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“IN FAIRYLAND OR THEREABOUT”: THE FAIRY AS NATIONALIST SYMBOL IN
IRISH LITERATURE BY AND AFTER WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

by

CASSANDRA M. SCHELL

(Under the Direction of Howard Keeley)

ABSTRACT

This essay is a look at a little known Irish poet, William Allingham, who invokes the fairy as a vehicle for a political change in Ireland. It offers a close reading of a few of his poems as well as historically approaches the use of fairies in the popular culture of the nineteenth century. In Chapter I, I use an historical approach to discuss the biography of William Allingham and his place in Irish literature as “a poet we have neglected.” I also discuss a cultural study of the portrayal and use of the fairy in the nineteenth century. This chapter begins my essay as a foundation of Allingham’s knowledge of the fairy from childhood. In Chapter II, I use a New Critical Approach to discuss the use of the fairy as a nationalist symbol in an amalgamation of Allingham’s works. This chapter addresses Allingham’s *Diary* as well as his poems “Vivant!” and “Fireside Magic” in order to discuss Allingham’s religio-cultural anxieties. In Chapter III, I discuss both W.B. Yeats and William Allingham in reference to their use of the scary fairy as a means of working out their anxieties over the future of Ireland. I discuss Yeats’s “The Stolen Child” as well as Allingham’s “The Fairies” and “The Ban-shee, A Ballad of Ancient Erin.” To conclude, I look at the use of fairies in the popular culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with an emphasis on Eoin Colfer’s *Artemis Fowl* series.

INDEX WORDS: Fairy, Fairies, Faerie, Faery, Fairyland, Tuatha de Danaan, William Allingham, Ireland, Folklore, Poetry, Pagan, Druid, Enchantment, Magic, Patron Saints of Ireland, Celtic, W.B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory.

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CASSANDRA M. SCHELL

B.A., University of Central Florida, 2005

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CASSANDRA M. SCHELL

Major Professor: Howard Keeley
Committee: Joe Pellegrino
Mary Villeponteaux

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INTRODUCTION

Fairies of popular culture are often seen as whimsical figures only to be found in the stories of children. They have the multicolored wings of a butterfly and appear to be at most a few inches tall. To date, the most famous account of a fairy is J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* which describes the pixie, Tinker Bell, who exists only on the belief of children. The fascination and interest in otherworldly creatures such as fairies and vampires has seen a boom in the fiction and film-making of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; however, this is not the first such popular show of interest. Such a boom came with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century with literary ventures in the fairy tales and folklore of the peasantry, previously known only in the oral tradition. Also, the world of art became an extremely popular place to find the fairy. Fairies adorned the walls of countless nurseries and embellished innumerable parlors. The theatre saw an invested interest in the idea of the fairy, with popular staged productions of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and ballets that boasted ethereal fairy characters. These things I will discuss in Chapter I of this essay.

On this scene came antiquarians such as William Morris, John Ruskin, W.B. Yeats, Lady Isabella Gregory, and Lady Wilde, among others. They are remembered for their work with the Arts and Crafts Movement and their interest in saving both England's and Ireland's oldest buildings. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Lady Wilde were grand supporters of the Nationalist movement in Ireland while Yeats and Lady Gregory were known as advocates of the Irish Literary Revival. Through the Literary Revival in Ireland, Lady Gregory traveled from house to house among the peasantry to record the stories of pre-history that Yeats would eventually write and publish. However, prior to Yeats and Lady Gregory was William Allingham, a little known Irish poet who had a similar interest in folklore. Evidenced in this essay is Allingham's

undeniable kinship with the fairy folk as well as his ability to see his childhood through the lens of a fairy being. Not only does Allingham use the fairy as a way of remembering his childhood and family members, he uses the fairy as a vehicle to bring an ancient Irish or Gaelic genius to a modern Ireland.

W.B. Yeats called William Allingham “a poet we have neglected,” and ranked him among Ireland’s greatest, Thomas Osbourne Davis, James Clarence Mangan, and Samuel Ferguson. William Allingham was not known as a prolific writer and probably will not be remembered as such, but it has become apparent through the research of this essay that Allingham was a man invested in antiquities and the rise of an ancient Irish dispensation in a modern world. The fairy, as told by the peasantry of Ireland, existed in multiple realms, which offer to Allingham a chance to re-create the United Irishmen motto of “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter.”

Throughout the course of this essay I will discuss fairies of the nineteenth century as well as the biography of William Allingham. I will also discuss the history of the fairy and its ties to both pagan and Christian traditions in Ireland. I will argue that William Allingham has an invested interest as well as a noticeable kinship with the fairy-folk of Ireland and that he uses that relationship to assuage his religio-cultural anxieties, to claim himself as an Irishman among Irishmen, and to re-create the ancient Irish genius of days gone by.

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM AND THE FAIRY

In Chapter I, I use an historical approach to discuss the biography of William Allingham and his place in Irish literature as “a poet we have neglected.” I also discuss a cultural study of the portrayal and use of the fairy in the nineteenth century. This chapter begins my essay as a foundation of Allingham’s knowledge of the fairy from childhood.

The Bard of Ballyshannon

According to the autobiography he began but never completed, William Allingham was born in 1824 in “a little House” in the port town of Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, in the northwest of Ireland (*Diary* 1). Allingham’s wife—the celebrated English watercolorist Helen Paterson Allingham—explains in a footnote within *William Allingham’s Diary*, which she edited, that “[t]he Allinghams had migrated from England and settled at Ballyshannon...in the time of Elizabeth” (7). As we shall see, Allingham pursued the study of Irish toponyms, and the anglicized term Ballyshannon derives from a Gaelic phrase that means “Town at the Mouth of Seannach’s Ford,” a reference to a fifth-century native warrior, Seannach, who was slain there. As with many of his contemporary countrymen, Allingham regularly pointed out the ancient, even mythic, past just under the skin of the present. He noted, for example, how a Ballyshannon church sits upon a fairy hill (*Diary* 15).

Allingham may have been born in Ireland, far from the heavily anglicized capital of Dublin. Nevertheless, his Elizabethan, Anglican planter ancestry caused him significant anxiety as he attempted to claim Irishness in a predominantly Catholic country aware, not least due to popular antiquarianism, of its Gaelic patrimony. One antiquarian with whom Allingham corresponded was George Petrie, whose “special interest was in the round towers and other ancient buildings in Ireland.” Petrie remarks in one such correspondence on having read

Allingham's "Abbey Asaroe," from *Irish Songs and Poems*, and calls it "a beautiful old Irish melody" that has "charmed me...for it is marked throughout with the same sort of antique simplicity" (*Letters* 254). Daniel O'Connell won Emancipation for Irish Catholics in 1829. Furthermore, while the 1831 Stanley Education Act precipitated the rapid spread of English across Ireland, Donegal would remain largely Gaelic-speaking longer than most regions of the country. A customs officer who, in 1870, became a full-time man of letters (editor, poet); Allingham used his move away from public service as a pretext to settle permanently in Southern England. However, Irish themes and topics infuse his writings constantly, and he insisted that his cremated remains be interred in Ballyshannon (Warner 80). The primary focus of my first two chapters is the presence of fairies in Allingham's writings. I argue that they offer him a vehicle to express a vision of an Ireland that both asserts and revivifies its Gaelic or precolonial identity and welcomes and accommodates its settler peoples.

Popularly deemed the Bard of Ballyshannon, Allingham was not of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, the coterie with which we associate Maria Edgeworth and Lady Gregory (among others) and, of course, the Big House. Later, I elaborate on how Allingham remembers his generally "small" childhood homes as fairy-like dwellings. Like William Butler Yeats's maternal grandfather (from Sligo town, not far south of Ballyshannon), Allingham's father belonged to the Church of Ireland merchant class. Concerning his bourgeois father, Allingham recounts that he

had [a] small farm on lease, and also a large field near the town, called "The Big Meadow," in which grazing was let to some neighbors' milch cows along with our own; but he was not a farmer, and his agricultural produce went mainly to supply his own family and grandmother's, the surplus being sold. His business

was that of a merchant...he imported timber, slates, coal, and iron, and owned at various times five or six ships, trading chiefly to Canada and the Baltic for timber.

(*Diary* 7)

Allingham, who often chose to add “Junior” to his name, describes William Allingham Senior as “a short, active, black-haired man, with very light gray eyes, quick, impatient, curious as to the externals of objects, and easily amused, but disregarding of whatever did not immediately interest him...[He was] punctual also as to set hours, and letter-writing” (*Diary* 9). Allingham Junior, like his father before him, became an inveterate letter-writer whose correspondence extended to a quite renowned group of authors. The fairy figure was perchance fascinating to Allingham due to his father’s uncanny resemblance to one; his characteristics—“short,” “active,” “quick,” “curious”—are undeniably of an elfin or impish quality. According to a footnote in the *Diary*, Allingham’s “last visit to Ireland” occurred apropos “a sudden intimation of his Father’s death.”

Perhaps the keenest loss in Allingham’s life was the “early death” of his mother, following “ill-health.” She died in 1833, the year he turned nine. One speculates that her memory affects his fairy poetry, full as it is of shades and shadows of beings and of ephemeral energies. Concluding that “[s]he was perhaps not made for longevity,” Allingham writes,

I dimly recollect my mother as thin, pale, delicate, gentle in voice and movement, with soft dark hair and an oval face slightly sun-freckled. She was kind, sweet, and friendly, and a great favorite with all who knew her.

He laments that he and his siblings had, “alas! to learn...her merits by hearsay and to love her shadowy memory when the mild presence had vanished forever” (*Diary* 8).

Certain of the above terms—“pale,” “gentle,” “shadowy,” “vanished”—accord with the vocabulary often used to describe fairies, as underscored by W.Y. Evans-Wentz’s *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (1966). Regarding “pale,” that text explains that those who have glimpsed the fairies called Water Beings describe them as “groups of pale beings” (63). As for “gentle,” the book quotes words of a seer at Lough Derg, Co. Donegal, a sacred pagan site (later Christianized as St. Patrick’s Purgatory): “The gentle folk [fairies] are not earthly people; they are a people with a nature of their own” (73). Allingham’s darker phrase “shadowy memory” fits with Evans-Wentz’s note that some fairies “are evil spirits...just like a shadow on the wall” (123). Incidentally, Yeats remarks, “Without mortal help [the people of faery] are shadowy” (*The Celtic Twilight* 7). The power of Allingham’s pen coupled with the wraithlike presence of the fairy is able to produce a foundation for a new Gaelic dispensation in Ireland. With the writing down of his “shadowy memory” of his mother, Allingham is able to better understand or see her as she really was. The textual study of Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” in Chapter II will attest to Allingham’s passion for the power of the written word.

Allingham states, “I only recollect [my mother] as an invalid, we children were not allowed to be much with her” (*Diary* 9). To the degree that the mother is childlike in her illness, one may recall the changeling: a “weak” and “frail” being, according to Evans-Wentz (73). William Butler Yeats—another son of a chronically ill and incapacitated mother—points out that “[s]ometimes the fairies fancy mortals, and carry them away into their own country, leaving instead some sickly fairy child,” that is, a changeling (*Fairy and Folk Tales* 54).

In fact, the youngest of Allingham’s four siblings lived but a few months. Of another sibling, John, Allingham recounts a terrifying, life-altering moment:

My brother John and I had not much in common; but on Sunday evening, I remember...we were on the stairs of the Church gallery—a big boy quarreled with me and suddenly made as though he would throw me over the railing. I was rescued quickly, but during the momentary struggle I saw John's face, who was some steps higher up, looking down with an expression of alarm and horror which I never afterwards forgot, and which gave me a new feeling towards him from that day. He never knew this. (*Diary* 14)

His brother's expression of "alarm and horror" and the "new feeling" Allingham had towards him was never discussed. This "new feeling" may have been an inspiring factor for Allingham's exploration of fairies and the supernatural. This recollection rather suggests that Allingham was predisposed to recognizing the scarier or startling fairy qualities. These qualities, I will discuss in Chapter III, *The Scary Fairies*.

As the association between Lough Derg and the "gentle folk" suggests, appreciation of rural place is often part and parcel of appreciation of fairies. Allingham's prose and poetry are distinguished by vivid awareness of Donegal's wild, even sublime, landscapes. His *Diary*, for example, recalls a Donegal walk—taken in the company of his sister Jane, just prior to a trip to the metropolis of Dublin—"by riverside, grassy headlands, leafy gulfs, rushing white stream" (46). Having lost his first wife, Allingham's father remarried, a union that yielded three children. One of these, Hugh Allingham, manifested similar closeness to the local, rural scene, writing what William Allingham Junior calls "an unpretentious little book, *Ballyshannon, Its History and Antiquities*" and researching "a more extended local history" (*Diary* 341).

A sense of the rural and attention to what makes a given place special or unique are also striking features of paintings by Allingham's wife, twenty-four years his junior, whom he

married in 1847 (*Diary* 234). Written during her lifetime, Marcus B. Huish's *Happy England as Painted by Helen Allingham* (1904), remarks on "her adherence to the portrayal of" England, especially its cottages. The text continues,

She has never travelled or painted outside Europe, and within its limits only at one place outside the British Isles, namely Venice. Even in her native country her work has been strictly localized. Neither Scotland nor Wales has attracted her attention since the days when she first worked seriously as an artist, and Ireland has only received a scanty meed, and that due to family ties. (2)

The first woman member of the Royal Watercolor Society, Helen Allingham, Huish claims, was "above all else a fair-weather painter. She [had] no pleasure in the storm, whether of rain or wind" (193). In fact, her paintings, often described as "nostalgic," have activist intent: as a member of William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (or Anti-Scrape Society), she wanted to record England's vernacular architecture before industrialization spread further.

Helen Allingham's painterly work and William Allingham's writerly efforts intersect in a diary entry the husband made in late 1883: "Mr. George Philip of Liverpool, publisher, came and lunched with us. He agreed to publish *Blackberries* and *Day and Night Songs* [two poetry collections]—bought Helen's 'Cottage Garden, Spring'" (*Diary* 319). Allingham's choice of a painter as wife underscores his interest in visual aesthetics and their relationship to the written word. As these chapters proceed, they will address how several members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (or, as Allingham had it, the P.R.B.) provided illustrations, including depictions of fairies, for his poetry collections. Architecture, too, interested Allingham. He commented, for

example, on the construction, in the 1850s, of the Ruskin-inspired Museum Building at Trinity College, Dublin—a masterwork by Thomas Deane and Benjamin Woodward.

By contrast with his wife, Allingham was, in the words of W.B. Yeats, “a singer of Irish scenes and Irish faces” (*The Collected Works* 149). Indeed, the speaker in Allingham’s single-stanza poem “A Stormy Night, a Story of the Donegal Coast”—found in the 1887 Reeves and Turner edition of *Irish Songs and Poems*—insists, “A wild west Coast, a little Town, / Where little Folk go up and down, / Tides flow and winds blow: / ... / Let me sing of what I know” (136). Re-titled “Let Me Sing of What I Know,” the poem also opens the 1905 retrospective *Sixteen Poems* selected by W.B. Yeats. Notwithstanding his resolute Irishness and her equally resolute Englishness, work by both Allinghams is characterized by keen anxiety about urbanization and industrialization in modern times. The husband’s presentation of the Irish fairy, like the wife’s depictions of the English cottage, sought to emplace the past in the present, lest a venerable value system be overwhelmed by the future.

Helen Allingham became her husband’s chief advocate. After his 1889 death, she saw to press his efforts towards an autobiography, pairing his finished chapters with his diary to create *William Allingham’s Diary* (1907). She also gathered together his correspondence, releasing selected letters as *Letters to William Allingham* (1911). Especially when resident in Ireland, Allingham developed epistolary relationships with, among others, Tennyson, Emerson, the Brownings, Carlyle, Dickens, George Eliot, Hawthorne, Ruskin, and Thackeray. Another of Helen Allingham’s tribute works, *By the Way: Verses, Fragments, and Notes by William Allingham* (1912), begins—in the spirit of Carlyle and Ruskin—with a turning away from modernity. The lyric “The Hermitage” states, “Far from the city’s smoke and stir / My quiet Hermitage is made” (3).

In addition to his efforts as a poet, Allingham became sub-editor of *Frasier's Magazine* in 1870, progressing to the full editorship four years later. An editorial note in *William Allingham's Diary* explains that so busy did these posts render him, “in his diary many of the days have entered against them only one word—proofs” (201). A June 1884 entry reveals the stress that accompanied the job:

Nine years of subediting and editing *Fraser*, and what a list of people I have offended for life, by declining their contributions or in other ways! My name was known in connection with the Magazine, and people applied to me personally and took personal offence, even when J.A.F. [James Anthony Froude, editor until 1874] was the really responsible person. Enough of it! (322-23)

This entry indicates extreme sensitivity, one that is a predisposition to the awareness of fairies. In other words, Allingham's world-weariness calls for a need to “escape” to Fairyland.

An illness brought about Allingham's death. Helen Allingham describes the day before his passing, Sunday 17 November 1889: “[I]t was evident that the end was near. When asked if he had any requests to make, he said ‘No, my mind is at rest....And so, to where I wait, come gently on’” (*Diary* 387). She also reports an utterance he made on the morning of his last day: “I am seeing things that you know nothing of” (*Diary* 388). A little before his demise, Allingham received a visit from the French-born British cartoonist and fiction writer, George du Maurier (grandfather of Daphne du Maurier), who discussed with Allingham the plot of a new story. Allingham summarizes it briefly: “[T]he hero acquires a power of regulating and continuing his dreams. In Dreamland he often meets a lady whom he has fallen in love with” (*Diary* 386). As we shall see—in an extended discussion of an Allingham poem called “Vivant!”—the idea of

Dreamland excited Allingham, as it would W.B. Yeats. (He titled his first volume of autobiography *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*.)

In an essay titled “A Poet We Have Neglected,” Yeats hails William Allingham as “at once the most delicate and the least read [poet] on this [the Irish] side of the water [the Irish Sea]” (149). Appearing in the 12 December 1891 issue of *United Ireland* newspaper, the piece reviews a six-volume collected edition of Allingham’s poetic opus, published by Reeves and Turner of London. Yeats seeks to install his fellow Anglican Irishman Allingham alongside three greats of nineteenth-century Irish letters:

To most Irish men and women he is merely the author of “Fairies,” or of some other stray lyric which has drifted into our ballad collections. In England he is becoming better known, and now, two years after his death, Messrs. Reeves and Turner have completed the collected edition of his works by the addition of *Thought and Word* and *Blackberries*. These six little books, with their vellum backs and illustrations by Dante Rossetti and Millais, and their advertisement of more expensive editions on deluxe paper, have all the signs of being addressed to an assured public, who will both read their Allingham and pay for him too. It is time for us over here to claim him as our own, and give him his due place among our sacred poets; to range his books beside [Thomas Osbourne] Davis and [James Clarence] Mangan, and [Samuel] Ferguson. (149-50)

Collected in *Irish Songs and Poems*, the first-published among the “six little books,” the poem “Fairies” is the most famous and enduring work by Allingham. I will assess that lyric, but also others with fairy themes, referring to their presentation in the Reeves and Turner suite, which is generally considered definitive, and which Yeats especially admired because of its physical

beauty and art. Bound in blue-green, a color that suggests both sky and earth, the basic Reeves and Turner editions are *Irish Songs and Poems* (1887), *Flower Pieces and Other Poems* (1888), *Life and Phantasy* (1889), *Lawrence Bloomfield in Ireland* (1890), *Thought and Word and Ashby Manor* (1890), and *Blackberries* (1890). Importantly, *Life and Phantasy* contains a multi-poem section called “Fairies, etc.”—appropriate perhaps, given the collection’s blending of the real and imagined in its title. For Yeats, reconnecting to the Irish past—through rehabilitation of native mythology—was the antidote to threats posed by British colonialism, particularly infection of Irish culture by English industrial materialism. One could argue that Yeats’s call for the Irish to espouse Allingham endorses the fairy as a key part of native mythology. How exactly Allingham nationalizes and politicizes this figure is a complex matter, but one very much worth pursuing. However, first it is necessary to consider the fairy more generally as part of the Victorian and early-twentieth-century imagination.

Fairy Fancies

“Do you believe in fairies? If you do, clap your hands and that will save poor Tinker Bell.... Do you believe?” he cried. As his plea rang round the world, there came an echo of sound as of millions of little hands clapping, as if all the children throughout the world knew suddenly that of course they believed in fairies. The result was magical. Tinker Bell was saved.... (Barrie 55-56)

The preceding is the most famous quotation from J.M. Barrie’s beloved fairy play, *Peter Pan*. Written in 1904, at the beginning of the twentieth century, J.M. Barrie’s play came on the heels of a grand nineteenth-century fascination with fairies. The *Oxford English Dictionary* deems the fairy “one of a class of supernatural beings of diminutive size, in popular belief supposed to possess magical powers and to have great influence for good or evil over the affairs of man”; however, this definition is ambiguous and does not define the different classes that make up the supernatural beings. In fact, not all fairies are of diminutive size. In this section, I

will explore the nineteenth century perception of the fairy while also discussing the foundation for these beliefs.

In order to discuss the understanding of fairies during the nineteenth century, we must look at the Victorian need to dream of them. Nicola Bown in *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (2001) alleges, “the Victorians thought of themselves as makers and masters of the modern world: that is the self-image they were most anxious to pass on to posterity. But they also felt oppressed by their responsibilities, fearful of the future and doubtful of the alleged benefits of progress” (1). As I will argue through the course of this essay, William Allingham’s fascination with fairies was born of “fear,” “anxiety,” and “doubt”; yet, his use of the ethereal figures will give rise to a new modern in an Ireland that honors its past. It is interesting to note that “most Victorians who dallied with the fairies did not believe in them, though many thought that their forebears had so believed, and they found the conditions of this credence fascinating” (Bown 2). As we will see in subsequent chapters, William Allingham was unlike most Victorians in this instance.

As said by Nigel Sucking in *Faeries of the Celtic Lands* (2007), “In the European Romantic Period of the nineteenth century, many legends and ideas which had been banished from the world by the Age of Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution were triumphantly reborn in literature and art, among them faeries in all their ancient splendor” (201). Fairies could be found in the nursery, though they “were not just for children, nor even mostly for children” (Bown 1). The figure of the fairy could be found also in the parlor and on the stage.

Adults fell under their spell freely, and indulged a taste for escapist fantasy in visions and descriptions of fairies and fairyland.... Hundreds of fairy operas and

operettas, plays, songs and ballets were produced in the nineteenth century... fairy tales, traditional and literary, were published during the period. (Bown 1-2)

Used as an outlet for fantasies and escapism, the fairy was not the only otherworldly figure the Victorians were fascinated with, but also ghosts and vampires, spirits of the dead, angels, and the gods of other cultures. The Victorian era was a period of extreme doubt in the battle of religious affiliations. It was difficult for a member of the Roman Catholic Church to reside in England, just as it was difficult for a Protestant to live in Ireland. This era of doubt gave rise to a great interest in the occult; however, it was the fairy which represented a symbol of both good and evil in the spiritual world. The fairy, unlike the vampire, was not simply the dead awakened, but a local rather than exotic being that could travel between many different realms including the realm of the human race. It was the fairy to which the Victorians could most closely relate.

The Victorian era, the age of industry and modern instances, brought what William Allingham, like W.B. Yeats after him, would see as the destruction of the pure Irish genius. The nineteenth century fairy represented the idea of Arcadia in the industrial age (Bown 3). As W.B. Yeats argues in his poem "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," "The woods of Arcady are dead / And over is their antique joy," the presence of the ideally rural or rustic world has been replaced with products created in a factory rather than by hand. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave rise to an interest in Antiquarianism, both in England and in Ireland. As evidenced in the prior section, the Allinghams were associated with William Morris, the head of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (or Anti-Scrape Society) and advocator of the Arts and Crafts movement. W.B. Yeats is best known for his work with William Morris and his campaign for the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland, but it was Allingham who first used the fairy in his poetry as a political polemic for a return to arcadia in the industrial age.

