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Y Tylwyth Teg. An Analysis of a Literary Motif.

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TRAETHAWD PH.D.

Y Tylwyth Teg

An Analysis of a Literary Motif

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31/7/2021

Ysgol y Gymraeg ac Astudiaethau
Celtaidd

Prifysgol Bangor

Abstract

This thesis has two main parts. Part 1 explores the names used as synonyms for ‘Tylwyth Teg’, giving an initial insight through semantics into the nature of these supernatural beings, and revealing the relevance of the cultural context of the relevant texts: motifs and tale types from both nineteenth-century folklore and medieval and early modern literature are explored. I ask anew whether the otherworld is identical to hell or a realm of the dead. The importance of folk beliefs related to the denizens of the otherworld for devising an imagery for the process of poetic creativity and for transformational processes will be shown. Part 2 focusses on the historical development of traditions connected with the Tylwyth Teg, a valuable tool for the historian, providing deepened social insight.

The study is one of *longue durée*, covering a period from the Middle Ages onwards, and is a combination of overview and focus. I explore various tensions arising between the use of folklore in creative processes of appropriation, and mechanisms that ‘other’ the socially disadvantaged. The euhemerization of the fairies during the rivalry of druidic and Celtic traditions at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century provokes an extended study of John Rhys’ influential model of British prehistory: I explore how he used social Darwinism to read fairy folklore for political and cultural reasons verging on the nationalist and suggest how the broad traditions of interpretation and recreation manifest themselves in nineteenth-century literature. I take here as specific comparative case studies the prose of Daniel Owen and the poetry of Glasynys, highlighting the contrast between more romantic readings, and the novel ideas originating in Rhys. Finally, and more briefly, the theories are pushed in the direction of the present day, with an analysis of the role of fairy traditions in alternative religion, once again performed with special attention to how Rhys was appropriated (this time by the feminist goddess movement and neo-pagan syncretism). Appendices gives examples from twentieth century literature which suggest future directions of research.

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

I confirm that I am submitting this work with the agreement of my Supervisor(s).

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

Rwy'n cadarnhau fy mod yn cyflwyno'r gwaith hwn gyda chytundeb fy Ngoruchwyliwr (Goruchwylwyr)

*Pendefig, gwledig gwlad hud—is dwfn,
Ys difai y'm dysgud.*

‘Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gwilym’ – Dafydd ap Gwilym

*For my daughters
Constanze, Anne & Sophie*

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Introduction

I believe the folklorist can, by analyzing folklore, discover general patterns of culture, and I would maintain further that knowledge of such patterns can provide the means of raising levels of consciousness.

Alan Dundes (1980, p. x)

Folklore Studies as a scholarly discipline has its beginnings in the nineteenth century (Dorson 1968) and continues to grow. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw important contributions to Welsh folklore studies, including fairy folklore, and still outstanding among those collection is John Rhŷs's fundamental *Celtic Folklore Welsh and Manx*,¹ essential primary material for any thorough understanding of the motifs and traditions of folklore related to the Tylwyth Teg, and of what perspectives such an understanding could bring. Motifs and themes from fairy folklore are apparent in the medieval literature of the British Isles and of Ireland, both vernacular and Latin: it is difficult to fully appreciate the Welsh poetry of all periods without understanding imagery related to the Tylwyth Teg and the otherworld, or imagery describing the poetic process, taken from the lore about otherworldly journeys. In early modern times, attitudes towards the fairies are indicators of religious orientation and social questions relevant to particular Christian denominations. Social topics involving marginalization and othering are also connected with the fairies, often associated or conflated with gypsies, wandering folk, cunning people and foreigners (various communities of the 'other'). It is no surprise that the twentieth century saw an increase in the number of studies involving fairy traditions; moreover, technical progress enabled the collection of oral tales without the written text as a medium interrupting transmission from tradition bearers and scholars of folklore, enabling, for instance, Robin Gwyndaf's collection of oral folklore and extensive studies preserving Welsh fairy lore.²

¹ A section of volumes covering Welsh folklore see Rhŷs (2012 [1901]), T. Gwynn Jones (1979 [1930]), Isaac (1938), Sikes (2007 [1880]), Myrddin Fardd (Jones 1908), and Elias Owen (1973 [1887]); Welsh folklore included in Hartland (1891), Evans-Wentz (1994 [1911]). For more recent collections of Welsh folklore and fairy traditions see Huws (1987, 2008a & 2008b) and Owen (1959, 1984, 1991).

² Without aiming for completeness, a representative selection: for the Welsh oral tradition see Gwyndaf (1976/1981, 1984, 1987, 1987/88, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992/93 a & b, 1993/94, 1994, 2003). For charms and cunning men in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Bosse-Griffiths (1977) who introduced to the public the book of a cunning man and with this the role of the fairies in early modern Welsh charms. See Juliette Wood's various studies for the history of Welsh folklore and its impact on Welsh society, studies on selected motifs, and research on traditional motifs to the fairies in popular film (Wood 1983, 1985, 1992, 2006, 2018). Tallis discusses the role of fairy traditions in religion and popular magic in early modern Wales (2007) and see Coward for the magic and supernatural in eighteenth-century Wales, with particular focus on Reverend Edmund Jones (2012). For studies beyond and around Welsh material: see Briggs for useful surveys of British and international fairy

Although there have been numerous studies on the fairies of the British Isles, there has been no attempt at a history of the Tylwyth Teg and beliefs related to their tradition spanning the centuries. In studies concerning the folklore of various areas of the British Isles, Welsh material is often underrepresented in comparison to English or Scottish material. The present study aims to close this gap: it provides an analysis of Welsh fairy folklore in texts and beliefs from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century, also covering social aspects and showing how fairy traditions were used by the learned elite in two fundamentally different ways: (a) fairy traditions were appropriated in the creative processes, but also for social legitimization by a supernatural ancestry, and (b) fairy traditions were used for othering and orientalizing the socially disadvantaged. We will also consider how fairy lore was used to underpin religious and social ideology by either rejection or appropriation. Special attention is given to John Rhŷs, who supported his ideas about the pre-history of the British Isles with evidence from the folklore of the Tylwyth Teg.

Where the focus is on early periods, the main sources used are naturally written materials, print and manuscript. A concentration on written materials in the context of more recent periods was also necessitated by the circumstances under which this thesis was written, given that the majority of the final two years of study have been entirely disrupted by the strictures of the Covid-19 pandemic. This work had ever been a long-distance project, with time split between working and teaching in Germany and researching at Bangor University, which required intricate time-management to arrange for access to special material in Welsh libraries, archives and collections. Covid-19 brought travel and archive-access to an end, and planned visits to important centres such as Amgueddfa Werin Cymru Sain Ffagan (National Museum of History at St Fagans) were impossible.

Texts analysed here include folklore collections from the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries which record tales about the Tylwyth Teg. The Tylwyth Teg appear also in poetry and creative prose from the sixteenth century onwards, in records of the Quarter Session Courts, in antiquarian descriptions of folk customs and in charms of ritual magic. In

folklore (2002 [1967], 1970, 1978, 1993, 2003 [1959]). See Hart (2004) for a more recent collection of British fairy traditions, and Purkiss (2000) for fairy beliefs in various historical periods, Davidson & Chaudri (2003) for a companion to fairy tales. Narváez edited a collection of essays on fairy lore which explore the social and psychological implications of fairy beliefs, among them Narváez' study on liminal spaces and Susan Schoon Eberly's and Joyce Underwood Munro's ground-breaking essays on changeling beliefs (1991). See Silver for fairies in Victorian literature (1999), Hutton for an attempt on a history of the British fairies (2014). For various historical and social aspects James Wade (2011), Helen Cooper (2004), Carolyne Larrington (1999, pp. 32-47) Kathryne Westoby (1985), Corinne Saunders (2010). See Wilby for similarities between early modern cunning women/witches and shamans (2010, 2011). For Scottish fairy beliefs see, e.g., Henderson & Cowan (2001).

medieval texts, while the expression ‘Tylwyth Teg’ had not yet been coined, denizens of the otherworld appear, recognizable as fairy characters because of associated motifs. Therefore, I also cover vernacular prose and poetry from the Middle Ages, most important being poems from MS Peniarth 1, The Black Book of Carmarthen and MS Peniarth 2, The Book of Taliesin; the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym, the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, *Culhwch ac Olwen* and various Arthurian tales and poems. In addition to vernacular literature, texts by Gerald of Wales, Gervasius of Tilbury, Walter Map and Geoffrey of Monmouth are considered, increasing the evidential range of genres. Although I focus on Welsh material, a comparative methodology is applied where appropriate: Irish, Icelandic and Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, German and Finnish texts are treated where relevant, and Classical literature also, when it may contribute to the understanding of motifs.

Dundes argues that, ‘[w]ith respect to any given item of folklore, one may analyze its texture, its text, and its context’ (1980, p. 22). Accordingly, this thesis puts special emphasis on *reading* certain texts, especially poetry in which motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg appear. Thus, as my arguments progress, the reader will encounter sections whose characters are notably different: some compare and collect similar motifs and discuss their basic (‘abstracted’) meaning, while others deal in detail with selections from particular texts, analysing language and meaning in greater literary context in order to allow a more differentiated analysis.

The thesis proceeds in two main stages: Part 1 is a largely synchronic study of the meanings of relevant names, motifs and themes, while Part 2 uses this foundational semantic and semiotic knowledge more diachronically in particular historical contexts, with an eye on the historical development of the tradition.

Chapter 1 explores the semantics of various synonyms for the term – or name – ‘Tylwyth Teg’: such semantics provide insight into beliefs about the nature of the Tylwyth Teg and how these beliefs are connected with key medieval ideas such as the nature of the soul. Three chapters follow which analyse motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg and their otherworldly domain: two chapters concern otherworldly realms, and one focusses specifically on water. Chapter 2 focusses on subterranean abodes and the motif of the glass castle, including a more detailed investigation of the relationship between Annwn and Uffern (‘hell’). The question of whether the world of the Tylwyth Teg was thought to be a world of the dead will be elucidated in the context of the glass castle, and this motif leads on to the question of how the poetic process was imagined. Chapter 3 investigates motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg and water: water appears as boundary between the world of humans and of the denizens of the

otherworld, and also appears as magical mist facilitating the passage into otherworldly realms, and I will show ways in which the elementary conflict between fire and water precipitates in tales about the otherworld. As the otherworld is ambiguous, we not only find the destructive conflict of fire and water, but also the motif of fire in water related to the creative process and mirrored in the colour symbolism of otherworld creatures. Chapter 4, the final chapter of Part 1, explores the physical appearance of the inhabitants of the otherworld, and especially the messages which can be decoded from e.g., the use of particular colours and hairstyles. We investigate further some general principles of human-otherworld interactions.

Part 2 is an investigation of the historical development of fairy traditions. Chapter 5 moves from the medieval to the early modern period, when the expression ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ developed, considering how attitudes towards fairy beliefs depend on social standing, education and religious orientation. Special focus will be placed on interesting examples of ritual magic demonstrating that the charms used by cunning people sometimes had medieval roots and had been adapted to Welsh tradition by adoption of the Tylwyth Teg: I also discuss possible evidence that parts of those charms could have entered oral traditions.

Chapter 6 explores the euhemerization of the Tylwyth Teg and the conflating of fairy traditions with the idealized image of the druids that follows the Classical revival of the eighteenth century. Central to this chapter are John Rhŷs’ theories about the prehistoric population of the British Isles, bolstered by the folklore of the Tylwyth Teg. Rhŷs’ reading of Welsh folklore is based on a Victorian social Darwinism, and I argue that Rhŷs aimed at defending Welsh culture from the ongoing assaults of so-called ‘Teutonists’. Considering the use of motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg in nineteenth-century poetry, Owen Wynne Jones (Glasynys) is given special attention: in contrast to Rhŷs’ euhemerising approach, we explore how Glasynys used folktales to create artistic fairy tales inspired by Iolo Morganwg. Last but not least, I briefly consider the novel *Gwen Tomos. Merch y Wernddu* by Daniel Owen, a work that gives a rich description of rural life, also presenting Methodist attitudes towards these customs. As a coda to this chapter, I discuss Evans-Wentz’ collection of Celtic folklore in the context of his theosophical convictions. Chapter 7 reaches the twentieth century: it discusses the re-use of fairy traditions in the neo-pagan movement (including, perhaps most significantly, feminist appropriations), and parallels between fairy folklore and UFO-beliefs. Here, we see how the methodology developed while considering the medieval and early modern has relevance also for critical-ideological study of the modern and post-modern.

Appendices contain lengthier citations of relevant source texts, including a transcription of a sixteenth-century poem by Roger Davies which survives in MSS Peniarth 104 and Cardiff

2.14.477: I provide a tentative translation and analysis of the *cynganedd* to facilitate further investigations. The appendices also contain references to a short selection of modern Welsh literature using the traditions of the Tylwyth Teg, with suggestions for further study and continuation of the present methodology.

Part I: Y Tylwyth Teg: Names, Motifs and Themes

1. About the Tylwyth Teg: Synonyms

“Y Gair oedd yn bod ar y dechrau cyntaf.” (IOAN 1:1)

This thesis is entitled ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’³ (‘The Beautiful Tribe’/ ‘The Beautiful Family’), an expression usually rendered in English as ‘the fairies’ or ‘the elves’. In Wales, local synonyms such as ‘Bendith y Mamau’, the ‘Verry Volk’,⁴ ‘Y Teulu’, ‘Plant Rhÿs Ddwfn’, and ‘Plant Annwn’ are used.⁵ As fairy traditions were present in Wales prior to the first appearance of ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ in writing, a study on Welsh fairy traditions cannot be restricted to the assessment of texts containing the phrase ‘Tylwyth Teg’, but must be extended to material in which it is absent, such as medieval Latin texts reporting stories of supernatural characters resembling the Tylwyth Teg: these characters are not identified as fairies by name directly, but by the narrative motifs they share with the fairies of folktales. This chapter provides a study of Welsh and Latin expressions used for naming fairy-like characters, to gain an initial insight into the nature of these supernatural beings. We will thus grasp the meanings of fairy traditions through the semantics of names.

1.1 ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’: Welsh Synonyms and English Translations

1.1.1 ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ and the English Translations ‘Elves’ and ‘Fairies’

J. Gwynfor Jones notes that ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ appears in Welsh texts from the fifteenth century onwards (Jones 1964), and first in ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’ (‘Oed â’m rhiaid addfeindeg’).⁶ This poem by an unknown author, who often imitated Dafydd’s poetry,⁷ and in this specific case

³ I use throughout the capitalized form ‘Tylwyth Teg’ following the example of John Rhÿs (2012 [1901]), T. Gwynn Jones (1979), Elias Owen (1973 [1887]), Evans-Wentz (1994 [1911]) and Helen Fulton (1996).

⁴ This expression for the fairies was used in Gower according to the testimony of Reverend John David Davis collected by Evans-Wentz (1994 [1911], pp. 158-159): according to Davis, the expression ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ had never been used in Gower. ‘Verry Volk’ is a local form for ‘Fairy Folk’. However, the expression is not mentioned in Penhallurick’s work on the history of Gower’s languages (Penhallurick, 1994).

⁵ ‘Bendith y Mamau’: ‘Blessing of the Mothers’; ‘Y Teulu’: ‘the tribe, the family’; ‘plant Rhÿs Ddwfn’: ‘the progeny/children of Rhÿs Ddwfn’, ‘Plant Annwn’: ‘the progeny, children of Annwn’. Regarding the meaning of ‘Annwn’ cf. chapter 2 of this thesis.

⁶ The poem appears under the title ‘Y Niwl hudolus’ in Fulton (1996), but the poem is also entitled by its incipit. I use ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’, a title which refers to the main motif.

⁷ DAG, ‘Rhagymadrodd: “Yr Apocryffa”’. The dating of this poem is crucial for the first mentioning of the Tylwyth Teg, however the dating is controversial. For a more detailed discussion of the dating, see chapter 5.

‘Y Niwl’.⁸ Both ‘Y Niwl’ and ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’ tell how the poet sets out to meet a girl, but cannot proceed on his way, as he is trapped in the mist. I cite ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’ here from Fulton’s edition:

Tew fry yn toi ar y fron,
Taid llwydrew, tad y lladron,
Gwasarn eiry llon Ionawr,
Goddaiith o’r awyr faith fawr,
Ymlusgwr, bwriwr barrug
’R hyd moelydd grinwydd a grug,
Uchel rhagorgop topie,
Gweilgi yn llenwi pob lle,
Fal hudol byd yn hedeg
O barthlwyth y Tylwyth Teg,
Ac un dduliw, hagrliw hyll,
Obry’n dew wybren dywyll
Lle’r ydoedd ym mhob gobant
Ellyllon mingeimion gant.

Thick above, roofing the hill,
grandfather of hoar-frost, father of thieves,
bright trampled snow of January,
a blaze from the air, long and great,
dragger and hurler of hoar-frost
over the brushwood of bare hilltops and the heather,
high top-knot of peaks,
an ocean filling every place,
like a world’s magician flying
from the homestead of the Fairy Folk,
with a single black colour, a nasty ugly colour,
down below like a thick dark cloud
where in every hollow there were
a hundred mocking sprites.

(text and translation: Fulton, 1996, ll. 27-40)

Jones suggests that the name ‘Tylwyth Teg’ is a mistranslation of ‘fairies’ based on the translation of ‘fair’ with ‘teg’ (Jones, 1964, p. 97). Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider the possible English synonyms for ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and their meaning. We will return below to the equally important word ‘ellyllon’; for now, note that Fulton translates ‘Tylwyth Teg’ as ‘Fairy Folk’ and not ‘Fair Folk’ (the latter being a literal translation). This is significant, for ‘fairy’ in English has its own semantic field.

When translating ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ into English language, two words are most commonly used, namely ‘fairies’ and ‘elves’. In *Welsh Folklore* Elias Owen points out: ‘In English the words Fairies and elves are used without any distinction’ (Owen, 1973 [1887], p.

⁸ Motifs in ‘Y Niwl’ are discussed in detail in chapter 2.6.

4). However, Owen himself sees a difference between ‘fairies’ and ‘elves’, for, in his opinion, ‘fairies’ correspond to ‘Tylwyth Têg’ and ‘ellyllon’ to ‘elves’. But he also admits that the distinctive character of the Welsh words has been lost for his countrymen (*ibid.*). I will return to this point in section 1.1.2.

In *Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx* (2012 [1901]) John Rhŷs translates ‘Tylwyth Teg’ as ‘fairies’, claiming that ‘the most common name for the fairies in Welsh is *y Tylwyth Teg*, “The Fair or Beautiful Family”’ (p. 671). Rhŷs’ use of ‘elves’, however, leaves room for interpretation regarding the equivalence of ‘elves’ and ‘fairies’. In a letter written to Margaret Murray in July 1915, John Rhŷs writes:

It was Gwyn son of Nûð the chief of the Elves or demons who had his court on the Tor: there is a story how St. Collen went up there one day provided with holy water which he sprinkled over the court with the instantaneous effect of making Gwyn and all his surroundings disappear.

(quoted by Oates & Wood, 1998, p. 80)

Rhŷs’ letter, read contextually, suggests that he also considered ‘elves’ and ‘fairies’ to be interchangeable, if he refers to the version of early modern *Buchedd Collen* edited in *Y Greal* (1807) (BCb). According to the comment in *Y Greal*, this edition is based on a text lent to Iolo Morganwg by Thomas Evans of Brechfa. In this text Gwyn ap Nudd is addressed as ‘[b]renin Anwn a’r tylwyth têtg’ (‘king of Annwn and the Tylwyth Teg’):

[E]ve á glywai ddau ddyn yn ymddyddan am Wyn ap Nudd ac yn dywedyd, mai hwnw oedd vrenin Anwn a’r tylwyth têtg.

(Jones, J., et al. (eds), 1807, p. 339)

He heard two men discussing Gwyn ap Nudd and saying that he was the king of Annwn and the Tylwyth Teg. (My trans.)

One might think on first reading that Rhŷs’ letter considers the Tylwyth Teg to be ‘elves’ and ‘Plant Annwn’ to be ‘demons’. However, if Rhŷs had the manuscript version of *Buchedd Collen* from 1536 in mind, which calls Gwyn ap Nudd only ‘Brenin Annwn’ (BCa), then we must assume that ‘elves’ are identical to ‘demons’ and represent a particular species of demonic characters. It is noteworthy that in connection with ‘Annwn’ one of Rhŷs’ informants, Mr. Pughe of Aberdovey translates ‘Gwragedd Annwn’ with ‘Dames of Elfin

land'. Rhys included this tale in a chapter of Celtic Folklore entitled 'The Fairies' Revenge'. This last piece of evidence would suggest that elves and fairies are equivalent for John Rhys.

Translating 'Tylwyth Teg' as 'fairies' or 'elves' promotes an assimilation of meaning and narrative traditions: by using these words, a semantic concept is imposed on 'Tylwyth Teg'. While I shall here use 'fairies' in a sense equivalent to 'Tylwyth Teg', not least for producing a readable text, we must keep in mind that both 'fairies' and 'elves' have their own semantic associations and historical complexity, as I will briefly discuss, starting with the word 'elves'.

Katharine Briggs defines 'elf' as follows:

Originally Anglo-Saxon for Fairies. Later applied in England to small fairies, retained in Scotland for some time for all fairies. Scandinavian – The Elves or Elle people. Ellfname [sic!] - Scots name for Fairyland.

(Briggs, 1978, p. 195)

This suggests a folk tradition widely spread in north-western Europe with regional varieties, but also common migratory motifs, so that elves and fairies are at least somewhat equivalent. Reidar Christiansen, based on an analysis of Irish fairy stories and Scandinavian folk tales, concludes thus:

The Irish and Scandinavian legends referred to above offer ample evidence of springing from a common background, the belief in the existence of a hidden race, living close to the human world, perhaps even under our very houses.

(Christiansen, 1971-73, pp. 110-111)

More recent work by Alaric Hall confirms that the fairy tales found in Celtic-speaking countries and those about elves from the Germanic tradition share a broad range of narrative motifs (Hall, 2007, pp. 152-153). Following Christiansen and Hall, then, we may assume that the fairy lore of Celtic-speaking countries and the Scandinavian and Germanic legends of elves are rooted in a common stratum of beliefs: therefore, also for the analysis of Welsh material, it will be instructive to consider the semantics of the word 'elf'. Alaric Hall (2007) has usefully explored the meaning of 'elves' in Anglo-Saxon England and '*álfar*' in medieval Scandinavia: these supernatural beings have complex associations, especially when Christian demonology is conflated with the pre-Christian stratum. The pre-Christian stratum might be best preserved in Scandinavian material, if here, due to the lateness of conversion, we can expect the least Christian influence and the best transmission of pre-Christian tradition. Hall finds:

While it would be possible to speak hereafter of the *álfar* as ‘non-monstrous supernatural beings’, I suggest ‘otherworldly beings’ as an appropriate alternative term; its mixed connotations of wonder and fear will emerge below to be fitting to members of this category.

(Hall, 2007, p. 32)

This shows that the Scandinavian concept of *álfar* is apt to be applied to the Tylwyth Teg, for they, too, are non-monstrous supernatural beings, otherworldly beings, and their world is both connected with wonder and fear (cf. also chapter 2). As for the Anglo-Saxon *ælf* Hall maintains: ‘Our earliest Old English evidence matches our early Scandinavian evidence neatly’ (Hall, 2007, p. 74). Therefore, using the English word ‘elves’ to gloss ‘Tylwyth Teg’ cannot be contested, for both the earliest concepts and modern folklore (see above) support this.

Now we turn to ‘fairies’ as equivalent for ‘Tylwyth Teg’. The semantics of ‘fairy’ is comparably complex. Noel Williams (1991) connects the word etymologically with L. *fatum*, pl. *fata* ((1) ‘thing said’, ‘utterance’, ‘oracle’; (2) ‘fate’, ‘destiny’; (3) ‘natural term of life’; (4) ‘doom’, ‘death’, ‘calamity’):

Thus one of the key notions which links the usage of fairy from its earliest proto-usage seems to be that of “fatedness” but we cannot trace this notion to any particular culture, tradition, style, register or period, and we cannot even specify what that notion entails. “Fatedness” is a vague concept.

(Williams, 1991, p. 472)

Noting the connection between fate and death, between being fated and doomed to die (pp. 463-465), Williams suggests that enchantment is a degeneration of fate (p. 464). A most important development was the medieval reading of ‘fata’ (neuter plural) as feminine singular and interpreting a ‘fata’ as supernatural woman or a woman with supernatural powers (p. 462). Furthermore, there is also a meaning which does not refer to supernatural characters, but rather to an experience. Williams identified this use of ‘fairy’ by analysing texts belonging to the genre of romance. Williams maintains:

From the earliest date fairy seems to be used both as a typification of experience (i.e., denotatively or referentially, applied to a real experience) and as a metaphor for experience (i.e., associatively, connotatively) meshing both kinds of meaning, as can be seen from the unclear etymology, from the vagueness and ambiguity of early uses and from the number of contributory influences on romances such as *Sir Orfeo*.

(p. 471)

One possible meaning of the noun ‘fairy’ is ‘dazed or exited state of mind’ (OED, s.v. ‘fairy’). This makes the noun ‘fairy’ differ from ‘elf’, for the latter noun clearly refers to a supernatural being. However, the Old English adjective relating to ‘elf’, ‘ylfig’, describes a state of mind or a mental ability, namely ‘being divinely possessed’ or ‘foretelling the future’ (Hall, 2007, p. 151).

Both ‘fairy’ and ‘elf’ are nouns to describe supernatural beings which share common motifs in folklore with the Tylwyth Teg. Moreover, both words are linked to fate, which can be revealed in an inspired state: an experience of the non-mundane world of otherness. As this thesis will show, otherness, inspired and liminal states, but also the experience of death are important motifs connected with the Tylwyth Teg or the Welsh otherworldly realms (cf. chapter 2), and thus, ‘fairies’ and ‘elves’ must be considered adequate English translations, especially as common narrative motifs support it.

1.1.2 Ellyllon

In ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’ cited above, not only do the Tylwyth Teg appear, but also magical creatures called ‘ellyllon’ (text and translation: Fulton, 1996, p. 120, l. 40). This makes us wonder how ‘Tylwyth Teg’, an expression which appears in this poem for the first time, is related to ‘ellyllon’, a word well-known from earlier texts. The poem suggests that the homestead of the Tylwyth Teg is in a remote place, since the place where the poet is caught in a mist is separated by a journey by air from the abode of the Tylwyth Teg, for the mist is addressed with the words: ‘Gweilgi yn llenwi pob lle/ Fal hudol byd yn hedeg/ O barthlwyrth y Tylwyth Teg’ (‘an ocean filling every place,/ like a world’s magician flying/ from the homestead of the Fairy Folk’, text and translation: Fulton, 1996, pp. 120, 121, ll. 34-36). In contrast to the Tylwyth Teg the *ellyllon* are housed in hollows, more local and more earthbound places: ‘Lle’r ydoedd ym mhob gobant/ Ellyllon mingeimion gant’ (‘where in every hollow there were/ a hundred mocking sprites’, text and translation: Fulton, 1996, pp. 120-121, ll. 39-40). The context suggests that ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘ellyllon’ are closely related, but not necessarily identical. In Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem ‘Y Niwl’ which inspired ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’ ellyllon do not appear. But the use of ‘ellyllon’ in other poems by Dafydd ap Gwilym shows a similar relationship between ellyllon and Tylwyth Teg, the subjects of Gwyn ap Nudd. The poem ‘Y Pwll Mawn’ supports the idea that the Tylwyth Teg or Tylwyth Gwyn (cf. also 1.1.8) are related to ellyllon, with the latter being more earthbound. ‘Y Pwll Mawn’ reports how the poet must travel through a bog to meet with his girl, where he falls into a peat pit, which he calls ‘Pysgodlyn i Wyn yw ef,/ Ab Nudd, wb ynn ei oddef!/ Pydew rhwng gwaun a cheunant,/ Plas yr ellyllon a’u plant.’ (‘It’s a fish-pond belonging to Gwyn ap Nudd,/ alas

that we should suffer it! / A pit between heath and ravine, / the place of phantoms and their brood.’ text & translation DAG, 59, ll. 29-32) Like in ‘Y Niwl’ ellyllon are associated with Gwyn ap Nudd (and therefore also with tylwyth Gwyn or Tylwyth Teg), but they dwell in a peat pool, a water-logged place, in contrast to the Tylwyth Teg of ‘Y Niwl hudolus’ and Tylwyth Gywn of ‘Y Niwl’ who travel through the air. The evidence from Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poetry refers to ellyllon in the context with earth-bound locations. In ‘Y Sêr’ (‘The Stars’), the poet speaks:

Cerddais ar draws naw cardden
Ac ar hyd moelgaerau hen;
Oddi yno i ddinas
Ellyllon, cyfeillion cas.
Cyrchais o'r dinas glasfawr
Corsydd ar ael mynydd mawr.

I walked across nine enclosures
and along old hillforts;
from there to the fortress
of ghosts, nasty companions.
I made my way from the great green fortress
to boggy land on the edge of a big mountain.

(text & translation DAG, 161, ll.19-24)

These lines suggest that *dinas ellyllon*, which is also called great green fortress is a burial mound or natural hill in which ellyllon are believed to dwell. All this suggests that ellyllon are fairy-like creatures bound to the landscape, to caves, mounds and pools. Although the translator of DAG has chosen in all cases ‘ghost’ or ‘phantoms’ which cuts the relations to fairy-folklore which Dafydd ap Gwilym used, as his mentioning of Gwyn ap Nudd in his poems shows.

In the case of ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’, various translators have fundamentally different ideas about the nature of ‘ellyllon’. Fulton translates ‘ellyllon’ as ‘sprites’. A sprite is a non-corporeal or immaterial being, often small and of mischievous nature. The word can be used for ‘elf’ or ‘fairy’ and can also refer to the non-physical aspect of a person (OED, *s.v.* ‘sprite’). Maelog has ‘goblins’ (1834). A goblin is a small, gnome-like, ugly, demonic creature, but not necessarily a non-corporeal one (OED, *s.v.* ‘goblin’). But in an article published in *The Cambro-Briton* in 1820, the anonymous author and translator, probably Owen Pughe, as a footnote to the article suggests, uses ‘elves’ (Anon, 1820, pp. 348). If, indeed (following our previous identification) ‘elves’ and ‘fairies’ are in the nineteenth century to be seen as equivalent terms, the latter translation can be taken to suggest that ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and

‘ellyphon’ are synonymous. This leaves us with the question in which cases ellyphon and Tylwyth Teg have been considered as identical creatures, and why; and if not, what features made them differ.

Indeed, it is not necessary to go through English to conclude that ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘ellyphon’ are synonymous. Ieuan Fardd had this to say in 1762:

[T]hey [the fairies] are mentioned by our most antient Bards under the names of *Ellyll*, *tylwyth teg*, and *Gwyllon mynydd* [...]. [O]ne species in South Wales is called simply *Teulu*.

(cit. Jones, 1964, p. 96)

To Ieuan Fardd, then, ‘ellyphon’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ are interchangeable. GPC supports this: ‘menig (yr) ellyphon’ (‘foxgloves’) and ‘menig y tylwyth teg’ are synonymous (GPC, *s.v.* ‘maneg’). Rachel Bromwich maintains: ‘*Ellyphon* are synonymous with *tylwyth teg* in the names *bwyd ellyphon* “mushrooms”, *menyg ellyphon* “foxgloves”, and are referred to in this sense in certain *cywyddau*.’ (Bromwich, 1961, p. 170).

Also, consider the following stanza which has been published in an article of *The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory* entitled ‘The Year’s Sleep; or, The Forest of the Yew Tree’ (Hughes (ed.), 1830, pp. 58-59). The stanza is believed to refer to a legend related to a patch of woodland named Ffridd yr Ywen, because in its middle there is a huge yew tree. In the woodland there are many green circles which are called ‘the dancing places of the goblins’. Legend has it that once a servant became entrapped in such a circle, could be rescued after one year, but died as soon as he touched human food. Elias Owen refers to the stanza as an example which treats ‘ellyphon’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ as synonyms.

Pan dramwych ffridd yr Ywen,
Lle mae *Tylwyth Têg* yn rhodien
Dos ymlaen, a phaid a sefyll,
Gwilia’th droed – rhag dawnsva’r *Ellyll*.

(Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 4)

When you pass through the woodland of yew trees,
where the fairies [Tylwyth Teg] stroll,
go ahead, do not delay,
watch your step – beware the dancing-place of the fairies.’ (my trans.)

However, he suggests that this identity of ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘Ellyll’ was motivated by the poetics:

Although the poet mentions the Tylwyth Têg and Ellyll as identical, he might have done so for rhythmical reasons. Undoubtedly, in the first instance a distinction would

be drawn between these two words, which originally were intended perhaps to describe two different kinds of beings, but in the course of time the words became interchangeable, and thus their distinctive character was lost.

(ibid.)

This shows that Owen acknowledges the interchangeable use of ‘ellyll’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ in his period but sees a difference between them. His translation of ‘dawnsva’r ellyll’ is ‘goblin’s dancing sword’, but ‘Tylwyth Teg’ are translated as ‘fairies’. Indeed, the stanza and its translations represent the problem of the confusing use of words to translate both ellyllon and Tylwyth Teg in a nutshell, for the editor of the journal translates ‘Tylwyth Teg’ with ‘elves’ and ‘dawnsva’r ellyll’ with ‘spirit’s dancing sword’ (Hughes (ed.), 1830, p. 58).

T. Gwynn Jones, too, sees a difference between ‘Ellyllon’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’: ‘The Welsh *Tylwyth Teg* are non-ghostly apparitions, whereas the *Bwbach*, *Bwca*, *Bwci*, *Bwgan*, *Coblyn* and *Ellyll*, sometimes classified as Fairies, are not’ (Jones, 1979, p. 51).⁹ However, Jones does not provide evidence, nor does he define ‘ghostly’ or ‘non-ghostly’, but his statement suggests that he considers the Tylwyth Teg to be corporeal, in contrast to ghosts which have no body (Jones, 1979, p. 51). His opinion might be based on early modern Welsh dictionaries: in *A Dictionary in English and Welsh* William Salesbury defines ‘ellyll’ as ‘ghost’, whereas for ‘Tulwyth tec’ he translates ‘fairies’ (1547). John Davies’s *Dictionarium Duplex Britannico Latinum* (1632) translates ‘ellyll’ as ‘idolum, spectrum, lemures, laruæ’ (DD, s.v. ‘ellyll’). This indicates that the Tylwyth Teg differ from ghosts. According to *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, ‘ellyll’ covers a broad range of meanings:

goblin, elf, fairy, sprite, genius (of a place, &c.), apparition, phantom, spectre, wraith, ghost, shade, bogey; evil spirit, fiend, devil, demon, *bibl.* a kind of demon that haunts ruins, satyr, familiar spirit; a diabolically cruel person.

(GPC, s.v. ‘ellyll’)

Leaving aside the figurative use of ‘ellyll’ for describing ‘a diabolically cruel person’, we find that the possible meanings can be arranged in three main groups. One of these describes supernatural beings, such as ‘goblin’, ‘elf’, ‘fairy’ and ‘satyr’. Evidence for the corporeal nature of these creatures can be found, although, depending on the way they are integrated in the Christian cosmology, this corporeal nature can be discussed controversially (see below). The second group comprises ‘sprite’, ‘genius’, ‘apparition’, ‘phantom’, ‘spectre’, ‘wraith’, ‘ghost’, ‘shade’ which all describe immaterial, soul-like entities. Finally, the last group of

⁹ This difference T. Gwynn Jones sees between ‘ellyllon’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ reflects his use of English, for he translates ‘ellyllon’ with ‘elves’, but ‘Tylwyth Teg’ with ‘fairies’ (Jones 1979, p. 33).

possible translations refers to spirit-beings of evil character: ‘bogey’, ‘evil spirit’, ‘fiend’, ‘devil’, and ‘demon’. This evidence suggests indeed that *ellyllon* are rather ghostly, non-corporeal apparitions, and therefore, they would differ essentially from the Tylwyth Teg *if* the latter were always seen as being corporeal. Therefore, it is crucial to address the question whether there is evidence which proves that the Tylwyth Teg are believed to be corporeal creatures.

In a more recent essay on fairy folklore, Robin Gwyndaf follows T. Gwynn Jones by defining fairies as ‘non-ghostly apparitions’ (Gwyndaf, 1991, p. 160). Gwyndaf does not consider ‘Ellyllon’ as equivalent to ‘Tylwyth Teg’, either, for he lists as Welsh names for the fairies only ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’, ‘Plant Annwn’, ‘Bendith y Mamau’ and ‘Dynon Bach Teg’ (ibid., pp. 159-60). Nevertheless, we must caution against absolutist statements regarding the nature of the Tylwyth Teg, for opinion varies in both oral and written sources, and is often contradictory. The following examples will show that it is impossible to simply classify ‘fairies’ or ‘Tylwyth Teg’ as corporeal or non-corporeal: ideas concerning their physical nature vary from source to source, from period to period and according to wider context.¹⁰ Thus, we may not use corporeality to decide concerning the semantic identity of the terms ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘Ellyllon’, either.

Turning to the question of corporeality of the fairies, strong evidence in favour of corporeality are tales in which sexual intercourse between fairies and mortals is involved, e.g., fairy mistress legends which mention offspring from marriages between mortal men and fairy -women,¹¹ while testimonies about the pure spiritual or ghostly character of the Tylwyth Teg are found, e.g., in records collected by Evans-Wentz. Evans-Wentz quotes Rev. T. M. Morgan, vicar of Newchurch parish not far from Carmarthen:

The *Tylwyth Teg* were believed to live in some invisible world to which children on dying might go to be rewarded or punished, according to their behaviour on this earth. Even in this life the *Tylwyth Teg* had power over children for good or evil. The belief, as these ideas show, was that the *Tylwyth Teg* were spirits.

(T. M. Morgan as quoted by Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 150)

J. Ceredig Davies of Llanilar is quoted by Evans-Wentz as follows:

¹⁰ The second part of the thesis deals with the historical development of ideas about the fairies.

¹¹For a collection of Welsh fairy mistress legends see: Rhŷs (2012 [1901], pp. 1-74), Owen (1973 [1887], pp. 5-24). For scholarly introduction to the genre see Wood (1992), Davies (2018), Silver (1999, pp. 89-116). The fairy mistress tales will be discussed further in chapter 3 of this thesis. A famous abduction tale is the tale of Gwyn ap Nudd abducting Creiddylad.

By many of the old people the *Tylwyth Teg* were classed with spirits. They were not looked upon as mortal at all. Many of the Welsh looked upon the *Tylwyth Teg* or fairies as the spirits of Druids dead before the time of Christ, who being too good to be cast into Hell were allowed to wander freely about earth.

(J. Ceredig Davies as quoted by Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 147)

This question of whether fairies are ghostly and spiritual, or corporeal can be very complicated, in cases when they are described as devils or inhabitants of hell, frequently found in texts which treat ‘Annwn’ and ‘uffern’ as synonyms.¹² As devils are fallen angels, the debate of the fairies’ corporeal or non-corporeal nature relates to the multi-layered and complex ecclesiastic discussion about the nature of angels, fallen angels and demons. In medieval texts we do not find references to ‘Tylwyth Teg’, but we find e.g., references to Gwyn ap Nudd’s people. *Culhwch ac Olwen* describes Gwyn ap Nudd thus: ‘Ni heli[r] Twrch Trwyth nes kaffel Guynn mab Nud ar dodes Duw aryal dieuyl Annwuyn yndaw rac rewinnyaw y bressen’ (‘Twrch Trwyth will not be hunted until Gwyn ap Nudd is obtained, in whom God put the spirit of the devils of Annwn lest the world would be destroyed’ (CO, ll. 714-715), and early modern *Buchedd Collen* has this to say about Gwyn ap Nudd and his subjects:

Ac val yr oedd ef ddiwyrnod yn i gvddigyl, ef a glowai ddav ddyn yn siarad am Wyn Ap Ynvdd, ac yn dywedvd mai hwnw oedd vyrenin Anwn. Ac estyn anaeth Kollen i ben allan o’i gvddigl a dywedvd: ‘Tewch yn vvan; nid oes o’r hai hyny ond kythyrelied.

(BCa, p. 39)

And as he was in his cell one day, he heard two men talking of Gwyn ap Nudd, and saying that he was king of Annwn. And Collen put his head forth from his cell and said ‘Be silent quickly! Those ones are nothing but devils.’

(my trans.)

These examples give evidence that some medieval and early modern authors believed the subjects of Gwyn ap Nudd and inhabitants of the otherworld to be devils. In these cases, we must understand the ecclesiastic concept of the angelic nature for understanding the medieval ideas related to the question of their corporeality. According to Gregory the Great, the angelic nature implies that angels, fallen angels included, are living spirits not enclosed in flesh (GDL, 4.3).¹³ But how can supernatural beings who are supposed to be pure spirit interact with man in the mundane world? William of Newburgh offers a solution: ‘operatione diaboli, qui nimirum per angelicae naturae potentiam in elementis mundanis plurimum potest’ (‘the devil

¹² For ‘Annwn’ being not identical to ‘Uffern’ cf. chapter 2.

¹³ Bartlett introduces Gregory the Great’s opinion on the nature of beings as voiced in *Dialogi* as ‘a common medieval opinion’ (Bartlett, 2008, p. 72).

[...] can influence the physical elements very much through the power of his angelic nature') (text & trans.: Bartlett, 2008, p. 76), which implies that by influencing the physical elements a body could be created so that physical contact to human beings could be enabled. If the fairies are to be considered as devils, i.e. fallen angels, or as angels not entirely fallen, just stuck between heaven and hell, an idea which remained a popular folk belief in Wales, Scotland and Ireland (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], pp. 53, 67, 109), then they were - according to ecclesiastical doctrine- by nature pure spirit beings without a corporeal body, although they could probably create one.¹⁴ I will not go further into the field of scholastic controversial discussions about the nature of the angelic body, but I think these examples suffice to shown that corporeality is not an apt feature for identifying fairy beings. We must conclude that a fairy must be identified from the context and with the help of the motifs. Moreover, in the argument regarding the relationship of 'ellyllon' and 'tylwyth teg' and the semantics of 'ellyllon' we must analyse further uses and folk beliefs connected with 'ellyll/ellyllon'.

Another way 'ellyll' seems to be used concerns ideas of the soul being a composite entity. The soul having a composite nature shows in beliefs connected with the double or fetch, for it was believed that it is this part of the soul which can wander when a person is sleeping, or ill, or in an ecstatic state such as a shaman experiences (Lecouteux, 2003, pp. 5- 9). Often the double takes animal shape. A Welsh example of the soul travelling in the shape of a lizard has been collected by T. Gwynn Jones 1906 in Flintshire (1979, p. 202). Tales about the double are wide-spread and appear both in medieval European literature and in European folklore. Éva Pócs summarizes these beliefs as follows:

Certain *archaic notions of the soul* seem to be present in every European culture as universal grounds for communication with the spirit world and appear to be basic criteria underlying any type of communication with the supernatural. According to European religions, i.e. beliefs, humans have a *life soul*. Humans are also held to have a *free, external* or *shadow soul (alter ego)* which can become detached from the body. It may take the shape of an animal, but it also has bodily/physical and soul/spiritual variants, as well as forms which fill the role of *accompanying soul, destiny soul* or *guardian soul*.

(Pócs, 2011, p. 102)

Seeing the double is often a death-omen (Trevelyan, 1973 [1909], p. 186).¹⁵

¹⁴ This question remained crucial in the early modern time and was of central importance for the witchcraft beliefs and the witchcraft processes, too, for it touched the question in which way a witch could have intercourse with demons or the devil. (see also Bartlett, 2008, p. 76).

¹⁵ For the double in medieval European literature and folklore see Lecouteux (2003).

In ‘Dan y Bargod’, Dafydd ap Gwilym describes himself waiting outside the house of his beloved Morfudd on a cold winter’s night, but she does not open despite his fervent knocking:

Yma ydd wyf trwy annwyd
 Tau ddawn, yn y tŷ ydd wyd
 Amau fydd gan a’m hirglyw
 Yma, fy aur, ymy fyw
 Yna y mae f’enaïd glân
 A’m ellyll yma allan.
 Ymaith fy meddwl nid â
 Amwyll a’m peris yma.
 Amod â mi a wneddwyd
 Yma ydd wyf, a mae’dd wyd?

Here I am, impelled by passion,
 whilst you have the fortune of being indoors.
 Whoever hears me here, my precious girl,
 must doubt whether I will live.
 My pure soul is there within
 and my phantom here outside.
 My mind just won't go away,
 it is madness that has brought me here.
 You made a contract with me,
 here I am, but where are you?

(text and trans.: DAG 98, ll. 37-45)

The lines ‘Yna y mae f’enaïd glân / A’m ellyll yma allan.’ are remarkable, for they suggest a contrast between two spiritual entities, namely the soul with the epithet of purity located within (a house) and the ellyll linked to the term ‘allan’ (outside). This connection is even strengthened by the *cynghanedd groes* linking ‘ellyll’ and ‘allan’, whereas the rhyme at the end of the lines connects ‘glân’ (‘pure’) and ‘allan’. Thus, as we see from the citation below, it contrasts the purity indoors and ‘annwyd’ (‘passion’) and ‘amwyll’ (‘madness’) outside (‘allan’), the latter three linked by assonance. After all, ‘ellyll’ is connected with a state of possession, namely being possessed by the desire for a girl.

Translations which have been suggested for ‘ellyll’ in this place are ‘wraith’ or ‘apparition/drychiolaeth’ (DAG, *ibid.*), contrasting ‘soul’. This translation agrees with ‘ellyll’ referring to a noncorporeal, ghost-like entity (see above). It has also been suggested that ‘ellyll’ has to be understood as a soulless body (DAG, n. 42), which would represent a nice contrast to ‘soul’ but looking at the field of meaning which ‘ellyll’ covers, ‘dead body’ or any bodily entity does certainly not correspond to ‘ellyll’, it would be even contradictory. But

Dafydd is in an ecstatic state. Thus, ‘ellyll’ could indeed refer to his spectral double. T. Gwynn Jones comes to a similar conclusion:

The meaning seems to be that the soul which is his, that is, himself, is the maiden in the house, and that the image of it, or the other-self, is outside. This is perhaps another way of saying what poets often say in different ways, that the beloved person is the soul, but the use of the term *ellyll* is notable, as in other contexts it has the undoubted meaning, not only of a ghost, or a demon, but also of one’s own ghost or spirit, or perhaps one’s attendant ghost, one’s other self. [...] Many medieval stories in which magic plays a part, as well as some modern accounts of the “double” are perhaps due to primitive conceptions perpetuated in speech-forms and occasionally visualized.

(Jones, 1979, p. 204)

In Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem ‘Ei Gysgod’, ‘ellyll’ appears, too. The poem is a dialogue between Dafydd and his shadow when he is waiting under a birch tree for a girl.

Nage, ŵr hael, anwr hyll,
Nid wyf felly, dwf ellyll.

No, my good man (ugly wretch),
I’m not like that, appearance of a fiend.

(text and translation: DAG, 63, ll. 21-22)

Here the translator has chosen ‘fiend’ for ‘ellyll’, which is a good choice when stressing that the shadow is an enemy to Dafydd’s self-confidence by showing a distorted image. But in context with the shadow, the motif of seeing one’s own image, the ‘fetch’ (i.e., ‘double’) would fit equally well. Perhaps, using ‘ellyll’ Dafydd addressed both levels of meaning, which is hard for us to translate, as we do not have a word at hand which covers both meanings, let alone that we are today culturally far removed from the concept of the double, so that this choice does not come naturally to a translator in our period.

Iolo Goch uses *ellyll* in the sense of ‘wraith’ or ‘shade’. He has the soul accusing the drunken body with the words ‘ellyll meingul wyd’, and ‘ellyll’ is used in this context to stress the weakness of the body, so that the elusiveness and the lack of power which resonate with the words ‘shade’ or ‘wraith’ suggest this translation.

Tithau yn egwan d’annwyd
Mewn glwth, ellyll meingul wyd
Yn chwyrnu megis chwyrenell

(IGE xxvi, 18-20)

You [are] of feeble nature/passion/ energy
in a bed, a tenuous wraith you are,
snoring like a whirl

(trans. A.R.)

Guto'r Glyn uses 'ellyll' in the cywydd 'Ateb i ddychan Llywelyn ap Gutun' in a sense which suggests 'ellyll' being a soul-like entity:

Mae'n taeru, man y tiriwyf,
 Mai lledrith hen Malltraeth wyf,
 Bod ynof, bywyd enwir,
 Bysgod yn dyfod i dir,
 Bod moelrhon i'm dwyfron deg
 Neu f'ellyll yn y falleg.

He insists that I'm Malltraeth's old spectre
 at the place where I come to land,
 that there are fish inside me coming to land,
 ungodly existence,
 that there's a seal in my fair breast
 or my apparition in the cage.

(text and translation: GGI 65, ll. 31-36)

In this latter case a translation of 'ellyll' with 'soul' in the sense of 'double' would fit even better, for it is the double which wanders. A caged double would be as unnatural as fish coming to land.

Rachel Bromwich suggests that 'ellyll' is used to refer to men taken by (battle) fury who are beside (outside) themselves.

These instances are relevant to triads 63, 64, in which the suggested implication of *ellyll* is that of men who become 'outside' themselves. The concept here may be related to Old Norse *furor bersericus* or *berserksgangr* (Cleasby-Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, second edition, p. 61). For something similar in Celtic sources, cf. the Ir. epithet *geilt* in the name and story of *Suibhne Geilt*, and the related story of *Myrddin* [...] who is called *Gwyllt*.

(Bromwich, 1961, p. 170)

Triads 63 and 64 are the 'Three Bull Spectres of Britain' and the 'Three Wild Spectres of the Island of Britain', respectively. She comments on triad 64 'Tri Gwyd Ellyll Ynys Brydein': 'The term *ydellyll* (for *gwydellyll*?) occurs in the *Gododdin* reference to furious activity in battle' (Bromwich, 1961, p. 171). The battle fury is an ecstatic state, and in such states the double can leave the body. Thus, we can conclude: *ellyll* is associated with ecstatic states and to some spiritual essence travelling outside the body. So, we find the situation that we have a word which relates the wandering soul and exceptional states of consciousness to magical creatures.

This Welsh example finds a parallel in medieval German beliefs. Considering in this context the medieval German equivalent of ‘elf’ is instructive, for it proves another example of medieval European language which uses the same word for the double and magical creatures, namely the elves. The medieval German ‘Alb/Alp’ (OHG) or ‘elb’ MHG) is equivalent to the modern German ‘Elf’ (Drosdowski, s.v. ‘Elf, Elfe’), and correspond etymologically to the modern English ‘elf’. ‘Elb’ was used to describe a beautiful fairy-like being as Heinrich von Morungen’s poetry illustrates: ‘Von den elben wirt entsên vil manic man’ (‘many a man is enticed by the elves’, my trans.) (Curschmann & Glier, 1987, p. 512). Morungen sings of his desperate love for a beautiful woman. Referring to the elves in the opening line of his love poem, he compares the power of love for the venerated woman to the magical power and beauty by which elves enchant men. But the medieval *Alb* was also a spirit that exerted physical pressure on a sleeping person, causing nightmares: in German, ‘Albtraum’. It was believed that certain persons turned into *Alb* and wandered at night (Petzhold, 1990, p. 16). Additionally, it was believed that the *Alb* was a soul-like entity which could leave the body in the shape of a mouse (G. ‘Albmaus’) (ibid.).¹⁶ This idea of the *Alb* being a spiritual entity able to travel outside the body recalls the ‘ellyll’ in ‘Dan y Bargod’. The similarities between these beliefs cannot be regarded coincidental, but they belong to a system of beliefs which have been common in medieval Europe. A crucial point is that magical beings like elves and ellyllon share the name with this soul-like entity which can leave the body. Understanding fully the meaning of these beings which have been assimilated to the Tylwyth Teg will also enhance the understanding for the meaning of tales about the Tylwyth Teg.

Indeed, a further connection between the double and the fairies has been identified. Lecouteux suggests that a fairy is a form of the ‘psychic double’ that appears not merely in medieval texts and folk traditions in Europe, but also in the wider Northern hemisphere: he sees parallels between the psychic double in fairy tales, and the supernatural wife in shamanistic tales from Siberia. These female characters, he says, are a manifestation of an ecstatic experience, an idea borrowed from Mircea Eliade:¹⁷

Eliade suggests that the theme of the supernatural wife is a “derivation” – meaning “deviation”, as well – or manifestation of the ecstatic experience. According to the

¹⁶ An early example of the belief that the soul leaves the body in shape of a little animal is the legend of King Guntram told by Paul the Deacon in the late 7C *Historia Langobardorum*. For trans.: Lecouteux (2003, pp. 91-92). This long-lasting, Europe-wide belief is attested in Wales, collected by T. Gwynn Jones in early 20C Flintshire (see above).

¹⁷ See Eliade (2004, pp. 79-81).

account of the Goldi shaman, the supernatural woman, or *áyami*, is comparable in many ways to the Norse *fylgia* and the Celtic fairies.

(Lecouteux, 2003, p. 70)

This shows that the idea of the double as introduced above does not only apply to ‘*ellyll*’, to *ellyllon* or elves, but it is a general concept which applies to a whole range of fairy-like beings. The meaning ‘double’ for ‘*ellyll*’ is rooted in the same beliefs which gave rise to tales about ‘*ellyllon*’, ‘elves’ or ‘*Tylwyth Teg*’. On this level the discussion about the differences and similarities between *Tylwyth Teg* and *ellyllon* is not useful, and we must caution against an absolutist categorizing of fairy beings. However, it must be noted that the use of the words is subject to a historical development, and differences may be introduced in the course of time and by novel meaning which becomes attached to expressions. Therefore, investigating the different expressions for fairy beings can reveal their nature and their cultural background which has been demonstrate by this investigation on the meaning of ‘*ellyllon*’ in comparison to ‘*Tylwyth Teg*’.

1.1.3 Coblyn, Bwbach, Bwgan, Pwca/Pwci

Words such as ‘*coblyn*’, ‘*bwbach*’, ‘*bwgan*’, ‘*pwca*’ or ‘*pwci*’ shall be considered briefly for the sake of completeness. Like ‘*ellyll*’, they share the meanings of ‘ghost’, ‘spirit’ or ‘sprite’. Elias Owen writes about the *coblynnau* (sing. *coblyn*):

The *Coblynnau* or *Knockers* were supposed to be a species of Fairies who had their abode in the rocks, and whose province it was to indicate by knocks, and other sounds, the presence of ore in mines.

(Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 112)

This shows that Owen considers the *coblynnau* to be fairy creatures. T. Gwynn Jones admits that they were sometimes classified as fairies, but that they were, in contrast to the *Tylwyth sTeg*, ghostly apparitions (Jones, 1979, p. 51). With the same argument, Jones does not identify ‘*bwbach*’, ‘*bwgan*’, ‘*pwca*’ or ‘*pwci*’ as fairies.

The possible meaning of those names as revealed in dictionaries supports the Jones’ statement regarding the ghostly nature of those creatures. The word ‘*coblyn*’ is described as ‘goblin, sprite, imp, bogie’ by GPC (*s.v.* ‘*coblyn*’), the *Dictionarium Duplex* gives L.

‘lemures’ (‘ghosts’) (DD, s.v. ‘coblyn’).¹⁸ ‘Bwbach’ and ‘bwgan’ can both be translated as ‘bugbear’ and ‘ghost’ (GPC, s.v. ‘bwbach’). ‘Bwbach’ can also be described as ‘spectre, phantom’ or ‘scarecrow’ with the verb ‘bwbachu’ (‘to scare’), whereas ‘bwgan’ can be additionally used to describe ‘hobgoblin’ (GPC). The ‘pwca’ or ‘pwci’ is described as ‘sprite, goblin, ghost, bogey’. Similar words are found in English ‘puck’, in Irish ‘púca’ and in Icelandic ‘púki’ (‘demon’).

In contrast to T Gwynn Jones, Briggs classes ‘bwbach’, ‘bwgan’, ‘pwca’ or ‘pwci’ with the house spirits, whereas she believes that the Tylwyth Teg have to be classed with the trooping fairies, i.e. with the fairies who appear always in large groups (Briggs, 1978, pp. 40-42; 53-65).¹⁹ Analysing fairy stories according to narrative motifs seems to be the more promising way to identify fairy creatures, for according to some sources some of which have been mentioned above) the Tylwyth Teg are ghostly entities as well, the spirits of the druids or of children (see above).

1.1.4 Gwyll(i)on

‘The Gwyllion’, says Sikes, ‘are female fairies of frightful characteristics, who haunt lonely roads in the Welsh mountains, and lead night-wanderers astray’ (Sikes, 1880, pp. 49), and Elisa Owen also uses ‘gwyll(i)on’ for the fairies. Owen refers to Thomas Richards’ *Antiquae Linguae Britannicae Thesaurus* s.v. ‘Gŵyll’ (1753) (TR).

Gwyll, according to Richards, and Dr. Owen Pughe, is a Fairy, a goblin, &c. The plural of *Gwyll* would be *Gwylliaid*, or *Gwyllion*, but this latter word Dr. Pughe defines as hobgoblins, &c.

(Owen, 1973, 1887, p. 4)

‘Gwyllion’ has a similar connotation to ‘ellyllon’, for Davies’ *Dictionary Duplex* translates ‘Gŵyll’ as ‘strix’, ‘lamia’ and ‘larva’ (DD).²⁰ The Latin ‘strix’ [<Gr. στρίγξ, cf. στρίζω] means screech owl (Stowasser, 1980, s.v. ‘strix’), but it also denotes a female demon who attacks

¹⁸ Interestingly, W. Owen Pughe translates ‘Coblyn y Coed’ as ‘woodpecker’ in *A Welsh and English Dictionary* (1794, s.v. ‘coblyn y coed’).

¹⁹ This classification must be rejected because the Tylwyth Teg do not exclusively appear in large groups, as e.g. the fairy mistress tales prove.

²⁰ A survey on demonic female spirits has been composed by West (1990). Lamia is related to water by her being the daughter of Poseidon and the mother of Scylla and Akheilos, two sea-monsters. The *Striges* are demons killing children (OF VI, 142), but ‘strix’ is a loan from Greek (‘στρίγξ’) for the screech owl (Stowasser, 1980, s.v. ‘strix’).

children in a manner similar to the 'lamia' (OF VI, 131-150; DS XX, 41; Bell, 2009). 'Larva' a word to describe the spirits of the dead or ghosts (Dixon-Kennedy, 1998, p. 188). Salesbury translates 'Gwyll' as nightmare (WS).²¹ Pughe translates 'fairy' and 'goblin', but also suggests 'night-walker', 'shade' and 'ghost' or 'hag' (WED, s.v. 'Gwyll'). *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (GPC) offers 'ellyll, gwrach' ('witch'), 'un o'r tylwyth teg', but also 'tylluan (wen)' ('(screech owl)') and 'drychiolaeth' ('apparition, ghost, spectre, phantom') as synonyms of 'ŵyll'. Thus, the word 'ŵyll/gŵyll' applies to fearsome supernatural characters.

The screech owl 'tylluan' as bird of the night is associated with the king of the fairies, Gwyn ap Nudd, by Dafydd ap Gwilym in 'Y Dylluan' (DAG, 61, l. 40), showing another connection with the fairy beliefs. Dafydd ap Gwilym calls her 'ellylles adar' which has been translated 'ghoul of the birds' (DAG, 61, ll. 32). It would be tempting to see also an association with Blodeuwedd, for she is turned into a bird of the night, and Gwydion predicts that she will be hated by the birds; a parallel that has been noted by Rachel Bromwich (DAG, n. 61, l.32). However, this does not necessarily imply a relationship between Blodeuwedd and Gwyn ap Nudd's bird, the owl, because the hatred of all other birds for the owl is a motif which was commonly known in medieval Europe and could be traced back to classical sources (Hirsh, 1974, pp. 146, 148). Blodeuwedd's associations with the fairy-world is not so clear in this case, either, nor is it clear what being Blodeuwedd is, for the Fourth Branch only mentions that Math and Gwydion took flowers and created a woman by magic and enchantment (PKM, p. 83). She might be entirely without a soul-like entity, but as she is baptized, we could assume that she is not thought without having a soul. So, Blodeuwedd's case only the image of the owl is in agreement with the female fairies named Gwyllion. After all, the analysis of 'gwyllion' as name applying for a class of fairies brought forth the association with an animal, the screech owl. We can suppose a relationship of 'Gwyllion' to 'Gwrachiod Annwn' ('witches of Annwn') who are magical characters appearing in Dafydd ap Gwilym's 'Y Niwl' in the company of tylwyth Gwyn and ellyllon (DAG, 57, l. 44). Moreover, the possible translation 'hag' and 'witch' as well as the suggested synonym 'gwrach' show the predominance of a female element and emphasize the enchantment and magic the fairies are related to.²²

²¹ The nightmare is in Germanic tradition a bad dream caused by an elfin character, the Alb. Hence German: 'Albtraum' for 'nightmare' (Petzold, 1990, p.16). See above 1.1.2

²² Note that 'lamia' and 'striga' can both be translated as 'witch', which implies for a modern reader a human nature, but both characters are originally demonic, non-human, such as 'hagazussa' (OHG) (Schwaiger, 1988, p. 41).

1.1.5 Bendith y (eu) Mamau

In 1567 the expression '*Bendith û Mammau*' signifying 'the fairies' appears first in John Penry's *The Aequity of a Humble Supplicant* with the aim that the gospel can be preached in Welsh in every parish. For describing the necessity of religious education, he reports about the folk beliefs involving the fairies. It is a rare piece of early modern evidence of folk fairy beliefs which are often only accessible by documents of court sessions, e.g. in witchcraft trials or trials of cunning people in this period (cf. chapter 5).²³

It is worth citing here in full the interesting passage in which John Penry describes the fairy belief:

Hence flow our fwarms of fouthfayers, and enchanter, such as will not sticke openly, to professe that they walke, on Tuesdaies, and Thursdaies at nights, with the fairies, of whom they brag themselves to have their knowledge. These sonnes of Belial, who shuld die the death, Leuit. 20,6 haue stroken such an astonishing reuerence of the fairies, into the hearts of our filly people that they dare not name thē, without honour. We call them *bendith û mamme*, that is such haue deserued their mothers blessing. Now our people wil never vtter, *bendith û mamme*, but they wil saie, *bendith û mamme û dhûn*, that is their mothers blessing (which they account the greatest felicity that any creature can be capable of) light vpon them, as though they were not to be named without reuerence. Hence proceed open defending of Purgatory & the Real presence, praying vnto images &c. with other infinit monstres.

(Penry 1960 [1587], p. 33)

T.P. in *Cas gan Gythraul* (1711) speaks of 'y cyfryw Ysrydion, sef, y maent yn ei alw yn dylwyth tēg, eithr yn neheubarth y maent yn ei galw yn Fendith eu mamau.' ('the same kind of spirits, namely, they call them Tylwyth Teg, but in Deheubarth they call them Bendith eu Mamau', my trans.) (CGC, p. 24). The *English and Welsh Dictionary* edited by John Rhydderch in 1737 considers 'ellyll', 'Tylwyth Teg', and 'Bendith eu Mamau' as being synonymous. We read s.v. 'A Fairy': '[E]llyll un or tylwyth tēg, neu fendith eu mammau'. As far as nineteenth century folklore is concerned, John Rhŷs and T. Gwynn Jones claim that the term 'bendith y mamau' is geographically restricted to Glamorgan (Rhŷs 2012 [1901], p. 174; Jones 1979, p. 51). Thus, we have ample proof that 'Bendith y Mamau' and 'Tylwth Teg' are synonyms.

Modern folklorists have tried to explain the expression 'Bendith y Mamau' for the fairies in different ways. John Rhŷs maintained: 'Christianity failed to put an end to the belief in these divine Mothers and Virgins: it was continued in connection with benignant fairies and

²³ For biographical details see Pierce (1923).

the Madonna' (2008 [1888], p. 102). However, Rhys' theory is only based on the words 'matres' ('mothers'), 'matronae' ('wives, ladies') and 'mamau' ('mothers') appearing in the names of the Gallo-Roman deities and the Welsh fairies, respectively. This interpretation is driven by the questionable wish to rediscover a Celtic pantheon surviving in the folklore of Glamorgan.

William J. Gruffydd provides another explanation of 'Their /The Mother's Blessing':

As to *Bendith* 'blessing', I can only suggest that it is used to propitiate the fairies just as the Greeks spoke of the Furies as *Eumenides*, 'the Gracious Ones.' If this is correct the *Bendith y Mamau* is a propitiatory term for *Melltith y Mamau*, 'The Curse of the Matres.'

(Gruffydd, 1958, p. 5)

This use of 'Bendith y [= eu] Mamau' suggests that the fairies are not 'well-disposed' but, rather, vengeful, dangerous characters who have to be appeased by being addressed in a polite manner. Gruffydd's idea is supported by the medieval *Speculum Christiani* discussed below (1.2), in which the subjects of Gwyn ap Nudd are addressed as 'Eumenides', and by Penry's evidence that the fairies are always addressed with respect and honour, a fact which can also be understood as an appeasing behaviour.

1.1.7 Dynon Bach Teg, Plant Rhys Ddwfn

Equally appeasing as 'Bendith y (eu) Mamau' is 'Dynon Bach Teg' ('Fair Little Men'), used to refer to the fairies in Pembrokeshire (Jones 1979, p. 51). However, there is not much more to be said about this local expression. Another more frequently found way to refer to the fairies in Pembrokeshire is 'Plant Rhys Ddwfn'. According to Rhys, 'Plant Rhys Ddwfn' is likewise restricted to Pembrokeshire, and both Rhys and Jones claim that it is equivalent to 'Y Tylwyth Teg' (Rhys 2012 [1901], p. 161; Jones 1979, p. 53). Alwyn and Brinley Rees suggest that 'the name is probably a corruption of *Plant yr Is-ddwfn* or *Plant Rhi Is-ddwfn*, "the children (of the King of) the Nether World"' (1961, p. 179), and R. Geraint Gruffydd (1987, p. 29) concurs that '*Plant Rhys Ddwfn*' should be glossed as 'plant Is-ddwfn' or 'plant isfyd' ('tribe of the underworld'). This view has recently been further supported by Sims-Williams, referring to a line in Dafydd ap Gwilym's 'Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gwilym (DAG, 6, l. 21): 'Pendefig, gwledig gwlad yr hud - is dwfn' ('Prince, lord of the land of magic below the world') (Sims-Williams, 2011, p. 58).

1.1.8 Y Teulu, Tylwyth Gwyn

Ieuan Fardd gives ‘Y Teulu’ as one of the synonyms of ‘Y Tylwyth Teg’ (1.1.1). ‘Teulu’, just like ‘tylwyth’, can mean ‘family, tribe, retinue’, but equally ‘war-band’ or ‘host’. It is etymologically identical with the word ‘toili’ used for the phantom funeral, and T. Gwynn Jones gives ‘Cŵn Toili’ as a synonym of ‘Cŵn Annwn’ and ‘Cŵn Bendith y Mamau’ (1979, p. 203). It is striking that ‘Teulu/Toili’ refers not only to the fairies, but also the phantom funeral, an omen of death, ‘tolaeth’, which is described by Wirt Sikes as follows:

Of the Teulu, or Goblin Funeral, a death-portent of wide prevalence in Wales, numberless stories are told. This omen is sometimes a form of the Tolaeth, but in itself constitutes an omen which is simple and explicit. A funeral procession is seen passing down the road, and at the same time it is heard. It has no shadowy goblin aspect, but appears to be a real funeral. Examination shows its shadowy nature. Subsequently a real funeral passes the same way, and is recognised as the fulfilment of the omen. The goblin funeral precedes the other sometimes by days, sometimes by weeks.

(Sikes, 1880, p. 231)

We might ask what a possible connection between the fairies and a death portent can exist. Among the tales Sikes collected about the phantom funeral is one in which the witness of the funeral sees his spectral double while beholding the mourners (*ibid.*, p. 232). This tale shows the connection between the fairies and the death omen. We see that the beliefs connected with the death omen *toili* are related to the belief of the spectral double. The spectral double recalls the *ellyll* which represents the spectral double, as has been shown above. Moreover, we have already discussed in the context with the *ellyll* that fairies in general can be a representation of the spectral double. Seeing the double is a widely known death omen in Europe (Lecouteux, 2003, p. 129). In this we can identify common motifs of fairy beliefs and beliefs in death omens. Moreover, the semantics of ‘fairies’ relates to ‘fatedness’. The ability to perceive the apparition resembles an inspired state which allows prediction of the future.

The name ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’ appears in Dafydd ap Gwilym’s ‘Y Niwl’ (DAG 57): ‘Tyrau uchel eu helynt / Tylwyth Gwyn, talaith y gwynt’ (‘Towers of Gwyn’s tribe / travelling on high, headdress of the wind’) (31–2). ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’ might be considered equivalent expressions, especially if ‘gwyn’ is translated as ‘fair’: both could be translated as ‘fair tribe’. However, Dafydd ap Gwilym is clearly referring to Gwyn ap Nudd: line 40 has ‘Gwyn a’i dylwyth’ (‘Gwyn and his tribe’). Therefore, ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’ is a pun paraphrasing Tylwyth Teg which actually emphasizes the identity of ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’. The imitator of Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem who composed ‘Y Niwl Hudolus’

uses the term ‘Tylwyth Teg’ instead of ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’: ‘Barthlwyrth y Tylwyth Teg’ (‘from the homestead of the Fairy Folk’) (text and trans. Fulton, 1996, pp. 120-121).

1.1.9 Plant Annwn

The expression ‘Plant Annwn’ originated in the eighteenth century: it appears first in Ellis Wynne’s *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* which uses ‘Plant Annwn’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ synonymously. ‘Plant Annwn’ also appear in Theophilus Evans’ *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* (Evans, 1902 [1740], pp. 63, 77). In collections of Welsh folktales of the nineteenth century we read also about the fairy ladies living in the lakes of Wales who are called *Gwragedd Annwn* (Gwyndaf, 1991, p. 160). Sikes has picked up the expression for the lake ladies from an article in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* by John Pughe (1853, p. 203).²⁴

The identity of ‘Plant Annwn’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ is important, for ‘Annwn’ is a word which appears already in medieval texts at a time when ‘Tylwyth Teg’ has not yet shown in writing. Therefore, establishing the identity of ‘Plant Annwn’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ justifies the investigation of Annwn in medieval literature to see how the domain of these supernatural fairy creatures was imagined in this early period. In his paper on Gwyn ap Nudd, Brynley Roberts supports this conclusion by comparing the expressions *Cŵn Bendith y Mamau* and *Cŵn Annwn* on the basis of folklore collections by John Rhŷs, T. Gwynn Jones, J. Ceredig Davies, Edmund Jones’ *A Relation of Apparitions of Spirits* and the various versions of *Buchedd Collen*: ‘Enw arall ar gŵn Annwn yw Cŵn Bendith y Mamau; enw arall y Tylwyth Teg yw Plant Annwn’ (‘another name for the Dogs of Annwn is Dogs of the Bendith y Mamau; another name for the Tylwyth Teg is Plant Annwn’) (Roberts 1980/81, pp. 285-286).²⁵

To sum up, most Welsh names for the fairies, Gwyn’s subjects, have no negative connotation. The names are friendly, perhaps even appeasing by calling the fairies ‘fair’ or ‘Blessing of the Mothers’: Tylwyth Teg, Bendith y Mamau, Dynon Bach Teg, Tylwyth Gwyn, Y Teulu, or Plant Rhys Ddwfn. The choice of appeasing names suggests that they were believed to be powerful and were feared. Two expressions used for the fairies could also be

²⁴ Rhŷs mentions this name just once in *Celtic Folklore* (2012 [1901], p. 191) referring to Sikes’ *British Goblins* (1880, p. 35).

²⁵ Cŵn Annwn are supernatural hunting dogs hunting in the skies at night (Jones, 1979, p. 203). Cŵn Bendith y Mamau are considered to be equivalent to Cŵn Annwn by Edmund Jones: he recorded the opinion of one informant who believed the spectral dogs hunt on the route a corpse takes to the churchyard (2010 [1780], pp. 90-91).

used for ghosts and spirits, namely ‘ellyllon’ and ‘gwyllion’. The word ‘ellyll’ connects the fairy beliefs with ecstatic states such as battle-fury, and also with the belief that a soul-like entity is able to leave the body.

1.2. Y Tylwyth Teg and Latin Synonyms

In medieval Wales Welsh was not the only language used: the educated would also speak Latin, English and French, which became more important after the Norman conquest (Fulton, 2012, p. 157). Literate people who had a higher education, such as clerics and scholars, could read classical Latin and in less frequent cases even Greek texts.²⁶ But Latin was the *lingua franca* of the European Middle Ages. Fulton maintains: ‘The early conversion of Wales to Christianity in the fifth century nurtured a strong cultural tradition of Latin writing, mainly of a religious nature but also in the form of annals, chronicles, and philosophical work’ (Fulton, 2015, p. 159). As in the Welsh texts, there is a great variety of expressions for fairy-like characters in Latin, and here also, the fairies are identified by the motifs typical of fairy traditions.²⁷

In his *Itinerarium Cambriae* (1191), Gerald of Wales describes how the priest Elidorus stayed for some time in a subterranean kingdom of little people when he was a boy (IC, pp. 65-67). Gerald refers to the small people as ‘homunculi’: ‘apparuerunt ei homunculi duo staturae quasi pigmeae’ (‘two little men with the stature of pigmies appeared to him’, my trans.). This tale, included in various collections of tales about the Welsh fairies, is one of the earliest reports of a Welsh fairy tale: the narrative motifs and the plot of the story are typical of the Tylwyth Teg.²⁸ Jean Goodrich finds:

One of the earliest examples of peasant fairy lore that contributed to the popular conception of faerie was recorded in The Itinerary through Wales (ca. 1191) by Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales (ca. 1146-ca. 1223).

²⁶ A good example of a medieval scholar who had knowledge of both Latin and Greek is Gerald of Wales who compares the alleged language of the little people with Greek (IC, p. 67).

²⁷ For typical motifs see the indices by Baughman (1966) or Thompson (1955-1959). The following works on fairy folklore contain concise motif indices of typical narrative motifs and tale-types Briggs (1978, pp. 209-213); Henderson (2001, pp. 218-223).

²⁸ It can be found e.g. in *Celtic Folklore* by John Rhŷs (2012 [190]1, p. 270), in Wirt Sikes’ *British Goblins* (1880, pp. 58-60), in Evans-Wentz’ *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (1994 [1911], p.149), Elias Owen’s *Welsh Folklore* (1973 [1887], pp. 32-35), and in ‘The Trifles of Monastic Writers’ by Goodrich (2015, p. 450).

(Goodrich, 2015, p. 450)

The word ‘homunculi’ which is used for the little people Elidorus meets is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, they were perceived as non-ghostly, corporeal beings, for they eat and drink and have, and are at least in this respect like ordinary men. So, ‘homunculi’ (lat. ‘little men’) means that the people of this hidden realm were, but not as tiny as the insect-sized Victorian fairies. In IC they ride on greyhound-sized horses: ‘Equos habebant suae competentes modicitati, leporariis in quantitate conformes’ (‘They had horses of a size which suited them, about as big as greyhounds’) (IC, p. 65; trans. Thorpe, 1978, p. 134). Finally, ‘homunculi’ does not have magical or demonic connotations: although the kingdom of the little people is located in a secret landscape, we do not read that they dabble in magic, but they appear as a pygmy race of higher morality than humans (a motif which I will explore in detail in chapter 2.2).

Walter Map’s *De Nugis Curialium* contains stories about fairy creatures. One example is ‘De aparicionibus fantasticis’, which has been included by Rhys in his chapter on fairy-mistress tales, ‘Undine’s Kymric Sisters’, in *Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx* (2012 [1901]).²⁹ This is a fairy mistress tale explicitly connected with Wales, being set in the landscape next to Brecknock Mere, today known as Llyn Syfaddan (Llangorse Lake) (DNC; *Distinctio* II.xi). A man sees a company of ladies emerging from the lake and dancing in the moonlight; he seizes one of them, and the lady agrees to stay with him as long as he does not strike her with a bridle. This happens one day, so that she leaves him and returns to the lake. The lake-lady is called simply ‘femina’ (‘woman’) in Walter Map’s tale, but the motifs appearing in this tale identify the lake-lady as lady of the Tylwyth Teg.³⁰

²⁹ The lake legends will be discussed further in chapter 3.2 and 4.2.2. The legend presented by Map is composed of motifs typical for fairy-bride tales. The characteristic motifs appearing in Walter Map’s ‘De aparicionibus fantasticis’ comprise: fairyland under water (F 212) ; congregating places of fairies (F 217); fairies dance (F 261); man obtains power over fairy mistress (F 302.4); man marries fairy and takes her to his home (F 302.2); marriage or liaison with fairy (F 300); taboo: striking supernatural wife (C 31.8); fairy bride leaves man when he breaks taboo (F 302.6); offspring of fairy and mortal (F 305). The motif numbers refer to compared to Baughman’s *Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (1966). Motifs typical for fairy-bride tales of Wales have also been identified by Juliette Wood (1992, p. 69).

³⁰ In medieval tales fairy characters are often not named as fairy character, a fact which will be discussed at the beginning of chapter 4. In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* we meet a ‘pulcerrimus iuuenis’, a ‘most beautiful young man’ who is the mysterious father of Merlinus Ambrosius (HRB 107.530-540). The plot and the motifs of this episode recall other well-known episodes in the medieval romances and tales when supernatural characters of the elves or the Irish *Áes Síd* beget children. Here we find a supernatural character who is not classified by name, but can be interpreted as a supernatural, fairy-like character by the narrative motif connected with him.

‘De Herla rege’, another tale from *De Nugis Curialium*, presents a quite different kind of fairy-like being. King Herla, a British king, befriends a king of the little people:

Unam tamen et solam huic nostre curie similem fuisse fabule dederunt, que dicunt Herla regem antiquissimorum Britonum positum ad rationem ab altero rege, qui pigmeus videbatur modicitate staturae, que non excedebat simiam. Institit homuncio capro maximo secundum fabulam insidens, vir qualis describi posset Pan, ardenti facie, capite maximo, barba rubente prolixa, pectus contingenteque, nebride preclarum stellata, cui venter hispidus, et crura pedus in caprinos degenerabant.

(DNC, Distinctio I.xi)

That there was but one court similar to this of ours we learn from old stories. These tell us that Herla, the king of the very ancient Britons, was led into a compact by another king, seemingly a pigmy in the lowness of his stature, which did not exceed that of an ape. As the story has it, this dwarf drew near, sitting on a huge goat—just such a man as Pan is pictured, with glowing face, enormous head, and a red beard so long that it touched his breast (which was brightly adorned with a dappled fawn skin), a hairy belly, and thighs which degenerated into goat-feet.

(Tupper & Ogle 1924, Distinctio I.xi)

This detailed description of the king of the little people includes such characteristics as his ugliness and the red of his beard; these will be discussed further in chapter 4, but here I focus on the word ‘Pan’ used to describe him. Pan is a Greek deity of the forest, god of shepherds and hunters, connected with music and fertility and lust, but also with ecstatic states and sudden terror (Borgeaud 1988, pp. ix-xi). The comparison with Pan makes the king a figure head of a world beyond the realm of men, for Pan is a deity of the woodland. The epithet ‘Pan’ relates the pigmy king to a pagan past. But this pagan past as seen from the perspective of a Christian redactor who conflates the tale with local fairy traditions, such as the time flowing differently in the realm of the fairies.

Elias Owen refers to two chapters of Gervasius of Tilbury’s *Otia Imperialia* which was written in the thirteenth century.³¹ Owen identifies motifs which appear in Welsh folklore, too. He associates Welsh expressions for the fairies with the magical creatures described by Gervasius:

It would appear from Brand’s *Popular Antiquities* [...], that according to Gervase of Tilbury, there were two kinds of Goblins in England, called *Portuni* and *Grant*. This division suggests a difference between the *Tylwyth Têg* and the *Ellyll*. The *Portuni*, we are told, were very small of stature and in appearance, “*statura pusilli, dimidium pollicis non habentes*.” but then they were “*senili vultu, facie corrugata*.” the wrinkled face and aged countenance of the *Portuni* remind us of nursery tales in which the wee ancient

³¹ For text and introduction see either Liebrecht (1856), which is easily accessible online, or for a modern edition see Banks & Binns (2002).

female Fairy figures. The pranks of the *Portuni* were similar to those of Shakespeare's Puck.

(Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 5)

Gervasius claims that 'Neptuni' or 'Portuni' were names used in England and France, respectively: 'daemones [...] quos Galli Neptunos, Angli Portunos nominant' ('demons [...] which the inhabitants of Gaul call Neptunos, the English Portunos') (OI, p. 29: *Decisio III: LXI*). Liebrecht argues in the preface of his edition of *Otia Imperialia* that both Neptuni and Portuni imply a kind of water-sprite, but this is based on the similarity of the names to the Roman deities Neptunus and Portunus (Liebrecht, 1856, p. 131). The way the Portuni and Neptuni are described suggests another kind of fairy spirit: they are very small and look old and wrinkled; at night, they come to the houses of farmers and warm themselves at the fire and roast frogs there; they help with the work in the house. But the Portuni also like to lead horsemen astray at night. Lewis Spence, Liebrecht, Owen and Oman all agree that the Portuni resemble domestic spirits or hobgoblins such as the Scottish brownie (Spence, 1997 [1948], pp. 16-17; Oman, 1944, p. 5; Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 5; Liebrecht, 1856, p. 131). But Oman compares them to Robin Goodfellow, too (Oman 1944, p. 5), and is thus in agreement with Elias Owen who compared them to Puck, because of their habit of leading people astray (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 5).

The other creature Owen considers to be relevant for Welsh folklore is the 'Grant'. It remains rather unclear what kind of creature the Grant is. Gervasius claims that the Grant is a creature known in England (OI; *Decisio III*, LXII, p. 980).³² This magical horse-like creature walked on its hind-legs, and warned people of fire: 'Et quoties apparet, futurum in urbe illa vel vico potendit incendium' ('Whenever he appears, he prophesizes a fire in that town or village'). Because of the aspect of the creature, Felix Liebrecht sees a parallel to the Scottish Kelpie and to other water demons (Liebrecht, 1856, pp.131-2).³³

³² In some manuscript versions we find the form 'Gyant'. For the different manuscript versions see OI, p. 131. Liebrecht sees an etymological connection between 'Gyant' and 'giant' but believes that 'Grant' is the true form. I have chosen the form 'Grant', following the edition of Banks & Binns (2002, pp. 676-678). For a modern edition of the text and introduction see also Banks & Binns (2002).

³³ He also suggests that the Grant could be connected with the river Cam, the old name of which was Grant or Gront. Joseph Pentangelo, however, suggested in a more recent study that the Grant could have been a magical creature in the form of a magical hare, because in medieval folklore the hare was a portent of fire (2019).

In chapter LXXXV of Deciso III ‘De lamiis et dracis et phantasies’ Gervasius describes other creatures which relate to folk beliefs also known from Welsh fairy stories. He introduces fairy-like demons (‘daemones’) named ‘draci’, found close to the banks of the river Rhone (OI; p. 38). The *draci* recall the *homunculi* Elidorus met, for their realm was also reached by a subterranean passage close to the banks of a river. The *draci* abduct women to breast-feed their own offspring and are thus comparable to fairies who abduct women after they have given birth. Walter Scott saw a resemblance between Scottish and Irish folktales, writing thus in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*:

It is a curious fact that this story, in almost all its parts, is current in both the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland with no other Variation than the substitution of Fairies for Dracae [sic!] and the cavern of a hill for that of a river.

(Scott, 1802, p. 179).

Scott’s statement can be extended to Welsh fairy midwife tales as recorded e.g., by Wirt Sikes (Sikes, 1880, pp. 86-87).

The form ‘draci’ is interesting, for this form and the declination throughout the text suggests a masculine noun ‘dracus, -i’: ‘de dracis’ (abl. pl.), ‘quas draci rapiunt’ (nom. pl.). This differs from ‘draco, draconis’ (‘dragon’). We could expect that fairy-like creatures had been called ‘dracones’, for ‘dracones’ can be used figuratively for ‘demons/devils’ based on the biblical description of Satan as ‘old snake’ and ‘dragon’ (Revelation 12:9). But we find the form ‘dracus, *pl.* draci’. GMIL gives *s.v.* ‘dracus’:

Occitanis etiamnum *Drac, Drago*, est *une fée*, nymphe: hinc *fa le drac* pro *faire le diable, faire merveille pour ou contre quelqu’un*. [...] Unde *Drage*, pro *Venefica*, vulgo *Sorciere*.³⁴

Thus, we could conjecture from the relation to the devil, that ‘draci’ might be a corrupted form of ‘draco, draconis’, but we also find the meaning of ‘Fée, nymphe’, supporting the identification of the *draci* with a fairy people.³⁵

Finally, there is a fourteenth-century text which clearly relates to Welsh folklore for it describes an invocation of Gwyn ap Nudd. Such an invocation was made when somebody

³⁴Occitanic still ‘Drac, Drago’, a fairy, nymphe: from here ‘fa le drac’ for ‘romp’, ‘work a miracle for or against someone.’ [...] Whence ‘Drage’ for ‘person making poison’, commonly ‘witch’.

³⁵ For fairy creatures seen as demons we find further proof. Another author, Odericus Vitalis who was born in England about 1075, but who lived in Normandy uses the words ‘daemon’ and ‘gobelinus’ as equivalent (OV, hist. eccl. V, 556).

believed to have taken ill because he had been overlooked.³⁶ The text was meant for the instruction of clerics and the relevant section of *Speculum Christiani* has been edited by Brynley Roberts (1980/81, pp. 287-288):

Quidam etiam stulti et stulte cum aliquis ergotauerit vadunt ad hostium tenentes ignem et ferrum in manibus suis et clamant ad regem Eumenidum et reginam eius qui sunt maligni spiritus sic dicentes. Gwynn ap Nwdd qui es ultra in silvis pro amore concubine tue permittite nos venire domum. In hoc stultissime agunt petendo auxilium a malis spiritibus qui non habent nisi dampnationem eternam contra quos clamat apostolus, Nolo vos socios esse demoniorum.

(Roberts, 1980/81, pp. 287-288)

Some stupid [persons] also go stupidly to the door carrying fire and iron in their hands if someone will have made [somebody else] ill⁶¹ and cry to the king of the Eumenides and his queen who are evil spirits and say: Gwyn ap Nudd, [you] who are beyond in the forests for the love of your lover allow us to come into the house. In this way they act very stupidly by asking help of evil spirits who have nothing but eternal damnation and against whom the apostle cries, I do not want you to be the fellows of the demons.
(my trans.)

This text and the motifs appearing in it will be discussed further in chapter 3, but I will focus on the names for the fairies. Gwyn's subjects are addressed as 'Eumenides' ('The Gracious ones'). Obviously, 'Eumenides' identifies the fairies with characters from classical mythology. The name 'Eumenides' has a female connotation, and it is an appeasing name chosen to address extremely vengeful and dangerous characters, for in Greek mythology the Erinyes are called 'Eumenides' to appease them. The name 'Eumenides' identifies the subjects of Gwyn ap Nudd with the pagan deities, and consequently, the author uses the word 'daemones' ('demons') as an alternative expression, for according to Christian doctrine, the existence of pagan deities was not denied, but they were interpreted as being demons or devils:

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"-- yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. [...] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

(1 Corinthians 8:5-6; 10: 20-21)

To sum up, the Latin expressions used for the Tylwyth Teg can be classed in four groups. We find completely neutral names like 'femina' or 'iuvenis'. Some names refer to a small

³⁶ This text is found in MS Coleg Balliol, Oxford, 239, 22-27. There are various versions of this text, but a 'distinct recension sometimes called Cibus Animae is found in Cam. Trinity Hall 16, B.M. royal 5A vi, Rylands lat. 341 and elsewhere' (Roberts, 1980/81, p. 288).

stature like ‘homunculi’ or ‘pygmaei’. Next to this we find medieval expressions for supernatural beings who are neither angels nor saints, namely ‘daemones’ (and possibly ‘draci’ must be classed here, if we assume that it is a corrupted form or a form derived from ‘draco’.) Other expressions such as ‘Eumenides’, ‘Neptuni’, ‘Portuni’, ‘panes’, ‘fauni’ relate the fairies to pre-Christian divinities. The authors use these names as a medieval learned interpretation of folklore, based only on their classical education. The name ‘incubi’ for these supernatural creatures suggest their desire for having intercourse with human women. It is also important that none of the Latin names for the fairies suggests non-corporeal spirits or ghosts. The names ‘fauni’ and ‘panes’ associate the fairy characters with the woodland, with places which are outside the human community or in the case of the Portuni and their nocturnal activities, with times outside the normal waking times of human beings.

