

Darby O’Gill and the Construction of Irish Identity

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Declaration

I, Brian McManus, declare that the following thesis has not previously been submitted as an exercise for a degree, either in Trinity College Dublin, or in any other University; that it is entirely my own work; and that the library may lend or copy it or any part thereof on request.

Signed _____

Brian McManus

Date _____

27/4/2018

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Summary

This thesis investigates the role of the term “Darby O’Gill” in the modern Irish consciousness as a signifier of a pejorative construction of Irish identity and the extent to which it is justified when all cultural incarnations of Darby O’Gill and the version of Ireland that he inhabits are taken into account. This thesis investigates not only whether it is justified to apply this cultural signifier to Darby O’Gill but also whether the emphasis that is placed upon the signifier in Irish cultural discourse obscures a more complex and interesting construction of Irish identity. The introduction establishes the origins of Darby O’Gill and his Ireland in the literary fairy tales of Anglo-Irish-American children’s author Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, which were published in the diasporic space of Irish America at the turn of the twentieth century. It also acknowledges the 1959 live-action film adaptation by Walt Disney Productions upon which Darby O’Gill’s notoriety appears to be founded. The introduction sets out the objective of this thesis to constitute the first sustained and comprehensive scholarly analysis of either Kavanagh’s tales or the Disney film, in order that an extremely thorough investigation into the signifier may be conducted. It explains how this analysis will consist of close textual analysis, socio-historical and cultural contextualisation, the application of relevant literary and cultural theories and relevant, pre-existing scholarship and findings from archival research which has been conducted for this project. The remainder of the introduction explores all previous scholarly analyses of both the literary and cinematic incarnations of Darby O’Gill and provides a detailed account of Kavanagh’s life and career, as this will inform and enhance the readings of her tales that feature in the main body of the thesis.

This thesis concerns the construction of Irish identity through representation and, thus, it is divided into four chapters as an acknowledgement of the four main areas of representation which can be identified in the tales and the film. The first chapter explores the representation of the Irish people in Kavanagh's literary fairy tales, focusing, firstly, on Kavanagh's appropriation of the cultural construction of Irish identity referred to as the "roguish hero" and, secondly, showing how this sympathetic, celebratory representation was facilitated by place of publication and by the form of the literary fairy tale. Thirdly, this first chapter discusses how the attitudes and preoccupations of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century permeate her representation of the Irish people and, lastly, it will examine Kavanagh's critique and repudiation of the cultural construction of Irish female identity in the diasporic space known as the "henpecking wife" through her representation of Irish women and their relationships with men. The second chapter of this thesis concerns the innovative and subversive representation of the fairies of Irish folk tradition, or Good People, in Kavanagh's tales and it shows how Kavanagh entirely reconstitutes their role in the lives of the Irish people. Firstly, it will explore their reconstitution as "roguish heroes" and the firm and loyal friends of the Irish people before, secondly, exploring the reconciliation that Kavanagh orchestrates in her work between the Good People and Roman Catholicism and, thirdly, exploring the consequences of their newly acquired benevolence. Lastly, this second chapter will consider how such a radical re-interpretation of the fairies from Irish folk tradition may have impacted upon Kavanagh's target diasporic readership and its understanding and appreciation of Irish folklore.

The third chapter of this thesis focuses on the representation of the Irish people in the film adaptation of Kavanagh's tales, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, and it suggests

that this representation was influenced and determined by a variety of factors, including the literary source material, established modes of representing Irish people in mainstream American cinema and the dominant themes and tropes in Disney products of the period. The four sections discuss the representation of Irish life, the Irish character, Irish class identity and Irish female identity respectively. The fourth and final chapter of this thesis focuses on the representation of the fairies from Irish folk tradition, or Little People, in the Disney film. It begins by exploring every aspect of their representation within the film before, secondly, exploring the paratextual representation of the Little People in the film's extensive and sophisticated marketing campaign, which testified to the actual existence of real leprechauns, not only in Ireland but also in the film. Thirdly, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between Walt Disney Productions and the Irish Folklore Commission, as the former sought help from the latter in making the film, and, finally, this chapter considers the film's representation of the Little People in the context of Irish folklore and its global transmission. The conclusion of this thesis will return to its starting point as an investigation into the use of "Darby O'Gill" as a cultural signifier, whilst also establishing what else has been discovered throughout the course of the project. It will conclude by suggesting the wider implications of the findings of this research project for literary and cultural discourse in the immediate future.

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Introduction

The term “Darby O’Gill” serves a particular function in the modern Irish consciousness as a signifier of a pejorative construction of Irish identity that originates in the United States of America and promotes an inauthentic view founded upon an over-emphasis of certain aspects of Irish life and regressive behavioural stereotypes. There are many recent examples of the term being used in this manner by both Irish cultural commentators and Irish cultural practitioners. It was used by film critic Donald Clarke in a provocative article that was published in *The Irish Times* on the 19th of February 2010, in which he denounced the forthcoming *Leap Year*, an American romantic comedy that was largely set and filmed in Ireland,¹ as “offensive, reactionary, patronising filth”.² Clarke concludes the article, which was entitled “Enough, begorrah!”, by reflecting “the fact that, 50 years after Darby O’Gill, Hollywood studios are still belittling the nation in trash such as *Leap Year* is genuinely depressing”.³ An article that was published on the satirical news website *Waterford Whispers News* on the 9th of March 2016 again uses the term “Darby O’Gill” as a signifier of the kind of pejorative construction of Irish identity that it is ridiculing.⁴ Entitled “Chilling: Did Darby O’Gill Predict 9/11?”, the article ridicules such constructions of Irish identity, which it locates as originating in the United States of America, by endowing them with what is clearly being perceived as unwarranted significance. When casting *The Secret of Inish Roan* (1994), which was set and filmed in Ireland, American film director John Sayles encountered the use of term “Darby O’Gill” as a signifier by his Irish casting director Ros Hubbard. According to

¹ See *Leap Year* (Anand Tucker, USA/Ireland, 2010).

