almost as explicit as a textbook definition. Note how MacDonald even capitalizes the terms "Self" and "Shadow" to emphasize the psycho-allegorical abstraction in this exchange between Mara and Lilith: [Lilith] "'I will do as my Self pleases--as my Self

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[14] Patai Gates of the Old City 453.

desires.' [Mara] 'You will do as the Shadow, overshadowing your Self inclines you?'" (199).

MacDonald recognizes the romantic appeal of the satanic claim for independence, and Lilith's response to Mara's rationalization of the subordination to divinity represents this argument. Despite MacDonald's efforts to make Lilith at once attractive and despicable, it is difficult not to sympathize with her passion for autonomy. Indeed, her claim of self-determination has a literary precedent; she echoes Lucifer's assertion in Paradise Lost that the "mind is its own place" (I: 254): "My own thought makes me me, my own thought of myself is me. Another shall not make me!" (200). Particularly in an era that was confronting the issues of female subordination, MacDonald's emphasis on surrender to divine illumination is dubiously presented when Lilith uses such words as these: "I defy that Power to unmake me from a free woman! [. . .] You may be able to torture me [. . .] but you shall not compel me to anything against my will" (200).

Besides Lilith's connection to this Shadow-devil, Kabbalistic sources also might have influenced MacDonald's mention of Lilith's rage against the destruction of a giant snake by her subjects (75); for, according to "several 17th-century Kabbalistic books", Lilith and Sammael both assumed the forms of serpents.[15] Perhaps this is one of the reasons MacDonald has her take the form of a giant leech when molesting Vane.[16] As for her leopard manifestation, it may well be the oblique association

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[15] Patai The Hebrew Goddess 246.

[16] McGillis has another suggestion for the leech form:

> in the Book of Isaiah (34:14), there is the scene of desolation among Edam's ruined fortresses. Here "the wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the

between the "wildcat" and Lilith in the Old Testament that prompted this choice: "Wildcats shall meet with hyenas, / goat-demons shall call to each other; / there too Lilith shall repose [. . .]" (*Isaiah* 34:14).[17] The Kabbalistic account of Lilith eventually having intercourse with Adam "against his will" might have also contributed to MacDonald's conception of her imperious nature.

Suffice to say, MacDonald exaggerates Lilith's defiance from what was simply contesting for an egalitarian position to a stance of uncompromising dominance. Also, insisting on her angelic essence, MacDonald implicitly equates her excessive pride with the hubris of Lucifer--though the resonance is more literary than religious. One can hear the echo of Milton's Satan who insists he was "self-begot, self-raised" (*Paradise Lost* V: 860) in the insistence of MacDonald's Lilith that she alone had produced Lona-- both Milton's Satan and MacDonald's Lilith attribute greater powers of creation to themselves than they actually have. Thus, part of the morality of Lilith's fall, according to MacDonald's metaphysics, is that she must be

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> wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there." The King James version renders Lilith as "screech owl", [sic] but the revised Standard version translates the same word as "night hag", and it seems clear that the reference "is not to an animal, but to a female demon of popular superstition, analogous to the *alukah* or vampire of Proverbs 30:15. the *alukah* is given as "horse-leech" in the King James Bible, and this brings to mind Lilith's manifestation as the white leech in MacDonald's Lilith: A Romance. (4)

[17] Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy Eds. The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. Jeanne Walker suggests that the association is from a "Babylonian inscription describing the seven evil spirits of Sumeria" that includes 'a grim leopard / that carrieth off children.' Lilith's spotted evil cat attacks Mara's white cat Astarte, which is the name of a pagan fertility goddess. These clues suggest that the cat into which Lilith metamorphoses furthers the fertility/infanticide theme in MacDonald's Lilith." Walker 181.

made to realize the macrocosmic context of who she truly is--her link in the divine chain of being.

In the Talmud and Kabbala, Lilith's role, is an entirely different matter--she is a seducer, warrior, thief of sperm for the breeding of demons, and a licensed child-killer. As a seducer in the Zohar, one of her tactics is to wear "many ornaments"(233)--it is possible that MacDonald chose to make Lilith the ruler of a city of jewels, based on her association with the iniquity of ostentatious wealth. A more plausible connection in the Kabbalah states "there is no good intention in her but only to arouse wars and all kinds of destruction."[18] And indeed we find in MacDonald that his Lilith declares, while presiding over battle: "Ye are men: slay one another!" (54).

Above all, it is moral issues that motivate MacDonald to alter the lore of Lilith. Thus, just as he felt obligated to make Lilith more obviously tyrannical, rather than egalitarian, he also attempts to attribute more guilt to her actions than is evident according to tradition. Unlike MacDonald's Lilith, the Lilith of the Talmud and Kabbala has the right to kill children under certain circumstances--as we see according to this Zohar account: "she rushes off [. . .] to seek out the children who deserve to be punished. And she smiles at them and kills them."[19] It is not necessarily the child's fault either that makes him or her vulnerable to Lilith; for, if parents violate certain laws governing sexual congress, then: "All the children who

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[18] Patai Gates of the Old City 464.

[19] Patai The Hebrew Goddess 237.

issue from such unions, Lilith can kill them anytime she wishes [. . .]."[20] MacDonald's explanation of Lilith's rage against children is entirely another matter--it is not divinely sanctioned, but is another symptom of her alienation from God and jealousy for power: "The birth of children is in her eyes the death of their parents, and every new generation the enemy of the last. Her daughter appears to her an open channel through which her immortality [. . .] is flowing fast away" (150).

MacDonald cannot accept a God that would condone the killing of children, so he makes Lilith's evil all her own--or at least he attempts to make this connection, though philosophically it is not convincing since evil to have any power whatsoever is not logically compatible with benign omnipotence. Ultimately, MacDonald takes the Romantic tact, like Shelley, of asserting that evil is a temporary state: a mere mask for the temporarily inscrutable goodness beneath. This idea is pronounced overtly at the end of Phantastes: "What we call evil is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good" (212). Evil is a finite, subjective glimpse of a larger process, the whole of which constitutes eternal goodness. Such optimism seems almost like another delusion in these two stories, Lilith and Phantastes, whose hallmark is a kind of surrealism that frequently tests the reader's expectations of what is a dream and what is reality.

MacDonald imposes the uncertainty of subjectivity not only upon his protagonist, Mr. Vane, but Lilith as well; by reshaping Lilith's character, MacDonald subordinates the authority of Jewish legends to his own Christian agenda and artistic aesthetic. Lilith's self-perception is revealed as a delusion derived from a prejudiced

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[20] Patai The Hebrew Goddess 235.

view of her own career--a gaze not her own, but the vision of the Shadow, the negative opposition to divinity. MacDonald obtrudes himself between Lilith and her traditional figure, overshadowing the role of Lilith as a divinely sanctioned child-killer with his intention to reform her as a scapegoat for the redemption of all humanity. Refashioning Lilith as a capitalistic tyrant, MacDonald implicitly derides the socio-economic pretensions of the British Empire that mistakenly subordinates spiritual consciousness to material gains. Ultimately, MacDonald repudiates the very idea of anti-social self-interest as a metaphysical challenge to communal values--yet another conflict between the ideal, childlike, imaginative, feminine utopia and the rationalistic, industrial, masculine dystopia. Except to maintain this pattern--also present in the Curdie books-- in Lilith MacDonald must first save the rebellious female from the delusion of rebellion itself in order to rescue the impressionable male, Mr. Vane, from the desire for empty ideals. Yet, the ending of Lilith does not allow for such ideological closure, for in the last chapter Vane continues to question and doubt, and one wonders if his fairy-tale adventure truly extended beyond those "mental peculiarities," which he first identified as impelling him towards metaphysical speculation (5).

Phantastes: Fairy-Tale Patterns and Folk Beliefs in MacDonald's Landscape of the Psyche

Phantastes (1858), like Lilith, involves a copious amount of metaphysical meditations, and its use of folklore largely serves the task of spiritual instruction through narrative. Unlike Lilith, which relies on Jewish legends, MacDonald's use of tradition in Phantastes relies more directly on the familiar aspects of international tale-types and British folk beliefs, in particular drawing on some little discussed aspects of native Scottish lore. As in Lilith, MacDonald imparts his psychological and spiritual allegory into the fairy-tale world. MacDonald not only maintains his concern--evident through all his fairy-tale fantasies--with the tensions between spiritual and material realities, but illustrates through fairy-tale motifs in Phantastes the profoundly personal and archetypal nature of confrontations between visionary ideals and conduct. More specifically, Anodos's struggles in Fairyland constitute the artist's task of harnessing ideals within a form that labor will advance. Among all of MacDonald's fantasies, it is Phantastes that most emphatically asserts the relationship between morality, aesthetics, and action.

Like Mr. Vane, Anodos begins his fairy-tale career by inheriting the estate of his father; he is twenty-one and has thus just passed the threshold of maturity. He discovers, while searching through the various hidden compartments of his deceased father's house, a woman, who alters her size, claiming to be his "grandmother." She asserts that he will enter Fairyland, since she overheard his wistful longing to make such a journey when he was reading to his sister (4). Sure enough, when he awakens

the next day and recalls the conversation gradually his room sprouts foliage, water courses through the dressing room, and Anodos is on his way to adventures. Much of the story is spent in pursuit of a beautiful woman while Anodos must, among other difficulties, avoid the despair of his shadow, the hostile force of the Ash Tree, and the temptations of the Alder Maiden. Anodos has the help of a knight--Sir Percival, various maternal figures, two brothers, and ultimately sacrifices his own desire for the ideal woman in order to destroy an insidious force masquerading as a worthy religion. After dying in this act of valiance, Anodos eventually awakens--leaving the knight to marry the woman--and yet later remains convinced that his experiences have not only helped him to live in the waking world, but that he shall soon enter a world of pure ideals.

Many of the characteristics of this fantastic otherworld that Anodos enters are clearly derivative from MacDonald's understanding of folk tales. This perhaps should be no surprise given the subtitle of the work: "A Fairy Romance for Men and Women." To begin with, the otherworldly domain that Anodos enters is in fact called Fairyland. Anodos enters this place apparently through the metaphysical manipulations of the spirit which calls herself his "grandmother." It is a strange beginning, which suggests psychological consolation through a vision of this maternal archetype. Anodos is emotionally isolated by both the recent death of his father and the fact that his "mother died when [. . .] [he] was a baby"--this very thought enters his mind as he looks into the eyes of his mysterious grandmother (5). Given this introduction to "Fairy-land," it is difficult not to interpret the events that follow in terms of pscho-allegory and as symbolic dreams. Regardless of such

interpretations, Anodos seems immersed in the domain of the marvelous; he adopts the role of the impersonal and depthless fairy-tale protagonist.

Before showing Anodos's career as a fairy-tale protagonist, the dynamics of the initial introduction of the fantastic in the narrative demand brief recognition. Reinforcing the view that this is all a dream is the fact that the transformation of the objects in Anodos's room correspond to dream-logic. The evolution from art objects into the natural objects they represent exemplifies the dynamic of literal evocation through associative thinking, which is the hallmark of dream-logic: "where this carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daisies, bordered the course of the little stream, the grassblades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze [. . .]. [. . .] I looked up, and saw that the branches and leaves designed upon the curtains of my bed were slightly in motion" (6-7). Thus these details of Gothic foliage, that Morris and Ruskin were so fond of, leap the representational gap between signifier and signified. This fantastic transformation where the lifeless becomes organic is emblematic of MacDonald's aesthetic theory, as Stephen Prickett's remarks indicate in Victorian Fantasy:

> in the story we are suddenly brought from 'art' to 'life'; in reality, since the story we are reading is itself a work of art, we are moving from 'life' to 'art'. The 'new reality' is being created by MacDonald as author in order to reveal what is latent, but not explicit in the old. (180)

Let us proceed with the features of this "'new reality'" whose nature MacDonald fashions from fairy tales.

The aspects of MacDonald's Fairyland that most closely resonate with traditional fairy tales are Anodos's performances of the expected roles and behaviors of fairy tale heroes. However, MacDonald is so self-conscious of Anodos as at once a Victorian persona for himself that the gap between Anodos's fantasy status as a convincing fairy tale protagonist and his literary state as a pawn for MacDonald is never convincingly closed. For instance, his first action upon discovering the "footpath"--"surely [. . .] the path into Fairy-land"--leading out of his fantastically transformed home is to follow it unquestioningly and then deviate from that path just as willingly: "I crossed the rivulet, and accompanied it [. . .] until it led me, as I expected, into the wood. Here I left it, without any good reason" (7). A folk tale hero would not bother to comment on such behavior. MacDonald is well aware of the commonplace motif of "straying from the path" in fairy tales, and here Anodos inexplicably--to him--does just that; but as readers we know that he must get "lost in the woods." The reference to the lack of "good reason" signifies the exertion of the generic requirements of the fairy tale over Anodos's free will--represented, of course, as the rational faculty. For, MacDonald wishes to underscore in Phantastes the opposition between his visionary Fairyland--the world of the spiritual imagination--and the negation of rationalism.

Indeed, soon after Anodos's arrival in Fairyland MacDonald cannot resist emphasizing what he perceives as the anti-rational essence of Fairyland, though in fact there is a "logic" to fairy tales: "it is no use trying to account for things in Fairyland; and one who travels there soon learns to forget the very idea of doing so, and takes everything as it comes; like a child, who being in a chronic condition of

wonder, is surprised at nothing" (24). Here Anodos--MacDonald speaks through him--is correct in suggesting the unflappable consciousness that is typical of a hero in Fairyland, but it is also part of the Romantic and Victorian sensibility that ascribes this lack of surprise to child-like wonder. The heroes of fairytales are surprised at nothing because the magical nature of those domains are a given, both for the characters and the listeners in an audience that is familiar with the traditional expectations. Thus, the reader is reminded that Anodos is not of Fairyland while he is adapting to his new role, though the fault for this temporary distancing is MacDonald's own self-consciousness. His spiritual didacticism intrudes and he simply must call attention to the freedom from rationality that he believes Fairyland affords him.

MacDonald expresses this polarization between the creativity of the imagination and the nihilism of reason through the paradigmatic splitting between Anodos and his shadow. The Shadow in Lilith is not the same as Anodos's shadow, but there are similarities. MacDonald's presentation of Anodos's shadow as a force that occludes the imagination with depreciating thoughts is a nearly equivalent model to the superimposition of the Shadow's evil onto Lilith. In both cases MacDonald makes evil an issue of negative perception; he abstracts both reductive rationalism and corruption as exterior impositions over one's ideal essence. Wolff's interpretations of Anodos's shadow are persuasive: "disillusionment and suspicion and intellectual questioning--spoils the poetic power of the imagination" (71). Yet, to follow Anodos's or Wolff's shadow is not the focus of this study. Rather, what should be emphasized here is that not only is the shadow a folk motif that writers of the

kunstmärchen had already experimented with--Andersen, Chamisso, Hoffmann--but that paradoxically it is this shadow that makes Anodos unfit to be a fairy-tale protagonist. In other words, his morbid self-consciousness chains him to the realm of thought while generally hindering the readiness for action that is the hallmark of the typical fairy tale hero.

The actions that Anodos does take are generally the wrong ones--which in itself is often "right" for a fairy tale hero. That is to say, Anodos invariably violates prohibitions--thereby fulfilling one of the initial Proppian functions--opening Bluebeard's closet whenever he has the chance, so to speak. In fact opening a forbidden closet releases his mocking shadow to begin with: 'The prohibition, however, only increased my desire to see" (62). The very term, "prohibition," reveals MacDonald's conscious employment of fairy tale motifs and further ironically distances the narrator from the role of fairy tale protagonist who uncritically acts. Anodos acts and is paradoxically aware of his impulsive irrationality.

Anodos breaks prohibitions consistently: such as when he meets one of several old maternal women--typical fairy-tale helpers--(in cottages naturally), he disobeys their advice: "All I remember is a cry of distress from the woman: "don't go there, my child! Don't go there!" But I was gone" (163). Similarly Anodos enters the house of the ogress, though warned against it, and is nearly killed due to the seduction of the Alder-Maiden, whom Sir Percival warns him of. For MacDonald, the fairy-tale prohibition, which is typically violated in folk tales, presents the essential model for the irrepressible human urge towards defiance as well as the almost inexplicable moment of human error, which to MacDonald is sheer mystery. In his book The

Portent, which focuses on the Scottish highland tradition of the second sight, his narrator--whose references to Novalis clearly betrays the closeness to MacDonald's own sensibilities--asserts that: "the hardest thing to understand, in intellectual as well as moral mistakes, is--how we came to go wrong" (26).

Including Sir Percival overtly introduces a literary quality into Fairyland, as well as emphasizing once again MacDonald's occupation with the interrelation of art and life. Anodos reads a story of Sir Percival and the Alder-Maiden before meeting him. There is no such story outside of Phantastes, but the encounter is likely derived from Spenser's Redcross Knight and the manipulations of Duessa (in Book 1 of The Faerie Queene), whose beauty, like the Alder-Maiden's, is an illusion and a tool for malice.[21] Evidence suggests that the flower-fairies are also derived from literary, not folkloric, precedents--particularly sources such as Shakespeare's Midsummer's Night's Dream and The Tempest. There are fairy flowers in nineteenth century British traditional tales, but not flower fairies. The figure of this knight is Anodos's ideal self--the hero that he is not: "I saw a dim shadow of myself in the shining steel" (157). It is the knight who fights the Ash tree--the collective shadow of evil--and saves Anodos's life. It is the knight who joins in union with the ideal woman whom Anodos catches glimpses of throughout his adventures. And, it is the knight whose

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[21] However, folklore also may have influenced MacDonald's description of the Alder-Maiden, for her hollow back, which reveals her evil nature, is a feature of Scandinavian elf-seductresses, who may be spotted as otherwordly by either their tails or their backs which "are hollow like a blasted tree." Alison Jones, Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore (New York: Larousse, 1996) 162. See the similarity between the Scandinavian elf or huldre-folk and MacDonald's Alder-Maiden: "it was a rough representation of the human frame, only hollow, as if made of decaying bark torn from a tree. [. . .] The thing turned round; it had for a face and front those of my enchantress, but now of a pale greenish hue in the light of the morning, and with dead lusterless eyes" (48).

evaluation of Anodos makes explicit the gap between the idealistic creator or reader of a märchen--who merely sojourns in Fairyland as a dreamer or thinker--and a fairy-tale protagonist. It is this knight who embodies those ideals which Anodos merely envisions: "There was something noble in him, but it was a nobleness of thought, and not of deed. He may yet perish of vile fear' (158).

Ultimately, the transformation of idealism into action is the fundamental question for the entire narrative of Phantastes. MacDonald may well have had Hamlet in mind as a model when he chose to present Anodos debating with himself. Having returned from Fairyland to the "world of men" Anodos expresses this very issue:

> Could I translate the experience of my travels there, into common life? This was *the question* [my italics]. Or must I live it all over again, and learn it all over again, in the other forms that belong to the world of men, whose experience yet runs parallel to that of Fairy-land? These questions I cannot yet answer." (210-211)

It is convenient that MacDonald provides such explanations of his aesthetic and moral theories of the fairy-tale. Yet, despite MacDonald's overt indications that he is concerned with the "deeper fairyland of the soul" (76), further analysis is needed to explicate the scenes and functions of other folkloric elements that allow Anodos to gain the hope of heroic self-actualization in "common life."

Examining how Anodos chooses heroic action, and what this means, also reveals the meaning of his statement that "I, who set out to find my Ideal, came back

rejoicing that I had lost my Shadow" (211). Anodos's "Ideal" manifests itself as the beautiful woman who appears throughout Phantastes--she is of course, like any Romantic ideal, at a distance, and it is only through art and sacrifice that Anodos comes closest to achieving any sort of union with her. When he discovers her on a pedestal--appearing as a statue--he starts to sing life into her form; MacDonald, virtual Romantic that he is, believes art gives life to the Ideal. However, Anodos grows impatient, violates the interdiction posted nearby of "Touch not!" (124), embraces her form and she manages to escape, rebuking him for the physical contact and not continuing to sing. Like Shelley, Anodos has to learn that his visionary ideal is not to be found in the flesh--this lesson is repeated several times: earlier, Anodos had confused the succubus-like Alder-Maiden with "my white lady" (45). Instead of ever uniting in marriage with the object of his affection, as would be the case in most traditional fairy tales, Anodos only wins her love through his own courageous death. One does not tend to expect much in a story from the main character after his death, but in Phantastes Anodos's consciousness survives to philosophize and proselytize: "All true love will [. . .] behold its own image in the eyes of the beloved [. . .] in the realms of lofty Death" (208). For MacDonald, all grievances are addressed in the shade of Death. And, since death is ultimately a good, the hero needs stop at nothing to work for his ideals.

Blending dream imagery with fairy-tale motifs, MacDonald constructs a psychological fairy-tale fantasy that represents his vision of aesthetics and morality being inextricably combined. Imagination and earnestness triumph over skeptical reason. Anodos develops from a wanderer to a helper and finally a sacrificial hero in

his quest to achieve unity with truth and love. Instead of building towards deeds of greater and more rewarding action, as is typical of the wonder tale hero, Anodos subordinates his own self-interest to communal priorities--his mistakes are all due to willfulness and his successes are presented as changes in consciousness rather than deeds of physical courage. While the folk tale hero often appears to learn little, Anodos learns through error: his internal debates and regrets make him more realistic as a character than the complacent protagonist of tradition. Yet Anodos's emblematic pursuit of ideals also depreciates him as a mere puppet, performing according to MacDonald's didactic pull of the strings. The masks of the fairy-tale do little to conceal MacDonald's true architecture: a psychological exemplum that portrays the heroic potential in choosing service to social idealism rather than the mere satisfaction of selfish desires by material challenges and rewards.

Phantastes: A Fairy Tale of the Gospel of Work?

It is when Anodos first accepts social responsibility that he becomes most closely aligned with the traditional folk hero role: his work then defines and validates him.

The word "work" is not used idly here. Carlyle's doctrine of Work influences MacDonald's conception of Anodos's revelation of heroism as work for the Ideal, not the glorification of the ego by beholding the Ideal:

> I learned that he that will be a hero will barely be a man; that he that will be nothing but a doer of his work is sure of his manhood. In

> nothing was my ideal lowered [. . .] I only saw it too plainly, to set myself for a moment beside it. Indeed, my ideal soon became my life; whereas, formerly, my life had consisted in a vain attempt to behold, if not my ideal in myself, at least myself in my ideal." (188)

Even more stridently than in the Curdie books, Anodos's words have the echo of Carlyle's didactic emphasis on achieving ideal spiritual fulfillment through industry in "The Everlasting Yea" (Sartor Resartus): "the hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement is even this: "When your Ideal World, wherein the whole man has been dimly struggling and inexpressibly languishing to work, becomes revealed [. . .]. [. .] . here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free" (148-149). For both MacDonald and Carlyle it is work that most approaches the living manifestation of the spiritual Ideal.

MacDonald implements Carlyle's Gospel of Work--"The latest Gospel in this world is Know thy work and do it" into the fairy-tale episodes of Phantastes that stage the major trials Anodos encounters.[22] For instance, when Anodos leaves the wise woman and her cottage, she tells him "Go, my son, and do something worth doing"--a clarion call to work (164). Anodos sets off and naturally, for here MacDonald's story most closely mirrors the plot of a traditional fairy tale, finds an adventure: "something worth doing." In fact, Anodos literally walks into a folk fairy tale of "The Three Brothers" (AT 654)--in which traditionally three brothers whose training in extraordinary skills brings them success. He meets two bothers who hail him as their

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[22] Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present. 1843. (New York: New York University Press, 1965) 196.

third brother--all of them, of course, are sons of a king oppressed by "three giant brothers" (167). He has arrived in medias res and the brothers acquaint him with the story so far regarding their efforts to prepare to fight these giants. A wise woman showed them a vision of Anodos himself weeping and she informed them that through his power their chances of victory would be enhanced: "if I mistake not, he will make you weep till your tears are dry forever. Tears are the only cure for weeping. And you may have need of the cure before you go forth to fight the giants" (170-171).

Thus, Anodos as cathartic creator of tears has the chance to fulfill his role as poet or artist--he sings to these brothers; he had failed in this role previously when he impatiently had embraced the "white lady." Notably, the inspiration for art itself relies upon work: "I have a feeling that if I work well, song will not be far off to enliven the labor" (171). Not surprisingly to reinforce the thematic concern, the very word "work" is repeated multiple times throughout this episode. And, Anodos does do manual labor such as forging armor, and indeed the songs follow with the cure of weeping: "The first three times I sang these songs they both wept passionately. But after the third time they wept no more. Their eyes shone, and their faces grew pale, but they never wept at any of my songs again" (173). Likely enough, with the shining of the eyes that do not weep, MacDonald indicates that the souls of these brothers have been fortified and are ready for deadly confrontations. The fairy-tale convention of tripling, used for the "three times" Anodos must sing his songs before his artistic magic has its effect, operates as a metaphysical standard here--emphasizing

dramatically the authority of the wise woman's prediction and that the stemming of tears is part of a larger reliable system.

MacDonald adheres the closest to a typical märchen here in this episode of the three brothers to crystallize the essence of his own gospel of work. The tightness of the genre is a rhetorical device--the fairy tale serves MacDonald as an emblem of the universality of his message. By showing the reader that his visions are compatible with the ancient traditional tales, MacDonald is better able to reinforce the sense that his own work is part of a larger project of storytelling wisdom.

In this embedded märchen Anodos most successfully merges with the expected role of the fairy tale protagonist, particularly of the medieval variety; he enables the three brothers to defeat the giants. In his preparations for the combat and his strategies during the conflict, Anodos displays some of the typical features of the fairy-tale hero's competence. He makes the most of his defects and skills; uses his wits in the combat; and, ultimately decapitates his opponent:

> I was inferior in strength to both my brothers, but a little more agile than either; and upon this agility, joined to precision in hitting with the point of my weapon, I grounded my hopes of success in the ensuing combat. [. . .] I saw that his body-armor was somewhat clumsily made [. .] I hoped [. . .] some joint would open a little in a [. . .] accessible part. [. . .] I clove his head. (174-176)

Yet, once Anodos discovers that he is the only survivor--his brothers and the other giants have perished--he returns to being the reflective anti-hero who deconstructs his own heroism while critically analyzing his relation to the brothers:

> I stood exhausted [. . .] after the first worthy deed of my life [. . .] there lay the Shadow [. . .]. [. . .] my heart sank, "it was only skill. Your giant was but a blunderer." [. . .] I had only aided in carrying out the thought born in their brain, and uttered in visible form before ever I laid hold thereupon. Yet I did count myself happy to have been chosen for their brother in this great deed. (177-178)

Notably, Anodos spies his shadow, and thereafter follows his depreciation of his victory. However, we see in Anodos's explanation the portrait of the artist "carrying out the thought." The deed was not his own thought, yet he has done the work of implementing in action what had been articulated in conception: this was work, something worth doing if not of his own creation.

Though rewarded with a "splendid suit of armor" and other chivalric accoutrements by the king--the father of the two brothers--Anodos sheds the role of the knight: it is not the work that is best suited to him. Despite his intermittent self-deprecatory meditations he becomes arrogant, for which, of course, he is punished immediately: "I rejoiced [. . .] having even the unspeakable presumption [. . .] to think of myself [. . .] as side by side with Sir Galahad! Scarcely had the thought been born in my mind, when [. . .] I espied a resplendent knight, of mighty size [. . .]. [. . .] armor like my own [. . .]" (181). Here, Anodos encounters an antagonistic knight--virtually his double--who compels him to enter a tower with his shadow, whose nature as Anodos's double is further emphasized by association with this hostile knight: "I had a terrible conviction that the knight and he were one" (183). Thus, Anodos must confront himself in the dark tower; the conception is not unlike the

absence of an external opponent in Robert Browning's "Childe Rowland to the Dark Tower Came." In both cases the Victorian male confronts his impulses and imagination as he attempts to integrate his self with the demands of a civilized and rational superego. Unfortunately, Anodos remains imprisoned until liberated by the song of a woman, whose magical globe he had destroyed carelessly when she was a child. But, we find now that the "light and the music of her broken globe were now in her heart and her brain" (186). This is the exact same dynamic emphasized by the lack of a physical object in Curdie's gift of perspicuity--the young woman needs no external object or outside imposition of art or authority; she has her own autonomous imagination linked in universal harmony with a greater good.

In other words, MacDonald reverses the externalization of inner qualities of typical märchen symbolism. Generally a gift received in a fairy tale indicates the acquirement of inner resources; here, the loss of that object is the catalyst for the acquirement of that quality signified by the object. Similarly, Anodos gives up his armor; yet in MacDonald's eyes he is now the closest to spiritual nobility that he yet has been: "I stripped off all my armor [. . .]. [. . .] I learned that it was not myself, but only my shadow, that I had lost. I learned that it is better [. . .] for a proud man to fall and be humbled, than to hold up his head in his pride and fancied innocence" (187).

With such avowed meekness, it is perhaps of little surprise that Anodos is on his way to be a martyr--a complete violation of the typical assertive heroism and formal optimism of the märchen; Anodos does not live happily ever after in Fairyland, but dies happily ever after. Anodos meets his ideal knight once again, the

"white lady" is his wife, and this knight presents his philosophy of fairyland in which we can see again the Gospel of Work, as well as the multiple antitheses that suggest the reason MacDonald chose Fairyland as his medium of representation:

> not withstanding the beauty of this country of Faerie, in which we are, there is much that is wrong in it. If there are great splendors, there are corresponding horrors; heights and depths; beautiful women and awful fiends; noble men and weaklings. All a man has to do, is to better what he can. And if he will settle it with himself that even renown and success are in themselves of no great value, and be content to be defeated, if so be that the fault is not his, and so go to his work with a cool brain and strong will, he will get it done; and fare none the worse in the end, that he was not burdened with provision and precaution. (194)

Anodos begins to argue with this doctrine though his contradictions mainly rest within himself--for he does not accept the career of his life as this Knight has done.

Nevertheless, Anodos literally puts this philosophy of unselfconscious industrious heroism to the test by dying while defeating a wolf-like monster: "My anxious hope was, that even after they had killed me, they would be unable to undo my grip of his throat before the monster was past breathing. I therefore threw all my will and force and purpose into the grasping hand" (204). In this particular conflict, it is hard not to imagine that MacDonald's ethical objections to certain aspects of religious bigotry are reflected in this scene. The beast is beneath the altar, before which an impressive religious ceremony is taking place, in which the knight can see

no evil: "Incapable of evil himself, he could scarcely suspect it in another, much less in a multitude such as this, and surrounded with such appearances of solemnity" (201). In other words, the ceremonial aspects of a religion, no matter the moral dubiousness of the doctrine, can easily distract and overpower the good person, according to MacDonald. Wolff's biographical interpretation is compelling:

> Though George MacDonald was not worthy to be a minister, he seems to be saying, at least he could show the worthy ones some of the wickedness of priestcraft, even if he should die in the attempt [. . .]. [. . .] The Galahads of this world are unfit for certain tasks that need doing [. . .] to expose the seamy side of religious observance. (106)

The only problem--or at least the most obvious one--with this interpretation is that so much of MacDonald's writing is not at all with the "seamy side of religious observance," but how to incorporate the imagination of the spiritual life into the material world of the present. That is, after all, the "question" that Anodos asks after his return from Fairyland.

Work becomes a unifying ideal in Phantastes, most closely joining MacDonald's allegory with the ethos of the märchen where tasks demonstrate the hero's competence; yet, MacDonald subverts the expectation of unambiguous victory by synthesizing an understated theme of Christian suffering, self-denial, and redemption with Anodos's many defeats. Anodos, to do his work, gives up hopes of romantic union, the implicit status of knighthood, and monetary rewards are nonexistent--it is only the work or art itself, whether singing, crafting armor, fighting, or self-renunciation, that MacDonald offers as a symbolic tool of iconoclastic force

against tyrannical forms and conventions. MacDonald even disturbs the integrity of his own art form by Anodos's questioning of his experiences in fairyland: he threatens to destroy the fantasy of adventure as a meaningful history. Or rather, like the smashing of the woman's magic ball, MacDonald translates the significance from a transcendent ideal to the psychological realm of internal experience, where it may lead to conscious new work, against the forces that promote sophistry or "priestcraft" as the truth itself. The ideal of work thus ironically sustains itself in Phantastes despite the ambiguity of the fairy-tale pattern that MacDonald uses to express spiritual labor and development.

Folk Tale Structure, Folk Beliefs, and the Fantastic in Phantastes

Structurally, while specific episodes of Phantastes are tightly crafted linear segments, the work as a whole, with its shifting symbolism and directions, arguably lacks harmony. According to Wolff this is the result of MacDonald following Novalis's prescription for a literary märchen, that it should be incoherent.[23] The "incoherence" of the work is further amplified by the generic ambiguities within its borders. Like Hoffmann's "The Golden Pot," the work alternates between the narrative and metaphysical borders of a legend and märchen. Anodos, like Anselmus frequently doubts the reality of Fairyland--a significant narrative complication for a

[23] Some of Novalis's comments regarding the incoherence of the literary fairy tale were misrepresented due to "his friends and editors Tieck and Schlegel" who "had printed the opposite" ("zusammenghängend"--coherent, instead of "unzusammenghängend"--incoherent)--Wolff explains this misunderstanding (43). He notes that MacDonald "had not noticed or been troubled by this inconsistency" and followed Novalis's precept (44).

character in a literary fairy tale to do, despite Mrs. Cathcart's incredulous inquiry as to whether the "reality of a fairy-tale" could even be a subject of discourse.

It is in fact in these moments of hesitation that Anodos crosses the generic boundary between märchen and legend--and, the very shift in metaphysics and perception is expressed geographically. The folk legend narrative itself tends to accrue on the borders (we will analyze this idea more closely in the next chapter). Before entering and just after emerging from the archetypal forest of psychological and metaphysical chaos, where Anodos encounters the evil Ash tree and Alder-Maiden among others, Anodos meets with people who literally live on the borders of Fairyland. It is in this interface between Fairyland--the domain of the marvellous--and the mundane--the realm of everyday life--that Anodos questions the reality of his otherworldly experiences.

In fact, Anodos's perspective in Fairyland depends upon the influence of others--it is not until his encounter with the wolf-like creature that he has the conviction of the righteousness of his own authority. Having recently strayed from the path in the forest, Anodos encounters a young woman and her mother. The young woman acquaints him with vegetation-lore and warns him against the evil Ash and Alder trees; her mother insists that Anodos has traces of "fairy blood" in him and may have the enhancement of vision that is associated with such heritage (9-11). The idea that Anodos is not altogether a foreigner to Fairyland reinforces the association that MacDonald, and many writers before him--including the Romantics--like to emphasize between artists and the world of Faery:

> "I should be ill if I did not live on the borders of the fairies' country, and now and then eat of their food. And I see by your eyes that you are not quite free of the same need; though, from your education and the activity of your mind, you have felt it less than I." (11)

The mother's words also have a platonic value: she implies that Anodos has not become "ill" by his earlier distance from Fairyland because through intellectual pursuits he has had compensation or indirect representations of the essence that one experiences in Fairyland. Traditionally, to eat of fairy food is to be forever unsatisfied with the everyday world (think of the "goblin fruit" in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" for instance. C211.1 *Tabu: Eating in Fairyland*). In folk tales the fairies constantly seek to entrap mortals by eating and drinking in the otherworld. However, here MacDonald alters this folk belief by suggesting there is a restorative value in fairy food for those people who are marked by the fay heritage.

Since "education" is comparable to fairy food, it is clear that MacDonald is referring to a mental, and even spiritual--or at least imaginative--nourishment. In fact, when Anodos does eat the food of Fairyland he finds that "it not only satisfied my hunger, but operated in such a way upon my senses, that I was brought into far [sic] more complete relationship with the things around me" (35). Thus, for Anodos the distance of subjectivity is diminished by intercourse with essential objectivity. This interpretation is far from imposing an allegory of imaginative and spiritual engagement on MacDonald. He prepares the reader for such an interpretation from the first chapter, when the mysterious female figure first asserts to Anodos in his

father's house that he will enter Fairyland: "Your little sister was reading a fairy tale to you last night [. . .]. [. . .] she [sister] said [. . .] 'Is there a fairy country, brother?' You replied with a sigh, 'I suppose there is, if one could find the way into it'" (5). Anodos's rejoinder must be considered in conjunction with his final synopsis of Fairyland, that he "set out to find" his "Ideal" (211). His sister's reading serves as the medium for imagining an alternative world--a transcendent ideal--and it is of this that Anodos was likely thinking: "I meant something quite different from what you seem to think" (5).

It is the written medium, rather than the oral, that MacDonald emphasizes in his portrait of folklore--for it is book tales that his audience would be familiar with: and so these are the stepping stones to greater ideals. Notably, Anodos's first act, after discourse with the woman, is to read a book--here he reads of Sir Percivale and his temptation by the "damosel of the alder-tree" (14). Not only is this act of reading interrupted by the fantastic appearance of the grisly hand of the Ash tree, but Anodos himself succumbs to the temptation of the alder-tree maiden, who leaves him to be destroyed by the Ash. For MacDonald, fiction is capable of significant transformation and the metaphysical shift--the introduction of the marvellous into the borderland of the fay woman--underscores this dynamic. MacDonald makes this equation between transcendence and literature even more overt in Lilith, where Adam--in his guise as the librarian--insists that a "book [. . .] is a door in, and therefore a door out" (40). Similarly, Vane beholds a glorious butterfly which "the instant" he "took it" it became "a dead book" (47). Thus, MacDonald believes there is great generative power in the "dead book"--if the doctrine is not too rigid. He

espouses the fairy tale genre especially for its metamorphic nature--where ideas and emotions articulate into literal form; and, in the case of recorded or written tales, literary form as well.

Regarding the fairy-tale commonplace of transformation, Anodos's encounter with the trees will appear to the folklorically uninformed reader as idle fancy--as though MacDonald were merely animating wood to show his arbitrary power as a creator. Or, one runs the risk, like Wolff, of insisting on highly specific allusions, as well as vague generalizations: " The fantasy of tree-beings is widespread in literature, from Ovid to Joyce Kilmer" (55). While suggestions that MacDonald's talking flowers were "embroidering on the merest hint given by Novalis in the dream of Heinrich von Ofterdingen," and the "*Märchen* of Hyacinth and Rosebud in Novalis' *Lehrlinge zu Saïs*" may be plausible, Wolff offers no genesis for the primary adversary, the Ash itself (53). There is good reason for this--there are folkloric precedents that Wolff is unaware of. Thus, while noting that "Ash personifies greed and cruelty" may have a certain allegorical truth, it does little to explain the significant extent to which MacDonald is borrowing from very specific British traditions (54).

Ash trees are specifically mentioned in British folk tales as demonic, although such traditions have not been extensively surveyed in international research, as Katharine Briggs reports in *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales*, "Traditions of malignant and benevolent trees are widespread in England, but are hardly treated in the Motif-Index" (197).[24] One of the tales included in that collection, "Crooker," tells

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[24] Motifs include F.402.6.1 *Demon Lives in Tree*

of an evil ash-tree that displays multiple features in common with the ash tree in Phantastes. A traveler is pursued near a river crossing--a notable feature in itself as an interface between the security of civilization (a bridge) and the deadly potential of the natural world (a river)--by the ash tree, dubbed "Crooker" : "he saw the chasing shadow of long crooked hands like branches" (196). Compare MacDonald's description of the first sign of the ash tree: "a shadow, as of a large, distorted hand, with thick knobs and humps on the fingers [. . .] passed slowly over the little blind" (14). The similarity in the moral association of evil with the ash tree as well as the description of the shadow identifying the presence of the entity is too close for mere coincidence in imagination: MacDonald is purposely using an archetype which has particular cultural resonance--folkloric and mainstream. Some rural people know the ash tree as a traditionally evil figure, while even the most enlightened urban-dweller can appreciate the unsettling appearance of shadowy branches passing shadows on the walls on a dark and stormy night. The ash tree has positive associations as well in British folklore--from healing to protection from snakes--but this particular incarnation of the ash tree's malevolence resonates with MacDonald's literary representation of the ash most deeply.[25]

Another tale in Briggs' Dictionary, "The Watchers By the Well"--a Welsh border tale told by a gypsy-- includes the potentially malicious behavior of an ash

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[25] In Iona Opie and Moira Tatem's A Dictionary of Superstitions lists multiple examples of taboos from AD 77 to the nineteenth century--particularly in Britain--involving the ash tree, including divination, protection against witchcraft, and the great risk in breaking "a bough from the ash" (5-8).

tree.[26] In this account, a young wife is ignorant of the intricate set of magical defenses and negotiations that her husband maintains on his property: "she'd altered the Wishing Well, and couldn't' do much about that, but she still thought her looks might save her, if her husband saw her curls decked in the seven red ribbons hanging on the ash-tree above the Wishing Well" (558). Of course this is a mistake--the naive wife upsets the delicate balance that restrains the aggressive powers of the tree spirit, among other faux pas--such as wounding the protective dog.[27] In this next passage the storyteller uses the same rhetorical signal I just did, "of course," to underscore the woman's ignorance of folk defenses (the open window in particular): "it drew on to dusk [. . .]. [. . .] thin jeering laughter outside broke out suddenly , and there were no dogs--ugly or not--to bark and drive them away. And then there came a rapping and a scraping like great hands along the shutters, and she yelled, and ran upstairs, and of course the window was open, and a great twiggy hand came groping for her"--this is the ash tree, of course (558). The dog, among other helps in this story, deals with the ash tree through violence--as does the Knight in Phantastes ("I [. . .] hewed [. . .] at the tree, till [. . .] it fell to the earth" (158). Thus, despite the supernatural associations of the tree, the solution depends upon the literal quality of the

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[26] Faben relies heavily on Briggs's Dictionary and yet apparently did not read this compendium of folk tales thoroughly. Otherwise, Faben would have cited at least one of the folktales on the ash that I have mentioned; instead of providing an actual folk narrative containing folk beliefs concerning the ash, she turns to the neo-pagan phenomenological speculation of Robert Graves' The White Goddess: "The cruelty of the ash [. . .] lies in the harmfulness of its shade to grass or corn [. . .] (22).

[27] Briggs mentions in A Dictionary of British Folktales that "a spayed bitch was a protection against ghosts and spirits'--according to Ruth Tongue, the collector that particular tale, as well as other authorities (560).

"supernatural" force as a tree, not a spirit abstracted from physical substance. There is good reason for this--a physical object serves as evidence. One may tell many tales with an artifact, such as "a great branch below the window all gnawed with dog's teeth."[28]

The legend, as a historicized narrative, demands physical evidence--and supernatural beings typically must be reduced to some physical remnant in order to persuade, metonymically evoking the amplified body of a tale through the barest bones. Suffice to say, the inclusion of folk beliefs in Phantastes indicates MacDonald's engagement with folk metaphysics, not only deriving his spiritual dynamics from German Romanticism. MacDonald is mapping out the dimensions and attributes of the marvelous not simply through literary precedents, such as Novalis, but the folklore of, so to speak, his own backyard in Britain. Introducing native folk beliefs, such as the dangerous ash tree, expands the aura of the fantastic in Phantastes, appealing to the circulation of oral tales, as well as the familiar book tale associations of those readers of MacDonald's literary fairy tales. A particular sort of hesitation resulting from the familiarity with folklore about the ash tree might make a reader pause, asking, "Ah, is this the same sort of ash tree that I've heard so much about?" Should the reader be more familiar with the benign attributes of the ash tree, then the hesitation might be all the greater and the story more disturbing. Regardless, the possible reactions of readers are expanded by MacDonald's treatment of the folk beliefs concerning the ash tree. This multiplication of potential meanings resonates with his stated theory of the validity of interpretations by readers unanticipated by the

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[28] Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Folk Narratives 559.

author in "The Fantastic Imagination": "he cannot help his words and figures falling into such combinations in the mind of another as he had himself not foreseen, so many are the thoughts allied to every other thought, so many are the relations involved in every figure, so many the facts hinted in every symbol" (9).

Notably, MacDonald emphasizes the dynamic of such interactive experience--just as a reader's preconceptions exert an interpretative force on a book, so in Phantastes one's beliefs alter perception of life itself. Or rather, MacDonald demonstrates the contagious nature of subjectivity--making belief dependent on partial consensus. When Anodos first has his major moment of hesitation as to the reality of Fairyland, it is by witnessing a child reading a fairy tale that his belief is revived. Anodos has emerged from his encounters in the forest with the Ash Tree and Alder-maiden and discovered a cottage where a family dwells, the mother and daughter believe in Fairyland, while the father openly mocks the idea:

> [his] very voice [. . .] seemed to disrobe the room of the strange look which all new places wear,--[sic]to disenchant it out of the realm of the ideal into the actual [. . .]. [. . .] I could hardly believe that there was a Fairyland; and that all I had passed through, since I left home, had not been the wandering dream of a diseased imagination [. . .]. But the next moment my eye fell upon a little girl who was sitting in the chimney corner, with a little book open on her knee, from which she had apparently just looked up, to fix great, inquiring eyes upon me. I believed in Fairy-land again [. . .]. [. . .] saw that she was reading "The History of Graciosa and Percinet.

> "Very improving book, sir," remarked the old farmer [. . .] "We are in the very hottest corner of Fairy-land here. Ha! ha!" (53-54)

Paradoxically it is the fictional story that asserts the reality of Fairyland for Anodos; however, when placing this scene in context with MacDonald's theme of transformative literature it is understandable. There is a related dynamic in ***Lilith*** which Stephen Prickett describes in "The Two Worlds of George MacDonald." Vane, the protagonist, discovers a manuscript--in the library he has inherited--written by his father detailing his own experiences beyond the magical mirror. Vane's reading of this manuscript helps to generate a consensus reality out of what would otherwise seem wholly anomalous--his own isolated experience of the fantastic:

> What the manuscript demonstrates to him is that this experience is neither as new, nor as unique, as he had at first supposed. [. . .] Similarly, if we were typical Victorian novel readers, we would ourselves have borrowed the book from a library, so we are placed in an analogous position--poised between our own lives and the world of fiction in the book before us.[29]

But literature or art as the threshold between empirical and imaginative experience is not the only implication here. What also helps make Anodos believe is the very attitude of the child, with those "great, inquiring eyes" which sentimentally represent the child-like, the earnest soul, for MacDonald: the very aspect that MacDonald is writing to in his adult audience. For MacDonald, the childlike is that

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[29] Prickett, "The Two World of George MacDonald" 18.

quality which perceives without concern for an authoritative ideology--hermeneutic individualism at its purest:

> It may be better that you should read your meaning into it. That may be a higher operation of your intellect than the mere reading of mine out of it: your meaning may be superior to mine [. . .]. [. . .] children are not likely to trouble you about the meaning. They find what they are capable of finding [. . .]. I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five.[30]

Anodos is released from the yoke of the mundane realist--the kindly farmer--by the childlike and feminine aspects of his self, embodied in the mother and daughter. The son is even worse, when he laughs at his father's comment about his mother, who believe herself descended from the titular character of the fairy tale, "The White Cat," his laugh "was polluted with a sneer" (55).

Rationalism is arrogant in MacDonald's view, the matron merely smiles with "the look with which one listens to the sententious remarks of a pompous child" (55). Anodos's hesitation returns the next morning when he beholds the objective starkness of the view outside his window "radiant with clear sunlight [. . .] cows [. . .] were eating [. . .] maids were singing at their work as they passed to and fro between the out-houses: I did not believe in Fairy-land" (57). But the light of inflexible reason again is tempered by the child-like; the girl informs Anodos that a "white lady [not Anodos's ideal] has been flitting about the house all night" and he tells the mother of his dialectic of belief: "When I looked out of the window this morning [. . .] I felt

almost certain that Fairyland was all a delusion of my brain, but whenever I come near you or your little daughter I feel differently" (57). Reminiscent of Dorothy Wordsworth's bolstering of her brother's natural piety through her own devotion, the child and her mother help to strengthen Anodos's conviction in his impressions of the marvelous.

Thus, the introduction of a folk belief, a ghost--this "white lady" flitting about-- serves to exemplify the possibility of perceiving the marvellous within everyday life--which, one must be reminded, is avowedly *the question* of Phantastes. Although, Wolff insists that At the Back of the North Wind is "unique among" Macdonald's stories due to "its combination of realism and fantasy," we can clearly see now that this is an oversimplification. Attributes of realistic narrative compete with the aesthetics of fantasy in MacDonald's fantasies because of his use of legend--a genre that depends on negotiating with realism (160).

MacDonald offers the fairy-tale pattern, beliefs, and motifs in Phantastes as a vision of transformation that first promises to unite the world of spiritual imagination with reality, yet Anodos's ultimate annihilation from so-called fairyland belies any such ideal synthesis. Rather than offering the stable coherence of the marvellous that characterizes the fairy-tale realm, MacDonald disturbs traditional expectations by intrusions of skepticism: Anodos doubts both his surroundings and himself. The very characters and events he meets with, from the mundane to the marvellous, contribute towards the ambiguity of his experiences in fairyland, and MacDonald makes Anodos at once an alien to the life he has known and the adventures he comes to experience.

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[30] George MacDonald, The Complete Fairy Tales, ed. U. C. Knoepflmacher (New

Populating fairyland are creatures from legend that further disorient Anodos, as well as the reader, by their inconsistent adherence to tradition, for MacDonald reshapes beliefs and motifs into new forms that resonate more with his moral didacticism and aesthetics rather than folklore. Such is MacDonald's use of folkloric and literary tradition: to dissolve conventional associations in order to refashion new perspectives based upon a fantastic visionary synthesis of ethics, spirituality, and imagination.

Through the fantastic MacDonald and Barrie's fantasies include perspectives that integrate the consciousness of realism; their works do not offer manifest escapism. Instead, each text presents the disintegration of imaginative and spiritual values in the materialist world of utilitarianism and industry. The very kingdom crumbles away due to economic avarice in the Curdie books. The Victorian family fragments into selfish children and unimaginative adults in Peter Pan. The poor house, mental delusions, and the shadow of death lurk behind the ethereal robes of North Wind and the hyperborean fairyland in At The Back of the North Wind. The city of Bulika--with its imperialist agenda--appears much more realistic than Vane's hopes in Lilith for the imminent apocalypse: "Now and then, when I look around on my books, they seem to waver as if a wind rippled their solid mass, and another world were about to break through. Sometimes when I am abroad, a like thing takes place [. . .]. [. . .] I wait; asleep or awake, I wait" (251-252). Anodos in Phantastes similarly awaits "good" which "is always coming, though few have at all times the simplicity and the courage to believe it" (212). In other words, in each fantasy it is not utopia,

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York: Penguin Books, 1999) 7.

but dystopia that is realized within the confines of the text, and the dream of good lies glinting beyond the textual horizons.

Ultimately then, Barrie and MacDonald's use of the märchen--like Vane's books--does not allow them for more than a moment to overcome the profound doubts of their contemporary world in the nineteenth century. The fantastic folkloric events and characters produce hesitation that at once reveal the instability of conventional social, metaphysical, and psychological assumptions, while containing such eruptions of unreal visions by counterpoints of skepticism and pessimism. These authors present glimmers of possibility as they retrospectively gaze back at the world of fairy tales and "happily ever after" and then gaze ahead with uncertainty--if perhaps hope--into the future.

The question remains for us to consider--what are some of the ways in which nineteenth century British writers of the fantastic who use supernatural folklore represent "the marvelous within everyday life"? In folklore this is the narrative province of the legend and the metaphysical and cultural dominion of folk beliefs. We cross now over from Fairyland proper, where literary fairy tales, fantasies, and märchen dwell, to the borderland of the skeptical farmer and other morbidly self-conscious narrators such as Anodos--who are never ultimately convinced by the reality of fantasy.

Chapter Six

Specters Among the Real: Folk Metaphysics and Narrative Authority

Upon cursory reflection, realism and naturalism may seem to have very little to do with supernatural folklore. Yet, the truth of the matter is that empirical details and a preoccupation with the living conditions of the underclass are fundamental to the historical structure and style of folk legends: "Legend, typically, is a traditional, (mono)episodic, highly ecotypified, localized and historicized narrative of past events told as believable in a conversational mode."[1] The realistic details of legend narratives help to make folk beliefs credible, and the very presence of folk beliefs in a legend reinforces the metaphysical authority of the legend for a traditional audience.[2] Furthermore, the ideological--almost metaphysically inexorable--dynamics of social determinism in naturalism are analogous to the inevitable forces of folk beliefs in legends that influence individual and communal welfare.[3] The texts under analysis here have been selected according to whether they invoke supernatural folklore

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[1] Timothy Tangherlini, Interpreting Legend--Danish Storytellers and Their Repertoires (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994) 22.

[2] "In tradition, legend derives part of its believability from the folk beliefs it reflects, while folk beliefs are supported by legend narratives." Tangherlini 16.

[3] "Emile Zola, the high priest of the naturalistic movement in literature [. . .]. [. . .] [believed that] men's lives and actions were determined by environment and heredity [. . .]." J. A. Cuddon, The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (New York: Penguin Books, 1992) 575.

directly within a realistic discourse or represent the marvelous through embedded legend narratives.

In passing, it should be noted that the nineteenth century is full of works, including many canonical ones, which fall into an additional category: evoking the essence of folk beliefs through metaphorical allusion or the uncanny. Although there must be limits to this study, a few words are necessary, beyond what was mentioned in chapter one, to demonstrate the presence of folklore at the center of the Victorian canon. There already are books such as Harry Stone's Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Novel-Making that analyze Dickens's use of fairy–tale narrative patterns. Stone also acknowledges some metaphors of folk belief--though he does not identify the folkloric influence per se--such as Bill Sikes's psychological haunting by his crime against Nancy.[4] A few dissertations explore the use of folklore in Thomas Hardy's stories and at least one essay examines folkloric resonance in Hardy's ballads.[5] What still remains to do is to specify the relation between the use of folklore and the fantastic in nineteenth century literature, as well as to point out the presence of folklore in works generally regarded as models of realism. For example, in Middlemarch, even though Eliot offers nothing overtly

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[4] Katharine Briggs turned her attention towards Dickens as well. Katharine M. Briggs, "The Folklore of Charles Dickens" Journal of the Folklore Institute VII.1 (June 1970): 3-20.

[5] Pharr, Ellen Monica Pharr, The Use of Folklore and Mythology in Six of Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels Diss. (University of Oregon, 1976). Lombardi, Betty Ritch. Folklore in Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels. Diss. University of Indiana, 1975. Carolyn Fitts Lumsden, The Function of Regional Folklore and Tradition in Three of Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels. Thesis (M.A). (West Georgia College, 1976). Charles Greg Kelley, "'A Phantom through the Pane': Thomas Hardy's Use of Ballads" North Carolina Folklore Journal 37.2 (Summer-Fall 1990) 97-109.

fantastic or folkloric, she implicitly uses the folk belief of the revenant as a fatalistic agent in her rendering of Mr. Raffles, whom Bulstrode thought as good as dead, yet returns to spread rumors of Bulstrode's dishonesty. It is ironic that Mr. Bulstrode should be dogged by this virtual corpse, who is dying when they meet again--and finally does die, though not before exposing Mr. Bulstrode--for Mr. Bulstrode's greatest crime was to treat his wife's daughter as though she were dead. Bulstrode selfishly concealed that the woman was later found to be alive in order that he might keep the inheritance all to himself. Raffles metaphorically, as a revenant, champions the socio-economic claims of the dead. The connection between spirits of the dead and problems with inheritance persists even today as a commonly held association.[6]

Raffles's metaphysical association with a revenant also is an example of the marvellous coincidence widely used by nineteenth-century writers as a sign of the spiritual world lurking or shining in the background of the physical realm. Raffles tracks down Bulstrode due to what he calls a "providential thing": while unsuccessfully petitioning his son-in-law for money, Raffles picks up a fallen letter, which he uses to steady his flask, and later discovers Nicholas Bulstrode's signature on the letter.[7] Thus, Raffles comes to think of a means to make money: blackmailing Bulstrode. The appearance of a character or artifact at the moment he, she, or it is

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[6] For accounts of family legends concerning the dead and inheritance see Jason Harris, "Shadows of Tradition--The Role of Belief and the Mechanics of Legend in Tales of the Spirit World" Northwest Folklore 14.2 (Summer 2000) 40.

[7] George Eliot, Middlemarch (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977) 362.

thought of--or needed--demonstrates the idea of universal interconnectedness that Lüthi identifies in his anatomy of the rules of the märchen. This metaphysical coherence of episodic events also is a feature of folk legends; for example, a spiritual being often manifests itself in response to a violated taboo or a wish. No curse or spoken desire is idle: destruction and temptations follow invocations and imprecations.

Among the Victorians, Thomas Hardy, Benjamin Disraeli, Bram Stoker, and Charles Dickens all employ the strategy of the marvellous coincidence, which has obvious dramatic benefits.[8] Bram Stoker's allusion to Disraeli's use of fantastic timing in Sybil--quoted preceding a number of incredible events in Dracula--highlights how literary renderings of unlikely circumstances are in fact mimetic, blurring the lines between fantasy and realism: "'The unexpected always happens.'"[9] Unpredictable complications and troublesome timing always occurs to advance the plot. In Macbeth Lady Macbeth enters immediately to goad Macbeth to murder Duncan when he realizes during his private debate that he has "no spur / to prick the sides of [. . .] [his] intent" (1.7.25-26). The metaphysics of drama and the folktale both provide an underlying system of significance to randomness (motives will find the opportunity for deeds), as well as producing the narrative tension that audiences and readers expect from a rousing story. Suffice to say, the underlying metaphysics

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[8] The miraculous coincidences are also examples of what Bakhtin refers to as adventure-time, as is discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation.

[9] Bram Stoker, Dracula (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 107.

of legends continue to flow through central Victorian literary culture, even when their presence is distanced by metaphor or silenced by rationalizations of everyday chaos.

This study concerns works of the literary fantastic whose elements of folk belief are in conflict with predominantly enlightened attitudes in the age of industry and science--the text becomes a battleground of metaphysical tensions where rational editors and narrators clash with superstitious, yet assertive and articulate, characters. From the competition of folkloric and literary elements in Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873) and James Hogg (1770-1835), to the competition of European and Polynesian beliefs in Robert Louis Stevenson's (1850-1894) South Seas fiction, the fantastic represents a dilemma of genres. Such texts present an interface between the discourse of the real and the marvelous or uncanny that arrests readers--planting them on a ledge of expectation. A reader is unsure on which side of the wall to fall--which "reality" will ultimately be the grounding and secure one to choose, and whether after the fragmentation of expected norms, there will be a reconstitution. Will the pieces of the initial consensus reality be put back together as the kings' men sought to do with Humpty Dumpty?