Moreover, analysis of both the Welsh and Latin expressions used to talk of the fairies shows that the motifs which relate to the fairy characters and the context are most important to interpret the names correctly. Sometimes the decision whether a magical creature is a fairy cannot be made based on the name alone but must be consistent with the motifs attached to it. We also find that the attempt to classify fairies by qualifiers such ‘ghostly’ versus ‘non-ghostly’, ‘corporeal’ versus ‘non-corporeal’ is not successful, as the beliefs concerning fairy creatures in general, and the Tylywth Teg in particular, are subject to historical change. Investigation of this change in meaning will be the subject of the second part of the thesis, whereas typical motifs will be discussed in the following chapters.

2. The World of the Tylwyth Teg: The Abode of Otherness in the Depth

*Eto, yno, yno unwaith,
Gwelais fywyd glwysaf awen,
Yfais neithdar duwiau daear,
Duwiau breuddwyd y boreddydd.*

– ‘Gwlad Hud’ gan T. Gwynn Jones

The first chapter explored the semantics of words and expressions used for the Tylwyth Teg; the present chapter (the first part of general thesis) will investigate the motifs which appear in connection with their world, in various types of narratives. The periods of the source texts range from the Middle Ages to the present, and various genres will be considered: not only poetry, prose literature, and reports about folk tradition which have been handed down orally, but also texts with political or religious backgrounds. The approach in this chapter is mainly synchronic, but in some cases it will be necessary to keep the historical development of motifs in mind, and to consider the historical or diachronic. The present and the two following chapters will contain two main approaches. Motifs will be introduced and listed on a wider scale, but certain texts containing these motifs will be analysed in depth and in detail to drive the argument home.

To avoid redundancy, some sources will be introduced quite concisely, because some texts will be discussed in more historical detail in the second part of this thesis, thus providing a more extensive diachronic approach to the traditions involving the Tylwyth Teg. The reader will in these cases be directed to the relevant chapters of the thesis.

This present chapter will explore the motif of the subterranean otherworldly abode. The motifs which allow to discriminate between Annwn and *uffern* (hell) will be introduced. The chapter will also contribute to the controversial discussion concerning whether the realm of the fairies was originally a realm of the dead, or whether it was perceived as a happy realm of the ever-living ones, a kind of Elysian Fields. This question will be mainly addressed in the chapter about the glass castle. First, though, I explore the name of this realm in Welsh tradition, ‘Annwn’.

2.1 Annwn

In *Culhwch ac Olwen* Gwyn ap Nudd rules over the denizens of Annwn (CO, pp. 26-27, ll. 713-715).³⁷ Annwn is a realm set apart from the world of human beings: its inhabitants must be closely guarded by Gwyn and kept away from the world of man, for otherwise they will destroy it. In chapter 1 we saw that ‘Tylwyth Gwyn’ and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ were used synonymously, and ‘Tylwyth Teg’ and ‘Plant Annwn’. Therefore, we assumed that the denizens of Annwn who are called ‘dieuyl’ (‘devils’) in *Culhwch ac Olwen* are identical with the fairies, then ‘Annwn’ is the oldest name for their abode found in vernacular prose.³⁸ Idris Foster suggested that *Culhwch ac Olwen* was written no later than 1100 AD (Foster 1953, p. 199). Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans largely follow Foster, claiming that composition dates from c. 1100 AD (Bromwich & Evans, 1997, p. lxxxvii), but more recently Simon Rodway has argued strongly that the tale was composed no earlier than the second half of the twelfth century (Rodway, 2005). Annwn is also mentioned in the First Branch of the Mabinogi (PKM, pp. 2-3), but this text does not permit its identification with the realm of the fairies, for none of the common expression for the fairies such as ‘Tylwyth Teg’ or ‘Bendith y Mamau’ appear in it, nor do the kings of Annwn who are mentioned in the First Branch of the Mabinogi appear in other texts which associate them with the fairies. In the First Branch of the Mabinogi, Annwn might be any magical realm: it is inhabited by characters able to practise magic, but they are not named ‘Tylwyth Teg’. We can only identify motifs common to fairy-lore and the Mabinogi. Therefore, we do not know how the Annwn of the Mabinogi was perceived in comparison to the magical realms described e.g., in *Itinerarium Cambriae* by Gerald of Wales or in ‘De Herla Rege’ by Walter Map. These texts have already been introduced in chapter one and use motifs typical for fairy lore, too.

The meaning of ‘Annwn’ is controversial, for the etymology is difficult. The word consists of ‘dwfn’ and the prefix ‘an-’ (GPC). ‘Dwfn’ can be read as *n.* ‘world’ or as *adj.* ‘deep’, whereas ‘an-’ can function as negative, or as intensifier, or even with the meaning ‘in/into’. Ifor Williams discusses these possibilities, giving possible translations ‘not-world’,

³⁷ In the following the modern spelling ‘Annwn’ will be mainly used instead of ‘Annwfn’ (GPC s.v. ‘Annwn’).

³⁸ Evidence that Annwn is the abode of the fairies is connected with the character Gwyn ap Nudd, for *Buchedd Collen* with the first manuscript version dating to 1536 refers to Gwyn ap Nudd as ‘Brenin Annwn’ (‘King of Annwn’) and in a version of *Buchedd Collen* published in *Y Greal* as ‘[b]renin Anwn a’r tylwyth tēg’ (‘King of Annwn and the fairies’) (BCa & b). *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* by Ellis Wynne supports the idea that the fairies are the inhabitants of Annwn although Gwyn does not appear in it (GBC, p. 7, ll. 11, 32-35) (cf. chapter 1 of this thesis).

or ‘in-world’, but (with reference to Dafydd ap Gwilym’s ‘Y Llwynog’), since this ‘in/into’ referred to ‘in/into the earth’, Williams ultimately favours ‘under-world’ (Williams, 1930, pp. 99-100). Thomas Parry favours ‘not-world’ (Parry, 1963, pp. 449, 470), while Alwyn and Brinley Rees and R. Geraint Gruffydd propose ‘very deep’. These critics also suggest (Rees and Rees, 1961, p. 179; Gruffydd, 1987, p. 29) that ‘plant Rhys Ddwfn’, used as an alternative name for the fairies, is possibly a corrupt form of ‘plant yr Is-Ddwfn’ (‘children of the Lower World’): this is a point made already in chapter 1. Patrick Sims-Williams suggests, referring to studies by Eric Hamp and Heinrich Wagner, that ‘an-’ should be read as an intensifying prefix and ‘dwfn’ as ‘deep’ (Sims-Williams, 1990, p. 62; 2011, pp. 57-58; Hamp, 1977/78, p. 10; Wagner, 1975, p. 7).

Yet, all translations of ‘Annwn/Annwfn’ suggest that this realm is separated from the mundane world of humans, that it is a location hard for mortals to access.³⁹ The translation ‘not-world’ implies that it is a negation of the world of man. ‘Very deep’, ‘underworld’, ‘lower world’ suggest a location somewhere beneath the earth on which man lives, or an underwater world. However, although the etymology of ‘Annwn’ seems to suggest a subterranean region or aquatic location, sometimes Annwn appears to be on one level with the ordinary world, merely remote from the dwelling places of man. An example is found in the First Branch of the Mabinogi: Arawn, king of Annwn, meets Pwyll, prince of Dyfed, in Glyn Cuch and guides him into his kingdom, but no underground or underwater passage is mentioned (PKM, p. 3).

Annwn as described in the *Mabinogi* is no local domain linked to a particular landscape formation such as a hill, mountain or prehistoric monument, but seems to be a single realm accessible from different auspicious locations, such as Glyn Cuch (cf. chapter 3.1.2). Annwn appears to be a kingdom or a realm consistent of two kingdoms, as both Arawn and Hafgan are mentioned as kings of Annwn. The question arises what relationship exists between the two kingdoms. Patrick Sims-Williams is of the opinion that Annwn was one kingdom:

Apparently, then, Annfwn was a single kingdom, divided in sub-kingdoms and dominated, with opposition, by a king claiming overlordship under the title ‘king of Annwfn’ - a fair reflection of medieval Welsh politics. The Irish fairy mounds or *síde*, by contrast, are independent kingdoms, which enjoy more or less friendly relations with one another like the mortal *tuatha* of early Irish law.

(Sims-Williams, 2011, p. 59)

These considerations leave us with the question whether additional evidence can be found to support the idea of Annwn being one realm, as in the *Mabinogi*, or whether there coexisted a

³⁹ For early modern translations of ‘Annwfn’ cf. chapter 2.2.

concept that located local, independent fairy abodes or kingdoms at specific places in the landscape.⁴⁰

One text which shows a possible connection of a fairy abode with the Welsh landscape is the ‘Colloquy of Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwyddneu Garanhir’ in the Black Book of Carmarthen (BBC, pp. 71-73). This poem does not mention Annwn but can be interpreted as suggesting that the abode of Gwyn ap Nudd was located at Mynydd y Drum near Neath Port Talbot. Although the Black Book of Carmarthen was written in the second half of the thirteenth century (Huws 2000, pp. 36-56), the language of this saga poem suggests a date of

⁴⁰ Sims-Williams finds evidence in the wording of the First Branch: Arawn describes himself with the words: ‘Arawn urenin Annwuyn wyf i’ (‘I am Arawn, king of Annwfn’) (PKM, p. 2), but Arawn addresses Hafgan as ‘Hafgan urenin o Annwuyn’ (PKM, p. 3), translated by Sims-Williams as ‘Hafgan, a king from Annwfn’. Sims-Williams concludes that Arawn was the high king of Annwn and Hafgan was but a (sub-)king (Sims-Williams, 2011, p. 58).

Parallels between Annwn and the Irish *síde* in terms of localizing this supernatural abode and its entrances in the landscape can be controversial. The outcome of this comparison is largely based on the opinion about the nature of the Irish Otherworld. It is crucial whether the Irish Otherworld can be entered by different *síde*, but access is granted to the whole otherworld, or whether a *síd* grants only access to a special kind of otherworld characteristic for this particular *síd*. Sims-Williams opinion is contradictory to O’Rahilly’s earlier conclusion:

In pagan Ireland every district of importance tended to have its own *síd* or hill within which the Otherworld was believed to be located; nevertheless there was in Celtic belief but one Otherworld, despite the fact that so many different locations were assigned to it. In the same way the deities who presided over the different *síde* were ultimately the same everywhere despite the variety of local names applied to them (O’Rahilly, 1946, p. 290).

Sims-Williams responds:

This conception of ‘but one Otherworld’ looks like a modern abstraction, as far as Irish evidence is concerned. Certainly, there is no Irish term so likely to mean ‘the Otherworld’ as *Annwfn* and Gaulish *Andoounn*- possibly do; as already noted, it is doubtful whether *síd* ever meant ‘the Otherworld’ or even ‘an Otherworld’ (Sims-Williams, 2011, p. 59).

John Carey’s position in 1987 is similar to O’Rahilly’s:

Worth particular attention is the belief – notwithstanding the contrasting view that the *síde* were residences individual immortals—that each one of these places could grant access to the whole immortal realm, the Otherworld in its entirety. [...] The otherworld is not, properly speaking, assigned different locations by the Irish: rather it exists in no definable relationship with the mortal realm (Carey, 1987, p. 2).

In a similar way, Alwyn and Brinley Rees point out that a simple answer may not be possible, because the Otherworld represents the concept of a domain to which ordinary mundane geography does not apply. Localizing the Otherworld in a narrative is subject to describing otherness in the first place:

To the question: “Where is the Other World?”, “Is it one or many?”, the answers furnished by myth are contradictory. It is the “lower” half of Ireland, the land under the earth or the *síd*-mounds. It is also “the land under the wave” an island, or a series of islands beyond the sea. Yet it can manifest itself in other places [...]. The limits of such a world cannot be “defined” in terms of distance and direction (Rees & Rees, 1961, pp. 342-343).

composition at the end of the eleventh century (Rowland, 1990, pp. 388-389). The poem is composed as a colloquy between Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwyddno Garanhir which takes place after a fierce battle from which Gwyn returns when he is addressed by Gwyddno who asks Gwyn for protection. The eighth englyn is put in the mouth of Gwyn:

Nim gad e gan kyulauaret a thi,
urth i fruyn yd wet.
dywris im trum tawuy a net.

(BBC, p. 72, ll. 22-24)

The white horse does not allow me conversation with you
Because it leads with the bridle
It hastens away to my ridge of Tawe and Nedd. (my trans.)

This englyn adds colour to the poem, for it describes how Gwyn's excited white horse cannot be brought under control with the bridle, so that Gwyn has not the time to linger for a longer conversation, as his horse speeds home from the fierce battle.

A few remarks regarding the translation are necessary. As a bridle is mentioned in this englyn, it doubtlessly refers to Gwyn's horse which has not yet been mentioned. Therefore, a translation like Skene's 'he will not leave me in a parley with thee' (1868, p. 293) or Evans' 'he will not let me parley with you' (Evans and Mühlhausen, 1922, p. x) sound odd, as the noun the pronoun 'he' refers to has not yet been specified. However, 'gan' can be a mutated form of 'can' ('white') used substantively to refer to a 'white (horse)' (Williams, 1935, p. 62; Roberts 1978, p. 317; BBC, p. 166). I follow Rowland: 'The white horse does not allow me conversation with you.' (Rowland, 1990, p. 506). Rowland reads 'trum' in the next line as 'battle' (ibid.), but Alfred Jarman suggests 'trum' ('ridge') for a place name (BBC, p. 166). Jarman's interpretation is consistent with Skene, Rhys, and Evans, who interpret 'im trum' ('to my ridge') as a reference to the location of the abode of Gwyn ap Nudd (Skene 1868, p. 293; Rhys 1891, p. 364; Evans and Mühlhausen 1922, p. x). I prefer 'ridge' as well, giving the image of a terrified horse fleeing from a battlefield, racing home unbridled: this is convincing in the context and a kind of situation surely well known to an audience used to riding on horseback. The englyn could function as a narrative element to bring the situation to life.

Gwyn racing to another battle immediately after a terrible fight in which his own armour has been severely damaged – as described in the previous englynion – is unlikely, unless Gwyn is read as a pagan god of carnage rushing from one battle to the next. But seeing Gwyn as god of battle is a rather recent and spurious interpretation, developed by John Rhys

(Rüdiger, 2018, pp. 124-125; see also chapter 6). If we read the last line as ‘It hastens away to my ridge of Tawe and Nedd’, then we have a place directly named as the abode of the ruler of Annwn: The present name of this ridge is Mynydd y Drum,⁴¹ and if it had a medieval reputation as a fairy abode, the question of the survival of the tradition in folklore arises. Indeed, Rhŷs collected a story in which a treasure guarded by fairies (or demons according to another version) was hidden at Mynydd y Drum, a ridge located between the vale of the Tawe and the river Neath (Nedd) (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 19-20, p. 255). Rhŷs notes that the first version of the tale ‘reached me from a friend of my undergraduate days at Jesus College, Oxford, Mr. Llywarch Reynolds of Merthyr Tydfil’ (p. 18). In this version, the treasure is guarded by a monstrous bull (p. 19).

Interestingly, another alleged abode of Gwyn ap Nudd is the Tor at Glastonbury. It appears as ‘mynydd Glassymbyri’ in the sixteenth-century manuscript of *Buchedd Collen* and relates to a folk tradition which corresponds to the Welsh folk tales referring to Mynydd y Drum, for it uses similar motifs. Goodwin Wharton (1653-1704), a politician with a great interest in alchemy, mysticism and treasure-hunting recorded a memorate⁴² by Mary Parish, a Somerset cunning woman who spoke to Wharton about her experiences with the fairies.⁴³

After this day as she was sitting alone in her chamber, appears a man to her, and tells her thus: Mary, if thou wilt come down to Glastonbury Tor, we have a great treasure, thou shalt have some of it, but there will appear a great fierce bull, who will come furiously at thee as if he would have thee to pieces but be not thou afraid of him, for he cannot hurt thee nor hinder thee. And then disappeared [*sic*].

(Wharton as quoted by D. Purkiss, 2000, p. 191)

Mary Parish’s report proves that two locations connected with Gwyn ap Nudd, namely Glastonbury Tor and Mynydd y Drum, attracted another identical motif of fairy folklore, for Reynold’s version of the tale of Mynydd y Drum shows - like Mary Parish’s tale- the motifs

⁴¹ Cartographical evidence is available at <<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/304745/details/garn-goch-mynydd-y-drum>> [27 April 2020]. Note the numerous cairns on the ridge. The prehistoric burial sites could have inspired attributing a magical character to the place (cf. the fact that Irish prehistorical monuments are often connected with local fairy traditions). The Welsh word ‘gorsedd’ can be used to describe a prehistoric tumulus or a natural hill (GPC, s.v. ‘gorsedd’), and the First Branch of the Mabinogi gives an example that such a *gorsedd* – namely Gorsedd Arberth – can be a magical place (PKM, p. 9), but there is no hint that an otherworldly realm is located *within* the mound, which is a notable difference from Irish tradition.

⁴² For the folkloristic terminology see von Sydow (1977 [1948]), Pentikäinen (1973), Honko (1965).

⁴³ For cunning men and women related to fairy traditions see chapter 5.

of the hidden treasure guarded by fairies, the monstrous bull attacking but not harming the treasure hunter:

[...] and it being reported that there was a great treasure hidden in Mynydd y Drum, the wizard said he would secure it, if he could get some plucky fellow to spend a night with him there. John Gethin was a plucky fellow, and he agreed to join the *dyn llaw-harn* in his *diablerie*. [...] and there soon appeared a monstrous bull, bellowing dreadfully; but the plucky Gethin held his ground, and the bull vanished.

(Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 19)

The similarity of the memorate by Mary Parish related to Glastonbury Tor which we know to be Gwyn ap Nudd's abode and the legend related to Mynydd y Drum and retold by Llywarch Reynolds support the interpretation that Mynydd y Drum is indeed the place referred to in the Black Book of Carmarthen. Therefore, examples given above show that people located the abode of Gwyn ap Nudd at specific places within the landscape, comparable with the otherworld of Irish tradition. At least in the case of 'mynydd glassymbyri' (Glastonbury Tor), *Buchedd Collen* does not leave us in any doubt that the hill is an entrance to Annwn, for Gwyn's court is the court of the king of Annwn, and we can assume that Mynydd y Drum might have been considered to be another entrance to Annwn, as we can identify it as one of Gwyn ap Nudd's strongholds: these considerations about Gwyn's strongholds support Sims-Williams's opinion of Annwn being one kingdom with various entrances.

The medieval *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and the early modern *Buchedd Collen* and *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* present Annwn as equivalent to hell ('uffern'), implying that we have a Christian reinterpretation of an autochthonous tradition. The question arises whether the identification of Annwn with hell was possible because Annwn was not split into independent local units, but appeared as one realm, or whether the identification of Annwn with hell led to the idea that there were no local units of Annwn, but one realm, just like the Christian hell. If the latter were the case, then the notion of Annwn as one large realm would be an indicator of the gradually progressing identification of the abode of the fairies with the Christian hell.⁴⁴ However, this is unlikely, for while Annwn appears as one realm in the First Branch of the Mabinogi, it is described as a place of beauty and wonder and is by no means

⁴⁴ Another indicator of the process of Annwn and hell being conflated is the loss of the fairy king's name from folk tradition, and his replacement by the devil. In the fourteenth century, Gwyn ap Nudd as king of the fairies is connected with folk traditions, as proved by an invocation in *Speculum Christiani* (Roberts, 1980/81, p. 288). However, Welsh fairy folk tales collected in the 19th century do not mention the fairy king by name (Rüdiger 2018, p. 124). The names of Arawn and Hafgan only survive in the First Branch of the Mabinogi, and we cannot say whether a folk tradition was indeed connected with them, or whether they are literary names invented by the author (or, better, the final redactor) of the First Branch.

hellish. Therefore, we must assume that the identification was brought about by the attempt to interpret a non-Christian autochthonous tradition of the supernatural according to Christian demonology: that is, Annwn was probably unified *before* the Christian reinterpretation. We must thus ask what further evidence can be found in Welsh literature regarding the original nature of Annwn.

2.2 The Subterranean Abode of the Fairies: *Annwn* versus *Uffern*

In folk tales collected during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the realm of the fairies is nameless, but we do find the idea that it is subterranean:

One detects in different stories three ways getting into and out of this realm: (1) through open caves or holes in the ground, sometimes covered with a heavy stone moving of itself in obedience to certain spoken words [...]; (2) through lakes or pools [...]; (3) through underground passages and water [...] the latter possibly pointing to a fusion of the other two [...].

(T. Gwynn Jones, 1979, p. 52)

Medieval texts give the name ‘Annwfn’ for the Welsh otherworld which is in agreement with the imagination of more recent folklore, for, as shown above, ‘Annwfn /Annwn’ can be read literally as ‘very deep’, ‘underworld’, ‘lower world’.⁴⁵ This translation suggests a semantic proximity to ‘uffern’, which derives from the Latin ‘inferna’ (‘lower regions’, sg. ‘infernum’), and in pre-Christian texts, ‘inferna’ indeed, describes subterranean regions. To Roman authors such as Tacitus, it is synonymous with ‘Hades’, whereas in the Christian period it signifies ‘hell’ (Stowasser, 1980, s.v. ‘inferna’). In the early modern period, ‘Annwn’ is used synonymously with ‘uffern’, e.g., in the eighteenth-century *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc*. In Salesbury’s dictionary of 1547, the Welsh word ‘Annwn’ appears with no English equivalent. In Davies’ *Dictionary Duplex* (1632) ‘Annwn’ is given as ‘abyssus, profundum, orcus’. Thomas Jones notes in his dictionary from 1688, s.v. ‘Annwfn’, ‘cadduglynn, llyn heb waelod, uffern. *A bottomless pit, hell*’,⁴⁶ but, s.v. ‘Annwn’, he has ‘pôbl y tu arall i’r ddaiar, a’u traed tuag at ein troed [*sic*] ni. *Our antipodes*’⁴⁷ (Jones 1688). This evidence suggests, that ‘Annwn’ was initially a realm which had no proper English equivalent but was later

⁴⁵ According to GPC ‘Annwfn’ is the older form, whereas the spelling ‘Annwn’ can be found more frequently in early modern texts (s.v. ‘annwfn, annwn’).

⁴⁶ GPC s.v. ‘Cadduglyn’ ‘dark, deep pit, bottomless pit, abyss, gulf, chasm, whirlpool, often fig. ‘llyn heb waelod’: ‘bottomless lake’.

⁴⁷ ‘[P]eople of the other side of the earth, with their feet towards our feet’.

interpreted figuratively. It became a synonym for ‘hell’ and even as term for ‘antipodes’. Thomas Jones uses the different forms ‘Annwfn’ and ‘Annwn’ to differentiate between a traditional interpretation and the more modern geographical use. But what was the original meaning of ‘Annwn’?

2.2.1 *Annwn* in Twelfth-Century Poetry and in *Llyfr Taliesin*

In twelfth-century poetry, we find ‘uffern’ used in the sense of ‘hell’: Meilyr Brydydd, wanting to be buried on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) sings this:

Krist croesdarogan a’m gwyr, a’m gwarchan
 Rac uffern affan, wahan westi:
 Krea6dyr a’m crewys a’m kynnwys i
 Ymplith plwyf gwirin gwerin Enlli.⁴⁸

(GMB, p. 101, ll. 35-38)

The Christ of the Cross who was prophesised recognizes me, who leads me
 Past the pain of hell, the dwelling-place apart
 The Creator who made me welcomes me
 Amidst the holy people of the community of Enlli. (my trans.)

‘Annwn/Annwfn’, however, was used in a quite different context by another contemporary poet. Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (1155-1200) sings in ‘Arwyrain yr Arglwydd Rhys’:

Hydyr yd gert uyg kert yg kyfla6nder
 [...]
 Yn awen barawd a6dl burwa6d bêr;
 Yn ann6fyn, ynd6fyn, yn dyfynder - yd uarn
 Nyd beirt a’e daduarn, bart a’e daduer.

(GCBM, p. 165, ll.5, 8-10)

Powerfully my poem proceeds in fullness [...]
 With ready inspiration of an awdl of pure and fair song.
 In Annwfn, in the deep, in the depth does it pronounce,
 Poets do not make it powerless; a poet declaims it. (my trans.)⁴⁹

This poem suggests that Annwn is underground or under water, but it does not seem to be identical with hell, rather being linked to poetic inspiration, ‘awen’. The poet claims that his

⁴⁸ In modern orthography: ‘Crist croesddarogan a’m gŵyr, a’m gwarchan / Rhag Uffern affan, wahan westi:/ Creadur a’m crewys a’m cynnwys, / ymlith plwyf gwirion gwerin Enlli’ (GMB, p. 102. ll. 35-38).

⁴⁹ Marged Haycock translates the last two lines quoted above: ‘With ready inspiration of an awdl of pure and fair song; /in Annwfn, in this world (or ‘in the deep’), in the depth does it pronounce, / [and] it will not be [any other] poets who render it powerless [for a true] poet [now] declaims it’ (Haycock, 2007, p. 440).

powerful poetry has its origin in Annwn and cannot be rendered powerless by other poets. A comparable identification of Annwn as a source of poetic inspiration is found in *Llyfr Taliesin*. The poem ‘Angar Kyfundawt’ (‘Hostile Confederacy’) describes Annwn as a subterranean realm and one of two places where poetic inspiration, ‘awen’, is created.

Kerdwn Duw yssyd
 trwy ieith Talhayarn
 bedyd budyd varn,
 a varnwys teithi
 angerd vardoni.
 Ef a’e rin rodes
 awen aghymes:
 seith vgein ogyruen
 yssyd yn awen
 wyth vgein o pop vgein
 euyd yn vn.
 Yn Annwfyn y diwyth
 yn Annwfyn y gorwyth
 yn Annwfyn is eluyd
 yn awyr uch eluyd.

Let’s approach God who is
 – according to the utterance of Talhaearn –
 the true judge of the worth of the world,
 the One who adjudged the qualities
 of passionate song.
 He with his miracle bestowed
 immeasurable inspiration:
 there are 140 ‘ogrfen’
 in inspiration
 eight score...
 ...in [each] one.
 In Annwfn he ranged [divisions of inspiration]
 in Annwfn he made them
 in Annwfn below the earth
 in the air above the earth.

(text & translation: Haycock, 2007, p. 113-114, ll. 70-84)

According to this poem, poetic inspiration has its origin in God.⁵⁰ As it was created both in Annwn and the air, a possible interpretation is that all the cosmos is filled with divine poetic inspiration, both the air human beings breathe and the inaccessible hidden realm. But this could also imply that poetic inspiration is transmitted from the hidden realm of Annwn into the air which a poet breathes, so that this inspiration becomes alive in the imagination of the poet and is brought into the world by his breath. This part of the poem demonstrates very

⁵⁰ Cf. also comments by Haycock to line 81 of the poem (2007, p. 145).

clearly that Annwn cannot be equivalent to the Christian hell and is an example of how the poetic tradition concerning *awen* is integrated in a Christian context. Further examples for this twinning of traditions are given by Y Chwaer Bosco (1996, p. 14) and Barry J. Lewis (2002).

‘Preiddeu Annwfn’ (‘The Spoils of Annwn’, ed. trans. in Haycock, 2007) is another of the legendary poems in The Book of Taliesin,⁵¹ describing a fatal raid by king Arthur into Annwn: none but seven men return, including the poet who boasts to have been an eye-witness to the marvels of Annwn. This poet, the speaker, is Taliesin (Haycock 1983/84), who taunts the monks and lesser poets who have learned from books and who do not have his inspired poetic wisdom. At first glance, ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ seems to suggest the identity of Annwn and *uffern*, for the heroes saw the gates of hell: ‘A rac drws porth Vffern, llugyrn lloscit’ (‘and in front of the door of Hell’s gate lamps were burned’ (l. 20). Indeed, Loomis maintains that ‘*uffern* (Latin <*infernum*) is employed as the equivalent of Annwn.’ (1941, p. 894). However, the poem does not state that Annwn and *uffern* are identical, which leaves room for interpretation: if Annwn and *uffern* are *not* identical, the heroes could have passed by the doors of hell’s gate when raiding Annwn. *Uffern* could be a part of Annwn or could be reached via Annwn, the gates of hell being located in Annwn, or close to its entrance.⁵² This could suggest that the head of Annwn guarded the doors of hell’s gate, consistent with John Rhŷs’ ideas about the function of Gwyn ap Nudd in *Culhwch ac Olwen*: ‘Gwyn was supposed to delight in the battlefield; and restraining the demons of Annwn or Hades is represented in the story of Kulhwch as one of his functions’ (Rhŷs, 1891, p. 341).

⁵¹ This thesis is based mainly on the edition and translation by Haycock (for text, translation and introduction see Haycock 2007, p. 434-451). The reader could also refer to the following selection: Bollard (1984, pp. 13-25); Coe and Young (1995, pp. 137-139); Higley (1996, pp. 43-53); Koch (1995, pp. 290-292); Zimmer (2006, pp. 79-86); Carey (2007, pp. 80-86; 129-131; 217); Green (2009, pp. 207-213). Loomis’ ‘Spoils of Annwn: An early Arthurian Poem’ (1941, pp. 887-936) is in the context of this study important, as it discusses various motifs connected with the description of Annwn in detail and will be referred to further.

⁵² The gates of hell in proximity to the entrance of the land of the fairies appear in a romance written about 1400 which narrates the tale of Thomas the Rhymer alias Thomas de Ercildoun who was abducted by the queen of Elfland to the otherworld. The romance inspired various ballads (for texts and introduction see Murray (1875) or Laing (1885), parts of the text are also edited by Lyle (1971). On their journey to elfland the queen shows Thomas four ways one to heaven, one to hell, one to the early paradise, one to purgatory and in the distance her own fair castle (Murray 1875, p. 13). In this example, the gates of hell are not far from the fairy castle either. Thomas finally returns from the court of the queen of elfland with the gift to have to speak the truth at all times and with the gift of prophecy, for speaking about the future and being unable to speak an untrue thing makes Thomas a prophet. This latter motif resembles the motif of Annwn as the origin of poetic and prophetic power.

Additional arguments that Annwn is not here the Christian hell could start with the fact that ‘Annwn’ in earlier and contemporary poetry is not identical with *uffern* (cf. chapter 2.2). Moreover, ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ describes the head of Annwn as owner of a magical cauldron (ll. 15-16), inconsistent with the devil of Christian tradition. Furthermore, the poem refers to Pwyll and Pryderi, and the Annwn of the Mabinogi is no sinister hell: on the contrary, as mentioned above, the First Branch describes Annwn as a world of great beauty, but also with great challenges. Similarly, ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ presents Annwn as a world filled with wonder and danger: we hear of a magical cauldron with pearls, not heated by fire but kindled by the breath of nine maidens, a flashing sword and a glass fortress, and a bitter battle fought against Arthur and his heroes.

Important here is the use of ‘Kaer Sidi’ (‘Caer Siddi’) for the otherworldly realm in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’. According to Sims-Williams ‘Sidi’ is most likely a literary borrowing from Old Irish ‘*síd*’ (Sims-Williams 2011, p. 72), and Jacqueline Borsje’s definition of ‘*síd*’ summarizes the features commonly attributed to such an abode:

A *síd* is a hill, a megalithic tumulus or pre-Christian grave hill. Its inhabitants look like human beings but they are different. In general, they are superior to humanity: they live longer or are even immortal; they are more beautiful and possess supernatural powers.

(Borsje, 2009, p. 58)

It is hard to imagine that a poet who borrowed the term ‘*síd*’ would have done so to describe a place equivalent to hell. That said, *Síd Cruachan* is termed ‘*dorus iffirn na Hérend*’ (‘Ireland’s door to hell’) in *Cath Maige Mucrama* (text and translation: CMM, § 34; alternatively see: O’Daly, 1975, pp. 48-49), marking the place as a source of malevolent otherworldly interference. Therefore, the use of ‘Uffern’ in context with the otherworld could also be a metaphor borrowed from the Christian context to denote the danger and challenge which is a feature of the Otherworld as well as its beauty and splendour. John Carey describes how

[t]he exotic use of allegory in *Echtrae Cormaic*, and of the doctrines of Paradise and the Fall in such tales as *Immram Brain*, are clear indications of the extent to which the nature of the Irish Otherworld came to be expressed in Christian terms.

(Carey, 1987, p. 12)

The Irish examples suggest that in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ we find a Welsh parallel for the metaphorical use of Christian terms like ‘hell’ describing the dangers of the Annwn. Haycock relatedly notes that ‘Caer Wydyr’ recalls the heavenly Jerusalem as described in Rev 21:18

(‘and the city was gold, like unto clear glass’). This implies that wonders of Annwn are described by referring to a metaphor from the Christian context, too.

The term ‘Kaer Sidi’ appears also in the poem ‘Golychaf-i Gulwyd’ which reinforces the idea of Annwn being a place where neither sickness nor old age trouble the inhabitants, in good agreement with the description of a *síd* as summarized by Borsje; on the contrary, it is a place of plenty and poetry:

Ys kyweir vyg kadeir yg Kaer Sidi:
nys plawd heint a heneint a uo yndi,
ys gwyr Manawyt a Phryderi.
[...]
ys whegach no’r gwin gwyn y llyn yndi.

Harmonious is my song in Caer Siddi
sickness and old age do not afflict those who are there,
As Manawyd and Phryderi know. [...]
Its drink is sweeter than the white wine.

(Haycock 2007, p. 277, ll. 45-47, 51)

Presenting Caer Siddi without old age and affliction, implies that Caer Siddi must be free from Original Sin since death is the consequence of the Fall (Gen 3:2-3).⁵³ It must be noted that these lines give the impression that the term ‘Kaer Sidi’ is not alone in having been inspired by Irish material: we sense the idea of the *áes síde* living in a sinless state, as *Immram Brain*, *Echtrae Chonnlai* or *Tochmarc Étaíne* show.⁵⁴ For example, from *Immram Brain*:

Since creation’s beginning we exist
Without age, without decay of freshness [*or of earth*]
We do not expect lack of strength through decay,
The fall has not touched us.

(Mac Mathúna, 1985, (trans) § 53; (text) § 40, 44)

The connotation of Caer Siddi is such, that a place being attributed with this name can hardly be an equivalent of hell, as the following example proves. Sims-Williams draws attention to Llewelyn ap Morgan’s description of Brecon (Aberhonddu) with the words ‘aber.../chodni

⁵³ ‘The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” (Genesis 3:2-3, NIV)

⁵⁴ For editions and translations of the texts see in the case of *Echtrae Chonnlai* (McCone, 2000), for *Immram Brain* (Mac Mathúna, 1985), for *Tochmarc Étaíne* (Bergin & Best 1938). An introduction into the genre of *Echtrae* see Duignan (2011). For a discussion about the inhabitants of the otherworld as being free from the original sin see Mac Cana (1976) and McCone (2000). Williams briefly touches on this topic (2016, p. 59).

kaer sidi kor saint' ('Aberhodni, a Caer Siddi, an assembly of saints') which was written after 1475 (Sims-Williams 2011, pp. 71-72).⁵⁵

Elidorus' tale in Gerald of Wales' *Itinerarium Cambriae* gives us a Welsh equivalent of the Irish sinless otherworld. The priest Elidorus tells how he reached the realm of the fairies:

[A]nnuens ille surgensque secutus est praevios per viam primo subterraneam et tenebrosam usque in terram pulcherrimam, fluvis et pratis, silvis et planis distinctissimam, obscuram tamen, et aperto solari lumine non illustratam.

(IC, p. 65)

He rose to his feet and followed them. They led him first through a dark underground tunnel and then into a most attractive country, where there were lovely rivers and meadows, and delightful woodlands and plains. It was rather dark because the sun did not shine there.

(trans. Thorpe, 1978, pp. 133-134)

This is not the description of an infernal realm. On the contrary, its denizens have a higher morality than mortal men:

Juramenta eis nulla. Nihil enim adeo ut mendacia detestabantur. Quoties de superiori hemisphaerio revertebantur, ambitiones nostras, infidelitates et inconstantias expuebant. Cultus eis religionis palam nullus: veritatis solum, ut videbatur, amatores praecipui et cultores.

(IC, p. 66)

They never gave their word, for they hated lies more than anything they could think of. Whenever they came back from the upper world, they would speak contemptuously of our own ambitions, infidelities and inconstancies. They had no wish for public worship, and what they revered and admired, or so it seemed, was the plain unvarnished truth.

(trans. Thorpe, 1978, pp. 133-134)

This last description, the missing religious cult and the missing sun and moon allude to the celestial Jerusalem as described in Revelation 21: 22-23:

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

The great reverence for the truth of Elidorus' little people recalls another motif apparent in Irish tradition, and, as Ó Cathasaigh has shown, also in the First Branch of the Mabinogi and

⁵⁵ Sims-Williams points out that 'Caer Siddi' was only rarely used to name the Welsh otherworld and that its use in early modern poetry must be regarded as a reference point to Taliesin (Sims-Williams 2011, pp. 71-72).

‘Preiddeu Annwn’: the concept of ‘truth’ (*fīr*) as a prerequisite for the state of peace and successful kingship which mirrors the ideal state of the Otherworld (Ó Cathasaigh & Boyd (ed.), 2014, pp. 12-14, 30-34). We recall that Gwyn ap Nudd, the king of Annwn, is addressed in ‘Ymddiddan Gwyddneu Garanhir a Gwyn ap Nudd’ thus: ‘arbenic llw llid anhaut /dinam eiroes am oes naut’ (BBC, p. 71), that is ‘leader of a host, not easy to anger, / of faultless faith, is there protection for me?’ (trans. Rowland, 1990 p. 506). This is not only standard praise, but as Gwyddneu asks for protection after battle, ‘eiroes’ (‘trust’, ModW ‘eirioes’) resonates, a person whom you entrust with your life after battle must be trustworthy, and being able to protect another person’s life displays the power of a ruler. This distinguishes Gwyn as a ruler equipped with qualities which correspond to *fīr flathemon* (prince’s truth), and which enable him to act according to the requirements of this principle. This can also be expected of an otherworldly ruler: ‘the kingdom aspires to the ideal condition of the Otherworld, and [...] only a just and righteous king, endowed with *fīr flathemon*, can satisfy these aspirations’ (Ó Cathasaigh, 2014, p. 28). The previous evidence has shown that Annwn and the rulers of Annwn are endowed with *fīr flathemon*. The little people of Elidorus’ tale worship truth. This finds a parallel in the descriptions of the Irish otherworld, for Carey maintains: ‘In Echtrae Cormaic Conn’s grandson is induced to pursue a man from “a land where there is nothing save truth” [...] truth and peace are the Otherworld’s gifts to a righteous king’ (Carey, 1987, pp. 4, 14). Therefore, we must exclude that Annwn, or the realm of Elidorus’ little people could be identical to hell, for the Christian concept of the devil who rules hell presents him as arch-liar, incompatible with truth:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

(John 8:44, KJV)

If truth is of such great importance in the Otherworld, then we can assume that knowledge obtained in the otherworld is true. We must ask whether this knowledge acquired in Annwn is different or even contradictory to Christian truths. The Irish example may guide us in our search for evidence. Regarding knowledge that can be imparted by a visit to the Irish otherworld whose inhabitants are not subject to Adam’s fall, Mark Williams maintains:

It is difficult, after all, to imagine what an unfallen mode of knowing might look like, except in the terms that the New Testament represents as proper to the redeemed. In 1 Corinthians 13:12, the Apostle Paul provides the classical statement on the latter: ‘For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully, even as I have been fully known.’

(Williams, 2016, p. 60)

The description of a knowledge corresponding to this unfallen mode is maybe found in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’, for the speaker of the poem boasts with his knowledge which comprises both autochthonous and Biblical traditions, and which goes beyond the uninspired knowledge of an ordinary monk:

The speaker is undoubtedly the Taliesin figure, recognizable by his trademark questions (the nature of the Otherworld cauldron, in line 15), and more particularly by his taunting of ‘men involved with religious writings (line 29) [...]’.

(Haycock, 2007, p. 433)

Haycock does not think that a general latent conflict between the learned orders of poets and clergy can be suggested based on Taliesin taunting men of religious learning, suggesting instead:

We must remember [...] that the picture of the *ymryson* in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ may well be retrospective, i.e. it may purport to be set in the past and reflect a belief that there had been some initial enmity between the religious orders.

(Haycock, 1983/84, p. 57)

The Taliesin figure, the speaker of ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ would agree very well with the *filid* from a hagiographical legend as described by Williams:

According to hagiographical legend, when Patrick came before the court of Lóegaire mac Néill, supposed high king of Tara, the only people to rise in respect before the saint were a poet and his pupil. The story tells us that the *filid* were concerned to represent themselves as an ancient order with roots in the deep past, but an order whose members had instantly perceived the truth of Christianity and readily accepted it.

(Williams, 2016, pp. 157-158)

We could even go a step further, for the legendary Taliesin is not bound to the limitations of space and time: he claims to have been present in many places of this world and the otherworld and in different periods of time, as e.g. in ‘Kat Godeu’ (text and translation: Haycock 2017, pp. 174-239). Thus, he seems to share some qualities of the inhabitants of the otherworld, such as Manannán in the *Immram Brain*, who, in Williams’ words (comparing him with Bran), has ‘a degree of insight deeper, truer, and keyed to eternity’ (Williams, 2016, p. 58). This description of knowledge applies to Taliesin’s knowledge as well. Furthermore, Williams draws attention to Columba’s characterization of inspired knowledge of holy persons, quoting from Adomnán’s *Life of Columba* (Williams, 2016, p. 60):

There are some people -few indeed- to whom the grace of God has given the power to see brightly and most clearly, with a mental grasp miraculously enlarged, at one and the same time as if lit by single sunbeam, even the entire orbit of the whole earth and the sky and the sea around it.

(from Adomnán's *Life of Columba* as cited in Charles-Edwards, 2000, p. 193)

These are words referring to a saint, but Thomas Charles-Edwards has shown that this insight of a saint resembles the inspiration of a poet, *imbas for-osna* ('encircling knowledge which illuminates') (Charles-Edwards, 2000, p. 193). The Irish examples agree with the figure of Taliesin, whose inspired knowledge goes beyond ordinary learning but incorporates elements of Christian tradition, and does not contradict it. We may compare once again 'Preiddeu Annwn':

Nid wdant [...]

bet sant yn diuant, a bet allawr.

Golychaf-y Wledic, Pendefic mawr:

na bwyf trist: Crist a'm gwadawl.

They [the monks] don't know [...]

how many saints are in the void, and how many altars.

I praise the Lord, the great Ruler:

may I not endure sadness: Christ will reward me.

(Haycock, 2007, 18.55-60)

This strengthens the argument that Annwn is not identical with hell, if a poet inspired in Annwn is endowed with secret knowledge of the Saints and praises the Lord.

To sum up: the analysis of the Elidorus-episode found in the *Itinerarium Cambriae*, the poetry declaring Annwn to be the source of *awen*, inspired poetic and prophetic knowledge, and the use of the name 'Caer Siddi' for Annwn, suggest that a concept of Annwn like the sinless Irish otherworld existed. Thus, we conclude that there existed a poetic tradition in which the Welsh otherworld was by no means a sinister equivalent of hell.

2.2.2 Annwn in the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym

The poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym shows three distinct ways of dealing with the concept of the otherworld. We find poems in which Annwn relates to fairy folklore, poetry which uses Annwn in a figurative way, possibly as an equivalent for 'Hades', and finally, the otherworld appears as a land of magic and poetical inspiration.

In many of his poems Dafydd ap Gwilym talks in a jocular way about situations which are inconvenient for him, and in these poems he refers to Annwn or Gwyn ap Nudd, or the Welsh fairies as acting mischievously. In 'Y Dylluan' ('The Owl'), an owl keeps him from

sleeping by hooting and screeching at night, so that Dafydd says that ‘Edn i Wyn ap Nudd ydiw’ (‘it is Gwyn ap Nudd’s bird’) (DAG, no. 61, l. 40). ‘Y Pwll Mawn’ (‘The Peat-Pit’; DAG 59) describes how the poet wants to visit a girl but ends up in a peat pool with his horse. He refers to the peat-pit: ‘Pysgodlyn i Wyn yw ef, / Ab Nudd, wb ym ei oddef!’ (‘It is a fishpond belonging to Gwyn ap Nudd/ alas that one should suffer it!’) which shows that the moorland is a dwelling place of the denizens of Annwn; DAG, no. 59, ll. 29-30). In ‘Y Niwl’ (‘The Mist’; DAG 57) a heavy mist obscures Dafydd’s way. In the latter poem he calls the fog ‘ennaint gwrachod Annwfn’ (‘ointment of the hags of Annwn’), and further on we read:

Y sêr a ddaw o’r awyr
 Fal fflamau canhwylau cwyr
 Ac ni ddaw, poen addaw, pŵl
 Lloer na sêr Nêr ar nîwl

The stars come from the sky
 like flames of wax-candles
 but neither moonlight nor Lord’s stars,
 painful promise, will come in mist.

(text and translation, DAG, no. 57, ll. 49-52)

Huw M. Edwards comments on this metaphoric of light and darkness:

The star is God’s candle which guides him towards Morfudd whereas love’s impediments are associated with the dark powers of Annwfn, the otherworld of ancient Celtic mythology.

(Edwards DAG)

These metaphors suggest Annwn to be indeed a place far from the presence of God, but it is not equivalent to hell. The inhabitants of Annwn are presented as creating situations which are a challenge and nuisance for the poet. They dwell in the mist which hides them from the light created by God. Rather it is associated with places unfit for humans to live in. The situations described in the poems are treated in a jocular manner, as can be seen from the metaphors used for the mist, e.g., ‘gwe adrop, Ffrengigsiop ffrwyth/ Gwan dalar Gwyn a’i dylwyth’ (‘a spider’s web, wares of a French shop, / flaccid headland of Gwyn and his tribe’). The French wares not only physically resemble a veil or spider’s web, but they are a trap for the buyer: the humour is subtle. It is hard to imagine that a late-medieval poet like Dafydd ap Gwilym would use the Christian hell conflated with folklore in such a frivolous way, although a place removed from the presence of God is half-way to hell. Annwn and its denizens are rather a denominator for places which hold the dangers of wilderness for a human. The dangers of wilderness could be attributed to the Fall: in paradise, the lamb and the lion coexist

peacefully, so ultimately the challenges related to Annwn originate in its remoteness from divine presence.

In ‘Y Llwynog’, Annwn is also mentioned, but in a different way, for Annwn is not evoked implicitly by referring to motifs from fairy folklore, but the use of the word relates to its meaning that it is a subterranean abode. This makes it similar to ‘uffern’, hell, which is also subterranean:

Nid hawdd ymy ddilid hwn
A’i dŷ annedd hyd Annwn.
Deugwae’r talwrn lle digwydd,
Delw ci yn adolwg gŵydd.

It is not easy for me to follow him
since his dwelling is as far down as Annwn.
Beware the field where he happens to pounce,
The image of a dog, craving for a goose

(DAG 60: 41-44)

A connection with folklore, like in the poems mentioned above, can be conjectured, as the fox is a mischievous goose-thief, inhabiting the forest, easily associated with the equally mischievous fairies dwelling in Annwn.

A completely different concept of Annwn appears in ‘Mawl i’r Haf’, where summer singing with the voice of sunshine, describes itself as a prince who escapes to Annwn at the onset of winter:

[‘]Tyngedfen ym, rym ramant,
Tywysog wyf,’ tes a gant,
‘Dyfod drimis i dyfu
Defnyddiau llafuriau llu,
A phan ddarffo do a dail
Dyfu a gweu gwiaail,
I ochel awel aeaf
I Annwn o ddwfn ydd af.’

[‘]It is my fate, powerful omen,
I am a prince’ it was sunshine that sang
‘to come for three months to grow
the material for a host of crops,
and when the growth of treetops and leaves
ceases, and the weaving of branches,
to avoid the winter wind
I go from the world to Annwn.’

(DAG 35: 33-40)

This poem does not allow the identification of Annwn with hell either. Annwn is a place fit for summer to retire from the hardship of winter, so it must be a comfortable place, preferable to a wintry landscape. Nor may Annwn be where summer sleeps a deadly sleep, to resurrect in springtime: rather, the cyclical process is described, summer being part of the ever-changing seasons as fate (tynged). So, if we sought one, we could see a parallel to Persephone (Kore) from Greek mythology staying on the earth for half a year and then departing to Hades to live as a queen there. Indeed, perhaps the story of Kore and Demeter influenced Dafydd ap Gwilym, for he uses Ovid as a reference point for a great poet (DAG 71: 51; 72: 20), and Ovid treats of the story of Kore/Persephone in *Metamorphoses* (OM, 5.385-571). Rowlands suggests another mythological reading. In the line ‘didwn ben, dadeni byd’ (DAG 35: 6) he believes to detect a reference to Bendigeidfran who becomes a symbol for the alteration of the seasons: beheaded and alive according to season (1959, pp.126-128). This would make Bran or summer a variant of a dying and resurrecting god of vegetation. However, the lines ‘Pa dir ydd ai, er Pedr ddoeth?’ (‘to what land will you go for wise Peter’s sake?’), DAG 35: l. 30) suggest according to the notes to this line that summer might go to heaven, but in DAG it is pointed out, that the reference to Annwn was a pagan interpretation. However, we can also suggest that Dafydd ap Gwilym interpreted Annwn like the Irish otherworld or an earthly paradise, then St. Peter as reference point would be no contradiction.

In ‘Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gwilym’, Dafydd seems to echo the poetry of *Llyfr Taliesin*, probably ‘Preiddeu Annwn’:

Pendefig, gwledig gwlad hud—is dwfn,
Ys difai y'm dysgud.
Pob meistrolrwydd a wyddud,
Poened fi er pan wyd fud.

Chieftain, prince of the land of magic beneath the earth,
faultlessly did you teach me;
you knew every mastery,
I have been pained since you have been mute.

(DAG 6: 21-24)

‘Is dwfn’ and ‘gwlad hud’ can be understood as referring to Annwn, and the first line of this *englyn* seems to allude to the first line of ‘Preiddeu Annwn’, ‘Golychaf Wledig, Pendeuic gwlad ri’ (‘I praise the Lord, the Ruler of the kingly realm’).⁵⁶ If this interpretation is correct, then Dafydd, by these subtle allusions, places the uncle who taught him poetry on a level with

⁵⁶ Alternatively, this line could also be interpreted as reference to Pwyll Pendefig Dyfed ac Annwn (Pwyll Lord of Dyfed and Annwn (Johnston *et al.* 2010, p. 596-597). See also DAG, 6, n.21.

Taliesin. After all, this use of ‘gwlad hud’ and ‘is-dwfn’ – paraphrases for Annwn – shows that they do not here connote ‘hell’ or ‘uffern’, but rather poetic inspiration, a realm to inspire creativity. ‘Mawl yr Haf’ does not allow the identification of Annwn with the Christian hell at all, nor the metaphors involving an otherworldly realm according to the Taliesin-tradition in ‘Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gwilym’.

From the previous examples in this subchapter, we must conclude that in medieval poetry Annwn is not identical to Christian hell, but as the examples show, there is a tendency to conflate ‘uffern’ (‘hell’) and ‘Annwn’, especially, as the dangers which a visitor to Annwn must face and the subterranean location promote a figurative use for a place like hell. One main feature of Annwn is its ambiguity, with danger and delight, woe and wonder coexisting. The strategies to reconcile the traditional concept of this otherworldly realm with the Christian tradition is problematic, for the Christian tradition is one which clearly separates dual opposites: light from darkness, heaven from hell. Moreover, these opposites are related to the categories (morally) ‘good’ versus ‘bad’. Therefore, attempts to represent an otherworld characterized by coexisting dual opposites will result in texts which either highlight the paradisaical aspect or the infernal features which creates descriptions of the otherworld which contradict each other. In a Christian context, it is only a little step then to identify the challenging dangerous aspects with hell, and the beneficial ones with paradise: The features of a sinless otherworld with inhabitants of superior morality and wisdom are contrasted with an otherworld holding infernal dangers. But the fact that early texts referring to Annwn relate it to absolute truth, to the doctrine of *fír flathemon* - using the Irish term- as well as to prophetic and poetic wisdom, to *awen*, allow to reject the notion that the subterranean Annwn is an equivalent of hell according to medieval texts.

2.3 Being Dead for the World: The Glass Castle, *Caer Wydyr*

The previous paragraph asked whether Annwn was a synonym for ‘uffern’. In this sub-chapter we follow many folklorists to ask, ‘is the otherworld a realm of the dead?’ The main motif in this investigation will be the glass castle, closely related to the otherworld, and, as we will see, related to the motif of the soul resting between life and death.⁵⁷ I shall ask in what medieval

⁵⁷ For the glass mountain and the otherworld see Stith Thompson (F145, F751), for glass castle or glass house (ibid., F751, F 771), for glass tower (ibid.) (F772). A glass house, fortress, bower, coffin or mountain as places where a soul, a human being (sometimes in animal shape), or a supernatural character resides in a state of limbo, is a widely spread motif in folklore, and there are well-known examples in the Grimm Brothers’ collection of fairy tales. In ‘Die sieben Raben’ (‘The Seven Ravens’), the glass mountain is the abode of the seven ravens, the enchanted brothers of the heroine (Grimm,

and early modern texts the glass castle appears and whether the otherworld as presented in these texts is a realm of the dead. Then evidence from folklore will show to what extent the realm of the fairies and the land of the dead are conflated in folk tales and folk belief. Occasional comparisons with the literature and folklore of neighbouring countries will be made.

2.3.1 Myrddin Imprisoned in a Glass House: The Poetic Process

The glass fortress appears in 'Preiddeu Annwn' which names next to Caer Siddi seven other fortresses.⁵⁸ As noted One of these fortresses is named Caer Wydyr (Glass Fort) (Haycock, 2007, p. 436, l. 30). Glass is a material denoting otherness (Haycock, 1983/84, p. 73). Therefore, its appearance is expected in Annwn, and with it goes another motif, namely that of disrupted communication, for it is hard to communicate with the watchmen of Caer Wydyr (Haycock, 2007, p. 436).

A glass house appears in the narrative traditions connected with Myrddin/Merlin, a character which underwent a complex and complicated development.⁵⁹ From the fifteenth century sources describe Myrddin having been enclosed or enshrined in a glass house because of his love (Bromwich 1961, p. 474; Bartrum, s.v. 'Myrddin'; Ford, 1976, p. 384).⁶⁰ According to tradition the glass house is located on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) site of the monastery founded by Saint Cadfan (Ford, 1976, p. 384). On Ynys Enlli the glass house of Merlin is located according to Lewis Morris (Morris & Evans, 1878, p. 170), whose location is at least in accordance with Gruffudd Hiraethog's passing remark on Enlli in *Enweu Ynys Prydein*:

1997b, vol. 1, pp. 172-176). Glass as a magical material symbolizing suspension between life and death appears also in the crystal coffin in which Snow White is enshrined (Grimm, 1997a, vol. 1, pp. 300-311). *Deutsche Mythologie* surveys the glass castles and mountains appearing in medieval German literature (Grimm & Kretzenbacher (ed.), 1968 [1875-78], p. 698), and here we find a reference to a medieval Danish ballad, 'Sivard og Brynild', in which the valkyria, a supernatural being, sleeps on a glass mountain, before she is awakened by the hero (DgF 3, TSB E 101).

⁵⁸ '[K]aer pedryuan' is interpreted as a description rather than a name by Haycock (2007, p. 434), 'Caer Vedwit', 'Caer Rigor'. 'Caer Golud', 'Caer Vandwy', 'Caer Ochren'. These names can be interpreted either as alternative names for Caer Siddi, revealing by those names more characteristics of the place raided by Arthur, or as other places located in Annwn.

⁵⁹ A survey is given by Bromwich (1961, pp. 469-474) and Bartrum (1993, s.v. 'Myrddin/Merlin')

⁶⁰ For examples of Myrddin as lover in fifteenth-century poetry, see Bromwich (1961, p. 474); Bartrum (1993, s.v. 'Myrddin') or Ford quoting Lewis Morris (1976, p. 384).

‘Ynys Enlli [...] yn yr ynys honn y kladdwyd Merddin ab Morfryn’ (‘Ynys Enlli: [...] on this island Merddin ab Morfryn was buried’ (Bromwich, 1961, p. 474).⁶¹

In the *Chronicle* of Elis Gruffydd several motifs recalling ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ are worked into the story of Myrddin, who stays in a death-like state in a glass edifice. In ‘O varuolaeth Merddin, y nneb a ymydewis a llys y brenin’ (‘Concerning the death of Myrddin, he who left the court of the king’), Merlin was not only enclosed in a house of glass, but was a spirit who reappeared under the name of Taliesin in the time of Maelgwn Gwynedd, a third time as Mad Merlin, son of Esyllt: Gruffydd notes a contemporary belief that he as Taliesin resides at ‘Caer Sidia’, and will reappear before Doomsday.⁶² In Gruffydd’s tale Taliesin is alive at Caer Sidia. Additionally, Caer Sidia and the glass house become exchangeable names for the liminal state in which the soul of a master of poetic and prophetic inspiration is kept in a state of being eternally alive, but dead to the world.

In a similar way we can understand the creative process a truly inspired poet is subjected to when travelling to Annwn. The wisdom of Annwn is the wisdom which is waiting to be voiced and put into verse, as the poet goes through a process of transition which is the process of poetic inspiration, just as ‘Angar Kyfundawt’ expresses it (see above). Described thus, Annwn becomes a world of possibilities waiting to take shape. This process of inspiration by transition is precisely expressed in ‘Buarth Beird’ from the Book of Taliesin: ‘Wyf kell, wyf dellt, wyf datweirllt, / Wyf llogell kerd, wyf lle ynneyet’ (I’m a cell, I’m fragmented, I change my form; I’m a repository of song, I’m in a dynamic state’) (text & translation Haycock, 2007, p. 80, ll. 23-24).

The motif of staying in a glass abode is often combined with the motif of sleep.⁶³ ‘Mabgefreu Taliesin’ puts it: ‘A wydost ti peth wyt / pan vych yn kyscwyt:/ ae corff ae eneit, ae argel canneit?’ (‘Do you know what you are / when you are asleep / a body or a soul or a

⁶¹ Another tradition is the tale of Merlin storing the thirteen treasures of Britain in a glass house. In *Y Brython* we find a version of a text on the thirteen treasures of Britain which reads: ‘Myrddin Wyllt aeth a’r rhain i gyd o’r ddinas a elwid Caerlleon ar Wysg, i’r Ty Gwydr yn Ynys Enlli’ (‘Mad Merlin took all these from the city called Caerlleon-on-Usk to the House of Glass on Bardsey Island’) (Pedrog, 1860, p. 372). Both Bartrum (1993) and Ford (1976) refer to this text. Moreover, Ford draws attention to the different scholarly opinions regarding a connection between the motif of Merlin’s imprisonment and hiding the treasures in a glass house: Eurys I. Rowlands considers this motif separate from the narrative motif of Merlin being imprisoned in the glass house (Rowlands, 1958, p. 52), but both he and Loomis identify the glass house as kind of otherworldly location (Rowlands, 1958, pp. 33-69; Loomis, 1956, p. 53).

⁶² For text and translation see Ford (1976, p. 380, 390).

⁶³ Snow-White sleeps in her coffin, those abducted in *Sir Orfeo* are in a kind of sleeping state, see below.

pale mysterious thing?’) (Haycock, 2007, p. 243). Sleep has traditionally been compared to death: Thanatos (death) and Hypnos (sleep) are brothers, and a euphemism for stillbirth is ‘born asleep’.⁶⁴

Death is of course a great transition, and so we find the image of death as part of the creative process of poets in medieval Welsh poetry. Patrick Ford saw as results of his study on the death of Aneirin metaphoric death and process of creating poetry closely connected in medieval Welsh and Irish poetry (Ford, 1987, pp. 48-50). The words of Aneirin who describes himself being imprisoned in an earthy house or dwelling place during the inspirational process which leads to *Y Gododdin* give a powerful example:⁶⁵

Nyt wyf vynawc blin
 ny dialaf vy ordin
 ny chwwardaf y chwerthin
 a dan droet ronin
 ystynnawc vyg glin
 en ty deyeryn.
 cadwyn heyernin
 am ben vyn deulin
 o ved o vuelin
 o gatraeth werin.
 mi na vi aneirin
 ys gwyr talyessin
 ovec kywrenhin.
 neu chein[g] e ododin
 kynn gwawr dyd dilin.

(Williams, 1970, p. 22)

I am no weary lord,
 I avenge no provocation,
 I do not laugh
 Beneath the worms.
 Outstretched was my knee
 In an earthy dwelling,
 An iron chain
 Around my knees.
 About mead from drinking horn,
 About the men of Catraeth,
 I, not I, Aneirin
 Taliesin knows it,
 Skilled in expression
 Sang Y Gododdin
 Before the next day dawned.

(trans. Jarman, 1990, pp. 32-33)

⁶⁴ In German ‘to die’ and ‘*entschlafen*’ are synonyms; ‘*schlafen*’ = ‘sleep’.

⁶⁵ For text and introduction see Williams (1970), for translation Jarman (1990).

Concerning this *awdl*, Eson says the following:

These lines could refer to the actual burial of Aneirin after his death or they may just as readily be taken metaphorically, as in the passages above, to refer to the harsh ritual initiation of the Celtic archetypal poet.

(Eson, 2007, p. 184)

Aneirin is in a liminal state, his identity floating: 'I, not I'. He refers to Taliesin who 'knows it', suggesting that Taliesin knows of the liminality of the creative situation. Therefore, it can also be conjectured that the earthy dwelling not only recalls the grave, but also Annwn which is located underground and whence Taliesin – at least according to the poetry of the Book of Taliesin – gets his inspiration. The creative process as a transition or a passage is captured by the metaphor of death, but in the case of Taliesin the process of being bestowed with inspiration is also envisioned by birth for in *Ystoria Taliesin*⁶⁶ he is swallowed up and reborn from Ceridwen. The creative process seems to have three stages: leaving this world, acquiring inspiration and knowledge, and returning gifted with poetic inspiration. Patrick Ford has this to say:⁶⁷

The implication is that poets must experience an isolation tantamount to death and burial as part of the initiation process -- just as in the primordial story of Taliesin, where the initiate was swallowed, lay first in the womb of the *mam-awen* ['mother of inspiration'] Ceridwen, then was reborn, then was wrapped in a second womb wherein he floated about for 40 years before he was christened Taliesin.

(Ford, 1976, p. 47)

Moreover, Eson sees parallels between Aneirin's situation described in the *awdl* from *Y Gododdin* above and *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd y Chwaer* ('The Conversation of Myrddin and his Sister Gwenddydd') in which Myrddin speaks from an underground cell recalling a grave (Eson, 2007, pp. 185-187). In this case, too, the ritual death and rebirth of the poet are related to the motif of the grave and are itself metaphors for the creative process. Aled Llion Jones points out that in case of Aneirin, leaving the grave seems not to be a necessary condition for uttering a song (Jones, 2013, p. 70). The poet remaining in an otherworldly abode, or the grave becomes a motif for the poet being in an inspired, creative

⁶⁶ For text and introduction see Ford (1992).

⁶⁷ It is a widely spread motif that inspired wisdom is found beyond death. In the scripture we find Saul who conjures the ghost of Samuel (1 Sam 28); in the *Aeneis* Aeneas travels into Hades to have the soul of his deceased father to foretell the future (VER, VI), in *Baldur's Draumar*, Odin travels to Niflhel, precinct of the dead, and wakens a wise woman from the grave to foretell (Bellows, 2004, p. 196). Odin himself got his prophetic powers in shape of the runes after having been exposed to an ordeal hanging on a tree (Krause, 2010, s.v. 'Odin'). Eson (2007) discusses further examples of ritual burial and rebirth of poets.

state. Jones maintains: ‘the Celtic-language poet’s figural mobility between life and death is paralleled by his legendary access to the Otherworld and his legal mobility between kingdoms’ (ibid.).

The evidence presented above suggests that the motif of the glass house or the glass castle could be a metaphor for the grave, as Myrddin/Taliesin is enshrined in the glass house. But this does not necessarily imply that the glass house as otherworldly location is identical to the world of the dead. For the poet being in the grave (and returning from it) is a figure for the creative process. Both the grave and the otherworldly place are metaphors for the poet staying in a liminal state, and for the creative process which is presented as process of transition.

Muteness

If the poet remains in the grave, enshrined in the otherworld, he cannot bring forth poetry in this world. He is mute, and both muteness and insanity can indicate otherness.⁶⁸ Disruption of communication is also brought about if the words uttered make no sense: speaking nonsensical syllables shows that the poet still lingers in a liminal state and has not yet succeeded in bringing his inspired knowledge back into this world. Indeed, nonsensical speaking mirrors an otherworldly state of producing sound and yet speaking nothing (see Jones, 2013, pp. 68-69 for a connected discussion of poetic inspiration and the philosophy of language).

Historia Brittonum’s combination of muteness and a glass edifice gives an early example of a fortified building made of glass, in a paragraph describing how settlers came from Spain to Ireland:

[E]t postea filii militis Hispaniaecum triginata ciulis apud illos et cum triginta coniugibus in unaquaque ciula et manserunt ibi per spatium unius anni. et postea conspiciunt turrim vitream in medio mari et homines conspiciebant super turrim et qaerebant loqui ad illos et nunquam respondebant et ipsi uno anno ad oppugnationem turris propaverunt cum omnibus mulieribus excepta una ciula, quae confracta est naufragio, in qua ernat viri triginta totidemque mulieres. et aliae naves navigaverunt ad expugnandam turrim, et dum omnes descenderant in litore, quod erat circa turrim, operuit mare et demersi sunt et non evasit unus ex illis.

(Klawes (ed.), 2012, §13)

After these came three sons of a Spanish soldier with thirty ships, each of which contained thirty wives; and having remained there during the space of a year, there appeared to them, in the middle of the sea, a tower of glass, the summit of which seemed

⁶⁸ In German folklore ‘Das stille Volk zu Plesse’, a dwarfish, fairy-like people, has muteness as a feature of otherness (Grimm & Grimm, 1997b, p. 57).

covered with men, to whom they often spoke, but received no answer. At length they determined to besiege the tower; and after a year's preparation, advanced towards it, with the whole number of their ships, and all the women, one ship only excepted, which had been wrecked, and in which were thirty men, and as many women; but when all had disembarked on the shore which surrounded the tower, the sea opened and swallowed them up.

(Giles (trans.), 1848, § 13)

The glass castle cannot be conquered. Its inhabitants cannot, or wish not to, talk with the aggressors: in addition to inaccessibility there is a barrier of communication. The motif of muteness also appears related to the motif of the cauldron, which *Ystoria Taliesin* proves (and further examples are in the Second and Third Branches of the Mabinogi). As the motif of the cauldron deserves its own chapter, the motif appears below in chapter 3, and we will see that in context with the cauldron, too, muteness is caused by a failed transitional process mediated by an otherworldly object.

2.3.2 The Isles of Glass: Otherworldly Realms and Isles of the Dead? - The Perspective of John Rhŷs

In Gruffydd's *Chronicle*, the glass house was built in 'Ynys Wydrin ['Glassy Isle'], which is in a mill-dam besides the Perilous Bridge in Gloucestershire' (Ford, 1976, p. 389). The epithet 'Glassy Isle' or 'Isle of Glass' appears several times in Arthurian romance as name of a magical realm and in connection with stories corresponding to the motif of a woman abducted to fairyland (cf. Stith-Thompson-Index F 322 and chapters 3, 4 & 5 below).

'Ynys Wydrin' recalls several places appearing in Arthurian romance: Glastonbury is interpreted as glass city, '*Urbs Vitrea*' in the *Vitae Gildae* by Caradoc of Llancarfan (VGC, §10, l. 35); it is the stronghold of Melvas who abducted Arthur's queen (this story corresponds to tales of women who have been abducted by fairy lords. In Chrétien's *Érec et Énide*, Maheloas comes from the supernatural Glass Isle 'l'Isle de Voirre', where no toads or serpents can be found and where the climate is always pleasant and temperate. The similarity between Melvas, Maheloas and Meleagant from *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, and also between Gwyn ap Nudd and Melwas, is noted by Rhŷs, Loomis and Carey (Rhŷs 2008 [1891], p. 334; Loomis, 1993, pp. 190, 213; Carey, 2017, pp. 146-7):⁶⁹ all three agree that the respective abodes of these characters are otherworldly. Carey draws attention to 'Gorre', the kingdom of Meleagant's father, claiming that this reflects Fr. 'voirre' or W. 'gwydr' (Carey, 2017, p. 147).

⁶⁹ For text, Modern French translation and introduction see Chrétien & Croizy-Naquet (2006).

Jones and Lloyd-Morgan discuss the connection between these tales and the history of motifs such as the abduction story and the Isle of Glass (2020, p. 77). Lloyd-Morgan has also explored how Glastonbury and Ynys Wydrin on the one hand, and Ynys Wydrin and Caer Wydr on the other are related:

One striking fact which emerges from a survey of the incidences of the three place-name Ynys Afallach, Ynys Wydrin and Gasynbri, is the absence of the first two in the earlier native Welsh literature. Apart from the extremely faint possibility that the Caer Wydyr ('fortress of glass') in the early Arthurian poem, 'Preiddeu Annwfn', in the Book of Taliesin, might have some vague connection with Ynys Wydrin there is a deafening silence.

(Lloyd-Morgan, 2001, p. 174)

Moreover, Jones and Lloyd Morgan (2020, p. 49) draw attention to Ifor Williams' opinion that 'Ynys Wydrin' is based on 'woad', which was grown at Glastonbury, for Lat. 'vitrum' can be 'woad' (*Isatis tinctora*) or 'glass', linked by the blue dye and the blue-green tinge of glass. This agrees with Pyatt *et al.* (1991) and Lewis Gray (1935). Jones and Lloyd-Morgan conclude that Ynys Wydrin could be a back-translation of the English name (2020, p. 49).

The Arthurian tales suggest that Glastonbury is considered a mythical and otherworldly place (Loomis, 1993, p. 190), a tradition which survived into modern times (cf. 2.1 above): it is likely that this influenced the interpretation of the name. The motif of the glass isle, with glass as magical marker of otherness, became entwined with the name of the place, supplanting the agricultural meaning.

In *De Instructione Principium*, Gerald of Wales localizes this magical abode at Glastonbury (DIP, p. 193). About the same time Ralph de Coggeshall, too, in *Chronicum Anglicanum*, identifies Avallon with Glastonbury (RCA, p. 36). The identification of Avallon with Glastonbury connects the tradition of the Glass Isle with the Elysian abode of plenty and healing. This connection persists. In MS Llanstephan 4 we read in *Claddedigaeth Arthur*:

Honneit y6 weithon paham y gelwir y lle h6nn6 Ynys Wydrin, paham Auallach, a phaham Glastynbri. A honneit y6 heuyt pa dylyet a oed ch6edylydyon gal6 y wreic honno, Margan, yn d6ywes o Ann6fyn.

It is known now why that place is called Ynys Wydrin, why Avallach, and why Glastonbury. And it is also known why the storytellers were obliged to call that lady, Margan, the goddess of the Otherworld.

(text and translation: Henley, GMS)

This citation is evidence that ‘Ynys Wydrin’, ‘Ynys Avallach’, ‘Glastynbri’ were considered to be identical and governed by a goddess of ‘Annwfn’.⁷⁰ We finally can read in *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* that Triad 90 found in Peniarth 185 lists Ynys Avallach, Caer Garadawc and Bangor as the sites of the ‘three perpetual harmonies’, while in Peniarth 228, these are Bangor, Caer Gariadawc and Ynys Wydrin (Bromwich 1961, p. 217).

Rhys went a step further than only seeing the Glass Isle as otherworldly. In *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (2008 [1891]), Rhys lists Gorre and Glastonbury as ‘Isles of the Dead’ (p. 349). In the case of Gorre and especially Glastonbury Rhys believed it to be an isle of the dead based on the equivalence of Melvas, Maheloas and Meleagant to Gwyn ap Nudd, the king of Annwn who is styled a divinity of death and darkness by Rhys (ibid., pp. 137, 330, 342-343).⁷¹ Also, another of Rhys’ proclaimed ‘Isles of the Dead’ is Ynys Enlli (see above). Furthermore, in *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (2008 [1888]) Rhys discusses the bower of glass in *Tochmarc Étaíne* in which Étaín – transformed into a purple fly – was placed by Angus Óc⁷² (the wandering soul could take such a shape, according to beliefs discussed in chapter 1).⁷³ Étaín, too, is in kind of liminal, death-like state, cut off from this world. According to Rhys’ reading of medieval Celtic literature, Angus is the Celtic Zeus with Myrddin being his Welsh equivalent, and based on this supposed identity, he understood the bower as comparable to Merlin’s glass house (pp. 144-146, 151, 155).

The glass bower and the glass house are indeed similar but should not be based on a fabricated Celtic pantheon. There is little to distinguish mute otherworldly limbo from death, and even if there is a small difference for (s)he who is in the glass, there is none for mundane society: unless the imprisoned character returns, he/she is indeed dead to the ordinary world. Myrddin incarnates as Taliesin, and Étaín is finally reborn. This makes the sojourn in the glass

⁷⁰ For a detailed discussion of Glastonbury in the vernacular Welsh literature see Lloyd-Morgan (2001).

⁷¹ The related evidence Rhys believes to have discovered is problematic: the references to Gwyn ap Nudd in the Black Book of Carmarthen do not support his interpretation. Idris Foster believes that Rhys was led astray by interpreting Annwfn as hell (Foster, 1953, p. 200), and also criticizes (p. 202) what he sees as an impossible interpretation of the name of Gwyn’s dog Dormarch as ‘Death’s door’. Moreover, Rhys completely neglects a standard heroic description of Gwyn, translating ‘mi.wi. wiw. vintev. y. bet’ (i.e., ‘myfi fyw, wynteu ym medd’, ‘I am alive; they are in the grave’) from ‘Ymddiddan rhwng Gwyddneu Garanhir a Gwyn ap Nudd’ as ‘I am the escort to the grave’: he does this in order to find in Gwyn a Celtic Hades, modeled on classical patterns (Rüdiger, 2012, pp. 42-46; 2018, pp. 124-125).

⁷² For text and introduction see Bergin & Best (1938).

⁷³ For the zoomorphic double in the shape of a fly see Lecouteux (2003, p. 93).

abode a state of transition and reshaping and the liminal situation between life and death is resolved.

2.3.3 The Folklorists' Perspective

Welsh Evidence

In *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* the poet meets the Tylwyth Teg:

Ond wrth feddwl fod yr wynebau a adwaenwn i wedi eu claddu, a'r rheini'n fy mwrw,
ac eraill yn fy nghadw uwchben pob ceunant, deallais nad witsiaid oeddynt, ond mai
rhai a elwir 'y Tylwyth Teg'.

(Wynne 1998 [1703], pp. 7, ll. 8-11)

But on considering that the faces I recognized have been buried, and that those were
striking me, and others holding me high above every brook, I understood that they
were not witches, but (certain) ones which are called 'Y Tylwyth Teg'

(my trans.)

This seems to suggest that some of the Tylwyth Teg are deceased people, while at the same time Annwn becomes equivalent to hell. Rhys (2012 [1901]), suggests that one source of fairy belief is the worship of dead ancestors,⁷⁴ but rather cautiously considers a mixed origin for the fairies:

So I should hesitate to do anything so rash as to pronounce the fairies to be all of one and the same origin: they may well be of several. For instance, there may be those that have grown out of traditions about an aboriginal pre-Celtic race, and some may be the representatives of the ghosts of the departed men and women, regarded as one's ancestors, but there can hardly be any doubt that others, and those possibly not the least interesting, have originated in the demons and divinities – not all of ancestral origin - with which the weird fancy of our remote forefathers peopled lakes and streams, bays and creeks and estuaries.

⁷⁴ The idea of interpreting the fairies as the dead was uttered by Rhys (2012 [1901], p. 273-279), when trying to explain the tales about the *Toili*, the funeral host. The idea to see the fairy belief as a primitive worship of the ancestors is originated in the evolutionary theories on the development of religion, and it reflects probably very much the 'zeitgeist' of the folklorists of the 19th century (see this thesis, part II, chapter about John Rhys).

Spence (1948) took up the idea of the fairies being the dead eagerly, but, unfortunately, based his arguments in case of the Welsh fairies on the fact that Gwyn ap Nudd was the 'king of the dead', thus taking up a misinterpretation of a medieval source by Rhys.

Purkiss (2000) still highlights the link between the fairies and the dead but cautions against such arguments as the fairies being the dead because they are often related to burial mounds, yet in other places she stresses the connection between the fairies and the dead (see above).

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 455)

Evans-Wentz presents evidence for the belief that fairies are spirits of the dead not bad enough for hell, but also unfit for heaven. He recorded the report of the folklorist J. Ceredig Davies of Llanilar, who had interviewed many Welsh people:

Many of the Welsh looked upon the Tylwyth Teg or fairies as the spirits of Druids dead before the time of Christ, who being too good to be cast into Hell were allowed to wander freely about on earth.

(Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 147)

Another of Evans-Wentz' informants, Rev. T. Morgan of Newchurch parish, Carmarthenshire is recorded as saying: 'The *Tylwyth Teg* were believed to live in some invisible world to which children on dying might go to be rewarded or punished, according to their behaviour on this earth' (p. 150). A sixty-year-old Pembrokeshire woman told Evans-Wentz: 'I think there must be an intermediate state between life on earth and heavenly life and it may be in this that spirits and fairies live.' (ibid. p. 154).

T. Gwynn Jones writes in *Welsh Folklore*:

The Fairies are immortal, and there is no suggestion in any Welsh material known to me that the realm was the land of the dead, beyond the fact that the grave is sometimes facetiously called *Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg*, 'the Land of Fairies', and the statement made by the wife of a Lleyn man who used to follow the Fairies regularly once a month, that one's soul is allowed to go to their country after death.

(Jones, 1979 [1930], p. 54)

This shows that there is an overlap between the world of the dead and the fairies in folk beliefs from the eighteenth century onwards, but there is no definite identity of both realms. The evidence collected by Evans-Wentz suggests that the realm of the fairies was reserved only for a special kind of dead.

English, Scottish, Irish and Cornish Sources

Comparing with evidence from neighbouring countries could help us to understand why the realm of the fairies seems to be accessible for a special kind of dead people. Katharine Briggs sees a closer connection between the fairies and the dead:

At first sight the commonly received idea of Fairyland seems as far as possible from the shadowy and bloodless Realms of the Dead, and yet, in studying fairy-lore and ghost-lore alike we are haunted and teased by resemblances between them. This is not to say that the Fairies and the Dead are identical, or that the fairies derive entirely from notions

about the dead, only that there are many interconnections between them, and that some classes of the dead were undoubtedly regarded by old people as inhabitants of Fairyland.

(Briggs, 1970, p. 81)

Briggs' assessment is largely based on medieval texts, especially *Sir Orfeo*,⁷⁵ calling this poem 'the medieval example of a full fusing of Fairyland with the Realm of the Dead'. Although classical sources must be taken into account, the main influence here is Celtic, for it is the translation of a Breton Lai (1970, p. 81). In *Sir Orfeo* we meet the motif of glass as otherworldly material again, and the motif of disrupted communication. Orfeo's queen has been abducted by the fairy king, and Orfeo sets out to search for her. He sees her hawking with other ladies but is unable to talk to her. He makes his way to the castle of the fairy king who has taken his queen. This castle has an outer wall resembling crystal (Laskaya & Salisbury 1995, ll. 358). In the castle, Orfeo meets people asleep between life and death:

Than he gan bihold about al,
And seighe liggeand within the wal
Of folk that were thider y-brought
and thought dede, and nare nought.

(Ibid., ll. 387-390)

Then he began to gaze about
And saw within the walls a rout
Of folk that were thither drawn below
And mourned as dead, but were not so.

(trans. Tolkien 1975, ll. 387-390)

The following twelve lines describe people who have 'died' in the world of men: beheaded and severely wounded, drowned and burned, women in childbirth, but also the queen who sleeps under the grafted tree (ibid., ll. 390-402); and finally, the narrator comments:

Eche was thus in this world y-nome,
With fairi thider y-come.

(ibid., ll. 403-404)

Thus in the world was each one caught
And thither by fairy magic brought.

(trans. Tolkien, ll. 403-404)

Briggs states that all those people died prematurely (Briggs, 1970, p. 85). Premature death she finds to be a precondition for the dead to move to fairy land. Briggs uses folk tales collected in the nineteenth century, including 'The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor' discussed below, but she also considers early modern material concerning Scottish witch trials, such as the case

⁷⁵ For text, translation and introduction see ORF or Laskaya & Salisbury (1995); for sources of *Sir Orfeo* see Davies (1936).

of Elspeth Reoch, who claimed to have met her late kinsman John Stewart in the company of a fairy, and that he became her guide to the fairies. Similar cases include that of Bessie Dunlop, charged with witchcraft in 1578, whose most important fairy-contact was a certain Thom Reid (Briggs, 1970, p. 88), Alesoun Peirson who states when charged that her chief contact was William Sympsoune, her cousin (Purkiss, 2000, p. 102). Diane Purkiss discusses these also seeing a strong connection between the worlds of the dead and of the fairies (Purkiss, 2000, pp. 90-106). Both Briggs and Purkiss point out that only those who died prematurely were thought to be with the fairies (Purkiss, *ibid.*; Briggs, 1970, p. 96). Purkiss sees the fear and veneration of the dead as source for the fairy belief: 'From death, yes; like European fairies, as we shall see, demons are often the dead' (Purkiss 2000, p. 15), but she says this concerning the witch trials:

Fairies also share many of the characteristics of the dead; in some stories they *are* the dead, or the dead are with them, in others it is difficult for teller and reader alike to tell the difference between a ghost or revenant or a fairy.

(Purkiss, 2000, p. 86)

Lady Gregory collected folk beliefs in the west of Ireland, suggesting that women who died prematurely, often when giving birth, and also men who passed away prematurely and unexpectedly, had gone with the fairies (Gregory 1992 [1920], pp. 106, 111). The general outline of those beliefs is that the people who joined the fairies are in fact exchanged and that they now live with the fair folk, their death having been faked. The beliefs collected by Lady Gregory differ from the testimony of the women tried as witches, for they believed that they met with truly dead relatives.

The Cornish tale 'The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor', collected and first published by William Bottrell in 1873, unites in a single tale two central ideas: that fairies are truly dead, and that while people abducted by the fairies are believed to be dead in the world of man, they live with the fairies.⁷⁶ A certain Mr. Noy is saved from permanent capture by the fairies by the advice of a girl who loves him: she has been taken by the fairies, who have faked her dead body:

He [Mr. Noy] approached and was surprised to see that the damsel was no other than a farmer's daughter of Selena, one Grace Hutchens, who had been his sweetheart for a long while, until she died, three or four years ago [...]. "People believed, and so it seemed, that I was found on the moor dead; it was also supposed that I must have dropped there in a trance, as I was subject to it. What was buried for me, however, was

⁷⁶ For a detailed discussion of the origin and possible Irish and Welsh influences see Young (2013) and Harte (2004, p. 43).

only a changeling, or a sham body, never mine I should think, for it seems to me I feel much the same still as when I lived to be your sweetheart.”

(Bottrell, 1873, p. 98)

At the same time, the fairies are introduced as dead pagans who worshipped the stars:

[E]ven then after many years' experience, their mode of life seemed somewhat unnatural to her, for all among them is mere illusion or acting and sham. They have no hearts, she believed, and but little sense or feeling; what serves them in a way, as such, is merely the remembrance of whatever pleased them when they lived as mortals, - may be thousands of years ago. [...] For you must remember they are not of our religion [...] but worshippers of the stars. [...] And indeed they often long for the time when they will altogether dissolve in air and so end their wearisome state of existence without an object or hope.

(Bottrell, 1873, pp. 99-100)

The examples from folklore show that the Welsh beliefs agree with their neighbours' that only the realm of the fairies was not generally a realm of the dead but reserved for a special kind of deceased. This supports Purkiss and Briggs that the folklore of originally Celtic-speaking areas imagines the world of the fairies as a kind liminal space where those souls can linger whose mortal life has prematurely ended, but who are not yet 'ripe' to be accepted into heaven or hell. Especially those who died violently without Christian rites, or without baptism, would be excluded, with no hope of resurrection to eternal life. The state of being in fairy land resembles the Catholic limbo of those who are not damned but remain in the state of original sin. The concept of limbo is rejected by the Protestants, and it is possible that this difference was an additional driving force for the effective merging of Annwn and hell, for with no liminal zone for those who are unfit for heaven or hell, they must go to one or the other.

2.3.4 Dead or Alive: A Question of Perspective

In the previous section we learned that the fairy land is open to the prematurely deceased. In the fairy world being 'dead' or 'alive' is not defined in the same way as in our world. Thus, 'being dead' can be a metaphor for an utterly different world, an inverted world characterized by otherness, and examples from folklore support this interpretation. In a Welsh fairy-mistress tale reported by Elias Owen's informant Shon Rolant, the fairy-bride is not happy to marry a human: 'She [...] expressed displeasure at marrying a dead man, as the Fairies call us' (Owen 1973 [1887], p. 11). There is a parallel from Scotland: a woman lends her cauldron to the fairies but forgets to speak the formula to ensure its return. She enters the fairy abode to fetch it, and the fairies set their dog named Rough on her:

Thou dumb sharp one, thou dumb sharp,
That came from the land of the dead,
And drove the cauldron from the brugh-
Undo the knot and loose the Rough.

(text and trans. Campbell 1900, pp. 57-58)

The land of the fairies or the otherworld is so filled with life that they consider living mortals to be ‘dead men’. This is a very powerful motif. In the otherworldly realm the concepts of ‘being alive’ and ‘being dead’ are different from our perspective

Another example of mortal men being ‘dead’ to the inhabitants of the otherworld, is *Echtrae Chonnlaí*.⁷⁷ Connlae, son of Conn of the Hundred Battles, is standing on the hill of Uisneach with his father and his father’s druid when he sees a woman approaching. She claims to have come from the land of the living and invites him to the Plain of Delight, a place free from sickness and death: ‘Grandly does Connlae sit amidst the short-lived dead awaiting terrible death. The everliving living invite you’ (McCone, 2000, pp. 166-170). We would do the text no justice by interpreting this merely as a motif denoting otherness. Kim McCone (2000) reads the text as Christian allegory, where death relates to sin, and man must die because of the original sin. Furthermore, all motifs of the tale have then to be interpreted according to the Christian tradition. The address of the young woman does not speak of otherness then, but of eternal life. McCone puts it like this: ‘[...] she finally persuades Connlae to give up his regal future among mortals for and a distant sinless paradise’ (McCone 2000, quoted in Williams, 2016, p. 53). Williams addresses the question of how the Christian allegory and pre-Christian motif such as the ‘woman of sovereignty’ and the *síd*, ‘the big hollow hill’ can be brought into agreement (ibid., 52-56):

That ‘The Adventure of Connlae’ is about salvation is clear; its difficulties become fewer if we surmise that its author was thinking in terms of the theology of divinization. His creative innovation was to identify ‘gods’ of the Psalmist with his own island’s indigenous divinities, appropriating them as metaphors for redeemed souls. [...] If we read it in this way [...], then we can catch a glimpse of how the author’s circles must have read: the text privileges the implicit and rewards the reader’s ability to see new significance in old motifs.

(Williams, 2016, pp. 55-56)

The motifs must be interpreted in their context and according to their genre: a motif from folklore and a literary motif can be of similar form but differing in depth and meaning.

⁷⁷ For text, translation and introduction see: McCone (2000).

2.3.5 The Otherworldly Flow of Time

In folklore collections of the nineteenth century, we find the motif of people who have gone into the land of the Tylwyth Teg do not age, quite contrary to the world of men. Returning to the world of men they do not live long or even crumble to dust (Evans, 1935, p. 70). The absence of time or the extremely slow flow of time in the otherworld turns its denizens and visitors into 'ever-living ones'. But if time does not flow, then the past and the future collapse into an unending present. The dancers who stumble into a fairy ring, still dance one year later (as seen from the perspective of men) and they believe that only a moment has passed since they started to dance (Evans, 1935, pp. 1-6). Carey finds:

I would argue that Otherworld time is not only out of alignment with mortal time, but is of fundamentally different in kind. [...] In the Otherworld all of time exists simultaneously in an eternal present.

(Carey, 1987, p. 8)

This specific flow of time, or stopped flow of time, can be detected implicitly in medieval literature in a motif that relates to knowledge of all periods of time. Carey maintains that in this way it is possible to have all knowledge of the past and of the future, such as Manannán displays (p. 8). Carey points out that this feature is sometimes interpreted in the Christian context and the fundamentally different flow of time in the Otherworld is a metaphor for the carefree delights of Paradise in which neither old age nor death are known (ibid.). Furthermore (p. 10):

The motif of a metamorphosis-sequence is used in Celtic narrative as a device to connect the present with its origins, whether the beginnings of history or the transtemporal eternity of the Otherworld.