² Donald Clake, “Enough, Begorrah!”, *The Irish Times*, February 19, 2010, 10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See “Chilling: Did Darby O’Gill Predict 9/11?”, *Waterford Whispers News*, March 9, 2016, <http://waterfordwhispersnews.com/2016/03/09/chilling-did-darby-ogill-predict-911-3/>

Sayles, Hubbard would have the word “DOG” written next to certain actors’ names and when he asked her about it, “she said it stood for ‘Darby O’Gill’ – meaning that that actor tended toward a stage-Irish character, especially when an American is looking at them”.⁵ In an interview about his work, Irish voice and dialect coach Cathal Quinn uses the term in the same way as Hubbard when discussing the challenges of teaching non-Irish actors how to speak with an Irish accent. He says that “whether they can pick up an Irish accent well depends very much on the actor, or whether they’ve been to Ireland. A lot of American people think we sing all the time as if we go around talking like Darby O’Gill”⁶

The term “Darby O’Gill”, which has been used as a signifier in these four examples, refers to *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*,⁷ a 1959 live-action film produced and released by Walt Disney Productions during the tenure of Walt Disney as the organisation’s chief executive.⁸ Directed by Robert Stevenson from a screenplay by Lawrence Edward Watkin, the film was adapted from a series of literary fairy tales by the Anglo-Irish-American children’s author Herminie Templeton Kavanagh (1861–1933). The first of these tales, “Darby Gill and the Good People”, was published in the December 1901 edition of the New York-based literary magazine *McClure’s*.⁹ Fifty-eight years after the film’s release and one-hundred-and-sixteen years after Kavanagh’s creation of the character of Darby O’Gill and the version of Ireland that he inhabits, when the term “Darby O’Gill” is used in Irish cultural

⁵ KM Chanko, “The Secret of John Sayles” in *John Sayles: Interviews*, ed. Diane Carson (Mississippi: The University of Mississippi Press, 1999), 181.

⁶ Tanya Sweeney, “An Interview with Cathal Quinn”, *The Irish Independent*, July 27, 2013.

⁷ See *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* (Robert Stevenson, USA, 1959).

⁸ For the avoidance of confusion, Walt Disney will be referred to throughout this thesis as Walt Disney and The Walt Disney Company, the organisation that he founded in 1923 with his brother Roy O Disney, will be referred to as Disney.

⁹ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh was known as Herminie Templeton from the start of her literary career in December 1901 until she married Marcus Kavanagh in August 1908 and, thus, all of her published work between those dates was credited to Herminie Templeton. All of the work that she published after her marriage to Marcus Kavanagh was credited to Herminie Templeton Kavanagh and it is this later incarnation of her name that will be used throughout this thesis.

discourse, it predominantly functions, as it does in the four examples above, as a signifier of a pejorative construction of Irish identity. This thesis will investigate the extent to which the use of the term “Darby O’Gill” as a signifier is justified when both incarnations of Darby O’Gill and the version of Ireland that he inhabits are taken into consideration and analysed comprehensively. It will also endeavour to discover whether the emphasis in the modern Irish consciousness on “Darby O’Gill” as a signifier, be it justified or not, actually obscures a more complex and interesting construction of Irish identity than heretofore appreciated. This thesis will constitute the first sustained comprehensive scholarly analysis of Darby O’Gill and his Ireland in either their literary or their cinematic incarnations, although more has been written on their later cinematic adaptation than their literary origins in Irish-American children’s literature of the turn of the twentieth century. It has become increasingly apparent during the course of this research project that, whilst the vast majority of Irish people are keenly aware of the Disney film *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, only very few are even vaguely aware of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh’s *Darby O’Gill* literary fairy tales which preceded it. This is perhaps the reason why the term “Darby O’Gill” occupies the position of a signifier of an objectionable construction of Irish identity, because it is understood to refer to a cultural product that was entirely created by a hugely powerful and influential international media organisation rather than one which originated with a largely obscure and mildly successful author whose career was conducted in radically different circumstances. This investigation will confront the reality of the construction of Irish identity in the literary as well as the cinematic incarnation and will give equal weight to these separate incarnations. Therefore, it acknowledges two distinct phases in this fascinating cultural narrative.

The first phase relates to the publishing of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales in *McClure's Magazine*, and other magazines between 1901 and 1913 and to the publishing of two collected editions of her tales: *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (1903) and *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* (1926). The second phase relates to the conception, production and release of the film adaptation which took place over a protracted period of time at Walt Disney Productions from the summer of 1945 to the summer of 1959. The first phase will be covered in the first and second chapters and the second phase will be covered in the third and fourth chapters. Although this chronology will be largely maintained, connections and disconnections between the literary and the cinematic Darby O'Gills will be explored throughout. This thesis will analyse how Irish identity is constructed in both of these phases: firstly, through representation of the Irish people and, secondly, through representation of the fairies from Irish folklore, referred to by Kavanagh as the Good People and by Disney as the Little People.¹⁰ Discussions of the representation of the Good People/Little People have been granted such a major position in this thesis because of the centrality and significance of these folkloric creatures in the construction of Irish identity in both the tales and the film. Throughout the thesis, Kavanagh's tales and the Disney film will be subjected to close textual analysis to determine exactly how they represent the Irish people and the Good People/Little People. They will be examined within the cultural and socio-historical contexts in which they were produced for the purpose of determining the extent to which these factors contributed to the representations featured within these texts. This close textual analysis and cultural and socio-historical contextualisation will be strengthened by findings from archival research which was conducted at the Walt Disney

¹⁰ The fairies of Irish folklore will be referred to as the Good People when Kavanagh's representation of them is being discussed and as the Little People when Disney's representation of them is being discussed and simply as "the fairies" or "fairy folk" in all other instances throughout this thesis.

Archives, which constituted the first research of its kind to ever be conducted at the institution, and from archival research at the Betsy Beinecke Shirley Collection of American Children's Literature, which involved the most comprehensive exploration of that collection's Irish-themed material to date.¹¹ They will also be strengthened by references to pre-existing scholarship on pertinent literary and cinematic texts and by the application of pertinent literary and cultural theories. This thesis will elucidate the central aspects of the representation of the Irish people in Kavanagh's tales (Chapter One), of the Good People in Kavanagh's tales (Chapter Two), of the Irish people in the Disney film (Chapter Three) and of the Little People in the Disney film (Chapter Four). The conclusion will then return to the issue of the use of "Darby O'Gill" as a signifier of a pejorative construction of Irish identity. In light of all the available evidence throughout the four chapters, it will endeavour to state categorically the extent to which it is justified, whilst also considering whether the literary and cinematic Darby O'Gills have any merit or significance beyond the parameters of the signifier.