“It is a little known fact,” notes Bown, “that the industrial revolution caused the extinction of the fairies. That the coming of the factories should have coincided with the departure of the fairies was no accident” (39). John Ruskin, author of *The Stones of Venice* (1896), art critic, and social thinker, argued upon the case convincingly in his lecture, “Fairyland” (1884), where he “made use of the fairy as a metaphor throughout his writings, and some of his early efforts at poetry have fairy subjects, including the lament for “The Emigration of the Sprites”” (Bown 39-40). Documented both by *William Allingham’s Diary* and the *Letters to William Allingham*, William Allingham corresponded several times with John Ruskin; the two also had many conversations in person about poetry and Allingham’s work with *Frasers Magazine*. A conversation on Fairyland was never held, or at least never documented. Furthermore, it is apparent through a conversation Allingham had with Tennyson in 1884 that Allingham was not fond of Ruskin as a poet. In a conversation between Tennyson and Allingham, Tennyson claimed that “Ruskin’s dictum [was] not to be relied on.” To which Allingham replied, “Especially on poetry. He printed a volume of poems of his own; but that (he wrote to me once) is ‘the disgrace of whatever faculty I possess.’—Recently he has republished his Oxford Prized Poem on the “Caves of Elephanta”—entirely worthless” (*A Diary* 327). Despite this conversation, perhaps a number of the ideas of both Allingham and Ruskin would have inevitably been shared. Ruskin’s “Emigration of the Sprites” claims of Fairyland,

There are no railroads in it, to carry the children away with, are there? No tunnel or pit mouths to swallow them up.... And more wonderful still, --there are no gasworks! no waterworks, no mowing machines, now sewing machines, no telegraph poles, no vestiges, in fact, of science, civilization, economical arrangements, or commercial enterprise!!! (Bown 40)

The idea that the industry “had driven away the fairies was a powerful one which resonated widely in Victorian culture” (Bown 41).

In 1854, Edward Hopley produced a Pre-Raphaelite painting entitled “Puck and a Moth” which draws the eye directly to the figures of Puck and a moth in a forest-like foreground. To the left of the figures, seen only through the opening in the foliage, reside a railroad and a church in the background. Bown writes, “The diagonal connects the fairy and the church, both of which stand metonymically for the ideas of tradition, the persistence of the past in the present, and the presence of the supernatural in the everyday world” (43). Between them the train, she notes is “the sign of modernity,” which “works as a kind of pivot,” the point at which the eye passes repeatedly the railway or the “line of modernity” (Bown 43). In other words, the fairy is the symbol of spiritual belief in the past, the church a symbol of the present, and the railway the line of liminality which causes the two to coincide, but not blend. This painting portrays Allingham’s perception of the possibilities of the fairy; however, Allingham believed that the figure of the fairy could allow for a bridge between the old world and the new.

The image of the fairy changed greatly throughout the nineteenth century; in fact, the fairy of popular culture hails from the Victorian era. She is a dainty beauty that possesses the wings of a butterfly. However, the fairies of legend were actually quite different. The fairies of legend were not winged creatures at all. But, if not, what were they? W.B. Yeats’s *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) offers an explanation.

The Irish word for fairy is sheehogue [sidheóg], a diminutive of “shee” in banshee. Fairies are deenee shee [daoine sidhe] (fairy people). Who are they? “Fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost,” say the peasantry. “The gods of the earth,” says the Book of Armagh. “The gods

of pagan Ireland,” say the Irish antiquarians, “the Tuatha De Danān, who, when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high.” (8)

The latter, as I will explore in Chapter II, appears to be the belief of William Allingham. It also correlates with J.M. Barrie’s Tinker Bell, who as portrayed at the opening of this section, is only saved when a child’s belief in her is pronounced. This, by definition, is the way of the pixie and will be explored in my section entitled, “Fairies and the Spiritual Realm.”

In *The Celtic Twilight, Faerie and Folklore* (1902), Yeats claims the following of the friends of the people of fairy, “Those that see the people of faery most often, and so have the most of their wisdom, are often very poor”; thus, it is the fairy legends told by the peasantry that make up the work of W.B. Yeats (100). According to Yeats, there are Trooping Fairies and Solitary Fairies. The trooping fairies, he says,

wear green jackets, the solitary ones red. On the red jacket of the Lepracaun, according to McAnally, are seven rows of buttons—seven buttons in each row. On the western coast...the red jacket is covered by a frieze one, and in Ulster the creature wears a cocked hat, and when he is up to anything unusually mischievous, he leaps on to a wall and spins, balancing himself on the point of the hat with his heels in the air. (*Fairy and Folk* 324)

Furthermore, the trooping fairies are extraordinarily violent, while the solitary ones are typically nothing more than mischievous. When taking evidence of fairy presence in nineteenth-century Ireland, W.Y. Evans-Wentz has been given a plethora of descriptions. He has been told that the fairy appears as an opalescent being, “about fourteen feet in stature,” and a shining being, “our own stature or just a little taller.” The Sidhe, he says, are usually described “as being tall

beautiful people” (62). There are water beings, who live in the world beneath a lake in the west of Ireland, and wood beings, who appear to be “a shining silvery colour with a tinge of blue or pale violet, and with dark purple-coloured hair.” There are also accounts of fairy beings known as Brownies, Changelings, Dwarfs, Gnomes, Goblins, Kelpies, Leprechauns, Pixies, Sylphs and Trolls. Each fairy class will be defined in Chapters II and III as they apply to Allingham’s poetry.

Interestingly, the Brownie became an especially prominent fairy figure at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1908, Baden Powell established the Boy Scouts in England, the Girl Guides following suit with the Brownie as a symbol for one of the troops. As we will discuss further in Chapter III, the fairies known as trooping fairies traveled in groups. This idea was used for the Boy Scouts as well as the Girl Guides when they were divided into troops. The Girl Guides, using the Brownie as an organizational principal, offered an alternative to fairies as an ethereal being. In this case, they were seen in practical terms. Discussed in Chapter II, Allingham, too, uses the fairy as the principal symbol for organization. Nicola Bown describes the “fairy way of writing” as “truly a national way of writing, because poetry comes out of the store of tradition that makes up the nation’s identity” (35). Allingham uses the “fairy way of writing” and the fairy figure to organize and recreate Irish nationalism. His fairies were not seen as a means to escape, but as a useful way to bring the old Irish genius to the modern world.

The fairies of legend were not winged creatures. In fact, it was Alexander Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” in 1714 that portrayed the first winged fairy; given the wings of a bat, an example of Pope’s fairy can be seen in Henry Fuseli’s *Puck* (1790) (See Figure 1, p 27). Bown believes the bat wings suggest a sinister connotation and states, “The bat’s wings imply that Puck’s ability to fly itself carries with it something unnatural or even evil.

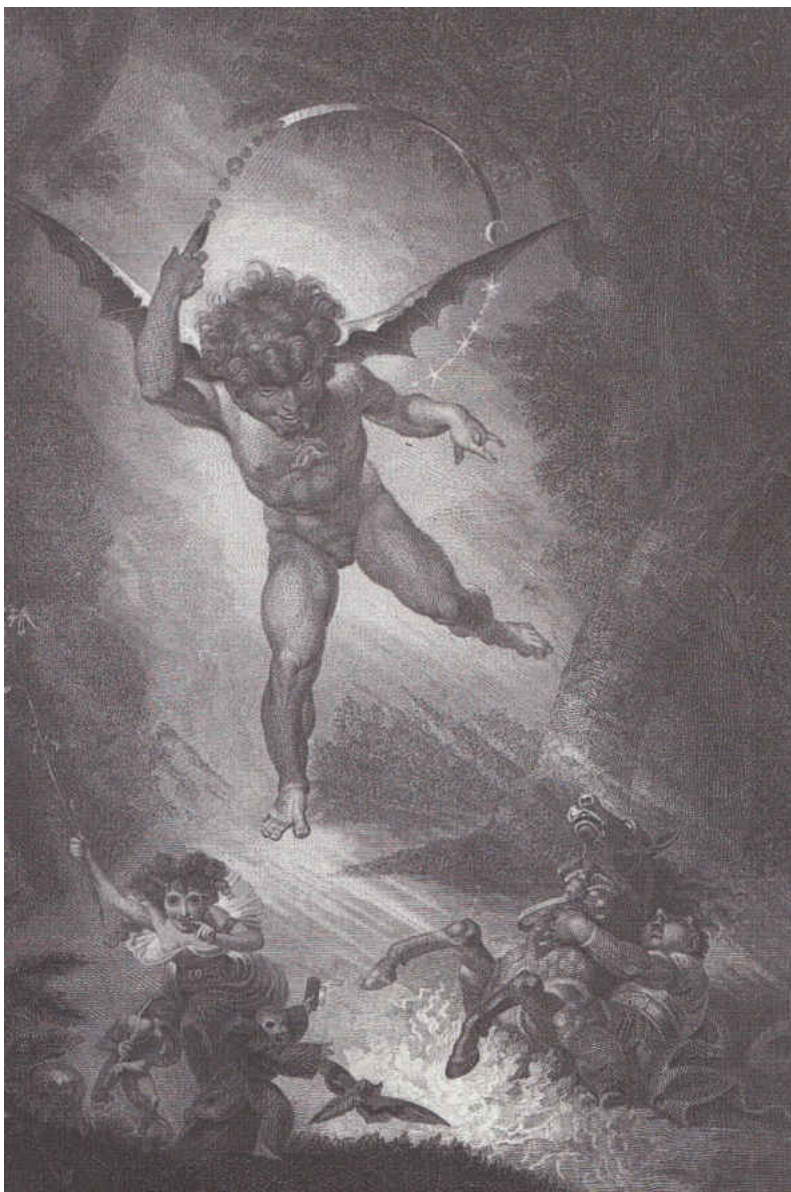


Figure 1. J. Parker after Henry Fuseli, *Puck*

Even before the appearance of the vampire in the early nineteenth century the bat was associated in popular superstition with witchcraft and black magic” (27). I will show in the section entitled, “Fairies and the Spiritual Realm,” that black magic and witchcraft are also tied to fairies in a Pre-Christianized Ireland. In other words, Pope’s bat winged fairy is most closely related to the fairies of pagan Ireland. Indeed, *In Fairyland* (1870), a compilation of Allingham’s “Prince Brightkin” and the art of Richard Doyle, displays on its cover a gilt edged fairy with the wings of a bat. A reprint in 1798 of Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” boasted illustrations by Thomas Stothard; these illustrations were “the first to give fairies butterfly wings” which “established the convention for nineteenth century artists” (47). An example can be seen in Stothard’s *Frontispiece to Canto III, The Rape of the Lock* (See figure 2, p 29).

Alexander Pope’s changes in the image of the fairy are more relevant to this essay than one may imagine. As we will discuss in the section entitled “Fairies and the Land of Ireland” William Allingham’s religio-cultural anxieties are worked out through the outlet of the fairy. Allingham, while born in County Donegal, Ireland, was a Protestant and a Member of the Church of Ireland. He declares in his diary, “I love Ireland: were she only not Catholic! but would she be Ireland otherwise?” (*Diary* 201), a statement which sums up the total of his anxiety over his Irish birth and English religion. Similarly, Alexander Pope, known as one of England’s greatest poets, was born in Dublin, Ireland to Roman Catholic parents. He moved to London as a boy and his family was forced to move to Berkshire due to strong Anti-Catholic sentiments in England at the time. While his fairy does not stand as a political polemic for nationalism in Ireland, his anxieties as a poet are undeniably similar to Allingham’s and it is apparent that both were interested in the fairy, possibly for the same reasons.



*Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.
All but the sylph —*

Figure 2. Thomas Stothard,
Frontispiece to Canto III, The Rape of the Lock

Prior to the fairy in Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," was Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) and William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594). There were countless other references to the fairy in literature prior to the nineteenth century; however, Spenser's and Shakespeare's fairies are probably the most prominent. Edmund Spenser wrote *The Faerie Queene*, his famous ode to Queen Elizabeth, in Ireland in 1590. His spelling of the word faerie with an "ae" differs from the popular spelling of fairy with an "ai"; this spelling would be popularized by Yeats and other Irish Revivalists who strove to learn from the medieval period. According to the *OED*, the word faerie or faery is "the realm or world of the fays or fairies; fairyland, fairydom. Usually, the imaginary world depicted in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, the personages of which have little or no resemblance to the 'fairies' of popular belief."

According to *The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland* (1937) by Isabel E. Rathborne,

Spenser's long residence in Ireland makes it probable that he was acquainted with Irish legends of the Happy Otherworld, and certain scholars have suggested that his fairy mythology may have owed as large a debt to Irish folklore and legend as to classical mythology and Italian romance epic. (185)

Similar to William Allingham, *The Spenser Encyclopedia* states, "Spenser ties his poem to national history by making Fairyland part of a larger political geography. From this perspective, Fairyland occupies the political space of Elizabethan England or 'Logris land'" (293).

Furthermore,

In Fairyland, where various historical legendary, and mythical times coexist, past, present, and future must be treated as relative, not absolute, terms. Since Spenser frees Fairyland from the burden of any particular time, he can use it to coordinate the historical circumstances of the epic quests, the political and religious events

that occur and are destined to occur in the places that make up the political geography surrounding Fairyland. (293)

While his views on Irish emancipation differed from Allingham, Edmund Spenser entered Ireland at the same time as Allingham's ancestors, thus providing an opportunity where Ireland's strangers use the fairy to make a political statement.

William Shakespeare's fairies are fascinatingly akin to William Allingham's fairies. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594), includes the mischievous and trouble making Puck, who as we will later discuss, is derived from the Puck fairy—an evil, malicious, or mischievous spirit or demon of popular belief. It is possible to read Puck as a British or even Celtic presence in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; furthermore, Puck is represented as a servant to the Classical Greek fairy beings. In other words, Shakespeare uses the character of Puck and the characters of Oberon and Titania to synthesize the native fairy of Celtic lore with the fairy gentry of Classical Greek mythology. Allingham's fairies as well as Shakespeare's Puck offer an agent by which the struggle can be worked out.

In the nineteenth century, children's literature became a popular genre filled with "fairy tales." The Brothers Grimm, Jakob and Wilhem Grimm, are the most popular nineteenth century authors of fairy lore in children's literature. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the brothers began gathering German folklore by inviting storytellers into their home and, by 1810, produced a manuscript of the stories they had been told. The stories published by the brothers were in large told to them by women. The "bearers of tradition" and "adherents to superstition," women were believed to have no access to reason and therefore no aptitude for education (Bown 18). These unfavorable sentiments toward women inexorably caused the fairy to become a creature spurned by women. According to Bown, "In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then, it

was overwhelmingly men who were interested in fairies, who wrote about and painted them; women were largely indifferent” (13). Because of this general feminine lack of interest in fairies, the work of the Brothers Grimm became of great import as they “sparked a general passion for collecting folktales before they were lost” (Suckling 202). As we will see, this was similar to the mindset of W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory.

The nineteenth century saw a literary boom in the interest of recounting and documenting the folklore of times gone by. The Irish Literary Revival, promoted by both W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, produced a vast amount of literature on the folklore of the peasantry, especially the lore of the fairy. In Chapters II and III, we will discuss in detail the work of both Yeats and Lady Gregory. However, in addition to these two leading revivalists, it is imperative to note a few other nineteenth-century writers of folklore. Thomas Croker’s *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1882) is filled with the lore of the South of Ireland and includes a story entitled “The Changeling,” in which a young woman left her child in the corner of a field during harvest time only to discover “a thing in the cloak that was not half the size, and that kept up such a crying you might have heard it a mile off” (61). The woman was told to starve, to beat and to pinch the child mercilessly. A week after doing so, she awoke to find her own child lying in the bed beside her. “The fairy that had been put in its place did not like the usage it got from [the woman]...and away it went after a week’s trial, and sent her own child back to her” (61-62). Another example is Thomas Keightley’s *The Fairy Mythology* (1870), which documents the lore and superstitions of various countries. Keightley describes Irish fairies as “diminutive [in] size, rarely exceeding two feet in height” and says “they also live in society, their ordinary abode being the interior of the mounds, called in Irish Rathes (Râhs), in English,

Moats, the construction of which is, by the peasantry, ascribed to the Danes from whom, it might be inferred, the Irish got their fairies direct and not via England” (363). He also notes,

The most remarkable of the Fairy-tribe in Ireland, and one which is peculiar to the country, is the Leprechaun. This is a being in the form of an old man.... He is by profession a maker of brogues; he resorts in general only to secret and retired places, where he is discovered by the sounds which he makes hammering his brogues. He is rich, like curmudgeons of his sort, and it is only by the most violent threats of doing him some bodily harm, that he can be made to show the place where his treasure lies; but if the person who has caught him can be induced...to take his eyes off him, he vanishes, and with him the prospect of wealth. (371-72)

Furthermore, recorded in *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham* (1897), Rossetti explained his having shared Allingham’s *Songs* with the family of “Mr. Keightley.” He says, “Old K. [presumably Thomas Keightley’s father] was taken with the *fairies*” (72). Interestingly, the leprechaun was appealing to Allingham for he wrote a poem entitled, “The Lepracaun, or Fairy Shoemaker” that can be found in his *Irish Songs and Poems*. Both collections written by Croker and Keightley offer many more stories from Irish lore, such as those detailed above; to describe them all would be unnecessary and tangential to the topic of this essay.

Other books written during the nineteenth century in the same tradition were: James Bonwick’s *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions* (1894), Edward Hugessen’s *Stories for my Children* (1869), Lady Francesca Speranza Wilde’s *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1889), W.B. Yeats’s *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888)

and *Celtic Twilight, Faerie and Folklore* (1902), as well as Lady Augusta Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (1904) and *A Book of Saints and Wonders* (1906). All of the aforesaid texts have been consulted for the research of this essay.

Fairies also became popularized on the stage. In 1840, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performed at Covent Garden and staged by Madame Vestris "was considered to be the first effective production of the play since the seventeenth century," one in which she "emphasised the scenes with the fairies," and turned the play into "a spectacular theatrical experience" (Bown 73). Vestris was also a collaborator in the fairy extravaganzas of J.R. Planché, staged yearly between 1836 and 1856. According to Bown, "The fairy extravaganza, a variant of pantomime based on fairy tales and featuring magical set-pieces and transformation scenes, was an annual Christmas event" during the mid-nineteenth century. She notes the productions of Planché and Vestris as the most spectacular of the fairy extravaganzas. Theatrical productions were not the only productions to stage the figure of the fairy; they were found also in ballets. An example is the story of *La Sylphide* (or *The Sylph*), performed in 1832, which "tells the story of a fairy who falls in love with a mortal man" (Bown 73).

In addition to staged productions and literary works, the figure of the fairy became especially popular in nineteenth-century art. The Pre-Raphaelite movement, the most prominent movement of the nineteenth century,

grew out of a dissatisfaction on the part of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), and John Everett Millais (1829-1896).... The Brotherhood found some direction in their search for acceptable modern subjects in the technique of realism they found in their study of early Italian and Northern

European painting before Raphael and in Ruskin's early writings about naturalism in *Modern Painters*. (*The Victorian Web*)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a sometimes collaborator and intimate friend of William Allingham; his illustrations appear in *Irish Songs and Poems* as well as *Flower Pieces and Other Poems* both published by Reeves and Turner in 1887 and 1888. Allingham's *Flower Pieces and Other Poems* is dedicated to Rossetti, "whose early friendship brightened many days of my life, and whom I never can forget." John Everett Millais created a drawing entitled *The Fireside Story*, which was intended to illustrate Allingham's "Frost in the Highlands." Written November 10, 1855, Allingham's letter to Millais notes the "deep respect I have for your powers." He also states, "The originality and truthfulness of your genius fill me with delight and wonder. I wish you would master the art of etching, and make public half a dozen designs now and again" (*The Life and Letters* (257)). It was due to this advice that Millais would choose to study the art of etching. Millais is famous for his *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849) (See Figure 3, p 36), which according to Bown, is "the only example of a fairy painting by a Pre-Raphaelite artist" and portrays "green bat-fairies supporting a green child-Ariel" (110). It is important to note that all figures are placed in a natural setting, a setting which was the standard for fairy painting in the mid-nineteenth century. John Anster Fitzgerald's 'Cock Robin' paintings including *Cock Robin Defending his Nest* and *Who Killed Cock Robin*, were produced in the 1860s (See Figures 4 and 5, p 37). According to Bown, Fitzgerald's fairies "look strikingly different from any other images of fairies produced at the same time or before" (110). This, too, was the theme of Richard Doyle in his illustrations of William Allingham's "Prince Brightkin," which were published in 1870 in a book titled, *In Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf-World*.¹

¹ On Monday, November 1, 1870, Allingham wrote the following in his diary: "*In Fairyland* comes—a muddle, no consulting having been made or proposed between artist and poet. The former (in a huff probably) has put his own

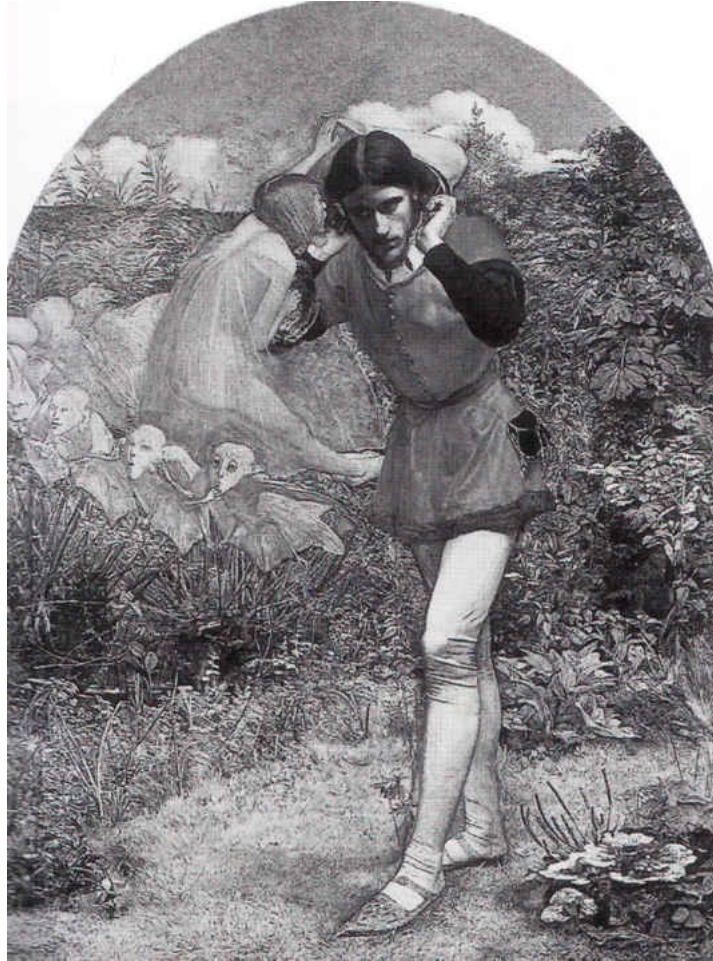


Figure 3. John Everett Millais, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*

prose description to the pictures” (Diary 201). The following is also written in Allingham’s diary: “News Room. In Fairyland, [Prince Brightkin]. Daily News says, ‘charming poem!’” (201).