Often, this crisis of the literary fantastic involves choosing an interpretative perspective that is defined by sympathies of class, nationality, and religion. Or rather, the narrative will offer multiple perspectives on the fantastic and a reader will therein witness a range of different cultural affinities. Inserting supernatural folkloric material usually both constitutes the introduction of the fantastic in these narratives as well as representing a cultural clash or "contact zone" between diverse communities.

While I devised the conceptual basis for this model before reading Mary Louise Pratt, I adopted her expression "contact zone" because my framework resonates with her use of the term "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery [. . .]."[10] The primary arena of cultural--and psychological--tension that is evident in the literary rendering of supernatural folk beliefs and legends is a metaphysical one; folk metaphysics compete with conventional rationalism along boundaries of difference such as class, geography, imperialism, nationality, and race.

It should come as little surprise that imperialism plays a role in the literary appropriation and imitation of legends and folk beliefs. For example, "The Beach of Falesá" by Robert Louis Stevenson dramatizes how an imperialist uses native folklore to subjugate and exploit an island's resources. Exploitation is just one aspect of imperialism that appears in these contact zones with folklore. Xenophobia--the fear of the alien-- as well as exoticism--the idealization of and fascination with the foreign-- influence literary representations of traditional motifs. For example, in Le Fanu's "The Child who was Taken by the Fairies" we find one of the fairies is described in terms that evoke the costume of Africa and India, as well as linking the ominous qualities of this magical being with the darker skin and exotic costume.

My idea of a metaphysical contact zone combines Pratt's concept of cultural contention with the observation of folklorists that supernatural intrusions in folk

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[10] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," Profession 91. (New York: Modern Language Association): 33.

legends circulate around the interface between the borders of civilization and the wilderness.[11] Robert Paine in "Night Village and the Coming of Men of the Word: *The Supernatural as a Source of Meaning among Coastal* Saami" provides an excellent analytic example of the dynamics of this legendary interface:

> My presentiment is that, for the villagers, the Little People and the raw'ga [revenants from the sea]--located on the boundaries of tundra (with pastoral Saami) and sea (with Norwegians)--are lightning rods for the traumas and conflicts (with their brew of fear, stigma, ambiguity, and ambivalence) that villagers experience in their betwixt-and-between world. Put another way, these phenomena are (whatever else they may be for them) psychic representations of selected aspects of their relations with those Others at the borders of their village. In terms of my own pair of metaphors, the problems of the Day Village are put on stage in the Night Village.[12]

In the course of this study the metaphysical contact zone will evolve into a flexible model admitting fluctuations, rather than a wholly rigid one based on absolute polarities. For, as we have seen in chapter one, there is not a clean separation

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[11] Timothy Tangherlini in Interpreting Legend offers evidence for "the interface between" the "man-made" and the "natural" in his exploration of legends and memorats where "human control" is represented by the man-made features, and implicitly, though Tangherlini does not fully articulate this view, the natural connotes a coded threat to civilization. Timothy R. Tangherlini, Interpreting Legend—Danish Storytellers and Their Repertoires (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1994) 131-132.

[12] Robert Paine, "Night Village and the Coming of Men of the Word: *The Supernatural as a Source of Meaning among Coastal Saami*" Journal of American Folklore 107 (1994): 360.

between the beliefs of the "folk" and the socially elite. Rather, there is an inward shift within late Victorian culture--evident in the rising interest in Spiritualism and preserving folklore--which constitutes a departure from distinct Enlightenment values and attempts an assimilation or partial infusion of "folk culture" into "high culture" rather than a simple dismissal or dissipation of antiquated traditions.

However, narratives that are both folkloric and fantastic do not always overtly present this trend towards cultural integration. In an established plane of British, nineteenth century, elite, cultural normalcy--constituted by standard English, middle and upper class values, and rationalism--preternatural folkloric elements in a text test the solidity of this bourgeois pattern. Folk beliefs and legends abrade against the expectations of realism, thereby producing the literary fantastic, and comprise cultural and psychological eruptions of material that diverge from convention: normative taboos are strained, tested, and broken. Due to this specific cultural and narrative friction, I call this particular form of the literary fantastic the *folkloric fantastic*. With the profoundly divided Victorian mind that characterizes the majority of the authors of the works in this study the conflict staged on the metaphysical contact zone is also an interior one. Thus, particularly with the narrators of these works, these texts of the folkloric fantastic display profound self-consciousness, religious doubt, and uneasy skepticism attending the appropriations of folklore in the age of industry.

In the final analysis, however, despite the assumed ideological oppositions between folk and elite culture some of these narratives of the folkloric fantastic reveal an intercultural connection where realistic psychological and social dynamics are manifested through the articulation of supernatural folklore. In other words, these

texts align themselves along an aesthetic continuum of epistemological ambiguity. Superstition and reason appear to be irreconcilable opposites in Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner and Scott's The Black Dwarf. But, in Le Fanu's short stories he uses underclass superstitions to embody popular social anxieties (chapter seven). Ultimately, the final analysis reveals that supernatural folklore can be used as a visionary mirror for reality that sharpens rather than distorts images of ethnic, imperial, and national conflicts--as is the case in Stevenson's South Sea tales, his Master of Ballantrae, and Hogg's The Three Perils of Man (chapters eight-ten).

Multiple Voices: Folklore and Literature

The articulation of the metaphysical contact zone between folklore and literature is often presented in nineteenth century texts through the clash of multiple voices. The narrator may adopt a condescending tone towards the beliefs of the "folk," only to have that complacency challenged by the fantastic events that ensue. Or alternately, the narrator may present informants who speak with their own native accents and beliefs, presenting embedded folk narratives, which the frame-narrative attempts to contain or incorporate into a rational system--sometimes such an assimilation is impossible.

The shifting position of the author further complicates the ambiguity of these competing voices. James Hogg and Sheridan Le Fanu epitomize the fluidity with which an author may adopt various personae to produce narratives that destabilize normative expectations. Each at times plays the role of a skeptical editor or narrator

either doggedly dismissing the folkloric fantastic or being convinced against his will of the validity of folk beliefs. Le Fanu and Hogg's incarnations as narrative and metaphysical arbiters are complicated by their actual positions as editors and public figures. Their own sympathies and perspectives threaten to become irretrievably confused or diffused in the web of conflicting narratives and voices that their folkloric fiction weaves. Besides the strife of the conflicting accounts of reality offered by informants, these authors tend to appear to use a normative narrator--usually a somewhat-to-highly educated figure--who may be only subtly distinguishable from the narrator of another of their stories. Rather than necessarily untangling this web, this analysis of multiple voices will be centered on the effects achieved through this network of perspectives--how the folkloric fantastic resonates and echoes, altering, gaining, or negating meaning through this literary ventriloquism.

James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner[13] (1824) serves as an instructive example how simultaneously different narrative voices and worldviews compete and sometimes tend towards polarizing the extravagant speech and metaphysics of folklore against the controlled writing and rationality of literature. The presentation of the "Editor's Narrative," the "Confessions" themselves, and the "authentic letter" of James Hogg himself, who appears as a character distinct from the "Editor," to some degree offers corroborative evidence for the supernatural visitation of a diabolic figure, Gil Martin, in conjunction with a religious fanatic, Robert Colwan. At the same time, the parallel stories contain

[13] All references are from: James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (New York:Penguin Books, 1983).

enough disparities to largely confound the idea of a unified narrative core out of which the different strands radiate. The fictional editor confesses that he "dare not venture a judgment" because he does "not understand" the work which he has presented (241). Instead this befuddled editor suggests various possibilities which would account for the uncanny coincidence between the events narrated by the deceased Robert and the "numerous distorted traditions" which have been culled from the vicinity. He hypothesizes that Robert's "work having been printed and burnt" by a censorious printer was orally reincarnated because "the story" was then "known to all the printers, with their families and gossips" (241). Thus, the extravagance of oral narrative appears in the editor's estimation to be nothing less or more than gossip which has further corrupted the work of an already corrupt mind: "I account all the rest either dreaming or madness" (241). Or, alternately, the work is simply the fictional output of a creative artist—"a religious parable" which was at odds with the enlightened tenor of "this day, and with the present generation" where "it will not go down that a man should be daily tempted by the devil"(242).

The hesitation and tentativeness of Hogg's fictional editor approximates the effect that Hogg was aiming for with his audience; his folkloric fiction purposely and playfully undercuts the complacency of the educated classes while celebrating the vitality of rural traditions. Hogg's editor is meant to look rather ridiculous and wishy-washy in his desperate attempt to dismiss the supernatural as oral excess and mental unrest. Within the narrative of the Confessions itself, we find that the opinions and stories of "gossips" with their "numerous distorted traditions" gain

credibility and moral authority through the course of the story, rather than diminishing in narrative potency.

In fact, the most obvious indicator of a character's worldly and spiritual integrity in the Confessions is whether or not he or she speaks a rural dialect, or at least a variation from plain English. Louis Simpson enumerates several types of speech in Hogg's novel: "*The Justified Sinner* offers plain English, English touched with Scots, and English with Biblical overtones, as well as dialogue in Scots. The devil in this tale speaks out of Scripture, and Robert Colwan has a ready command of Puritan cant" (125). As Simpson indicates, approximations of religiously enthusiastic and Scriptural speech connote deceptive dogma. What Simpson doesn't explain, however, is that through the use of other folk accents Hogg identifies the representatives of the country communities who offer defensible alternative worldviews to the literate Editor and analogous audience members in Edinburgh, which was the main site of literary elitism to which Hogg was introduced. From the Lord Colwan's argument with the Calvinist minister Robert Wringhim, to the homiletic folk tale told by Robert Colwan's servant Samuel, the balance in moral superiority or at least humanity is tipped in favor of the party whose accents include a tad of Scots.

Lord Colwan's wife, Lady Dalcastle, who is slavishly and perhaps sexually devoted to the minister betrays her religious bigotry through her language, something much like the "Puritan cant" Simpson sees in Robert Colwan: "It shall never be said, Sir, that my person was at the controul of a heathenish man of Belial-- a dangler among the daughters of women,--a promiscuous dancer,--and a player at unlawful

games. Forego your rudeness, Sir I say, and depart away from my presence and that of my kinswoman" (34-35). When Lady Dalcastle runs away temporarily to her father in Glasgow he addresses her in native accents:

> "An sae I find that Dalcastle has actually refused to say prayers with you [. . .] an' has guidit you in a rude indelicate manner [. . .]. [. . .] I shall be revenged on him for aince. [. . .] I shall lounder her that is nearest to him in life. Take you that, and that, Mrs. Colwan, for your husband's impertinence!" (35-36)

Lady Dalcastle's father clearly gains the upper hand here and uses it to chasten his daughter: "the baillie began to inflict corporal punishment on the runaway wife" (36). Hogg makes clear through his narrator that the baillie is far from being an abusive monster: "His strokes were not indeed very deadly, but he made a mighty flourish in the infliction, pretending to be in a great rage" (36). The baillie's very rank evokes a certain degree of authority which he deploys here along with ironic speech, which partly because of, rather than despite, its smattering of Scots is more than a match for his daughter's parroting of evangelical rhetoric.

A more serious altercation, and a similar instance of dialect accompanying and identifying Hogg's endorsement of popular ethics is when Mrs. Logan, the mistress of the late lord Dalcastle, and Mrs. Calvert, witness to Robert Colwan's slaying of his brother George, subdue Robert after he has attempted to murder Mrs. Logan. Robert reviles the two women with his formal Puritanical phrasing: "You are liars, and witches [. . .] creatures fitted from the beginning for eternal destruction," while Mrs. Logan and Mrs. Calvert respectively, rebuke the fanatic, using Scots

vocabulary and proverbs: "said Mrs. Logan, 'what hast thou to say for thyself? Lay thy account to dree the weird thou hast so well earned. [. . .] said her companion. 'Murder will out, though the Almighty should lend hearing to the ears of the willow, and speech to the seven tongues of the woodriff" (102-103). The effect of this speech is to assert folk morality; murder is a crime that will come to light and the murderer must endure the fate (dree the weird) that he has earned.

Lord Dalcastle's retorts to Minister Wringhim's accusations of infidelity likewise include a touch of Scots and colloquial speech that ring with vital, if somewhat irritable, defiance before Wringhim's solemn didacticism: "I ask you, Sir,--before God and this witness, I ask you, have you kept solemnly and inviolate the vows which I laid upon you that day? Answer me?' 'Has the partner whom you bound me to, kept hers inviolate? Answer me that, Sir? None can better do so than you, Mr. How's -tey-ca'-you" (40). As a member of a higher social class, Lord Dalcastle's speech is proportionately less full of Scots, according to the linguistic standards of Hogg's novel— the characters of higher social rank tend to speak closer to English. Yet, in recognizing Lord Dalcastle's colloquialism ("Mr. How's-tey-ca'-you"), however slight it may be, we discern Hogg's judgment of moral superiority in this confrontation, despite the veracity of the minister's accusation. Lord Dalcastle may be an adulterer, but he is certainly far closer to being a justified sinner than Robert Colwan or his spiritual if not biological father, Minister Wringhim.

Samuel's performance of a folktale concerning the devil to his master Robert, is the most revealing example of how the voice of the folk in the Confessions ultimately controls not only the moral tenor of the larger story, but contributes to the

formulation of the narrative's particular reality. It is Samuel, named after the Old Testament prophet who admonishes Saul, who presents the essential core of Robert's predicament through relaying legendary gossip revolving around Robert: "they say the deil's often seen gaun sidie for sidie w'ye, whiles in ae shape, an' whiles in another. An' they say thar he whiles takes your ain shape, or else enters into you, and then you turn a deil yoursel" (193). This "insinuation" from Samuel "awed and confounded" Robert because it resonated with his own intuitions, which he has repressed: "if it had not been for my well-founded faith. . .that I was a chosen and elected one. . . I should at that moment have given into the popular belief, and fallen into the sin of despondency" (193). Robert's thorough immersion in dogma prevents the revelation Samuel gives him from doing any good and like Saul before him, he ignores the warning of his seer and is condemned to be tormented by an evil spirit. Curiosity, however, leads Robert to inquire further into "all that passed between you and the wives of the clachan" to learn "the sentiments of noted witches regarding myself and my connections" (194). Samuel responds by transmitting the legend of Auchtermuchty which he claims to have heard from Lucky Shaw, one of the aforesaid gossips or witches. The tale serve as an analogue to Robert's own experience of being deceived by Gil-Martin, his satanic companion. Robin, who has the second sight, and reveals the "cloven feet" of the demon preacher to the congregation, is first reviled and disbelieved, much as Robert fails to appreciate the wisdom of Samuel. However, though Robert calls Samuel's narrative, a "fool's idle tale," he does apply Samuel's advice regarding the "gouden rule" which is the quickest way to "look for the cloven foot" (199): "I then went to try my works by the Saviour's golden rule, as

my servant had put it into my head to do; and, behold, not one of them would stand the test" (200). Robert comes thereby "to doubt the motives" of Gil-Martin, his diabolic spiritual adviser: "not that they were intentionally bad, but that his was some great mind led astray by enthusiasm, or some overpowering passion" (200).

Not only does Samuel's tale provide the emblematic underlying moral focus of the larger narrative but the laws that traditionally control the world of folktale, the stock motifs, beliefs, and narrative tendencies, emerge as the discourse that governs Robert's reality from this point onwards. Soon thereafter, Robert flees his home to avoid being tested by the folk custom of having to touch the dead body of his mother, to see if the corpse bleeds, as it was expected to do in the presence of the murderer. Then, Gil-Martin insists that he and Robert exchange clothes—this act of changing clothes in order to escape is a folkloric motif, as is the power that comes with the new clothes Robert wears: "the. . .mob. [. . .] instead of offering to detain you [. . .] shall pay you obeisance" (203).[4] In addition, accompanying the conferment of the vestments is Gil-Martin's movement of passing his hand "thrice" over Robert's face—a traditional commonplace of magical ritual. Clearly, Robert has stepped into the role of dupe in this folktale where the Devil plays the tailor and pulls the strings.

While Robert disdained the idea, implied by the oral rumors represented by Samuel, that his partnership with Gil-Martin might be a form of the traditional diabolic contract, Robert soon finds himself living in a world where those circulating

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[4] The motifs which may be referenced in Stith Thompson's *Motif Index* are: K521.4 Clothes, changed so as to escape," G303.6.1.2 "Devil hides in clothes of running people," and D1721.0.1 "Magic power from donning magician's clothes."

rumors have solidified into a legendary abstract--codifying his experiences in exactly those terms of Faustian compact. When Robert seeks shelter in a weaver's house he finds the weaver relates Robert's story according to those popular beliefs and narrative conventions which are intrinsic to folk legends: "I was feared ye might be that waratch that the deil has taen the possession o', an' eggit him on to kill baith his father an' his mother, his only brother, an' his sweetheart. . ." (207). The weaver's speech is emblematic just like Samuel's folktale—it represents in synoptic form the etiological and chronological core of a legend of which Robert is the subject. Robert stands in the unique position of being a living legend; and, he meets the unofficial historian of his life in this dialect-speaking tradition-bearer. Just as Robert is enmeshed in the wiles of Gil-Martin and his own religious hypocrisy—symbolized by their virtual equivalence through exchanging clothes—so he is also entangled in the legendary matrix of the folk, which is further suggested by his literal entanglement in the weaver's loom.

Robert's final absorption into the matrix of legend occurs after his death, when the oral testaments concerning his mysterious end receive the dignity of print: namely, when the fictitious editor represents the actual letter of James Hogg which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in 1823 (the year before Confessions). Once Robert occupies the role of a folktale character who is harassed by the Devil, he becomes partly sympathetic as a sinner who attempts to resist the powers of evil by choosing suicide. And, indeed, the ending of the narrative conveys this moral ambivalence through the additional legendary testimony regarding the purportedly preternatural preservation of his corpse: "I never heard of a preservation so

wonderful" (233). This oral report, submitted by Hogg, is ambiguous in itself, since when the editor investigates the body, it has indeed decomposed, though this may be attributed to subsequent tampering with the grave. Regardless, the very state of preservation involves spiritual doubt since as Leatherdale asserts, in his study of Dracula, while the "Latin tradition held that the non-decomposition of a corpse was an exclusive sign of sanctity" it was a belief of the Greek Church that the body of a suicide likewise did not decay because of "diabolic intervention" (29). Ultimately, the moral, social and metaphysical impact of Hogg's composite narrative depends on his interweaving of different voices—specifically those Scots folk whose gossip, proverbs, legends, and tales overbear the restraints of the fictitious editor, who like Robert prefers to think of the Confessions as a "fool's idle tale."

The many ways in which the supernatural, as represented by folk voices and beliefs, gathers authority in a literary work like that of Hogg's Confessions may be described as an existential as well as a narrative process. The hesitation to judge whether an incident is marvelous (truly supernatural), or merely uncanny (uncommon but explicable by rational laws), which constitutes the fantastic according to Tzvetan Todorov's definition, becomes further complicated when Eric Rabkin's idea of ground-rules cannot definitively be established. Thus, what law of everyday reality is reversed, or, as Rosemary Jackson would have it, what convention is subverted, remains too unstable for unequivocal analysis. When the worldviews of two or more cultures are represented in a single story, hesitation is continuous until the reader accepts the metaphysical rules of one culture or the other. In particular, when the narrator does not identify which cultural perspective is authoritative, a

reader is suspended indefinitely in ambiguity. While Sir Walter Scott, and especially George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell typically identify folk beliefs as erroneous, other writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, M. R. James, and J. H. Riddell do not so decisively establish conventional parameters of narrative reality.

In Scott's The Black Dwarf (1816), he not only debunks the seemingly marvelous as the uncanny, but also provides an example of how the aura of the supernatural, or superstition, is sometimes used to depreciate an individual, class, or group as Tobin Siebers maintains in The Romantic Fantastic when he asserts that the "structure of exclusion" is "proper to the logic of superstition" (34). The dwarfish character of Elshie is the amalgam of Scott's legendary sources and his own historical observations of a laborer named David Ritchie, who suffered physical deformities and was treated with superstitious dread and prejudicial contempt as a result. The product is a romantic tale of a diminutive and disillusioned knight who becomes misanthropic due to a career of unhappy intrigues before being redeemed through accepting new ties of affection. When Elshie is revealed to be Sir Edward Mauley, and a magnanimous rather than misanthropic individual, the resonance of the epithet of Good Neighbor, applied to the fairies for fear lest they prove to be malicious, reverses and serves as a validation of Elshie's humanity rather than his difference. This moment of recognition which disperses the uncanny tensions occurs when the superstitious Hobbie, who initially viewed Elshie as an otherworldly being—either a ghost, or "the Enemy himsell" (19), finally addresses Elshie as a "canny neighbourly man" (126). In this statement of friendly solicitude, one can hear the echo of Hobbie's earlier discourse on the fairies to Earnscliff: "it's for certain the

very fairies—I mean the very good neighbours themsells, for they say folk suldna ca' them fairies—that used to be seen on every green knowe at e'en, are no half sae often visible in our days" (21).

Scott, as the authoritative narrator, in both his introduction which explains his use of David Ritchie's history, and through his parenthetical comments, conveys his skepticism for superstitious thinking and thereby prepares the reader for this unequivocal judgment: "'Frighted wi'bogles!' exclaimed the females, one and all; for great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these glens to all such fantasies" (19). Similarly, Scott casts doubt on popular beliefs by making Hobbie relate how an intoxicated man is likely to see the fairies: "And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e'en, wi' a drap drink in his head, honest man'" (22). Earnscliff, as the aristocratic representative of reason, and Scott's own view: "was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another" (22). In contrast to Hobbie's Scottish speech and superstitious beliefs, Scott presents the young Lord Earnscliff, juxtaposing the enlightened perceptions of this speaker of formal English and perceiver of nothing more than natural aberrations, not apparitions. As the two men first behold Elshie, their respective reactions exemplify the split between both folk and elite culture and reason and superstition that Scott means to convey: "'He is mad, ' said Earnscliff. 'He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne,' answered his superstitious companion [. . .]" (14). Earnscliff's evaluation of Elshie's mental state, underscores that it is the detachment of reason which is preeminent in Earnscliff himself, while in Hobbie it is the intimacy of local

history whose predominant influence predisposes Hobbie to interpret subsequent phenomena in terms of the past. Thus, he is both a historian and a philosopher of the metaphysical school of the folk; for Hobbie a ghost is a means to explain an unknown form in relation to a known one. Likewise his grandmother's identification of Elshie as the legendary "Brown Man of the Moors" is an attempt to assimilate the anomalous by recourse to the matrix of traditional history.[5] Scott includes traditions not to expand the metaphysical borders of his work but to provide striking ethnographic details of the lives he describes, to entertain his readers like the enlightened Earnscliff, and ultimately to burst the bonds of bigotry.

Hogg described Scott's treatment of the supernatural, ghosts in particular, as an ill-conceived blend of rationality and superstition: "his stories made up of half-and-half, like Nathaniel Gow's toddy [. . .] trying to throw cold water on the most certain, though most impalpable, phenomena of human nature" (Simpson 160). Eliot and Gaskell with their even stronger tendency towards realism, apply water that much colder, often dismissing the objective value of traditions while still using them for metaphors and arguments. For instance, in North and South, Gaskell describes "one of the savage country superstitions" where "the cries of a cat, in the agonies of being boiled or roasted alive, compelled (as it were) the powers of darkness to fulfill the wishes of the executioner. [. . .] The poor woman evidently believed in its efficacy"—clearly Gaskell does not believe in the charm's potency and uses the

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[5] The legend of the "Brown Man of the Muirs" appears in Briggs and was recorded by Hamish Henderson "from a letter written by Surtees to Sir Walter Scott, prefixed to Vol. IV of Surtees's *History of Durham*. It was told him by Elizabeth Cockburn, and was said to have happened in 1641" (187).

cruelty towards the animal as an emblem for the dangers of illiteracy (391-392). Immediately prior to this presentation of folk beliefs, Mr. Bell, an Oxford man, had just insisted upon the superfluity of education for the lower classes, yet when he hears the "savage" practice described above, he recants: "Anything rather than have that child brought up in such practical paganism" (392).

The overtones of this "practical paganism" extend beyond the issue of education to also suggest the latent savagery in utilitarian practices that govern the economical world of the Manchester communities—manufacturers and laborers alike. No folk representative explains the superstition. In Gaskell's recital the "practical paganism" speaks for itself, not as a viable cultural alternative, but rather as a part of a residual darkness dividing the educated and illiterate classes.

Similarly, in Silas Marner George Eliot describes the mechanics of superstition, in terms not unlike those used by Gaskell or Siebers for that matter: "superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional like the visits of the pedlar [. . .]. To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery" (5). Opening her novel in this fashion, Eliot distinguishes between the enlightened present of her educated audience and the unenlightened past, the domain of ignorant peasants—whose passe worldview may afford both entertainment and exempla to those who profess to know better.

Yet, in the works of other authors, the enlightened narrator or character may find that the superstitions of the peasantry may prove inexorable, despite the complacency of bourgeois rationality. More often than not, such a conversion entails a slip into

irrationality, as is the case with Poe's narrator of "The Black Cat." His eventual acceptance of "the ancient popular notion, which regarded all black cats as witches in disguise" cannot clearly be separated from the mania of a man who through paranoia, irascibility, and alcoholism kills his wife and pet (9). The equation between cat and female fiend represents the psychological pattern which accompanies the narrator's violence. It is his wife whom he remembers voicing the particular superstition, it is his wife who prizes the second cat as a "favourite," it is his wife whom the narrator slays, and it is from atop his wife's corpse that the cat's "wailing shriek" speaks with an arresting eloquence.

In other words, the cat serves as a projected demonization of the narrator's unacknowledged hostility towards his wife. Similarly, in "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator's espousal of the folk belief in the danger of the Evil Eye is the result of his directing his hostility synecdochically—blaming a part where he abhors the whole: "it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye" (4). Both stories, though constructed as testimonies of madness, thereby undercutting the feasibility of reading these works as supernatural, yet in their narrative conclusions affirm the folk wisdom asserted by Mrs. Logan of Hogg's Confessions: "Murder will out. . ." (103).

While in Poe, belief in folk traditions involves a degeneracy of the mind, in other stories folk beliefs may assert themselves in characters fully in possession of their reason, who simply are hearing the call of cultural roots or standards which they have distanced themselves from intellectually. In M. R. James's "Lost Hearts" the sociopathic yet eminently intellectual Mr. Abney kills two children, marginalized by English society—"a girl of gipsy extraction" and "a wandering Italian lad"—murders

which he justifies in the pursuit of "a very remarkable enlightenment of the spiritual faculties" achieved through ingesting their hearts (34-35). Mr. Abner's "philosophic temperament" which he believed would protect him from "annoyance. . .from the psychic portion of the subjects, which popular language dignifies with the name of ghosts" proves a vain hope (35). The revenants of the murdered children destroy the social elitist who believed the loss of "such persons" could be accomplished "without occasioning a sensible gap in society" (35). While Mr. Abner states his rational arguments in print, he is defeated when he must resort to speech. When the boy who would have been the third victim approaches the room where Mr. Abner is about to be murdered he hears that Mr. Abner "was speaking" (34). James's tale is functionally equivalent to many folk legends whose aim is to discourage antisocial behavior which transgresses social norms. The story is also a graphic and grotesque polarization of the unassimilated foreign members of society, "gipsy" and "Italian," against the rich, educated owner of Aswarby Hall.

Another cultural clash where folklore is ascendant is in J. H. Riddell's story "The Banshee's Warning." The claims of Hertford O'Donnell's native Irish culture pursue him in London, despite his attempt to distance himself not merely intellectually but geographically from the traditions and prejudices of his homeland. Hertford had left his family, friends and love behind because of "old animosities and by difference of religion" which had divided "his people."[14] Yet when the banshee comes to his London hospital to lament the boy (his own son, unbeknownst to him),

dying on the operating table before him, Hertford hears a voice as assertive of popular belief as Poe's black cat. The emigrant's public identity in England crumbles, revealing that: "He was Irish—not merely by the accident of birth [. . .] but by every other accident and design which is objectionable to the orthodox and respectable and representative English mind" (308). The ability of the Banshee to cross national borders to asserts its voice of familial and cultural connection occurs in folk legends—it is not simply a literary device, but a living tradition. Henry Glassie provides the transcript of a legend-telling session which details how the Banshee's cry was heard in Ireland before the death of a man in America (124-127). Despite, or rather because of, the death of his child, Hertford is reunited with his first love, the Irish woman, and metonymically, Ireland herself.

Throughout the examples cited, tensions between the elite and the folk, the written and the oral have clashed and sometimes joined in narratives that unite folk traditions with literary sophistication—complicating the worlds of the reading public through the introduction of lively voices which through dialect and superstition challenge the equilibrium of bourgeois and aristocratic realism. These works like Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" have combined verbal testaments with literary inscriptions, at once giving and gaining authority through the mixture of speech and writing. Gray's narrator is not satisfied alone with the tribute of what "some hoary-headed Swain may say" (97). Though that testimony is indispensable, because it is the authenticity of living voices from a class and mystique he idealizes,

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[14] Susan A. Williams, ed. The Lifted Veil—The Book of Fantastic Literature by Women 1800—World War II (New York: Carroll & Graf Publisher, Inc., 1992)

Gray also craves the prestige of the epitaph, which his literary audience "canst read" though the Swain cannot. Writers of English in the nineteenth century, like Gray, are self-conscious in their representation of rustic lore—in all cases the printed word must negotiate with the implications and intonations of traditions which are performed orally. Out of these tensions between author and storyteller have come works whose roots lie in diverse cultural conventions and perspectives; sometimes these components harmonize, sometimes all one hears is the strife of competing voices.

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Chapter Seven

"The Events Which I Have Recorded Are Not Imaginary."

Fairies, Ghosts, and Devils: Realistic Appropriations of Legend and Folk Belief in Le Fanu's Stories

Supernatural folklore does more than contribute to narrative instability in literature; rather, preternatural traditions provide a framework for presenting the conflict between normalcy and the anomalous, not only on the metaphysical level, but also on the psychological and social as well. Of particular relevance in the narratives of the folkloric fantastic is the role of the geographic and temporal interface in legend narratives between the wild and the civilized regions--the realms of normalcy and the preternatural. Folkloric literary productions often present a Gothic stylization of the importance of this interface--which I have designated the metaphysical contact zone--where the rules of the known and the unknown worlds collide. Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873) in particular associates psychological disruptions and social transgressions with this metaphysical contact zone, for the interface of the "natural" and human worlds conveniently evokes the tension between social conventions and daimonic impulses--the border between the superego and id, so to speak.

From the outright marvelous, to the disconcertingly uncanny, Le Fanu offers complicated representations of supernatural folklore. His stories are well-informed by tradition and often present subversive and satirical comments on Victorian values

and human psychology. While Michael H. Begnal declared in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1971) that Le Fanu's "supernatural or Gothic stories [. . .] seem in need of a critical reevaluation," hitherto, there has not been a thorough analysis exploring the various dynamics of these narratives (14). Begnal also asserts that "we find in his work little use of the banshee, leprechaun, or other manifestation of Irish folklore" (37). Allegedly this is because the "supernatural with which Le Fanu is concerned is a universal as well as a particular phenomenon, transcending individual time and place" (37).

Because Begnal does not perceive the stereotypical figures of Irish folklore in Le Fanu's stories, he concludes that neither Irish--nor, apparently, any--folklore plays a significant role in the supernatural dimensions of the narratives. Begnal certainly provides no insights into the operations of how folklore works in the stories. Nor has any other critic since Begnal helped extensively in this direction. Jolanta Natecz-Wojtczak while pointing out that "Irish folklore" is one of the "new elements"--the other two are "Swedenborgian ideas and psychological interest"--that Le Fanu injects into the literary tradition of ghost stories claims that such components, except for the psychological, "lead nowhere."[1] Nateca-Wojtczak identifies Le Fanu's use of folklore as a kind of narrative spice: "Elements of Irish folklore give local flavour to the stories and enrich their poetic world [. . .]."[2] Granted, Nateca-Wojtczak stresses that

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[1] Jolanta Natecz-Wojtczak, "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and New Dimensions for the English Ghost Story," Literary Interrelations-Ireland, England and the World--2 Comparison and Impact. Eds Wolfgang Zach and Heinz Kosok. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1987). 193

[2] 193.

this dismissal of folklore and Swedenborgianism is from "the point of view of their potential impact"; yet, even this is hasty.[3] For, not only have we seen that M.R. James--a great admirer of Le Fanu--introduced folkloric elements into his own ghost stories, but Nateca-Wojtczak fails to realize that the psychological and folkloric are interconnected in tradition as well as Le Fanu's stories. Similarly, Begnal claims in his final words on Le Fanu's short stories that "Le Fanu has learned that it is human actions which create spirits and fiends" (44). This may well be so, but what Begnal does not realize is that a similar psychological and metaphysical deduction can be made from reading folk legends. In what is considered the most critically eminent study of Le Fanu, Sheridan Le Fanu (previously titled Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland) W. J. McCormack presents a sophisticated analysis, particularly of the political and religious implications of Le Fanu's fiction. However, McCormack appears to share Begnal's ignorance of the particular dynamics of folklore, as does V. S. Pritchett, whom McCormack quotes from and agrees with, and who presumes to distinguish Le Fanu's handling of "justified" ghosts from previous manifestations in literature:

> Le Fanu's ghosts are what I take to be the most disquieting of all: the ghosts that can be justified, blobs of the unconscious that have floated up to the surface of the mind, and which are not irresponsible and perambulatory figments of family history, mooning and clanking about in fancy dress. The evil of the justified ghost is not sportive, willful,

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[3] 193.

> involuntary or extravagant. In Le Fanu the fright is that effect follows cause. (230)

Reading through the variety of ghost legends that exist, such as those in Brigg's immense compendium of folk narratives, one finds that cause and effect are an integral part of folk metaphysics.

In the folk imagination, supernatural manifestations are reactions to human actions; folk beliefs concerning spirits represent a continuum from the visible world of natural interactions into the invisible world of moral impressions. Human actions that violate social norms--such as murder--cause a moral disturbance that extends into the supernatural world and a revenant operates to restore the balance of the outraged ethical hue and cry of vengeance that resonates through the metaphysical universe. Thus, if Pritchett is struck by Le Fanu's ghosts being more "justified" than earlier Gothic treatments of the spirit world, it is precisely because of the harmony of Le Fanu's texts with the legendary dynamics of those "figments of family history" found in folk tales--not Gothic romance--that distinguish him from the "clanking about" of purely sensational aspects of the supernatural in literature.

Despite McCormack's neglect and sometimes unpersuasive rendering of the precise functions of folklore in Le Fanu, he does identify and emphasize Le Fanu's fundamental use of tradition. He declares that Le Fanu uses "Swedenborg's metaphysics and the Irish folk world's infinite power of absorption and transformation" to produce "symbols and not creeds," offering a complex system of representation that suggests "the context of a higher rationality" to otherwise inexplicable events (242). McCormack then, recognizes a logic to superstition, but he

doesn't show this logic in action. Clearly, for a "critical reevaluation" to occur, one must first understand how folklore functions in Le Fanu's work. It is only by analyzing Le Fanu's use of folklore that one can fully appreciate and understand both the morality and metaphysics of his ghost stories. This study then is an important beginning in such a project of critical comprehension.

For some Le Fanu is chiefly known for his mystery stories; indeed Uncle Silas is the "best Victorian mystery novel," according to E. F. Bleiler in his introduction to Ghost Stories and Mysteries (vii).[4] But probably for most readers, Le Fanu is the "undisputed master of the Victorian ghost story."[5] We will leave both the novels and mystery short stories per se untouched in this examination of Le Fanu's work. However, Le Fanu's supernatural stories are themselves in fact "mysteries." That is to say, one of the recurring structural features in Le Fanu's "ghost stories" is the evaluation of unexplained events. Fantastic events accrue like a trail of clues, which usually reveals a supernatural culprit, whose motivation or genesis is then deciphered by the implicit folk metaphysics suggested by the folk beliefs in embedded memorats and legends. The "solution" to these supernatural stories, when there is one, is analogous to the "evaluation" in the folk legend (or memorat as well) which is the part of the narrative which interprets the preternatural events.

Yet, solutions are dubious in Le Fanu's ghostly tales: one of his dogmatically "rational" narrative personas might insist upon a "reasonable explanation" or dismiss

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[4] Bleiler is using the same title as Le Fanu's collection of 1851, although Beiler has added some other stories to the previously collected narratives.

[5] Gary William Crawford, "Sheridan Le Fanu and *In a Glass Darkly*" The Romantist. 4-5 (1980-1981): 25-27.

the anomalous as unexplainable, rather than reconcile conventional enlightenment views with folk metaphysics or Spiritualism. McCormack gives an example of how Le Fanu's stories work against the skeptical denial of their narrators: "The second part of the tale ["The Fortunes of Sir Robert Ardagh"] tends to corroborate the crude synopsis of the first, though the narrator insists that 'the two narratives are irreconcilable' " (74). It is in the same story that the skeptical narrator believes that he will demarcate the authority of his story from the idle tales of the countryside: "The events which I have recorded are not imaginary. They are FACTS; and there lives one whose authority none would venture to question, who could vindicate the accuracy of every statement which I have set down, and that, too, with all the circumstantiality of an eye witness."[6] Such an attempt by an educated narrator to insist on the authoritative text comprises a willful negation of the fantastic, silencing the memorats that multiple characters have communicated. (A memorat, to refresh the reader's memory, is a narrative of an encounter with the supernatural, usually told by the person who allegedly had the experience). Le Fanu's hyperrational narrators or expositors dismiss the folk and their superstitions as ignorant and as for the other, perhaps well-educated and genteel *informants* who expound memorats, they are marginalized by these skeptical narrators as sufferers from mental aberrations.

It is convenient to align memorats with legends in terms of structure. Memorats are virtually "legends in-waiting" so to speak--they potentially may become legends at any time, once they are more frequent and communal rather than

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[6] Le Fanu, Best Ghost Stories of Le Fanu 360.

isolated and personal, though in some cases this may never transpire. Referring to W. F. H. Nicolaisen's structural studies of legend, Timothy Tangherlini outlines the structural possibilities in Interpreting Legend: "the legend may encompass as many as six distinct structural elements, these being abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result and coda, or as few as two, namely orientation and complicating action" (10). Le Fanu's stories mirror the structure of legends, as outlined by Tangherlini; in fact, some of his narratives use all of the structural elements of the legend.

To persevere in the "mystery" analogy, let us consider Le Fanu's almost Sherlock Holmes-like protagonist Dr. Martin Hesselius.[7] A stranger to Le Fanu's work might detect a similarity between the name and Bram Stoker's Van Helsing. Indeed, this is common knowledge among critics, who recognize the influence of Le Fanu's vampire story "Carmilla" on Stoker's Dracula: 'The extraordinary story is recounted by a German physician called Martin Hesselius, an obvious model for Van Helsing in Bram Stoker's novel."[8] Dr. Hesselius's role is not limited to "Carmilla." In fact, Le Fanu wrote several stories where his narrative persona is the "medical secretary" of Hesselius.[9] This secretary presents a few of the cases from among the papers of the deceased Dr. Hesselius, if the "case strikes me as of a kind to amuse or

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[7] Nelson Browne asserts that Hesselius was a virtual incarnation of Le Fanu's perspective: "Dr. Hesselius is, of course, a projection of the author himself, with his absorption in psychic matters, and with the strain of Swedenborgian speculation which characterized his thought in later years." Nelson Browne, Sheridan Le Fanu. (New York: Roy Publishers, 1951) 78.

[8] Bram Stoker, Dracula Ed. A.N. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) xii.

horrify a lay reader with an interest quite different from the peculiar one which it may possess for an expert" (179)

Doctor Hesselius is not simply a physican, but is a metaphysician as well, and his interest in matters of how the spirit world and the material world intersect results in a pseudo-scientific discourse in which to discuss supernatural phenomena which are the stuff of legends, if not dreams. Hesselius is not interested in folk metaphysics; he is not concerned with the violation of taboos that often precipitate preternatural results. Rather, he generally focuses on the manifestation of the supernatural only as a symptom of a sort of spiritual infection of the mind. Nor does Dr. Hesselius desire to construct a narrative that has aesthetic features; his is an empirical and theoretical study of spiritual phenomena, not folklore or storytelling per se. (However, as we shall see in examples after Hesselius's "files", Le Fanu has other narrators and characters who are not merely conversant with but appreciative collectors of folklore).

Thus, Le Fanu's narrative persona, that of Dr. Hesselius's secretary, serves as an editor who compiles and cuts material in order to tailor the proper fit for the literary tastes of his popular audience. Perhaps the most blatant instance of this acknowledged bias, besides the criteria mentioned above ("the case strikes me [. . .] "), is the anonymous secretary's explanation of why he would have chosen the later report of the case of "Mr. Justice Harbottle" even if the more scientifically accurate and timely one, which Dr. Hesselius had evaluated as superior had been extant: "The strictly scientific view of the case would scarcely interest the popular reader; and,

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[9] Le Fanu, Best Ghost Stories 168.

possibly, for the purposes of this selection, I should, even had I both papers to choose between, have preferred that of Mr. Harman, which is given, in full in the following pages" (245).

The fictional operation of the secretary's editorial decisions is of twofold importance. First, Le Fanu is making the reader aware of an interpretative vision and authority that is behind the presentation of the anomalous. Secondly, this secretary's somewhat arbitrary--and decidedly intrusive--control of numerous testimonies to the supernatural is typical of the role of the nineteenth-century collector and editor of folk tales, as well as representative of the other narrators in Le Fanu's stories--some of whom are presented as amateur folklorists. Therefore, with Le Fanu's fictional character of Hesselius's secretary we encounter a manner of editorial practice that is common in Victorian literary treatments of folklore.[10] The narrator's emphasis is on aesthetic content--material which is amusing, frightening, mysterious, and picturesque--which he conceives to be pleasing to the taste of a popular--but well-educated--audience and the tone is condescending and often dismissive of the folk culture which presents this fodder for literary diversion.

Out of the five stories which involve Dr. Hesselius in Best Ghost Stories, three of them involve supernatural folk beliefs and make reference to the dynamics of legends.[11] "Green Tea" is one of the two exceptions, and is the first of the Hesselius

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[10] See chapter one for examples of the editorial practices of Victorian folklorists.

[11] These five stories, masquerading as the files of Dr. Hesselius were collected for the anthology In a Glass Darkly (1872), a title that Gary Crawford implies emphasizes the interpretative hesitation a reader experiences with these stories where "nothing, or everything, is real. Man must forever see "in a glass darkly" (27).

tales.[12] "Green Tea" is part of the Gothic literary tradition that suggests the moral and metaphysical complications that arise when science transgresses the limits of the natural--other examples would be Frankenstein and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." The accelerated pace of the Industrial Revolution created anxious speculation as to the ethical impact of enhanced technology. More recent incarnations of this genre continue to pervade our media: novels and movies concerned with the horrific implications of genetic engineering. Clearly, metaphysical fears tend to hover along the new frontiers of technology.

"Green Tea" is relevant to this analysis of Le Fanu's use of folklore. Although the supernatural events of the story rely on the theories of Emanuel Swedenborg--to whom Blake's ideas of the spiritual imagination are partially indebted-- Le Fanu employs some of the spatial aspects of folk metaphysics in his atmospheric descriptions. Le Fanu's use of the interface between the wild and the civilized, which is typically the locale of legends and memorats, is exemplified in this story, despite the fact that the supernatural visitation is not precipitated by this metaphysical contact zone. In "Green Tea" the Rev. Mr. Jennings meets Dr. Hesselius, whose "Essays on Metaphysical medicine," Mr. Jennings had read (186). Dr. Hesselius learns that Mr. Jennings believes himself increasingly harassed by a spirit that resembles a black monkey, and whose attention Mr. Jennings decides he earned the attention of by unfortunately awakening his "interior sight" by the stimulation of green tea (186). Mr. Jennings's readings from Swedenborg support this theory, though Dr. Hesselius believes the man is suffering from a disturbance of health whose cause does not lie

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[12] Crawford mentions that "Green Tea" was "originally published in Charles Dicken's

outside himself. Regardless of the cause, Mr. Jennings apparently feels driven to commit suicide.

Put aside Dr. Hesselius's tract on "The Cardinal Functions of the Brain"--which explains how "green tea is one" of several "agents" that might lead to the "seat of interior vision" (207) being opened to spiritual matter. And turn away from Swedenborg's insistence that there are evil spirits "with every man"--instead of the theories of theological and pseudoscientific discourse we shall focus on the topography surrounding the dwelling of the unfortunate Mr. Jennings, who was plagued by the sight of one of those evil spirits (186). What sort of house does Jennings live in? Dr. Hesselius describes it thus: "He would have been much better in a lodging-house, or hotel, I thought, as I drove up through a short double row of sombre elms to a very old-fashioned brick house, darkened by the foliage of these trees, which overtopped, and nearly surrounded it. It was a perverse choice, for nothing could be imagined more triste and silent" (190-191). So, aside from Hesselius's analysis of the negative atmosphere of the house, what do we learn in this description? We find in the almost total enclosure of this "old-fashioned brick house" that the wilderness has ascendancy in this interface between the wild and the civilized. Judging from the topography of legend, it should come as no surprise that the man living within is doomed.

The topography surrounding one's dwelling is of cardinal importance in legends. There are many accounts of buildings, particularly Churches and castles, being moved mysteriously because of their proximity to riversides and hillsides

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All the Year Round (1869)." Crawford 25.

which are claimed by fairies, giants, and other beings.[13] And, more importantly, in many British folk legends trees are attributed with supernatural powers and they are a force to be reckoned with in the metaphysical ambience of any estate or household.. In "The Tree's Revenge"--a legend from Somerset--the storyteller explains how a tree killed a farmer and his son for not observing either the proper boundaries or using folk defenses against the forest's power: "Be danged if gurt oak didn't' drop a limb on cart and timber and farmer and eldest son."[14] After these deaths the youngest son inherits the farm. And, the storyteller, as he explains the son's conduct after his inheritance, reveals the details which relate to those trees in "Green Tea":

> "So youngest he gets farm and gives back all the old man nicked, and puts fences to their rightful places, and prospers. And he drove the cart-hoss to market through forest all his days, and tree never followed'n nor closed in about'n nor let drop branches. But he had a criss-cross of nails on each boot to make sure."[15]

Given the trees that encircle Mr. Jennings's house, it is evident according to folk beliefs that circulated in England (never mind that Richmond--where Jenkins lives--is far North of Somerset) that hostile forces have "closed in about'n."

Whether or not Le Fanu knew of legends of hostile trees, he chooses to stress the ominous nature of trees throughout his supernatural stories--thus he uses the

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[13] Here are some of the British local legends that detail the movement of fortifications due to spiritual conflicts over territorial space: "The Building of St Chads Rochdale," "Callaly Castle," "The Castle of Melund," "The Church of Fordun," "The Church of Old deer ." Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales Part B: Folk Legends Vol.2 (London: Routledge, 1991) 173-179.

[14] Briggs, Folk Legends Vol. 2, 589.

metaphorical equivalence of the essential danger that is encoded in folk beliefs of potentially bellicose boughs. When Mr. Jennings is discovered after an apparent suicide and Dr. Hesselius describes the gruesome scene he notes the intrusion of the surrounding foliage: "In this sombre and now terrible room, one of the great elms that darkened the house was slowly moving the shadow of one of its great boughs upon this dreadful floor" (204). The moving shadow as an immaterial expression of the tree's physical form does more than cast a shade of gloom in this context. The form of the spirit that harassed Mr. Jenkins initially appeared as "the outline of something black"--a shape of darkness which might well seem a mere shadow to Dr. Hesselius whose eyes had not been opened to perceive spiritual realities more directly (193). Even if the shadow of the tree is not a glimpse at the malign entity which tormented Mr. Jenkins, the shade is at least a telling image. This detail simultaneously evokes the shadow of death and connects the tragedy to the bordering trees, which are the representative features of an assumedly hostile and chaotic wilderness--whose most intense forms constitute the preternatural in folklore.

We will return later to the issue of Le Fanu's depiction of borders in his tales, but now we must revisit Dr. Hesselius, and see what else he has to tell us:

> Poor Mr. Jennings made away with himself. But that catastrophe was the result of a totally different malady, which, as it were, projected itself upon the disease which was etablished. His case was in the distinctive manner a complication, and the complaint under which he really succumbed, was hereditary suicidal mania. Poor Mr. Jennings I cannot call a patient of mine,

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[15] Briggs, Folk Legends Vol. 2. 580.

> for I had not even begun to treat his case [. . .]. If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain." (207)

Dr. Hesselius while insisting on the opening of the interior vision of Mr. Jenkins does not believe it is the pernicious influence of the hostile spirit that led Mr. Jenkins to commit suicide. The good doctor's rationalization that Mr. Jenkins suffered from suicidal mania however is labored and is not convincing. Indeed, it is true that Mr. Jenkins is one of many character in Le Fanu's ghost stories who are what Nateca-Wojtczak calls "tragic characters" who find themselves poised on the brink of madness:

> The source of their tragedy springs from their desperate, spasmodic struggle for sanity--from a neurotic's awareness that his mind is suddenly on the borderline between what is conventionally considered to be normal and abnormal. [. . .] after the very first moments of their encounter with the supernatural they try to control their anxieties and phobias, to find a satisfactory logical explanation [. . .]. Showing the painful awareness of being on the verge of otherness, the desperate, futile struggle to conquer the unknown force driving one to insanity, Le Fanu touched one of the most tragic and pathetic struggles of man.[16]

But, just as Nateca-Wojtczak's emphasis on the psychological disruption of Le Fanu's characters ultimately ignores the supernatural, by redefining it as an "unknown" psychological force, so too Hesselius fails to adequately dispel the specter that

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[16] Nateca-Wojtczak 195.

Jennings contended with. Nateca-Wojtczak is absolutely right to refer to a psychological "borderline" that Le Fanu's characters confront, but this is very much a cultural and metaphysical borderline. The resulting madness of Le Fanu's characters is most often despair in the face of a world whose natural and supernatural laws offer no salvation--a harsh revelation that opposes preconceived cultural norms espoused by the characters.

The ambiguous mixture of metaphysical speculation and medical convention in Dr. Hesselius's diagnosis, as well as the realm of supernatural possibility that the narrative evokes through Swedenborg and the doctrinal and folkloric traditions of "evil spirits," contradicts the complacency of Hesselius's evaluation of Mr. Jenkins's death. The very admission of Hesselius of spiritual influences belies a reader's confidence in his judgment that the suicide was a "hereditary" issue rather than a supernatural one. Mr. Jenkins claimed that the spirit was "always urging me to crimes, to injure others, or myself," and indeed this has the ring of mental illness, but is not easily dismissed--given the context (201). We have all heard the expression "the devil made me do it"--and there are numerous tales which represent the tradition of diabolical or spiritual influence in moral decisions. The invitation to suicide is particularly frequent in such tales since the act is both a flagrant sin and a surety that the agent's soul will be in the power of evil forces thereafter--and may well return as a baleful ghost to urge others to follow suit.[17] And, in this particular story, "Green Tea," we have Swedenborg's assertion that "The delight of hell is to do evil to man, and to hasten his eternal ruin" (186). Clearly, Dr. Hesselius's confidence that "hereditary

suicidal mania" resulted in the destruction of Mr. Jenkins is significantly subverted. Thus, Dr. Hesselius's status as an authoritative expositor of the fantastic is undermined in a fashion similar to that of Hogg's editor in The Confessions of a Justified Sinner. Both literary works demonstrate the disintegration of narrative authority resulting from the attempt to construe the fantastic as merely uncanny and repress or ignore the claims of preternatural traditions.

Unlike Bram Stoker's Van Helsing, Dr. Hesselius does not seem to ever conquer or contain dangerous supernatural forces except in theory. In the most folkloric and also incontrovertibly marvelous of Dr. Hesselius's "cases," he is not even present at all: "Carmilla," Le Fanu's vampire tale is of seminal interest here, not because of intertextual relation to Stoker, but on account of the models of cultural conflict that the narrative enacts. The majority of the tale's suspense derives from the resistance of the elite to the traditions of the folk.

The document which Hesselius's secretary offers in "Carmilla" is purportedly written by a mature woman, named Laura, who recounts the insidious predations upon her by a female vampire, Carmilla Karnstein, years ago when she dwelled with her father in his retirement in Styria, Austria. The story owes much in the lesbian eroticism to Coleridge's "Christabel," as well as actual folk traditions of vampirism. In particular the folk belief that vampires were the causes of plagues. In his thorough study Vampires, Burial, and Death--Folklore and Reality, Paul Barber emphasizes the role of epidemics in vampire belief:

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[17] I discovered in "Shadows of Tradition" that people still tell tales of the vengeful ghosts of suicides.

> When one considers that vampires commonly infect others with their condition, it will become obvious that, if even a single vampire escapes the ministrations of the local people, vampirism may increase in geometric proportion. In a short time there may be more vampires than normal people. This was believed to explain epidemics of plague, although it was sometimes thought necessary to find and destroy only the original vampire, not his every victim, to end the plague. (57)

Le Fanu's awareness of the link between vampire belief and epidemics manifests itself not only in the references to the plague the peasants are suffering from but also the conceit of the plague, which he maintains through the entire story. When the first peasant dies, and Laura mentions to Carmilla that the woman is to be buried, Carmilla, who in retrospect is clearly the cause of this "plague," responds vituperatively:

> "She? I don't trouble my head about peasants. I don't know who she is," answerd Carmilla, with a flash from her fine eyes. [Laura]"She is the poor girl who fancied she saw a ghost a fortnight ago, and has been dying ever since, till yesterday, when she expired [. . .] I hope there is no **plague** or fever coming [. . .]. The swineherd's young wife died only a week ago, and she thought something seized her by the throat [. . .] Papa says such horrible fancies do accompany some forms of fever." (294)

Carmilla's classist contempt is ironic, since of course she preys upon the very peasants who are stricken, and in this case the "horrible fancies" that Laura mentions

are the causes rather than the symptoms of their ailments. Furthermore, the distance which Carmilla attempts to establish between herself and the peasantry is belied by her later admission that she suffered from the same ailment: "I suffered from this very illness; but I forget all but my pain and weakness, and they were not so bad as are suffered in other diseases" (297).

Adding to the irony of Carmilla's contempt is that these peasants whom she disdains are the historians of her own past. The General, who ultimately leads to the defeat of Carmilla, consults one of these local historians--legend-tellers--near the "chapel of the Karnsteins" (327):

> "I hear the axe of a woodman [. . .] he possibly may give us the information of which I am in search, and point out the grave of Mircalla [an earlier name for Carmilla], Countess of Karnstein. These rustics preserve the local traditions of great families, whose stories die out among the rich and titled so soon as the families themselves become extinct." (327)

This woodman refers the vampire hunter to an old man, who relates how the nearby village was "troubled by *revenants*" and the measures that followed to destroy the "vampire" which would "glide away towards the village to **plague** its inhabitants" (329). The General when he thanks the Baron for his help in the destruction of Carmilla praises him for having "delivered this region from a **plague** that has scourged its inhabitants for more than a century" (334).

Though the "local traditions" preserved by "rustics" serve to deliver the young Laura from the vampire plague, the obstacle of conventional enlightenment

thinking must first be overcome, as well as class prejudice. Laura, as the narrator is called, does not announce her case as one of vampirism until nearly the conclusion of the account, where she asserts the inevitable power of the folk tradition of vampiric revenants:

> I saw all clearly a few days later. The disappearance of Carmilla was followed by the discontinuance of my nightly sufferings. You have heard, no doubt, of the appalling superstition that prevails in Upper and Lower Styria, in Moravia, Silesia, in Turkish Servia, in Poland, even in Russia; the superstition, so we must call it, of the vampire [. . .]. [. . .] For my part I have heard no theory by which to explain what I myself have witnessed and experienced, other than that supplied by the ancient and well-attested belief of the country. (335)

Laura compares the accumulation of memorats involving the supernatural activities of vampires to the collection of testimony in legal discourse:

> If human testimony, taken with every care and solemnity, judicially, before commissions innumerable, each consisting of many members, all chosen for integrity and intelligence, and constituting reports more voluminous perhaps than exist upon any one other class of cases, is worth anything, it is difficult to deny, or even to doubt the existence of such a phenomenon as the vampire." (335)

The analogy here is metafiction in the sense that Dr. Hesselius's own compilation of anomalies purport to be documentations of supernatural testimony. Moreover, Le Fanu himself may well hope for a similarly disturbing suggestion to dawn in the

minds of his readers, the more credulous of whom might extend the argument to the very stories they are reading in his collected works. Notably, the due process implied in this legal analogy asserts the powers of literate discourse, which validates the beliefs of the folk only by documentation and "commissions innumerable"--as though the many bureaus of Chancery had entered the halls of legend to take stock.

Above all it is the young Laura's father who is unable to credit supernatural agency in the affliction of his daughter until it is almost too late. He stubbornly resists what he considers the foolish notion of vampirism and aligns superstition with the irrationality of the lower classes. When he hears of the peasants who are dying in the vicinity and how the simple rustics credit their travails to the "oupire" (295) his reaction is to make an analogy between the material plague he believes is circulating and the fanciful plague which is deluding the ignorant: "All this," said my father, "is strictly referable to natural causes. These poor people infect one another with their superstitions, and so repeat in imagination the images of terror that have infested their neighbours" (94). "Carmilla" is not the only narrative in which Le Fanu characterizes superstitions as plagues. For example, in "The Fortunes of Sir Robert Ardagh" the narrator, Father Purcell, asserts that "Superstitious feelings are at all times more or less contagious, and the last century afforded a soil much more congenial to their growth than the present" (356).

Laura's father in "Carmilla" similarly dismisses the claims of the servants as hysterical gossip. The underlings evidently recognized the symptoms of vampirism when Laura as a very young girl first encountered Carmilla: "I remember my father: "I remember my father [. . .] asking the nurse a number of questions, and laughing

very heartily at one of the answers; and patting me on the shoulder [. . .] telling me [. . .] it was nothing but a dream and could not hurt me" (277-278). It should be no surprise at this point to see the folkloric fantastic dismissed as a dream once again. Continuing the plague conceit and her father's dismissiveness, when Laura as a young woman asks her father what the doctor thinks is "the matter" with her, he responds with the rejoinder: "Nothing; you must not plague me with questions" (315).