The analysis in this thesis has been informed by the work of a number of leading figures in the field of children's literature scholarship, including Jacqueline Rose, Barbara Wall, Peter Hunt, David Rudd, Kimberley Reynolds, John Stephens, Matthew Grenby and Vanessa Joosen. Whilst the work of most of these scholars is referenced only briefly or, indeed, not at all, the work of Barbara Wall features prominently and consistently throughout this thesis. This is because it will be argued that, in constructing Irish identity through representation, both Kavanagh's literary fairy tales and the Disney film address a

¹¹ The Walt Disney Archives are located on the main campus of the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California and were accessed for this research project from 8/6/2015 to 12/6/2015. The Betsy Beinecke Shirley Collection of American Children's Literature is located in the Beinecke Library on the campus of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut and was accessed for this research project from 18/4/2016 to 13/5/2016.

dual audience of child and adult members of the Irish diaspora in the United States of America at the particular diasporic moments at which they were produced. The concept of addressing a dual audience features in all four chapters as a means of acknowledging potential and diverse ways in which the representation of the Irish people and the Good People/Little People within the texts may be interpreted. The term “dual address” can be traced to Barbara Wall’s theory about the three main forms of narrative address in children’s fiction; single address, double address and, most significantly in this context, dual address.¹² Wall equates the naïve, inexperienced reader with the implied child reader and the sophisticated, experienced reader with the implied adult reader. Whilst single address treats both groups of readers indiscriminately¹³ and double address places sophisticated, experienced “adult” readers in a privileged position over their naïve, inexperienced “child” counterparts,¹⁴ dual address occurs when both groups of readers can read the exact same passage and extract entirely different yet equally legitimate meanings from it.¹⁵

Whilst there is no existing documentation that testifies to Kavanagh’s intention to address a dual audience, the exploration of the circumstances in which the tales were published and the close textual analysis of her thematic, linguistic and narratological approach to writing fiction, both of which feature in the first two chapters of this thesis, strongly suggest Kavanagh’s adoption of dual address. Sandra L Beckett discusses dual address in the context of crosswriting. She asserts that, although crosswriting for both children and adults in the same text through the adoption of dual address is often

¹² The three main forms of address used in children’s fiction are discussed by Barbara Wall throughout *The Narrator’s Voice: The Dilemma of Children’s Fiction* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1991) but they are introduced and defined by Wall in the book’s second chapter, “Problems of Audience”. See 20 – 36.

¹³ Wall, *The Narrator’s Voice*, 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 – 21.

considered to be a relatively recent phenomenon, it actually has a very long and distinguished history,¹⁶ a history which predates the writing and publication of Kavanagh's tales considerably. She also asserts that the marketing of a crosswritten text can be instrumental in obscuring its adoption of dual address¹⁷ and this issue will become increasingly pertinent throughout this thesis as the role of Kavanagh's work in the American Celticism publishing fashion is explored. Dual address also features heavily in the latter two chapters of this thesis and that is not only because an exploration of the circumstances in which the film was produced and an analysis of the film itself both strongly suggest its relevance. It is also because the fact that dual address was Walt Disney's preferred form of narrative address in the films that were produced at his organisation is well documented and previously asserted. According to Amy M. Davis, Walt Disney did not wish to prioritise child viewers over adult viewers or vice versa but rather to attract both audiences to his company's films equally,¹⁸ thus he claimed repeatedly that they were made for "the child within the adult"¹⁹ and "children of all ages".²⁰ Whilst such statements refer to a certain extent to the nostalgic quality of his films, they also illuminate Disney's awareness of addressing a child and adult viewer equally within the same text, which is the essential principle upon which the concept of dual address is founded. The application of Wall's theory of dual address in the analysis of both Kavanagh's tales and the Disney film seems entirely appropriate, therefore, and its considerable importance in understanding the

¹⁶ See Sandra L Beckett, *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults* (New York: Garland, 1999), xii.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁸ See Amy M Davis, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 110.

¹⁹ See *Ibid.*

²⁰ See *From Walt to Woodstock: How Disney Created The Counterculture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 212.

representations featured within these texts will become increasingly apparent throughout the thesis.

This introduction will now establish the starting point from which this research project developed by reviewing all of the pre-existing scholarship on Kavanagh's *Darby O'Gill* literary fairy tales and on Disney's film *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* that has been consulted in preparation for this new scholarly investigation. It will also highlight works of scholarship in which one may have expected to find references to either the tales or the film but from which such references are entirely absent and it will consider why this may be. Herminie Templeton Kavanagh is mentioned in Charles Fanning's seminal study, 1990's *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years of Irish-American Fiction* in a footnote to a discussion of American Celticism and its prominent fairy and folk dimension which saw the publication of a wide variety of texts in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century which targeted an Irish diasporic readership.²¹ In the footnote about "other 'Celtic' texts", Fanning states that "also, in 1903 Hermione (sic) Templeton Kavanagh published her tales of a Tipperary man among the fairies, *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (New York: McClure)".²² This footnote is misleading because he also includes Barry O'Connor and Seumas MacManus as examples of authors who produced texts of American Celticism.²³ The crucial difference between their work and Kavanagh's work is that they wrote retellings of episodes from Irish folklore, whereas Kavanagh wrote original literary fairy tales inspired and influenced by Irish folklore. Also, Fanning does not acknowledge that Kavanagh's tales constituted Irish-

²¹ For the entirety of his discussion of American Celticism, see Charles Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years in Irish-American Fiction* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 167 – 173.

²² Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 400.

²³ The texts by Barry O'Connor and Seumas MacManus which are referred to by Fanning as examples of American Celticism are *Turf-Fire Stories and Fairy Tales of Ireland* (New York: PJ Kennedy, 1890) and *In Chimney Corners: Merry Tales of Irish Folklore* and *Through the Turf Smoke: The Love, Lore and Laughter of Old Ireland* (New York: McClure, 1899) respectively. See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 400.

American children's literature, although this is emblematic of the study in general which does not engage with the concept of the development of Irish-American children's literature in any meaningful way, despite discussing to an extensive degree the work of one of its chief and earliest proponents, Mary Anne Sadlier.²⁴ Irish-American children's literature is similarly neglected in other studies of Irish-American literature by Ron Ebest and Daniel J Casey and Robert E Rhodes, in which Kavanagh is never mentioned at all.²⁵ Neither is she mentioned in Sally Barr Ebest's *The Banshees: A Literary History of Irish American Women Writers* (2013), which claims to offer "the first Irish-American women's literary history"²⁶ yet does not explore the work of any female Irish-American children's authors such as Sadlier, Kavanagh or Ella Young, even though they all fulfil Ebest's "novel and short story" criteria for analysis.²⁷

The lack of critical attention paid to children's literature by these Irish-American literary scholars does not entirely account for Kavanagh's perfunctory appearance in or complete absence from their work because even the most scrupulous and comprehensive scholarly guides to American children's literature from the 1920s and 1930s that include a strong Irish-American component do not mention Kavanagh. This indicates that her work did not enjoy a significant degree of popularity or prominence even in her own lifetime or in the period immediately following her death. *The Junior Book of Authors: An Introduction to the Lives of Writers and Illustrators for Younger Readers from Lewis Carroll and Louisa Alcott*

²⁴ For the entirety of his discussion of Mary Anne Sadlier, see Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 114 – 141.