Figure 4. John Anster Fitzgerald
Cock Robin Defending his Nest



Figure 5. John Anster Fitzgerald
Who Killed Cock Robin

Doyle's pictures portray a mischievous elf who climbs into a bird's nest in *Climbing*, and steals an egg in *Stealing*. Another example of the shared world of the bird and the fairy is the

Triumphal March of the Elf-King, of which Doyle writes,

This important personage, nearly related to the Goblin family, is conspicuous for the length of his hair, which on state occasions it requires four pages to support. Fairies in waiting strew flowers in his path, and in his train are many of the most distinguished Trolls, Kobolds, Nixies, Pixies, Wood-sprites, birds, butterflies, and other inhabitants of the kingdom. (Doyle 6)

Another example of Doyle's shared world of birds and fairies can be seen in *Elf and Owls*, which portrays a red-capped elf sitting in a nest and flanked on both sides by two owls. One other, entitled *An Intruder* depicts a very upset looking fairy who is sitting in the middle of a bird's nest being squawked at by its inhabitants (See Figures 6-9, pp 39-40).

One of the most prominent of late nineteenth-to early twentieth-century fairy artists was Arthur Rackham who, according to Derek Hudson in *Arthur Rackham, His Life and Work* (1960), "was descended, however remotely, from a pirate." He furthers his witty overture to say, "One goes on to imagine a humorously ineffective pirate, who might have stepped out of *Peter Pan*, and who spent his time sketching on the quarterdeck when he should have been boarding the enemy with his cutlass" (19). Rackham is most famously known for his fairy illustrations of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1906). Each illustration is titled by a quotation from the work. For my purposes, there are three illustrations that necessitate inspection. The first is entitled "Old Mr. Salford was a crab-apple of an old gentleman who wandered all day in the Gardens" (Hudson 67), which portrays three or four fairies of a different class, flying through the air behind Old Mr. Salford.



Climbing.

Figure 6. Richard Doyle, *Climbing*



Stealing.

Figure 7. Richard Doyle, *Stealing*



Figure 8. Richard Doyle, *Triumphal March of the Elf King*



Figure 9. Richard Doyle, *Elf and Owls*



Figure 10. Arthur Rackham,
*Old Mr. Salford was a crab-apple of an old gentleman who
wandered all day in the Gardens*



Figure 11. Arthur Rackham,
*The Serpentine is a lovely lake,
and there is a drowned forest at the bottom of it*



Figure 12. Arthur Rackham,
*Fairies never say, 'We feel happy':
what they say is, 'We Feel dancy'*

The second illustration, “The Serpentine is a lovely lake, and there is a drowned forest at the bottom of it,” portrays seven beautiful fairies flying toward the bottom of the lake (69). The third, which states, “Fairies never say, ‘We feel happy’: what they say is, ‘We Feel *dancy*,”” depicts five beautiful pixie fairies dancing in a garden with an elf (75) (See Figures 10-12, pp 41-43). Arthur Rackham was also famous for his illustrations of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, *Rip Van Winkle*, *Hans Christian Anderson’s Fairy Tales*, *Mother Goose*, *Aesop’s Fables*, and *The Wind in the Willows*. While Rackham was not always an illustrator of fairies, he was unquestionably an illustrator of fairy tales.

The last artist that must be mentioned in reference to nineteenth-century fairy art is none other than Richard Dadd. The only similarity between Richard Dadd and the Pre-Raphaelite movement is “in the use of light, clear colours and taut contours” (Allderidge 41). *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke*, painted around 1855, began as a sketch for an unnamed friend of G.H. Haydon who wrote poetry (125) (See Figure 13, p 45). At first glance, the painting appears absurd with a chaotic portrayal of fairy life. According to Allderidge in *The Late Richard Dadd* (1974),

The fairy woodman (the ‘feller’) in the centre foreground, clothed from top to toe in leather, raises his axe to strike a hazel nut; the rest of the characters are ‘Fays, gnomes, and elves and suchlike’, who have gathered to settle some dubious point known only to themselves, but are now watching to see whether he will split the nut with one stroke. (125)

With the exception of *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke*, none of Richard Dadd’s fairy paintings appear as a disorganized gathering of fairy people. A vast majority of Dadd’s paintings on fairies illustrate unclothed dancing fairies with the bodies of sculpted humans; an example is



Figure 13. Richard Dadd, *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke*



Figure 14. Richard Dadd, *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*



Figure 15. Richard Dadd, *Titania Sleeping*

Dadd's *Come unto these Yellow Sands* (1842), the title of which comes from Ariel's song from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. More famous is his painting entitled *Titania Sleeping* (1841), which with "its companion *Puck*, were the two which helped to establish Dadd's reputation as a fairy painter" (59) (See Figures 14-15, p 46). As stated by Allderidge, "the figure of Oberon can just be made out in the shadows of the cave, preparing to squeeze juice from the magic flower on Titania's eyelids" (59). Most relevant to the discussion of William Allingham's fairies is Richard Dadd's painting entitled *Puck* (1841), which depicts the naked, human-like fairies dancing around a toadstool topped by Puck (See Figure 16, p 48). According to Bown,

The highlights on Puck make him look large, and in comparison to the fairies beneath him, he is. But when compared to the size of the toadstool he sits upon and to the flowers, grasses and foliage surrounding him, he is small, extremely small, and this makes the fairies tiny. Through a trick of scale, Puck is made to look larger than the moon, even though he is very little. (79)

Richard Dadd's *Puck* strikes an uncanny resemblance to an untitled illustration which marks the title page of William Allingham's *Fairies, & c.* section of his *Life and Phantasy* (1889) (See Figure 17, p 48). The illustration is signed "Dalziel," presumably by one of the Dalziel brothers (George and Edward) who were well-known collaborators of "many of the most distinguished artists of the period." In a book entitled, *The Brothers Dalziel*, the brothers note, "Our first encounter with [Arthur Hughes] was for 'The Music Master, and other Poems,' by William Allingham, for which he did two drawings; one, a fairy moonlight subject, being exquisitely beautiful" (192). While it was without a doubt one of the Dalziel brothers who signed the finished product, it may have been Arthur Hughes who actually sketched it.



58

Figure 16. Richard Dadd, *Puck*

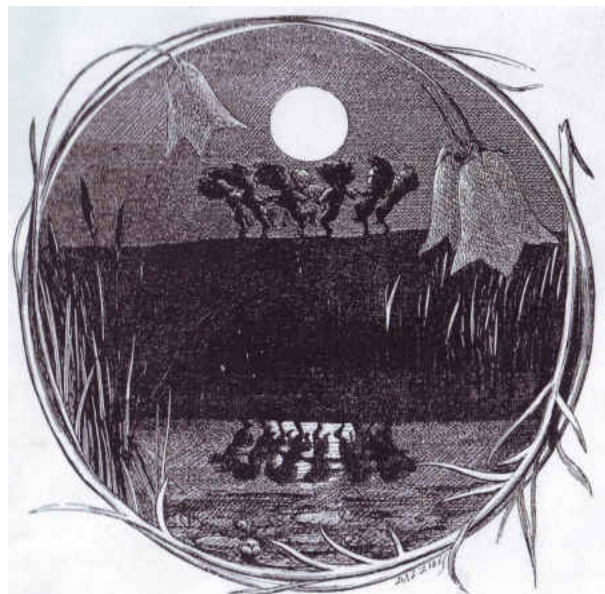


Figure 17. Dalziel, untitled

The two illustrations, Dadd's *Puck* and Dalziel's untitled drawing, differ in that the dancing fairies of Dalziel's illustration appear larger than the Puck character in the middle. Also, in this illustration, the moon is larger than both Puck and the dancing fairies. More fascinating is the presence of the lake and its fairy reflection. The reflection shows a shadowy version of the dancing fairies and, while they are detailed in the natural view, they are mere shadows in the reflection. Also, the Puck figure is missing from the reflection. Furthermore, the moon, while high in the night sky in the natural view, is setting in the reflection. The most mesmerizing aspect of this illustration is that one could rotate it one hundred eighty degrees to see fairies dancing around a Puck-like figure at dawn as the reflection of the shadowy fairy figures at dusk. The land upon which the fairies are dancing offers a line of liminality, "the liminal mood of dusk and dawn in which it is easy to imagine the boundaries between worlds dissolving and faeries stepping out of their world into ours, and vice versa" (Suckling 205). The illustration portrays that Yeats's *Celtic Twilight*, a topic we will further discuss as it relates to William Allingham's poetry, offers a chance to reflect upon the past in order to look toward the future.

As we have seen, fairies were undoubtedly ever-present in the nineteenth century. As Nicola Bown eloquently states, "Fairies look towards the past: that is their appeal as a consolation for Enlightenment modernity. That is why, at the end of the eighteenth century, fairies peopled the imaginings of men, and why, at the same time, they failed to cast their enchantments over women" (38). However, Allingham did not see fairies as a figment of the imagination, but a real being with whom a modern man could travel to the past. For William Allingham, to believe in fairies is to return to the past and restore Ireland to its original Gaelic dispensation; there a spiritual faith existed that was not upset by the turmoil of church doctrine and cultural boundaries. To return to Peter Pan's question, posed at the beginning of this section,

were Allingham to have been asked if he believed in fairies, it is undeniable that he would have answered, "I do."

Chapter II

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM'S FAIRY POLITICS

In Chapter II, I use a New Critical Approach to discuss the use of the fairy as a nationalist symbol in an amalgamation of Allingham's works. This chapter addresses Allingham's *Diary* as well as his poems "Vivant!" and "Fireside Magic" in order to discuss Allingham's religio-cultural anxieties.

Fairies and the Land of Ireland

William Allingham uses fairies as well as fairy architecture to establish the origins of Ireland and to recreate Ireland as an original entity. *William Allingham's Diary*, initially written as autobiography, describes childhood locations as fairy-like dwellings in the chapter entitled "Ballyshannon." He begins by giving voice to the Ireland of his childhood by stating, "The little old Town where I was born has a Voice of its own, low, solemn, persistent, humming through the air day and night, summer and winter. Whenever I think of that Town I seem to hear the Voice" (1). The Ireland mentioned by Allingham is more than a place, but a being; it more than exists, it speaks. Allingham capitalizes the word "Voice" to bring the reader's attention to the word. In doing so, he introduces an Ireland that has something to say. Allingham also capitalizes the word "Town" to bring attention to the importance of locality in Irish tradition and origin. This brings to mind the Gaelic word *dinnseanchas*, meaning place lore, a device Allingham will use throughout his memoir to discern the original Ireland from an Ireland connected to Britain.² By introducing the "Town" and its "Voice" in the first two lines of his autobiography, Allingham initiates a conversation in which the true origins of Ireland can be found in her topography. Allingham describes the "Voice" as "low, solemn, persistent, humming" (1). Fairies are commonly known to be silent creatures who fly through the air on

² As previously mentioned, Ballyshannon, meaning "The Mouth of Seannach's Ford," was named after a fifth century warrior Seannach who was slain there.

filmy wings. In his edited anthology *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, Yeats includes Sir Samuel Ferguson's melancholy poem "The Fairy Well of Lagnanay," which includes the lines, "The Fairies are a silent race, / And pale as lily flowers to see" (21). Another Ferguson ballad, "The Fairy Thorn"—collected in Edward Hayes and William Kenealy's *The Ballads of Ireland*—speaks of "the silky footsteps of the silent fairy crowd" (117). The anthology also offers R.D. Williams's "The Fairies of Knockshegowna," which describes fairies as follows:

A rustling, whirling sound sweeps by,
 Like leaves on an Autumn breeze,
 Tho', since sunset fled, there was scarce a sigh
 To stir the slumbering trees;
 And a troop comes forth from the moonlit glen,
 With such mist-like motion on,
 That you may not find an injur'd flower
 Where their coursers' hoofs have gone.

They glide along o'er the dewy banks,
 On their viewless, filmy wings,
 And anon and again from their restless ranks
 The merry fairy laughter rings.

In lonely dells... (124-25)

The low aspect of Ireland's voice attributes to the silence of the fairy race, while the humming can easily be seen as the whirring or "whirling" flutter of the "filmy" fairy wings. In this, the

fairy becomes the voice of Ireland, a voice which brings forth in the Irish imagination the original Gaelic dispensation which can be heard “in lonely dells.”

We also find that “nothing impressed [Allingham] so peculiarly as the *Sound*, the Voice, which ceased not day or night; the hum of the Waterfall, rolling continually over its rock ledge into the deep salt pool beneath. In some moods it sounded like ever-flowing Time itself made audible” (Diary 18). He capitalizes the word “Time” in order to emphasize its importance. For “Time itself [to be] made audible” is for the Irish to hear the ancient world as if it exists today. As we will see, for Allingham this ancient Ireland is closely connected to the Ireland of his childhood.

Allingham states, “The trees hide in glens” (1). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the word “glen” is of Gaelic origin, meaning mountain-valley. Allingham chooses his diction carefully and specifically by strategically replacing English words with the Gaelic equivalent to bring forth Irish sentiments. Letter II of Sydney Owenson’s *Wild Irish Girl* (1806) powerfully exemplifies the use of the word “glen” in the following passage:

To him who derives gratification from the embellished labors of art, rather than the simple but sublime operations of nature, *Irish* scenery will afford little interest; but the bold features of its varying landscape, the stupendous attitude of its 'cloud-capt' mountains, the impervious gloom of its deep embosomed glens, the savage desolation of its uncultivated heaths, and boundless bogs, with those rich veins of a picturesque champagne, thrown at intervals into gay expansion by the hand of nature, awaken in the mind of the poetic or pictorial traveler, all the pleasures of tasteful enjoyment, all the sublime emotions of a rapt imagination.

(112)

In other words, Irish scenery complete with ““cloud-capt’ mountains,” “deep embosomed glens,” and “uncultivated heaths” can only be cherished by those who appreciate the simplicity of nature.

Allingham’s childhood resembles fairy architecture. Of this he states, “I was born in a little House” (*Diary* 1). Again, we find an emphasis with the capitalization of “House,” yet a lower case “little” to describe it. The *OED* recognizes the fairy as “One of a supernatural class of diminutive beings.” If the fairy folk are believed to be a class of diminutive beings they must reside in structures created for such. Therefore, Allingham’s “little House” could effortlessly be perceived as a fairy-like structure, little in configuration but large with importance. Allingham states, “From the House that I was born in we moved to one somewhat larger”; thus, allowing for the feeling of being from somewhere else. This somewhere else is reminiscent of a fairy land, known but existing in a far off place. He furthers this idea by stating that the mind is given “the triumphant feeling of power in mounting and descending [the] difficult heights [of a stairway], and penetrating at will the new regions in the remotest recesses of the House” (2). These stairways in conjunction with the “remotest recesses of the House” speak of the verticality of the fairies. The first winged fairies, mentioned in Chapter I, were the fairies of Alexander Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” in 1714. Contemporary with “The Rape of the Lock,” the sylph may not have connoted the fairy being, but by the mid-nineteenth century—the time Allingham would write—Pope’s sylph was popularly considered to be a fairy being. As noted in Nicola Bown’s *Fairies in Nineteenth Century Literature and Art*, these fairies were “airy sylphs derived from Paracelsus’ theory of elemental spirits,” (47) as well as bat-winged fairies in Fuseli’s *Puck* and fairies with the wings of a butterfly in Stothard’s illustrations for the 1798 edition of “The Rape of the Lock.” The Shakespearian fairies of the sixteenth century were not given wings; yet, the

butterfly effect was the well established convention by the nineteenth century in which Allingham wrote. Difficult heights located in the remotest recesses of the house could only be reached by a fairy-like creature with wings.

Opposite the house “was a garden wall, with rose-bushes hanging over” (1). The garden is seen as the home of the fairy in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Ariel, a spritely creature, says, “Where the bee sucks, there suck I” (V.I.). Also, his most infamous fairy, Puck, is known to steal ointment from flowers to use as a magic potion in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. *William Allingham’s Diary* is filled with references to floral objects that lend to Allingham’s home being similar to that of a fairy dwelling.

My Father was fond of flowers, [he says], I loved the violet and lily of the valley, and above all the rose—all roses, and we had many sorts, damask, cabbage, ‘Scotch,’ moss, and white roses in multitude on a great shady bush that overhung the little street at our garden-foot. The profusion of these warm-scented white roses gave a great feeling of summer wealth and joy, but my constant favourite was the ‘Monthly Rose,’ in colour and fragrance the acme of sweetness and delicacy combined, and keeping up, even in winter time, its faithful affectionate companionship. (5)

It is imperative to recognize this description as important to Allingham. He has not simply mentioned a rose bush in passing, but given an exceptionally detailed explanation of his father’s fascination with flowers as well as the many flowers present in an Allingham garden. The damask and cabbage roses have origins in China, thus contributing to Allingham’s interest in that which is oriental or foreign much like the fairy. The word ‘Scotch’ is written with quotation marks as well as capitalization to emphasize its value. This word is a reference to the Scotch or

Scottish and while it is not a directly Irish connection, it is Celtic. Furthermore, it is Gaelic. The Celtic ideology—the coming together of Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and Breton traditions—will remain as a thread throughout Allingham’s poetry as an example of the ability for the Celtic dispensation to be made up of several elements. But more importantly, both the Scottish and Irish peoples belong to the Gaelic subgroup within the Celtic family, and as an Ulsterman, Allingham would be very aware of descendents of the many Scots who settled Ulster as planters in the seventeenth century. This bodes well for Allingham’s efforts to further prove himself as Irish as the original Irish or Gaelic dispensation.

“Opposite the hall door,” Allingham describes, was “a good-sized Walnut Tree growing out of a small grassy knoll leaned its wrinkled stem towards the house, and brushed some of the second-story panes with its broad fragrant leaves” (Diary 4). The Walnut Tree, in relation to fairy lore, is a part of the Italian tradition. According to Raven Grimassi’s *Beltane* (2001), “Walnut is one of the sacred trees of Italian Witchcraft and is intimately associated with fairies. The walnut tree is also sacred in Roman mythology.... Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that the walnut possessed and imparted the gift of prophesy” (92). The walnut tree is mentioned again by Allingham in the following statement:

Before the front door grew my dear Walnut Tree out of its little mound, beyond which the narrow drive curved in something of a figure of S to the stable and byre, its little shrubbery on either side shady enough with lilacs and laburnums to yield forest haunts to the childish fancy” (*Diary 5*).

Allingham’s need to mention the presence of walnut trees in his past is a way for him to work out a few of his anxieties. Discussed in Chapter I, Allingham uses the figure of Puck to collude the Greek and Celtic traditions in order to find an equal ground. The walnut tree offers the same

opportunity for Allingham to join together the traditions of Italian, Roman and Greek mythology as well as his own mixed Anglo-Irish heritage. Furthermore, the walnut as a conveyer of prophesy only adds fuel to Allingham's argument for a new version of an old Irish dispensation.

In his diary, Allingham goes on to describe his grandmother's house in the same fairy-like detail he described his own.

My great curiosity and interest in outward things, and delight in their beauty and novelty, along with much activity of imagination, or rather fantasy, tended to save me; and at my Grandmother's house—but a little way off, and to which I went as often as I could—I found something of that atmosphere of affection and confidence which is so suitable to the free growth of any tender young soul.

(Diary 10)

Allingham acknowledges that it is his interest in these fairy-like structures and “activity of imagination, or rather fantasy” that “tended to save [him]” (10). The most important word in this statement is “save,” a word commonly associated with Christianity. I will discuss in the next section “Fairies and the Spiritual Realm,” Allingham use of the fairy and the fairy realm as a substitute for the Church to assuage his religio-cultural anxieties. However, for my immediate purposes, we will look at Allingham's grandmother's house and its likeness to a fairy dwelling. For Allingham, his grandmother's house appears in his remembrance to describe far-away places such as the fairy realm. This brings to mind the German word *heimlich* which means homey or home-like. Furthermore, according to the *OED*, the word *unheimlich* represents the weird or uncanny. In other words, to Allingham, his grandmother's house which should be homey is in fact the representation that inside the house often lurks the thing that is scary or foreign. “I now know that my Grandmother's was a small house,” writes Allingham, “but if I were to describe it

from the impressions of those years it would be spacious and many-roomed, with a long, dim, lofty Entrance Hall, wide enough to be the scene of many fancied adventures” (*Diary* 11).

Furthermore,

At the end of the hall, between the foot of the staircase and the kitchen door, was a door, generally locked, whence a few descending stairs led to a curious back-room with hen-coops, a smell of live animals, an ancient wooden partition, and a window dim with old crusted dirt; and from this a dark flight of stone steps descended to a truly mysterious and almost awful region, a dim back kitchen paved with rude flags, with a well of living water of unknown depth in a recess of the wall. (*Diary* 11-12)

Allingham uses the words “curious,” “ancient,” “dark,” and “awful,” and adds to them by calling the region “truly mysterious.” According to the *OED*, the word awful objectively means “awe-inspiring,” and Allingham uses these words to describe his interest in his Grandmother’s home. He goes on to describe “a well of living water of unknown depth in a recess of the wall.” As I have previously mentioned, the recesses in the home speak of the verticality of the fairies. In this case, it is below the stairway where we find the “well of living water.” Allingham brilliantly uses fairy lore as a part of his childhood reminiscences. We have recognized Pope’s *Rape of the Lock* as the first text to portray a winged fairy; conversely, Celtic lore allows that fairies appear in several different forms or figures. Allingham’s “The Lady of the Sea, A Legend of Ancient Erin”—found in the Reeves and Turner Collection *Irish Songs and Poems* and dedicated to Irish Antiquarian George Petrie—portrays the story of Merrane and Dalachmar, a fairy from the sea and the human she falls in love with. Allingham’s speaker states, “For he had wedded a fairy wife” (20). He also states,

With long loose hair, and her body fair
 Shimmering as with watery light;
 For nothing save a luminous mist
 Of tender beryl and amethyst
 Over the living smoothness lay,
 Statue—firm from head to feet,—
 A breathing Woman, soft and sweet,
 And yet not earthly. (10)

She is most importantly “a fairy wife/... Shimmering as with watery light/...And yet not earthly” (10, 20). She is described with “sea-blue-eye[s]” and a “sea-shell-tint” (12). In the poem, Merranee says,

In those vast kingdoms under sea,
 Dusky at noontide, some there be
 Of mine, a magic race, that dwell,
 And how we came there none can tell,
 Imperial mid the monstrous forms
 Of Ocean’s creeping, gliding swarms;
 We live three hundred years, and sometimes four,
 And then—ah misery! And then— (17)

The poem above offers proof of Allingham’s belief that “a magic race” (or fairies) exist “in those vast kingdoms under the sea” for “three hundred years, and sometimes four” (17). Allingham’s “truly mysterious...well of living water of unknown depth” when viewed in light of “The Lady

of the Sea,” it is impossible not to note his interest and wonder at the possibility of an otherworld underneath the water in a well. If he “were to describe [his Grandmother’s house] from the impressions of those years,” Allingham notes that “it would be spacious and many-roomed, with a long, dim, lofty Entrance Hall, wide enough to be the scene of many fancied adventures” (Diary 12). The “well of living water of unknown depth” seems to be one of the scenes of Allingham’s “many fancied adventures”; furthermore, it is an adventure in which he imagines the existence of a fairy in the well inside his grandmother’s house.

It has always been supposed that some countries have, so to speak, a peculiar magnetic attraction for the soul of their children, and I found plenty of reason, in the conduct of my neighbours as well as my own consciousness, to count Ireland as one of these well-beloved mother-lands. This home-love is strongest in the dwellers in her wild and barren places, rock-strewn mountain glens and windy sea-shores, notwithstanding the chronic poverty in which so many of them live.