Carey notes that Taliesin in 'Kat Godeu' is not bound to time, place or shape: many different states of being have been accessible (for text, see Haycock 2007, pp. 174-186).

If the irreversible flow of time is not present, then the concepts of 'aging' and 'dying' have no meaning. Carey illustrates this with Manannán's household 'where nothing is ever exhausted or dispersed' (*op cit.*, 12). But there is no development either, for being trapped in an eternal present of immortality means that one has left the flow of life just as if one were truly dead. Therefore, the otherworldly realm is one in which the boundaries between the dead and the living have fallen. This is exactly what the eternal present of the Otherworld, a motif described by Carey (ibid., p.14) shows us. In The First Branch of the Mabinogi, Hafgan, king of *Annwn*, could well be killed, but with one stroke only, for the second stroke, instead of

being the fatal one, restores him to strength again (PKM, p. 3). Another example is Sir *Orfeo*, discussed above: the queen is in a death-like state at court but is seen hunting and hawking in the wood. Such a world is an antithesis to the world of men, where the borders between life and death are normally clear or must be clarified (heated discussions take place whenever this clear borderline seems to be blurred by modern medicine, as in the case of prenatal medicine, rules for taking organs for transplantation, or in the case of patients in comas). A world with no clear distinction between death and life would be an otherworld indeed, differing from ordinary human experience. Moreover, it is essential for a human society to deal with death. In non-secular societies, religion normally provides patterns, so that the transition can be integrated. We have seen that people who died an untimely death, without preparation and proper transition rites are bound to stay in the realm of the fairies, extra-social and liminal, suspended between life and death.

It cannot be denied that the dead reappearing in spectral form may have contributed to the formation of fairy traditions. We have seen examples above which present the otherworld as a place where the prematurely deceased stay. However, I caution against reducing Annwn or the realm of the fairies to a world of the (venerated or feared) dead, or against reducing the fairies to spirits of the dead: this does not account for other features of Annwn, especially in the literary tradition.

In medieval literature, Annwn is a realm of exceeding beauty, wisdom, lack of old age and sickness and supernatural integrity. Furthermore, in the First Branch of the Mabinogi Annwn is a realm where permanent death *may* occur, which would give the paradox of the dead dying, if we assumed that Annwn and its denizens is a realm of the dead. Furthermore, the tale of Elidorus does not suggest in any way either that he has gone to a world of the dead, as the little people have children, eat and drink and though they have strange customs, there is nothing to support their being spirits of the dead (IC, pp. 65-67). Considering folk traditions, the fairy-bride legends do not give us reason to assume that the fairy brides represent the dead. Several traditions of fairy wives who took human husbands and whose children are the ancestors of Welsh families were collected by Rhys (2012 [1901], pp. 3-18, p. 41, p. 46-47, p. 55, p. 65). These are rather tales of supernatural ancestry. Moreover, we have also to investigate cautiously whether the idea of the fairies representing ancestors, i.e. the past, is not a back-projection of what the interpreter of fairy folklore experiences as 'other': e.g., in the case of John Rhys it will be shown in chapter 6 that the fairies are rationalized as a primitive people of the past, which represents otherness for him.

The problem whether the world of the fairies is a realm of the dead or not, can be solved when interpreting the world of the fairies as a world representing otherness in the first place. An author could express this otherness by contrasting the meaning of death in his own world to the meaning death has in the imagined otherworld. If an author believed the existence of death being a feature of his own mundane world, he would depict the otherworld as a place where death does not occur. If a life lived out from birth to old age was considered the norm for a human being, then the prematurely deceased find a place in the realm of otherness. If the flow of time leading to inevitable death is the norm in the ordinary human world, death and time have no meaning in an otherworldly liminal realm in which past and future coexist. Annwn is a liminal world, though not an abode set aside exclusively for the departed.

3. Water-Worlds & Wilderness

*A tithau'n gwatwar - a'th wyn donnau'n codi,
Gan ddynwaredu fel y gwnant wastrodi
Ar hyd eu hochrau, pan fydd eu corynod
Yn drigle Gwyn ap Nudd, fel Cantre'r Gwaelod.
-Glasynys*

The dwelling places of the Welsh fairies are not only located either underground, in hills, caves or burial mounds, in a glass fortress, but also beyond or under the sea, in lakes, beyond the waters, even in the mists, but also in woodlands, in wastelands and wilderness and, last but not least, in people's imaginations. Water is important in the stories about the fairy folk of Wales, and consequently, the following sections analyse its meaning, as well as the conflict of fire and water. Woodland and wilderness as favourite dwelling places are discussed next, leading on to considerations about the direction in which the realm of the fairies is located: north, south, east, west, or in the inner landscape of the human mind.

3.1 Foreign Shores

Both in folklore and in literary sources we find examples of otherworldly realms located on a foreign, distant shore, often on an ocean or lake island. Sometimes the otherworld border is simply a river or even a stream.⁷⁸ What, then, are the features of the realm beyond the water, associated motifs and their meaning? What function does the water barrier have, and what happens when crossing it? Section 3.1.1, 'The Otherworld beyond the Waters' presents examples from *Llyfr Taliesin* which suggest a location of the otherworld overseas: these will be compared to Irish and Scottish evidence. Then, examples from Welsh folklore will be presented which locate the otherworld on an island in a lake, and finally we consider the magical Isle of Avallon. Two motifs will deserve special attention: the nine maidens inhabiting the otherworld, and the apple trees and apples related to this realm. In both cases possible classical origins will be considered.

Section 3.1.2, 'The Separating Waters: A Liminal Space of Transformation', considers the special horses which transgress this border in medieval Welsh literature, with comparison to Irish evidence. Streams and fords separating the worlds are discussed, with comparison to Irish, Norse and Finnish examples.

⁷⁸ See below for examples.

3.1.1 The Otherworld beyond the Water

Evidence from Llyfr Taliesin - Comparison with Irish Examples

Chapter 2.2 presented examples of an underground Annwn, but the poem ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ suggests that it can be reached by ship: ‘Tri lloneit Prytwen yd aetham-ni idi’ (‘Three full loads of Prydwen we went into it’) (Haycock, 2007, p. 435, l. 9). If Annwn can be reached by ship, then it must be a realm which is located beyond the sea or at least on a foreign shore. Carey reads ‘Annwn llifereint’⁷⁹ in ‘Kat Godeu’ (The Battle of the Trees) as locating Annwn overseas: he translates as ‘Annwn of the floods’ (Carey, 2000, p. 119); Haycock prefers the translation ‘streams of Annwn’, and also notes Mary Burdett-Jones’ ‘silver streams of Annwn’ (p. 230). Yet, the ‘very deep’ of ‘Annwn’ suggests that it could be located under water, under the ocean: the voyage of ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ is thus magical, sailing not over, but through the water (cf. Haycock 1983/84, p. 56; 2007, p. 273).⁸⁰

‘Preiddeu Annwn’ shows Irish influence in its use of the name ‘Caer Siddi’ (Sims-Williams 2011, p. 72; cf. also 2.1), and the subject of the raid into Annwn recalls the Irish medieval *echtraí* (heroic otherworld journeys) and *immrama* (extended voyage in the course of which the hero visits several islands with otherworldly character (Haycock, 2007, p. 434)⁸¹ John Carey notes that only two Irish texts locate the otherworld on an overseas island, namely the texts *Echtrae Conlae* and *Immram Brain* (Carey, 2000, p. 119). Carey maintains that the overseas otherworld *topos* was introduced by the Ulster literary movement into Irish literature (Carey, 2000, pp. 116, 119): this suggests that the location of an otherworldly realm overseas was part of a gradual development of older traditions of the otherworld being a subaquatic or subterranean abode. ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ might thus be an example of an intermediate stage: ‘Annwn’ and ‘Caer Siddi’, and even ‘uffern’ suggest a subaquatic or subterranean otherworld (cf. chapter 2.2) but the voyage by ship suggests an otherworld located overseas, although, as I have suggested already above, a magical journey through water was also possible.

‘Preiddeu Annwn’ has similarities with Arthur’s expedition to Ireland to fetch the cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and also Bendigeidfran’s raid into Ireland, as noted by several scholars (for *Branwen*: Williams, 1930, p. liii; Rees & Rees, 1961; p. 48; Bromwich & Evans, 1997, lxii; Loomis, 1941, p. 906; Haycock, 2007, p. 441, n. 10; for *Culhwch ac Olwen*: Bromwich & Evans, 1997, lxii; Loomis 1941, p. 906). The otherworld is

⁷⁹ Haycock 2007, p. 183, l. 189.

⁸⁰ Annwn as subaquatic realm will be considered in chapter 3.2.

⁸¹ For an introduction to, and survey of, the genres *immram* and *echtrae*, see Duignan 2011.

projected onto Ireland, as a foreign country and an otherworldly realm become interchangeable. J. Shack relatedly suggests the First Branch of the Mabinogi might contain an analogy between Norman society and the traditional otherworld (Shack, 2015), and Irish and Scottish traditions also demonstrate parallels in which an otherworldly realm is projected onto a foreign country. In *Tochmarc Emire*, the otherworldly home of Scathach, *Dún Scáith*, is in Alba (Meyer, 1890, pp. 446-7), and Nagy describes a Scottish oral tradition in which Cumhall, Fionn's father, is asked to save Ireland from the otherworldly *Lochlannaig* (Nagy, 1985, p. 86). Another tale in which the Fenian heroes have to battle the supernatural *Lochlannaig* is the Battle of the Sheaves (*Cath na bPunna*) (Nagy 1985, p. 55; for further discussion of Lochlann as an otherworldly location in the *echtrae* see Duignan, 2011, pp. 175-176).

Evidence from Welsh Folklore

Carey maintains that the medieval Irish and Welsh otherworld is rarely found on overseas islands:

Outside the *immrama*, then, and the two closely linked tales *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Conlae*, the early sources give us no grounds for postulating belief in an overseas Otherworld; nor does there appear to be satisfactory evidence for such a belief in either contemporary Irish folklore or the traditions of Wales.

(Carey, 2000, p. 119)

The phantom islands which appear in Welsh tradition are features of local geography (ibid, p. 118), and there are parallels with Irish legend:

A tradition amongst the inhabitants of Trevine, Pembrokeshire, states that islands could be seen from Llan Non in that neighbourhood [...], and attested mirages are suggested as an explanation. The island tradition also reminds us of Irish legend.

(Jones, 1979 [1930], p. 53)

T Gwynn Jones refers to John Rhŷs' collections in Pembrokeshire (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 160-61; pp. 169-173). Rhŷs presents another tradition which conflates several ideas about the realm of the fairies: one motif is that the land of the fairies consists of land, or patches of land, of lush growth; another is this that it is located overseas; finally, it is conflated with Ireland.

From Llanrwst I went up to see the bard and antiquarian, Mr. Gethin Jones. His house was prettily situated on the hillside on the left of the road as you approach the village of Penmachno. [...] However, from his room he pointed out to me a spot on the other side of the Machno, called *Y Werdon*, which means 'The Green Land', or more literally 'The Greenery', so to say. It was well known for its green, grassy fairy rings, formerly

frequented by the *Tylwyth Teg*; and he said he could distinguish some of the rings even from where he stood. [...] This name *Y Werdon*, is liable to be confounded with *Iwerdon*, 'Ireland' [...].

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 204)

Rhŷs highlights the similarity of 'Gwerddon' to the expression 'Gwerddonau Llŷon' denoting the Green Isles:

This name *Y Werdon*, is liable to be confounded with *Iwerddon*, 'Ireland', which is commonly treated as if it began with the definite article, so that it is made into *Y Werdon* and *Werdon*. The fairy *Werdon*, in the radical form *Gwerddon*, not only calls to mind the Green Isles called *Gwerddonau Llŷon*, but also the saying, common in North Wales, that a person in great anxiety 'sees *Y Werdon*'.

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 204)

The tradition of *Gwerddonau Llŷon* as name for the otherworld seems to be purely literary and rather recent. GPC dates it to the eighteenth to nineteenth century, referring to the third series of triads in the *Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, known to be a forgery by Iolo (Parry, 1955, p. 302).

Tri Difancoll ynys Prydain:

Cyntaf Gafran ab Aeddan a'i wŷr a aethant i'r mor ynghyrch Gwerdonau Llŷon, ac ni chlywyd mwyach am danynt,

Ail Merddyn Bardd Emrys Wledig a'i naw Beirdd Cylfeirdd a aethant i'r mor yn y Ty Gwydrin, ac ni bu son i ba le ydd aethant;

y Trydydd Madawg ab Owain Gwynedd, a aeth i'r mor a thrichannyn gydag ef mewn deg llong, ac ni wyddys i ba le ydd aethant.

(MA, p. 401)

Three disappearances of the Isle of Britain:

The first: Gafran ab Aeddan and his men who went to sea on an expedition for Gwerddonau Llŷon, and no more was heard of them;

The second: Merddyn poet of Aurelius Ambrosius and his nine *cylfeirdd*⁸² who went to the sea into the House of Glass, and there was no mention of where they went;

The third: Madawg ab Owain Gwynedd who went to sea with three hundred men in ten ships, and it is not known where they went.

⁸² *Cylfardd*, pl. *cylfeirdd*: poet according to the poetical system devised by Iolo Morganwg. See Williams (ap Iolo) (1848, p. 217).

(my trans.)

Rhŷs presents a further variant of the otherworld located on an island (op. cit., p. 20): he quotes a legend which appears in *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids* by Davies (1809, pp. 155-157). Once a year, on May Day, a rock would open and allow passage to a fairy garden on an island in the middle of a lake. Rhŷs believes, according to the oral testimony of I. James, that this lake is Llyn Cwm Llwhch (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 21).

The insular otherworld has an Irish parallel in *Tochmarc Becfola* (O'Grady, 1892, pp. 85-87), and another controversial example is Labraid's house: Meyer and Nutt, as well as Ó Cathasaigh, argue that it is located overseas (Meyer & Nutt, 1895, p. 184; Ó Cathasaigh in Ó Cathasaigh & Boyd (ed.), 2014, p. 29, n. 44), whereas Carey maintains that it is in a lake (Carey, 2000, pp. 116-117, n. 20).

The Isle of Avallon

The Arthurian texts famously feature the isle of Avallon:⁸³ In *Historia Regum Britanniae* we read:

Accinctus etiam Caliburno gladio optimo et in insulam Auallonis fabricato, lancea dextram suam decorat, quae nomine Ron uocabatur.

He also buckled on Caliburnus, an excellent blade forged on the isle of Avallon, and graced his hand with his spear, called Ron.

(text and translation HRB 147.111)

Sed inclitus ille rex Arturus letaliter uulneratus est; qui illinc ad sanandam uulnera sua in insulam Auallonis euectus Constantino cognato suo et filio Cadoris ducis Cornubiae diadema Britanniae concessit anno ab incarnatione Domine .dxlii..

The illustrious king Arthur too was mortally wounded; he was taken away to the island of Avallon to have his wounds tended and, in the year of Our Lord 542, handed over Britain's crown to his relative Constantinus, son of Cador duke of Cornwall.

(text and translation HRB 178.82-84)

Avallon was clearly an otherworldly realm. Important here are the motifs of Arthur's magical sword which came from Avallon, and of the healing powers. The motif of the magical sword

⁸³ For a survey of literary fragments mentioning Avallon see Bartrum (1993). Both 'Avalon' and 'Avallon' are found: today, 'Avalon' might be more common, but I use 'Avallon', following Bartrum (1993) and Neil Wright (HRB), as it corresponds to the original spelling in the texts introduced in this thesis. The spelling 'Avalon' is first found in the *chansons de geste* (Bartrum, *ibid.*, s.v. 'Avallon').

finds its parallel in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ in Lleog’s sword (Haycock, 2007, p. 436, l. 18). Here we find the motif of the initiation of the warrior, but also the motif of the sovereignty deity, as the sword legitimates the ruler.⁸⁴ Healing powers keep death away, and hence we encounter again the motif of the deathless realm.

Nine Maidens

Avallon, Annwn and Caer Loyw are all inhabited by a triple triad of women with supernatural powers. Haycock and Loomis note the parallels between Morgen and her sisters, who dwell on Geoffrey’s *Insula Pomorum* (‘Isle of the Apples’), and the nine maidens guarding the cauldron of Annwn in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ (Haycock, 2007, p. 443, n. 14, Loomis 1941, p. 907).⁸⁵ In *Peredur vab Efwrc* Peredur visits the nine witches of Caer Loyw who initiate him in the art of fighting as can be taken from the words of the witch (Vitt, 2010, pp. 154-157). Haycock suggests that the nine otherworldly maidens initiate the visitor (p. 443, n. 14). In contrast to the witches of Caer Loyw they do not train the warrior, but inspire the poet:

It is not clear whether it was the cauldron or Taliesin’s *kynneir* which was ignited by the breath of the nine maidens: for the idea of poetry containing nine parts, cf. [...]. *Ardywreaf naf o na6 rann-uyg kert,/ O na6 rif angert, o naw ryw uann* ‘I praise the lord with the nine parts of my art, with the nine numbers of inspiration, with nine types of song’.

(p. 443, n. 14)

We also find nine women with magical powers in a classical source, Pomponius Mela’s *De Chorographia* speaking of the Gallicenas of Sena (text & translation see Frick as quoted by Klarer, 1993, p. 7; cf. Appendix). Loomis sees here a parallel to Morgan and her sister in *Vita Merlini* and to the nine maidens of ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ (Loomis, 1941, p. 907), and Jackson saw the same parallels (1961, pp. 12-19). Both the warrior and the poet receive their initiation in an otherworldly realm by a triple triad of women with supernatural powers, be they described as maidens or priestesses.

⁸⁴ For the sovereignty motif see MacLeod (2018).

⁸⁵ Especially in the European pre-Christian context the number nine is of importance when supernatural women are concerned. In the Norse tradition the nine daughters of Ran are known. Ran is the wife of the sea giant and the daughters are understood as the waves (Krause, 2010, s.v. ‘Ran’). The god Heimdall is son of nine giant sisters (*ibid.*, s.v. ‘Heimdall’). In *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* the valkyries appear in groups of nine girls or three times nine (Larrington, 1999, p. 128). The most interesting parallel however, might be the one to Apollo and his nine Muses, for the muses inspire artists, musicians, and poets.

The initiation of the warrior by women is also known from the Irish tradition with Cú Chulainn being trained by Scáthach (van Hamel, 1933, p. 56), or Fionn mac Cumhaill being educated and trained by warrior women (Nagy, 1985, pp. 103-104). Fionn is initiated as both a poet-seer and a warrior, in an extra-social space in touch with the otherworld, just as in Welsh tradition the poet and the warrior are initiated and trained in the otherworld, and the ruler can find his legitimization there.

The female gender plays a dominant role in these otherworldly realms, more dominant than in the respective human society. Rhys recorded the opinion of a smith of Ystrad Meurig, and points out the similarity between this folk belief and medieval Irish literature:

In any case, he [the reader] will remember the smith's statement that *the fairies were all women* [...]. The idea was already familiar to me as a Welshman, though I cannot recollect how I got it. But the smith's words brought to my mind at once the story of Condla Rúad or the Red, one of the fairy tales first recorded in Irish literature. There the damsel who takes Condla away in her boat of glass to the realm of the Everliving sings the praises of that delectable country, and uses, among others, the following words [...] *ni fil cenel na mná acht mná ocus ingena*. There is no race there but women and maidens alone.

(Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 661)

We could add that in *Immram Brain* Bran sets off for a voyage to *Tír na mBan* ('the land of women') another well-known otherworldly domain dominated by women. There is much scholarly discussion of the role of women in the above-mentioned Irish texts, summarized by Leonie Duignan for the *echtrae* and *immrama* under the aspect of typical sovereignty motifs (2011, pp. 109-113). Karin E. Olsen, discussing the role of women in the *echtrae* and especially the merging of Christian traditions with older native material, concludes:

Whereas the plots of *Echtrae Nerai*, *Serglige Con Culainn* and *Echtrae Laegairi* resist any fusion with Christian ideals, the authors of *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Chonnlaí* were able to merge the concepts of the Otherworld with that of Christian Paradise. The fairies, though manifestations of the sovereignty goddess, could also be seen as heavenly messengers and therefore did not need to be euhemerized, subordinated or silenced. On the contrary, they were perfect instruments to promote the new faith.

(Olsen, 2014, pp. 73-74)

The dominance of femininity is a feature which discriminates between the otherworldly society and the human society which in Europe in almost all periods of time except for the second half of twentieth century has been dominated by the male gender. The authors of the tales themselves are probably male, and therefore, the female gender and real women's power is a token of otherness. Tales of an otherworld dominated by women can serve as a projection

plane for social discourse of gender problems, as I will discuss further in chapter 6 in the context of the question of women's rights in the Victorian society.

The Fortunate Islands: Classical Influences

Searching for the origin of Avallon and the blessed isle in Geoffrey's writing we should consider that a classical origin or influence is also possible. The otherworldly island is found in Europe as early as Hesiod (c. 700 BC), who wrote about the Isles of the Blessed, *Nesoi Makarôn*, a mythological place where Kronos rules (Hesiod, 2018 [1914], p. 156). Pliny the Elder (AD 23/24-79) related the motif of the blessed islands to a mundane geographical location opposite to Celtiberia in *Natural History* (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 4. 36). Isidor of Seville refers to the Fortunate Islands in *Etymologiae* and locates them west of Mauretania (IHE, XIV.6.8). Neither Pliny the Elder nor Isidor of Seville see the islands as a mythological place: they have a distinct geographical location in mind. Flood (2015, p. 86) notes that Isidor of Seville's fortunate islands might have been the blueprint for Geoffrey's Avallon.⁸⁶

Geoffrey did not merely use the motif of the blessed and fruit-bearing fortunate isles, but the island is inhabited by a sisterhood with magical powers. A classical comparable motif is found in the tales of the Hesperides. One of the earliest sources is Hesiod who writes in *Works and Days*: 'The Hesperides who guard the rich, golden apples and the trees bearing fruit beyond glorious Okeanos (Oceanus)' (Hesiod & Evelyn-White (ed.), [1914] 2018, p. 215). The tale of the Hesperides is retold by Virgil who refers to it in the *Aeneid*. The commentary by Maurus Servius Honoratus tells the tale of the apples. This is important in terms of a possible transmission of the tale, as in medieval Wales Latin was more frequently read than Greek (cf. chapter 1.2).⁸⁷ After all, the motif of a blessed and happy otherworld on

⁸⁶ For the Classical texts mentioned in this paragraph see Appendix A1.

⁸⁷ The narrative motifs of the Blessed Isles or a blessed realm beyond the sea connected with the magical apple make us wonder whether *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Chonnlaí*, too, could have been influenced by the above-mentioned narrative motifs from classical Greek tradition of the Hesperides. If we assumed that this is the case, it would agree with the result of Carey's studies on the location of the otherworld in Irish tradition. Regarding the overseas Otherworld he maintains:

It seems reasonable to suggest, in the light of age and popularity of *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Conlae* that it is they and the Ulster literary movement which produced them which introduced this topos into Irish literature; that it was foreign to the native tradition at every stage appears evident' (Carey, 2000, p. 119).

The idea that the motif of the overseas otherworld might be inspired by Greek sources is tempting. Ralph O'Connor states that 'Early medieval Ireland clearly had an unusually lively tradition of learning and literary activity in the late-antique classical tradition' (2014, p. 2). This would make a transmission of the complex narrative motif from a classical source likely.

an island such as Avallón or the Isle of the Apples certainly has a complex history and might be a synthesis of autochthonous elements with Christian and learned classical traditions. Therefore, the apple-motif must be interpreted with care taking the context and comparable examples into account: the classical sources show that the motif of the blessed otherworldly realm bearing apples and granting immortality is not part of the Christian metaphoric alone.

Symbolism of Apples

Motifs which relate to the description of the otherworld and to otherworldly characters are the apple, the apple tree (and branches of this tree) and the grove of apple trees. The apple has a broad range of symbolic associations:

Probably no other fruit or vegetable has inspired the imagination and creativity more than the apple: in mythology, religion, folklore and art throughout the cultural history of the West, it has been used as the material symbol of a vast number of immaterial ideas: eternity, death, youth, seduction, sin, love, temptation, redemption, peace, knowledge, nature, health, illness, beauty, femininity, purity of form and colour.

(Krauss, 2015, p. 279)

The narratives of Avallón and the *Insula Pomorum* (Island of Apples) support the symbolism of the apple as a symbol for health, immortality and femininity. In the Christian context apples relate to paradise, to the trees of life and knowledge, respectively. This expands the possible interpretations of the apple symbolism connected with the blessed isle. Avallón or the Blessed Isle can be interpreted as an earthly paradise. These considerations find a parallel in the interpretation of Irish text involving the symbolism of the apple. Mark Williams discusses *Echtraí Chonnlaí*:

James Carney brilliantly suggested that the author imagined the apple as coming from the *other* tree in Eden- the Tree of Life, rather than the Tree of Knowledge. Augustine of Hippo thought that if Adam had eaten from this tree he would have become immortal, which is precisely what happened to Connlae.

(Williams, 2016, p. 52)

The apple in *Echtraí Chonnlaí* has been interpreted as symbol for a transitional state. McCone calls Connlae's surviving on an apple a 'transitional change of diet' (2000, p. 81) and in *Echtrae Chormaic*, Manannán mac Lir carries a branch with golden apples whose magical music brings sleep to those in pain and annihilates mundane grief (Stokes 1891, pp. 194-195, 212-213). Sleep taking away the grief of life can be understood as a figure for death, so here we find the apple connected with the symbolism of death and oblivion in the world of

men, although we have seen above that at Manannán mac Lir's court death becomes meaningless.

Myrddin's Apple Trees

The apple relates to otherworldly realms, and apple trees relate to places where the otherworld meets the world of mortal men. The connection with the world of the fairies is strong.⁸⁸ In 'Afallennau Myrddin' (BBC, 16) Myrddin addresses the apple trees of Coed Celyddon where he hides from his enemies. He describes being cut off from the world of men, and complains 'it vif in ymdeith gan willeith a gwillon' ('I roamed with insanity and madness') (l. 59): he is in an exceptional state of mind. Victoria Flood maintains that the apple tree grove is a place of exile for Myrddin (Flood, 2015, p. 89). In 'Afallennau' we find the motifs of being removed from the world, being in special state of mind, possibly in the company of a fairy mistress⁸⁹: this indicates a state of transition the poet and prophet must be subjected to acquire his knowledge and inspiration which goes beyond the ordinary.

In a tradition not contained in the Mabinogi, Math's wand was made from a magical tree growing on the bank of the Gwyllionwy. It seems to be fruit-bearing and is perhaps an apple tree. We find this in the prophetic poem 'Daronwy' from the Book of Taliesin:

Hutlath Vathonwy,
ygkoet pan tyfwy,
ffrwytheu rwy kymrwy
ar lan Gwyllionwy.
Kynan a'e kaffwy
pryt pan wledychwy.

Mathonwy's magic wand,
when it grows in the wood,
promotes fruits/success
on the bank of the Gwyllionwy.
Cynan will secure them

⁸⁸ In Norse mythology this connection is also present: Iðunn guards the apples which grant immortality, but apples can also be food of the dead (Ellis Davidson, 1964, pp. 165-166). We also see a connection between magical apples and elves or dwarfs. In *Hrafnagaldur Óðins* the sixth stanza refers to Iðunn⁸⁸ who is 'of aelfen race' ('álfa ættar') in Thorpe's translation, whereas Lassen's makes Iðunn descended from dwarfs (Thorpe, 1866, p. 29; Lassen, 2011, p. 84). In *Skírnirsmál*, Freyr who was given Alfheim, the home of elves, as a tooth-gift, sends eleven golden apples to Gerðr. For various editions of both *Skírnirsmál* (motif of the elven golden apples) and *Grímnirsmál* (alfheim as tooth-gift for Freyr) see <www.heimskringla.no> [12 February 2020]. For English translation see Bellows (2004 [1923]; p. 88; p. 113). In *Sir Orfeo* the queen is taken by the king of the fairies as she rests under the *ympe*-tree, an 'apple tree' or 'orchard tree' according to Laskaya & Salisbury (1995, n. 70). This *ympe*-tree is a liminal place where the queen is brought into a liminal state between life and death.

⁸⁹ Myrddin mentions a girl he courted under an apple tree, traditionally interpreted as a fairy mistress; Goodrich (2000, p. 95) points out that the apple is a token of both sexual love and knowledge.

When he shall rule.

(text and translation Haycock, 2012, p. 29, ll. 12-16)

If the apple represents transformation, and the apple tree an otherworldly place where prophetic knowledge can be obtained, then it would be fitting for Math's wand, with its power to transform human beings into animals and to reveal secrets (Aranrhod being no maiden), to be made from the wood. This assumption is corroborated by the reference to Cynan, a secular deliverer like Cadwaladr, and the latter is mentioned in a similar context in 'Yr Afallenau'. Cadwaladr seeks an apple tree:

Afallen peren a pren fion
A ttif y dan gel yg coed Keliton.
Kid keisseer ofer vit heruit y haton.
iny del kadwaladir oe kinadil. kadwaon.
y erir tywi a teiwi affon.

(BBC, 16.73-77)

Sweet apple tree with rose-colored wood,
Which grows in concealment in the wood of Celyddon;
Though one may seek it, it will be vain because of its characteristics,
until Cadwaladyr comes from his meeting of warriors,
To the bank of the rivers Tywi and Teifi.

(my trans.)

The apple tree is not only sought by the poet, but also by the hero:

Like the woods on the banks of Gwyllionwy and the wild man's apple grove, Avalon can be understood as a sylvan space apart from the world, beyond the reach of ordinary travel, associated with a broader narrative of national restoration. It is also notable that the sylvan locales of these prophecies place the hidden tree besides a water barrier, a river: like the heroes of Welsh political prophecy, Arthur must travel across the water to reach his own hidden location.

(Flood, 2015, p. 90)

Floods' words prove that the apple-tree motif which signposts a magical realm has become conflated with the question of the nations' destiny, for the poet and prophet find the inspiration in the otherworldly realm to speak of the national destiny. The national hero's path to victory leads thorough the otherworldly realm.

3.1.2 The Separating Waters: A Liminal Space of Transformation

Crossing the Border: A Magical Horse called 'Black of the Sea'

This paragraph is dedicated to a famous magical horse which can mediate the journey between our world and the otherworld: Du y Moroedd, 'Black of the Sea'. It is not surprising that (otherworldly) heroes travelling between such a magical realm and the mundane world often

ride horses which can overcome a magical separating water. In *Culhwch ac Olwen*, in order to take part in the hunt of Twrch Trwyth, Gwyn ap Nudd needs a famous horse which can walk over the waves of the sea:

‘Nid oes uarch a tyckyo y Wynn y hela Twrch Trwyth, namyn Du march Moro Oeruedawc.’

(CO, p. 27, ll. 717-718)

‘There is no steed which is adequate for Gwyn to hunt Twrch Trwyth except for Black, the steed of Moro Oerfeddog.’

(my trans.)

A steed named Du appears in other texts as well, e.g. the poem ‘Torrit anuynudawl’ (‘An untamed horse was broken in’) from the Book of Taliesin, also known as ‘Canu y Meirch’. The horse’s name is given as ‘Du Moroed’ (‘Black of the Seas’) (Haycock, 2007, p. 392, l. 41). Du is also clearly able to run across the water in TYP 44: ‘Du Moro march Elidir Mwynvavr, a duc arnav seith nyn hanner o Benllech yn y Gogled hyt ym Penllech y Mon.’ (‘Black Moro, horse of Elidir Mwynfawr, who carried on his back seven and a half people from Penllech in the North to Penllech in Môn’). Tudur Aled refers twice to Du’r Moroedd, in one instance referring to a magical trip across the sea: ‘Du’r Moroedd, ar derm oerwynt / Aeth ar i gefn wyth wŷr, gynt’ (‘Du’r Moroedd on the spree of cold wind / eight men went on his back, in time past.’) (GTA II, p. 400, ll. 59-60).⁹⁰ Possibly, also ‘Du, march Brwyn mab Kynadaf’ (‘Black, horse of Brwyn, son of Cunedda’) is identical with Du y Moreodd (TYP 43). Rachel Bromwich has discussed the connection of these horses named ‘Du’ appearing in medieval literature (Bromwich, 1961, pp. 113-114). Today Bromwich’s opinion that Black, the steed of Moro Oerfeddog is identical with Black of the Seas is widely accepted.

We have discussed ‘Ymryson Melwas a Gwenhwyfar’ above, in the context of the glass island, and we shall have cause to return to it below when specifically considering the colours of fairies and their animals. Here, in the context of ‘Du’, I note that the second version begins with the following *englyn*:

Dv yw fy march a da dana
ag er dwr nid arswyda
a rhag vngwr ni chilia.

(text: Jones & Lloyd-Morgan, 2020, p. 60, ll.1-3)

Black is my steed and brave beneath me
No water will make him fear

⁹⁰ The other reference see GTA (II, p. 392, ll.75-76).

And no man will make him swerve.

(translation: Williams, 1938, p. 39)

Williams translates 'Black is my steed'. 'Du' could refer to the color of the horse, but perhaps it is also the name of the horse, for the poem suggests that the horse will not be hindered by a water barrier on the way. Jones and Lloyd-Morgan see parallels to Elidir riding Du Moroedd (ibid. p. 61), I would go even further and suggest that Melwas' horse is identical with Du y Moroedd, for it is the horse of Melwas, Lord of an Otherworldly realm travelling between the world of mortal man and his own dominion. Interestingly, Jones and Lloyd-Morgan compare the Knight of the Well in *Owein*, and Ysgolan of the Black Book of Carmarthen, to Melwas, because they ride on black horses, too. In the case of the Knight of the Well, we face a guardian of an otherworldly place, so that there is a stronger similarity of the motif than in the case of Ysgolan. The motif of the magical horse walking the waves enforces the function of the water as magical barrier and not just a mundane one. Meeting a rider on a sea-going horse or using such a horse indicates the interaction with the otherworld has begun and the threshold between the mundane and the otherworldly domain is reached.⁹¹

The Battle at the Ford: Fighting in a Liminal Space: The Testing of the Hero

The water representing the threshold and border between the two domains can be either the sea, a lake or a river. The separating function of the sea is comparable with the function of mythological rivers which separate the world of men from an otherworldly realm. In 'Afallennau' we find but a faint hint of this motif with the apple tree being located at the bank of a river (see above), but in the First Branch of the Mabinogi the function of a river as magical boundary is more pronounced. Shack has pointed out that Glyn Cuch could be regarded as a liminal place as Afon Cuch separates two commotes from each other (Shack, 2015, p. 176). McKenna sees Afon Cuch as interface between the otherworld and the mundane world of men, between Annwn and Dyfed (McKenna 2007, p. 114). Shack has also drawn attention to the fact that in the First Branch of the Mabinogi the battle between Arawn and Hafgan takes place at a ford which can be considered a liminal place (Shack, 2015, p. 178). We should keep in mind that a river which separates two (magical) realms from each other is part of none of them or belongs with its banks to both of them, so that the condition of liminality is fulfilled

⁹¹ An Irish parallel motif of horses being able to cross a water barrier between the ordinary world and otherworldly realms appears in the Bruidhean-ales of the Fionn-cycle as well (Murphy, 1953, p. xxxii-xxxiii). *Immram Brain* we know about Manánán mac Lir whose horse can walk the waves (Mac Mathúna, 1985, § 53). In the Icelandic *Thorstein's saga*, the motif of the magical horse being able to overcome waters which separate the ordinary world from an otherworldly abode, and which are fatal for ordinary horses or men appears as well (Powers, 1985, p. 157).

when being in the middle of a river. Liminal spaces however are prone for mediating transition, and they are propitious for meeting with denizens of the Otherworld or entering an otherworldly realm.

Loomis saw parallels between the combat between Pwyll and Hafgan, the combat at the perilous ford in '*Didiot Perceval*' and the many combats Arthurian heroes have to fight at a ford:

It has been noted by several scholars that one of the stock incidents of Arthurian romance is a combat of the hero with one or more redoubtable antagonists at a ford. It occurs first as Erec's encounter with the robber knights; other important examples occur in Wauchier, *Diu Krone*, *Le Bel Inconnu*, Malory's Book of Gareth, *Historia Meriadoci*, *De ortu Walwanii* and *Lanzelet*. Kindred versions, though not strictly Arthurian, are found in the *Lai de l'espine* and the Scottish poem, *Eger and Grim*.

(Loomis, 1945, pp. 64-65)

The ford as a liminal place of fateful combat appears also in one version of *Acallam na Senórach*, when Fionn's host before his last battle is described: 'And they made a fierce, swift, light-winged, intrepid rush in their well-arranged phalanx and in their destructive mass and in their furious band to the center of the ford' (Meyer, 1910, p. 433).

Loomis also observed the importance of the motif of combat at the ford in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. Most important examples are the combat of Cú Chulainn and Fer Diad, but also the fight between Cú Chulainn and Lóech. The parallelism between the fight of Cú Chulainn and Fer Diad and Pwyll and Hafgan was noted by Alice Furlong (1906, p. 502), without going into detail. Donna Wong discusses the combat between the fosterbrothers Cú Chulainn and Fer Diad in detail stressing the psychological crisis of Fer Diad (Wong 1993). Ó Cathasaigh discusses the same episode highlighting the conflict of loyalties and the code of (personal) honour the combatants are subjected to (Ó Cathasaigh & Boyd (ed.), 2014, pp. 192-193): 'The conduct of warfare in the *Táin* is governed by a set of conventions or code of conduct known collectively as *fír fer*, literally "the truth of men", but usually translated "fair play."' (ibid., p. 196). In killing Fer Diad, Cú Chulainn violates this 'fair play' as he uses the *gae bolga*:

Its insidious expansive effects, its duplicitous use when cast unseen and underwater to attack the opponent in an extra-martial zone of the body (abdomen and genitals), all make it a problematic weapon in the warrior arsenal. Cú Chulainn had been faced with an ethical decision [...]. Fer Diad's accusation makes the ethical question explicit: "O Hound of the fair feats it was not fitting that you should slay me. Yours is the guilt which clings to me. On you my blood was shed."

(Sayers, 2013, p. 7)

Cú Chulainn has to choose between being loyal to his maternal kindred and his maternal people, or to act loyal to a friend and fair according to the code of a warrior, and he chooses to serve his kindred and people. This is what is expected of Cú Chulainn; in Ó Cathasaigh's words 'He is destined to save his people from the ravages of war' (Ó Cathasaigh & Boyd (ed.), 2014, p. 56). He has to act as a hero but to do so he must sacrifice his ethical integrity on a personal level. The battle of Pwyll and Hafgan shows a striking parallel: In order to be loyal to Arawn and to save Arawn's people from a battle, Pwyll has to act against mercy, and withholds from Hafgan the 'stroke of mercy', leaving him in pain. Hafgan, too, accuses Pwyll, whom he somehow recognizes, of unethical conduct:

"A unben," heb yr Hafgan, "pa dylyet a oedd iti ar uy angheu i? Nid yttoydw i yn holi dim i ti. Ni wydwn achos it heuyt y'm llad i; ac yr Duw," heb ef, "canys dechreueist uy llad, gorffen."

(PKM, p. 5)

'Lord,' said Hafgan, 'what right did you have to my death? I was claiming nothing from you. Nor do I know of any reason for you to kill me; but for God's sake,' he said, 'since you have begun, then finish!'

(Davies, 2007, p. 6)

The motif of the combat at the ford represents for the warrior a situation of trial and tribulation in which he is called to protect his kindred or people entrusted to him for safe-keeping or to sacrifice his personal honour. It can be compared to the challenge a poet and prophet such as Myrddin is subjected to, for Myrddin's mental sanity is lost, but his prophetic power concerning the fate of his people is gained. The hero who must choose between two difficult options is in a liminal situation, if he has not decided yet, and his inner conflict is metaphorically mirrored in his fight in a liminal place, the ford.

The character of the battle at the ford between Hafgan and Pwyll has been subject of scholarly discussion. Charles-Edwards summarizes the controversy over the combat and challenges the way how Saunders Lewis introduces the idea that the combat was a tournament. Charles-Edwards maintains that

The encounter between Pwyll and Hafgan has all the features of the *fīr fer*, *comrac fri hóenfer* or *comlann*. It was fought between two men. [...] It was fought at a ford. One of the words used to describe it, *cyfranc*, is cognate with the Irish *comrac* used for the *fīr fer* encounter.

(Charles-Edwards, 1996, p. 43)

This interpretation taking the Irish material into account supports the notion that a ford is a place connected with the otherworld, for, as we have seen already above, *fir fer* is a concept related to the otherworld.

The Tryst at the Ford: Two Worlds Touching

A liminal place is also a location where human beings can meet the denizens of the Otherworld. MS Peniarth 147 (16C) contains a story of Modron verch Avallach, daughter of the king of Annwn, who washes at Rhyd y Gyfarthfa ('The Ford of the Barking') in the parish of Llanferres in Denbighshire. Hounds assemble at the ford, and it seems that they indicate the presence of a supernatural character. Urien Rheged sees the woman washing, makes love to her and Owein and Morfudd are born (ed., trans. Bromwich, 1961, p. 495; trans. also T. G. Jones 1979, p. 107). Bromwich also (ibid.) gives a short survey on texts from Irish and Breton folklore which contain the 'washer-at-the ford' motif, and one very impressive parallel is the Dagda's intercourse with the Morrighu washing at the ford of Unius: this sexual union with a supernatural woman endows the male with fortune in warfare. In a way, the begetting of a hero son as in the episode of Urien, is also a gift of good fortune in battle for the benefit of the male partner's people. However, as the begetting of children is involved in the meeting of Modron and Urien, their story resembles the Welsh fairy mistress legends, when the fairy lady is captured by a mortal man. The ford represents the nexus between the mundane and the supernatural world, where a hero can be begotten.

European Parallels

The motif of a river-border between man and the supernatural, the dead or, in a variant, separating different supernatural realms from each other, is well known and widespread.⁹² We find it in at least three of the *Fornaldarsögur*: *Thorstein's saga*, *Erik's saga* and *Saga of Vilhjalm sjóð* (Power, 1985, pp. 157, 159, 162). Perhaps the most famous example is the river Lethe from Greek mythology, but a motif from the Finnish *Kalevala* can help understand how a shamanist world view can be woven into an epic text: here, the river Tuonela separates the realm of the dead from the realm of the living, and the 14th song tells of Lemminkäinen trying to shoot the Swan of Tuonela in order to win as his bride the daughter of Louhi, mistress of the Northland.⁹³ Lemminkäinen fails, dies and his body is fragmented. His mother collects the fragments and revives him with the help of bees. Hans Fromm interprets this as an initiatory

⁹² For references and examples see Stith Thompson Index F141 (water barrier to the to the otherworld) and E 481.2 (land of the dead across water).

⁹³ For text, translation and introduction see Bosley & Lord (1989) or Fromm & Fromm (2018 [1967]).

shamanistic journey (2018 [1967], pp. 446-448), an interpretation which is in accordance with the episode when Väinämöinen crosses the Tuonela to find magical power beyond the water. Wilfrid Bonser supports the idea that there are shamanistic elements in the *Kalevala*, and stresses the similar function of Tuoni's river and the Greek Styx or the Norse river Gjöll, border of Hel's realm (1965).

The voyage to the otherworld from which the hero wins (supernatural) knowledge has been compared by Joseph Nagy with the shamanistic journey in the Bruidhean tale about Fionn mac Cumail:

[A] shaman both penetrates the otherworld and protects this world from malignant supernatural penetration. These functions are intimately connected since the shaman uses what he learns in the otherworld for the defense of the human society.

(Nagy, 1981, p. 320)

This definition can apply both to a warrior and a poet. The warrior defends the physical integrity of his people, and the poet defends and protects the cultural heritage of the people. In a mythical setting the foe can be represented by an otherworldly threat.⁹⁴

3.2 Worlds under Water

3.2.1 The Subaquatic Realm of the Fair Folk

Although Annwn is reached by ship in 'Preiddeu Annwn', suggesting that Annwn is an island or found at least at a distant shore, the poem does not exclude the possibility that Annwn is a subaquatic world, for Annwn as a realm of the depth can be imagined as a subterranean or a subaquatic realm. In Welsh folklore a subaquatic location of the fairy realm is a frequent motif.

The Animals of the Subaquatic Realm

Welsh folk tales locate the magical realm in lakes rather than in the sea. In nineteenth-century folklore, the silent lakes in the mountains were believed to be the entrances to the world of the Tylwyth Teg (cf. Jones, 1979 [1930], p. 52). Ancient examples of this belief can be found in medieval literature and have been partly introduced in the contexts of the previous chapter when looking for medieval expressions for the fair folk (cf. chapter 1). Eurys Rowlands thinks that in 'Y Pwll Mawn', Dafydd ap Gwilym plays with the tradition that pool are entrances to

⁹⁴ In this vein Jarman maintained: '[T]he stress on eulogy (including elegy) and celebration must have been connected with the precarious position of the Welsh kingdoms and their rulers for many centuries in face of hostile external pressures. Both the rulers and the ruled needed the encouragement and approval provided by their poets' (1981, p. 30).

Annwn calling the peat pool ‘pysgodlyn i Wyn’ (‘fish pool of Gwyn’) (DAG, no. 59, l. 29). Two folk beliefs related to a fairy realm in a lake are represented by the fairy mistress-legends and the legends of fairy cattle coming out of a lake. A medieval example of a fairy mistress legend is found in *De Nugis Curialium*: Walter Map gives the legend of Llyn Syfaddan (Llangorse Lake) which appears under the name Brecknock Mere (DNC; Distinctio II.xi). Rhŷs included the tale in *Celtic Folklore* (Rhŷs, (2012 [1901], p. 71-73).⁹⁵

In some tales the fairy cattle, *Gwartheg y Llyn* (‘cattle of the lake’), play the key role, as in the legend of Llyn Barfog recorded by Rhŷs in *Celtic Folklore* (p. 144). Like the fairy mistress tales, the cattle from the lake appears in folk tales recorded in the nineteenth century, but connections to medieval tales can be detected, as the following example shows. Elias Owen reports the story of *Y Fuwch Frech* (the freckled cow) connected with the moorlands of Denbighshire (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 129-131). A similar tale is ‘The White Cow’ collected by Robin Gwyndaf (1991, pp. 189-190). Owen notes that the legend was in the nineteenth century not restricted to Denbighshire:

There are many traditions afloat about a wonderful cow, that supplied whole neighbourhoods with milk, which ceased when wantonly wasted. In some parts of England this is called the Dun Cow; in Shropshire she becomes also the White Cow; in Wales she is, *Y Fuwch Frech*, or *Y Fuwch Gyfeiliorn*. This mystic cow has found a home in many places.

(Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 129-131)

A version recorded by Owen is that of Thomas Jones of Cefn Bannog, who claims that many places on his farmland still retain the name of *Y Fuwch Frech*. Although Jones does not detail the cow’s origin, he says that it calved the *Ychain Banawg* (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 130). In end she went straight into Llyn Dau Ychain (‘lake of two oxen’), taking the *Dau Eidion Banawg* (the two oxen of Banawg), her offspring, with her (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 131). These two oxen appear in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. They are kings who have been transformed into oxen for their sins, and it is one of the difficult tasks that Culhwch must fetch them and yoke them to the plough (CO, ll. 596-599).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ The motif of the fairy mistress will be discussed in detail below (chapter 3). For studies on Welsh fairy mistress-tales see Gwyndaf (1992/93), Davies (1996, 2018), Wood (1992), and Silver (1999, pp. 89-116).

⁹⁶ The motif of fairies and their cattle living in lakes has parallels in other traditions, which shows that it is a well-known migratory motif: According to Elias Owen, Croker’s *Fairy Legends of Ireland* has a variant of ‘Y Fuwch Gyfeiliorn’, the stray cow (Owen 1973 [1887], p. 137), and as far away as the Black Forest in Germany we find a motif similar to that of the lake ladies and their cattle from Llyn Barfog. The Mummelsee was allegedly named after female water spirits called ‘Mümmlein’, similar

Not only cattle lives in the subaquatic magical realm beneath the surface of pools. Sometimes dragons live in a pool, as in 'Lludd and Llefelys' (Rhŷs & Evans, 1887, pp. 93-99; Roberts (ed.), 1975). The motif of the fighting dragons, each of which represent a people appears in *Historia Brittonum* (HB, 42) and in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britanniae* (HRB 108.560-575). The motif of the dragon in the pool persisted in folk tradition, for Marie Trevelyan reports the legend of a dragon living in Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) (Trevelyan & Hartland, 1973 [1909], pp. 13-14). The Welsh *Ceffyl Dŵr* ('water horse') which resembles the Scottish kelpie lives in water (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 131). In all these cases, their subaquatic habitat reinforces the otherness of these supernatural beings living in an abode which cannot be a dwelling place for men. The subaquatic otherworld is a parallel world, accessed by magical means.

Changeling returned to the Aquatic Realm

According to Welsh changeling tales, the non-human nature of a child is identified by brewing beer or making a stew in an eggshell, prompting the fairy to speak unexpectedly. Afterwards the non-human child is thrown into a lake or river, and the human baby restored by the fairies to his/her human mother. Owen records two legends of this type: 'The Egg Shell Pottage' (changelings thrown into Llyn Ebyr) and the 'Corwrion Changeling Legend' (changeling dropped from a bridge into the river) (1973 [1887], pp. 57-59). Owen describes an incantation to be applied in such cases, but gives no source:

There was, it would seem, in Wales a certain form of incantation resorted to reclaim children from the Fairies, which was as follows: - the mother who had lost her child was to carry the changeling to a river, but she was to be accompanied by a conjuror, who was to take a prominent part in the ceremony. When at the river's brink the conjuror was to cry out:-

Crap ar y wrach-
A grip on the hag;
And the mother was to respond-
Rhy hwyr gyfraglych-
Too late decrepit one;

and having uttered these words, she was to throw the child into the stream, and to depart, and it was believed that on reaching her home she would there find her own child safe and sound.

(Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 58-59)

to the Welsh fairies inhabiting mountain lakes. Once, a bull came out of the Mummelsee and mixed with a farmer's cattle until a little man emerged from the water and drove the bull back into the lake (Grimm J. & Grimm, W., 1997b [1816/18], vol.1, no. 59, pp. 83-85).

Rhÿs mentions this custom, too, and names various sources, the eldest being a copy from a manuscript by Lewis Morgan written between 1724-1729 (Rhÿs 2012 [1901], p. 450). Rhÿs suspects that the story was from Môn (Anglesey). This motif bears a close resemblance to the custom of professional conjurors of ‘laying a ghost or demon’ by luring him into a bottle and throwing the bottle into a river or lake or banish him into a lake by other means (Owen 1973 [1887], pp. 161-163). The example of ‘laying a ghost’ shows that the subaquatic realm is considered not only to be a fairy realm, but the appropriate place for spirits, especially those who disturb the human society. This folk tradition emphasizes the extra-social character of the underwater world. The changeling who is in several tales returned to the water is a disturbing element for the human society. ‘The Gors Goch Changeling Legend’ shows the destructive power of the changeling, for in this tale the changeling becomes the heir of the farm after its presence has destroyed the family (Owen op. cit., pp. 59-61). The changeling legends are discussed further in chapter 4 in the context of the motif of exchange with the otherworld.

Subaquatic Fairy Realms in Arthurian Literature

In French Arthurian literature the motif of the lake-dwelling fairy precipitated in the character of the Lady of the Lake (La Dame du Lac) who appears in various Arthurian texts. In the Post-Vulgate Cycle and in Malory’s English *Le Morte Darthur* she provides Excalibur,⁹⁷ Arthur’s sword. She is responsible for Merlin’s removal from the world (cf. chapter 2.3) and according to the prose tale of *Lancelot* she becomes Lancelot’s foster-mother. In *Studies in Arthurian Legend*, John Rhÿs saw the parallel to Welsh folklore, namely the changeling legends, but also to the sisterhood of women inhabiting a magical realm. He writes:

[J]ust before the queen was taken captive, a fairy rose in a cloud of mist and carried away the infant Lancelot from where he had been left under a tree. She took him to her own land, consisting of an isle surrounded by impassable walls in the middle of the sea, whence the fairy derived her name of *la Dame du Lac*, or Lady of the Lake, and her foster-son that of Lancelot du Lac, while her kingdom was called *Meide lant*, or the land of Maidens. In all this we recognize the familiar figure of the heroine of many a Celtic tale: she steals babies and she belongs to a community of the fair sex.

(Rhÿs, 1981, p.127)

In Arthurian romance not only, female characters inhabit the lakes, but there are also fairy knights known who inhabit the waters. One example is found in the Breton *Lai de*

⁹⁷ Translation of the *Post-Vulgate Cycle* see Lacy (1995; 1996). For an online text edition see Malory, Caxton & Sommer (1889). Note that the magical sword is returned to the lake according to Vulgate *Mort Artu* and *Le Morte Darthur* by Malory.

Tydorel by Marie de France: Tydorel is the son of a queen of Brittany who was surprised by a fairy knight and water spirit who proved his supernatural nature to the queen by riding into a lake with his horse (Lommatzsch & Wagner (eds), 1922, pp. 23-26).⁹⁸ Another example is Aalardin del Lac who appears in the first continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval*.⁹⁹ These examples show, how closely the motif of the lake-dwelling fairies is woven into the Arthurian literature, and, in the case of Myrddin, how the various possibilities to imagine an otherworldly abode have become entangled: related to Myrddin, the Otherworld appears a glass house, as apple grove, as lake.

3.2.2 The Conflict of Fire and Water

Characters as intimately related to water as the Welsh fairies might be expected to show a special enmity to fire; indeed, this is apparent in *Culhwch ac Olwen* (CO 985-1006). If the lake-dwelling Tylwyth Teg are associated with water, the same should be true for their king Gwyn ap Nudd, and his chief enemy is indeed a fire-related character, whose name, 'Gwythyr ap Greidawl', may be translated 'Victor, son of Scorcher'. Bromwich (1961, p. 403) notes that 'Gwythyr' < 'victor', and his patronymic contains 'greid', with meanings including 'heat, burning zeal, warfare, conflict, fierce, ardent, burning' (GPC *s.v.* "graid"). Therefore, the father of Gwythyr is characterized by a name which comprises a fiery element: not of a beneficial aspect, but in the context of giving battle, recalling the fierce aspect of wildfire. The fight of Gwyn and Gwythyr takes place at a liminal time, in the moment of the transition of the seasons, when winter gives way to summer, for 'Calan Mai', 'the calends of May' are the beginning of summer (GPC, *s.v.* 'calan').

In the battle taking place before the arrival of Arthur at his stronghold, Gwyn also fights Greid ap Eri (CO 992). Gwyn fights characters whose names are related to fire, and this motif may be compared with tales about Fionn mac Cumhaill, for Gerard Murphy identified one of the oldest motifs related to Fionn as being a victorious fight against a destructive burner, a fire related demon:

The story of How Fionn Prevented the Magic Burning of the King's Court is, then, not only widely spread as an episode in folk accounts of Fionn's boyhood, but is also, as a folktale, at least as ancient as the 12th century. It does not appear to have parallels in international folklore. We may therefore look upon it as being perhaps that of which we are in search, a survival in folklore of a particular theme which always served to identify Fionn, rather than the attaching of a general folk-theme to his name.

⁹⁸ Alexander H. Krappe compared this tale to Irish motifs (1929).

⁹⁹ For text and introduction see Van Coolput & Roach (1994).

(Murphy, 1953, p. LIV, §7)

Murphy maintains further that this basic conflict is manifested in the fire-related names of several of Fionn's foes: some are related to fire directly or by the color red such as Dearg Corra mocu Dhaighre ('Red One of Corr of the race of Flame'), or Cúldub, called 'daigerderg' ('flame-red') in an eleventh century poem, or Aed mac Fidga ('Fire son of Fidga') (pp. LXIV-LXV, §8). As Fionn is a foe of a fire demon, and a character bearing traits similar to Gwyn ap Nudd, it should be expected that he is a water-related character, which indeed he is: 'the aquatic connection runs like a leitmotif through the various episodes of Finn's birth and youth' (Nagy, 1985, p.111). This evidence suggests that the conflict between Gwyn and Gwythyr mirrors the eternal conflict between fire and water, and Arthur's verdict that they fight until Judgement Day has an apocalyptic overtone, for fire and water will fight till the world ends, or – we can put it also like this - if the equilibrium between both forces is disturbed, then the world will end.¹⁰⁰

The apotropaic quality of the colour red against fairies, in Irish and Welsh folklore, has its source in the fairies dread of fire.¹⁰¹ Carrying something red has been considered protection in Irish lore until the most recent time. However, Jenny McGlynn, an Irish tradition-bearer, explains this as a hatred of blood on the part of bloodless spirits (Lysaght, 1991, p. 34). The protective quality of red as a symbol for blood is also attested for the Welsh fairies. Robin Gwyndaf reports that protection against the fairies was provided by rowan, whose red berries signified Christ's blood (1991, p. 163): this is a Christian version of the protective qualities of the rowan which fights off fairy magic and witchcraft according to folk beliefs.¹⁰²

The fairies' enmity toward fire is well known in Scottish and Irish folklore. In the Western Isles of Scotland, fire was carried around mother and child shortly after birth, and

¹⁰⁰ There is an interesting analogy found in Norse mythology, namely the conflict between Freyr and Surtur. Freyr; lord of Alfheim, is related to water by his father Njörd who is a water related deity. Surtur is a fire giant who will burn the world in Ragnarök (Krause, s.v Njörd, Freyr, Surtur). In Norse mythology the world is created in the space where fire and ice (water in its coldest form) meet. It is tempting to believe to have found a mytheme which precipitated in medieval texts and that might have had a common origin.

¹⁰¹ Red is a color which had a magical significance from the beginning of human culture. a concise overview can be found in *Die Farbe Rot in den Kulturen. Ein interdisziplinärer Vergleich im rituellen Kontext* by Annemarie Schlerka (2010).

¹⁰² The interpretation of berries as drops of Christ's blood is commonly known for the berries of the holly (Ollerton, Rouquette & Breeze, 2016, p. 94). A survey on Irish Scottish and Welsh folk customs connected with the rowan is given by Mac Coitir (2003, s.v. 'Rowan').

before the mother was churched¹⁰³ and the baby was baptized in order to protect them from the fairies (Owen [1887] 1973, p. 53). Fire as protection against fairies and their magic is also attested for in Ireland: thus, Wilde dedicated a whole chapter of *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions* to this topic (Wilde, 1887, p. 71).

In chapter 1.2 the 14th century *Speculum Christiani* was discussed, which describes the invocation of Gwyn ap Nudd and his queen. This text claims that fire and iron were carried when invoking the king of the fairies, when somebody was believed to have been taken ill because he had been overlooked.¹⁰⁴ Although nothing is explicitly mentioned about the role fire plays in this custom, a possible function could be to act as protective agent against unwanted effects of the fairy magic. However, it could also be that the fire and iron is not meant for the fairies, but for the supposed sorcerer who has overlooked somebody else. Gwyn is asked: ‘Gwynn ap Nwdd qui es ultra in silvis pro amore concubine tue permitte nos venire domum’ (‘Gwyn ap Nudd, [you] who are beyond in the forests for the love of your lover allow us to come into the house’, my trans.; Roberts, 1980/81, pp. 287-288). The words ‘venire domum’ are problematic (‘come home’ or ‘come into the house’), for it is not specified into which house the people want to go, and the same is true for ‘ad hostium’ ‘to the door’. It could be quite possible that the upset peasants flock to the house of the one with the evil eye and threaten him with fire and some weapons. Brynley Roberts suggests that they might as well go to the door of the ill person, but he also emphasizes the difficulty of the Latin text (Roberts, 1980/81, pp. 288-289)

One must beware that the reading of old tales with more recent custom in mind does not drift into an unfounded reconstruction. However, I may not close this chapter without discussing W. J. Gruffydd’s rather problematic interpretation of the murder of Gwern in the Second Branch of the Mabinogi, thrown into the fire by his uncle; Gruffydd’s hypothesis touches on the motif of fairies shunning fire:

Now this episode is a confused version of the procedure for testing a Fairy Child or, in communities where the Fairies are identified with Evil Spirits, a child of the Devil. There were two main tests - you either threw the child into water, and if it swam, then he was

¹⁰³ The churching of women is a ceremony which blesses the mothers after having recovered from birth, in former times after her lying-in. Though it is not exactly a purification ceremony, it is related to the Jewish custom that a woman has to be purified after having given birth (Leviticus 12:2-8).

¹⁰⁴ This text has already been quoted fully in chapter 1. It is found in MS Coleg Balliol, Oxford, 239, 22-27. There are various versions of this text, but a ‘distinct recension sometimes called Cibus Animae is found in Cam. Trinity Hall 16, B.M. royal 5A vi, Rylands lat. 341 and elsewhere’ (Roberts, 1980/81, p. 288).

a changeling, a fairy child, or you held him in the fire and if he was burnt, then he was not a fairy; if he did not burn then he was certainly a fairy.

(Gruffydd, 1958, p. 17)

Suggesting that the ‘true’ tale of the Second Branch corresponds to the testing of a changeling implies that the redactor was unaware of this, and that the modern scholar must find the ‘real’ meaning. Nagy dismisses this methodology:

[T]he disadvantage to Gruffydd’s approach, as to the approaches of the “mythological” folklorists of the nineteenth century in general, is that it renders the traditional text a ruin in its wake, demoted in literary or aesthetic terms to a botched job, resulting from recent or long-standing misunderstandings.

(Nagy, 2001, p. 96)

Regarding Gruffydd’s assumptions about the murder of Gwern in particular, Nagy adds:

We note that Gruffydd’s analysis is both to award primacy of place to ritual and primitive, magical beliefs in the historical reconstruction of the elements that went into the making of the story, and simultaneously to link this primal, primitive layer with ongoing Welsh “folk” custom and worldview, which preserve the vestiges of a savage past: all in all, a very Frazerian project, co-existing not altogether comfortably with the Müllerian agenda that also drive Gruffydd’s analysis.

(Nagy, 2001, p. 97-98)

The general criticism voiced by Nagy can be complemented by criticizing Gruffydd because folktales as found in the nineteenth-century collections do not support Gruffydd’s interpretations.

We may summarize the usual plot of the Welsh changeling legends: (1) the baby is changed; (2) it is recognized as a changeling; (3) it is scared away or the fairies are made to take their child back. Such changeling tales can be found e.g. in the collections of Elias Owen, John Rhŷs and Hugh Evans (Owen, [1887] 1973, pp. 51-58; Rhŷs 2012 [1901], pp. 161, 231; Evans, 1935, pp. 55-64). Exceptions from this pattern are known, as e.g. ‘The Legend of the Gors Goch Changeling’, for in this case the changeling remains and destroys the family (Owen, [1887] 1973, pp. 59). However, in all those tales the identification of the changeling does not involve testing by fire: recognition is due to (1) the changed looks of the child, looking aged, (2) making the child speak prematurely, (3) failure of the child to thrive, (4) heating blessed salt in a shovel in the room where the changeling is. The latter example is found in Evan Isaac’s *Coelion Cymru* (1938, p. 30). Examples for (1) to (3) are found in the above collections by Owen, Rhŷs and Evans.

Moreover, in all those folktales fire is never applied to turn the fairy changeling away. The changeling may be thrown into a lake or a river, but this motif cannot be brought into

agreement with a swimming test described by Gruffydd – an ordeal which actually appears in early modern witch trials.¹⁰⁵ If the child is thrown into the water like in the ‘Corwrion Changeling Legend’, then this has the character of returning the fairy child/children to the element they belong to (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 57). In other variants, the fairies are forced to rescue their own babies and to return the human child, as in the versions of the changeling legend from Treveglwys near Llanidloes (Owen, [1887] 1973, p. 54) or Ysbyty Ifan/Cwm Eithin (Evans, 1935, p. 58). All this shows that Gruffydd has not only assumed that the text from the Mabinogi had an agenda not known to the redactor, but also the folktales, for he presents them as corrupted tales of a sort of witch-hunt. Although Gruffydd’s theories seem to provide more evidence that the fairies hate fire, they are unreliable.

3.3 Wellsprings of the Otherworld

3.3.1 Wellsprings of the Sea

Llyfr Taliesin

A special case of the subaquatic location is a well or well-spring. The poem ‘Golychaf-i Gulwyd’ suggests such a location for Caer Siddi:

Teir oryan y am tan a gan recdi,
ac am y banneu ffrydyeu gweilgi;
a’r ffynhawn ffrwythlaw ynssyd oducht –
ys whegach no’r gwin gwyn y llyn yndi.

Three instruments/organs around a fire play in front of it
and around its turrets are the wellsprings of the sea;
and [as for] the fruitful fountain which is above it –
its drink is sweeter than the white wine.

(text & translation: Haycock 2007, p. 277, ll. 48-50)

How, though, to imagine such a fountain? The description of a well in *The Voyage of Máel Dúin* could help: a ‘large stream rose up out of the strand of the island, and went like a rainbow over the whole island, and flowed into the other strand of the island on the other side of it’ (Oskamp, 1970, pp. 148-99 as quoted by Haycock, pp. 291-292). Haycock also suggests (ibid.) that the description of the spring of Zion in the Old Irish *Evernew Tongue* can be

¹⁰⁵ For ordeals used in witch trials, especially the swimming test or the application of red-hot iron see Clark (1997, pp. 590-591) and Bartlett (1986, pp. 148-149).

compared to the miraculous spring of *Caer Siddi*. This evidence shows that medieval literature locates the otherworld under a miraculous well which is related to the sea.

Seithennin – Black Book of Carmarthen

The well springs of the sea are intricately connected with an otherworldly subaquatic realm. The motif of the female guardian of these wells emphasises once again the importance of the feminine in otherworldly abodes. The motif of a wellspring of the sea recalls the saga-poem ‘*Seithennin*’ or ‘*Boddi Maes Gwyddneu*’ (BBC, 39). In the opening stanza *Seithennin* is called out to witness the flooding of *Maes Gwyddno*. According to the poem the inundation was brought about by a maiden named *Mererid*, who, after a battle, released a fountain called the wellspring of the sea. The following stanzas refer to the fountain *Mererid* released.

Boed emendiceid y morvin
ae hellygaut guydi cvin.
finaun wenestir mor terruin.

Boed emendiceid y vachteith
ae. golligaut guydi gueith.
finaun. wenestir mor diffeith.

(BBC, 39.4-9)

May the maiden, the server of the desolate sea,
who released after lament
the fountain be cursed.

May the maiden, the server of the desolate sea,
who released after battle
the fountain be cursed.

(Rowland, 1990, p. 508)

‘*Mererid*’ (‘*Pearl*’) is the vernacular form of ‘*Margareta*,’ but also carries the connotation of marine origin, of whiteness, loveliness and purity.¹⁰⁶ Saint Margaret is shown in iconography holding down a dragon (Gorys, 1999, s.v. ‘*Margareta von Antiochia*’). We can conjecture that the name was chosen deliberately for a woman guarding the destructive powers from the deep. It is a tempting assumption that *Mererid* is a damsel from an otherworldly abode located in

¹⁰⁶ In the following it will be shown that sacred wells and magical cauldrons are comparable narrative motifs. The rather rare name *Mererid* recalls the cauldron of the head of *Annwn* as mentioned in ‘*Preiddeu Annwn*’: *Yg kynneir, o’r peir pan leferit: / o anadyl naw morwyn gochyneuit. / Neu peir Pen Annwfyw, pw y vynut, / gwrym am y oror a mererit?*’ (‘my first utterance was spoken concerning the cauldron / kindled by the breath of nine maidens. / The cauldron of the Head of *Annwn*, what is its disposition / [with its] dark trim, and pearls?’) (Haycock, 2007, p. 435). We could speculate whether the poet of ‘*Preiddeu Annwn*’ is playing with the meaning of ‘*mererid*’, which refers to pearls decorating the vessel, but could perhaps also be a metaphor for maidens of loveliness and purity, so that we find a pun in this line.

the sea who has been offended or who wanted revenge, for she released the fountain after lament and battle. Mererid could also be a personification of the sea. But as the poems holds no further clue, this is speculative.

One may interestingly compare the inundation of Cante'r Gwaelod and that of Kaer Is in the bay of Douarnenez.¹⁰⁷ Both in the oldest version of the tale recorded by Albert le Grand in 1632 in *Vie de Saints de la Bretagne Armorique* ('Life of the Saints of Armorican Brittany') and in the poem 'Livaden Geris' ('the submersion of Keris') edited by Villmarqué (1854), the sea was let in by Dahut, the daughter of King Gradlan (Doan, 1981, pp. 77-78). In Marie de France's *Graelent*, the *lai*'s eponymous hero follows his fairy mistress into a river and is almost drowned (Bromwich, 1950, p. 241; Doan, 1982, p. 78). James Doan concludes that an early version of the legend of Ker-Is circulated as early as the twelfth century (ibid.). This early version represents a link to fairy traditions, for the female protagonist is a denizen of the otherworld. According to a Breton tradition, Dahut is changed into a denizen of the sea, a *mari morgan*, a mermaid, luring the sailors to death (Doan, 1981, p. 78; Boyd, 2013, p. 237). both the very early version of the inundation story and the later traditions suggest a relation between the female protagonist letting in the sea and the otherworld. If the fairy mistress in *Graelent* is supposed to be an early version of Dahut, then it is an apt motif that in Breton folklore she returns to her element after the inundation. If Dahut has been originally a fairy character, then this supports our previous assumption that Mererid could be an otherworldly character, too, for Bromwich has drawn attention to the analogy between Dahut's and Mererid's tale (Bromwich, 1950, p. 238).¹⁰⁸ We can conjecture that the well springs of the sea are guarded by a damsel of the otherworld, so that the otherworld controls the sea.

3.3.2 Wells of Wisdom

The previous chapters have shown that wisdom, knowledge, poetic and prophetic powers can be gifts of the otherworld. If otherworldly creatures and their domain are so strongly related to water, we can expect to find water as a medium to transport the gifts of the otherworld. A

¹⁰⁷ Introductions into various versions of the legend and useful bibliographies see Bromwich (1950), Doan (1981) and Boyd ed. (2013).

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the similarities between the two tales are great, so that Villemarqué most certainly borrowed from *Seithennin* when composing his poem about the inundation of Ker-Is as Rachel Bromwich pointed out (Bromwich, 1950, p. 232).

water-related symbolism and metaphoric depict processes of transformation mediated by contact with the otherworld.

Well, Wisdom, and Salmon

An Irish example links the motif of the subaquatic well and the wisdom bestowed by it. In the first *Dindshenchas* account of Sinann there is a well of knowledge in the subaquatic domain of Condla with nine hazel trees growing around the well and dropping their nuts into it:

Tipra Chonnlaí, ba mór muirn,
bói fon aibeis eochar-guirm:
sé srotha, nárb inann blad,
eisti, Sinann in sechtmad.

Nói cuill Chrimaill, ind fhir glic,
dochuiret tall fon tiprait:
atát le doilbi smachta
fo cheó doirchi dráidechta.

Connla's well, loud was its sound,
was beneath the blue-skirted ocean:
six streams, unequal in fame,
rise from it, the seventh was Sinann.

The nine hazels of Crimall the sage
drop their fruits yonder under the well:
they stand by the power of magic spells
under a darksome mist of wizardry.

(Gwynn 1913, pp. 292-293)

The hazelnuts fall into the water and the salmon eat them, the juice forming bubbles of wisdom in the water (p. 233). When the salmon has eaten the nuts, it becomes the vessel of the water's magical properties: eating it gives knowledge of the otherworld. The salmon is thus agent of transformation and shuttle for the knowledge between the otherworld and the mundane.

The tale of how Fionn mac Cumhaill obtained his supernatural knowledge confirms the previous interpretation. *Macgnímartha Find* uses the motif of the salmon as vessel of poetic and prophetic power (Nagy, 1985, pp.155-156). Tasting the salmon bestows the gift of knowledge upon Fionn, enabling him to lead the Fianna (Meyer 1882).¹⁰⁹ The motif of the

¹⁰⁹ Fionn's perception was widened for he obtained prophetic powers. It is suggestive that both Fionn's and Gwyn ap Nudd's name can be traced back to an Indo-European root with the significance 'see', and the name itself meaning 'white, shining' but also 'fair' and 'blessed' (GPC, s.v. 'Gwyn').

Parallels to the tale of Fionn include that of Sigurd, endowed with supernatural knowledge by accidentally eating of the dragon's heart (Nagy, 1980). We may also consider the white snake in one

salmon having extraordinary knowledge also appears in *Culhwch ac Olwen*: the Salmon of Llyn Llyw is the oldest and wisest animal, which transports the heroes to the secret otherworldly prison of Mabon (CO 900-919).

The Herbal Essence of Wisdom: Gwion

Ystoria Taliesin shares with the tales of Fionn the motif of inadvertently tasting magical food and thus being inspired. Gwion guards the cauldron in which a brew simmers, concocted by Ceridwen in the attempt to bestow profound knowledge upon her ugly son Afagddu (Ford, 1977). But in this case no fish appears as mediator for prophetic and poetic knowledge. The cauldron of Ceridwen is an example of the herbal mediation of knowledge:

If we consult the text [...] two features are striking. It was on Gwion Bach that the three *drops of juice* fell; these herbal drops were a *poison* strong enough to split a cauldron. Gwion Bach is thus the supernatural embodiment of the plant juice, the poison.

(Hamp, 1978, p. 152)

Herbs, like the fish, are closely connected with water, too, it being the essence of their life, which on their part can be regarded as transforming the powers of water in the process of growth. But why are Ceridwen's herbs poisonous? Poisonous herbs could have psychedelic effects supporting poetic creativity, widening perception as a consciousness-enhancing drug: such herbal drugs could help mediate a shamanic journey into the otherworld in an intoxicated, even death-like state. Hamp's suggestion that Gwion is the embodiment of the poisonous plant juice implies that he had become the embodiment of travelling to Annwn in a liminal state. In such a state of constant travelling between the mundane and the otherworldly realms, he can access the liminal otherworld and capture its knowledge. The herbal power must be that of herbs poisonous for mortal man, following the principle of inversion of the human world. What is poisonous for humans does not harm the denizens of Annwn.¹¹⁰ While it is not specifically poisonous, Marged Haycock notes the abundant supply of intoxicating liquor in Annwn (Haycock, 1983/84, p. 56): this is also agent of an inspired state of mind.

The Cauldron

of the Grimm Brothers' tales, kept hidden in a bowl which can be interpreted as a symbol for a cauldron or a well. Eating a part of this snake enables understanding of the animal language (Grimm & Grimm, 1997 [1812], vol.1, pp. 126-127).

¹¹⁰ *Ymenyn Tylwyth Teg* ('Fairies' butter) is petroleum (rock oil), *Bwyd Ellyllon* ('Food of Elves') is a fungus. Folklore marks a most poisonous herb as a fairy flower, namely *Menig yr Ellyllon* (*Digitalis Purpurea*; Foxglove) whose digitoxin can cause heart failure (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 111). Cf. also chapter 3 of this thesis, 'Taboos'.

It seems that we drifted with this tale of Gwion away from the wells of wisdom located in Annwn, but both the cauldron and the well can symbolize a vessel containing the magical fluid of the otherworld which brings about inspiration and knowledge: this symbolism of rivers, wells, whirlpools, waterfalls as vessels of knowledge is discussed by Sharon MacLeod (2006/2007). The cauldron is a symbol which emphasizes the mental transformation required to become inspired with otherworldly knowledge. In a cauldron, things are boiled and thus transformed.¹¹¹

In 'Preiddeu Annwn', the cauldron of the Head of Annwn '[n]y beirw bwyt llwfyr, ny ry tyghit' ('[...] does not boil a coward's food, it has not been destined to do so') (Haycock, 2007, no. 18, l. 17). As symbol of transition, the line can be interpreted thus: a coward will fail on his quest to Annwn, i.e., he will not master the transition process he has to face. The poet who cowardly fails the challenges which come about by being on a quest for poetic inspiration in Annwn, will have no chance to be transformed into a master of poetry by the powers of the cauldron.

We can regard the boiling cauldron also as an image of sustained power of life, the source of a nourishing agent.¹¹² This source of life-sustaining power appears in the Second Branch of the Mabinogi as a cauldron which gives life to the slain warriors (PKM, p. 44). They are re-born, but mute. In contrast to the poet subjecting himself to a journey to the otherworld which can be connected with deathlike states and challenges to overcome actively and successfully, the warriors are boiled in the cauldron in a procedure which does not involve the transformation of their spirit, but only revives their flesh. Therefore, they are mute, because the procedure of their revival is a perversion of the cauldron's powers. They have no inspiration for any utterance, for they are only passively subjected to a process. If rebirth is a possible function of an otherworldly cauldron, then it is a figure for the womb, an image which Ford invokes in the context of *Ystoria Taliesin*, and which was introduced above, in 2.3. We

¹¹¹ Nagy discusses this in the context of the adventures of Fionn (Nagy, 1985, p. 157).

¹¹² The life-sustaining powers become manifest in the image of the lavish feasting in the otherworld, which grants food and drink to the visitors. The latter is an important feature of the fairy world which can be found in oral testimonies as early as the early modern reports period. Persons who claimed to have journeyed to the realm of the fairies report about the rich food which is provided for the inhabitants of the fairy world, as for example Isobel Gowdie in her witch trial: 'I wes in the downie hillis, and got meat ther from the qwein of faerrie, mor then I could eat' (Wilby, 2011, p. 40). Another life sustaining characteristic of the Otherworld is the healing power or knowledge which is guarded there: a famous example from Welsh folklore is the conflating of the tradition of Meddygon Myddfai, the Physicians of Myddfai and the Legend of the Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach. Extraordinary medical knowledge is attributed to transmission of this knowledge from the otherworld. A medieval literary example appears in *Vita Merlini*, for Arthur was taken to Avallion, home of Morgen 'Le Fay' (GVM, ll. 916-938; Bartrum, 1993, s.v. 'Morgen').

can enlarge on Ford's interpretation: Gwion is three-times reborn: his spirit from the cauldron, his body from Ceridwen in an otherworldly domain, and finally he is reborn into the mundane world by being rescued from the sea, a threefold birth.¹¹³

The Motif of Fire in Water

Staying with the motif of the boiling cauldron, another important motif must be introduced. The process of boiling transfers the heat of fire to the liquid in the cauldron: the power of fire is stored in water. The 'fire in water' motif is not only a paradox, but a motif of dual opposites coexisting, and therefore it can be used to describe a liminal state – typical of the otherworld – which eventually is resolved by a transition. Dumézil and Ford have both drawn attention to the Indo-European mythological concept of 'fire in water' (Dumézil, 1963, pp. 50-61, Ford 1974, pp. 67-74). Ford writes:

The *imbas*, or 'very great knowledge' (cf. parallel concepts in *druí* from **der-uid-*; Welsh *cyfarwydd*, *derwydd*), also had the property of illuminating, or kindling. The R.I.A. (Royal Irish Academy) dictionary gives the following meanings for *forosna*: 'lights up (or 'burns'- as a candle), illuminates, kindles, shines.'

(Ford, 1974, p. 73)

This illuminating inspiring essence which is described with the epithets of radiance and lighting up can be taken from the water, which is the reason that poets seek inspiration at the brink of the water. Therefore, Ford concludes thus:

[G]iven the list of correspondences between Irish and Iranian legends, so carefully defined by Dumézil, we are no doubt justified in taking the paradoxical concept of "fire in water" as confirmed in the native Irish treatment of inspired poetry: a potent illuminating wisdom, found in water, guarded by Nechtan, whose possession endowed the few privileged few with extraordinary powers.

(Ford, 1974, p. 74)

In the case of the wells, MacLeod suggests that the red hazels falling into them, or the red flesh of the salmon, symbolize the fire hidden in water (MacLeod, 2006/2007, p. 352). This idea leads on to the investigation of colour symbolism treated in chapter 4, but here I draw attention to the fact that in relation to the water symbolism which abounds in the context of the otherworld, we can identify important motifs involving fire. The conflict of fire and water

¹¹³ Cf. the triple conception of Cú Chulainn; or the births of Lleu and Pryderi (Rees & Rees, pp. 213-243). For text and introduction see Ford (1992).

stresses the contrast between the world of the supernatural ‘other’ and human society, but ‘fire in water’ is related to transformational and transitional processes mediated by the otherworld.

3.4 The Magical Mists: Towers of Gwyn’s Tribe

3.4.1 The Towers of Gwyn’s Tribe: The Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Parallels in Folklore

The previous chapters have shown that Annwn was imagined as either a subterranean abode (2.2), an island (3.1) or a subaquatic realm (3.2). The mist, this combination of the elements water and air, has also been described as domain of the fairies and other denizens of Annwn, most famously in ‘Y Niwl’ (‘The Mist’) by Dafydd ap Gwilym who describes the motif of the mist as a domain of *Tylwyth Gwyn*, Gwyn’s tribe in his poem ‘Y Niwl’ (DAG, no. 57).

Twyllai wŷr, tywyll o wedd,
 Toron gwrddonig tired,dd,
 Tyrau uchel eu helynt
 Tylwyth Gwyn, talaith y gwynt,
 Tir a gudd ei ddeurudd ddygn,
 Torsed yn cuddio teirsygn,
 Tywyllwg, un tew allardd,
 Delli byd i dwyllo bardd,
 Llydanwe gombr gosombraff,
 Ar lled y’i rhodded fal rhaff,
 Gwe adrgop, Ffrenigsiop ffrwyth,
 Gwan dalar Gwyn a’i dylwyth,
 Mwg brych yn fynych a fydd,
 Mogodarth cylch meigoedydd,
 Anadl arth lle cyfarth cŵn,
 Ennaint gwrachiod Annwn,
 Gochwith megis gwlyth y gwlych,
 Habrsiwn tir anehwybrsych.

[I]t would deceive men, dark appearance,
 shaggy cloak of the lands,
 towers of Gwyn's tribe
 travelling on high, headdress of the wind,
 its grim cheeks hide the land,
 a blanket covering three signs of the
 Zodiac,
 darkness, a thick unlovely one,
 blindness of the world to deceive a poet,
 broad web of thick deceptive cambric,
 it was spread out like a rope,
 a spider's web, like wares of a French shop,
 flaccid headland of Gwyn and his tribe,
 speckled smoke which gets everywhere,
 steam around small trees,
 bear's breath where dogs bark,
 ointment of the witches of Annwn,
 it wets stealthily like dew,
 damp opaque habergeon of the land.
 (DAG, no. 57, ll. 29-46)

The poem describes the protagonist setting out to meet his beloved, but on his way, he is trapped in a mist. The major part of the poem describes the mist by means of *dyfalu*, and we can identify several metaphoric groups or comparisons. The simplest images used to describe the mist are those which refer to its natural qualities. To begin with, in the mist it is dark: Dafydd calls it ‘niwl yn gynhebig i nos’ (‘a mist just like night’, l. 14), saying later that travelling at night is even better ‘Haws cerdded nos ar rosydd / I daith nog ar niwl y dydd’ (‘It's easier to go on a journey by night / over moors than in mist by day’; ll. 47-48). Between the initial and the final mentioning of night the darkness of the mist is evoked: it is ‘anghlaer’

(‘dark’, l. 19), ‘tywyll’ (‘dark’, l. 29) and ‘tywyllwg’ (darkness, l. 35). Mist is pale, also dulling the colours of the landscape, and we find ‘llwyd’ (‘grey’, l. 21) and ‘yn un lliw’ (‘of one colour’, l. 21), ‘tewlwyd’ (‘thick grey’, l. 25) ‘gwynllwyd’ (‘pale grey’, *ibid.*) and ‘cyfliw â mwg’ (of one colour with smoke’, l. 26). The last descriptor leads on to comparison with similar natural phenomena such as ‘mwg’ (‘smoke’, ll. 26, 41, 42), ‘tarth’ (‘haze’, l. 24) and ‘anadl’ (‘breath’, l. 43), especially breath in the cold air.

Another group of metaphoric descriptions is centred about the mist covering the landscape. It is notable that only once a comparison to a solid covering is chosen, namely ‘cwferth’ (‘lid’; l. 22). The other metaphors have a textile connotation: ‘carthen’ (‘blanket’, l. 20), ‘cwfl’ (‘cowl’, l. 22), ‘toron’ (‘cloak’, l. 30), ‘tored’ (‘blanket’, l. 34). But we find also metaphors which do not relate to the function of a textile, but to the characteristics of the cloth, such as ‘cnu’ (‘fleece’, l. 23), and especially ‘combr’ (‘cambric’, l. 37), which is a very fine, but densely woven lightweight cloth initially manufactured at Cambrai in France. ‘Ffrengigshop ffrwyth’ (‘wares of a French shop’, l. 39) probably also refers to cambric cloth. These textile comparisons are intricately woven into metaphors of deceit and of being trapped. ‘Llydanwe gombr gosombraff’ (‘broad web of thick deceptive cambric’, l. 37) is followed by ‘gwe adrgop’ (spider’s web’, l. 39) placed directly next to the wares of the French shop, and both lines enclose the image of mist as a rope to stumble over and to make the lost wanderer fall. I have already referred to these metaphors to demonstrate the jocular mood of this poem in 2.2.2 when discussing Annwn in the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym. The mist is also called ‘talaith y gwynt’ (headdress of the wind; l. 32), which makes us think of a woman’s headdress made of fine, but inscrutable cloth. The mist is also called ‘ennaint gwrachïod Annwn’ (ointment of the witches of Annwn’, l. 44). This evokes the image of a deceitful woman, and the mist as a means of her deceit, just as if a such a woman was trying to waylay Dafydd on his way to his true love, with the mist the deceitful agent of this temptress. As we see from the part of the poem printed above, here the fairies are worked into the metaphoric web. The domain of the fairies is described as deceitful and hard to grasp: ‘Gwan dalar Gwyn a’i dylwyth’ (‘flaccid headland of Gwyn and his tribe’, l. 40). The mist hides the signs of the Zodiac¹¹⁴, the stars which Dafydd calls the lights of God: (‘sêr Nêr’, l. 52). Thus, mist becomes not only an obstacle, but a place of severe temptation and deceit for Dafydd, who finds himself

¹¹⁴ The three signs of the Zodiac probably refer to a triplicity, i.e., a group of three out of twelve Zodiac signs. In the 1st century CE, the four triplicities became connected with the directions north south, east and west, later (2nd century CE) the triplicities became associated with the four elements (TAD, s.v. ‘triplicity’). As Dafydd probably loses orientation, the first association is the appropriate one for this poem.

trapped in the mundane and far from the presence of God, cf. ‘Delli byd i dwyllo bardd’ (‘blindness of the world to deceive a poet’, l. 36). Though the mist seems soft, the assault is very hard, and the mist is described with martial metaphors, e.g.: ‘Habrsiwn tir anehwybrsych’ (‘damp opaque habergeon of the land’, l. 46). The line ‘Anadl arth lle cyfarth cŵn’ (‘bear’s breath where dogs bark’, l. 43) underlines this attack of the sinister experienced in the fog. The breath of an attacking bear is an appealing image to the modern reader, but the medieval audience would have imagined bear baiting, a strong animal trapped and attacked by dogs. The dogs, however, would recall immediately the Cŵn Annwn who hunt the souls of the wicked, especially since the leader of the pack, Gwyn ap Nudd, is mentioned twice in this part of the poem (Rowlands, 1959, p. 122). Thus, Dafydd’s description of a scene in nature can be read as a metaphor for being trapped in the world and being threatened by temptation, so that the way to true love is hard to find.

The poem presents mist as the domain of the Tylwyth Teg. The fairies are presented as demonic creatures which live in the air, which is a marked difference to the location of Annwn under the earth or under water. It seems that we witness here that the neo-Platonist idea of demons as entities between god and man inhabiting the air has been conflated with autochthonous traditions. The *stoa* considered the air to be the realm of the demons. This teaching precipitated into the writings of Plutarch (45-125 AD) who thought that an aerial body was a characteristic of the demons (Schwaiger, 1988, p. 59-60). Plotin (205-270 AD) and Porphyrios (234-302 AD) developed the demonology further (ibid.). Augustine elaborated the demonology and described demons as beings which have originally been angels who are banned into the air to await the final judgment (ibid., pp. 62-68). Comparable ideas are repeated by Isidore of Seville in *Etymologiae* (8.xi, 16-17). Obviously, the neo-Platonist ideas have been applied to the Tylwyth Teg.