²⁵ The studies in question are Ron Ebest, *Private Histories: The Writings of Irish Americans 1900 – 1935* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), Daniel J Casey and Robert E Rhodes, *Irish-American Fiction: Essays in Criticism* (New York: AMS Press, 1979), Daniel J Casey and Robert E Rhodes, *Modern Irish-American Fiction* (Syracuse: University of Syracuse Press, 1989), Daniel J Casey and Robert E Rhodes, "The Tradition of Irish-American Writers: The Twentieth Century" in *Making The Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, eds. Marion R Casey and JJ Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 649 – 662.

²⁶ Sally Barr Ebest, *The Banshees: A Literary History of Irish-American Women Writers* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2013), 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10 – 11.

to the Present Day (1934) features contributions from Kavanagh's Irish-American children's literature contemporaries, Young, MacManus and Padraic Colum and from the Irish children's author Anne Casserley, in the form of autobiographical sketches that they wrote themselves.²⁸ The fact that Kavanagh had died the year before the book was published does not explain her absence and, indeed, Lady Gregory, who was also recently deceased, does actually have a section devoted to her. All of the aforementioned authors who featured in *The Junior Book of Authors*, apart from Casserley, had previously featured in *The Three Owls* (1925–1931), three volumes of essays by pioneering scholar Anne Carroll Moore in which contemporary American children's literature was analysed critically.²⁹ Great attention is paid to Colum, who is interviewed in the first volume alongside reviews of his latest children's books, and, in this interview, he states his belief that *The King of Ireland's Son* (1916) is his greatest achievement.³⁰ This statement by Colum in the first volume would seem to substantiate Moore's approach to providing an overview of children's literature relating to Ireland and Irish people, in which she emphasises fiction that incorporates elements of mythology and folklore at the expense of realist fiction.³¹ Indeed, much of the work that she mentions in which episodes from Irish mythology and folklore are retold cannot be convincingly identified as explicitly addressing a child audience, although Moore seems to hold the view that texts of this nature always constitute children's literature.³² In

²⁸ See Howard Haycroft and Stanley J Kunitz, eds., *The Junior Book of Authors: An Introduction to the Lives of Writers and Illustrators for Younger Readers from Lewis Carroll and Louisa Alcott to the Present Day* (New York: The HW Wilson Company, 1934).

²⁹ See Anne Carroll Moore, *The Three Owls: A Book about Children's Books, Their Authors, Artists and Critics* (New York: Macmillan, 1925, 1928, 1931).

³⁰ See Moore, *The Three Owls* (1925), 104 – 118.

³¹ See Moore, *The Three Owls* (1928), 225 – 238.

³² Moore's full list of authors whose work she identifies as Irish children's literature comprises the following: Eleanor Hull, Samuel Ferguson, TW Rolleston, Lady Gregory, James Stephens, Joseph Jacobs, Ella Young, Padraic Colum, William Allingham, Nora Hopper, Edward Leamy, Gerald Griffin, Seumas MacManus, Father Prout, Seamus O'Sullivan and Aldis Dunbar.

an article on the work of James Stephens, which includes an assertion by Stephens that his books such as *The Crock of Gold* are not written for children, Moore contradicts him by stating that “they are extremely appealing to and popular with all readers who dwell in the Land of Faery, irrespective of their age”.³³ Even with these expanded criteria for inclusion in *The Three Owls*, Kavanagh is never mentioned in any of the three volumes and this would seem to prove the lack of popularity and prominence of her obscure literary fairy tales during this period.

Given the increased cultural significance of Kavanagh’s work following its Disney adaptation in 1959, one may have expected it to be discussed in more contemporary Irish-American children’s literature scholarship but, in the small amount of relevant material that has been produced in recent years, this has not been the case. A collection of essays based upon research conducted at the Betsy Beinecke Shirley Collection of American Children’s Books was published in 2017, and it included an essay by Pádraic Whyte in which he argues for greater appreciation of Padraic Colum’s contribution to American children’s literature.³⁴ Also published in 2017 was an essay by Ciara Gallagher in which she explored the development of the Irish immigrant experience in Irish-American children’s literature of the second half of the nineteenth century, although she largely focussed on the work of two authors, Mary Anne Sadlier and Mary E Mannix.³⁵ Padraic Colum is once again the central figure in a 2011 essay by Aedín Clements in which she surveys the first thirty years of America’s first children’s literature reviewing periodical *The Horn Book* for Irish content and

³³ Moore, *The Three Owls* (1925), 259 – 267.

³⁴ See Pádraic Whyte, “A Place in the Canon: Padraic Colum’s Newberry Books and the Development of American Children’s Literature” in Timothy Young, ed. *Story Time: Essays on the Betsy Beinecke Shirley Collections of American Children’s Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

³⁵ See Ciara Gallagher, “The Development of the Irish Immigrant Experience in Irish-American Children’s Literature 1850 – 1900” in Pádraic Whyte and Keith O’Sullivan, eds. *Children’s Literature Collections: Approaches to Research* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 71 - 90.

finds that Colum features more prominently than any other Irish author.³⁶ This is not a comprehensive analysis of Irish-American children's literature during this period from 1924 to 1954, not only because it deals exclusively with *The Horn Book* and authors mentioned, reviewed and quoted within it but also because it does not differentiate between the Irish-American children's authors about which she writes such as Young, MacManus and Arthur Mason, as well as their Irish counterparts, such as Casserley and Patricia Lynch. Clements' introductory remarks are very illuminating:

Edited for many years by Massachusetts bookseller Bertha Mahony, *the Horn Book* promoted what it termed "good books" and so ignores much popular fiction. That said, it offers valuable insight into the reception of Irish children's literature in America.³⁷

It is clear that not only does Clements acknowledge the partiality of her exclusive source, *The Horn Book*, but also that she conceives of "Irish children's literature in America" as a homogenous entity without distinctive Irish and Irish-American component parts. Thus, even though it does not lay claim to be, this essay should not be viewed as a comprehensive analysis to Irish-American children's literature of this period, even in the absence of other scholarly work on the topic. Recent studies of the history of American children's literature by Gillian Avery and Gail Murray Schmunk do not explore the work of any Irish-American children's authors or any representations of Irish people in work by American children's

³⁶ See Aedín Clements, "Padraic Colum, the Horn Book and the Irish in American Children's Literature in the Early Twentieth Century" in Mary Shine Thompson, ed. *Young Irelands: Studies in Children's Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 154 – 163.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

authors.³⁸ Therefore, Clements' essay occupies the position of the most informative, general guide that has been thus far made available to scholars.