(Diary 17)

Crucial to the mollifying of Allingham’s cultural anxieties, he calls Ireland a “well-beloved mother-land.” While he does acknowledge that “some countries have...a peculiar magnetic attraction,” he is adamant that for him this magnetic attraction only comes from the land of Ireland. The idea of “dwellers in [Ireland’s] wild barren places, rock-strewn mountain glens and windy sea-shores” is a clear indication of the fairy folk and her “dwelling” in “wild” places and “mountain glens.” Again, we find the use of the word “glen” when talking about the land of Ireland as a use of the original Gaelic dispensation in order bring forth ancient Irish sentiments.

Allingham states, “In these remote and wild parts Erin is the most characteristically herself, and the most unlike to Saxon England” (Diary 17). In other words, he refers to Ireland

as Erin, her original Gaelic name, and notes that her “wild parts” are “the most unlike to Saxon England.” The Saxon England he mentions is the very same Saxon England of his father’s ancestry; however, this statement is made with wonder at the wild parts of Ireland and her inability to be replicated. By using the original Gaelic name of Erin and distinguishing the land from Saxon England, Allingham effectually conveys the original Irish dispensation, the ancient Erin where fairies exist. He also states, “Her strange antiquities, visible in gray mouldering fragments; her ancient language, still spoken by some, and everywhere present in place-names, as well as phrases and turns of speech; her native genius for music...” (Diary 17). Allingham uses the words “strange” and “antiquities” to describe the Ireland of the original Irish dispensation. W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory along, with other Big House Anglicans of their time, were well known Irish Antiquarians who founded the Abbey Theatre and were renowned Irish Revival Figures. According to the publisher’s preface to Lady Gregory’s *Gods and Fighting Men [The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland]*, Lady Gregory, like W.B. Yeats, “was born into a class that identified closely with British rule, [and] her conversion to cultural nationalism, as evidenced by her writings, was emblematic of many of the changes to occur in Ireland during her lifetime.” This too is evidenced by Allingham’s diary as well as his poetry. Moreover, Allingham’s writings provide that he was invested in cultural nationalism in Ireland prior to W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory.

On the character of Ireland, Allingham calls her “reckless, variable, pertinacious, [and] enthusiastic” (*Diary 17*). Furthermore, he notes her “manners [as] reconciling delicate respect with easy familiarity; her mental movements [as] quick, humorous, imaginative, impassioned; her habits of thought as to property, social intercourse, happiness; [and] her religious awe and reverence” (*Diary 17*). By referring to Ireland in the familiar Ireland as woman trope with the

personal pronoun, she, Allingham notes her characteristics as though she were a person rather than a country. More importantly are the characteristics Allingham gives his “well-beloved mother-land.” The terms “delicate,” “quick,” “humorous,” “imaginative,” “impassioned” and “happy” could be used synonymously in a description of the fairy. In fact, Evans-Wentz’s *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* describes the voice of the fairy as “silvery,” “quick and sweet” (47). Also, Thomas Keightley’s *The Fairy Mythology* proclaims, “...the Little Folk, / So happy and so gay, amuse themselves / Sometimes with singing...Sometimes with dancing” (267). To further this idea Allingham states,

all these, surviving to the present day under whatever difficulties have come down from times long before any England existed, and cling to their refuge on the extreme verge of the Old World, among lonely green hills, purple mountains, and rocky bays, bemurmured day and night by the Western Ocean. (*Diary* 17)

The above passage is probably one of Allingham’s most profound. The mention of Ireland’s fairy-like characteristics spurs Allingham to remember their origins. In other words, these characteristics are genuine to Ireland because they have survived “to the present day” through any trouble from a time long before England’s colonization. It is important to note that Allingham uses England as the comparison as he is impassioned by the need to claim his Irish heritage rather than his English. These characteristics, he claims, cling to a refuge on the “extreme verge of the Old World...bemurmured day and night by the Western Ocean” (*Diary* 17). The word “bemurmured” brings to mind the small voice of a fairy.

Allingham states, “I never came back to the Ballyshannon country after an absence, without thinking that it looked to be the oldest place I ever saw” (*Diary* 17), proving that Allingham views his place of birth as “the oldest place.” This ideology proves William

Allingham as a man of the original ancient Gaelic dispensation. His memories of Ballyshannon are remembrances of an ancient world where he shared his childhood with the fairy folk.

Fairies and the Spiritual Realm

*Ah, faeries, dancing under the moon,
A Druid land, a Druid tune!* (W.B. Yeats)

William Allingham describes a church upon fairy hill located in his childhood home of County Donegal. As we will find, the church upon fairy hill and the Fairy-Faith play a large role in Allingham's poetry as well as his autobiographical writings. According to Allingham,

The said Church (of the United English and Irish Establishment) was an important object in my childish life. To me it was a spacious and awe-inspiring Edifice with windows of peculiar shape, and a square Tower which was the measure of height,--'as high as the church steeple.'... The Church stood on the highest ground, and commanded a wide prospect, from its tower-top a panoramic one.

(Diary 14)

The height of the steeple, like the stairway in Allingham's childhood homes, invokes the verticality of the fairies. In addition, Allingham mentions that "the Church stood on the highest ground." As the Church was located on the highest ground with the tallest steeple, its reach was that much closer to the "Airy-land" that is mentioned in Allingham's poem "Vivant!"

More importantly, Allingham recalls the name of the "highest ground" upon which the Church stands. He states, "Mullinashee (Fairy Hill) this eminence is called on which the Church stands" (*Diary 15*). In Gaelic the word "Mul" is the English equivalent of the words mound, or hill, while the word "na" in Gaelic corresponds with the phrase "of the" in English.

Furthermore, the Gaelic word "Sidhe," pronounced "Shee," is the English equivalent of the word fairy. Therefore, the Gaelic word Mullinashee is literally, as Allingham blatantly points out,

fairy hill. While I have explained the etymology of the word, it must be noted that Allingham placed such importance on this word that he wrote the English translation in parentheses as if to be sure that even the modern Irish inhabitants would understand an ancient Gaelic word.

The Church of Allingham's childhood was built on Fairy Hill; thus, Allingham's spiritual foundation rests upon the property of the fairy and its surrounding terrain. Prior to his discussion of Mullinashee, Allingham notes that when he stepped out of his grandmother's house and garden he could "overhear hints of a more wonderful world outside of this, magic pictures formed themselves within [him] of such heavenly beauty as no experience has matched" (*Diary* 13-14); thus, furthering the notion that Allingham has an affinity to "overhear" the "magic," or the fairy land that existed in an ancient Ireland. The sounds of ancient Ireland and their likeness to the fairy are now formed within Allingham as "heavenly beauty." In this, Allingham moves from the structures of his childhood and their resemblance of a fairy dwelling to the fairy's magic as the creation of a "heavenly beauty" within him. In other words, Allingham's spirituality is guided by the fairy people and their "magic" or enchantments.

He goes on to state,

These had a consistency of their own, and recurred till they left impressions that resembled real memories, and have, I doubt not, made and do still make a large part of the scenery of my Dreams. Beautiful Dreams (I mean in sleep) have been no trivial part of the pleasures of my life. Certain Dreams show up again and again, like the opening of a familiar page. Sometimes there is an interval of years between two appearances of the same Dream. There are several Dreams, each distinct, of Lakes, of Rivers, of Mountains, of Woodlands, of Cities, of Great Buildings, of Strange Countries; a Dream of a Cave, and a Dream of a Gothic

Ruin, a Dream of Flying, a Dream of Death, and many more. Dreamland has its own geography, of places wherein all strange adventures and experiences are possible. (*Diary* 14)

This Dreamland of Allingham's is capitalized because it is a place name. It is the place Allingham travels to in dreams to create "impressions that resembled real memories," and, as I have previously mentioned, it is the "magic pictures" that form the "heavenly beauty" which is translated into the "impressions that resembled real memories" in Allingham's dreams. Like Allingham's use of the word Dreamland, all of these landmarks are capitalized to delineate the places within Dreamland. The "Lakes," "Rivers," "Mountains," "Woodlands," "Caves" and "Gothic Ruins" are verisimilar and conjure the topography of an ancient Ireland. The same can be said for the "Cities" and "Great Buildings" that were claiming a vast majority of the Modern Irish landscape of Allingham's adulthood.

His Dreamland also includes "Strange Countries," "Flying," and a "Dream of Death." While these locations seem ominous and advocate intrigue, they too are verisimilar and suit the ideology of the fairy realm. As we have previously discussed, the fairies exist in and translate between multiple realms. These realms are "strange," peculiar places that suit the fairy as well as the Irish imaginary. Also as we have previously discussed, fairies of the nineteenth century were known to be creatures of flight with wings like butterflies. New to our discussion, however, is the idea of fairies and death. The general perception of fairies is that of the pixie. Known to have origins in Cornwall, piskies or pixies

are close to leprechauns, phoukas and brownies in many ways, though with a slimmer and pointier appearance.... According to witnesses piskies usually have pointed ears, chins and noses. Often they look cross-eyed, but this is quite

probably just their way of being rude to humans.... Some say they are the old pagan gods whose size has diminished in proportion to people's belief in them, so that most are now only about a foot tall and some no larger than ants.... Some say they are the souls of the un-baptised dead who are neither good enough for Heaven nor bad enough for Hell.... [It has been suspected that] this suggestion for their origins was pinned to them by a Church reluctant to acknowledge the existence of spiritual beings that were neither angels nor devils. (Suckling 145)³

The most popular pixie of the twenty-first century is, of course, Tinker Bell of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*; however, the fairy world is vast and filled with many different fairy clans. According to Nigel Suckling in his book *Faeries of the Celtic Lands*, it has been said "of the faeries that there was the Seelie Court and the Unseelie Court; which was a way of saying there are good faeries and bad ones." In the Seelie Court, he notes, are the good fairies; in opposition, the bad fairies "who are purely malevolent" and "deliberately set out to harm people just for the sake of it, or maybe from some kind of ancient jealousy or grievance" belong to the Unseelie Court (152).

One of the darkest or scary fairies is the Bean Sidhe, also known as the Banshee in popular culture. The Gaelic name, Bean Sidhe, literally means female fairy. She is "one that has adopted a family of ancient origin and screams when one of them is about to die" (Suckling 152). According to W.B. Yeats in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, "Many have seen her as she goes wailing and clapping her hands. The keen (caoine), the funeral cry of the peasantry, is said to be an imitation of her cry." He also notes that when a gathering of banshees appear, and "they wail and sing in chorus, it is for the death of some holy or great one" (116). This Bean

³ Thomas Keightley's *The Fairy Mythology* (1850) states, "The popular belief in Ireland also is, that the Fairies are a portion of the fallen angels, who, being less guilty than the rest, were not driven to hell, but were suffered to dwell on earth. They are supposed to be very uneasy respecting their condition after the final judgement" (381).

Sidhe, the crier of death, is a fitting character for Allingham's "Dream of Death," especially when taking into consideration Allingham's poem "Banshee" which we will discuss at length in Chapter III. His dreams of "Strange Countries," "Flying," and a "Dream of Death" invoke the ideology of the fairy, and the Bean Sidhe in particular.

Allingham's dreams, as we have noted, encompass the landmarks of ancient Ireland, the modern Irish structures, and the strange characteristics of the fairy realm. By invoking all three of the characteristics of the ancient, the modern, and the otherworldly nature of Ireland, Allingham creates Dreamland, a world in which all three exist in harmony. As a "strange" or different being, the fairy offers Allingham a spiritual alternative to Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. In the forward to W.Y. Evans-Wentz book *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (1911), Leslie Shepard poses the famous question from J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, "Do you believe in fairies?" She mentions that in answer to the question, the children in the story shout "Yes!" in order to "save poor Tinker Bell and renew the fairy-faith for another year." According to Shepard,

It is not considered a proper question to put to professors of folklore and mythology. Ever since the science of folklore became established in the nineteenth century, learned scholars have collected and studied fairy tales from country people, particularly in Celtic areas where the fairy-faith has always been strong. But the professors were not committed to the same faith as the storytellers, for whom the fairies were *real* entities—not just interesting relics of folklore. It is one thing to collect stories about fairies—quite another to believe in them. (Forward)

In other words, in order to write the folklore of the Irish peasantry a scholar must garner the same respect for the fairies as the Irish peasantry by believing in the Celtic Fairy-Faith. The term “Celtic Fairy-Faith,” according to W.Y. Evans-Wentz, means the “form of belief in a spiritual realm inhabited by spiritual beings which has existed from prehistoric times until now in...the ancient empire of the Celts” (xxiv).

In his text, Evans-Wentz journeys through an anthropological study of the fairies and their history as a people. His section entitled “Taking Evidence in Ireland” is introduced by Douglas Hyde, a contemporary of W.B. Yeats, President of the Gaelic League and author of *A Literary History of Ireland* (1903). He too talks of a place called *Mullach na Sidhe* by the old people of Ireland and states, “This name is now practically lost, and it is called Fairymount” (27). He also talks of a “bog-slide in the neighboring townland of Cloon-sheever (Sidhbhair or Siabhra),” and writes its meaning as “the Meadow of the Fairies.” He states that this “must have at one time [been] the head-quarters of the Sidhe for a score of miles round it.” Through his talk of the *dinnseanchas*—or place names—inspired by fairy lore, Hyde discusses the anthropological history of the Sidhe. He states,

Of all the beings in the Irish mythological world the *Sidhe* are, however, apparently the oldest and the most distinctive. Beside them in literature and general renown all other beings sink into insignificance. A belief in them formerly dominated the whole of Irish life. The *Sidhe* or the Tuatha De Danann were a people like ourselves who inhabited the hills—not as a rule the highest and most salient eminences, but I think more usually the pleasant undulating slopes or gentle hill-sides—and who lived there a life of their own, marrying or giving in marriage, banqueting or making war, and leading there just as real a life as is our

own. All Irish literature, particularly perhaps the ‘Colloquy of the Ancients’ (*Agallamh na Senorach*) [one of six existing manuscripts from Irish Prehistory] abounds with reference to them. (27-28)

One other of the existing manuscripts from Irish Prehistory, *The Book of Leinster*—currently housed at Trinity University in Dublin—includes *The Book of Invasions* which deals with the coming of the Tuatha De Danann and their eventual exit underground, a subject I will discuss later in this chapter. In his book *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, Evans-Wentz discusses the different theories by which the fairies can be studied—The Naturalistic Theory, The Pygmy Theory, The Druid Theory, and the Mythological Theory; but points that the Mythological Theory is of great importance. The Mythological Theory, he states, “is that fairies are the diminished figures of the old pagan divinities of the early Celts; and many modern authorities on Celtic mythology and folk-lore hold it” (xxxii). To conduct his study, Wentz “made a very careful personal investigation of the surviving Celtic Fairy-Faith by living for many months with and among the people who preserve it” and states that he

compared fairy phenomena and the phenomena said to be caused by gods, genii, daemons, or spirits of different kinds and recorded in the writings of ancient, mediaeval, and modern metaphysical philosophers, Christian and pagan saints, mystics, and seers, and now more or less clearly substantiated by from thirty to forty years of experimentation in psychical sciences.... As a result, I am convinced of the very great value of a serious study of the Fairy-Faith. (xxxiii)

Wentz sets himself apart from “the great majority of men” by claiming that they are “apt to pride themselves on their own exemption from ‘superstition,’ and to smile pityingly at the poor countrymen and countrywomen who believe in fairies” (xxxiii). When they do so, he claims,

“they forget that, with all their own admirable progress in material invention, with all the far-reaching data of their acquired science, with all the vast extent of their commercial and economic conquests, they themselves have ceased to be natural” (xxxiii). The people who have “ceased to be natural” are the people of modern Ireland; the people whose land has been built into the “Cities” with “Great Buildings” that make up a portion of Allingham’s Dreamland. Evans-Wentz also discusses the difference between the belief systems of an Irish peasant and his materialist Anglican land lord who is generally found to be “under the sway of city influence”; whose thought is molded “in matters of education and culture and in matters of touching religion, that they have lost all sympathetic and responsive contact with Nature” (xxxiv). The peasant, on the other hand believes that upon having a psychical experience, he believes that he has seen “one of the ‘good people,’ that is to say a fairy.” He goes on to state,

It is useless to try to persuade him that he is under a delusion: unlike his materialistically-minded lord, he would not attempt nor even desire to make himself believe that what he has seen he has not seen. Not only has he the will to believe, but he has the right to believe; because his belief is not a matter of being educated and reasoning logically, nor a matter of faith and theology—it is a fact of his own individual experiences, as he will tell you.

Most importantly, “such peasant seers” argued frequently with Evans-Wentz “to the effect that ‘One does not have to be educated in order to see fairies’” (xxxiv). Evans-Wentz offers two completely different outlooks on the fairy-faith. One outlook offers the land lord who cannot believe in fairies because of his materialistic views, another offers the peasant who does not possess the ability to not believe in fairies because “it is a fact of his own individual

experiences.” Evans-Wentz offers the testimonies of several different Irish inhabitants in regards to their belief or faith in the fairies.

According to Irish mystics in the Sidhe World, says Evans-Wentz, “on the hills and Greenlands (a great stretch of open country, treeless and grass grown), and on the strand at Lower Rosses Point—called Wren Point by the country-folk—these beings can be seen and their wonderful music heard” (58). He goes on to say that “a well-known Irish artist has shown [him] many drawings, and paintings in oil, of these *Sidhe* people as he often beheld them at those places and elsewhere in Ireland.” The Sidhe people are described as “a race of majestic appearance and marvelous beauty in form human, yet in nature divine.” The highest order of them, he notes, “seems to be a race of beings evolved to a superhuman plane of existence, such as the ancients called gods” This belief is held by the educated Irish seers, though they further the belief to say “that these highest *Sidhe* races still inhabiting Ireland are the ever-young, immortal divine race known to the ancient men of Erin as the Tuatha De Danann” (58-59). Thus, Evans-Wentz establishes that the Tuatha De Danann, the highest order of the Sidhe and a superhuman race, are in fact, the very beings seen and heard by the country-folk of Ireland, and ends his discussion eloquently by stating,

Of all European lands I venture to say that Ireland is the most mystical, and, in the eyes of true Irishmen, as much the Magic Island of Gods and Initiates now as it was when the Sacred Fires flashed from its purple, heather-covered mountain-tops and mysterious round towers, and the Greater Mysteries drew to its hallowed shrines neophytes from the West as well as from the East, from India and Egypt as well as from Atlantis; and Erin’s mystic-seeing sons still watch and wait for the relighting of the Fires and the restoration of the old Druidic Mysteries. (59)

Through the research and documentation of W.Y. Evans-Wentz, it is apparent that the Fairy-Faith was as much alive in 1911 as it is represented in Allingham's writing. Furthermore, the Fairy-Faith is left unquestioned by the country-folk of Ireland, their faith never wavering nor refuted.

Evans-Wentz also substantiates the reality of Sidhe Visions, Otherworlds, Conditions of Seership, the Stature of the Sidhe, the Worlds of the Sidhe, the Influence of the Sidhe on Men, Water Beings, Wood Beings, Sex among the Sidhe, the Social organization of the Sidhe, and the Nourishment of the Higher Sidhe. His evidence is vast and his efforts cannot be argued with, nor shall I replicate all of his evidence for the purposes of this essay. I will, however, delve into a few of the details he has been given by the Irish country-folk. The Sidhe can be divided into two great classes: "those which are shining, and those which are opalescent and seem lit up by a light within themselves. The shining beings appear to be lower in the hierarchies, the opalescent beings are more rarely seen, and appear to hold the positions of the great chiefs or princes among the tribes of Dana" (60). Also, the Sidhe have been seen most frequently, according to one peasant, on the west coast of Ireland. He claims that "the whole west coast from Donegal to Kerry seems charged with a magical power" and that such magical places are "naturally charged with psychical forces, and were for that reason made use of long ago as sacred places." Therefore, the west of Ireland, especially Allingham's birthplace of County Donegal, is the place most abundantly filled with magical powers and the greatest presence of the Sidhe. As to the worlds of the Sidhe, the Irish peasant claimed to Evans-Wentz that "[t]he shining beings belong to the mid-world; while the opalescent beings belong to the heaven-world. There are three great worlds which we can see while we are still in the body: the earth-world, mid-world, and heaven-world" (62). On the influence of the Sidhe on Men, Evans-Wentz has been told that "the water

beings, also, of the shining tribes, [are always dreaded], because [a peasant] felt whenever [he] came into contact with them a great drowsiness of mind and...an actual drawing away of vitality” (63).

Now that we have established that the Sidhe exist, what they look like, and how they live, it is imperative to understand where they came from and how there came to be a faith based on their existence. According to Lady Augusta Gregory in *Gods and Fighting Men: [The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland]* (1904), “It was in a mist the Tuatha de Danaan, the people of the gods of Dana, or as some called them, the Men of Dea, came through the air and the high air to Ireland” (13). Others may chronicle it differently, but according to Lady Gregory, “it was on the first day of Beltaine, that is called now May Day, the Tuatha de Danaan came, and it was to the north-west of Connacht they landed”; yet, the Firbolgs from the South, who had been in Ireland before them “saw nothing but a mist, and it lying on the hills” (14). A fight would ensue between the Firbolgs and the Tuatha De Danaan. Chronicled by Lady Gregory,

It was on a Midsummer day they began the battle. Three times nine hurlers of the Tuatha de Danaan went out against three times nine hurlers of the Firbolgs, and they were beaten, and every one of them was killed.... And when there were but three hundred men left of the eleven battalions of the Firbolgs...Nuada [King of the Tuatha De Danaan] offered them peace, and their choice among the five provinces of Ireland. [The Firbolgs chose Connacht] and lived there and their children after them. (16-17)

The Tuatha de Danaan “took possession of Teamhair...and from that time it was above all other places for its king was the High King over all Ireland” (17). Then came the battle with the

Fomorians—the most “dreadful” army—and another with the Milesians—of Northern Spain—which would result in the exit of the Tuatha De Danaan underground. The Fomorians, called the Fomor by Lady Gregory, were “dreadful” to look at, “and maimed, having but one foot or one hand, and they under the leadership of a giant and his mother” (18). Ostensibly,

...the Fomor, whose dwelling-place was beyond the sea, or as some say below the sea westward, began putting tribute on [the Tuatha De Danaan], the way they would get them under their own rule.... There never came to Ireland an army more horrible or more dreadful than that army of the Fomor. And they were friendly with the Firbolgs and content to leave Ireland to them, but there was jealousy between them and the Men of Dea. (18)

There came a fight between Lugh of the Long Arm—warrior of the Tuatha De Danaan—and Balor of the Evil Eye—warrior of the Fomor—in which Lugh thrust out the eye of Balor and lopped off his head. Inexorably, this was the beginning of the end of the Fomor in Ireland; “[a]nd there were but four men of the Fomor left in Ireland...spoiling corn and milk and fruit, and whatever came from the sea, till they were driven out one Samhain night by the Morrighu and by Angus Og, that the Fomor might never be over Ireland again” (*Gods and Fighting Men* 60).