This development finds parallels in the way how the Túatha Dé Dannan were incorporated into a Christian view of the world. In *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, in English known as *Book of Invasions*, the Tuatha Dé Danann landed in dark clouds in Ireland, hidden from sight (Macalister, 1941, §55). They are associated with an airy misty realm. Furthermore, they, too, have become associated with the fallen angels who have not yet arrived in hell. In ‘Scél Tuáin meic Chairill’ we read: ‘Beothecht son of Iordanen took this island from the people that were in it. Of them are the Gáilióin, and the Tútha Dé and Andé, whose origin the men of learning do not know; but they thought it likely that they are some of the exiles who came to them from heaven.’ (Carey, 1984b, p. 106).

This absorption of fairies into a Christian worldview persisted in folk tradition, as Evans Wentz notes:

Our Pembrokeshire witness is a maiden Welshwoman, sixty years old, who speaks no English, but a university graduate, her nephew, will act as our interpreter. [...] ‘Spirits and fairies exist all round us invisible [...]. I think the spirits around us are the fallen angels, for when Doctor Harris died his books on witchcraft had to be burned in order to free the place where he lived from evil spirits. The fairies, too, are sometimes called fallen angels. They will do good to those who befriend them, and harm others. I think there must be an intermediate state between life on earth and heavenly life, and it may be in this that spirits and fairies live.

(Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], pp. 153-154)

Evans-Wentz informant repeats ideas which are in accordance with neo-Platonist demonology. This shows that these ideas have been transmitted for a long time. In this case the transmission was not necessarily purely oral, as the book of a cunning man, John Harries of Cwrtycadno, is mentioned. This could also explain the neo-Platonist demonological ideas which are connected with the alchemistical ideas of the cunning people, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

In early modern poetry the fairies re-appear in the context of unpleasant weather conditions the poet is exposed to, and this way of adding colour to a poem strongly recalls Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poetry. Huw Machno (1585-1637) re-uses these motifs bringing the king of the Tylwyth Teg into connection with mist and rain. B. Roberts edited the following text from MS Llan. 124, 1-5 in an article about Gwyn ap Nudd. Huw Machno composed a *cywydd* for Sir Wiliam Glyn of Glynllifon explaining his adventures on the road to Glynllifon on a Christmas night. In the *cywydd* he refers to the fellow poets with whom he used to contest:

[F]fylip yn ddirip yw ddydd
a Chynwal wych awenydd
havrent fy mod yn rhodiaw
i niwl gwlyb ynial a glaw
Dan wybr am byd yn obrydd
heb nwy gida Gwyn ap Nŷdd
minav trwy Grist didrist dôn
yn llowio at Lyn Lliwon.

(Roberts 1980/81, p. 285)

Ffylip, not liable to stumble [...]
and the great inspired poet Cynwal
taunted me that I was walking
into wet and desolate fog and rain
under a sky and my life sad
without vigour in the company of Gwyn ap Nudd
I with Christ[’s help] not in a sad mood
steering to Glynllifon.

(my trans.)

In this section the contrast between a homely place and good company on the one hand and the wilderness and awful weather on the other hand shows as clearly as in Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem 'Y Niwl'. Gwyn ap Nudd is bad company for a traveller, and Christ protects the poet against this bad company. Thus, implicitly, Gwyn is introduced as a demonic creature. However, the mood is light, and the demonic character of the king of the Tylwyth Teg rather adds a folkloristic element.

Mist and clouds as domain of the king of the Tylwyth Teg remained a motif of Welsh poetry to most recent times, as in in the poetry of Elfed (Howell Elvet Lewis, 1860-1953), who addresses Gwyn ap Nudd:

Cysgod cwmwl sy ar dy ben,
Am danat mae y niwl yn llen.

(Elfed, 1909, p. 58)

The shadow of a cloud is upon your head,
the fog is around you as a veil. (my trans.)

In folk tradition the motif of the mist survived as well into the modern time, especially in context of children being taken by the Tylwyth Teg in the mist:

During my visit to Aberdaron, my wife and I went to the top of Mynydd Anelog, and on the way up we passed a cottage, where a very illiterate woman told us that the Tylwyth Teg formerly frequented the mountains when there was a mist on it [...].

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 228)

Elsewhere, Rhŷs describes how a mother used the fear of the fairies in the mist to discipline her children:

To this I may add the testimony of a lady for whose veracity I can vouch, to the effect that when she was a child in Cwm Brwynog, from thirty or forty years ago, she and her brothers and sisters used to be frequently warned by their mother not to go far away from the house, when there happened to be thick mist on the ground, lest they should come across the Tylwyth Teg dancing, and be carried away to their abode beneath the lake. They were always, she says, supposed to live in the lakes; and the one here alluded to was Llyn Dwythwch, which is one of the famous for its *torgochiaid* or chars. The mother is still living; but seems to have long since, like others lost her belief in the fairies.

(Rhŷs, 2010 [1901], p. 33)

Y Brenin Llwyd – Monarch of the Mountain Mist

Trevelyan and Hartland give a similar story about people being taken in the mist by Y Brenin Llwyd (The Grey King), believed to be the king of the mountain mists (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 142; Trevelyan & Hartland, 1973 [1909], pp. 48, 69):

An old woman said that many a time she shuddered when they ascended to the mineral wells on the Smaelog, and was glad to come down, because the people and children warned everybody not to linger late, for the Brenin Llwyd would be after them.

(Trevelyan & Hartland, 1973 [1909], p. 69)

Y Brenin Llwyd, Grey King or ‘Monarch of the Mist’, as Marie Trevelyan calls him, shares the habit to hunt with the Cŵn Annwn with the kings of Annwn, namely Gwyn ap Nudd and Arawn. Y Brenin Llwyd is said to hunt on the slopes of Cadair Idris with Cŵn Annwn (The Dogs of Annwn) (ibid., p. 48). Not only are Gwyn ap Nudd and Y Brenin Llwyd both leaders of Cŵn Annwn, but their names are also connected: ‘llwyd’ does not only refer to the colour ‘grey’ but can mean ‘old’ or ‘blessed’ (GPC, s.v. ‘llwyd’). ‘Gwyn ap Nudd’ can be translated ‘the Blessed/Fair One, son of Nudd’ or even ‘the Blessed One, son of Mist’ (GPC, s.v. ‘gwyn’), and ‘y Brenin Llwyd’ can be translated ‘the Blessed King’ which could be an appeasing name for a potentially dangerous character. Possibly, Gwyn ap Nudd and Y Brenin Llwyd were originally equivalent characters.¹¹⁵

3.4.2 Magical Mists in Vernacular Medieval Prose

‘Y Brenin Llwyd’ is likely connected with Llwyd ap Cilcoed of the Third Branch of the Mabinogi: Llwyd can be identified as a fairy king or king of Annwn due to associated motifs. To begin with, Llwyd ap Cilcoed changes the land by means of a magical mist (PKM, p. 51); he takes people after enticing them into his battlements with an enchanted white boar (p. 55): white is a magical colour typical of otherworldly animals; Llwyd’s people destroy the crop in the shape of mice (pp. 61-3). This last motif (F 369.5 of Thompson’s Motif Index) corresponds to the fairies destroying crops such as in the tale of Pantannas (see e.g., Rhys, 2012 [1901], p.

¹¹⁵ Although ‘Nudd’ is usually interpreted as personal name cognate with the Irish ‘Nuada’ and the Britanno-Roman deity ‘Nodens’, O’Rahilly and Ross both suggest that the name means ‘cloud maker’ (O’Rahilly 1935, pp. 354-355; Ross, 1967, p. 176). It would fit with magical mist being an agent of contact with the otherworld that the father of the king of Annwn should have this quality. For a brief survey on suggested etymologies of ‘Nodens’ see Carey (1984, pp. 2-3) or Hutton (2011, pp. 63-68).

175-177).¹¹⁶ Therefore, according to principles established in Chapter 1, we identify Llwyd ap Cilcoed as an otherworldly ruler, even if the Mabinogi does not say so explicitly.

The magical mist can also be found in ‘Geraint’,¹¹⁷ where Enid’s father is earl ‘Y Niwl’. Rachel Bromwich suggests that he was once possibly identical to the ‘Owein iarll’ who presides over the ‘cae nywl’ (a ‘hedge of mist’) (1961, pp. 475-476). Possibly, he was once an otherworldly character. Dara Hellman supports this interpretation: she suggests that there is a familial connection between the Earl Y Niwl and Edern ap Nudd (Hellman, 1997, p. 224). Geraint’s battling against Edern ap Nudd, brother to the king of Annwn, Gwyn ap Nudd, corresponds to the motif of a human warrior fighting an otherworldly warrior and helping an otherworldly chief, although it is the conflict between Y Niwl and the young earl which is settled after the tournament for the sparrow hawk. This motif can be found in other Welsh and Irish tales such as the First Branch of the Mabinogi (PKM), *Serglige Con Culainn* (Dillon, 1953), *Echtrae Lóegaire* (Jackson, 1942) or *Thorstein’s Saga* (Power, 1985), just to mention a few examples.¹¹⁸

Mist not only conceals but mediates contact with the supernatural realm:

The point is illustrated very well by what Irish literature tells of the connections supposedly made with the otherworld. When a being comes from that realm to encounter mortals, we usually read of a supernatural mist enveloping those present. This mist is an otherworldly device in order to allow the two realms to interface.

(Ó hÓgáin, 1999, p. 116)

Mist creates a liminal space, and supernatural characters, denizens of the otherworld, are beings found in states of liminality. Relevant Irish texts include *Echtrae Loégaire* (Jackson, 1942, p. 381), *Echtrae Chormaic* (Stokes, 1891, p. 213) and ‘Five Luguids’ (Arbunot, 2007, p. 97), and in *Baile in Scáil* we read: ‘While they were there ten, they noticed a great fog around them and they did not know where they were going because of the intensity of the darkness that descended on them (Murray, 2004, pp. 33-44): darkness and loss of mundane sight mediates the encounter with the supernatural. This function of mist is found in the Third Branch of the Mabinogi, but can also be applied to the poet’s journey through the mist in Dafydd ap Gwilym’s ‘Y Niwl’. In the case of ‘Geraint’ Hellman maintains: ‘It would seem only logical then, that he should mate with the daughter of the Mist [Enid], for it is through

¹¹⁶ For an analysis of folk motifs in the PKM see Welsh (1988). For further work on migratory motifs see Jackson (1961a). Ford discusses mythological motifs (1981/82).

¹¹⁷ For text and introduction see Thomson (1997).

¹¹⁸ For more examples see Duignan (2011, p.183).

this mist that he sees clearly and may establish a connection to his own privilege and duty' (Hellman, 1997, p. 231). The mist mediates a shift of perception.¹¹⁹

A passage through darkness can have a similar function as the passage through mist. To reach an otherworldly realm, a medium which hinders normal sight and acts as a veil between worlds must be penetrated. The *Itinerarium Cambriae* describes the kingdom visited by Elidorus thus: 'Erant ibi dies omnes quasi nebulosi, et noctes lunae stellarumque absentia teterrimae' ('There all the days were as if misty, and the nights were very dark because of the absence of the moon and stars.') (IC, p. 65; my trans.).

3.4.3 The Cloud Mountain

Mist can darken a place, if caught within, but when mountain mist rises, fantastical beings can be imagined rising with it, always changing shape, and clouds resting on mountain tops can be seen as airborne landscapes, worlds of change and illusion. 'Ymddiddan Gwyn ap Nudd a Gwyddno Garanhir' contains an *englyn* which can be interpreted as referring to clouds or a cloud-like mountain mist:

Dormarch truinrut ba ssillit arnaw
caniss amgiffredit.
dy gruidir ar wibir winit

(BBC, XXXIV, ll. 40-42)

Dormarch of the ruddy nose what are you looking at me
since I cannot understand
your wandering on the mountain of cloud.

The translation of this *englyn* is slightly problematic, for we have at least two words each of which could have an alternative grammatical meaning. The first is 'arnaw' which could be either 'arno' or 'arnaf' (Roberts 1978, p. 318, n. 14.2). The other problem is the verbal form 'amgiffredit'. Roberts suggests a 3rd sing. pres. or a 2nd sing. present (Roberts 1978, p. 318, n. 14.2), though Rowland suggests a rare 1st sing. pres. (Rowland, 1999, p. 636, n. 34c).¹²⁰ As we do not know who is speaking, there are two possibilities: following the traditional (unproven) assumption that Gwyddno speaks in response to Gwyn praising his dog, my translation above makes most sense. Rowland interpreted this *englyn* as 'statement of grieved shock' – presumably because Maelgwn has passed away (Rowland, 1999, p. 636, n. 34c). If

¹¹⁹Copious examples from international folklore connect fairies with magical mist: cf. Cross' Index Motif F 278.2 (1952).

¹²⁰ Rowland translates 'Red-nosed Dormach, what nature does he have / since I cannot follow / your course above the sky?'

however we assume that Gwyn is speaking, then the most likely translation would be ‘Dormarch of the ruddy nose, why are you looking at him / Since he cannot understand / your wandering on the mountain of cloud’.

The line ‘Dy gruidir ar wibir winit’ (ModW ‘Dy grwydr ar wybr fynydd’) is enigmatic. Jarman suggests ‘cloud’ for ‘wibir’ which I prefer: Gwyn hunting with *Cŵn Annwn* on the clouds may resonates here, whereas Rowland’s ‘your course above the sky’ omits the image of the mountain. The ‘mountain’ could have further relevance, as the name of an otherworldly abode,¹²¹ as Rhys notes:

‘Sky Mountain’ might also do, as Gwyn’s favourite haunt in the daytime was the cloud clad tops of the hills, and one of the names of his dogs is *Cŵn Wybyr* or Sky Hounds.¹²²

(Rhys, 2008 [1891], p. 156)

If reading ‘wibir winit’ as ‘cloud mountain’, a mountain covered in clouds, is justified, then the connection between Gwyn ap Nudd and his subjects and the cloud or mists on the high mountains could be a particularly old motif.

We have therefore shown how mist and clouds are associated with the otherworld. The magical mist creating a liminal condition excluding sight of mundane things appears both in Welsh and Irish texts. The poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and the early modern *cywyddwyr* shows that the traditional motif persisted, although Dafydd ap Gwilym’s fairies are no longer heroic, and the magical mist has accrued a sinister connotation, even though poems in which they are mentioned are jocular. The idea that Neo-Platonic ideas of Christian demonology have become associated with traditional beliefs will be discussed further in chapter 4.

3.5 Wood & Wilderness – The Fringes of the World

The First Branch of the Mabinogi shows that it is not always necessary to go on a quest over or beyond water or underground or need the agency of mist or darkness to find a way to Annwn. Pwyll meets Arawn in the forest and the journey to Annwn is easy (PKM, pp. 1-4). The abode of the Tylwyth Teg can either be located in the uninhabited, non-cultivated

¹²¹ The Grimm Brothers point out that the glass castle and the cloud castle are equivalent motifs of otherworldly abodes, with the ‘mons Wolkinburg’ (‘mountain of the cloud castle’) appearing in the medieval writings of Caesarius of Heisterbach (Grimm, 1968 [1875-78], III, p. 243). Therefore, keeping the translation close to the text allows tracing a symbolic equivalence between ‘wibir winit’ and ‘caer wydyr’.

¹²² Gwyn hunting the skies with *Cŵn Annwn* creates a link to another type of folktale, those which share the motif of the spectral hunt, discussed in Chapter 3.

wilderness or this wilderness may constitute an entrance to it from the world of men. Wilderness, of course, has liminal qualities:

Nature, where the *fénnidi* live and from which they gain their livelihood, is the quintessential boundary zone in traditional Irish ideology. Not only does it separate the cultivated lands of the various *túatha*, but it also separates this world from the otherworld which lies hidden in nature just as the “fairy mound” (*síd*) contains and conceals a spacious otherworld.

(Nagy, 1985, pp. 39-40)

This function of wild nature is also manifest in both Welsh literary and folk tradition. The peasants mentioned in the *Speculum Christiani* text believed to find Gwyn ‘ultra in silvis’ (‘yonder in the forests’) (Roberts 1980/81, p. 288).

In ‘Y Pwll Mawn’, Dafydd ap Gwilym locates Gwyn’s domain on the moorland in a jocular way by calling a boggy peat-pit the fishpond of Gwyn ap Nudd which ridicules both the situation and the fairy king as owner of the dirty fishpond.

Pyd ar ros agos eigiawn
Pwy a eill mwy mewn pwll mawn?
Pysgodlyn i Wyn yw ef.
Ab Nudd, wb ynn ei oddef!
Pydew rhwng gwaun a cheunant
Plas yr ellyllon a’u plant.

Such peril on moor that’s an ocean almost.
Who can do any more in a peat-pit?
It’s a fishpond of Gwyn ap Nudd
Alas that we should suffer it!
A pit between heath and ravine,
The place of the phantoms and their brood

(DAG 59.27-32)

It seems to be a characteristic of these Welsh texts that the otherworld directly borders this world: there seems to be no buffer zone.¹²³ In the First Branch of the Mabinogi Pwyll transitions smoothly to Annwn, and in the Fourth Branch, Lleu in the shape of a wounded eagle rests in an oak: this is merely a single tree between two pools, but represents an otherworldly realm, a limbo for one untimely ripped from life. Gwydion’s *englynion* show that the oak is neither wet by rain nor troubled by heat. The liminal tree is not part of the mundane woodland:

¹²³ In the Fenian Cycle the world of the Fianna, the world of the outlaw, forms such a buffer zone between the two realms (Nagy 1985).

Dar a dyf y rwng deu lenn
 Gorduwrych awyr a glenn.
 Ony dywedaf i eu,
 O ulodeu Lleu ban yw hynn.

Dar a dyf yn ard uaes
 Nis gwlych glaw, mwy tawd nawes.
 Ugein angerd a borthes.
 Yn y blaen, Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

(PKM; pp. 89- 90).

An oak grows between two lakes,
 Very dark is the sky and the valley.
 Unless I am mistaken
 This is because of Lleu's Flowers.

An oak grows on a high plain,
 Rain does not wet it, heat no longer melts it;
 It sustained one who possesses none-score attributes.
 In its top is Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

(Davies, 2007, p. 62)

Fairies can be met in lonely, uncultivated areas. These areas mediate the contact with the denizens of the otherworld and represent liminal spaces. Wilderness as a liminal space is also known from modern folklore: in Newfoundland tradition the grounds for berry picking were regarded as a threshold to the fairy realm (Narváez 1991, p. 337). In Welsh folklore, the Tylwyth Teg can be met in the wilderness and loneliness of the mountains, of heather and moor, although the fairies sometimes visit farmsteads, or some singular spirit like the Pwca is bound to a special family or farm.¹²⁴ This love of the Tylwyth Teg for the wilderness with its wild growth fits very well to their liking of water, for water is the prerequisite of growth, and it would open up an alternative understanding for their shunning of iron and fire and agriculture,¹²⁵ as all human activity involving the building of fires, the manufacturing of iron which requires charcoal and water, and ploughing fields destroy the wilderness and the woods (see also below chapter 3: 'Taboos'). After all, this implies that as soon as one strolls through wild places, one can stumble into an otherworldly realm without any boundary warning against drifting away from the mundane world.

¹²⁴ Such episodes are found in several collections but see especially *Welsh Folklore* by Elias Owen. For people meeting the fairies in desolate places: pp. 77, 79; Owen lists several dance places of the fairies in the mountains (p. 89). For fairies visiting human abodes: pp. 68-71. For the Pwca see pp. 121-124, 138-140.

¹²⁵ 'Pantannas' relates that fairies do not dance on ploughed land or ploughed fields. They punish the farmer who ploughed their dancing places in order to chase them from his land (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 137).

Culhwch ac Olwen locates the abode of Gwyn ap Nudd, the ruler of Annwn, in ‘the North’, where Arthur goes to find him on hearing of his conflict with Gwythyr ap Greidawl:

Clybot o Arthur hynny, a dyuot hyt y Gogled, a dyuynnv a oruc ef Gwynn uab Nudd attaw[.]

(CO, p. 35, l. 996-998)

Arthur heard about this, and came to the North, and summoned Gwynn ap Nudd before him. (my trans.)

The ‘North’ (‘y Gogledd’) evokes two very different fields of association. Firstly, it resonates with ‘Yr Hen Ogledd’, the areas of South Scotland and North England, the territory of the old British kingdoms:¹²⁶ an audience would think of the ancestors of the Welsh princes, the princes and heroes of the Old North, such as Cunedda, the grandfather of Maelgwn Gwynedd, of the heroes who fought the Anglo-Saxons, Urien Rheged and his son Owein, of the heroes who served Mynyddog Mwynfawr and were immortalised by Aneirin. They would possibly also think of Talhaearn Tad Awen. Anwyl noted early that the name of ‘Nudd’, the father of Gwyn and Ederne, appears in the names of Nudd Hael and Nudd Senyllt among the names of the men of the North (Anwyl, 1907, p. 146). Moreover, according to Anwyl ‘Nwython’ is the Welsh form of the Pictish name ‘Naiton’, so perhaps Nwython who was killed by Gwyn was a Pictish warrior. Peniarth MS 132, p. 129 has an entry by Lewys ab Edward:

Gwyn ap nydd gryddyei ap lludd. y vaeth yr llen ap llininawc a[n]gel. rwng wybyr ac awyr ydd aeth. brawd oedd ef [i] Garadawc vreichfras ac y wallaawc ap llennawc. vn vam oedd ef ac hwynt.

Gwyn ap Nudd gryddyei (?) ap Ludd. He went of Llew ap Llyminod Angel. He went between sky and air. He was brother to Caradog Freichfras and to Gwallog ap Lleenog. He and they had the same mother.

(text and translation, Bartrum, 1993, s.v. ‘Gwyn ap Nudd’)

This makes Gwyn the brother of king of Elmet, Gwallog ap Lleenog, mourned by Gwyn in BBC 34.

But Gwyn ap Nudd is not simply a prince of the Old North, he is the ruler of Annwn, and so the ‘North’ in *Culhwch ac Olwen* has not only a geographical, political connotation, but also a mythical one. Coed Celyddon where Myrddin hides in an otherworldly grove is also located in the North.¹²⁷ Gwenogvryn Evans suggests in the preface to his edition of the Black

¹²⁶ For a concise history and survey on the cultural legacy see George (2018).

¹²⁷ Similar blending of an actual geographic location and a mythical otherworldly realm happens in the case of Ultima Thule, known from Pytheas. Moreover, Tacitus located Ultima Thule beyond the Orkneys, but tradition soon gave it a mythical connotation (Romm, 1992, pp.121-171).

Book that Coed Celyddon corresponds to Annwn: poem XXXIV connects Gwyn ap Nudd with the men of the Old North, he notes, suggesting furthermore that there might have been different ideas as to where to locate Annwn in South Wales and in the Old North. He also draws attention to the fact that Arawn appears as King of Annwn in the Mabinogi, but a person with the name Arawn, son of Cynfarch, figures as the king of Prydyn in the Bruts, with Prydyn being identical to North Scotland (Evans 1906, p. x-xiii). If we follow Evans, the idea of a remote northern woodland realm representing Annwn would in poetry take the name of ‘Coed Celyddon’.¹²⁸

However, there is another explanation why Gwyn should be located in the North. *Culhwch ac Olwen* introduces him as ruler of the devils, and Arthur sets out to meet him in the North; the next time Arthur sets out for the North he does so to collect the blood of the Very Black Witch, daughter of the Very White Witch from Pennant Gofid in the uplands of hell (‘Y Widon Ordu merch y Widon Orwen o Penn Nant Gouut yg gwrthtir Uffern’) (CO 1206-1207). Here we find the Christian hell located in the North, a tradition which di Nola describes as having developed for one part from a song full of derision about the king of Babel (di Nola 1993, p. 181):

(12) How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

(13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:¹²⁹

(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

(15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

(Isa 14:12-15; KJV)

The Revelation of Paul also gives importance to the north regarding the location of hell: Paul recounts being taken from the City of the Blessed to the ocean encircling the earth, and even beyond, where there is no light anymore. He sees a river of fire and then, ‘I saw on the north side a place of sundry and diverse torments, full of men and women, and a river of fire flowed down upon them’ (RA, §32). Therefore, the north could become the localised abode of the devil or the place of the severest pains of hell. Murphy (1983) shows that it was common in

¹²⁸ The exact location of Coed Celyddon is a subject of scholarly dispute. Some do not locate it in the Old North: Chambers claimed it could be any forest, perhaps near Chiltam (Chambers 1927, p. 202). Wade-Evans favoured an area between the Severn and the Cotswold (1938, p. 75).

¹²⁹ The Vulgate, essentially a 4th-century work: ‘sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus aquilonis’ (‘aquilonis’, i.e. ‘northeastern’).

medieval English literature for the north to be the home of the devil or of at least some dangerous otherworldly beings who tempt men. In the 'Friar's Tale' from the *Canterbury Tales* (ChCT) the summoner meets the devil in the guise of a hunter alongside the green wood:

'Welcome,' quod he, 'and every good felawe!
Wher rydestow, under this grene-wode shawe?'
'Welcome,' said he, 'and every good fellow!
Where ridest thou, alongside this green wood?'

(ChCT ll. 1385-88)

Further, the foreign hunter claims to come from the North, when asked for his dwelling place:

'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north contree
Whereas I hope som tyme I shal thee see.'
'Brother,' he said, 'far in the north country,
Where I hope some time I shall see thee.'

(ChCT ll. 1413-16)

Another poem using this imaginary is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (GGK). Gawain has to go north to meet the Green Knight who tests Sir Gawain, with the Green Knight's wife being the personification of temptation. The north seems to be a metaphor for a realm located outside the world of men. Such a place could be identified with hell, as in Hildegard of Bingen's *De operatione Dei*:

(God himself speaks to Hildegard)

Ich offenbarte meine Werke in Ost, Süd und West. Den vierten Teil im Norden aber ließ ich leer; weder Sonne noch Mond geben dort einen Schein. Deshalb ist an dieser Stelle, außerhalb des Weltgefüges, die Hölle, die weder oben ein Dach, noch unten einen Grund hat.

(No. 12, 4th vision; Schipperges, p. 84, as quoted by Vorgrimler 1993)

I revealed my works in the East and South and West. But the fourth part in the North I left void, neither sun nor moon shine there. Therefore, hell which has no roof nor bottom is in this place outside of the world's fabric.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ However, in the celestial Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation, sun and moon are not present either: 'And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof' (Rev. 21:23), and this image has passed into the Elidor episode. It must be expected that in a place lacking sun and moon, time flows differently from in the world of men. This narrative motif of lacking sun and moon appears again in the writings of Ralph of Coggeshall, where, in the land whence the green fairy-like children of Woolpit came, there is no sun (RCA, p. 119), and in the *Itinerarium Cambriae* (IC, p. 66). Thus, the domain of the fairies seems submerged in eternal twilight. Twilight can stand for a liminal condition, as it belongs to neither day nor night, a place beyond the reach of sun's or moon's light. The liminal condition of light and darkness

In *Lebar Gabála Éirenn* the origin of the Irish Túatha Dé was also located in the North, ‘the most ill-omened direction in medieval thought’ as Williams remarks (2016, p. 146).

The descendants of Bethach and Iarbonél the Prophet son of Nemed were in the northern islands of the world, learning magic and knowledge and sorcery and cunning, until they were pre-eminent in arts of the heathen sages. They are the Túatha Dé Danann who came to Ireland.¹³¹

(trans. Carey, 2014, p. 132)

This suggests that the lore of the both the Irish and the Welsh denizens of the otherworld has been subjected to a comparable process of Christian interpretation.

The previous considerations show that the North mentioned in *Culhwch ac Olwen* carries several layers of meaning. The character of Gwyn ap Nudd shows that autochthonous ideas are gradually assimilated to Christian traditions. On the one hand we still have his association with the heroes of the Old North, as in BBC 34. He still is a cherished councillor to King Arthur and member of his court (CO 181; 1209-1221), but on the other hand he is indispensable, because he must stay in his abode and retain the devils of Annwn from the destruction of the world (CO 713-715). This creates a problem, for how can Gwyn be one of Arthur’s courtiers, but actually be present in Annwn? Two traditions must have been amalgamated: the realm of warrior women with magical powers has become the upland of hell. Just as in the case of Annwn and Uffern in Chapter 2.2 we see that the tradition of an Otherworld which can be encountered in the remote wilderness has become conflated with the Christian hell. In the case of Myrddin and Lleu, the wild woodland enclosed a liminal retreat. This state holds the dangerous challenges which have to be sorted in process of inner transformation, but this challenge is not evil in a Christian sense. So Myrddin in his

mixed is perhaps also present in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’: based on the above quoted episode of the *Itinerarium Cambriae* Loomis claims:

[W]ithout question, then the Welsh of the twelfth century were familiar with a conception of Annwn as a dimly lighted subterranean land [...]. [T]his may possibly supply a plausible explanation [...] of the mystifying statement that “noonday and jet-blackness were mingled” as if in a crepuscular light [...] (Loomis, 1941, p. 918).

Loomis refers to the line ‘Echwyd a muchyd kymyscetor’. Haycock renders this as ‘fresh water and jet are mixed together’: she notes that ‘noon-day’ is possible, but thinks that fresh water and jet would be a fitting pair, consistent with Isidor of Seville’s description of the strange property of jet, set alight by water (Haycock 2007, pp. 436, 445). Either way, the image is fitting for a liminal place, and polysemy cannot be excluded, with both interpretations to be read together.

¹³¹ For edition, see Macalister (1941, p. 106).

otherworldly abode, though tortured by madness, is not equivalent to a Christian hermit such as Antonius Eremita being tortured by demons in the wilderness.¹³²

3.6 An Illusion, an Inner World, a Shift in Perception

Detecting the otherworldly abode in the wilderness is also a question of being able to accept a shift of perception. Annwn is described with metaphors which conjure in our mind the image of a liminal world. This liminal world depends on our perception. Annwn thus becomes an inner reality, and projected onto this mundane world it becomes an illusionary world. Therefore, the transition to Annwn is often described as entering a zone of twilight, or of darkness, a zone in which ordinary sight is impaired, as mentioned above (3.4).

A motif frequently found in folktales is this that the world of the fairies appears at first sight as a marvellous place, which later either disappears or turns out to be a bundle of fern, a primitive cave instead of a castle. The harper who spent the evening in a formidable fairy castle wakes up on a bundle of rushes or fern (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 90, 104). We read of the midwife who was called to a fairies' palace and gets some of the ointment meant for the baby into her eye, and she discovers that the palace is but a poor dwelling place or that the inhabitants have the appearance of devils (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 66-67; Sikes, 1880, p. 87). Golden coins turn out to be mere leaves or cockle shells (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 81-83). Collen who sprinkles Gwyn ap Nudd and his court with sacred water makes the whole castle and all its inhabitants vanish (BC). The magic of Gwydion who conjures up hounds and horses for Pryderi, and a host to deceive Aranrhod and even a woman from flowers resembles the magic of the folklore fairies who present leaves and cockle shells as gold coins. These motifs suggest that the otherworld may be mere illusion. In fairy folklore this illusion is presented as deceit by devils, as in this midwife tale collected by Sikes:

One morning, while putting the ointment on the eyes of the children, her own eye itched, and forgetting the orders of the master she touched one corner of it with her finger which was covered with ointment. Immediately, with the vision of that corner of her eye, she saw herself surrounded by fearful flames, the ladies and the gentlemen looked like devils, and the children appeared like the most hideous imps of hell.

(Sikes, 1880, p. 87)

The way the denizens of the otherworld are perceived depends on one's attitude towards this world: the application of the ointment is the motif the fairy tale uses to make the change of perception understandable. The tales about the fairies and the otherworld agree that to visit

¹³² About the devil in the desert cf. di Nola (1993, pp. 220-224)

the otherworld a transitional shift of perspective is necessary. Whether this happens externally and physically, or internally and psychologically seems to be a secondary aspect.

A famous example is that of the companions of Bendigeidfran feasting at Harlech with the birds of Rhiannon singing, in the Second Branch of the Mabinogi. Again, we see how directly the transition into an otherworldly realm is possible in the Mabinogi. The place where the survivors of the fatal expedition to Ireland rest becomes liminal due to the presence of Bendigeidfran's head but loses this quality on the forbidden opening of the door. The opening of the door is a metaphor for opening the mind to the outer world, the mundane reality again, after having gone through a process of grieving which was liminal as long as they were not ready to accept the new realities. They finally accept the reality of loss:

Sef a wnaeth Heilyn uab Guyn dydgueith. "Meuyl ar uy maryf i," heb ef, "onyt agoraf y drws, e wybot ay gwir a dywedir am hynny." Agori y drws a wnaeth, ac edrych ar Gernyw, ac ar Aber Henuelen. A phan edrychwys, yd oed yn gyn hyspysset ganthunt y gyniuer collet a gollyssynt eiryoet, a'r gyniuer car a chedymdeith a gollyssynt, a'r gyniuer drwc a doethoed udunt, a chyt bei yno y kyuarffei ac wynt; ac yn benhaf oll am eu harglwyd.

(PKM, p. 47)

One day Heilyn son of Gwyn said, 'Shame on my beard unless I open the door to find out if what they say about it is true.' He opened the door, and looked at Cornwall, and at Aber Henfelen. And when he looked, every loss they had ever suffered, and every kinsman and companion they had lost, and every ill that had befallen them was as clear as if they had encountered it in that very place; and most of all concerning their lord.

(Davies, 2007, p. 34)

To conclude: Chapter 3 has explored the location of the otherworld beyond the ocean, on blessed islands, on the far banks of rivers, submerged in the sea or in a lake, beneath fountains or in woods and wilderness. We have seen that mist and darkness, agencies which hinder normal sight, mediate the transition into an otherworldly abode, but that one can cross the border in the wilderness. The locations of the otherworld indicate its being removed from human society.

Water plays an important part as a barrier between the two worlds, and, by separating these two worlds from each other it is a liminal place. In this place the protagonist meets with the challenges of the otherworld, as the motif of the battle at the ford showed. At the ford, in the middle of the water the visitor to the otherworld is exposed to a process of transformation. Water is also the agency which carries the gifts of the otherworld, which may also have transformative power. The cauldron is another motif which relates to the transformation brought about by the contact with the otherworld. Water not only brings beneficial gifts but

can also be a manifestation of the otherworldly threat and vengeance of the otherworld, as in inundation stories. Water in the form of mist can mediate the shift of perception which is a prerequisite for contacting otherworldly beings.

The otherness of this liminal world consists in the coexistence of possibilities which come into existence or are rejected by visitors, subjected to processes of transition whose positive outcomes are not guaranteed. Narratively, the protagonist must only successfully enter and leave, but (s)he has to interact with it, an interaction modelled as an interaction with the inhabitants of that world. The next chapter will investigate the inhabitants of Annwn, the principle of exchange as found in characteristic tale types, the liminal world of the outlaw, and the hero who mediates between the otherworld and that of man.

4. Dealing with the Otherworld: Its Denizens and the Principle of (Ex)Change

*‘Arglwyd, pa furyf y cafi dy gerennyd di?’
Pwyll Pendefig Dyfed wrth Arawn Brenin Annwfn*

Exploring how the otherworldly realms are presented has taught us that the otherworld is a liminal place. One of the main connected themes is transformation, sometimes connected with *rites de passage*, such as birth – as in the case of Gwion – the transition from virgin to lover or wife – as in the case of Creiddylad – or with passing out of the world – as in the case of Myrddin. Sometimes the transformation is exclusively one of personal inner development: the poet is inspired by the touch of the otherworld – as with Taliesin – and the warrior is transformed into a hero – as in the case of Pwyll. Transformation, however, implies change, and this can be brought about only by new challenges. Therefore, a person must encounter situations which differ from his or her ordinary life allowing them to experience otherness before the transformation can take place. In other words, contact with the other promotes transformation. The tales about the Tylwyth Teg and the denizens of the otherworld show how this otherness may be read metaphorically. Narrative motifs of this otherness are the focus of this chapter: they are explained in the context of the respective texts (part 4.1).

As the process of transformation is triggered by the otherworld, the person about to be transformed must interact in some way with this supernatural realm. This interaction is presented in the tales as personal interaction between ordinary human beings and the denizens of the otherworld. Therefore, the second part of the present chapter will investigate how the inhabitants of the supernatural realm interact with human beings. Several standard tales – such as fairy mistress tales and changeling tales – will be investigated in order to reveal the meaning of the narrative patterns (section 4.2). Of special interest is the role of outlaws and marginalized social groups as mediators between the ordinary and the other.

4.1 Looking at the Denizens of the Otherworld

In the previous chapter we noted that in texts relating to Annwn a symbol can have more than one meaning, as it might have originated in different cultural contexts. An example is the direction ‘North’ which could have a positive connotation related to a heroic past and heroic ancestors, an ambiguous mythical one related to a dangerous otherworldly realm, and a definitively negative one related to the Christian Hell and its dire punishments. Thus, the meaning of a motif attributed to the fairies can only be understood properly if it is seen in the context of other narrative motifs and folk beliefs which allow the cultural context to be identified.

Most easily assessed is the Christian context based on the doctrines of the Church Fathers and enriched by Neoplatonic and Roman pre-Christian demonology. Since the Middle Ages a higher education comprised studies of Classical texts. Therefore, sometimes we find a syncretism with the Classical pantheon,¹³³ and as we have ample literary sources to compare, it is easiest to come to an understanding of the motifs. Most difficult to assess are motifs related to north-western European pre-Christian traditions which were absorbed into medieval Christian culture. The latter reach us filtered by authors with Classical and Christian education.

4.1.1 The Language of Colour

The colours worn by supernatural characters signify their nature, and decoding the colours helps understand the immediate message of the texts. In studies dealing with the fairy folklore of Britain, we find the unjustified generalisation that British fairies were commonly green, as here:

Malory relates that when Queen Guenever advised her knights of the Table Round that on the morrow (May Day, when fairies have special powers) she would go on maying, she warned them all to be well-horsed and *dressed in green*. This was the colour that nearly all the fairy-folk of Britain and Ireland wear.

(Evans-Wentz 1994 [1911], pp. 312-313)

Ronald Hutton also follows this line, in ‘The Making of Early Modern British Fairy Tradition’:

These [accounts] included several motifs which were to be enduring components of fairy lore. [...] The fourth is that such non-human beings are often associated with the colour green, either in their clothing or even their flesh.

(Hutton, 2014, p. 6)

I aim to show below that – at least for the Welsh fairies – association with the colour green is an important motif, but the denizens of the otherworld are also associated with other colours depending on where the texts were created and in which culture.

Red and Blue: The Fairies of Hell

First, I will show how Christian traditions influenced Welsh vernacular texts which involve fairy characters. I will introduce two early modern texts which both have been influenced by *Visio Pauli* (‘Revelation of Paul’). As we will see, in both cases the fairies are introduced as

¹³³ A famous example is Shakespeare’s fairy queen Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. She has been given the name of Diana. Another example is ‘The Merchant’s Tale’ by Chaucer, who makes Pluto and Proserpina king and queen of the fairies (CT, ll. 2038-2039).

demons. They are clothed in red and blue, colours which are in accordance with the narrative motifs used for the description of hell in *Visio Pauli*.

Buchedd Collen (Life of Saint Collen), the earliest version dating from 1536, concerns without any doubt the nature of fairies: they are devils, and this truth is put in the mouth of the saint:¹³⁴

Ac val yr oedd ef ddiwyrnod yn i gvddigyl, ef a glowai ddav ddyn yn siarad am Wyn Ap Ynvdd, ac yn dywedvd mai hwnw oedd vyrenin Anwn. Ac estyn a naeth Kollen i ben allan o'i gvddigl, a dywedvd: 'Tewch yn vvan; nid oes o'r hai hyny ond kythyrelied.'

(BCa, p. 39)

And as he was in his cell one day, he heard two men who spoke about Gwyn ap Nudd and said that one was the king of Annwn. And Collen put his head out of his cell and said: 'Be silent quickly; those are but devils.'

(my trans.)

Collen is summoned by Gwyn ap Nudd and finally appears at his court, but he refuses to eat: Collen claims the food to be an illusion, being in truth the leaves of trees. Gwyn directs the attention of the saint towards the dresses of his courtiers:

Heb y brenin: 'A welaisti wyr gwell i tyrwsiad no'r rain yma?', heb y brenin. 'O goch a glas', heb Kollen, 'da ddigon yw i trwsiad yn hw o'r rryw drwsiad ac ydiw,' heb Kollen. 'Par yryw trwsiad yw hwnw?', heb y brenin. Ac yna y dyvod Kollen: 'Koch y sy o'r naill dv [yn] arwyddokav i llosgi, a'r tu glas y sy yn arwyddokav mai oerni yw.'

(BCa, p. 40)

The king said: 'Have you seen men better dressed than these here?' 'Of red and blue', said Collen, 'their attire is good enough for the kind of attire that it is.' 'What kind of garment is that?' said the king. And then Collen said: 'Red on the one side, symbolizes burning, and the blue side symbolizes coldness.'

(my trans.)

We do not have to guess the context to find the appropriate interpretation and its source. Collen exorcises Gwyn ap Nudd and his people with holy water, therefore, the key for decoding the colour symbolism found in *Buchedd Collen* is found in the context is Christian demonology. Today, Hell is commonly imagined as place of fire, but in *Visio Pauli* ('The Revelation of Paul'), Hell is also a place of coldness: 'again, I beheld there men and women with their hands cut off and naked, in a place of ice and snow, and worms devoured them' (RA §39). In *Visio*

¹³⁴ For editions of the text see BCa, BCb or Baring-Gould (1907-1911, pp.375-378). An introduction to *Buchedd Collen* can be found in: Henken (1991, p. 221-226), about the Welsh saint in general Henken (1987).

Pauli however, fire and ice as agents for punishment are not equally treated. There are more punishments related to fire, and furthermore, there are other tortures as well.

The symbolism of *Buchedd Collen* is also close to Bede's Hell, whose tortures are equally composed of heat and extreme cold:

Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. Fletus de ardore, stridor dentium solet excitari de frigore. Ubi duplex ostenditur gehenna: id est nimii frigoris, et intolerabilis esse fervoris. Cui beati Iob sententia consentit dicentis: Ad calorem nimium transibunt ab aquis nivium.

(MPL, p. 092, c. 0509 B)

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Crying is usually caused by heat and gnashing of teeth by cold. Where the double (= the pair of this) is offered, there is hell: this means that it is intolerable by exceptional great coldness and heat. The sentence of the blessed Job who says: 'They go over to the exceptional [great] heat from the waters of snow' consents with this.

Bede refers to two passages from the Old Testament and the New, namely Job 24:19 ('Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so does the grave those which have sinned') and Luke 13:28 ('There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out'). Both Bede and the author of *Visio Pauli* could find in scripture the roots of their description of hell as both a place of agonizing cold and scorching fire.

In Ellis Wynne's *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* (1703) we also find the Tylwyth Teg in red and blue:

A chynta' peth a welwn i, yn f'ymyl, dwmpath chwarae; a'r fath gad-Gamlan mewn peisiau gleision a chapiau cochion yn dawnsio'n hoywbrysur.

And the first thing which I saw near me was a playing field; and a kind of rabble in blue petticoats and red caps dancing gaily and briskly.

(GBC, p. 5, ll. 23-25)¹³⁵

The dancers, members of the Tylwyth Teg, carry the narrator through the air until he is rescued by an angel who explains that the Tylwyth Teg are Plant Annwn (GBC, p. 7), revealing their hellish nature. In the vision of Uffern ('Hell'), Lucifer refers to them when suggesting how to deal with a man who has failed to recruit another sinner for hell:

'Hai,' ebr Lucifer, 'buriwch ef i ysgol y Tylwyth Teg, sy eto tan y wialen am eu castiau diriaid gynt, yn llindagu a bygwth eu cyfneseifiaid, a'u deffroi felly o'u diofalwch; canys gweithie'r dychryn hwnnw 'chwaneg, ond odid, arnynt na deugain o bregethau.'

(GBC, p. 141, ll. 4-8)

¹³⁵ For text and introduction see Wynne (1998) and Thomas (2001).

‘Hey,’ said Lucifer, ‘throw him into the school of the fairies, who are still under the scourge for their former mischievous tricks, ensnaring and scaring their neighbours, and so awakening them from their carelessness, because that fright would surely work better on them than forty sermons.
(my trans.)

The Tylwyth Teg are unsuccessful devils, not bringing more sinners to hell, but frightening them away by making them aware of the troubles of hell. Not only are the Tylwyth Teg demonic, but their attire is red and blue, prompting the query as to whether the *Gweledigaethu* use the same colour symbolism as *Buchedd Collen*. Donovan and Thomas draw attention to the fact that Ellis Wynne has been inspired by *Visio Pauli* (Wynne 1998, p. xv); such inspiration most likely includes the colors of the garments (as in *Buchedd Collen*), and the description of hell, with torture by burning and extreme cold:

[Y]mhen ennyd, lluchient hwy ar ei gilydd yn hunfeydd i ben un o'r creigiau llosg i rostio fel poethfel. Oddi yno cipid hwy ymhell i ben un o fylchau y rhew a'r eira tragwyddol.

(GBC, p. 99, ll. 1-4)

After a short time, they threw them together in mounds on top of one of the burning rocks to burn like charcoal. From there they were snatched away to the top of one of the ravines of eternal ice and snow.

The colours of the clothes can signify fire and ice, especially since they are still tormented. Given that both BC and GBC draw on *Visio Pauli*'s demonological tradition, the garments may be interpreted similarly, even though BC was composed roughly two centuries before the *Gweledigaethu*. (It is tempting to wonder whether Wynne was directly influenced here by *Buchedd Collen*: we know that he was familiar with folktales since he refers to ‘Einion ap Gwalchmai a Rhiaïn y Glasgoed’¹³⁶, and perhaps he knew the tale from *Buchedd Collen* – but without further evidence, this would be pure speculation.)

GBC further shows that the Tylwyth Teg are understood as demonical creatures, using motifs which appear also in folk narratives, where their origin in Christian demonology is not so obvious. Portraying the Tylwyth Teg as flying demons appears in a tale recorded by Elias Owen (Owen 1973 [1887], p. 102-3), and it appears both in fairy and witch tales (v. Baughman's *Motif Index* (1966), F 284.4; D 2135). This accords with Neoplatonic demonology (cf. chapter 3.4), but of course, such folk belief was present in the Classical world, and it did not originate in learned Neoplatonic ideas (e.g., the *strix* and the *lamia* have

¹³⁶ A version of this tale can be found in Thomas (2007 [1908], pp. 85-87). See also Williams (1963, p. 60).

been discussed in Chapter 1). Therefore, when dealing with folk narratives we must expect a syncretism of Christian demonology and autochthonous beliefs in supernatural beings which gets harder to disentangle the younger the tales are.

Another feature of the fairies closely connected with Christian teaching about demonology and sin is their love for dancing. When they appear first in GBC they are dancing merrily. However, dancing without religious motivation has ever been suspect. Johannes Chrysostomus (c. 349-407 AD) maintained: 'Ubi saltatio ibi est diabolus. Neque enim Deus dedit nobis pedes ut lascive saltemus, sed cum angelis in caelo chorizemus' ('Where there is dancing, there is the devil. And indeed, God did not give us feet so that we should dance in a lascivious manner either, but that we should dance in heaven with the angels', PT).¹³⁷ Central biblical episodes which may support negative attitudes towards dancing are the dance around the golden calf (Exodus 32:1-6) and the dance of Salome (Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6: 14-19) (Koal 2007, p. 20). The Church Fathers here are in agreement with the Welsh revivals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:¹³⁸

A typical example of the attitude to worldly entertainments was expressed by Rhys Prydderch (ca. 1620-99), a Carmarthenshire minister who listed mixed dancing as the first of twelve sins found in his *Gemmau Doethineb* [Gems of (Proverbial) Wisdom] a book in which he discussed the "Foolhardy Age" in which he lived.

(Blyn-LaDrew, 1998, p. 231)¹³⁹

The fairies' dancing and flying characterize them as demonic, but these motifs are not uniquely applied to the fairies. They appear in early modern witch beliefs, too, flight and dancing in circles being associated with the witches' Sabbath presided over by the devil (Clark, 1997, pp. 14-15, 23). Motifs associated with assemblies of the Tylwyth Teg and the witches have become exchangeable. David G. Williams notes in *Casgliad o Lên Gwerin Sir Gaerfyrddin* that the expressions 'cylch y Tylwyth Teg' ('circle of the fairies') and 'ring y

¹³⁷ J. Chrysostomus as quoted by Pelbartus de Themsvaer (1435-1504), who, too, preached against dancing in 'De decollatione sancti Iohannis Batisitae' (PT).

¹³⁸ Relating to the so called 'decline in magic' and the gradual disappearance of traditional forms of folk customs, cf. Thomas (1974), Gwynn Williams (1975), Gwyndaf (1987-88), Evans (1993), Evans (1989), Blyn-LaDrew (1996; 1998). In an article on 'The Welsh Folk Narrative Tradition: Continuity and Adaption', Gwyndaf finds

Though few long international wonder tales (*märchen*) survive in Wales, there is no shortage of brief local legends (*sagen*) illustrating man's [= people's] belief in the supernatural. These local belief legends refer, for example, to the fairies; mine knockers; the Devil; witches; magicians (y 'Dyn Hysbys'); ghosts; winged serpents; apparitions, such as death omens; giants; and mythological animals, such as dragons, winged serpents; black dogs [Cŵn Annwn]; and water monsters (Gwyndaf, 1987-88, p. 80).

¹³⁹ *Gemmau Doethineb*: for the text see GD; for the respective part referring to dancing see (DG, p. 107-114); for a translation see Gwynn-Williams (1975, p. 119-120)

gŵr drwg' ('ring of the bad man', i.e., 'ring of the devil') were used synonymously in Carmarthenshire for rings of greener growth in grass, believed to be the dancing places of fairies (Williams, 1996 [1895], p. 30).¹⁴⁰ Christian demonology was conflated with fairy traditions not only in literary texts such as *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc*, but also, in folk tradition.

As noted earlier, it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to identify the relevant interpretative context of folk tales involving fairy characters (especially in collections of fairy folklore) such that one may only conjecture a possible meaning. A characteristic example is found in Evans-Wentz' *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, where he quotes Morris-Jones' opinion of the Tylwyth Teg: 'They were generally supposed to live underground, and to come forth on moonlight nights, dressed in gaudy colours (chiefly red), to dance in circles in grassy fields' (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 142). By comparison with *Buchedd Collen* we may conjecture that the fairies are seen as demonic creatures, where their red clothes could signify hellfire, but we have virtually no context. The 'gaudy colours' could also be seen as simply stressing the otherness of the fairies. Michel Pastoureau (2017) has explored the colour of medieval and early modern European garments: '[l]ike Lutherans and Calvinists, the austere Anglicans rejected vivid and loud colours in their clothing, they always gave priority to black grey, white, and brown' (p. 108). The fairies are dressed differentially from a largely Protestant community. However, for want of sufficient context, such interpretations remain tentative.

Quite another example is the tale of Dr Edward Williams who wrote about his experience at Cae Caled in 1757: 'They [*sc.* the fairies/elf dancers] were all clothed in red, a dress not unlike a military uniform' (Owen 1973, [1887], p. 98). Here, we have context: the elf dancers are threatening and strange. For a Welsh village boy, a troop of English soldiers represents an extra-social group of people, probably menacing. This may be read as a visualization of the otherness of the fairies.

The colours of the Tylwyth Teg's garments are not restricted to one or two colours. In the late nineteenth century Wirt Sikes collected from Welsh folktales a whole range of colours for fairy garments: blue, green, red, white, black, brown, and copper.¹⁴¹ Sikes' interpretation of the garments' colours does not relate to the context of the tales. In the case of blue, Sikes

¹⁴⁰ In modern poetry however, the motif of the dance of the fairies has become entirely detached from any demonological connotation, and only the playful and romantic character remains, e.g., in 'Gwlad Hud' by T. Gwynn Jones (1934, p. 157) or 'Llywelyn a'i Gi' (Jones (Glasynys), 1898, p. 62). Cf. also Appendix A4.4.

¹⁴¹ A survey on the colors of fairy dresses see also Baughman (1966): F236.1.

follows Peter Roberts' fairy euhemerization theory that fairy traditions are rooted in the collective memory of the Druids who went into hiding after the Roman conquest (cf. chapters 6 for discussion). Sikes refers to the changeling legend of the Place of Strife (Twt y Cwmwrs, a shepherd's cot), in which the Tylwyth Teg are called 'the old elves of the blue petticoat';¹⁴² suggesting a connection between the blue of the fairies' garments and the Druids: 'It has been pointed out that the sacred Druidical dress was blue. The blue petticoat fancy seems to be local to North Wales' (ibid.).¹⁴³ He refers to a goblin called the Green Lady of Caerphilly who turns into ivy, so that the green garment is associated with the green leaves of the ivy. Furthermore, Sikes thinks that the white garments were chosen for fairies when they should be shown as beautiful beings. Sikes maintains that 'commoner' fairies such as the Bwbach show duller colours. Sikes explanation for the great variety of colours, red colour included: 'These various details of colour are due to the fervour of the Welsh fancy' (ibid.).

Green: The Ambivalent Colour

Green deserves special attention. It is hard to interpret when connected with the otherworld, and in medieval texts the problem is even more difficult, for its significance is affected by our prejudices, as John Gage cautions:

Romanticism and the Jungian psychology of archetypes have led us to expect that a symbol should have some universal validity, should respond in some way to a deeply human need. But this was not the way symbolism was understood in the Middle Ages. Then the symbols were fluid [...]. The theorists of symbolism from Augustine to Dante emphasize this ambiguity.

(Gage 1999, p. 83)

Heather Pulliam emphasizes the importance of context: '[w]hen navigating the tricky waters of medieval colour symbolism, context is everything – both anchor and compass' (Pulliam 2012, p. 5).

To explore the ambivalence of green in an otherworldly context, I will focus on poems concerning the abduction of Gwenhwyfar by Melwas,¹⁴⁴ who is variously associated with green. The previous chapter discussed briefly the dialogue poem between Melwas,

¹⁴² For the tale see Gryg (1836).

¹⁴³ The ideas about the druids and the fairies will be discussed in the second part of the thesis (chapter 6) which presents a diachronic study of the fairy beliefs.

¹⁴⁴ The earliest source reporting this abduction story is found in Caradog of Llancarfan's *Vita Gildae*. For an edition of this episode with translation see Bromwich (1961, p. 381).

Gwenhwyfar and Arthur/Cai.¹⁴⁵ In MS Llanstephan 122, Melwas says ‘glas yw fy march o liw dail’ (‘green is my steed of the colour of leaves’) (Jones & Lloyd-Morgan, 2020, p. 60, l. 4). In the following the symbolic meaning of the peculiar colour ‘green’ of the Melwas’ horse will be explored. Melwas is associated in several other ways with the colour green and exploring the meaning of green in context with Melwas in general will lead us to decode the motif of the green horse.

Dafydd ab Edmund (c. 1456-1497) describes Gwenhwyfar being brought into an otherworldly woodland:

Och! nad gwiw ochenaid gwas
 I mi alw am grefft Melwas,
 Y lleidr, drwy hud a lledryd,
 Aeth a bun i eitha’ byd:
 I’r coed îr ai’r hocedydd
 I furiau cain o frig gwŷdd –
 A dringo heno, fal hwn,
 Yn uchel a chwenychwn.

Alas! That a youth’s sigh avails me not
 to invoke the art of Melwas
 the thief that by magic and enchantment
 took a girl to the end of the world
 to the greenwood the deceiver went
 to walls (made) from the branch of a tree-top
 and I would wish tonight to climb
 As high as he.

(text and translation Bromwich, 1961, pp. 382-383)

Here, Melwas is associated with the colour of the greenwood. Moreover, Bartrum remarks:

Another poem attributed to Dafydd ap Gwilym refers to *hun Melwas dan y glas glog*, ‘the sleep of Melwas in the green cloak.’ This occurs in BL MS 14,866 p. 283 by David Jones (1587) where the following note appears: *Melwas a fu mewn clog unlliw ar dail yn disgwyl Gwenhwyfar gwraig Arthur ai llawforwynion ar dduw calanmai r bovd i ddyfod i geisio bedw i groesaw yr haf*. [...] Melwas was in a cloak of the same colour as the leaves, waiting for Gwenhwyfar and her handmaidens on May-day. They had come to seek birch to welcome the summer.

(Bartrum, 1993, s.v. ‘Melwas’)

How may we interpret the colour green associated with Melwas in this context? The obvious context is the abduction of Gwenhwyfar, so green could symbolize love, and a love not necessarily in accord with social rules: May is the season most auspicious for such love, and

¹⁴⁵ For text and translation see: Jones (1937), Williams (1938). For comments see Rowland (1990, pp. 256-258). Mary Williams thinks the original version of the poem could date to *saec.* XII^{mid.}, but that we must assume that it was significantly changed until *saec.* XV. The fact that two versions exist supports her argument (1938, pp. 38-39).

green is the colour of springtime and new foliage. Jones & Lloyd-Morgan point out that the greenwood is the '*locus classicus*' for lovers' meetings (2020, p. 79). The woodland is also a retreat for lovers whose union is not socially accepted. Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry provides a fine example for this interpretation: in 'Mis Mai' (DAG 32, 23-25) we have: 'Gelyn, Eiddig a'i gwelai, / Gwyliwr ar serch merch yw'r Mai' ('May is enemy to the guardian of a girl's love, / the Jealous One saw her'),¹⁴⁶ and the greening of branches is metaphor for falling in love in 'Mis Mai a Mis Tachwedd':

Hawddamor, glwysgor glasgoed,
Fis Mai haf, canys mau hoed,
Cadarn farchog serchog sâl,
Cadwynwyrdd feistr coed anial,
Cyfaill cariad ac adar,
Cof y serchogion a'u câr,
Cennad nawugain cynnabl,
Caredig urddedig ddadl.

Hail to thee, fair chancel of the greenwood
Summer month of May, since it is this I long for,
mighty knight, lover's boon,
green-chained master of the wild forests,
companion of love and birds,
memory of lovers and their friend,
messenger of ninescore trysts,
affectionate and dignified meeting.

(text and translation: DAG, 33, ll. 1-8)

Dafydd's allegory of the '[s]ummer month of May' as 'green-chained master of the wild forests, / companion of love' and May-Day as the time of the abduction of Gwenhwyfar, evoke Gwythyr and Gwyn's eternal battle on the calends of May for Creiddylad who was abducted by Gwyn ap Nudd (CO, pp. 35-36, ll. 985-1006). Gwyn's abduction of Creiddylad is paralleled in the tale of Melwas, who magically abducts Gwenhwyfar into the green forest. Dafydd ap Gwilym refers to him in the poem 'Y Ffenestr':

Ni bwy' hen o bu o hud
Ffenestr â hon un ffunud,
Dieithr hwyl, dau uthr helynt,
Yr hon ar Gaerlleon gynt
Y dôi Felwas o draserch
Drwyddi heb arswydi serch,

¹⁴⁶ In the wider European medieval context also, green is attested as a symbol for love in general. Newly-weds should wear green (Hodges, p. 102, Nixdorff & Müller, 1983, p. 152). Pastoureau explains: '*Frau Minne* [i.e. Dame Love], as the poets called her, is a capricious and unpredictable goddess [...]. She is often wearing a green dress, symbol of her inconstancy and uncertain love she prompts' (2014, p. 72).

Cur tremynt cariad tramawr,
Gynt ger tŷ ferch Gogfran Gawr.

May I not grow old if there was ever, by way of enchantment,
a window such as this,
apart from the nature of that window (a couple whose predicament was astonishing)
in the fort of Caerllion long ago
Through which Melwas, impelled by desire,
came with none of love's trepidations
(extreme pain of boundless passion)
Once by the house of Giant Gogfran's daughter.
(text and translation DAG, 65, ll.15-22)

Woodland is not only a secret meeting-place for lovers but can be the realm of an otherworldly ruler (cf. chapter 3.5). Being a prince of the otherworld, Melwas could also be regarded as a demonic being. In iconography since the middle of the twelfth century, the devil was shown as a green creature, as Pastoureau shows in European artwork mainly from France, England and Germany (2014, p. 91). Therefore, the green of Melwas' horse could be demonic. But there is still another possible interpretation of green. As Melwas mentions in the first line that his black horse is not afraid of water, the green of his (other) horse could show that this horse is a water creature. 'In the water lived other green creatures that were all negative as well', says Pastoureau (2014, p. 94), and referring to the bestiary of the devil he explains, 'it is possible that green evoked not only their evil nature, but also this tie to the aquatic universe' (p. 97). The green of Melwas' horse seems open to a wide variety of interpretations, but given the fluidity of medieval symbolism, it can figure as an ambivalent, multi-layered symbol.

Gawain and the Green Knight also works with the multi-layered, ambivalent symbolism of green.¹⁴⁷ The Green Knight has been subject to many studies, and variously interpreted. The ambivalence of positive and negative aspects of this figure has been noted in earlier studies by e.g. Benson (1965), Burrow (1965) and Besserman (1986), respectively. He has been identified as a personification of death, as the 'Green Man', a spirit of vegetation, as the Old Year, as fiend or devil, and even as a personification of Christ's word.¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, green has been identified as a symbol for vegetation, youth, death, the fairies, the devil, and

¹⁴⁷ For text see: GGK; for introduction and translation see: GGKt.

¹⁴⁸ For the Green Knight as an ambivalent figure representing vegetation ('green man' and 'wild man') see Benson (1965). For the Green Knight as an ambivalent figure representing youth, courtesy, but also death, or the devil, see Burrow (1965). Also, on the Green Knight as devil or fiend see Murphy (1993) and Levy (1995); as personification of death see Krappe (1938); as vegetation god see Speirs (1949); as Christ's word see Schnyder (1961). A connection to the history of salvation and the Green Knight as ambivalent figure is discussed by Besserman (1986), Christian and pagan symbolism is discussed by Leighton (1975).

Pastoureau thinks it is mainly related to fortune (2014, p. 105).¹⁴⁹ These possible interpretations of the colour green in context of the Green Knight suggest that *Gawain and the Green Knight* uses the colour green on various levels of symbolism.

Like Melwas, the Green Knight is a character who comes from a sphere beyond the ordinary and mundane into a human society and challenges this society: the Green Knight is an emissary of the otherworld. Therefore, it will be instructive to see whether Melwas and the Green Knight relate to a comparable symbolism. The colour green as symbol for the vigour and comeliness of a young warrior apply both to the green Knight, as shown by Burrow (1965) and to Melwas whose name is read by Rhÿs as 'princely youth' (Rhÿs, 2008 [1891], p. 51). The Green Knight could also be interpreted as a personification of the woodland: 'It would be too much to list half the adornments / stitched on his clothes, the birds and the insects' (GGKt, ll. 165-166). Moreover, 'But in one hand he had a bough of holly, / the greenest tree when groves are bare' (206-207). This connects the Knight with the eternal vigour of vegetation that challenges winter, but it also connects the knight with Christmas and winter, when at winter solstice the sun begins to unfold its power in a new yearly cycle. But only 33 lines further we read what the courtiers think about the green colour: 'They had seen many marvels but nothing like this, / so they assumed it must be magic and witchcraft' (239-240). This, and the fact that the Green Knight is an eager huntsman, identifies him as demonic, eventually as the devil, especially as he tempts Gawain into a dangerous challenge and exposes him to the temptation of a sexual relationship with a married wife by leaving him alone with his ¹⁵⁰. The lady of the Green Knight gives away a green girdle, where green is related to the garments of capricious Love. The love offered in the otherworldly castle is not approved of by society, but just as the love Melwas offered to Gwenhywfar, a woman also married to another.

This ambivalent symbolism of green mirrors the ambivalence of the otherworld. Gawain is put to the test in a liminal domain. His life is suspended in the castle, where he is in a sort of limbo and must face the challenges of the otherworld before he can return to the world of men and fulfil his duty as a hero.¹⁵¹ The apparently contradictory connotations of

¹⁴⁹ 'For my part I would like to see in this strange and threatening green the color of the goddess Fortune, often represented in medieval images wearing a green or striped dress. By accepting the challenge proposed by the Green Knight, Gawain wagers not only his reputation, but also his life.' (Pastoureau, 2104, p. 105)

¹⁵⁰ The devil was depicted as huntsman, for he hunted the souls of wicked, but also because the Church Fathers had conflated the figure of Nimrod from the Old Testament with the devil, both because Nimrod was known as a great huntsman, and because he opposed the will of God (Hardin, 1988, pp. 38-39).

¹⁵¹ We can compare the testing of Gawain in the green castle to the poet's journey to the otherworld where the poet has to face the challenges of the otherworld.

green – youth, vigour, fertility, love on the one hand and death, decay and the devil on the other – represent situations in which society offers no protection from the elemental power of nature. Thus, man is forced to acknowledge that he is not a bodiless spiritual being, but a part of nature and subject to nature's laws. Independently of how green is interpreted, its symbolism supports the hypothesis that the fairies and their realm represent extra-social challenges imposed upon man by nature. We could even say that green symbolizes the essence of the liminal otherworld in all its manifestations: green symbolizes liminality.¹⁵²

Bright White and Red: Indo-European Symbolism

The otherworldly characters in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi are mostly associated with the colours grey or white, often connected with bright radiance. In the First Branch Arawn appear riding a dapple-grey horse ('[m]arch erchlas') and wears clothes of a light-grey material ('gwisce o urethyn llwyd') (PKM, p. 2). His dogs are gleaming shining white and their ears are red ('lliw oed arnunt, clærwyn llathreit, ac eu clusteu yn gochyon') (PKM, p. 1). His rival's name is 'Hafgan' which Rhys translates as 'Summer-white' (Rhys, 2008 [1888], p. 354). Rhiannon appears on a big, tall, pale-white horse, wearing shining golden brocaded silk ('ar uarch canwelw mawr aruchel, a gwisce eureit, llathreit, o bali amdani') (PKM, p. 9). Her betrothed is named 'Gwawl' ('Brightness'). In the Third Branch, Llwyd ap Cil Coed whose name can be translated as 'Grey One son of Woodland-Retreat' entices the human huntsmen to his castle with a gleaming-white wild boar ('[b]aed coed clærwynn') (PKM, p. 55). Llwyd also conjures the magical mist which transforms the country: 'Ac yn ol y nywl, llyma yn goleuhau pob lle' ('And after the mist, everywhere became bright') (PKM, p. 51). The light-grey and white colours may be seen in the context of the magical mist.

White can be taken as symbol for the otherworldly creatures' special relationship to water, as Mark Williams finds in the cities, sages and treasures of the Túatha Dé. The city Findias, [< 'find' ('fair, bright, white')] is associated with the sage Uiscias [< 'uisce' ('water')], and the associated treasure is the Sword of Núadu (Williams, 2016, p. 152). This supports the above suggested colour symbolism, as we often find analogies between Irish and Welsh material. Furthermore, the hypothesis of chapter 3.2.2 that the battle between Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwythyr ap Greidawl is a conflict of fire and water is strengthened if the colour 'white' ('gwyn') is related to water. Earlier, we could support this idea only by narrative motifs and the etymology of Gwythyr's patronym 'G Reidawl', but we now see that the water-

¹⁵²Green as otherworldly essence appears in the tale of the green children of Woolpit. The inhabitants all have green skin, differing thus from those of the ordinary world (RCA, p. 119).

related character Gwyn ap Nudd represents a concept also visible in the association of Findias, Uisce and the sword of Núadu, especially if Nudd and Núada are equivalent.¹⁵³

However, there is more than conflict between fire and water: in chapter 3.3.2 we also considered Dumézil's understanding of an Indo-European concept of 'fire in water', applied by Ford and MacLeod to Irish narrative. With colour white representing water, and red representing fire, interesting interpretations follow: Arawn's dogs represent the 'fire in water' motif: the red ears on the white animals accord with the colour symbolism of shining white for otherworldly waters and red for the fiery spark of inspiration.

The shining whiteness is also symbolic of the beauty and the blessedness of the otherworld. The wife of Llwyd ap Cil Coed is described as: '[g]wreigyang deccaf a welsei neb' ('the fairest young woman that anyone had seen') (PKM, p. 65). Extreme beauty beyond the mundane supports the otherworldly character of the denizens of the otherworld. This is also true for extreme ugliness. As for the combination of bright colour and beauty, Rhiannon in her shining dress on her white horse sets the example. Another is that of Gwyn ap Nudd who appears in 'Ymddiddan rhwng Gwyn ap Nudd a Gwyddneu Garanhir' as a horseman on a bright white horse with a golden saddle ('eur kywruy cann') (BBC 34, l. 28)

The words 'gwyn' and 'llwyd' are more than colour terms. 'Llwyd' can also mean 'old', or 'holy, blessed' (GPC, s.v. 'llwyd'). 'Gwyn' has the connotation 'fair' and 'blessed' (GPC, s.v. 'gwyn'). Indeed, Jessica Hemming has this to say:

More abstract qualities such as vigour, liveliness, strength, and beauty may also be incorporated into the semantic range of particular colour terms, as may fully metaphysical dimensions like sacredness (*gwyn* is the prime Welsh example).

(Hemming, 2017, p. 195)

This shows that white is not only often associated with divine or supernatural beings but has also the connotation of spiritual perfection. 'Gwyn' in the sense of 'blessed' is the epithet of the perfect warrior or saint. We find formidable heroes: Pyll Wyn, Cynddylan Wyn, Cai Wyn, or blessed saints like Seiriol Wyn and even Crist Wyn.¹⁵⁴ 'Gwyn ap Nudd', king of Annwn,

¹⁵³ For Núada and Nudd being equivalent see Carey (1984, p. 6).

¹⁵⁴ Canu Llywarch: 'Pyll wynn pellynnic y glot' (Blessed Pyll of far reaching fame) (Rowland 1990, pp. 408-409: 'Pyll', l. 36); Canu Heledd: 'Kyndylan wynn uab kyndrwy' ('Blessed Kynddylan, son of Cyndrwy') (Rowland 1990, p. 430: 'Marwnad Cynddylan', l. 13); 'Pa ŵr yw'r Porthor?': 'Kei guin a llachev' ('blessed Cai and Llacheu'); 'Kei win a aeth von / y dilein lleuon.' ('Blessed Cai went to Môn to destroy this place utterly') (BBC, no. 31, l. 76 & ll. 81-82); 'Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser': 'rac crist guin nid oes inialet' ('before the blessed Christ there is no hiding') (BBC, no. 8, l. 11). A legend of Seiriol tries to explain 'Wyn' as 'fair' in the sense of 'white complexion' (Llwyd 1837, p. 5), but it might be that the epithet 'wyn' just meant 'blessed', as he was one of the seven blessed cousins (saints) who went on pilgrimage to Rome (Baring-Gould, vol. 4, p. 179).

may have been so named to evoke associations with the formidable warrior and the magical shining whiteness of the Otherworld.

We can see that in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi and the saga poem of the Black Book of Carmarthen the colour-symbolism differs significantly from the ambivalent green connected with the otherworldly inhabitants elsewhere (discussed above by means of Melwas' horse and the Green Knight). It also differs from the symbolism of red and blue originating in Christian demonology. Although in the stories of the Mabinogi, Annwn and its denizens are characterized by the tension between beauty and danger and the possibility of fatal failure, the use of the symbolic colours is not ambivalent: the otherworld is characterized by a shining brightness, with parallels in the Irish tales (Ó hÓgáin, 1999, p. 126).

The interpretation of colours has shown that the visual representation of the fairies is dependent on the cultural context from which the story evolved. Although the colour symbolism must be interpreted with care, it can nevertheless provide an insight in the motivation of the redactor, his background and the associations he intends to invoke when talking of the otherworld.

4.1.2 Hair Bearing Meaning

Robert Bartlett summarizes the symbolic power inherent in a hairstyle:

Hair is a particular fertile and powerful bearer of meaning for three basic reasons: First hair is an exceptionally malleable body part. [...] Second head and facial hair surround the face, the part of the body with the most concentrated and diverse communicative functions. [...] The treatment of the hair is thus a pre-eminently socially visible act. [...] Third, hair gives [...] biological information [...].

(Bartlett, 1994, p. 43)

It is no wonder that in tales about fairies and the otherworld, hair illustrates character and depicts otherness. Sometimes it is not only how the hair of the head or face is treated: magical hair can grow on unusual parts of the body, and some domestic spirits found in folklore are famous for their furry appearance. For example, The Welsh *bwbach* is described by Wirt Sikes: 'The Bwbach is usually brown, often hairy' (Sikes, 1880, p. 133). The *bwbachod* are domestic spirits, although the name 'bwbach' can be used both for a domestic spirit or a terrifying phantom: Sikes states that the bwbach is given a 'double character' (p. 32). T. Gwynn Jones believes the bwbach to be a ghostly apparition and points out that 'bwbachu' means to scare (Jones, 1979, p. 51). Katharine Briggs compares the *bwbachod* to the domestic spirits found in folklore of the North of England and the Lowlands of Scotland and known by the name 'Brownies' based on common motifs (Briggs, 1978, p. 195).

John Rhys says that ‘The Manx brownie is called the fenodyree’ (2012 [1901], p.86) and notes that ‘it is the word used in the Manx Bible of 1819 for *satyr* in Isaiah xxxiv. 14’ (p. 288).: As ‘fenodyree’ glosses ‘satyr’, we should have a closer look at the nature of the satyr, to reveal characteristics shared with domestic fairy spirits. The satyrs (Greek ‘satyroi’) were originally rustic fertility spirits who consorted with the nymphs (DGR, s.v. ‘satyrus’). In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid calls them ‘semidei’ and ‘deos’ (‘semi-gods’ and ‘gods’; OM I, ll. 192, 692) and deities of the forests (‘numina silvarum’; OM VI, l. 392). However, a late classical interpretation saw the satyrs rather as humanoid silvan creatures, as ‘wild men’ of the forest (Kulik, 2013, p. 205). A creature which is imagined in a satyr-like way shares iconographical features with the devil of Christian culture in medieval Europe: ‘The function and role of the Devil in art come from fifth-century theology, and so do his names. His face and form come from Hellenistic sources’ (Link, 1996, p. 71). According to Kulik, ‘Two of the traditional figures surviving in modern usage, the satyr and the devil, are in fact doubles, at least in the most popular variant of their appearance’ (Kulik, 2013, p. 197). In case of the fairy beliefs this leaves us again with the problem that it is difficult to discriminate between pre-Christian local ideas and motifs originating in classical or Christian demonological sources.

The Pilosi, other fairy-like wood-land spirits can be added to this company of hairy beings. ‘Pilosi’ the ‘hairy ones’ was used in translating Isaiah, too. Like the Classical ‘Panēs,¹⁵⁵ ‘Fauni’ and ‘Dusii’ they are woodland spirits.¹⁵⁶ To understand the Christian interpretation of classical woodland deities such as Panēs and Fauni, it is instructive to have a look at Christian authors. Cassianus, a fifth century a priest and abbot, mentions spirits of the forest who enjoy playing games, enticing men and making fun of them. These spirits were called ‘fauni’ by the common people: ‘Nonullos [spiritus], quos faunos vulgus appellat’ (‘some [spirits] whom the common man calls Fauns’ (my trans.) (CCP VII.c.32). In the 7th century Isidore of Seville writes about of hairy demons:

Pilosi, qui graece panitae, latine incubi appellantur – hos daemones Galli Dusios nuncupant. Quem autem vulgo incubonem vocant, hunc Romani Faunum dicunt.

(IEL Etym. Lib. VIII.C. ult)

Pilosi (‘The Hairy-Ones’) who are called Panēs in Greek, Incubi in Latin- those demons call the people of Gaul Dusios. Those which they call commonly Incubi, those are called Fauni by the Roman.

¹⁵⁵ Pan is a Greek deity of the forest, God of shepherds and hunters, a deity connected with music and fertility and lust, but also with ecstatic states and sudden terror (Borgeaud 1987, pp. ix-xi)..

¹⁵⁶ Faunus is the Roman equivalent of the Greek Pan (see Dixon-Kennedy 1998, s.v. ‘Faunus’).

(my trans.)

The expression ‘Dusii’ appears some centuries earlier in Augustinus’ *De Civitate Dei* (CD c.23), in Hincmar’s *De divortio Lotharii* (DL p. 654) and in Gervasius of Tilbury’s *Otia Imperialia* (OI, I.989). In Walter Map’s *De nugis curialium* we meet the Pan- or satyr-like dwarf king with his long red beard, hairy belly and goat feet who invited king Herla into his palace (DNC, Distinctio I.xi).¹⁵⁷ All these hairy fairies and spirits represent the wilderness, animality, and a wild sexual vigour, which is obvious in the case of the Pilosi, who were also called ‘incubi’.

Culhwch ac Olwen shows that the hairy, therianthropic Morfran ail Tegid was considered to be a devil:

Moruran eil Tegit – ny dodes dyn y arf yndaw yGhamlan rac y haccred, pawb a tybygynt y uod yn gythreul canhorthwy; blew a oed arnaw mal blew hyd.

(CO, ll. 225)

Morfran son of Tegid – no man laid his weapon in him at Camlan because he was so ugly everyone thought he was an attendant demon; he had hair on him like a stag.

(trans. Davies, 2007, p. 185)

Morfran is a liminal therianthropic character on the threshold between human being and animal.¹⁵⁸ According to Lévi-Strauss (1963, p. 89), therianthropy is an element of a meta-language, as Kulik explains:

Lévi-Strauss suggests seeing animalistic features as accessible and universal elements of meta-language. Therianthropic motifs, binary by definition, can also be regarded in light of his general theory of myths as dualistic structures functioning to mediate contradictions.

(Kulik 2013, p. 196)

In the case of our satyr-like, furry otherworldly creatures, we have mediation between the world of men and the extra-social space, the wilderness, which is not subject to human activity, and in their role as domestic spirits they represent the impersonated threshold between the domestic domain of man and the domain of animal life with its tireless activity.

¹⁵⁷ The comparison to Pan makes the king is a figure head of a world beyond the realm of men and connected to a pagan past, but a pagan past as seen from a Christian medieval perspective and conflated with local fairy traditions.

¹⁵⁸ Hamp had identified the brew Ceridwen prepared for her son as the essence of plants (cf. chapter 3.3). Taking up this idea we could say that Ceridwen attempted to create the perfect liminal creature by combining in the person of her son the powers of the animal and the plant kingdom as well as the abilities of a human being.

Next to fairy characters who are remarkable because of their hairy bodies, we find also anthropomorphic fairies with a particular hairstyle. The little people described in Elidorus' tale from *Itinerarium Cambriae* are such beings:

Erant autem homines staturae minimae, sed pro quantitatis captu valde compositae; flavi omnes, et luxuriante capillo, muliebriter per humeros coma demissa.

All these men were very tiny, but beautifully made and well-proportioned. In complexion they were fair, and they wore their hair long and flowing down over their shoulders like women.

(text: IC, p. 65; trans. Thorpe, 1978, p. 134).

The first thing we observe is the fact that the little men Elidorus meets differ both in hair and customs from the (Welsh) human society described: 'Tam mulieribus autem in hac gente, quam etiam maribus ad aures et oculos tonsure rotunda' ('Both the men and the women cut their hair short and shape it round their ears and eyes') (text: IC, p. 195; trans. Thorpe, 1978, p. 238). Thus, for one thing, the long hair of the fairies is a marker for their otherness. Hair was often a marker of ethnic origin in medieval Britain and Ireland (Bartlett, 1994, pp. 44). Gerald of Wales, however, was member of a Norman-Welsh family. Cut hair was not only typical of the Welsh, but also for the Normans, who had their hair shaved at the neck as shown on the Bayeux tapestry (Owen-Crocker, 2004, p. 261), whereas the Anglo-Saxons used to wear their hair longer (ibid.; Bartlett, 1994, p.45). Both from a Welsh and a Norman point of view, the long hair of men implied otherness.

Gerald's wording suggests long hair is inappropriate for males, something condemned by the church itself: such men were considered unholy and they could be excluded from the blessings of the church: 'On Ash Wednesday 1094 Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury refused to give ashes or his blessing to those young men who grew their hair like girls' unless they had their hair cut' (Bartlett 1994, p. 50). Does this suggest that the fairies of *Itinerarium Cambriae* are not only 'the other', but that they are excluded from God's blessing, as betokened by their womanly hair? Such an interpretation would contradict the other features of the fairy people, namely that they are of higher morality, as shown in chapter 2.2, that they resemble the sinless people appearing in Irish texts such as *Immram Brain*. Therefore, the context allows only the conclusion, that the hair style of the little people is a token of otherness, without a necessary negative religious connotation. Maybe it is also a resonance of the predominance of the female gender in the otherworld, or at least of the another, higher social standing of women in the Otherworld, a further token of difference from medieval human society.

Whether due to influence, common heritage or coincidence, Elidorus' tale shows another parallel to the sinless denizens of the Irish otherworld. The Book of Lismore contains a tale about Leagaire mac Crimthainn's visit to the fairy realm, saying of the fairy host that 'on all their heads are beautiful golden-yellow manes' (Meyer & Nutt, 1895, p. 181). This creates a picture very similar to that of the *Itinerarium Cambriae*, but that the fairies in Elidorus' tale are little people. Long hair was typical for a free Irishman, and only servants were shorn (Ir. 'mael'). In the years around the turn of thirteenth to the fourteenth century in Ireland short hair became a marker of the English, and an Irish citizen who was allotted the rights of an English person had to cut his hair (Bartlett, 1994, pp. 44-46).

Long hair is especially apt for the denizens of an extra-social domain:

Long hair is therefore, I suggest, a symbol of being in some way outside society, of having less to do with it, or of being less amenable to social control than the average citizen. But the means by which one attains this condition are of course various. Anchorites, witches, intellectuals, hippies and women all have long hair, but there is no single quality which they have in common besides the negative one of being partially or wholly outside society. There is however one characteristic which is often associated with being outside society, for whatever reason: this is animality.

(Hallpike, 1969, p. 261)

According to Hallpike, the long hair of the inhabitants of the otherworld is a hint of their animality, beyond society – in other words they represent the 'other'. Moreover, Hallpike considers shaving hair as a sign of entering society, and letting it grow long as a sign of leaving it (pp. 263-264). We can test this hypothesis on the Boyhood Deeds of Fionn mac Cumhaill. Fionn grows up in the wilderness separated from human society, but when wandering with craftsmen he becomes 'mael' ('bald') by losing his hair due to a plague: he is 'Demne mael' now (Nagy, 1985, pp. 152-153).¹⁵⁹ The wider meaning of 'mael' is important in this context: Nagy explains that '*Mael*, like the other words *mug* and *gilla*, is used in early medieval Irish to form compound names that express a person's subservience or devotion to a person, a deity, a Christian saint or even a non-human being' (ibid., p. 51).

Being bald or shorn appears as characteristic for the members of society with a spiritual calling, such as pagan druids or monks. These persons serve the divine, and they serve society

¹⁵⁹ The name 'Demne' has been translated as 'little stag' by Weisweiler (1950, p. 158), so Fionn becomes the 'shorn stag' which corresponds to a loss of animality and an integration into the human society. This could mirror indeed a crucial development which discriminates the character Gwyn ap Nudd from Fionn mac Cumhaill. For if Gwyn ap Nudd and Fionn mac Cumhaill are cognate characters, Fionn must have been a supernatural character and has become assimilated to the society as a human hero. So maybe this episode allows a glimpse on the development of a myth which enabled Fionn becoming one of Ireland's most cherished heroes whereas Gwyn ap Nudd remained a supernatural character and became equivalent to the devil.

by mediating between the divine and society. Nagy maintains that by joining the craftsmen, Demne/Fionn(-to-be), too, submits to his status as a mediator between the otherworld and the society. Being bald becomes the outward symbol for Fionn being bound to serve. He serves society in the low rank of an outlaw who lives in the buffer zone between the human society and the sphere of the Otherworld. Regarding the knowledge enabling Demne to become Fionn, or a druid to fulfill his/her social function. Nagy explains:

[T]he great knowledge of druids and craftsmen, which allows them to fulfill their crucial social functions, comes from sources outside of society, so that the pagan priest and *áes dana* – the latter having inherited much of the druidic “mystique” during the Christian period – were viewed as mediators between worlds, figures in a very special way peripheral to human society.

(Nagy, 1985, p. 154)

After all, baldness in the ritual form of tonsure indicates having acquired inspired otherworldly knowledge and a human existence on the periphery of human society, but also being bound to serve the human society. Removal of the tonsure by letting the hair grow could therefore signify loss of supernatural knowledge, moving into the center of society or refusing to serve society any further, thus breaking bonds with society. This latter interpretation agrees with Hallpikes theory above.

Further examples for the social and magical importance of hair can be found in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, where one must differentiate between facial hair and that of the head (Sheehan, 2005, p. 4). When Culhwch joins the court of Arthur, Arthur trims his hair (CO, ll. 162-172), a symbol for entering Arthur’s court, and consistent with Hallpike. In the case of Ysbaddaden and Dillus barbering is more than integration into Arthur’s host of heroes: it is submission to the power of this host of heroes. Ysbaddaden has to submit to Arthur, i.e., to human society, for now he must allow the marriage of his daughter, a rite of passage giving her new status among Arthur’s people. Ysbaddaden’s beard is shorn before he is put to death. The giant Ysbaddaden can be interpreted as an otherworldly threat to Arthur’s court and the human society he is king of. The shearing and killing of the giant signify the taming and submission of a force threatening Arthur and his nephew Culhwch.

Hair matters, when interpreting the tales of the otherworld although the hair style alone is no self-sufficient motif to identify an otherworldly being. But in the context of a specific tale, hair can be a special marker of distinctions between the human and the supernatural. The otherworld is usually shown as being remote from the dwelling places of humans. These places are not cultivated by humans and we can name them extra-social spaces. The extra-social can be used as image for the otherworld or its denizens. Therefore, the hairstyle which

indicates whether a character is a member of society or not, can also serve as indicator for an otherworldly character.

4.1.3 Size as Signature of Otherness

Supernatural characters of miniature size were part of autochthonous European folk beliefs in pre-Christian times, and in all these cases miniature size encodes otherness paired with elusiveness. The Roman *Lares* are depicted as small male figures, the poetic *Edda* talks about dwarfs. The dwarfs are considered as elfin characters (Germ. 'Elben') as the dwarf king's name 'Elberich' shows. The *leipreacháin* of Irish tradition are small beings and appear already in early medieval literature (Ó Giolláin 1984). Narrative motifs from Roman, Irish, Norse and Anglo-Saxon culture could have directly influenced the Welsh narrative traditions by close contact of people. But little people, little fairies and dwarfs appear all over in the folklore of Europe. A comprehensive survey can be found either in Katharine Briggs' *A Dictionary of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and Other Supernatural Creatures* s.v. 'diminutive fairies' and s.v. 'dwarfs'. Moreover, the Motif Index by Stith Thompson gives evidence that dwarfs can be found in European folklore, but also the indigenous traditions of Northern America and Hawaii know about dwarfs (Stith-Thompson, F 451). The tales about the little people in various, geographically and culturally separated traditions must be regarded as analogue developments.

In the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, the English fairies shrink in size, so that in the Victorian time we find small insect-like beings. Diane Purkiss attributes this to the Jacobean obsession with the miniature: 'The Elizabethans and even more the Jacobeans loved the miniature. In their hands, fairies shrank to tinies' (Purkiss, 2000, p. 181). This tiny shape symbolizes not only the secret and elusive, but also the ephemeral: these fairies have butterfly-wings and are associated with flowers, an association with short-lived plants and animals. It is certainly no surprise that this kind of fairy is also strongly associated with ephemeral childhood. Tinker Bell of *Peter Pan*¹⁶⁰ is perhaps most famously presented as bound to children's belief in fairies (Purkiss, 2000, p. 247). But children's beliefs are subject to change and loss, for the child develops into an adult. However, fairies of the small insect-like Tinker Bell style are foreign to Welsh folk traditions as collected in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, we meet denizens of the otherworld of small size already in medieval literature. The people Elidorus met are described as little people:

¹⁶⁰ For versions of *Peter Pan* see Rose (1984).

Erant autem homines staturae minimae [...]. Equos habebant suae competentes modicitati, leporariis in quantitate conformes.

All these men were very tiny [...]. They had horses of a size which suited them, about as big as greyhounds.

(text: IC, p. 65; trans. Thorpe, p. 134)

These people are small, but, still, they differ from the tiny, insect-sized fairies which become fashionable from the Elizabethan period. In nineteenth-century Welsh folklore collections, we also meet fairies which are small, but not as tiny as insects.¹⁶¹ The fairy mistress legends from the collections of Welsh folktales are an exception, for they present the fairies as having the size of human beings.¹⁶² Although the size of the fairies can vary from text to text, *if* fairies or any other otherworld beings are of a different size from ordinary human beings, this is an obvious marker of otherness.