As separate entities decontextualized from their later cinematic incarnation, Kavanagh's *Darby O'Gill* literary fairy tales are only mentioned once in scholarship, by Fanning in his discussion of American Celticism and never in the context of Irish-American women writers or Irish-American children's literature. The Disney film *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* appears more frequently in scholarship and Kavanagh's tales thus receive more attention as a result of their relationship to the film. The film still appears surprisingly seldom, however, given the wealth of scholarly material which has been written on Walt Disney, his organisation and its oeuvre. The film is placed at a distinct disadvantage in scholarly terms by the fact that it is live-action rather than animated: the vast majority of critical analyses that have been conducted on Disney's work prioritise the organisation's animated films and their various themes, preoccupations and ideologies. The live-action films that receive a certain amount of critical attention have been extremely successful, such as *Mary Poppins* (1964), or extremely controversial such as *Song of the South* (1946).³⁹ However, the film under discussion here has not distinguished itself in either regard. A topic which is frequently explored in Disney scholarship is the organisation's tendency to appropriate European folklore through its iconic adaptations of literary retellings of oral European fairy tales and of works of children's literature which are inspired and influenced by European folklore. *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* has never been included in explorations of this topic, even though its inclusion would seem entirely legitimate, and this

³⁸ The studies in question are Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and their Books, 1621 – 1922* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994) and Gail Schmunk Murray, *American Children's Literature and the Construction of Childhood* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998).

³⁹ See *Mary Poppins* (Robert Stevenson, USA, 1964) and *Song of the South* (Harve Foster and Wilfred Jackson, USA, 1946).

is perhaps because the scholars who have undertaken this work like Jack Zipes, Richard Schickel and Robin Allan have always chosen to focus entirely on animated films.⁴⁰ Certain complete and unabridged histories of Disney's films do not share this bias towards animation that often colours Disney scholarship, although the sections on *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* in histories by Leonard Maltin and Dave Smith could not reasonably be considered scholarly analyses.⁴¹ Rather they comprise plot summaries, lists of credited cast and crew members and obscure and valuable factual information on the conception, production and release of the film. Maltin includes a review in which he calls it "not only one of Disney's best films, but certainly one of the best fantasies ever put on screen";⁴² however, he focuses almost entirely on praising the film's pioneering visual effects and chooses not to discuss the film in broader terms.

Darby O'Gill and the Little People has occasionally been referenced in scholarship that does not contextualise it as a Disney film but rather as a contribution to Irish-American cinema, although an essay by Brian McIlroy in which he argues that Irish-American film comedy is a distinct sub-genre does not analyse the film itself. Instead, it analyses a paratextual faux-documentary, which was produced by Walt Disney Productions as a promotional opportunity.⁴³ He locates this *Disneyland* television special "I Captured the King of the Leprechauns", in which Walt Disney travels to Ireland to recruit real leprechauns to

⁴⁰ Jack Zipes, Richard Schickel and Robin Allan explore this topic in *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale: Revised Edition* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013) and *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy Tale Films* (London: Routledge, 2011), *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art and Commerce of Walt Disney: Third Edition* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc Publisher, 1997) and *Walt Disney and Europe: European Influences on the Animated Feature Films of Walt Disney* (London: John Libbey and Company, 1999) respectively.

⁴¹ A section on the film features in Leonard Maltin, *The Disney Films: Fourth Edition* (New York: Hyperion, 2000), and in Dave Smith, *The Disney A to Z: The Official Disney Encyclopaedia: Fourth Edition* (New York: Disney Editions, 2006).

⁴² Maltin, *The Disney Films*, 159.

⁴³ See Brian McIlroy, "Searching for the Sub(genre): Irish-American Film Comedy" in Ruth Barton, ed. *Screening Irish-America* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 299 – 310.

appear in his new project, within a tradition of culture-clash comedies on an Irish-American theme in which a contemporary American travels to Ireland with a specific purpose and becomes enchanted by the Irish people.⁴⁴ Although it is referenced, the main film is sidelined in favour of the promotional paratext in McIlroy's essay, just as the main film is sidelined in an essay by Roddy Flynn on the co-operation between the Department of External Affairs and various international film companies in the period after World War Two which resulted in the filming in Ireland of several American productions including the iconic Irish-American film, *The Quiet Man* (1952).⁴⁵ Flynn's essay begins by describing the overwhelmingly positive attitude that was adopted by the Department of External Affairs towards Walt Disney after he personally sought assistance from the Department in 1946 in conducting research on Irish culture and folklore for a new Irish-themed film project during a forthcoming trip to Ireland.⁴⁶ The essay proceeds to discuss several productions that were filmed in Ireland due to the co-operation between the Department and the film companies in question. Perhaps because *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* was not ultimately shot in Ireland as had been hoped, neither the film nor the interactions between the Department and Disney are referenced again. The fascinating relationship between Disney and the Irish Folklore Commission that developed as a result of these interactions is analysed in forensic detail, however, in Tony Tracy's essay "When Disney Met Delargy: Darby O'Gill and the Irish Folklore Commission" from the 2010 volume of *Béaloidéas*, the official journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society.⁴⁷ Granted access to the archives of the National Folklore

⁴⁴ McIlroy, "Searching for the Sub(genre)", 305.

⁴⁵ See Roddy Flynn, "Projecting or Protecting Ireland?: The Department of External Affairs and Hollywood, 1946 – 1960" in Ruth Barton, ed. *Screening Irish-America* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 211 – 232. See also *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, USA/Ireland, 1952).

⁴⁶ Flynn, "Projecting or Protecting Ireland?", 211 – 212.

⁴⁷ See Tony Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy: Darby O'Gill and the Irish Folklore Commission", *Béaloidéas*, 78 (2010), 44 – 60.

Collection, Tracy charts chronologically all the interactions and correspondence between Disney personnel and the Director of the IFC, Dr James Delargy, that have been officially recorded. He also engages in a wider discussion of the folkloric aspect of the careers of Walt Disney and Delargy and the differences in their approach to folklore that caused tension between them. In this context, he mentions Disney's decision to adapt Kavanagh's tales,⁴⁸ although neither Kavanagh's work nor the finished film is the focus of this essay and, thus, Tracy does not analyse them at all.