After an unknown length of time, in which the Tuatha De Danaan held sway over Ireland, Lady Gregory claims that “they were put from it at last” (63). This was due to the coming of the Milesians; a great account of which can be found in Marie Heaney’s *Over Nine Waves: [A Book of Irish Legends]*. In her book, Heaney claims, “In the north of Spain lived another tribe, the Sons of Mil, [also known as the Milesians]...[who] were skilled in magic too, and for generations had been a wandering people” (50). The Milesians would strike a deal with the Tuatha De Danaan that they would “go back to [their] boats and retreat from the shore over the

distance of nine waves” (53). Because they were confident in the magic of their druids the Tuatha De Danaan agreed, but to their detriment the Milesians overcame the waves and killed “three De Danaan Kings and their three queens...and when their followers saw this happen they lost heart” (54). The Milesians won the battle for the land and “divided Ireland into provinces: Ulster in the north, Munster in the south, Leinster in the east and Connacht in the west and, at the center, Tara. Each province had its own king...but the High King, who lived in Tara, ruled the country, helped by the provincial kings and chiefs” (54-55). “As for the Tuatha De Danaan,” Heaney notes, “though they had been defeated by the Milesians at the battle of Tailtinn, they did not leave Ireland.” It was underground they went to “inhabit the mounds and earthworks known as *sidhes*”; while over them, “in the upper kingdom, the human inhabitants of Ireland, the descendants of the Milesians and the Gaels, lived and died, helped and sometimes hindered by the People of the Sidhe” (55). And so was the story of the underground inhabitation of the Tuatha De Danaan.

This was, of course, the era of pagan Ireland, or a Pre-Christianized Ireland. How or exactly when Christianity came to Ireland is unknown, yet the Christianization of Ireland is credited to Ireland’s beloved and once enslaved St. Patrick. According to *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (1989),

We do not know when the first Christian missionaries began work in Ireland, and it is reasonable to assume that a fairly long time elapsed before Ireland as a whole began to leave evidence of Christian culture. Very likely, Christian missionaries arrived in Ireland first in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. (8)

More to the point, however, is St. Patrick’s participation in the Christianization of Ireland. In fact, Patrick “is generally regarded as the greatest of Ireland’s missionaries” (9). Born in western

Britian, St. Patrick claims to have been the son of a decurion—a minor ranking military officer or member of a city council (*Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus*)—and a deacon (*The*

Confession). Captured at the age of sixteen by Irish raiders, he was

shipped as a slave to Ireland, where he remained, probably in north Connacht, for six years; he escaped, travelled 200 miles, and shipped out of Ireland with a pagan crew; the Irish continued to haunt his thoughts, and he returned to them (perhaps as a bishop, though probably not part of any official mission) to preach the gospel... (9)

According to James Bonwick in *Irish Druids and Old Irish Religions* (1894), St. Patrick is said to have “burnt the one hundred and eighty books of the druids”; thus, destroying the superstitious belief in Druidism (14). Before Patrick, the people of Erin “adored things of Faery”; (135) however, Patrick reputedly “blessed the ground, and it swallowed up the Druids” (27). So, like the Tuatha De Danaan, the Druids would exit under the earth to inhabit another world.

Additionally, St. Patrick is most famously known for his initiative in casting out the snakes from Ireland. At present, the limestone coast which had “once been given up to sexual worship,” has been worn “into shapes often tortuous or serpentine.” If tradition is to be believed, “this coast is the site in which St. Patrick “cast the snakes out of Ireland into the sea; that is to say, in other words, that Christianity extirpated the libidinous deities” (129).

St. Columba, or Columbcille—“Columb” meaning Dove and “Cille” meaning Church—, was the Patron Saint of Donegal. In fact, it was his joint English and Scottish brand of Christianity which was dubbed Columban Christianity. St. Columba was a part of the Monastic movement in Ireland. High born to an Irish nobleman, Columba’s participation in the Monastic movement began with a dark incident between his family and another. When the ensuing

argument over a valuable religious text caused Columba's family to go to war with another, he found himself amidst the fight over the ownership of a book. St. Columba was justifiably horrified by the violence and believed that ownership was not worth death. The war was a fight over ownership of knowledge and the worth of literature, the worth of lore. Indeed, Columba's feelings are relative of the idea that in order to have the knowledge of the fairies, one must be violently taken. As we will find in Chapter III, Allingham's "The Fairies" and Yeats's "The Stolen Child" offer readings of such an occasion. The end of the fight found St. Columba in Iona, Scotland as he had stolen away from Ireland to another land, another realm, with the vow to never again return to Ireland. When a dispute arose in the Irish Church, St. Columba was implored to return to Ireland to adjudicate the crisis. In order to honor his vow, Columba return to Ireland with bound feet so as not to physically touch the land of Ireland. His story represents the possibility of a joint religion between Scotland and Northern England. Glen Columbcille, found in County Donegal, already a sacred zone in pagan times, provides the monastery's participation in a spiritual ground. As the Patron Saint of County Donegal, Ireland, St. Columba is the saint with which Allingham would have been most familiar. This, as we have seen, is not unlike Allingham's childhood church upon fairy hill.

St. Brigit of Kildare, another Patron Saint of Ireland, is probably the most relevant to the discussion of fairies and the spiritual realm. While Patrick is responsible for the disappearance of the Druidic Faith, Brigit controversially brings with her a set of baggage full of fairy ancestry. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, St. Brigid of Ireland, incorrectly known as Bridget, was "born in 451 or 452 of princely ancestors at Faughart, near Dundalk, County Louth [and died on the first of] February, 525, at Kildare." Having refused numerous offers of marriage, she became a nun, and "with seven other virgins she settled for a time at the foot of Croghan Hill, but

removed thence to Druin Criadh, in the plains of Magh Life,” where she raised, under a large oak tree, the Church of Kildare, previously named the Convent of *Cill-Dara*, or the church of the oak (Grattan-Flood). *The Catholic Encyclopedia* further recognizes that St. Brigid founded both “a school of art,” and “two monastic institutions, one for men, and the other for women”; upon her death, she was buried to the right of the high altar at Kildare Cathedral with a lavish tomb “erected over her,” but due to the Scandinavian raids,

the relics of St. Brigid [in about 878] were taken to Downpatrick, where they were interred in the tomb of St. Patrick and St. Columba. The relics of the three saints were discovered in 1185, and on 9 June of the following year were solemnly translated to a suitable resting place in Downpatrick Cathedral. (Grattan-Flood)

Intriguingly, St. Brigit is regaled by the peasantry of Ireland as “Brigit, the Mary of the Gael.” Moreover, Lady Gregory writes that St. Brigit was “born at sunrise on the first day of spring, of a bondwoman of Connacht. And it was angels that baptized her and that gave her the name of Brigit, that is a Fiery Arrow.... And all the food she used was the milk of a white red-eared cow that was set apart for her by a druid” (2).

Gregory’s *A Book of Saints and Wonders* (1906) offers twenty-two anecdotes on Brigit, the Mary of the Gaels, which portray Brigit as having both Christian and Pagan affiliations. She is revealed as having the ability to increase everything she put her hand to; to also better the sheep, satisfy the birds, and feed the poor. In one anecdote, Brigit miraculously or magically produces the exact amount of bacon she previously fed to a hungry dog (2). In another, during a visit with her sick mother, Brigit divides the churning “first into twelve parts in honour of the twelve apostles of our Lord; and the thirteenth part she would make bigger than the rest, to the honour of Christ, and that part she would give to strangers and to the poor” (3). We also find

that she interacts with a Druid and creates a Lake of Milk when God blesses her with enough milk for the whole of Leinster. Saint Brigit's Day is the first day of February, which we have already established as her birthday. However, her day is celebrated on the first of February, "for she was good always, and it was her desire to feed the poor, to do away with every hardship, to be gentle with every misery." It is on Saint Brigit's Day the "first of the birds begin to make their nests, and the blessed Crosses are made with straw and are put up in the thatch; for the death of the year is done and the birthday of the year is come" (9-10). As we have seen, tradition remembers St. Brigit to have been an affiliate of both Paganism and Christianity. It was she who was baptized by angels and fed by the milk of a cow given to her by a Druid. Through this account, one cannot argue that the memory of St. Brigit is anything less than a conjoined Christian Saint and Pagan Deity. Furthermore, the name of Brigit has direct ties to the fairy people we know as the Tuatha De Danaan, proving why the Catholic Encyclopedia would record St. Brigit as "St. Brigid of Ireland, incorrectly known as Bridget."

As we have established, the Tuatha De Danaan are also known as the People of the goddess Dana. According to Evans-Wentz in *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*,

The Goddess Dana, called in the genitive Danand, in middle Irish times was named Brigit. And this goddess Brigit of the pagan Celts has been supplanted by the Christian St. Brigit; and, in exactly the same way as the pagan cult once bestowed on the spirits in wells and fountains has been transferred to Christian saints, to whom the wells and fountains have been re-dedicated, so to St. Brigit as a national saint has been transferred the pagan cult rendered to her predecessor. Thus even yet, as in the case of the minor divinities of their sacred fountains, the Irish people through their veneration for the good St. Brigit, render homage to the

divine mother of the People who bear her name Dana,—who are the ever-living invisible Fairy-People of modern Ireland. (284)

The conflicting memory of St. Brigit and her ties to both Christianity and the Tuatha De Danaan, along with St. Patrick's long celebrated career, offer to the Irish a means of enmeshing the ancient pagan traditions of Ireland with the modern Christian religions. There are three Patron Saints of Ireland: St. Patrick, St. Brigit, and St. Columbcille. As was previously mentioned, the three saints were buried together at Downpatrick Cathedral, providing that the ancient Irish beliefs can survive alongside the modern Christian beliefs. This would be appealing to Allingham who was Anglo-Irish, though not a part of the Ascendency. However, as we have discussed, it is he who finds the fairy-like dwellings in the homes of his childhood and remembers fondly the church which sits upon Mullinashee (or Fairy Hill).

On the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism in Ireland, Allingham writes the following in his diary:

All the country gentry and nearly all the well-to-do people were Protestants, having the ascendency naturally belonging to money and education, and their connection with a State-privileged Church was, I imagine, less noticeable; that is, there was little if any political feeling on this head, though plenty of theological aversion and contempt on both sides; and in any sort of public dispute or collision, Catholics and Protestants (Orangemen, mostly of the small farmer class, were those who were apt to show up on such occasions) ranged themselves as by instinct, or chemical affinity, on opposite sides. (*Diary* 20)

In other words, there existed a “theological aversion and contempt on both sides” and the two Christian faiths would fight accordingly. Furthermore, Allingham felt little to no interest in

“neither service nor sermon,” nor did he find any meaning in either faith; yet, “the sense of a solemn stringency of rule and order was deeply impressed, and the smallest infraction, it was felt, might have unimaginable consequences” (*Diary* 22). His inability to muster any sort of “interest or meaning” in the religions offered to him would prove to be an anxiety that would last into his adulthood. While *William Allingham’s Diary* began as an autobiographical text, it was left unfinished at his demise, the text supplemented and edited by his wife, Helen, and D. Radford. One of their additions to Allingham’s text offers, “Willy...was then attending Wray’s School in Church Lane, then the only school in Ballyshannon—indifferently attended by Catholics and Protestants” (*Diary* 28). As a boy, Allingham attended a school unconcerned with religious affiliations; as a man, he had a clear attraction to the belief in and the occurrence of the fairies. Thus, William Allingham found a niche in Ireland as one of many who believe both in the Christian faith as well as the Fairy-Faith of the ancient pagans. As is evidenced in this essay, a faith in fairies was present during in the nineteenth century in conjunction with a staunch belief in Christianity. It would have been easy for Allingham to simply choose to create a world where he could be born of an Anglo-Irish family, with the belief of an ancient Gaelic dispensation.

Allingham’s Political Call to Action

By far the greatest difficulty in arranging a Home Government for Ireland lies in the deep-rooted antagonism I will not call it ineradicable of Catholics and Protestants; the former having, by count of heads, a majority of three to one. When men have learnt to consider a Religious Creed as a body of Symbols, not of doctrines, many political arrangements will become easier. (By the Way 91)

In this section, I will complete a close reading of William Allingham’s poem, “Vivant!” For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to present the poem in its entirety at the start of the section. To maintain the integrity of Allingham’s work, I have endeavored to present the poem in a form similar to that which is printed in the edition published by Reeves and Turner of London.

Vivant!

No need, I hope, to doubt my loyalty ;
 From childhood I was fond of Royalty ;
 To Kings extravagantly dutiful,
 To Queens yet more, if young and beautiful.

How rich their robes! what crowns they all had too !
 And yet how friendly to a small lad too !
 At glorious banquets highly gracing him,
 Beside the lovely Princess placing him.

Their kingdoms' names I did not care about ;
 They lay in Fairyland or thereabout ;
 Their date, though, to forget were crime indeed,—
 Exactly. “Once upon a time” indeed.

And still they reign o'er folk contended, there :
 I hope to have my son presented there—
 At every joyous court in Fairyland,
 Its Cave-Land, Forest-Land, and Airy-Land.

So down with democratic mania !
 Long live great Oberon and Titania,
 Imperial Rulers of those regions !—he
 Be shot who wavers in allegiancy !

And bless all Monarchs in alliance with them,
 Who've no enchanters, dragons, giants with them,
 To keep sweet ladies under lock and key,
 And answer challengers in mocking key ! (*Life and Phantasy* 107)

“Vivant!” the opening poem of William Allingham’s *Fairies, & c.*, calls for the audience to instantly ‘be alive!’ Written amidst Ireland’s tumultuous struggle between a Roman Catholic majority and a Protestant minority, Allingham chooses this as his platform for a political polemic. In doing so, he enters the Irish imagination through the metaphor of the fairy to project the future of Irish politics. Few critics have offered extensive readings of this section as a political allegory; however, as a member of the Church of Ireland and not the Roman Catholic Church, William Allingham found himself barraged with religio-cultural anxieties having to do

with his settler heritage as well as his middle-class socio-economic status, all of which are presented in his work as a political gravitas.

With the British colonization of Ireland, the ancient Gaelic dispensation distinguished by kingship was displaced. This ancient Gaelic dispensation was made up of multiple regional kings, with an overall High King known in Gaelic as the Ard Rí. The Ard Rí was based in the ancient capital city of Tara, found in the defunct Royal province of Meath. In a fictitious example, the Prince of Inishmore, of Sydney Owenson's *Wild Irish Girl* (1806), represents a type of regional king known to ancient Ireland. With the displacement of the Gaelic dispensation and the destruction of the Royal province, the people of Ireland struggled to remain Irish in a country that was quickly overrun with the British royal regime. As the ancient Gaelic dispensation was distinguished by Royalty, the Irish began to see themselves as a royal race. They went so far as to have a quasi-comical variant in which even the poorest Irish peasant possesses royal blood. Amidst this turmoil was the Flight of the Earls in 1607, which would end the Gaelic Order. The Allingham family entered Ireland with the Tudor, specifically Elizabethan Re-conquest causing the major Gaelic noble or royal families to exile themselves to Catholic Continental Europe. Thus, the British royal regime attained victory and the shift in royal ideology went from Gaelic to that of the Tudor and ultimately Jacobean rule.

Allingham's "Vivant!" published in 1889, can be found in a collection of his poetry entitled *Life and Phantasy*. This collection consists of six sections, the fourth of which is titled *Fairies, & c.* and begins with the poem, "Vivant!" Centered on the page to the left of the poem is a small portrait of a child-like character which appears very much like the Puck of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who represents a harmonious, albeit comical, dispensation. Placed next to Allingham's "Vivant!" the first poem of his *Fairies, & c.*, the

portrait represents the harmonious Irish dispensation Allingham attempts to create in his poetry. “Vivant!” is a six stanza poem with four lines per stanza and is written in an AA BB rhyme scheme. With the exception of two stanzas, the poem is written in exact rhyme. The poem’s punctuation includes hyphens, which add to the poem’s tentative position, and exclamation points that call attention to the speaker’s surety by emphasizing his immediate need to end those points in a cry.

“Vivant!” reflects the anxieties born of a colonized Ireland and its national self-determination to re-instate in the modern world a version of that original Gaelic, royal dispensation through the fairy. The word “vivant” is French in origin and suggests the application of the French Revolution of 1790. According to *A New History of Ireland* (1986), the French Revolution inspired the need for a radical movement to direct parliamentary reform and support Catholic tolerance.

The poem begins with the line, “No need, I hope, to doubt my loyalty.” The phrase “I hope,” located in the heart of his opening line, signifies a tentative feeling present in all of Allingham’s works and represents his need to claim his place as an Irishman among other Irishmen. He is able to prove his Irish identity by invoking an ancient Irish race, the fairy.

“Vivant!” is filled with a plethora of words that suggest a royal Irish dispensation. The words “Royalty,” “Kings,” “Queens,” “Princess,” “Rulers,” and “Monarchs,” capitalized and spread throughout the poem, draw attention to the eye and bring the focus of the poem to a modern version of an ancient Ireland. Also found in the poem are the words “rich,” “crowns,” “kingdoms,” “reign” and “court.” While these words are not capitalized, they must be noted with great importance as they are peppered throughout the text. The first stanza of the poem continues with the line, “From childhood I was fond of Royalty.” Allingham’s speaker is not

recently fond of Royalty or the need to invoke royal beings, but has been so since childhood; therefore, he has spent a lifetime with the knowledge of an ancient royal Irish race.

The speaker goes on to state, “To Kings extravagantly dutiful, / To Queens yet more, if young and beautiful.” Queen Victoria of England, who fell in love with Ireland when she was young, was at this time in terrible standing with the Irish populace. This was considered to be partly the fault of her minister Lord John Russell’s exacerbation of the Potato Famine and partly the fault of Queen Victoria’s avoidance of Ireland at the refusal of the Dublin Corporation to congratulate her son, the Prince of Wales, on his marriage. Furthermore, according to James Loughlin in *The British Monarchy and Ireland: 1800 to the Present* (2007),

The British mindset, which conceived the Irish as inevitably pulled between the opposing poles of loyalty to the monarch and separatism, regarded another royal visit an effective counter to the Fenian menace. The focus was provided by an International Exhibition of Arts and Manufacturers in Dublin that the Prince of Wales would open on 8 May 1865. The public reaction to the Prince ranged from tepid to outright antagonistic.... That the visit was not a ringing success is not surprising: 1865 saw the Fenian movement at its strongest, especially in Dublin, and was the optimum year for a rising. A royal presence in the Irish capital to counter its influence was ill considered. (111)

We also find that with the rise of the Fenian movement, “the only Catholic Irishmen the Queen seemed now to approve of were those employed in the Irish constabulary; whose efforts in suppressing the Fenian revolt were rewarded with the term ‘Royal’ being added to the force’s name [Royal Irish Constabulary] (RIC)” (Loughlin 121). Regardless, the line which states, “To Queens yet more, if young and beautiful,” is an observable slight toward the no longer “young

and beautiful” Queen Victoria and a means to introduce the need for a new queen in the form of a fairy.

Foreshadowing a sexual relationship between the speaker and a young fairy queen or princess, Allingham intimates an intimacy, with the lines which state, “At glorious banquets highly gracing him, / Beside the lovely Princess placing him.... And still they reign o’er folk contented, there: / I hope to have my son presented there.” The creation of a child between Allingham’s speaker and a fairy princess allows for the creation of a new Irish race or a United Irish movement in which all who are Irish in any manner are Irish in all manners.

The line which states, “And still they reign o’er folk contented, there,” presents a Fairyland in which the inhabitants are content with the royal regime. Also, by placing the words “o’er” and “folk” adjacent to one another, Allingham suggests a need to resort back to an old Irish dispensation or an Ireland prior to its colonization. The word “folk” sounds like the German ideal of the “Volk,” which is the romantic notion of a return to the wisdom or genius of the past. One ideal of the Romantic Movement was a declaration of nationalism made often in the form of folklore. Famous German folklorists, the Brothers Grimm, are noted for their rigorous assembling of the prehistoric tales of Germany’s natural inhabitants. In fact, the epigraph to the Brothers Grimm, written in 1824, suggests the return to “Fancy” or a pre-industrialized world in which the fairy exists. The epigraph begins with the following lines:

O happy, happy season,
 Ere bright Fancy bent to Reason;
 When the spirit of our stories
 Filled the mind with unseen glories;
 Told of creatures of the air,

Spirits, fairies, goblins rare...

We find that the epigraph begins in a time of “Fancy” where popular lore was “filled...with unseen glories” of “spirits,” “fairies,” and “goblins.” However, the most important lines in the epigraph can be found further in the poem: “But the fays and all are gone, / Reason, reason reigns alone.” These lines provide that without the fairies of ancient lore, all that is left is the reason of the industrial period. The brothers, it seems, believed that one should find a middle ground between emotion and thought, the past and the present. These ideals were present in the mind of William Allingham as he wants to not only return to the time of the fairy, but to use the fairy as a vehicle for a modern return to or a redaction of an ancient Irish dispensation.

The word “folk” also implies the common people or peasantry of Ireland who possess the blood of the Irish royal race. The poem continues with the lines, “Their kingdoms’ names I did not care about; / They lay in Fairyland or thereabout.” The use of the word “kingdoms” further invokes the idea of a royal Irish dispensation, especially when they lay in Fairyland. According to the *OED*, Fairyland is the country home of the fairies; used in a correspondence between Thomas Gray and a N. Nicholls in 1843, “King Arthur was not dead, but translated to Fairyland.” Allingham’s use of “kingdoms” and “Fairyland” within the same stanza was not accidental, but quite deliberate. The speaker goes on to state, “At every joyous court in Fairyland.” These locutions discuss “kingdoms” and “courts,” two words highly suggestive of royal dwellings. These royal dwellings exist in Fairyland, the resting place of King Arthur, the most beloved king in British and Welsh Celtic lore. Similarly, yet more importantly is Oisín of Irish Mythology who translates to Tír-na-n-Og (the land of youth), one of many after-worlds. In his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, W.B. Yeats states, “According to many stories, Tír-na-n-Og: is the favourite dwelling of the fairies. Some say it is triple the island of the living,

the island of victories, and an underwater land” (204). In other words, Tír-na-n-Og represents the multiple realms within Fairyland.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852 – 1932), an Irish antiquarian, mentor, patron, sometime collaborator and intimate friend of W.B. Yeats, traveled Ireland in an effort to collect and record the lore of the Irish peasantry. She was an Irish dramatist and folklorist and, along with W.B. Yeats and others, co-founded the Abbey Theatre. *Gods and Fighting Men: [The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland]* (1904), written by Lady Augusta Gregory, details quite literally the story of the gods and fighting men of Irish legends. The Tuatha de Danaan derive from the pre-Christian gods of Ireland. According to Lady Gregory, “It was in a mist the Tuatha de Danaan, the people of the gods of Dana, or as some called them, the Men of Dea, came through the air and the high air to Ireland.... It was on the first day of Beltaine, that is called now May Day, the Tuatha de Danaan came, and it was to the north-west of Connacht they landed” (13-14).

Lady Gregory’s work is crucial to the discussion of William Allingham’s “Vivant!” as it is her work *Gods and Fighting Men* that details the story of Oisín. As I have previously mentioned, the work of Lady Gregory was to translate into English the original lore of the Irish peasantry. The story of Oisín found in her work is the standard issue story written in the same tradition of the Irish peasantry. Oisín was the son of Finn Mac Cumhal, the leader of the Fianna of Ireland. The *Fianna Fáil*, or the Fianna of Ireland, were small semi-independent warrior bands in early Ireland who lived apart from society in the forests as mercenaries who could be called upon by kings in the time of war. Their story can be found in the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythology. Finn, according to Lady Gregory,

was a king and a seer and a poet; a Druid and a knowledgeable man; and everything he said was sweet-sounding to his people. And a better fighting man than Finn never struck his hand into a king's hand, and whatever any one ever said of him, he was three times better.... And if he was quiet in peace he was angry in battle, and Oisín his son and Osgar his son's son followed him in that.

(153)

Oisín represents a man's ability to exist in Tír-na-n-Og, one of many afterworlds, as Allingham wishes to exist in Ireland. Oisín's son Osgar is the product of the relationship between Oisín and Niamh of the Golden Hair who was the daughter of the king of the Country of the Young. This is not unlike Allingham's speaker in "Vivant!" who creates a son with a fairy princess and allows for the creation of a new Irish race or a United Irish movement as we have previously discussed.