But, as in case of the fairy mistress tales, not all tales use size as marker for otherness and show the inhabitants of otherworldly realms as small, let alone tiny beings. The Four Branches of the Mabinogi do not indicate that the inhabitants of Annwn differ by size from the human beings, nor does the Black Book of Carmarthen show Gwyn ap Nudd as a small or even tiny character (BBC 34). The idea that the fairies are of ordinary human size must have been still widely spread in the early modern Welsh population. An incident described by John Wynn in *The History of the Gwydir Family* supports this idea:

Thus, after many bickering betweene Howell and David ap Jenkin, he being to weake was faigne to flie the country, and goe to Ireland, where he was a yeare or thereabouts. In the end he returned in the summer time haveing himselfe, and all his followers clad in greene, who, being come into the countrey, he dispersed here and there among his friends, lurking by day, and walkeing in the night for feare of his adversaries; and such of the countrey as happened to have a sight of him and of his followers, said they were fairies and soe ran away.

(Wynn, 1878, p. 74)

The peasants' mistaking outlaws for fairies would have been impossible if fairies had been believed to be tiny.

The following paragraphs try to answer the question what ideas could have contributed to imagining the denizens of the otherworld as pygmy people. Since classical times, reports about pygmies are known, and medieval scholars worked the pygmy tribes into their cosmologies, locating them at the fringes of the known world with other legendary people:

¹⁶¹ For examples see Owen (1973 [1887], pp. 49, 99, 93, 105, 106); Evans (1935, p. 6-7).

¹⁶² For a selection of Welsh fairy mistress tales see Owen (1973 [1887], pp. 16-27); Rhŷs, (2012 [1901], pp. 2-22); Evans (1935, pp. 21-26), Jones (1979, pp. 61-64).

Au XIII^e siècle les Pygmées sont bien installés dans le grand légendaire de l'Occident médiéval [...]. Ils prennent place dans les géographies, dans les encyclopédies, sur les cartes, aux même titre que les autres hommes monstrueux, Acéphales, Cynocéphales, Sciapodes etc.

(Lecouteux, 2013, p. 24)

By the thirteenth century the Pygmies had become well established in the great legendary of medieval Europe [...]. They took their place in the geographies and encyclopedias, on maps in the same way as other humanlike monstrous beings, the Acephali, Cynocephali, Sciapodes, etc.

We could conjecture that the fairies have been conflated with such a legendary pygmy people, but another possible explanation for the small size of fairies could be found in medieval beliefs about the form in which a soul appears. Chapter 2.3 discussed the otherworld as a place where the soul can rest in a state of limbo: it would not be surprising for the denizens of the otherworld to adopt characteristics which resembled the attributes of the soul. In European medieval artwork we frequently find the soul appearing as a small child-sized, man-like figure, which disappears through the mouth, when a person is dying (SGS). The soul in small humanoid shape is a migratory motif, for the Grimm Brothers draw attention to the fact that this motif can be found in countries far from Europe, e.g., in India (Grimm, vol III, p. 127). This is confirmed by the Stith-Thompson Motif Index (E.747).

We must also consider the tradition that fairies were angels which have fallen, but not confined in hell (cf. chapter 3.4). While it is difficult to find evidence connecting the size of creatures of folk beliefs and popular ideas about the size of angel, we do have evidence for how angels were imagined at the beginning of the Late Medieval Period in a piece of Arthurian poetry by Albrecht of Scharfenberg, who imitated Wolfram of Eschenbach's fragmentary poem 'Titurel'. Albrecht of Scharfenberg's 'The Younger Titurel', presumably written in the years 1260/1270, contains the following: 'Ein ieglich engel schient also gestalter. Al sein kint in iaren vieren. In der ivgende' ('every angel appears in the shape of child of four years age in the youth') (Hahn, 1842, stanza 5895).¹⁶³ Therefore, we may conjecture that the small size of the denizens of the otherworld could also have its origin in popular ideas about the shape and size of angels. Various other evidence from Germany shows that elfin characters were of the child-size and could be mistaken for an angel.¹⁶⁴ Taking this evidence into account and

¹⁶³ For a modern edition of the text and introduction see Nyholm (1984).

¹⁶⁴ The dwarf King Elberich ('king of the Elves') is described as a beautiful child in *Ortnit und Woldemar*, an epic poem from the thirteenth century. King Ortnit comes to a linden tree: 'es ging von einem paume auch nie so susser wint. / Da sach er auff den esten liegen ein schones kint' ('also, never came from a tree such a sweet wind / there he saw a beautiful child lying on the branches') (Lunzer, 1906, p. 11, 86). A direct combination of the angelic aspect of a dwarf king is found in a *Spielmannsgedicht* (poem of a wandering musician/poet) of the thirteenth century entitled 'Zwergenkönig Laurin'. It proves that a small man appearing as a splendid knight could be mistaken

also the discussion of chapter 1 which presented 'ellyll' as word describing a soul-like entity, it is most likely that the imaginations about the shape of the soul contributed more to the idea that the fairies are of small size than the ideas of a legendary pygmy people.

4.2 The Principle of (ex)Change

There is one principle which rules all dealing with the otherworld and its inhabitants: this is the principle of (ex)change. Between the inhabitants of the ordinary world and the inhabitants of the otherworld objects, animals, services and people can be exchanged. By the process of exchange which involves a reciprocity between the beings of the otherworld and the human being, the human being is changed. This change can become manifest in an altered social position of the human being, or in an 'inner' change which might involve a change of personality or the acquisition of special abilities. This basic principle is demonstrated by well-known tale types such as tales about expeditions into the otherworld (ML 4075; F370), fairy-mistress tales (ML 5090, F302) fairy midwife tales (ML 5070; F333) abduction stories (ML 4077, F322) and changeling tales (ML 5085; F321.1).¹⁶⁵ I will use mainly material from medieval literature and nineteenth century folk tales, for these tale types do not only appear in folk tales collected from the nineteenth century onwards, but can be already identified in medieval texts. As the motifs to be discussed are basically migratory motifs, a parallel treatment of tales from very different genres and centuries is justified, for Kenneth Jackson (1961) and Andrew Welsh (1988) have shown that already medieval texts such as the Four Branches of the Mabinogi are composed of traditional narrative elements which also appear as narrative elements of fairy folktales in folklore collections of the nineteenth century.

The first tale type to be discussed is the expeditions into the otherworld. It is frequently found in medieval vernacular literature but is of lesser importance in nineteenth century folktales. The texts can be classed by the reason why the expedition into the otherworld has been undertaken. The subchapter is structured accordingly: first journeys which are undertaken to obtain precious and magical objects or skills are discussed, then quests into the otherworld for freeing prisoners. The flow of time in the otherworld will be investigated

for the archangel Michael. Therefore, the idea that angels were little beings must have been common knowledge. As for the size of Laurin we read: 'Es war gefleckter haut sein Roß / Und war nur wie ein Reh so groß.' (His horse of speckled skin / and only of the size of a roe') (Brückmann, 1980, ll. 165-166). The men who see Laurin approaching think 'Das mag wohl ein Engel sein, / wie Michael so reitet er / kommt aus dem Paradies wohl her!' ('This might be an angel / he rides like Michael / he might come from paradise') (*ibid.* 238-240). These examples show that the angels were imagined as beings of the size of children in the Late Medieval Period. In the fourteenth century angels are depicted as children in Germany and France (Keck, 1998, p. 31).

¹⁶⁵ ML refers to Christiansen's *The Migratory Legends* (1958). The single letter & number code refers to Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk-Literature*.

further in this context. After the expedition into the otherworld legends about children from the union of a supernatural and a human being will be explored, and also the fairy-mistress and fairy midwife-legends which relate to the motif of the union between a human being and a denizen of the otherworld. Finally, the changeling legends will be considered which bring in the new aspects of interpreting these tales as images of social strain and disability as reinforcement of the changeling beliefs.

4.2.1 Visits to the Otherworld

‘Preiddeu Annwn’ shows us reasons a hero – like Arthur – could wish to visit Annwn: his fame may be increased, or he wishes to win a magical weapon related to special skills in fighting or another valuable object, such as the cauldron of the Head of Annwn. Equally, a poet – like Taliesin – could desire a journey to the otherworld to be endowed with supernatural poetic inspiration and prophetic knowledge. Or the otherworld might be visited so that prisoners of the fair folk – like Gweir – be freed.

Questing for the Gifts of the Otherworld

A hero who dares to face and conquer the host of the otherworld will win fame and be exalted and praised by the poets. The poet who dared to be present at the show-down in the otherworld will outshine all other poets. Taliesin, the poet speaking in ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ puts it in words:

Ny obrynaf-i lawyr llen Llywyadur,
tra Chaer Wydyr ny welsynt wrhyt Arthur

I don't rate the pathetic men involved with religious writings,
those who had not seen Arthur's feat beyond the Glass Fort

LT, no. 18, ll. 29-30.

Moreover, the poet whose poetry is fit to be presented in an otherworldly fortress will become famous:

Neut wyf glot geinmyn: cerd ochlywit
yg kaer pedryuan pedrychwelyt.

I'm splendid of fame - song was heard
in the four quarters of the fort, revolving [to face] the four directions.

LT, no. 18, ll. 11-12.

This fame increases the status of the hero or the poet having returned to the world of men.

This motivation to win fame by challenging the otherworld is a common motif in Arthurian tales. In *Iarlles y Ffynnawn*, having just heard of the adventure Cynon experienced at the well, Owain says: ‘Ha wyz heb yz owein ponýt oed da mynet y geiffyaó dýwanu ar y

lle hōnnō' (Evans, 1907, p. 117) 'Men [...], wouldn't it be good to try and find this place?' (trans. Davies, 2007, p.121). Gawain accepts the challenge of the Green Knight so that Arthur's reputation as a king with a court of most splendid knights is not damaged. In all these cases when the otherworld is visited to win fame or knowledge, or for adventure, the otherworld represents a challenge to both hero and poet, but the rewards obtained remain purely immaterial.

If the quest to the otherworldly realm is made to acquire special skills, the process of transformation is often dangerous. The poet can increase his poetic gift by going through a transformative process, as discussed in chapter 2.3 with Taliesin and Aneirin as examples. Myrddin hiding in Coed Celyddon in his apple grove has also already been discussed in the context of otherworldly realms: his sanity is at stake. Welsh folklore, too, shows that the making of a poet can require a dangerous visit to an otherworldly place. The poet can be trapped in the otherworld, and, similar to Myrddin, when being unable and /or unwilling to return to the abode of man, he will be insane:

According to one widely reported folk tradition, should someone remain alone on the summit of Cadair Idris for one night, that person would become a philosopher, or a poet or turn mad. A similar tradition is applied to Gorsedd Arberth in the tale of Pwyll Pendefig Dyfed in the Mabinogi. Various versions of the tale suggest the same theme: that the mountain holds a supernatural power. This is echoed in the story of Morgan Rhys, resident of Cadair Idris. Tylwythion Teg Cadair Idris ('the fairies of Cadair Idris') visited Rhys and gave him a magical harp.

(Joyner, 2006, s.v. 'Cadair Idris')

Failed transformation results in madness, which is the narrative motif corresponding to being trapped in the otherworld. Several legends suggest that Cadair Idris is otherworldly terrain,¹⁶⁶ among them the tale of Iolo ap Hugh, a wandering mistrel who wanted to solve the mystery of an underground passage leading from Morda to Chirk Castle on Halloween. This cave was believed to be the entrance to the underworld. Iolo was drawn into this cave and never returned into the world of humans again, although he had been sighted a few times after his disappearance as a captive of the otherworld. It was believed that Iolo became huntsman-in-chief to Gwyn ap Nudd cheering the Cŵn Annwn ('Dogs of Annwn') over the slopes of Cadair Idris every Halloween, for the slopes of Cadair Idris are the hunting ground of Gwyn ap Nudd's pack (Rhys, 2012 [1901], pp.202-203). Interestingly, before Iolo ap Hugh becomes huntsman to Gwyn ap Nudd, he plays the fiddle in the otherworldly cave (Trevelyan & Hartland, 1973 [1909], p. 139). Iolo, too, is a creative person who becomes trapped in the

¹⁶⁶ Cadair Idris is not only the hunting ground of Gwyn ap Nudd, but also one of the favourite haunts of The Grey King, Brenin Llwyd. another legend has it that the eagles of Cadair Idris could never be caught (Trevelyan & Hartland, 1973 [1909], pp. 69, 82)

otherworld. W. Jenkyn Thomas recorded a similar tale: Morgan Rhys was endowed by the Tylwyth Teg of Cadair Idris with a magical harp (Thomas, 2007 [1908], pp. 69-71). In this tale the special artistic gift comes with a magical object, in this case a magical harp. This object symbolizes the creative inspiration which is the gift of the otherworld.

Not only magical instruments as gifts of the otherworld are known, but also magical weapons. Whereas the instruments appear more frequently in folk tales, the weapons are found in medieval texts. There are many tales of warriors whose precious weapons are gifts from the otherworld, and whose precious otherworldly weapon transforms them into formidable heroes. Magical swords are common in the saga and legend of North-Western Europe. Arthur's sword Excalibur is one of them. In German epic and in Norse saga magical swords abound, many of them forged by dwarves (Krause, 2010, s.v. 'Schwert'). A similar motif is that of the warrior who seeks out an otherworldly realm, not to get a magical weapon in the first place, but to be instructed in fighting skills. Another example from Welsh medieval prose is Peredur who is taught how to fight by a witch or a magical warrior woman at Caer Loyw and takes arms from her (PAE, p. 35v, c.139, ll. 9-36; c.140, ll. 1-10).¹⁶⁷ The gifts from the otherworldly realm such as weapons and musical instruments are not only precious objects, but they endow the recipient with magical skills. The main value of these gifts is not their material value, their price in gold or money, but the immaterial skill. The person who receives these gifts can profit from them and bring them into his own world.

When it comes to transferring material wealth from the otherworld to the mundane world, things turn out to be different. The otherworld is usually depicted as a place of wealth and treasures (cf. chapter 2). However, trying to bring these treasures into the world of mortal man does not work out well.

The treasures of the otherworld often turn out to be an illusion. This motif can be found frequently in folktales. Fairy money is changed e.g., into leaves or cockle shells or other worthless stuff. Elias Owen recorded a selection of such tales (Owen 1973 [1887], pp. 81-82, 84). In some tales the treasures are real, but cannot be found again (Owen 1973 [1887], pp. 79-80). *Buchedd Collen* is an example for a text which holds a similar motif: St. Collen claims the rich food to be but enchanted leaves of trees (BCa, p. 40). The message of such tales seems to be that material wealth which has its origin in the otherworld does not persist. However, depending on the text the meaning may vary: again, context is crucial for interpretation. In a text like *Buchedd Collen* the motifs are taken from Christian demonology and supersede any

¹⁶⁷ Alternatively see: Goetinck (1976).

other message, because as shown above, narrative motifs in this text are closely related to the teachings of the Church Fathers. The fairies are interpreted as devils by the author and according to Christian tradition the devil is the father of lie and delusion.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

(KJV, John 8:44)

Influences from Christian demonology could also have precipitated in folk tales of the nineteenth century as the previous analysis of the fairies' dancing suggests.

However, in texts which do not present the denizens of the otherworld as demons, the transfer of gifts from the otherworld into the world of men is problematic, too. In these texts humans lose the otherworldly gifts, and frequently also their good luck, because they transgress a taboo or the moral code of the otherworld.

Elidorus' tale is an example for this group of texts, for the little people he meets are no devils, on the contrary, they are of high morality and revere truth above all. Elidorus steals a golden ball from the little people, which results in breaking his friendship with them (IC, p. 66). By stealing, Elidorus has violated the moral code of the little people who revere veracity above all. Breaking of taboo and loss of all wealth appears in powerful images in the fairy mistress tale of the Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach.¹⁶⁸ When the fairy lady's husband violates the conditions of the marriage contract, the fairy lady returns with all her cattle into her otherworldly realm at the bottom of the lake. All the wealth she brought to her husband with her fairy cattle was related to the condition (or *geis*, often translated 'taboo')¹⁶⁹ not to strike her three times without a cause.

The taboo connected with a gift from the otherworld can be self-imposed, but breaking it has the same disastrous effect. Consider the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi: Pryderi has agreed with his people not to give away the swine – a gift from the King of Annwn – until they have bred twice their number (PKM, p. 68), and giving them away to Gwydion for mundane luxury is a violation of this commitment to veracity. Using the Irish terminology for the truth and justice of a ruler, we could say *fír flathemon* has been violated, and consequently disaster and the downfall of the ruler follows with the whole episode leading to the death of Pryderi. If we consider the fact that material wealth cannot be taken easily and in a lasting

¹⁶⁸ For sources of text and secondary literature see chapter 3.1.2.

¹⁶⁹ For discussion of *geis*, see Ó Cathasaigh (Ó Cathasaigh & Boyd, 2014, esp. pp. 13-14, 24-27, 33).

form from the otherworld, as the examples above suggest, it is instructive that Pwyll cannot, in the First Branch, compensate for his insult to Arawn by paying gold or any other treasures. Arawn asks for a service, namely fighting against Hafgan (PKM, pp. 2-3).

The First Branch is an interesting example how the motifs of courtly behavior, but also of deception on different levels are woven into a tale about the dealings of a human prince, Pwyll, with the otherworld. By his interaction with the otherworld, Pwyll develops gradually to a perfect prince. Catherine McKenna has researched this aspect of the tale. She interprets the tales of the Mabinogi to be a mirror for princes (McKenna 1980; 1999; 2003; 2007), or Helen Fulton's studies about the Mabinogi and the education of Welsh princes (2005, p. 241), for education is aimed at initiating a transformative process, too. In the context of the interaction with the otherworld we find the otherworldly characters as teachers of courtly manners, but they also trick Pwyll into using deceit to achieve his ends, which will make him and his family the aim of supernatural vengeance. Arawn is of better courtly behaviour and higher morality than Pwyll. This we can see immediately from the beginning of the tale when Pwyll is about to meet Arawn. Pwyll sees no problem in claiming the stag which was brought down by a foreign pack if nobody is around to witness his theft, which violates the laws of courtly behaviour and the laws of veracity which would have demanded that he acknowledge that the stag belongs to another huntsman (p. 2). Arawn on his part profits from this imperfection of moral conduct: he demands that Pwyll fights Hafgan, who can be killed only by a single stroke. Arawn as a perfect knight would be compelled to give his dying enemy the stroke of mercy, but Pwyll who is a less perfect character cannot be tricked into giving a second stroke by Hafgan's pain. Pwyll is less perfect than Arawn, of less compassion and with fewer scruples when fighting a fight which is not his own, when fighting in disguise and thus deceiving Hafgan – which is also a violation of veracity. Admittedly, Arawn has his share in this deceit, but it is not Arawn who tries to deceive Hafgan in an ordeal by combat. It is Pwyll's mistake to offer Arawn as compensation freeing him from his foe without asking for the details. We can say that Arawn uses the mortal man of lesser moral standing and lesser wit as a weapon against his foe. However, by keeping his promise to Arawn, Pwyll is true to his word and he becomes the protector and hero for Arawn's people and his own. Moreover, the way Pwyll acts, by not touching Arawn's wife, shows a higher moral standard. This conduct wins him the friendship of Arawn, which is the gift Pwyll takes home from his visit to Annwn. The theme of courtly behaviour is visible in the episode of Pwyll meeting Rhiannon, for Pwyll only succeeds to address her, when he shows *courtoisie*, asking her on behalf of her

beloved.¹⁷⁰ But as Pwyll is an imperfect prince still, he makes a great mistake when he tries to be courteous, when Gwawl, Rhiannon's former betrothed, asks for a favour, so that Gwawl can win Rhiannon back. Pwyll corrects this error by brute force and by deceit. He cheats Gwawl, so that Gwawl is caught in a sack, and has him beaten until he concedes to cancel the wedding with Rhiannon. This deceit is a violation of the truth expected by a prince, although it was Rhiannon who suggested it. The result of this behaviour is seen in the Third Branch when his son Pryderi and Rhiannon are caught in an otherworldly prison (PKM, pp. 55-56).¹⁷¹

These examples show that the high value of truth holds a central position in the above discussed tales about the otherworld. It is the gift and essence which is bestowed on a visitor, and it is by its nature an immaterial gift, though it is sometimes symbolized by a magical object. A musician gifted by the otherworld will create true music, the essence of music, a poet will create the essence of poetry, the prophet will speak true, and the warrior will succeed in *fir fer*, the ordeal by battle. Truth is the essence of the otherworld. It is almost an antithesis of mundane riches. The Welsh tales do not provide a striking terminus for 'truth' and yet, the idea is visible in the tales.

Freeing Prisoners and the Cycles of Time

A further reason to visit the otherworld could be the wish to free a prisoner of the otherworld. In medieval literature we find several examples of prisoners. Gweir ap Gweirioed (ModW. Gwair ap Gweirioedd) is named as one of the three exalted prisoners of the Island of Britain. The other two prisoners mentioned in the triad are Mabon ap Modron, and Llŷr Lledyeith.¹⁷² Additionally, the comment to the triad mentions the imprisonment of Arthur in Caer Oeth and

¹⁷⁰ Welsh and Anwyl have noted that the episode of Rhiannon being courted by Pwyll corresponds to a fairy mistress tale (Welsh 1988; 1989; Anwyl 1896/97). Rhiannon can be addressed by appealing to her in the name of her beloved. The same pattern of conduct is found for Gwyn ap Nudd, who calls himself 'the lover of Creiddylad' 'gortech creurdilad merch lut.' (BBC, no. 34, l. 18). He can be invoked by the love of his mistress (Roberts, 1980/81, pp. 287-288), cf. also chapter 2.

¹⁷¹ The motif that the denizens of the otherworld avenge themselves on mortal men by abducting the heir is also found in the folktale of Pantannas (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 176-178). The Tylwyth Teg abduct the heir of a farmer who ploughed the dancing places of the Tylwyth Teg. The narrative pattern of stealing a child in order to punish a transgression against the Otherworld could also be behind the stealing of Rhiannon's son by the monster in the night of May, a time auspicious for the activities of otherworldly beings.

¹⁷² In the case of Llŷr Llediaith this is not explicit, but it is simply noted that he was imprisoned by Euroswydd. Rachel Bromwich translated the name Euroswydd as 'Splendid Enemy' (Bromwich, 1961, p. 351), where the elements 'splendid' and 'enemy' could agree with the naming of an otherworldly character (cf. 3.1.1), and the fact that he is one of Penarddun's consorts who fathered Nyssyen and Efnysyen. As the brothers represent dual opposites and we know that the otherworld is a place in which dual opposite are coexistent, it might not be far-fetched to suggest that Euroswydd could have been a fairy character and rival of Llŷr Llediaith.

Anoeth by Gwen Pendragon. In a variant of the triad appearing in *Culhwch ac Olwen* Greid ap Eri who was taken prisoner by Gwyn ap Nudd is mentioned (CO, p. 33, ll. 913-916, 992). Certainly, when talking about prisoners of otherworldly characters we also must think of Pryderi and Rhiannon imprisoned in the fortress of Llwyd ap Cilcoed (PKM, pp. 55-57). Young women are taken by otherworldly rulers, such as Creiddylad who was abducted by Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwenhywfar who was abducted by Melwas. Finally, also Myrddin in his glass castle is a prisoner of the Otherworld (cf. 2.3).

In folktales we read of young men who get lost in fairy rings, suddenly addicted to dancing, and must be freed from those rings. Hugh Evans presents several variants of these tales in *Y Tylwyth Teg* (1935, pp. 1-9). In these tales choosing the correct time to free the prisoners from the otherworld becomes a crucial issue. Not only does time flow differently (cf. chapter 2.3), but the time of the otherworld is not presented as a continuous flow from a distant past to a distant future but passes cyclically. When the magical period of a year or a year and a day have passed, a person can be freed from the otherworld, as the tales collected by Evans show (Evans, 1935, pp. 2, 4-5). The importance of the period of a year (and a day) is also attested in context of the medieval texts: The battle of Hafgan and Arawn is renewed after this period: 'blwyddyn y heno' ('a year from tonight') (PKM, p. 2). This implies that the outcome of an ordeal can be put to the test and reversed after the period of a year. Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwythyr ap Greidawl must renew their battle for Creiddylad every year on the Calends of May:

Sef tangneued a wnaethpwyt, gadu y uorwyn yn ty y that yn diuwyn o'r dwy Barth, ac ymlad bob duw kalan Mei uyth hyt dyd brawt o'r dyd hwnnw allan rŵng Gwynn a Gwythyr, a'r un a orffo onadunt dyd brawt, kymeret y uorwyn.

(CO, p. 35, ll. 1000-1004)

This is the agreement that was made: the maiden was to be left in her father's house, untouched by either party, and there was to be battle between Gwyn and Gwythyr every May day forever from that day forth until Judgement Day, and the one that triumphed on Judgement Day would take the maiden.

(Davies, 2007, p.207)

The arrangement for a marriage can be put into question after the period of a year, as we have seen in the case of Rhiannon's marriage feast as told in the First Branch of the Mabinogi (PKM, pp. 16-18). The repetition of the motifs such as the battle, the marriage feast, the dance on the heather suggests a circular understanding of time:

Repetition, that putative marker of orality, which is intrinsic to narrative in the repetitive reconfiguration of motifs, the repetitive retelling of semi-hardened forms, as well as in internal repetition in the reiteration of a single motif, points to the circularity of time:

time is not going anywhere. Repetition amplifies without being additive. [...] Although at one level repetition in narrative serves as an allegory to historicity, emphasizing the progressive unfolding of events which differentiates them from duration, on another level its very recursiveness effects a doubling back, a disruption of linear order—circularity effecting atemporality: time's standing.

(Conrad, 2014, p. 341)

For fully understanding the tales of the dancer trapped in a fairy dance, we must also apply the concept of liminal time, a time which transformation is possible. This motif deepens our understanding of the liminality of the otherworld. The concept of liminality which has been developed for rites of passage, has been applied by folklorists following the example of Narváez to geographical areas in the context of fairy folklore (Henderson & Cowan, 2001, p. 39). In the case of the dancers, we apply liminality to time which is a time in an ambivalent state. In a liminal world the possible options for the outcome of an ordeal by battle are coexistent, and so are the chances of escaping or being caught.¹⁷³ When a cycle of time has passed, we find both options coexistent again, and the visitor from the mundane world can choose another option by his interaction with the otherworld. The options are with the one outside of the circle, the collapsing of time and its standing is experienced by the one dancing, by the one kept in circular movement. Therefore, the image of the fairy dance in which a person has been caught is a perfect visualization for the way a circular concept of time works. The cyclical dance of the fairies can be associated with the revolving time, which relates to the cyclical movement of the celestial bodies. This is in agreement with Yamada & Kato who have shown that the concept of circular time is connected with natural processes (2006, p. 143). When the same moment of the celestial constellation returns, the dancer passes by the place where his friend or beloved awaits him after a year, then he can be plucked from the circle, i.e. he can be removed from the liminal situation by the action of a helper grounded in the mundane. He is brought back to the linear flow of time and the mundane world. The picture cyclical time versus linear flow of time illustrates the difference between the ordinary world and the otherworld. A cyclical time cannot really pass, and ageing is not possible, but no other development except for the development that takes place in the inner world of a visitor from the mundane. This investigation of the fairy-dance motif of folklore which is very popular also supports the results of chapter 2.3 which show that the otherworld is not a world of the dead, for if there is no aging and there are no irreversible developments, real death is impossible.

¹⁷³ For the understanding of liminality as a realm of possibilities see the concise introduction by Ashley (1990, p. xviii).

The understanding how people imagined liminal time also increases our insight in the fairy beliefs connected with the festivals during the period of a year. We can start with the ordeal by battle which is fought each year till the day of doom between Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwythyr at the Calends of May. The battle does not only repeat every year, but takes place at a liminal time, at the transition from winter to summer. At such times, encountering the denizens of the otherworld is facilitated. At these times the veil between the worlds is thin and contact with the supernatural is possible, but also prediction of future events is auspicious, as folk beliefs show. Elias Owen tells us that on All Hallow Eve, St. John's Eve and Mayday Eve *rhamanta* were believed to be most effective (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 280). These times were also known as *Y Tair Ysbrydnos* (Jones, 1979, p. 151). Like the Calends of May, Midsummer's Day is a liminal time, a time of transition of the seasons. The sun culminates, so it is not ascending anymore and not descending yet. It coincides almost with the festival of St. John (24th of June), so that St. John's Day was considered to be the day of midsummer. As at other liminal times, the activity of the fairies and other supernatural creatures was believed to be high.

The liminal times of the year find their correspondence in the liminal times of day and night: twilight and midnight and high noon.¹⁷⁴ These times are part of both day and night, late evening and early morning, morning and afternoon, respectively. In *Buchedd Collen* Gwyn ap Nudd summons Saint Collen to come to his castle at high noon ('haner dydd'; BC, p. 39). Here, the motif of high noon as time for supernatural beings to appear is entwined with Christian demonology: it makes Gwyn resemble the *daemonoum meridianum* (demon of noon time). The demon of noon time who entices monks to forfeit their pious way of life, as Evagrius Ponticus tells us in *De octo vitiosis cogitationibus* and *Tractatus practicus* (di Nola, 1993, p. 229). Noon time as an uncanny time is a motif which is widely spread and as old as the Classical period. The Greek deity Pan, protector of woodland, herds and herdsman, and hunters, spreads terror at noon time (DRG, s.v. 'Pan'), and in Lucan's *Pharsalia* (LPH, III, l. 423-425) a sacred grove is described thus:

[M]edio cum Phoebus in axe est
aut caelum nox atra tenet, pauet ipse sacerdos
accessus dominumque timet deprendere luci.

If the sun is in the zenith
or the black night holds the sky, not even the priest dares
to come close, for fear to surprise the lord of the grove when approaching.

¹⁷⁴ Some texts show night-time a favourite time of the fairies and the moon is called 'Haul yr ellyllyon' 'sun of the fairies/phantoms' by Dafydd ap Gwilym (DAG, no. 58, l. 32). In this context the night as the favourite time of the fairies is a motif used to highlight their otherness and depict their world as inverted to the world of mortal man.

(my trans.)

Meeting with the denizens of the otherworld is not only mediated by the liminal spaces discussed in the third chapter such as the bank of a river or lake, a ford at a river; there are also liminal times to meet the magical folk. If liminal places create spaces where transformation can take place, liminal times create possibilities to revert those transformations.

4.2.2. The Union of Mundane and Other

Children of Mixed Parentage

One way of bringing the benefits of the otherworld into the mundane world is the journey of the individual to this magical realm in order to find there what is needed or desired and return with it to the world of humans. The benefits of the otherworld can enter the mundane world also by a child born from a union of a human and a supernatural partner. The motif of supernatural or divine ancestry is common and widespread,¹⁷⁵ and Welsh characters who can claim a supernatural parent include Myrddin, Owain ap Urien, Gwallog ap Lleenog and Pryderi, all of them have already been mentioned before. Welsh folklore claims fairy ancestry for the Meddygon Myddfai.¹⁷⁶ We also hear of the fairy descent of some Welsh families like the Pellings, or families nicknamed Simychiaid or Cowperiaid (Rhÿs 2012 [1901], p. 69).¹⁷⁷

So, we must pose the question: under what circumstances is the offspring of a union between a human being and an otherworldly character beneficial for the human society? What about children born from the union of human and supernatural appearing in fairy midwife tales? The above-mentioned examples of heroes and specially gifted children show that the children must be accepted by the human society for it to profit from the gifts of the otherworld. This may be the reason why children born by a human mother in the otherworld do not play any important role. Such children with a human mother who stays with the fairies appear in folktales summarized as fairy-midwife tales (ML5070). Fairy midwife tales are a genre found in folklore which warns girls not to associate with otherworldly young men and midwives to

¹⁷⁵ Examples from ancient tradition of Ireland and Wales can be found in *Celtic Heritage* by Rees & Rees (1961).

¹⁷⁶ For a modern study on conflating the lake lady legends with the Meddygon Myddfai see Davies (2018).

¹⁷⁷ Rhÿs notes: '[the] association of the lake legends with intruders from without is what has, perhaps, in a great measure served to rescue such legends from utter oblivion' (ibid.). Rhÿs' comment supports the notion that stories of supernatural ancestry are stories about the incorporation of extra-social persons, impulses or innovations.

help children of such unions into the world.¹⁷⁸ A typical Welsh tale is that of Eilian who used to spin with a fairy family and was finally abducted into their world. Eilian's mistress is called into the otherworld to assist a young human lady giving birth to a fairy child, and she recognizes Eilian. In the tale the wonders and the beauty of the otherworld are demasked as an illusion created by the devil, when the midwife brings accidentally a magical ointment into her eye which was meant for the fairy child only.¹⁷⁹ The midwife has no benefit from helping the mother giving birth to a half-breed fairy child, but on the contrary, in the tale about Eilian she loses one eye, for she was able to recognize the denizens of the otherworld for what they are. Fairy midwife tales represent a way of warning against meddling with the other, the extra-social elements. The child and the mother remain trapped in the domain of the other, and so the child cannot transfer positive impulses from the domain of the other into the mundane world of man.

In medieval literature we find off-spring of human and otherworldly parentage. For Welsh and Irish literature, Alwyn and Brinley Rees have created a survey on heroes and the tales of their conception and birth and the role the otherworld played in this context (1961, pp. 213-243). If these children are accepted by the human society, they can act as benefactor for the human society. By doing so, they can bestow beneficial gifts of the otherworld on the human society. As the otherworld can be rationalized as a foreign country and its denizens, as otherness can easily be projected on the foreign, the motif of the human-fairy marriage has been interpreted by Rhŷs (1901) and later by Gibson (1955) as an image of the intermarriage of a foreign intruder and a local or aboriginal partner (see below). Even if we do not adhere to the euhemerization of fairy characters, we must concede that tales about the intermarriage with an otherworldly character and acceptance of a child from such a union, can be read as tales about social belonging, kinship and the struggle to incorporate foreign influences and impulses.

Fairy Mistresses / Fairy Brides

Among the tales about intermarriage between fairy characters and human beings, the fairy mistress tales represent a genre of their own (F 302; ML 5090). A selection of fairy bride tales have been collected by Rhŷs in the first chapter of *Celtic Folklore*, 'Undine's Kymric Sisters' (2012 [1901], pp. 1-74). The fairy bride legends of Wales were discussed by Juliette Wood

¹⁷⁸ For fairy midwife tales cf. F333 (Baughman, 1966). For a study providing and discussing comparative material from Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia see Mac Cárthaigh (1991).

¹⁷⁹ A version of Eilian's tale is found in Rhŷs' *Celtic Folklore* (2012 [1901], pp. 212-214), another in W. Jenkyn Thomas' *The Welsh Fairy Book* (2007 [1908], pp. 93-95).

(1991). Robin Gwyndaf researched the Welsh lake legends with a special focus on the legend of Llyn y Fan Fach and the Meddygon Myddfai (Gwyndaf, 1992/93). Sioned Davies explored the transmission and re-oralization of this legend (1996; 2018). The fairy bride in Victorian culture was researched by Carol Silver (1999).

The fairy mistress tales speak about accepting a denizen of the otherworld in a human family and society. They provide information about social norms in the society of the storyteller. The fairy mistress legends demonstrate how otherness can be described by referring to social norms both the storyteller and the audience are familiar with. This leads to the observation that extra-social groups became conflated with the denizens of the otherworld. Fairy mistress tales are structured according to a stereotype pattern which includes the meeting of the fairy mistress and her future husband, the making of a contract on the marriage conditions, and the failure of the husband to keep the conditions of the contract which leads to the departure of the fairy mistress.¹⁸⁰ The conditions for the lasting of the marriage, however, are apt to show that the bride is an otherworldly being, and the conditions allow a glimpse on the usual behaviour and custom of the human society.

A typical condition of the marriage contract between a man and a fairy mistress is that the fairy mistress shall not be touched with iron. This condition relates to the idea that iron is taboo for the fairies.¹⁸¹ The tradition that fairies avoid the touch of iron is based on a taboo which has already been known in the classical time. Robert Lawrence collected such beliefs from various periods and countries and found that already Pliny the elder reports that iron is a means to frighten away ghosts and demons (Lawrence, 1898, pp. 26-27). The apotropaic power of iron is a widely spread motif and by no means restricted to scaring away Welsh fairies. Texts in which this taboo appear suggest that the fairies are to be regarded as demonic. These examples are found in collections of folktales. Iron appears as an apotropaic means in Rhys' *Celtic Folklore* in the tale of a conjuror with an iron hand who tries to steal the fairy treasure of Mynydd y Drum (2012 [1901], p. 26), in the story of a man who was caught in a fairy ring and must be touched with iron when being rescued (ibid., p. 200), a changeling at whom iron has to be thrown to make him vanish (p. 231), throwing rusty iron at a fairy companion to get rid of him (p. 250), but also in a tale of undoing the charm of a witch by rubbing the bewitched person with iron (p. 297). In this context it is noteworthy that the denizens of the otherworld appearing in the Branches of the Mabinogi, Arawn, Hafgan,

¹⁸⁰ Examples for Welsh fairy mistress tales are found in Rhys (2012 [1901], pp. 1-74). For studies on Welsh fairy mistress-tales see Gwyndaf (1992/93), Davies (1996, 2018), Wood (1992), and Silver (1987, 1999, pp. 89-116).

¹⁸¹ More examples of the apotropaic qualities of iron are found in Lawrence (1898, pp. 1-140).

Gwawl, Llwyd ap Cilcoed or Gwyn ap Nudd appearing in *Culhwch ac Olwen* or in the Black Book of Carmarthen seem not to be subject to such a taboo. In the texts of the Mabinogi, in *Culhwch ac Olwen* and in saga poetry warriors and kings of the otherworld are described, but in none of the texts appears any remark about their weapons being not made of iron. This can be interpreted as further evidence that the Annwn and its princes and denizens have not been regarded as demons or hellish creatures in these texts. In folklore of the nineteenth century the situation is quite contrary, and not only the apotropaic power of iron, but also of salt and fire are means to frighten away the fairies (Owen, 1973 [1887], p. 53; Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p.103). As in the case of iron, these means are not specific repellents for the fairies, but they are commonly used to avert all kind of evil magic. This use of fire and salt is also very old and widely spread (Lawrence, 1889, pp. 56-57, 177-181). The appearing of iron, salt, and fire as means to scare away the fairies indicates that they are perceived as demonic beings, but at the same time the use of salt, fire and iron against them marks the fairy people as otherworldly in the sense that they represent otherness. All three things iron, salt and fire are indispensable for man. But these things most useful for a human being, are most dreaded by the inhabitants of the otherworld.

Although examples for the tale type of the fairy bride are frequent in Welsh folklore, and the general plot is always the same, the marriage conditions reveal great differences. If the iron taboo is brought in, this could originate in the idea that Tylwyth Teg were demonic beings, rather.¹⁸² In the case of the Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach, the understanding of the otherworld is different. The Lady is a 'personification of *summum bonum*', recalling a female deity, as Robin Gwyndaf puts it (Gwyndaf, 1992/93, p. 255). Her marriage contract is based on the condition that she should not be struck three causeless blows ('tair ergyd ddiachos') (ibid., p. 242). To begin with, this condition does not originate in demonology. If the condition is a token of otherness, it gives a rather sinister picture of the human society, for it implies that women could receive a stroke by no reason from their husbands. The otherness of the otherworldly society consists in the greater respect which is paid to the female gender.

We detect a parallel in the First Branch of the Mabinogi: the episode of Pwyll courting Rhiannon can be identified as a fairy mistress tale.¹⁸³ Rhiannon cannot be stopped by force or power or horsemanship, but by a courtly request for the sake of the man she loves most (PKM,

¹⁸² The iron taboo has also been interpreted in the context of the fairy euhemerization theory following Rhÿs (2012 [1901], p. 660), who explained this dislike with euhemerizing the fairies as a stone age population. But, considering more recent archaeological development, the interpretation of the iron taboo must be re-considered.

¹⁸³ For further discussion see Welsh (1990, p. 353), and Gwyndaf (1992/93, p. 253).

p. 12). She cannot be ordered to stop, but she must be kindly asked to do so. In this respect, too, the otherworld is a land of women, for here they are treated with more respect than in the human society. In the case of the Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach the condition resembles a *geis* as known from the Irish stories, and not the breaking of a magical taboo. In a similar way at least two situations which lead to the stroke without reason are not merely incidental, but the lady shows an attitude towards life which is governed by an almost saintly *contemptus mundi* rather fit for a sinless people of higher morality than ordinary men.¹⁸⁴ This motif we found attributed to Elidorus' little people and to the sinless denizens of the Otherworld in Irish tales. So, this fairy bride tale reveals a very different attitude towards the fairies compared with those tales in which the fairy brides are made to vanish by touching with iron. Therefore, it is not surprising that the legend of the Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach could become conflated with the legend of the Meddygon Myddfai, for here a beneficial gift was brought into the world from an otherworld of high morality, and as according to medieval understanding healing powers had their origin in the divine (Wortley, 1992, pp. 160-161).

Fairy mistress tales are associated with legends of intermarriage with women from foreign countries or from socially marginalized groups. Rhŷs discusses this in *Celtic Folklore* in the context of the fairy bride legend of Llyn Corwrion. Regarding the origin of the Simychiaid-family two versions were told, one of them claiming that they originated from a wandering family, the other that they are of fairy-descent:

We may, however, assume, I think, that there was a tendency at one time in Gwynedd, if not in other parts of the Principality, to believe, or pretend to believe, that the descendants of an Englishman or Scotsman, who settled among the old inhabitants, were of fairy origin, and that their history was somehow uncanny, which was all, of course, duly resented.

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 69)

Another family, Belisiaid y Pennant, were credited with a fairy ancestor, too. One of Rhŷs' informants reported:

Some two or three hundred years ago, Sir Robert of the Nant, one of Sir Richard Bulkeley's ancestors, had a son and heir who was extravagant and wild. He married a gipsy, and they had children born to them; but as the family regarded this marriage as a disgrace to their ancient stem, it is said that the father, next time the vagabonds came round, gave a large sum of money to the father of the girl for taking her away with him. This having been done, the rumour was spread abroad that it was one of the fairies the youth had married, and that she had gone with him to catch a pony, when he threw a bridle at the beast to prevent it passing, the iron of the bridle touched the wife; then that she at once disappeared, as the fairies always do so when touched with iron.

¹⁸⁴ At a wedding the lady says about the couple: 'now people are entering into trouble' and at a funeral 'because people when they die go out of trouble' (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 9-10).

(Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 105-106)

These examples are excellent evidence to prove that socially marginalized groups are used as a projection plane for the otherworld, for they, too, represent otherness in the perspective of people in the center of society.

But these socially marginalized groups are not only the projection planes for the otherworld. They have a special function in mediating the dealings with the otherworld and its denizens. These groups are often credited with magical capacities, so that they can act as mediator between the human world and the other. Notably, these social groups are of inferior status in the human society. This is the pattern is apparent in the case of Fionn's *fénnidi* in Ireland who are mediators between the human society and the otherworld. The *fénnidi* are outlaws who represent humans of living outside of society, without social rights and privileges (Nagy, 1985, p. 21). In Wales, from the early modern period onwards vagabonds and gypsies are credited with dealing in magic and hence mediate between this world and the domain of the fairies (Tallis 2019). It could be argued that the wandering folk offered magical services to the believers in such practices, but on the other hand the believers must have thought it credible for some reason that these people had a better access to the world of magic, and this goes, as I believe, with the notion that being other makes a social group predestined to be credited with a special access to the 'real' otherworld. Ironically, this pattern holds true when changing the point of view. For the English, Wales became a hoard of magic (Suggett, 2008, pp. 8-10). This goes hand in hand with the attempt of the English society to marginalize the Welsh people by treating Wales like a colony (Davies 1974). After all, these examples show that a close look on the traditions about dealing with the otherworld allow for a social analysis which discloses information about socially accepted and socially rejected behaviour, and about marginalized groups and xenophobia.

The Changeling

Finally, I want to turn to the changeling legends (F 321). The main pattern has been already introduced in chapter 3.2.2. In this place I will turn to the sociological implications of changeling legends: what is out of the norm and why are children abandoned? It is certain that occasionally occurring illnesses helped to strengthen the belief in changelings (Eberly, 1991): the rejection of a disabled child mirrors the unwillingness to accept a severe illness which leads to a strong deviation from the normal. In primitive societies these deviation from the norm can be attributed to and seen in context with supernatural aggression which comprises

sorcery and witchcraft, but also other mystical aggression (Jenkins, 1991, pp. 302-303). Richard Jenkins' hypothesis about the symbolic meaning of supernatural aggression:

[I]n any given social system, different categories of supernatural aggression may be the means of symbolizing deviance from the norms of any categories of social relations and behaviour that are in contrast.

(ibid., p. 303)

As a consequence, a person who shows a deviant behavior or does not conform to the norm can become suspect of being the source of such aggression (ibid., p. 307). Developing this thought further it is understandable that a child suffering from illness is not pitied but believed to be exchanged for the child's deviant behaviour rouses suspicion, and the afflicted is mistaken for the source of aggression, a fairy changeling. Among the Welsh folktales the believe in the mischievous character of the changeling is most obvious in the 'The Legend of the Gors Goch Changeling' who destroys the entire family (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 59). The otherness of the changeling in fairy stories becomes obvious by his aged view, eating and not thriving, being wise and able to speak or to make music when he should be just a wailing infant.¹⁸⁵

However, not only deviant behaviour or being visibly marked with illness lead to the rejection of a child. Joyce Munro shows how the failure of parent-infant-bonding can result in a failure of the child to thrive. Estrangement of mother from child leads to a clinical condition of the child which provides a basis for a prolonged withdrawal of care, as the child is not accepted as a person but perceived as a changeling (Munro, 1991, pp. 275-279). Munroe maintains:

The changeling appears to be a very accurate description of a failure to thrive infant or child. Review of case narratives of failure to thrive infants and psychosocial dwarfs [...] is like a review of changeling narratives. [...] Folk interpretation of the inexplicable, the "invisible", put fairy changelings in the cradle to embody a "change" for which they had non language to express what they saw.

(Munro, 1991, pp. 276, 279)

Thus, the changeling tales deal with the problem of accepting a family member. A conflict caused by non-acceptance and emotional deprivation between the social group, the family, and the 'other', the afflicted child, the "changeling", is enacted in a family setting.

We have seen that the stories about dealing with the otherworld can be divided in two main classes. One deals with travels to the other world, and the main theme of those tales is

¹⁸⁵ For examples see Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 51-58; Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 161, 231; Evans, 1935, pp. 55-64.

the transformation of the traveller. The second class is centred on the union of the denizens of the otherworld with mortals, and these tales basically deal with the ability of society to cope with foreign impulses from non-integrated social groups. On the level of the family this can also imply dealing with a new member which adds to the strain of the group. A close look at the motifs in detail – or their interpretation – can give us some information regarding the society in which such a story is handed down. Therefore, such an analysis can be helpful for the investigation of historical and sociological processes – as will be shown in the following part of this thesis.

Part II: The History of Fairy Traditions

Investigating the development of British fairy lore between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries, Hutton has outlined the development of a collective identity of the fairies and the coherent sense of a kingdom (2014); he points out that earlier studies covering historical aspects of fairy traditions do not aim at a continuous history of fairy lore: e.g., by Purkiss (2000), Thomas (1991), Henderson & Cowan (2001). Hutton's study is essentially based on written sources from England and Lowland Scotland and considers only a few Welsh texts; moreover, it does not reach beyond the early modern period. The aim here is to close this gap, and the second part of this thesis provides a diachronic study of motifs connected with the Tylwyth Teg in Welsh texts.

Assessing the historical development and use of fairy traditions will provide a deepened understanding of social developments. Hutton (2014), James Wade (2011), Helen Cooper (2004), Carolyne Larrington (1999, pp. 32-47) Kathryn Westoby (1985), Corrine Saunders (2010), Carol Silver (1999), Susan Schoon Eberly (1991), Joyce Underwood Munro (1991), and Lisa Tallis (2007) all show that social preoccupations are mirrored by and precipitate in fairy traditions. This is not surprising, as fairy traditions provide narrative patterns for talking about otherness (cf. *supra*, chapter 4). By providing images of an Other, the fairy traditions can help define the human world in contrast to the world of the fairies. Further, authors may construct fairy worlds contrasting with their own. In each case, a history of fairy traditions may prove a useful tool for the historian.

The following chapters cover developments from the medieval to the early modern period. The Reformation and Enlightenment tried to root national identity in the classical past, resulting in the novel interpretation of medieval texts in vernacular languages as Celtic heritage; the nineteenth century saw flourishing investigations in Celtic folklore; and finally, the twentieth century up to the present has seen the revival of Wales' traditional fairy lore in literature, but also in the works of fantasy writers and in different traditions of alternative spirituality.

We shall on the whole be concerned with the source texts discussed in the first part of the thesis: the meanings of the motifs elaborated there provide the basis for the ensuing historical analysis. To avoid lengthy repetition of introductions to source texts or the elaboration of a special meaning of a certain motif I will direct the reader to the respective text discussed in the first part of the study.

5. From the World of Wonder to the Abyss of Hell and the Secrets of the Alchemists

*'Aeth talm o waith y teulu,
Dafydd, â chroes. Da foes fu'.*

- 'Yr Adfail', Dafydd ap Gwilym

This part of the study focusses on the status ascribed to the Tylwyth Teg in the hierarchy of natural and supernatural beings. It will provide a marker that we can trace with certainty through the centuries linking our findings to historical development and revealing authors' attitudes to the fairies, and their notion of otherness. The following medieval examples illustrate how this *status* can be completely different even if common and typical fairy motifs are identifiable. In texts from the High Middle Ages, we find numerous ways of reconciling the denizens of the otherworld with the Christian order of beings. In the following two examples, the otherworldly creatures (a) are organized in a kingdom, (b) are pygmies, and (c) are inhabitants of a wondrous world, they are embedded in the order of beings in fundamentally different ways.

The tale of Elidorus in *Itinerarium Cambriae* (A.D. 1191) presents the fairies as a tribe of little people living under rule of a king (IC, p. 66). They are shown as beings of higher morality than mortal men, who in this resemble the interpretation of the Túatha Dé Danann as beings who escaped Adam's fall (cf. chapter 2.1). This pigmy people of excellent little men and women are to be contrasted with the fairy-like pigmy creatures described by Walter Map in 'De Herla Rege' (cf. chapter 1). The dwarf king who invites Herla resembles the satyrs of the classical world, and the iconography of the Christian devil with his cloven hooves. In both Elidorus' tale and the tale 'De Herla Rege' we encounter pigmy peoples reigned by a king, but these tribes are presented very differently. Gerald of Wales and Walter Map reveal two different ways of integrating fairy-like creatures into the medieval worldview: Gerald interprets the little people as one of the tribes living at the periphery of the human world in a secret underground abode; this is an euhemerization of otherworldly beings (knowledge of pigmy tribes was a heritage of the Classical world which had passed into medieval learning: these creatures could excel in (Christian) piety).¹⁸⁶ Map, however, created a demonic pigmy people which clearly relates to the classical woodland deities (cf. Chapter 1).

¹⁸⁶ In *Huon de Bordeaux* another very pious dwarf king, Auberon, who also shows exceptional Christian piety can be found (HDB).

The embedding of local fairy-traditions in medieval demonology can also be seen in Walter Map's presentations of the tale of Llyn Syfaddan, a typical fairy-bride legend (DNC; *Distinctio* II.xi). In 'De aparicionibus fantasticis' Map speaks only of 'women', as if the ladies described are but a subaqueous tribe of human beings. However, in the following chapter about Edric the Wilde and his fairy bride, Walter Map calls the tale equal to that of Llyn Syfaddan, concluding with the words:

Audiuimus demones incubus et succubus, et concubitus eorum, periculosos.

We have heard that incubi and succubi are demons, and the intercourse with them is dangerous.

(DNC; *Distinctio* II.xiil; my trans.)

This implies that he considers the lady from Llyn Syfaddan and the bride of Edric to be *succubi*, and thus, they are identified as demonic spirits. This identification, however, appears only as postscript to the tale of Edric, whereas the Welsh tale does not show demonological interpretations, except by the title which could be translated as 'About Ghostly Apparitions' or 'About Illusionary Apparitions'. This suggests that Map's source for the tale of Llyn Syfaddan did not present the lake lady as a demon, any more than modern recordings of fairy bride legends do. We witness here how a local tradition is embedded in learned Christian cosmology, for, after the chapters with the two fairy bride tales Map adds the chapter 'Item de eisdam aparicionibus' in which he explains how a *fantasia* or *fantasma* is a transient apparition created by demons (DNC; *Distinctio* II, xiii).

Another way of presenting fairy-characters is to introduce them as if they are human beings, with their supernatural character showing only in that they are skilled in magic.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, we can identify these characters as denizens of the otherworld by the motifs related to them. Such a character, introduced in the previous chapter, is Melwas who abducts Gwenhwyfar with magic and enchantment. He is identified as a fairy character by the abduction motif of the tale, by his abode and by the magical horse he rides (cf. chapter 4.1.1). Other characters related to this category are Llwyd ap Cilcoed who works magic by making Dyfed vanish in magical mists and by transforming his courtiers and queen into mice, or Arawn who changes his own and Pwyll's shape (PKM, p. 3). Llwyd ap Cilcoed is not addressed as denizen of the otherworld, in contrast to Arawn who is named king of Annwn. When looking at the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, we can observe that the nature of the inhabitants of Annwn does not receive a single comment. Indeed, the nature of such characters as Arawn, Hafgan, Llwyd ap Cilcoed, or Rhiannon is not discussed, and neither is the

¹⁸⁷ According to medieval understanding, a magician forces demons to serve him and bring about the work he wants to be done (Saunders, 2010, pp. 109-111).

difference between the magic of Llwyd ap Cilcoed and of Gwydion or Math. The question of who is a human enchanter and who is otherworldly can only be answered by investigating the perspective, i.e., who represents otherness and who is a member of human society. The Four Branches do not inform us as to the nature of the inhabitants of Annwn, though: in the First and Third Branches they are presented as heroic characters, with great magical abilities. Annwn can be dangerous: Arawn asks Pwyll to fight in combat, Llwyd ap Cilcoed is vengeful (PKM, p. 64). The ambiguity of the otherworld is visible here, because the contact with the otherworld gives also the opportunity of self-perfection, of self-testing, of winning a fairy bride and a blessed heir (cf. chapter 4). Therefore, it is doubtful whether the audience identified the denizens of the otherworld as fallen creatures because they worked magic, even if, according to church fathers such as Augustine or Isidore of Seville, magic always involved dealings with evil angels.¹⁸⁸ The legendary poems of the Book of Taliesin such as ‘Preiddeu Annwn’ which relates to the Four Branches by referring to Pwyll and Pryderi do not show Annwn and its denizens as an equivalent to the Christian hell, either, as I discuss in chapter 2.

Mark Williams explored an interesting strategy to describe the nature of the Túatha Dé in the tale *Altrom tigi dá medar* (‘The Fosterage of the House of the two Vessels’). They are not described as demons, but as beings who have a close relationship with a personal devil which is the source of their magic (Williams, 2016, pp. 240-243). They are not outright described as supernatural beings, but their spiritual status is complicated:

The question of the baseline spiritual state of the Túatha Dé is addressed with cunning. They are explicitly described as magicians and the worshippers of pagan gods: once again ex-gods are troped as their votaries.

(Williams, 2016, p. 241)

This leaves us with the question whether the otherworldly characters in the Mabinogi have been subjected to a comparable process of euhemerization, so that they finally appear as characters working magic in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi.¹⁸⁹ Christian cosmology left little room to interpret fairy characters: one possibility was that they were neutral or fallen

¹⁸⁸ Opinion about magical practices varied considerably dependent on the period and the social status of the magician. For a survey see Saunders (2010). Regarding the opinions of Augustine and Isidore see (*ibid.*, p. 100). Magic in the Middle Ages is a complex subject, for people differentiated between *magia diabolica* and *magia naturalis*. Helmut Birkhan showed the differences between these two kinds of magic and also discusses the kinds of *magia naturalis*, which comprises the tricks of the juggler and the art of the mathematician and of mechanics as well (Birkhan, 2010, p. 36).

¹⁸⁹ The ability to do magic has always been firmly connected with fairy characters. Noel Williams points out that in Old French the word ‘fae’ is mostly used as adjectival form derived from to the verb ‘faer’ (‘to enchant’) (Williams, 1991, p. 463).

angels, and consequently fallen demonic creatures (cf. for Irish parallels, Williams 2016, p. 147).

Regarding prose treatments of otherworldly beings, we find a great difference between vernacular and Latin sources. The Latin sources record episodes involving fairy characters not unlike episodes from nineteenth-century folklore collections. Here we find fragmentary evidence of folk customs and beliefs e.g., the fairy-brides from the lakes, the cunning and conjuring people and their practices become visible. The author has the position of a spectator as a collector of strange tales. Some of them appear in these collections as one of the oldest folktales about the fairies, such as Elidorus' visit to the pygmy fairy people, or the tale of Llyn Syfaddan as an early fairy mistress legend. The spiritual status of the fairy creatures differs between the various episodes retold.

In some Latin texts the fairy-like beings are described either neutrally, such as the green children of Woolpit (RCA), or as being of higher morality than human beings, like the little people of Gerald of Wales (IC, p. 66). A rare example is the case of Egwin, bishop of Worcester who saw three beautifully singing women in a forest and concluded that they must be saints (Hutton, 2014, p. 1140). Another group of texts presents the fairies as demons: examples are 'De Herla Rege' in *De Nugis Curialium* by Map mentioned above, but also the works by Gervase of Tilbury discussed above in Chapter 1.

Gerald of Wales's tale of Melerius presents the denizens of the otherworld as demons as seen from the perspective of Christian demonology, with neo-Platonist elements. It can be recognized as related to fairy folklore only by comparison with the early modern record about the vagabond Harry Lloyd whose tale appears in the Calendar of the Caernarvonshire Quarter Sessions Records of 1541-58 and who claimed to meet with the fairies and to have their help in fortune telling (see on this below). Melerius obtains occult knowledge and ideas about the future from his intercourse with unclean spirits.¹⁹⁰

Notandum autem, quod in his urbis legionum partibus fuit nostris vir quidam Cambrenis, cui nomen Melerius, futurorum simul et occultorum scientiam habens, cui talis hanc eventus scientiam dedit. [...] Semper tamen cum spiritibus immundis magnam et mirandam familiaritatem habens, eosdem videndo, cognoscendo, colloquendo,

¹⁹⁰ The 'unclean spirits' appear in the guise of hunters to Melerius. Demons appearing as huntsmen is a motif similar to the devil appearing as a hunter who hunts souls. This idea was introduced into Christian tradition by Origenes who interpreted Nimrod as hunter and rebel against the will of God, which makes him an allegory of the devil (Herzog et al., 2002, p. 120). Moreover, demons and Satan are found in the desert, where they try to seduce the pious hermits who have gone there for meditation (even Jesus himself met Satan in the desert) (di Nola, 1993, p. 224). The image of the hellish huntsman, however, cannot be found in the scripture. Having said this, huntsmen appearing in the scripture such as Esau and Nimrod are not the chosen ones of the God of Israel.

propriisque nominibus singulos nominando, ipsorum ministerio plerunque futura praedicebat.

(IC, p. 45)

It is worth relating that in our days there lived in the neighbourhood of this City of the Legions a certain Welshman called Meilyr who could explain the occult and foretell the future [...] All the same, he remained a very close and most remarkable familiarity with unclean spirits, being able to see them, talking to them and calling them each by his own name, so that with their help he could often prophesy the future.

(trans. Thorpe, 1978, pp. 116-117)

Melerius appears as the forerunner of early modern soothsayers and cunning people who claimed to be assisted by the fairies.¹⁹¹

In vernacular medieval prose we find a different situation. We can identify motif of fairy folklore, but they are elements of larger elaborated tales, such as the Four Branches of the Mabinogi. The otherworldly characters appear as royal persons or at least persons of high standing. The persons who experience the contact with the otherworld are noble people.

In another group of texts which appear in the Mabinogion, most often referred to as the Three Romances (Y Tair Rhamant), namely 'Owain / Iarlles y Ffynnon', 'Peredur ap Efrog' and 'Geraint ac Enid' we meet characters who relate to motifs which identify them as otherworldly characters. Such characters are e.g., the little king, brenin bychan or Gwiffred Petit, appearing in 'Geraint': he is a dwarf king and resides in a most beautiful castle which is reached by crossing a river.¹⁹² Another otherworldly character is the Lady of the Fountain appearing in 'Owain'. She is the guardian of a miraculous well and resides in a shining castle. The integrity of her realm depends on her ability to find a knight to defend the miraculous fountain. Edern ap Nudd who is Gwyn ap Nudd's brother is an otherworldly character, too. These texts, too, do not explicitly introduce these characters as otherworldly beings, and we find no hint which makes us believe that they are of demonic nature.¹⁹³ In *Lludd a Llefelys* the

¹⁹¹ Interestingly, in *Cambriae Descriptionis*, and with many examples from Scripture and Classical literature, Gerald of Wales defends the *awenyddion* from being inspired by evil demons. He does have to admit that 'Forsan sicut per phantasticos et energumenos spiritus interdum loquuntur tamquam ignaros' (IC, p. 206) 'It is possible that they are speaking through demons which possess them, spirits which are ignorant and yet in some way inspired' (Thorpe, 1978, p. 247). We witness the struggle effected when an ancient custom has to be brought into agreement with the religious orthodoxy.

¹⁹² Vernon J. Harward compared the little king to Giuvret in Chrétien's Erec, and to Auberon in *Huon de Bordeaux* (1958, pp. 62-66).

¹⁹³ For text see Thomson (1997) and translations see Davies (2007).

redactor of the tale does not comment on the magical creatures appearing in them with considerations about demonology either.¹⁹⁴

The vernacular texts, which relate to the courtly traditions of storytelling and poetry, present an otherworld which is a place of great dangers but also of great reward for one who can master the challenges. Otherness can be perfection: perfect poetry, perfect knowledge of the future, perfect knightly conduct, perfect chivalry when courting a lady, perfect beauty, and riches. This implies that an ordinary human being is not perfect but can progress by accepting the challenge of the Other. These motifs involve the inspiration of the poet and prophet and show similarities to the shamanist quest into the otherworld (cf. chapters 2 and 3). It is also the theme of the knight's quest. The Arthurian texts and especially the grail-tradition relate to the narrative motifs connected with journeys to the otherworld.

This idea of seeking perfection by leaving the habitual social context and questing into the unknown and experiencing otherness agrees with other cultural themes which are important in the medieval period such as the *peregrinatio* of the monk but also retreating into the wilderness. Irene Erfen explains:

Die Peregrinatio ist eine signifikante Erscheinungsform des irisch-angelsächsischen Möchtums, die sich in mehrgestaltiger Ausprägung zeigt. Neben den leuchtenden Exempla der den Kontinent durchwandernden Missionare wie Kilian, Kolonat und Totnan, deren Martyrium ihnen die Himmleskrone erwirkt und die Leiden in fremden Ländern lohnt, findet sich die eremitische Form des peregrinen Daseins wie es im "Väterleben" dargestellt und von einer Reihe von Iro-Schotten nachgelebt wird.

(Erfen, 1997, pp. 244-253)

The *peregrinatio* is a significant way how the Irish-Anglo-Saxon monastic way of life appears, which can show in various forms. Next to the radiant examples of the monks wandering through the continent such as Kilian, Kolonat and Totnan whose martyrdom wins them the crown of heaven and rewards their sufferings in foreign countries we find the way of the hermit of the peregrin way of life as it is described in *Vita Patrum* and is lived by a number of Irish-Scottish [monks].

The pilgrimage in general, but also the *inclusorium*, represent ways to cut the pilgrim and the recluse, respectively, off from the touch of the world and open a way to sanctity (Jones, E. A., 2013, p. 17). Being in touch with the unknown or being cut off from the mundane brings about the development of the soul. Even the crusades have been presented like a variant of seeking salvation of the soul by pilgrimage: the warrior's pilgrimage into holy battle:

A crusade was originally a *peregrinatio*, and the Holy Land crusade so remained until specialized terms with a more specifically military slant like 'general passage' (*passagium generale*) came into use in the course of the thirteenth century.

¹⁹⁴ For text and introduction see: Roberts 1975.

(Webb, 2000, p. xii)

In a cultural context in which contact with the foreign and with otherness is believed to bring about development, the quest into the otherworld is a motif which meets with similar important cultural patterns. Moreover, questing has a positive connotation. This is probably the reason why the otherworld of vernacular poetry, of the Four Branches and finally of the Arthurian tales did not contract the negative associations of demonology. In these texts motifs from a pre-Christian cultural stratum could survive, such as motifs related to shamanist journeys into the otherworld as shown in chapter 2. Indeed, the motif of a shaman's quest into an otherworldly realm resonates with the idea of the *peregrinatio* and the chivalric quest which is presented in vernacular literature. The folk tales, beliefs, and customs, however, which are not presented in the literature of the elite as an adventurous experience of a hero or a poet, are liable to be condemned as superstition. This is the case with the Latin texts which present fragments of folklore. They are interpreted from the perspective of Christian demonology. In this way two concepts of the otherworld become coexistent in different types of literature. One concept presents the otherworld and its denizens as dangerous, wonderful and inspiring, and the other concept dismisses the otherworld as illusion and its denizens as demons.

Evidence from the Poetry

In 'Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gwilym' (DAG 6), Dafydd ap Gwilym uses images found in 'Preiddeu Annwn' and the Taliesin-tradition when calling his uncle 'pendefig, gwledig gwlad hud—is dwfn' ('Chieftain, prince of the land of magic beneath the earth') (l. 21). In other poems – such as 'Y Dylluan', 'Y Pwll Mawn', 'Y Niwl', and 'Ail Ymryson Dafydd ap Gwilym', – he uses local fairy traditions in an almost jocular way to add colour: here, Gwyn ap Nudd is fairy king and the fairies minor demons.¹⁹⁵ Brynley Roberts (1980/81, p. 285) gives Huw Machno, Rhisiart Cynwal and Rhisiart Phylip as other examples of humorous use of the folk belief of Gwyn ap Nudd and his tribe.

A poem by Roger Davies (*fl.* c. 1500) also uses the Tylwyth Teg in a similar vein. This poem is preserved in two manuscripts, Cardiff C 2.14,477 and Peniarth 104,156: I provide transcripts and translation in the appendix. Davies presents the Tylwyth Teg as minor devils and uses them to create humour. Use of the line 'Ellyllon mingeimion gant' ('a hundred

¹⁹⁵ In 'Yr Adfail' the fairies brought destruction upon the people who lived in the house which is now a ruin. In this context the folk belief is presented as 'real', an exceptional example, which seems also to respect the taboo of naming the fairies (Gruffydd, 1979).

mocking sprites')¹⁹⁶ which also appears in 'Y Niwl Hudolus' from the Dafydd ap Gwilym Apocrypha: 'a yllyllon min geimion gant' (Davies, l. 38, see appendix), suggests that Davies saw his poem in the tradition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry, and most likely knew the apocryphal poem 'Y Niwl Hudolus' (attributed in one eighteenth-century MS to Siôn ap Hywel (*fl.* c. 1490-1532), and to Dafydd in 45 MSS, the earliest of which is Cardiff, MS Hafod 26 from c. 1574) (Fulton, 1996, p. 231). Unfortunately, we don't know anything about the lifespan of Roger Davies: it might be the case that it was he who first used 'tylwyth teg' in writing and Siôn ap Hywel took the line 'a yllyllon min geimion gant' from Davies, but without no certain dates or further evidence, it is impossible to be sure. What can be safely said is more interesting for us: by around the early sixteenth century 'y tylwyth teg' had been established as name for the denizens of the otherworld.

The poetry of Wiliam Llŷn (1534/35-1580) demonstrates various ways of using motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg. 'I'r Gog' uses Gwyn ap Nudd and Annwn as reference points:

Y goc las ar gogail ir
Yn bwrrw adwyth in brodir
Yn anwyn ith wenwynwyd
Gwn hen gorn wenwynic wyd
Nith dynid oth adanudd
Oni bai ynwrn Gwyn ap Nudd.

(Wiliam Llŷn, 'I'r Gog': Morrice 1908, p. 242)

The grey cuckoo on the green distaff
Shedding evil in our land
In Annwn you were poisoned
I know that you are a poisonous horn
You would not be taken from your side (?)¹⁹⁷
Unless it be in the fist of Gwyn ap Nudd.

In another poem Wiliam Llŷn plays with hints to the wonders of Annwn as known from the medieval literature and to the court of the King of Annwn which is without compare. In a very enticing way William Llŷn makes us recall a fairy palace he is visiting by using the words 'teulu tec', 'aur a bwyd ac arian', 'gwraic wych' and 'Nudd' in a suggestive way, when praising Dafydd Lloyd of Dolobran and his wife Efa and their household:

Mwy noc i ffair medd gair gwann
Oedd o lwybre i Ddolobrann

¹⁹⁶ See chapter 1 for the whole relevant section from 'Y Niwl Hudolus' (text and translation: Fulton, 1996, pp. 120-121, ll. 27-40).

¹⁹⁷ This line is awkward as rendered here. The word 'adanudd' is difficult to translate, being unattested with this spelling; perhaps we should read 'adanedd' ('wing; feather') or consider a form related to 'annudd' (abode). In any case, the general gist should be clear.

A ffyrth heb glo na fforthor
 A gras Duw ymhob gris a dor
 A chynnal beirdd ychwanec
 A chanu ymysc teulu tec
 Ac aur a bwyd ac ariann
 A gwraic wych a gar y gwann
 Gorau wyd naws gwryd Nudd
 O falch na difalch Dafudd.

(Morrice 1908, p. 20)

More than to a fair, says the word of the weak/gentle,
 Were there ways to Dolobran
 and gates without lock or porter
 and God's grace in every stair and door
 and the keeping of more bards
 and singing among a beautiful family
 and gold and food and silver
 And a magnificent woman who loves the weak
 best you are, (who have) the nature of Nudd's strength
 o splendid and not void of pride Dafydd.

'Teulu tec' is a synonym of 'Tylwyth Teg', 'aur a bwyd ac arian', recalls the riches and the feast of an otherworld castle, the description of Dolobran as home of poets compares it to the castles of the otherworld where the source of poetic inspiration, *awen*, is located, 'gwraic wych' recalls the beautiful queen of Annwn and 'Nudd', can be seen as a reference to Nudd Hael, but also, to Nudd, father of Gwyn, thus connecting closely the references of historical and magical courts. Nevertheless, the name 'Tylwyth Teg' is avoided. The above citation from 'I'r Gog', however, represents fairy-related motifs in a different way. The king of the fairies, Gwyn ap Nudd is named, Annwn is a source of deadly poison, and the mood of the poem is jocular. We see that Wiliam Llŷn, like Dafydd ap Gwilym, uses two different fairy traditions: on the one hand Annwn and its inhabitants in the context of a marvellous Otherworld, the source of poetic inspiration, and on the other hand Annwn the realm of demonic creatures, but seen with mild derision, a folk tradition best used in a jocular manner.

5.1 The Protestant Perspective & Humanism versus Tradition

Already in the medieval period people who left goods for the fairies were considered as practicing virtually a rival religion and fairies were believed to be demons or diabolic delusions (Thomas, 1991, p. 728). The early modern period was darkened by turmoil caused by new thought in the field of religion which led to the Reformation and to wars connected with it, such as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) on the continent and the English Civil War (1642-1649), just to name two major conflicts. In addition, the witch craze infested Europe like a plague of the mind. Relatedly, the Reformation brought about a change in attitude

towards traditional lore. The Puritans rated folk beliefs as superstitions and often also as Papist delusions:

[T]he Protestant myth that fairy-beliefs were an invention of the Catholic Middle Ages may well have had some effect. Fairies, like ghosts, were said to have been devised by popish priests to cover up their knaveries. [...] Most of those who remained sympathetic to fairy-beliefs admitted the Roman Catholic character of the fairy kingdom. 'Theirs is a mixed religion,' wrote Robert Herrick, 'part pagan, part papistical.'

(Thomas, 1991, p. 729)

In *Three Treatises Concerning Wales* (1567) John Penry complains about the reverence that the Welsh have for the Tylwyth Teg (called 'Bendith eu Mamau' here). He also discusses soothsayers and enchanters who claim to walk with the fairies on Tuesdays and Thursdays and to get their knowledge from the fairies – a subject that will be taken up later in this chapter:

Hence flow our swarms of fouthfayers, and enchanters, such as will not stick openly, to professe that they walke, on Tuefdaies, and Thurfdaies at nights, with the fairies, of whom they brag themselves to haue their knowledge. These sonnes of Belial, who shuld die the death, Leuit. 20.6. haue stroken such an astonishing reuerence of the fairies, into the hearts of our silly people that they dare not name thẽ, without honour. We call them bendith û mamme, that is such haue deferred their mothers blessing. Now our people wil neuer vtter, bendith û mamme, but they wil faie, bendith û mamme û dhũn, that is their mothers blessing (which they account the greatest felicity that any creature can be capable of) light vpon them, as though they were not to be named without reuerence. Hence proceed open defending of Purgatory & the Real presence, praying vnto images &c. with other infinit monsters.

(Penry, 1960 [1587-9], p.33)

Penry here claims a wide-spread belief in the existence of the Tylwyth Teg and their supernatural powers in the middle of the sixteenth century: soothsayers and/or their clients believe in the Tylwyth Teg's ability to impart secret knowledge. This belief is condemned by Penry and placed on a level with idolatry: doing magic with the help of the Fair Folk, he says, is a sin which falls under the verdict of the Book of Leviticus, 20.6.

The Early Modern period saw the decline of the medieval bardic order due to the social changes which destroyed the medieval system of patronage (for a recent study: Williams, 2019). The poetic art based on traditional learning and traditional patterns was confronted with Humanism and the Renaissance, as exemplified by one remarkable interaction:

During these very years in Wales itself, these same two worlds were to come together in a rather more confrontational fashion. I refer to the celebrated poetic debate - the longest of its kind in Welsh literary history, comprising a total of fifty-four poems, amounting to some five and a half thousand lines exchanged over seven years between 1581 and 1588 - in which the participants were the humanist Edmwnd Prys, archdeacon of Merioneth, and the professional poet Wiliam Cynwal.

(Williams, 2004, p. 33)

Edmwnd Prys and Wiliam Cynwal debated in their *cywyddau* the predominance of the traditional bardic lore or the humanist learning of the universities (p. 52).¹⁹⁸ It is programmatic for a humanist and a poet rejecting the traditional lore as basis for poetry. Edmund Prys' *Cywydd XXV* tells us:

Dangosaf ar loewaf lwybr
Am yr awen mor ewybr
Ni châd hon (pand cofion câs?)
O bair gwrach na berw grychias
Nac o ffrwyth y tylwyth teg
Nac o swynion, gâs waneg;

(Williams, 1986, p. 112)

I will demonstrate on the brightest path
Concerning the awen so clear
This was not obtained (are the memories not bad?)
From the cauldron of a hag nor a boiling bubbling
Nor from the fruit of the Tylwyth Teg
Nor from spells, (a wave of bitterness [OR 'evil appearance']).

We see that Prys' rejects traditional lore as source of inspiration. Mentioning both the Tylwyth Teg and 'pair gwrach' ('cauldron of the hag'), he not only dismisses folk beliefs and practices, but also the cauldron, and so the poetic tradition of *Llyfr Taliesin*. Prys does not differentiate between the fairy tradition of folklore and the tradition of a marvellous otherworld, but for him they belong together and must be jointly rejected. Both the new Protestant religious ideas and Humanism rejected traditional tales as superstitions and branded them as out-dated, as John Aubrey states:

[T]he many good Bookes, and variety of Turnes of Affaires have put all the old Fables out of dores and the divine art of Printing and Gunpowder have frightened away Robin-good-fellow and the Fayries.

(Aubrey, 1972 [c. 1686-88], p. 290)

The Humanists dismissed such tales as Merlin being a child of an incubus, that of Huon de Bordeaux, and the romances of Arthur and Lancelot (Williams, 2004, pp. 43-44), tales which contain motifs from fairy traditions. Motifs of pilgrimage and crusade were also rejected (*ibid.*) clearly indicating a new view of the world, mirrored in the attitude to folk beliefs.

There is thus a tension between three perspectives, namely (a) accepting the otherworld as source of inspiration, and using the motifs related to it; (b) rejecting folk beliefs

¹⁹⁸ For Edmund Prys' biographical details and especially his education and studies see Williams (1986, pp. xci-cxvi).

with derision and using them merely to add humour to poetry; and even (c) complete rejection of any tradition involving an otherworldly realm. Such attitudes towards fairy traditions and beliefs continue in the literature of the later centuries, as shown in the following chapters; here we should just briefly remind ourselves that the rejection of folk beliefs went hand in hand with interpreting magical creatures from folk tales, according to learned demonology, as devils. This continuous process has already been shown in the examples of *Buchedd Collen*, *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* and other texts in the previous chapters of the thesis. The following section will introduce a prose text about the history of the Welsh in which the Tylwyth Teg are rejected as personification of paganism, idolatry and their worship as a token of people having left the Christian righteous path.

5.2 Charles Edwards: Writing Welsh History as the History of the Chosen People

The opinion that the folk beliefs about the fairies were in fact a form of paganism persisted. Charles Edwards promoted this view in *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant* (Faith Unfeigned) (1677) the title of which was borrowed from 1 Tim 1:5 (Thomas, 1997, p. 192).¹⁹⁹ He used the fairy beliefs to style the history of the Welsh people as that of a people chosen by God and following the history of Israel, the Lord's chosen people. For Edwards, fairy beliefs are a token of straying from the path and the faith the Lord has designed for His people: he presents history as a history of the faith a people showed, and ill fortune because of God's wrath in the face of his chosen people's infidelity. This understanding of the historic process is in the tradition of Gildas' *De excidio Britanniae* which also sees political and military defeat as punishment for straying from the true Christian faith.²⁰⁰ Gildas identifies idolatry with the refusal to obey God:

Notandum ergo est, quod dixit scelus idolatriae esse nolle Deo adquiescere.

We must, therefore, observe that he says, the refusal to obey God is the crime of idolatry.

(text & trans. Williams, 2010 [1899], §39)

In the same way both punishment and mercy are predictable in *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant*. The tone of the whole work resembles the way prophets like Isaiah or Jeremiah spoke. M. Wynn Thomas notes that not least because of the personal hardship he suffered during Restoration,

¹⁹⁹ M. Wynn Thomas compares the Puritan writers Morgan Llwyd and Charles Edwards (1997); a useful bibliography may be found in this article. For a discussion of the rhetoric in *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant* see Morgan (1969).

²⁰⁰ For an edition of the text see Williams (2010). For historiography in early Welsh literature see Roberts (2019), and Jankulak (2010, pp. 1-4)

Charles Edwards 'found it natural to identify passionately with Gildas' (1997, p. 192). In chapter XVIII of *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant* we read:

Ar ol Rhyfel Owen Glyndwfr, parhâodd y caethiwed gorthrwm hwn ar ein cenedl ni drwy yr amser y rheolodd pump o frenhinoedd Lloegr; ac yn ddigon o hyd er dwyn dygn dlodi, ac anwybodaeth arni. Ac i ddigalon neu ddiffodd yr hyn o fawrfrydigrwydd, ac o fedrusrwydd, celfyddyd, ffydd, a moesau da y fuasai yn eu mysc gynt. Yn y cyflwr hwn cafodd achos i alaru ger bron Duw fel Sion gustuddiol; Nyni a wnaethom gamwedd, ac a fuom anufydd, a thitheu nid arbadaist. Gorchguddiaist ni â sorrain. Ti a'n gwnaethost yn sorod ac yn yscybon. Dychryn a magl a ddaeth arnom, anrhaith a dinistr. Syrthiodd y goron oddiam ein pen, gwae ni [y]n awr bechu o honom. Canys cyflawnwyd ynddi fwgwth Duw yn ddigon union, --- oblegyd na wasnaethodd yr Arglwydd ei Duw mewn llawenydd, ac mewn hyfrydwch calon, am amltra pob dim, am hynny y gwasanaethodd ei gelynion mewn newyn, ac mewn syched, ac mewn noethni, ac mewn eisieu pob dim, ac efe a roddes iau haiarn ar ei gwddf. Yn amser yr anwybodaeth hon yr arferodd ein gwladwyr ymgymdeithasu â'r tylwyth tēg yn y coedydd y nôs. Er hyn nid yn dragywydd y gwrthododd yr Arglwydd hwynt, ond er iddo eu cystuddio yn drwm, etto efe a dosturiodd wrthynt yn ol amllder ei drugareddau. Ac a ddattododd lawer o'u rhwymmau trwy y brenin Harri y Seithfed: Yr hwn oedd wŷr i Owen Tudyr O Fôn (a briodasai frenhines weddw yr oedd ef yn ei wasanaethu) ac a gafodd y frenhiniaeth fel hyn.

(Edwards, 1677, pp. 196-197)

After the war of Owain Glyndŵr, oppressive servitude on our nation continued through the reign of five English kings, enough to bring onto her severe poverty and ignorance. And to dishearten or extinguish such magnanimity and skill, art, faith, and good manners that were formerly in their midst. In this condition it (the nation) had reason to lament before God like the distressed Zion. We sinned and were disobedient and you did not spare us. You covered us with anger. You made us dross and dregs. Fright and fetters came on us, spoil and destruction. The crown fell from our head – woe that we should have sinned. Since in it the threat of God was completed justly and directly – since she (the nation) served not the Lord her God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore, she served her enemies in hunger and thirst and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he placed a yoke of iron upon her neck. In this time of ignorance our countrymen used to associate with the Tylwyth Teg in the woods at night. Despite all this the Lord did not reject them eternally, but although he vexed them greatly, nevertheless he had pity on them according to the abundance of his mercy. And he released many of their bonds through the king Henry VII, he who was grandson of Owen Tudor of Môn (who had wed the widowed queen he served) and thus obtained the kingdom.

In chapter 20 (p. 237), Edwards writes this:

Canys megis ac yr oedd yr efengyl gynt yn gostegu lleisiau, ac yn rhwystro gweithrediadau cyhoeddus y cythreuliaid; felly er pan adgweirwyd y ffydd yn ddiweddar, nid yw'r tylwyth teg (sef y cythreuliaid cymdeithgar) cyn hyfed ac oeddent yn amser Pabyddieth: pryd yr ymddangôsant yn finteioedd gweledig i lithio pobl drwy yspreddach â hwynt. Arwydd ei myned hi yn ddydd efangylaidd, pan ymguddiodd pryfed y tywyllwch.

Since just as the gospel in earlier times would silence voices and obstruct the manifest work of the devils; thus, since faith was recently restored, the Tylwyth Teg (namely

the sociable devils) are not as bold as they were in the time of Papism when they showed themselves in visible crowds to lure people through amusement with them. [This is] a sign of it becoming an evangelical day when the vermin of darkness hid.

The latter text shows Charles Edwards describing the Tylwyth Teg as ‘sociable devils’ and ‘vermin of darkness’. Their presence and the strength of their power is a measure of the absence of true faith in the gospel. They have been driven away by the day of the gospel, i.e. of the Protestant faith. He compares the vanishing of the Tylwyth Teg to the wonders of the first church when work of the devils was hindered. It was not possible for the Papists to chase away the Tylwyth Teg, who came in troops to entice men by their splendour. Thus, Edwards makes it clear that only the Protestants were able to cope with deeply rooted superstitions, and with evil represented by the opponents of the will of God, for these are the devils indeed. Hence, the message is that only the Protestants truly carry out the will of God. In highlighting the inability of the Papists to get rid of the fairies, Edwards argues in a way similar to Aubrey (see above).

But Charles Edwards’ statements go further, they go beyond simply removing a superstitious belief. The vanishing of the fairies becomes an allegory for the removal of fundamental ill from the country. With this understanding the deeper meaning of the first part of the text comes clear.

Edwards claims that people went to the woods to associate with the fairies (a common motif studied at length in Chapter 3 above, esp. 3.5). But Edwards did not want to record a folk custom, nor did he simply want to tell his fellow countrymen that the Tylwyth Teg should be regarded as devils. As he compares the Welsh with the chosen people and with Zion of the scripture, he replaces the idolatry of the Israelites, the worship of other gods by ‘association with the Tylwyth Teg’. Although we can assume that there really were folk customs which involved evoking the Tylwyth Teg, and although the realm of the Tylwyth Teg was certainly believed to be the deep woods, Edwards goes far beyond this. His writings equate the Tylwyth Teg with non-Christian divinities and equates folk custom with idolatry and the practise of a rival religion. His statement is a figurative one, and certainly no authentic report about a folk custom: the struggle of the Welsh for political influence and economic wealth was a punishment for clinging to folk traditions. The coming of the Tudor dynasty which he sees as the reign of a Welsh house is a sign of the mercy of the Lord. Indeed, the reign of the Tudor dynasty caused the break with Rome, the papist faith Edwards despises and led to the Reformation in England and Wales, but even more, for Edwards it is the promise of a great

future for Wales.²⁰¹ Thus, for Edwards the otherness represented by the fairies is the past with no hope and prospect of a golden future for Wales.

5.3 Prophet Jones: Disbelief in the Fairies - The First Step to Losing Faith

We have already seen that Protestant authors thought that fairies were non-entities, delusions devised by the Papists to cover their own crimes (Latham 1930, pp. 62-64; Thomas 1991, p. 729). The typical opinion of Aubrey has already been cited above: one should be happy, when such beliefs vanished. Edmund Jones, Pont-y pŵl, however voiced a very different opinion in *A Relation of Apparitions of Spirits in the Principality of Wales* (2010 [1780]), and he was not isolated with his opinion.

Edmund Jones, born in Aberystroth, Monmouthshire, was a fervent Calvinist (Bowen-Jones, 1959). Jones, also known as ‘Proffwyd y Tranch’ (‘Prophet of the Tranch’) collected reports about spirits and apparitions.²⁰² He claimed that disbelief in the spirits, apparitions and fairies would necessarily be followed by the disbelief extending to the established religion:

In answer to this, I avow that it is designed to prevent a kind of Infidelity which seems to spread much in the kingdom, especially among the Gentry and Nobility, even the denial of the being of Spirits and Apparitions, which hath a tendency to irreligion and atheism; for when men come to deny the being of Spirits, the next step is to deny the being of God who is a Spirit, and the Father of Spirits. Some indeed will not deny the being of Spirits good and bad; but without the least reason, or even a shadow of reason, deny their appearance.

(Jones, 2010 [1780], pp. ii-iii)

Regarding Jones’ opinion Coward maintains:

In this he was utilizing an argument reminiscent of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writers such as Joseph Glanvill, Richard Baxter, and Meric Casaubon who believed that disbelief in spirits led to saduceism, and ultimately, atheism.

(Coward, 2015, p. 182)

We could add that he also shared this opinion with Robert Kirk who wrote *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*, who believed it necessary to thus ‘suppress the impudent and growing atheism of this age’ (Kirk, 2008 [c.1691], p. 45). Yet, Jones, in contrast to Kirk, believes the Tylwyth Teg are devils: ‘the Fairies, tho’ not the worst of Devils, yet are

²⁰¹ For the role of Tudor dynasty and Jasper Tudor as the expected founder of such a dynasty putting the reign of Britain in Welsh hands see (Griffith & Thomas, 2021).

²⁰² For a detailed discussion of Edmund Jones life, work, historical background and further bibliographies, see Coward (2009, 2013, 2015, 2018). For a detailed survey of the fairy beliefs in his work see Williams (2008).

Devils enough to delight in the misery of men' (Jones, 2010 [1780], p. 9). The fairies as 'minor' devils we have encountered already in the discussion of *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* in chapter 4: Wynne and Jones seem to agree in this. Yet, further on, Jones changes his mind:

All the Spirits of hell cannot make as good appearance, and divert themselves in the hellish state, as the Fairies do, who are nothing else after all the talking about them, but the disembodied Spirits of men who lived and died without the enjoyment of the means of grace and Salvation, as Pagans and others.

(Jones, 2010 [1780], p.50)

Jones is apparently guided by Scripture (Eph 2:1-2)²⁰³ and, while talking about the fairies, he concludes that 'the prince of the Kingdom of darkness is called the prince of the power of air, and doubtless not for nothing so called. Eph II.2' (Jones, 2010 [1780], p. 41). In this case we see that demons that dwell in the air resemble the demons of pre-and post-Platonic philosophy, which achieved a popularity of their own in early modern times.²⁰⁴ Interpreting the letters to the Epheser in a neo-Platonic way has long tradition, for Seamus O'Neill highlights the similarity between the demonology and cosmology of the Platonists and Augustine (O'Neill, 2017, pp. 46-47) .

To sum up: Edmund Jones' ideas of the spiritual world shows the fairies in a position between devils and angels, although closely related to the former. However, he also sees fairies as spirits of the dead who are an integral part of his beliefs. To deny one element of the supernatural cosmos he believes in would make the whole construct collapse, and so Edmund Jones is a real believer in the existence of the fairies or, at least, he wants to be a real believer. The appearance of the Tylwyth Teg in the mundane world of men is a liminality (the Tylwyth Teg transgress the border between the spiritual and the corporeal world) which for Jones proves the existence of his spiritual world. Jones was not isolated with this opinion, but his investigations are of special interest for us, as he created a collection of folk beliefs including fairy beliefs in proof of his opinion. In this way he opened for us a window to early modern Welsh fairy beliefs. One of the tales Jones recorded reports of travelling folk, gypsies, who worked magic against a man and his family after having been turned away (Jones, 2010

²⁰³ Eph 2.1-2: 'And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you formerly lived according to the world's path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience.'