This review of all pre-existing scholarship on Kavanagh's tales and the Disney film will now conclude by discussing the most comprehensive and sustained scholarly analyses to which both the literary and the cinematic incarnations of *Darby O'Gill* have been subjected. In 2015, the *Dublin Review* published an essay by Carol Taaffe entitled "Walt Disney and the Little People", in which Taaffe states her belief that Walt Disney and his staff chose to ignore the material brought to their attention by Irish folklorists and adapt Kavanagh's tales instead because of their perception of what would attract the largest proportion of their target Irish-American audience.⁴⁹ This argument has merit and Taaffe astutely identifies the prioritising of an Irish-American understanding and appreciation of Irish folklore and culture in both Kavanagh's work and the Disney film. She unjustly dismisses Kavanagh's tales as representing "unabashed blarney"⁵⁰ and adhering to "a familiar formula",⁵¹ however, and does not acknowledge the innovative and subversive nature of Kavanagh's work for the period during which Kavanagh was writing. She also makes assertions which do not bear scrutiny such as that Kavanagh's treatment of Irish Catholicism is entirely comic or that

⁴⁸ Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 55.

⁴⁹ See Carol Taaffe, "Walt Disney and the Little People", *Dublin Review* 64 (2015): 5 – 17.

⁵⁰ Taaffe, "Walt Disney and the Little People", 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

Kavanagh simply characterises Darby O’Gill as a “stage Irish buffoon”.⁵² Similarly, Douglas Brode’s analysis of the film is coloured by his determination to prove the central thesis of his 2004 book, *From Walt to Woodstock: How Disney Created the Counterculture*, in which he boldly argues that Walt Disney actually had a liberal, progressive political agenda which permeates his organisation’s animated and live-action films. Brode makes several assertions about the film that do not bear scrutiny, particularly regarding what he perceives to be Walt Disney’s progressive attitudes towards women and organised religion.⁵³ He calls the character of Katie O’Gill “one more of Disney’s proto-feminist role models” because she shows little interest in marriage in her opening scene.⁵⁴ He ignores her transformation during the film from a fairly assertive and autonomous figure to an emphatically conservative figure who is soon to be married and who appears willing to adopt a submissive role within that marriage. Also, Brode claims that Walt Disney once again “establishes the limits of conventional religion” in the film by showing that the local Catholic priest, Father Murphy, cannot cure Katie of her illness but that the Little People actually can.⁵⁵ He ignores the fact that the Little People were clearly also the cause of her illness in the first instance, as well as the fact that religion is shown to be an effective protection against the malign interference of the Little People. Whilst Taaffe’s essay and Brode’s book provide us with the most comprehensive and sustained scholarly analyses of Kavanagh’s tales and the Disney film respectively, their analyses are brief and perfunctory and elements of both of their arguments suggest a lack of substantial engagement with the texts. It is

⁵² Taaffe, “Walt Disney and the Little People”, 12.

⁵³ For Douglas Brode’s analysis of the film, see Brode, *From Walt to Woodstock*, 211 – 213.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

clear, therefore, that no sustained or comprehensive scholarly analysis of either the literary or cinematic incarnation of Darby O’Gill has been conducted thus far.

This introduction will now be brought to a close with a factual account of the life and career of the children’s author who first created the character of Darby O’Gill and the particular version of Ireland that O’Gill inhabits. This account is being provided because, despite the cultural significance of her literary fairy tales, Kavanagh is an undeniably obscure literary figure about whom biographical details are not readily available. It would seem negligent, given how fundamental her work is to this research project, not to address this obvious issue and, also, a factual account of her life and career should facilitate a greater understanding of crucial aspects of her tales and their construction of Irish identity. All information in this account has been collected from authoritative and verified sources such as birth and death certificates, census forms, passenger lists, military files, copyright documentation, graveyard archives and newspaper articles about the author and her family. Herminie Templeton Kavanagh was born Minnie Allen McGibney at the British army barracks in Aldershot, Hampshire, England on the 6th of May 1861, the second child and daughter of George McGibney, originally from Templemichael, County Longford, Ireland and Caroline Allen, originally from Cow Lane, Coventry City, England.⁵⁶ At the time of her birth, George McGibney was stationed at Aldershot as Regimental Sergeant-Major with the cavalry regiment the 18th Hussars, having joined the British Army aged nineteen in 1843.⁵⁷ Thirty-four-year-old George, who had been baptised into the Church of Ireland in his native Longford, married twenty-two-year-old Caroline Allen in St Michael’s Anglican Church in

⁵⁶ This information is taken from the birth certificate of Minnie Allen McGibney, which was released for research purposes by Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, England on 11th of August 2014.

⁵⁷ George McGibney’s British armed forces record was accessed through <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/8470091/regimental-sergeant-major-george-mcgibney-british-army-18th-hussars/> on 18th of November 2013.

Coventry on the 17th of June 1858⁵⁸ and they became the parents of seven children over a period of thirteen years from 1859 to 1872; in chronological order, their children were Edith, Minnie, Kate, Annie, George, John and Jane.⁵⁹ Sergeant-Major McGibney was honourably discharged from the 18th Hussars at his own request in 1868 aged forty-four⁶⁰ and worked as a drill sergeant at an army training ground in Akeley, Buckinghamshire, England in 1871,⁶¹ having spent a period of time living in the East Indies with his family immediately following his discharge.⁶² The entire McGibney family set sail from Derry, Ireland, aboard The Scandinavian and arrived in Quebec, Canada, on the 8th of May 1872,⁶³ two days after Minnie's eleventh birthday, although the family had settled in New York City by 1880 when widowed Caroline, aged forty-four, was living on East 55th Street in Manhattan with her seven children, including nineteen-year-old Minnie, who was working as a saleswoman.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ The marriage was reported in the "Births, Deaths and Marriages" section of *The Coventry Times* on the 23rd of June 1858.

⁵⁹ All of George and Caroline McGibney's children are listed in the 1871 Census of England which was accessed through <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/group/1871UKI> on 1st of July 2015 and they are also listed in the 1880 Census of New York which was accessed through http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=8940&geo_a=r&o_iid=41013&o_lid=41013&o_sch=Web+Property on the 2nd of July 2015. The statements made in the first census regarding the children's names and order in the family are corroborated by the statements made in the second census. Jane is the only child to have been born between 1871 and 1880 and, thus, she is only one listed in the second census.

⁶⁰ George McGibney's British armed forces record was accessed through <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/8470091/regimental-sergeant-major-george-mcgibney-british-army-18th-hussars/> on 18th of November 2013.