According to Gregory, "Some say it was hundreds of years [Oisín] was in the Country of the Young, and some say it was thousands of years he was in it; but whatever time it was, it seemed short to him" (386). Tír-na-n-Og offers liminality in the form of space and time in which Oisín, like Allingham, could exist in and out of Ireland. This Country of the Young provides an afterworld which allows Oisín to live hundreds or thousands of years without aging. Lady Gregory recounts, "It is long and lasting your life will be in it, and you yourself will be young for ever" (387). Also, Oisín recalls, "And I did not feel the time passing, and it was a long time I stopped there...till the desire came on me to see Finn and my comrades again" (*GFM* 388). At the end of his time in Tír-na-n-Og Oisín was reminded by Niamh of the following:

"And O Oisín," she said, "I tell it to you now for the third time, if you once get down from the horse, you will be an old man, blind and withered, without liveliness, without mirth, without running, without leaping. And it is a grief to me,

Oisín,” she said, “you ever to go back to green Ireland; and it is not now as it used to be, and you will not see Finn and his people, for there is not now in the whole of Ireland but a Father of Orders and armies of saints; and here is my kiss for you pleasant Oisín,” she said, “for you will never come back any more to the Country of the Young.” (*GFM* 388)

After hearing this, Oisín chose to go back to Ireland to see his father, Finn and the Fianna of Ireland, and it was then he was prey to the enchanted stone trough that was used by the Fianna. Oisín tells of this experience, highlighting the consequences exactly as Niamh had told them.

I was turning to go away and saw the stone trough that the Fianna used to be putting their hands in, and it full of water. And when I saw it I had such a wish and such a feeling for it that I forgot what I was told, and I got off the horse. And in the minute all the years came on me, and I was lying on the ground, and the horse took fright and went away and left me there, an old man, weak and spent, without sight, without shape, without comeliness, without strength or understanding, without respect. (*GFM* 390)

By placing his feet on the ground of Ireland, Oisín was mortal once again. Having lived in Tír-na-n-Og, the Country of the Young, Oisín existed, like fairies, a native of Ireland yet an inhabitant of another realm. By invoking the fairy realm as well as the idea of the Irish after-worlds, Allingham brilliantly and quite successfully creates a modern, yet distinctly Irish dispensation and value system based on ancient precepts and practices. In other words, he travels to the past to figure out the future. W.B. Yeats too uses this modern version of an

original Gaelic dispensation that Allingham has created in this poem by promulgating the Arts and Craftsism Movement in Ireland.⁴

On the appearance of Tír-na-n-Og Yeats states, “It never appears unless to announce some national trouble” (*FFT* 204). In concordance with this statement, Allingham uses the idea of the different realms of the fairy and the idea of fairy royalty to invoke in the imaginary the story of Oisín, son of Finn, the King of the Fianna of Ireland. As Oisín is Ireland’s royal prince in its oldest tradition and Tír-na-n-Og an enchanted afterworld which only appears at the announcement of national trouble, Allingham invokes these ideas as a call for a nationalist movement in his poem, “Vivant!” He has his speaker state, “At every joyous court in Fairyland, / Its Cave-Land, Forest-Land, and Airy-Land.” Fairyland is not one entity, but a realm that consists of others. Allingham writes “Cave-Land,” “Forest-Land,” and “Airy-Land” with a carefully placed hyphen before the capitalized “Land.” This hyphen adds emphasis to the word “Land” as its appearance stands out on the page. During this time, the land of Ireland was moving from ownership between the British or Anglo-Irish, to the Roman Catholic inhabitants in the Home Rule Campaign’s ally, the Land Campaign of the 1860s. According to the *Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (1989), with an imminent Land Act that was raising expectations “everyone was now determined ‘to have a bit of land’. The landlords, still socially powerful, had become the perceived enemy” (211). As a member of the middle class, William Allingham found himself a man apart—born in Ireland, yet of settler ancestry and a member of the Church of Ireland.

As previously noted, Allingham wrote in his diary that “all the country gentry and nearly all the well-to-do people were Protestants. ...[I]n any sort of public dispute or collision,

⁴ Another example of Yeats interest in creating a modern version of an original Gaelic dispensation is found in his promotion of John Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice* as well as Yeats’s place as a leading figure in the Irish Literary Revival and his nationalistic stance as an Irish Senator.

Catholics and Protestants...ranged themselves as by instinct, or chemical affinity, on opposite sides” (Allingham 20). He states,

I remember arguing with my nurse Kitty Murray, (who only died this year, 1883, at the supposed age of ninety-three—but I don’t think it was she who took me to the chapel), for the superiority of Protestantism because ‘the Catholics, you see, are poor people’; to which Kitty replied, ‘It may be different in the next world.’
(*Diary 25*)

By 1870, with the forthcoming success of the Land Campaign, Allingham felt a great anxiety toward his place in Ireland. This vulnerability as an Anglican in a Catholic Ireland would become great for Allingham as the middle-class Catholic majority was increasingly being made powerful since the Catholic Emancipation of 1829. Dublin Anglican Theobald Wolfe Tone, who coined the phrase “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter,” was a leading figure in the Society of the United Irishmen and was killed for his efforts in the 1798 Rebellion to create an equality of religions in Ireland. The 1798 Rebellion of Ireland was launched by the Society of the United Irishmen whose major rallying cry was “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter.” The Society of the United Irishmen, according to *A New History of Ireland*, believed that “no reform would be practicable which did not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion” (294).

Not quite a century had passed at the time Allingham would write this poem. As an Anglican in a Roman Catholic majority, Allingham would relate to Theobald Wolfe Tone and his need to create equality for all Irishmen. By stating, “At every joyous court in Fairyland, / Its Cave-Land, Forest-Land, Airy-Land,” Allingham creates an Ireland where all three “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter” could co-exist. The word “Airy-Land,” when used in its Gaelic form *Eire-Land*, sounds and looks like Ireland; thus, Allingham names Ireland as another realm in

which the fairies exist. This produces a liminality in which the fairies co-exist with the inhabitants of Ireland as well as the inhabitants of the different realms within Fairyland.

Allingham's political gravitas is particularly present in the fifth stanza. His speaker states,

So down with democratic mania!
 Long live great Oberon and Titania,
 Imperial Rulers of those regions!—he
 Be shot who wavers in allegiancy!

The first line of the stanza gives way to highly political speech. Allingham has his speaker call democracy a mania. In his diary, Allingham details a conversation between himself, Tennyson and Tennyson's eldest son, Hallam, in which they discuss both nationalism and democracy. Having claimed that Allingham has an English name and that he is English in every way Tennyson claims, "But you happened to be born in Ireland, therefore you are for it." Allingham notes, "I pleaded that I was more impartial than most people; 'if I were Nationalist I might be popular in Ireland and perhaps get into Parliament if I liked.'" Allingham most likely means the Irish bloc in the Westminster Parliament, from where Ireland had been ruled since the 1800/1801 Act of Union. He may be "more impartial" than some Irish men and women, but it's important to note that he never claims full impartiality. One could certainly argue that Allingham's real opinion is along the lines of his suggestion, "Suppose England tried leaving them to themselves" (*Diary* 325). What would Ireland look like without England? It would undoubtedly be akin to the multi-land dispensation imagined in Allingham's "Vivant!" Furthermore, Tennyson and Allingham shared a discussion of William Morris's *Justice* and his theories on Democratic Socialism. William Morris's brand of socialism appealed to the likes of Yeats in that it brought to the foreground an access to art for everyone: the house beautiful shouldn't be the province of the

elite alone. Allingham writes that he fears democratic socialism if it's imposed by “atheists and anarchists” (*Diary* 326). It is therefore probable that he wants thorough-going reforms based on order and a spiritual sensibility—qualities that the Fairies afford one.

The speaker of Allingham’s “Vivant!” goes on to state, “Long live great Oberon and Titania.” Oberon, the King of the Fairies, found in Medieval Germanic Literature, but best known for his role in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, is invoked along with his Queen, Titania, as the fairy royalty of the Irish dispensation to replace the reigning British royal regime. He calls them the “Imperial Rulers” with a capital ‘R’ to indicate their position as Ireland’s ultimate sovereign in the form of the fairy. The stanza ends in a violent claim that “—he / Be shot who wavers in allegiancy!” Allingham’s speaker offers a political call to action, specifically violent in nature, against those who stand in the way of the united Ireland that was the ideology of the Society of the United Irishman. In other words, Allingham’s political gravitas is the foundation of the Celtic Twilight and Allingham himself should be seen as an active member of the literary aspect of this movement and its call for nationalism in Ireland.

The “Fireside Magic” of the Fairy Realm

William Allingham’s “Fireside Magic,” also published in the Reeves and Turner collection *Life and Phantasy* (1889), is the fourth poem in the section entitled “Fairies, etc.” Printed in three columns, the poem consists of ten stanzas formed of eight lines each, except for stanza nine which has twelve. Each stanza is prefaced by a roman numeral creating a political gravitas with the physicality of the poem. The roman numeral is not incidental. As in epic poetry, the roman numeral stands as a symbol for monument; hence, Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” must

be included in this study. As we will find, Allingham uses the element of Time as well as the written word to present a nationalistic move to a modern Ireland that is united in her differences.

“Fireside Magic” begins with the lines: “Listen what transporting magic/ I have nightly at command” (128). The “transporting” that Allingham mentions offers two readings. It could literally mean “transporting”; as in the transportation of someone to another place. In our case, it would seem that the “transporting magic” allows the transportation between the realms of the fairies. It could also suggest the idea of the transcendence of time. In other words, “transporting magic” could be the magic that allows for an Ireland full of its colonial baggage on the edge of a modern world. This liminality represents an opportunity for Ireland to change her direction, and as Allingham argues throughout his works, to find in modern times an Ireland not unlike the Ireland of the ancient Gaelic dispensation. This is an idea we have already seen in Allingham’s “Vivant!” where the creation of a child between Allingham’s speaker and a fairy princess allows for the creation of a new Irish race or a United Irish movement in which all who are Irish in any manner are Irish in all manners.

Time is the central conceit in Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” as he continues to use this idea in the following lines: “Now one May-time, spray-time, gay time,/ In the shrubbery do I rove,/ Chatting to a pretty damsel/ Half in pique and half in love” (130). The locutions used in this statement are deliberate. May-time, as Allingham represents it, is the time when a “pretty damsel” is filled with half arousal and attraction and half a feeling of love. The idea of May-time implies the celebration of the first day of May. Called Beltaine in Gaelic, the first day of May is celebrated as “the return of growth and the end of decline within the cycle of life” (Grimassi 2). According to Raven Grimassi in *Beltane* (2001),

Among the Celtic people the celebration of May was called Beltane, meaning “bright fire,” due to the bonfires associated with the ancient rites of this season.

This festival occasion was designed as a celebration of the return of life and fertility to a world that has passed through winter season. It is the third of the four great Celtic fire festivals of the year: Beltane, Imbolc, Lughnasahd, and Samhain.

Beltane was traditionally celebrated at the end of April [on May Eve]. (4-5)

Beltaine, as we have previously discussed, marks the arrival of the Fairy People or the Tuatha De Danaan in Ireland. According to Lady Gregory in *Gods and Fighting Men: [The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland]* (1904), “it was on the first day of Beltaine, that is called now May Day, the Tuatha de Danaan came, and it was to the north-west of Connacht they landed” (14). Furthermore, W.Y. Evans-Wentz in *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (1911) mentions a first account testimony given to him by seers of fairies in Ireland in which the *good people* steal butter on May Day if they are given the chance. He notes, “If a person enters a house then, and churning is going on, he must take a hand in it, or else there will be no butter. And if fire is given away on May Day nothing will go right for the whole year” (43).

Another account of May-Day superstitions can be found in Lady Francesca Speranza Wilde’s *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887). This account goes as follows:

One day in May a young girl lay down to rest at noontide on a fairy rath and fell asleep--a thing of great danger, for the fairies are strong in power during the May month, and are particularly on the watch for a mortal bride to carry away to the fairy mansions, for they love the sight of human beauty. So they spirited away the young sleeping girl, and only left a shadowy resemblance of her lying on the rath.

Evening came on, and as the young girl had not returned, her mother sent out messengers in all directions to look for her. At last she was found on the fairy rath, lying quite unconscious, like one dead. (137)

The celebration of Beltaine is a pre-Christian tradition which helps to assuage Allingham's anxieties with the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions. As I established in the section on the spiritual realm, Allingham is not anti-religion, but spiritual.

The first stanza continues with the following lines:

Here with feet upon the fender,
 In the moving of my hand.
 O how soft and instantaneous
 Is the waftage that I feel! (128)

We find Allingham's speaker at the beginning of his journey with his feet upon a fender. According to the *OED*, a fender is something that serves to fend off something else. We also find that by moving his hand, the speaker possesses the "magic" to bring about a "soft and instantaneous...waftage." Also according to the *OED*, waftage is the passage through air or space, which fits seamlessly with the prior discussion on transportation through time. The speaker, standing where he can fend off anyone or anything that could hinder his magic, is able to propel himself through air and/or space. As I have mentioned in a prior section, this ability to fly through the air is fairy-like. Also, the idea of a "soft and instantaneous...waftage" provides Allingham's speaker the ability to travel back through Ireland's history as well as the various realms associated with the fairy.

The poem continues to synthesize magical experiences to move forward through time. Pulling together a variety of experiences, we are allowed to come to realize how far Ireland has come and where she could go in the future. The second stanza goes as follows:

Now I'm by a lake enchanted,
 Folded in a winding wood;
 Gates of lily-cruled marble
 Gleam upon the shadowy flood;
 Elfin music trembles round it:
 Who can tell if that be boat
 With a shining pilot spirit-pilot,
 Or a golden star afloat? (128)

Now the speaker has wafted to stand “by a lake enchanted.” Allingham’s speaker is quick to point that it is not simply a lake, but “a lake enchanted.” According to the *OED*, to be enchanted is to be “invested with magical powers or properties,” or to be “bewitched [or] laid under a spell.” In other words, this “lake enchanted” by which the speaker is standing is invested with magical powers, having been bewitched.⁵ Next we find that the lake is “folded in a winding wood” with “gates of lily-cruled marble” which “gleam[s] upon the shadowy flood.”

As we know, Ireland is a lush land of rolling hills, raths, rocky mountains and rainwater filled rivers. However, it is Ireland’s otherworld that is noted for its fairy filled forests. This brings to mind Shakespeare’s forest of fairies found in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”; however, a less ubiquitous fairy legend is that of “The Forest Fairy.” Edward Hugessen

⁵ According to Evans-Wentz, “...there followed the most weird legend I have ever heard in Celtic lands about Druids and magic. One afternoon Patrick Waters pointed out to me the field, near the sea coast opposite Innismurray, in which the ancient menhir containing the ‘enchantment’ used to stand; and, at another time, he said that a bronze wand covered with curious marks (or else interlaced designs) was found not far from the ruined dolmen and *allée couverte* on the farm of Patrick Braun, about two miles southward” (52).

Knatchbull-Hugessen in his *Stories for my Children* (1869) talks of a Forest Fairy who lived in a Royal tree. This Royal tree, he states, was located in

a large wood, full of very tall trees, so thick with their beautiful foliage that the rays of the sun could scarcely force their way through in the brightest summer day; but underneath the boughs it was right pleasant to walk, for there you found beautiful shade, and the mossy turf beneath your feet was soft as velvet. (113)

In this Forest, “dwelt the loveliest little Fairy that any one ever set eyes upon. She was about seven inches high, of perfect face and form, and with a queenly look about her which inspired respect, just as her beauty and sweet manners compelled people to love the very sight of her” (114). Similarly, “Wood Beings” have been described to W.Y Evans-Wentz as being “of a shining silvery colour with a tinge of blue or pale violet, and with dark purple-coloured hair” (64).

As I have previously mentioned, the second stanza of Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” tells of a “shadowy flood.” It is crucial to understand the placement of Allingham’s poems in his *Life and Phantasy* collection by Reeves and Turner. As we have established, “Fireside Magic” is the fourth poem in the section entitled “Fairies, etc.” Moreover, the “Fairies, etc.” section is preceded by three sections, one of which is entitled, “Shadowings.” Shadows, often used in literature as a symbol of foreboding, conjure the unseemly or seedier side of Irish fairy lore, a subject I will deal with in Chapter III. However, for the purposes of this section, we must consider the work of St. John D. Seymour, *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology* (1913), in which he concentrates on the blending of Irish fairy lore with sorcery. A Church of Ireland antiquarian, Seymour, like Allingham, would have been interested in the religious practices other than that of the Anglican Ascendency. The combination of fairy lore and sorcery, Seymour states, is a

byproduct of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland which split the country into two “opposing elements, the Celtic and the English” (2). He goes on to claim that while a widespread belief in witchcraft (also known in popular culture as a form of dark magic) would have been blocked by the ruling English religion, it was “inextricably blended” with the fairy lore of Celtic Ireland. Such a subject is tangential to this work, but it must be considered as it is this apparent blending found in Allingham’s “Fireside Magic.” We must take from Seymour the proof that a dark, foreboding, shadowy magic did exist in Celtic Ireland though small its practices were due to the presence of English Protestantism and the anti-Catholic penal laws against the propagation of literature by sympathizers of the Roman Catholic Church.

The second stanza of “Fireside Magic” continues with the “trembling” presence of “Elfin music.” Elves are described by W.Y. Evans-Wentz as “a goblin race who take special delight in misleading travelers and in playing mischievous tricks on men” (320). Furthermore, according to the *OED*, a goblin is “a mischievous and ugly demon”; therefore, the presence of Elfin music allows for a foreboding and ominous tone. In addition, Lady Wilde states,

It is sometimes possible, by the spells of a powerful fairy-man, to bring back a living being from Fairy-land. But they are never quite the same after. They have always a spirit-look, especially if they have listened to the fairy music. For the fairy music is soft and low and plaintive, with a fatal charm for mortal ears. (38)

Allingham’s speaker states, “Who can tell if that be boat / With a shining pilot spirit-pilot, / Or a golden star afloat?” (128). As I have mentioned, this second stanza of Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” is chock full of references to dark magic, demonology or death. By questioning the appearance of a boat with a “shining pilot spirit-pilot,” Allingham conjures the lore of traveling by boat to the Land of the Dead. The most famous account in Celtic lore is that

of King Arthur whose body is sent by boat to Avalon to await his return to Camelot. In Irish lore the story of St. Brendan comes to mind. While a factual person, St. Brendan's exploits are remembered in embellished accounts. Reported to have discovered America, his is a story of setting out on a perilous voyage, not knowing what may transpire. Leaving from Kerry, St. Brendan traveled toward the west. This spawned the idea of a progress toward death into the western sea, or a passage into death or the afterworld.

The "shining pilot" conjures the idea of the "Shining Beings" described to W.Y. Evans-Wentz by an Irish mystic. Upon asking for their description, Evans-Wentz was told,

It is very difficult to give any intelligible description of them. The first time I saw them with great vividness I was lying on a hill-side alone in the west of Ireland, in County Sligo: I had been listening to music in the air, and to what seemed to be the sound of bells, and was trying to understand these aerial clashings in which wind seemed to break upon wind in an ever-changing musical silvery sound. Then the space before me grew luminous, and I began to see one beautiful being after another. (61)

Of spirits, Evans-Wentz describes "Theories about Pygmy Fairies." The pygmy, according to the *OED*, is "a member of a race of very small people" including the elf, the pixie, and the puck. The most famous account of a pygmy is Shakespeare's Puck, candidly named for the puck pygmy, "an evil, malicious, or mischievous [sprite], spirit or demon of popular belief." Per Evans-Wentz, the Puck Pygmy is a member of the earth inhabiting fairies who fall under the umbrella of the term, Gnome. More importantly, however, the pygmies "inhabiting the air are called Sylphs. These Sylphs, commonly described as little spirits like pygmies in form, correspond to most of the fairies who are not of the Tuatha De Danann or 'gentry' type, and who

as a race are beautiful and graceful” (241). From this, we can determine that the “shining pilot spirit-pilot” of Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” is undoubtedly of or relating to the pygmy fairy; thus, providing that the second stanza of the poem describes “a lake enchanted” with dark, perhaps demonic magic, a boat guided by a mischievous or somewhat evil spirit and the music that would accompany him.

The third stanza of the poem carries the speaker from this dark enchanted lake to a “dell and greenwood” with a “band of merry men.” Both the dell and the greenwood are characteristics distinct of an ancient untouched Ireland. The dell, as indicated by the *OED*, is a “deep natural hollow or vale of no great extent, the sides usually clothed with trees or foliage” otherwise known as the greenwood. The last two lines of the third stanza state, “Sweetly sung, those ancient ballads / To the harp at dim twilight” (128). The two seemingly simple lines are in reality two of the most important lines in the poem. As we have already determined, the music of Allingham’s remembrances is “Elfin music,” the music of foreboding. Yet, in this stanza, Allingham’s speaker refers to ballads that are “sweetly sung.” We cannot know whether Allingham intended for us to understand the music to be sweet or if the music is sung by sweet voices. Either way, it seems that this fits directly with Lady Wilde’s claim that fairy music “is soft and low and plaintive, with a fatal charm for mortal ears” (*AL* 38). In other words, one should be careful when listening to what simply appears to be a “sweetly sung” ballad. These ballads are referred to by Allingham as “ancient ballads.” This word “ancient” invokes the ancient Irish genius we have discussed in prior sections. By referring to the “ancient ballads,” Allingham furthers his argument for finding a place for the ancient Irish genius in a modern Ireland.

The last line of the stanza states, “To the harp at dim twilight.” The harp is the classic symbol of Ireland. Diarmuid Ó Giolláin in *Locating Irish Folklore* (2000) states,

The harp itself—chosen as the symbol of the United Irishmen—formerly held an esteemed place in Gaelic elite culture.... In 1808, the Irish Harp Society was founded in order to promote the harp. The founders were Bunting and Dr. James McDonnell, a Protestant doctor from an old Gaelic family and a leading patron of Gaelic culture, of science and of medicine. Their intention was both to teach the harp to blind boys and girls so that they could make a living and ‘to promote the study of the Irish language, history and antiquities.’ (97)

It is clear from the abovementioned quotation that the harp, as the symbol of the Irish Harp Society, became the symbol of an Irish antiquarian. While there is no documentation which deliberately claims Allingham as an Irish antiquarian, it is quite clear through his poetry, autobiographical text, and his literary associations that Allingham’s agenda was that of an Irish antiquarian. As we have already seen, William Allingham shared correspondence with Irish antiquarians such as George Petrie.

We also find that “a harp with the motto It Is New Strung and Shall be Heard was the insignia of the United Irishmen, who sought to infuse the popular mind with French revolutionary principles” (Thuente 7). According to Mary Helen Thuente in *The Harp Re-Strung*, [*The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism*] (1994),

The United Irish Society, founded in Belfast and Dublin in the autumn of 1791, was originally dedicated to achieving civil rights for Catholics and parliamentary reform through a “Union” of Irishmen of all religious persuasions. But the United Irishmen’s original constitutional focus was transformed during the 1790s into a

movement seeking separation from England by means of physical force. In 1791, the society was largely composed of middle-class radicals who wished to build upon the concessions from England achieved by the Volunteers and other patriotic reformers during the 1780s. (1)

One of the leading founders of the United Irishmen was Theobald Wolfe Tone whom we have previously discussed in the section on Allingham's "Vivant!" It was he who coined the term "Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter." It was also he who wrote in his journal "The harpers again. Strum. Strum and be hanged" of the harpers who strum to promote the study of the Irish language, history and antiquities, which has caused many critics to believe that cultural nationalism played no part in the United Irish movement (Thuente 5). They would, however, be incorrect. Wolfe Tone's poem, "Ierne United," states,

Her harp then delighted the nations round,
By its music entranc'd, their own suff'rings were drown'd,
In Arts, and in Learning, the foremost was she,
And Ireland United was Happy and Free,
With her Ballinamoney, & etc. (Thuente 237)

The United Irish movement would give rise to the 1798 Rebellion and eventually the United Irish newspapers, songs and songbooks, as well as Young Ireland poetry, all of which use the literary outlet to propagate a political call for cultural nationalism.⁶ As we will see, Allingham uses this ideology at the closing of "Fireside Magic."