²⁰⁴ For Neo-Platonic beliefs related to and important for fairy beliefs see Briggs (2003, p. 167). For the post- and pre-Platonic philosophy see Burkert (1987). *Epinomis* (EPI 984-985) describes demons living in the air.

[1780], p. 4). In the next paragraph fairy belief related to wandering cunning folk will be considered.

5.4 The Fairies and the Cunning Folk

When investigating the role of fairy beliefs in early modern Wales, it is necessary to consider the fairies which appear in the witch trials, as well as evidence of cunning men and women, and legal reports about vagabonds and soothsayers.²⁰⁵ I will present the vagabond Harry Lloyd here, because in the context of his case we find one of the early examples for ‘Tylwyth Teg’ in writing (Jones, 1964, p. 97). Moreover, this paragraph will show comparable examples from other areas of the British Isles, so that we can see that ‘working’ of cunning people with fairy beliefs was no isolated Welsh custom in the early modern period.

The Caernarvonshire Quarter Session Records 1541–58 give us a vivid example of a cunning man, a soothsayer and enchanter in the person of Harry Lloyd:

[H]e the said harry lloyd beinge a common wanderer & vagabond from place to place having noe c'teine trade occupacon or meanes of livinge but under fayned colour & p'tence of surgery or Phisike doth exercise wicked & unlawfull arts (that is to say) fortunetellinge, Palmestry common hauntinge & familiarity wth wicked spirits in the night time & common cheatings & cunages of div'se of his mat^s leadge people...whereby he is dangerous to the inferiour sorte of people [...] this exaiate demanded of the said harry lloyd how & by what meanes he made them soe rich. he informed that by familiars and spirits and c'teine fairies commonly called in welsh (y Tyllwith Tegg) & that he the said harry Lloyd did resort unto them & had conferences wth them Twice ev'ie weeke in the night time vidzt upon Twesday nights & the Thursday nights weekelie thorough the yeere and that the fayries & spirits put a great quantitiy of gould & Silv' uppon the anville of said Richard y goe [...].

(quoted in Jones, 1964, p. 97)

Harry Lloyd is both a vagabond and a cunning man skilled in surgery, and various magical practices, such as telling the future, hand reading, conjuring wicked spirits.²⁰⁶ He claims - and

²⁰⁵ For studies on early modern witchcraft see: a) comprehensive works exploring the development of early modern witchcraft in general: Clark (1997); Cohn (1975); b) works emphasizing the sociological context: Ankarloo & Henningsen (1993), Barry, Hester & Robert (1996), Briggs (1997), Behringer (1997), Hutton (2004); c) comparative works comparing magical practice and shamanism: Wilby (2010, 2011). For studies on the role of cunning men and witches in Wales see: Davies (1999), Suggett (2008), Tallis (2007; 2019), Bosse-Griffiths (1977).

²⁰⁶ For the folklorist, the Quarter Session Record holds an interesting detail which is also mentioned in Penry's text and often mentioned in context with the Tylwyth Teg: they can be encountered most easily on Thursdays (and Tuesdays), and the next source from the Caernarvonshire Quarter Session Records confirms this. The fairies travel on Thursdays in ‘Y Niwl’: ‘Doe Ddifiau, dydd i yfed / Da fu'm gael, dyfu ym ged’ (‘Yesterday, Thursday (a day for drinking / it was good for me to have, I got a favour’) (DAG n.57, ll.1-2). A tale by Glasynys reported by Elias Owen in Rhÿs' trans. also gives this (Owen 1973 [1887], p.47): ‘He went back one Thursday night, the first of the moon that month, as suddenly as he had left the first time, and nobody knew whither [...]’. The belief can be found for

perhaps also believes to a certain extent – that he can converse with spirits and fairies. The fairy knowledge can be exploited by him to improve his social standing, as in the cases of other cunning men and women (Purkiss, 2000, pp. 90-104). Thus, the belief in the fairies and the imagined dealings with the fairies become a tool for social advancement.

But he is a confidence trickster who cheats his clients: the officials thought him a danger to the ‘inferior sort of people’, probably uneducated people who were insufficiently sceptical, and the officials clearly did not adhere to the same folk beliefs. It illustrated the huge chasm between an educated elite who used the fairy beliefs to add colour to their poetry, and lesser educated classes who hoped for help from the fairies mediated by the cunning men and women.

We remember that in medieval prose tales contact with the world of the fairies provides the chance of personal improvement for the knight, and inspiration for the poet. The way the confidence tricksters deal with their clients’ fairy beliefs is almost a parody of the medieval quest into the otherworld: if the knight or poet strive for lofty ideals, a poor vagabond like Harry Lloyd is just looking for money and respect from his contemporaries, and to achieve this end he claims to have been travelling with the fairies. However, the fairies are still a means to achieve an improvement of one’s situation.

The case of Harry Lloyd has parallels outside Wales. In Scottish witch trials, e.g., of Elspeth Reoch (1616) and others, we find evidence for the belief that secret knowledge could be obtained from the fairies.²⁰⁷ Fairy beliefs were of course not limited to the Celtic-speaking areas. Keith Thomas (1991, p. 727) lists cases from Somerset, Suffolk, London, Dorset, Surrey, and Cornwall, referring among others to Joan Tyrry (1555) Mariona Clerk (Suffolk, 1499), one Croxton’s wife (Yorkshire, 1567), Susan Snapper (Sussex, 1607) and a sixteenth-century vicar of Warlingham, Surrey.²⁰⁸ We find that fairy beliefs were widely spread, so that

Scotland, too. Bovet mentions a report by Captain George Burton about the Fairy Boy of Leith, who claimed to be a drummer for the fairies:

He seemed to make a motion like drumming upon the table with his fingers upon which I asked him, whether he could beat a drum? To which he replied, yes Sir, as well as any man in Scotland; for every Thursday Night I beat all points to sort of People that meet under yonder Hill’ (1684, p. 173).

Purkiss mentions a belief that fairies travel on Tuesdays and Thursdays from early modern Sicily, Romania and Eastern Europe. This must be connected with general medieval superstitions regarding the days of the week (2000, p. 147).

²⁰⁷ For a listing of Scottish witch trials so far found that contain references to fairy belief see Henderson & Cowan (2001).

²⁰⁸ For detailed material on the cases of the above-mentioned persons see also: (I) for Joan Tyrry: Wells Diocesan Records at the Somerset Records Office, A21 and A22, pp. 296, 317. (II) for John

cunning people could advertise their services by claiming to have obtained knowledge from the fairies. The evidence of fairy belief all over the British Isles supports Richard Suggett's argument: 'It must be emphasized that the literary accounts of magic in Wales were an expression of English attitudes towards the Welsh rather than the records of actual practices in Wales' (Suggett, 2008, pp. 8-10).

5.5 The Fairies and the Alchemists: Elemental Spirits, Transmission of Charms

It was not only the poorly educated cunning man or cunning woman who claimed to rely on the fairies' help in early modern Britain: while scientific thinking was gradually developing, there were also literate cunning men and conjurors, astrologers and alchemists, educated in the sciences, but also relying on the support of elemental spirits.²⁰⁹ I discuss below how alchemical theories about elemental spirits, widely spread in Europe, came to be conflated with early modern British fairy traditions, and the Welsh Tylwyth Teg in general. I discuss in particular one early modern charm which demonstrates the transmission and continuity of motifs widely spread in Europe, their assimilation to Welsh traditions, as well as their longevity.

The most famous early modern conjurer and alchemist with a Welsh background is John Dee (1527-1608), grandson of Bedo Ddu of Nant-y-groes, for whom hermetic magic and mathematical research were certainly not in conflict.²¹⁰ When travelling in the Netherlands and France, he became familiar with Paracelsian alchemy (Parry, 2011, pp. 51-52). Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombast of Hohenheim, 1493/94-1541) believed in the existence of elemental spirits or elemental angels, entities bound to the elements, but susceptible to invocation by a person learned in magic.²¹¹ Already Proculus (A.D. 412-84) had classed the daimons in groups bound to the elements (fire, water, earth, air and underground) (Butler, 1979, p. 35). Karin Olsen and Jan Veenstra point out that Paracelsus did not assume a demonic nature of these elemental spirits:

[T]he first author to give them a non-demonic place in the order of creation was Paracelsus whose *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris* (posthumously published in 1566) legitimised the elemental spirits, or *Geistmenschen* as he called them, as forces inherent in nature much in the lines of the secret virtues of plants and herbs and stones, placed there by the creator for the benefit of mankind as restorative

Walsh see: 'The examination of John Walsh (1566)', reprinted by Rosen, Barbara (ed.) (1991, p.68), the trial transcript is at Exeter Record Office, MSS Chanter 855B, f. 310R. (III) for Susan Snapper (Cave & Nichols, 1863, p. 121).

²⁰⁹ For medieval and early modern science see: Crombie (1959).

²¹⁰ For John Dee and hermetic magic see: Yates (2001, pp. 92-110).

²¹¹ For the concept of elemental spirits in Classical and Christian texts see: Schweizer (1988).

powers or objects of marvel. The Swiss doctor approached them with the eyes of the empiricists, even though he believed their visible manifestation relied on divine revelation, and treated them as further evidence of nature's plenitude and as a scientific reminder of the Aristotelian precept that nature abhors a vacuum.

(Veenstra & Olsen, 2014, p. vii)

The idea of a universe peopled by a multitude of spirits which could be invoked by an enchanter, a magician, was a Neo-Platonic legacy revived in the Renaissance.²¹² John Dee was familiar with the theory about the existence of 'elemental angels' (Harkness, 1999, p. 41), believing himself to converse with these spirits; and according to the opinion of Calder, some of them must have been inspired by fairy characters (1952; I, p. 761). But, according to Gwynfor Jones, Dee never referred to the Tylwyth Teg, nor did other more scholarly Welsh conjurors:

Nodweddiadol o ofergoeledd yr oes yng Nghymru ydoedd diddordebau gwŷr hsybys fel Arise Evans o Sir Feirionydd, John Evans (a fu'n athro i William Lilly, un o brif ddewiniaid y cyfnod yn Lloegr), John Dee (a gysylltir â Maesyfed), Rhisiart Ysgribwr, Thomas Pugh ac eraill. Eto nid ymddengys unrhyw gyfeiriad pendant at y tylwyth teg yn eu gwaith llenyddol fel y cyfryw a bu eu hymchwiliadau hwy'n fwy ysgolheigaidd o lawer nag arferion Harry Lloyd.

(Jones, 1964, p. 99)

Characteristic of the superstition of the age in Wales were the interests of cunning men like Arise Evans from Merionethshire, John Evans (who was teacher to William Lilly, one of the leading magic men of the period in England), John Dee (connected with Maesyfed), Rhisiart Ysgribwr, Thomas Pugh and others. Nevertheless, no definite reference to the Tylwyth Teg appears in their literary work as such and their investigations were more scholarly by far than Harry Lloyd's habits.

This suggests the belief in the Tylwyth Teg or fairies was something for the lower classes, the uneducated people and often looked at with some ridicule and classed with the devils (see above). The more educated cunning men did not identify them as elemental spirits or angels. However, things would change in the course of time and conjuring fairies would become acceptable also for the more educated.

Before we return to Welsh cunning people, we should note that William Lilly (1602-1681), pupil of John Evans (1594-1659), conflated his alchemistical magic with fairy beliefs, even attempting with the help of various conjurors to get contact the Queen of the Fairies, whom he considered to be an angelic being, as he describes in his autobiography *William*

²¹² For a comprehensive introduction into Neoplatonism see: Remes (2008).

Lilly's History of his Life and Times (Lilly 1822 [1715], pp. 229-232). The syncretism of Neoplatonic elemental spirits or angels with the fairies is here evident, whereas it could be but conjectured in the case of John Dee, for Dee never explicitly referred to the fairies like Lilly.

In a booklet by an unknown cunning man from Denbighshire, cited by Bosse-Griffiths we read (1977, p. 130): 'Diau fod yr ysbrydion hyn sef y Tylwyth Teg, yn fwy daearol a chymdeithasol iddynt na rhai uffernol ac wybrennol' ('It is without doubt that these spirits namely the Tylwyth Teg are earthlier and more sociable than infernal and aerial [ones]'; my trans.). It is a matter of debate whether we can trace Paracelsian ideas here. If 'daearol' does not only imply an earth-bound dwelling place, this quote could also suggest that the Tylwyth Teg were identified as elementals by the author. The aerial spirits suggest another elemental spirit, and the infernal spirits could also be regarded as elementals following Proculus. The other possibility to translate wybrennol is 'celestial' which could mean that the author sees the Tylwyth Teg as earthbound creatures between devils and angels. But this leaves us with the question why the author does not use the word 'angylion'. This latter interpretation would agree with the general assumption that elementals were of mixed nature, i.e., neither infernal nor celestial (Butler, 1979, p. 59). However, without any further textual evidence we cannot decide whether we witness a new aspect, namely that of an elemental spirit, being attached to the fairy folk.

Labelling the Tylwyth Teg 'daearol' is a feature which discriminates them from the aerial fairies of the neo-Platonist concepts. Richard Baxter, a 17th century Puritan, classed the fairies among the aerial spirits of the sub lunar sphere, and did not regard them as some earth-bound spirits 'We are not fully certain whether these Aerial Regions have not a third sort of Wrights, that are neither Angels, (Good or Fallen) nor Souls of Men, but such as have been placed as Fishes in the Sea and Men on Earth; and whether those are called Fairies and Goblins are not such' (Baxter, 1691, p.4). Reverend Kirk from Aberfoyle held the view that the fairies were 'of a middle nature betwixt man and angels, as were the daemons thought to be of old' (Kirk, 2008 [c. 1691], p. 47). His fairies are creatures of the air rather, and the link to classical Neoplatonic philosophy is obvious in his referring to 'daemons'. Aerial nature of fairies is in agreement with the description of the fairies in much earlier texts, such as in Dafydd ap Gwilym's 'Y Niwl' or in *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* and other texts which describe the flight of the fairies through the air. Both Baxter and Kirk see the fairies a species between angels and devils, but not bound to earth, which could be in agreement with the Welsh charm provided 'uffernol' and 'wybrennol' are meant as opposites.

5.5.1 Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych: Following the Tradition of Early Modern Conjurors

Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych ('The Secret Book of the Cunning Man of Denbighshire'),²¹³ a hand-written book of roughly 200 pages, is a collection of charms, incantations and instructions on how to conjure fairies, written in Welsh and English, in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (Bosse-Griffiths 1977, p. 43), and given that they are inspired by (or are copies of) the work of William Lilly, some of these charms bear witness to at least a century's transmission (p. 45). But the charm copying tradition reaches back prior to the eighteenth century. One charm taken down in English and reproduced by Bosse-Griffiths (p. 132) is very similar to a charm for conjuring a fairy in Bodleian Library MS. Ashmole 1406 (16th and 17th centuries) and edited by Briggs (Briggs (ed.), 2003 [1959], pp. 248-249). The charm copying tradition persisted in the early nineteenth century. Another charm copied by the cunning man from Denbighshire resembles one found in another 'Llyfr Cyfrin', that of Ellis Edwart, copied by Dafydd Dafis in 1804. We may compare the charm in these two versions. First, from 'Llyfr Ellis Edwart':

Yr ysbrydion yma hefyd eill fod i galw fel ysbrydion ereill, am riw achosion lle maent yn fynych: Rhaid i'r lle boch iw galw fod yn bur lanwaith a chadach wedi ei daenu ar lawr neu ar fwrdd naw troedfedd oddi wrth y cylch[.]

(Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 46)

These spirits, too, can be called like other spirits, for some reasons [in places] where they are often. The place where you will call them must be pure and clean, and a piece of cloth spread on the ground or on a table nine feet from the circle.

(my trans.)

Here it is in 'Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych':

Hyfforddiad i alw ar ysbrydion a elwir tylwyth teg. Rhaid i'r lle y boch yn galw arnynt fod yn bur lanwaith a chadach wedi ei daenu lawr neu ar fan o amgylch troedfedd oddi wrth y cylch neu sircil ar lawr[.]

(Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 46)

Instruction to call the spirits which are called Tylwyth Teg. The place where you call them must be pure and clean, and a piece of linen spread on the ground or on a place round about a foot from the circle on the ground[.]

(My trans.)

²¹³ This handwritten book was given to Bosse-Griffiths by Llinos Davies who worked then in Abertawe. It is listed with the manuscripts of the National Library at Aberystwyth in the bibliography and provided by Griffiths with the remark that it is in the possession of Llinos Davies. No manuscript number is provided. I have not been able to locate it in the catalogue of the National Library.

This comparison shows how the author of ‘Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych’ replaces ‘spirits’, a rather unspecified term, with ‘Tylwyth Teg’ of the autochthonous Welsh tradition. Harms has shown that such replacements were not unusual, as for the conjurors the goal of the incantation was in the center of their attention, and not exact nature of the spirits with whose help the goal was achieved (Harms, 2018, pp.75-76).

Another charm in ‘Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych’ gives further evidence for the gradual early modern transformation of Annwn into hell and the identification of the ruler of Annwn with the devil. An incantation of the Tylwyth Teg, followed by the Cabalistic diagram, calls upon the Tylwyth Teg and ‘Sathan Barampar Barbarson’ to reveal hidden treasures:

Ffordd arall o alw ar yr ysbrydion a elwir Tylwyth Teg ac i gael allan drysor cuddiedig. Mewn ystafell ddirgelaid o oleuwch ac ynddi arogl peraid, y mae’n gymwys gwneud y gwaith hwn sef ysgrifennu â gwaed y ceiliog du ar bapur gwan glân yn gyntaf eich deisyfiad fel y mae canlyn: Sathan Barampar Barbarson, Dewch ataf fi mewn prysurdeb i’r lle hwn. Dygwch imi y trysor i’r fan a’r lle yma [...].

(Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 130)

Another way to call upon the spirits which are called Tylwyth Teg and to get out hidden treasure. In a secret chamber of light, with sweet-smelling fragrance, is it appropriate to do this work, namely firstly to write with the blood of the black cockerel on small (thin?) clean paper your petition as follows: Sathan Barampar Barbarson, hurry to come me to this place. Bring to me the treasure to this place and spot [...].
(my trans.)

This charm brings the Tylwyth Teg into the context of dark ritual magic, using fragrances, writing letters and invoking Satan as the master who brings treasures. This charm is a further example how the Tylwyth Teg became associated with the Devil.²¹⁴

The main issue of the last spell cited above is the discovery of hidden treasures with the help of the fairies. The texts hold several elements which are like typical motifs connected with fairy traditions: the fairies as guardians of treasures, offering food to fairies and elves to make them inclined to help the supplicant and the fairies’ love for cleanliness.²¹⁵ The fact that the Tylwyth Teg are offered quite mundane food is a clear indicator that they were not treated as bodiless spirits, but that they must have at least some kind of body allowing them to enjoy the meal in some way. In folklore the gratefulness of the fairies for food is well attested

²¹⁴ In 19th century folklore we find the motif of both the Tylwyth Teg and the Devil as guardians of hidden treasure: Rhŷs, in *Celtic Folklore*, gives two versions of the treasure hidden in Mynydd y Drum (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 19-20, 255). One version identifies the fairies as guardians of the treasure, the other the devil.

²¹⁵ For the text see Appendix A3.

(Thompson F 332). Those who leave milk or cream, and sometimes bread, are usually rewarded: Rhÿs tells of a girl who received money (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 36), and various authors mention gifts of food, such as pouring out milk for the fairies in order to appease them and to gain their benevolence and blessings (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p.193; Wilde, 1887, p. 276, Cowan & Henderson 2001, p. 19). The fairies' love of cleanliness and fresh water is also well attested in nineteenth-century Welsh fairy lore (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 224). The Tylwyth Teg who visit a house at night expect it to be neat and clean, and fresh water set aside for them. This feature they share with 'ladies of the night', Abundia or Holla and her women, who used to visit houses at night (Cohn, 1975, pp. 201-219). It cannot be excluded that these fairy women from continental tradition also influenced this part of folklore concerning the Tylwyth Teg, as we find no comparable narrative motif in the medieval material (Purkiss, 2000, p. 148).

Oralization of Literary Names

The Tylwyth Teg are shown in this charm to be ruled by a king and a queen called 'Meiob'/'Meicob' and 'Oberion'.²¹⁶ 'Oberion' is well known to us from Shakespeare, as Oberon, King of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose name derives from that of the dwarf king 'Auberon' in the thirteenth-century romance *Huon de Bordeaux*, a *chanson de geste*.²¹⁷ This name is the French form of 'Alberich', a name which translates as 'powerful elf' (Petzolt, 1990, p. 19; Lecouteux, 2013, p. 63), for 'alb' of Old German corresponds to 'ælf' in Anglo-Saxon (Hall, 2007, pp. 4-5). The meaning of 'Meicob'/'Meiob' is more enigmatic, unless it is a scribal error for 'Micol'. For William Lilly reports in his autobiography that the name 'Micol' was used by Ellen Evans, daughter of the conjuror John Evans, in the opening phrase of her incantation to conjure the queen of the fairies: '*O Micol, o tu Micol, regina Pigmaeorum*' (O Micol, o you Micol, queen of the pygmies)' (Lilly, 1822 [1715], p. 229).

We could speculate that the fairy rulers' names from literary sources became part of the practice of the Denbighshire conjurer, perhaps akin to the way 'Oberon' slipped into the oral tradition of a different cunning man:

The English sceptic Thomas Jackson once confronted an English cunning man, and asked him about one of his rituals, which the man said was directed at the king of

²¹⁶ The fairies being ruled by a king and a queen is according to Hutton typical of early modern British fairies and developed during the late Middle Ages (Hutton, 2014, p. 1153).

²¹⁷ For text and introduction see Hindley & Levy (1983).

fairies. ‘Yet,’ says Jackson, with an audible grin, ‘he had entirely forgotten this King’s name until I remembered it unto him out of my reading in *Huon of Bordeaux*.’

(Purkiss, 2000, pp. 130-131)

This is far from a unique example of literary characters becoming reintegrated into oral folk tradition: we may consider the integration of King Arthur into folk beliefs as leader of the spectral hunt, mentioned in Gervasius Tilbury’s twelfth-century *Otia Imperialia* (Schmitt, 1994, pp. 118-19). Ronald Hutton sees a close interaction between oral and literate cultures in the development of early modern fairy traditions (Hutton, 2014, p. 1154; see further Fox, 2002, p. 8). Re-oralization of folklore can feature several complex stages (see Sioned Davies (1996), for an indicative study of the Lady of the Lake legend); in our case, when only names are transmitted, the case is less complex, but it is further proof that oral and written tradition can be closely related. Fairy traditions are enriched by names which are transmitted from written sources. The re-use of ‘Oberon’, well known from Shakespeare, and ‘Micol’ certainly well-known to a conjuror from Lilly’s autobiography is not unexpected. However, the charm names seven ladies who accompany the royal couple of the fairies: Sibia, Reflilia, Forta, Folla, Affrita, Julia, Benula (Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p.125).

5.5.2 The Seven Sisters: Transmission of Charms tracked by Names

The seven sisters Sibia, Reflilia, Forta, Folla, Affrita, Julia, Benula appear first in fever charms. The original language of the conjuration of the seven sisters (invoked in the charm quoted above) is Latin, and the seven sisters are considered demons causing fever in these earliest sources. Charms against fever demons imagined as a group of sisters have a long history and have been widely known: Bosse-Griffiths identified a version of this conjuration in a Danish source edited by Ohrt in *Da signed Krist* with the names Ilia, Reptilia, Folla, Suffugalia Affrita, Filia and Loean or Ignea (Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 127). However, Ohrt names the sisters Alia, Reptilia, Folia, Suffugalia, Affrica, Filica, Loena/ Igne (Ohrt, 1927, p. 33). The earliest source I have discovered is the early thirteenth-century *Codex Gigas* (CG, p. 578), probably written in Bohemia, but a variant is also found in the Codex Vaticanus Latinus 235 (fol. 44–45) from the tenth or eleventh century (Simek, 2019). There is a further variant on a lead amulet at Blæsinge in Sjælland, Denmark,²¹⁸ dated to the period 1000 AD-1350 AD (SNRD). Simek identified this amulet from Blæsinge, too, in his study on apotropaic amulets

²¹⁸ The *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas* provided by Uppsala University (SNRD) provides rune texts from various objects, and especially amulets are interesting to get an insight in charms which were popular in the Middle Ages.

protecting against illnesses in Scandinavia. He lists three further amulets from Scandinavia and two from Germany referring to the seven sisters. From these early sources it is apparent, that the seven sisters are originally fever demons, representing illness.

The text of *Codex Gigas* reads:²¹⁹

Contra febres	Against fevers
In nomine Patris et filii et	In the name of the Father and the Son and
spiritus sancti adiuro uos	The Holy Ghost I adjure you colds,
frigores, septem enim sorores estis,	For you are seven sisters,
una dicitur Ilia II Restilia III	One is called Ilia II Restilia III
Fogalia IIII Suffogalia V Affrica	Fogalia IIII Suffogalia V Affrica
VI Ionea VII Ignea.	VI Ionea VII Ignea.
conjuvo vos frigores de	I adjure you colds of
quacumque natione estis	whatever nation you are
per Patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum [...]	By the Father and Son and Holy Ghost [...]
(CG, p. 578) ²²⁰	

The charm on the lead amulet from Blæsinge as found in the *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas* (DK Sj 50) reads as follows:

Coniuvo vos, septem sorores [...] Ellffrica	I invoke you seven sisters [...] Elffrica (?),
(?), Affrica, Soria, Affoca, Affricala.	Affrica, Soria, Affoca, Affricala. I invoke
Coniuvo vos et contestor per patrem et filium	and call you to witness through the Father,
et spiritum sanctum, ut non noceatis istam	the Son and the Holy Ghost, that you do not
famulum Dei [...].	harm this servant of God [...].

Moreover, Simek refers to two sixteenth-century manuscripts; one of these, BL MS Sloane 3853, a miscellany of magical tracts, notes explicitly that the charm is for ‘the expulsion of elves and fairies’ (Simek, 2019, p. 283). In these early modern English manuscripts, the seven sisters appear as well, so that these texts represent a link between the continental medieval sources and *Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych*. However, Tuckley refers to a charm invoking the seven sisters which appears in MS Oxford 37 (Tuckley, 2011, p. 246), so that we could also assume that local versions of the incantation naming the seven sisters are based on medieval versions.

²¹⁹ The complete prayer is edited and translated in Tuckley (2011, p. 250-251).

²²⁰ Page numbers refer to the digitized online-edition.

The following table gives the names of the seven sisters from the various sources. It illustrates the continued transmission of the names, but also the scribal errors.

Llyfr Cyfrin (1st incantation of the seven sisters) Bosse- Griffith, 1977, p.123	Llyfr Cyfrin (2nd incantation) Ibid. , p. 124	BL MS Sloane 3853 (as quoted by Simek, 2019)	MS Oxford 37 (Tuckley 2011)	Codex Gigas	Ohrt (1927) & as quoted by Simek, (2019)	Ohrt (as quoted by Bosse- Griffiths, 1977)	Lead Amulet Sj 50
19th c.	19th c.	16th c	11th c	13th c.	15th c.	?	11th- 15th c-
Sibia	Sibia	Lilia	Idia	Ilia	Alia	Alia	?
Reflilia	Restilia	Restilia	Restilia	Restilia	Reptilia	Reptilia	?
Forta	Fora	Foca	Focalia	Fogalia	Folia	Folla	Elffrica
Folla	Folla	--	Subfogalia	Suffogalia	Suffugalia	Suffugalia	Affrica
Affrita	Offrita	Affrica	Affrica	Africa	Affrica	Affrita	Soria
Julia	Julia	Iulia	Nillica	Ionea	Filica	Filia	Affoca
Benula	Bonulia	Iuliana	Ionea Ignea	Ignea	Loena/ Igne	Loena/ Ignea	Affricala

The seven sisters are part of a rather widely spread and long-lived motif appearing in charms, but in the Welsh charm they have undergone a transformation: they represent fairy-characters (a change already introduced in the Sloane manuscript) and are addressed not as demons of illness, but as companions of the royal fairy couple. They are guardians of treasures and are named as earthly spirits.

The process of transformation of fever demons into fairies and elves is clarified by a fourteenth-century charm from Germany (ed. Lecouteux, 1999, p. 241-244), which lumps together all possible causes for illnesses: elves and small elves, cramps and fevers. This charm shows that elves have been held responsible for causing illness, just as fevers and cramps are thought of as personified demonic creatures which can be subjected to an incantation. Simek's study gives additional evidence. In his survey of the names of magical or supernatural creatures believed to be responsible for illnesses, we find several variants of 'elves':

It can be assumed that the terms for the spirits conjured on these amulets were, at least to some extent, interchangeable, so that we have a list of spirits called, in the latinized forms used:

Demonēs (pl.)

Elvae (pl. f.)

Elves (pl. m.)

Albes (pl. f. and m.?)

Pestes (*omnium infirmitatum*) (pl., obviously as a personification of pestis "plague": "you plagues of all illnesses")

Septem sorores (with five out of seven names)

Alber (sg. m.)

Diabolus (sg. m.)

Satanas (sg. m.).

(Simek, 2019, p. 381)

It seems that demons causing illness seen as elfish characters facilitated the interpretation of the seven sisters as fairies or Tylwyth Teg. But by this interpretation they lost their character as fever demons. The infliction of illness is not a motif associated with the Tylwyth Teg: on the contrary, the Welsh fairies are rather associated with magical healing. A comparable study by Toms Kēncis (2017, p. 33) on a Latvian fever charm referring to five sisters shows a transmission from Syrian material to Latvia via Byzantine regions and West Slavonic countries. Kēncis notes that in Russia, too, female fever demons were known, the *triasavitsy* (p. 31).

Seven Sisters – Nine Maidens?

In search of comparative motifs, Bosse-Griffiths refers to the nine sisters, *Y naw chwaer*, who appear in 'Preiddeu Annwn' as the nine maidens of the cauldron, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's '*Vita Merlini*', Morgan and her sisters, and finally the nine priestesses of the Isle of Sena mentioned by Pomponius Mela. Having referred to the religious function of the nine priestesses, Bosse-Griffiths says this:

Mae'r saith chwaer hefyd yn cynrychioli atgofion am gyfeillach o ferched swydd offeriadol, er iddynt ymddango fel "ysbrydion daearol a elwir Tylwyth Teg".

(Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 128)

The seven sisters, too, represent a reminiscence of a fellowship of women in a priestly function, although they show themselves as "earthly spirits who are called Tylwyth Teg".

However, as we have seen that the seven sisters originate in the belief in fever demons imagined as seven sisters, the idea that we find here a reminiscence of a female priesthood must be rejected.

Oralization – Transmission of the Seven Sisters' Names into Folklore

Returning to the names of the seven sisters, and the possibility of the transmission of these names into folklore, Bosse-Griffiths suggests that Sibia probably appears as Sibi in the tale about the young man of Braich y Dinas in Rhÿs' *Celtic Folklore*, and Julia and Affrita as 'Jili ffrwytan' in two stanzas attributed to a spinning fairy from Llŷn in T. Gwynn Jones' *Welsh Folklore* (Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 126).²²¹ Moreover, she finds 'Affrit yw'r gair Arabeg am ysbryd' ('Affrit is the Arabian word for spirit', *ibid.*). An Arabian origin of 'Affrita' is unlikely as it is more plausible that 'Affrita' is a scribal error for 'Affrica', which appears in the earlier charms listing the names of the seven sisters (see table above).

Jones and Rhÿs both give an example from Corwrion where a fairy is humming 'sili ffrit' while spinning (Jones, 1979, p. 74; Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 64-65). Rhÿs notes that the words 'sili ffrit Leisa Bela' were used by children in the area, but he was not sure what it meant. According to Rhÿs, 'ffrityn' and 'ffritan' are used in Caernarvonshire to describe a small man or woman, respectively (*ibid.*). GPC gives 'good-for nothing person' for 'ffrityn', which is used from the seventeenth century onwards. 'Sili' is from English 'silly' according to GPC (*s.v.* 'sili'). Rhÿs says that 'sili ffrit' is used for a female dwarf, a small person, in Merioneth and parts of Powys, and further, 'The term *sili ffrit* was formerly in use at Beddgelert, and what was thereby meant was a child of the Tylwyth Teg' (*ibid.*). Rhÿs has no definite conclusion regarding the Welsh or English origin of 'Leisa Bela', and is inclined to see here a corruption of 'Isabella' (*ibid.*).

This evidence does not support the hypothesis that 'sili ffrit' was based on the charm with the names of the seven sisters. In absence of further evidence, it could be that the

²²¹ For the tale of the young man of Braich y Dinas see: *Celtic Folklore* (Rhÿs 2012 [1901], p. 97). For the tale from Llŷn of the spinning fairy see: Jones 1979, p. 74.

similarity in sound of ‘sili ffit’ and Affrita is simply accidental. In connection with changeling tales, ‘sili ffrit’, ‘silly good-for-nothing person’, would make sense. ‘Sibia’ or ‘Sibi’ could be a truncated form of Sibylla (Lat.) or Sibile (Old French), both without relating to the charm. Harms draws attention to the fact that the Sibyls of the Classical became reinterpreted as fairy characters in the Middle Ages (2018, p. 63). Therefore, a form of Sibyl appearing in folk tradition as fairy name must not necessarily been connected to the charm. We must note that Sibia appears in the Welsh charm which presents the youngest version of the seven sisters who are interpreted as Tylwyth Teg in that charm. We could therefore assume that the redactor of the charm has replaced a version of ‘Ilia’ by a typical fairy name. Furthermore, Bosse-Griffiths suggests that ‘Folla’ could be derived from the Irish triad of ‘Folla, Banba, Éire’ (Bosse-Griffiths, 1977, p. 126). But as the older charms relating to the seven sisters were popular in Scandinavia and Germany, an Irish origin is not as likely as changes due to consecutive scribal variations.

The etymology of the fairy names remains unclear, but it is obvious that the Welsh cunning men who used written charms drew on traditions widely spread in Northern Europe, and which could claim great antiquity, as Simek’s and Kęncis’ studies on fever demons imagined as maidens show. With the charm ‘Hyfforddiad i alw ar ysbrydion a elwir Tylwyth Teg’ from *Llyfr Cyfrin y Dyn Hysbys o Sir Ddinbych* we find a rather recent western variant of a charm involving the maidens who originated in fever demons. We witness that the conjurors conflated local beliefs with the patterns of general European ritual magic. In this process the character of the original charm was considerably changed, so that instead of averting illness, treasures shall be discovered, with fever demons transformed into members of the royal court of the Tylwyth Teg associated with their king and queen.

5.6 Outlaws in the Green

The world of the fairies is always close to the world of the outlaw, of the vagabond and the socially marginalized. Here, to conclude this chapter, I will present further evidence which shows how the belief in the fairies was deeply rooted in rural society, and which also underpins the identification of the Tylwyth Teg and their realm with the extra-social world.

The example I shall use is given by John Wynn in *The History of the Gwydir Family* (cf. chapter 4.1.3): David ap Jenkin and his followers hide in the forests, clad in green and are mistaken for fairies, and the peasants run away when seeing them. Indeed, the peasants act in

such a way, as if they'd follow the advice of Sir John Falstaff, as given in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* (V, 5): 'they are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die'.²²²

The outlaws in the green mentioned in the *History of the Gwydir Family* have an interesting English parallel: the Duke of Buckingham's park in Kent was raided by a gang who called themselves 'servants of the queen of fairies' (du Boulay 1964, pp. 254-255). In England the fairies in the green would develop into a narrative element bordering on the pastoral, with fairies taking the place of the classical nymph (Hutton 2014, p. 1151). Fairies became a romantic token of a by-gone better merry old England. Elizabeth I was called a fairy queen, the most famous example being Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* (1596) (see Wilson 1980, pp. 99-118, 126-142). In the courtly surroundings fairies were quite acceptable, so Henry, Prince of Wales could appear as Oberon in a court mask, whereas James I, author of *Daemonologie* (1597), condemns the fairies as illusions by devils when writing about fairy beliefs (Hutton, 2014, p. 1152). This last example from the English court shows that fairy lore was acceptable when motifs were in a play or a masque. Fairies were evoked to describe beauty and marvel. This is a metaphoric use of fairy lore which does not imply a belief in fairies. But if the belief in fairies was discovered with people of low social standing it was entirely rejected, for the fairies are interpreted as demons in this context, the belief in fairies as superstitions of the uneducated, othering them by this attitude.

Throughout this chapter we have witnessed a similar development in the treatment of Welsh fairy beliefs from the medieval literature onwards. On the one hand the Welsh poets and redactors of prose tales use the otherworld metaphoric to describing the outstanding poet, the wonderful court of a nobleman, or the motifs from folklore can be used as reference points in poetry to add colour to the description of a scenery, but on the other hand authors condemn the raw folktales and the belief in the fairies when found with people such as the vagabond Harry Lloyd. The fairy beliefs are acceptable when appropriated by the learned, and transformed in literature or art, but they are condemned by the learned when found as a less

²²² A few lines further on Falstaff exclaims, 'Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!' This provokes the question as to what ideas the early modern English had about Welsh traditions and folk beliefs. For the English Wales was regarded as hoard of magic and sorcery. Suggett summarizes the multitude of beliefs held about the early modern Welsh and their connection to the supernatural (Suggett, 2008, p. 1-12). However, the contemporary assumptions about the survival of illicit pre-Christian cults ('gentilisme') and lack of faith in Wales cannot serve as evidence for a folklorist, for it is a stereotype that foreign peoples are suspected of magic and uncanny art. Coward (2009) points out, that in the case of Wales this process started already in the Middle Ages. Examples of this attitude towards a neighbouring people can be witnessed elsewhere in Europe, too. It is the fear of otherness, which is projected onto the neighbours. The Sami were regarded as gifted practitioners of magic already in Old Norse literature (Pálsson 1999). Indeed, the expressions '*alfr*' (elf; fairy) and '*dvergr*' could be used synonym to *Finnr* (Sami) in Old Norse literature (Pálsson 1999, p. 33).

critical living belief. In this way the more educated use the fairy beliefs to exoticize, orientalise or other the believers who are often of lower social standing. The way how people deal with fairy beliefs has become a social marker.

6. Searching for Wales' National Identity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries: Conflating the Fairies with Pre-historical People

When in early modern Europe began developing consciousnesses of national identity, and nations began to form, legitimation was sought in the pre-Christian classical past. The Celts, and the druids as their tradition bearers, came into the focus of European scholars searching for ancestral peoples, especially among those peoples who spoke Celtic languages in the early modern period.²²³ Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709), eminent scholar and founder of Celtic and comparative philology, maintained that survivals of druidical teaching could be found in Welsh literature (Lhuyd, 1707, pp. 250-251).²²⁴ In eighteenth-century Wales, the idea developed that the druids represented a golden period of knowledge and pre-Roman scholarship. Theophilus Evans (1693-1767), in *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* (1740), promulgated this theory claiming a pre-Roman literacy of the Celtic people (1902 [1740], pp. 21-22).

This tendency was carried on into the Romantic period by Lewis Morris (1701-1765), culminating in the efforts of Robin Ddu o Fôn (Robert Hughes; 1744-1785), William Owen Pughe (1759-1835), Owain Myfyr (Owen Jones; 1741-1814) and, most importantly, Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams; 1747-1826). Iolo's goal was to revive the Celtic and druidic traditions with the help of medieval Welsh literature, and fabrications which supplemented the genuine canon of medieval texts.²²⁵ The alleged survivals of druidic wisdoms led to the founding of *Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain* in 1792 and the implementation of the *Gorsedd* into the *Eisteddfod* in 1819, and to date the druidic ritual adds to the splendor and solemnity of the *Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru* (Bowen 1992). After all, according to this development, the druids were perceived as radiant figureheads of Celtic, and hence also Welsh, identity. Peter Roberts played an important part in conflating the fairies and the druids, establishing an euhemerization theory for the Welsh fairies (Roberts 1815).

²²³ A small selection of general, more recent literature about the druids see Aldhouse-Green (2010), Birkhan (1997, pp. 896-949), Brunaux (2006), Cain & Rieckhoff (2002), Chadwick (1997), Cunliff (2011), Ellis (1994), Freeman (2006), Green (1997), Guyonvarc'h (1997), Hofeneder (2005, 2008), Hutton (2009), Jones (1998), McCone (1990), Maier (2009), Ó hÓgáin (1999, pp. 69-127), Piggott (1995 [1968]), Ross (1996), Zecchini (1984).

²²⁴ For biographical details see Jones (1959) and Roberts (2009).

²²⁵ For biographical details see for Robin Ddu o Fôn (Roberts 1959), for William Owen Pughe (Williams 1959a), for Owain Myfyr (Williams 1959b), for Iolo Morganwg (Williams 1959c; Jenkins 2009; 2018; Constantine 2007).

However, in the second half of the nineteenth-century Sir John Rhŷs, first Professor of Celtic Studies at Oxford, presented a quite different image of the druids.²²⁶ According to Rhŷs, the druids had been the sorcerer-priests or medicine men of a pre-Celtic, primitive aboriginal population of the British Isles. Rhŷs supported his views with evidence he believed he had discovered in Welsh folk-traditions by applying the fairy-euhemerization theory to the Tylwyth Teg, the Welsh fairies (Rüdiger 2018). Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Welsh public was confronted with two opposing views of both the druid and the fairies.

This chapter will investigate the process which led to these two contrasting euhemerization theories for the fairies to be coexistent. It will explore how the paradigm shift regarding the ideas of the fairies as prehistoric people was enabled. I will show that Cririe's and Roberts' ideas and the mixing of social-Darwinist theories enabled Rhŷs to devise an image of the druid as a magician rooted in a non-Celtic culture as presented in *Celtic-Folklore: Welsh and Manx*.

6.1 Conflating the Fairies and the Druids: Early Fairy Euhemerization Theories

*Gwyn ap Nudd uwch nudd yn awr - esgyna
Mewn gwisg ganaid rwysgfawr,
Mal serydd, dremidydd mawr,
I'r Wyddfa grib rieddfawr.*

-Cynddelw, 1877

The beginning of the euhemerization of fairy characters as druids in the early modern period can be found in a triad fabricated by Iolo Morganwg in *Myvyrian Archaiology*:

Tri Gwyn Seronyddion ynys Prydain: Idris Gawr, a Gwydion mab Don, a Gwyn ap Nudd; a chan faint eu gwybodau am y sêr a'u haniau a'i hansoddau y darogenynt a chwennychid ei wybod hyd yn nydd brawd.

(MA, p. 409)

Three blessed astronomers of the Isle of Britain: Idris the Giant, and Gwydion mab Dôn, and Gwyn ap Nudd; and so great was their knowledge about the stars and their nature and their qualities that they prophesized that which one desired to know until the day of doom.
(my trans.)

In this triad Iolo Morganwg conflates fairy tradition and alleged ancient bearers of wisdom, because Gwyn ap Nudd, known from medieval and early modern tradition as king of Annwn

²²⁶ For biographical details see Evans (1914-15), Frazer & Williams (2004/2006), Morris-Jones (1924/25) and Charles-Edwards (2013; 2019).

and king of the Tylwyth Teg, the Welsh fairies,²²⁷ is described by Iolo as one of the three blessed astronomers of the Isle of Britain. Thus, Gwyn appears as a sage, and resembles in his function as astronomer the *magi* of the Bible. According to his profession as a vaticinator or wise man he could well be described as ‘derwydd’ (‘wise man, druid’), and indeed the triad might be read to show the three astronomers as druidic characters. The other two characters are Gwydion ap Dôn, a magician in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi, and Idris the Giant, a rather enigmatic figure.²²⁸

We find the name ‘Gwyn’ is the Neolithic Castell Bryn Gwyn, probably a henge monument, located west of Brynsiencyn on Ynys Môn. According to Rowlands, this was the chief tribunal of the druids (Rowlands, 1766, p. 90), and this might have inspired Iolo Morganwg to list Gwyn as one of the blessed astronomers. Huw Derfel Hughes argues in a similar way that the *Myvyrian Archaiology* styled Gwyn ap Nudd as a *Carneddwr* (a man of the burial mounds),²²⁹ who is consequently understood to be a druid, astronomer or warrior:

Gwyn ap Nudd: mewn cân o ymddiddan rhyngddo a Gwyddno Goron Hir, gwelir ef yn “Garneddwr” ac er na chysylltir ef yn bendant a charnedd Llewelyn na Charnedd Ddafydd, eto y mae gan y ddwy gystal hawl iddo fel Derwydd, Seronydd, neu Ryfelwr ag un garnedd yn yr Ynys.

(Hughes, 1979, p. 53):

Gwyn ap Nudd: in the song of the colloquy between him and Gwyddno Garanhir he is called ‘Carneddwr’ and though he is not certainly connected with Carnedd Llewelyn nor Carnedd Dafydd, nevertheless, the two have an equal claim to him as druid, astronomer or warrior as any cairn of the Island.

(my trans.)

In *Barddas* which was edited by ap Ithel from papers by Iolo Morganwg, Gwyn ap Nudd is regarded as an equivalent to Huon, first of the wise men: ‘And the first sage was Huon, the son of Nudd, who is called Gwynn, the son of Nudd, and Enniged the Giant’ (ap Ithel 1862,

²²⁷ For surveys see Rüdiger (2018), Roberts (1978), Foster (1953). Also see this dissertation, *passim*.

²²⁸ On the giants of Wales see Groomes (1993). There is a Neolithic monument on Ynys Môn which bears the name of Idris: Bryn Idris in the proximity of Brynsiencyn. Here may be a link indeed, which inspired Iolo Morganwg, for Henry Rowlands claimed Idris to be equivalent to the biblical Enoch, the founder of astronomy and astrology, (Rowlands, 1766, p. 30) - a widespread traditional view which is also still popular in Islam (Paxton, 1972, pp. 198-200). Indeed, Hugh Derfel Hughes refers to the Arabian tradition regarding Idris when discussing the triad about the astronomers (1979, p. 58).

²²⁹ This is based on a misreading of line 35 of ‘Ymddiddan rhwng Gwyddneu Garanhir a Gwyn ap Nudd’, being BBC 34: ‘Gwin ab nut but. Bitinaur./ kint y sithei kadoet rac carnetaur dy ueirch/ no bruyn briw y laur’ (ll. 34-35). In the *Myfyrian Archaiology* the stanza reads ‘Gwin [sic!] ap Nudd budd bytinawr/ cynt i syrthiei cadoedd rhag Carneddawr/ Dy veirch no brwyn briw i lawr’ (MA, p. 126).

pp. 258-259). Here we have a special way of euhemerizing a single fairy character as a wise man and druid.

During the early nineteenth century the collective of the Tylwyth Teg became conflated with the druids. This started with the Scotsman Cririe's *Scottish Scenery*:

Most of the traditional stories respecting fairies especially such as represented them as embodies Spirits might perhaps be accounted for, upon supposition that the Druids or rather conquered Aborigines had fled from their enemies.

(Cirie, 1803, pp. 347-8)

The Welshman Peter Roberts elaborated a similar theory (Roberts, 1815, pp. 192-201). Interestingly, Roberts uses folk traditions about the fairies which Shakespeare worked into his plays as evidence for his euhemerization theory:

The regularity and generality of this system shews, that there was a body of people existing in the kingdom distinct from its known inhabitants, and either confederated, or obliged to live or meet mysteriously; and their rites, particularly that of dancing round a tree probably an oak, as Herne's, &c, as well as their character for truth and probity, refer them to a Druidic origin. If this was the case, it is easy to conceive as indeed history shews, that the Druids were persecuted by the Romans and Christians.

(Roberts, 1815, p. 199)

The druids of *Popular Cambrian Superstition* are still largely positive characters, Celtic priests persecuted because of their faith, searching a way to survive the Roman conquest, but soon Rhys would claim that the druids are representatives of a primitive people dapplying in magic and superstition. The supposed identity of druids and fairies was transmitted from those scholarly ideas into popular beliefs, and we will remember that in 1911 W.Y. Evans-Wentz recorded the belief that the fairies were spirits of the druids (cf. 2.3.3).

Romantic ideas about druids related to the stone monuments and burial mounds of the Welsh landscape ended in the middle of the nineteenth century as new evolutionary theories were developed in the field of Archaeology. In *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed udgiven af det kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab* (1836); translated into English by Egerton in 1848 as *Guide to Northern Archaeology*), Christian Jürgensen Thomsen considered how the development of mankind was determined by the constant improvement of tools: he refined the previously accepted Three-Age System by introducing the Stone, Bronze and Iron Age as a chronological system for classifying archaeological artifacts (Thomsen 1836). One effect of accepting this system for dating artifacts put an end to the association of the Neolithic remains with the druids, for the latter were priests of Iron Age Celtic tribes (Birkhan, 1997, pp. 459-461). Thomsen argued that Stone Age Europe was populated by an aboriginal population

which was ‘non-Aryan’ or, as we would say today, non-Indo-European (for discussion, see Kyllingstad 2012).

These theories and the new evolutionary anthropological theories which had been established by Tylor (1871; 1920) and Frazer (1890), evolutionary theories about the organization forms of society as published by Bachofen (1861), Morgan (1877) and Engels (1886), and racial theories about the physiognomy of people by Beddoe (1885) as well as the fairy euhemerization theory made public by MacRitchie (1890; 1892; 1893; 1894) influenced John Rhys as he developed his model of the prehistoric past of the British Isles.

6.2 Writing Britain’s Celtic History in the Nineteenth Century: John Rhys’ Studies of Folk Tradition

And hint came of the old name of the fairies, “the little people”, and the very probable belief that they represent a tradition of the prehistoric Turanian inhabitants of the country, who were cave dwellers; and then I realized with a shock that I was looking for a being under four feet in height, accustomed to live in darkness, possessing some stone instruments, and familiar with the Mongolian cast of features!

The Shining Pyramid by Arthur Machen (Arthur Llewellyn Jones) 1895

6.2.1 Sir John Rhys – A Short Biography

Sir John Rhys [formerly Rees] was born 1840 at Aberceiro, Cwmrheidol, Cardiganshire. His father was Hugh Rees who was a farm worker and lead miner. Rhys was educated at the British school, Ponterwyd, and later at a school at Pen-llwyn. After attending Bangor Normal College he was appointed master at the British school at Rhos-y-bol on Ynys Môn (Anglesey). Rhys was mainly interested in the study of languages and antiquities, which led to his acquaintance with chancellor of Bangor cathedral James Williams (of Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy) and Morris Williams ‘Nicander’ of Amlwch. It is supposed that one of the latter, presumably James Williams, introduced Rhys to Charles Williams, Principal of Jesus College, Oxford (Fraser & Williams, 2004/2006). In 1865 Rhys was granted a scholarship to that college. When studying at Oxford he used the summer holidays for trips to the continent and visited the towns of Paris, Heidelberg, Leipzig and Göttingen. In the context of this chapter, it is noteworthy that he studied in Leipzig under Brockhaus, Curtius, Ritschel, and Leskien, and also met Schuchardt for the first time (Thorne, 1986). Schuchardt and Leskien had both studied under Schleicher who saw parallels between the study of languages and the theory of Charles Darwin (Schleicher, 1873, pp. 7-8; Darwin, 1859). Rhys stayed in touch with Schuchardt even when Rhys was in Oxford and Schuchardt stayed in Graz (Thorne, 1986).

In 1871 Rhŷs returned to Wales, and about this time he began to use the Welsh spelling of his name. He served as inspector of schools in Flint and Denbigh. 1874 he gave a series of lectures at Aberystwyth on Welsh Philology (Rhŷs, 1877). In 1877 John Rhŷs was appointed first Professor of Celtic Studies at Oxford (Charles-Edwards, 2019; Fraser & Williams, 2004/2006; Williams, 1959). The life and work of Rhŷs have been acknowledged by various authors such as Evans (1914-15), Hartland (1916), Stephens (1986), Evans (1995), Morris-Jones (1924/25), and Ifor Williams (1959). Most recent research focussing on Rhŷs' achievements in the field of linguistics has been published by Charles-Edwards (2013), Rodway (2019), Sims-Williams (2019), Lewin (2019), and Falileyev (2019). Dorson (1968), Davies (1990) and Wood (2005) focused especially on Rhŷs' influence on folk narrative research in Wales, for Rhŷs was not only a scholar of Celtic Studies, but also a folklorist and eager collector of Welsh folktales (Rhŷs, 1901). Lewis (2016a; 2016b) focuses on the ethnological and anthropological aspects of Rhŷs' work.

In the preface to *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (1901) Rhŷs describes his motivation for collecting folklore (pp. vii-viii):

Towards the close of the seventies I began to collect Welsh folklore. I did so partly because others had set the example elsewhere, and partly in order to see whether Wales could boast of any storytellers of the kind that delight the readers of Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* [...] It is a cause of genuine regret to me that I did not commence my inquiries earlier, when I had more opportunities of pursuing them, especially when I was a village schoolmaster in Anglesey and could have done the folklore of that island thoroughly; but my education, such as it was, had been of a nature to discourage all interest in anything that savoured of heathen lore and superstition.

In 1888 Rhŷs joined the Folklore Society,²³⁰ serving as its Vice-President from 1893 until his death in 1915. Whitley Stokes with whom he ran a copious correspondence, was also a fellow of the Folklore Society from 1882, and the Irish texts edited by Stokes and Windisch provided Rhŷs with narrative episodes which he would use in proof of his ideas about the prehistoric past of the British Isles.²³¹ John Rhŷs was certainly an outstanding scholar with his broad interest in the fields of language, archaeology and folklore. In the two last chapters of his

²³⁰ The Folklore Society (FLS) is a learned association in the United Kingdom, founded in 1878. The homepage of the FLS states "The Folklore Society (FLS) is a learned society, based in London, devoted to the study of all aspects of folklore and tradition, including: ballads, folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends, traditional song and dance, folk plays, games, seasonal events, calendar customs, childlore and children's folklore, folk arts and crafts, popular belief, folk religion, material culture, vernacular language, sayings, proverbs and nursery rhymes, folk medicine, plant-lore and weather lore" (source: <http://folklore-society.com>, accessed 1.8.2019).

²³¹ See below. For the correspondence between Rhŷs and Stokes see Russel (2019). Part of the correspondence, namely the so-called *Sir John Rhŷs Papers: Letters and Cards from Whitley Stokes, 1871-1909* are available at the National Library of Wales.

Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx entitled ‘Folklore Philosophy’ and ‘Race in Folklore and Myth’ he conflates his hypothesis about the Celtic history of the British Isles with his studies on folklore by using narrative motifs from the fairy traditions to underpin his hypothesis. In what follows, I will show the way the evolutionary theories of the nineteenth century influenced Rhŷs in his making use of folklore.

6.2.2 The Theoretical Context

It is impossible to understand and discuss Rhŷs’ model of the prehistory of the British Isles without taking into account contemporary academic developments in Rhŷs’ own and neighbouring fields of research. The following discussion will introduce the main theories on which Rhŷs’ interpretation of folklore is based, and which precipitated in his model of prehistory of the British Isles. The foundations of nineteenth-century evolutionary theories were laid by Social Darwinism which will be introduced first (6.2.2.1). Equally important is the question of women’s rights, which became important in the social discourse of the Victorian period and met with the development of social Darwinist hypotheses about women’s rule in the prehistorical past (6.2.2.2). Evolutionary theories about the development of religion made Max Müller’s solar myth theory obsolete and forced a fundamental change in Rhŷs’ attitude towards Celtic religion (6.2.2.3). The belief that folk tradition and custom are actually a window to the past – even to the prehistoric past – is another important building block in Rhŷs’ model of prehistory (6.2.2.4). A further section is dedicated to elucidating the connection between linguistic research, evolutionary ideas, and archaeological models of the prehistoric past (6.2.2.5). These considerations will also highlight the link between social Darwinist and imperialist ideas developing in the second half of the nineteenth century. After providing an introduction of the theoretical context in the above listed areas, Rhŷs’ model for the prehistory of the British Isles will be presented, for now we can fully understand from which sources Rhŷs is drawing, and we will be able to recognize the evolutionary theories in *Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx*, in *Celtic Britain* and *The Welsh People*. The discussion will also concisely cover Welsh scholarly traditions of finding historical evidence in written or oral lore, as the development of Welsh scholarship, too, adds to the context of Rhŷs’ theories.

6.2.2.1 Social Darwinism

In 1859 Darwin published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (Darwin 1859). Darwin’s theory of evolution was one of the great revolutionary ideas of the nineteenth century. Shortly after the publication of Darwin’s theory, Herbert Spencer compared the biological mechanisms of natural selection as described by Darwin to his economic theories (Spencer, 1864, p. 129). It

was also Spencer who coined the term ‘survival of the fittest’ (Spencer, 1864, pp. 444–55)²³² and who considered social development as evolutionary process (Spencer, 1864, pp. 347, 469).²³³ Thus, in the course of the nineteenth century, Darwin’s evolutionary concept of natural selection was applied to human economic and social issues. This development resulted in theories labelled ‘social Darwinism’, which claimed that evolution was not only the driving force for the development of species, but also within economy, for the development of organisational forms of society and for cultural achievements, material or immaterial, such as the development of religion. The term ‘social Darwinism’ appeared in scholarly writing for the first time in 1877–1879 (Leonard, 2009, pp. 38-9; Halliday, 1971; Rogers, 1972). The evolutionary concept was also applied to justify imperialism and to back up the notion that some races which were inferior to others. Benjamin Kidd writes in *Social Evolution* (1894) in a chapter ‘Conditions of Human Progress,’

Yet neither wish nor intention has the power to arrest a destiny which works itself out irresistibly. The Anglo-Saxon has exterminated the less developed peoples with which he has come into competition even more effectively than other races have done in like case; not necessarily indeed by fierce and cruel wars of extermination, but through the operation of laws not less deadly and even more certain in their results. The weaker races disappear before the stronger through the effects of mere contact.

(Kidd, 1894, p. 47)

6.2.2.2 *The Female Rule*

During the mid-Victorian period the question of women’s rights in society became a topic of general interest. The British Newspaper Archive²³⁴ proves this by the great number of newspaper articles which discuss women’s franchise, suffrage, and women’s emancipation and which were published in newspapers from places all over the United Kingdom in the second half of the nineteenth century. The evidence is far too copious to refer to every article, and therefore, the invitation of the Debating Society published in the *University College of*

²³² “This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr Darwin has called “natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life.”” (Spencer, 1864, pp. 444-45).

²³³ “Among philosophical politicians, there has been spreading the perception that the progress of society is an evolution: the truth that ‘constitutions are not made but grow’, is a part of the more general truth that societies are not made but grow. It is now universally admitted by philologists, that languages, instead of being artificially or supernaturally formed, have been developed. And the historians of religion, of philosophy, of science, of the fine arts, and of the industrial arts, show that these have passed through stages as unobtrusive as those through which the mind of a child passes on its way to maturity... But though natural selection acts freely in the struggle of one society with another; yet, among the units of each society, its action is so interfered with, that there remains no adequate cause for the acquirement of mental superiority by one race over another except the inheritance of functionally-produced modifications” (Spencer, 1864, pp. 347, 469).

²³⁴ Available at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk, accessed 01.08.2019.

Wales Magazine is presented as a typical example for the public discourse about women's rights. The Debating Society had invited to a public debate 'On the Extension of the Franchise to Women' scheduled for 24th March 1880 and the proceedings of this debate were published in *The University College of Wales Magazine* (Winstanley, Angus & Lloyd, 1880, pp. 224-31). The discussion of women's rights seems also to have precipitated in the field of folklore studies, for in her study on fairies and Victorian consciousness Silver points out that it might not be coincidental that the discussion about women's rights and an increased interest in and fondness of fairy mistress tales culminate at the same time (Silver, 1999, p. 89). Indeed, the fairy mistress tales show marriage as a contract between husband and wife. If the husband fails to correspond to the conditions of the contract, his fairy wife will leave him. In the case of the legend of *Llyn y Fan Fach*, the fairy wife takes all her property with her and also all the wealth which originated in the property she brought into the marriage (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 10).²³⁵ A collection of Welsh fairy mistress tales can be found in the first chapter of Rhÿs' *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 1-74). It is entitled 'Undine's Kymric Sisters' and suggests that Rhÿs, too, was intrigued by this subject. He chose lines from de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* which is a literary fairy tale (*Kunstmärchen*) based on traditional narrative motifs taken from fairy mistress tales as preface for this chapter (Rhÿs, 1901, p. 1).²³⁶ In the context of this chapter, it will be shown that Rhÿs relied indeed on these fairy mistress tales as evidence in proof of his own hypothesis about the aboriginal population of the British Isles. Following the arguments of Silver, it seems that the fairy mistress tales offered Victorian society a way of musing over pressing questions, such as the right of women to keep their property, even in the case of divorce, or women's right to divorce if the husband did not keep to the conditions under which the woman had agreed to marriage. The fairy tales allowed these questions to be addressed in traditional narrative motifs (Silver, 1999, p. 89).

Therefore, as the role of women in society was a central question to be addressed by society in the nineteenth century, it had to be expected that research, too, would address the question of women's role in society in some way. Indeed, we can observe that in the nineteenth century anthropological evolutionary theories about the role of women were postulated. As early as 1861 Bachofen had presented *Das Mutterrecht* ('The Mother Right') in which he developed a theory about the evolution of forms of social organization considering especially the role and predominance of either the male or the female gender. Bachofen believed that the

²³⁵ For a study on the transmission of this legend see Davies (2018). About fairy bride legends in Wales see also Wood (1992).

²³⁶ 'Undine, liebes Bildchen du,/ Seit ich zuerst aus alten Kunden/ Dein seltsam Leuchten aufgefunden/
Wie sangst du oft mein Herz in Ruh!' ['Undine, you dear little picture/ since I have found your strange
shining from old tales for the first time, how often have you sung my heart to peace'; my translation]

earliest and most primitive form of social organisation was hetaerism, a form of society which does not know wedlock.

Auf der tiefsten Stufe des Daseins zeigt der Mensch neben völlig freier Geschlechtсмischung auch Oeffentlichkeit der Begattung. Gleich dem Thiere befriedigt er den Trieb der Natur ohne dauernde Verbindung mit einem bestimmten Weibe vor Aller Augen.

(Bachofen, 1861, p. 10)

On the lowest level of existence, man exhibits next to a completely free mixing of sexes also sexual intercourse in public. Like an animal he satisfies the urges of nature without lasting relationship with a certain woman in plain sight.

(my trans.).

The following stage of social organization was matriarchy, which was finally followed by the patriarchal society – the most advanced form of society according to Bachofen.

Das Mutterrecht gehört dem Stoffe und einer Religionsstufe, die nur das Leibesleben kennt und darum, wie Bellerophon, verzweifeln vor dem ewigen Untergang alles Gezeugten trauert. Das Vaterrecht dagegen gehört einem überstofflichen Lebensprinzip. Es identifiziert sich mit der unkörperlichen Sonnenkraft und der Anerkennung eines über alle Wechsel erhabenen, zu den göttlichen Lichthöhen durchgedrungenen Geistes.

(Bachofen, 1861, p. 7)

Matriarchy belongs to material matter and to a stage of religion which knows only the life of the body and therefore, like Bellerophon, despairingly mourns the eternal decay of all that was begotten. Patriarchy, however, belongs to the principle of life surpassing material matter. It identifies with the non-corporal power of the sun and the acknowledging of a spirit which is above all changes and has reached the divine heights of light

(my trans.).

Lewis Henry Morgan developed a theory of social evolution which came to conclusions similar to Bachofen (Morgan 1877). In *Ancient Society*, Morgan defines various stages of human social development, namely that of savagery (low, middle, upper), barbarism (low, middle, upper) and civilisation. Morgan claims that people he classed as savage or as barbarian of lower status, such as the Australian tribes, share their wives and husbands in common (Morgan, 1877, p. 49). Groups defining their descent by the female line are found among peoples who live at the stages of middle savagery to upper barbarism (Morgan, 1877, pp. 66-67), whereas the patriarchy is found in the more developed stages of society.²³⁷ Engels, too,

²³⁷ An on-going argument in Victorian Britain should be noted with respect to whether the Britons were inferior to the Anglo-Saxons. According to Morgan, the Britons belonged to the stage of middle

shared Bachofen's and Morgan's opinion that matriarchy preceded the patriarchal organisation of society (Engels, 1886, pp. 16-43). Hence, a people living in the stage of matriarchy would be classed as belonging to an inferior stage of cultural development.

6.2.2.3 *Magic versus Religion. Evolutionary Theories on Religion.*

Rhÿs' *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (Rhÿs 1888) were strongly influenced by Max Müller, whose *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India* (1878) provided the pattern for Rhÿs' work on Celtic religion: Rhÿs, too, uses a comparative mythological approach, and his Lecture V ('The Sun Hero') especially demonstrates the application of Müller's solar myth theory to Celtic material.²³⁸ The lecture identifies a number of characters from Irish and Welsh medieval literature as characters who originated as Celtic solar deities. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Müller's theories became less popular, and new evolutionary models for the development of religion were in the ascendant. Tylor applied evolutionary theories to anthropology and the development of religion, and in *Primitive Culture*, he argued that religion developed from animism to polytheism and ended in the most developed state of monotheism (Tylor, 1871; *id.* 1920). His work influenced James Frazer, who published the first edition of *The Golden Bough* (1890) presenting another evolutionary model. He claimed primitive man lacked religion but practised magic, and magic was but a mock image of science, based on a rudimentary and incomplete understanding of the physical world:

Hence, when at a late period the distinction between religion and superstition has emerged, we find that sacrifice and prayer are the resource of the pious and enlightened community, while magic is the refuge of the superstitious and ignorant. But when, still later, the conception of the elemental forces as personal agents is giving way to the recognition of natural law, then magic, based as it implicitly is on the idea of a necessary and invariable sequence of cause and effect, independent of personal will, reappears from the obscurity and discredit into which it had fallen, and by investigating the causal sequences in nature, directly prepares the way for science.

(Frazer, 1894, p. 32)

Religion, however, according to Frazer, was based on the assumption of the existence of a deity who may be addressed, though the outcome of the address was not predictable, as religion was not bound by the laws of nature, but instead represented something akin to a

barbarism, whereas the Germanic tribes he classed as living on the stage of upper barbarism. The marker for the discrimination should be the use of iron, but Morgan finds that the Britons have to be classed rather with the people living on a stage of middle barbarism because of their 'domestic institutions', i.e. alleged plural marriages according to Caesar (Morgan, 1877, pp. 11, 483).

²³⁸ For a survey on Müller's solar myth theory and a criticism of this theory see Carroll (1988).

bargain between two individuals. This view is voiced most concisely in the 1922 edition of *The Golden Bough* in the 'Magic and Religion' chapter:

By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. Thus defined, religion consists of two elements, a theoretical and a practical, namely, a belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate or please them.

(Frazer, 1925, p. 50)

Rhÿs' shift from Max Müller's theories to the new evolutionary theories becomes obvious in his preface to *Studies in Arthurian Legend* (1891):

Most of the following chapters arose out of my *Hibbert Lectures on Celtic Heathendom* which were delivered in the year 1886. In consequence of that origin they take for granted the same views, in the main, as to Aryan mythology. It is hoped, however, that the reader who disapproves of those views, will not regard me as now perpetrating a fresh offence, though I have been obliged to continue the use of some of the terms of the Solar Myth Theory. They are so convenient; and whatever may eventually happen to that theory, nothing has yet been found exactly to take its place. Nevertheless, we are possibly on the eve of a revolution in respect of mythological questions, as Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* seems to indicate.

(Rhÿs, 2008 [1891], pp. v-vi)

In *Celtic Folklore*, the impact of both Frazer's and Tylor's work on Rhÿs' prehistoric theories is obvious, as Rhÿs explicitly refers to the work of both scholars in the chapter entitled 'Race in Folklore and Myth' and in which he connects the Welsh fairy traditions with prehistory (1901, pp. 639-688).

6.2.2.4 Folk Custom as Survival of Ancient Religion

Using folk traditions as source of evidence when drafting a hypothesis of prehistory was in accordance with the results of anthropological studies. Tylor believed that custom and beliefs of primitive culture survived in nursery folklore, popular sayings, custom and superstitions (Tylor, 1871, pp. 15-16). He could rely on the earlier work by the Grimm Brothers (1835, p. 9). Frazer, too, followed the idea that folklore holds survivals of pagan custom: '[...] every inquiry into the primitive religion of the Aryans should start from superstitious beliefs and observances of the peasantry' (Frazer, 1894, pp. vii-xi). Thus, folklore gained a new importance as hoard of information about the pagan past which had to be properly exploited and interpreted. In the long run this understanding of folklore was certainly one factor which would lead scholars into suggesting that beliefs of the common people in Britain consisted only of a thin veneer of Christianity covering pagan beliefs surviving from the pre-Christian times, aptly summarised by Hutton:

During the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, it was commonplace among historians that the common people of medieval England had remained substantially pagan in their religious beliefs. Christianity, according to this view, was essentially the faith of the elite, with the populace embracing what was at best a dual allegiance to the new and old religion.

(Hutton, 2011, p. 235)

However, Hutton finds that today these romantic theories must be rejected, for genuine survivals from the pagan past seem to be extremely rare, if such survivals as the names of the days of the week, the names of the months, classical motifs persisting in medieval literature and art, classical influences on the architecture of the churches and similarities between pagan and Christian ritual are excluded. The survival of a pre-Christian religion has to be rejected (Hutton 2011; 1991, pp. 324-327).

Another development which led to an increased appreciation of folklore was closely connected with the progressing industrialisation, for during the nineteenth century, problems related to industrialisation began to show, such as the pollution of the environment and increased urbanisation with the development of a proletarian class living under very poor conditions. Studies such as those of Williams (1973), Keith (1975), Wiener (1981) and Bennett (1993) show how, as a reaction to the problems of industrialization and progressing urbanization, life in the countryside was idealised and romanticised. Both the wish to believe in pagan survivals and the idealisation of country life and folk beliefs and customs are a reaction to the challenges of industrialisation and scepticism towards conventional Christianity which did not seem to answer the spiritual challenges in the second half of the nineteenth century. After all, at the end of the nineteenth century, Rhys considered folklore a portal to the prehistoric past, and hence a repository of evidence for his theories.

6.2.2.5 *Language, Culture and Race*

The previous have introduced various evolutionary theories which were mainly based on the nineteenth-century ethnological research. Rhys' academic education was based on the studies of languages, including linguistics and philology (Thorne 1986), and in this field, evolutionary theories flourished, too, being merged with earlier considerations concerning the Celtic languages and their origin. Research into the origin of languages leads inevitably to investigations about the people who spoke those languages, and, as a consequence, archaeology must assist in drafting any model about the spread of languages in prehistoric times. This section will concisely introduce the theories of language, archaeology and race which prepared the ground for Rhys' presentation of the prehistory of the British Isles as

several stages of invasion, with each of the invading peoples installing a more advanced culture.

In *Archaeologia Britannica* (1707),²³⁹ Edward Lhuyd recognised similarities between Welsh, Cornish, Gaelic (Irish and Scottish), Breton and Gaulish, identifying them as Celtic languages. He also recognised that these languages could be grouped in two families; namely, P-Celtic or Brythonic (Welsh, Breton, Cornish) and Q-Celtic or Goidelic (Irish, Scots Gaelic, Manx). This left scholars with two questions: how had these languages been introduced to the British Isles, and – after the spread of Darwinian ideas in the field of linguistics – how could the Celtic languages be ranked in comparison with other languages? Darwinian ideas surfaced quite quickly in the field of linguistics. Connecting ethnology and linguistics, however, had a tradition which predated the Darwinian theories. In 1831, James Cowels Prichard published *The Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations proved by a Comparison of Their Dialects with the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Teutonic Languages Forming a Supplement to Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* (Prichard 1831). Here, Prichard refers explicitly to Lhuyd, and also to Friedrich and August Schlegel, who had developed comparative language studies, and to Jacob Grimm. Prichard understands the use of cognate languages as marker for racial relationship between people and highlights the close connection between ethnology and linguistics:

The examination of cognate languages, while it points out their resemblances and proves the affinity of the races of man of which they formed the vernacular speech, seldom fails at the same time to elucidate, in a greater or lesser degree, the structure of the respective idioms themselves [...].

(Prichard, 1831, p. vi)

A German scholar who fused Darwinian theory with linguistic research was August Schleicher, who had published an essay entitled ‘Die Darwinische Theorie und die Sprachwissenschaft’ (Schleicher 1873). He sees parallels between biological processes in nature and the development of languages, so that he even postulates that ‘*Glottik*’, *die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, is a natural science (Schleicher, 1873, p. 7). Schleicher had been the academic teacher of Leskien who taught Rhÿs, and Rhÿs’ friend Schuchardt had been a pupil of Schleicher. It is therefore possible that Rhÿs had been aware of August Schleicher’s theory. Schleicher postulates:

Desto unbestreitbarer ist aber auf sprachlichem Gebiete die Entstehung der Arten durch allmähliche Differenzierung und die Erhaltung der höher entwickelten Organismen im Kampfe ums Dasein.

²³⁹ For biographical details on Edward Lhuyd see Roberts (2009) and Williams (2009).

(Schleicher, 1873, p. 33)

Even more, it is no question of debate in the field of language that the species come into being by gradual differentiation and by the preservation of the higher developed organisms in the struggle for life.

(my trans.)

However, the human race is not only characterised by the languages used, but also by the artifacts it leaves behind. About the middle of the nineteenth century Scandinavian scholars developed craniology, the comparative study of the size, shape, and proportions of skulls, further and applied it to skulls found by archaeologists. In 1846, both the Three-Age System (discussed above, 5.1) and craniology were made available to the British and Irish public by Worsaae (Worsaae 1849).²⁴⁰ Beddoe, a Welsh archaeologist, found the studies of craniology insufficient for characterising the races of the British Isles and extended his line of inquiry to pigmentation, introducing an index of nigrescence (Beddoe 1885).²⁴¹ In the second half of the nineteenth century, MacRitchie (1851-1925), Scottish folklorist and antiquarian, founder of the Gypsy Lore Society and later the Vice-president of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, strongly promoted a theory that the aboriginal population of the British Isles consisted of pygmy tribes. MacRitchie is also credited as the founder of the fairy euhemerization theory which considers the fairies to be a pre-Bronze Age people, a race connected to the Ainu, Saami and Inuit, the latter called ‘Lapps’ and ‘Eskimos’ according to MacRitchie’s nineteenth-century terminology (MacRitchie 1890; 1892; 1893; 1894). However, MacRitchie was not alone, for other scholars promoted the idea of a pygmy population of Europe as well; one of these scholars who Rhÿs refers to was Kollmann (1894), who believed to have discovered archaeological evidence to support this theory.²⁴² As will be argued below, Rhÿs’ ideas about race and fairy lore hold a number of elements influenced by MacRitchie’s theories (MacRitchie 1890; MacRitchie 1893).²⁴³

²⁴⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the transmission of Worsaae’s theories see: Birkhan (2009, p. 453) and Morse (1999).

²⁴¹ For further information on the transition from antiquarian interest to archaeological research in Wales see Edwards & Gould (2013).

²⁴² Modern archaeology, however, no longer supports these ideas. Indeed, the theory of pygmies as British aborigines was rejected as early as 1907 by the Irish scholar Holmes (1907) in the absence of reliable archaeological evidence.

²⁴³ Wood draws attention to Rhÿs being influenced by MacRitchie (Wood 2005) but, surprisingly, Morris-Jones (2002) claims that Rhÿs’ reached his conclusions independently. Yet, Rhÿs himself refers to MacRitchie’s work in a footnote (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 680). On the dwarf races, Rhÿs obtained additional information from A.C. Haddon (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 683-84).

Theories about ‘inferior’ autochthonous races were given higher ‘credibility’ by nineteenth-century ‘discoveries’ of tribes in the rainforests and other remote areas of Africa, Asia and Australia. Dorson comments on Alfred Nutt’s address to the Folklore Society in 1899:

They [*sc.* British folklorists] possess the primitive stratum of ‘archaic literature’ in a far better state of preservation than it was found in Germany, France, Scandinavia, or Russia. Their imperial position brought the savage races of the world under the same rule as the peasant at home.

(Dorson, 1968, p. 233).

Rhys’ predilection for the pygmy theory, however, was not shared by other eminent members of the Folklore Society. Andrew Lang challenged it (see Kirk, 2008, p. 17), as did Hartland (1891, pp. 348-352). The latter certainly influenced Rhys strongly, as shown by the references to Hartland’s work in *Celtic Folklore* (pp. 18, 268, 359, 360, 406, 605). Further major influences were Gomme (pp. 103, 310, 346, 358, 360) and Clodd (pp. 584, 585, 593, 598, 607, 628). All three folklorists favoured the evolutionary theories stressing the difference between primitive and civilised man (see Dorson, 1968, pp. 221, 245, 249).

But how did the evolution or advancement of culture come about? In the remainder of this section, I consider assumptions about the process of passing on and development of advanced cultural achievements, which had influenced Rhys, namely that the achievements of civilisation had to be learned from more advanced people. As early as 1845 in *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* Robert Chambers draws attention to this lack of belief in self-originated development and cautions against it:

It is also alleged that we know of no such thing as civilisation being ever self-originated. It is always seen to be from one people to another. Hence, of course we must infer that civilisation at the first could only have been of supernatural origin. This argument appears to be founded on false premises, for civilization does sometimes rise in a manner clearly independent amongst a horde.

(Chambers, 1845, p. 208)

Combining this lack of belief in a self-originated civilisation with the Three-Age System enforces the assumption that an advancement of culture is only possible by close contact between two peoples, one of which has already reached a higher cultural level. This contact could be brought about peacefully by trading or by military conquest. Therefore, it seemed a reasonable idea to draft the prehistoric past of the British Isles as a series of invasions and conquests, especially if the academic elite wanted to see themselves as the descendants of culturally advanced people. William Boyd Dawkins expresses this attitude in his *Early Man in Britain and His Place in the Tertiary Period* (1880, p. 247): ‘We have to chronicle in the

Prehistoric period the changes wrought in Europe by the invasion of new peoples, and the appearance of new civilisations.’ However, this virtually denies autochthonous people both (a) the possibility of development by taking up new impulses from other peoples and developing them further and (b) the ability of innovation. Taking one step further, this view of civilisation spreading by contact with more advanced and hence more successful people was embedded in imperial thinking.²⁴⁴ The idea of successful people moving eastward and northward and creating empires shows in Benjamin Kidd’s *Social Evolution*:

We follow the path of the Empire from the stagnant and unchanging East, westwards through peoples whose pulses beat quicker and whose energy and activity become more marked as we advance... A similar lesson is emphasised in the northward movement of rule and empire throughout historic times.

(Kidd, 1894, pp. 56-57)

We see Darwinist ideas merging with an imperialist attitude (cf. Brantlinger 2018, and for a more detailed introduction to British Imperialism, Johnson 2003). Moreover, small nations came under pressure in retaining their place in history and society, as they were stigmatized as inferior and backward nations (Evans & Pryce, 2013, p. 234).

6.2.3 Rhys’ Model of Britain’s Prehistory as presented in *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*

6.2.3.1 The Stone Age Population – The Lowest Stratum: The Mound Dwellers

Rhys found himself in agreement with the Three-Age Theory, believing that Wales had been populated by pygmies in the Stone Age, similar to pygmy tribes ‘discovered’ in tropical forests during the nineteenth century:

First comes the race of the mound folk, consisting of the short swarthy people variously caricatured in our fairy tales. The real race of the little people forms the lowest stratum which we can reach, to wit, at a level no higher, seemingly, than that of the present-day natives of Central Australia.

(Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 683)

Rhys not only adhered to MacRitchies’ pygmy theory (MacRitchie 1890, 1892, 1893, 1894), but also accepted Beddoes’ index of nigrescence (Beddoe, 1885, pp. 1-9). According to Rhys, some individuals of this pygmy population survived in hidden and remote places of the British

²⁴⁴ For a critical discussion of the invasion hypothesis in British archaeology see Clark (1966). The question how and from where the Celtic languages and the Iron Age culture commonly labelled ‘Celtic’ came to the British Isles is still a matter of debate. For various positions see Sims-Williams (2020), Karl (2012), Koch (2019).

Isles into the historical period, but remained at their own stage of development, i.e. that of the Stone Age. In his view, the little people, the fairies, were actually a memory of the race of people living on a very low level of civilisation.

The sallowness of their skins and the smallness of their stature, their dwelling underground, their dislike of iron, and comparative poverty of their homes in the matter of useful articles of furniture, their deep-rooted objection to the green sward being broken up by the plough, the success of the fairy wife in attending to the domestic animals and to the dairy, the limited range of the fairies' ability to count; and lastly, one may perhaps mention the using a language of their own [...], which would imply a time when the little people understood no other, and explain why they should be represented doing their marketing without uttering a syllable to anybody [...]. The attribution of these and similar characteristics to the fairies can scarcely be all mere feats of fancy and imagination: rather do they seem to be the result of our ancestors projecting on an imaginary world a primitive civilization through which tradition represented their own race as having passed, or, more probably a civilization in which they saw, or thought they saw, another race actually living.

(Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 659)

After some considerations concerning place-names and tribal names which seem to contain probably the element 'cor' (dwarf), Rhÿs concludes: 'There we should have accordingly to suppose the old race to have survived so long and in such numbers, that the Celtic lords of southern Britain called the people of that area by a name meaning dwarf' (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 675). According to Rhÿs, the lake legend of Llyn y Fan Fach clearly contrasts advanced and primitive civilisations. The fairies are recognized by Rhÿs as members of a primitive society because they are unable to make proper bread. Moreover, he believes to detect evidence in the tale that the Tylwyth Teg were organised in a matriarchal society (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 660-661). Interestingly, he draws this conclusion because the shepherd boy is son of a widow: 'Seemingly, he belongs to a primitive society where matriarchal ideas rule and where paternity is not reckoned' (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 661). This, Rhÿs argues, makes the shepherd living on one level with the lake fairies (*ibid.*). Rhÿs also saw importance in Isaac Davies, a smith from Ystrad Meurig, who claimed that fairies were all women (*ibid.* p. 245, 661). Rhÿs also refers to Condla's journey to the realm of the ever-living ones, where a race of women and maidens alone lived:

Now what people could have come by the idea of a race of women only? Surely no people who considered that they themselves had fathers. It must have been some community so low in the scale of civilisation as never to have had any notion whatsoever of paternity: it is their ignorance that would alone render possible the notion of a race all woman.

(Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 662)

6.2.3.2 *The Neolithic Cultures: The Picts, a Warlike Stock*

Furthermore, Rhÿs assumed that another people followed, living at the stage of a Neolithic culture.²⁴⁵ These people practised magic but had no religion. Rhÿs supposes that ‘they got their magic and druidism from the dwellers of the síds’ (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], 685). According to Rhÿs, this non-Aryan race was warlike, and it had ‘a notion of paternity, though, on account of its promiscuity, it has to reckon descent by birth’ (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 684). To Rhÿs, these characteristics were a sign of a more advanced stage of culture, and we see that Rhÿs’ opinion mirrors the theories by Bachofen, Morgan and Engels and those of Frazer and Tylor (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 above). Rhÿs believed this race to be the Picts (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 637-638, 684; Rhÿs, 1884, pp. 69-70). Accordingly, these ‘Picts’ had Lybian or Iberian affinities, which implied that they came from the Western Mediterranean region to the British Isles (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], pp. 682, 684). It is obvious that Rhÿs’ ideas about the Picts are indeed very far from our knowledge about the historical Picts,²⁴⁶ and colleagues were not always happy: Whitley Stokes, for instance, criticised in a letter the theories elaborated in *The Welsh People* (1900):

I ought to have acknowledged it long ago, but, to tell you the truth, the chapter on the Pictish question made me so unhappy that I could not bear to write to you on the subject. I seem to feel as poor Caleb Balderstone felt when he saw the Master of Ravenswood ride recklessly into the fatal quicksand!

(Whitley Stokes as quoted by Russel, 2019, p. 31)

6.2.3.3 *The Iron Age – The Celts – Two Aryan Peoples*

The arrival of the Celtic tribes on the British Isles are treated only passingly in *Celtic Folklore*, as Rhÿs seems to take the knowledge of the reader about the Goidels and Brythons as granted. Rhÿs believed that two Aryan (i.e., Indo-European) races arrived in succession in two waves of invasion and introduced an Iron Age culture (Rhÿs, 1884, p. 4). Rhÿs explained that the aboriginal population influenced the Celtic tribes in terms of language and culture; however, the non-Aryan heritage remained comparatively small in the case of the Brythons as they had arrived later (Rhÿs, 1890/91, p. 22). We see that Rhÿs’ model does not only comprise three stages of cultural development, but he also assumes that every new level of cultural development is connected with the arrival of a new race on the British Isles; a theory he

²⁴⁵ ‘I am inclined to think that in pre-Aryan times a neolithic race, which may be termed Ibero-Pictish, occupied Western Europe from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Pentland Firth and the Danish Islands of the Baltic’ (Rhÿs, 1890/91, p. 121).

²⁴⁶ For modern studies on the Picts see Clarkson (2012) or Hudson (2014).

published together with Brynmore-Jones in *The Welsh People* (Rhys & Brynmor-Jones, 1900, p. 11).

6.2.4 Fairy Folklore as Evidence to back up Rhys' Model of Britain's Past

6.2.4.1 The 'Little People' – A Pygmy People living in Hidden Places?

Here, the following question arises what evidence did Rhys consider supportive for his theory and what was his aim?

Being not only a linguist, but also a folklorist, Rhys supported his opinions with evidence from folk traditions connected with the fairies, as citations from his works provided in section 6.2.3.1 demonstrate. Rhys used elements of fairy traditions to support his model of Britain's prehistoric past, for he assumed that the tales about the Tylwyth Teg contained elements of imagination and ancestor worship as well as historical elements, so that the tales represented at least partly a collective memory of prehistoric tribes (Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 659). For Rhys, the matter was obvious: the pygmies are the 'little people', y Tylwyth Teg, the fairies, especially when they are reported to be ugly (Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 685). We recognize the pygmy theory of MacRitchie, but also the Victorian preoccupation with the motif of the ugly dwarf, the ugly person from an underdeveloped people (this motif in Victorian literature has been thoroughly investigated in Silver, 1999, pp. 117-147).

Rhys also takes the motif of the Tylwyth Teg rejecting iron as evidence of the fairies representing a Stone Age population (Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 660). However, the idea that the narrative structures and folk traditions could hold a meaning different from representing a distorted historical tradition or could have a social function other than being a collective memory is not part of Rhys' methodology in assessing fairy traditions. When applying the euhemerization theory to Welsh folk beliefs, Rhys understood fairy folk tradition as a repository of historical memories. For Rhys and folklorists adhering to the euhemerization theory, fairy attributes and narrative motifs are possibly distorted, but nevertheless fragments of real, historically significant evidence.

Rhys was not the first to euhemerise the fairies, as I have shown in part 6.1. He was certainly familiar with Peter Roberts' ideas as he refers to Roberts' *The Cambrian Antiquities* in the bibliography to *Celtic Folklore*. However, the antiquarians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century did not consider the druids to have been the magicians of a primitive autochthonous, non-Celtic people. In this place we must elaborate on the difference between the Welsh antiquarian tradition and the studies of folklore carried out by John Rhys.

Folklore studies as a means for collecting antiquarian knowledge had a tradition predating the evolutionary theories by Tylor or Frazer. The idea that studies of folklore or antiquities were a subject in its own right began to develop strongly during the eighteenth century, but the view that folk tales and customs could eventually provide access to the past can be dated to the sixteenth century. William Camden (1551-1623) maintained that legends could be based on historical evidence (Dorson, 1968, p. 4). George Owen shared his friend Camden's interest in folklore (Thomas, 1975, p. 35) as well as Rhys Meurig of Cottrell (Williams 1959). Dorson finds 'the moral for the later antiquaries is plainly marked: the factual story behind the Roman ruin may still survive, dipped in legend, on the lips of the natives, and offer clue to the historian' (Dorson, 1968, p. 4). Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709), a widely known scholar researching Welsh antiquities followed this strategy (Jones 1959), and he reported on customs and traditions in his *Design* (Roberts, 2009, p. 40), combining oral traditions with linguistic and archaeological studies. His methodology of finding evidence about the past is similar to Rhys' method combining evidence from various fields of research in his *Celtic Folklore*. Lhuyd stayed critical and rejected popular explanations of phenomena which contradicted either scientific or historical knowledge (Roberts, 2009, p. 40). Lhuyd treated folk tradition with caution.