Even Laura hesitates to align her ailment with the symptoms suffered by the peasantry, though hers is not a classist or materialist position like her father's, rather it is mere empiricism: "It could not be that terrible compliant which the peasants call the oupire, for I had now been suffering for three weeks, and they were seldom ill for much more than three days, when death put an end to their miseries" (308). What Laura is not aware of however, is that the vampire Carmilla has an erotic attraction for her; thus hers is to be a protracted decease: "You will think me cruel, very selfish, but love is always selfish; the more ardent the more selfish. How jealous I am you cannot know. You must come with me, loving me, to death; or else hate me, and still come with me, and *hating* me through death and after" (302).

The father's skepticism, though, is doomed to pass. His good rational friend, the General, has already lost a daughter to Carmilla and consequently revises his worldview :

> You are right in supposing that I have not been led lightly into a belief In the marvellous--for what I have experienced *is* marvellous--and I have been forced by extraordinary evidence to credit that which ran

> counter, diametrically, to all my theories. I have been made the dupe of a preternatural conspiracy." (317)

The General's encounter with the fantastic satisfies Rabkin's requirement for a 180 degree turn; for, the Generally emphasizes the experience has "diametrically" reversed his *ground rules* for reality. At this moment of discussion Laura's father still sees from the perspective which the General has departed from into a more ambiguous space: "Notwithstanding his profession of confidence in the Generals penetration, I saw my father, at this point, glance at the General, with, as I thought, a marked suspicion of his sanity" (317). The reaction of Laura's father is the typically rational response to the fantastic: a stubborn belief in anything departing from the conventional worldview must be the product of a delusional mind.

In both "Green Tea" and "Carmilla" attempts by the so-called enlightened to contain the supernatural within a rationalistic framework fail to account for the fantastic events that characterize the narratives. The aura of traditional lore exerts greater authority in these stories than the pretensions of diagnosticians to analyze evil marvels into oblivion. Dr. Hesselius's neatly-bundled collection of cases of anomalies are not isolated studies to merely be examined by a curious reader, but instead are intrusions from the world of folk metaphysics into the age of industry and science. The medicinal rhetoric that both Carmilla's father and Dr. Hesselius use to combat preternatural perceptions does not successfully dispel either the cultural and psychological force of folklore, nor the physical reality of the phenomena behind such beliefs. Lurking beyond the pages of Dr. Hesselius are the numerous unrecorded tales of thousands of peasants, whose "plague" of superstition infects both the nobility

and the clergy. Neither education nor wealth negates the claims of the folkloric fantastic.

Folk Justice and the Problem of Redemption in Le Fanu

Le Fanu's use of folklore is not limited to evasions of rational authority and challenges to cultural hegemony; he harnesses folk beliefs for morally didactic purposes as well. Or rather, by applying folk beliefs to social crises he creates a coherent--yet disturbing--vision of supernatural justice. Le Fanu does not show ideal exempla of Christian morality; he instead portrays a world governed by severe forces of cause and effect: supernatural agents enforce the violation of taboos; they do not exhibit compassion nor seem to adhere to religious orthodoxy. However, many of Le Fanu's portrayals of supernatural events do represent tensions involved with class hierarchy, and the moral compromises involved in pitting prince against pauper. Sympathy is present in Le Fanu's ghostly tales, but the human cry for succor is never answered by supernatural assistance. Moral outrage haunts the borders of Le Fanu's texts, yet only the specter of revenge--not salvation--rises to meet those who offend social norms.

One of the common recipients of draconian justice in Le Fanu's tales is the skeptic of folklore whom preternatural powers inevitably chasten or at least awaken to the sight of disturbing horizons of which they were previously blind. Also at risk of a rude awakening, however, is the spiritual complacency of the religious conformist. Laura's father in "Carmilla" occupies both categories, while Carmilla

herself, on the other hand, is clearly awakened to the preternatural implications of vampirism and she challenges both in deed and in word the doctrinal complacency of Laura's father:

> "[Laura's father] We are in God's hands; nothing can happen without His permission, and all will end well for those who love Him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us." [Carmilla] "Creator! *Nature!*" said the young lady in answer to my gentle father. "And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature--don't' they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so." (297)

Adding Carmilla and vampirism to the realm of Nature, attests to Tennyson's view of nature as "red in tooth and claw" and reddens the halcyon waters of divinity in which Laura's father imagines the world to be paternalistically floating.

Despite the evidence for viewing Carmilla as an antagonistic, atheistic, and aristocratic force pitted against the communal and homely peasantry, it is disappointing that Julia McElhattan Williams in "The Nation Articulate": The Discourse of Colonialism and the Anglo-Irish Novel ignores the tension between this Styrian aristocrat and her underclass victims. Williams insists that Le Fanu's female vampire represents the "threat" of "the Irish 'native'" to the solidarity of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy (177). Not only does Williams ignore the fact that there was no longer a native aristocracy in Ireland, but she begs the question that the setting of the story in Styria is merely a formal illusion for its Irishness, "Since the story is a

vampire tale, the setting the narrator identifies is Styria, but the particular details of the setting suggest that once again Le Fanu is writing an 'Irish story' [. . .]" (173). For Williams, "victory over the vampire" is "victory over the 'native'" (197). It is most peculiar that Williams chose this tale out of all Le Fanu's supernatural works to emphasize the chaotic threat of the native Irish to the political and social pretensions of the Anglo-Irish. Perhaps this is because his ghost stories are more subversive of Protestant landowners than the Catholic peasantry. Regardless, Williams convinced herself that in the relationship between Carmilla and Laura there is the model "for the Anglo-Irish future, Laura must be preserved from the vampire's contagion" (197). To maintain this dubious vision, Williams must deny the Styrian location, ignore Carmilla's hostility to the peasantry (which would be the real native Irish, not Carmilla), and Carmilla's disgust with religion. If Carmilla truly was a representative of the Irish native majority, then she should be Catholic, but she is clearly hostile towards all orthodoxy.

The hardly subdued outrage of Carmilla's objection is the cry of protest from a woman whose violation was "more than a century" old (334). For "though a hundred and fifty had passed since her funeral" her life after death was not a torment that she had earned through sin but merely the continuance of a force that was sent in motion previous to her (335). As is often the case with Le Fanu, his visions of evil include the suggestion of sexual perversion or at least unrestrained sensuality. As Harold Orel's words in "'Rigid Adherence to Facts': Le Fanu's In a Glass Darkly (1872)" indicate, critics have focused on the lesbian eroticism of "Carmilla.":

> Peter Penzoldt's belief that Le Fanu could not have recognized the lesbian love he was describing for what it was need not detain us, any more than the patronizing remarks made by other critics about scenes in Thomas Hardy's novels in which two women respond sexually to each other. No less than Hardy, Le Fanu appreciated the perversity of this kind of relationship, and sought to make his moral point, at some risk because of the situation he was defining and the language he was employing; that point--consistent with earlier points made in the collection *In a Glass Darkly* (1872), and in several stories in *Chronicles of Golden Friars* (1871) and *The Purcell Papers* (1880)--has to do with the evil, nascent or flowering, within each man's soul.[18]

Orel's argument for Le Fanu's construction of a homily concerning the dangers of lesbianism may be valid, however, there are heterosexual elements in "Carmilla" as well. Carmilla's tale to Laura of her wounding at a "ball" has a sexual subtext of lost heterosexual virginity as well as the recognition of callousness in desire and the suggestion of vampirism: 'I was all but assassinated in my bed [. .]. [. . .] a very--cruel love--strange love, that would have taken my life. Love will have its sacrifices. No sacrifice without blood" (303).

What sort of creator, Carmilla implicitly asks, would destine a woman to such a fate? The folk beliefs of the vampire however are not derived from theological concerns but material ones--anxieties over the plague--and like many folk beliefs

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[18] Harold Orel, "'Rigid Adherence to Facts'": Le Fanu's In a Glass Darkly." Eire-Ireland--A Journal of Irish Studies 20.4 (1985): 87.

what we think of as the supernatural is indeed merely a hyperextension of the natural. Or rather, folk metaphysics extend human observations of threatening aspects of reality to their associative, if not logical, consequences--reinscribing psychological and social patterns beyond the material veil in order to evoke recognizable shapes in the invisible world. The conflict between associative thinking and the fixedness of doctrine enters into other Le Fanu stories as well, where the inevitability of folk metaphysics leaves little or no room for divine mercy once a taboo is crossed.

Supernatural justice in folk legends rarely incorporates the notion of mercy among crimes--such as unprovoked murder and licentious concealment--which threaten the cardinal moral underpinnings of the community. Coleridge was basically describing the psychological dimensions of folk metaphysics in his commentary on Macbeth's interaction with the preternatural: "He has by guilt torn himself live-asunder from nature [. . .] and is, therefore, himself in a preternatural state; no wonder, then, that he is inclined to superstition, and faith in the unknown of signs and tokens, and superhuman agencies."[19] To be subject to supernatural influences is to have transgressed against the natural, or conventional, order of things. Transgressions that open the gate to the otherworld, however, are not limited to violent acts or morbid guilt. The falsification of sacred contracts--documents which combine spiritual principles with material practices--such as marriage, wills, and death warrants are among the transgressions which tend to elicit supernatural retribution.

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[19] Roy Walker, The Time is Free (London: Andrew Dakers Limited, 1949) 117.

But there are other transgressions besides radically antisocial violence and devious socio-economic manipulations that violate communal ethics and send simultaneous shockwaves into the spiritual as well as the material world. Careless dealings with spiritual matters, whether through cursing or not observing caution during the metaphysical borders of time and place, commonly result in negative spiritual reactions. Any disregard for the interface between the material and spiritual world constitutes a disturbance that necessitates a decisive preternatural response. The supernatural functions in folk metaphysics as a cosmological response to a disruption whose effects are simultaneously material and spiritual--thus a supernatural being or event often materializes as a specialized agent whose role is to rebalance Nature, whether it be through punishment or revelation.

Many of Le Fanu's supernatural tales focus on retribution and his use of folklore often results in a clash between the mechanics of folk justice and the Christian tradition. In a phrase, it boils down to this: Faustus cannot repent. Rather than the jarring non sequitur that the last sentence seems to be in this context, the idea of Faust's inability to repent demonstrates the ascendancy of folk justice over the idea of grace. Critics, such as McCormack have identified the lack of salvation in Le Fanu's stories as a sign of Le Fanu's own religious and political doubts:

> Whether doubter or outright sceptic, his self-conscious anxiety about belief barred the way back to his father's harmony of church and sate. Politically he had separated himself from the orthodox party-men, and imaginatively he could not return. Le Fanu's heroes from Marston

> onwards will be moulded by that betrayal; they will lose belief in God [sic] but still fear the Devil [. . .]. [20]

However, one does not need to rely on biography for interpreting the unrelieved terror of satanic threats in Le Fanu's fiction; rather, one finds a similar state of affairs in folk legends concerning the devil.

For, there is no escaping the penalties of the diabolic contract through direct divine intervention: only one's wits and conversance with folk defences are of any use in legendary accounts of such matters.[21] And, these cases of outsmarting the devil are not the most common variety of devil legends. Theologically only true repentance would save Faust or these sinners from the snares of the devil or the effects of their own fleshly sins--of which the devil may be considered a substantive projection. However, it seems that Le Fanu like Marlowe questioned the possibility of a true repentance, or at least the prevalence or feasibility of a successful spiritual conversion when one is faced with the force of carnal appetites.

For now, we will not rush into the satanic compact, but will first consider other instances in Le Fanu's stories which stage the problematics involved in the

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[20] McCormack Sheridan Le Fanu 109.

[21] Religious mediators can provide advice, such as the parson does in "The Devil and the Blacksmith" when he advises the blacksmith not to accept money from the devil, which would have ensnared him in much the same way as a man accepting payment from the fairies. Briggs, Vol. 1, 72. Clergy are often susceptible to the devil's power--particularly the card-playing and hunting variety, as is the case of the seizure of the hunting friar in "The Devil and the Friar" (74), and the murder of the hosting minister to a "party of clergy [. . .] assembled one Sunday night at Plaish playing cards" (73). Schoolmasters are not necessarily duped by the devil, as is Faustus; for instance in "The Devil and the Schoolmaster" the clever master assigns the devil the task of knitting "knots out of a strike of sand" and he is thereby dispelled, after the master's students had foolishly raised the Evil One. H.1021.1 *A Rope of Sand*

tensions between folk justice and conventional theology. The metaphysical ambiguity between the severity and inevitablity of folk justice on the one hand and the hope of divine compassion on the other hand comprise undetermined ground rules; for, the reader is unsure from what moralistic frame the hand of supernatural agency is suspended. This dynamic of spiritual and moral instability adds a further level to the literary fantastic in such stories as "The Vision of Tom Chuff," "The Drunkard's Dream," and "The Spectre Lovers" (a section of "Ghost Stories of Chapelizod").

In "The Vision of Tom Chuff" (1870) we meet an abusive alcoholic who "was a poacher, and hardly made an ostensible pretence of earning his bread by an honest industry. [. . .] He beat his wife, and led his children a life of terror and lamentation [. . .]."[22] The only fairy tale motif here is metaphorical: Tom is an abusive ogre or giant: "His three little children, cowering in a corner, eyed him from under a table, as Jack did the ogre in the nursery tale" (154). The dynamics of the story are oriented towards the legend narrative. Notably, the story takes place on the metaphysical contact zone: "At the edge of melancholy Castean Moor, in the north of England" (153). Moreover, this locale contains the same paradigm of encroaching trees which we encountered in "Green Tea": "with half-a-dozen ancient poplar-trees with rugged and hoary stems around, one smashed across the middle by a flash of lightning thirty summers before, and all by their great height dwarfing the abode near which they stand [. . .] " (153).

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[22] Sheridan Le Fanu, Ghost Stories and Mysteries (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975) 153.

The chief interface between the natural and the supernatural in this literary legend is the mind--the narrator uses the psychological and metaphorical medium of dreams and impressions. The threatening atmosphere of supernatural folklore is articulated through the mundane, but morbid setting of a real-life monster and his victims. It is Tom who is compared to a legendary being from the wild: "he knocked at the door [. . .]. Had the summons been that of a bogie from the moor, the inmates of this small house could hardly have heard it with greater terror" (153). Notably, the idea of the "bogie" is rhetorically posed as a real possibility, rather than the fictional representation of the ogre. Le Fanu's narrator circumscribes fairy tales to the nursery, while maintaining that legends are adult genres--believed by the peasantry if not the educated members of literary salons.

Tom returns home belligerently drunk and falls into a trance where he meets, on the moor, his father's dead spirit which threatens him with a grave marked for him as well as the horrors of hell. But, Tom is granted one more chance by a "venerable man with a snowy beard" (158). Though intent on reform Tom falls into his old ways and his wife, Nelly, dies due to the misery of her existence. Nelly's brother Jack serves as the agent who fulfills Tom's vision of judgment. On the day of the funeral for Nelly Tom is out on the moor--having skipped the funeral--and meets Jack, whom Tom mistakes for the spirit of his father. Terrified, Tom falls into the open grave, which was prepared for Nelly's coffin, and dies.

Besides the prophetic nature of Tom's dream, there is nothing supernatural here--and one may of course argue that the whole of the matter is merely the workings of a guilty conscience coupled with an unusual coincidence in the manner

of his death. When Tom beholds the moor that has "the sky and scenery of his vision," the inner sight overpowers the outer: "His dream was returning and slowly enveloping him. Everything he saw was weaving itself into the texture of his vision" (162). The fantastic is circumscribed in Tom Chuff's mind. Or rather, it would be, except that the narrator notes that this story becomes a circulating legend--thus the metaphysical interpretation of Tom Chuff's experience is arbitrated by more than one audience: his story becomes a cultural text, not simply a personal one.

The function of this legend is superficially homiletic. The didactic narrator emphasizes the potentially spiritually edifying effects of hearing this tale: "it appeals to what many would term superstition, it yet sounded, in the ears of a rude and simple audience, a thrilling, and let us hope, not altogether fruitless homily" (163). Besides the conventional denigration of mere "superstition" by the enlightened narrator, this passage in its tentative and condescending hope that improved moral behavior will ensue from the relation of this legend to the peasantry underscores the ambiguity of the morality that this story offers. For, like Faust, we must ask, why can't Tom repent? And, what is the role of conventional religion in Tom's failure to alter his ways?

The narrator's explanation for this conundrum is the following:

> Impressions upon the imagination, however, are but transitory, and a bad man acting under fear is not a free agent; his real character does not appear. But as the images of the imagination fade, and the action of fear abates, the essential qualities of the man reassert themselves. (160)

In other words, Tom's vision was devoid of power to alter his true nature. In fact, the narrator's exposition suggests that the admonitory vision eventually works towards intensifying Tom's misbehavior: 'in a little time came a relapse, and another repentance, and then a relapse again, and gradually the returns of old habits [. . .] with more violence and gloom, in proportion as the man was alarmed and exasperated by the remembrance of his despised, but terrible warning" (160). Thus, the vision has bred only bitterness and belligerence in the reprobate. Clearly then, there was not the divine power of grace to change Tom through this experience--despite the appearance of the "venerable man" who the narrator obliquely relates to the spiritual allegories of John Bunyan (158). Psychologically, Tom may merely be guiltily conjuring the ghost of his father, as perhaps did Hamlet; metaphysically, Tom is doomed by his character and marked for damnation. And, his father is eager to welcome this corrupt son to the torments of the otherworld.

Inevitable, numinous, merciless punishment and vengeance, even upon those who successfully reform, are common conclusions in supernatural folk legends that involve transgressions, and "The Vision of Tom Chuff" maintains this dynamic. In "The Doom" collected by Lady Wilde from Galway, a young man is cursed by a priest for his "wicked life" (74), and though James Lynan's later life "was a model of sobriety and order" he perishes by being blasted by the fairies (75).[23] Thus, in the folk imagination, not only can the fairies serve as instruments of divine punishment, but "the doom of the priest is as the word of God" (76)--such curses are unavoidable. The very haphazard nature of the death of Tom is also reflected in prophecies of

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[23] Henry Glassie, ed., Irish Folk Tales (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

death and punishment. For instance in one of the legends anthologized by Briggs,"The Sailor's Dream," a sailor claims that the devil visits him at sea three times warning that he will die in three days--despite protests by the crew at this foolish morbidity, the sailor dies, by accident, on the very day portended.[24]

Le Fanu further develops the theme of visionary prophecies and impossible repentance in "The Drunkard's Dream," where the titular character, Pat Connell, experiences a similar vision where he promises to return to hell, and so receives a temporary reprieve. Pat does in fact cease his drinking, yet like James Lynan of "The Doom," Pat faces a grim version of folk justice and perishes after what seems to be an isolated relapse, rather than the more entrenched devolution of Tom Chuff.

Morally, "The Drunkard's Dream" is even more subversive than "Tom Chuff." The narrator, a minister, who hears Pat's whole tale, though skeptical of the objective truth of the vision, seeks to reform Pat through his superstition:

> however clear might be my internal conviction of the groundlessness of his fears, and however strong my scepticism respecting the reality of what he had described, I nevertheless felt that his impression [. . .] and terror [. . .] might be made available as no mean engines in the work of his conversion from profligacy [. . .]. I therefore told him that he was to regard his dream rather in the light of a warning than in that of a prophecy; that our salvation depended not upon the word or deed of a moment, but upon the habits of a life. (171)

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[24] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales--Folk Legends Vol. 1., (London: Routledge, 1991) 134.

Yet it is precisely the "deed of a moment" that directly precedes Pat's death--he alters the "habits" of his life to no avail. Despite these grand claims for the potential of salvation, the clergyman himself later states that alcoholic addiction overpowers conscious repentance: "who can tell the moment in which the base and ruinous propensity may not recur, triumphing over resolution, remorse, shame, everything [. . .] " (172). The long-absent friend who invites Pat to the public house may very well be a tool of the devil in this story. Pat's own wife claims that a second figure was with him before he fell, or was pushed, down the stairs of the house--exactly where he had sank during his vision of descending to hell.

Thus, liquor and the powers of circumstance--apparently monitored closely by Satan, as in the "Sailor's Dream"--overpower the ministrations of the clergy and the resolutions of the will in Le Fanu's bleak vision of human susceptibility to vice: "I felt I was his [Satan] own, to do what he liked with" (170). The narrator's skepticism of the sinister supernatural is shaken, and his metaphysical hesitation simultaneously reinforces the moral severity of a universe so unforgiving that a repentant sinner is inextricably damned by prior experience: "Was the dream verified [. . .] who can say? We know not [. . .] . The coincidence was terrible" (173). Unlike Tom, Pat's vice never results in abusing others--since even the clergyman can see no justice in the outcome, we must consider what ethical framework Le Fanu is appealing to. Or rather, is he asserting the injustice of everyday life where repentance and willful redemption are not necessarily recognized by the cruel course of random events? If so, it is fitting that Le Fanu would turn to folk metaphysics, where death and disaster

may choose their victims randomly--as in the "The Sailor's Dream," and yet prove inescapable despite such injustice.

The prophetic nature of the utterances and exigency of the commands of supernatural beings, such as the devil in "The Sailor's Dream" and "The Drunkard's Dream" is a common feature of folk metaphysics. In "The Spectre Lovers" there is again an ethical conflict between the inexorable nature of folk justice and moral conscience or sensitivity. Just as the minister's mind revolts from the idea that Pat could be damned irrevocably in "The Drunkard's Dream," so Peter in "The Spectre Lovers" defies the claims of spirits that he deems immoral--a choice that spells his doom.

Peter gradually discovers that the strange "officer" and "lady " he meets are ghosts and though he is eager to do their bidding to gain their "lost treasure," he loses his nerve when gleaning that they had murdered their child: "he saw the faint image of a new-born child [. . .] and a smile so heavenly [. . .]. At sight of this [. . .[his heart entirely failed him, he looked on the figures that stood near, and beheld them gazing on the infantine form with a smile so guilty and distorted, that he felt as if he were entering alive among the scenery of hell" (132-133). Peter abjures the ghosts in "the name of God," later learns that he has indeed met a ghostly couple guilty of infanticide, but dies mysteriously in an accident while supposedly attempting to find the treasure he had sworn to ignore, because it had come from tainted hands (133-135). Peter's death seems to be a result of the clash of Christian and folk metaphysics. For, there are various legends of fortune-hunters gaining treasure by

heeding the commands of ghosts.[25] But, Peter was ethically repelled by the sight of child-murderers, and thus refused to submit to the demands of the ghosts, and so his later venture for treasure was both hypocritical, impious, and cursed by supernatural agency.

Le Fanu's stories emphasize that inevitable consequences follow the violation of social norms: actions incur grave reactions. His use of the supernatural relies upon versions of folk justice found in British legends of ghosts and devils. The addition that Le Fanu makes to the vengeful tendencies of folk justice is psychological--he portrays the tenaciousness of guilt and the obsessive recidivism towards destructive habits of behavior, whether avarice, violence, or alcohol, which plagues human sovereignty. Le Fanu's moral renderings of folk beliefs illustrate the chaotic forces dwelling within us that threaten to drag us down into our own private hells where no spiritual aid can reach us.

Educated Antiquarians, and Superstitious Informants in Le Fanu

Le Fanu often uses folk beliefs to polarize peasant and elite cultures, as he does in "Carmilla," only to then dissolve those borders by presenting fantastic events that educated metaphysicians and religious authorities, such as Dr. Hesselius and Rev. Jennings, corroborate through their testimonies and theories based on book-learning. One of the figures that Le Fanu commonly employs as a middleman between elite and

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[25] In "Geordie McPhee," for example, the sole purpose of the ghost is to expose the hidden gold in a mill. Apparently the dead cannot rest with unexposed secrets. E.371 *Return*

folk cultures is the antiquarian--a persona that M.R. James also frequently adopts. Collecting legends and memorats is of interest to Le Fanu's antiquarians because of their historical passions, rather than metaphysical interest. Yet the embedded legend narratives that these scholars offer illustrate more than picturesque pastimes and idle beliefs. A rhetorical tug-of-war characterizes the tension between enlightened antiquarian and unruly peasant in many of Le Fanu's stories, where the peasant's voice inevitably gains ground over the shocked protests, sneering rebukes, grudging wonder, or earnest admiration, of the narrator.

"The Spectre Lovers," which is the final segment of the series of stories entitled "Ghost Stories of Chapelizod," and "The Ghost and the Bone-Setter" exemplify the struggle between antiquarian and informant that is present in much of Le Fanu's works. In "Ghost Stories of Chapelizod" Le Fanu introduces this set of supposedly local legends by emphasizing that the village of Chapelizod supports his claim that "there is no such thing as an ancient village, especially if it has seen better days, unillustrated by its legends of terror" (116). His introductory paragraph broaches the subject of folklore with a tone that is typical of Le Fanu's urbane narrators of the anomalous: "You might as well expect to find a decayed cheese without mites, or an old house without rats, as an antique and dilapidated town without an authentic population of goblins" (116). At once condescending yet fascinated, balancing enthusiasm for such superstitious peasant fare with sophisticated irony, the narrator appears to be a man who considers his collecting of folklore a quaint, yet culturally intriguing, occupation of leisure:

From Dead to Reveal Hidden Treasure E. 451.5 *Ghost Laid When Treasure is Unearthed*

> And I am persuaded that a Commission to inquire into and report upon the numerical strength, habits, haunts, etc., etc., of supernatural agents resident in Ireland, would be a great deal more innocent and entertaining than half the Commissions for which the country pays, and at least as instructive. This I say, more from a sense of duty, and to deliver my mind of a grave truth, rather than with any hope of seeing the suggestion adopted. But, I am sure, my readers will deplore with me that [. . .] the collection of that species of information should be confided to the gratuitous and desultory labours of individuals, who, like myself, have other occupations to attend to. (117)

Le Fanu's narrators are often, in fact, amateur folklorists, or what was known in the nineteenth century as investigators of popular antiquities--antiquarians. Le Fanu writes with an awareness of developing British interest in folklore, and his narrators in their ambivalence of condescension and fascination exemplify the attitudes of many nineteenth century folklorists. In other words, part of the cultural clash that occurs in Le Fanu's ghost and fairy stories is the conflict between the civilized antiquarian and the unruly peasant, whose tales the collector is eager to grasp.

In fact, the very location in which this antiquarian narrator gathers folklore is unruly. Chapelizod itself was historically a nexus for Christian and Pagan traditions, as Williams explains":

> The name "Chapelizod" derives from a Gaelic, and not an Anglo-Saxon, mythic female figure, thereby signaling Chapelizod's two

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Briggs, Vol.1, 458-459.

> histories, one "native" and Irish, the other colonial and Anglo-Irish. [. . .] Revolt lies just beneath the symbolic order established by Anglo-Irish power, in the uncontrollable, feminized past which is 'Irishness.' (131). [. . .] Le Fanu demonstrates a persistent concern with space, the space that the Protestant Ascendancy marks off for itself with religious, political, and social boundaries, and the space that this same class imagines existing just beyond the boundaries, the "native" Irish space. Concern with identifying these spaces is a sign of Le Fanu's engagement with both colonial discourse and Anglo-Irish colonial power during a period of gradual liberalization of British policy in Ireland. (132)

The same problem remains with Williams' interpretation here as with her analysis of "Carmilla"--the class tensions in Le Fanu's ghost stories underscore "uncontrollable" qualities not in the natives but in the otherworldly gentry (as we shall see later in his fairy stories), arguably stand-ins for the Protestant Ascendancy itself. Not to mention, much that is "uncontrollable" in Le Fanu's tales is male impulsiveness, which diminishes the authority of Williams's claim "that uncontrollable, feminized past which is 'Irishness'" is the primary ethos of Le Fanu's use of the supernatural in his Gothic works.

"The Ghost and the Bone-Setter," like James Hogg's Confessions, Shelley's Frankenstein, and Stoker's Dracula, this story's evocation of the literary fantastic depends partly on the ambiguity of the document--there are multiple layers to the narrative. The narrative persona in this case is the friend of the departed "country

priest" Francis Purcell, whose will "put me in possession of all his manuscript papers" (182). Similar to Dr. Hesselius's secretary, this anonymous friend, a priest, offers a "document" which he deems of interest from among the dead man's papers. With an antiquarian interest comparable to that of the narrator of "Ghost Stories of Chapelizod," this "*residuary legatee*" vouches for the folkloric authenticity of Purcell's "story":

> the superstition [. . .] that the corpse last buried is obliged, during his juniority of interment, to supply his brother tenants of the churchyard in which he lies, with fresh water to allay the burning thirst of purgatory, is prevalent throughout the south of Ireland. The writer can vouch for a case in which a respectable and wealthy farmer, on the borders of Tipperary, in tenderness to the corns of his departed helpmate, enclosed in her coffin two pair of brogues, a light and a heavy, the one for dry, the other for sloppy weather; seeking thus to mitigate the fatigues of her inevitable perambulations in procuring water, and administering it to the thirsty souls of purgatory. (182-183)

The "writer" thereby becomes a legend-informant and witness to the fact that it is not simply unrespectable and poor people who believe such things, but the "respectable and wealthy" as well. Thus, the various narrators in the story, even in the static state of print, stage a dialogic presentation of folk beliefs that belies any model of petrified opposition between the elite and the folk.

The third narrative strand establishes the main tension between collector and informant and is the voice of Purcell's educated peasant storyteller himself, though mediated by the memory of Purcell:

> I tell the following particulars, as nearly as I can recollect them, in the words of the narrator. [. . .] a *well-spoken* man, having for a considerable time instructed the ingenious youth of his native parish [. . .] a circumstance which may account for the occurrence of several big words [. . .] more distinguished for euphonious effect, than for correctness of applications I proceed then [. . .] to lay before you the wonderful adventures of Terry Neil." (183)

Immediately following this preface, Terry Neil's own colloquial accents, represented through orthographic approximations, tell the story, as well as establishing the tale as a family legend--a fourth narrative strand, which attests to the traditional nature of the story:

> "Why, thin, 'tis a quare story, an' as thrue as you're sittin' there; and I'd make buld to say there isn't a boy in the seven parishes could tell it better nor crickther than myself, for 'twas my father himself it happened to, an'many's the time I heerd it out iv his own mouth; an I can say, an' I'm proud av that same, my father's word was as incredible as any squire's oath in the counthry; and so signs an' if a poor man got into any unlucky throuble, he was the boy id go into the court an' prove; but that dosen't signify--he was an honest and as sober a man, barrin' he was a little bit too partial to the glass, as you'd find in a day's

> walk; an' there wasn't the likes of him in the counthry round for nate labourin' [. . .] he tuck up with bone-setting." (183)

Purcell's preface prepares the reader for such malapropisms as the squire's "incredible" oath. This is not simply a humorous misuse of language, but a subtle subversion of the pretensions of the folk narrator. While Terry is overtly asserting the veracity of his tale by appealing to the integrity of his father--also called Terry Neil--by his malapropisms and digressions, he conveys a narrative that conflicts with his intentions. Though Terry emphasizes the equality between his father's "oath" and any "squire," the malapropism belies this bold assertion of the working class's honor. Yet, one can also read beyond Terry's intentions and interpret the phrase as subversive to the pretensions of squires as well as laborers--for if both their oaths are not believable then little honor resides with either class. Other traces of class tension are in the subject matter of the story--the squire's ghost is a corrupt and ridiculous spirit--as well as the oblique parallel between the epithet "your honour," used by Terry's father to address the dead squire, and by Terry towards the priest Purcell. The identical term of reverence gradually becomes ironic, since the squire's ghost is clearly dishonorable, and therefore the term's weight of respect for the priest is similarly diminished. In other words, this might be the tale of a drunken fool, but the priest, the secretary, and the enlightened reader are not above the foolishness either.

Terry's attempts to present his father as a credible tale-bearer fall short, not only because of his malapropisms, but due to his contradictory claims. For, in the same breath that he asserts his father is "sober" he admits he was "too partial to the glass"--thus, as is often the case with literary renderings of folk legends, alcohol

serves as a rationale for the perceptions of the fantastic. Just as Peter in "The Spectre Lovers" had partaken of "at least a pint of good whiskey" before his experience with the ghosts, so Terry's father "dhrunk about a pint of sperits [sic], to compose his mind" when watching over the supposedly haunted castle of Squire Phalim (185). Therefore, even while formally presenting the voice of the peasantry in a respectful fashion, Le Fanu 's narrative framework, ironically subordinates the claims of veracity in this particular ghost story.

Le Fanu's satirical presentation of Terry Neil's tale in "The Ghost and the Bone-Setter" is not exactly an exclusionary gesture towards peasant storytellers, but is rather in harmony with the overall style of the story. For instance, Le Fanu satirizes the now well-known Gothic convention of the pictures that disturbingly move in a painting: "lookin' now an' thin at the picthur, an' he immediately observed that the eyes av it was follin' him about, an' starin at him, an' winkin' at him, wherever he wint" (186). Ivan Melada points out the Gothic precedent to Le Fanu's use of the fantastic here in Sheridan Le Fanu: "A figure stepping out of a portrait is a stock occurrence in the Gothic novel; an instance of it is found in Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764)" (14). This winking portrait of the squire is absurdly funny, not frightening, as is the entire story. The squire's ghost eventually emerges from the picture, drinks Terry Sr.'s whiskey, and demands that Terry mend his broken leg because he is the legendary water-bearer in purgatory and his feeble leg hinders him (187-188). By recourse to holy water, Terry manages to deprive the phantom of his ghostly leg altogether, and thus, in keeping with the sometimes very literal folk imagination, the ghost "was never known to walk again" (188). Instead of suggesting

an innovative absurdity--a ghost dependent on natural movement--traditional ghosts sometimes are fundamentally dependent on and vulnerable to the laws of physical objects.[26] Thus, Ivan Melada shows a lack of awareness of folk traditions by his criticism of "The Familiar" that the "corporeality" of the ghost "undercuts his credibility" (97).

Given the multiple layers of narrative effects in this representation of a supposed folk legend it is surprising that McCormack asserts that the tale is an example of how Le Fanus' early use of folklore was simplistic:

> those first stories which Le Fanu had published in the D.U.M. [Dublin University Magazine] thirty years earlier [before In a Glass Darkly 1872] elements of folklore intruded only to provide a comic or pseudo-Gothic effect; fears of Purgatory and graveside battles were transformed into the cosy humour of 'The Ghost and the Bonesetter.' (239)

Despite McCormack's earlier perceptive comment on the competing traditional and literary narratives in "The Fortunes of Robert Ardagh," it appears that his analytic eye

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[26] While I have not found an exact parallel to Le Fanu's story of a ghost wanting its leg healed, there are legends overtly concerned with a ghost recovering its body fully intact. For instance in "Sammle's Ghost"(Briggs, Vol 1. 563) Sammle must recover his various body parts to be eaten up by the Big Worm (death) in order to leave the material world. Unfortunately he can't find one nail and thus is doomed to wander forever. Briggs believes this belief explains the following motif: E. 235.4 *Return From Dead to Punish Theft of Part of Corpse*. Besides being concerned over their specific body parts, some ghosts care about physical warmth, E.578.1 *Revenants Want to Warm Themselves*; others wish to have some vestments, E.341.4 *Ghost Grateful For Clothes*. Both international motifs apply to "The Old Lady of Littledean" collected in Scotland--this old lady ghost is "touched" by a resident's cleaning of her cold, wet shoes. Ghosts have trouble with some physical obstacles, such as crossing water (such as "The Green Lady" who asks to be carried over the stream--Briggs, Vol2. 489), and can also be wounded by physical means: D1385.4. *Silver Bullet Protects Against Giants, Ghosts, etc.*

is not consistently focused on folkoric operations. However, it is important to note that these "fears of Purgatory and graveside battles" which are the premise for the ghost's desire for a mended leg is that he has been doomed to be the water bearer in purgatory. This is a belief that McCormack and other critics, such as Melada, have learned was a living tradition while Fanu lived:

> According to superstition, the last person buried in a churchyard was obliged to carry water to the souls in purgatory of those previously buried there. With two funerals on the same day, the competition over who would be buried first was intense. William Le Fanu [Joseph Le Fanu's brother] vividly recalls one such competition in his neighborhood, which ended in bloodshed. Two funeral processions approached Abington Churchyard from different directions. The band of mourners farthest from the entrance took a short cut across a field adjoining the burial ground and lifted their coffin over the churchyard wall before the other procession could get in through the gate. "This was counted such sharp practice, " remarks William Le Fanu, "that they were at once attacked by the other party, and a battle royal ensued."[27]

Le Fanu, while apparently having little interest or respect for Gaelic mythology, which was such a fundamental attraction to the Irish Literary Renaissance, clearly was well acquainted with so-called "antiquarian lore" along the lines of family

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[27] Ivan Melada, Sheridan Le Fanu (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987) 5-6.

legends, local traditions, etc.[28] Le Fanu's knowledge of legendary material sometimes surpassed his knowledge of local history; in one of his "Ghost Stories of Chapelizod" which use "traditions recalled from his childhood" Le Fanu made a major faux pas:

> I was very much flattered by your appreciation of my Chapelizod Ghost Stories & was yesterday rather shocked by McGlashan [now the publisher of the D. U. M.] shewing [sic] me a letter from Sam O'Sullivan asking, 'why has Le Fanu killed bob Martin who is now alive & well & filling his vocation as Sexton [?]' The possibility of this had struck me when I introduced him but I scouted it, for I remember him when I was a child, an old man. There can be no doubt that the story is a horrid libel on him & I live in daily expectation of a message.[29]

Le Fanu's dual position as an antiquarian himself and yet hardly a stranger to folk culture enabled him to deftly portray the varying narrative styles and belief systems of the collector and informant. The rhetorical conflict between the educated narrator and the emphatic orator figures as a significant strategy for producing the fantastic in Le Fanu's stories. Le Fanu's use of humor mocks both peasant and patrician, subordinating social authority to the aesthetic demands of a rousing tale.

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[28] McCormack describes Le Fanu's lack of interest in Gaelic material. Sheridan Le Fanu, 243. Melada describes how Samueal Carter Hall, "author of a travel book on Ireland" praised Joseph and his brother William as "full of anecdote and rich in antiquarian lore, with thorough knowledge of Irish peculiariaties. They aided us largely in the preparation of our book, Ireland: Its Scenery and Character." 5.

[29] McCormack 120.

"Grand Ladies," "The Gentry," and "Good Neighbors": Folkloric Representations of Class and Racial Tensions in Le Fanu

Besides the subtle irreverence of the jests of "The Ghost and the Bone-Setter," Le Fanu includes darker folkloric representations of class, as well as racial, tensions. In "Laura Silver Bell" there are parallels between the seductions of lower class women by irresponsible aristocrats and the traditions of fairy seduction. In this tale a fairy suitor persuades Laura, a young woman particularly susceptible to supernatural attacks because she has never been baptized, that he is a young lord and she should be his wife. At least three traditional narrative strands are wound into Le Fanu's story: the suitor pretends to be wealthy, is a "demon lover," and the last sight of Laura is by Mother Carke who plays the role, in this case, as midwife to the fairies.[30] Laura's gullibility is a manifestation of her materialism--she values wealth: "I keeked at him under my lashes and a conny lad he is, to my teyaste, though he be dressed in black, wi' sword and sash, velvet twice as fine as they sells in the shop at Gouden Friars" (98). Laura puts a high price on this "lad" due to his apparent possessions. The fairy in fact is an impoverished being--materially and spiritually--and Le Fanu presents his poverty as an outward sign of his essential malignance, as Mother Carke's words

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[30] The deceit of this fairy lover is reminiscent of the tale-type 859 *The Penniless Bridegroom Pretends to Wealth* Stith Thompson, The Types of the Folktale (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961) 289. Tales of human midwives are among the "commonest types of fairy anecdote" according to Briggs. Folk Legends B:1 175

suggest: "What was he like? Was his feyace grimed wi' sut? a tall fella wi' wide shouthers, and lukt like an ill-thing, wi' black clothes amist in rags?" Appearing wealthy and noble to naïve Laura, but the contrary to wise Mother Carke, the fairy's concrete deception is primarily masquerading as a wealthy man when he is a poor one.

The seduction of the peasant girl by the aristocratic rake is a common motif in English literature, from Fielding's Pamela to Eliot's Adam Bede and Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles. It is Hetty especially, with her hopes for socio-economic advancement through marriage, whom Laura resembles: "Hetty's dreams were all of luxuries [. . .] t o have some large beautiful earrings, such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace [. . .] " (100). Eliot compares Hetty's dreams to marry the lord Arthur Donnithorne to that of the "baker's pretty daughter" who "dreams of the handsome young emperor" (100). While Eliot asserts that neither Hetty nor the baker's daughter, at this point in the story, believe they will have their desired mate, the very comparison between Hetty and this baker's daughter--with the medieval and romantic associations-- invokes the discourse of fairy tales. And in fairy tales--märchen--such unions are possible, where the clever peasant girl may win the hand of the prince.[31] However, the genre of legend typically adheres closer to the sterner realities of life, than the märchen. Just as in the realistic discourse of Eliot, Hetty is deceived in her hopes of marriage, so also in Le Fanu's metaphorical and folkloric representation of realism does Laura's dream become a nightmare. When Mother Carke answers the demands of a "tall gentleman" to "attend Lady Lairdale, who was

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[31] 870A *The Little Goose-Girl* and 875 *The Clever Peasant Girl*. Thompson.

about to give birth" she discovers the true state of Laura's domestic affairs: "Old Mall Carke recognized in the faded half-starved creature who lay on the bed, as dark now and grimy as the man, and looking as if she had never in her life washed hands or face, the once blithe and pretty Laura Lew" (102-103).

Dickens's Compeyson, who deceives Miss Havisham in Great Expectations, by pretending to be a gentleman, is another analogous figure to compare with Laura's fairy lord. As Magwitch says of Compeyson to Pip, he "set up fur a gentleman [. . .]. [. . .] was a smooth one to talk [. . .] a dab at the ways of a gentlefolks. He was good-looking, too" (372). Both male figures, from Dickens and Le Fanu, pretend to wealth and manners in order to drain a woman of her resources. In the case of Miss Havisham, it is money the man is after, while with Laura it is her power of generation: "In due time the poor woman's pains were over, and a daughter was born. Such an imp [. . .]. It instantly began to yell and talk in some unknown language" (103). Though Le Fanu does not overtly present the tradition, the emphasis on the offspring of Laura suggests that the fairy man's motivation was to strengthen the fairy race through human blood.

Le Fanu's story is not unique in representing fairies as aristocratic; in fact, there are many tales of fairies who appear as ladies and gentlemen--one of the common epithets for the fairies in Ireland, is "the gentry." In addition, the romantic attraction of Laura for her fairy man has precedents--there are numerous legends of servant women and girls who become infatuated with their fairy masters, who appear

as noble gentlemen.[32] What is unprecedented is Le Fanu's portrayal of the fairy lover as sinister primarily through his socioeconomic deception. Fairyland in Le Fanu's vision is not the beautiful land of supernatural beings beneath or beyond the sea, nor a hidden world of riches underground. Rather, the fairy dwelling is but a mere hovel where the stolen bride, tempted by the riches and status of a lord, meets a life no better than if she were married to an abusive drunkard like Tom Chuff. Le Fanu's description of the impoverished fairy abode uses the imagery of death and physical deformity: "a miserable building of loose stone, with a thatch so sunk and rotten, that the roof-tree and couples protrude in crooked corners, like the bones of the wretched horse, with enormous head and ears, that dragged them to the door" (103). This portrait conjoins spiritual death with material poverty--reversing the typical opulence of fairylore and implicitly asserting that the degraded conditions of real-life destitution are more fearsomely supernatural, or unnatural, than legends of the otherworld. Laura has not entered fairyland; she has entered a slum.

Le Fanu's story "The Child That Went With The Fairies," demonstrates, as does "Laura Silver Bell," the impressive versatility of Le Fanu's use of folk beliefs regarding the fairies, as well as engagement with imperialist imagery. The latter story shapes fairylore into a nightmarish vision of deceitful male seducers who oppress lower class women into a virtual death of crippling childbirth and poverty, while the former tale synthesizes fairy traditions, class tensions, and xenophobia of the other races at the borders of the British empire.

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[32] Two examples include "Cherry of Zennor" and "The Fairy Widower" Briggs, Folk Legends.

"The Child That Went With The Fairies" focuses on the *stolen child* motif from folk legends--fairies steal human children. The renowned Irish folklorist Sean O'Sullivan testifies to the prevalence of this legend in Folktales of Ireland:

> It was a common belief in Irish oral tradition that the fairies were continually trying to abduct newborn children (usually males) to replenish their own fairy population, and that they also took young mothers into fairyland to suckle such abducted children. The Irish Folklore Commission has thousands of tales illustrating this belief. (273)[33]

The legend may well represent the anxiety that many parents have that other people will take their children, and such is sometimes the case--this is not a groundless fear. In Le Fanu's story this anxiety is coupled with distrust of the upper classes and dark-skinned foreigners. Having violated the taboo of being outdoors at twilight, the children of the "widow named Mary Ryan" are vulnerable (136). The eldest daughter Nell is "infected" by the "terrors" of her mother, "many stories had she listened to by the winter hearth, of children stolen by the fairies, at nightfall" (138). Nell goes out to look for the children and discovers them "approaching [. . .] from the direction of the dreaded hill of Lisnavoura" but "only two of the children, and one of them, the little girl was crying" (138): "'He's gone away with the grand ladies,' blubbered the little girl" (139).

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[33] O' Sullivan's comments come from his notes to the tale "The Children of the Dead Woman" recorded in 1935. Sean O'Sullivan, ed., Folktales of Ireland (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966).

Amongst the many epithets for the fairies in Ireland, the "good neighbors," "good people," "gentry," and "sidhe," there is no equivalent to the "grand ladies." However, the term "gentry" associates the aristocracy with the fairies, and in the historical imagination of Ireland it is possible that the fairies represent to some degree the memory of the Celtic nobility who developed numerous kingdoms. Notably, the early Celts supposedly had blond hair, fairies themselves are often described as having blond hair (F.233.5 *Fairies have golden hair*) and the British fairies in general, according to Briggs, have a penchant for human children with blond hair, as is the case in this story:[34]

> The children were so frightened [. . .]. But a very sweet voice from the open window of the carriage reassured them [. . .]. A beautiful and "very grand-looking" lady was smiling from it on them [. . .]. "The boy with the golden hair, I think," said the lady [. . .]. The upper sides of the carriage were chiefly of glass, so that the children could see another woman inside, whom they did not like so well. This was a black woman, with a wonderfully long neck, hung round with many strings of large variously-coloured beads, and on her head was a sort of turban of silk striped with all the colours of the rainbow, and fixed in it was a golden star. This black woman had a face as thin almost as a death's-head, with high cheekbones, and great goggle eyes, the

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[34] See for example "The Gold-Haired Girl of Unst" in Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary [. . .] Folk Legends, where she notes at the end that among other "fairy beliefs, which are not fully covered by the Motif Index" is "the fairies' love of golden-haired children" 258.

> whites of which, as well her wide range of teeth, showed in brilliant contrast with her skin, as she looked over the beautiful lady's shoulder, and whispered something in her ear. "Yes; the boy with the golden hair, I think," repeated the lady. (140)

Out of context, one would have no idea this is a story about a child "that went with the fairies." Instead of supernatural beings, Le Fanu presents a vaguely beautiful aristocratic woman and a black woman whose physique and apparel suggests the exoticism of both India and Africa. Le Fanu never clearly describes the "grand-looking" lady--her beauty presumably is conventionally British--but instead focuses on the black woman whose sinister appearance, compared to a "death's head," signifies the evil behind the fair lady's charming overtures to the child. When the grand lady takes the child "the other children would have been only too happy to change places with their favoured little brother. There was only one thing that was unpleasant [. . .] that was the black woman" (141).

Concentrating evil in the racially different is a well-known feature of literature in our era of post-colonial discourse. Yet Le Fanu's presentation is not wholly so one-dimensional--both female figures are evil here. For, the beauty of the lead fairy-woman, referred to as "the princess" is merely skin-deep (140): "the lady was so beautiful they looked on her instead" (141). The events that follow and the narrator's emphasis on the response of the children implies that their apprehension of evil is naïve. The princess's conventional and stunning beauty is far more insidious than the strangeness of the dark-skinned woman. The evocative racial dynamic between the exoticism of the black woman and the alien nature of the fairies is reciprocal. On the

one hand, the obvious racial difference of the black woman from the children underscores that the fairies are a very different race than humans. On the other hand, Le Fanu's presentation of the supernatural nature of the fairies and their antipathy towards humanity demonizes racial difference by depicting a black woman as the signifier of the fairies' evil.

Le Fanu's portraiture of these fairy abductors combines old legends with more recent Victorian cultural anxieties--infusing the unease of new human blood, as it were, into the long-standing fear of fairies. The specter of mundane miscegenation appears to hover nearby the idea that fairies steal children to "replenish their own fairy population." Metaphysically, another potential motive for fairies to seek out human intercourse is that the fairies traditionally are denied Christian salvation because they are not included with the human flock. As the priest tells a group of fairies in "The Blood of Adam" who inquire, "if you have any drop of Adam's blood in your veins, you have as good a chance of Heaven as any man, but if you have not, then you have no right to Heaven."[35] If all it takes is a drop of human blood for salvation then interbreeding is a reasonable solution for the fairies.

Glassie claims that this belief that the fairies are not to be saved derives from the "general belief that fairies are fallen angels. It is a Christiansen migratory legend type 5050, common in Norway" (346). While William Carleton corroborates Glassie's assertion that the genesis of the fairies is commonly ascribed in Ireland to the war in heaven where those angels who "stood timidly aloof, and refused to join either power" were cast down to earth, there are other competing versions of fairy

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[35] Glassie 150.

genesis in Ireland.[36] Besides diminished versions of early deities, the fairies are sometimes considered to be the hidden children of Eve, or offspring of Lilith, a tradition which is also "common in Norway," though Glassie does not mention it.[37] Considering that Carleton's "Prophecy Man" mentions the "winged woman that flewn to the wildherness," though the folk prophet's explanation serves as an allegory for Protestant and Catholic conflicts, it is most likely this "winged woman" is Lilith.[38] For, as Patai points out in The Hebrew Goddess, Lilith's connection with the wilderness is clear in Isaiah 34:14 "describing Yahweh's day of vengeance, when the land will be turned into a desolate wilderness"--it is said that "Lilith shall repose there" (222-223) As for Lilith's wings, in the Talmud it states "that she had wings" and her ability to fly is described in numerous Jewish accounts (223). Regardless, given the cultural exchange between Norway and Ireland recognized, among others, by Christiansen and Glassie, suffice to say, it is most likely that Lilith was known among the country people in Victorian Ireland. Lilith's penchant for stealing and devouring children may even be one of the forces lurking behind fears of fairy abduction.

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[36] William Carleton, Tales and Sketches, Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of The Irish Peasantry, 1845 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980) 72.

[37] See "The Origin of the Huldre-folk:the Huldre Minister" and "The Origin of the Huldre-Folk:the Hidden Children of Eve" 89-92 in Reidar Christiansen, Folktales of Norway. Also see on 87-88 Christiansen points to his article that stresses the similarities between "Norwegian and Gaelic beliefs about the remption of fairies" "Gaelic and Norse Folklore," Folklive, II (1938), 330.

[38] William Carleton, Tales and Sketches [. . .] 218-219.

Thus, a vast and rich network of traditions exists that describe the racial and metaphysical tensions between fairies and humans. Rather than directly representing the various legendary strands--if Le Fanu even knew them all--Le Fanu instead assimilates the multiple beliefs of the sinister difference of fairies from humans into a single figure in "The Child that Went With the Fairies." The black woman not only embodies East Indian and Africa features, but serves by her alien and morbid appearance to represent the archetypal figure of difference for a British readership: female, dark-skinned, and supernatural.

Although the presentation of racial tensions distinguishes "The Child that Went With the Fairies" topically from "Laura Silver Bell," both works are examples of Le Fanu's rendering of fairylore to emphasize class conflicts. In fact, one might categorize the two stories as great expectations gone awry--the child favored by the "grand ladies" finds his elevated benefactors bring him no good. Returning briefly to his family, the young boy "was barefoot and ragged, and looked pale and famished"--a state of degradation similar to Laura's (142). Yet, like the duplicitous "lord" who courted Laura with all the accoutrements of wealth, "a coach and four horses, with gold-laced footmen, and coachman in wig and cocked hat" (102), so too the fairies charm young Billy with visions of fortune. Billy beholds a "carriage drawn by four horses" which was to him and the other "children, who had never seen anything finer than a turf car [. . .] a spectacle perfectly dazzling" (140). Clearly though, like Laura, Billy does not benefit from this presentation of opulence.

Le Fanu shows in "The Child that Went with the Fairies" and "Laura Silver Bell" the destructive temptation of wealth and status to the indigent. Aristocrats and

fairies cast a deceptive glamour upon the peasantry that charms them to submit to their supposed social betters; then the poor country people discover their maidens are undone and their children stolen. Had Laura and Billy been less awed by the vision of riches their fairy visitors presented, then they would have stood a chance against the spiritual--and material-- poverty that lay under the superficial display. Notably, however, both Laura and Billy are poor villagers who have little hope of social advancement beyond their own parish. Rather than a märchen-like union of happily ever after, the solicitations of the otherworld in these two stories result in familial disruption and greater poverty for the objects of fairy desire. Such a downward spiral due to the spiritual beings of folk beliefs reveals the debt of Le Fanu's bleak supernatural mechanics to the dynamics of folk legends.

Le Fanu's Narrative Morality and the Metaphysical Contact Zone

Not only does the traditionally merciless quality of folk justice influence the moral dimensions of Le Fanu's narratives, but also the metaphysical associations of spatial and temporal features in legends serve as a model for his moral mechanics. The idea of the metaphysical contact zone reveals traditional codes that help to construct the moral reality of Le Fanu's stories. Underpinning the seemingly arbitrary callousness of "The Child that Went with the Fairies" and "Laura Silver Bell" is the traditional framework of a series of checks and balances that have historically been a living part of the legendary landscape of Britain. Le Fanu relies upon this folkloric interface between civilization and the otherworld to evoke a sense of the dire

consequences that may result from careless acts of human behavior. Folk beliefs express the resonance of experience, which demonstrates that a slight mistake may indeed prove a grave one when committed at the wrong place and at the wrong time. Also, Le Fanu's correspondence of disastrous events to the dangerous border between cultivated and wild regions provides a consistent aesthetic space. In this artistic sphere, highlighted by Gothic literature and attested to by traditional lore, thematic conflicts achieve an aura of narrative order. Thus, the metaphysical contact zone imbues Le Fanu's stories with an analytic scope that counterbalances the moral perplexity that categorizes the struggles of his characters.

Morally, "The Child that Went With the Fairies" is perhaps one of the cruelest of Le Fanu's stories. Unlike Tom Chuff, who was a wife-beater, or Peter who was an avaricious fortune-hunter, or even Pat who had sinned, though venially by the minister's standard, as an alcoholic, Billy is guiltless of any religiously orthodox sins or civil crimes. Billy is enticed not through hope of material gain, as Laura was, but by the sheer beauty the fairies displayed. Billy seems innocent; he is "about five years old [. . .] with [. . .] that gaze of earnest simplicity which belongs not to town children of the same age" (139). Yet Billy, his brother, and sister are guilty of a fatal trespass: "Under the great old ash-trees, whose last leaves were falling at their feet, in the light of an October sunset, they were playing [. . .] and their faces were turned toward the west and storied hill of Lisnavoura" (140).

The children have violated both the temporal and spatial taboos of the metaphysical contact zone of folklore. They are outside at a critical interface of time--sunrise and sunset are traditionally when the fairies most frequently travel. Carleton

gives an example of this belief in Ireland in a legend of "Paddy Corcoran's wife" who learns from a fairy that she's been ill as punishment because "your childhre threwn out yer dirty wather afther dusk an' before sunrise, at the very time we're passin' yer door, which we pass twice a day." [39] Le Fanu's fairies closely observe this rule--appearing in the road to harass the children promptly after sunset. In addition to this temporal trespass, the children are precariously positioned at the division between the civilized and wild worlds: they are beneath the "ash-trees" and "playing on the road" which borders the fairy hill of Lisnavoura (137). These are transgressions that are mortally dangerous in folklore. While not sins in the sense of defects of character that are at variance with divine law, the breaking of these taboos sets up a nearly inevitable chain of events by disrupting the silken cords that constitute the web of folk metaphysics.

Folk metaphysics is largely a matter of cause-and-effect and checks-and-balances, rather than primarily an ethical philosophy. Indeed, Billy's mother appeals to those powers which sometimes are able to influence the fairies, but the effort is futile: "'Fairy doctors,' as the dealers in the preternatural, who in such cases were called in, are termed, did all that in them lay--but in vain. Father Tom came down and tried what holier rites could do, but equally without result. So little Billy was dead to mother, brother, and sisters; but no grave received him" (143). Thus, human intermediaries are unable to negotiate with either the Christian God or the pagan forces that have claimed the boy.

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[39] William Carleton, Tales and Sketches [. . .] 76.

In what seems to be a lack of critical sensitivity, McCormack asserts that the story "concentrates on human acceptance of death" (240). His judgment appears to derive from his dependence on biographical context: "The death of a child and Abington cemetery may recall Catherine Le Fanu's early death [Le Fanu's sister] [. . .]. The narrator neither seeks consolation nor requires it; in his remoteness he is at peace, and being at peace he can approach once again the reality of death" (240). McCormack's ability to find something consolatory in Le Fanu's story suggests that the text is indeed drawn "vers deux poles antagonistes [towards two opposite poles" as Gaïd Girard explains in "Du récit de légende à la nouvelle: *The Child that Went with the fairies* de Sheridan Le Fanu."[40] Girard argues that Le Fanu's narrative shows a "double aspect du monde" which the two very different fairies represent (36). Yet, even while asserting this polarity, Girard's evidence for the darker aspects are more plentiful and convincing: "L'illusion que Billy ait pu avoir un destin heureux parmi les fées--ce qui arrive dans certain récits--est détruite par sa dernière apparition, marquée par la mort. [The illusion that Billy could have had a happy destiny among the fairies--which happens in certain legends--is destroyed by his second apparition, distinguished by death (36)." Rather than peaceful acceptance it is painful impotence that the story chiefly reinforces--the ultimate failure of all human resources, regardless of creeds, to negotiate with the loss of a child. Yet, as Girard and McCormack's readings suggest, the text also negotiates with human hopes, arguably manifesting Le Fanu's simultaneous doubt of and wish for an afterlife.

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[40] Gaïd Girard, "Du récit de légend à la nouvellse: *The Child that Went with the fairies* de Sheridan Le Fanu," Licorne 22 (1992) 36.