⁶¹ This information is taken from the 1871 Census of England which was accessed through <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/group/1871UKI> on 1st of July 2015.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ The entire McGibney family are featured on the passenger list for this voyage of The Scandinavian. This passenger list was accessed through http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=IMG_PASSLISTS&gss=sfs28_ms_f-112&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=minnie&gsfn_x=0&gsln=mcgibney&gsln_x=0&cpxt=1&cp=11&MSAV=1&MSV=0&uidh=000 on the 2nd of July 2015.

⁶⁴ This information is taken from the 1880 Census of New York which was accessed through http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=8940&geo_a=r&o_iid=41013&o_lid=41013&o_sch=Web+Property on the 2nd of July 2015.

Minnie subsequently married the vaudeville performer and theatrical manager John Templeton, twenty-three years her senior, who travelled around the United States of America with his troupe. This troupe included his daughter from a previous marriage, Fay, who would later become one of the most celebrated female Broadway stars of the early twentieth century.⁶⁵ Minnie separated from her husband whilst she was living in Chicago in 1893,⁶⁶ remaining in the city alone and supporting herself by working as a clerk and stenographer in local government departments, such as the recorder's office and the board of education.⁶⁷ In 1900, estranged from her husband and having suffered the death of her only child, she was using the name Herminie Templeton and living in South Town, Cook County, Chicago, as a roomer in the household of hotelier Thomas White and his Irish wife Hannah.⁶⁸ The following year, her literary career was launched with the publication of her literary fairy tale "Darby Gill and the Good People" in *McClure's Magazine*.⁶⁹ This was the beginning of an association with the magazine which lasted until 1907 and which saw the

⁶⁵ There is an overview of John Templeton's life and career in an article announcing his death, which was published in *The New York Times* on the 12th of December 1907 on Page 11. Two newspaper articles about Kavanagh's second marriage assert that it is this particular John Templeton who was Kavanagh's first husband and, therefore, that she was also the stepmother of the Broadway star Fay Templeton – see "Mrs Templeton A Bride", *The Kansas City Times*, August 19, 1908, 1 and "Judge Kavanagh Marries", *The Intermountain Catholic*, September 12, 1908, 7.

⁶⁶ This information about Kavanagh's first marriage to John Templeton is taken from "Mrs Templeton A Bride", *The Kansas City Times*, August 19, 1908, 1.

⁶⁷ Kavanagh's previous clerical work is acknowledged in the following quotations from articles written about her once she began her career as a published author – "The writer is a Chicago woman who, until a short time ago, was employed in the recorder's office of this city" ("Chicago Woman Writing Irish Fairy Tales", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 2, 1902, 16) and "Herminie Templeton, who will be remembered here as a stenographer for the board of education is now a fully-fledged author" ("In Brief", *The Inter Ocean*, March 9, 2003, 5).

⁶⁸ This information is taken from the 1900 Census of Chicago which was accessed through http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1900usfedcen&gss=sfs28_ms_db&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=templeton&gsfn_x=0&gsln=herminie&gsln_x=0&MSAV=1&MSV=0&uidh=000 on the 10th of July 2015.

⁶⁹ In the first published version of Kavanagh's first literary fairy tale, the protagonist's name was Darby Gill and, thus, the tale was called "Darby Gill and the Good People". This was immediately revised and, for all subsequent appearances of that character in her work, from "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" in the August 1902 edition of *McClure's Magazine* onwards, he was referred to as Darby O'Gill.

publication of seven more of her literary fairy tales⁷⁰ and three sentimental love poems.⁷¹ The newspaper *The Chicago Tribune*, and three other magazines, *The New Broadway Magazine*, *Hampton's Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly*, also published one of her literary fairy tales each between 1903 and 1913,⁷² whilst the magazine *The Delineator* published her only example of a realist children's short story in its November 1905 edition.⁷³ In New York in 1903, the publishing house of *McClure's Magazine* published the collection *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*, which was comprised of revised versions of five previously published tales and one previously unpublished tale,⁷⁴ and this same collection was published simultaneously in Chicago by Reilly and Lee, the publishing company that was specialising in children's fiction and literary fairy tales during this period and was achieving huge success with the *Oz* books of L Frank Baum. No new material by Kavanagh was published for thirteen years until the Chicago-based publishing company Jordan Publishing published *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* in 1926. This collection comprised revised versions of five previously published tales and four previously unpublished tales.⁷⁵ No other

⁷⁰ The seven other literary fairy tales by Kavanagh that were first published in subsequent editions of *McClure's Magazine* are "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" in August 1902, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun" in December 1902, "The Convarion of Father Cassidy" in March 1903, "The Banshee's Halloween" in May 1903, "The Ashes of Old Wishes" in December 1905, "Killbohgan and Killboggan" in October 1906 and "Patrick of the Bells" in December 1907.

⁷¹ The three sentimental love poems by Kavanagh that were published in *McClure's Magazine* are "A Song" in April 1902, "Until You Came" in July 1902 and "A Serenade in Autumn" in October 1904.

⁷² "The Changeling: A Story of Christmas Eve" was published in *Chicago Daily Tribune* in its December 20, 1903 edition, "The Ghosts of Chartre's Mill" was published in *The New Broadway Magazine* in its April 1, 1908 edition (Volume 20, Issue 1), "The Crocks o' Goold" was published in *Hampton's Magazine* in its September 1909 edition and "How Sattin Chayted Mrs Muldowney" was published in *Harper's Weekly* in its July 12th 1913 edition.

⁷³ "The Exaltation of William Henry" was published in the November 1905 edition of *The Delineator*.

⁷⁴ "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun", "The Convarion of Father Cassidy", "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" and "The Banshee's Comb" had all been published previously – although the last tale had been re-named from "The Banshee's Halloween" and greatly expanded. "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" had not been published previously and first appeared in Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*, (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1903).

⁷⁵ "The Ashes of Old Wishes", "Killbohgan and Killboggan", "The Crocks o' Goold", "How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney" and "Patrick of the Bells" had all been published previously. "The Haunted Bell", "The Sheep Stealer", "Bridgeen and the Leprechaun" and "The Monks of Saint Bride" had not been published previously

literary work by Kavanagh was ever published, although *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* was re-issued by Reilly and Lee in Chicago in 1915 and by GP Putnam’s Sons in New York in 1932, the year before her death.