After all, when Rhys started his work, he confronted a long-established intellectual tradition of retrieving the past from the analysis of medieval texts and documents. As *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* shows, Rhys, too, believed that the old medieval texts were a window on the Celtic past (Rhys 1888), but he did not consider the druids as the idealised keepers of Celtic wisdom and tradition. On the contrary (see also section 3 above):

Here I may be allowed to direct attention to the two following facts: the druid, recalling as he does the magician of the Egypt of the Pentateuch and the shaman of the Mongolian world of our own time, represented a profession probably not of Celtic origin.

(Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 631)

How this altered image of the druids must be attributed to the archaeological Three-Ages Theory and social Darwinist theories, we have seen above.

In the field of racial theories, too, Rhys could rely on the work of Welsh scholars who had tried to establish a racial theory about the inhabitants of the British Isles. Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc; 1787-1848) had composed *An essay on the physiognomy and physiology of the present inhabitants of Britain; with reference to their origin, as Goths and Celts* (1829).

This essay was written as a challenge to the ideas of the Teutonist Pinkerton (Rees 1959). Price's work is mainly descriptive and still far from the three-age theory with the differentiation between the different peoples according to the level of their civilisation, instead Price focuses on the physical features (Price 1829). In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, racial evolutionary theories had been established which prompted Rhys to understand the 'little people' of the fairy tales as the British aborigines, and to interpret their ugly appearance described in the fairy tales, especially in the changeling-type tales, as typical physiognomy of an inferior race (Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 667). He even believed to detect aboriginal genetic heritage with his own contemporaries:

It was that of a wife of a farmer living near Nefyn, in West Caernarvonshire. It was whispered that she was a changeling, so I am inclined to regard her as no other than one of the representatives of the same aboriginal stock to which one might conjecture some of her neighbours also belong to [...]

(Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 667)

6.2.4.2. Magic, Shamans, Medicine Men and Druids of the Fairies

In his chapter on 'Race in Folklore and Myth' Rhys connects the idea of the druids as primitive priests or medicine-men of the pre-Indo-European population of Ireland and the British Isles closely with the social Darwinist theories about the development of religion. In fairy stories, magic is a frequent narrative element. This element, however, is taken by Rhys as evidence of the fairies being a primitive aboriginal people who have not developed religion yet (Rhys, 2012 [1901], pp. 637-638, 685).

Rhys also uses medieval sources for supernatural fairy characters from Welsh or Irish medieval tradition such as Arawn, king of Annwn, Gwyn ap Nudd and Midir of Brí Léith. Arawn is called "arch-enchanter" by Rhys (*ibid.*, p. 637), and in the case of Gwyn and Midir, Rhys' translation and interpretation of the medieval sources are done in such a way as to support his ideas of British and Irish aborigines, respectively, being adept at magic.

The earliest mention of Gwyn in Welsh literature is the dialogue between him and Gwyddno Garanhir in the *Black Book of Carmarthen* (BBC, pp. 71-73). Asked for his name, Gwyn answers, 'hud im gelwir e guin mab nud'. Various translators both before and after Rhys translate 'hud' here as an affirmative preverbal particle (Skene, 2007 [1868], p. 210; Evans, 1989, pp. 170-71; Rowland, 1990, p. 506; Rüdiger, 2012a, p. 85; cf. GPC, s.v. 'hud'), and the line is most plausibly translated as 'Thus, I am called Gwyn ap Nudd'. Rhys, however, misreads and mistranslates: 'In an ancient poem in the Black Book of Carmarthen, Gwyn is made to give his name as *Hûd Gwyn*, "the White Spell or White Magic"' (Rhys, 2008 [1888],

p. 562). It is noteworthy that ‘hud’ meaning ‘magic’ appears only with fourteenth-century texts (GPC), whereas the Black Book is thirteenth-century (Huws 2000, 70). The dialogue between Gwyn and Gwyddno is even older, most probably predating the middle of the twelfth century (Rowland, 1990, p. 389).

Rhŷs claims that Midir was not a warrior but a wizard:

Now it is true that the fairy Mider is described as resembling the other heroes of Irish story, in having golden yellow hair and bright blue eyes, but he differs completely from them in being no warrior but a great wizard.

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 681)

It is difficult to understand this statement, for *Tochmarc Étaíne* describes Midir as a warrior (TE).²⁴⁷ Rhŷs also points out that Midir was the master of three dwarfs. Rhŷs concludes that there was a pygmy race, which formed the lowest stratum, and that they merged with a slightly more advanced people who were warlike and had a notion of paternity, namely the Picts. The latter possibly adopted their magic from the *síd* dwellers, i.e. the pygmy population (p. 685). Rhŷs focuses strongly on the meaning of the word ‘cor’ (Welsh ‘dwarf’) describing a pygmy mound-dweller (p. 675), seeing parallels to the dwarf (‘corr’) accompanying Eder ap Nudd in *Ystoria Gereint Uab Erbin* (p. 681). Moreover, he believed *corr* to be Irish, and refers to Stokes’ translation of *The Second Battle of Moytura* (1891) in which Stokes translated Ir. *corrguinigh* as ‘sorcerer’ (pp. 76-77). For Rhŷs, the linguistics seems to underpin his notion that the little people were ‘consummate magicians’ (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 681).²⁴⁸ As for the practitioners of magic in the ranks of the little people, he uses ‘druids’, ‘shamans’ and ‘medicine men’ interchangeably (p. 658).

Rhŷs reads the changeling legends in the context of inter-race conflict. To begin with, Rhŷs follows Roberts (1815), who interpreted the stories as child-stealing by the druids’ hidden communities (pp. 192-201), but for Rhŷs the community of the druids is the aboriginal population, and he adds racial aspects when claiming that the inferior aborigines stole children to improve their poor stock. This shows a fully-fledged racist euhemerization of the fairies:

²⁴⁷ After the description of the physical appearance of Midir TE continues: “Thereupon he came up to Eochaid. Then Eochaid said, ‘Welcome to the warrior whom we do not know.’ ‘Tis for that we have come,’ said the warrior. ‘We know thee not,’ said Eochaid. ‘I know thee, however,’ replied the warrior. ‘What is thy name?’ said Eochaid. ‘Not famous,’ said he, ‘Midir of Brí Léith.’”

²⁴⁸ Indeed, Stokes, too, sees the texts of the medieval manuscripts as windows on the prehistoric past for he refers to Rhŷs with the following words: ‘The value of our story (corrupt and incomplete as it is) to students of mythology and folklore appears to me considerable, but can be properly estimated by scholars like Mr. Lang, Prof. Rhŷs, M. Gaidoz and Mr. Alfred Nutt, who have made a special study of the beliefs and practices of savage races’ (Stokes, 1891, p. 56).

The other fairies, when kidnapping, it is true preferred the blond infants of other people to their own swarthy brats, which, perhaps, means that it was a policy of their people to recruit itself with men of the superior physique of the more powerful population around them.

(Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 668)

Rhÿs also applied the theories of Beddoe to Welsh folklore and medieval Irish literature. That there were fair-haired and fair-skinned fairy tribes, with prominent characters such as Midir having blond hair and blue eyes, however, presents a problem for Rhÿs, contradicting his theory, and he had to find fitting explanations. He suggested that the tales of the blond fairies should not be considered with the rest of the fairy traditions, as they were related to a late settlement of 'a family or group of families from without' (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 668). In the case of the medieval description of Midir, Rhÿs does not only deny that Midir is a warrior, but implicitly suggest that Midir's fair hair and blue eyes are simply a literary stereotype (cf. quote in the previous paragraph: Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 680).²⁴⁹ According to the racial theory Rhÿs applied to the fairy traditions, Midir as a king of the fairies should share the physical appearance of either the pygmy or 'Pictish' people of swarthy complexion (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 683): this would agree with Beddoe's index of nigrescence (cf. 6.2.3.1).

It is unsurprising that Rhÿs applied these racial theories to folklore, especially those of Beddoe: he was closely connected with other scholars involved in the development of social Darwinist evolutionary theories, e.g., through the *Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* founded in 1893. Board members of this Committee included Beddoe, Francis Galton (a cousin of Darwin's who had introduced eugenics in 1883), Joseph Anderson and John Romilly Allen (representing the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland), and Rhÿs himself (Hammond 2006). Another scholar who was most influential for *Celtic Folklore* was MacRitchie, whom Rhÿs calls 'very instructive' regarding the Picts; and we have to mention Sayce, whose physiognomic theories are recommended by Rhÿs (Rhÿs, 2012 [1901], p. 682). Sayce says this in his *The Races of the Old Testament* (1891):

Though the small dark Iberians of the British Isles intermingled with the blond Aryan Kelt centuries ago, no new type has been originated. To the present day the so-called Keltic race preserves in all their purity the two ethnological types of which it is

²⁴⁹ As mentioned, Rhÿs sees the description of the fairies as relating to the physical appearance of a primitive people. Physically 'other' to the human, the fairies are either of supernatural beauty or of abysmal ugliness. Thus, fairies are apart from human society, whether they are blond or black-haired. In the case of Midir, the mediaeval scribe has chosen the combination of yellow (golden/blond) hair and blue eyes, a combination of colours found in the descriptions of other heroes as well. We might recall the description of Cormac in *Echtra Chormaic* where he has 'hair braids slightly curled all-golden upon him' and 'like blue-bells... eyes' (Stokes, 1891a, pp. 203-4).

composed, and even in the same family it often happens that some of the children belong to the one type, others to the other. Mixture of blood results only in sterility or reversion to an ancestral type – atavism, as it is usually termed, not a new race.

(Sayce, 1891, pp. 33-34)

We see that Sayce and Rhys agree as far as their racial theories are concerned. The Celts carry the Aryan heritage, and although they have intermarried with the non-Indoeuropean aboriginal people. As Sayce denies this what he calls ‘a mixture of blood’, this implies that the population can be divided into Celtic-Aryan individuals and so-called Iberians, and the marker for racial type is the physiognomy. We can now understand why Rhys believed to be able to identify the wife of the farmer from Nefyn as a ‘changeling woman’ by her physiognomy (see quote previous paragraph: Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 667).²⁵⁰

6.2.5 John Rhys’ Aims

Having contextualized and provided a background for Rhys reading both medieval literature and Welsh fairy folklore as source for evidence for the fairy euhemerization theory, we must ask why he favoured this theory, while, as mentioned above, other members of the Folklore Society, such as Andrew Lang, stressed a more spiritual interpretation of the fairy traditions. Based on his model of the prehistoric past, Rhys claims that the influence of the aboriginal population on the Celtic Brythons was smaller than in the case of the Goidels:

[W]e may safely assume Welsh, Cornish and Breton to be freer from the influence of the non-Aryan element native to the British Isles than the Goidelic dialects can well have been.

(Rhys, 1890/91, p. 4)

Note how Rhys stresses that both the Goidels and Brythons are Aryan. By means of his particular model of Britain’s prehistory, Rhys rejects the English stereotype that Wales was a stronghold of magic: he attributes this negative stereotype to a separate aboriginal people. Rhys does allow that an aboriginal, non-Aryan element contributed to the present population of the British Isles, but he stresses that this is equally present in the English population. Furthermore, emphasising that both the Welsh and English are of Aryan descent the Welsh

²⁵⁰ Related to the hypothesis of Britain’s aboriginal pygmy population, a ‘Turanian’ dwarf population is the conflation of the supernatural and natural dwarf and the preoccupation of the Victorians with racial myth which culminated in the belief that the physiognomy is an indicator of moral and intellectual qualities and went with an anxiety of the Other (Silver, 1999, pp. 117-147). For related discussions in contiguous fields see Cislo (2004), Lumbley (2019), Rich (1994), Knobel (2001) and Kelly (1995).

cannot be considered inferior to the English: both peoples are equal in terms of the respective amount of their Aryan and non-Aryan heritage:

Reverting for a moment to the chief races constituting the Welsh people, the Celtic or Aryan consisting of Goidels and Brythons, and the non-Aryan consisting of the Aboriginal population, we may say that their relative proportions to one another may be treated as little disturbed by immigrants from Ireland or even from England; for the average Englishman is at most not much more Aryan than the average Welshman.

(Rhŷs & Brynmor-Jones, 1900, p. 31)

Rhŷs' urgent wish to show that the Welsh are not underdeveloped can be understood in contrast to the contemporary Oxford Saxonist historians (among them Bishop Stubbs, J. R. Green and E. A. Freeman, influenced by the earlier work of Kemble: see Williams, 2014, pp. 54-63). The latter's evolutionary model of history identified 'degenerate races' subdued by Germanic tribes (Kemble, 1876, p. 232) or 'perishing people' such as the Celtic civilisation destroyed by the Romans (Stubbs, 1883, pp. 2-39). With these theories of the Saxonist historians in the background, from 1842 onwards articles stressing the racial inferiority of the Celtic people appeared in *The Times* (Williams, 2014, p. 60). This shows that the discourse on racial theories remained not merely academic but reached a wider audience and coincided with social tendencies. An additional indicator for the degradation of the Celtic heritage was the assaults against the Welsh language which was called an impediment to cultural development as expressed in the Blue Books (Roberts 1998). Publication of *The Welsh People* at the beginning of the twentieth century coincided with a strengthening of the Welsh language movement (Day & Suggett 1985), and Rhŷs' rejection of the earlier stereotype of Welsh being an inferior language supported the movement by providing a historical background placing Welsh and English on the same level. Rhŷs' work can thus be read as model of history which rejects a school of historians who strongly promoted the alleged superiority of what they called the 'Teutonic race' over the 'Celtic race'.

6.2.6 Analysing the Use of Fairy Traditions: A Folklorist's Question

Rhŷs attributes all stereotypes he wants not to be attached to Welsh society to an aboriginal British people which has become conflated with the fairies. This is only possible by accepting a euhemerist theory about the origin of the fairies. This interpretation is supported in his own writing:

Thus the Aboriginal non-Aryan ideas as to marriage might, conceivably, have survived long in the modified form of a tendency to take somewhat too lenient a view of immorality.

(Rhŷs & Brynmor-Jones, 1900, p. 23)

Therefore, Rhŷs' drafting of Britain's prehistory shows how he tries to clear his countrymen of the stigma of underdevelopment. In addition, it is apparent that Rhŷs uses traditional motifs in a very traditional way: he devises a prehistoric people with a culture that comprises all features he does not want to attribute to his own Welsh society.

Rhŷs' theories influenced J. E. Lloyd's theories about the origin of the Goidels (Pryce 2013) and his ideas have proved very long-lived and influential. Rhŷs' study of folklore can be seen as important work which encouraged the subsequent generation of Welsh scholars to cherish their folklore heritage and the language. Moreover, by applying an euhemerisation theory to the study of the Welsh oral tradition, the tales had been cleared off their interpretation as superfluous and superstitious. On the contrary, deemed as representing memory of prehistoric peoples, the tales gained scientific importance. The folk tradition was turned from being the one consisting of 'old wives' tales to be ignored into a store of potentially historically important material. For John Rhŷs, this aspect was crucial: 'my education', he says, 'such as it was, had been of a nature to discourage all interest in anything that savoured of heathen lore and superstition' (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. viii). He continues: 'those who may think that these legends here recorded are childish and frivolous, may rest assured that they bear on questions which could not themselves called either childish or frivolous' (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 1).

Indeed, variations on a kind of euhemerisation theory have been developed profitably to the present day by rejecting the debatable ethnic theories, but by acknowledging that ancient roots of folk traditions, such as in the important work of R. Gwyndaf:

Neither do we have to accept in its entirety the ethnic theory of the Little People as an explanation of the origin of the fairies and fairy lake-dwelling. Even so, the Llyn y Fan Fach legend in content and atmosphere takes the listener a long way back in history, possibly even as far as the Iron Age.

(Gwyndaf, 1992/93, p. 248)

Rhŷs' theories had not only an impact on folklore studies, but they precipitated also in prose tales, as they have also inspired novelists, who often invoke a hidden realm of a primitive people on British ground, such as Arthur Machen (Arthur Llewellyn Jones) in his well-known short story *The Shining Pyramid*. Likewise, Rhŷs' theories inspired twentieth century novelists.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Two novels with a prehistorical setting corresponding to Rhys' theories are *The Mist of Avalon* by Zimmer-Bradley (1982) and the retelling of the Mabinogion by Evangeline Walton (1974).

In the end, as this study originated in an investigation on the use of folk tradition, I shall conclude in this place with the words of Alan Dundes the truth of which has been proven in my opinion by the present example: ‘I believe the folklorist can, by analysing folklore, discover general patterns of culture, and I would maintain further that knowledge of such patterns can provide the means of raising levels of consciousness’ (Alan Dundes, 1980, p. x).

6.3 Fairy Traditions in Nineteenth-Century Prose and Poetry

6.3.1 The Beauty of the Landscape, the Glory of the Past and the Legacy of Iolo

Morganwg

*But joy to the minstrel whose deathless song
On the breeze of the mountain is borne along
And joy to the warrior whose heart and hand
Are strong in the cause of his native land;
For them we are twinning our fairest wreath,
They are welcome as moonlight to Gwyn ap Nudd.*

- 'A Fairy's Song', Jenkins 1873

During the nineteenth century the Tylwyth Teg become a narrative motif closely connected with the Welsh landscape and a glorious, golden past; and at times the fairy poetry also shows patriotic overtones. Cynddelw (Robert Ellis, 1812-1878), a Baptist minister active in the Eisteddfod movement, uses the Tylwyth Teg in his image of an idealized, romanticized landscape: in his *cywydd* ‘Berwyn’ he refers to legendary tales connected with the landscape, addressing the Berwyn mountains:

Wyt hafdŷ hundŷ hoendeg,
Breninllwyth y Tylwyth Teg;
Teulu hedd mewn tawel hin,
Nawdd breiniol Nudd eu brenin

(Cynddelw, Ioan Arfon (ed.), 1877. p. 76)

You are a fair summer mansion
Of the royal dynasty of the fairies,
People of peace in tranquil season,
Nudd's, their king's royal peace

(my trans.)

The poem is edited in a section entitled ‘Caneuon Gwladgarol a Chymroawl’ (‘Patriotic and Welsh Songs’): the Tylwyth Teg have become a reference point for the ‘Welshness’ of the landscape in connection to autochthonous traditions, and folk traditions are interpreted positively, being used to create a romantic landscape. The Berwyn mountains become the dwelling place of the Tylwyth Teg, addressed as ‘people of peace’, an expression which

resembles the Scottish traditions, who call the fairies *daoine síth* or *daoine maithe* ('people of peace' or 'good people'; Campbell, 1900, pp. 3, 7).²⁵²

Song XIII, 'Seryddiaeth yr hen Gymry' ('Astronomy of the Old Welshmen'), of the section 'Caneuon Gwladgarol a Chymroawl' is inspired by Iolo's triad #89 about the Three Blessed Astronomers of the Isle of Britain. Gwyn ap Nudd appears disconnected from his traditional role as fairy king, here almost a divine priest or other divinity, and once as a stellar constellation whose white garments recall the white dresses of the druids:

Gwyn ap Nudd uwch nudd yn awr – esgyna
 Mewn gwisg ganaid rwysgfawr,
 Mal serydd, dremidydd mawr,
 I'r Wyddfa grib rieddfawr.
 (Cynddelw, Ioan Arfon (ed.), 1877, p. 43)

Gwyn ap Nudd above the mist now – rise
 In shining white, splendid raiment,
 Like an astronomer, great seer,
 To the great majestic summit, Yr Wyddfa (my trans.)

It is noteworthy that the Tylwyth Teg appear as friendly beings, and Gwyn ap Nudd is by no means a demon king but a magnificent sage with the splendour of the heroic and druidic past clinging to him. This is a clear dismissal of the early modern beliefs which saw the fairies as devils and understood their king to be a demon (cf. chapter 5).

Connected with the struggle for national identity, the Tylwyth Teg have adopted a new, positive connotation. In the course of the nineteenth century, they have become a narrative element recalling a glorious and idyllic past flavoured with patriotism in the writings of poets of eisteddfodic circles drawing on the legacy of Iolo Morganwg. They figure as a metaphor for the loveliness and charm of the Welsh landscape,²⁵³ having become the token of a glorious past and the desire to restore this past, aiming at changing a political reality in which Welsh culture and language are under pressure. It is also a romantic desire to escape to a world apart from the problems of a fast-industrialising society.

²⁵² We could relate 'síth' to Ir. 'síd' which has been discussed above. Interestingly, Campbell translates 'peace', but explains this 'peace' as 'being silent'. The 'good people' he considers an expression an Irishman would use (ibid.).

²⁵³ Another example follows in the following part 6.3.2.1.

6.3.2 Glasynys: Writing Artistic Fairy Tales

Glasynys (Owen Wynne Jones, 1828-1870) was a prolific member of a school of Welsh writers, mostly Anglican clerics, whose work led eventually to the Romantic movement in Wales.²⁵⁴ Despite Rhŷs' and MacRitchie's attempts to explain folk belief in the Tylwyth Teg as a remembrance of a prehistoric primitive people, the Tylwyth Teg were firmly established as a symbol evoking an idealized rural life. This development has its early roots in the work of the patriotic Anglican clerics, writers and antiquarians who significantly contributed to Welsh culture by trying to preserve Welsh life and history in all their various aspects. Saunders Lewis list among these clerics Gwallter Mechain, Tegid, Ifor Ceri, Rice Rees Nicander, Robert Williams, Carnhuanawc, ap Ithel and Robert Jones (Lewis, 1943, pp. xviii-xix).²⁵⁵ Lewis uses the term 'clerical school' for the patriotic clerical writers of the nineteenth century who inherited the positive attitude towards the various aspects of Welsh tradition from the above-mentioned authors bridging the eighteenth and the nineteenth century (Lewis, 1, p. xiii).

In the nineteenth century the Oxford Movement pushed for the re-introduction of certain pre-Reformation customs into Anglican liturgy (Herring 2010). Those who found these aims attractive would probably be inclined to appreciate antiquities and ancient traditions in other fields as well, quite in contrast to the Methodist movement which rejected folk traditions and tried actively to suppress them. Glasynys was such a person; he had converted from Methodism to Anglicanism at about seventeen (Lewis, 1943, p. x), and Rhŷs testifies that Glasynys was 'an enthusiast for Welsh antiquities' (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 109). Glasynys' fascination with antiquities may have been inspired by the education he got by his mother, who made him appreciate works such as *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* by Theophilus Evans, and *Gwladgarwr* by Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Lewis, 1943, p. xii). Thus, early education laid the foundation for Glasynys' holding the national Welsh heritage high, and for finding his inspiration, his 'patterns', as Saunders Lewis termed it, in the Iolo manuscripts (Lewis, 1943, p. xx):

Rhyddiaith farddonol fel hyn fydd rhai o bethau gorau Glasynys maes o law. Dyna yw llawer o'r *Straeon* yn y cyfrol hon, megis *Llwyn y Nef*. Dyma un o'r ffurfiau llenyddol a grewyd gan ramantiaeth Ossianiadd; Coleridge a de Quincey yw ei meistri yn Saesneg; Bandelaire [*sic*] a Rimbaud a roes iddi ei hawl mewn Ffrangeg. Rhoes Glasynys inni esiamplau o'r dull mewn Cymraeg.

²⁵⁴ For a short biography see Lewis (1943, pp. vii-xlvi). Lewis also lists several relevant articles (pp. vii-viii). For the Romantic movement in Wales see Llywelyn-Williams (1960).

²⁵⁵ For biographical background see WBO Walter Davies aka Gwallter Mechain (1761-1849), John Jones aka Tegid (1792-1852), John Jenkins aka Ifor Ceri (1770-1829), Rice Rees (1804-1839), Morris Williams aka Nicander (1809-1874), Robert Williams (1810-1881), Thomas Price aka Carnhuanawc (1787-1848), John Williams aka ab Ithel (1811-1862), and Robert Jones (1810-1879).

(Lewis, 1943, p. xx)

Poetic prose like this will be some of Glasynys' best things in due course. That is what we have in many of the stories in this volume, such as *Llwyn y Nef*. This is one of the literary forms created by Ossianic romanticism; Coleridge and de Quincey are its masters in English; Baudelaire and Rimbaud gave its right in French. Glasynys gave us examples of the style in Welsh.

Glasynys wrote both poetry and prose, and his short stories are masterpieces; in three of them, edited by Saunders Lewis in *Straeon Glasynys* (1943), Glasynys deals with Welsh fairy folklore, for in chapter one we have introduced the *bwgan* as a fairy spirit, for Glasynys mentions tales of several *bwganod* in 'Sôn am Ysbrydion' ('Report of Spirits'). The other two tales, which I will discuss in detail, are 'Y Tylwyth Teg' ('The Fairies') and 'Y Fôr-Forwyn' ('The Mermaid'), because they shed light on Glasynys' working with motifs derived from traditional tales about the fairies, and motifs taken from Iolo Morganwg's writings.

'Y Tylwyth Teg' (Lewis, 1943, pp. 46-49) is an artistic fairy-bride tale: (Lewis, 1943, pp. 46-49). It has been first published by Isaac Foulkes in *Cymry Fu* (1862). According to Glasynys' own words it is based on tales heard from his mother (Lewis, 1943, p. 46). We identify the traditional motifs of a shepherd losing his way in the mist and stumbling into a fairy ring; the subterranean way leading to the fairy realm lit by a mysterious light from the rocks; dining at a richly laid table in the land of the fairies and not seeing the fairies (at first); and finally travelling on a Thursday night. A new motif which describes the difference between the world of the fairies and the world of human beings is their celebrating a wedding in silence, further marking the otherness of the fairies. However, a clear difference between this and folktales of fairy mistresses is that here, the wedding between a mortal and a fairy seems to be a lucky match, and the last sentence of the story shows the tale to be an onomastic *apologia* for the 'Tylwyth Teg': 'A thyma baham y galwyd y teulu hynod sydd yn nhir Hud a Lledrith yn Dylwyth Teg' ('And this is why the remarkable people in the land of Magic and Enchantment are a Fair Family') (p. 49; my trans.).

Glasynys' fairies are by no means devils, but appear as friendly, loveable creatures. The fairy man who invites the young shepherd is described as a '[t]orpwth o hen ddyn llygadlas, llygadlon' ('a stocky old man with blue, merry eyes') (p. 46); the wife of the fairy man is described like this: 'Ar hyn, dyma globen o hen wreigan raenus a thirion yr olwg arni yn dod atynt' ('Just then, there was a plump old woman of good appearance and pleasant to look at coming to them') (p. 47); and their daughters are described as 'tair o ferched heirdd nodedig' ('three remarkable, beautiful daughters') (p. 47). The land of this nice family is full of joy:

Erbyn cyrraedd palas y torpwth, yr oedd wedi pencyfrdanu gan mor beraidd-oslefol y pynciai'r adar yn y coedlwyni. Yno drachefn yr oedd aur yn serennu'r llygaid, ac arian yn gwawlio'r golygon.

(Lewis 1943, p. 47)

By the time he arrived at the palace of the stocky man, he was amazed at how sweet-sounding and melodiously the birds sang in the groves. There once again, gold blinded the eye, and silver lit the sight.

(my trans.)

Thus, the Tylwyth Teg are the blessed inhabitants of a wonderful, hidden country, and in the tale by Glasynys all this splendour is not described as an illusion, for it does not vansih as in tales in which people have been subject to fairy illusion.²⁵⁶

Glasynys' 'Y For-forwyn' is a *Kunstmärchen* (artistic fairy tale), a genre which flourished with the growing Romantic movement throughout Europe. Tales about mermaids especially in connection with the fairy mistress motif were extremely fashionable in the nineteenth century, both in literature and art.²⁵⁷ 'Undine' by de la Motte Fouqué (De la Motte Fouqué, 1859) and 'The Little Mermaid' by Andersen (Andersen, 2005 [1839-45], pp. 77-101) are two well-known examples. 'Y Fôr-forwyn' is another otherworldly bride, or fairy mistress tale, with typical folk-tale motifs such as winning the mermaid as wife by taking her by force and keeping a magical object which belongs to her; the wife running away; the quest of the husband to find and bring back his wife. But the tale is not only folklore, being enriched by literary motifs and otherworldly beings. Most striking is the presence of Gwyn ap Nudd,²⁵⁸ Gwydion and Nefydd Naf Neifion, as their treatment demonstrates how medieval motifs and those from texts by Iolo Morganwg become entwined. Of those three characters, only Gwyn ap Nudd has a claim to be a ruler of the otherworld according to medieval and early modern

²⁵⁶ It is interesting that Evans-Wentz has obviously heard an oral re-telling of this tale by Glasynys, but does not recognize it, thinking it an ancient survival and leading him into fantastic speculations concerning its age (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], pp. 160-163). This draws attention to the fact that in Glasynys' and other nineteenth-century authors' work we find narrative motifs of fairy tradition which probably never ceased to be transmitted orally. But there are also characters from both medieval fairy folk traditions and medieval literary traditions such as Gwyn ap Nudd and Arawn, who were virtually lost from folk traditions. In the nineteenth century the interpretation of the characters from medieval literature was influenced by the forgeries of Iolo Morganwg, as the example of the poetry of Cynddelw showed (see above). In this way these characters became part of another, more recent oral tradition, namely the tradition founded by the clerical poets inspired by Iolo's ideas.

²⁵⁷ For a survey on mermaids connected with the fairy mistress motif in the nineteenth century see Silver (1999, pp. 89-116).

²⁵⁸ In the present context I count Gwyn ap Nudd among the characters from literary tradition, for his oral tradition seems to be discontinuous. The context in which he is presented here suggests that he was introduced on the ground of the rediscovery of medieval Welsh literature during the age of the classical revival in Wales.

tradition, even if his realm there is not necessarily under or beyond the sea, and neither is he a ruler of the sea in medieval texts; for Glasynys, though, (and especially in his poetry), Gwyn has become a ruler of the sea.

To understand why Gwyn ap Nudd has become a ruler of the sea in Glasynys' prose, we must turn to Glasynys' poetry. 'Myrddyn Wyllt sef Can Ddesgrifiadol Cymru' ('Mad Merlin, being a Descriptive Song of Wales') is a poem praising the landscapes of Wales (Glasynys, 1898b, p. 28). Sitting and looking at the waves, Myrddin Wyllt addresses the sea:

A tithau'n gwatwar – a'th wyn donnau'n codi,
Gan ddynwaredu fel y gwnant wastrodi
Ar hyd eu hochrau, pan fydd eu corynod
Yn drigle Gwyn ap Nudd, fel Cantre'r Gwaelod.

And you mocking – and your white waves rising,
Imitating the way they will serve
All along their [the hill's] sides, when their summits will be
A stronghold of Gwyn ap Nudd, like Cantre'r Gwaelod.

(Glasynys, 1898b, p. 28)

These lines speak of the waves of the sea which will once drown the mountains, so that the hill will be like the drowned lands known as Cantre'r Gwaelod. Gwyn ap Nudd being a ruler of the sea is a synthesis of two ideas. One element is drawn from 'Ymddiddan Gwyddno Garanhir a Gwyn ap Nudd'. Gwyddno asks Gwyn for protection when the two heroes meet after battle (ll. 4-9):

Y gan gur gurt y kinnit.
arbennic llv llidowit.
ath vit naut canys erchit.

(BBC, 34, ll.4-9)

From the warrior of strong rule,
Leader of a host, lord of wrath,
You shall have protection since you ask for it.

(trans. Rowland, 1990, p. 506)

Glasynys seems to conclude that there has been a conflict between Gwyn and Gwyddno, for he maintains in his essay 'Cantref y Gwaelod' in *Cymru Fu* (Foulkes (ed.), 1862, pp. 3-12):

Yn *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*, yr hyn a gasglwyd tua dechrau y 9fed ganrif, ceir tri dernyn o ffrwyth ei [Gwyddno] awen, sef *Cân*, *Foesol*, *Ymryson Gwyddno a Gwyn ap Nudd*, a *Chwynfan oherwydd Gorlifiad Cantre'r Gwaelod*.

(ibid., p. 5)

In the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, collected about the beginning of the 9th century, one gets three parts of the fruit of his [Gwyddno's] poetic art, namely *Song*, *Moral*,

Colloquy of Gwyddno and Gwyn ap Nudd, and Lament because of the Drowning of Cantre'r Gwaelod.

(my trans.)

The tradition that the drowned lands of Cantre'r Gwaelod are the lands of Gwyddno Garanhir existed already in the fifteenth century: Rachel Bromwich notes Guto'r Glyn's use of the lament of Gwyddno as reference point to describe his grief for the deceased abbot of Strata Florida (1961, p. 398). It seems that perhaps originally independent motifs, i.e. the meeting of Gwyn and Gwyddno after the battle and the drowning of Cantre'r Gwaelod gave rise to the idea that Gwyn was responsible for the flooding of Gwyddno's lands, and hence that Gwyn's realm was the sea. But if Gwyn rules the waves, and the waves finally submerge the mountains, and turn it into a stronghold of their lord, then this imagery is congruent in agreement with Gwyn representing water, an idea which has been discussed above (chapter 3.2.2). We witness an otherworldly attack on the domain of men.

Having elucidated why Gwyn ap Nudd appeared as ruler of the sea, we still have to answer this question for Nefydd Naf Neifion and Gwydion ap Don. Nefydd Naf Neifion appears in Triad 97 in the third series of Iolo Morganwg's triads in *Myvyrian Archaiology*, which treats of the three primary and extraordinary works of Britain. Peter Roberts introduces Nefydd as 'Lord Supreme of Waters' (Roberts, 1803, p. 41). Gwydion ap Dôn could have been regarded as ruler the otherworld because he is a magician according to the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi. Gwydion has become a prince of the otherworld in the nineteenth century, but whether these traditions have been inspired by Iolo Morganwg who associates Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwydion ap Dôn in Triad 89, in the third series of triads, remains unclear (MA, Triad 89). According to Evans-Wentz, David Williams, a member of the Cymmrodorion Society of Carmarthen, reported that Gwydion ap Don was the king of the Tylwyth Teg residing among the stars in Caer Gwydion (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], pp. 151-152).

The names Glasynys uses for naming the otherworldly realms in 'Y Fôr Forwyn' demonstrate how names from medieval texts, and names invented by Iolo are brought together. *Gwerddonau Llion* as a name for the otherworld appears in Glasynys' 'Y Fôr Forwyn' (Lewis 1943, p. 81). This expression for the otherworld has been already introduced in chapter 3. Glasynys also mentions another otherworldly realm, namely Dwfn-Cwm Eigion Annwn ('Abyss-Valley of the Bottom of Annwn') (Lewis, 1943, p. 82), thus merging three traditional motifs, namely that the otherworldly realm is either located in the deep, under water or beyond the sea (cf. chapter 2 & 3). The mermaid remarks 'Fy enw, pan oeddwn yn Morganwg. fy ngwlad fy hun, oedd Nefyn, a merch wyf i Nefydd Naf Neifion, a nith i Gwyn ap Nudd a Gwydion ab Don' ('When I was in my own land, my name was Nefyn, daughter

of Nefydd Naf Neifion, and niece to Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwydion ap Don') (Lewis, 1943, p. 77). This quote exemplifies the merging of motifs found in the Mabinogi, and others found in Iolo's Triads in one sentence.

6.3.2.1 Romantic Tradition and Pygmy Euhemerization Theory Collide

With John Rhŷs and Glasynys we have two characters who use the fairy folklore in a fundamentally different way. Glasynys uses the motifs in a creative way, inspired by the work of Iolo Morganwg, but John Rhŷs takes the perspective of the folklorist interpreting fairy folklore following an euhemerization theory. John Rhŷs was aware of the connection between Glasynys' artistic fairy tales and the fairy mistress legends of Welsh folklore: he refers to them and reproduces 'Y For-Forwyn' almost entirely, along with a rough translation (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 117-123). But he does not appreciate Glasynys' treatment of folk motifs, on the contrary, he criticizes the reworking of the folktales:

The shorter versions given by Glasynys are probably more nearly given as he heard them, than the longer ones, which may be suspected of having been a good deal spun out by him [...]. Where he got this from I have not been able to find out, but it has probably been pieced together from various sources [...].

(Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 116-117)

However, Glasynys was an artist and author in the first place and not a scholarly folklorist, as Saunders Lewis points out (Lewis, 1943, p. vii), whereas Rhŷs takes the perspective of the folklorist: Why does Rhŷs not acknowledge Glasynys' work as *Kunstmärchen*, rather treating the tales as if taken from a poor, fragmentary collection of folklore? Indeed, Rhŷs appreciates the genre of the *Kunstmärchen*, for he named the first chapter in *Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx* 'Undine's Kymric sisters' after *Undine*, a novel and artistic fairy tale by de la Motte Fouqué.

It is also interesting that Rhŷs almost gives the complete tale by Glasynys, but omits the episode where the mermaid refuses to come with Ifan Morgan, the young man who has caught her, an episode which excellently represents Glasynys' incorporation of classical Welsh traditions into folklore. The wailing mermaid is first compared to a hare, and then an owl: 'Ond pan afaelodd yn ei llaw, ysgrechiai fel ysgfarnog mewn rhwyd' ('But when he gripped her hand, she screamed like a hare in a net') (Lewis, 1943, p. 73), and 'dyma hi'n gwichian fel hanner dwsin o gywion dylluan' ('she squealed like half a dozen young owls') (p. 74). According to folk traditions of the British Isles, southwest Sweden, southern Norway, and Denmark, and other parts of Europe, the hare is an animal witches can transform to (Nildin-Wall & Wall, 1993; F6655.2), and there are several examples found in Elias Owen's

compilation of Welsh folk beliefs, the earliest of these found in the *Topographia Hibernica* by Gerald of Wales (Owen, 1973 [1887], pp. 227-234). The relationship between the screeching owl and the fairies has already been treated in chapter 1. Here Glasynys works more subtly with traditional motifs, but receives no acknowledgement by Rhŷs.

We have seen that Rhŷs used Welsh folklore and especially the fairy traditions in quite a different way: for him, they are a projection plane for the negative stereotypes of the Welsh. The fairies are styled as source of these undesirable characteristics and are cleared away as a conquered and vanished people. The druids are the priests of these vanished tribes immersed in primitive customs such as the practice of magic (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], pp. 656, 685). The writings of Glasynys, however, are inspired by the idea that the age of druids was a golden age of learning and wisdom for Wales:²⁵⁹ druids are wise men, guardians of Wales' cultural heritage, and they are by no means debunked as primitive, savage magicians. We may consider his poem 'Myrddin Wyllt':

Uwch ben y mannau gynt lle bu'r derwyddon
Yn dysgu moes, athroniaeth, a chyfrinion;
Cysegrwyd daear werdd ei lleiniau llonydd
Gan waed dihalog; do, a'i glesin weunydd
A fwydwyd gan y llidiog lengoedd beiddgar –
Ni pherchid glendid na doethineb treiddgar;
Mae'r awen eto, er cynifer oesau,
Uwch ben y fan yn tywallt heilltion ddaugrau.

(Glasynys, 1889b, p. 46)

Above the places where the druids formerly
taught moral principles, philosophy and mysteries;
The green earth of her [i.e. Ynys Môn] tranquil strips of land was sanctified
By immaculate blood; yes, and her green meadows
Which were fed by the angry challenging legions –
Holiness was not respected nor insightful wisdom;
Still the poetic inspiration / the muse, despite so great a number of ages,
Sheds salty tears above the place. (my trans.)

In Glasynys' poetry, magicians and the fairies are entwined, too, as in 'Llywelyn a'i Gi' ('Llywelyn and his Dog'):

Pa le mae Dinas Emrys, chwareule'r Tylwyth Teg,
Ac Ogof y Dewiniaid – y gwŷr a roddent reg
Ar ben gelynyon Cymru [...]?

(Glasynys, 1889a, p. 62)

Where is Dinas Emrys, the playground of the Tylwyth Teg,
And the cave of the Magicians – the men who bestowed a curse

²⁵⁹ See chapter 6.1.

On the head of the enemies of Cymru [...]?

(my trans.)

The placing of magicians and fairies next to each other is suggestive, for both appear as the magical guardians of Wales. We should remember that identification of magicians with druids, and the druids with fairies, was possible, for Crie in Scotland (1803, pp. 347-348) and Roberts (1815, p. 199) in Wales maintained that the fairies were the druids in hiding (see this chapter above). Both druids and fairies are part of a cherished heritage, interpreted in a Romantic fashion. Another example is found in Glasynys poem 'Enid' Glasynys (1889, pp. 83-84). The Tylwyth Teg are the lake-dwellers and are presented almost like a feature of nature, like the water lilies of the lake where Enid drowned. After all, we can say that Glasynys cherished the Tylwyth Teg and in his writing, they have no negative connotation, and appear as purely supernatural beings.

Having said this, the fairies and the druids as imagined by Glasynys contrast with Rhŷs' image of the fairies, who are euhemerized by Rhŷs as folk memory of a primitive people. These considerations suggest that Rhŷs' remarks reject this Romantic use of fairy traditions, because Rhŷs must have recognized, if Glasynys – and authors working along similar lines – was not discredited as an inferior collector of folklore bolstering his material with 'compound adjectives',²⁶⁰ then the underlying message of Glasynys' tales, the pride in the Tylwyth Teg as part of the national Welsh heritage, might be transmitted effectively. This would not suit Rhŷs' aim of using fairy folklore to devise a prehistoric primitive people to clear the 'Aryan' Welsh from the stigma of being a people of a lower level of cultural development than the Anglo-Saxons.

6.3.3 The Idealized Past as Realm of Desire

The nineteenth-century authors established an idealized picture of the Welsh rural life.²⁶¹ In the train of this development the Tylwyth Teg being part of traditional Welsh folk beliefs became romanticized, too. The poem 'Noswaith yn yr Hafod' ('An Evening in the Summer Farmstead') by Glasyn (Richard Jones Owen; 1831-1909), a friend of Glasynys, is a representative example (Carneddog (ed.), 1914, pp. 35-38). In the poem, Arthur Llwyd yr Hafod tells stories of the Tylwyth Teg, and the first tale relates how Eluned Glan y Llyn, a beautiful maiden, is a favourite of the Tylwyth Teg: she receives presents from them, and even

²⁶⁰ 'I will not attempt to translate Glasynys' poetic prose with all its compound adjectives, but it comes to this in a few words' (Rhŷs, 2012 [1901], p. 40).

²⁶¹ The following authors discuss and describe this phenomenon, some with a stress on the development in England: Williams (1973), Keith (1975), Wiener (1981), Bennett (1993).

returns safe and sound from the Tylwyth Teg when she loses her way on the heath. Eluned falls in love with a young man who is not faithful and dies from a broken heart. The Tylwyth Teg take vengeance for her death by enchanting her faithless lover to drown himself in a lake. The next part of the poem relates a changeling tale: a little boy is stolen from the cradle and the mother dies from a broken heart, but the changeling grows into a beautiful maiden. On one evening of singing, storytelling and dancing, a beautiful young man comes to the house, and it is revealed that he was the changed baby. He marries the changeling maiden. The third part of the poem is a song about the Tylwyth Teg: ‘hoff blant y mynydd ydynt hwy, a theulu’r grug a’r brwyn’ (‘favourite children of the mountains they are, and the family of the heath and rushes’) (Carneddog (ed.), 1914, p. 38). The poem reads further:

Yng nghyfnod diniwiedrwydd – yn oes ein tadau gynt,
Fe fyddai ieuencyd Cymru Fu yn dawsio’n mraich y gwynt,
Fry yn y fawnog wastad, heb yngan llw na rheg,
Cyd-ddawnsient ar yr hymfa gron yn llon â’r Tylwyth Teg.

In the time of innocence – in the age of our forefathers.
The youth of Old Wales (Wales that Was) would dance in the arm of the wind.
Above in the level peatbog, without speaking blasphemy or curse,
They danced merrily together on the foliage with the Tylwyth Teg. (my trans.)

We see that not only rural life, but also the past of Wales and the tales of the Tylwyth Teg have become idealized. Even the changeling tale gets a lovely romantic aspect here. The Tylwyth Teg have become a metaphor for all that was good and innocent and lovely in the bye-gone days of rural life. Negative social aspects which go hand in hand with a firm belief in changelings have been completely suppressed.²⁶²

6.3.4 Daniel Owen’ *Gwen Tomos - Merch Y Wern Ddu*

It is essential to give at least brief mention to the Tylwyth Teg in the work of Daniel Owen given his importance in establishing the novel in Welsh literature.²⁶³ In *Gwen Tomos. Merch Y Wernddu*, the Tylwyth Teg appear in the context of describing a *gwraig hysbys* (cunning woman) named Nansi’r Nant. His presentation of a *gwraig hysbys* is very interesting, given the richness of his description of rural Welsh life (Williams, 1959), and Owen dedicates the whole second chapter to Nansi (GW, issue 27th April 1893). Nansi claims to be of gypsy

²⁶² Jenkins (1991) elucidates such negative aspects in his essay ‘Witches and Fairies: Supernatural Aggression and Deviance Among the Irish Peasantry’.

²⁶³ For an appreciation of Daniel Owen see WBO, entry by Katherine Williams (‘Kate Roberts’), 1959 and Johnston (1999, pp. 77-80), and Robert Rhys (2000).

descent and earns her living by offering services as a midwife, offering (herbal) cures, telling fortunes (preferably to lovers) and sometimes cursing people (it is stressed that she believed in her own charms and curses). In short, comparing Nansi with the descriptions of cunning women given by Tallis (2019) and Davies (1997), we see that Owen gives us an authentic picture of a cunning woman.

The presentation of Nansi's Nant includes a fragment of Welsh fairy belief, when Nansi curses the local squire who threatens to set his dogs on her with the following words: '[M]i ofala i bydd cwn uffern yn ych cnoi chithe i dragwyddoldeb' ('I will take care that the dogs of hell will bite *you* to eternity'). Here we have Cŵn Annwn²⁶⁴ being invoked to avenge Nansi on the unfriendly squire. The Tylwyth Teg are mentioned in chapter XIII 'Yr Ornest' ('The Contest'):

Yr oedd y lle a elwid y Lawnt yn fangre ddymunol. Darn o dir glas gwastad ydoedd yn nghanol coed y Plas, rhyw ddeugain llath o hyd ac ugain o led, a'r coed mawr fel muriau o'i gwmpas ac yn ei gysgodi yn brydwerth dros ben. Yn moethder eithaf yr haf byddai y Lawnt yn hyfryd oer. Credid y byddai y Tylwyth Teg yn dawsio yno wrth oleu'r lloer, ac yr oedd yn ffaith fod Twm o'r Nant wedi bod yno yn cynnal interliwd unwaith os nad ddwywaith. Pan fyddai ysbleddach fwy na chyffredin yn y Plas, odid fawr na ddiwedddai mewn dawns ar y Lawnt. Dywedai rhywrai hefyd y byddai Nansi'r Nant yn ymweld cyson â'r Lawnt, ac mai yno y byddai hi yn cael datguddiedigaethau gan ysbrydion a chyfrinach gyda'r Tylwyth Teg.

(GW, 20th July 1893)

The place which was called Lawnt was a pleasant location. It was a part of green level land in the middle of Coed y Plas ('Woodland of the Palace'), some 72 feet long and 38 feet wide, and the great wood like walls around and in its shade it was very beautiful. In the extreme heat of summer y Lawnt was nice and cool. It was believed that the Tylwyth Teg danced there in the light of the moon, and it was a fact that Twm o'r Nant had held an interlude there once, if not twice.²⁶⁵ When there was more merriment than usual in y Plas, it usually ended with a dance on the Lawnt. Some said that Nansi'r Nant visited the Lawnt regularly, and that there she got revelations by the spirits and secrets by the Tylwyth Teg.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ For folk beliefs connected with Cŵn Annwn see e.g., Owen (1973 [1887], pp.125-129).

²⁶⁵ Interlude, i.e. kind of morality play. Twm o'r Nant or Thomas Edwards, dramatist and poet (1739-1810), cf. WBO, s.v. 'Thomas Edwards'.

²⁶⁶ This paragraph appears in the newspaper edition (GW 1893) and the first complete edition of 1894 (Owen 1894), but it was removed from T. Parry's editions of 1937 and 1978 (Owen 1937 and 1978). The editor subtitles the edition 'Argraffiad newydd wedi ei ddiwygio gan T. Parry, M.A.' ('new corrected (improved) edition by T. Parry M.A.'), and the reader might expect that typing errors etc. have been removed, but perhaps not that the editor would shorten the original text or take further liberties with it. But this is what happened. In other places there are also parts missing, e.g. in Chapter II, the words of Pitar, the tailor, praising Gwen are cut. This 'improvement' weakens the novel, as removing lively episodes with direct speech diminishes the liveliness of the description and renders the chapter duller. We have to ask why the paragraph concerning the Tylwyth Teg has been taken out, as it is not short and it adds significantly to the reader's imagination of the location. One possible

Daniel Owen has here been inspired by authentic material: folktales collected at the end of the nineteenth century confirm that the Tylwyth Teg like to dance on the green, and that they are believed to dance in moonlit nights (cf. Owen, Elias, 1973 [1887], pp. 87-100). The connection between the cunning folk and between cunning men and women has been introduced in chapter 5 already and is well researched.²⁶⁷ Another interesting aspect which sheds light on Daniel Owen's Methodist creed is the fact that the dancing place of the Tylwyth Teg is the very place where the *Anterliwt* is performed.²⁶⁸ This kind of morality play met with Methodist disapproval. We see that the rejection of traditions which are undesirable relates to conflating these traditions with fairy folklore. This is new in the context of the *Anterliwt*, but a déjà-vû, nevertheless, for we have seen in chapter 5 that the Puritans conflated Catholicism with the fairy traditions. Again, we witness that the fairy traditions are used for othering a group of people - in this case those who have not yet converted to the Methodist faith.

It is remarkable that in contrast to the novelist Daniel Owen, collectors of folklore such as Rhys (2012 [1901]) or Elias Owen (1973 [1887]) detail no connection between the conjuror and the fairies, merely noting that conjurors could bring people back from the land of the fairies and recognise changelings. This is remarkable, given that Owen dedicates a large part of his collection (pp. 216–262) to stories about witches and conjurors. Rhys mentions *dynion hysbys* only once, briefly, in the main text, and once in a footnote, and yet cunning men and cunning women working or claiming to work with the help of the Tylwyth Teg is not a topic in either volume of *Celtic Folklore*. Neither does T. Gwynn Jones (1979) discuss the role of the Tylwyth Teg in the practices of conjuring men, although he dedicates a complete chapter to (ritual) magic (pp. 119-144). It is difficult to understand this discrepancy between the picture of rural life given by Daniel Owen, which shows us the role of the fairies for cunning folk, and the Welsh collections of folklore which – if they mention them at all – stress the

answer might be that the editor simply underestimated the function of this part for the whole chapter, as he had done before in the case of Pitar's words. The other possible explanations are more problematic, but perhaps more unlikely, implying conscious censorship of unwanted remembrances of a folk belief and custom. The mentioning of a cunning woman conjuring ghosts and the Tylwyth Teg could have been rejected by Parry on religious grounds, if he followed the Puritan doctrine to remove what they believed to be pagan superstition. But the episode could have also been rejected because it seemed to strengthen English prejudice against Wales as a hoard of superstition. This latter view is supported by Coward (2009). Even if, at first glance, removing a paragraph from a Welsh-language novel because of its feared impact on a non-Welsh audience seems unlikely, one should not entirely neglect this possibility.

²⁶⁷ See J. Gwynfor Jones (1964), Diane Purkiss (2000), Tallis (2007) Keith Thomas (1991), and Emma Wilby (2010, 2011).

²⁶⁸ For the *Anterliwt* see Bleddyn (1996). For Twm o'r Nant (Thomas Edwards, 1738-1810) one of the most renowned writers of interludes see Roberts (2011), and for Huw Jones, another eminent writer, see Jones (2014).

conflict between the fairies and the cunning people. In the Irish collection of folklore *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* by Lady Gregory, we find that much room is given to a character like Biddy Early, a cunning woman believed to cure with the help of fairy knowledge (1992 [1920], p. 50). The next paragraph will suggest an answer why the Irish perspective of Lady Gregory is different from the Welsh perspective.

Coward (2009) shows how Thomas Pennant gives less attention to superstitious folk customs and beliefs in *Tours in Wales* than in *A Tour in Scotland*, concluding that this could be an attempt to discourage stereotypes of Wales as a stronghold of magic and superstition (p. 62). It is quite possible that the omission from Welsh collections of folk customs of cunning folk who believed in the fairies (or at least claimed to work their charms with their help) was for similar reasons (certainly, we have seen that Rhŷs' theories aimed at proving the Welsh to be equal to the English, and that magical traditions should be attributed to survivors of a Stone Age population remembered as 'fairies' in Welsh folklore).²⁶⁹ In the end, this hypothesis cannot be entirely discarded, as it would be in good agreement with Suggett and Coward, that the nineteenth century saw in large parts of Welsh society a consensus of not passing on folk traditions (Suggett, 2008, p. 154; Coward, 2009, p. 69). Comparing this attitude with Lady Gregory's attitude towards fairy folklore, the difference becomes understandable. Lady Gregory worked together with Yeats who attributed to the fairies a divine status either in the past or as a pagan survival (Williams, 2016, p. 315). In this vein Lady Gregory writes in the introduction of her folklore collection: 'In the old times in Ireland they were called gods and children of gods; now it is laid down they are those Angels who were cast out of heaven, being proud.' (1992 [1920], p. 11). Purkiss remarks about Yeats and his ideas about the fairies: 'They [the fairies] represent an Irish culture that has been kept pure and intact from before the conquest' (2000, p. 295). Therefore, we find an appropriation of the fairies in the search of national identity.²⁷⁰

During this chapter we have seen so far that at the end of the nineteenth century, ideas as to what or who the Tylwyth Teg are, have become complex. We have found two

²⁶⁹ Yet, cunning folk still adhering to magical practices in the nineteenth century is no argument which could be used to show that Wales was lacking behind in development, for the work of Davies (1997) shows that the custom was not singular for Wales. In the literary field we find parallels to Nansi in nineteenth century European literature, such as the work of Theodor Fontane, who created the figure of Hoppenmarieken, a dwarf woman who resembles Nansi in quite some features (Fontane 2004 [1878]).

²⁷⁰ It is important not to see the rejection or appropriation of the fairies combined with a special creed in general, e.g., Catholicism versus Protestantism or Methodism. For in the case of the Yeats theories, the Catholic church was not pleased about the fairy beliefs as survival of paganism among the peasantry (Williams, 2016, p. 315).

euhemerization theories related to the Tylwyth Teg: one of these sees the Tylwyth Teg as representatives of a golden past and an undisturbed landscape with idyllic rural life and the other as a folk memory of prehistoric primitive savages. The idea of the Tylwyth Teg being helpful spirits for cunning men or women persisted in rural areas and, dovetailing with this belief, we find belief in the Tylwyth Teg being rejected as an uneducated superstition which is irreconcilable with Christian theology. It became obvious that, like in the previous early modern period, the fairy beliefs are either appropriated or used for othering groups with another creed or ideology. Appropriation is related to a positive attitude towards the past, whereas rejection of the beliefs and othering is found in the case that the past is rejected.

6.4 Evans-Wentz: Using Fairy-Folklore for Writing Apologetics of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy

This last part of chapter 6 explores how Welsh fairy folklore was reinterpreted to fit into the spiritualism and the theosophical system of Madame Blavatsky in the late nineteenth century. As was seen in the previous sections, the scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries euhemerized the Tylwyth Teg in the process of creating a national (pre)history: folk beliefs in the fairies were rejected as superstitious beliefs, but at the same time the Tylwyth Teg were used to further romanticism. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, Andrew Lang and Walter Evans-Wentz turned away from the fairy-euhemerization theories for studying fairy folklore, proposing psychical research and an anthropo-psychological method, respectively, leading Evans-Wentz to create a collection of folklore from Celtic-speaking areas of Europe, *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (1911). Evans-Wentz' personal faith was based on Madame Blavatsky's theosophy, which relied on Paracelsus (cf. Chapter 5), and included fairies as spirits of the elements in the theosophical cosmos.²⁷¹ In *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* Evans-Wentz confirms the existence of fairies as 'intelligent forces' and 'units of consciousness' (1994 [1911], p. 490) and creates a basis

²⁷¹ In *The Theosophical Glossary*, Blavatsky writes s.v. 'Elementals': 'Elementals. Spirits of the Elements. The creatures evolved in the four Kingdoms or Elements — earth, air, fire, and water. They are called by the Kabbalists, Gnomes (of the earth), Sylphs (of the air), Salamanders (of the fire), and Undines (of the water). Except a few of the higher kinds, and their rulers, they are rather forces of nature than ethereal men and women. These forces, as the servile agents of the Occultists, may produce various effects; but if employed by "Elementaries" (q.v.) — in which case they enslave the mediums — they will deceive the credulous. All the lower invisible beings generated on the 5th, 6th, and 7th planes of our terrestrial atmosphere, are called Elementals: Peris, Devs, Djins, Sylvans, Satyrs, Fauns, Elves, Dwarfs, Trolls, Kobolds, Brownies, Nixies, Goblins, Pinkies, Banshees, Moss People, White Ladies, Spooks, Fairies, etc., etc., etc.' (Blavatsky, 1892).

for merging fairy folklore with the New Age movement.²⁷² Although he studied under Sir John Rhys, Evans-Wentz' ideas were completely different from Rhys' fairy euhemerization theory which Evans-Wentz strongly rejected (1994 [1911], p. 389).

Walter Evans-Wentz was a folklorist brought up in his family's theosophist faith. While 'theosophy' can apply to 'a number of philosophies maintaining that a knowledge of God may be achieved through spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition or special individual relation' (ODPF, s.v. 'theosophy'), I use it here to refer to the nineteenth-century movement established in the United States by Helena Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott and others who founded the Theosophical Society (BDPF, s.v. 'Theosophy'). Also known as 'esoteric Buddhism' adherents of Theosophy 'claim that the doctrines of the great world religions are merely the exoteric expressions of their own esoteric traditions' (BDPF, s.v. 'theosophy'). Evans-Wentz' studies in Celtic folklore were designed to bring forth evidence for his personal theosophist belief in a universal 'religion of the ancients':²⁷³

This message we think is fundamentally important in understanding the Celtic Fairy Faith for in our opinion the belief in fairies has the same origin as all religions and mythologies. [... T]he Ancients called its [the unseen world's] inhabitants gods, genii, daemons, and shades [...] and the Celts think of them as gods, and as fairies of many kinds.

(Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. xxiv)

Evans-Wentz' work represents a further example of how narrative motifs from fairy traditions are used to describe otherness, to present the author's ideas about his own society and desired changes.

6.4.1 The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries: A Reliable Source for Welsh Fairy Folklore?

Evans-Wentz collects fairy material from folk-traditions, but also uses medieval literature, mainly material from Arthurian tales, the *Mabinogi*, and the Black Book of Carmarthen. Medieval motifs of fairy tradition he labels 'Recorded Fairy-Faith' (Evans-Wentz 1994 [1911], pp. 308-331), showing that he treats folk beliefs in fairies like a religious *faith*. For Evans-Wentz, fairies truly exist as part of an objective scientific worldview, being equivalent to William James' 'units of consciousness' (pp. 490-491):²⁷⁴

²⁷² For the development of New Age traditions from theosophy see Hammer (2001, pp. 73-78). Neopaganism being part of the New Age movement is still an issue of scholarly debate, yet, following Hutton, I treat the two movements as different from each other (Hutton 1999, p. 411).

²⁷³ Helena Blavatsky wrote in *Isis Unveiled*: "Be as it may be the religion of the ancients is the religion of the future." (1886, p. 613).

²⁷⁴ For William James' theories see Nielsen & Day 1999.

We have a clear right to set up under scientific authority these tentative conclusions: (1) Fairyland exists as a supernormal state of consciousness into which men and women enter temporarily in dreams, trances, or in various ecstatic conditions; or for an indefinite period at death. (2) Fairies exist, because in all essentials they appear to be the same intelligent forces now recognized by psychical researchers, be they thus collective units of consciousness like what William James has called 'soul-stuff', or more individual units, like veridical apparitions.

Evans-Wentz' method of interpreting fairy traditions and collecting evidence: although he discusses various theories in detail, his main objective is not collecting fairy traditions *per se*, but collecting evidence for his own theosophical beliefs, and in this context he redefines 'science', which must be enlarged to include psychical experiences (ibid., p. xxiv):

[I]f fairies actually exist as invisible beings or intelligences, and our investigations lead us to the tentative hypothesis that they do, they are natural and not supernatural, for nothing which exists can be supernatural.

This scientism is characteristic of the Theosophical Society. Hammer investigated the purposes of the Theosophical Society and found that the Theosophical Society declared its purpose to be 'the investigation of unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man' (Hammer, 2001, p. 218). Theosophy is not seen by its adherents to be opposed to science, but as a discipline which can enclose both the natural sciences and magical practices: so-called 'miracles' are deemed so merely because the working of magic is not yet properly understood (p. 220). Thus, Evans-Wentz starts his work with the assumption of the existence of fairies as invisible entities and intelligences on a theoretical framework which is in accordance with his theosophical beliefs, and the value of his study as a collection of folklore satisfying modern standards is immediately undermined, damned even by his own words:

The only liberty taken with some of the evidence has been to put it into better grammatical form, and sometimes to recast an ambiguous statement when I, as collector, had in my own mind no doubt as to its meaning.

(Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 20)

Such pieces cannot be taken as primary sources of folklore, unless supported by independent evidence.

Evans-Wentz believed that his understanding of his informants was increased by his sharing their food and shelter, leading him to write of 'the Celt': 'I participated in his innermost thoughts about the great problem of life and death' (ibid., p. xxviii). Since we cannot be sure to what extent Evans-Wentz made interpretative additions by 'recasting ambiguous statements' according to his personal methodology, we are unable to discern

whether certain words or phrases are genuine, or a consequence of Evans-Wentz' 'editing' his sources. Thus, when an unclearly identified informant reports phrases such as 'I believe that we are forever immersed in the spiritual world' or 'through meditation and psychical training', 'the higher life is open to our consciousness' (ibid., pp. 83–84), 'the second sight gave our race power to see the inner world' (ibid., p. 70), it is highly doubtful whether such utterances are authentic.

Evans-Wentz uses a comparative methodology then generally accepted in Celtic Studies (used also by John Rhŷs). On the other hand, the technique of pattern recognition, emphasizing parallels and constructing correspondences, is a trademark of theosophical and later New Age traditions, where extreme reduction of multiple sources creates evidence of an all-comprising truth (Hammer, 2001, pp. 160-163). The doctrine of rebirth and Karma are essential ingredients of theosophy (Blavatsky dedicates a chapter of her *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) to the mysteries of re-incarnation), and a striking example from Evans-Wentz' work of this reductive methodology is his discussion of 'Celtic re-birth doctrines', noting parallels in the teachings of the Buddha, Pythagoras, Plato, the Neo-Platonists and 'the Druids'. He refers to Origenes and the Gnostic Pistis Sophia, and also uses Iolo Morganwg's *Barddas* (op. cit., pp. 358-396, esp. p. 379).

Compare also his treatment of pygmy fairies (p. 243):

[I]ndependently of the Celtic peoples there is available very much testimony of the most reliable character from modern disciplines of the medieval occultists, e.g. the Rosicrucians, and the Theosophists, that there exists in nature invisible spiritual beings of pygmy stature and of various forms and characters, comparable in all respects to the little people of Celtic folk-lore.

He comes to a predictable conclusion that 'fairyland exists as a supernormal state of consciousness into which men and women may enter temporarily in dreams, trances or in various ecstatic conditions' (p. 490), a statement in full agreement with his initial hypothesis. As Evans-Wentz' study regarding the physical existence of fairies is not based on any falsifiable evidence, and as the initial hypothesis and the conclusion are identical and fit into his theosophical world-view, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* must be seen as an unscholarly apologetic for the theosophist ideas presented.

6.4.2 The Meaning of Evans-Wentz' Fairy World: Applying the Principle of the 'Inverted World' and 'Exchange and Transition' to his Work

Previous chapters have shown how the fairy world adopts the place of an inverted reality as regards to that of author, narrator or investigator: fairies inhabit the extra-social space beyond human society. Evans-Wentz' identification of fairyland or the otherworld as a 'supernormal

state of consciousness' naturally identifies the fairy realm as a space beyond ordinary human experience: exchange with this domain is possible for dreamers, ecstasies and the dead. He also incorporates a second relevant motif, namely that contact with the fairy realm can promote creativity or transitions: he identifies contact with the Otherworld as a psychical initiation experience (op. cit., p. 336).

As the theosophists strive to adopt higher states of consciousness, and to perfect themselves by working with powers they claim to be not yet properly understood by humans, the fairies take on an entirely positive connotation for Evans-Wentz, and he moves away from Blavatsky's ideas about the Elementals (see footnote above). Rather, the fairies are here seen as more spiritually evolved beings which people the cosmos:⁷ they are a desired otherness. Evans-Wentz the theosophist ultimately wishes for personal spiritual perfection, but also for social change: he explicitly castigates urbanization and industrialization and constructs a dualism of 'civilization' and 'culture' versus 'Nature' (written with a capital letter):

Are city-dwellers like these, Nature's unnatural children, who grind out their lives in an unceasing struggle for wealth and power, social position, and even for bread, fit to judge Nature's children who believe in fairies?

(Op. cit., p. xxxv)

Evans-Wentz must necessarily reject the euhemerist traditions: this he does, and in contrast he favours animistic traditions which are in better agreement with his spiritualism (p. 244). His 'Animistic Theory' explains the smallness of the fairies not as a memory of a pre-historical pygmy population, but by using comparative anthropology to stress that many cultures know small spirit beings:

Ancient and thoroughly reliable manuscript records testify to the existence of pygmies in China during the twenty-third century B.C.; yet, no one has ever tried to explain the well-known animistic beliefs of modern Chinamen in ghosts, demons, and in little nature-spirits like fairies, by saying that these are a folk-memory of this ancient pygmy race. [...] Further examination of the animistic hypothesis designed to explain the smallness of elvish spirits leads away from mere mythology into psychology, and sets us the task of finding out if, after all, primitive ideas about the disembodied human soul may not have originated or at least have helped to shape the Celtic folk conception of fairies as small statured beings. [...] And independently of Celtic peoples there is available much testimony of the most reliable character from modern disciples of the medieval occultists, e.g. the Rosicrucians, and the Theosophists, that there exist in nature invisible spiritual beings of pygmy stature of various form and characters, comparable in all respects to the little people of Celtic folk-lore.

(pp. 238-239, 243)

Evans-Wentz not only rejects the pygmy euhemerization theory, but also the theory of fairies as druids or druidesses (p. xxxii). The fairies are, as mentioned above, superhuman beings

with a positive connotation, and the druids whom Rhys figures as shamans and magicians of an under-developed pre-historic society are now people trained in the handling of the invisible entities the theosophists themselves would like to handle (p. 489).

These fundamentally different positions regarding fairy lore might have brought Evans-Wentz and Rhys into conflict, but in fact Rhys wrote the introductory chapter to Welsh fairy lore for *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (pp. 135–137). However, the introductions by Douglas Hyde to Irish material, by Alexander Carmichael to the Scottish evidence, by Sophia Morrison to the folklore of Man, by Henry Manner to the Cornish tales and by Anatole Le Bras to the tales from Brittany are all longer than Rhys' to the Welsh folktales. Rhys wrote roughly two pages, consisting mainly of a rather meagre list of the seven most frequent tale-types found in Welsh fairy lore, in marked contrast to the other introductions which are extended and coherent text. Indeed, Rhys' use of tale-types (fairy dance, men being enticed into fairy land and marry a fairy maiden, fairy bride legends, changeling legends, midwife folk tales, fairies visiting houses at night, fairies borrowing) is contradictory to Evans-Wentz' opinion of how fairy-lore should be presented: '[c]lassification under various headings', he says, 'such for example, as Fairy Abductions, Changelings, or Appearances of Fairies, seems equally unsatisfactory' (p. 17). It is clear that Evans-Wentz and Rhys held contrary opinions regarding more than just the pygmy euhemerization theory.

6.4.3 The Welsh in Spiritual Bondage by Commercialism

Evans-Wentz claims that 'modern Wales is poorer in its fairy atmosphere than modern Ireland or modern Brittany' (ibid., p. 11). He does not exactly explain what a 'fairy atmosphere' is, but we can conclude from the previous chapters that it must be a landscape and society as remote from modern infrastructure and social developments as possible, since he believes that commercialism has driven out or at least obscured 'the ancestral idealism of the Bythonic race' (ibid.). This is not surprising since theosophy was (after Romanticism) a second wave of reaction against the Enlightenment project, with urbanization, industrialization and the advancement of natural sciences (Hammer, 2001, p. 508): the theosophist's ideal is man undisturbed by these developments. Consequently, Evans-Wentz celebrates the 'primitive purity' of the Isle of Man (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 9): he desires a secluded Celtic society, and promotes both a Romantic view of the Celtic countries and a theosophical reaction to industrialization, contrary to Rhys, and almost all Welsh authors since the early modern period (cf. this chapter above). Indeed, by claiming the 'fairy atmosphere' to be connected to pre-industrial society, Evans-Wentz identifies the countries where he collects fairy folklore as an extended fairy realm of otherness. This American, socialized in urban areas such as Trenton

and San Diego, projects a ‘fairy atmosphere’ onto the rural society of countries located at the periphery of Europe. The Druidic *Eisteddfod*, however, redeems the Welsh in his eyes (Evans-Wentz, 1994 [1911], p. 11), because the druids, as guardians of magical esoteric knowledge, are thoroughly positive.

In his chapter on ‘Darwinism and re-birth’, Evans-Wentz gives Iolo’s *Barddas* as an example of the Celtic scheme of evolution: he considers Iolo’s three circles of existence, the circle of Ceugant, the circle of Abred and the circle of Gwynvyd to be evolutionary, and the three ‘stabilities of knowledge’ mentioned in the Preface to *Barddas* as yet another scheme of evolution:

[I]t seems clear that the circle of Gwynvyd finds its parallel in the Nirvana of Buddhism, being, like it, a state of absolute knowledge and felicity in which man becomes a divine being, a veritable god.

(pp. 365–367)

Gods and fairies are thus characters who have made greater progress in self-perfection than ordinary man, in keeping with the theosophical aim of self-improvement. We see again how Evans-Wentz finds parallels between theosophy and folklore, so that folklore bolsters his personal belief.

7. Fairy Folklore Transformed

In the twentieth century the *Nachleben* of Rhÿs' theories can be witnessed in other fields of alternative religion, as this chapter shows. In the first half of the twentieth century in Europe and Northern America, neopaganism or modern paganism began to flourish, and offered spiritual alternatives to the traditional religious faiths. Margaret Murray and Gerald Gardner, both active in the Folklore Society, expanded Rhÿs' fairy euhemerization theories when they described the early modern witch craze as the persecution of a secretly surviving pagan religion (at the same time as they were establishing British Wicca).²⁷⁵ My goal here is to show how Welsh fairy traditions became involved into these movements.

The last part of the current chapter discusses beliefs in aliens which adjust traditional fairy beliefs to modern science fiction. Bullard (1989) and Rojcewicz (1991) have drawn attention to the similarity of alien and fairy beliefs.

7.1 The Welsh Fairies and the Neo-Pagan Movement of the Twentieth Century

Another way of transforming traditional beliefs is their incorporation into a new religious movement. The previous chapter discussed the impact of John Rhÿs on twentieth-century authors and the neo-pagan movement, and – moving on chronologically – we now consider how neo-pagan witchcraft beliefs incorporated (1) Welsh fairy beliefs, (2) Rhÿs' and Evans-Wentz' theories about fairies, as well as (3) (early modern) English stereotypes about Wales and the Welsh. I also show how fairy beliefs became part of the historiography of radical feminism, contributing to the so-called 'Goddess movement' (strongly influenced by Robert Graves' monomyth of the Goddess)²⁷⁶ which represents a religious branch of the feminist movement. Although these developments were mainly initiated outside of Wales and the other Celtic-speaking areas by people who, with few exceptions, had no Welsh background, students of Welsh fairy folklore need knowledge of them, since neo-pagan ideas are, by various media, liable to influence the interpretation of Welsh folklore and the pre-Christian history of Britain. Another field of neopaganism, neo-druidism, was greatly influenced by early modern theories of the druids, drawing on the ideas of Iolo Morganwg. As syncretism is a typical feature of the neopagan movement, some groups have conflated both neo-druidism and modern neo-pagan witchcraft beliefs.

²⁷⁵ See Murray (2005 [1931]) and Gardner (2004 [1959]). For a critical article on Murray's theories, why they were believed, and the criticism her theory met see Simpson (1994).

²⁷⁶ See Robert Graves' *The White Goddess* first published 1948 (Graves 1966).

7.1.1 Neopagan Witchcraft

Ronald Hutton (1999) has shown clearly that the specific neo-pagan belief of Wicca was fabricated in a process in which two members of the Folklore Society – Margaret Murray and Gerald Gardner – played a major part. Murray theorised that the women and men persecuted as witches in early modern times were practitioners of an ancient pagan belief: she underpinned her theories by selectively interpreting historical documents from Germany and from the Scottish witch trials, but also by re-interpreting folklore. Oates and Wood (1998) show that Murray selectively evaluated evidence to support her theory about the early modern witches. In fact, the field for Murray's theories had been prepared by Darwinist theories such as those of Bachofen, Morgan and Engels regarding the matriarchal structure of early pre-historic societies, and also the fairy euhemerization theories which had found a supporter in John Rhys who had adopted the euhemerization theory as central element into his interpretations of fairy lore. Murray's is but another variant of the fairy euhemerization theory. She euhemerizes the fairies as witches:

If then the fairy godmother and the witch are so closely identical, the question of the fairies becomes important. [...] [T]he accounts of fairies, when given by people who for various reason were unaffected by the influence of Shakespeare, show them as real human beings, smaller than those who made the records but not very noticeably so. [...] The fairies then were the descendants of the early people who inhabited northern Europe; they were pastoral and not nomad, they lived in the unforested parts of the country where there was good pasturage for their cattle, and they used stone in the Neolithic period and metal in the Bronze-age for their tools and weapons. [...] Undoubtedly, as civilization advanced and more and more land came under cultivation the fairy people must have mingled more and more with the settled population. [...] That the fairies, i.e., witches, had settled in the villages is shown by the statement of the contemporary recorders. Sprenger in the *Malleus Maleficarum* says "there is not so little a parish but there are many witches known to be therein".

(Murray, 2005 [1933], pp. 35-40)

As the fairies are associated with both a liminal and extra-social domain, Murray could easily conflate them with so-called witches, who in early modern times were marginalized, believed to be part of a counter-society to the Christian society.

Wood and Oates ask why the theory was initially not more rigorously contested (1998, pp. 10-11). One reason might be that several elements of Murray's theory agree with accepted Social Darwinist theories about the development of religion and social structures and the survival of archaic traditions in folklore. As discussed above (chapter 6), Taylor and Frazer claimed that magical practices preceded religious faith; Rhys had promoted the idea that small communities of a people of a pre-historic Stone Age culture had managed to survive in remote and hidden areas into historic times; Bachofen, Morgan and Engels had suggested that

matriarchy preceded the patriarchal organization of society. These theories could be used to support the idea of a surviving group of pagan practitioners of an ancient religion in which female traits are predominant. In this respect the imagined society of witches resembles the fairies. A predominance of the female element in fairy tradition is indeed visible (cf. chapter 2); however, this can be explained as narrative motif used to describe the otherness of the fairy society in contrast to the society of the narrator.

Gerald Gardner was a firm believer in Murray's theory: indeed, he tried to create an alternative religion promoted as a revival of one long-suppressed. His faith, rooted in a mysterious past, elaborated in his *Book of Shadows* (Gardner, 2008 [1949-61]), became Wicca, the oldest variant – and one of the most important – of modern neo-pagan witchcraft (Hutton, 1999, pp. 298-305). Gardner connected modern witchcraft beliefs most closely with the medieval and early modern literary traditions about Gwyn ap Nudd, whom he styled God of the Witches:

But *why* should the witches impersonate the Wild Hunt? Did it have any other significance to the cult, beside the joke of scaring people? I think it did, and that the legends of the Wild Hunt are the remains of one of the oldest traditions of the Ancient Gods.

Its leader goes by various names in different countries, and in different districts of the British Isles. But under whatever names he may be known, he is always the Old God of Hunting and Death. One of the most famous of his names is Gwyn ap Nudd [...].

(Gardner, 2004 [1959], p. 145)²⁷⁷

Gardner soon found epigones who claimed that their variant of modern witchcraft was based on older authentic material (Hutton, 1999, pp. 319-339). Some of them claim Welsh roots, such as Alex Sanders who claimed to have a witch ancestress who had lived near Snowdon. According to Hutton, Sanders was born in Birkenhead and his grandmother, Mrs Bibby, was a cunning woman born in Bethesda (Hutton, 1999, pp. 330-331). Another character involved in the development of neo-pagan witchcraft was Robert Cochrane who worked with a Welshman named Evan John Jones (*ibid.*, pp. 315). An actress and occultist named Ruth Wynn Owen claimed also to have inherited 'the craft' from her Welsh family (p. 317). She founded the group and tradition 'Y Plant Bran' (*sic*), the pages of which can still be found on the web, and a related group call themselves 'Y plant Don' (*sic!*). It is obvious that these groups have no genuine knowledge of the Welsh language, which is strong evidence against their claims of secret, unbroken traditions. In fact, one wonders whether the supposed

²⁷⁷ For the development of the modern notion of the Wild Hunt see Hutton (2014). Hutton suggests that Jacob Grimm conflated medieval legends and modern folklore for creating the construct now known as the Wild Hunt.

‘Welsh tradition’ attracts people to the movement who orientalisingly connect Wales with ancient magic.

7.1.2 The Goddess Movement

In the 1960s and 1970s, a feminist variant of Wicca in America gave rise to the so-called Goddess movement (Hutton, 1999, pp. 340-368).²⁷⁸ Adherents aimed to increase the importance of its agenda by rooting it in a distant past, claiming that the social change and religious ‘revivals’ they attempt to bring about are not new but are an attempt to re-install prehistoric matriarchal religious and social patterns (Eller, 2000; Davis, 1998). This supposed Golden Age of matriarchy is called ‘matriarchal myth’ by Cynthia Eller, who states that ‘Matriarchal myth addresses one of the feminist movement’s most difficult questions: How can women attain real power when it seems we have never had it before?’ (Eller, 2000, p. 185).

The fairy euhemerization theory as introduced by Rhÿs was ripe to be adopted as evidence for a matriarchal pre-history. The only element to be added was prehistorical worship of a great Goddess. Goddess worship was believed to be an indicator of a matriarchal society, an argument challenged by Eller, since historical evidence shows that the worship of the divine feminine is not necessarily related to a non-misogynous mind-set (Eller, 2000, pp. 103-107). This myth is precipitated e.g., in Evangeline Walton’s feminist retelling of the Mabinogi (1974), analysed by Nicole Thomas (2013), and in the novel *The Mist of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer-Bradley (1982). Aili Bindberg (2006) explores Zimmer-Bradley’s construction of a pre-Christian religion. Both novelists use motifs well-known from Rhÿs’ theories that Britain was inhabited by an aboriginal pre-Celtic people that lived in a matriarchal society (cf. chapter 6). In *The Mists of Avalon* these people were small and dark. A second wave of invaders to the British Isles is introduced by both novelists. In Walton’s novel these invaders are the Celtic tribes and are organized in a patriarchal society, which is very close to the model of prehistory by Rhÿs. In Bradley-Zimmer’s novel the aboriginal population is of small stature and dark complexion. The invaders are of fairer complexion and in dream episodes their origin is in some western countries drowned in the sea. They consider the aborigines as ugly and call them ‘fairies’. The real fairy world is also existent in this novel and Morgan Le Fay is accepted by them like a relative which stresses the close relationship between the aborigines and the fairies. The idea of rebirth is also used. Moreover, in *The Mists of Avalon* the religious setting of the novel draws strongly on the writings of Gardner and Murray: the female priesthood of Avalon

²⁷⁸ For the history of the Goddess movement see also Cynthia Eller (2000) and Philip G. Davis (1998).

resembles a coven of witches /neo-pagan priestesses. A Goddess but also a Horned God are worshipped in seasonal rituals. The element of the Great Rite, the ritual sexual union of priest and priestess play a central role.

It is hard to be certain, but transmitted by popular novels to a broad audience, the fairy euhemerization theory and the theory of the surviving aboriginal population could attain an unexpected *Nachleben* in popular culture and popular ideas about the past; in any case, feminist use of the theory of prehistorical aboriginal peoples brought about a paradigm shift: Rhÿs had used the fairy traditions to postulate a prehistoric matriarchal Britain which could be held responsible for all attributes of Welsh society which he deemed undesirable, but the feminists styled exactly this past as a Golden Age worth reviving. We witness again how interpretations of the fairy world (even in its rationalized form) are based on self-perception. Although the feminists begin by adopting Rhÿs' theory about fairy traditions, their conclusions are quite opposed to his, as are their judgments regarding the supposed prehistoric matriarchal society. We see mirrored here the clash of Victorian patriarchal society and a hypothetical matriarchal feminist society. Matriarchy was an element a Victorian scholar like Rhÿs used to other the fairy society, but for the feminists, matriarchy was an ideal state which they want to appropriate.

Another influence on Wicca and the Goddess movement was Robert Graves. According to William Doty, while 'Graves' influence is hard to calculate [...] *The White Goddess* (1966) is widely regarded among persons interested in fields lumped together today as the Hermetic, occult or New Age' (Doty, 2000, p. 245). Graves relies strongly on medieval Welsh texts, and especially on the legendary poetry of *Llyfr Taliesin*, but he also used Gwyn ap Nudd, so that we can witness a further transformation and re-use of this fairy character. For demonstrating his method to use Welsh medieval texts to create his fiction by applying his monomyth, but also to show the inconsistencies in his fiction, I will present his use of Gwyn ap Nudd. Graves believed that there existed one 'monomyth': two heroes or gods competed for the love of the threefold goddess in a seasonal ritual. At times, the goddess could be replaced by a royal woman. He found this monomyth embedded in tales of all kind, as the narrative motif of 'two men competing for a woman' is by no means rare. It is not surprising that he found his monomyth in the yearly battle of Gwyn ap Nudd, king of the Welsh fairies, and Gwythyr ap Greidawl for the love of Creiddylad, especially as Rhÿs had postulated that this battle on the calends of May was only one of a pair of two seasonal fights – an opinion embraced by Graves (Graves, 1966 [1948], p. 321). But in contrast to Rhÿs who styles Gwyn a deity, Graves reduces him from a supernatural character to being merely a hero for whom Graves even

invents a funeral ceremony, after his death at the hand of his rival (*ibid.*, p. 179). However, whereas Gwyn was a personification of winter for Rhŷs (1888, p. 562), Graves' Gwyn has become the personification of that half of the year in which the days become longer (Graves 1966 [1948], pp. 110, 179).²⁷⁹ By the application of the monomyth Graves has adapted an episode of a medieval text into an episode which is suitable now to be appropriated by a neo-pagan community whose religious rituals are bound to the seasonal circle of the year. Having used an episode from a medieval manuscript, a legitimization in the distant past is provided. But the transformation of Gwyn and Gwythyr's battle, nor of the combatants does not stop here. In a further step the battle is used in a syncretism which is a typical feature of a neopagan religion such as modern pagan witchcraft or the goddess-movement, for the practitioners discovers the God and the Goddess in various pagan deities from most diverse cultures.²⁸⁰

In contradiction to his own statement of Gwyn being but a hero, Graves describes him as one aspect of a threefold god of spring / early summer. This god is obvious a parallel construct to the threefold goddess and is composed by Graves from two characters from the Mabinogi, Dylan and Lleu, and additionally Gwyn ap Nudd. In analogy to the myth of Osiris, this threefold god has a counterpart corresponding to the autumn/winter half of the year, a parallel to Osiris' enemy Seth. These two gods are understood by Graves as two aspects of the male counterpart of the Goddess. In a further construct in parallel to the Egyptian mythology, Graves postulates a resurrection of the God. Thus, he finally turns the Welsh king of Annwn and the Tylwyth Teg into the Welsh Osiris (*ibid.*, p. 321). The influence of Frazer's theories about the dying and resurrecting god and the primitive fertility rites are obvious. Moreover, Gwyn ap Nudd is the oak king, and his battling the holly king stems from Graves' specific interpretation of other Welsh medieval poetry such as 'Kat Godeu' from *Llyfr Taliesin* and the 'tree-alphabet' invented by Graves (*ibid.*, pp. 27-48, 165-205). A survey of neo-pagan publications shows that Graves' *White Goddess* has become a canonical book with great influence, and Gwyn ap Nudd has been turned effectively into the Oak King or Oak Knight (Farrar & Farrar, 1989, p. 36) – in addition to his function as the Horned God according to Rhŷs (2008 [1888], p. 84). This shows how in an exemplary way how Graves' syncretism works by using medieval literature and scholarly works from the nineteenth century.

²⁷⁹ Rhŷs is very flexible about the Gwyn as divine character: In *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* Gwyn features as a personification of winter (2008 [1888], p. 562), he is presented as king of the summer-land in *Arthurian Legend* (Rhŷs, 2008 [1891], p. 345).

²⁸⁰ For a typical example see Murray (2005 [1931], chapter I).

Moreover, he enlarged the season ritual for the component of resurrection and adapted it further to fertility rites. In this way novel myths are created.

7.1.3 A Mixture of All: Faerie Faith - Neo-Druidic Movement - The Church of the Tylwyth Teg

The neo-druidic movement strongly influenced by the legacy of Iolo Morganwg has brought forth branches in Wales which understand the medieval characters to be deities. This way of reconstructing a pantheon is called neo-pagan reconstructionism.²⁸¹ The fairies, however, have no great impact in neo-druidry except that some people might still accept the theories of Criríe (1803) or Roberts (1815) that the fairies can be rationalized as druids in hiding. It is fashionable to compare the druids to shamans, and in contrast to the negative connotation Rhôs had intended by such an interpretation, post-modern Western society sees this as positive, since shamanism is no longer seen as ‘primitive and unacceptable’: it is accepted more or less as one possibility (even a mainstream one) of searching for new spiritual ways, as Robert Wallis argues (Wallis, 2003, pp. 24-30).

A branch of neo-pagan Wicca is the so called ‘Faerie Faith’ which uses Graves’ tree alphabet, another poetical invention based on medieval Welsh poetry (Hawkins, 1996, p. 29), whose name suggests the influence of Evans-Wentz. As stressed above, syncretism is a typical feature of modern neo-paganism, but different forms of neo-paganism may also blend. That said, it is perhaps no surprise to find a group calling themselves ‘Y Dynion mwyn and the Clan of the Tylwyth Teg’. They claim Welsh roots, but The Church of the Tylwyth Teg became legally incorporated by the state of Georgia. Yet, they claim: ‘Prince Llewellyn’s Bards taught a way of life unmarred by the moral confusion of the medieval Christian church’ (*sic!*) (VGG, p. xxii). Their mythology draws both on Rhôs and Graves, but also on the writings of Iolo Morganwg and the ideas of the Celtic reconstructionists in general who believed to discover pre-Christian Celtic deities in the vernacular medieval literature of Britain and Ireland. They found their inspiration especially in the work of academic scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth century such as Rhôs or O’Rahilly (1946). We see that the Tylwyth Teg have been appropriated by a group of alternative religion. In this case, too, legitimization is sought in the past and in a supposed connection to a royal lineage. Seeking a legitimization in the past has been investigated for the goddess-movement by Eller (2000). Sabina Magilocco has pointed out

²⁸¹ For Celtic Paganism and neo-druidry see Williams (2016, pp. 477-488), Hutton (2009) and Birkhan (2009).

Folklore plays a significant role in modern Paganisms, in that it is regarded as a repository for bits and pieces of ancient religion that survive to the present day. Because neopagans locate authenticity in ancient religions, folklore becomes an important index of authenticity.

(Magliocco, 2012, p. 156)

However, there might be another reason which makes the Tylwyth Teg attractive for a group with alternative religion. David Bromley maintains: ‘Alternative tradition groups are socially, but not culturally aligned with the dominant institutional order’ (2012, p. 16). As the fairies represent otherness, an appropriation can reenforce the consciousness of the own culture which is deviant from the mainstream. This could explain why the Tylwyth Teg are so attractive for group with non-mainstream spirituality.