While there are folk legends that record successful rescues of children and wives stolen by the fairies, Le Fanu chooses to model his fairy stories on the bleaker examples--and, we must ask ourselves, why?[41] The answer seems to lie with Le Fanu's handling of supernatural folklore in general in his stories. Throughout Le Fanu's so called ghost-stories, supernatural forces wreak revenge or simply raise havoc with sinners and the innocent alike. The worldview such tales represent is reminiscent of the biblical folktale presented in the Book of Job where suffering is ultimately inscrutable in a divine ethical system. Folk legends offer microcosmic testimonies of macrocosmic metaphysical uncertainties such as the haphazard confrontations of humanity with death, disease, and other disasters--large or small.

Le Fanu turns to folk beliefs--the metaphysical perspectives in legends--not as a seeker of a consistent system of truth, but as an artist interested in a storehouse of signs that have traditionally served to communicate people's anxieties and fears. McCormack and other critics see Le Fanu's own crisis of faith in his protagonists' dark encounters with metaphysical forces. McCormack identifies in Le Fanu a "paradoxical self-division": his sympathy for Irish nationalism constrained by his Anglo-Irish heritage and repugnance for revolutionary violence; his Calvinist anxieties despite failing to be convinced by providence; and, a renegade son who longed for the stability of his father's paternalistic harmony of self-satisfied Toryism.[42] Barbara Gates in "Blue Devils and Green Tea: Sheridan Le Fanu's

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[41] Motifs involving rescue from Fairyland include, especially relevant, F.321.3 *Man goes to Fairyland and rescues stolen child*, and more generally, F.322.5 *Rescue from Fairyland*

[42] McCormack, Sheridan Le Fanu 70, 109-110.

Haunted Suicides" similarly traces Le Fanu's choices as a writer to biographical details. She connects his focus on suicides with the suicidal threat of his cousin Frances and her subsequent abandonment by her sister Alicia: "Le Fanu never forgot the stigma attached to the idea of a suicide in the family" (16). Gates sees in the inscrutability of the haunting in "Green Tea" a reflection of the essential mystery of the crime of suicide: "Le Fanu offers no satisfying explanation for Jenning's complaint. His dis-ease reflects Victorian unease and feeds our own discomfort as we ponder what it really is that causes a man not to want to live" (23). Gates briefly implies that the apparition of the monkey that terrifies Jenkins is fitting for Le Fanu's audience because the image might represent the Darwinian threats to religious faith of the Victorians, and the consequential despair that might result: "Daily and weekly papers and The Annual Register were full of suicides attributed to 'religious melancholy'" (21-22). But, as Gates stresses herself, Jennings is not an atheist, though he is intrigued by pagan metaphysics. However, one of Le Fanu's "haunted suicides" is an atheist, who in "The Familiar" (previously titled "The Watcher") is pursued by what may be merely a vengeful man, or perhaps the revenant of the father of a young woman that Captain Barton wronged. Harold Orel in "'Rigid Adherence to Facts'": Le Fanu's In a Glass Darkly (1872)" is convinced that "Le Fanu's anger against the presumptions of the *philosophes* of the 1790s burns through story after story. It is no accident that so many of his narratives are set in the past: human history, he seems to be arguing, took a turn for the worse as a consequence of the doctrines of a generation of rationalists."[43] Barton gradually finds his skepticism

[43] Orel 75.

defeated as he comes to realize there is--as Orel states--"something greater than the principles of the Enlightenment."[44] If "greater," why so destructive?

Regardless of Le Fanu's own psychological conflicts and ideological disputes it is undeniable that his short stories make use of the anxieties inherent in folk traditions--that is why a reader emerges with what seems to be a pessimistic worldview in Le Fanu's narratives. One detail mentioned in Gates's interesting discussion of suicide and Le Fanu's stories is that until "1823 it was legally possible to bury suicides at a crossroads with a stake through the heart" (15). The reason for this, though Gates doesn't acknowledge the fact, is that this "stake" was a folk defense against the corpse of the suicide becoming a revenant. Supernatural intrusions of the dead constitute a metaphysical response to breaches in social conformity--a revenant therefore is an undeniable manifestation of deep-seated fears of social difference: "In general, lists of potential revenants tend to contain people who are distinguished primarily by being different from the people who make the lists."[45] In other words, folk beliefs comprise supernatural threats and defenses that illustrate the sense people have, on the one hand of, of impersonal and antagonistic forces in the social and natural world, and, on the other hand, practical recourses and philosophical rationales for crises.

Thus, so-called superstitions provide nodes of meaning and a plan of action--even if it's simply a matter of carrying a lucky horseshoe--where only blank

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[44] Orel 74.

[45] Paul Barber, Vampires, Burial, and Death (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) 30.

uncertainty and nameless fear would otherwise exist. Folk defenses often constitute envisioning spirituality in materialist terms and this pattern is present in Le Fanu's stories. Despite Orel's claim for Le Fanu's opposition towards rigid materialism inherited from the Enlightenment, his ghosts have the practical impact in the "real world" of the revenants of folk tradition. V.S. Pritchett asserts that it is "guilt that patters two-legged behind its victims in the street"--harassing the likes of Captain Barton--but this "guilt" also was seen by other characters and fired a weapon at Barton.[46] A revelation of moral consciousness it not sufficient, these ghosts will "have blood, they say" as Macbeth reported of revenant lore after beholding the apparition of Banquo (Macbeth 3.4.123). Psychological revelations are not enough in folk metaphysics: there must be tangible results.

What Le Fanu does with these narrative beliefs is to stylize certain features that contribute to artistic form and provide substantive resonance. Thus, Le Fanu uses the idea implicit in folklore of the metaphysical contact zone as a signifier that is at once atmospherically evocative and formally unified. Le Fanu elects to use folk beliefs in his stories that carry the sense of inevitability that harmonizes with the accumulation of suggestive details and events in his narratives. Le Fanu's stories use folklore to paint inexorable patterns.

Writing to an educated and condescending audience, Le Fanu tends to begin his presentation of folkloric stories with an appeal to the aesthetic tastes of the readers, as the first sentence of "Laura Silver Bell" demonstrates: "In the five

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[46] Pritchett is quoted from: James Swafford, "Tradition and Guilt in Le Fanu's 'Schalken the Painter" Canadian Journal of Irish Studies 14.2 (1989): 48.

Northumbrian counties you will scarcely find so bleak, ugly, and yet, in a savage way, so picturesque a moor as Dardale Moss" (94). Le Fanu relates the charm of the wilderness and the rustic inhabitants, though with a detached air unlike the Romantics' enthusiasm for peasant subjects. Swiftly, Le Fanu continues the portrait; he describes Mother Carke's cottage, noting significant features that identify the metaphysical contact zone of superstition: "Habitations are thinly scattered in this barren territory, and a full mile away from the meanest was the stone cottage of Mother Carke [. . .]. [. . .] The primitive neighbours remark that no rowan-tree grows near, nor holly, nor bracken, and no horseshoe is nailed on the door" (94-95). Marginalized by poverty, Carke and her dwelling at once cross the border into numinous disrepute as well as socio-economic limbo: "Mall Carke was for many a year the *sage femme* of this wild domain [. . .]. [. . .] and in popular esteem is little better than a witch" (95).

While asserting his cultural distance from these folkloric perspectives (to solidify his identification with an educated audience), by using the derogatory term "primitive neighbours," and the French expression for *wise woman*, Le Fanu further pushes Mother Carke into metaphysically transgressive territory--at once socially and spiritually stigmatizing her. Thus, when the fairy arrives, "gaunt, sombre, bony, dirty, and dressed in a black suit which a beggar would hardly care to pick out of the dust" to demand Mother Carke's magical services to entice Laura to himself, the "young lord in love with her," it is evident that Mother Carke is in a compromised situation (95). Her habitation has none of the folk defenses, "no horseshoe is nailed on the door," because she traffics with spirits.

The location of Carke's cottage bordering the wilderness signifies the precarious nature of her position. Though she refuses the fairy's demand, it is similarly clear by the description of his departure that she has met her match--he is an emanation of the very threatening wilderness that surrounds her and she has sought to negotiate with: "He looked very angry. Sulkily he turned away at her words, and strode slowly toward the wood from which he had come; and as he approached it, he seemed to grow taller and taller, and stalked into it as high as a tree" (96). Thus, in a step-by-step analysis of Le Fanu's details, one can closely observe his careful articulation and accumulation of folk beliefs--giving particular atmospheric attention to rendering the metaphysical contact zone--producing a dark narrative harmony, while maintaining the voice of enlightened culture that pretends immunity to superstition.

To answer the earlier question then, Billy and Laura are doomed because of the metaphysical consequences of the aesthetic demands of the narrative. Le Fanu consistently incorporates descriptions of the impingement of the wilderness into civilized regions. Other critics have sensed the "subtle affinity between wild scenery and the supernatural" in Le Fanu's stories, but have not productively analyzed this relationship.[47] Just as interfaces between wild and civilized regions point to coded threats in folklore, so also Le Fanu adopts many of those signs and uses them as emblems of psychological and social degeneration--where the human world breaks down into animal nature through domestic discord, economic poverty, madness, and

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[47] S. M. Ellis, Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and Others. (London: Constable & CO LTD, 1951) 153.

death. By paralleling class, economic, gender, and racial tensions with supernatural conflicts in folklore, Le Fanu not only expresses much of what was implicit in folk legends to begin with, but shows the continued relevance of anxieties and mysteries that at first glance might seem merely antiquated and picturesque superstitions. Laura Silver Bell, Carmilla's Laura, Tom Chuff, Pat, Peter, and young Billy, lead lives that encounter, by impetus of either character or circumstance, threats that comprise humanity's confrontations with the fundamental anxieties of socio-economic, emotional, and spiritual existence.

In "Carmilla," "The Vision of Tom Chuff," "The Drunkard's Dream," and "The Spectre Lovers," Le Fanu expresses the failure of the individual will to overcome destructive and erotic impulses from within and without, and the absence of a transcendent power that might redeem human purity. Instead these stories portray forces of merciless vengeance that punish, but never forgive. The lower and upper classes are both subject to the tyranny of such influences; socio-economic power does not make one immune to the creeping chaos that imbues natural and social disasters with the resonance of the supernatural.

However, despite the hint of egalitarianism in the fact that rich and poor alike suffer in Le Fanu's narratives, he also depicts otherworldly encounters that reinforce adversarial class relations. Indeed, the supernatural decimation of the peasantry by the cruel Carmilla is merely another face of the finely-dressed hydra that scourges Le Fanu's underclass country people in other stories. It is one of the heads of the same beast that eagerly snatches away Billy from his impoverished family and lures Laura

Silver Bell by her doomed lust for the glamour of a young lord who seems to promise wealth and status for her.

Laura in "Carmilla" shares with Laura Silver Bell the uncontrollable impulse for her own destruction--even after, or perhaps because, she was vampirized: Laura "often from a reverie" fancied "the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door" (339). Similarly, obsession--or possession--drives Mr. Jennings to suicide in "Green Tea," and in Le Fanu's world connects human psychology with the realm of folk belief where dangers intrude at every side. Every single action and desire may violate a taboo that results in the destruction of the body, the torture of the mind, and the loss of the soul--for eternity. The invisible world of thought does not have a clear division from the world of ghosts, fairies, and demons.

Unseen dark desires and fears overpower any efforts to contain them. The science that Dr. Hesselius uses to combat superstition and mental illness is merely another form of folk belief, accepted by an elite community of scholars, but no more efficacious--rather less so--than Billy's mother's placing "horse-shoes [. . .] a phial of holy water," and other assorted defenses against "that lonely hill-haunt of the 'Good people,' as the fairies are called euphemistically" (137). Billy's mother, Mary Ryan, can neither protect the boy from his own vulnerability to temptation, nor the proximity of the sinister race that craves his young blood. Her attempts to construct an impregnable fortress against the evil of strangers are as vain as English isolationist hopes to preserve an ideal purity of culture amid a global empire of many arts, peoples and nations. New ideas trickle in through various channels of trade, overflowing the dams of orthodoxy.

For Le Fanu, folk beliefs exert a historical claim upon communities and psychology that defies the rational pretensions of his day. The mind ultimately bends or breaks beneath the rod of fear and guilt that tradition sometimes wields; the old tales anticipate the new anxieties of the future and Le Fanu dresses emerging tensions of class, race, and gender in the clothes of the rural past. The natural world, with its shadowy tree branches, famines, plagues, stimulants, sunsets, sunrises, and inevitable press of time, imprints an influence upon individual psychology and communal perspectives that no new civilized creed can erase. In Le Fanu's stories, the fears of a dying aristocracy, an impoverished Ireland, the erosion of religious faith, and an unending war between rich and poor, as well as between men and women, assume the form of otherworldly beings that prey upon the living. For Le Fanu the supernatural is the aura of the Self's gradual defeat by the persistence of elemental forces that the imagination recognizes as the shapes forming the boundaries of life, death, and the identity that stirs briefly somewhere in between.

Chapter Eight

Stevenson, Folklore, and Imperialism

Robert Louis Stevenson's (1850-1894) reputation as a writer has vacillated greatly. Though praised by his contemporaries, such as Edmund Gosse, Andrew Lang, and Henry James, who commended The Master of Ballantrae as "a work of ineffable and exquisite art," twentieth-century critics have often dismissed Stevenson as a writer.[1] F.R. Leavis, for example, in 1963 despised Stevenson's work as further degrading a "bad tradition" of romantic fables deriving from Sir Walter Scott.[2] However, more recently, Stevenson's resistance to realism has gained appreciation and support by his ability to present narratives that have multicultural appeal. Jenni Calder describes in Stevenson and Victorian Scotland how Stevenson's writing is not merely bound to matters of Scottish interest: "He has an internationalism that Burns and Scott lack, a responsiveness to multiple traditions, a gift not only for language and languages, but for variations in cultural and psychological nuances."[3] Nor, as Edwin Eigner observes, is Stevenson's "rejection of the realistic or pictorial tradition of the novel [. . .]. [. . .] an unthinking rejection."[4]

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[1] Edwin M. Eigner, Robert Louis Stevenson and Romantic Tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 3.

[2] Eigner 4.

[3] Jenni Calder, "Introduction: Stevenson in Perspective," Stevenson and Victorian Scotland Jenni Calder ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981) 2.

[4] Eigner 44.

In fact, with Stevenson's acute attention to psychological and emotive resonance one might argue his concern is for the realism of humanity on the fundamental level of subjective impressions and morality, rather than microscopic occupation with the mundane. His system of representation evokes Northrop Frye's assertion that romance serves "to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience" in contrast to realism which puts "the emphasis on content and representation rather than on the shape of the story."[5] Most importantly--for the focus of this study--is Calder's observation that Stevenson "never doubted the value of story-telling": "Brought up on the Old Testament, on tales of the Covenanting martyrs, and on ingredients of a profound folk tradition Stevenson could scarcely have avoided being intensely aware of the force of language over human behavior and belief."[6] Stevenson's use of folk tradition informs not only the thematic elements and structural contours of his fiction, but contributes to his portrayal of the social dynamics between different cultures, as well as the role of folk beliefs within a particular culture.

Thus, Stevenson, like Le Fanu, is very much interested in the social implications of folk beliefs, but not for the aesthetic resonance that Le Fanu created. Stevenson emphasizes the dynamics of how supernatural folklore influences people's worldview. He focuses on folklore in the stories "The Beach of Falesá," "The Isle of Voices," and his novel, The Master of Ballantrae, to explore human manipulations of

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[5] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism--Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) 139-140.

[6] Calder 9.

cultural power. All three narratives also approach being what Patrick Brantlinger calls imperial Gothic in Rule of Darkness: "Imperial Gothic combines the seemingly scientific, progressive, often Darwinian ideology of imperialism with an antithetical interest in the occult" (227). In each story the fantastic elements depend on non-English culture and pose structures of preternatural signification against British and European materialist ideologies--particularly economics.

In " The Beach of Falesá" Stevenson shows how the economic interests of mercenaries, the religious agenda of missionaries, and Western--especially British--imperialism conflict with the native folk beliefs of the Polynesians. The narrative makes the hesitation of the literary fantastic paradoxically dependent on culture, as well as--at least partly--transcendent of race. Superficially the story is a tale of the downfall of one highly ingenious, immoral, and rapacious Englishman, Case, who gains control over the (fictional) south Seas island of Falesá through trade and trickery, and rules the natives through cutthroat social politics. The protagonist of the story--also English--Wiltshire, negates Case's plans to eliminate him as a mercantile competitor, and destroys both Case and his system of deceit. Calder aptly describes Case as: " the arch exploiter, [who] has discovered that instead of relying on the symbols of white civilization to establish a relationship, he can dominate the natives totally by using their own totems--hence the effectiveness of his devils. His power is the result of white technology and native superstition."[7]

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[7] Jenni Calder, introduction, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Stories by Robert Louis Stevenson (New York: Penguin Books, 1979) 17.

Roslyn Jolly in "Stevenson's 'Sterling Domestic Fiction,' 'The Beach of Falesá'" also describes Case's uncanny magical performance as "merely low technology; as Wiltshire says earlier, 'With a box of tools and a few mighty simple contrivances [Case] had made out to have a devil of a temple [. . .].'"[8] Jolly finds great significance in Case's technological magic:

> The collapse of the opposition between Western 'tools' and non-Western 'temple is important for [. . .] Stevenson's readers, because it denies convenient and comfortable oppositions between Western rationality and non-Western supernaturalism, European enlightenment and native 'darkness [. . .]. Falesá has not caused Case to 'regress': his evil is all his own; he brought it with him along with his trade goods and his lust for power."[9]

Jolly insists that Stevenson's "demystification" of Case's demonology "makes his story an ironic reflection upon, rather than an example of, the form of [. . .] 'imperial Gothic'" because Brantlinger includes "'psychological and social regression like Kurtz's "going native" in Heart of Darkness'--as one of the central characteristics of imperial Gothic [. . .]."[10]

The analyses of Calder and Jolly are both acute, but neither adequately explains the actual dynamic of the function of folk beliefs in the story. It is not

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[8] Roslyn Jolly, "Stevenson's 'Sterling Domestic Fiction,' 'The Beach of Falesá,' Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language 50: 200 (Nov. 1999): 467.

[9] Jolly 467-468.

[10] Jolly 467.

simply that Case uses dynamite and an Aeolian harp--what Calder calls "white technology"--to mimic the unearthly signs of the demons that the Polynesians believe in. Rather, the cultural borders between "white technology" and "native superstition" are actually quite porous, even absorbing the instability that Jolly suggests "denies convenient and comfortable oppositions." Jolly asserts that the effect of Stevenson's "demystification" of magic and frequent comparison of Polynesian culture with British commonplaces is to "familiarize and domesticate" Polynesian features.[11] However, she neglects to observe the manner in which British and Western culture in general is absorbed into a folkloric discourse that belies the mundanity of such "demystification." Jolly emphasizes how the "Wiltshires' mixed-race children [. . .] are the material foundation for all the conceptual crossings, contaminations, and interbreedings that the text proposes."[12] Analogous to Jolly's metaphor of miscegenation, Wiltshire--the protagonist who usurps Case--Catholicism, and Queen Victorian herself, become immersed in the matrix of the hybrid folk religion of Falesá that develops from the tensions between Polynesian culture and the demands of British trade and colonization. If the Wiltshire's children are the offspring of cultural "interbreedings" between Polynesia and Britain, it is the synthesis of British and Polynesian metaphysics and storytelling that constitutes the fertile ground for such successful generation.

Case, by both guile and serendipity, assumes the position of demigod--adapting old beliefs and bringing new anxieties to the shifting sands of the dynamic

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[11] Jolly 474.

culture on the beach of Falesá. Case rules the natives by locating himself in the metaphysical contact zone--he specifically chooses to construct a base of power "in the desert among all the *aitus* [devils] and makes the natives believe that he is aided by "Tiapolo big chief devil [. . .] Christian devil" (145). Thus, Case merges the teachings of the missionaries with the native folk beliefs to build a mystique that combines the old fears of the devil Tiapolo with the new reverence for Christianity. The natives perceive Tiapolo as a spiritual figure that unites Christianity with their traditional metaphysics and Case takes advantage of this synergy of belief. Case also promotes belief in European folklore. Specifically, Case presents the Kanakas with the Evil Eye, "a common thing in a country of Europe called Italy, where men were often struck dead by that kind of devil"--which the natives had not heard of prior to his arrival, adding to the supernatural anxieties on the island (136).

As a testament to Case's successful manipulation of island folklore, Uma, Wiltshire's native wife (who he is first tricked into marrying but later chooses voluntarily), relates a memorat when she claims to have "gone one day [. . .] too near the margin of the bad place"--Case's realm of devil worship--and seen a devil: "she [. . .] saw [. . .] the appearance of a lean grey old boar [. . .] she was aware it was no boar, but a thing that was a man with a man's thoughts" (148). It is Uma also who imagines Queen Victoria as a "big chief" whose overall power may well surpass that of Case and his devils (146). But, Uma believes, this "big chief" is "too far off" and only a "small chief" would bother to help the little island of Falesá; Victoria as the leader of a great empire is too busy, like the Catholic "chief": "God he big chief--got

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[12] Jolly 481-482.

too much work" (146). The Kanaka's and Case's main devil, Tiapolo, on the other hand, is a "small chief" and thus has dominion over the island--not Queen Victoria. In other words, one renegade trader, Case, is more powerful in Uma's microcosmic metaphysics, than the queen of the British empire.

Besides establishing himself at the center of the natives' cosmology, Case also gains control over the customs of the Polynesians as well: "I saw that Case had plenty of disciples. It seems, indeed it was, a piece of fashionable boldness to venture up here with the trader, and a young man scarce reckoned himself grown till he had got his breech tattooed, for one thing, and seen Case's devils for another. This is mighty like Kanakas [term for natives of the South Sea islands]: but, if you look at it another way, it's might like white folks too" (152). Wiltshire not only recognizes that Case has established himself as an integral feature of the natives' rites of passage, but also perceives that Case's exploitation is emblematic of imperialism. Case is merely doing on a small scale what missionaries and trading nations have long done--solidified economic markets by establishing the signs of supernal authority.

Wiltshire attempts to demythologize the mystical web of Case and crosses over the feared "margin of the bad place" to confront Case and his devils. Wiltshire arrives as an opportunistic trader, like Case, intent on making profits from non-whites, but ends up quickly enmeshed in Polynesian culture, adopting both the native beliefs and even assuming some of the stereotypes perceived by outsiders, despite his conscious resistance to ethnic lore. Wiltshire integrates the fears of native cannibalism--common responses to news of imperialist interactions with aboriginal populations--into his own persona when he gloats over having killed Case: "Talk

about meat and drink! To see that man lying there dead as a herring filled me full" (167). Thus, Stevenson works towards eroding the barriers of cultural perceptions that separate the white British case from the dark native Polynesians.

In particular, Wiltshire's reaction to Polynesian folk beliefs demonstrates Stevenson's use of folklore to erase racial difference, rather than to demarcate strict cultural fields. At first Wiltshire dismisses his wife Uma's beliefs about supernatural pigs and devils that haunt the island: "'I wish I had been there with my gun,' said I. 'I guess that pig would have holla'd so as to surprise himself.' But she told me a gun was of no use with the like of these, which were the spirits of the dead" (149). Wiltshire shows his disdain for such superstitions through his humor. His joke about shooting the pig emphasizes his view in the earthly nature of Uma's vision, which she neatly counters by insisting on the insubstantial quality of the pig as a spirit--a very different ghost than Le Fanu's ghost that wants its broken leg mended. Wiltshire displays similar disregard for Uma's beliefs by referring to her tales as "yarns": "Don't think it was Uma's yarns that put me out; I don't value native talk a fourpenny-piece . . . " (150). Wiltshire's dismissive diction is significant, for he mocks the supernatural folklore using an economic metaphor--subjugating the claims of the island culture in speech, just as he and Case and Western imperialism have usurped the natives' autonomy through the imposition of lucrative trade.

Economics and culturally relative metaphysics underpin much of the literary fantastic in this story. For example, Case hypocritically charges one of the itinerant ministers who visits Falesá with mercenary motives, and by sleight of hand proves his point, as the missionary relates to Wiltshire:

> "'So,' says he, in native, 'here is the holy man [. . .]. [. . .] will you know what was in his heart? [. . .] And, making a snatch at my hand, he made believe to pluck out a dollar [. . .]. 'There went that rumour through the crowd with which Polynesians receive a prodigy. As for myself, I stood amazed. The thing was a common conjuring trick [. . .] but how was I to convince the villagers of that?'" (139)

This scene exemplifies the ambivalence towards the fantastic that different cultural representatives may feel--for the missionary this legerdemain is a mere "trick"--performed by an unjust man; for the Polynesians it is a "prodigy" that signifies Case's connection to a greater metaphysical world beyond the normal human means. Thus, Case simultaneously dismisses the missionary as a righteous man of the new religion--Christianity--while also displaying powers associated with the old religion of the Polynesians.

Not only does the epithet of "yarns" depreciate Uma's cultural perspective, but Wiltshire's proverbial devaluation of these "yarns"--"I don't value native talk a fourpenny-piece"--further asserts his own English culture over her own. In fact, one might call this an example of "linguistic imperialism"; Wiltshire uses an English oral expression--folklore in itself--to devalue Uma's culture.[13] Ironically, Wiltshire turns in his articulation to a British traditional expression to denigrate a Polynesian tradition. Similarly, Wiltshire describes Uma's uncanny sleight-of-hand--it is not only a white man like Case who can perform such tricks--in spiritualist terms: "I

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[13] Similar expressions of monetary devaluation are quite common in English, consider for example: "I wouldn't give him a dime/a penny/a dollar."

couldn't see now where she took it [the bogus marriage certificate designed by Case] from; it seemed to jump into her hand like that Blavatsky business in the papers" (134). Wiltshire uses the "papers" as a common source of social knowledge that has credibility, yet his comparison to the "Blavatsky business" also invokes what amounts to fashionable folk beliefs in Victorian society: spiritualism. One might argue that both these speeches of Wiltshire--dismissing Uma's yarns using a proverb, and describing her legerdemain in terms of spiritualism--shows his vulnerability to Polynesian traditions, since the very mode of his own self-expression depends on cultural traditions. Roslyn Jolly claims that "the story plays with these fictional modes [evocations of the supernatural which she calls Gothic] only to debunk and discard them."[14] In other words, Jolly sees Stevenson as ultimately dismissing the supernatural and moving on to what she sees as his concern with "the feminine realm of domestic fiction [. . .]."[15] In this case, Jolly is too dismissive given her own observation of Stevenson's attack against "comfortable oppositions." Instead of debunking Polynesian superstitions, what Wiltshire's narrative reveals is that British culture does not stand on ground that is not to be shaken by supernatural folk beliefs; for, clearly even Wiltshire's contemporary England manifests cultural dynamics analogous to the superstitions of Falesá.

Wiltshire's linguistic-traditional instability prefigures the metaphysical crisis that surprises him when he ventures into the borderland that Uma describes. Encountering the sounds of Case's Eolian harp set up to scare intruders, Wiltshire

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[14] Jolly 463.

[15] Jolly 463.

finds himself affected superstitiously and postulates that folk beliefs transcend race and culture: "We laugh at the natives and their superstitions; but see how many traders take them up, splendidly educated white men, that have been book-keepers (some of them) and clerks in the old country. It's my belief a superstition grows up in a place like the different kinds of weeds; and as I stood there and listened to that wailing I twittered in my shoes" (150).

This time Wiltshire turns to Victorian science, rather than economics, for a secure metaphor. This view of folklore was attributed in fact to Andrew Lang (falsely, according to Stith Thompson), known as "'polygenesis,'" or the theory that resemblances in stories are due to independent invention in many places, since they are made up of beliefs, customs, etc. which are common to peoples of the same stages of culture."[16] These early folklorists, influenced by anthropologists, viewed cultures that produced supernatural folk tales and beliefs to be in the childhood of civilization and assumed that every culture went through the same stages of development, similar to parallel psychoanalytic beliefs.[17] Wiltshire displays a similar attitude towards the Polynesians, as these nineteenth century anthropologists, folklorists, and

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[16] Stith Thompson, The Folktale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 380.

[17] Proponents of these anthropological beliefs include the writers Frazer and MacCulloch. James Frazer, The Golden Bough (London: Oxford University Press, 1994) J. A. MacCulloch, The Childhood of Fiction (London, 1905). Freud also overtly aligns the child with the "savage" in "The Infantile Recurrence of Totemism": "The relation of the child to animals has much in common with that of primitive man." Sigmund Freud, The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud (New York: The Modern Library, 1966) 904.

psychologists: "It's easy to find out what Kanakas think. Just go back to yourself anyway round from ten to fifteen years old, and there's an average Kanaka" (153).

Notably, the organic conceptualization of folk beliefs, although as adaptation rather than spontaneous generation or polygenesis, is partly integrated into modern folklore studies as the oikotype (ecotype). Tangherlini describes the ecotype's genesis: "Borrowing a term from botany, von Sydow labeled the variants particular to a specific area oikotypes (ecotypes), suggesting that just as physical environment influences biological organisms and their development, cultural environment influences folk expressions and their development" (11). We can see then in Stevenson's fictional representation of imperial dealings in the South Seas in the nineteenth century that such intercultural contact helped to develop abstract anthropological speculation, such as Wiltshire's--or Stevenson's--that partly contributed to the anatomy of folklore studies.

Katherine Linehan in "Taking up with Kanakas: Stevenson's complex Social Criticism in 'The Beach of Falesá'" refers to this idea of polygenesis using the terms of a recent historical examination of the subject, The Mismeasure of Man, by Stephen J. Gould. Relying on Stephen J. Gould's analysis of recapitulation theory, Linehan explains the "theory argues that human development, whether within individuals or social groups, recapitualates earlier evolutionary stages along the path towards maturity. The proposition that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny [. . .] was thus manipulated to support a view of whites as fully-evolved [. . .]" (410-411). Linehan emphasizes how "Stevenson's likening of Polynesians to children is part of a larger framework of hierarchical thinking about race" which he had "unreflectingly

absorbed from popular culture" and thus "could not easily see its inconsistency with his own consciously proclaimed egalitarian views" (411). While Linehan is not short of examples that support her assertion, her argument is neglectful of the totality of Stevenson's vision of the South Seas. Linehan evidently did not integrate "The Isle of Voices" into her study (which follows shortly in this analysis). Here, Stevenson introduces cultural relativity into the idea of polygenesis: a native non-European consider Europeans children. Perhaps, as we shall see, the reason for her neglect is her blindness to the importance of folklore in these two stories.

The greatest testament to Wiltshire's assertion that superstitions transcend the dubious borders between Western Civilization and native cultures--"how many traders take them up"--is, after he has pierced the veil of Case's illusions (Eolian harp, luminescent paint, etc.), he mistakes his Polynesian wife Uma for a diabolic figure:

> Well, as I stood there thinking, it seemed the bush woke and became full of little noises. [. . .] It wasn't Case I was afraid of, which would have been common-sense [. . .] what took me, as sharp as the colic, was the old wives' tales--the devil-women and the man-pigs. It was the toss of a penny whether I should run; but I got a purchase on myself [. . .]. There, coming right up out of the desert and the bad bush--there, sure enough, was a devil-woman, just as the way I had figured she would look. I saw the light shine on her bare arms and her bright eyes, and there went out of me a yell so big that I thought it was my death." (161)

Idioms dependent on economics continue to pepper Wiltshire's speech--"the toss of a penny whether I should run; but I got a purchase on myself"; it is as though Wiltshire's selfhood depends on his ability to declare himself in economic terms that he believes don't depend on Falesá. But, the irony is that as a trader, Wiltshire's economy does depend on Falesá--and thus his identity is also malleable to the influences of this new cultural environment. Wiltshire's comments reveal how deeply his imagination had fully engaged with the beliefs of devil-women on Falesá. Uma appears to him as a devil-woman "the way I had figured she would look" because he has subconsciously integrated her stories into his psyche. When recounting a couple of the "yarns" that Uma told him, despite his disclaimer, "I don't remember half a quarter of them, of course, for I paid little heed; but two came back to me kind of clear," Wiltshire narrates the encounter with the devil-women in great detail (146). The men are driven out of their senses, and ultimately their lives, because of a chance encounter with beautiful devil-women on this island--and the veracity of the legend is at least as widely established as the "Blavatsky business in the papers": "She told me the thing was well known [. . .] but this was the only case where five had been slain the same day [. . .] it had made a great stir in the island, and she would be crazy if she doubted" (148). Uma's explanation emphasizes how madness and sanity are dependent upon what perspectives are culturally validated.

Thus, what would be folly to believe in London is reversed here on Falesá--the interpretation of metaphysical reality depends on consensus--and the literary fantastic that Stevenson creates in "The Beach of Falesá" is essentially a result of

pitting different cultural perspectives together. Linehan is correct in her general evaluation of the role of cultural tensions in the fantastic:

> part of the story's emphasis on uncertainty [. . .] stems from Stevenson's interest in dramatizing through his tough-talking hero a sense of the unsettling and disorienting shift or even inversion of perspectives that comes with pulling back from the society of white European males and engaging with Polynesia and Polynesians at a level of considerable emotional receptivity."[18]

However, what Linehan did not understand was that Wiltshire achieves this "emotional receptivity" and "inversion of perspectives" through his immersion in the mindset of Polynesians through folkloric traditions. Instead, she makes the same mistake that earlier we saw some of Le Fanu's critics have made: relying on biography to fill in the gaps of analytic neglect. Linehan explains how "Stevenson probably *was* carried outside of himself during this period of his life" that he lived with the Polynesians. And, Linehan describes how Wiltshire "alone in the bush" encounters the "spirit of the jungle--in his words, "the queerness of the place"--[which] deeply stirs his imagination. (Here there is unquestionably an echo of Stevenson's experience of emotional engagement with Polynesia, for his inspiration [. . .] originated, as he reported to Colvin in November of 1890, 'in one of my moments of awe, alone in that tragic jungle.'"[19] It is good to know that Stevenson felt an

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[18] Katherine Bailey Linehan, "Taking up with Kanakas: Stevenson's Complex Social Criticism in 'The Beach of Falesá,'" English Literature in Transition 33.4 (1990): 415.

[19] Linehan 419.

earnest response to the cultural and environmental ambiance of Polynesia, but to reduce the experience of Wiltshire to generalities and a moment of the ineffable does not do justice to Stevenson's well-crafted blending of economics, folklore and psychology.

If we are to turn to biography, it also significant to note that Stevenson, like Le Fanu and Hogg and Scott, was also deeply interested in folklore of the cultures he wrote about. And these cultures were interested in his stories:

> Stevenson delighted in the folklore of Samoa and of Europe. The Samoans of his time apparently accepted all stories as true, so when his tale of the Bottle Imp, basically a European legend, appeared in Samoan, the people thronged to [. . .] see it. They thought that the bottle must be kept in the safe in the house, and that it was the source of Stevenson's wealth.[20]

Stevenson found that his own Highland folklore served as convenient cultural capital with the Polynesians when he wished to learn their traditional beliefs, tales, and legends:

> When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, I cast back in the story of my fathers and fished for what I wanted with some equal trait of barbarism: Michael Scott [. . .] the second-sight, the Water Kelpie--each of these I found to be a killing bait [. . .]. The

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[20] Helen Fraser, "Robert Louis Stevenson" New York Folklore 6.3-4 (1980): 104.

> native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened."[21]

On the surface, Stevenson's recognition of mutual "barbarism" does seem to be another example of what Linehan considered Stevenson's acceptance of "hierarchical thinking about race" since Stevenson must turn to the past for traditional tales. However, that is also the nature of tradition, particularly according to nineteenth century standards for folklorists--any tale worth its salt as authentic folklore needs the validation of historical transmission.

Not only did Stevenson import European folklore to the islanders, he also exported island culture to Europe. As Robert Hillier explains, Stevenson incorporated much of the folklore of the South Seas into his travel narrative, In the South Seas:

> Much of the book reveals Stevenson's fascination with Polynesian and Micronesian folklore. Cannibal stories dominate the Marquesas letters; ghost stories run through the Tuamotus chapters; folk beliefs and superstitions are recounted in the Hawaii Letters, the *Footnote to History*, and the Gilbert Islands sections. Stevenson's narrative poem about cannibalism "The Feast of Famine" is his attempt to recreate Marquesan folklore, and "The Song of Rahero" is an exact retelling of a Tahitian revenge story. Superstitions of the Tuamotu atolls and the Hawaiian islands permeate his story "The Isle of Voices." And most

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[21] Robert Hillier, "Folklore and Oral Tradition in Stevenson's South Seas Narrative Poems and Short Stores," Scottish Literary Journal 14.2 (Nov. 1987): 32.

> effectively, Polynesian superstition is the basis for Case's power over the islanders in *The Beach of Falesá* just as Wiltshire's victory comes revealing the fraudulence of Case's 'magic.'[22]

Hillier's two observations on Stevenson's use of folklore in "The Beach of Falesá" and "The Isle of Voices" are the extent of his analysis of tradition in that particular article.[23] Stevenson's portrayal of the folkloric fantastic shows the plasticity of human beliefs; in particular, he demonstrates that the power dynamics of imperialism are not limited to economy, as the white man fancies, but that metaphysical perspectives, albeit unwanted and unwillingly, are also exchanged. Magic and money are both currencies inextricably connected to the colonial market.

In Stevenson's "The Isles of Voices" folklore, the fantastic, and economics are once again tightly bound together, but in this story magic appears to have a more objective reality than the manipulations of Case, while also representing the dynamics of imperialism. The examination here will demonstrate the inadequacy of critical dismissal of Stevenson's use of the supernatural, exemplified by Eigner's claim that--referring to "The Isle of Voices," among other stories--"the supernatural is used purely for sensational effects."[24]

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[22] Robert Hillier, "In the South Seas" Studies in Scottish Literature 23 (1988): 118.

[23] However, in "Folklore and Oral Tradition in Stevenson's South Seas Narrative Poems and Short Stories" Hillier identifies multiple instances of Stevenson's borrowing from and imitating of Polynesian tradition, especially with regard to ballads and "The Isle of Voices." Unfortunately, perhaps because Hillier considers "The Beach of Falesá" a "realistic novelette" he neglects to pursue its folkloric dimensions. Robert Hillier, "Folklore and Oral Tradition in Stevenson's South Seas Narrative Poems and Short Stores," Scottish Literary Journal 14.2 (Nov. 1987): 32.

[24] Eigner 34.

Unlike the more central cultural clash between European and South Sea Islander of "The Beach of Falésa," here the main characters are all Hawaiian. One of the reasons for this may be that "as Stevenson's wife reports" the story was "primary intended for a Polynesian audience."[25] More importantly, however, this focus on the Hawaiian natives allowed Stevenson to stage an escape from the Eurocentrism that Linehan asserted Stevenson could never elude due to the deep-seated nature of his cultural indoctrination. The protagonist, Keola, discovers that his father-in-law's status as "the wise man of Molokai" is no empty superstition (372).[26] Indeed, Keola learns that this sorcerer is able to transport himself to another island from which he brings back shells that become coins. Eventually he challenge his father-in-law, is abandoned at sea, undergoes a series of adventures--including the cannibalistic attentions of the mysterious island's natives. Finally, with the aid of his wife Keola, he escapes both the cannibals and the wrath of his father-in-law, while giving away the money according to the advice of a "white missionary" (190).

Symbolically, the alchemy is fairly clear: an islander may acquire wealth by marketing natural resources. Keola's father-in-law, Kalamake, notably keeps "his treasure" in a "desk [. . .] under the print of Kamehameha the Fifth, and a photograph of Queen Victoria with her crown"--emphasizing the imperial connection between the British Empire and a colony's potential wealth through trade. This equation between

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[25] William J. Scheick, "The Ethos of Stevenson's 'The Isle of Voices'" Studies in Scottish Literature, 27 (1992): 145.

[26] Robert Louis Stevenson, The Complete Short Stories, 2 vols. ed. Ian Bell (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993).

magic and economics is underscored by Keola's revelation that there are many sorcerers from various lands--imperial countries in particular--who obtain these shells, by visiting the "isle of voices" invisibly, like his father-in-law--and himself:

> All tongues of the earth were spoken there: the French, the Dutch, the Russian, the Tamil, the Chinese. [. . .] And his head was dizzy with the thought of these millions and millions of dollars, and all these hundreds and hundreds of persons culling them upon the beach [. . .]. 'And to think how they have fooled me with their talk of mints,' says he, 'and that money was made there, when it is clear that all the new coin in the world is gathered on these sands!' (387-388)

Thus, this mysterious isle of voices becomes a microcosm for all economic exploitation in a foreign land of cannibals; for the natives are "eaters of men" who Keola had "heard tell" of from stories of "travellers" [sic] (386).

Keola's attention to oral tradition, such as these travelers' tales, is a testament to his intelligence in contrast to the white men who are "like children and only believe their own stories" (381). Stevenson reverses the typical prejudice against native cultures by showing that attention to folklore is a mark of cleverness, rather than a sign of anthropological childhood. This turnabout of perspective suggests Stevenson's is not wholly imprisoned by his own prejudices; indeed, in his travel writing concerning "the native" of Samoa, he claims such a person is similar to "a child, his true analogue, he observes, apprehends, misapprehends, and is usually

silent."[27] Despite such comments that are reminiscent of Wiltshire's condescension, in "The Isle of Voices," it is greed that Stevenson implies is childish. Keola himself first plays the part of a child by coveting a concertina and then discards that dream when faced with the more sinister conflict of the cannibals and imperialist sorcerers. In fact, the cannibals and sorcerers--whether Hawaiian or European--are closely related in signification; both are selfish in their desire to consume the resources of others. Keola escapes from the cannibals by rejecting his implicitly immature desire for conspicuous consumption--the concertina--and examining his position from the larger framework of oral traditions. From what he has heard he is able to see better what he must do:

> He had heard besides, by travellers, of their practices, and how when they are in a mind to eat a man, they cherish and fondle him like a mother with a favourite baby. And he saw this must be his own case; and that was why he had been housed, and fed, and wived, and liberated from all work; and why the old men and the chiefs discoursed with him like a person of weight. (386)

Ironically, this last passage--despite the story's criticism of economic sorcery--is obliquely an endorsement of capitalism. It suggests that to make gratuitous provisions for Keola--without him having to work--ultimately represents a cannibalistic society. In this respect, "The Isle of Voices," offers Victorian middle-class morality--one must work after all, as Keola learns despite his dream of free provisions: "'Why should I work' thought he, 'when I have a father-in-law who makes

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[27] The observation appears in A Footnote to History (1892). Alanna Knight, R.L.S. in

dollars of sea-shells?'" (377). Carlyle would want to see Keola chastened for such thoughts, and he is.

William Scheick in "The Ethos of Stevenson's 'The Isle of Voices'" also agrees that the narrative "stresses the nature and consequences of greed" (145) and he insists that Steveson's argument is against capitalist exploitation of the natural world: "These images suggest that the natural world of the islanders is already replete with a wealth (kaupoi) that surpasses the monetary [. . .] into which it is debasingly transformed, a wealth free for the taking by any viewer with the sensibility to appropriate it through aesthetic appreciation" (146). Scheick asserts that Keola awakens to "value the treasures of everyday life" (148) which include "the gift of life" from his wife and "simple, commonplace things as a bowl of cooked and fermented taro root [. . .]" (147). However, Scheick's analysis ignores the far more ironic note on which the story ends. For, after this "bowl of poi" that Keola eats with his wife the couple visit a "white missionary" who convinces them to donate their money "to the lepers and some to the missionary fund [. . .]. And no doubt the advice must have been good, for from that day to this, Kalamake has never more been heard of. But whether he was slain in the battle by the trees, or whether he is still kicking his heels upon the Isle of Voices, who shall say?" (390). The both charitable and self-serving advice of the Christian missionary to the couple betrays the hint of imperial manipulation of the islanders through religion: the missionary in effect bankrupts the man and woman. The couple had acquired wealth through trade not administered by European forces: "he [the missionary] warned the police at Honolulu that, by all he

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the South Seas (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1986) 20.

could make out, Kalamake and Keola had been coining false money, and it would not be amiss to watch them." (390). Keola and Lehua obey the dubious authority of the missionary in the hopes of evading Lehua's father-in-law--an essentially superstitious decision. They put their faith in a virtual indulgence to buy their salvation from the ignorant proselytizer in order to deliver them from the shrewd native capitalist Kalamake. Perhaps Keola and Lehua have come to "an appreciate vision of the protean every day wonders that intrinsically inform and redeem the shadowy, fleeting dream that is human existence," as Scheick insists (147). But, at the same time they have in effect returned to an Eden of ignorance and isolation from the world of commerce of which the island remains a part despite their retreat. If one listens, the clink of coins may be heard from under the missionary's robes.

If it is wisdom that Keola gravitates toward ulimtately, then one must admit that Keola partly grows into this wisdom because he takes his position seriously in relation to folkloric traditions. Keola's judicious response to tradition is opposed to the white man who was the mate on the ship that picked Keola up from the sea, after his abandonment there by his father-in-law. This mate, who mistreated Keola "was told of it [the fish in the lagoon were poisonous in the "sickly season"] [. . .] but he was a fool of a white man, who would believe no stories but his own and he caught one of these fish [poison], cooked it and ate it, and swelled up and died" (384). The punishment for the mate's lack of respect for Keola and native traditions in general typologically serves as a warning for European attitudes towards island folklore and culture. This dangerous consequence of contemning native traditions resonates with

Brantlinger's analysis of what "typifies" Imperial Gothic: "Western rationality may be subverted by the very superstitions it rejects" (227).

Stevenson's story not only presents folk beliefs both realistically and fantastically but also makes use of fairy-tale patterns. Keola's adventures are märchen-like in his maturation; he is no longer a complaining and covetous young man who foolishly and parasitically seeks to exploit his dangerous father-in-law: "He can gather dollars when he pleases on the beach, and he leaves me to pine for a concertina! Let him beware: I am no child [. . .]." (377). Instead Keola becomes free both from excessive monetary desires (particularly if one agrees with Scheick), rebels against the imperialist sorcerers, and dwells in peace with his wife Lehua without fearing anymore the authority of the "wise man" of the island. The resourcefulness of Keola's wife, "She has the intelligence to suggest that the lover elude the oven [of cannibals] by hiding in a haunted region, noted by Hillier in "Folklore and Oral Tradition in Stevenson's South Seas Narrative Poems and Short Stories" is a common feature of the international tale-type of AT 313 *The Girl as Helper of the Hero on his Flight.* Frequently the woman is the daughter of a magician who is hostile to the protagonist.[28] In addition Keola's foolishness is consistent with the tale-type of AT*1685 The Stupid Son-in-Law*; however it is Keola's selfisness rather than stupidity that contributes to his initial foolish acts.

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[28] Unfortunately the article does not thoroughly analyze the role of folklore in "The Isle of Voices" despite the claims of the title. 38. As emphasized in previous chapters, Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's title for tale-type 313 does not do full justice to the significance of the female's role in this international tale--often the hero's success completely depends on upon her magical and intelligent acts.

Both "The Beach of Falesá" and the "Isle of Voices," criticize imperial exploitation of native island cultures by presenting fantastic narratives that pit different cultural standards against each other. Stevenson, in "The Beach of Falesá," emphasizes the evil of European imperialism by Case's deceitful and uncanny manipulation of traditional folklore. He creates a story that is closer to the marvelous in "The Isle of Voices," yet achieves ironic ambiguity in its allegorical satire of economic exploitation.

Stevenson also uses aspects of imperial Gothic in The Master of Ballantrae, which has been critically praised as Stevenson's "most polished and mature work."[29] In his portrayal of the diabolical James Durie, Stevenson presents a dichotomy between the supernatural traditions of both Scotland and India in contrast to the rationality of England. In the story James Durie, the Master of Ballantrae, disappears to India after allegedly dying in the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. He returns to quarrel with his younger brother, Henry Durie, over money, their inheritance, and the same woman: Henry's wife. In the course of their struggles James survives so much physical violence--including a fraternal duel--that it seems to his brother that James is more than human: a kind of revenant intent on persecuting the hapless Henry. Their rivalry culminates in India where James, hoping to evade the hired murderers of his brother Henry by feigning death, plans to be resuscitated by his Indian servant, Secundra. The revival is not entirely successful. Yet, the fantastic sight of his supposedly dead brother's signs of life after being dug up after a week in the grave

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[29] James Kilroy, "Narrative Techniques in *The Master of Ballantrae*" Studies in Scottish Literature 5 (1967): 98.

kills Henry whose paranoid obsession over the lack of potency that he has in his confrontations with his brother has driven him increasingly insane. James's mystique as a satanic being is constructed from among a range of cultural narratives--offering competing versions of who exactly he is, as well as revealing the conflicting cultural perspectives represented in the text.

As James Hogg does in the Justified Sinner, Stevenson offers a narrative composed of different narrative voices from a variety of social classes and cultures; the composite text discovered within the fictional "preface" is referred to as the "papers of the Durrisdeers" (6). The editorial persona of Stevenson who begins the novel alludes to reading in the "'Forty-five'" concerning "strange passages with the devil," to the literary documents composed by the "Chevalier de Burke" and edited by the Durrisdeers' family servant Mr. Mackellar are set alongside intimations from "deformed traditions" orally (6). James Kilroy identifies Mackellar's few mentions of legendary material as a sign of Mackellar's animosity towards James Durie:

> The first time he describes James, he maligns his character by mentioning (or is it not mentioning?), a slander: "One very black mark he had to his name; but the matter was hushed up at the time, and so defaced by legends before I came into those parts that I scruple to set it down. If it was true, it was a horrid fact in one so young; and if false, it was a horrid calumny.[30]

In other words, Mackellar's very inclusion of traditional materials is, for Kilroy, a token of his unreliability as a narrator:

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[30] Kilroy 100-101.

> The judicious reader tends to disregard all such malicious attacks, not always an easy task due to the persuasive force of Mackellar's innuendo. Stevenson's technique here is quite complex: by employing undocumented rumor, he seems to force the reader's skepticim; the very vagueness of his claim, and the smug tone of its utterance make us question Mackellar's integrity.[31]

Kilroy betrays his prejudice towards the oral tradition as well as Mackellar's own reticence.

While it is credible that Mackellar, as a loyal servant to Henry, may be eager to intrude a libel against Henry's antagonistic brother, James Durie, he actually has no need for the intimations of tradition--he was an eyewitness to James Durie's crimes. The main problem with Kilroy's view here is that it neglects the operation of tradition in the story; folklore is not to be dismissed as mere rumor. To do so is to miss a fundamental aspect of the narrative dynamics of the story, which any study of "narrative techniques" should definitely not do. The immediate juxtaposition of this supposedly well-documented set of "papers" with supernatural traditions from "the country folk" concerning the devil emphasizes both a narrative indeterminacy and metaphysical instability; in other words, we are initially introduced to the literary fantastic within these opening papers. This tension between "deformed traditions" and Mr. Mackellar's more measured presentation of James Durie articulates precisely

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[31] Kilroy 101.

the same dilemma that Henry Durie, must contend with: is his elder brother really the Devil?

The typical self-consciousness of nineteenth century narrators of supernatural folklore is in evidence in Stevenson's approach to traditions in The Master of Ballantrae. Although Stevenson was committed to the romance, as opposed to the more naturalistic novelist discourse becoming increasingly popular in the Victorian era, he had reservations concerning depictions of the supernatural or even the ambiguously fantastic. Writing to Henry James regarding the last sections of the novel he laments that "they are fantastic; they shame, perhaps degrade, the beginning."[32] For Stevenson, consciously or not, his use of supernatural folk beliefs are inextricably wound together with his psychological and aesthetic vision. Interestingly, "shame" is one of the connecting features of Stevenson's analysis of both his use of the fantastic and psychology: "I am at bottom a psychologist and ashamed of it."[33]

Indeed, one might argue that Stevenson's own discomfort over using the "fantastic" partly motivates him to present a protagonist whose ultimate sign of mental and moral degradation is his final submission to the local supernatural folk belief that his brother is indeed otherworldly. Eigner identifies Henry's fall as this moment as well, although the particularities of his analysis differ:

> Henry errs most seriously when he accepts James as the projection of an element in his character, as his double, in fact; thus equating the smuggler or

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[32] Eigner 34-35.

[33] Eigner 37.

> lawless element in himself to the devil in James. [. . .] It was the fault of Dr. Jekyll and of Henry Durie that they could not distinguish between the lawless and the wicked, and that they were therefore unable to live with themselves. (192-193)

While Eigner emphasizes the psychological weakness of Henry's dual perspective--Henry cannot distinguish between the anarchic power of human impulse and malicious intent (amorality versus immorality)-- one must not ignore that the usurpation of his reason and identity depends upon his resignation to folk metaphysics and narratives.

Throughout the story the character of Henry's brother owes its ambience to folk narratives--from "legends" that "defaced" his relations with his fiancé, Alison Graeme, the woman who becomes Henry's wife (11), to the legend of his brother as the devil that Henry relates to his own son: "I have just been telling Sandie the story of this place, and how there was a man whom the devil tried to kill, and how near he came to kill the devil instead" (140). Yet, as it turns out--and is the case in many folk legends of the devil--this mortal does not escape so easily.

Like Case's technological improvisations that mimicked folk beliefs in "The Beach of Falesá," James Durie is an accomplished actor who purposely manipulates others through their superstitions. James himself has nothing but contempt for folk metaphysics, as he makes clear to Mr. Mackellar when the man betrays feeling ominous qualms over their planned trip to New York:

> "Something speaks in my bosom; and so much it says plain--that this is an ill-omened journey." "If you take to prophecy," says he, "listen

> to that." There came a violent squall off the open Solway, and the rain was dashed on the great windows. "Do ye ken what that bodes, warlock?" said he, in a broad accent: "that there'll be a man Mackellar unco sick at sea." (174)

Importantly, James condescends to use the "broad" Scots accent, aligning the language of the folk with their beliefs. Though a Scot himself, his speech is typically rendered as unexceptionally English--he adopts Scots dialects only to chafe and manipulate others. James's subtle manipulation of folk beliefs continues to be a theme on the trip itself. He tells Mackellar what appears to be a folktale concerning James's "friend the count" and "an enemy a certain German baron, a stranger in Rome," but the tale is most likely in fact an example of how James performed an "assassination" (183). In the tale this "German baron" (whom we gradually suspect, as Mackellar does, to be James himself) claims to have a portentous dream of the count's death. He then communicates this to the count, a "superstitious man, who affected the scorn of superstition," and takes great care to fulfill the requirements of the dream: driving the count to distraction and death (185).

This tale is not unlike the legend of Auchtermuchty related by Robert Colwan's servant Samuel in Hogg's Justified Sinner; both tales paradigmatically emphasize the use of folklore in the narratives to exemplify moral conflicts. Just as Robert discovers that his supposed spiritual advisor is as corrupt as the demon-preacher in the legend, so Mackellar learns that James is the evil baron who continues to drive superstitious men to death--ultimately his own brother Henry. James, who survived the duel with his brother earlier despite Henry's belief that he had killed him,

appears literally to rise from the dead once more because of using a traditional technique taught to him by his servant Secundra: "I tell you I bury him alive [. . .]. teach him swallow his tongue. Now dig him up pretty good hurry, and he not much worse" (250).

In other words, James appears in effect as a revenant of the vampiric variety. In fact, Secundra kills and scalps--to suggest Native Americans are the culprits--the hired murderers who had planned to kill James. In this respect the vampire motif is extended; it is as if James himself might be rising nightly from the grave to slay his enemies. It is this particular subterfuge of James's which involves aspects of imperial Gothic.

The inclusion of the Hindu Secundra as James's virtual servitor spirit connects fantastic folk traditions with the mystery of the far East. Notably, Mackellar hearing voices--not knowing that James and Secundra are speaking in Hindustanee--is reminded of a legend that "a fairy wife (or perhaps only a wandering stranger), that came to the place of my fathers [. . .] talking often in a tongue that signified nothing to the hearers" (152). While Penny Fielding in Writing and Orality analyzes this scene in terms of the relation between "James" and "an irrational, female, and subversive orality which threatens the male romance" (165) she neglects to incorporate the xenophobic dimensions of this discourse. Mackellar's impression implicitly associates the otherworldliness of the fairies with the alien tongue of India. Superstition works as a mechanics of prejudice in much of the narrative--Secundra is called a "familiar spirit" (241-242) by Henry and a "black dog" by Mackellar (153). James, misanthropic as he is, and contemptuous of superstitions, is not so dismissive

of Secundra whom he calls "a native gentleman of India" (153). And, in fact, Secundra, who knows English perfectly well, belies the perspective of an inarticulate alien that Mackellar imposes upon him.

However, despite being somewhat humanized by Stevenson's characterization, Secundra's main role is as the shadowy catalyst for James's most mysterious and fantastic performance. Having faked his death among criminal traders whom Henry hired to murder James, once and for all, Secundra comes back to dig up James's body--in a trance, but still alive. Having heard of his supposed death, Henry protests to Sir William Johnson--an actual historical figure who helped to dissuade the Iroquois from joining the French in 1756--that he must "see him rotting":

> My lord caught Sir William by the coat with a hooked hand. "This man has the name of my brother, " says he, "but it's well understood that he was never canny."
>
> "Canny?" says Sir William. "What is that?"
>
> "He's not of this world," whispered my lord, "neither him nor the black deil that serves him." (241)

The exchange between Sir William and Henry stages the tension between English rationalism and superstitious Scottish superstition. Unlike Hobbie's eventual diminishment of superstitious fears with his recognition of the physically stunted Elshie as a "canny neighbourly man," in Scott's The Black Dwarf, Stevenson's Henry develops a view of his brother that is ultimately incompatible with English rationality. The dichotomy is underscored by the difference in language; notably, Henry often speaks a clearly Scottish dialect in contrast to his brother James, who is skeptical

rather than credulous of folk beliefs. Yet, in this most fantastic section of the story, Sir William himself speaks with a voice that "was thick and weak" when he beholds the Master's corpse with a week's worth of beard (251). Mackellar beholds "the week-old corpse" look him "for a moment in the face" and Henry himself "fell to the ground" and dies from the shock of what seems indeed to be his brother's revenant. But in fact, James dies too--this miracle of suspended animation Secundra protests would have worked "in India," but the soil in America is too "cold" (251).