The symbol of the harp, present at dim twilight in Allingham's "Fireside Magic," offers a chance for Ireland to remember what she once was and to use that memory to craft her future.

⁶ For a more in depth study of these aspects of the United Irish movement, please see Mary Helen Thuente's *The Harp Re-Strung, [The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism]* (1994).

This idea is present in W.B. Yeats's *The Celtic Twilight*. For Yeats, the Celtic Twilight is not the end of an era, but the dawn of a new one. He states,

Time drops in decay
 Like a candle burnt out.
 And the mountains and woods
 Have their day, have their day;
 But, kindly old rout
 Of the fire-born moods.
 You pass not away. (Yeats)

The word twilight also symbolizes the liminal time between day and night where time transcends and the precipice upon which the speaker stands, when he must choose to look back or move forward. However, Allingham's "Fireside Magic," like Yeats's *Celtic Twilight*, offers the chance for Ireland to do both. Both Allingham and Yeats see Ireland at a threshold with a need to create a new Ireland. With a rejection of democratic mania as portrayed in Allingham's "Vivant!" the fairy offers an alternative through which Ireland can reconnect to the past, return to a pre-modern Irish genius. Coupled with the liminality present in this stanza, Allingham offers a chance for Ireland to view her history, and learn from it; to recreate what once was while keeping an eye toward a modern Ireland.

Moving into the fourth stanza of "Fireside Magic" we find that Allingham's speaker has moved again to another place, perhaps another realm.

Now I'm with a serious tutor,
 Taking me a country walk;
 Leaving no field-sight unnoticed

In his meditative talk.
 Clumsy-gay, pedantic-humble,
 He's a mild and stubborn saint;
 Pure and wise, and widely honour'd,
 Spite of all his Foy-Bells quaint. (Allingham 129)

The first two lines of this stanza depict our speaker in the country with a “serious tutor,” providing that intelligence can be found in country life and its inhabitants. By placing his speaker in the country with a “serious tutor” Allingham furthers an argument for the truth behind the lore of the peasantry. This intelligent tutor of the country represents the truth in a belief of and a belief in fairies, which coincides brilliantly with Allingham’s placing of his “Fireside Magic” in the section entitled, “Fairies, etc.”

We find that “Clumsy-gay, pedantic-humble, / He’s a mild and stubborn saint.” In other words, Allingham sees this intelligent country tutor as a saint. According to the *OED*, one definition of the word saint is “To ascribe holy virtues or a sacred character to.” Thus, it appears that this “serious tutor” is sacred to Allingham’s speaker. He is also “pure and wise, widely honour’d, / Spite of all his Foy-bells quaint.” The first part of this statement is indicative of an honor for all that is pure and wise. Again, Allingham points his audience to the past to the original ancient Irish genius. This Irish genius, as I have stated, can be found in Ireland’s peasantry and their pure, unadulterated faith in the fairies of the past. The word “spite” offers a couple of remarkable, if not slightly contradicting readings. This statement could mean that in spite of all his Foy-Bells he is quaint. Or, it could mean to spite his Foy-Bells, he is quaint. The word Foy, according to the *OED*, is equal to the word Faith. In other words, Foy-Bells could also mean Faith-Bells or, more accurately, Church-Bells.

In the fifth and sixth stanzas, Allingham's speaker moves to a lively picnic and then to the Thessalian valley. When discussing the picnic, the speaker talks of lively lays, or songs, which are warbled and "Help'd with many a killing glance." It is difficult to understand why a lively picnic with music would be accompanied with a killing glance. However, in the sixth stanza, we find the speaker "At the *buffet* of a hell." As recorded in the *OED*, the word buffet is a blow or a stroke as in the context of a fight. Also according to the *OED*, hell is a place of turmoil and discord. The "killing glance," along with the "*buffet* of a hell," offers a picture of Ireland as it stands in the late nineteenth century. W.B. Yeats, in his *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*, states,

I remember sitting upon somebody's knee, looking out of an Irish window at a wall covered with cracked and falling plaster, but what wall I do not remember, and being told that some relation once lived there. I am looking out of a window in London. It is in Fitzroy Road. Some boys are playing in the road and among them a boy in uniform, a telegraph-boy perhaps. When I ask who the boy is, a servant tells me that he is going to blow the town up, and I go to sleep in terror.

(5)

Yeats writes with the despair of a child who is not merely scared, but *terrified*. It is apparent through this statement as well as Allingham's poetry that the idea of turmoil and discord, fighting and killing is not uncommon to Yeats or Allingham. As we move through the realms in Allingham's "Fireside Magic," it appears that they are juxtaposed with Ireland's tumultuous past. The poem claims that "curtains closed make morn and midnight" and stanza five ends with the statement, "Little heed the stealing dawn." As we have discussed, twilight symbolizes the liminal time between day and night where time is transcendent and the speaker must choose to

look back or move forward. Allingham's "steeling dawn" represents that which follows the "dim twilight." What will dawn bring? Allingham leaves stanza five with an understandable anxiety toward the future. In looking at the turmoil of the past and the uncertainty of the future, Allingham understands that moving forward requires a certain level of blind faith, a faith which he places in the fairies.

Stanza seven finds our speaker "at the *buffet* of a 'Hell'" where he states, "Pledge me, fair one, merrily, deeply! / Philtre this of powerful spell." Defined by the *OED*, a philtre is a potion, drug, or charm supposed to be capable of exciting sexual attraction or love, especially towards a particular person, a love potion. Used as a verb, Allingham's speaker is demanding a "fair one" to pledge him with a love potion. Furthermore, stanza eight provides a May-time celebration, most likely that of Beltaine, where nature's fertile ground is celebrated and fairies are notorious for being seen. The speaker states,

In the shrubbery do I rove,
 Chatting to a pretty damsel
 Half in pique and half in love;
 She's romantic, she's coquettish,
 Eager with her smile or tear.

Not unlike Allingham's vacillating feelings toward his Irish authenticity, the speaker is torn between the feelings of hate and love for this romantic, yet coquettish damsel. Furthermore, it isn't simply love that the speaker feels, but in calling for a philtre, the speaker presents a sexual attraction, quite possibly a sexual encounter with a damsel. The stanza ends with lambs bleating nearby. The lamb, a symbol of new life, offers the pure product of the unity between love and hate, acceptance and rejection. Allingham too is the product of such a marriage. An Anglo-

Irishman, Allingham was born on Irish ground of settler heritage. Using the lamb as the product of a sexual attraction between the speaker of “Fireside Magic” and a fairy damsel provides Allingham an opportunity to create a new Ireland or a new Irish genius.

Moving again to a scary or frightening realm, repeating the terror and discord of Irish history, we find the speaker “on a mighty river” with “Day and night, storm and splendor, / Moonlight damm’d with monstrous bars,” and “Red sundawn that kills the stars.” This reiteration of the binaries of day and night, storm and splendor, hatred and love, portrayed in each realm and stanza of the poem, exemplifies again the anxiety Allingham feels toward the past and the anxiety he feels toward the future. Allingham, like Yeats, believes that one must look back at the ancient Irish genius to create a new understanding of Irish nationalism. The words “storm,” “damm’d,” “monstrous,” and “kills” are present in this stanza. Indeed, all are words which invoke feelings of angst. Curiously, Allingham’s speaker provides “red sundawn that kills the stars.” In other words, dawn kills or ends night. Yet, is a new dawn a chance for the terror of the night to end, or is a new dawn another tyrant to come? It is difficult to determine whether Allingham wishes his audience to believe this to be an opportunity for Ireland to gain a new identity or for the discord of history to repeat itself as it often does. This is simply another example of Allingham’s vacillating emotions toward his religio-cultural background. However, stanza ten, the concluding stanza, brings us full circle with a proposition on how to find equal footing for Ireland and its inhabitants.

Cease awhile from weird journey,
 Close the spreading wings to rest,
 One by one the summon’d spirits
 Smiling friend hath simply guess’d.

Hast thou so?—then, whatsoever
 Land or sea our homes divide,
 Open book, and by this magic
 We shall travel side by side.

In order to understand this stanza, we must look again at the last two lines of the opening stanza of the poem which state, “Words of charm pronouncing softly, / Words the wizard leaves reveal.” As we have established, Allingham’s “Fireside Magic” offers a “weird journey” in which our speaker sweeps between realms of enchantment and discord. Most importantly, we cannot forget that Allingham is first a poet, second a nationalistic spokesman. As a poet, the most important tools in Allingham’s position are his words; therefore, the key is in understanding the words. In this first stanza, the wizard softly pronounces words of charm or magic, but the last line of this stanza provides that these softly spoken words are not irrelevant. In fact, these words left behind reveal a plan to create a united Ireland for “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter,” a place where the Anglo-Irish can truly be as Irish as the Irish. Allingham cleverly provides a play on words with his statement “Words the wizard leaves reveal.” These are both the words spoken by the wizard throughout this “weird journey” and the words written on the leaves, or pages of books for posterity’s sake. This play on words provides Allingham an opportunity to juxtapose the oral tradition and the literary tradition. In fact, Allingham begins “Fireside Magic” with the capitalized demand to “LISTEN.” This emphasis on words and language is an emphasis on the words conveyed through the oral tradition.

In opposition, we find the speaker at the end of the poem soliciting Ireland to “cease awhile from weird journey.” The fifth line of this final stanza is interrupted by a hyphen. This hyphen draws attention to the second half of the stanza and offers an opportunity to pause and

reflect on that which has past in order to prepare for that which is to come. The hyphen, Allingham's last dramatic gesture, is followed by the following lines: "then, whatsoever / Land or sea our homes divide, / Open book, and by this magic / We shall travel side by side." Allingham believes that Ireland can listen to its Catholic brethren, but must establish Irish credentials through literature. Here we find the Anglo-Irish creation of a political rise through the literary tradition. Allingham's emphasis on words is similar to Yeats's "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" (1889), in which he states, "For words alone are certain good" (*Yeats Reader* 4); in his "Words" (1910), in which he states, "And words obey my call" (*YR* 37); and also Yeats's "Easter 1916," in which he states, "I write it out in a verse" (*YR* 78). Both Allingham and Yeats are under the pressure of the Catholic majority and a need to defend their Irishness. Words and the literary tradition offer Allingham a chance to justify the use of the book or literary tradition as a political call to arms for national equality. By opening the book, "We," the collective people of Ireland, "shall travel side by side."

Chapter III

SCARY FAIRIES AND OTHER SORTS

In Chapter III, I discuss both W.B. Yeats and William Allingham in reference to their use of the scary fairy as a means of working out their anxieties over the future of Ireland. I discuss Yeats's "The Stolen Child" as well as Allingham's "The Fairies" and "The Ban-shee, A Ballad of Ancient Erin."

*Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping
than you can understand. (W.B. Yeats)*

The passage above, from W.B. Yeats's "The Stolen Child," describes the fairies' plea for a human child to choose Fairyland over the industrialized modern world. The poem, published in 1888, offers an escape to a fairy realm that can be found at the bottom of an enchanted lake.

Yeats states,

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water-rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries
And of the reddest stolen cherries.

*Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild⁷*

⁷ The poem printed in Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) prints this line as: "To the woods and waters wild" (67).

*With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping
than you can understand. (TYR8)*

As discussed in Chapter II, the enchanted lake is a lake that has been invested with magical powers. In this case, the enchanted lake offers the line of liminality where fairies and humans can traverse between the human world and the realms of Fairyland. W.Y. Evans-Wentz calls Lough Gur, County Limerick, “One of the most interesting parts of Ireland” and notes that it has long been “regarded as a sort of Otherworld preserve haunted by fairy beings, who dwell both in its waters and on its land.” Indeed, the peasantry “still believe that beneath its waters there is one of the chief entrances in Ireland to *Tir-na-nog*, the ‘Land of Youth’, the Fairy Realm. And when a child is stolen by the Munster fairies, ‘Lough Gur is conjectured to be the place of its unearthly transmutation from the fairy state’” (78). The stealing of children brings to mind the Changeling, which we have previously discussed in Chapter II. A member of the solitary fairy family, the Changeling can be described as merry and gentle, or evil. In traditions other than Irish, the evil Changeling steals mortals in order to sacrifice a life to Satan every year. The only comparison W.B. Yeats documents is with the Pooka, a November spirit. Yeats describes the Pooka as a shape shifter who can take on the shape of the Water-horse. The Water-horse

was common once, and used to come out of the water to gallop on the sands and in the fields...they would make the finest of horses if only you could keep them away from the water; but if once they saw a glimpse of the water, they would plunge in with their rider, and tear him to pieces at the bottom. (*FFT* 103)

A similar example is the Kelpie who, according to Nigel Suckling, “is a shape shifting faerie that often takes the form of a horse but inhabits the rivers and lakes of Ireland and Scotland, trying to

lure people to their death by drowning” (159). Per W.B. Yeats, “Sometimes the fairies fancy mortals, and carry them away into their own country, leaving instead some sickly fairy child.... Most commonly they steal children.... Those who are carried away are happy, according to some accounts, having plenty of good living and music and mirth” (54). The fairy of Yeats’s “The Stolen Child,” while threatening to steal a human child from its family, is probably more consistent with the fairies who bring happiness to those who are stolen rather than the Pooka who bring harm to their captors. Yeats’s “The Stolen Child” offers an alternative realm where a child can escape the ruin brought to the world by the industrial revolution.

Essential to this discussion is the fairy as a motive force in Yeats’s poem. In his poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” he states both at beginning and end, “I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree” (TYR 13). At the end of his poem we find the speaker exactly where he started, talking about going to Innisfree, but not actually following through. However in his poem “The Stolen Child,” Yeats begins the poem by stating, “*Come away, O human child!*” and ends the poem with the statement,

*For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
From a world more full of weeping
than he can understand. (TYR 8)*

This is a poem where we see the enactment of the drama that it desires. Speaking to the power of the fairy, the child actually chooses to go with the fairy; whereas in his poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” the absence of the fairy causes the human to go nowhere. By juxtaposing these two popular poems by W.B. Yeats, it is clear that the fairy becomes a motive force for Yeats.

While I have discussed Yeats's use of the fairy as a means of escapism for a human child in a modern world of industry, we find also that the fairy's ability to successfully convince the human child to leave the human world is far more disturbing than it is good.

Yeats's "The Stolen Child" is an offering of salvation to a child as well as an indictment of the modern world and modern parenting. The presence of darkness in the poem is not utopian, but rather a dystopia where regulative morals do not exist. His first stanza mentions the hiding of "faery vats, / Full of berries / And of the reddest stolen cherries." As I will discuss, the Trooping Fairies celebrate three great festivals per year. According to Yeats, "After November Eve the blackberries are no longer wholesome, for the pooka has spoiled them" (*FFT* 9). These fairies, known for the stealing of maidens and children, also have a clear affinity for berries. These berries are "spoiled" just as the cherries are "stolen." Also, Yeats calls them the "reddest stolen cherries." The color red could be attributed to violence and blood. Also, the stealing of a cherry can be seen as a symbol of the end of a child's or a maiden's innocence. As the cherry is red and stolen, it appears that the innocence is lost not through pleasure, but an act of sexual violence.

Yeats's use of the fairy as both a means of escapism from a modern world of industry and a disturbingly violent figure of an ancient unknown suggests an anxiety of a future unknown. Written at the beginning of Ireland's Celtic Twilight, a time of stability for Ireland's economy, Yeats's poem suggests that the human child should leave what appears to be a good world behind for "the waters and the wild." Yet, at the same time, he suggests that the world of industry is "more full of weeping" than good. He also proposes that "the waters and the wild" could perhaps be full of violent acts. It is clear through all of these ambivalences that Yeats, like Allingham, believes that in the new world things are going to break down; therefore, an

alternative should be proposed. Neither Yeats's nor Allingham's ambivalence rejects the alternative offered by Fairyland, but they acknowledge that things are not completely worked out and are both apparently anxious about what this ancient Irish dispensation in a modern world might look like. In presenting Fairyland as consisting of "Cave-land," "Forest-land," "Airy-land," and "Dreamland," Allingham creates multiple realms in which he can work out the ambivalence that we see in his poetry presented in this essay as well as Yeats's "The Stolen Child." As we will see, the multiple realms are accompanied by multiple varieties of malicious fairies such as those that successfully lure a human child to "the waters and the wild" where the reddest cherries are stolen.

Apropos of the stealing of children and Yeats's "The Stolen Child," is a discussion of William Allingham's "The Fairies." Published by Reeves and Turner in 1887, "The Fairies" is the twenty-fourth poem in the collection entitled, *Irish Songs and Poems*. "The Fairies" begins with the following lines:

Up the airy mountain,
 Down the rushy glen,
 We daren't go a-hunting
 For fear of little men... (128)

The first line of the stanza suggests with the words "up" and "airy" the idea of the building up of a new "Airy-land" or a New Ireland. Yet in the next line he immediately moves "down" to the "rushy glen." As previously evidenced, the glen is a topographical characteristic of an ancient Ireland. Hence, Allingham offers juxtaposition in the building of a New Ireland its disparate ancient past. The word "daren't" in line three evokes the phraseology of the aftermath of 1798, "Who dares to speak of '98?" It was suggested then that those who dared were to be celebrated.

Therefore, by stating “We daren’t go a-hunting / For fear of little men,” we find that such a celebration would not be worth the possible presence of the “little men.” In fact, later in the poem we find that “any man so daring” to dig up the planted thorn-trees, “shall find their sharpest thorns / [i]n his bed at night” (129). The stanza continues with the following lines:

Wee folk, good folk,
 Trooping all together;
 Green jacket, red cap,
 And white owl’s feather! (128)

The term “wee folk” is perhaps a reference to the peasantry, the down-trodden of Ireland, while the “good folk” calls to mind the “*Daoine Maithe*, or the ‘Good People,’ as the Irish call their *Sidhe* race” (Evans-Wentz 22). Between the “good folk” and the “fear of little men” there is almost a tangible tension between fear and goodness. According to W.Y. Evans-Wentz, “the ‘good people’ live in the *forts* and often take men and women or youths who pass by the *forts* after sunset” (72); therefore, while they are known as good folk, they are clearly beings that should be feared.

According to Yeats, the trooping fairies wear green jackets; therefore, the “wee folk” who wear “green jacket[s]” and go “trooping all together” in Allingham’s poem are none other than the trooping fairies. The color green must be recognized as the native color of Ireland. It is also imperative to note that these “wee folk” wear red caps. Captivatingly, the red cap evokes the Redcap of Liberty as seen in the French Revolution as a powerful symbol of emancipation or autonomy. It was also incorporated into the symbol of the United Irishmen, an organization we have established as Allingham’s ideologue for a new Irish dispensation. The red cap derives from the Phrygian cap, a soft red canonical cap with the top pulled forward, worn in antiquity by

the inhabitants of Phrygia. This cap shares an uncanny resemblance to the hat worn by an elf or a gnome. According to Suckling, “Recaps are among the most vicious of the Little People. At first sight they can look quite similar to brownies and the like, but the red in their caps is not from vegetable dye but the blood of passing strangers they have stoned to death” (158). These Redcaps live in old castles along the English-Scottish border, but “in Ireland the redcap is known as the fir dearg or fir darrig and is not quite as desperately violent but still full of bad will towards humans” (Suckling 159). Yeats notes that the Far Darrig or (fear dearg) “busies himself with practical joking, especially with gruesome joking. This he does, and nothing else” (*FFT* 87).

Also mentioned in this stanza is the fear of little men. In order to understand this fear, the fourth stanza of the poem must be explored. Allingham’s speaker states,

They stole little Bridget
 For seven years long;
 When she came down again
 Her friends were all gone. (129)

After having been “stolen” away to Fairyland for seven years, little Bridget’s friends have forsaken her. Is this necessarily a bad thing? Furthermore, what kind of friends are these to leave after only seven years? They are perhaps the kind of friends who would have kept her from maturation. In other words, in order for Bridget—a young child of Ireland—to be a part of the building of a New Ireland, she had to be taken away from the friends who might have corrupted her.

The line which states “They stole little Bridget” is problematic. As stated in the section entitled “Fairies and the Spiritual Realm,” Bridget is remembered in Irish history as both a member of the Tuatha De Dannan and an Irish saint. Furthermore, Allingham’s speaker

continues with the statement, “They took her lightly back, / Between the night and the morrow” (129); thus providing the knowledge that the only time the fairies could return “little Bridget” was “[b]etween the night and the morrow,” or as we have established, the line of liminality when fairies and humans can travel between the realms. The stanza ends with the following:

They have kept her ever since
 Deep within the lake,
 On a bed of flag-leaves,
 Watching till she wake. (129)

The place where Bridget is being kept is perhaps Lough Gur where beneath its waters rests the gateway to other fairy realms. She lay sleeping on a “bed” as they watch “till she wake,” providing care for her almost as a parent would for a sickly child. They have taken her to watch over her. Asleep, she is not fully in the world, almost as if she is taken out of the world to be made fully awake within the world upon her return. Through this poem we find that W.B. Yeats used Allingham’s fairies as a prototype for his fairies in “The Stolen Child.” In fact, one could see Yeats’s call “Come away, O human child!” to be a prequel to Allingham’s “They stole little Bridget”; whereas Yeats’s fairy calls to the human child, and Allingham’s fairy has successfully stolen her.

The Pooka, like the “wee folk” of Allingham’s “The Fairies,” are members of the Trooping Fairies. The Trooping Fairies have three great festivals in the year: May Eve, Midsummer Eve, and November Eve. According to Yeats, every year on May Eve, the Trooping Fairies “fight all round” and when “the wind makes the straws and leaves whirl as it passes, that is the fairies, and the peasantry take off their hats and say, ‘God bless them.’” Furthermore, Midsummer Eve, when the fairies are at their gayest, they “sometimes steal away beautiful

mortals to be their brides” (*FFT* 9). In opposition, on the first night of winter or November Eve “they are at their gloomiest.” This night, notes Yeats, “they dance with the ghosts, and the pooka is abroad, and witches make their spells, and girls set a table with food in the name of the devil, that the fetch of their future lover may come through the window and eat of the food” (9).

November Eve, known in Gaelic as Samhain and pronounced Sow-in, is celebrated in popular culture as All Hallows Eve or Halloween. Evans-Wentz notes, “To the pre-Christian Celts, the First of November, or the Festival of *Samain*, which marked the end of summer and the commencement of winter, was symbolical of death” (439). Furthermore, “*Samain* was the great Celtic feast of the dead when offerings or sacrifice of various kinds were made to ancestral spirits, and to the Tuatha De Danann and the spirit-hosts under their control.”

Yeats’s description of the trooping fairies on November Eve mentions ghosts who dance with the trooping fairies. Ghosts, according to Yeats, who are called Thevshi or Tash (taidhbhse, tais) in Irish, “live in a state intermediary between this life and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living. The statement, ‘I will haunt you,’ is a common threat” (*FFT* 134). In addition,

When the soul has left the body, it is drawn away, sometimes, by the fairies. I have a story of a peasant who once saw, sitting in a fairy rath, all who had died for years in his village. Such souls are considered lost. If a soul eludes the fairies, it may be snapped up by the evil spirits. The weak souls of young children are in especial danger. (134)

According to Lady Wilde, “It is amongst the people when throwing away water at night, to cry out in a loud voice, ‘Take care of the water’...for they say that the spirits of the dead last buried are then wandering about, and it would be dangerous if the water fell on them” (*FFT* 142).