7.2 Fairies and Aliens

As early as 1969, Vallee highlighted the similarity between fairy and UFO lore, and Rojcewicz and Bullard turned to this field in the late 1980s (Bullard 1989; Rojcewicz 1987, 1989, 1991). These folklorists showed how folktales about aliens resemble traditional fairy lore. Narrative elements held in common by folktales about fairies and reports of aliens include the abduction of humans, sexual experiences with otherworldly beings, the dependence of fairies or aliens on improving their stock by mating with humans, experiences of floating through the air, and time flowing differently in the realm of the fairies or the aliens. It seems that in the 20th century tales about aliens supplant the tales about the Tylwyth Teg. In *Wales of the Unexpected* (2005), a recent collection of stories about supernatural encounters, Holland draws attention to this similarity between traditional folk tales about the fairies and tales about the aliens (pp. 82-83). The blending of fairy traditions with belief in UFOs seems to be on its way in modern popular culture: fairy beliefs begin to blend with belief in aliens, just as fairy beliefs were merged with beliefs in the dead, in demons, in angels or in witches in the past. Today, believers in aliens visiting from outer space have transferred narrative motifs traditionally connected with the Tylwyth Teg to aliens visiting the earth: this is understandable, since tales about alien encounters similarly aim at presenting experiences with beings from a realm differing from the mundane world human beings know, and Rojcewicz would surely concur with the hypothesis that the traditions about the Tylwyth Teg offer a means of talking about important social topics:

Human beings traditionally return to the traditional. “Tradition” is not to be understood here in some limited antiquarian sense, but rather as a “functional prerequisite of social life.” People traditionalize aspects of their meaningful experiences.

(Rojcewicz, 1991, p. 495)

As this study has shown, fairy traditions provide a narrative tool for exploring such questions as who belongs to society and who should be excluded, what rules are accepted, but also how personal identity is defined and how experiences of transition are dealt with in society. Rojcewicz (*ibid.*, p. 496). observes that '[t]radition suggests a symbiotic or participatory relationship between the human perceiver and the entity perceived.' He continues: 'From this perspective a fairy encounter is a mutually constructed reality', and he notes that this applies to UFO encounters as well (p. 497):

[F]rom this perspective, UFOs may substantially be our own creation, but we may be equally the creation of the UFOs. The human mind is a mirror of the universe mirroring the human mind.

Indeed, the world of the fairies and also that of the aliens are constructed as inverted mirror images of human society, but one need not assume a mutually constructed reality (i.e. by both humans and aliens): on the contrary, the fact that aliens almost always share common traits with humans, especially their desire for exchange and sort of communication with human beings, is a typical social feature of the human species and supports the idea that aliens are a distorted, alienated projection of men.

Conclusion

The Tylwyth Teg and the traditions related to them are of eminent importance, used and re-used when social, religious or political groups distinguish themselves and/or discriminate against others, be they the mainstream or minorities. The history of the Tylwyth Teg and their use in literature indicate social processes. Analysis of motifs related to the Tylwyth Teg proves useful not only for the folklorist, but also for the historian and sociologist. Often the Tylwyth Teg are associated with the past, either demonised or idealised, so that the present is contrasted with a previous state of society, an ‘otherness’ to be either desired or rejected.

We have explored names, terms, motifs and their application. We have seen how the names used for the ‘Tylwyth Teg’ are related to medieval imaginations of the wandering soul, and the experience of exceptional mental states. We have noted that vernacular names are mostly appeasing and reverent, whereas expressions used in Latin texts are mostly influenced by the learned opinion that the fairy creatures are minor demons (with the exception of Elidorus’ tale, which resembles Irish tales about a sinless otherworld). The imagery of the otherworld and its inhabitants is important for the description of the poetic process, presented as a sojourn in the otherworld or a journey during which a poet experiences inspiration: these transformational processes are closely related to the idea of a changed flow of time, but also to the imaging of deathlike states. We have a liminal world marked as the abode of a transformational otherness, central to which are either the absence of death or the residing of the prematurely dead. Moreover, the Annwn of medieval literature is not yet identical with hell, although the process of conflating hell and Annwn already began, a full identification is found first in early modern literature.

Dividing waters often become a liminal place between the worlds, and crossing them, fighting in them or meeting a fairy maiden there involves inspiration by, or endowment with, the gifts of the otherworld. In some tales not even a magical mist is necessary as an agency, but a changed perception is sufficient to cross the border between the worlds or such borders can be crossed by entering wilderness (in texts as ancient as the First Branch and as recent as the report of Narváez’ berry pickers). The otherworld and its denizens mediate transformational processes: the poetic process is the most important example in Welsh literature, but the warrior, too, can find his vocation and initiation in the otherworld.

In our exploration of interaction with the denizens of the otherworld we have seen how texts inspired by the *Visio Pauli* use red and blue for freezing cold and burning fire, and project the fairies as demons. Green is far more ambiguous than often thought, with connotations

ranging from love to the demonic, also indicating the ambiguity of the fairy characters. Another relevant group of colours comprises white, light grey, shining white, and gold, found in the Four Branches. Hairstyle can emphasise otherness or a connection with the animal kingdom and wilderness, while we noted (supporting the findings related to nomenclature) that the relatively late idea of child-sized fairies is rooted in medieval images of the soul and angels.

The interaction with the otherworld is often guided by taboos. Fairy mistress tales can stress otherness by significantly different rules and perceptions of reality, and the fairies can be of higher morality than humans. In other tales the Tylwyth Teg are subject to taboos rooted in the apotropaic qualities of iron, salt and fire. If these motifs appear, they indicate that the Tylwyth Teg are perceived as demonic creatures. The tales also suggest that in the process of exchange with the otherworld, it is often futile to see mundane riches, whereas special skills can be permanent gifts from the otherworld. Changeling tales can be explained as encoding non-acceptance of children with deviant appearance or behaviour – often caused by clinical conditions – or due to unspoken (taboo) social strain.

Already in the medieval period we witnessed two very different ways of dealing with the denizens of the otherworld: either they are appropriated into a courtly literary context such as in the Four Branches or Arthurian tales, or they can be rejected as demonic creatures, and both ways of treating the otherworld can coexist in the work of a single poet. But the Tylwyth Teg are not merely demonized: in early modern political and religious prose we see them being used to orientalise groups which were perceived as ‘other’, including different Christian denominations and the socially disadvantaged. Another example for appropriation is the conflating of the Tylwyth Teg with the spirits invoked in charms used by the cunning people of the early modern period. Incantations popular in the medieval period were transformed into early modern charms and adapted to Welsh culture by replacing spirits with the Tylwyth Teg.

In the early nineteenth century the Tylwyth Teg became euhemerized as druids hiding from the Romans. As the druids played a crucial role in rooting the nation's history in the pre-Roman past, the Tylwyth Teg were thus appropriated. In poetry they become metaphorised, in the context of the idyllic landscape and an idealized rural life. But in the second half of the nineteenth century things changed significantly with John Rhŷs: the Tylwyth Teg become an aboriginal population of non-Aryan origin as Rhys grounds his model of Britain's prehistory in social Darwinism in an attempt to defend against ‘Teutunist’ historians. The supposed aborigines of Britain became a projection plane for unwanted characteristics, and the Tylwyth Teg were used in a process which orientalised a part of the population based on physical

features. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Tylwyth Teg are either idealized magical creatures or an underdeveloped primitive race of aborigines: Glasynys's artistry represents one pole, and the failure of John Rhŷs to appreciate his work the other, perhaps because Glasynys' idealized image of the Tylwyth Teg and the druids was too strong a contradiction of Rhŷs' theories. Finally, we saw how Daniel Owen created an image of rural Wales in which the Tylwyth Teg figure as symbol for a non-reformed religious orientation and for superstition: the Tylwyth Teg are again used to other a social group which does not conform with the convictions of the author. Evans-Wentz, though having studied under Rhŷs, rejected euhemerization: in his *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, he uses fairy beliefs to 'prove' the validity of his own theosophical convictions. To him, the Welsh are too given to commerce to be able to fully experience the fairy faith, and thus are ignorant of the 'real' spiritual sphere, of which the Tylwyth Teg are an essential feature. Evans-Wentz' was far from unique in reusing fairy folklore to find or support an alternative spirituality. Wicca was inspired by Rhŷs' theories about the deities and aboriginal population of the British Isles, and the most important appropriation in this field is connected with the feminist movement which embraces the idea that there had been a matriarchal society in the pre-historic British Isles. The syncretism of neopaganism enables the conflation of various religious beliefs, enabling even the founding of a legally incorporated church in Georgia, The Church of the Tylwyth Teg. As what may be seen as a further type of displacement of religious belief (or at least, perhaps, a displaced 'transcendence'), beliefs typical of fairy folklore return in UFO-stories, where the denizens of the otherworld have become aliens.

This final chapter and the Appendix A4 introducing some examples for the use of the Tylwyth Teg in twentieth-century literature show that there is a persisting need for studies on the use of fairy folklore for they can teach us about the anxieties and desires, and the dynamic of groups in an always more quickly changing society. The analysis of literature and films preferred by young and adolescent people will allow us to see wishes of the young generation and the ideas they can identify with.

Appendix

A1 Magical Islands in Classical texts

A1.1 The Gallicenas of Sena

Pomponius Mela's *De Chorographia* speaking of the Gallicenas of Sena:

Sena in the Britannic Sea, opposite the Osismician shore, is characterized by an oracle of a Gallic divinity whose nine priestesses are holy by virtue of their perpetual virginity. They are called Gallicenas and are thought to be endowed with unique powers: They move seas and winds with songs, change themselves into different animals and heal what is considered incurable for others.

(translation by Frick as quoted by Klarer, 1993, p. 7)

A1.2 The Islands of the Blessed

Hesiod (c. 700 BC) writes about the Isles of the Blessed:

But to the others father Zeus the son of Kronos gave a living and an abode apart from men and made them dwell at the ends of earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the Islands of the Blessed (*Nesoi Makarôn*) along the shore of deep swirling Okeanos (Oceanus), happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year, far from the deathless gods, and Kronos (Cronus) rules over them; for the father of men and gods released him from his bonds. And these last equally have honour and glory.

(Hesiod & Evelyn-White (tr.), 2018 [1914], p. 156)

Euripides (~ 480-406 BC) writes in *Hippolytus*:

I would win my way to the coast, apple-bearing Hesperian coast, of which the minstrels sing. Where the Lord of Okeanos (Oceanus) denies the voyager further sailing and fixes the solemn limit of Ouranos (Uranus, Heaven) which Giant Atlas upholds. There the streams flow with ambrosia by Zeus's bed of love and holy Gaia (Gaea, Earth), the giver of life, yield to the gods rich blessedness.

(Vellacott, 1961, p. 742)

Vergil (BC 70-19) writes:

Near Oceanus' bound and the setting sun lies Aethiopia (Ethiopia), farthest of lands, where mightiest Atlas on his shoulders turns the sphere, inset with gleaming stars [...]. the fane of the Hesperides.

(VER 4.480-486)

Pliny the Elder (AD 23/24-79) locates the Fortunate Islands:

Opposite to Celtiberia are a number of islands, by the Greeks called Cassiterides, in consequence of their abounding in tin: and, facing the Promontory of the Arrotrebae, are the six Islands of the Gods, which some persons have called the Fortunate Islands.

(Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 4. 36)

Isidore of Seville (AD c.560-636) refers to the Fortunate Islands in *Etymologiae*:

Fortunatarum insulae vocabulo suo significant omnia ferre bona, quasi felices et beatae fructuum ubertate. Sua enim aptae natura pretiosarum poma silvarum parturiunt; fortuitis vitibus iuga collium vestiuntur; ad herbarum vicem messis et holus vulgo est. Unde gentilium error et saecularium carmina poetarum propter soli fecunditatem easdem esse Paradisum putaverunt. Sitaе sunt autem in Oceano contra laevam Mauretaniae, occiduo proximae, et inter se interiecto mari discretae.

(IHE, XIV.6.8)

Isles of the Fortunate mean by their name that they bear all good things, as if they were happy and blessed by the abundance of fruits. In fact, being equipped by nature they bring forth fruit of precious forests; the summits of the hills are clothed with vines growing by chance; instead of grass there are commonly crops and vegetables. From this the error of the pagans and the songs of the secular poets have believed that these islands are Paradise because of the fertility of the soil. But they are located in the Ocean to the left of Mauretania, very near the west, they are separated by the sea flowing between them. (My trans.)

A2 Poem by Roger Davies

The poem survives in two manuscripts: the older is Peniarth 104 (Hengwrt 200), written 1624-1651 according to Gwenogvryn Evans (1898), and a younger version is found in Cardiff MS 2.14 written by William Rowland 'or hendu' who in the years 1720-36 copied a collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century carols, englynion and cywyddau.⁴⁰ The table below shows transcripts of both texts and an analysis of the *cynganedd* to facilitate further investigations. Missing or illegible letters are marked with asterisks. Variations are underlined. A tentative translation follows.

Caerdydd C 2.14.477

Cowydd a wnayth Gwr a Gollase yr ffordd
ag Syrthiase ymlith Tylwyth teg ag
syrthiase yn y rafon

Peniarth 104.156

**wydd a wnaeth gwr a gollase yr ffordd
ag syrthase
y mlith y tylwyth teg ag a syrthase yn yr
afon

- (1) Trista dim y troes dyn dai chwauth
- (2) **myn** Iesu imi noswauth
- (3) a fo allan y **man** nos +
- (4) Ceisied riw nodded y nos
- (5) ystyriwch y tostiri
- (6) **gofi** a/ Siawns a gefais i/
- (7) Drythyllwg trwm olwg tro
- (8) am **Deunodd** i fynd yno
- (9) temtasiwn regwn y rodd +
- (10) orn (**om**) ty allan **am** twyllodd
- (11) beth a dal diofalwch
- (12) o/ duw **trist** i/ **un** trwch +
- (13) syrthio yn dwr stan fyngwaneg
- (14) lle ir oydd **wy**th o/ tylwyth teg
- (15) nid oedd **fan** yng wlad **anwn**
- (16) ddyfriach anharddach na hwn
- (17) Disgin yn ffrom mewn **tomen**
- (18) **Diras** y **mh**wyll **Dros** y **mhen**
- (19) ni sefais llithrais yn llon
- (20) o **riw** ofid **ir** afon
- (21) uffern lydan is **anwn**
- (22) pwll Diawl oddi hawl oedd hwn
- (23) **ffwrn** ais Dowyll ddy **ffyrnig**
- (24) a/ **braidd** y gwelwn i/ **brig**
- (25) lle bu yr fagddu yn ymgiddio
- (26) lle anardd i/ fardd iw fo
- (27) Drwg y Drichwain **germain** gwg
- (28) o/ **Dreth** allel **Drythyllwg**
- (29) llam diffaith ffau ymdaith ffos
- (30) **baedd** agwedd **boddi** agos
- (31) **Dan** y **Dwr** yn anwrol
- (32) fal mylfran ffyll dwrstan ffol
- (33) **uffern** ddall oedd y **ffwrn** ddu
- (34) y **dotia**is yn i/ **deutu**
- (35) bym Siaplen yno **enyd**
- (36) i/ annwn ai **gwn** i/ **gyd**
- (37) **Consir**iais mewn **Cwyn** Soriant
- (38) a yllyllon min geimion gant

- (1) Trista *dim* y troes *dai* chwa*th
- (2) **myn** Iesu imi noswaith
- (3) A fo allen y **mannos**
- (4) Ceisied riw nodded y nos
- (5) ystyriwch y tostiri
- (6) **gofi** a/ Siawns a/ gefais*
- (7) drythyllwg trwm olw* tro
- (8) am **deunodd** i/ fynd yno
- (9) temptasiwn regwm y rodd
- (10) **om** ty allan **am** twyllodd
- (11) beth a/dal diofalwch
- (12) o/ enw **trist** i/ **un** trwch#
- (13) syrthio yn dwrstan fyngwaneg
- (14) lle ir oydd **wy**th or/ tylwyth teg
- (15) nid oedd fan yng wlad anwn
- (16) ddyfriach anharddach na hwn
- (17) disgin yn ffrom mewn **tomen**
- (18) **diras** y **mh**wyll **dros** y **mhen**
- (19) ni sefais llithrais yn llon
- (20) o/ **riw** ofid **ir** afon
- (21) uffern lydan i* **anwn**
- (22) pwll diawl **di hawl oedd hwn
- (23) **ffwrn** ais dowyll ddy **ffyrnig**
- (24) a/ **braidd** y gwelwn i/ **brig**
- (25) lle bu yr fagddu yn ymgiddio
- (26) lle anardd i/ fardd iw fo
- (27) drwg y dichwain **germain** gwg
- (28) o/ **dreth** allel **drythyllwg**
- (29) llam diffaith ffau ymdaith ffos
- (30) **baedd** agwedd **boddi** agos
- (31) dan y **dwr** yn anwrol
- (32) fal mylfran ffyll dwrstan ffol
- (33) **uffern** ddall oedd y **ffwrn** ddu
- (34) y **dotia**is yn i/ **deutu**
- (35) bym siaplen yno **enyd**
- (36) i/ annwn ai **gwn** i/ *yd
- (37) **consir**iais mewn **Cwyn** soriant
- (38) a yllyllon min geimion gant

- (1) *cytseinedd/croes bengoll*
- (2) *C. groes*
- (3) *C. lusc*
- (4) *C. lusc*
- (5) *C. draws*
- (6) *C. groes*
- (7) *C. sain gadwynog*
- (8) *C. croes (m) wreiddgoll*
- (9) *C. sain*
- (10) *C. croes*
- (11) *C. lusc*
- (12) *C. groes*
- (13) *C. lusc*
- (14) *C. sain*
- (15) *C. lusc*
- (16) *C. sain*
- (17) *C. lusc*
- (18) *C. groes*
- (19) *C. sain*
- (20) *C. groes*
- (21) *C. lusc*
- (22) *C. sain*
- (23) *C. draws gyferbyn*
- (24) *C. draws fantach*
- (25) *(C. sain wallus?)*
- (26) *C. sain*
- (27) *C. sain*
- (28) *C. groes*
- (29) *C. sain*
- (30) *C. groes*
- (31) *C. lusc*
- (32) *C. sain*
- (33) *C. draws*
- (34) *C. groes*
- (35) *C. lusc*
- (36) *C. sain*
- (37) *C. draws*
- (38) *C. sain*
- (39) *C. sain*

(39) Codais eil**waith** dryd **waith** dro
 (40) yn **ddi**enaid oddi yno
 (41) ar **draws** y Domen Drain
 (42) **braw** o/ **fedydd** **briwo** **fadain**
 (43) Gwisco yr towel iw yngelyn
 (44) yn **lle** yr ystolaf y **llyn**
 (45) pen Dull**fan** yw fy **maneg**
 (46) mewn twll ai *chwydd* na *cheg*
 (47) babi **myd** *enbyd* un *ben*
 (48) a/ **ffawb** yn dyfaly i/ **ffen**
 (49) Dygym **gall** **ryw** ofal **llew**
 (50) i/ fan y **pader** or **pydew**
 (51) f el tin **gwyll** ni bym **bwylllog**
 (52) **yng**rair wrth Dowel **yng**rog
 (53) lliw bol hen wrach a/ **fiach**aidd
 (54) ne **god** **hir** /i/ **gadw** **haidd**
 (55) a **fliniaidd** **ffiaidd** i/ **ffon**
 (56) **Dyrnol** ar waith y **darnen**
 (57) **fel** **tin** ab foel **tene** wyd
 (58) **ag** **anardd** ond rhag **anwyd**
 (59) na **ddel** i/ **ddyn** **cyntyn** caith
 (60) y **fath** ddolur **fyth** eil**waith**.
 Roger Davis

(39) Codais eil**waith** dryd **waith** dro
 (40) Yn **ddi**enaid oddi yno.
 (41) Ar **draws** y domen ar drain
 (42) **braw** o/ **fedydd** **briwo** **fadain**
 (43) gwisco yr towel iw yngelyn
 (44) yn **lle** yr ystolaf y **llyn**
 (45) pen dull**fan** yw fy **maneg**
 (46) mewn cwell ai *chwydd* na *cheg*
 (47) babi **myd** *ynbyd* [enbyd] un *ben*
 (48) a/ **ffawb** yn dyfaly i/ **ffen**
 (49) dygym gall **ryw** ofal **llew**
 (50) i/ fan y **pader** or **pyden**
 (51) fel tin **gwyll** ni bym **bwylllog**
 (52) **yng**rair wrth dowel **yng** rog
 (53) lliw bol henwrach a/ **fiach**aidd
 (54) ne **god** **hir** /i/ **gadw** **haidd**
 (55) a**fliniaidd** **ffiaidd** i/ **ffon**
 (56) **dyrnol** ar waith y **darnen**
 (57) **fel** **tin** ap foel **tene** wyd
 (58) **ag** **anardd** ond rhag **anwyd**
 (59) na **ddel** i/ **ddyn** **Cyntyn** Caith
 (60) y **fath** ddolwr **fyth** eil**waith**.
 Roger Davis

(40) *C. draws*
 (41) *C. draws*
 (42) *C. groes*
 (43) *C. lusk*
 (44) *C. draws fantach*
 (45) *C. lusk*
 (46) *cytseinedd*
 (47) *C. sain*
 (48) *C. draws fantach*
 (49) -
 (50) *C. anghyflawn*
 (51) *C. lusk*
 (52) *C. draws*
 (53) *C. lusk*
 (54) *C. groes*
 (55) *C. sain*
 (56) *C. draws*
 (57) *C. groes*
 (58) *C. draws*
 (59) *C. sain*
 (60) *C. groes*

A tentative translation

A cywydd made by a man who lost his way and fell among the Tylwyth Teg and fell into the river

- (1) The saddest thing which turned God
- (2) (by Jesus), for me into bitterness in the evening
- (3) He who may be outside at night.
- (4) Let him seek some protection of the night (sanctuary from the night)
- (5) Consider the mercy,
- (6) (Fellow), and the accident which I got.
- (7) Wantonness (a heavy vision (?) one time)
- (8) Enticed me to to go there;
- (9) Temptation (let us curse the gift)
- (10) Deceived me [to go] out of my house.
- (11) What good is carelessness
- (12) (O! sad name!) to a wretched person?
- (13) I fell awkwardly (with my appearance awkward)
- (14) [in a place] where eight of the Tylwyth Teg were;
- (15) There was no place in the land of Annwn
- (16) wetter and uglier than this;
- (17) falling peevishly in a dunghill
- (18) (vile was my prudence) over my head
- (19) I did not stand: I glided merrily
- (20) from some trouble [or possibly 'from the slope...'] to the river
- (21) a broad hell below Annwn
- (22) This was a pool of the devil without right(?)
- (23) a dark black fierce furnace [hellish place];
- (24) and barely could see to the top
- (25) where the utter darkness was hiding.
- (26) it is an ugly place for a poet
- (27) a bad adventure, a howling of anger,
- (28) from the taxing powers (?) of lasciviousness

- (29) a purposeless jump [or fate] into a den, an expedition into a ditch
 (30) resembling a boar – nearly drowning
 (31) in an unmanly [unheroic] way under water
 (32) like a foolish clumsy dark cormorant
 (33) blind hell was the black furnace
 (34) where I became confused on both sides.
 (35) I was a chaplain there a short while
 (36) for Annwn and all its dogs;
 (37) I conjured in an angry lament
 (38) with (?) a hundred wry-mouthed elves [or ‘wry-mouthed elves sang’]
 (39) I rose a second, a third time
 (40) lifeless [lit. soulless] from there
 (41) across the mound and the thorns
 (42) (fright of a baptism?) wounding my side (or my wings *image of the cormorant*)
 (43) wearing the towel is my enemy (?)
 (44) In the place where I will strike roots in the lake
 (45) Pen Dullfan is my gauntlet (fig. challenge)
 (46) in a belly (a den) with its protuberance and no opening
 (47) a mute baby, a fearful tyrant
 (48) and everybody guessing/describing its head [i.e. that of ?]
 (49) crooked inclined to give some anxiety of the lion (?)
 (50) to the place of the lord’s prayer from the pit
 (51) like a wild arse (?tin gwyll) I was not measured
 (52) my relic attached to a cloth on a cross
 (53) the colour of the belly of an old unhealthy hag
 (54) or a long bag to keep barley
 (55) her head deformed and abhorrent
 (56) A glove at work on the small piece (?)
 (57) you are slim like a bald monkey’s arse
 (58) and ugly, but to defend against passion
 (59) let there not come to any man (captive sleep)
 (60) such pain ever again.

A3 Hyfforddiad i alw ar ysbrydion a elwir Tylwyth Teg

The following Welsh text was published by Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1977, pp. 123-125):

Hyfforddiant i alw ar ysbrydion a elwir
Tylwyth Teg

Instruction to call the spirits called
Tylwyth Teg

Rhaid i'r lle y boch yn galw arnynt
fod yn bur lanwedd a chadach wedi ei
daenu ar lawr neu ar fwrdd yn gylch i
droedfedd oddi wrth y cylch neu y sircil
ar lawr; a bod cyw iâr neu ryw aderyn
arall wedi ei rostio yn daclus a chawg neu
ddysgl wen fechan a'i llond o ddŵr glân
rhedegog a hanner peint o hufen llaeth
mewn dysgl. Yr hyn fydd yn gwneud
hwynt yn gydnabyddusach ac yn fwy
cyfeillgar i wneuthur eich dymuniad.

The place where you call them must be
pure and clean, and a cloth spread on the
ground or a table round about a foot
from the circle on the ground, and a
chicken or some other bird tidily
roasted, and a bowl or a small white dish
filled with pure flowing water and half a
pint of whole milk in a dish. This shall
make them more familiar and friendlier
to do your bidding.

Y pethau hyn, sef y dysglau, ni chwrddant â'r
cylch. Wrth eu galw mae rhaid eich bod
wedi ymolchyd yn lân ac yn hardd.

These things, that is the vessels, they do
not touch the circle. When you call them
you must be washed clean and beautiful.

The incantation continues:

Eisteddwch wrth fwrdd neu ryw le
arall a rhowch drosto gadach gwyn
golau yn crogi droedfedd dros bwrdd;
ac yna galwch ar yr ysbrydion sydd wedi
eu gosod yn bennaf ar lywodraethu ar y
lleill, y rhai a elwir Meiob ac Oberion.

Sit at a table or some other place and put
a white cloth over it, a light hanging one
foot above the table, and then call to the
spirits who have been placed to rule over
the others, those who are called Meiob
and Oberion.

A gan y rhain y mae saith chwaer
sef Sibia, Refilia, Forta, Folla,
Affrita, Julia, Benula. I'r rhain sydd
eto lawer lleng o ysbrydion gwasanaethgar
yn wandro yma a thraw a ganddynt
gadwedigaeth ar drysor cuddiedig.
A thrwy'r cyfarwyddyd uchod
fe ellid eu cael allan ond galw fel y
mae yn canlyn. Galw ar yr
ysbrydion ynghyd: "Yr wyf i yn eich
tynghedu ac yn gorchymyn ichwi
ysbrydion daearol y rhai sydd bennaf
yn llywodraethu ar y tylwyth teg sef
Miscob ag Oberion yn enw yr Hollalluog
dduw Jehova a'i unig anedig fab Iese
Grist etc.

And these have seven sisters, namely
Sibia, Refilia, Forta, Folla, Affrita, Julia,
Benula. These have moreover many
legions of ministering spirits wandering
here and there, with hidden treasures in
their custody. And by means of the
guidance above they could be drawn out,
only call as follows. Call to the spirits
together: "I adjure you and I bid you
earthly spirits, those who rule over the
Tylwyth Teg, namely Miscob and
Oberion in the name of the Almighty
God Jehova and his only begotten son
Jesus Christ etc.

Yn ganlynol y modd i reoli y
rhagddywededig ysbrydion: “Rwyf yn galw
ac yn taer ddeisyfu ar ichwi ysbrydion
Meicob ag Oberion orchymyn i’r saith
chwaer Sibia, Restilia, Fora, Folla, Offrita,
Julia, Bonulia y rhai hyn i ymddangos yn
eglur mewn mwyneidd-dra ac ewylllys da
neu yrru rhyw un o’ch llywodraeth chwi
i’n dyheu ac i’n hamddiffyn yn ein
Dymuniad
yr hyn beth a allant. Yn yr hyn wyf yn
hyderu ac yn erfyn ac yn ymbil
fel yr ydych chwi i gyd yn weision i’r
goruchaf [...]

[...G]adewir i’r
ysbryd neu i’r ysbrydion sydd [yn] cadw yr
lle
gael eu rhyddhau yn fuan mewn heddwch
a thangnefedd, yr hyn sydd yn erfynedig ac
yn blaen â: “Thangnefydd Duw yn wastad
a daioni rhyngoch chwi a minnau.
Gwnewch imi fel gweision i’r goruchaf.”
Felly
y rhai cyntaf hyn sydd i’w harferyd y
saith noswaith gynyddiad y lleuad,
a dechrau ar yr wythfed nos, sef y nesaf
ar ôl i’r lleuad newid. Ac ar yr wythfed
rhaid galw naw gwaith yn yr awr a
dechrau unarddeg o’r gloch am eu bod hwy
yn arferol ymddangos at yr amser
hwnnw ac fe allant basio mewn
terfynau heb gennad.

Following, the way to control the
aforementioned spirits: ‘I call and
fiercely implore you spirits, Meicob and
Oberion to order the seven sisters Sibia
Restilia, Fora, Folla, Offrita, Julia
Bonulia, to show themselves clearly in
gentleness and good will, or to send
someone of your dominion to aspire and
protect us in our desire what they can. In
this I am confident and beg and beseech
you as you are all servants of the
Almighty.

[...T]he spirit or spirits which are kept
in place are permitted to be released soon
in peace, that which is implored with:
‘The peace of God for ever and goodness
between you and me. Do to me like the
servants of the Almighty.’ Thus, these
first things are to be practiced on the
seven evenings of the waxing moon,
beginning on the the eighth night,
namely the next after the change of the
moon. And on the eighth [you] must call
nine times in the hour beginning at
eleven o’clock since they usually appear
at that time, and they can cross borders
(vanish completely?) without
permission.

A4 The Tylwyth Teg in Prose and Poetry: The 20th Century

Appendix A.4 of the thesis will introduce examples from Welsh prose and poetry of the twentieth century which use the narrative motifs of fairy folklore. Appendix A4 will start with novels which were written for children and involve the traditions of the Tylwyth Teg. Especially E. Tegla Davies' novels for children will be explored.

The second part is entitled 'retelling old tales in modern times' and shows by the example of Mihangel Morgans' novel *Pantglas* how a novel of magical realism can be created by using the traditional folklore on various narrative levels. *Pantglas* also shows how fairy folklore motifs are used to address the question of identity and otherness.²⁸²

The third part introduces the sci-fi novel *Y Blaned Dirion* which uses motifs from fairy folklore.

The fourth and last part focusses on the Tylwth Teg in poetry which will show that references to the Tylwyth Teg are motif not only used for creating a romantic atmosphere, but creates poetical expressions of otherness, change and transformation, as we should expect.

A4.1 Tales of the Tylwyth Teg: Tales for Children Only?

E. Tegla Davies thought that the land of the Tylwyth Teg was a land the children liked to visit, and his *Tir y Dyneddon* was written for children, as the opening lines of the preface show:

Nid myfi yw'r cyntaf o lawer iawn i grwydro i dir rhyw ddyneddon neu i' gilydd. Bu plant dynion yn eu gwlad ymhob oes, o ddyddiau duwiau bach y coed, heibio i ddyddiau'r Tylwyth teg, i lawr i'n dyddiau ni.

(Davies, 1921)

I am not the first of many to stray to the land of some sort or other of little men. The children of men were in their land in every age, from the days of the little gods of the forest, to the days of the Tylwyth Teg, down to our days.

Indeed, at least since the second half of the nineteenth century the folk traditions of the Tylwyth Teg inspired authors writing for children. Siwan M. Rosser explored the beginning of writing children's literature in Wales in the nineteenth century (2017). In this context it is interesting to see that this genre strengthened generally with the Victorian period and the

²⁸² As the Four Branches of the Mabinogi hold motifs from fairy folklore, and as the writers of Wales made frequent use of this ancient source of inspiration, examples of drama and novel abound which hold these motifs. Discussing and comparing all these literary works holds material enough for another thesis. I will not discuss these works here, although, they, too, often address the question of otherness and identity such as Saunders Lewis' *Blodeuwedd*- just to name a famous example.

Victorian nostalgia for childhood and the rural life. Linda Austin claims in her work that rural living and childhood were the main topics for the Victorian preoccupation with the past, an opinion which is also supported by Kristie Blair (Austin, 2007, pp. 3, 87; Blair, 2012, p. 108). Furthermore, in *At the Bottom of the Garden* Diane Purkiss maintains: 'The Victorians took up the Romantic notion of the child as perfect innocent and linked that innocent child with the fairies' (Purkiss, 2000, p. 220). Applying the hypothesis that narrative motifs involving fairies represent problems of otherness and transformation, we can conjecture that relating the child to the fairies and a countryside unsullied by the negative effects of industrialization identifies the undisturbed landscape and the idyll of childhood as the counter-image of Victorian reality. Indeed, many children of the proletarian class lived neither in a lovely landscape, nor were they so innocent of adults' problems with children's work being a common thing. Another aspect of the tales for children is their educational purpose. The child must be transformed to be a valuable member of the human society. The domain of the fairies is the place where this educational transformation takes place.

Stories for children are not only found in books and booklets, but also in journals. In *Cymru'r Plant* stories with the Tylwyth Teg as protagonists appear such as e.g 'Brenin Y Tylwyth Teg' (Anon 1908), 'Gwladys a Gwilym: II. Gyda'r Tylwyth Teg' (Williams 1905), 'Y Tylwyth Teg' (Evans 1905), 'Anturiaeth Rhyfedd Meinwen a'r Tri: X – Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg' (Anon. 1909). In these stories the Tylwyth Teg live in a beautiful country and bestow gifts on good children, either riches or gifts of a good character. Clearly, these tales have both an entertaining and educatory purpose, showing the Tylwyth Teg as benevolent beings. In this they meet very much the attitude Hugh Evans shows towards the Tylwyth Teg in his book *Y Tylwyth Teg* first published in 1935:

Enw arall y gelwid hwy arno oedd plant Rhys Ddwfn, hen enw digon cas, yn awgrymu eu bod o'r un tylwyth â'r ellylon neu ysbrydion drwg. Nid wyf hoffi'r rhai sydd yn ysgrifennu am y Tylwyth Teg ac yn eu cymysgu ag ysbrydion.

(Evans, 1935, p. xiii)

Another name they were called was Plant Rhys Ddwfn, a hateful enough name suggesting that they are of the same tribe as the goblins or bad spirits. I do not like those who write about the Tylwyth Teg and confuse them with spirits.

In the Victorian romantic ideas of the fairies we can find an explanation that the fairies adopted a positive connotation in Welsh literature additional to their becoming a symbol of patriotism, cf. 6.3.)

Children's books have actually remained the main media where stories about the Tylwyth Teg can be found, in addition to the collections by folklorist or articles appearing in Welsh periodicals such as *Cymru*, *Y Geninen*, *Y Brython* and written to preserve a memory of folk traditions. Thus, today, when running the key word 'Tylwyth Teg' through the catalogue of the library at Bangor University, most entries with this key word in the title refer to children's books. A closer examination shows that among them books retelling the tales known from the 19th century collections are quite frequent. In contrast to E. Tegla Davies' work or the tales of some periodicals, genuinely new creations are rare, although the various authors/editors and illustrators add elements or enlarge on a well-known traditional tale. Examples are Rosalind Kerven's and Honey de Lacey's retelling of the tale of Elian, a fairy midwife tale appearing e.g., in the collection of Thomas (2007 [1908], pp. 93-95).²⁸³ The authors show the fairies as connected with a watery and or airy element. They also suggest a fairy raid as a midwinter event, which can be understood when the fairy king is seen as a leader of the Spectral Hunt, following Rhys' opinion (2008 [1891], p. 155). *Y Llyfr Ryseitiau: Gwaed y Tylwyth* by Nicolas Daniels (2007) uses motifs from the legend of Llyn y Fan Fach into the magical world unfolding in this novel. The fairies in *Yr Ynys Hud* by Mererid Hopwood & Fran Evans are small beings with wings inspired by the Victorian Fairy painting. Their fairy land is a land of plenty and luxury (Hopwood & Evans, 2005). In Angharad Tomos' Tir na n-Og Award winning novel *Sothach a Sglyfath* the fairy Hud, too, is a tiny being with small wings resembling rather a Victorian miniature fairy that Tylwyth Teg of Welsh folklore. (1994). Another Tir na n-Og Award winning novel is Susan Cooper's *The Grey King* (1977). Cooper created a tale based on the traditions of about the Brenin Llwyd, the Gey King of the mountain mist, a fairy character who shows a great similarity to Gwyn ap Nudd.²⁸⁴ The story is also located in Wales. It is part of a series of books in which the powers of darkness and light fight each other. Susan Cooper's Grey King is an emissary of dark and destructive powers aided by a pack of magical foxes, called *milgwn*, who evoke reminiscences of the *Cŵn Annwn*, as does the translation of their Welsh name which means 'greyhounds'. *The Grey King* draws on the dark and fearsome aspect of folklore.

From these examples we see that the use of the folk traditions in children's books still spans the whole spectrum of connotations the fairy world can be traditionally related to: We find benevolent, harmless fairies, the mysterious ambivalent fairy world, and the dark and

²⁸³ See Kerven & de Lacey (1992).

²⁸⁴ For the traditions of the Grey King see Trevelyan & Hartland (1973 [1909], p.48).

dangerous side of the fairy world threatening the world of man. The narrative motifs of fairy folklore fascinate the young readers. What could be the reason for this observation? Children are forced by their gradually growing up to undergo transitions. They must find their way into society, find their peer-groups in school and are continually called to sort out problems of identity and otherness and of transformation. This suggests that young people are drawn to this kind of tales by the meaning of the fairy motifs. The great fascination fantasy tales exert upon young people is not only based on the wish of fleeing reality, but also by the possible subconscious identification and dealing with problems of identity and otherness and of transition as presented in such tales. These assumptions regarding the psycho-social function of fiction drawing on fairy folklore motifs is strengthened by the opinion of Zipes regarding the social function of literary fairy tales, a genre which composes new stories by the use of traditional narrative motifs, too. Zipes writes:

Third, there were different social functions of the literary fairy tale, which was initially not intended for the entertainment or education of children, and yet, children had for centuries listened, remembered, and communicated through fairy tales because of the relevance to their lives.[...]For sure, entertainment and instruction were always part of their function, but they were designed to communicate ideas about natural instincts, social relations, normative behaviour, character types, sexual roles, and power politics.

(Zipes, 2013, p. 99)

Comparing Zipes's statement with the topic fairy folklore is preoccupied with, we find that social relations, normative behaviour and sexual roles are clearly dependent on defining who is member of a certain social group, who does not fit to it, and how is the identity of the group defined. The answers to these questions involve also defining otherness. Character types and the sexual role of a character is part of personal identity, whereas power politics and enlarging natural gifts can be treated as a problem of transformation, transition, and creativity which is mediated by contact with the otherworld. Talking about otherness can be used to define the own identity, but transgression of borders and taking up novel impulses can open the ways for changing identity, self-development, exploiting natural gifts (such as poetry) and empowerment (quest of the hero) and hence shift power patterns and the position of an individual in a social group.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Here we see the great overlap of the fairy world and the world of the outlaw as introduced by Nagy (as pointed out in other places of this thesis as well). Thus, Nagy writes about Creidne who was temporarily leader of a *flan*:

Creidne was molested at a time when her social and sexual identity was still in a process of formation. The incest that occurs in the story highlights the confusion and danger of the transitional phase in which the unmarried Creidne exists. Her becoming a *fénnnid* articulates

A4.1.1 E. Tegla Davies (1880-1967) : *Tir y Dyneddon*

E. Tegla Davies uses motifs from Welsh folklore on a large scale, and he created a masterpiece by using fairy folklore, in his novel *Tir y Dyneddon* subtitled 'Storïau am Dylwyth Teg'. His copious work includes other children's books which use fairy motifs. I hesitate to class *Tir y Dyneddon* as a typical book for children, for it is a complex work which creates allegories that might be rather demanding for a child to fully understand. Davies is driven by the urge to preach and to convey a moral message, but he is sensitive to the traditional narrative motifs, so that he fully adopted them as means of expression. Pennar Davies draws attention to the biographical episode that after hearing J. P. Roberts preaching, E. Tegla Davies felt hunted by hounds, and only the beauty of the starlight landscape could restore his inner peace (Davies, P., 1983, p.5). The dread of hunting hounds may have been instigated by childhood experiences of killer dogs attacking sheep (ibid, p. 4). Transporting this experience to the spiritual level is in complete accordance with folk traditions such as the tales about the Cŵn Annwn hunting the souls of the wicked.

Tir y Dyneddon is, according to E. Tegla Davies himself, a novel about a fantastic world whose inhabitants are letters. The letters are divided into tribes, outlaws are those whose physical appearance does not fit to either the letter-tribe of letters written with straight lines, such as A, M etc., or the one written with curves, such as O, C etc. This looks like the framework of a very artificially created fantasy world which could be found in a schoolbook for first grades. Yet, there are some other major motifs which have a great impact, as I will show in the following, and which make *Tir y Dyneddon* a fascinating artistic work.

Tears are a dominant motif in the whole novel. The tears are the real source of waters transporting blessings and creative power: the tears of the boy who is trapped and immobilized in the fairy world create the temple (Davies, 1910, p. 33), the tears of Aa (one of Dyneddon) create a lake (Davies, 1910, p. 95), the tear of Di opens the way for Di to escape his own loneliness (Davies, 1910, pp. 101-102). The tears as creative fluid bringing about inspiration

the liminality of her situation and functions in her life as the temporary means for attaining the permanent end of adult social identity (Nagy, 1985, p. 47).

In case of the early modern fairy beliefs we have seen that Diane Purkiss argued that women like Elspeth Reoch and Janet Weir answered to a low social standing within their families and to possibly having been victims to sexual aggression with believing to be in touch with the fairy realm, a fact that gave them knowledge and power (Purkiss, 2000, pp. 90-97). Especially in the case of Elpeth Purkiss uses the wording: 'What happens to Elspeth is close to a perverse drama of clan identity.' (Purkiss, 2000, p. 94)

and divine blessing find their counterpart in traditional lore. The world of the fairies is a world of inspiration and this world being closely linked to waters (cf. chapter 3). Moreover, the motif of the tears strangely recall the poem 'Awen' by Parry-Williams: 'Ond odid na chanfyddir nad yw hi/ yn ddim ond ffynnon fach o ddagrau'n lli' ('Perhaps one does not perceive that it is nothing but a small well of tears flowing') (1987). Indeed, E. Tegla Davies expresses a similar truth by saying 'A deallais fod dagrau, hwythau hefyd, yn canu yn Nhir y Dyneddon' ('I understood that tears, they too, sing in the land of the Little Men') (Davies, 1910, p.33).

The cold is another prevailing motif and it recalls the images of the hell in the north, as does the cold dark land where Aa and Em search for the hidden roses. For finding the hidden roses they need the help of a wizard living in the Dark Land: 'Clywais gan fy nhad, pan oeddwn yn blentyn bach, fod dewin yn byw erioed yn y Tir Tywyll, ac mai ganddo ef y mae cyfrinach y blodau' ('I heard from my father, when I was a little child that a wizard ever lives in the Dark Land, and that he keeps the secret of the flowers') (Davies, 1910, p. 86). In fact, the all-white figure of the wizard clad in snow and living in the snow makes us wonder whether E. Tegla Davies has been inspired by a fairy king figure such as Gwyn ap Nudd, who was an astronomer, sort of *magus* with knowledge of all things to happen according to the tradition founded by Iolo Morganwg and whose whiteness was a token of winter according to the tradition founded by Rhys (Davies, 1910, pp. 87-88).

Daethant o'r diwedd i odre' Tir Tywyll na oleuid gan ddim ond eira [...] Braidd y gwelent ef [y dewin] pan ddaethant yno gan mor wyn ydoedd. Dillad wedi eu nyddu o blu eira oedd ei ddillad, mantel eira oedd trosto, wyneb fel llewych eira oedd iddo, a rhidens eira ei wallt a'i farf, a siaradai fel rhu cawod o eira dan y gwynt.

(Davies, 1910, pp. 87-88).

Finally, they came to the border of the Dark Land which was illuminated by nothing but snow [...] they hardly saw him when they came there, for he was so white. A gown spun from snowflakes was his gown, a mantle of snow was over him, his face like glittering of snow, and tassels of snow his hair and beard, and he spoke like a roar of a snow-shower under the wind.
(my trans.)

Maybe, considering the religious overtones, one could get the idea that E. Tegla Davies could also have been inspired by Revelation 1:14 'the hair of his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were a blazing fire.' However, this interpretation sounds less convincing to me, for the Dark Land does not meet with the idea of celestial splendour and fiery heat in the eyes of the figure described in the Revelation of John.

A third motif is the message that every achievement and development can only be brought about by suffering. Play, even if it can cause no harm to anybody, can darken the holy

things represented in the novel by the temple of ice: ‘Aeth y deml rew yn bygddu, ac ataliwyd y pelydrau a ddisgleiriai o’r rhew trosti i gyd.’ (‘The temple became pitch-black and the radiation which shone from the ice above all together was hindered’) (Davies, 1910, pp. 65-68). The land of the Dyneddon is the home of flowers and the music of light, but both things are fragile, and are threatened by the cold and by the darkness of dust: the physical cold and darkness and the spiritual cold and darkness in the hearts of the inhabitants which are often cruel to their neighbours. But ultimately the music of the little harpist (y Telynor Bach), one of the Dyneddon, redeems them all by his music: ‘Nid oedd nac eiddigedd na gelyniaeth yn eu mysg oll, ond pob un yn ymdoddi’r llall’ (‘There was neither envy nor enmity in their middle, and everyone mixed with the other’) (Davies, 1910, p. 131). The dream ends here for the warmth of the dance, not only the physical but also the warmth between all Dyneddon make the feeling come back to the boy who is the mountain. Here we understand why *Tir y Dyneddon* is truly a counter-image of E. Tegla Davies’ own world. This last chapter seems to express a deep wish that in the author’s society and world the like changes might happen and harmony between the various people prevail- a thing that seemed doubtful after one world war having passed and another dawning.

The novel uses in the framework (*Rahmenhandlung*) motifs which are taken from the traditional fairy lore, but there is another motif as well which strongly recalls the novel *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen (Andersen, 2005 [1839-45], pp. 259-293). In that novel an ice-splinter in the eye was also the means to change the sight of the protagonist Kai who is changed in character and at the same time the way to otherworld of the Snow Queen is opened for him. An ice-splinter changes the view of the little boy in *Tir y Dyneddon* as well and opens the way to the world of the Dyneddon. Being bound, unable to move is a feature which recalls the people who fall into the land of the fairies and are bound there with gossamer stands. Yet, if we see the world of the fairies as one of creativity and transition, being bound in such a world is actually a token of being unable to bring about the desired transition actively, and thus only the tears retain creative power. Another sign for the degradation of the power of the spoken word may consist in this, that in the world of the boy, God spoke the word and it was (for we may assume the boy is of Christian faith). But in the inner world of the boy, there remain only letters which he cannot make into words, for he cannot speak and cannot advise the letters to form a word, and finally in the inner sight of Di, one of the Dyneddon, Di sees but his only reflection which is a single letter. The boy in the land of the Dyneddon is a mountain and a god, but a disabled one.

After all there are not only folk motifs used in this novel, but it satirizes also episodes from the Bible, such as prophets climbing the mountains, the Israel burning animal sacrifices for the lord (the Dyneddon burn mice for the mountain (Davies, 1910, p. 44) and the queen and the king mating as bride and bridegroom recall the song of songs (Davies, 1910, pp.50-51). It is no surprise either that the work has been criticized by Saunders Lewis for being too obviously aimed at moral/religious education accusing it of being tainted by ‘the mildew of evangelicalism’ (cited in: Davies, Pennar, 1983, p. 46). Indeed, some passages, such as the formation of the temple from the boy’s tears seems overloaded with sentimental religious images. Yet, it is a masterpiece of creating an inner world inspired by a frozen waterfall, and we find the theme of religious education underpinned with powerful images which obviously spring from the authors’ various layers of cultural traditions, and witnessing this process alone makes the novel precious, even if the obvious evangelicalism could reject a less religious reader.

Another novel by E. Tegla Davies in which the *Tylwyth Teg* appear is *Rhys Llwyd y Lleuad*, the man in the moon who is the brother of Shonto’r Coed, the king of the Tylwyth Teg on this earth (Davies, 1925). It is a novel about the trip of two boys to the moon and back again, in the process of their adventure they turn to water, become clouds, a lake and then assume human form again. Again, the waters are an element promoting transitions which makes us recall the traditional narrative motifs. The tears as an important motif re-appear again. They are the medium through which the colours of the rainbow reveal celestial beauty. Davies who presents the work of E. Tegla Davies in ‘Writers of Wales’ series (Davies, P., 1983, pp. 55-57) muses about the meaning of this motif, but I think that it can be seen in accordance with the role the tears adopt in *Tir y Dyneddon*, namely that only the tears and suffering bring about understanding of the divine and blessings. The *Tylwyth Teg* in this novel are much more in accordance with the traditional *Tylwyth Teg* which were known from folktales. They dance in the moonlight, they work magic under the moon, and all in all, the story is certainly more comprehensible for children than *Tir y Dyneddon*. Again, a critic, especially a non-believer of the Christian faith, might be repelled by the evangelical and educatory framework of the story: The boys have the chance to travel to the moon because they do not go to chapel, and on the moon they long to go to chapel, and sound the bells. However, this is a context not unfamiliar for reading books for children at the beginning of the last century (I remember from my mother’s schoolbook a poem about a bell catching a girl who fails to go to the service on Sundays).

Stori Sam (Davies E.T., 1938), although it does not talk about the *Tylwyth Teg*, nevertheless uses motifs which are in accordance with the traditional tales about the otherworld: Sam claims his inspiration coming from a stone in a brook, i.e. from flowing waters, the clouds gain personality, even become the inspiration of the world. The golden-haired beauty making Sam to follow her lets us think of Niamh calling for Oisín, and like in all traditional fairy mistress tales, the unhappy Sam fails to bring back the inspirational impulses from the otherworldly cloud-realm filled with starlight music (a motif appearing also in *Tir y Dyneddon*). Sam is simply incapable to acknowledge the otherworldly beauty properly, thus forsaking the most precious gift. He has to return and longing is his part, just as for any other failing lover of a fairy mistress.

Davies works with rich images from a cultural background which reaches beyond the evangelical stratum, to express a morality as revealed in the light of a Christian tradition.

A4.2 *Pantglas* - Fairy Folklore for creating Magical Realism

Pantglas by Mihangel Morgan (2011) can be identified as a work of magical realism, for apparently wondrous events happen as part of mundane reality. A definition of magical realism is still debated (Durst, 2007, p. 219), but this the novel meets three constitutive criteria to identify magical realist literature according to Chanady:

Magical realism is [...] characterized [...] by two conflicting, but autonomously coherent, perspectives, one based on an 'enlightened' and rational view of reality, and the other on the acceptance of the supernatural as part of everyday reality.

(Chanaday, 1985, p. 21)

In *Pantglas* these two conflicting, but autonomously coherent perspectives are represented by the rational view of reality on the one hand, and the system of traditional folk beliefs on the other hand. The folk beliefs referred to in this context comprise belief in the *Tylwyth Teg*, in sorcery and witchcraft, in spirits and death omens. Since early modern times they have been regarded as 'superstitions' by the greater part of the educated elite.²⁸⁶ One might believe at first glance that by setting up this dichotomy of perspectives the author follows a still widely assumed idea of folklore which defines folklore as a set of traditions surviving from past ages, destined to vanish in an educated society. According to this definition, folklore represents a false view of the world (Dundes & Bronner, 2007, p. 56). Yet, Morgan works with this

²⁸⁶ Cf. chapter 5.

dichotomy on various narrative levels, so that in the end the expectation of the reader that the folk traditions vanish with the Welsh community described in the novel are proved wrong.

Pantglas tells the story of the small village ‘Pantglas’ which is to be drowned to provide the English centres of industrial development with water. In the novel the flooding of the village and the exodus of the villagers is transformed into an allegory for the decline of the Welsh rural traditions and the disintegration of a Welsh speaking community. Morgan works motifs and tale types from Welsh folklore into his novel. Interestingly, they do not only appear as beliefs of some villagers still enmeshed in the traditional superstitions, but the traditional tale types become the main building blocks for the novel. The novel is set in the period of industrialization which marks a turning point for folklore.²⁸⁷ Thus, the period of time chosen by Morgan underlines the central theme of the novel, as do the conflicting understandings of folklore, i.e. folklore as a set of erroneous beliefs and national heritage. As we will see in the following, Morgan works with narrative motifs and folk traditions on various levels.

The First Level: Rejection and Derision

On one level, the inhabitants of the village reject some old traditions as illusory, among these the belief in the *Tylwyth Teg*. This is the modern rationalist or enlightened view. It is voiced in several places: Pitar Wad tells Siemi Dafydd, Ned a Tomi about a suspicious hare lurking around his hen shed. Siemi suggests the hare might be indeed a witch who has taken the shape of an animal, but Pitar denies this possibility: “‘Lap a lol’ meddai Pitar Wad, “be nesa? Tylwyth Teg?’” (Morgan, 2011, p. 29). Another incident stresses the same rational attitude towards the traditional lore, especially the lore about ghosts and death omens: Tomos Hopcyn has been filled with wondrous tales about ghosts and death omens by his grandmother. Yet, when his uncle dies and Tomos -more or less unwillingly- holds a long vigil next to the coffin with his uncle’s remains, he experiences nothing supernatural. He recognizes that the traditional beliefs he has been brought up with are but illusions, only death itself is real (Morgan, 2011, pp.131-32). The list could be continued by the example of Roni Prys who mistakes the light of the moon for a Corpse Candle, a death omen (Morgan, 2011, pp. 67-71). This is the narrative level on which folk traditions and folk beliefs are shown to be a false set of beliefs to explain and understand the world, and indeed these beliefs are prone to die with the tradition bearers such as Tomos’ grandma and uncle. This level of using folk traditions I

²⁸⁷ Cf. chapter 6.

would like to call the first level which is the level of rejection of folk beliefs following the code of a rational, enlightened view of the world.

*The Second Level: The Marvel within Confines*²⁸⁸

On another narrative level, there is the story about the conflict of Pitar Wad, an asocial character, and Pedws Ffowc, the *gwraig hysbys* of the village. The story makes us believe that she can take the shape of a hare to steal the eggs from Pitar Wad. In the shape of a hare she is wounded by Pitar with a silver bullet. She has the surgeon dress her wound. In the following she avenges herself on Pitar first by undermining his health and strength by using a little waxen doll presenting Pitar for working dark magic. Later she finds ways to administer a magical potion to Pitar. Pitar ends up as blind man, totally dependent on the help of a woman. Pedws is a wise woman, *gwraig hysbys*, and in her way, she supports the society by punishing a cruel anti-social member of the community, but when seeking personal vengeance her cruelty reveals her to be also a witch, a *gwrach*, a *malefica*. In the person of Pedws, the idea of the 'white' and the 'black' witch are blurred. The witch taking the shape of a hare is a famous motif from European witch beliefs.

The episode concerning the destruction of a menhir named Carreg Einion or Maen Einion shows even more clearly, that Pedws is in close relation to the pre-Christian past of the land. Maen Einion appears to be connected to the past of the country, as Jaco's vision suggests (Morgan, 2011, p. 53). Pedws on her part curses the people who destroy the stone and brings the vengeance of Ysbryd Einion down on all those who destroyed the stone (Morgan 2011, p. 135). Although the non-Welsh speaking workers cannot understand, the curse seems to strike home, for fatal accidents happen. Maybe worst of all, the foreman Bickerstaff loses his son in an accident. This recalls the tale of Pantannas, a story from the fairy tradition. The fairies take the heir of Pantannas into their country to avenge themselves on of his ancestors who dared to plough their dancing place. The heir is destroyed when returning to his own country after generations of absence from the world of men (Rhys, 2012 [1901], p. 137). Yet, having said all this, all actual happenings regarding Pitar, Pedws, Jaco and the son of Bickerstaff could be explained rationally, i.e. by assuming that there is no magical or supernatural concept behind all those happenings. Indeed, all the times the author leaves it to the reader to make sense of all those events in the way suggested by the folk traditions, or to reject such an explanation.

²⁸⁸ I have adopted the terminology Durst used in his study on magical realism (2007). He differentiated between the marvel within confines and the marvel without confined ('das begrenzte und das entgrenzte Wunderbare').

This tale is also an example for the intertextual links between a modern novel and the traditional stories which have to be known to the reader so that the mysterious or better the belief in the mysterious can be enabled as one of the autonomous perspectives to interpret the reported happenings. It is noteworthy that the marvellous presented in these episodes is still isolated from the reality presented by the auctorial narrator of the novel, for whenever Pedws Ffowc appears, the magical is insinuated by the speech of the characters: Ned suggests that the hare is a witch (Morgan, 2011, p. 39), The women in the shop report of Pedws having been wounded by something that might have been a silver bullet. It remains unclear whether Pedws has been the hare indeed or whether she has simply been so unlucky to get hurt by a bullet which went astray (ibid. pp.46-48). When she wants to hurt Pitar with the help of a voodoo doll, the reader learns all from her own words (ibid. p.72-73). The reader does not know whether her potion actually worked, or whether the result is just another accidental happening and has perhaps its natural reason in Pitar's alcohol consume. The same holds true for the curse which might simply be an accident based on poor craftsmanship. Therefore, I would like to term this way of presenting the marvellous as keeping the marvel within confines, namely in the speech and thought of the characters acting in the novel.

The Third Level: The Marvel Freed from Confines

Narrative motifs from fairy traditions are worked into this strand of the novel which tells about Estons, the smith, Gladstôn the dog and Mari, the most beautiful girl of the village. Estons is a character which is a symbol for the community, for the smithy is placed in the centre of the village. In the smithy we find the fire, which can represent the *focus*, the inner fire of the community. Moreover, a smith works with iron which is not only the material to form tools and weapons for working and for fighting enemies which threaten a community, but iron is also a material which grants protection against assaults on the community from otherworldly realms which are extra-social domains representing otherness (with respect to the community) (Lawrence 1898). In traditional tales such assaults are usually made by the fairies. Hence it fits well into this context that the dog Gladstôn rescues Mari when she has fallen into a cleft in the rocks. Indeed, before this accident happens, she thinks about the Tylwyth Teg, who take people to their country: 'Cofiai stori am ferch a gafodd ei chipio gan y tywlyth teg' ('She remembered a story of a girl who was caught by the Tylwyth Teg') (Morgan, 2011, p. 60).

She also feels the touch of a hand on her cheek. Falling into a cleft and ending up in the land of the fairies has literary forerunners, namely *Tir y Dyneddon* by E. Tegla Davies. The narrator finds his way into fairy land by falling into a cleft. Mari's story resembles the reports

of the berry pickers who are 'in the fairies' (Narváez, 1991). The second life-threatening situation for Mari is the attempted rape by a strangely faceless person. Again, she is rescued by the faithful dog mysteriously sensing her anguish from afar. Putting the incident of the attempted rape in a context with her falling into a cleft seen as a supposed fairy abduction, the reader could recall the kidnapping of brides by fairy kings, such as the abduction of Creiddylad by Gwyn ap Nudd (CO, l. 985-1006), the abduction of Ethna by Finvarra as known from Irish tradition (Wilde, 1887, pp. 77-88). Finally, Mari is killed by a stranger after Gladstôn has died. The reader is led into believing that the murder was committed by a worker who came to build the reservoir, but the whole episode is strongly inspired by the traditional lore.

We may not forget that Mari represents the village. She is the queen of the young women and excites the sexual desires of a stranger who is not part of her own community. This is a pattern which fits well to such abduction stories as quoted above. We may recall that the girl abducted by Gwyn ap Nudd, Creiddylad who is described in *Culhwch ac Olwen* as the most majestic maiden there ever was in Britain and the three offshore Islands. The stranger is supposed to be one of the workers whose work will result in drowning the village, and hence the fires of the smithy will be quenched forever. This motif finds its parallel in the abduction of Creiddylad, too, for her lover, Gwythyr is son of Greidawl, the latter most probably a character connected with wildfire, whereas Gwyn has a strong relationship to water, and Gwyn's subjects can bring about the end of the world. In *Pantglas*, the workmen bring about end of the village. This is the end of their world for the inhabitants of *Pantglas*. Moreover, we can remember, that at least in some tradition 'being in the land of the Tylwyth Teg' is an euphemistic phrasing for being dead-used in this sense in (Jones, 1979, p. 54).

Thus, the plot develops along the old patterns provided by the traditions referring to the fairies, to the symbolism of fire and water and the conflicts and tensions resulting from the interaction of a society with the extra-social realm. As any social group has to interact with its environment and individuals and other groups which do not belong to a certain society, and as this process goes hand in hand with finding identity and belonging, the novel links the traditional patterns to an all-day reality. Hence, the folk traditions do not prove false or outdated. Actually, we witness here an example for the marvellous without confines, for it is reported by the auctorial narrator and the only hint to lead the reader to an understanding according to the code of folk beliefs is the reference to the Tylwyth Teg in the chapter of Mari and Gladstôn. However, a reader who is not familiar with the traditional code of tales about the fairies, is most likely to miss this layer of meaning.

To sum up: *Pantglas* is a post-modern novel using two different narrative strategies for bringing the magical into the realistic tale. Moreover, it uses the traditions about the fairies on various narrative levels to create allegories of radical changes the Welsh society is confronted with. These changes are imposed on the community from outside. As the description of otherness is always driven by using binary opposites and inversion, it will play an important role in a magical realist tale. Chanaday has shown that magical realism is created by using binary dualism of two contrasting perspectives or of two contrasting codes to decipher what happens. The narrative motifs of the fairy world are constructed by the binary dualism between our reality and the fairy world.

Elizabeth Nichols and Timothy Robbins maintain that magical realism holds an ‘implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite’ (Nichols & Robbins, 2015, p. 81). This is certainly true for the novel *Pantglas*, which criticises the English elite exploiting Welsh nature and people. In the context of this thesis, it is noteworthy that *Pantglas* makes us witness a process in which folk beliefs related to the fairies provide a post-modern author with powerful narrative patterns to picture problems of change, identity and a community threatened by otherness. At the same time this use of the respective narrative motifs reinforces the hypothesis that stories about the fairies talk about otherness and are a means to assess problems of identity, belonging to a certain group or living according to certain cultural conventions in a metaphoric context.

A4.3 *Y Blaned Dirion* by Islwyn Ffowc Elis

Given the strong overlap between fairy lore and traditions about aliens, it is not surprising that the merging of fairy traditions with encounters of aliens is precipitated in science fiction literature as well (for the development of this genre in Welsh, see Miriam Elin Jones (2018) who also discusses *Y Blaned Dirion*). *Y Blaned Dirion* (1968) turns the idea that aliens are a projection of the human mind we met in chapter 7.2 upside down: men are shown as the offspring of highly advanced aliens.

Islwyn Ffowc Elis was a prolific writer whose literary work deals with social changes. Although he seemed to have conformed to the expectations of his audience to some degree after publishing the psychological novel, *Ffenestri tua'r Gwyll* (1955), he nevertheless experimented with genres not previously common in Welsh literature (Johnston 1999, p. 121). *Y Blaned Dirion* (‘The Pleasant Planet’) was published in the year of the first flight around the moon (December 1968, without a landing) and roughly eight months before the first landing of the Apollo 11 mission on the moon (21 July 1969). It was written when the so-

called Golden Age of Science Fiction (1940-60) was already past; with the emergence of John W. Campbell and his dominance in the field, science fiction had taken a more realistic shape: scientists and their environment were depicted in a more realistic way, and the psychological depth of the stories and characters increased. In the 1950s the genre turned to social subjects, and even religious and spiritual themes appeared (Roberts, 2016, pp. 287-383). These developments have left their trace in *Y Blaned Dirion*, as the novel touches upon social subjects.

The novel tells the story of Teyrnnon, a Welsh scientist who works for the army during the Second World War but loses his job since he bothers more about travelling in outer space than about constructing missiles. He is friends with the anthropologist Elen, who believes that Adam and Eve are a memory of the earth being ‘infected’ by beings who had come from outer space, and from whom the species *homo sapiens* derived.

Initially, Teyrnnon seems mainly interested in space travel, and pays less attention to Elen’s theories. Emrys doubts the existence of a planet similar to Earth at all. But Teyrnnon loses his job, and Elen travels to Lewis to raise money for Teyrnnon’s research project she is fascinated with for she wants to search for the planet of ‘Adam’ and ‘Eve’. She convinces Lewis to give the money to Teyrnnon, and they build a craft for space travelling, but they would not have succeeded at all if some powerful inhabitants of Y Blaned Dirion had not intervened from the very beginning. The inhabitants of this planet achieve things by telepathy and telekinesis, and the reader understands in the course of the development, that Teyrnnon is inspired in his sleep by these aliens. Already in the third chapter he states: ‘Mae’r breuddwydion yn rhan bwysig o’r gwaith’ (‘The dreams are an important part of the work’) (Elis, 1968, p. 21). Islwyn Ffowc Elis reveals to the reader step by step that the inspiration comes from the Pleasant Planet. The world of the aliens is an otherworldly realm and a source of inspiration which is transmitted to human beings when they are asleep. This narrative motif resembles the motif of the medieval poet who travels to an otherworldly realm where the source of awen, the poetic inspiration, is found (cf. chapter 2.1). It is quite possible that the author had this specific Welsh tradition in mind, for he has Teyrnnon referring to the Welsh language as ‘iaith y nefoedd’ on the same page, so that a metaphoric link is formed between the Welsh language and the inspiration from a paradisaal realm in the distant depth of the star-filled universe, but also a religious connotation resonates in this expression (p. 21). This metaphor mirrors Islwyn Ffowc Elis’ patriotism and his pride in the Welsh language.

When Lewis presses the scientists to name a destination for their space travel, they meet an Indian who acts a medium and speaks of Y Blaned Dirion. Jones draws attention to the fact

that the Indian is an outsider to the Welsh society (2018, p. 193). The words chosen by the author create a link between ‘another world’, and the traditional Otherworld, the seat of inspiration, awen and the *awenyddion* mentioned by Gerald of Wales (IC, p. 206), a connection which a person learned in Welsh literature and history will associate with the description of the Indian’s vision: ‘ac fe aeth yr Indiad ’ma i drans. Toc, dyma’i wyneb o’n goleuo i gyd. A dyma lais yn dod ohono, fel...fel petae’n dod o fyd arall, rywsut’ (‘and the Indian fell in trance. Soon his face all lit up, and a voice came from him, as if... as if it was coming from another world, somehow’) (Elis, 1968, p. 63).

While travelling to the Pleasant Planet, the crew of the spaceship falls asleep, and when they see Y Blaned Dirion appearing, they have travelled for six years, a time span which appears to them just like a couple of hours. They had been put into a state of death (Elis, 1968, p. 114). This motif finds parallels in folk beliefs which claim that the dead, especially the prematurely dead, could stay for some time in the otherworld, or that they could cross the borders to the realm of the fairy only in a death-like state (cf. chapter 2). The journey exceeding the speed of light (*sic!*) features a narrative motif which resembles fairy traditions: when in touch with otherworldly realms the flow of time changes (cf. chapters 2 & 4). But there are more similarities between the description of fairy realms and the Pleasant Planet.

This picture of life on the planet draws on several traditional motifs describing the otherworld: I might begin with the angelic beauty and long lifespan which has been attributed to the fairies as well and indeed, some sources believed the fairies to be angels who had been expelled from haven. The prolonged hours of dawn, the mentioning of two moons are other motifs connected with fairy traditions. These features of Y Blaned Dirion recall moonlit nights as the favourite times of the fairies for dancing, and the liminal hours of dusk or dawn which are a favourite time of fairies, as these times are neither day nor night, but a state of transition between both. The inhabitants of the planet are a silent, peaceful folk. The same characteristics are attributed to the fairies, who are called ‘people of peace’ (‘*Daoine Síth*’) or ‘still people’ in Scotland (Henderson & Cowan, 2001, pp. 14-15) or ‘*das stille Volk*’ (‘the silent people’) in some parts of Germany (Grimm, 1997b [1816/1818], p. 57)). Another very striking characteristic is the absence of names for the inhabitants of Y Blaned Dirion. Individual names for the fairies are rare as well, and the Welsh folk tradition only makes few exceptions, among these the king of the fairies, Gwyn ap Nudd. The abundance of precious metals is also a feature known from fairy tales, appearing already very early, e.g., in Elidorus’ tale by Gerald of Wales (IC, p. 66). Another similarity to the fairy world described by Gerald of Wales can be found the special diet which does not resemble the normal earthly diet of humans and is strictly

vegetarian. Moreover, the fairies make messes from saffron, which is also a lovely flower, just as Haul Melys, 'Sweet Sun'.

Indeed, Elis' way of describing the alien world in *Y Blaned Dirion* by mixing folk traditions with narrative motifs from the scripture resembles the way Gerald of Wales uses to create an image of the otherworld experienced by Elidorus. Both authors not only use various narrative motifs from fairy folklore, but also mix them with narrative motifs from the Bible. Both create make the inhabitants of the otherworldly realm a race of human beings who escaped the Fall. The angel-like inhabitants of *Y Blaned Dirion* have abandoned sexual love, and this fact is declared in words similar to Mark 12:25. In Elidorus' tale images from the Revelation are used to describe the beautiful, otherworldly land of the fairies: Sun and moon are missing and there is no religious cult. In a wider sense the abundance of gold has also to be listed with the motifs that could have been taken from the Revelation. Although the lack of sun and moon in fairyland might be a tradition independent of narrative motifs from the Bible, the lack of a religious cult clearly has a parallel in the Revelation, for no temple is existent: (Rev 21: 21-23).

The same narrative motif is used by Islwyn Ffowc Elis who describes the city on the Pleasant Planet with its rich buildings and beautiful light. The influences of the Christian tradition become even more obvious when 'Iesu Christ' is introduced as a character known by the nameless inhabitants of the planet who honour him under the name 'Yr Enw' (Elis, 1968, p. 143). Here we find John 1:14: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth' (KJV).

Another parallel to Elidorus' tale is Stevens' obsession with a golden ball, recalling Elidorus who stole the golden ball belonging to the prince of the little people. Later Stevens obsesses over a machine which can make gold. Araon says 'Mae e ar fin y gamlas yn astudio'r peli aur ar y canllaw ac yn ceisio dadsgriwio un ohonyn nhw.' ('He is on the bank of a channel studying the gold balls on the balustrade and trying to screw off one of them') (Elis, 1968, p. 130). But it is not only Stevens who gives way to his worst desires: Lewis, too, tries to steal machines from the museum. He is fascinated with a machine of destruction that can place him in a position of absolute power. Twm Spanar falls victim to the liquors in the museum, and finds a companion in Migly. Elen does her best to seduce Araon who nearly falls to her persistent attempts. Yet, at the same time Emrys, the former lover of Elen, is driven into jealousy so far, that it seems possible that he will kill Araon. But it is not Araon who plays the part of the fallen angel in the end, but Astrea. She is an inhabitant of the Pleasant Planet, but

she wants to have a name. She wants to be recognized as an individual. She revives the custom of singing and dancing among the inhabitants of the planet, she learns to speak out loud, and last but not least, she wants to make and makes sexual experiences with Steven and Lewis (Elis, 1968, pp.168-189, 173).

In the end Theros decides to put all earthlings on their spaceship again, for he finds that the society of *Y Blaned Dirion* is not strong enough to resist the vices which have come with space travellers to the planet: Teyrnnon stands for pride, Stevens for avarice, Lewis for vainglory, Elen for carnal desires, Emrys for jealousy and Twm for intemperance, five personifications of the deadly sins which have to be expelled when the Pleasant Planet shall develop into a paradise. This list of the sins attributed to the protagonists corresponds to their names.

‘Theros’ should have no name, but he chooses to introduce himself under the name of the Greek God of Summer, which recalls that the land of the fairies is called ‘Summerland’ according to the Arthurian traditions connected to Glastonbury and ‘Avalon’ (Rhÿs, 2008 [1891], p. 345). ‘Araon’ bears a name which is consonant with ‘Arawn’ the Welsh king of Annwn. ‘Teyrnnon’ can be translated ‘Lord’, and ‘Elen’ is the Welsh form of Helena, who followed her desires not caring for child, husband or the destruction of Troy. Emrys is an astronomer, a skill which was attributed in the classical world to the magi. He is the namesake of the most famous magus of Welsh tradition, namely the famous Myrddin Emrys. In the case of Stevens and Twm no obvious connection can be seen.

Astrea’s name is interesting, deriving from Lat. ‘aster’ (‘star’) which could mean just woman from another star or even beautiful as a star, but could also be a reference to Lucifer, about whom Isaiah says ‘How you have fallen from heaven, o star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!’ (Isaiah 14:12). If the latter was the case, we have to deal with a female Lucifer, and indeed, other misogynous features are visible in the novel. Theros says to Elen: ‘Efallai fod dysgu’n galetach i galon merch.’ (‘Maybe it is harder for a woman’s heart to learn’) (Elis, 1968, p. 138). The two female characters appearing in the novel, Elen and Astrea, are shown as lusty and sexually uncontrolled (Astrea), playing false games as in the case of Elen, and being outright traitors trying to destroy cultural advancement and instigating primitive impulses (Astrea). Here we meet the stereotype that woman was the reason of the Fall and of sin.

This leads on to the general problem the novel explores: a totally controlled, absolutely rational society as shown in *Y Blaned Dirion* is virtually a dead society, for nothing unforeseen

happens: all intensive emotions are frozen. This recalls the Greek Hades where listless spirits drift along on meadows of asphodel flowers in a state without both pain and happiness. For a comparison, the land of the fairies appears in some folk traditions as a sort of limbo where the prematurely deceased can remain (cf. chapter 2). The reader is confronted with the question whether such a state is tolerable by a human being or even desirable for a human being. Whether the space travellers managed to return to the earth is not clear. Lewis has been annihilated in his attempt to kill Astrea, and the others might have reached the earth and live on under miserable conditions suffering from their guilt and addictions, but it is equally possible to imagine that they have been burned when their spacecraft entered the atmosphere and just the log book of Teyrnnon survives.

Y Blaned Dirion is a typical example of science fiction novel dealing with social problems, and an example of science fiction turning from mere adventure tales to criticism of society; it is inspired by contemporary scientific achievements, such as space travel to the moon, but to contrast the features of the human society on earth with a fictional utopian society different from that on earth, narrative motifs from fairy folklore are applied which can be traced back deep into the past, and which have served since then as a means for narrators to figure otherness.

A4.4 Some Examples of Twentieth Century Poetry

A4.4.1 The Poetry of Elfed (Howell Elvet Lewis, 1860—1953)

Elfed was a forerunner of the literary revival in Wales.²⁸⁹ As far as the Tylwyth Teg are concerned, we find in his poetry examples inspired by folk traditions and medieval tales (Elfed, 1909). In the poem ‘Gwyn ap Nudd’ Elfed deals with the known medieval traditions referring to the king of Annwn in a light, jocular way. Here, Gwyn ap Nudd retains much of the ambiguity traditionally attributed to the fairies; indeed, he remains a demon king, a ‘prince of all mischief’ (Elfed, 1909, pp. 58-61), similar to Dafydd ap Gwilym and the poets of the gentry who also used Gwyn and his tribe in a jocular way. Elfed does not devise a sinister, brooding dark character as a king of the fairies, nor a heroic character as the medieval tales could suggest, but one who is characterized by laughter, by taking things easy. The poem takes a lot of its easy-going tone from the jocular addresses to Gwyn ap Nudd, who is associated with laughter:

Pwy a welodd, Gwyn ap Nudd,
Ddeigryn unwaith ar dy rudd?
Chwerthin – chwerthin – yw dy oes di!

²⁸⁹ For an introduction see Llywelyn-Williams (1960).

O, dywysog pob direidi!

(Elfed, 1909, p. 58)

Who ever saw, Gwyn ap Nudd,
Tears on your cheek?
Laughter – laughter – is your age/lifetime!
O prince of all mischief!

(my trans.)

Another poem by Elfed which mentions the Tylwyth Teg several times is ‘Llyn y Morwynion’. But the Tylwyth Teg are no protagonists in this love poem, they are merely a literary reference point for great beauty. They are introduced as servants of ‘Love’:

Anfarwol Serch, ddolurus Serch [...]
Dy gerbyd a blethodd Y Tylwyth Teg
O ddail rhosynau Mehefin chweg

(Elfed 1909, p.39)

Immortal Love, dolorous Love [...]
Your carriage plaited the Tylwyth Teg
From the leaves of sweet June-roses

(my trans.)

In another place they become a metaphor for perfect music, music like the harper of the Fairy queen could make.

Neu ai telynor brenhines ferth
Y Tylwyth Teg, o dan wyrddlas berth,
Sy’n taro ei delyn â’i law fach wen

(Elfed, 1909, p. 44)

Or is it a harper of the beautiful queen
Of the Tylwyth Teg, from under a blue-green hedge,
Who strikes his harp with his small white hand

(my trans.)

The Tylwyth Teg have become a literary motif which has lost much of the ambiguity and danger which is attributed to them in folklore. This is certainly caused by the fact that the Tylwyth Teg have developed into the denominator for romance; the otherness attributed to them is the that of unearthly beauty.

A4.4.2 T. Gwynn Jones (1871-1849)

The role the otherworld takes in the work of T. Gwynn Jones, another author of the literary revival,²⁹⁰ suggests that otherness manifested itself form him as a desired realm, a realm which can hold the solution for the problems of society. Yet, these poems suggest that he felt that the blessings of the otherworld must be brought back to the human society, for otherwise they

²⁹⁰ For a short biography and an appreciation of his work see Davies (1970).

will not promote social progress. This is the heroic pattern, the hero mediating between the challenges and chances of the extra-social abodes and society itself. The idea that the necessary inspiration for useful change is found in otherworldly or extra-social regions is an archaic idea discussed and explored in chapters 2 and 3. The last stanza of T. Gwynn Jones' 'Afallon' illustrates this meaning of the otherworld:

Yno, mae tân pob awen a gano,
 Grym, hyder, awch pob gwladgar a ymdrecho;
 Ynni a ddwg i'r neb fydd ddiwygio,
 Sylfaen yw byth i'r sawl fydd obeithio;
 Ni heneiddiwn tra'n noddo - mae gwiwfoes
 Ac anadl einioes y genedl yno!

(Jones, 1910, p. 20)

There, is found the fire of every *awen* that would sing,
 The strength, self-confidence, keenness of every patriot who might strive;
 It gives energy to he who would reform,
 It is ever the foundation for he who would hope;
 We will not grow old while it protects us – the true custom/moral
 And the breath of life of the nation are there. (my trans.)

Moreover, as 'Ymadawiad Arthur' illustrates, this other realm can mediate the transition of the hero from a wounded, disabled state to new vigour, which can then help to put the otherworldly inspiration for supporting the hero's people into practice (Jones, 1910, pp. 18-19). This motif of the hero returning to his people from otherworld is found other poems by T. Gwynn Jones, too: In the *awdl* *Tír na n-Óg* Osian returns and in helping his people he perishes (Jones 1916). In the episode 'Mab y Pennaeth' in 'Gwlad y Bryniau' we witness the artistic shaping of the same theme (Jones, 1992, pp. 48-49). In the latter example Jones relies on the known motifs to describe the otherworldly realm. He describes the land as 'dieithr wlad, heb loyw huan, heb leuad' ('a strange land without bright sunlight, without moon'). Thus, the writings of T. Gwynn Jones abound with traditional motifs referring to the otherworld. Nevertheless, he keeps to the terminology of Irish material or Arthurian legend to name the Otherworld when drafting his powerful images of this realm. A possible reason might be that the meaning of the Welsh term 'Annwn' has been dramatically reduced in the early modern interpretation of 'Annwn' as hell by a process which had started in the medieval period (cf. chapter 2). The term Tylwyth Teg has a narrowed meaning, too. As we have seen they become a motif which is evoked for creating a romantic atmosphere, especially when referring to the dancing Tylwyth Teg. An example can be found in Jones' 'Gwlad Hud'. Just in the beginning he refers to them to create a 'magical' atmosphere (Jones, 1992, p. 140).

In 'Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg', the Tylwyth Teg are presented as a remembrance of childhood (ibid. p. 39-40). They appeared first in a tale by loving parent or care-taker, and were found and seen dancing, but later in life they cannot be found any more. The fairies become a token of a past that lies beyond reach, which is buried, and the title reads like a pun, for 'Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg' can be used (although rarely) as a synonym for 'grave' in folk tradition, a fact Jones refers to in *Welsh folklore and Folk-Custom* (1979 [1930], p. 54). In this context it is noteworthy that W. Beynon Davies interprets both 'Mab y Pennaeth' and 'Tír na n-Óg' as poems in which Jones try to convey also the message 'that there can be no total return to the past; only death lies that way' (Davies, 1970, p. 19). Davies also suggests that the journey of the poet Osian to the otherworld was a symbol for a poet who wants to try to rebuild the literary tradition by re-discovering authentic literary traditions rooted in the past and by creating a continuation (Davies 1970, p.18). If we agree with Davies, then both T. Gwynn Jones and Davies follow a very fundamental and original meaning of the otherworldly realm in Welsh literature, namely that the otherworld is a place from where creative impulses and especially the poetic inspiration springs. This is a meaning already present in the poetry of Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr and poet of 'Preiddeu Annwn', for these early poets locate the source of awen in Annwn (cf. chapter 2). In the poem 'Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg' the Tylwyth Teg are also closely connected to awen, for they cannot be found in an age without awen, i.e. without poetic inspiration. Thus, the Tylwyth Teg are identified as born from poetic inspiration, but with the medieval tradition as intertextual reference in the background, the metaphoric image work in the other direction as well: awen is missing, because the Tylwyth Teg have gone. Yet, when reading the last line the indefinite '[T]ylwyth Teg' can enfold a second meaning: It could also be understood that the return home is the founding of an own family, and this could conjure again the magic of a happy childhood.

A4.4.3 T. H. Parry-Williams (1887-1975)

R. Gerallt Jones praised the poetry of T. H. Parry Williams as one which found its inspiration in the unconsidered world of common things (Jones 1978).²⁹¹ In 'Bargen' (Parry-Williams 1987) the Tylwyth Teg are also used to evoke the innocence of youth and childhood. Not only does this term show the impossibility of returning to the innocence of childhood, but he also uses it to express that the key to satisfy his longing lies within himself, since for the loss of innocent belief closes the doors to the otherworld. This otherworld retains its ambiguity, the expected life beyond those doors can be higher or lower than the present, mundane one. Yet,

²⁹¹ For a biography and appreciation of the work of T.H Parry-Williams see Jones (1978) or WBO.

it seems that the poet wishes for nothing so much than for change. Thus, this poem is an example confirming the result of the analysis presented that the otherworld and its inhabitants are tokens not only for otherness, but also of change and transformation.

Indeed, his essays 'Drws-y-Coed' and, more so, 'Tri Llyn' show that the Tylwyth Teg are linked to a more beautiful past. The Tylwyth Teg appear in 'Drws-y-Coed' just after an evocation of the spirit and the magic of the forest long gone. Moreover, there is a semantic link between *ysbrydion y coed* (the spirits of the forest) and Y Tylwyth Teg:

Yn fras, ardal Drws-y-Coed ydyw, ac er nad oes fawr ddim coed yno heddiw, dim ond bonau duon yn y mawnogydd ac ysbrydion y coed yn y gwynt, y mae rhyw swyn addas i'r enw o hyd, o'i ystyried yn watwar edliwgar o'r hyn a fu. Dyma wlad y Tylwyth Teg, yma mae Llwyn-y-Forwyn a Llyn y Dywarchen.

(Parry-Williams, 1984, p.114)

Roughly speaking, it is the area of Drws-y-coed, and although there are few trees today, only black tree-trunks in the peat-bogs, and the spirits of the trees in the wind, there is still some charm that suits the name, taking it to be a reproachful mocking of what once was. This is the land of the Tylwyth Teg, here are Llwyn-y-Forwyn and Llyn y Dywarchen.

(my trans.)

The first section of 'Y Tri Llyn', which considers Llyn Dywarchen, is built around the Tylwyth Teg: the first sentence is a statement of rejection and scepticism: the author knows nobody who believes in the Tylwyth Teg but this is followed immediately by a jocular statement that a person who has seen the little people would be envied. Parry-Williams suggests that his ancestors surely made acquaintance with the Tylwyth Teg, as he heard stories of them. Here again the Tylwyth Teg are linked to childhood. Parry-Williams proceeds by commenting on the folklore collections, and mockingly remarks that they tell stories about the fairies as soberly as scripture ('yn sobr fel ysgrythur'). In the course of the essay he refers to the placename 'Llwyn-y Forwyn' which some believed to refer to a damsel ('morwyn') of the Tylwyth Teg, and which suggests that a fairy-mistress tale is linked to the area.²⁹² The essay ends expressing the hope that the Tylwyth Teg should appear once again, or at least a romantic person should bring the message to have them seen again. Even expecting the return of the

²⁹² It is noteworthy that the other explanation for the name of the place as given by T. H. Parry – Williams is the idea that it refers to a lady having lived in the eighteenth century named Marged ferch Ifan. She is described as strange and formidable, because she excelled in sports of men, composed poetry and music and kept hunting dogs. We see that obviously a historical woman who does not atone to the socially accepted behaviour of women is offered as alternative to a woman of the Tylwyth Teg who is an extra-social character by nature.

little people holds transforming power and is up-lifting in both a geographical and in a spiritual way:

Ac mi godaf innau ac mi anelaf yn union syth am Llyn y Dywarchen, yn uchelder Eryri,
yn falch o'r cyfle ac yn llawn hyder ffydd, i fynnu gweld a chlywed dros of fy hun.

(Parry-Williams, 1984, p. 235)

And I for my part will rise and aim direct for Llyn y Dywarchen, in the heights of Eryri,
happy to have the chance, and filled with the strong hope of faith, to insist on seeing and
hearing for myself.

The last sentence of the essay shows that the Tylwyth Teg are for T.H. Parry-Williams the other, yet again not characters only linked to otherness, but the experience of this otherness widens the perspective and deepens the link to the beloved landscape of Eryri and Llyn Dywarchen. The poem 'Bargen' and the essay 'Llyn Dywarchen' are two variations of the same theme explored by two different literary forms. For T.H. Parry-Williams the Tylwyth Teg represent 'Bywyd na wŷr ein byd ni'.²⁹³

When reading the poetry of T.H. Parry-Williams we see how expressions related to the fairy traditions which were in the medieval time still closely connected have drifted apart. The term 'Y Tylwyth Teg' transports the connotation childhood and childish belief, and on a second level longing for change, but the Tylwyth Teg have become a rather abstract term to evoke the before mentioned things, for the fairies do not appear as protagonists. 'Annwn' obtained a dark and sinister connotation, the king of Annwn hunts with his dogs in the poem 'Y Gigfran' and the image transports a threat (Parry-Williams 1972, p. 98).²⁹⁴ In 'Cwn Ebrill' the hounds of Annwn are introduced by one of their other names, but still an image holding tension is evoked (Parry-Williams, 1987, p. 68). 'Awen' however, has retained its utterly positive connotation as 'poetic inspiration', 'muse' as in his poem 'Awen' shows (Parry-Williams, 1972, p. 74), but its source is re-located to the inner self. This shows us how a modern poet who has knowledge about modern materialism and psychology reconciles medieval images with modern understanding of reality. Awen is presented a divine creative power, but also the source of tears. As the source of awen is now located in the depth of man's heart ('dyfnderau daear calon dyn'), the heroic journey must be a fight with oneself, a

²⁹³ For the competition for the crown at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Urdd Gobaith Cymru at Pen-y-Bont ar Ogwr, Taf ac Elái the last part of this essay was chosen as text to which the prose composed should refer. This text should inspire young people age 10 to 25 years. The crown winning essay by Trychfil Bach describes the life of Loti, a fairy who is on the threshold between childhood and her being a young grown-up.

²⁹⁴ For an alternative edition see Parry-Williams (1987, p. 134).

scrutinizing the own soul and the flowing tears bring creativity, which comes not from outer otherworldly waters but from the inner source of inspiration.

Awen
T.H. Parry -Williams

*Cloddier dyfnderau daear calon dyn
I gael cyfrinach ei Gelfyddyd Gain,
Tröer yr haenau bob yn un ac un,
Gan dreiddio i'r cilfachau sy'n y rhain.
Wrth durio'n is ac is i waelod bod
Y crëwr eneiniedig, pwy a wŷr
Na ddarganfyddir pen y ffordd i ddod
O hyd i'w Awen ymhen hir a hwyr?
A phan fo'r cyrchu ati hi'n dwysáu,
A'r ysfa weld yn angerddoli trem
Y llygaid sydd gan hud yn gwrthod cau
Wrth syllu arni yn ei glendid gem.
Ond odid na chanfyddir nad yw hi
Yn ddim ond ffynnon fach o ddagrau'n lli.*

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Abbreviations

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