Secundra's claim that his natural magic depends on a particular national and geographic region resonates both with the idea of cultural relativity and literary context, borders which Stevenson's narratives have explored and criticized. From the manipulations of the natives' traditions by Case in "The Beach of Falesá," to the fantastic metaphor of Keola's economic opportunism in "The Isle of Voices," Stevenson illustrates how folklore crosses both metaphysical and mercantile barriers. Stevenson uses the supernatural aura of folk beliefs to first misleadingly focus on the alien nature of non-English cultures, then he erodes the perception of categorical difference between enlightened England and its dark supernatural doubles by showing Anglo-Saxon pretensions towards the magical effects of non-industrial traditions. Case employs his fluorescent paints and gunpowder to raise demons, and James Durie enlists the aid of Hindu mysticism to rise from the dead. Both these villains manufacture illusions in order to gain and sustain their claims to wealth by defeating their rivals: Wiltshire threatens Case's monopoly of trade, and Henry holds the family legacy that James wishes to grasp himself. Their drive towards socio-economic advancement makes Stevenson's antagonists fairy-tale heroes--or perhaps anti-heroes-

-in their own right. Stevenson's Case and James are far more self-reliant than the typical märchen heroes, who tend to receive from others all they need, once they demonstrate their integrity. Case and James work to perform miracles using their own ingenuity; instead of depending on helpers, they strive to guarantee their own welfare and devastate the security of their competitors.

Just as Henry's obsessive fear of his brother James begins to seems somewhat monstrous, so also the white specter rises grinning with far more sinister, though at the same time vain, designs than the native Polynesian or Indian in these stories. Case's and James's diabolism debunks any xenophobic presumptions. Fear itself figures as a tool of British imperialism, while folklore serves as a store of wisdom and truth when the unbeliever does not seek to exploit others by idle tales. To ignore the validity of tradition is to live at one's own peril: in "The Isle of Voices" the European who scoffs at folk beliefs perishes. Furthermore, those imperialist traders who flock to babble on the beaches of that unnamed isle merge into a stream of invisible speech. Thus, in these three narratives by Stevenson any claims to a European essence of superiority are submerged in a tide of assimilative greed or destroyed by an ideology of arrogant cultural isolation.

The folk beliefs and legendary frameworks emerging from the borders and centers of these texts reveal how fears of demons, devils, and ghosts are primarily fears of social and financial impotence: poverty, death, and barrenness. The traditions of the South Seas, India, and rural Scotland demonstrate that these are common anxieties plaguing the global nation of which England itself is but one more voice in the larger choir. The pious instructions of the "white missionary," the idealized

homage to Victoria, or the technology of the industrialist are tools for cultural synthesis, which define neither more rational borders nor echo more resoundingly than James Durie's failed attempt at speech when revived from a week in the grave. Stevenson's close parallels of native superstition and British chauvinism demonstrate a kind of variation of cultural species, not progressive social evolution, but rather a repetition of old motifs and beliefs: the devil sails in a trading ship, while the angry ghost rises to claim his inheritance once again.

Chapter Nine

National Borders, Contiguous Cultures, and Fantastic Folklore in Hogg's The Three Perils of Man

The late medieval Border Wars between Scotland and England set the stage in Hogg's The Three Perils of Man--War, Women, and Witchcraft (1822) for a complicated play between identity and storytelling. Hogg's representations of folk beliefs, memorats, and legends, illustrate the common British lore that defies boundaries of class, education, and nationality in the narrative. However, Hogg also uses folklore to portray tensions between historical and fictional standards for narrative, upper and lower class models of behavior, and English and Scottish perceptions--including politics and metaphysics. Supernatural folklore circulates around the central location for the political events of the novel--Roxburgh castle on the border between Scotland and England--and Michael Scott's nearby castle, a place of necromancy and moral compromise that serves as a microcosm for the dangers of vassalage, whether romantic or political. Hogg uses these two sites, and the other scenes of border conflicts, to articulate the emphasis in the story on the struggle to resolve tensions between two countries at odds both militarily and culturally, and to criticize abuses of power in feudal, religious, and amorous relations,

The Three Perils of Man has a superficially chivalric premise. The Lady Jane Howard demands Sir Philip Musgrave take the castle of Roxburgh as a task of courtship while princess Margaret Stuart orders the same from her suitors. This

situation itself is folkloric: the romantic task is a fairy-tale motif. The story centers on the adventures and competitive tales of Sir Ringan's chosen emissaries to Michael Scott, the warlock. This party sets out to receive his interpretation of Thomas Rhymer's prophecy regarding which side Ringan should support in the struggle between the English Sir Philip Musgrave and the Scottish Lord Douglas. Trapped in Scott's stronghold each of these travellers tells a tale in a contest--to avoid being "food to his associates" [literally], and to "win the beautiful Delany," the woman accompanying them (234-235). With two notable exceptions--the seizure of the glutton Tam by the Devil and the servitude of the storyteller Gilbert--the deputation leaves Michael Scott and eventually unites with Sir Ringan's forces and the other victorious Scots. The chivalric satire ends with the marriage of Lady Jane to the doughty Charles Scott: Sir Ringan's greatest champion, who headed the group of travelers. After this romantic resolution, Hogg's narrative closes with the marvellous details of the final hours of struggle between Michael Scott and the Devil, and the pilgrimage of the main characters to the site of living legends.

On the structural and generic level The Three Perils of Man presents at least as complicated a composite narrative as Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner--in each case folk narratives and beliefs complicate the authoritative status of written documents. In particular it is the legend in its broadest sense--unofficial narrative oral history--that permeates the text. But, although the legend is the dominant folk narrative in the story, the opening of the story, told supposedly by the monk Isaac, has the style of a märchen: "There was once a noble king and queen of Scotland, as many in that land have been--. In this notable

tell-tale manner, does old Isaac, the curate begin his narrative" (2). From this brief quote one can see one of the fundamental narrative complications. The anonymous "Editor" serves an expositor and interpolator for the modern audience to whom he presents Isaac's "tale": "It was taken down from the manuscript of an old Curate, who had spent the latter part of his life in the village of Mireton, and was given to the present Editor by one of those tenants who now till the valley where stood the richest city of this realm" (2). The Editor's own rhetoric complicates the narrative's authority. For instance, he uses the term "idle tale" (138) to excuse himself from rendering a "sacred" name (Charlie Scott is praying) in print. Later the narrator asserts that the work he is writing is a "true history," a categorization which has more claims to authority than the deprecation of the expression "idle" (184). Thus, Hogg's fictional Editor in this case expresses greater ambivalence than that of the Justified Sinner.

In more prominent focus than the interplay between the Editor and Isaac are the specific tales that the visitors tell to Michael Scott that contribute to the difficulty in distinguishing between authoritative history and legendary narratives. Their stories include memorats, mārchen motifs, and the hyperbole common to tall-tales; however, rather than indefinite characters the very fellow travelers are revealed as participants in these tales. Thus, by marvelous coincidence--what amounts to Bakhtin's concept of "adventure-time"--the borders of these embedded folk narratives expand to admit the external reality of the storytelling audience. And indeed, the metaphysics of the internal world of these performed tales resonate with the spiritual dynamics of the world which these travelers occupy. Penny Fielding's claim that "Story and history

are so far merged that it is impossible for the reader to disentangle them" underscores this storytelling ambiguity that collapses into narrative equivalence between the performing of fiction and the reciting of a true history."[1]

Fielding has examined the novel's status as a "compendium of ideas about language and storytelling," but an analysis that focuses on some of the particular effects of supernatural folk narratives and beliefs remains to be done, and shall be the focus herein.[2] Fielding's observations provide a significant foundation to expand upon:

> The novel's structure seems to invite an opposition between the world of courtly sophistication and the primitive world of magic and storytelling. Yet as in Confessions of a Justified Sinner, binary oppositions in this novel, though very frequent, turn out to be highly deceptive [. . .]. Hogg attacks the cultural division into primitive and sophisticated, of which he was himself a victim, by setting up bifurcations, only to reveal how untenable they are.[3]

Fielding emphasizes the blurring of distinctions between the natural and the artificial in the story because she considers these the salient characteristics associated with "primitive and sophisticated" forms of narrative respectively. The Edinburgh literati considered Hogg himself something of a natural genius, but not sophisticated; he

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[1] Penny Fielding, Writing and Orality—Nationality, Culture, and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 94.

[2] Fielding 81.

[3] Fielding 81.

"seemed to embody both the idealized orality of the Romantic poet and the taint of a class more commonly associated with illiteracy."[4] Regardless of whether or not Hogg was "a victim" of these "bifurcations" between "primitive and sophisticated," in his use of fantastic folklore, Hogg erodes the pretensions of the "sophisticated" to wholly transcend the worldview of the "primitive" folk, who--as Hogg shows--are "sophisticated" in their own way.

Hogg dramatizes the pressure of the proximity between the Scots and English on the border by presenting scenes where Scots and English share living space. The first such emblematic scene is early in the book where Princess Margaret and Lady Jane have disguised themselves in order to visit their male champions anonymously. Instead the two women end up meeting each other--along with their attendants--randomly during a storm, seeking shelter under "the roof of Pate Chisholm's bigging [cottage]" (25).

More engaging and folkloric is the later meeting in Peter Chisholm's dwelling, where Chisholm's daughters have disguised themselves as men--recalling the royal women's subterfuge--while Will Laidlaw, who is wooing Bess Chisholm, arrives with his cohorts disguised as skin dealers. Will Laidlaw, detects the pretense by the "suppressed scream" of "one of the young men" when he announces the legendary abstract "I can tell thee sic news of Dan as thou never heard'st; he has sitten at his supper hand and neive [fist] wi' the deil" (428). Will then aggressively courts Bess Chisholm by telling her the legendary experiences of her brother Dan:

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[4] Fielding describes how Hogg was viewed "as a kind of Scottish Wordsworth" raised among natural influences. 74-75.

> he related the wonderful story of her brother's adventures with the devil, the warlock and the three evil spirits; of his race with those infernals along the marble pavement of the air; his transformation into a horned beast; and of his eating and drinking with the prince of darkness. But the two striplings were most of all shocked at hearing of the devil's burning stomach, and how the wine *fizzed* as it went down. (429)

Hogg not only maintains his humor with this running joke on gastronomy throughout the novel--particularly with the glutton Tam and other references to the devil's behavior while dining--but also represents the communal folk value of shared hospitality. Dining with the devil implies a convivial connection; Will's proverbial utterance expresses a generally recognized communal attitude.

It is not only folklore of course that emphasizes the importance of the bonding implicit in shared dining--literature in general tends to maintain the importance of social coherence and ingestion. Many a feast and wedding ends a romantic comedy. In this particular context these are "unwelcome guests" and Pate "could not contain his chagrin, and at first refused to turn out to the board, or partake with the rest" because he believes Will and his companions to be English (431). It is a mark of his desperation when more English visitors arrive--actual English horse thieves-- that he "actually intreated the last comers to sit down and share of the remnants of their supper" in order "to conciliate their favour" lest he be ransacked (433).

Given these English horse thieves, it is a mark of the devil's greater character that he and Michael Scot return the horses of Charlie and company after their adventures with the warlock--courtesy is decidedly Scottish rather than English in Hogg's presentation. However, his criticisms of the English are fairly oblique; for instance Bess lambasts England as a "perjured ungenerous nation," but this is in reaction to the joke of the disguised Sandy--friend to Will--that Will has kept "an English girl" as his mistress (429).

Bess's invective renders nationalist prejudice against England slightly absurd--the bitterness of a slighted woman. In fact, women express the bulk of anti-English sentiment in the novel; in particular, Princess Margaret inveighs against Lady Jane. Hogg's presentation is too good-humored to call misogynist without qualifications, yet his depiction of female rhetoric as characteristically hyperemotional is certainly arguably sexist. Nevertheless, any such criticisms must also consider the overall cleverness and courage shown by three of the heroines, as well as their unconventional behavior masquerading as men and, if not performing male roles impromptu altogether skillfully, at least receiving narrative commendation. For example, the Editor calls Bess "heroic" for her initiative in fighting against the horse thieves, despite her ineffectiveness as a warrior (437). Ultimately, Charlie's marriage to Lady Jane suggests possible reconciliation not only between the two nations, but also among men and women, superstition, and reason. However, marrying Charlie, even though he becomes Sir Charles, takes Lady Jane down a peg in status.

The union of Sir Charles and Lady Jane promises the propagation of life, rather than death between the two nations, which the revenant leitmotiv reinforces

throughout the narrative. Structurally, the episode involving the Scottish champion and the English lady follows closely upon the prank of Will on Peter Chisholm. Having courted his daughter as an English skin trader, old Pate [Peter] is desperate to "beg of Will Laidlaw to come and run off with his daughter before she fell into the hands of an English skinman" (461). And, this trick of Will's, which does result in marriage, immediately succeeds the plans for the final strategy by Sir Ringan at the siege of Roxburgh--the disguise as oxen. The chapter ends with an account of the death toll that has resulted from the struggle so far, closing with the significant line--having the brevity and concentration of folktale rhetoric: "The burying continued for three days" (459).

Besides these animal revenants--the wearing of dead animal skins by Sir Ringan's soldier in order to gain the castle--discussed more carefully later--a more concentrated symbol of the destructiveness of the border conflicts is the dead rider locked to his saddle which joins the company of the deputation to Michael Scott. The characters all believe it is truly a ghostly being that has come to them: "we are haunted. That is a dead man that rides in our company" (144). Seeking shelter in a nearby dwelling, the "men of the house" are certain the party "must be some murderers" because "they had seen a ghost" (145).

A communal sense of folk metaphysics guides the reactions of these Scots, despite the fact that the visitor is an uncanny rather than truly marvelous figure. Similarly, in daylight when the group beholds the "horses of our travellers going about in a careless easy manner. This they looked on as a good omen, knowing that horses were terrified for spirits" (148). The rider is the dead victim of Charlie's

sword--a reminder of the proximity of the dangerous border, despite their belief that they were "free from any danger of the foes they had left behind them on the Border" (145). The rider is the specter of war, whom has yet to be dispelled. The association of the threat of death with the hostilities of the border is more humorously emphasized by Peter Chisholm's uneasy reaction to the Englishmen in his house who are horse thieves: "old Pate, he kept going out and in like a restless spirit" (434). Crossing the threshold of his own house connects Peter emblematically not only with a ghost, a being which occupies at once spiritual and physical environs, but stresses the primary actions and circumstances of the entire book. The border tensions between England and Scotland are virtually the difficulties of a household dealing with troublesome guests; the perspective of course is relative as to who rightly commands the household and which side of the threshold is the otherworld. Regardless, on both sides of the national border people perish and die.

Besides these uncanny and metaphorical revenants that mark the divisiveness of Border relations, Hogg also presents what seems to be a truly ghostly revenant in Charlie Scott's memorat, included in his tale during the storytelling competition at Michael Scott's castle. Charlie tells of his first border skirmish, during which his father died and Charlie neglected to defend an English woman, Lady Neville, from being burned to death in her castle. However, Charlie does save her child, hearing the young boy calling for his father; or at least Charlie puts the boy in the way of Will Laidlaw, who is less concerned with the contempt of other Scots than Charlie--Will adopts and protects the boy. At night on the battlefield a "lady a' clad in white"

appears; Charlie soon recognizes her for Lady Neville's ghost, while Will "had nae suspicions o' ony thing beyond nature" (282-283).

The revenant behaves in many ways according to legends that have been gathered of ghosts--from the physical appearance of white vestments to the fact that "she touched her lips three times, as an intimation that she wished to speak and could not" (283). Traditionally a person must address a ghost first before it can speak, yet the signaling as to this fact is not folkloric, but appears to be Hogg's explication to an audience not familiar with such traditions. The words of the revenant, although pretentiously English, resonate with tradition as well--offering a reward contingent on not violating a prohibition: a common formula in emissaries of the otherworld in folktales. The revenant, when she does speak, asserts the significance of ethical standards--moral actions are policed by agents of the spirit world who implicitly produce the consequences of such behavior, good or bad:

> He has been guilty of a neglect that he will rue till the day of his death. But for another deed of mercy that you and he have done, your fates are averted, and your heads shall be covered in the hour of danger, which is fast approaching. You have saved a child from the devouring flames;--if you dare to wrong a hair of that child's head, how dreadful will be your doom. (283)

The revenant of Lady Neville not only emphasizes the destructiveness of war, but serves as a mystical nexus for moral standards amid the chaos of war--even pointing towards possible reconciliation between the English and Scottish given the adoption of the English child by Scottish male protectors.

Furthering the sense of potential union, despite border tensions, is the fact that among the listeners of Charlie's tale is the child himself--long lost according to Charlie who said "he was never been seen or heard of in this world neither as boy nor man" (291). The English boy who Charlie helped to save is in fact the poet who is part of the deputation to Michael Scott. He insists, like the ghost of his mother, that "spirits" and particularly "some being, wheresoe'er he dwells, that watches o'er the fates of mortal men" (292).

Paradoxically, the revelation of the poet's identity at once validates and undermines the historical credibility of storytelling--the poet works as a significant rhetorician for the literary fantastic. While the poet's presence seems on the one hand to confirm the authority of Charlie's memorat, on the other hand, when the poet tells his own tale, he brings up details that belie the marvels of his youth narrated by Charlie. He emphasizes that it was not "*the white lady*" who "*bore me from this land*," but an "amorous" and "wandering minstreless" who intrigued him not to "fairy land" but "fair Caledon" (347-348). Thus, the poet serves simultaneously to render Charlie's tale all the more fantastic by casting some doubt on the absolute truth of Charlie's impressions of the preternatural. The poet's description of the fairy land that Charlie believed him spirited away to is a mere extravagant euphemism for the prurient debauchery of the Scottish court:

> Fain would I tell my friends and fellow sufferers of my translation hence. Of all the joys and ecstacies of that celestial clime, ycleped the land of faery; were it not that one is here whose sex forbids it [. . .]. I sought the Scottish court [. . .]. There have I heard and and seen such

> scenes of love of dalliance, and of mirth, of deep intrigue and violent cruelty, as eye of minstrel hath not witnessed. Yes, I have seen things not to be expressed, at least not here. (347-348)

The otherworld of fairyland loses its literal sense as a transcendent realm of mystical beings and instead gains a surprisingly earthly association from this poet, who uses the aura of superstition to render taboo the extreme human behaviors of the court. The court is circumscribed away from the real world of Scotland and the poet's trip there while idealized as a "translation" only underscores the forbidden, and implicitly depraved, nature of "things not to be expressed." In this sense, Hogg is using folklore according to Siebers' characterization of superstition as a rhetoric of prejudice.

The otherworld of fairyland becomes literally the Otherworld of the corrupt court--defined by a difference that is not "celestial" but immoral and as ineffable as the poet's ghostly mother until spoken to. It is quite possible that some of Hogg's personal enmity towards the pretensions of Edinburgh's cultural elite influenced his view of the medieval Scottish court and that contributes to the satirical resonance of this passage, despite the poet's assumed earnestness. The very hyperbolic rhetoric of the poet renders the court's pretensions to social eminence absurd--and any further description would only break the spell of alienation. The metaphor of fairyland signifies the cultural and moral gap between the court of Caledon and the Scottish border. Therefore, in The Three Perils of Man the idea of cultural division accompanying geographic proximity does not apply only to England and Scotland.

As for England and Scotland, Hogg consistently presents the border between the two nations as a metaphysical contact zone. The warlock Michael Scott, tales of the devil, witches, and revenants all circulate near the border. Representatives of multiple worlds--devils, fairies, prophets, sorcerers, scientists, soldiers; the otherworldly and worldly, as well as the living and the dead--converge in this interface between two nations and cultures.

The dangers of the border as a metaphysical contact zone involves perils of time as well as space. The catalyst that moves Sir Ringan to send a deputation to Michael Scott is the mysterious prophet who arrives with an interpretation of the ancient prophecy of Thomas Rhymer--known to readers of British literature from the Child ballads. Thus, the invocation of this revered figure of folk legend and belief, Thomas Rhymer, in Hogg's tale heralds a legendary and distant past bearing mystically upon the fictionalized yet semi-historical events on this medieval border war between nations.

Another instance of the temporal dimensions of the metaphysical contact zone is apparent when Hogg describes how Scottish residents defended their personal borders--the thresholds of their homes--from the potential supernatural invaders given license to roam during the night hours. Notably it is only the English--strangers to Scottish folk beliefs--who violate the sanctity of the forest ruled by supernatural fears:

> Save when the English marauders were abroad, all was quietness by hamlet and steading. The land was the abode of the genii of the woods, the rocks, and the rivers; and of this the inhabitants were well aware, and kept within locked doors, whose lintels were made of the

> mountain ash, and nightly sprinkled with holy water. [. . .] They knew that their green and solitary glens were the nightly haunts of the fairies [. . .]. The mermaid sung her sweet and alluring strains by the shores of the mountain lake, and the kelpie sat moping and dripping by his frightsome pool [. . .] The fleeting wraiths hovered round the dwellings of those who were soon to die, and the stalking ghost perambulated the walks of him that was lately living, or took up his nightly stand over the bones of the unhouseholded or murdered dead. (375-376)

It bears repeating that the supernatural beings of folk beliefs tend to be concentrated on border areas of topographic features. The details of this passage by Hogg reinforce this truism from the physical margins where dwells the mermaid "by the shores of the mountain lake" and the kelpie "by his frightsome pool" to the wraiths circling the abodes of the living and the ghost haunting the sites of the dead.

The ghost's signification in relation to the concept of the border expands the sense of perilous boundaries by extending to issues of breaking communal bonds. The ghost here signifies the violation of the taboo of murder or, in the alternate possiblity, draws attention to another breach of what one may deduce as a popular value--being deprived of the natural right of a dwelling place. Ghost, wraith, fairies, kelpy--all these spirits represent the projected anxieties of mortality associated with dangerous physical locations and behavior.

Further complicating the dynamics of folk beliefs and the idea of the metaphysical contact zone is that the border in The Three Perils of Man is not only a

site of cultural tension between England and Scotland, but is also a location intruded upon by folklore of the European continent. In a highly literal sense, Hogg presents the invasion of continental folk beliefs and magical practices imported from Europe by Michael Scott. Hogg contrasts this new dangerous witchcraft with the native supernatural forces such as fairies and ghosts--spiritual beings that the Scottish peasant could learn to deal with if he observed certain principles of folk metaphysics:

> But these were the natural residenters in the wilds of the woodland, the aboriginal inhabitants of the country; and however inimical their ways might be to the ways of men, the latter laid their account with them. There were defences to be had against them from holy church, which was a great comfort. But ever since Master Michael Scott came from the colleges abroad to reside at the castle of Aikwood, the nature of demonology in the forest glades was altogether changed, and a full torrent of necromancy, or, as CharlieScott better expressed it, of *witchcraft*, deluged the country all over--[. . .] against which no fence yet discovered could prevail. [. . .] what could he [the country peasant] do now? His daughters were turned into roes and hares [. . .]. The old wives of the hamlet were saddled and bridled by night [. . .]. The cows were deprived of their milk [. . .]. (376)

Hogg's description of what are supposedly European imports of supernatural folklore are not altogether accurate--fairies were known for example to steal cattle's milk before witches were suspected of such crimes. Indeed, much of the folklore attributed to the witches of the European persecutions arose from fairy legends to

begin with. However, there is certainly a new aggression in the concept of Europe's magic of the witchhunts.

Of more importance thematically than the literal aspects of witchcraft brought "from the colleges abroad", are the dynamics of Hogg's concept of this European invasion of witchcraft, which he describes as "the new prevailing system of metamorphoses" (377). Given the importance of shapeshifting and disguises in The Three Perils of Man, Hogg's characterization of an invasive system of European witchcraft that is defined by "metamorphoses" points to outside cultural threats to native identity. In this light, the idea of the border in the novel becomes a conceptual zone where issues of Scottish essentiality clash with English impositions of national and cultural identity, as well as other alien intrusions emphasized by the injection of continental witchcraft. Thus, the struggles of individual characters to defend against the witchcraft of Michael Scott resonate as a quest for cultural identity in much the same way that Scotland is striving for political solidarity in its border struggle with England. Familiarity with Scottish superstitions in the novel represents an ideal of communal consciousness and national identity. Therefore, when Scottish characters misperceive fantastic, but ultimately natural, events as supernatural (when the marvelous turns out to be the uncanny) according to a consensus of folk metaphysics, they are experiencing the instability of their worldview. This misapprehension clearly establishes the border conflict as a fundamentally cultural struggle, whose nature the presentation of supernatural folklore helps to reveal.

Despite cultural differences among England, Scotland, and the European continent, Hogg is not wholly consistent in demarcating the national mindsets

according to variant beliefs, such as witchcraft. Rather, Hogg also stresses the unifying aspects of supernatural folklore with regard to nationality and especially class. This is largely because the story is set in the late medieval period and thus folk beliefs are not isolated to a particular class or location; as the Editor asserts, "none of that age were exempt from the sway of overpowering superstition" (107). This particular attitude--reaffirmed in several other passages--appears as a commentary on Douglas's reaction to the messages of the monk (who is princess Margaret Stuart in disguise) who claims to be relating the commands of the presumably dead Margaret. We find that the lords and ladies of Scotland are conversant with popular expectations of the otherworld and present a range of varying attitudes towards belief, as do men and women of lower social distinction.

Manipulation of supernatural folklore is prevalent in the narrative, although in the case of Margaret, and some other characters as well, the intentions are not always proof of skepticism or as mercenary or malicious as Case in "The Beach of Falesá" or James in The Master of Ballantrae. Strategic uses of preternatural folklore are not limited to the artifice of the upper classes, and such plots are engaged for both love and politics. Besides Margaret's pretense as her own revenant to influences the actions of her lover, Lord Douglas, there are the machinations of characters much lower on the social scale, such as Tom Craik, who in his performed tale explains his game feigning fear of the Scottish spirit, the bogle. Tom sleeps in the house of his employer--and the master's "wench Kell", whom Tom manages to seduce through the couple's complicity in gaining intimate license through a pretense of defending against the occult invader:

'I'm unco feared the bogle come the night, Kell.'

'So am I!'

'I wasna sure, but I thought I heard it yestreen!"

'I aince thought that I thought I heard it a wee too!

'How does it play when it is gaun to rise?'

'It begins a scart, scarting, like a rattan, making holes, I fancy, to come out and take us away.' (300-301)

Tom takes his cue from this dialogue and after promising to "keep it aff you, Kelly" then "sat down on the side of her bed, to keep the invidious scratching bogle away from her. [. . . .] Awakening before day, the first thing I heard was the bogle scratching. Kel had stretched her arm below the bed, on the side opposite to me, and was scratching slowly and fearfully" (301). This masquerade serves to propel their flirtation into greater physical intimacy. Private skepticism combined with superficial belief makes this game with communal lore successful.

Hogg's presentation of Tom and Kel's lack of credulity and conscious manipulation of folk beliefs undermines the assumptions of the nineteenth century reading public who would tend to polarize the superstitious lower class and the enlightened upper class. However, Hogg does not offer an unequivocal defense of folk culture; in fact, in at least one moment he appears to give credit to English rationality at the expense of Scottish superstition. When the border conflict has been resolved and Charlie--the plain-spoken Scots hero who marries Lady Jane instead of Lord Musgrave--has told everyone about their prior confrontation with the devil and Michael Scott, the Queen of Scotland is determined to visit the scenes of legendary

conflict. When she reaches the spot where "the devil and his three attendant imps had appeared to our warriors" she cals upon "Dan Chisholm" who was "one of the party" to relate his memorat of the "personal appearance of the arch fiend" (517). Listening to this tale "made such an impression on the Queen's romantic and superstitious mind, that her countenance altered in every feature, and [. . .] gazing around as if expecting Satan's personal appearance [. . .]" (517). Shortly, a figure is seen traveling "by the very road that the deils took" (517). This ominous sight combined with Sir Charles's earlier warning that the devil can take any shape "sometime in the form of the King of Scotland" distresses the "Queen and her ladies" so greatly that the entire party is ready to flee (516-518). Yet Lady Jane "Sir Charles' English lady, whose education had taught her to despise the superstitions so prevalent in Scotland" insists on confronting the traveler (518). And, as it turns out, Lady Jane's contempt for Scottish superstition is at least partly warranted in this particular situation, for it is only Gilbert Jordan, who has left the service of Michael Scott. However, Gilbert Jordan, the official storyteller of the Scottish deputation--and ironically the one who was condemned by chance to servitude under the warlock after the friar's destruction of his previous servant (using gunpowder)--returns with "a tale" which "wad take a winter night in telling" (519). Gilbert then presents his own memorat of the final struggle between the devil and Michael Scott.

Gilbert's preface to his memorat provides further emphasis on Hogg's titular and thematic linkage between war and witchcraft in the novel, which was already well-established by Sir Ringan's consultation of Michael Scott to facilitate political success through allegiance in war. To discuss war, as the fundamental manifestation

of political power, is to discuss politics. And indeed, the larger narrative of The Three Perils of Man provides significant resonance for Gilbert's words, constituting a deeper critique of politics than Gilbert as a mere storyteller is conscious of. Just as Sir Charles points out to the Queen that the devil is known to disguise himself as the Scottish king, so Gilbert also underscores the connection between the "grand" aura of diabolic and royal power:

> There is something sae grand in being in the presence of a King and Queen and their courtiers, that is brings me in mind of the devil and his agents that I have been in the habit of entertaining for a month bygane. But there is some wee difference in masters for a' that; for, in my late service, if I had been brought in to entertain them, in an instant they would have had me transformed into some paltry animal, and then amused themselves by tormenting that animal to death, by dissecting it while living. (520)

Gilbert's speech reveals the destructiveness of feudalism and the arbitrary cruelty of royal power.

It is particularly through Gilbert's reference to bestial degeneration that Hogg offers a metaphor--first presented vividly through the marvelous transformations performed by Michael Scott and his demonic minions--for the potentially dehumanizing effects of feudalism. For, we have seen lords and ladies already involved in both the transformation of men into animals and their subsequent destruction. Sir Ringan has his men disguise themselves as oxen--inspired by Charlie's unpleasantly magical experience being literally turned briefly into a bull by

the warlock earlier--in the siege against Roxburgh castle--suggesting metaphorically that men on the battlefield are the beasts of burden of the lords they fight for. Furthermore, part of the preparation for Princess Margaret's performance as a revenant is her arrangement of a young page to die in her place: "No my lord, the page whom you saw swung was *a tailor's apprentice*, whom I hired to carry a packet up to your lordship, with my green suit of clothes, and a promise of preferment, and I kept my word to the brat! An intolerable ape it was" (490). Note the overt semantic equation between young man and animal by Princess Margaret--such contempt for underlings Hogg implicitly argues is another consequence of feudalism and chivalry in particular, where women may demand men risk life and limb under the pretense of honor. People--or more particularly, men--are all potentially oxen to be slaughtered when ruled by the dictates of feudalism.

An ideologically narrow reader might mistake Hogg's novel for a sexist work--particularly if one assumes that witchcraft necessarily means women who practice magic. In fact, the majority of the magic is practiced by males--Michael Scott, the warlock, in particular. Dangerous manipulation, on the other hand, is practiced by both genders. What then of the "three perils"? Women are not represented as essentially destructive by Hogg; however Hogg does criticize women's connection with the violent dynamics of chivalry. For example, Hogg emphasizes the potential absurdity of chivalry by having Princess Margaret wish, in a pet of jealousy, that Lord Douglas had died for her, as Philip Musgrave did for Lady Jane: "But then the lord of *her* adoption *died* for her [. . .] . [. . .] I would rather that one lover had laid down his life for me than have had fifty husbands" (503). The hyperbolic comparison further

compounds the absurdity here, for of course, to have had "fifty husbands" is no conventional measure of honor. Princess Margaret, however, is no monster--the intensity of her speech typically far exceeds any physical malice she performs. Even the death of the page is an act she regrets in the same speech where she belittles the youth: "my heart smote me for the part I had acted" (490).

It is Lord Douglas, driven nearly mad by the strains of the siege--and what he deems the supernatural interference of Princess Margaret--who inveighs against women most explicitly : "I deem them subordinate creatures, created solely for man's disquietude. The warrior is naturally surrounded by dangers; but, till he engages with women, he rises superior to them all; it is then that his troubles and perils begin" (468). Rather than being the emblematic statement of the entire narrative--which a reader might imagine given the presence of the words "women" and "perils" in the same sentence--Douglas's utterance must be taken in context. This is the same man who believes the woman he had fought for is dead and believes himself harassed by a mysterious monk who communicates with the revenant of Magaret. Douglas is nearly deranged; a few page prior to this outburst by Douglas he "gazed upon the monk [Princess Margaret in disguise] in silence, with an eye in which there was an unnatural gleam of madness" (466). And, having threatened to "cut down every man that dares name one [a woman]," Douglas fails to perceive that when he hears the name of Lady Jane Howard shouted around him that an English conspiracy has arisen (470-471). Political rebellion erupts before him--not a personal response to his monomania: "hearing the conspirators shouting the same name, 'Lady Jane Howard!'

he took it in derision and flew on their ranks" (471). In effect, Hogg represents misogyny as a form of paranoia.

It is witchcraft and war that are more credibly presented as the great perils--by Charles and the Queen of Scotland respectively; and, in fact, the two perils are so intricately connected that one is essentially the reflection of the other. Surprisingly, Hogg himself apparently failed to realize the complementary nature of his work that fused magic and the battlefield together. Douglas S. Mack in "James Hogg's Second Thoughts on The Three Perils of Man" explains Hogg's uneasiness with the fantastic in his comparison of the The Three Perils (1822) to the revision which appeared in 1827 as "The Siege of Roxburgh." The revision eliminates the "expedition to Michael Scott; and its version of the concluding chapters removes the various references to this expediiton which appear in the original version."[5] Hogg's decision--if it was his--to expurgate the Michael Scott sections likely derives from his susceptibility to the opinion of Sir Walter Scott:

> When The Three perils [sic] of Man appeared he read me a long lecture on my extravagance in demonology and assured me I had ruined one of the best tales in the world. It is manifest however that the tale had made no ordinary impression on him as he subsequently copied the whole of the main plot into his tale of Castle Dangerous.[6]

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[5] Douglas Mack, "James Hogg's Second Thoughts on The Three Perils of Man" Studies in Scottish Literature 21 (1986): 168.

[6] The citation is from Hogg's Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott Mack, 168-169.

Whether it were Scott's negative opinion of Hogg's use of "demonology," there are Hogg's own words to show his own disavowal of such material: "I dashed on, and mixed up with what might have been made one of the best historical tales our country ever produced, such a mass of diablerie as retarded the main story, and rendered the whole perfectly ludicrous."[7]

I must beg to differ with the assessments of both Scott and Hogg. As a metaphor for the dynamics of power that war produces, Hogg's traditional and demonological rendering of magic is striking and effective. It is finally war that is the more pernicious evil, and witchcraft is simply a colorful and concentrated expression of the dynamics of power--magic and war are both concerned with the acquisition, consolidation, and exercise of power. Passages that explicitly use magic as a metaphor stress this perspective, as--for example--the Editor's comments concerning the feud over Roxburgh: "It was evident that the demon of animosity and revenge was now conjured up, which to lay was not in the power of man" (87). Similarly evoking the discourse of magic, the Editor describes the final seizure of Roxburgh castle as a feat that was "like a work of enchantment. Like some of the last inconceivable works of the spirits of divination" (453). Witchcraft in the novel operates as an emblematic display of the mortal and moral dangers of destructive political power as well as the force of war as a spectacle.

War, when it is distinguished from witchcraft, is ultimately the more dangerous peril. While the devil and Michael Scott kill no one without due process of compact, the border war has claimed the lives of many innocents or at least only

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[7] The citation is from Hogg's Memoir of the Author's Life qtd. in Mack 168.

pettily harmful individuals. The fate of Sandy the fisherman is a primary example of the greater danger of the uncanny machinations of war as opposed to the marvels of sorcery. Sandy discovers meat that is flowing up stream in the river: "Is the world turned upside down? [. . .] I's warrant that's for the warlock's an the' the deil's dinner the morn" (63). In fact, Sandy's analysis of this fantastic vision is inaccurate; as he soon learns, the English are using a line in the water to receive provisions to help fortify their soldiers in Roxburgh castle against the Scots. Sandy, having discovered the secret mechanism, steals the food daily, but eventually he is caught and hung by the English.

Though he has not incurred the wrath of supernatural forces Sandy has interfered with the traffic of food, and interactions with food in The Three Perils of Man are all socially significant. Food as the primary generative force of life is inevitably associated with mortality in this context of war--the unnaturalness of the "fish" that Sandy finds in the river is an indication that the world is indeed turned "upside down" in terms of the chaos of border conflicts. War produces its own marvels--from the seeming revenants of oxen and riders to meat flowing upstream. Sandy has transgressed a dangerous border by intruding upon the fantastic mechanics of the river separating Scotland from England. Clever and likeable a character Sandy may be, but he is doomed by the thematics of Hogg's story: what we may call narrative metaphysics perhaps, rather than folk metaphysics.

In folk metaphysics physical actions leave spiritual imprints, and this is precisely the pattern that Hogg establishes through his blending of fantastic folklore and realism and uses to portray multiple facets of social and political relationships.

The feudalistic elements of the diabolic contract between Michael Scott and the devil make overt the moral compromises that are inherent in Sir Ringan's opportunistic approach to political allegiance in the border conflict. The devil, disguised as an abbot, refers to Michael Scott as the "doughty champion of my domains"--making an implicit parallel between Sir Douglas and his mighty vassal Sir Ringan, who is in effect Douglas's "champion" (382). Just as Michael Scott negotiates for power through the diabolic contract with Satan, so Sir Ringan has sought to secure rulership for his own family by serving Sir Douglas. Worldy and otherworldly feudalism comes into direct conflict when Michael Scott claims Gibbie (Gilbert) as his servant and tortures him through various transformations and attacks by his three demonic spirits. Charlie Scott's protest and Michael Scott's reply asserts the endurance of social contracts invoked by verbal agreement:

> 'Master Michael Scott, I protest in my master's name against this usage of a leal vassal and tiend laird, ' said Charlie. 'The comely youth is mine by our own agreement,' said the Master [Michael Scott]: 'He shall be well seen to. (393)

In other words, Charlie has neither linguistic armaments nor a clear social framework to oppose the warlock's abuse of Gilbert--Michael Scott is not explicitly violating any oath or covenant. Charlie's reference to his "master's name" invokes the chain of loyalties inherent in the feudal idea. Such links of obligation and dependency are humorously emphasized earlier by the miller's revelation that being a vassal to Michael Scott subordinates him to a darker master: "Though I live on the lands of a Master of Arts, I had nae inkling that I was thirl to hell" (345).

Ultimately, despite the complications of feudal interdependencies and abuses of power--dramatized in particular through scenes of the marvelous--Hogg does not discard feudalism as a potentially ideal political and social system when its participants are virtuous. In the siege against Roxburgh, Sir Ringan, we learn "valued highest of all" his "kinsmen and followers" and he rewards them (451). Similarly, the central characters in Ringan's deputation to Michael Scott "had principles of virtue and honour in their natures that withstood the charms of necromancy--those charms before which noble dames, cruel laymen, and selfish clergy sunk down confounded and overpowered" (392). It is notable both that "selfish clergy" are mentioned as vulnerable to the devil's influence as well as the fact that the devil appeared as Scotland's chief abbot:

> 'But are nae ye Father Lawrence, the great primate, that acts as a kind o' king or captain ower a' the holy men of Scotland, and has haudding in that abbey down by there?'
>
> 'Certes I am Father Lawrence. Dost thou doubt it?'
>
> 'No, no [. . .]. An we dinna find truth aneath the mitre and the gown, where are we to look for it?' (377).

This final inquiry by one of Sir Ringan's deputies, Dan, resonates as one of the foremost rhetorical questions of the novel--what is the nature of truth? While too broad a theme to engage fully, one may assert that Hogg's presentation of feudalism criticizes authority that depends on hierarchical power alone. Father Lawrence is the devil in disguise--literally here--and it is no proof of his virtue if he's a kind of "king"

over "the holy men" anymore than his "mitre and the gown" guarantee sanctified limbs beneath the vestments.

The "necromancy" which these characters are immune to are the transformative spells of the devil and Michael Scott--the implicit moral message is that it is only one's interior will and conscience that may alter one's true form. Therefore, Michael Scott decides that "the men must be made accessory to their own transformation," which transpires by their impulsive submission to lust for women and alcohol (393). Hogg of course is not such a stentorian moralist that these characters receive lasting punishments; they are temporarily turned into bulls, foreshadowing the soldiers' disguise as oxen under Ringan's command later in the siege. Such servitude then as virtual oxen is also temporary and Sir Ringan joins his men in the disguise and bestial debasement only to transform with them into champions rather than cattle: "the two great lubberly oxen that stood shaking their ugly heads, and leaning against the wall, ripped up their own bellies; and out of two stuffed hides two most ingenious cases, started up two no less men than Sir Ringan Redhough and his dought friend Charlie Scott of Yardbire" (451). Thus, this transformation appears to perform the resurrection from the dead that one of the English soldiers idly spoke of seeing the sluggish oxen against the walls: "'they look as them hod been dead and roosen again'"(450). This scene is also one of many that explores the resonance of the revenant motif--most fully realized in Margaret's disguise--and here expands to signify positive rebirth and evolution from animalistic existence. Sir Ringan's men are liberated from their transformation into oxen; these

Scots have won the border battle against the English and receive due rewards from the feudal system they have bent their backs to.

The theme of bestial transformations in Hogg, whether the products of marvelous magic or ingenious disguise, emphasizes that humanity's animalistic impulses do not have essential moral value; it is the decisions one makes on handling these drives that generate ethical significance. The disguise of oxen that implicitly suggests that all men became beasts in war does not dismiss the value of military service itself or even the ideal of physical heroism. The emergence of Ringan and Charlie from the carcasses of beasts exemplifies the reality of heroism that transcends mere bestiality.

Directly related to this perspective is Charlie's assertion that the devil is in fact an "old gentleman" who "has been sair abused"--and this is his view after having been turned into a bull (477). Dan too believes that "it is true that Master Michael Scott said of the devil being more of a gentleman than he had been generally represented" (405). This is because the devil and Michael Scott returned the horses of the party as well as giving the friar (Roger Bacon in disguise) the means of returning the men to their human forms: "searching the long curled mane between the horns [. . .] he there found stitched a small scroll of parchment, neatly rolled up, and written in blood" (403). The effects of magical transformation depend once again on verbal acts that betoken social contracts--the diabolic contract is well-known to be written in blood, but Michael Scott's comment also suggests the ties of blood are influential here. Michael Scott shows such generosity--allowing the men to live as men again--because of his own acknowledgment of communal, particularly familial

bonds: "It boots nothing offending my kinsman, the Warden [Sir Ringan]" (401). Destroying these written testaments to transformation releases the men from their four-legged state. As a being who keeps his word and contractual or feudal obligations, the devil, as well as Michael Scott, is indeed a "gentleman."

The one man whom the devil does claim is Tam Craik, who has shown himself to be a veritable beast--always intent on his own selfish pleasuring of the bodily senses, particularly eating. The intensity and potential destructiveness of Tam's bestial impulses is evident by his enthusiasm for cannibalism: "I wonder whether men's flesh is likest to beef, or mutton, or venison?" (309). Even the devil, who is the incarnation of the principle of impulsive desire, is disgusted by Tam's undisciplined hunger: "he carried Tam off with him, according to compact--fed him for some time on animal food of the richest quality, which never once satisfying him, the devil grew weary of such a voracious cur, and twisted his neck about" (401). The devil's association with inexorable impulses is clear when Dan beholds "a terrific being standing on the landing-place, beckoning him to come down" and Dan responds from "an irresistible impulse" (331). However, this devil operates through due process, and Tam would have been spared damnation if he had not agreed "according to compact."

If the devil is in a sense predictable "according to compact," Hogg's narrative is not--the literary fantastic itself in fact generally indicates an unstable contract between reader and text. Uncertainty permeates the text, from the Editor's alternation between presenting an "idle tale" or a "true history," to the presentation of morality, the marvelous and uncanny. In The Three Perils Hogg accomplishes through his

subversive style of storytelling the unraveling of the cultural assumptions of religious authority, feudalism, and chivalry; he uses the metaphors and unorthodoxy of folk narratives and beliefs to undermine English conventions.

Hogg points out the Devil lurking in the details of power relations; he shows the devastating results of hierarchical power: whether it is the appetites of nations to devour enemy territory, or the nobleman's lust for his beloved that inspires him to sacrifice his subjects to his desire. Hogg implies such impulses are as self-serving and destructive as Tam the glutton's cannibalistic urges. The vibrant animism of British folklore threatens to succumb to the orthodoxy of Continental bigotry, which treats folk beliefs as articles of war: threats to religious purity and cultural sovereignty. Michael Scott's attempts to negotiate with Continental conceptions of diabolism are as destructive as the war waged in the name of chivalry, which Hogg deconstructs into jealous rivalries and misogynistic obsession.

Hogg, Le Fanu, and Stevenson, use supernatural folklore in their literary works for its psychological and thematic force. They negotiate provocatively between culturally contested positions on metaphysics and morality. Their texts elicit cultural truths from the emblematic visions of folk beliefs and motifs present in the embedded märchen and legend tales.

The metaphysical contact zone stands as a permeable horizon between varying metaphysical views in all of these authors' works. Threatening lines of trees simultaneously intrude with psychological and spiritual dark forces into the minds and lives of isolated figures in Le Fanu's short stories. Devils of native traditions compete with the dangers of gunpowder and gold on the beach claimed by native

traditions and imperialist opportunists in Stevenson's tales of the South Seas. Men and women of England and Scotland, upper and lower classes, and their accompanying ideologies fight and fraternize on the magical borders of Hogg's chivalric, yet satirical, romance. Magic as a metaphor for transformation is a constant in these works where the development of individuals and societies articulates itself through a folkloric phantasmagoria of hopes and fears. Fears are especially dominant in these texts, which offer visionary features of the fragmented worldview that results amid a myriad of cultural interactions.

Yet, as the international marriages in Hogg's text suggest, it is not necessarily unresolved division that characterizes the contact of different cultures, classes, nations, or races' metaphysics. Certainly, these texts show how superstition sometimes operates as a weapon of belligerent bigotry and calculated cultural manipulation. What emerges is a stained glass of multiple perspectives that simultaneously constitutes a holistic structure of universal human imagination. The cultural walls of class, education, language, and religion that define the opposition between Le Fanu's rational elite narrators and superstitious folk storytellers threaten to break down into a room that admits the echoes of multiple voices. And once we listen to them we don't hear wholly incompatible stories. Rather many of the same anxieties over socio-economic injustice that are present in the more overtly realistic novels decrying the condition of Britain and exploring the state of the Empire are present in these channeled voices of underclass superstition and middle-to-upper class fears. Similarly, the observations of Stevenson's Wiltshire demonstrate the shared humanity of minds that can incorporate both European and Polynesian metaphysical

beliefs. Every land has its own totems, nor are they essentially exclusive despite assumptions to the contrary. The evil eye pierces the veil of both Western Europe and Polynesia.

Conventional cultural standards that appear at first to be irreconcilable with competing views are revealed in these narratives to have underlying roots that tie them to comparable ethical and metaphysical systems of their cultural competitors. Each voice speaking is not the same, but rather their perspectives gain significance in the context of contiguous clamors of different cultures. Just as Stevenson presents in "The Beach of Falesá," Victoria might be the "big chief" in the British Empire, but nevertheless she does not always have uncompromising power over the "little chief." What is "canny," what is a delusion, and what might be a true marvel cannot be established in the folkloric narrative by the literary expositor alone; rather, there is an entire cultural choir to contend with replete with competing linguistic, narrative, moral, and metaphysical forms of expression. As Secundra remarks in The Master of Ballantrae, what works in the soil of India does not dependably perform in the soil of America. Voices of tradition speak to the present from the past and voices of the future--despite all their strident insistence or measured dismissal--cannot bar the claims that preceded them. In other words, these literary appropriations of folk legend and belief in the nineteenth century parallel the growing inclusion of different peoples and classes in the British empire. These parliamentary voices commingle with the established tones of the culturally elite and readers must listen to all to appreciate and understand fully the tales that are told.

However, rather than an impression of cultural understanding, these narratives chiefly convey the psychological discomfort of a society and empire that cannot assimilate its contending classes, genders, ideologies, races, and religions. The striking tension between folk beliefs and scientific reason exemplifies the cultural struggle of the Victorian era to promote a sense of equanimity. One narrator, one class, one ruler will no longer suffice as a cultural standard. The Romantic deification of peasants and their lore by the Grimms and Wordsworth has fallen into the spectral shape of the demonic in these narratives. The glory of revolution has declined into the fear of social fragmentation amid greater enfranchisement.

What remains now to do is, while continuing to keep an eye on England, to turn to Ireland and Scotland specifically--nations that culled their folkloric and literary traditions for the materials of an artistic revolution late in the Victorian era. This venture was central to their national and cultural identity. The members of this Celtic Renaissance hoped their native tales and beliefs woven into a national fabric of identity based on both innovation and tradition would clothe them anew, thereby liberating them from the tyranny of English cultural dominance. Yet, as the next three chapters demonstrate, this self-conscious project to reap the fruits of the seeds of tradition is characterized by an uneasy identity struggle between reason and superstition, as well as among class, nationality, and race. This dynamic is reminiscent of the cultural instability that appears to be omnipresent in nineteenth century narratives of the literary fantastic that involve supernatural folklore, and, as we shall see, creeps like an intruding shadow of the past into early twentieth century folkloric fantastic narratives as well.

Chapter 10

" The Oldest of the Aristocracies of Thought "--The Folkloric Fantastic and the Celtic Renaissance

Without a doubt, two of the most interesting figures of this international Celtic Renaissance are William Carleton (1794-1869) and William Sharp (1855-1905). There are several useful studies on Carleton, but much yet remains to be done. One finds very few critical sources on Sharp at all--what does exist is largely preoccupied with the provocative gender dynamics of Sharp's decision to adopt the female persona of Fiona Macleod. Furthermore, critics have paid scant attention to the use of folklore by both authors, although their use of folklore is arguably their most sophisticated narrative strategy.

Both writers experienced a dual identity that is consistent with other authors whose use of folklore produces the literary fantastic. These two men are simultaneously tradition bearers of local culture and more cosmopolitan expositors of Irish and Scottish folkways to the curious British reading public. Barbara Hayley in Carleton's *Traits and Stories* and the 19th Century Anglo-Irish Tradition asserts that Carleton "was the first nineteenth-century writer of fiction to publish in Ireland [. . .]" (ix). Carleton was also "the first Irish peasant to become a significant prose writer" and his background entails more than simply a triumph over class expectations.[1] His particular attention to the folk culture of the peasantry marks him as a writer of

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[1] Robert Lee Wolff, William Carleton: Irish Peasant Novelist—A Preface to His Fiction (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980) 4.

dedicated realism who at the same time integrated preternatural material into his prose. As for Sharp, through the ventriloquism of his adopted persona of Fiona Macleod he almost single-handedly defined the Scottish branch of the Celtic Renaissance: "The reputation of the group as spokesmen of a literary movement of any distinction rested [.l . .] upon the Fiona Macleod myth."[2] Fiona Macleod became known as the literary world's "'one and only Highland novelist.'"[3]

The Irish Literary Revival is primarily the focus of critics when speaking of the Celtic Renaissance. Scotland's late-nineteenth-century contributions to Celticism never achieved the same influence or stature. Part of the reason for this was the subsequent degradation of the Celtic Revival by writers of the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance whose main emphasis was on realism and nationalist rebellion against English tastes, linguistics, and politics: "It was Hugh MacDiarmid who first used the expression 'Scottish Renaisance' [. . .] in the middle 1920's, when MacDiarmid was associated with Neil Gunn and Edwin Muir in producing the

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[2] Flavia Alaya, William Sharp—"Fiona Macleod". (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). 152. What Alaya claims may be true for that particular moment --the end of the nineteenth century. However, after Sharp the Scottish Renaissance gained voices of distinction in the 1920's and 1930's with Hugh MacDiarmid and James Mitchell, in poetry and prose, respectively; however, their emphasis was largely a continuation of the Kailyard school--a far cry from the supernatural folklore of Sharp. In the 1930's and 1940's, Neil Gunn revived mysticism and folklore--see the concluding chapter of this study, which uses Gunn's *Second Sight* as an emblematic summation for the conflicting forces that characterize literary treatments of folklore. It is best perhaps to refer to Sharp and his contemporaries as the "Scoto-Celtic movement" which is how Mrs. Elizabeth Sharp--and Douglas Hyde--refers to it.

[3] Quotation presumably from The Irish Independent. Elizabeth Sharp 61.

Scottish Chapbook."[4] The *Scottish Chapbook*'s slogan "Not Traditions--Precedents!" articulated the progressive intentions of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, which contrasted with what its writers saw as the misguided tendencies of the Scoto-Celtic backward-looking movement of the late nineteenth century.[5]

Writers of the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance decried "'the pseudo-Celticism of William Sharp and the Ossianism of John Duncan.'"[6] Such charges were not altogether new. Andrew Lang in 1897 had made the same assessment of Sharp and others whom he criticized for their idealization of *The Poems of Ossian*. Lang took Sharp to task after Sharp wrote an introduction for Macpherson's work: "Mr. Sharp is not very lucid or logical in his introduction. [. . .] the essence of Macpherson's 'Ossian' is vagueness, mistiness, obscurity. To imitate this, as some Neo-Celts do, is not to Celticise, but to Macphersonise."[7] Other twentieth-century critical objections to "the degree of the Celticism of the Celtic Revival, names Rossetti as the greatest influence on Sharp, the Paterian beauty compounded with strangeness as his ideal, and the creation through art of barriers against the tide of science and literary realism as his goal."[8]

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[4] George Scott-Moncrieff, "The Scottish 'Renaissance' of the 1930s," Memoirs of a Modern Scotland ed. Karl Miller (London: Faber and Faber, 1970) 70.

[5] Duncan Glen, Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve) and the Scottish Renaissance (Edinburgh: W. & R Chambers LTD 1964) 74.

[6] A.T. Cunninghame qtd. in Glen 57.

[7] Andrew Lang "The Celtic Renascence" qtd in Malcolm Chapman, The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978) 104.

[8] Wendell V. Harris, British Short Fiction in the Nineteenth Century: A Literary and Bibliographic Guide (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979) 144.

Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance figures also derided the works of the Kailyard novelists, though not fantastic, as part of a "sentimental or romantic escapist tradition which stemmed either from the romances of Scott via Stevenson or from the parochial tradition of Burns."[9] Such evaluations by the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance of the Scoto-Celtic movement and the Kailyard writers disagree with Ian Craig's judgments--underscoring the lack of consensus in what exactly characterized the works of these Scottish writers at the end of the nineteenth century. Craig explains in "Myths Against History: Tartanry and Kailyard in 19th-Century Scottish Literature" how J.M. Barrie--best known popularly now for his fantasy Peter Pan, though he was also the father of the Kailyard or "cabbage patch" school of writing in Scotland--presented a bleak literary vision of Scotland. Barrie depicts a world "of parochial insularity, of poor, humble puritanical folk living out dour lives lightened only by a dark and forbidding religious dogmatism."[10]

It appears in the efforts of Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance writers to clarify their movement they vociferously dismissed their actual connections to their predecessors. Ironically, eventually Hugh MacDiarmid would find fault with Neil Gunn for continuing the spiritual myths of the highlands that the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance supposedly had left behind. Nationalism was a

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[9] Glen 58.

[10] Cairns Craig, "Myths Against History: Tartanry and Kailyard in 19th Century Scottish Literature," Scotch Reels ed. Colin McArthur (London: British Film Institute, 1982) 7.

significant part of the Scottish branch of the Celtic Renaissance, as Patrick Geedes explains in 1895, in the "review of the movement, *Evergreen*":

> "while we would renew local feeling and local colour, we would also express the larger view of Edinburgh as not only a National and Imperial, but a European city--the larger view of Scotland, again as in recent, in mediavel, most of all in ancient times, one of the European Powers of culture [. . .]."[11]

These are nearly identical sentiments to those of George Scott-Moncrieff as he retrospectively evaluates the impact of the "Scottish Renaissance that we talked of in the Thirties": "part [. . .] of a process of change that could be the hope and inspiration of a post-British Scotland, a Scotland that is once again European."[12] The Celtic Renaissance "movement thus foreshadowed the [Scottish] renaissance of this century in its nationalism," but its writers were often attracted to folk traditions and myths that resulted in an idealization of the Highland culture that representatives of the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance, especially MacDiarmid, disapproved of.

Presentations of so-called "pseudo-Celticism" were far less common among Scottish writers in the late nineteenth century than their Irish counterparts, and the emphasis of the Kailyard school on a dark vision of Scottish life sharply contrasts with the idealistic zealotry of Irish writers of the Celtic Renaissance. Multiple Irish authors fervently adopted the symbols of Irish mythology first translated for them by

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[11] Glen 57.

[12] Scott-Moncrieff 82.

Standish O'Grady and interpreted by Augusta Gregory and W.B. Yeats. Adapting native Irish cultural traditions--from the lips of the peasants and the texts of the medieval monks and bards--for political activism and national identity characterizes the ventures of the first wave of Irish Literary Revivalists.[13]

Indeed, John Wilson Foster's very definition of the Revival depends on these Irish writers' use of tradition: "By the Irish Literary Revival I would mean the work of those who sought to employ literature in a resuscitation of elder Irish values and culture that they hoped would transform the reality of the Ireland they inhabited."[14] Craig observes that such quests for asserting cultural and national identity were part of a larger process in nineteenth century Europe. He describes how "peripheral cultures were striving to assert the integrity of their own traditions by discovering or manufacturing legends, symbols, heroic figures upon which could be focused the sense of an identity continuing unchanged through all the fluctuations of history."[15] In Ireland, the resurrection of Irish mythology and heroism by the translation and revision of the Ulster cycle in particular provided a vision of "a native aristocracy" which "appealed of course to Catholic nationalists who thought that native Irish

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[13] The second wave, characterized by the like of Brian O'Nolan (aka Flann O' Brien) satirized the mythological, political, and folkloric pretensions of these impassioned writers. Ironically, the second wave's use of folklore for comic effect was in fact truer to the spirit of many traditional Irish wonder tales--therefore, arguably a more earnest revision than the initial zealotry of the founders of the movement.

[14] John Wilson Foster, Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987). xvi.