In the same tradition as the ghost comes the goblin who, according to the *OED*, is a mischievous and ugly demon. The goblin is remembered in Wales as a *Tylwyth Teg*, a “living being halfway between something material and spiritual, who was rarely seen” (Evans-Wentz 145). Furthermore, the *Tylwyth Teg* was “supposed to appear at dusk, in various forms, animal and human; and grown-up people as well as children had great fear of them.” Incidentally, William Allingham’s “The Goblin Child of Belashanny,” the twenty-third poem in the Reeves and Turner edition of *Irish Songs and Poems*, offers the story of a goblin child. The end of the second stanza offers that “On such a fagg’d November night, / Ev’n in a rougher place have found / A door to sleep’s Enchanted Ground.” In other words, around the time of Samhain, the central character of the poem becomes bewitched at bedtime. As the poem progresses, we find that “from the single darkness made / A thousand ghostly forms of shade, / On which the waker gazed and gazed,” when suddenly, from the brightened hearth, “It came across the floor, / Its size increasing more and more” (126). The poem notes that the creature then took to the fire in the hearth and disappeared instantly; “This happen’d when our island still / Had nests of goblins left, to fill....” It appears that Allingham’s goblin child was capable only of frightening his speaker.

Another aspect of the scary or seedier side of the fairy realm is the witch. Interestingly, W.B. Yeats notes,

Witches and fairy doctors receive their power from opposite dynasties; the witch from evil spirits and her own malignant will; the fairy doctor from the fairies, and a something—a temperament—that is born with him or her. The first is always feared and hated. The second is gone to for advice, and is never worse than mischievous. The most celebrated fairy doctors are sometimes people the fairies loved and carried away, and kept with them for seven years; not that those the

fairies love are always carried off—they may merely grow silent and strange, and take to lonely wanderings in the “gentle” places. (*FFT* 153)

He also notes that the spells of the witch oddly smell of the grave and describes a disgusting story in which a hand cut from a corpse can skim butter from the surface of a well. Yeats also mentions that a witch with the hand of a dead corpse can hold a candle and never have it blown out. Additionally is the entertaining albeit nauseating story of a witch who could make love-potions by “drying and grinding into powder the liver of a black cat” (154). Furthermore, Yeats notes the last trial for witchcraft in Ireland as March 31, 1711. Their alleged crime, he says, was the tormenting of a young woman named Mary Dunbar. “Tradition says that the people were much exasperated against these unfortunate persons, who were severely pelted in the pillory with boiled cabbage stalks and the like, by which one of them had an eye beaten out” (327-28).

The last of the scary fairies that must be mentioned is the Banshee. As we have established, the banshee, or the *Bean Sidhe*, is a female fairy “that follows the old families, and none but them, and wails before a death.... An omen that sometimes accompanies the banshee is the *coach-a-bower* (*cóiste-bodhar*)—an immense black coach, mounted by a coffin, and drawn by headless horses driven by a *Dullahan*,” or a headless phantom (116). Indeed, the fairy most associated with the leadership of the ancient Irish traditions or the leading families of the Gaelic order is the *Bean Sidhe*, who passionately serves the core coterie of ancient tradition; a tradition both Allingham and Yeats wish to rehabilitate for modernity. While the *Bean Sidhe* represents the leading families of the Gaelic order, she also represents the poets, the bards, and the *filidh*, who were the keepers of the ancestral stories and the supporters of patrimony. As the *Bean Sidhe* laments the loss of a member of the original Gaelic order, she is essentially lamenting the loss of the ancient poetic tradition. As previously discussed, the Allinghams entered Ireland with

the Tudor Re-conquest, which caused the Flight of the Earls in 1607. The Flight of the Earls in turn caused the O’Neills and the O’Connells—two of Donegals leading families of the Gaelic Order—to flee Ireland. As Allingham was from County Donegal, these are the two families with which he would be most familiar and their tradition would be one he would wish to continue. By invoking the Bean Sidhe, he reminds Ireland of the need to recognize and celebrate the achievements of the poets, the bards and the filidh, who also left Ireland with the original Gaelic Order.

To properly discuss the banshee in an essay on William Allingham’s fairies, we must look at his poem entitled, “The Ban-shee, A Ballad of Ancient Erin” which was published in the Reeves and Turner edition of *Irish Songs and Poems* in 1887. Allingham’s “The Ban-shee” is the twenty-ninth poem in the collection. Unlike his other poetry composed of well organized stanzas, “The Ban-shee” appears on the page in a form similar to a dialogue. The speaker states,

The cry, the dreadful cry! I know it—louder and
 nearer,
 Circling our Dūn—*the Ban shee!*—my heart is frozen
 to hear her!

Saw you not in the darkness a spectral glimmer of
 White
 Flitting away?—I saw it!—evil her message to-night.
 Constant, but never welcome, she, to the line of our
 Chief;

Bodeful, baleful, fateful, voice of terror and grief. (145)

The speaker, whose dialogue is full of exclamation, mentions that the banshee is the “voice of terror and grief,” who comes in “darkness” with a “dreadful cry.” More importantly, her message is evil and she is “constant, but never welcome.” However, at the end of the poem, we find a very different view of the banshee. She is not undesired, but sought after.

Victory!—that was my dream: one that shall fill
 men’s ears
 In story and song of harp after a thousand years.
 ‘Give me my helmet and sword. Whale-tusk, gold-
 wrought, I clutch thee!
 Blade, Flesh-Biter, fail me not this time! Yea, when
 I touch thee,
 Shivers of joy run through me. Sing aloud as I
 swing thee!
 Glut of enemies’ blood, meseemeth, to-day shall bring
 Thee. (146)

The first line of the stanza claims “Victory!” as the speaker’s dream. Used here, the word dream evokes Allingham’s Dreamland, one of his multiple realms of Fairyland. Furthermore, it is a dream that “shall fill men’s ears / [i]n story and song of harp after a thousand years.” As we have recognized, the harp was the symbol of the United Irishmen, a movement Allingham stood behind for its interest in equality for “Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter.” Just as Allingham uses the Bean Sidhe to remind Ireland of the need to lament the original Gaelic order and its supporters of patrimony, he claims that his dream is to have victory fill the ears of men through the vehicle of “story,” “song,” and “harp”; these symbols will become increasingly more

important as they are solely responsible for the recording of history's victories. Moreover, the lines which follow are horror filled with the presence of a helmet and a sword, two pieces of a uniform worn in times of war. By calling his sword "whale-tusk" and "gold-wrought," he brings Irish pre-history together through both Viking and Celtic traditions. Furthermore, by describing his sword in such a way, he has perhaps created a phallic symbol of weaponry through which he can gain masculinity for Ireland. The lines which follow are the bloodiest in all of Allingham's works. He goes so far as to call the blade of the sword a "Flesh-Biter," hinting a suggestion of rape, and feels joy upon touching its blade. The last few lines promote the "glut of enemies' blood"; yet, he states, "meseemeth, to-day shall bring / Thee." The word "meseemeth" is not a statement of surety, but of ambivalence. Therefore, Allingham's speaker is unsure of what a new dawn may bring to Ireland. Furthermore, Allingham's constant use of the words "I" and "me" suggest that quite possibly, these are not the sentiments of a narrator or a speaker, but of the poet himself.

Through the evidence provided in this chapter, it is apparent that the fairy is actually a complicated figure in Irish lore and legend. As we have seen in this chapter, both William Allingham and W.B. Yeats write of the scary, menacing beings that make up several different of the fairy classes, while creating an incredibly complicated figure by which Ireland can return to the genius of an ancient Ireland in order to re-establish the original Gaelic dispensation in the modern world. What we find in this chapter, is that both Yeats and Allingham were anxious over what this new Gaelic dispensation might look like and used the fairy to work through their feelings of ambivalence toward an unknown future in Ireland.

EPILOGUE

When I began this project, neither Dr. Howard Keeley nor I realized the grandeur of William Allingham's work. Through the research of this essay, I have discovered that Allingham's efforts were both laborious and purposeful. His poetry, while not predominantly beautiful, is intelligent, powerful, and insightful. He is remembered only for his poem "The Fairies," of which I have offered a brief reading, and his literary magnum opus, *Lawrence Bloomfield in Ireland* (1890). Evidenced in this essay are close textual studies of his poems, "Vivant!" and "Fireside Magic"; both providing the fairy as a way to promulgate a united Ireland where religion is concerned—a subject which has not previously been written on. Also, his poems, "The Banshee," "The Goblin Child of Belashanny," and "The Fairies" have been given a cursory study to further my argument for Allingham as a writer of grave matters, not whimsy. His anxieties are assuaged through the presence of the fairy; his use of an ancient Irish being as a remembrance in childhood, a way to replace his settler heritage with a being original to the "Airy-land" or the land of Ireland.

Prior to the start of my research, I did not know a large amount about the figure of the fairy other than what I remembered from childhood and what I have glimpsed in popular fiction. While I knew the world of the fairy was vast with a number of different beings, I had no idea that each class had a specific history designed to explain its existence. Nor did I know that each fairy class has several stories to substantiate its existence. I did not know that while the fairy comes from Celtic lore, each class of fairy comes from a very specific Celtic country, only to be recounted in the stories of that country, and more specifically, stories from a province within that country. I did not know the clothing of the fairy signified the fairy class or offered a sign of violence or friendliness. W.Y. Evans-Wentz was told that "One does not have to be educated in

order to see fairies,” thus making the fairy faith more pure, more believable and the spectator more willing to believe. Prior to the research of this essay, I had heard amusing anecdotes of how one should never mention the word fairy among the peasantry of Ireland, for fear of dire and drastic outcomes. However, I did not realize that this was truly the belief among the peasantry. As provided in Chapter III, certain classes of fairy beings are known to be particularly vicious, violent, and ruthless in their interaction with humans—these are the fairies justifiably feared by the peasantry. Prior to my research, I did not know that goblins, gnomes, elves, and pygmies were considered to be a classification of fairy, nor did I know they were considered to be demonic beings. I did not know that these beliefs form what has been recorded as the Fairy-Faith—a genuine belief that fairies do exist.

I knew that the fairies were believed to derive from the Tuatha de Danaan, whose story is told in one of Ireland’s annals of pre-history, the Book of Invasions, though not specifically that the Danaan were thought to derive from the pre-Christian gods of Ireland. Furthermore, I had no knowledge of the Danaan’s fight with the Milesians and their subsequent exit underground. While I knew that the fairy folk were known to live in multiple realms, I did not know that the underworld existed because of the Danaan’s extirpation from Ireland. Also, I had never taken the time to research the Patron Saints of Ireland, nor their relationship to the druidic faith and the fairy beings. It is apparent that what I did not know prior to the research of this project far outweighs what I knew.

Had I the time or the purpose to extend this essay into a dissertation or a book length project there are several other paths I could take. The works of William Allingham have been paid little to no attention in the past century. Through the research of this essay, it has been made clear that Allingham should not be overlooked as a poet, or an Irish nationalist. Books

such as *Letters to William Allingham*, *The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham*, and *William Allingham's Diary* offer detailed accounts of Allingham's life as well as his correspondence with intimate friends and fellow writers and antiquarians. I should like to do an intricate study of Allingham's life and friends, with an invested interest in his discussions on Fairyland and Dreamland, subjects which were brought up a number of times among several of Allingham's contemporaries. Also, more research should be done on Allingham's relationships with popular Irish antiquarians and their specific concerns.

Additionally, I only had time to sufficiently discuss two of Allingham's poems which are found in the "Fairies, etc." section of his *Life and Phantasy* collection. However, this section also contains Allingham's plays, "Prince Brightkin" and "Two Fairies in a Garden," and his poem "The Lyric Muse," all of which deal also with fairy subjects. Furthermore, his poems "The Lepracaun, or Fairy Shoemaker," "Fairy Hill; or, the poet's wedding," and "The Fairy King" found in the collection *Irish Songs and Poems*, as well as "The Witch-Bride," and "The Maids of Elfin-Mere," found in the collection *Flower Pieces and Other Poems* and "Phantom Duty," "An Evil May-Day," and "Phantast," from the collection *Thought and Word and Ashby Manor*, should be given a close textual study as they too deal with fairy subjects. His poem "An Evil May-Day" includes the following epigraph:

In the Soul's sky may dawn an Evil Day,
 First of a Time of Horror and Dismay,
 Which only God's own sun can chase away. (*Thought and Word*, 15)

Along with his poem "Sunday Bells," "An Evil May-Day" is an apparent working out of Allingham's religious anxieties and should be studied were this essay to be extended. Other of his poems in the six book collection by Reeves and Turner may not deal directly with the fairy,

but offer fairy descriptors and should be considered in a book length study of Allingham's fairies.

Through the research of this essay, it has become clear that a dissertation or a book length study of Allingham's fairies could without a doubt be completed. Furthermore, there was a plethora of information from Yeats, Lady Gregory, Keightley, W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Bonwick, Croker, Seymour, and Wilde that I read, but could not include in an essay of this length, all of which would provide adequate support of an extended study of Allingham's fairies. Furthermore, it has become apparent that a study on the work of Allingham without the use of fairies could be completed, though I believe his use of the fairy as a nationalist symbol to be the most interesting of topics. I have thoroughly enjoyed the research for this essay and would be extremely excited to delve deeper into the poetry of William Allingham, Ireland's neglected poet.

Fairies in Popular Culture

For amusements sake, I would like to end this study of William Allingham and the fairies of the nineteenth century with a cursory glance at fairies in the popular fiction of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As I have mentioned numerous times, the most popular example of this century's fairy is J.M. Barrie's Tinker Bell, who has become beloved in the hearts of children as the star of Walt Disney's cartoon version of *Peter Pan*. Disney's real life version *Hook* boasts a Peter Pan played by Robin Williams who amusedly notes of Tinker Bell,

You're a...you're a complex Freudian hallucination having something to do with my mother and I don't know why you have wings, but you have very lovely legs and you're a very nice tiny person and what am I saying, I don't know who my

mother was; I'm an orphan and I've never taken drugs because I missed the sixties, I was an accountant.”

Furthermore, the twentieth century offers two particularly prominent fairy recordings and illustrations by Brian Froud for children and adults alike. Published in 1978, Brian Froud's *Faeries* depicts pictures of weird, menacing and creaturely fairy beings which illustrate information on fairies gathered from sources such as Sir Conan Doyle's *The Coming of the Fairies* (1922). The Introduction states,

The world of “Once Upon a Time—,” delightful as it is and highly as we value it, is not the real world of Faerie. Faerie represents Power, magical power, incomprehensible to humans, and hence, inimical. It must always be remembered that though the world of Faerie is to a large extent dependent on humans, faeries are alien creatures with values and ethics far removed from mankind: they do not think, and most notably, they do not *feel*, the way that humans do. (Betty Ballentine)

I cannot adequately describe Froud's illustrations and therefore, have reproduced a few of them for the sake of curiosity. (Please see Figures 18-19, pp 131-32).

Another account of fairies by Brian Froud is *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book* (1994), a brilliant and attractive diary allegedly written by Lady Angelica Cottington, the “small girl surrounded by fairies” in the famous 1907 photograph, published in *The Regular* magazine. Written by Terry Jones, the introduction provides that “J.M. Barrie himself was convinced that he recognized at least one of the fairies in the photograph.” We also find that little was known about the photograph and the girl in it until the Cottington estate was bought in the early nineties and “a small volume” was discovered “stuck behind a trunk in the attic.”



Figure 18. Brian Froud's Pixie



Figure 19. Brian Froud's Puck

Thought to be used as fodder for a fire, the discoverer soon realized that “he might be holding in his hands something rather special.” Jones also states of this journal, “[T]his book is nothing less than a physical record of actual living faeries.” The book portrays funny depictions of fairies which have been smashed into the pages of the journal. The first accounts written in the journal state, “July 6th 1895. Nanna wuldnt bleive me. Ettie wuldnt bleive me. Auntie Mercy wuldnt bleive me. But I got one. Now they’ve got to bleive me”; and “July 7th 1895. I showd my faerey to Ettie but she sed Nanna wuld Be cross bekaws my book is for pressing flowers in not faereys so I wont show it to anybody I am going to fill my book up with faereys so ther.” Next to this account appears to be a partly translucent, partly iridescent fairy who has literally been smashed or pressed into the pages of the book. She appears to have been crying out for help at the time of her demise. (See Figures 20-21, pp 134-35)

Fairy accounts have become extremely popular in twenty-first century fiction with the young adult fascination with otherworldly creatures. Young adult fiction of popular culture includes novels such as *Agatha Raisin and the Fairies of Fryfam* by M.C. Beaton, a fairy mystery about a girl sent to find her destiny and true love; also, *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale* by Holly Black, about a sixteen year-old girl who finds herself caught in an age old rivalry between fairy realms. Additionally is Frewin Jones’s *Faerie Path*, which describes the land of Faerie, fallen into a dark world of shadows due to the five hundred year disappearance of its Princess, Tania. Furthermore, the novel *Bones of Faerie*, written by Janni Lee Simner, is the tale of fifteen year-old Liza, who discovers she has the fairy ability to see into the past and the future. Similarly is romance/mystery author Karen Marie Moning, whose Fever Series—*Dark Fever*, *Blood Fever*, *Faefever*, and *Dreamfever*—



Figure 20. Lady Cottington's Smashed Fairy



Figure 21. Lady Cottington's Smashed Fairy

are four of a five book account of the character MacKayla Lane, a twenty-something year-old from Georgia who discovers that she was actually born in Dublin, Ireland with Sidhe-Seer abilities, that is, the ability to see the fairies. These are just a few in the midst of a vast and continuously popular genre among the teenage and adult fiction audience.

Most relevant to this essay on William Allingham's fairies is Eoin Colfer's *Artemis Fowl* series which brilliantly and humorously depicts the story of twelve year-old Artemis Fowl, an Irish millionaire mastermind, whose family fortune has been lost. The seven-book series, first published in 2001, accounts Artemis Fowl's attempt to regain his family fortune through the fairy. The prologue to the first book states the following:

The story began several years ago at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Artemis Fowl had devised a plan to restore the family's fortune. A plan that could topple civilizations and plunge the planet into a cross-species war. He was twelve years old at the time... (2).

The audience soon finds out that it is Artemis Fowl's plan to steal the book which holds all the secrets of the fairy-folk. In order to do so, he traps a particularly haggard looking sprite and poisons her in order to claim the book. We find the following scene:

The hag froze. Bright eyes glinted from beneath the shawl.

"Book" she said cautiously. "I don't know about no book. I am a healer. You want book, go to library."

Artemis sighed with exaggerated patience. "You are no healer. You are a sprite, p'shog, fairy, ka-dalum. Whichever language you prefer to use. And I want your Book." (14-15)

The Book represents the annals of fairy intelligence which Artemis truly believes will bring the ability to gain back his family's lost fortune. Apropos of William Allingham's poetry, only the intelligence of the fairy or an ancient Gaelic genius can alter the future for the better. As the story progresses, we find that Artemis believes his fortune should be gained by stealing the pot of gold from a Leprechaun. The narrator offers, "Artemis's search had begun two years previously when he first became interested in surfing the Internet. He quickly found the more arcane sites: alien abduction, UFP sightings, and the supernatural. But most specifically the existence of the People" (24). As evidenced in the body of my essay, the fairy folk are also known to the peasantry of Ireland as "the People." Furthermore, the narrator presents evidence similar to my own that Artemis found "hundreds of references to fairies from nearly every country in the world. Each civilization [having] its own term for the People" who were "undoubtedly members of the same hidden family" (24-25). Moreover, several of his accounts describe a "Book carried by each fairy." Curiously, he notes that the Book is written in Gnommish, a fairy language, but believes he can translate the language through today's modern technology.

Hilariously, Colfer creates the character of Holly Short, a Leprechaun who when first introduced "was in an exceptionally bad mood, even for a fairy. Technically she was an elf, fairy being a general term. She was a leprechaun too, but that was just a job" (42). She is described as having "nut-brown skin, cropped auburn hair, and hazel eyes. Her nose had a hook and her mouth was plumb and cherubic, which was appropriate, considering Cupid was her great-grandfather" (42-43). Furthermore, "at exactly three feet in height, Holly was only a centimeter below the fairy average, but even one centimeter can make an awful lot of difference when you

don't have many to spare. Her job as a leprechaun is described as having been originated from the term LEPrecon, "an elite branch of the Lower Elements Police" (45).

Colfer humorously has his characters refer to humans as the Mud People, because they were of course, formed of clay. When Artemis, one of the Mud People, poisons the sprite with holy water in order to steal her Book (a brilliantly researched move by Colfer), he claims that he can return her magic with the contents of one of his two ampoules. He states, "One, a vial of spring water from the fairy well sixty meters below the ring of Tara—possibly the most magical place on earth" (17). As we know through the evidence of this essay, Tara is the ancient royal capitol in the defunct royal province of Meath. Furthermore, Colfer notes that all fairies must complete something called The Ritual once per year, which allows the underground beings to survive above ground. When Holly is ordered by her LEPrecon superior, Commander Root, to complete The Ritual or be put on restriction, she flies toward "the best site [which] would obviously be Tara, near the Lia Fáil" but notes that on a night such as this "every traditionalist fairy with an overground pass would be dancing around the holy scene" (98). This area, Colfer notes, is "the most magical place on the planet.

It was here that the Lia Fáil stood, the rock at the center of the universe, where the fairy kings and later the human Ard Rí were crowned. And it was also here, unfortunately, that the Mud People were most in tune with magic, which resulted in a far higher People-sighting rate than you got anywhere else on the planet.

Thankfully the rest of the world assumed that the Irish were crazy, a theory that the Irish did nothing to debunk. (96-97)

Colfer notes that Holly loves to fly, as all fairies do, but that she flies on fairy-made wings; "[a]ccording to the Book, they had once been equipped with wings of their own, but

evolution had stripped them of this power. All but the sprites” (95). Other fairy technology is depicted by the fairy pods. The pods are described as having been made for a century in a futuristic fashion with “plenty of neon and rubber.” Moreover, the designs had “become more retrospective” of late, “replacing the gadgetry with walnut dashes and leather upholstery. [Commander] Root found this old-style décor strangely comforting” (123). Through this example, we find that fairy intelligence, the intelligence coveted by Artemis Fowl—child mastermind—has returned to the natural implements of wood and leather. It has reverted to the ancient Irish genius Allingham argues for in his poetry. Furthermore, the wood is “walnut,” the tree painstakingly described in Allingham’s memoirs, also known to have ties to Italian fairy lore.

The examples evidenced in this essay of Eoin Colfer’s *Artemis Fowl* are only a few from his intelligent and widely popular fiction series for children. His use of the fairy as a long lasting race of beings who hold both the intelligence of Ireland’s past and its future is undeniably similar to William Allingham’s use of the fairy in his poetry. To different purposes, both authors use the fairy as a symbol of an ancient Gaelic genius in a modern world. This can be seen as the writing out of a new Irish self-awareness of an achieved Ireland. Largely predicated on information technology, Ireland’s Celtic Tiger is hoped for by Allingham’s call for the fairy in a modern world and portrayed by Colfer’s fairy technology and Artemis Fowl’s ability to translate the Gnommish language into English. The fairy is an increasingly popular being among fiction in the twenty-first century, yet no one captures the spirit of William Allingham’s fairy but Eoin Colfer.

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