[15] Craig 10.

society had been headless since the Flight of the Earls [. . .]. "[16] The bardic tradition, which was represented through the oral tradition as well as Old Irish texts, provided a visionary cultural identity that united--at least temporarily--Catholic nationalists with the Anglo-Irish ascendancy:

> The aristocratic idea also appealed to some of the Anglo-Irish gentry who felt alienated from their mainland counterparts and, cut off half-willingly from the main stream of British aristocracy, thought to immerse themselves, at least while in their studies and libraries, in the even older mainstream of ancient Irish aristocracy."[17]

It was not only in the "studies and libraries" that the Anglo-Irish fashioned their new identity; indeed, they fueled their visionary fires from the significant kindling they gathered from the peasantry: "Many of the folklorists of the revival were upper-middle-class Protestants" (205). Or rather, as Foster's analysis suggests, they found in the folk culture of the peasantry the reflection of their own cultural evanescence: "the romantic notion of a vanishing folklore, together with the romantic notion of a hidden peasant aristocracy [. . .] accorded with the self-image held by the more perceptive landed gentry. Standish James O'Grady told the landlord class, of which he was a member, that unless it mended its ways it was finished" (205).

Foster closely follows the general uses of tradition in the Irish Renaissance, while Craig attempts to explain why Scotland was unable to achieve the potent adoption of a volksgeist that succeeded in "Norway or Ireland or many of the areas of

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[16] Foster 12.

[17] Foster 12.

the Austro-Hungarian Empire."[18] Craig argues that Ireland was able to combine "myth and history together" due to the "conjunction" of "the romantic nationalist poet, W.B. Yeats," his artistic presentation of "Celtic heritage," and the political excitement and charisma of such revolutionaries as Pearse.[19] As for Scotland, Craig asserts such a reliance on myth and tradition was "made impossible because the tartan myth was a myth of historical redundancy, and being redundant its images declined [. . .] from the noble stature of *Ossian* and Scott's Jacobites to the parodic rednosed, kilted, drunken , mean Scotsmen of music hall comedy and picture postcard jokes."[20] Scotland, therefore, had to fall back upon "lowland rather than Highland experience"; in other words, the "cabbage school" of hard knocks, dismal dwellings, and a Scottish working class unrelieved by the dream of a submerged aristocratic tradition that Yeats asserted for the Irish peasantry.[21]

Craig denies that Scottish writers of the nineteenth century ever formulated a national myth that cohered into an otherworldly artistic vision. However, his explanation does not explain the popularity and function of William Sharp's folkloric fiction. Sharp overtly addresses the problem of history and attempts to evade the material reality of Scotland's national subordination to England by concentrating on the spiritual--specifically the metaphysics of the folk-- rather than the historically

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[18] Craig 10.

[19] Craig 10.

[20] Craig 10.

[21] Craig 10-11.

burdened "noble" exploits of aristocratic romance and bardic tradition.

Furthermore, Craig neglects to indicate that Irish writers eagerly awaited Scottish contributions to the overall Celtic movement, as Elizabeth Sharp reports:

> Dr. Douglas Hyde voiced the Irish feeling when he wrote to my husband: "I think Fiona Macleod's books the most interesting thing in the new Scoto-Celtic movment, which I hope will march side by side with our own." This movement was according to William Sharp "fundamentally the outcome of Ossian, and immediately of the rising of the sap in the Irish nation." Following on the incentive given by such scholars as Windische, Whitly Stokes, Kuno Meyer, and the various Folklore societies, a Gaelic League had been formed by enthusiasts in Ireland, and in Scotland, for the preservation and teaching of the old Celtic tongue; for the study of the old literatures of which priceless treasures lay untouched in both countries, and for the encouragement of natural racial talent.[22]

Hyde's words present the synergy of the Celtic movement. William Sharp's remarks underscore the synchronistic merging between the Scottish literary past and Irish political present. And, Elizabeth Sharp's summary identifies Irish and Scottish nationalist aims, defined by cultural if not political borders and verging on racial chauvinism.

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[22] Elizabeth Sharp, William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)--a Memoir Compiled by His Wife, vol. 2 (London: William Heinemann, 1912) 59.

In addition to his oversight of the impassioned spirit of the Scoto-Celtic movement, it seems the postcard image of "mean Scotsmen" is a needlessly large mote in Craig's eye. For, the Irish writers had their "mean" stereotypes to deal with, as well as the Scots. William Carleton details in Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry the difficulties a writer faced when confronting the multiple negative stereotypes of the Irish buffoon, and yet Carleton negotiates past these grotesque images. Carleton breathes new life into the peasantry in his realistic presentation of folk beliefs while simultaneously acting the part of the anthropologist anxiously concerned with preserving the traditions of a people gradually being depleted by the mercilessly grasping hand of historical change.

Both writers--Carleton and Sharp--rather than focusing on the mythological tradition of the ancient Celtic bards chiefly aimed their fiction towards how tradition continued to affect the lives of people who dwelled beyond the social centers of economy, industry, religion, and science. Instead then of recreating a national epic through the preserved bardic tales carried by the peasantry, Carleton and Sharp engage in dialogue with the minds and souls of those Irish and Scots whom they did not seek to place on cultural pedestals for political proselytizing. Carleton shows the impact of folk beliefs on the daily life of Irish country people and Sharp, through the works of his fictive persona, Fiona Macleod, portrays the deep-seated influence of folk metaphysics on the visionary imagination of those Scottish inhabitants far alienated from the factory smoke of industrial Britain.

Carleton and Sharp's literary works embody the self-consciousness of writers who are both fascinated and faltering in their artistic embrace of folk beliefs and

narratives. Both self-avowedly opposed to political activism, Carleton and Sharp concentrate on their roles as intermediaries--rather than revolutionaries--between the culture of the Celtic country people and that of the urbane English people. Through their attention to the supernatural folklore of rural regions in particular, Carleton and Sharp challenge the cultural dominance of English industrialism, the complacency of mundane rationality, and the narrative totalitarianism of realism.

Folklore and Celtic Cultural Politics: Carleton, Sharp, and Yeats's Position

Above all, the attention of writers to tradition bearers in Ireland and Scotland was an attempt to generate a new body of literature founded on the presumed imagination, vivid speech, and cultural authenticity of country people living in regions not wholly dominated by English conventions of thought and language. Scottish folklore is the cultural nexus of Scotland, combining native language, communal beliefs, and artistic tradition. By drawing on the folklore of the Highlands and Iona, as well as Scots Gaelic in his stories, Sharp models the amalgam of Anglo-Celtic literature which he hopes to disseminate through the British Isles to challenge the cultural forces that have oppressed Scotland. Scottish supernatural folklore in particular combats both the dry rationalism of "bastard utilitarianism" as well as the doctrinal inflexibility of "Calvinistic theology."[23] Folk metaphysics, which contains

[23] Fiona Macleod, The Sin-Eater, The Washer of the Ford and Other Legendary Moralities (1895; London: William Heinemann, 1912) 15-16.

multiple perspectives on divinity, belies the hegemony of Calvinism and challenges the materialism of utilitarianism.

The Celtic Renaissance's employment of folklore is fraught with contradiction. While, on the one hand, writers motivated by visions of Irish and Scottish nationalism, hoped to reclaim their suppressed traditions of native artistry, these sophisticated artists were sometimes uncomfortable with what they considered the ignorant or irrational aspects of folk beliefs and narratives. The result is that there is often a distance between the narrator in the work that contains folklore and the informants who serve as characters; a similar distance often occurs in the handling of folk collectors and their informants. W.B. Yeats for example, often adopts an ironic tone, which is far from an endorsement of the "peasant" conceptions of the world. Sometimes this ironic distance appears downright condescending, witty, or humorous. (Le Fanu is similar in this respect at times, and at least as self-conscious of the eyes of Reason watching his performance, which he deftly complicates through layering different levels of narrative between his own persona and that of the informant who narrates material fit for a winter's tale.)

Indeed, in some respects the Anglo-Irish writers who dominated the Irish Renaissance are not unlike the Protestant landowners; they are using the domains of the peasantry without granting this worldview an autonomy which frees it from the motivations and interests of their literary feudal lords. Thus, the rapport between the Anglo-Irish writers and the folkloric material of their "subjects" (in both the literary and semi-feudal sense) is characterized by tensions of power and cultural identity.

Adding to the cultural politics of Anglo-Irish literature are the tensions between the English and Irish aspects of each writer's' identity. Multiple stories of the folkloric fantastic embody the split loyalties of Anglo-Irish authors. The narrator--rationalistic editor or folk collector--not unlike Hogg's editor in The Confessions and Memoirs of a Justified Sinner, often finds him or herself troubled by the force of a legend or memorat which runs counter to the conventions of the enlightened--which usually means Anglicized--world. Rational narrators in the works of Carleton keep their distance from unruly folkloric material by both paraphrasing folk narratives in formal English or isolating the folk perspective in monologues of dialect.

Carleton's discourse of skepticism is a far cry from the mystical mode is George William Russell, the poet whose pen-name was AE. AE purportedly believed in the actual return of the ancient Irish deities, or at least a visionary truth to Irish mythology beyond the metaphorical:

> AE valued Irish folklore because he saw in it an expression of the ancient desire to come into communion with the real but invisible spiritual world. He was interested, too, in Irish myth because he sensed in the ancient gods and heroes expressions of his own pantheistic religion of the Earth Mother. In 1896 AE wrote to Yeats that he believed that the old gods were returning to Erin and that apocalyptic moment in world history was near.[24]

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[24] Richard Fallis, The Irish Renaissance (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977) 65.

Attendant to AE's attraction to Irish folk narratives and mythology was what amounts to racial aesthetics; he believed in essential characteristics in the Irish people that represented to him spiritual qualities he admired. In this respect AE shared a perspective with Yeats and Sharp as well: "Like AE, Yeats believed the Celts had a special access to supernatural wisdom because they remained passionate and instinctive; in addition they lived and thought in a symbolically charged world beyond the ken of urban civilization [. . .]"[25] Richard Fallis in The Irish Renaissance detects in such romantic enthusiasm for the Celtic peasantry the private agendas of the writers of the Irish Renaissance:

> each was imposing on a mythical Celtic race his own desires for a different world: Hyde for one full of Gaelic-speaking peasants, AE for a visionary utopia, Yeats for a pastoral society of mythmakers. Even so, the varying visions of the Celt had considerable influence in their time. They gave the Irish a sense of self-worth, a way of saying that they were a special people who were morally and imaginatively superior to the English oppressor." (61)

Russell's mystical faith in the imminent apocalypse of Irish myth and culture-- which would rebound in an eschatological surge-- is a far cry from the more measured mysticism of Sharp, who is the most mystical of the writers of the Scottish branch of the Celtic Renaissance. Sharp believes that the material sway of the Gaels is forever over; however, he proposes that the spirit and culture of Gaelic heritage might be transplanted to what he terms the "Anglo-Celtic" mind. In his prologue to

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[25] Fallis 61.

The Sin Eater, dedicated to George Meredith, whom he calls "Prince of Celtdom," Sharp makes this assertion:

> the genius of the Celtic race stands out now with averted torch, and the light of it is a glory before the eyes, and the flame of it is blown into the hearts of the mightier conquering people. The Celt falls, but his spirit rises in the heart and the brain of the Anglo-Celtic peoples, with whom are the destinies of the generations to come.[26]

Like Russell, Sharp uses the prophetic tone of apocalypse; however his religious metaphors rely far more on the Judeo-Christian heritage, rather than the Celtic mythological tradition--which Russell insisted would reveal itself vividly in an epiphany. Sharp's words invoke the New Kingdom which the New Testament insists will be located in the heart of Mankind ("I saw a new heaven and a new earth [. . .]." Revelation 21:1).Sharp is also invoking the discourse of imperialism as he implies that colonizing the minds of the English people will atone for the oppression of the Celtic people. This position of compromise would be unthinkable within the Irish Renaissance, where there would hardly be consolation found in the spiritual Celticizing of the "mightier conquering people." Nor would the writers of the Irish Renaissance stomach the utterance that the Anglo stock was "mightier."

Scottish and Irish writers of the Celtic Renaissance both respond to English political and cultural dominance. The majority of the writers of the Irish Renaissance burn for the political manifestation of their spiritual independence from the English.

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[26] Fiona Macleod, The Sin-Eater, The Washer of the Ford and Other Legendary Moralities (1895; London: William Heinemann, 1912) 11.

On the Scottish side of the matter, Sharp is content with viewing the doom of imperial oppression as a feature which is part of the Celtic mystique--which is also part of the Irish view--yet he does not insist on political response, but only an intellectual appropriation. In his address to George Meredith, Sharp parcels up Meredith's Gaelic lineage, "the Cymric [Welsh] blood" and faculties as though he were a piece of land that the Scots Gael has a claim to: "in you the Celtic genius burns a pure flame. [. . .]though England appropriate you as her son, and all the Anglo-Celtic peoples are the heritors of your genius, we claim your brain" (15). Sharp insists the history of the Scottish Gael will overcome English oppression through the narrative powers of writers, like George Meredith, whom Sharp claims, represent native traditions: "with you, and others not less enthusiastic if less brilliant, we need not despair. 'The Englishman may trample down the heather,' say the shepherds of Argyle, "but he cannot trample down the wind." (15-16)

Folklore for William Carleton, despite his skepticism, is primarily a matter of national culture, as is true for William Sharp. Carleton believes that his depictions of Irish peasants and their lore is necessary for a comprehensive and profound presentation of Irish national character. Furthermore, Carleton asserts that he is the perfect middleman to negotiate the cultural exchange of ways and words between the predominantly English educated reading public and the sphere of the Irish peasants. Carleton insists in Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry that he is both a "citizen of the world" (from his cosmopolitan travels and studies), as well as a genuine peasant (644). Having had "uninterrupted intercourse with the people as one of themselves, until I had reached the age of twenty-two years," Carleton professes to have the

intimate knowledge of the Irish that only an insider can have: "there exists no people whose character is so anomalous as that of the Irish, and consequently so difficult to be understood, especially by strangers" (644). In other words, Carleton was born from the "peasantry" but his development has exceeded those bounds.

Carleton uses his role as a citizen of different cultures as a rhetorical device to project an aura of objective credibility: "In conclusion, I have endeavored [. . .] to give a panorama of Irish life among the people [. . .] their loves, sorrows, superstitions [. . .] and in doing this I can say with solemn truth that I painted them honestly, and without reference to the insistence of any particular creed or party" (653). By avoiding partisan concerns, Carleton thus purports to approach the status of "disinterested" criticism that Matthew Arnold champions in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time."[27] However, Carleton's rhetoric is inconsistent; on the one hand, he is the peasant's voice that has risen to a level of national discourse, on the other hand, he is aloof from all such concerns. Carleton's emphasis on both his peasant roots and transcendent cosmopolitanism exemplifies the dynamic of writers who use folklore in the nineteenth century; despite their passionate interest in peasant lore, they are concerned that they not appear intellectually tainted by interaction with folk culture.

As a native ethnographer, Carleton claims to avoid the mistakes of past works on the Irish that relied on the prejudice of outsiders. In Traits and Stories of

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[27] "It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties [. . .] but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests [. . .] but absolutely and entirely independent of them" Matthew Arnold, Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold, ed. A. Dwight Culler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961) 247.

the Irish Peasantry Carleton explains the general deficiencies of many previous authors' attempts to represent the "Irish peasantry":[28]

> From the immortal bard of Avon down to the writers of the present day, neither play nor farce has ever been presented to Englishmen, in which, when an Irishman *is* introduced, he is not drawn as a broad, grotesque blunderer [. . .] . I do not remember an instance in which he acts upon the stage [. . .] uttering language which, wherever it may have been found, was at all events never heard in Ireland, unless upon the boards of a theatre. (641)

Carleton attributes misrepresentations of the Irish character to English misunderstanding of the Irish language and manners. He insists that what seem to be unintentional "blunders" of language are the result of cultural tensions based on political antipathy and chiefly English, rather than Irish, ignorance, and certainly not Irish stupidity. Intent on presenting the injustice of prejudices against the Irish intellect, Carleton also explains how much of what is lacking in Irish education was the fault of the "penal laws" which "rendered education criminal," and despite their abolishment the "political effects" still linger: "Its consequences have not yet departed from the country, nor has the hereditary hatred of the laws [. . .]" (650). Thus, Carleton is an apologist for criticisms against both Irish crime and ignorance.

Carleton sees in Irish modern literature a crucial opportunity to enlighten the national consciousness by harnessing the best of Irish learning from tradition and

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[28] William Carleton, The Works of William Carleton. 2 Vols. (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1881).

portraying Irish life accurately: "literature [. . .] is ere long likely to produce a most salutary effect among the educated classes of all parties, and consequently among those whom they influence" (644). Ironically and paradoxically it is from the culture of the lower classes, who will benefit from the trickling-down of the "influence" of the "educated classes," that much of the literature of the Irish Literary Renaissance draws its material.

Indeed, one of the primary reasons the stories of the folk held so much appeal for writers of the Irish Renaissance is that embedded in the heroic and mythological narratives in particular were the essential bardic stories of the old Gaelic nobility. When Yeats praises the virtues of folk storytellers in Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, he marvels at the powers of Irish storytellers' preservation of these ancient tales:

> stories have been handed down with such accuracy, that the long tale of Deirdre was, in the earlier decades of this century, told almost word for word, as in the very ancient MSS. in the Royal Dublin Society. In one case only it varied, and then the MS. was obviously wrong--a passage had been forgotten by the copyist. But this accuracy is rather in the folk and bardic tales than in the fairy legends, for these vary widely, being usually adapted to some neighbouring village or local fairy-seeing celebrity. (xix)

Praise for "accuracy" is a far cry from the performance-oriented studies of recent folklorists, who are concerned with storytellers' style and rapport with their audience.

But for Yeats, it is this "accuracy" that is important--the folk storytellers are vessels for the submerged culture of an ideal nobility he wishes to resurrect and transform:

> Folk-art is, indeed the oldest of the aristocracies of thought, and because it refuses what is passing and trivial, the merely clever and pretty, as certainly as the vulgar and insincere, and because it has gathered into itself the simplest and most unforgettable thoughts of the generations, it is the soil where all great art is rooted. (139)

Here, Yeats perhaps best captures the tensions between the nationalistic, idealistic expectations of the revivalists and the ambiguous amalgam of peasant and elite culture at the end of his pioneering work on representing the artistry of tradition: The Celtic Twilight. Yeats defines "folk-art" not only as the creative matrix for all "great art," but asserts that folk art is "aristocratic"-- traditional aesthetics by its very discrimination constitutes an elite inheritance.

Unlike Yeats, Carleton is not concerned with building a new Ireland from the fertile "soil" of folklore; he is most intent on preservation and disclosure of Irish traditional culture as anthropologically fascinating, vivid, and diverting for readers. Carleton wishes, despite his anxious negotiations with the discourse of skepticism, to show the vitality of the Irish peasantry. Sharp wishes to instill in his readers an appreciation for Scottish folk culture that would secure for Scotland an aesthetic legacy. Sharp strives to depict the almost archetypal significance of the most isolated of Scotland's peasant culture, whose beliefs and stories, represent an elemental reality worthy of the rest of the world's attention.

Chapter 11

William Carleton's Use of Supernatural Folklore: Tradition, Morality, and Skepticism

Carleton's folkloric fiction manifests the fantastic through a range of rhetorical strategies. His narrative persona, which presumes objectivity, keeps irrational folk beliefs at bay, while at the same time taking obvious pleasure at times in reporting--and sometimes espousing--the preternatural traditions of his native culture. In "Stories of Second-Sight and Apparition," Carleton pokes fun at the presumptions of both the gullible and the skeptical. Carleton's rationalist persona attributes ghosts to both imagination and the supernatural, thereby subverting conventional logical assumptions that would suggest such a position is paradoxical. Scattered amid Carleton's discussions of superstitions are allusions to English beliefs, as well as Irish, and scientific theories, whose historical obsolescence makes them the virtual equivalent of dubious folk beliefs--superstition and science blur within a mind that associates reason with what is familiar and nonsense with what is exotic. The folklore of the Other arbitrarily becomes the mirror of the unquestioned "reasons" and conventions of the Self.

The characters and events of Carleton's stories embody a similar mixture of skepticism and credulity that his narrative voice evokes. His tale of the midwife, "Rose Moan," offers a woman whose role in her community depends upon her knowledge of supernatural folklore--a position that she profits from by exploiting the

fears and desires of others for magical leverage, though her manipulations are without malice. In "Frank Martin and the Fairies" however, Frank, who allegedly has second sight, believes in his powers ingenuously and the narrator's attempt to dismiss Frank's pretensions do not effectively dispel the fantastic events of that tale. Similarly, in "The Three Tasks" the traditional motifs of legends and fairy tales render the ground rules of the narrative indeterminate.

Complicating Carleton's narrative tendency towards ironic distance and aesthetic enthusiasm are the psychological and folkloric dynamics of his moral didacticism. In "The Donagh" Carleton shows the ambiguity of faith: how unofficial beliefs may prove more compelling than official doctrine. His emphasis on psychological subjectivity--particularly the potency of guilt--maintains the fantastic nature of "The Donagh," despite the absence of the satirical skepticism he uses with Frank and Rose.

Education and Tradition

Carleton's emphasis on the native intelligence found in Irish traditional narratives and music is similar to Yeats's ideal of the latent nobility within the culture of the peasantry--both writers seek to assert the respectability of traditions that might appear primitive to outsiders. Just as Yeats asserts that folklore is the "oldest of the aristocracies of thought," so too Carleton points out in Traits and Stories the "intellectual cast" of such figures as the "old Harper," "the Senachie," and the

"prophecy-man."[1] As is typical of nineteenth century folklorists and authors who use folk materials, Carleton laments the passing of these folk artists as a vivid influence in Irish culture. Ironically, it is partly due to increasing education that Carleton believes such "remarkable characters that are strictly national" are dwindling, as he describes in the preface to Tales and Sketches Illustrating the Character of the Irish Peasantry.[2] Carleton suggests that "perhaps, after all, ampler knowledge may remove" the "fire-side enjoyment and simplicity of country life [. . .] without putting any thing so well calculated to charm the untutored heart in their stead" (ix).

Besides Carleton's ambivalence towards education, a further irony is that Carleton uses the metaphor of theater to treat the peasantry. For, the stage is the very medium that Carleton had criticized in Traits and Stories as detrimental to the Irish image: "Ignorance, want of education, and other causes, necessarily produced not only characters of a marked and peculiar kind, but also furnished the broad social stages on which they acted."[3] The language of theater, however, is perhaps inevitable when discussing folklore that is by definition oriented towards performance.

Education, performance, and respectability become of utmost concern to Carleton in his treatment of folk beliefs. When he presents superstitions, Carleton clearly struggles to maintain his status as an enlightened author. Carleton's cultural

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[1] Carleton The Works 653.

[2] William Carleton, Tales and Sketches, Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of the Irish Peasantry. (1845; New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980) vii.

[3] Carleton Tales and Sketches vii.

position as a writer is a precarious one--defining his space apart from the credulous Irish characters he describes, yet at the same time asserting his intimate knowledge of such material as an insider. Carleton himself achieved the dual status of being a respectable prose writer and a "genuine seanachie [traditional Irish oral storyteller]" as Thomas Davis, the leader of Young Ireland and nationalist writer of the 1840's, referred to him.[4] Carleton, as opposed to Davis, claimed he sought "to avoid politics."[5] Hayley has argued that this is far from the actual case; she refers to Traits and Stories as "the products of, the pressures of their time--Union *versus* anti-Union, Catholic *versus* Protestant, landlord *versus* tenant."[6] However, one can also insist that it is largely Carleton's presentation of folk material that defined him for his audience: "[Carleton] brings you to dance and wake, to wedding and christening--makes you [. . .] tremble at the ghosts, and frolic with the fairies [. . .]. Come what change there may over Ireland, in these *'Tales and Stories'* the peasantry of the past hundred years can be for ever lived with."[7] In fact, Carleton's own exploits became "part of local folklore"--his extraordinary leap over a river for instance.[8] Such a seemingly petty event of Carleton's life becoming a folk legend demonstrates the inextricable ties of Carleton's native locality upon his persona as a writer.

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[4] Wolff 86.

[5] Benedict Kiely, Poor Scholar—A Study of the Works and Days of William Carleton (1794-1869) (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948) 129.

[6] Hayley ix.

[7] Thomas Davis qtd. in Wolff 86-87.

[8] Eileen A. Sullivan, William Carleton. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983) 116.

Carleton was not always altogether comfortable with these ties to folk culture, from which he could never be free despite any outward signs of official endorsement from mainstream British audiences who were to hail him as the Irish Sir Walter Scott. Yeats himself praised Carleton as "a great Irish historian" for his preservation of Irish folk culture.[9] Yeat's definition of the importance of Carleton's work as a historian underscores the oral component of Carleton's work: "[a nation's history is] not in parliaments and battlefields, but in what the people say to each other on fair-days and high days, and in how they farm and quarrel and go on pilgrimage."[10] Not least among Carleton's areas of cultural ambivalence is his conversion to Protestantism from Catholicism; this very change of faith was the impetus for his early writings: "polemical tales against the Catholic Church and clergy."[11] However, Carleton's anti-Catholic vehemence was not sustained or definitive of his religious attitudes, as Yeats himself noted: "'[he wrote] books full of the most ardent defense of the Catholic priesthood [. . .] his anti-Catholic work [. . .] [was] early [. . .].][. . .] [his] heart always remained Catholic.'"[12] Yeats's words suggest that Carleton's written religious arguments, viewed in their totality, are not narrowly bigoted, but express a divided mind. Similarly Carleton's folkloric fiction

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[9] Wolff 3.

[10] Yeats qtd. in Kiely 4.

[11] Wolff 4.

[12] Wolff 5.

reflects the tensions of his cultural position: his tone as a writer vacillates between the passion of the enthusiastic seanachie and the assumed objectivity of the historian.

Carleton simultaneously defends his knowledge of folklore while also seeking to excuse his erstwhile superstition as the unavoidable product of his upbringing. In the introduction to Traits and Stories, Carleton reveals how personally connected he is to folklore; for, Carleton identifies his parents as the primary source of his knowledge of Irish traditions:

> Such, gentle reader, were my humble parents, under whose untaught, but natural genius, setting all other advantages aside, it is not to be wondered at that my heart should have been so completely moulded into that spirit and those feelings which characterize my country and her children.[13]

Carleton falls into romantic cliché here with the idea of "untaught, but natural genius." In fact, his parents have received a traditional education. Just as his mother learned the "old sacred songs and airs of Ireland" (646), so too, his father "could repeat nearly the whole of the Old and New Testament by heart" (645). Both parents exercised their memories and powers of verbal performance in a manner not altogether different from scholastic exercises that are taught (645).

In his youth Carleton received the fruits of a traditional education. From his mother, Carleton heard "the touching old airs" as well as "old compositions that were almost peculiar to our family," due to the talent of "her immediate ancestors" who

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[13] Carleton Works 646.

"composed in the Irish tongue several fine old songs" (645). From his father, Carleton learned countless folk narratives:

> My native place is a spot rife with old legends, tales, traditions, customs and superstitions; so that in my early youth, even beyond the walls of my own humble roof, they met me in every direction. It was at home, however, and from my father's lips in particular, that they were perpetually sounding in my ears. [. . .] I have hardly ever since heard, during a tolerably enlarged intercourse with Irish society, both educated and uneducated--with the antiquary, the scholar, or the humble senachie--any single tradition, usage, or legend, that, as far as I can at present recollect, was perfectly new to me [. . .]. (645)

Not only did hearing his father's masterful repertoire of tales in both English and Irish contribute to Carleton's own ability "in my writing to transfer the genius, the idiomatic peculiarity and conversational spirit of the one language into the other," but Carleton also became well acquainted with folk metaphysics (645).

Reason vs. Superstition

It is particularly with regard to the metaphysics contained in folk beliefs that Carleton is most uncomfortable with his heritage; to refute possible condescension by the reader he offers multiple defenses for the inclusion of such material. In the introduction to Tales and Sketches he first excuses himself aesthetically by disclaiming value in his work from "a literary point of view" but emphasizing

instead--albeit tentatively--the anthropological merit: "a body of IRISH SOCIAL ANTIQUITIES, which, he trusts, will, at all events, in some degree, repay a perusal" (ix). Included under this broad domination of "social antiquities" is of course superstitions. When Carleton presents specific folk beliefs in Tales and Sketches he reminds the reader of mainstream interest in the occult: "in no instance have we ever met any individual, no matter what his class or rank in life who was really indifferent to the subject of dreams, fairies, and apparitions" (60). However, despite having made this assertion that interest in the supernatural transcends all bounds of economy, society, and education Carleton believes that he must demonstrate his own skepticism.

Carleton's presentation of "second-sight and apparition" underscores his conflicted attitudes towards his folk heritage and the demands of rational respectability exigent on an author who pretends to high literary culture. He begins this chapter with an earnest appeal to "readers" which is even more defensive than his usual emphasis on his own skepticism and yet proceeds to declare that there are cases of "genuine" apparitions: " I myself, as I have already said, am not superstitious, except where I have good grounds for being so [. . .] (365). It is significant to see Carleton claim that there are "good grounds" for being "superstitious" in certain instances; his perspective here is akin to David Hufford's experienced-based theory of belief in spirits, (presented in the first chapter of this study)--reason and superstition are not necessarily inevitably at odds in an individual or culture's conception of their worldview.

Carleton pits aesthetics against skepticism; he not only takes the surprising strategy of criticizing unimaginative men who are narrowly dismissive of the supernatural, but also makes fun of the credulity of Shamus the seanachie concerning his own stories. Ultimately though, Carleton asserts the greater worth of "adroit and imperturbable liars" such as Shamus--largely due to their artistic merit:

> You might as well pull one of them by the nose as mention witchcraft seriously in his presence [. . .]. They conclude, too, that because they are no conjurers themselves, there never must have been such persons in the world. [. . .]
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> Poor Shamus Ewh! [. . .] They may talk about the invisibility of spirits; but I deny that doctrine, and bring forward Shamus to disprove it. The truth is, no ghost could escape him: if there was one at all anywhere secreted in the neighbourhood, Shamus detected it, and immediately informed the whole parish. As sure as you became acquainted with him, so certain was he to see your fetch in a fortnight. Shamus, in fact, had not only the gift of second-sight, but of third sight, or fourth sight, if I may say so. [. . .] I would rather, for my own part, smell my dinner through the bars of a tavern railing, in company with an able, fluent liar, than eat venison and drink champagne with a plodding villain [. . .]. (365-369)

A few of Carleton's multiple tones are evident in this passage; he moves deftly from asserting his own skepticism to admitting the genuine supernatural, then he attacks both entrenched skeptics and storytellers--the latter with more fondness than the

former. Carleton dismisses the logical pretensions of the former party by representing their reasoning as no true logic at all; what these men "conclude" is the result of their own lack of intellectual capacity. Cleverly, albeit with reliance on ad hominem attacks, Carleton subverts the notion that superstition is necessarily the position of the ignorant or that skepticism is always the view of the enlightened.

Carleton shifts the standard for appraising superstition towards aesthetics rather than analytics. How much more interesting, Carleton claims, are the stories of Shamus, even if they be the results of his own credulous but powerful imagination. Carleton's pleasure in storytelling "liars" brings our attention again to the traditional view of marvelous folktales as entertaining lies; however, tales of second-sight and apparitions are considered by folklorists and storytellers as an alternate genre to the märchen recognized communally as fiction. And, Carleton in fact emphasizes this distinction; he asserts that he is not intent on presenting pleasing lies: "I set out with something relative to ghosts, and here I find myself describing men who were talented at conversational fiction. The two subjects have certainly no connexion, as I will prove [. . .]" (373).

Carleton's long exposition on the intellectual instability of both skeptics and storytellers is merely one step in his rhetorical strategy; he wishes to dispel the preconceptions of his readers. Carleton, finally insists that some ghosts are real despite such adamant but intellectually incompetent skeptics and artful yet deluded storytellers. He offers his own memorat of second sight, as well as a family's legend concerning ghosts, as testaments to supernatural "truth" and exhorts "the reader [. . .] to dismiss all skepticism" concerning his "little story" [sic] which he "[is] able to

explain by no other theory than that of second-sight" (374). After this narration, Carleton then returns to his animated argument and appeals to multiple scholars of metaphysics--throughout history and the world--who he claims necessarily overpower the objections of the skeptical "Sadusaical rogues" who would attack the validity of the supernatural in his memorat:

> I range myself with Greece and Rome--with Herodotus and Livy; and if that does not satisfy you, then you must face the oriental Mollahs and Brahmins. But that is not all; here come Albertus Magnus, Cardan, Paracelsus, Franciscus Picus Mirandola [. . .]. (383-384)

Despite his fallacy of appealing to authorities who predate what his opponents would consider modern science, Carleton's rhetorical strategy reinforces the intensity of his defensiveness against being reduced to the ignominy of being considered a superstitious and ignorant peasant.

A final manifestation of Carleton's negotiation between skepticism and superstition is his defense of Irish traditions against English condescension. He criticizes any cultural snobbery on England's part by pointing out English beliefs concerning the caul: " a thin membrane, about the consistence of a very fine silk, which covers the head of a new-born infant like a cap. It is always the omen of great good fortune to the infant and parents" (123). Modern readers will remember the caul from the opening sentences of Dickens's David Copperfield. Carleton specifically addresses English belief in the caul as an argument for the powerful impact of the superstition:

> to such lengths has the mania for cauls been carried there [London], that they have been actually advertised for in the *Times* newspaper; [. . .] a large price will be given for them by that very intelligent class of men, the ship captains of England, who look upon a caul as a certain preservative against shipwreck. (123)

Carleton loosens the distinction between intelligence and superstition, showing "ship captains" to be quite concerned with cauls, although the phrase "very intelligent class of men" accrues a dubiousness in this context, which begins with the patronizing image of "let not our English neighbours smile at us" (123). Carleton asserts both the contemporary nature of folk beliefs and their cross-cultural dissemination--infesting English urban quarters as well as Irish rural communities. Neither country may so easily "wash their own hands clear of such practices": the traditional roots lie deep within the mind's associative patterns made manifest in outward customs and beliefs. Clearly, Carleton does his best to combat prejudice against supernatural folklore and attempts to prove that respectability and erudition are not incompatible with a belief in ghosts.

Fantastic Collisions: Carleton's Tales of Tradition vs. His Skeptical Rhetoric

Carleton's profound ambivalence towards supernatural folklore by producing hesitation render his folkloric fictions all fantastic. Even in "The Three Tasks," the one märchen represented in Traits and Stories, Carleton injects the most typical of

Victorian dismissals of fantasy, the dream, which Cathal Ó Háinle suggests is a sign of Carleton's insecurity:

> No such explanation would be normally required, since the wondrous events would be precisely what would have been expected in such a tale. Subsequently, however, we are told that Jack Magennis did, in fact, find wealth hidden in a rock as had been promised to him. This fits extremely poorly with the attempt at a realistic explanation of the preceding events as a dream.[14]

Ó Háinle is absolutely correct to emphasize that a traditional audience would expect fantasy from a volksmärchen. However, he is far too hasty by dispelling "any meaning in *The Three Tasks*" that might in fact depend on the seeming contradiction between its status as a meaningless dream and a prophetic vision. Significantly, Carleton claims in his autobiography to have been influenced by a dream. In fact, that dream of a pursuing bull, " symbol of Irish paganism, as the bull is," implies Carleton's spiritual tension between Irish mythology and mainstream religion: "Carleton suggests that this dream helped to put an end to his early journey toward Holy Orders."[15] Given Carleton's personal scrutiny of dreams--and his avowal of meaning in at least one of his own--Ó Háinle should not dismiss the importance of "The Three Tasks." It is neither an idle tale that does injustice to the storytelling tradition nor is it simply a " presentation by Carleton of the social life of the people."

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[14] Cathal G. Ó Háinle, "The Gaelic Background of Carleton's *Traits and Stories*," Éire-Ireland--A Journal of Irish Studies XVIII.1 (1983): 16.

[15] Steven Emery, "Influence of Old Irish Beliefs on Carleton," Carleton Newsletter 2 (1972): 31.

On the face of it, what Carleton has done here is to introduce the same kind of hesitation into the Irish wonder tale that Victorian writers of literary fairy tales were doing by including skepticism in their narrative asides. In addition, Eileen Ibarra argues that "deprecatory selfconsciousness [sic]" is "one of the characteristics of Irish storytellers [. . .]."[16] Therefore, one might insist that Carleton is extending a traditional feature of Irish storytelling by showing what might be Ned's own awareness of his role as a manipulator of tradition. In other words, Ned--and therefore Carleton--is not simply destroying a genre through mishandling, but hyperbolically expanding the märchen into a local legend, a homily, and folk song as well:

> In the coorse [sic] of time, a harper, hearing the story, composed a tune upon it, which every body knows is called the 'Little House under the Hill' to this day [. . .]. so you see that was the way the great Magennisses first came by their wealth, and all because Jack was industrious, and an obadient [sic], dutiful, and tindher son to his helpless ould mother, and well he deserved what he got, *ershi misha* [Say I]. Your healths, Father Ned--Father Pether--all kinds of happiness to us; and there's my story. (681)

Rather than an anomaly which "fits extremely poorly with the attempt at a realistic explanation of the preceding events as a dream" Jack's prophetic dream transforms the narrative into a legend rather than a märchen. The audience is left uncertain what

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[16] Eileen Ibarra, "Folktales in Carleton's 'The Three Tasks,'" Tennessee Folklore Society bulletin 36. 1970: 67. Ibarra explains the various folk motifs in the story.

to believe; Carleton has created the literary fantastic here by attacking the generic preconceptions of an audience responding to "The Three Tasks." Carleton's violation of normative expectations is similar to Hoffmann's narrative strategies; constantly casting doubt on the narrative ground rules is precisely what occurs in "The Golden Pot." Furthermore, Ó Háinle by denigrating Carleton's choice has failed to see a fundamental aspect of Carelton's use of folklore. For, in fact, "The Three Tasks" "fits extremely" well with Carleton's general approach to the supernatural in his appropriations of traditional belief narratives.

While on the one hand Carleton tends to tip the scales towards dismissing all fantastic elements in folk legends and memorats as the excesses of the popular imagination, on the other hand his editorial asides and notes do not decisively dispel the mystique of the supernatural tales that he presents. Jean Lozes's words concerning Le Fanu, could just as easily be applied to Carleton. Lozes explains how Le Fanu uses "une technique narrative qui suscite toujours le doute, la réalité ne cesse de défier l'anlayse et de se métamorphoser [a narrative technique that always raises doubt, reality does not cease to defy analysis and to transform itself]."[17] Part of the reason for this narrative suspension between skeptical dismissal and provocative mystery is Carleton's aesthetic interest in folk beliefs despite his self-conscious desire to be seen as above such country matters. In addition, Carleton's framing of the folk legends and memorats within the discourse of skepticism provides the illusion of intellectual rigor that makes his narratives anthropologically respectable as well as

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[17] Jean Lozes, "Aspects du Fantastique Anglo-Irlandais Chez Charles Robert Maturin, Gerald Griffin, William Carleton et Sheridan Le Fanu," La Figure du Vampire et Ses Metamorphoses Dans La Litterature et Les Arts. (Fevrier 1991): 37.

entertaining. Against the backdrop of rational analysis the tales stand out all the more impressively, for Carleton never positively argues the representative folk beliefs into irrelevance or reveals a legend as an absolute fraud.

Even when Carleton most emphatically suggests that a supernatural belief is a mere delusion, he shows the cultural importance of such faith by focusing on the psychological and social dynamics of the interactions between folk beliefs, skeptics, and believers in rural Irish communities. Thus, Carleton tends to associate the unquestioning acceptance of supernatural folk beliefs as a sign of popular credulity, individual or collective mania and guilt, or a pretense adopted for the social manipulation of power. However, he does not reduce these folk beliefs to cultural idiosyncrasies; they maintain an aura of inscrutable tradition--a veil that is an authority of its own and may not be wholly pierced, rationalized, or satirized into oblivion. The following narratives are all examples of this uneasy balancing act Carleton performs with the folkloric fantastic: "Frank Martin and the Fairies," "The Donagh," and "Rose Moan--The Irish Midwife."

"Frank Martin and the Fairies" is the tale in which Carleton most actively imposes his authorial authority as the overt narrator; however, such intervention does not dispel the fantastic. Carleton claims not only to have personally witnessed Frank's otherworldly delusions, but also to have an explanation for all presumably preternatural aspects concerned with Frank. Yet, there nevertheless remain fantastic elements of legendary durability connected with Frank. Carleton is ultimately just one more tradition-bearer, albeit a self-avowedly skeptical one. Hayley's assertion that Carleton's "attitude is one drawing attention to the quaint ways of strange

foreigners" has a certain validity--Carleton does condescend.[18] Yet, Carleton's tone places himself typically in a fondly condescending--not a ridiculing-- position towards the peasantry; furthermore, as this instance demonstrates, he does allow for what he considers sensible skepticism among some of the "country people":

> The man's name, I think, was Martin, and he followed the thoughtful and somewhat melancholy occupation of a weaver. He was a bachelor [. . .] and notwithstanding his supernatural vision of the fairies, he was considered to be both a quick and an excellent workman. The more sensible of the country people said he was deranged, but the more superstitious of them maintained that he had a *Lianhan Shee*, and saw them against his will. The Lianhan Shee is a malignant fairy, which, by a subtle compact made with any one whom it can induce by the fairest promises to enter into, secures a mastery over them by inducing its unhappy victims to violate it [. . .]. [. . .] the party entering into the contract [. . .] become[s] slave in his turn. Such is the nature of this wild and fearful superstition, which I think is fast disappearing, and is now but rarely known in this country. (91-92)

Carleton's nod to the "more sensible" and skeptical "of the country people" grants to the rural Irish a circumspect attitude that Foster emphasizes Yeats never did: "Scepticism and distrust are a genuine aspect of the Irish countryman's make-up, but Yeats saw it as an uncommon attitude imported from the outside."[19] Foster also points

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[18] Hayley 38.

[19] Foster 215.

out how the very condescension of collectors such as Yeats and Lady Gregory likely led to informants slyly "telling the collector what he wanted"--exaggerating tales of the fairies to gain the approval of distinguished collectors, tales that were manufactured performances rather than traditional legends.[20] There is evidence for such duplicitous dynamics between informant and collector in Sharp's stories as well; he presents a "ferrymaster at Iona" who made up a story that conformed to what "an English lady who was seeking for folklore" was particularly seeking: a parallel to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice:

> And when I asked him afterwards why he had told such a farrago of nonsense, [. . .] he said, "What harm in that now? . . .for sure the lady had her story as she wanted, and as for the truth, well, didn't Rory M'Killop of Heiskir go off with Kirsty Ross, and come back a year later, saying he had been in the Americas, and his wife dead now, God rest her."[21]

In the ferryman's narrative to the folklorists America became Gehenna, and the married couple follows the typology pertinent to the Greek myth. Clearly, the Irish and Scottish country people are not indiscriminately naïve creatures, and Carleton and Sharp--at least at moments--reveal this fact.

In "Frank Martin and the Fairies," it is notable in the previous passage the mention of the Lianhan Shee tradition--the "superstitious" people in this case view

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[20] 211.

[21] Fiona Macleod, "Oprpheus and Oisin," The Winged Destiny—Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael. (London: William Heinemann, 1912) 77-78.

Martin's fairy vision as a curse. However, despite what Carleton claims is the consensus of the "more superstitious," traditionally fairies jealously guard their invisibility. The good neighbors are not generally known to bestow such vision as a doom; on the contrary, Carleton's presentation of the "Irish Midwife" includes the migratory legend of how the fairies blind the eyes of mortals that acquire fairy sight (generally through the application of fairy ointment).[22] The prophetic power of second sight can also result in fairy vision and at least in Scotland the sense of second sight being a burden does exist, as Anne Ross reports in The Folklore of the Scottish Highlands: "They dread their mysterious power, which may suddenly manifest itself at any period of their life [. . .]"[23] Furthermore, regardless of the doubts and fears of others, Martin is clearly greatly entertained by his "mania" and instead of feeling victimized by the fairies claims that "they have no power over me" because he "was baptized against them" (92-93).

Interestingly complicating the tension of power revolving around Martin's vision--whether it is a gift or a curse--is Martin's claim that if he hadn't been "baptized against them" he would have been at the mercy of "their intention to make me king o' the fairies" (93). Studies of fairy traditions do not yield specific traditions of mortals being compelled to become kings "o the fairies," although there are

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[22] ML (Migratory Legend) 5070 *Midwife to the Fairies*. Motif F.235.4.1 *Mortal Nurse to FairyChild Gets Some of the Fairy Ointment in Her Eye*

[23] Anne Ross, The Folklore of the Scottish Highlands (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1976) 38.

accounts that this is the case with the queens.[24] However, we have already encountered one literary treatment of this emphasis on a mortal ruler in Macdonald's "The Shadows." Regardless, the issue of imposed kingship on a mortal raises significant concepts of the burden of power and responsibility. There is arguably psychological wish fulfillment at work here: the idea of his connection with the fairies might provide Martin with both pleasing delusions of grandeur at what might have been, as well as better satisfying him in his present position as a weaver.

Regardless of whether Martin's experiential claims are imaginary or not, he does gain local fame and influence through his reputed powers: "About this time there was said to have occurred a very remarkable circumstance, which gave poor Frank a vast deal of importance among the neighbours" (94). The alleged circumstance--which Carleton notably frames multiple times with the qualification that this is an unproven oral report, "there was said"--concerns how before the death of a child noises of construction were heard. After the child died "it is said that the sawing and hammering necessary for the completion of his task were precisely the same which had been heard the evening but one before" (96). The legend itself of a coffin made by unseen carpenters before a person's death is a widespread European tradition. And, in this case it is clearly centered on the metaphysical contact zone of time, space, and mortality: "the season was mid-summer; and one evening about dusk, during the illness of the child, the noise of a hand-saw was heard upon the Forth" (95). The Forth itself represents an ambiguous melding of time and space--a

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[24] Lewis Spence, The Fairy Tradition in Britain (Kila: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, n.d.) 149. The closest account to a mortal king in fairyland is perhaps in Child Ballad 39,

sort of Bakhtinian chronotope. It is on the edge of civilization, bordering the home of Frank Thomas (the father of the child) and "was said to be haunted by the fairies" as well as having the unknown "two or three little green mounds, which were said to be the graves of unchristened children, over which it was considered dangerous and unlucky to pass" (95).

The presence of the fairies and the association of death are in fact traditionally related as Katharine Briggs explains in The Fairies—In English Tradition and Literature as she analyzes a particular fairy legend: "The theory of the origin of the fairies which this story exemplifies restricts them to the dead of a certain class, in this case to the heathen dead" (19). The connection between "the heathen dead" and the fairies is certainly suggested in the legend Carleton presents, for the dead children are allegedly "unchristened." Frank Martin solves the mystery of the impossible acoustics of similar sounds made by invisible agents such as the "hammering and the drivings of nails, upon the Forth above, whilst those who stood on the Forth continued to hear it in the hollow" (95). When the neighbors summon Martin for his opinion he declares he sees the fairies and that they "are makin' a child's coffin" (96).

Carleton, as one would expect given his narrative persona of self-conscious skepticism, tempers the marvelous nature of the tale of Frank Martin with his own rationalizations that suggests the fantastic elements are explainable. He points out his role as an eyewitness and asserts:

> I remember the death of the child myself, and the making of its coffin, but I think that the story of the supernatural carpenter was not heard in

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"Tam Lin." The mortal knight is distinguished in Fairyland, but is not a king. His mortal

> the village for some months after its interment. [. . .] With respect to his solution of the supernatural noise, that is easily accounted for. The superstition of the coffin-making is a common one, and to a man like him, whose mind was familiar with it, the illness of the child would naturally suggest the probability of its death, which he immediately associated with the imagery and agents to be found in his unhappy malady. (96)

Upon first glance Carleton's explanations of the fantastic may seem to effectively dispel any potential marvels, but observe the qualification "I think," which is analogous to his earlier emphasis on "the story" as something that was a matter of speech only--and thus unreliable. Carleton reveals his own memory as unreliable; while he remembers the child and the coffin--natural events--he cannot positively assert that the supernatural tale did indeed postdate those circumstances. As for Martin's "solution of the supernatural noise" this very phrase serves to validate rather than discount the supernatural; for, Carleton has to admit to there being "supernatural noise" in order to then explain Martin's "solution"!

Thus, despite Carleton's judicious analysis of Martin's psychology in relation to his intimacy with folk beliefs, the underbelly of his rhetoric maintains the metaphysical uncertainty of the fantastic in this narrative. The question remains whether Carleton is merely playing the role of the skeptic or he is earnest in his rational analysis, but is unable to fully distance his perspective from his cultural

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beloved successfully rescues him; he is a prisoner with little real autonomy it seems.

heritage whose traditional metaphysics have left indelible marks on his cognitive constructs, or at least sympathies..

Like the narrative of "Frank Martin and the Fairies," Carleton's presentation of "Rose Moan--The Irish Midwife" also communicates a degree of fantastic uncertainty due to the competing voices and perspectives. Carleton stresses in his portrait of the midwife her centrality in the traditional communities of Ireland because of folk beliefs that he considers irrational, yet wishes to preserve. He busily qualifies his description of midwifes, and Rose Moan in particular, with rationalizations while also bringing "the midwife herself personally on the stage, that she may speak and act for herself" (124). His rhetorical drama complicates Carleton's position; not only does Rose speak but other tradition-bearers do as well, and Carleton's narrative pose of conservatism cannot wholly contain the fantastic nature of their utterances.

When Carleton does let Rose "speak and act for herself," she manipulates her community through her familiarity with supernatural folklore. The main instance of her powers of persuasion concern her journey to visit a pregnant woman. Midwives are primarily known for their services at birth, a position that epitomizes the midwife's role as a border guard, so to speak. The time of birth itself is a fundamental metaphysical contact zone where the spiritual safety of the infant is just as much a concern as its physical well-being. In fact, the spiritual anxiety is likely the cultural consolidation of the psychological tension experienced by a family worrying over the possibility of infant disease and death.[25] Addressing poor Phil, who brings Rose to her destination to attend a pregnant woman, Rose awes him with her supernatural

reputation, while at the same time cleverly contemning his own paranoia. The result is that Phil becomes her latest satisfied customer, or dupe.

Part of Rose's successful manipulation is her psychological perspicuity. She perceives the state of Phil's mind: he fears being waylaid by supernatural forces. Thus, she works towards increasing his supernatural fears in such a way as to generate further reverence for her: "If you knew as much as I could tell you--push an--you'd have a dhrop o'sweat at the ind [sic] of every hair on your head" (129). By simultaneously emphasizing her authoritative knowledge in connection with the supernatural--and stressing such knowledge is beyond both Phil's awareness and capability --Rose plays her role well as mistress of unseen forces:

> "Aisey, Mrs. Moan! God presarve us! what is that tall thing there to the right?"--and he commenced the Lord's Prayer in Irish, as fast as he could get out the words."
>
> "Why, don't you see, boy it's a fir-tree?" (130)

Rose plays with Phil's hypersensitivity and supernatural fears; furthermore, her game is Carleton's as well--both narrator and character blur the lines between the traditional elements of generic legends and the immediacy of personal experience.

Rose reinforces her aura of power by attributing to herself the role of midwife to the fairies; she tells a legend concerning midwives to awe Phil with. In Rose's version of the legend, the midwife serves the fairies, accidentally acquires some of their ointment and rubs it in the eye of a human child. And, that child is struck blind in that eye by the fairies as punishment when the secret is revealed later in life by the

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[25] Examples of parturition paranoia in folklore include tales of fairy changelings and

child's revelation of his ability to see fairies.[26] The legend emphasizes the dangerous power of those beings which midwives allegedly sometimes interact with. As Rose's tale excites Phil's imagination and fear he quickly believes that he spies fantastic phenomena all around him, starting with his misapprehension of the "fir-tree." By implying that Phil's visions are paranoid--the shapes that he perceives as fantastic are merely the uncanny delusions of his mind and the darkness--Rose amplifies the authority of her own supernatural experiences.

Carleton, who pejoratively refers to Phil's "credulity" and Rose's "ingeniously feeding" of this state of mind, tips the scales of interpretation towards Rose being a clever performer, not a wonder-worker (132). In fact, throughout Tales and Sketches, Carleton adopts for himself Rose's rhetorical strategy. By criticizing the credulity of others in folk beliefs, he leads the reader to believe that his own fantastic experiences are not the product of an overexcited imagination, unless of course he says they are, as in the case of his fever.

Rose Moan and Frank Martin are both examples of how an individual claiming to be a metaphysical intermediary between the folk community and the forces of the otherworld exerts social influence. Frank Martin gained status due to what Carleton felt was his complete belief in his claims to seeing the fairies--"there's two dozen of them in the shop (the weaving shop) this minute" (92). Similarly, "the very basis" of the midwife's power, according to Carleton, is her "conviction" of the

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charms used against the infanticidal urges of Lilith.

[26] The more common motif is the following: F. 235.4.4 (a) *Mortal Nurse of Fairy Child Gets Fairy Water in her Eye, Is Enabled to See Fairies as They Are, At Any Time. She Meets One Pilfering at Fair, She Speaks to Him; He puts out her Eye* (Baughman).

importance of her position regarding "the old lengendary [sic] powers with which she is supposed to be invested" (113-114).

Carleton's report of Rose mixes the self-conscious defense of skeptical irony with enthusiasm and even amazement, leaving the reader not altogether certain to what extent the charms of midwives are charlatanism, psychological marvels, or veritable magic. Carleton insists on her social significance, despite his tendency towards rationalization of her supposed powers: "Of these charms it may be said that they are all of a religious character, some of them evidently the production of imposture, and others apparently of those who seriously believed in their efficacy" (122). Carleton hesitates to declare that all the charms are ineffective. Yet, he attributes whatever success results to the beliefs of those who witness the performance.

Among the various attributes of Rose Moan, Carleton's discussion of the midwife's role as a defender against fairy predators relies on the voice of communal consensus; however, his own voice does not seem altogether complicit in this perspective:

> Every one knows that the power of fairies in Ireland is never so strong, nor so earnestly put forth, as in the moment of parturition, when they strive by all possible means to secure the new-born infant before it is christened, and leave a changeling in its stead. [. . .] Many a time [. . .] the windows rattled out, the door pushed with violence, and the whole house shaken as if it would tumble about their heads--and all by the fairies; but to no purpose: the charm of the midwife was a rock of

> defence; [. . .] they [fairies] were ultimately forced to depart in a strong blast of wind, screaming and howling with rage and disappointment as they went. (122)

The rhetoric of skepticism shows through, for all the signs of the fairies' power are those of "a strong blast of wind." One may interpret the phrase, "and all by the fairies"--preceded by a dash--as emphasizing not only the impressive power these beings hold according to tradition, but as an ironic aside. It is as though Carleton were saying, "what, you think that it is the wind that "rattled" the windows, door, and house? No! It is the fairies of course!" Reading Carleton one cannot ignore his self-conscious and highly wrought rhetoric of skepticism: his choice of words produce conflict between the traditional consensus of what everybody "knows" and his own ambivalence.

The phrase that everyone "knows" is tinged with additional irony, for Carleton is aware that his audience is primarily not Irish tradition-bearers at all. He points out, for instance, regarding the Irish Midwife" that there are "a few points of character [. . .] not in general known to a very numerous class of our readers" (114). And if these readers are aware of fairy folk beliefs concerning birth, they most likely do not accept such beliefs as accurate descriptions of reality. Therefore, the very idea of consensus is fraught with conflicting associations. The assumed wholeness of the collective voice of "everyone" turns out to be a fragmented choir--emphasizing the cultural fractures among the various members of the literary audience, the traditional community, and the mixture of perspectives that Carleton himself represents.

In "The Donagh" Carleton sustains metaphysical hesitation because of the moral influence associated with the suspense of the fantastic. Like Hogg, in his poem "On Superstition," Carleton evidently sees ethical value in folk metaphysics, despite his other rational reservations:

> But ah! thou [Superstition] filled'st the guilty heart with dread,
>
> And brought the deeds of darkness to the day!
>
> [. . . . . .]
>
> A shade of terror nature hung;
>
> A feeling more sublime than poet ever hung.
>
> [. . . . . .]
>
> This high belief in Providence's sway,
>
> In the eye of reason wears into decline;
>
> And soon that heavenly ray must ever cease to shine. (154-180)

Hogg's sentiments represent a broader cultural view than his own aesthetics; for example his words echo the regrets of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who decried how "the English in general [. . .] have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it [. . .] the giving up [of] witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible."[27]

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[27] Robert F. Geary, "From Providence to Terror: The Supernatural in Gothic Fantasy," The Fantastic In World Literature and the Arts: Selected Essays from the Fifth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts ed. Donald E. Morse (New York: Greenwood Press, 1984) 10.

Carleton interrogates this link between superstition and piety in "The Donagh." The story presents the moral interconnections between official religion and folk metaphysics--and the protraction of the literary fantastic provides the emotive resonance for this intercultural nexus of ethical authority.[28] Carleton shows the power of superstitious guilt is in fact more powerful than the hierarchical force of religious or legal authorities. Criminals and victims find in folk beliefs the images of their fears, and though they may transgress the bonds of civil law, they cannot escape the greater bonds of communal perceptions of the numinous world.

In "The Donagh" the priest awes the community with an unofficial religious relic--the Donagh, which traditionally has had local impact--in order to enforce communal ethical standards that the horse thieves have violated. The relic itself is of unknown origin and is described as a "small box covered with black cloth" beneath which veil is a "carving" of "Christ and the Twelve Apostles."[29] Hardly fearsome, one might think, what awes are the tales of "death, madness, paralysis, self-destruction, or the murder of some one dear" that threaten the fool who dares perjure

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[28] Critical examinations have neglected to analyze carefully the specifics of Carleton's use of folklore in these two stories. Margaret Chestnutt's examination of "peasant religion" in Carleton mentions how his stories illustrate Carleton's awareness of how the "boundary between Christian and pagan superstition is of course unclear" in peasant traditions, but she does no more than to cite certain folk beliefs in "The Donagh" and "The Lianhan Shee." The reason for this oversight is apparently that those "last examples are, however, of a kind which is not always directly related to Carleton's purpose of religious propaganda" and thus not the focus of Chestnutt's study. Margaret Chestnutt, Studies in the Short Stories of William Carleton. Gothenburg Studies in English 34. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1976) 39-40. A far better examination is that done by Barbara Hayley who argues that in "The Donagh" "Carleton equates conscience with superstition." 161-162. I contend with this position later.

[29] Carleton Works 897-898.

him or herself upon the artifact.[30] Despite the horse thieves' transgression of the village's moral consensus they are subject to a deeply ingrained consciousness of that morality which the religious relic emblazons.

Carleton establishes this psychological drama of folk metaphysics and religious morality through carefully deploying details that evoke the literary fantastic; he presents the folkloric perspectives of the villagers and shows how traditional views of the supernatural impact both the innocent and the guilty parties in the narrative. Carleton's description of the village and its inhabitants sets up a metaphysical contact zone reminiscent of similar interfaces in Le Fanu and Hogg:

> Carnmore, one of those small villages that are to be found in the outskirts of many parishes in Ireland, whose distinct boundaries are lost in the contiguous mountain-wastes [. . .]. [. . .] About three years before the time of this story, there came two men [. . .] they chose a residence [. . .] at some distance from those [. . .] we have just been describing (887).

Not only is the town itself an example of a precariously placed civilization--whose "boundaries are lost" in the "contiguous" wilderness--but the "two men" are the chief horse thieves. As interlopers it is fitting, according to the mechanics of legend, that they occupy an especially tangential relationship to the village; they live "at some distance"--they are more creatures of the wild than people struggling to be civilized. Preternatural rumors arise on the most extreme borders between the wild and the civilized. Thus, it is no surprise that there are multiple traditions concerning these brothers:

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[30] Carleton Works 898.

> Some said they lived by theft; others that they were coiners; and there were many who imagined, from the diabolical countenance of the older brother, that he had sold himself to the devil [. . .]. Upon this hypothesis several were ready to prove that he had neither breath nor shadow; they had seen him, they said, standing under a hedge-row of *elder*--that unholy tree which furnished wood for the cross, and on which Judas hanged himself--yet, although it was noon-day in the month of July, his person threw out no shadow. Worthy souls! Because the man stood in the shade at the time. (888)

As is consistent with the rhetorical patterns of Carleton, he intrudes his own skeptical perspective, immediately suggesting a naturalistic explanation for what seems otherworldly, regarding the absence of shadow. Yet Carleton's word here does not figure as absolute law; he is relating tales and regardless of his slanted attitude the voices of the villagers present alternative views.

Carleton complicates the authority of his own skepticism by making the most malicious brother, Anthony, be the most rationalistic. When Anthony is confronted by the other horse thieves about the possibility of having to swear on the "mass-book" as opposed to merely "the Tistament" [sic] he responds with a pointed argument:

> "aren't there books that say religion's all a sham? I think myself it is; for if what they talk about justice an' Providence is thrue[sic], would Tom Dillon be transported for the robbery *we* committed at Bantry? Tom it's true, was an ould offender; but he was innocent of *that*, any way. [. . .] I don't see why a man mightn't as well *switch* [kiss] the

> priest's book as any other, only that, somehow, a body can't shake the terror of it off o' them." (893)

Anthony's speech underscores the paradoxical nature of the human mind. As Hayley observes, these folk "believe that to swear falsely on 'The Law Bible,' that is, the magistrate's copy, is permissable; on the 'Priest's Bible,' it is a sin entailing dreadful punishment."[31] We see with Anthony the tension between beliefs based on logic and feeling--the emotional resonance of the authority of religion, or at least the Bible, is intimidating to him despite his reasoned belief that religion is a "sham." Clearly Anthony is not as much an atheist in his heart as he pretends to be. Yet, he is able to falsely swear on the Bible--where he quails is before the Donagh.

In "The Donagh" the power of oral repute in this case is stronger than the written and organized system of Christian administration. Carleton's tale explicitly shows that when the authority of official religion and law fails, superstition may promote morality: "many of those misguided creatures, who too frequently hesitate not to swear falsely on the Word of God, would suffer death itself sooner than commit a perjury on the Donagh" (900). The power of a local artifact, with the immediacy of local legends, is ultimately stronger in penetrating psychological power than the more diluted resonance of the text of official religion. This is not, however, the same as equating "conscience with superstition" as Hayley claims is what the story does; the superstitious force and purpose of the Donagh is the power to police

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[31] Hayley 161.

by fear. The Donagh does not provide a sense or system of right and wrong, but the sublime experience of terror.[32]

Carleton does more than present the dynamics of psychological sensitivity to superstition; he produces hesitation--with regard to the objective reality of the world he depicts--through the tension among his own skeptical commentaries, the beliefs of the villagers, and--in particular--the power of the Donagh psychologically over the entire local culture. Carleton demonstrates how folklore provides a systematic explanation for various phenomena. The most prominent of these phenomena is the fainting of Denis--Anthony's brother--when he beholds his brother perjuring himself upon the Donagh:

> Those who stood at the outskirts of the crowd, seeing Denis apparently lifeless, thought he must have sworn falsely on the Donagh, and exclaimed, "He's dead! gracious God! Denis Meehan's struck dead by the Donagh! He swore in a lie, and is now a corpse!" [. . .] At this moment a silent breeze came over where they stood; and, as the Donagh lay upon the table, the black ribbons with which it was ornamented fluttered with a melancholy appearance, that deepened the sensations of the people into something peculiarly solemn and preternatural. Denis at length revived [. . .]. (899)

According to the lore of the Donagh there is of course no question why Denis falls down, as if dead--and the crowd reaffirms the legendary attributes of the Donagh implicitly in their chorus above. The reader is just as unaware as the crowd that

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[32] Hayley 161.

Denis has merely fainted--rather than died--until Carleton informs us otherwise, undercutting the "peculiarly solemn and preternatural" moment. With Denis's revival, the judgment of the Donagh switches from fantastic to psychologically uncanny--and yet the threat of the curate that "a tremendous punishment, either on the spot, or in twenty-four hours after his perjury" is visited upon the Meehan brothers (898). Denis confesses out of terror, and Anthony's own daughter intercedes when her father tries to kill his younger brother; she is shot instead and her father dies a few minutes after of "apoplexy" (900). Thus, one may argue for the powers of the Donagh according to psychology or metaphysics--powers that administer justice emerge from either the guilty and superstitious human conscience or the numinous world.

Carleton points to other systematic superstitions besides the Donagh, which provide explanation for various phenomena.[33] While implicitly asserting the value of the Donagh as a moral superstition, Carleton nevertheless mocks the general folk beliefs of the town as credulous and erroneous supernatural conclusions on matters which had natural explanations: "If a man had a sick cow, she was elf-shot; if his child became consumptive, it had been overlooked, or received *a blast* from the fairies [. . .]. In short, there could not possibly be a more superstitious spot than that which these men of mystery had selected for their residence" (888). Besides the villagers in general, Anthony's brother Denis is particularly superstitious and when he finds that "a coffin I made in the ashes three times runnin" he is fixated on this as a

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[33] One might suggest that belief in the Donagh produces its legendary effects That, at least, is the rational argument for such phenomena proposed by the skeptic in Neil Gunn's Second Sight, as we shall see later in the conclusion to this dissertation.

dark omen (885). Considering the outcome of the story, where two coffins must be made for his brother and niece--this is arguably no idle premonition. While Denis's superstitious mind may well be fixated on morbid images, such as coffins, the fulfillment of his interpretation of his sketches belies Carleton's superficial attempts to dismiss superstitions as mere fantasies. The fantastic form of Carleton's narrative structure is at odds with his authorial interjections.

Despite no unequivocal supernatural events then, Carleton's tale maintains ambiguity through folkloric patterns based on oral history and imaginations that are shaped by folk beliefs. The Donagh's potency is attested to not merely by oral history, but a number of scholarly notes appended to the end of the story concerning the artifact. Carleton thereby extends the unsettling discourse of the narrative's metaphysical ambiguity into the contemporary world of his readers, similar to Hogg's editorial presentation, including the mention of Hogg and Blackwoods, in his Confessions of a Justified Sinner. Critical commentaries on Carleton take these letters regarding the Donagh seriously; thus, if Carleton has perpetrated a literary ruse similar to Hogg, it has been a convincing one.[34] Even the earlier claim Anthony makes for atheism--Tom Dillon being transported "for the robbery *we* committed"--arguably is another example of folk justice, where punishment arrives inevitably if not by due process of law. Tom was not guilty of "*that*" but he was "an ould offender" and thus does not escape judgment (893). Contained in Anthony's very speech

[34] Hayley, for instance, accepts these letters as works "from distinguished scholars" and offers their documentation to point to Carleton's originality in at least one aspect: "Neither letter in fact mentions its [the Donagh's] use as a 'conscience trap.'" 170.

against "Providence" then are the seeds of arguable evidence for otherworldly arbitration.

Ultimately, Carleton appears aware of the narrative's supernatural ambiguity--and the effect on the reader. His comment on the discomfort of the crowd who wait for their fate to be tested by the curate and the Bible or perhaps, according to rumor, the Donagh nicely epitomizes Carleton's own narrative dynamics: "The people, consequently, not knowing which [report] to credit felt that most painful of all sensations--uncertainty" (895).

In his renderings of the fantastic results of superstition Carleton offers narratives defined by hesitation. These works are filled with tradition-bearers, including the narrator, who encounter fantastic events, and present a variety of attitudes. Listening to the sheer energy and diversity of these folk voices, Carleton demonstrates the insufficiency of categorizing the peasantry as ignorant. The fantastic in Carleton's tales of folklore demonstrates that the human mind with its myriad of conflicting motivations and doctrines is sufficient cause to produce any uncanny visitation, and insufficient to determine what ultimately constitutes a psychological versus supernatural disruption. From his arguments pro and con regarding apparitions, to the sly devices of the midwife, and the aesthetic appreciation for good storytellers--even possibly deluded ones like Frank Martin--Carleton keeps his readers guessing what he really thinks, and where the tale's border of normalcy ends and fairyland begins.

Chapter 12

William Sharp and the Fantastic: The Chaotic Psychology of Folk Traditions

While the influence of education and the pressure towards cultural assimilation moved Carleton to preserve and protect Irish lore through a morally measured and sometimes ironic argumentative rhetoric, Sharp, on the other hand, gravitated towards a mystical defense of Scottish lore. Sharp sought to assert an indelible claim on the British imagination through an aesthetic influenced by Scottish history and tradition. Yet, despite Sharp's stated goal, his narratives present a mind divided at least as sharply as Carleton's. It is through the persona of mystical folk writer Fiona Macleod that Sharp presents his tales of Scots lore. This tactic suggests that he hides behind a female mask not only due to discomfort with the enthusiasm displayed in many of these works for folkways, but also because he fails to integrate the implications of folk culture with his male identity.

Nor is his female persona--so often pointed to by critics as an anomaly among nineteenth-century writers--the only sign of his divided consciousness regarding folklore.[1] The stories themselves show profound ambiguities morally as well as

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[1] Biographically, the clearest indications of inspiration for Sharp's choice of pseudonym are his own words on the subject, as well as his wife's comments--both are reported here by Alan Bold:

> The pseudonym Sharp adopted in 1894, on the publication of *Pharais: a Romance of the Isles* [. . .]. *Pharais* was dedicated to E.W.R. and in her foreword to the 1910 edition, Sharp's widow Elizabeth states that the 'ultimate characteristic expression of his "dream self" was due to the inspiration and incentive of the friend to whom he dedicated *Pharais*.' Sharp

metaphysically. Supernatural folklore in these tales rather than bringing harmony and mystical fulfillment tends towards social dissolution and personal destruction. In fact, Gloom--the chief character throughout the cycle of stories contained in Children of the Dark Star--uses traditional typologies from folk narratives to manipulate those characters that he wishes to harass and even kill. Nor is Gloom the only character to use such tactics and represent the phenomenology of folk traditions in such a dark light.

To understand Sharp's use of folklore in producing the literary fantastic entails examining characters such as Gloom and their relation to preternatural folklore as well as Sharp's overall Celtic aesthetic. Wendell Harris claims in British Short Fiction in the Nineteenth Century that "Sharp's stories [. . .] look not to inner motivations, but to mysterious external powers which drive the individual;" however, that assessment wholly ignores how Sharp delves into the mentality of his characters.[2] Many of Sharp's stories focus on individuals whose cultural immersion in supernatural folk traditions is so deep that the psychological impact renders moot the question of whether the fantastic incidents in a narrative constitute the marvelous or the uncanny, according to Todorov's analysis. As is the case in Sharp's tales of selky traditions, it doesn't matter if people actually have mystical blood ties to seals or

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himself said, in a letter to his wife, 'without her there would never have been any "Fiona Macleod."' She was Mrs Edith Wingate Rinder with whom the Sharps sojourned in Rome in 1890-1. [. . .] Mrs Rinder published *The Shadow of Arvor* (1896), a translation of Breton folktales and her husband, Frank, wrote an enthusiastic appreciation of Sharp when he died.

Alan Bold, Scotland: A Literary Guide (London: Routledge, 1989) 265-266.

[2] Wendell V. Harris, British Short Fiction in the Nineteenth Century: A Literary and Bibliographic Guide (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979) 144.

spiritual beings of the sea--if the people believe it themselves their behavior will be fantastic enough.

Rather than emphasizing the glorious potential of a life enriched by folk traditions, Sharp stresses that madness and social and biological devolution may result from total belief in fantastic folklore, as well as the loss of personal autonomy when faced with the patterns of tradition. In this respect then, Sharp's presentation resonates with the degradation of native cultures typical of nineteenth century anthropological studies that applied Darwinism to human cultural development: "The activities and habits of mind of other peoples which appeared to flout [rationality] [. . .] were classified [. . .] [as] faltering steps on the way to rationality. The 'superstitions' of peasants and the working class [. . .] [etc.]."[3] Yet, Sharp also offers constructive visions of folk culture. For instance, in "The Anointed Man" he presents an artistic aesthetic that uses supernatural folklore as a tool for the Romantic imagination. Sharp demonstrates by example how folk metaphysics provide a second sight for the artist's portrait of the world.

We will begin with Gloom--the antisocial brother of the Achanna family. The family itself on the isolated island of Iona serves as the quintessential region of Scoto-Celtic folk culture: "Iona is the microcosm of Gaeldom."[4] Gloom himself represents the dark destiny that Sharp believes has been at once a bane and a boon to Scotland--the scourge of imperial tyranny that has arguably provided Scotland with an identity

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[3] Malcolm Chapman, The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978) 114.

[4] Fiona Macleod, The Sin-Eater, The Washer of the Ford 12.

all the fiercer. For, unless Sharp/Macleod believes Gloom is necessary to Scotland's identity why is the character, who is integral to so many stories, never punished for his crimes? He lives on it seems to be a nemesis to the romantic dreams of his brothers and countrymen. In his persona of Fiona Macleod, Sharp specifies the outlines of his theory of his Celtic aesthetic that arguably contributes to the portrayal of the character Gloom:

> Some of my critics, heedless of the complex conditions which differentiate the Irish and the Scottish Celt, complain of the Celtic gloom that dusks the life of the men and women I have tried to draw. That may be just. I wish merely to say that I have not striven to depict the blither Irish Celt. I have sought mainly to express something of what I have seen as paramount, something of the "Celtic Gloom" which, to many Gaels if not to all, is so distinctive in the remote life a doomed and passing race."[5]

This character Gloom embodies the essential feature of a more general "Celtic gloom" which defines the Scottish Gael, if not the "blither Irish Celt." This gloom appears to be the intuitive awareness--partly generated by historical oppression--of the imminent racial mortality of the Scottish Gael.

Rather than mourn this "passing race," Macleod emphasizes such evanescence is of the flesh not the mind. Flavia Alaya makes this very observation in William Sharp--"Fiona Macleod" 1855-1905: "The source of all the thrust she gave to the

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[5] Fiona Macleod, The Sin-Eater And Other Tales and Episodes (1895; Books for Libraries Press, 1971) 7.

Celtic movement lay in her conviction that the very passing of the Celtic races would be evidence of a "spiritual rebirth" that could move the world" (39). Macleod then carries the Victorian folklorist's fear of the disappearance of folk culture to another level--the apocalyptic. And, it is this idea of spiritual revelation precipitated by the crisis of mortality that underlies the dynamics of the stories involving the character of Gloom.

Gloom seeks to destroy his personal enemies through manipulating folklore; however, while he succeeds in his plans with some, for others his harassment ultimately leads to enlightenment and the strengthening of cultural and interpersonal ties. Those he destroys Gloom moves to self-destruction by the presentation of visions derived from folk narratives and beliefs. Gloom's strategies are consistent: the traditional tunes which he plays upon his *feadan* to disturb the emotions and the ancient stories and superstitions which he tells to unsettle the mind--with these two tools Gloom subverts the spirit of those he seeks vengeance upon. Gloom chooses tales and songs that he feels represent the patterns he wishes to impose upon his victims. It is in this way that he creates a living art of the fantastic--making tradition uncannily manifest itself in an inevitable incarnation of obsession and madness to those Gloom influences.

In "The Dàn-nan-Ròn" and "Alasdair the Proud" the folklore Gloom emphasizes helps to drive two men mad. The victim in the former story, Mànus, Gloom convinces is a descendant of the Selkies, while to the victim of the latter story, Alasdair, he reveals the emptiness of his love for a married woman. To Alasdair,

Gloom repeats "the tale of Enya of the Dark Eyes, and how Aodh (whom he called Alasdair the Proud) loved her overmuch [. . .]. [. . .] Enya of the Dark eyes, who sang the same song to two men."[6] Having intercepted a letter from Ethlenn to her husband that negates the intimate and sensitive passions she claimed to feel for Allister, Gloom exposes this letter to confound the man whose success as a famous artist he resents and whose past pugnacious actions deeply offended Gloom:

> Had he forgotten, Gloom wondered [. . .] when he had [. . .] thrown him into the Pool of Diarmid? [. . .] And so, his thought ran, Alasdair M'Ian was a great man in that little world over yonder, the world of the towns and big cities! He had made a name for himself by his books, his poems [. . .]. did not he, Gloom know many a *dàn*, many a wild *òran*; could he not tell many a *sgeul* as fine, or finer? Ay, by the Black Stone of Iona! Why, then should this Englishman have so much fame? Well, well, if not English, he wrote and spoke and thought in that foreign tongue, and had forgotten the old speech, or had no ease with it [. . .]. He, Gloom Achanna, did not ever forget. (397)

In this passage Gloom figures not merely as the angry avenger of a previous grudge, but the outraged spirit of Gaelic culture wreaking its resentment upon the Scots Gael who has taken upon himself the ways of the "Englishman." Gloom's thoughts are of course highly prejudiced and self-serving, and to directly correlate his judgments with that of Fiona Macleod's is hasty.

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[6] William Sharp, The Dominion of Dreams Under the Dark Star (1895; New York: Duffield & Company) 406.

Yet, one cannot wholly deny the consistency of the pattern of Gloom as a scourge against cultural assimilation. He angrily wars against any changes to the island community in which he was born and behaves like a veritable genius loci of Iona, playing his mournful tunes; in this case "he had now two feadans, [feadan is the pipe-like instrument Gloom plays], though one was only a little sheet of paper" (400). Fiona Macleod here overtly states the manipulative intentions of Gloom when he plays upon his feadan and connects the revelation of the letter to that pattern of behavior. Gloom himself successfully convinces Alisdair of his foolishness in his idealization of the love between himself and Ethlenn: "A fool is bad; a blind fool is worse" (408). And, like so many literary figures who fail to initially apprehend the truth around him, Alasdair goes mad upon the revelation.

What particularly renders his madness fantastic and folkloric is not only the repeating of the old tale, or *sgeul* to him, but his vision of his own double following the traditional tune Gloom plays:

> He played the Dân-nan-Ròn, [Song of the Seals] which had sent Mànus MacCodrum to his death among the seals, and the Davsa-na-Mairv, [Dance of Death] to which Semas his brother had listened in a sweat of terror; and now he played the dàn which is known as the Pibroch of the Mad. [. . .] Alasdair stood intently listening. His limbs shook. Sweat poured from his face. His eyes were distended. [. . .] Suddenly he uttered a hoarse cry. A man stood near him, staring at him curiously. He knew the man . It was himself. [. . .] It was life or death; he knew that; that he knew. (412-413)

It is an erroneous conclusion to argue that the playing of the songs that Gloom does to harass his victims actually causes their madness and terror; rather, it seems that Gloom's music adds to the momentary intensity of feeling that the characters are already developing. In other words, Alasdair was broken by the news of his wasted love; it was the letter--not the music--that most affected him. Seeing his double, which he presumably interprets as a wraith--the apparition of a living person often associated with imminent or coeval death--reinforces symbolically the fact that Alasdair must now stand outside of himself. He can no longer be the man he was before who believed in a false love and founded his life upon an idle dream.

Fiona MacLeod continues her interrogation of subjectivity by implying that magical beliefs and aesthetics derive from a similar source; her very role as a character in "The Annointed Man" helps to erode the border between literary art and folk legend. Macleod shows how she learned the secret of the vision of Alan Dall--Alasdair Achanna. The moment is precipitated by Alasdair's expression of rapture, exclaiming "how beautiful is this lovely world" while looking upon "where the blighted potatoes [which] rotted among a wilderness of round skull-white stones" (148). Macleod cries and explains to Alasdair her terror at his finding beauty in what is "hideous"; and so he in turns tells her his story:

> "I was little more than a child, a boy just in my teens, when something happened, something that came down the Rainbow-Arches of Cathair-Sith." He paused here, perhaps to see if I followed, which I did, familiar as I was with all fairy lore. [. . .] "I [Alasdair] was so glad with my joy that golden day that I threw myself on the ground [. . .]

> sobbing the while with my vague, strange yearning. At last I lay still, nerveless, with my eyes closed. Suddenly I was aware that two tiny hands had come up through the spires of the heather, and were pressing something soft and fragrant upon my eyelids. [. . .] Thereafter I was the same, and yet not the same. Never could I see, as they saw, what my father and brothers or the islefolk looked upon as ugly or dreary." (151)

One may assert that this is merely a dream of a gift, or curse, from the fairies, but the fact remains that Alasdair believes and experiences his changed vision. One may also claim that this is the birth of a poet--one who has visionary imagination, not second sight.

Macleod's presentation of this second sight received from the fairies, however, is categorically different from the traditional ability to see fairies, fetches, and ghosts that is typical of second sight; Sharp's alteration of this belief highlights literary rather than folk aesthetics. What Alasdair receives appears to be a visionary bridge between pre-industrial romance and post-industrial realism, or rather he sees with an optimistic platonic and Blakeian vision of innocence directly into the humanity at the heart of industrialism. Ugliness is merely the shadow of a greater beauty:

> in the places they call slums, and among the smoke of factories, and the grime of destitution, I could see all that other men saw, only as vanishing shadows. What I saw was lovely beautiful with strange glory, and the faces of men and women were sweet and pure, and their souls were white.

> [. . .] And on the day of my home-coming, Morag was there [. . .]. She [. . .] said of me [. . .]. He has been touched with the Fairy Ointment. The Guid Folk know him. It will be thus with him till the day of his death, if a *duinshee* can die, being already a man dead yet born anew. He upon whom the Fairy Ointment has been laid must see all that is ugly and hideous and dreary and bitter through a glamour of beauty. (152)

One is reminded by Alasdair's claim to have seen that the "souls were white" of the poor--grimy people--of Blake's "The Chimney-Sweeper" in *Songs of Innocence*. In Blake's poem, Tom dreams that "naked and white" boys escape the "coffins of black" (12-17). That however is a dream--or arguably a spiritual vision--that contrasts with the miserable reality. Such double vision--finding consolation in the purity or cheerfulness of the oppressed--is criticized as hypocritical in "The Chimney-Sweeper" of Blake's *Songs of Experience*, where the "little black thing" explains how "because I am happy and dance and sing, / They think they have done me no injury" (1-10).

Thus, the pronouncement by Morag, a wise-woman, rather than resulting in a clear interpretation, complicates the ambiguity of Alasdair's second sight. For, is his perception of a "glamour of beauty" truly a revelation of greater spiritual truth past "vanishing shadows," or is this "glamour" a mere illusion that finds gold in a heap of dung? The conundrum of the visionary is similar to the fantastic narrative of Ludwig Tieck's "The Runenberg" where Christian enters the woods with what he perceives to be an ideal female being, while his family sees him "talking to the horrible old

woman of the woods" (55). Have Christian and Alasdair been deluded by otherworldly powers or their insufficiently worldly senses? Arguably, one may interpret the vision of Blake's chimney sweeper in a light similar to that of Alasdair--their sights validate the essential worth of humanity despite circumstantial degradation.

Aesthetics are not easily reduced to empirical evidence--whether the magic of folklore or the mystery of psychology; Sharp presents in his persona of Macleod here a philosophical standard of art that raises questions that transcend any particular folk belief of second sight. The divergent aesthetic experienced by Alasdair as a gift of the fairies--and the vilification and ostracism that he receives from his community as a result of this vision-- expresses the alienation of the artist whose aesthetic vision is at odds with convention. Or, rather than a suggestion of superior artistic vision, one may interpret Alasdair's perceptions as intrusive fantasies that cloud his comprehension.

It is the relation between folklore and psychology that emerges most from Macleod's presentation of the Achanna brothers and the fantastic events that accompany them. Gloom and his spirits are never absolutely rendered as truly supernatural; rather, they figure as the outward expression of mental and emotional states. Not only does Gloom play upon beliefs, but he also evokes the desires and terrors of those he contends with, hoping to overpower his victims' sense of self with their primal feelings. But, in one story, "Green Branches," it is Gloom's turn to be cowed by folk beliefs and be betrayed by the exertion of his own desires when he

believes he killed his brother, Sheumais, in order to gain the woman, Katreen Macarthur, they both desire.

In "Green Branches" Macleod uses the revenant motif as well as belief in the kelpy to orchestrate a subtle tale where moral vengeance triumphs over amoral desire. Sheumais's love for Katreen is not wholly pure of course, for he was "the more eager" for Katreen because he "wished [. . .] to put a slight upon his younger brother"--that is Gloom--who also loved her. However, he would presumably not have tried to kill Gloom in the fashion in which Gloom attempted to slay him. Gloom disguises himself amid green branches in the river and swims along to the rendez-vous point where he has observed Sheumais use the same disguise. However, on the day he is intent on slaughter he mistakes the floating clump of other green branches for Sheumais, when in fact it is Ian Macarthur, who is promised to Katreen by her father. He kills Ian, believing he has slain Sheumais, and attempts to seduce Katreen when what seems to be the specter of Sheumais appears behind him and speaks: "The voice was that of Sheumais, who lay dead in the lochan. The murderer shook as in a palsy. With a great effort, slowly he turned his head. He saw a white splatch, the face of the corpse; in this white splatch flamed two burning eyes, the eyes of the soul of the brother whom he had slain" (229). Gloom flees from what he believes to be the revenant of his brother while "Sheumais and Katreen stood, silent, apart, listening to the crashing sound of his flight--the race of the murderer against the pursuing shadow of the Grave" (230). For once, Gloom is punished for his violation of communal standards--he who always seeks to break the bonds of love, friendship, and family.

Gloom experiences something akin to the metaphysics of ghost legends involving an impostor ghost: impersonating the dead whether in jest or seriousness occasions vengeance from either the upset victim or the otherworld.[7] The letter Gloom sends to Sheumais when he discovers Sheumais plans to leave Iona with Katreen threatens Sheumais with the idea that Gloom may be otherworldly: "it is wondering if I am dead, you will be. Maybe ay, and maybe no. [. . .] neither you nor any man shall take Katreen away from me. *You* know that; and Ian Macarthur knows it; and Katreen knows it; and that holds whether I am alive or dead."[8] Gloom's threat is presumptuous. True, he has concealed himself after he helped drive Mànus to madness and death at the fangs of seals, but his claim to Katreen is unethical--she does not love him.

Gloom's signature strategy remains primarily to use traditional music to disconcert his victims, and in his letter he declares: "It was an ill hour for Manus when he heard the 'Dàn-nan-Ròn;' it was the song of his soul, that; and yours is the 'Davsa-na-Mairv.'" (208). When a hidden Gloom plays this song from near the shore as Sheumais sails, after appearing briefly in sight--making Sheumais and the crew believe a wraith or ghost haunts the shore--Sheumais fears the song is perhaps played if not by his possibly dead brother Gloom then "the Kelpie [. . .] one of the--the cavewomen [. . .] [who] sings or plays a strange tune to wile seamen to their death" (210). This Scottish siren is known to tear men apart and drown them. It is a suitable

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[7] Motifs: K.1833 *Disguise as Ghost* E.235.1 *Ghost Punishes Person Who Mocks Him* AT tale-type: 1676 *Joker Posing as Ghost Punished by Victim*

[8] William Sharp, The Sin-Eater--and Other Tales and Episodes (1895; New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971) 207.

being for Sheumais to imagine for it is his desire for a woman that threatens him with death at the hands of Gloom.

Significantly, Macleod's narrative sustains this psychological association with the Kelpy; for when Katreen accuses Gloom of having killed her absent lover, he suggests the Kelpy was the murderer: "I killed no one. He died his own way. Maybe the cramp took him. Maybe--maybe a kelpie gripped him" (227). Gloom's hypothesis is hypocritical and beyond symbolism utterly false; as well as cowardly concealing his role as a murderer, Gloom attributes his crime to the malice of a water spirit. It is fitting that what seems to Gloom to be Sheumais's corpse appears to have emerged from its watery grave--as though perhaps given license by the kelpy--to seek vengeance on Gloom who weaves crafty tales from the spirit world in order to dominate the minds of those around him.

William Sharp's Fantastic Naturalism: The Beast Within the Belief--Superstition, Evolution, and Race

The tale of Gloom's influence on Mànus MacCodrum in "Dàn-nan-Ròn" demonstrates not only Gloom's mechanics of folkloric manipulation and Sharp's presentation of the psychological force of fantastic folklore, but also how certain supernatural folk beliefs are tied intimately to perceptions of racial difference and defending communal interests. Macleod suggests that the legendary heritage of Mànus MacCodrum, whose racial difference from the Achanna brothers is clear by

his appearance, derives from traditional metaphorical perceptions of his racial features:

> He came of his people, sure enough. All the MacCodrums of North Uist had been brown-skinned and brown-haired and brown-eyed: and herein may have lain the reason why, in bygone days, this small clan of Uist was known throughout the Western Isles as the *Sliochd-nan-Ròn*, the offspring of the seals.[9]

Despite Macleod's suggestion of the correlation between legends of breeding with the seal-people (selkies, silkies, selchies) and racial characteristics, the Achanna brothers invoke the legend of the MacCodrum heritage, not as an idle tale of "bygone days," but a significant argument against their cousin Anne's marrying of Mànus.

The Achanna brothers are prejudiced against this man who is not only racially different from themselves, but who seeks to deprive them of what they consider their female resource: "they did not want to lose her, as she not only cooked for them and did all that a woman does, including spinning and weaving, but was most sweet and fair to see, and in the long winter nights sang by the hour together, while Gloom played [. . .]" (36). In other words, Mànus's proposal of marriage to Anne is a declaration of depriving the Achanna brothers not only of a companion, but an economic and aesthetic property--such a threat means war and Marcus and Gloom seek to prevent Mànus from taking Anne. In the struggle that ensues the Achanna

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[9] John Matthews, ed., From the Isles of Dream--Visionary Stories and Poems of the Celtic Renaissance (Wiltshire: The Cromwell Press, 1993) 35.

brothers--particularly Gloom--raise the specter of every folk belief they can in order to separate Anne and Mànus.

The primary attempt to denigrate Mànus's reputation before Anne is to emphasize the legend that taints his family. Readers may know of the international legend of the selky as a mate to a human from the Child Ballad 113 "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry," or perhaps the recent film *The Secret of Roan Inish.* Seamus Heaney includes a reference to the selkies in his poem "The singer's House": "People here used to believe/ that drowned souls lived in the seals."[10] The most common version of the legend is the "story of the seal woman captured by stealing her seal's skin--a local variant of a worldwide motif told elsewhere of swan-maidens or heavenly maidens--[. . .] given a number by Christiansen, ML [Migratory Legend] 4080 [. . .] there are hundreds recorded all along the Atlantic coasts from Ireland to Iceland."[11] However, in "The Dàn-nan-Ròn" the legend involves a male selky and a human woman, which appears to be particularly prevalent in the Scottish isles as Alan Bruford points out further below. Sharp in his opening note to Children of the Dark Star, in which the tales of the Achanna family are anthologized, he mentions that the "Dan-nan-ròn" does have its origin in legend. The story is:

> founded upon a superstition familiar through the Hebrides. The legend exists also on the western coasts of Ireland; for Mr. Yeats has told me that one

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[10] Maureen Murphy, "Siren or Victim: The Mermaid in Irish Legend and Poetry," More Real Than Reality—The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts, eds. Donald E. Morse and Csilla Bertha (London: Greenwood Press, 1991) 29.

[11] Alan Bruford, "Trolls, Hillfolk, Finns, and Picts: The Identity of the Good Neighbors in Orkney and Shetland," The Good People—New Fairylore Essays, ed. Peter Narváez (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997) 122.

> summer he met an old Connaught fisherman who claimed to be of the Sliochd-nan-ron, [sic] an ancestry, indeed, indicated in the man's name: Rooney.[12]

Sharp's version of the legend emphasizes the coded threat of male sexual aggression by making the otherworldly participant not a female but male, which is a fitting pattern to invoke for the agenda of the Achanna brothers:

> "You may be believing this or you may be believing that, Anna-nic-Gileasbuig, but two things are as well known as that the east wind brings the blight and the west wind the rain. And one is this: that long ago a seal-man wedded a woman of North Uist, and that he or his son was called Neil MacCodrum; and that the sea-fever of the seal was in the blood of his line ever after. And this is the other: that twice within the memory of living folk, a MacCodrum has taken upon himself the form of a seal, and has so met his death." (40)

Like Gloom's strategy of imposing typological patterns on his victims through folk narratives and ballads, Marcus Achanna tries a similar technique. He demands that his cousin Anne see Mànus not as the man she loves, but as another incarnation of the dangerous "seal-man," who lurks within the blood line of the MacCodrums.

The basic dynamics of the legend of the MacCodrum's lineage is no mere literary invention. In fact, as Alan Bruford points out in "Trolls, Hillfolk, Finns, and

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[12] William Sharp, The Dominion of Dreams & Under the Dark Star. (1895; New York: Duffield & Company, 1910) 290.

Picts: The Identity of the Good Neighbors in Orkney and Shetland," there exist similar accounts of human and seal family relations particular to Scotland:

> Other stories of union between people and seals, especially between a mortal woman and a seal man as in the ballad ["The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry"], in the story of the "Selkie Boy" of Breckin in North Yell and another match which is held responsible for an actual hereditary disability in Orkney, involving a thickening and hardening of the skin on the palms of the hands until they are as clumsy as the reputed ancestor's flippers--these seem to be unique to the Northern Isles. (122)

In addition Maureen Murphy mentions in "Siren or Victim: The Mermaid in Irish Legend and Poetry" the "nonchalance"-- betokening deep traditional familiarity-- of "an Irish country woman [who] remarks, 'Tá na róna gaolilte leis na muintir Conghaile,' (The seals are related to the Conneely people."[13] Regardless of Anne's own familiarity with the legend of human and seal inter-breeding, as well as Gloom and Marcus's eloquent emphasis of traditional taboos, Anne is defiant and refuses to be cowed. Thus, the Achanna brothers turn their attentions to Mànus himself.

The events of the story not only suggest the psychological and cultural resonance of folk beliefs, but also imply a metaphysical force of folk justice behind such beliefs. When heading towards the boat of Mànus, Marcus Achanna tells Gloom that he sees "a man's death there in the boat"--the death that he sees proves to be his own (43). While this may seem to be an ironic justification for Marcus's second

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[13] Murphy 29.

sight, or merely evidence that his mind was preoccupied with violence--coming as he and his brother were to drive Mànus away--the murder of Marcus by Mànus is the first overt transgression of communal morals.

Therefore, after Marcus is struck down, Gloom exploits Mànus's guilt and the revenant belief to escape. Pointing behind Mànus and his companion, Aulay Macneil, Gloom gestures "with his right hand as if to some one behind his two adversaries, he cried out: "Put the death-hand on them, Marcus! Give them the Grave!" Both men sprang aside, the heart of each nigh upon bursting. The death-touch of the newly slain is an awful thing to incur, for it means that the wraith can transfer all its evil to the person touched" (45). While Gloom's invocation of the "death-touch" belief is a mere strategy to give his enemies the slip, the incident also reinforces an important point: Mànus, despite his resistance to his family legend, is susceptible enough to folk beliefs to act reflexively according to superstition. Before making his retreat Gloom threatens to Mànus that he'll "hear the 'Dàn-nan-Ròn' the night before you die" (45).

Thus, after this unsuccessful attempt to compel Mànus to sail away without their cousin--resulting in the death of Marcus Achanna--Gloom assails Mànus's peace of mind with both the threat of the vengeful dead and the selky legend of the MacCodrums. A very real death haunts Mànus soon enough--his wife dies in childbirth. Arguably it is this event that unhinges his mind and makes him vulnerable to Gloom's manipulation of superstitions. Gloom makes himself visible in shadowy places, generating gossip about a dead man that walks or "the Watcher of the Dead" seeking for another man to "'take his place'" (53). The general belief is that Gloom

and Marcus died at sea after their quarrel with Mànus and Mànus himself believed this. Therefore, he is terrified when he begins to hear the "Dàn-nan-Ròn" and ponders whether "the sea" might "give up its dead?" (54).

Sharp then shows us Mànus's psychological breakdown into superstitious fear and bestial rage. He struggles in terror through the night, bites into a rat, and returning to his cottage sees through the window a shape sitting at his stool. This is Gloom, but Mànus imagines the "shadow-man" to be "his own wraith, of course; of that Mànus felt convinced" (57). The unequivocal certitude of Mànus shows his obsessive turn of mind--to be convinced of the metaphysics behind his perceptions is to be an outright fanatic.

Sharp aptly combines the sense of Mànus's superstitious obsession with his animalistic devolution: "Then with tearing hands he began to burrow an opening in the thatch. All the time he whined like a beast. He was glad the moon shone full upon him. When he had made a big enough hole, he would see the evil thing out of the grave that sat in his room and would stone it to death" (57). When the "shadow man" moves and plays music Mànus considers two alternatives to his interpretation of his perception: "The thing whether his own wraith, or the spirit of his dead foe, or Gloom Achanna himself, had begun to play [the Dàn-nan-Ròn]" (58). At this point Mànus's mental instability becomes directed by the song and he prances out to sea, imagining himself truly to be a seal-man, joins the other seals and is ripped apart due to his peculiar behavior.

Ultimately then, "the Dàn-nan-Ròn" depicts a man driven mad by folk beliefs--does it not? Yet, one must interpret that tale in the context of others that Macleod

offers. Not only is the tale of the "Dàn-nan-Ròn" explicitly related as *real*, for Anne Gillespie (the wife of Mànus) was "my friend" (49), but Macleod relates other tales as though told to her concerning the selkies which are more overtly supernatural. Once again, we find that the literary fantastic in representations of folkloric narratives extends past the borders of one page or story to involve the narrative dynamics of a whole complex of tales and beliefs. Fantastic folklore arising from multiple roots therefore defies any unifying theory of narrative or metaphysics that does not encompass all variants of a particular ideologeme--or way of viewing the world, to repeat Bakhtin's term.

In "The Judgment of God" and "The Dark Nameless One" Fiona Macleod relates tales of the seals that she claims to have heard from her sailing companions. The presentation of these literary stories as living traditional legends complicates the naturalism of "The Dàn-nan-Ròn" for the supernatural is more starkly defined in these tales than the psychological ambiguity of "The Dàn-nan-Ròn." Presumably the oldest tale is "The Dark Nameless One" that pits a selky against the Catholic missionary to Scotland, and Iona in particular, St. Colum. Dialogue in the presentation of this tale directly connects it to Mànus MacCodrum, for Ivor McLean, who narrates the legend to Macleod, asks her if she has "ever have been hearing of the MacOdrums [sic] of Uist?"[14] In response to her assent he mutters "The Sliochdnan-ròn . . . the progeny of the Seal. . . . Well, well, no man knows what moves in the shadow of life. And now I will be telling you that old ancient tale, as it was given to me by the mother of my mother" (266-267).

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[14] Sharp, The Sin Eater, The Washer of the Ford 266.

In the tale, Ivor tells of a "great black seal" that curses St. Colum who greets it and "speaking the good Gaelic as though it were the tongue of the deep sea, as God know it may be [. . .]." (267-268), the seal explains how it, a "Man-Seal," seduced a nun. Adding to the selky's testimony is the monk "Murtagh" who answers St. Colum's questions concerning the truth of the creature's claim--and here the metaphysics and narrative become a strange hybrid of pagan and Christian elements, threatening to dissolve into allegory. For the selky's woman, Kirsteeen McVurich, is revealed not only as the nun seduced one thousand years ago, but at once a living presence of local Scots Gaelic lore and an even older legendary figure of Jewish folklore. She is: "Adam's first wife [. . .] that sea-witch over there, where the foam is ever in the sharp fangs of the rocks" (270). And the selky has "the soul of [. . .] Judas" (271).

"The Dark Nameless One" ironically turns out to have more names and significance than a single legend perhaps should; Ivor's tale figures as an amalgamation of several generations of religious and folkloric beliefs that have accumulated on the most intense of metaphysical contact zones, the sea.[15] Ivor's narrative joins archetypal religious myth, local legends, and the primal topographic feature of the sea, rendering the Scottish coast--where the soul of Judas dwells and Lilith herself howls amid the foam and waves-- an essential microcosm for the entire moral and metaphysical world.

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[15] Robert Paine, for example, analyzes a beach community's role as a locus of cultural and metaphysical conflicts. Robert Paine, "Night Village and the Coming of Men of the Word: *The Supernatural as a Source of Meaning among Coastal Saami*" Journal of American Folklore 107 (1994): 343-363.

In contrast to the fantastic, but ancient and allegorical tale, "The Dark Nameless One," the tale told in "The Judgment o' God" by Pàdruig, one of Macleod's other sailing companions in "the Sound of Iona" (78) presents a far more recent narrative of the fantastic relations between seals and men. "The Judgment o' God" is arguably naturalistic, in that like "The Dàn-nan-Ròn" the emphasis is on the bestial potential of mankind that lurks within the psyche. Pàdruig's father told him the story, as well as Ian Finlay, who allegedly witnessed the events. The tale Pàdruig tells Macleod is a family legend; in fact his elder brother Murdoch is the central character, who becomes isolated and estranged from fellowship and becomes enamored of what is either a seal or a seal-woman:

> they saw--a--thing--come out o' the water. It was long an' dark, an' Ian said its eyes were like clots o' blood; but as to that no man can say yea or nay, for Ian himself admits it was a seal.
>
> "An' this thing is true, *an ainm an Athar!* they saw the dark beast o' the sea creep on to the rock beside Murdock, [sic] an' lie down beside him, and let him clasp an' kiss it. (87-88)

Murdoch curses God and he and his mate slay his pious collie dog, Deirg, which upbraids him, presumably for his blasphemy. Murdoch disappeared soon after this act of violence and allegedly he had confessed before his disappearance that he "was in love wi' a *maigdeannhmara*, a sea-maid" (89). This claim is actually a significant detail, for it arguably reveals Murdoch's confusion, rather than evidence for a preternatural alliance, or at least once again the lack of orthodoxy among folk beliefs. In "The Dark Nameless One Pàdruig distinguishes "what we call *ancailleach-uisge*

(the siren or water-witch)" from "the *maighdeannmhàra* (the mermaid) which means no harm" (263). In fact, tales of malicious mermaids abound, and if Murdoch's lover is such a being, it does not seem harmless.

So far what we have seems to be a tale of insane bestiality, does it not? The claim by Ian that he saw " eyes [. . .] like clots o' blood" may perhaps be dismissed as either optical effects of the moonlight or the effect of Ian's imagination, intensely aroused by the shocking sight of a man making love to a seal. But, consider the ending of the story that explains various disconcerting details. Pàdruig's own father allegedly "heard the voice of his eldest son at the door; but he would not let him in; but in the morning he found his boat broken and shred in splinters" (89). His father and the minister on that next day--the Sabbath--"read the Word o' God to the seals [. . .] and one a female, snarled and showed her fangs; and another, a black one, [. . .] made a noise that [. . .] was as the laughter of Murdoch when he swung the dead body of Deirg. [. . .] and no man knows the judgments o' God" (90). The phrase of moral and metaphysical speculation--superficially agnostic--that "no man knows the judgments o' God"--underscores the fantastic nature of the story. Rhetorically, the metaphysical implication is that an act of divine intervention has transformed Murdoch into the being physically that he had adopted through his behavior. However, what judgment or punishment is this that allows merely the fulfillment of bestial desire? The mad laughter of the "black one" that is identical to Murdoch's own laugh connotes a sense of unruly power here, where the meaning behind such events is unfathomable. The nearly explicit sexual relations between Murdoch and the seal emphasize the borders between human and animal that are so easily crossed--

so easily that perhaps Sharp suggests, and the legends as well, that the only difference between man and beast is a matter of seal skin.

The psychological dynamics of Sharp's tales of fantastic folklore suggest a flip-side to Alaya's claim for Sharp's evolutionary thinking in terms of spiritual amelioration. Alaya emphasizes how "Patrick Geedes and J. Arthur Thompson were to become close partners of Sharp [. . .] as founders of the Scottish branch of the Celtic movement" and that these men wrote a "treatise" which offered a vision of evolutionary theory extending by analogy to spiritual improvement: "admitting the theory of evolution we are [. . .] logically compelled to the assurance that [. . .] fruits of an apparently more than earthly paradise of love [. . .] are yet the realities of a daily life towards which we and ours may journey" (38-39). In the age of evolutionary biology Sharp appears to have injected his legendary stories with the elements of evolutionary psychology, or rather devolutionary psychology--showing how men may all too quickly rejoin the beasts through elemental passions.

Just as Gloom's lie to Anne that the Kelpy slew her lover is not wholly a lie, in that Gloom himself is a predator who wields otherworldly tradition as a weapon, so Mànus and Murdoch's bestial behavior erodes the border between naturalism and the fantastic. The mind obsessed is not dissimilar in behavior to what is traditionally perceived as the soul possessed. The entrance into the sea by Mànus and Murdoch figures as a direct transgression across the border between the civilized and wild spheres. To cross into the otherworld of kelpies, water-witches, mermaids, and selkies is in Sharp's presentation of supernatural folk beliefs a retreat into the animalistic side of the human mind.

Sharp's stories show this border between civilization and otherworldly anarchy as a primarily psychological rather than metaphysical contact zone, or rather his narratives minimize any difference between the psychological and metaphysical. The mind for Sharp is truly the otherworld--and his own mind is a divided one like the other various Victorian writers who use supernatural folklore. For, despite Sharp's avowed mission as Fiona Macleod to permeate and improve the British mind through Scottish culture it is often psychological fragmentation and devolution that is associated with folk beliefs and metaphysics in the fantastic and folkloric narratives of Macleod.

If Sharp is consistent in emphasizing through the literary fantastic the importance of psychological interactions with supernatural folk beliefs, he is also concerned with morals and their possible relation to metaphysical mechanics. Despite Gloom's power to disturb and destroy others through the manipulation of supernatural folk beliefs, it seems that Macleod presents metaphysical limits to human attempts to fashion themselves as agents of fate. Gloom's victims such as Sheumais Achanna and Alan Dall and Alisdair Achanna find the means towards enlightenment and stability despite Gloom's attempts at harnessing superstition as his weapon. Furthermore, Gloom's most total victory--over Mànus MacCodrum--does not have the aura of pure malice; rather, he achieves a measure of justice by driving the men who slew his brother to self-destruction. Gloom's misconception, however, is that he is an arbiter of destiny himself and may destroy others simply for interfering with his desires.

Similarly, Neil Ross in "The Sin-Eater" discovers that one man may not arbitrarily decide what law of folk metaphysics is absolute, when multiple tales and beliefs present a universe that is ultimately too dynamic for one man to totally control his destiny and indulge his vengeance. Sharp's presentation of the unorthodoxy of folk beliefs epitomize the chaos of human experience. Macleod's world of Scottish legend and folk belief fantastically reverses the complacency of the monomaniac--whether the lover or avenger. One is not permitted to fulfill an ideal obsession in a universe where a myriad of forces push and pull an individual's fate beyond the space intended by one's own will. There is no orthodoxy in Macleod's presentation of folk metaphysics. It is this very refusal of Macleod's metaphysics to offer up an authoritative dogma that produces infinite hesitation in these fantastic tales. A story like "The Sin-Eater" demonstrates that folklore is not merely one alternative explanation to rationalism, but offers a whole network of different perspectives.

The traditions of the sin-eating are as puzzling to folkloric research as they are disorienting to Neil Ross. In one of the few specific studies on sin-eating Karin Kvideland asserts that "tradition testifies to the existence of sin-eaters, without explaining their origin."[16] However, it is most likely that Sharp was working closely with actual folk beliefs. For, Kvideland shows from a seventeenth century source--John Aubrey in his book "Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme" (1686-1687)--that it "was an old Custome at funeralls [sic] to take upon them all the sinnes of the party

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[16] Karin Kvideland, "Sin-Eating." International Society for Folk Narrative Research June 12th-17th (1984): 35.

deceased. [. . .] [which] freed him (or her) from walking after they were dead."[17]

Kvideland also offers testimony from 1852 England:

> the food, bread, salt, cheese and drink, beer, milk, sometimes wine are either placed on the chest of the corpse or offered the sin-eater across the corpse. He eats and drinks the gift, chants, declares deceased to be without sin, gets paid and leaves--for the sin eater it is dangerous to remain where he is, because the other mourners are scared of him and might attack him. All the dead person's sins are supposed to be upon the sin-eater, which makes him a person to be feared.[18]

Neil Ross partakes of this tainted bread and becomes a scapegoat, just as tradition dictates.

In other words, Neil Ross's attempt to wreak otherworldly vengeance upon the man, Adam Blair, who brought dishonor to his family--"It was he who made Murtagh Ross break his troth to my mother, and marry that other woman"--results in him becoming a legend in his own time (20). However, he develops into a marginal figure--the Sineater--who is tightly locked into a typological pattern at least as restrictive as those roles which Gloom sought to imprison his victims in through relating traditional narratives that mirrored contemporary contexts. Neil's experience shows the tendency of Sharp's moral metaphysics--among competing folk beliefs an individual may not adopt a self-serving perspective without consequences from the underlying forces of such beliefs: fear, guilt, and cultural consensus.

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[17] Kvideland 27.

[18] Kvideland 28.

Neil Ross makes his decision to be a Sineater based on certain traditions he learns that entail the persecution of Adam Blair, but after the act he is tormented by the consciousness of other belief narratives that doom him, not the dead man. Thus, once again, Sharp shows us how supernatural agency is not actually needed to have material impact with folk beliefs: the potent nature of the suggestible psyche seems to suffice. Sharp's presentation of events chiefly supports the power of subjectivity rather than decisively delineating the outlines of a preternatural power at work.

The very progression of Neil's perspective represents a form of the literary fantastic, for the metaphysics of the world he lives in and believes to be using to punish his enemy ultimately are reversed, and it is he who becomes the victim. Thus, the reader's view is similarly rotated 180 degrees to reassess the narrative and its events. In fact, the tension between conventional rationalism and traditional superstition is an ongoing concern in the story where the very standards of ignorance and wisdom are reversed. The narration early in the story follows the movements of Sheen Macarthur. She recognizes and acquaints Neil with the tradition of sineating and appears to be authoritative as a metaphysical interpreter of folk beliefs:

> She stood still once, the fear upon her, for she saw three or four blurred yellow gleams moving beyond her eastward along the dyke. She knew what they were--the corpse-lights that on the night of death go between the bier and the place of burial. More than once she had seen them before the last hour, and by that token had known the end to be near. Good Catholic that she was, she crossed herself and took

> heart. [. . .] she came to the White House [. . .]. [. . .] [and observed] an ignorant lass called Jessie McFall, out of Oban. She was ignorant, indeed not to know that to wash clothes with a newly dead body near by was an ill thing to do. Was it not a matter for the knowing that the corpse could hear, and might rise up in the night and clothe itself in a clean white shroud?[19]

Sharp does not intrude upon Macarthur's perspective--unlike Carleton's manner--to assert his authorial authority (or Macleod's authority rather); instead, we are left with her thoughts and their connection to stated events. If seeing is believing, then these "corpse-lights" not only exist, but they are temporally contiguous with the death of Adam Blair. Unless the lights are a mundane natural phenomena such as marsh gas, that occurs frequently and randomly--and for which there is no evidence in the narrative--then one must at least consider the potential veracity of Macarthur's view of spiritual forces working before her eyes.

Where such folk beliefs correspond to outward reality with such exactitude, then what elite educators would consider superstitious ignorance is now wisdom; therefore, Jessie is "ignorant" not to follow the dictates of tradition regarding the recently deceased. Readers may persist in dogmatic skepticism and suspend judgment until other details emerge that might further establish the metaphysical laws of the narrative, but the gauntlet here has clearly been thrown down. At least, we have one assertive voice for supernatural folk beliefs in the character of Sheen

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[19] Fiona Macleod, The Sin-Eater and Other Legendary Moralities (London: William Heinemann, 1912) 25-26.

Macarthur. And it is she who first suggests Neil do the sineating for money, which he lacks.

Despite what appears to be Sheen's earnest acceptance and familiarity with superstition, the ambivalence towards the practice of sineating, shown by her friend Maisie Macdonald, complicates rather than simplifies the narrative dynamics of the story. As Sheen's self-avowed legendary expositor, "She will tell you what's for the telling. There is no harm in it, sure; sure, the dead are dead" (32), Maisie carries the stamp of Sheen's approval and is the next focus of metaphysical inquiry in the story. Maisies is the next link in the chain of supernatural belief and mechanics.

It is from Maisie that Neil hears that the tradition is only "an old ancient silly tale," but nevertheless she urges him to do the act thereby take "the sins of the corpse" which in no way could harm the sineater: "The-the---person--the person takes them away, and [. . .]. [. . .] and are you for thinking God would let the innocent suffer for the guilty? No--the person--the Sin-Eater, you know--takes them away [. . .] the air of heaven washes them away [. . .]" (33). Maisie's self-consciousness is clearly rendered in the pauses and hesitation of her speech. She protests too much that the tradition is "silly"--an epithet reminiscent of Robert Colwan's cowardly, and conventional, perspective in Hogg's Justified Sinner that his servant Samuel's exemplum is only an "idle tale."

Similar to Hogg's story, the man whose metaphysical perspective and tale serve to exemplify Neil's experience is another underclass representative of the traditional folk--a shepherd (rather than a manservant like Samuel). After he has already performed the act of sin-eating, Neil hears from him that "they say the Sin-

Eater should not be a man with a hidden lump in his pack" (48). The shepherd also is aware that Neil has been using an alias, that of Macallum, thereby breaking the taboo that a stranger is needed to be a Sineater, as Adam Blair's son, Andrew Blair stated:

> He must be a stranger, and should know nothing of the dead man, above all bear him no grudge. [. . .] I have heard this, and I have heard that. If the Sin-Eater was hating the dead man he could take the sins and fling them into the sea and they would be changed into demons of the air that would harry the flying soul till Judgment Day. (36)

Neil, under the disguise of being Macallum, enjoyed what he thought was a great vengeance upon Adam Blair and Andrew Blair as well--whom he cursed after the man had the insolence to refer to him as a "scapegoat" (42). It is not only the taboo breaking that the shepherd informs Neil of, but that the corpse of Adam Blair supposedly laughed at the sight of Neil Ross walking in the distance (48-49).

Like Gloom, although with hardly any such motivation, the shepherd uses folklore as a weapon against Neil. In fact, Sharp's very terminology makes this explicit. Seemingly angry at Neil for ignoring his words to him on the road, the shepherd "with a resentful air turned to his victim. 'You are a silent man for sure, you are. I'm hoping it is not the curse upon you already" (48). The shepherd's tale of the fantastic laugh of Adam Blair gives his testimony of the danger of the "hidden lump" greater authority than the other folk beliefs Neil has heretofore heard, for the preternatural event acts as a metaphysical signifier for essential meaning. The shepherd is a prophet for powers allegedly already at work.

Ambiguous glimpses are evident in "The Sin-eater" of supernatural forces behind such beliefs, although primarily the rest of the story involves Neil's mental breakdown in a fashion similar to that of Mànus--both men are driven mad by the cultural consensus of their respective public identities: selky crossbreed and scapegoat. Like Mànus, Neil is drawn to the sea, and similarly crosses the border of the shore--entering the sphere of wildness just as he has become estranged mentally and socially from civilization. Aulay Macneil witnesses Neil Ross enter the "Spouting Cave" where, as in Carleton's "The Donagh" death and madness await the transgressors of a metaphysical taboo; in this case it is not lying but merely physical presence that incurs such penalties:

> In the memory of man, no one had done this [entered the cave] and escaped one of three things: a snatching away into oblivion, a strangled death, or madness. The islanders know that there swims into the cave at full tide a Mar-Tarbh, a dreadful creature of the sea that some call a kelpie; only it is not a kelpie, which is like a woman, but rather is a sea-bull, offspring of the cattle that are never seen. (56)

Neil emerges from this cave and Aulay rescues the drowning man who "as ever after" would only utter "a single saying: '*Tha e lamhar fuar! Tha e lamhan fuar*!' 'It has a cold, cold hand!' The telling of this and other tales left none free upon the island to look upon the "scapegoat" save as one accursed" (57).

This incident is truly fantastic, for Neil's experience here contributes to the legend of the cave; he is quite insane--and perhaps more insane after his encounter. And why he should make such an utterance is peculiar, unless--if the monster does

not exist--he participates in the belief to a hallucinatory degree. Furthermore, despite having escaped being devoured by the Mar-Tarbh, if it existed outside of the islanders' imagination, Neil cannot escape the deeply ingrained beliefs concerning being a sin-eater, due to the circulation of "this and other tales." Ultimately imagining himself a kind of Judas, "because I sold the Son of God for five pieces of silver" (by analogy his payment for sin-eating), he drowns after he ties himself to a cross on the sea, believing he will expiate for the sins he has collected. Guilt proves to be the supreme force in Sharp's metaphysics in this tale.

A Final Word: Language and Folklore in the Celtic Renaissance

Throughout Sharp's stories, as well as Carleton's, the speech of the characters carries with it a sense of metaphysical printing, as it were, upon the tablets of the otherworld; curses and prayers echo throughout the collective cultural consciousness of these traditions. Just as Sharp's Neil takes upon himself the sins of Adam Blair through speech, so does Carleton's midwife Rose Moan reproach Phil Hannigan for using the term "fairy women" which might anger those beings who should only be addressed as the "good people." Words literally are actions in folk metaphysics and in the works of the Celtic Renaissance it is Gaelic, whether of the Irish or Scots variety, that represents the linguistic essence of magical speech utterances as well as defining cultural identity. Finally, remember that the dark seal speaks "good Gaelic" in "The Dark Nameless One" as though that is presumably the speech of the otherworld. Certainly it is not English.

Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), the German romantic philosopher, insisted that a common native language characterized the folk as a group, and this idea is evident not only in these Celtic works, but throughout the texts we've examined where dialect figures as the language of rural people.[20] Besides examples already examined such as Hogg's association of moral worth with speakers of dialect in his Confessions and the need for translation of Scots to the English in Stevenson's Master of Ballantrae there are other nineteenth century literary examples emphasizing dialect speech with a primal earnestness, such as in Hardy's Tess: "Mrs. Durbey field still habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter [Tess] [. . .] used it only when excited by joy, surprise, or grief."[21]

Similarly, Háinle emphasizes critics have noticed how Irish remains the language of the heart in Carleton's stories: "Maurice Harmon has pointed out that Carleton's characters break into Irish at moments of particular emotional intensity."[22] While many speak of French as the language of love and diplomacy, Ibarra observes in Carleton's "The Three Tasks" that Jack courts his fairy-tale beloved by charming

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[20] Richard Bauman summarizes Herder's views in the following words:

> the possession of a common language was the touchstone of a people's distinctiveness, the source that gave rise to and sustained their sense of themselves as a separate, unique, social entity; language embodied the character, the inner being, of a *Volk*. Moreover, language represented the means of transmitting the distinctive traditions of a *Volk* across the generations, thus representing the instrument for that progressive cultivation of faculties that Herder identified as culture. In Herder's conception, culture and tradition found their highest and truest expression in the poetry of the folk, its folk song and folklore.

Richard Bauman, "Folklore," Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking, Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer, eds. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974) 29.

[21] Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (New York: Penguin Books, 1998) 21.

[22] Ó Háinle 7.

"the lovely lady by his Irish -English speech."[23] Ó Háinle, however, notes that Carleton's presentation of Irish is not wholly adulatory: "while admiring the Irish language and what it had contributed to the English language through its influence in molding the Hiberno-English dialect, Carleton could at the same time in his stories present this same dialect to his readers as at best quaint, at worst barbarous."[24]

Carleton's presentation of the Irish language modulates during his writing, as is the case with his overall characterization of the Irish people. Margaret Chestnutt claims that in Carleton's works prior to Traits and Stories the "more a character is disapproved of by the narrator, the more he conforms to the Irish stereotype; the more he is approved of, the more he conforms to the civilized Anglo-Saxon ideal."[25] Hayley observes that such partiality to the Anglo-Saxon is integral to the narrative voice in Traits and Stories as well: "There are two kinds of language in Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry: the author's English, which Carleton tries to establish as authoritative, educated and gentlemanly, and the peasant speech."[26] Hayley also identifies the critical linguistic issue Carleton confronted as a writer--and similarly explored by Scott and Eliot--was "the difficulty of ascribing dignity to characters

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[23] Ibarra 68.

[24] Ó Háinle 11.

[25] Chestnutt 69.

[26] Hayley 26.

whose speech was not recorded as standard English" not rendering the narrative itself in nonstandard English.[27]

It should come as no surprise that Carleton's self-consciousness --and sometime clear embarrassment--with Irish culture extends to his ambiguous representation of the Irish language. Connected to both the Irish peasantry and British elite literary culture it is no wonder that Carleton is sensitive about the perception of his chosen subjects, as Chestnutt observes, "he evidently felt it incumbent upon him to act as a apologist for his countrymen [. . .] something which reflects the feeling of racial and cultural inferiority typical of colonial writers."[28] Yet, despite such insecurities the language of Irish resists English dominance throughout his short stories.

It is interesting that English has little--if any--emotional or metaphysical power in these stories which present native Scots and Irish: the language of the English conquerors is something mechanically adopted but largely impotent. In fact, preternatural power in these stories of the Celtic Renaissance never comes from outside Ireland or Scotland--imperial Gothic has no role here. Imperialist England may fear the vampires and werewolves of Eastern Europe and India, but the Gaels ascribe no such metaphysical power to outside nationalities. Language it seems is a potent border for metaphysical thought in these tales. Gaelic in fact represents,

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[27] Hayley 363.

[28] Chestnutt 193.

according to Sharp, a conflicting worldview to English rationality: "common sense (there is no Celtic word for it)" [29]

Sharp, moreover, argues for the necessity of writing in English in order to reach a larger audience, but without losing what he considers the Celtic soul of course. However, the Celtic soul, if it were an innate part of language, was continuing to diminish. In "The Gael and His Heritage" Sharp expresses the shared feeling among writers of the Celtic Renaissance that Gaelic was evanescent, and for that reason needed preservation. It seemed to Sharp that Scots Gaelic was passing from the lips of peasants to pedants: "Soon there will be only a few old peasants and a few learned men (mostly Germans) who will be able to speak in the old language."[30] While Sharp inveighs against divisive partisanship, whether cultural or especially political, his clear attachment to the romance of Gaelic culture represents a calculated defense against assimilation.

Attempts by writers to preserve Gaelic were not always treated with reverence. This is one of the reasons why, before concluding this study, turning to the comic end of the Celtic Renaissance--Flann O' Brien's The Poor Mouth in particular--helps clarify not only issues of language and the folkloric fantastic, but also gives representation to the significant second part of the Celtic movement. Writers such as James Stephens and Flann O'Brien turned away from the seriousness of Lady Gregory and Yeats--as well as the fiercer political associations identified

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[29] From "The Beauty of An Idea." Fiona Macleod, The Winged Destiny--Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael (London: William Heinemann, 1913) 170.

[30] Macleod 227.

with a Celtic identity--choosing to emphasize parody and satire in their adoption of Celtic folklore.[31] There was much to object to in the latter days of the Celtic Renaissance; for instance, in 1926--15 years before The Poor Mouth--the rigid idealization of Irish culture had resulted in such movements as the "Evil Literature Committee":

> to examine the threat to Irish public virtue from the British newspapers that specialized in sex scandals, and this led, three years later, to the Censorship of Publications Act which provided for censorship of books, magazines, and newspapers which might be conducive to sexual immorality." It is the very year in which "the provisions of the censorship law were slightly modified" that *The Poor Mouth* (1946) appeared.[32]

In this novel, O'Brien (the most famous of the pseudonyms of Brian O'Nolan) performs a thorough satire of certain tendencies of the Irish Renaissance: the idealization of Gaelic, the heroism of the working class, and a host of clichés promoted by Irish writers. O'Brien, described by Fallis as a "constant critic of the narrowmindedness [sic] of the Gaelic movement but a fluent writer of the language" wrote the book entirely in Gaelic--not until 1973 was it translated into English (219).

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[31] "The serious treatment accorded to heroic figures of Irish folklore in the works of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Irish Renaissance writers [. . .]. [. . .] the chauvinism exhibited by chroniclers of national mythology [. . .] [was] replaced by a purpose that more likely resembled that which inspired the tongue-in-cheek recorders of many medieval Irish tales--to amuse and entertain." Marguerite Quintelli-Neary, Folklore and the Fantastic in Twelve Modern Irish Novels (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997) 1.

[32] Fallis 172.

Through both his satire of the pretentious Gaelic rhetoric created by other Irish writers and his presentation of supernatural folklore, O'Brien produces a work of the literary fantastic that is a thorough parody. For example, the metaphysics in the narrative at times depend on literary allusions to the falsity of portraits of the Irish in ideologically nationalistic and romantic texts. Thus the "Old -Grey-Fellow" (a figure of supposed wisdom) refers to how each evening the villagers will be on the shore of the beach "according to literary fate" because that is how "the good books" (the Irish books presented as authorities on peasant life) represent "the coming of night" (67). And, "sure enough" the Old-Grey-Fellow is correct.

In common with Sharp's presentation of the psychological degeneration of his Scottish characters resulting from absolute acceptance of folk beliefs, O'Brien suggests that the Irish are declining, not evolving, due to their promotion of political mythology and neglect of economy. O'Brien emphasizes this dynamic by openly connecting Irish political identity with supernatural traditions. The fabled "Sea-cat," O'Brien points out in a footnote has "the same shape and [. . .] bad destiny" as "Ireland"--making overt the correlation between a dubious tradition and a dubious national ideal (77). Similarly, O'Brien ridicules the romanticizing of poverty within Gaelic culture, implying for all the patronization of the "gentlemen from Dublin who came in motors to inspect the paupers" that such attention is degrading (88).

The man these "gentlemen" praise in the story as being "truly Gaelic" is of course the poorest of the lot, Sitric O'Sanassa, whose fate recalls the selky legends once again. Unlike the patterns we have discussed of selky ancestry, Sitric appears to become a seal himself without precedent in his lineage, as though there is no

alternative to such poverty except becoming literally the beast that one is treated as socially. Sitric goes to a literal otherworld under the sea where "he had freedom from the inclement weather, the famine and the abuse of the world. [. . .] At times since then he has been seen at high tide, wild and hirsute as a seal" (98). What we may call the legend of Sitric is clearly an unlikely story, which is exactly the point. O'Brien underscores the vanity of romanticizing the Gaelic culture of the peasantry whose lives are mean and miserable. Yeats may urge that a nation's leaders should look for the submerged aristocratic model of a new Ireland in the hallowed but humble hovels of the peasantry's culture, but O'Brien does not.

Conclusion

O'Brien achieves through satire, what Carleton and Sharp produce by means of the rhetoric of skepticism and elementalism respectively--each writer approaches the folkloric fantastic as a narrative strategy that poses questions of culture, psychology, and nature through offering startling events and perceptions. What is most important for all these writers is not the ontological status of a folk belief or legend, but the manner in which individuals and communities respond to these traditions. Carleton and Sharp are earnestly concerned with the revelations of national and natural character. They are intent on portraying the Scottish and Irish superstitious mind at work, detailing how a world of fairies, ghosts, kelpies, and selkies provides a complex network of associations for a range of human thoughts and feelings, philosophies and ideologies.

Sharp and Carleton are well aware that emphasizing supernatural folklore as a fundamental framework of human experience runs counter to Victorian notions of progress and enlightenment, particularly within an age of literary realism. The self-consciousness of these writers--uneasy with the condescending and assimilating gaze of mainstream British culture upon them--contributes to the very ambiguity of their visions of native distinctions. The Irish and Scottish characters in their narratives think and breathe, but not within the sublime air of romantic notions of folk culture, but a mist blown by metamorphosing cultures. Clouds form in these minds, offering not only visionary gleams, but dark shadows of madness; Sharp and Carleton see into folk beliefs with the eyes of psychologists peering at layers of guilt and wishful thinking. It is a testament to the depth of their work that these writers offer multiple perspectives on folk beliefs--showing both the poetry of superstition and the self-destructiveness of fateful typologies.

Their stories are naturalistic not because they avoid stereotypes and fantasy--they don't--but because they convincingly and deterministically represent minds laboring under, and liberated by, tradition: folk beliefs in Carleton's and Sharp's prose figure as the sometimes flexible fabric, sometimes adamantine bonds, of social identities and communal visions. Rose Moan, Carleton's midwife, achieves significant autonomy as she cleverly manipulates her customers by appealing to the traditional consensus of her role. Frank Martin, Carleton's weaver, develops through threads of tradition and the loom of his mind a fairy following. This alleged retinue imbues him with celebrity status and frees him from tedium and isolation. Mànus MacCodrum and Neil Ross, Sharp's monomaniacs, obsessively and perversely encase

themselves in the iron maiden's embrace of scapegoat roles imposed upon them by their enemies. Sharp's Alasdair M'Ian is likewise sacrificed to traditional typology--driven mad by Gloom's narrative of legendary adultery--partly due to his association with English culture. If perceived as the avenging shadow of tradition, Gloom manifests the resentful spirit of anti-imperialism in both writers.

It is ironic, that Sharp who continues to be charged with the libel of pseudo-Celtic "mistiness," should write stories that align folk beliefs with self-destructive tendencies. His narratives of the literary fantastic discussed here illustrate that a mask of mysticism is a dangerous psychological aberration. Critics have ignored this other mode of Sharp, preferring to concentrate on the implications of his female persona and his florid introductions. Sharp's voice does not sing only in idealistic tones, eulogizing the beauty of Highland lore. His tales of monomaniacs exemplify how excessive identification with native traditions comprises mental devolution and cultural stagnation not spiritual transcendence. Thus, so to speak, Fiona Macleod's "sharpest" criticism is to be found in the stories themselves.

Folk legends and beliefs primarily function in Carleton and Sharp's stories as a framework of available narratives wielded as weapons in a cultural battleground. The war is waged between the tensions of the individual and the community, the Irish and Scottish nations and the British empire, folk religion and official religion, and the self and the forces beyond--whether the subconscious or the otherworld. Each folk belief and fantastic tale in these works of the Celtic Renaissance offers a new view into the dynamics of psycho-cultural identity; for, we now see that Scotland's and

Ireland's yearning for independence from England is not merely a matter of politics, but metaphysics as well.

Conclusion: Second Sight

Flann O'Brien's The Poor Mouth emphasizes a second vision possible--besides primary rational representation--through the use of supernatural folklore: satire. The idea of preternatural folklore enabling an additional perspective on events, issues, and psychology through constructing an emotionally resonant and intellectually provocative narrative using the literary fantastic is a constant throughout the works presented in this dissertation. Second sight metaphorically represents the primary use of folklore here--authors convey two ways of interpreting reality: the discourse of skepticism and folk metaphysics.

It is both rhetorically convenient and substantively effective to examine how Neil Gunn's Second Sight presents some of the major cultural conflicts and narrative strategies of the folkloric fantastic. Published in 1940, Gunn's novel stands as a timely bookend for the Victorian and early-twentieth century developments in the Celtic Renaissance, as well as a retrospective gaze back at the other works of fantasy and the fantastic in which folklore has been integral to form and function. Neil Gunn is the primary novelist of the Twentieth-Century Scottish Literary Renaissance, and the writer who coined the term, Hugh MacDiarmid, singled out Gunn for both praise "the only Scottish prose writer of promise" and criticism: "he perpetuates the myth of Highland and island spiritual superiority [. . .]."[1] MacDiarmid faults Gunn for continuing a vision of Scotland that MacDiarmid and others writers of the Twentieth-

Century Scottish Literary Renaissance considered historically erroneous. In this respect, and in many more, Gunn joins other writers of the folkloric fantastic who subordinate facts to the fancies of folklore--arguing by example for the primacy of cultural beliefs that create an art that defies expectations for normalcy.

Neil Gunn's importance for this study is not that he represents a kind of aesthetic culmination of the use of folklore, nor is his body of work solely concentrated on folk traditions. But, his use of highland folklore in Second Sight epitomizes the cultural negotiations that produce the folkloric fantastic and shows these narrative dynamics are an enduring--and evolving--feature of modern literature. Second Sight highlights the warring tensions that characterize the folkloric and fantastic texts we've analyzed: clashes in metaphysical perspective resulting from divisions between class, nationality, race, traditional culture, and official culture.

The plot of Second Sight follows the vacationing experience of wealthy English aristocrats at play in the country. They are entertained by hunting deer, diverted with their romances, and intrigued by the alleged second sight of one of the Scottish underlings, Alec. This seer, a tracker, has a vision of the highly analytic--though materialistically prejudiced--Geoffrey being carried by four of the other guests as though he had just died. Alec conceals this vision as long as he can until Harry, the intelligent, yet open-minded man discovers Alec's secret after becoming friends with him. In the end, Geoffrey dies indeed--not shot in a hunting accident as Harry

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[1] Hugh MacDiarmid, "Neil Gunn and the Scottish Renaissance," Neil M. Gunn: The Man and the Writer, ed. Alexander Scott and Douglas Gifford (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1973) 360-367.

supposed Alec had foreseen, but shot by another scared Englishman, when Geoffrey impersonates a ghost in order to ridicule superstitions in general.

In Gunn's story, English upper class rationalism competes with Scottish working class superstition, demonstrating the continuation of English and Scottish cultural tensions in folkloric literature. Consider Stevenson's The Master of Ballantrae, where the Scottish lord Henry raves about his "uncanny" brother, James, to the English commander, Sir William. Henry, in turn, echoes the folk mentality of Scott's rural storyteller, Hobbie, in The Black Dwarf, whose final pronouncement that the dwarf Elshie is "canny" repudiates the false gloom of superstition, showing the potential of the Scots folk to share the English enlightened perspective.

Rather than leaving these binary oppositions, between Scottish folk and English elite perceptions, mutually incompatible, Gunn presents characters who embody a synthesis of traditions--both official and unofficial. The primary reconciler is the Dean who places second sight "in proper perspective" as the sign of the Scottish cultural spirit which is an "inward" focus on the passions rather than "outward" materialism: "it had its day in an environment which forced the eyes at times to stare in contemplation. You have only to listen to their music, to [. . .] see that what I say is true" (236). Second sight according to the Dean represents the "mental manifestation or marvels" that result from this contemplative consciousness--developed over generations in a culture whose traditions have supported this spiritual growth. Yet the Dean considers "marvels" such as second sight to present a "spirit in decline" rather than "movement [. . .] to [. . .] higher consciousness" which he implies a more refined spirituality entails (237). Besides the rather Unitarian philosophical

discourse of the Dean, Gunn shows rational scrutiny is a part of the Scottish laboring mind, as well as demonstrating imagination and spirituality may be present in the English; Harry and Helen are the amalgams of these principles and naturally are attracted to each other.

Gunn focuses on the theme of second sight as a challenge to mundane perception, which is essentially the guiding principle for writers who used supernatural folklore before him as well. The metamorphic glamour of folk narratives served to justify Victorian literary fairy tales to begin with against the tedium of utilitarianism, and fueled the visionary fires of the Celtic Renaissance. Writers found in Irish and Scottish mythological and folkloric traditions implicit aesthetics fit to challenge English standards for art.

Viewed as an alternative to mere materialism, the folk belief of second sight figures as a near equivalent of the Romantic imagination's interaction with natural objects. Indeed, in Second Sight, the Dean's disquisition on second sight and spirituality sounds in part like a reconstituted sermon of Coleridge's definition of the imagination, as well as both Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "Immortality Ode":

> If you could think of the "I" being extended, transformed, into a universal "I", into a cosmic consciousness, and if you could think of yourself as coming in contact with, of being permeated by, that consciousness--the spirit within and behind all matter [. . .]. [. . .] all this has some bearing on second sight in the Highlands. [. . .] there comes to most lives a period [. . .] the very essence of life seems to change in meaning [. . .]. [. . .] Flowers, trees, the surface of our earth,

> are seen with what is called new eyes. Over all is a lovely light. The mind is transported. Beauty becomes so heightened that the frail, newly awakened spirit [. . .] breaks down in tears [. . .]. The person undergoing this experience acquires a new consideration for humanity, wants to do little acts of kindness [. . .]. (232-233)

Mixing Coleridge's "universal I AM" of imaginative consciousness with the humanitarian benefits of communion between the imagination and nature, as well as the "visionary gleam," Gunn's Dean presents a rather familiar Romantic visionary metaphysics. What's new here is that the Dean connects imaginative vision directly to second sight--it is a temporary glimpse of the larger "cosmic consciousness" that interrupts the normal flow of time. The more scientific, and less philosophical Colonel, speculates, using the basics of theoretical physics that "what appears to happen in second sight is that you enter the world of four dimensions and so quite naturally see the future" (227). This application of scientific or pseudoscientific theories to explain folk beliefs shows that the attitudes of spiritualists and psychic investigators of the nineteenth century persisted into the early twentieth century (and for that matter to our current time).

Therefore, the inquiry into the psychological, rational, and spiritual aspects of folklore in Second Sight continues cultural dialogues in science as well as within literature, particularly in works of the folkloric fantastic such as the pseudoscience of Le Fanu's Dr. Hesselius or Carleton's attempts to reconcile certain superstitions with scholastics. Geoffrey Smith's response to such discussion represents in Gunn's war of

perspectives the reductive and derisively analytic school of thought, as his response to Colonel Brown's claim about the difficulty in analyzing second sight shows:

> "But surely," said Colonel Brown, "it is clear that you cannot produce a psychical state and lay it on a bench as you would a lump of matter?"
>
> "Manifestly," said Geoffrey. "You usually put it on a couch and psycho-analyse it."
>
> "Is it not possible that we are confusing two quite different things," said the Dean, "as different as physics and psychology?" (228)

The Dean's interjection underscores Geoffrey's implicit reduction of a claim of second sight to psychological delusion. When the subject of the supernatural is broached earlier in the novel Geoffrey performs a similar anatomizing of Helen and Marjory's fearful reaction to the sudden stirring of wind through the window, wrapping the curtain around Helen:

> "It really was nasty for a moment," said Marjory, a sensible girl. "I was at the fire. Felt the chill in the room. Then Helen screamed and there was the curtain feeling around her. It should have been obvious to any sane person that it was nothing, but--"
>
> "But for that one moment," said Geoffrey, "you are not sane. There's the rub. And she only *felt* the thing. If for that moment she had imagined she *saw* the hidden thing as well, she might easily have been really sick." He glanced slyly at Harry, to whom he offered a cup. (34-35)

Labeling a "psychical state" of supernatural conviction as a mark of inferior or deluded thinking is a common judgment about folk beliefs as we have seen from Carleton's expansive presentation concerning the relation between mental aberrations and apparitions. Carleton combines his rational discourse, which criticizes the wholesale acceptance of apparitions in general, with his own experiences with supernatural folk beliefs to provide a subtler and more inclusive metaphysical view. Similarly, Gunn presents an argument using both rational and folk discourses--conjoining the dynamics of prophecy typical of second sight with the philosophical arguments of the Dean--to counter the skepticism of Geoffrey.

The outcome of Second Sight maintains the suspension of the literary fantastic by irony. In his desire to set about "exploding superstition" Geoffrey unwittingly contributes to his own death that fulfills the vision Alec had of the phantom funeral (287). The reader cannot be wholly certain whether Alec's vision of Geoffrey's death was a supernatural precursor of the future or whether the oral revelation of this vision set into motion a sequence of natural consequences constituting a self-fulfilling prophecy. Since Alec does not reveal right away who was the dead man in his vision it is conceivable that Alec eventually chose the victim to be the man he disliked the most among the condescending English vacationers. Gunn's narrative does not of course wholly support this interpretation. Considering the many arguments he presents for accepting the possibility of second sight, the ambiguity does not so much lie with whether Alec has second sight as to whether the vision was a glimpse of an inevitable fate.

Just as Sharp constructed narratives that ambiguously presented the border between folk metaphysics and psychological delusions--inspired by obsessive faith in, or fear of, communal beliefs--similarly, Alec arguably has merely had a vision that depends more on his cultural heritage than the supernatural. As Sir John, the Englishman who is heading the hunting vacation in Scotland, observes:

> "The phantom funeral [. . .]. [. . .] was not an uncommon experience in the old days in the Highlands, if we believe the old tales. But with the advance of science it is getting rare."
>
> "Naturally," agreed Geoffrey. "But it's an interesting form of delusion or hallucination. And Harry was obviously impressed!" (18)

The metaphysical credibility of the "old tales" becomes ultimately the substantive focus of the novel. The narrative dynamics here are similar to the emblematic discourse of the "idle tale" in Hogg's Justified Sinner, where Samuel's folktale exemplifies the overall moral and narrative dynamics of Robert's narrated experiences, despite the reservations of the editorial persona who seeks to dismiss legendary distortions.

The polemics of skepticism are manifest in nineteenth-century folkloric fiction, usually though in the narrator's ironic or vehement containment of peasant folklore; however, Gunn's primary skeptical voice is one single character: Geoffrey. This shift in the locus of skepticism undermines its narrative authority. By making the skeptic just another character, who is subject to both the reader and narrator's scrutiny, rationalism becomes one of multiple human viewpoints, all of which are influenced by subjective elements--the illusion of objective judgment quickly

vanishes in this presentation. Geoffrey's antagonism to folk traditions, while motivated partly by impatience for what he considers undisciplined thinking, is also driven by personal animosity towards Harry and Alec:

> He felt angry; he felt vindictive. To score over Harry, to expose this appalling incredible nonsense--at this time of day, not merely amongst superstitious natives, whom one might excuse, but amongst people like Harry and Helen, the so-called educated!--to expose it became imperative, an absolute duty. He spoke to Marjory with considerable heat. (291)

His prank that follows--where he pretends to die and rise from the dead--is his response to Harry's plea for him to leave because of Alec's prophecy, in fact ironically fulfills the vision Alec had of his dead body being carried by four men of the party. George is scared by what seems to be Geoffrey's revenant and shoots the skeptic. Such is the fate of Geoffrey, assisted by Marjory --note that she is referred to in the scene further above as "a sensible girl"--in his plan to explode superstitions. Marjory, the "sensible girl" and Geoffrey, the skeptic, achieve no lasting union; while Helen and Harry, both dynamic and sensitive to the traditions and perspectives of their Scots servants, become lovers.

Such is the barren outcome, Gunn's narrative suggests, of a mind too inflexible or insensitive to integrate features that appear alien to one's own culturally ingrained sensibilities and ideologies. Gunn's judgment of Geoffrey is clear from Harry's and the Dean's commentaries. Discussing Geoffrey versus Alec, Harry observes that Geoffrey "disintegrates--without integrating" (171). Geoffrey also

lives up to the Dean's analysis of the materialistic man whose narrow rationalism is self-destructive: "Now the spirit will never be defeated. [. . .] because it does not want to be cheated out of its own fulfillment [. . .]. The materialist, the scoffer, the sceptic, may try to destroy that spirit. He can never succeed. In the struggle it is not the spirit he will destroy, *it will be himself*" (235). Heavy-handed--and perhaps what may be called Romantically sentimental--this spiritual discourse may be, but the narrative dynamics of the story validate the Dean's rhetoric.

In addition to the fulfillment of Alec's vision, Geoffrey's prank and punishment, so to speak, is connected to the mechanics of consequence in folk metaphysics. By pretending to be a revenant, Geoffrey provokes and invokes the supernatural force associated with death--or at least such would be the case were he in the context of a folk legend. For example in "Black Devil and White Devil" (gathered from Lancashire) a "lout dressed himself in a white sheet" in order to terrorize "a poor idiot, named Gregory"--the result is that Gregory merely "laughed aloud at the white shape, then suddenly his face changed, and he cried "oh, oh! A black one! A black one!" (23-24).[2] This "black spectre" pursues the "mock ghost, who lay ill for weeks as a result of his jest" (24). Even more pertinent, in a tale told in Scotland collected in 1960, "The Two Ghosts," we find that death is the consequence of such impersonations of spiritual beings. To "cure" his brother who "was very addicted to drink" the "brither" "gets his-sel dressed wi'the white sheet" (594). The drunken brother is not alarmed, but merely remarks to himself that there

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[2] Katharine Briggs, A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language--Part B: Folk Legends Vol.1 (London: Routledge, 1991).

are now "twa" ghosts in the "church-yard" and "the brither he lookit roon and see'd the real ghost, and he took fright and he faintit. He fell across the bank and broke his neck. Died" (594-595).[3]

Besides his hubris of mocking the unseen world, Geoffrey incurs the folkloric penalty for breaking the taboo of killing the sacred animal. He even exults to himself when he destroys King Brude--the beautiful stag admired particularly by the local Scots--that he is a potent conqueror of superstitions and his egoistic mind is ascendant over everything: "There was nothing a man could not do, once he gave his mind to it. A certain type of man, with a trained mind. A superstition had been growing that no one would ever shoot King Brude. He had exploded that superstition--as he would explode others!" (282). And so it happens that Geoffrey is shot himself--another example of folk justice, the old adage of an "eye for an eye" that is well known to all.

Biblical moral resonance is present not only in the punishment of Geoffrey, but also in the sense of Alec becoming an exile as a prophet not appreciated in his country, or at least in the company of the English: "they'll never be able to look at me without remembering. I know about that. [. . .] Pity, for I like this country well enough" (326-327). He is joined in his exile by Mairi, the servant woman who loves him, and the novel ends with the couple--a veritable case of Adam and Eve--seeking a new world together, despite the bitter knowledge that may invade Alec's mind at any moment. Knowledge of life and death brings bondage rather than freedom, as is the case in Genesis.

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[3] These are international motifs found in Thompson's index of motifs: K. 1833 *Disguise as Ghost* and E. 235.1 *Ghost Punishes Person Who Mocks Him.* Briggs. 594-595.

Gunn's Second Sight shows the dangers of failing to bridge cultural gaps between official and unofficial culture as well as within the individual mind itself. As Harry's final argument with Geoffrey presents, every culture has its preconceptions and its superstitions--unquestioned belief in phenomena whose workings are never fully proved to the average person. Despite Geoffrey's condescension towards the "superstitious natives" (291) of Scotland, England too has its seers and witchdoctors--"specialists" of esoteric knowledge, whether medical or magical, upon whom the majority depend: "The folk here accepted the man with second sight as you accept the anatomist and I the astronomer--without investigation" (310).

Gunn's narrative helps to erode the rationalist condescension towards folk beliefs of the country people as childish modes of thought inferior to the more refined educated disciplined thinking of the urban crowd. Alec, the visionary, is no bumpkin, but bitterly and ironically aware of the condescension of his English employers (he is a stalker hired for the hunting of Scottish game). Alec realizes the patronizing and flippant attitudes of the English vacationers towards the Romantic and picturesque Highlands-- denigrating the essential value of what they perceive as aesthetic or entertaining. They see such matters as second sight as the diverting topic of a night's conversation, not a deeply felt cultural or experiential reality. Alec's words to Mairi, who loves him, expresses the sojourners' attitudes: "You know they come to the Highlands to be entertained. You know that. Well--we must do what we can. They expect to see ghosts and queer things. All part of the environment. Someone must play up." (28). This attitude of local "natives" consciously providing entertainment

to English overlords was a feature in both Yeats's interactions with informants and Sharp's stories as well.

Alec's flippant comments to Mairi further evoke the literary fantastic of the narrative. For, in fact, he does engineer uncanny situations to intimidate Geoffrey, whose condescension irritates him. But in this particular dialogue he is attempting to make light of the discovery of his vision, which was no mere act. Alec's visceral response of vomiting before Harry, who was with him at the time, underscores the intensity of Alec's second sight experience. Nevertheless, Alec's awareness of the dynamic between the English vacationers, who wish to be entertained, and Scottish servants like him, who may manipulate their so-called masters, introduces some hesitancy as to making an absolute pronouncement that second sight is unquestionably real in the narrative.

Gunn's use of second sight to present cultural tensions between the English vacationers and Scottish highlanders is tied to Scottish literary tradition as well as Highland folk culture. Second Sight is particularly reminiscent of Sir Walter Scott's treatment of friction between Highland and English perspectives in "The Two Droves" (1827) where Robin the Highlander's and Harry the Englishman's quarrel over their herding rights results in both their deaths because Harry fails to recognize Robin's traditional pride.[4] After being beaten by Harry, Robin avenges himself by plunging a dagger into Harry's chest: " You, Harry Wakefield, showed me to-day how

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[4]Sir Walter Scott, "The Two Drovers," The Norton Anthology of English Literature ed. M.H. Abrams 6th ed. vol.2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993) 299-320.

the Saxon churls fight--I show you now how the Highland dunniewassel fights."[5] Robin lays claim to the Highland rank--"dunniewassel"--right below the chief. Second sight in this story operates not only through magically foreshadowing Harry's death at Robin's hands--Robin's aunt "sees" English blood on his hand long before the skirmish--but also metaphorically articulates the conflict of vision between the cultures of the two men. Harry does not perceive--until it's too late--Robin's passionate hidden identity, a Highland noble, that belies his exterior as a mere Scottish herder: "The treasured ideas of self-importance and self-opinion, of ideal birth and quality, had become more precious to him [. . .] because he could only enjoy them in secret."[6] The judge who sentences Robin to death speculates on the cultural dynamics of the Highlanders' prideful self-conceptions:

> "These men [highlanders], from the ideas which they entertained of their own descent and of their own consequence, regarded themselves as so many cavaliers, or men-at-arms, rather than as the peasantry of a peaceful country. [. . .] Revenge [. . .] must have been as familiar to their habits of society as to those of the Cherokees or Mohawks."[7]

This speech is an example of the reflections on comparative traditions within different nations that preoccupied many cultural anthropologists in the nineteenth century; significantly, however, this judge underscores the Old World savagery of the Scottish peasant-nobles by linking them to the barbarians of the New World. Here is a peasant

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[5] Abrams 315.

[6] Abrams 313.

[7] Abrams 319.

aristocracy that is characterized by its belligerence--rather than aesthetics, as is the case with Yeats's representation of the Irish folk. Robin does not escape the death sentence; understanding is one thing, mercy is another within civilized Britain.

Scott also uses second sight in "The Highland Widow" (1827); the fact that both these stories of second sight do not debunk the evocations of the supernatural, as does Scot's The Black Dwarf, demands that one must repudiate the assertion by Douglas Gifford that Sir Walter Scott "relegated [. . .] brownies and wraiths, wizards and kelpies, to 'the cottage and the nursery,' thus declaring such a strong and organic part of Scottish cultural heritage off limits to 'sophisticated' writers and society at large."[8] Like other nineteenth-century writers of folkloric fiction, Scott's stories manifest ambivalence towards folk beliefs through the literary fantastic, rather than a consistent pattern of unequivocal skepticism. In "The Highland Widow" the young Highlander sees what seems to be the ghost of his father.[9] The apparition's gestures exhort him not to tarry at his mother's hut, where she later drugs him--thereby preventing him from fighting in his regiment (she feared he would die in battle) and ironically causing his ignominious death. He's executed for desertion. Coleman Parsons observes further irony in the warning of the father's ghost: the shade seems to be encouraging the son to fight for the "Hanoverian king"--not to reject the new order

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[8] Douglas Gifford, ed., "Introduction," The History of Scottish Literature vol. 3. gen. ed. Cairns Craig (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988) 7.

[9] Sir Walter Scott, The Supernatural Stories of Sir Walter Scott ed. Michael Hayes (London: John Calder, 1977).

by following the path of rebellion his father had done.[10] The fantastic vision of the dead father thus serves as an emblem of conflicted duty. The son is a Highlander, as was his father, yet the otherworldly father-figure beckons the son to accept British allegiance rather than embrace the destructive politics of identity represented by his mother. While Scott in both cases shows Highland culture as a dangerous identity to accept, Gunn's Second Sight reinforced the integrity of Highland identity as opposed to the fragmentation of English minds--the inability of the English to absorb psychically what they had annexed politically.

The metaphorical and folkloric resonance of second sight not only expresses tensions between English and Scottish culture, but also provides an overview for the function of folklore in the literary fantastic among the various works presented in this dissertation. Supernatural folklore, as these various writers have used it, serves as both an aesthetic and ideological tool. These various writers have tapped into a vast network of traditional meanings from oral tales and beliefs and forged new shapes, merging modern concerns--whether of class, economy, gender, race, religion, or psychology--with metaphysical and narrative forms outside the pretensions of the dominant mode of literary discourse: realism. Folklore offers an alternative vision to counter the rationalistic presumptions of the nature of what constitutes reality, whether the private sphere of individual psychology, or the public sphere of collective culture.

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[10] Coleman O. Parsons, Witchraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction—With Chapters on the Supernatural in Scottish Literature (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964) 78.

Gunn's story explores the same tensions between rationality and tradition that Carleton, Le Fanu, Hogg, and Scott portrayed long before. Ian Duncan, for example, explains how part of Hogg's The Three Perils of Man was a repudiation of "the Enlightenment allegory of cultural progress as a *disenchantment of the world.* [. . .] Hogg's narrator assumes the editorial voice, made familiar in Scott's novels of the Enlightenment cultural historian, but in order to confound that voice's sentence of scientific disillusion."[11] The breakdown of rational complacency is not only the hallmark of Hogg's The Three Perils of Man and The Confessions. Rather, this tension between reason and folk belief is also the distinguishing feature of Carleton's ambivalent discourse of skepticism, Sharp's devolutionary psychology of folklore, Le Fanu's morbid folkloric metaphysics, and Stevenson's chaffing of British imperialists, who imagine their own traditions are categorically superior to those of superstitious natives.

It is this narrative ambivalence, resulting in general from the uneasy inheritance of Enlightenment reason and Victorian religious doubt, that leads to narratives that are fantastic in their hesitant approach to legends and fairy tales, which stubbornly resist official dismissal. The nationalistic competition of Ireland and Scotland with the cultural and political imperialism of England added to this narrative stance in Irish, Anglo-Irish, and Scots writers, whose use of local lore represented more than just a struggle between Enlightenment thought and tradition. Their literary negotiations with folklore are a battleground for cultural identity. What Duncan

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[11] Ian Duncan, "Scott, Hogg, Orality, and the Limits of Culture," Studies in Hogg and his World 8 (1997): 57.

recognizes for Scottish writers is largely true for Carleton and Le Fanu as well: "Modern accounts of Scott and Hogg describe both authors as cultural figures of 'half-and-half', the one divided between an everyday modernity and the romance of a feudal and Jacobite past, the other between pastoral, oral-traditional Border origins and Edinburgh literary society" (38-39). Carleton, Le Fanu, MacDonald, and Sharp also contend in their fiction between allegiance to local traditional views of the world and the educated urbane societies upon which their literary success and cosmopolitan identities largely depended.

This friction between storytelling enthusiasm combined with traditional upbringings and the imperious demands of British secular and mainstream religious culture aligns these various writers with the underlying current of folklore's impact on the collective psyche in the nineteenth century. Carleton's and MacDonald's objections to materialistic-minded folk metaphysics--such as ghosts fretting over lost possessions--while appearing to be anxiety over a molehill actually constitutes a greater worry over the mountain of rising religious doubt extant throughout the entire era. MacDonald's Mrs. Cathcart with her objections to fairy tales as unfit on moral grounds echoes Sarah Trimmer's claims of how such tales injure children morally, or Ruskin's criticism of the erotic qualities of courtship in MacDonald's "The Light Princess." With a single glance over the shoulder towards Continental Europe, one should not forget how Grimms' fairy tales were purged of the sexual content of the folkloric originals.

It was not only on the level of philosophy, religion, and art that these works were timely in their content. Paradoxically, much of the anxiety encoded in the

legendary appropriations of these writers has strong ties to nineteenth century biology and anthropology. In a world that was beginning to have trouble defining the nature of humankind, when bestial relatives never seemed so near as after Darwin's discoveries, Sharp's portrayal of obsessive devolution in ""The Dàn-nan-Ròn" and "The Judgment o' God" figures as more than psychological aberration. Such stories represent the larger cultural unease with the apparently too close for comfort proximity of the apes. Sharp articulates through his presentation of folk superstitions how folk legends embody models for primal human behavior that erode the border between human and animal.

The question of borders, whether national, cultural, psychological, or metaphysical appears as a recurring concern and fundamental locus for the fantastic in the surveyed texts of literary treatments of folklore. Border anxiety in the nineteenth century represents not only growing popular consciousness of the British Empire's interaction with diverse races, but also tensions arising from the rapidly expanding enfranchised lower classes, whose superstitions made them native savages in England's own backyard. Thus, we find texts embodying these fears, such as the rural practice--pointed out as execrable by the narrator--of boiling a cat for divination in North and South, the metaphor of superstitious plagues in "Carmilla," and MacDonald's fairy-tale fantasies of goblin neighbors in The Princess and the Goblin. The genocidal answer in The Princess and the Goblin to living with goblins as neighbors reflected growing xenophobia and simultaneous exoticizing and demonizing of newly discovered ties between Britain and aboriginal people

throughout the globe, as well as the distrust of the under classes and conquered races of Britain itself.

The perception of potentially hostile otherworldly neighbors proved highly durable indeed in Britain. It is worth noting that violence towards supposed fairy changelings persisted long after the last witch execution. The final executions of witches in England and Scotland ended by the first quarter of the seventeenth century; the last Irish witchcraft trial was in 1711, which did not end with an execution.[12] Yet in Ireland in 1895 a woman was killed by her husband in his attempt to prove that she was a changeling, which--as Richard Jenkins remarks in "Witches and Fairies: Supernatural Aggression and Deviance Among the Irish Peasantry"--demonstrates that "beliefs are not just ideological constructs, but are also plans for action [. . .]."[13]

Yet, it is a mistake to view all these treatments of supernatural folklore as merely the anxious symptoms of a culture in flux, or at war with itself. It certainly was part of the motivation of some collectors of folklore, such as Walter Hone, that superstitions could be purged from an ideal, scientific, industrial, urban nation through staging in print a literary exorcism of inner societal devils spawned by an interior subculture of ignorant, antiquated country people. Yet, there was the simultaneous urge towards preservation of cultural traditions that despite their opposition to ideal Victorian respectability helped form the British character, and

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[12] William Butler Yeats, Folktales of the Irish Peasantry ed. Claire Booss (New York: Gramercy, 1986) 322. Yeats describes the details of the last witch prosecution in the notes to the story "A Witch Trial."

[13] Peter Jenkins, "Witches and Fairies: Supernatural Aggression and Deviance Among the Irish Peasantry," The Good People—New Fairylore Essays, ed. Peter Narváez (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997) 323.

generated a sense of imperial and national pride, demonstrated by the many folktale series published in the nineteenth century.

The cultural role of supernatural folklore in Britain was not based simply on polarization between different classes, races, nations, and creeds. Nor was aesthetic interest in folklore inevitably opposed to politics and the notion of progress. Irish nationalist writers found in traditional tales and beliefs the soul of a new nation, even while certain Chartists, such as Robert Lowery, objected to superstitions as obstacles to educating and energizing the lower classes for collective action against bourgeois oppression.[14] Carleton sought to make the Irish country people sympathetic by presenting their folklore as part of vivid personalities and dynamic communities--not irrelevant nonsense. Sharp offered, through his application of Scottish traditions, intense, mystical--and yet naturalistic--stories of passionate people whose lore represented human nature on an ancient and elemental level, while at the same time in implicit dialogue with contemporary notions of biology and psychology.

All these texts indicate that cultural progress does not entail the disqualification of the value of folk traditions. Recent critics, such as Nina Auerbach and U.C. Knoepflmacher, who seek in the fairy-tale tradition the basis for a feminist canon underscore an important fact of gender limitations in nineteenth century print culture, as David Vincent reveals in "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture":

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[14] David Vincent, "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture," Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 35.

> Women had played a major role in the process of preserving and transmitting the various forms of the oral tradition, but they were largely excluded from the opportunities which were being opened up by the greater availability of literature. The self-improvement societies, the book clubs, the newspapers, were increasingly run by men and for men.[15]

Vincent aptly explains how the "decline of the oral tradition" produced tensions that were never resolved.[16] Particularly this was the case for the "self-educated working man in the nineteenth century," when "antiquarians kept their distance from the common people, and for their part the self-educated struggled alone to achieve a synthesis between the oral and literary traditions which now existed alongside each other in the popular culture."[17] Carleton and Hogg both attempted such a synthesis and the fact that the fantastic characterizes much of their work indicates the instability of such a union, but it does not suggest the irrelevance or incompatibility of either branch of culture. Rather such fractures contribute to the multiple perspectives that characterize modern multicultural attitudes, where a collective culture is embodied and defined by its component individuals and communities rather than one single dogmatic interpretation.

It is in this way that Gunn's Second Sight helps to extend the dialogue of supernatural folklore from the nineteenth century into the twentieth. His characters

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[15] Vincent 41.

[16] Vincent 42.

[17] Vincent 42.

are from various classes and creeds, and the romantic coupling of Helen and Harry suggests a balance between mystical beliefs and logical concentration. Although Gunn is recognized as having ideological differences from Fiona Macleod, "Gunn's Celticism [. . .] is more surely based in his recognition of the need for political change and for the introduction of new industries into the Highlands" [as opposed to Sharp's aesthetic retreat into only artistic, not political or industrial action], his own use of second sight to articulate a moral as well as aesthetic consciousness echoes Sharp's own words on the subject.[18] Sharp, or rather Fiona Macleod--Sharp's own visionary self--proclaimed that "the second sight of the imagination" enable us to "see more clearly":

> in the dim subsided waters than through the foam and spray of the present; and most clearly when we recognize that, amid the ebb and flow of time and circumstance, the present is but a surface-eddy of that past to which we belong. In the strange arrogance of our passing hour we are as ships swinging happily content to anchors which are linked to us by ropes of sand.[19]

Macleod's linkage of past and present through visionary imagination emphasizes the enduring pertinence of folk narratives and beliefs that represent concentrated insights through their emotive connections and potent imagery.

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[18] Margery McCulloch, The Novels of Neil M. Gunn--A Critical Study (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987) 18.

[19] William Sharp, The Sin-Eater, The Washer of the Ford and Other Legendary Moralities. (London: William Heinemann, 1912) 144.

What is missing in many supernatural folktales is their moorings to a coordinated framework comparable to organized religion or philosophy, but it is precisely in this unorthodoxy that there is the greatest subversive potential. What cannot be officially defined continues to live and be reinterpreted in new clothes. Thus, throughout the nineteenth century the international märchen found themselves shaped by innovative ideological constructs from Christian Socialism and emerging feminism to alcoholic abstinence. The application of tale-types and motifs to subjects as diverse as Stevenson's stories of imperial manipulations on the South Seas and Hogg's criticism of hypocritical Covenanters demonstrates the plasticity and versatility of using folklore as a force for potent, disruptive critical inquiry and vivid artistic representation.

Just as John Stuart Mill saw the defining ideas of his generation in Bentham's analytic philosophy of utilitarianism and Coleridge's almost mystical reverence for tradition, the texts of these writers of the folkloric fantastic highlight a similar truth. These ambivalent literary dialogues between a rational narrator and supernatural beliefs and tales show the cultural relevance of preserving both disinterested critical acumen and the emotional resonance of metaphysical lore. This issue of enlarging the British mind through folklore emerged in not only the discipline of folklore studies itself in the nineteenth century, but through the assertions of Dickens and other writers, such as Matthew Arnold, that there were benefits to the cultivation of imagination and taste that tradition offered.

Arnold, in fact, saw Celticism as a primary solution to the English unimaginative, unaesthetic, anti-intellectual materialism--what he decried as

Philistinism--of the middle class: "we are imperiled by what I call the 'Philistinism' of our middle class. [. . .] Now, then is the moment for the greater delicacy and the spirituality of the Celtic peoples who are blended with us, if it be but wisely directed, to make itself prized and honored."[20] Arnold's words in the introduction to his famous lectures "On the Study of Celtic Literature" (1867) reveal some of the same emphasis on racial aesthetics that Sharp asserted in his writings. Arnold, like Sharp, believes that the English can benefit from the aesthetics of the Celts, based primarily on their sentimental nature: "*always ready to react against the despotism of fact*; that is the description a great friend of the Celt gives of him [. . .]."[21] Opposing this passionate creative enthusiasm against the "firm conception of the facts of human life," which the English have, Arnold seems to toss the Celts into the circus of Dickens's Hard Times antithetical to the utilitarian facts of Gradgrind. Arnold's praise is thereby qualified by denying the Irish and Scots "Celts" the respectability of English common sense.

Most important, however, is that it is largely through folklore that Arnold claims the Celts set an example for English Philistines: "'When I see the enthusiasm these Eisteddfods [Welsh summer festivals] can awaken in your whole people, and then think of the tastes, the literature, the amusements, of our own lower and middle class, I am filled with admiration for you.'"[22] Arnold, citing here his letter to a Welsh

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[20] Matthew Arnold, On the Study of Celtic Literature and Other Essays ed. Ernest Rhys (New York: Everyman's Library, 1976) 5.

[21] Arnold 82.

[22] Arnold 4.

man, implies how the participation of so many Welsh in their summer festival--a time of storytelling and other folk arts--generates communal aesthetics that are sorely lacking among his so-called "brother Saxons."[23]

Arnold's argument for the cultivation of English Philistines through integrating a sense of native culture--specifically Celtic literature--prefigures Sharp's later claims for how Scotland may achieve through folklore-inspired literature what it failed to do politically. Just as Sharp dismisses Scottish military action, Arnold squelches any sympathy for Irish or Welsh revolutionary politics and makes a claim for Celtic aesthetics alone: "To me there is something mournful [. . .] in hearing a Welshman or an Irishman make pretensions [. . .] to [. . .] a rival self-establishment [. . .]. It is not in the outward and visible world of material life that the Celtic genius of Wales or Ireland can hope to count for much; it is in the inward world [. . .]."[24] In his closing statement Arnold urges the English to "reunite ourselves with our better mind" by closing the gap between English facts and Celtic aesthetics, ushering in "sweetness of our spiritual life" as well as "a message of peace to Ireland."[25] Arnold wishes to pull out the teeth of the bear of Irish nationalism and get at the honey it nourishes itself with, for as Malcolm Brown points out in The Politics of Irish Literature it was through folklore that Irish nationalism spread: "The oral tradition was the main channel through which Irish nationalist sentiment flowed, and its

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[23] Arnold 22.

[24] Arnold 22.

[25] Arnold 136.

expressions were folk proverbs, slogans, hero and villain symbols, ballads recited and songs sung [. . ." (16).

Arnold's wish to simultaneously edify all British subjects through enthusiasm for native artistry, while dispelling nationalist agendas is akin to the utopian sentiments prevalent throughout the ideology-driven fairy tales of Victorian writers. One is reminded of MacDonald's attempt to reconcile orthodox notions of Christian redemption with the folkloric defiance of Lilith, ending not only imperialist exploitation, but healing a wound between the genders as well. Or perhaps, one thinks of Morley's equation of fairies and angels in his earnest story, "Melilot," of Christian Socialism. In all cases, these writers are intent on using folklore to fill the gap of a perceived cultural absence, an ulcer that no rational scrutiny alone can heal without the balm of tradition.

Thus, even though the presence of supernatural folklore in these nineteenth-century texts highlights cultural instabilities--divisions between national, political, and metaphysical ideologies--the very application of folk beliefs and motifs in the age of realism represents an attempt to bridge the breach caused by the Enlightenment between tradition and analysis. Suddenly rural, superstitious, fanciful folklore is no longer generally contemned as an antiquated relic of a preindustrial past. Instead, Victorian writers on the cutting edge of literary movements harness folklore to illustrate the psychological and cultural concerns of their era of ambivalence.

Neither war nor science it seems can dispel the bogeys and ghosts of fairy tales and legends. Traditional beliefs about spiritual beings not only fed anthropology, but studies such as Andrew Lang's Society for Psychical Research, and

continue to fuel parapsychology today. Scottish border disputes find their emotive and philosophical expression through folklore in Hogg's The Three Perils of Man. So too, writing in the nineteen-fifties, Tolkien would turn to Scandinavian and Celtic tradition to fashion his own fantasies conveying the sense of the comradeship, idealism, and disillusionment of fighting in World War One. Just these few examples demonstrate the fundamental intensity that writers have felt in sympathy with the beliefs, form, and motifs of supernatural folk narratives.

In the twenty-first century it is perhaps hard to appreciate the transgressive nature of the appropriation of such lore in literature. However, Andrew Lang's words prefacing his collection of both ancient and contemporary folklore--dreams, visions, hallucinations, wraiths, ghosts, and "mixed bogies"--emphasize how these writers threatened to upset sacred ground, disturbing conventions in a manner as outrageous as Darwin's theory of evolution:

> If there be truth in even one case of "telepathy," it will follow that the human soul is a thing endowed with attributes not yet recognized by science. It cannot be denied that this is a serious consideration, and that very startling consequences might be deduced from it; such beliefs, indeed, as were generally entertained in the ages of Christian darkness which preceded the present era of enlightenment. But our business in studies of any kind is, of course, with truth, as we are often told, not with the consequences, however ruinous to our most settled convictions, or however pernicious to society. [. . .]. For children the

> book is not written, any more than if it were a treatise on comparative anatomy.[26]

All this worry over a book of legends and memorats? Lang's rhetoric suggests that he is playing with fire as he clearly describes folk traditions as threatening--even "ruinous"--to the "settled convictions" of his enlightened age, not to mention potentially obscene when placed before the assumed innocence of children. Published in 1897, Lang has all the self-consciousness of offending public morality with folk beliefs that the Grimms had at the beginning of the century when they found public opinion opposed the raw sensuality and non-bourgeois ethos of the folk tales they had collected. But, the fact remains that Lang is convinced of the importance of what he is doing, and the subversive potential of his materials only amplifies that impression.

The earnestness of Lang may seem a sharp departure from the irony of Nesbit or Ford who use fairy-tale motifs for witty stories; however, in both cases the rhetorical strategies of these authors stem from a similar awareness of the volatile status of folklore in literary culture. From Carleton and Sharp, to Dickens, Morley, Wilde, Le Fanu, Hogg, and Scott, all these writers employ specific narrative methods to evade--or emphasize--the tensions surrounding supernatural folkloric material. Such tensions continue to exist today where popular movies represent witches and second sight to provoke viewers with their hidden fears, and publishers issue forth innovative versions of fairy tales, shaped to be politically correct, rather than

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[26] Andrew Lang, The Book of Dreams and Ghosts (1897; New York: Causeway Books, 1974) xvii.

traditionally authentic. Furthermore, as J.K. Rowling's immensely popular Harry Potter books and an upcoming movie on the Grimms' tales demonstrate, we still have an immense appetite for fairy-tale fantasies. However, the banning of the books at certain schools and the embarrassment of many critics at the high rankings of Rowling on best seller lists--reveals the fear of the subversive potential of the unorthodoxy of folk beliefs still remains, as well as doubts about the relevance of fantasy.

What was--and is--going on with the debate over fairy tales constitutes a struggle for defining the ideological framework underpinning literary culture--the standards for public morality, education, art, and religion. At stake in the nineteenth century literary appropriation of folklore is always much more than writing an "idle tale." Rather, there is a whole worldview, and how a nation--nay, an empire--defines itself.

For example, Mrs. Trimmer's anxiety over what is fit for children to read reveals the larger question of what exactly children are--an idea explored in Barrie's Peter Pan, which depicts the amoral and transgressive potential of children. Fairy tales, which often represent the rebellion of children against their parents--or an entire kingdom--were a genre that Victorians believed needed careful handling. Many feared that English children might get out of line and foolishly imagine that cleverness and willfulness could substitute for industry. Consequently there were many watchdogs of how writers were using fairy tales, such as Sherwood and Trimmer. One finds in these censors concern with the danger of applying fairy tales as ideological constructs. Thus, Sherwood emphasized that "such tales should be

sparingly used" lest rebellion against "Christian principles" result, just as Arnold wished to emphasize that the Celtic tradition should not be used to foment political revolution, but broaden cultural aesthetics among all British citizens.[27]

The variety of social stances concerning how the motifs and beliefs of folklore should best be used reveals the importance of fairy tales and legends to British culture, as well as the social tensions over what aspects of culture should be dominant. To some Chartist activists and Enlightenment thinkers folklore was an anchor weighing down the lower classes with ignorance, while to other writers and political visionaries folklore represented priceless ore waiting to be extracted and shaped into artistic forms capable of national and even international union. By the end of the nineteenth century utilitarian and Puritan objections to folk fairy tales in the nursery were countered by utilitarian and moralistic endorsements of literary fairy tales. Edward Salmon's proclamation in Juvenile Literature As It Is (1888) describes the sanitized Victorian literary forms of the fairy tale "as engines for the propulsion of all virtues into the little mind in an agreeable and harmless form."[28] Yet, in 1868 Ruskin asserted that children properly raised are ideally pure and "have no need of moral fairy tales" and the popular tales should not be tampered with for didactic purposes.[29] These two statements by Salmon and Ruskin represent that fundamentally the fairy tale was a mirror to the Victorian era's own desires and fears. In folk beliefs

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[27] Jack Zipes, Victorian Fairy Tales (New York: Methuen, 1987) xvii.

[28] Michael Patrick Hearn, The Victorian Fairy Tale Book (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) xix.

[29] Jonathan Cott, Beyond the Looking Glass (New York: Pocket Books, 1973) xlv.

and the fairy tale Victorians recognized unsettling, primal, truths, as well as either a coherent, morally contoured universe or a creatively dynamic world of possibility.

Even while there were cautions and objections to fairy tales, and the vehemence against superstitions voiced by many folklore collectors, there was no stopping the tide. Galvanized first by the realization of urbanization's threat to rural folk culture, men and women of the nineteenth century devoted an immense amount of energy to writing fairy tales and ghost stories, collecting folk tales, and theorizing on the implications of folk culture for philology, anthropology, psychology, and spirituality. And, in some quarters, twentieth-century literary criticism has followed suit, such as this study, which not only analyzes the ideological agendas of writers of literary fairy tales and fantasies, but also reveals the fundamental role that folklore plays in narratives of the fantastic. The inclusion of supernatural folklore in realistic fiction immediately erodes the borders of the text, allowing in a veritable stampede of traditional associations, rendering the metaphysics of the story indeterminate and threatening the authority of the author and the dominance of his or her literary culture. The emergence of so much literature of the fantastic in the nineteenth century is a testament to the cultural instability of an era divided profoundly by matters of faith, family, industry, politics, science, and tradition. Recent renewed interest in folk tales, ghost stories, superstitions, and the Celtic tradition in our own era underscores similar tensions among national, religious, and cultural allegiances in a broadening multicultural world.

From the central English canon with Dickens, Eliot, Gaskell, and Hardy onward to the Highlands with Hogg, MacDonald, and Scott; the isolated Scottish

island of Iona with William Sharp; or the villages of Ireland under Carleton's amiable guidance, supernatural folklore figures as a significant presence in nineteenth century literature. Having listened to the whispers around this campfire of folkloric fiction, one might imagine the jesting and winter tales once told among farmers, kings, sailors, scribes, spinners and field laborers--later culled and reformed by their literary inheritors. All are the voices of human experience and imagination that have shaped the very discourses today that now critique the great giant of storytelling holding them in the palm of its hand.

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Vita

Jason Marc Harris

Born: July 30, 1973
Sacramento, California

B. A. Literature, University of California, The College of Creative Studies, Santa Barbara Spring 1995

M.A. English Literature, University of Washington, Winter 1997

Ph.D. English Literature, University of Washington, Spring 2001

"Shadows of Tradition: 'We Never Really Believed It, But It Was Definitely There'--The Role of Belief and the Mechanics of Legend in Tales of the Spirit World." Northwest Folklore 14:1 (Summer 2000): 15-55.

"Experiences With the Fairies: Tradition, Imagination, and the Media" Northwest Folklore 13:7 (Autumn 1999): 10-26.