She had become Herminie Templeton Kavanagh aged forty-seven following her wedding on the 19th of August 1908 in Ireland to Cook County Superior Court Judge Marcus Kavanagh,⁷⁶ a forty-eight-year-old bachelor and son of Irish immigrants who had grown up in Des Moines, Iowa,⁷⁷ where his father was a successful railroad builder.⁷⁸ The couple had met professionally during the course of his work as a judge and her work as a clerk and stenographer. They developed a romantic relationship and an understanding existed between them for several years that they would marry after the death of her estranged first husband,⁷⁹ which occurred in December of 1907.⁸⁰ Marcus Kavanagh was a Roman Catholic and he expressed his religious affiliation publicly on several occasions, by delivering the commencement address at his alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, in 1905,⁸¹ by speaking at the International Confederation of Catholic Alumnae in 1915⁸² and by being

and first appeared in Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, *The Ashes of Old Wishes and the Other Darby O’Gill Tales* (Chicago: Jordan Publishing, 1926).

⁷⁶ Newspaper reports differ about where exactly in Ireland the marriage took place (Wexford, Waterford and Dublin are all suggested) but they all concur that the marriage took place in Ireland on the 19th of August 1908. See “Mrs Templeton A Bride”, *The Kansas City Times*, August 19, 1908, 1 for the Wexford marriage report, “Judge Kavanagh Marries”, *The Intermountain Catholic*, September 12, 1908, 7 for the Waterford marriage report and “Judge Kavanagh Weds Author”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 20, 1908, 7.

⁷⁷ See Albert Nelson Marquis, ed. *The Book of Chicagoans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men*, (Chicago: AN Marquis and Company, 1917), 375.

⁷⁸ See Johnson Brigham, *Des Moines: The Pioneer of Municipal Progress and Reform* (Chicago: The SJ Clarke Publishing Company, 1911), 307.

⁷⁹ See “Mrs Templeton A Bride”, *The Kansas City Times*, August 19, 1908, 1.

⁸⁰ See “Fay Templeton’s Father Dead”, *New York Times*, December 12, 1907, 11.

⁸¹ This information was accessed through the online archives of the University of Notre Dame at <http://archives.nd.edu/research/facts/commencement.htm> on the 1st of July 2017.

⁸² This is according to the 1916 edition of the *Catholic Educational Review*, which has been digitised by Harvard University and is available to be read online at https://archive.org/stream/CatholicEducationalReviewV11/CatholicEducationalReviewV11_djvu.txt.

photographed as a member of the Chicago branch of the Knights of Columbus in 1917.⁸³ The marriage was, therefore, an example of a mixed marriage, as Marcus Kavanagh was Roman Catholic and Herminie Templeton was from an Anglican background. Marcus Kavanagh was also a vocal supporter of Irish nationalism, as is evident from a speech he delivered at a Sons of Eirinn meeting in 1905 in which he proclaimed that “force to gain our Home Rule would be justifiable if practicable” and that “we will fight until we win Home Rule for Ireland”.⁸⁴ He also delivered a speech at Chicago’s Irish Fellowship Club in 1920 in which he praised Sinn Féin “for they are holding up the flame of Irish freedom” and asserted that “it is the duty of every Irishman in America to stand behind the Sinn Féin”.⁸⁵ The couple remained married for twenty-five years, sharing houses in Chicago and New Jersey,⁸⁶ and, in 1926, Kavanagh dedicated her second collection of tales to “my dear husband, Judge Marcus Kavanagh, who has dreamed these dreams with me and lightened with his courage and inspiration the weariness of my work”.⁸⁷ Kavanagh died of acute myocarditis or inflammation of the heart muscle on the 30th of October 1933 aged seventy-two following a short stay in St Luke’s Hospital, Cook County, Chicago⁸⁸ and her death was reported in *The Chicago Tribune* and

⁸³ See Frederick A Rowe, ed. *The National Corporation Reporter: Volume 55* (Chicago: The United States Corporation Bureau, 1918), 258.

⁸⁴ “Laud the Irish Martyrs – United Societies of Chicago Hold Celebration”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 24 1905, 3.

⁸⁵ “Judge Kavanagh Backs US Right to Aid Sinn Féin – Says Britain ‘Seeks Irish Revolt’”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 1, 1920, 3.

⁸⁶ According to the US City Directories accessed through http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=USDirectories&gss=sfs28_ms_db&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=marcus&gsfn_x=0&gsln=kavanagh&gsln_x=0&MSAV=1&MSV=0&uidh=000 on the 8th of July 2015, the addresses of the houses shared by Marcus and Herminie Kavanagh were 191 Lake Shore Avenue, Cook County, Illinois, Chicago and 4 Main Avenue, Ashbury Park, New Jersey, USA.

⁸⁷ Kavanagh, *The Ashes of Old Wishes*, iii.

⁸⁸ This information is taken from the death certificate of Herminie Kavanagh, which was released for research purposes by Cook County Recorder’s Office, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois on the 22nd of June 2017.

The New York Times. In both, she was noted, firstly, as the wife of Judge Marcus Kavanagh and, secondly, as a writer of Irish fairy tales.⁸⁹

She was survived by Kavanagh, who later died on the 31st of December 1937,⁹⁰ and, in 1946, when Walt Disney Productions sought copyright permission for her work, her closest surviving family members were her sisters Edith and Annie; her brother John; her niece Edith Broderick, the daughter of her sister Annie; and her nephew Lionel Albrecht, the son of her sister Jane.⁹¹ She is buried in Wood Lawn Cemetery, The Bronx, New York, in a McGibney family plot alongside eight of her family members and a Celtic cross has been erected especially in her honour, which bears the inscription “HERMINIE MCGIBNEY – WIFE OF MARCUS KAVANAGH – AUTHOR OF DARBY O’GILL”.⁹² Many aspects of this factual account of Kavanagh’s life and career will be endowed with a literary significance in Chapter One and Chapter Two of this thesis when they are re-iterated during the analysis of the representation of the Irish people and of the Good People in her literary fairy tales. It will be shown in these chapters how the personal circumstances in which Kavanagh operated influenced both of these representations, but these first two chapters will also establish the other many and varied influences on Kavanagh’s work. Chapter Three and Chapter Four will subsequently discuss the many and varied influences on the representation of the Irish people and the Little People in the Disney adaptation of her work. It will not merely explore the film in the context of its source material. In order to establish exactly how Irish identity

⁸⁹ See “Mrs Kavanagh, Wife of Judge, Dies, Ill A Week”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 31, 1933, 22 and “Obituaries – Mrs Marcus A Kavanagh”, *The New York Times*, October 30, 1933, 21.

⁹⁰ See “Judge Kavanagh, Unyielding Foe of Crime, Is Dead”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 1, 1938, 6.

⁹¹ This information is from the files of Spence Olin, the Walt Disney Studios’ lawyer in charge of copyrights, and features in an inter-office communication from “Kita – Library” to the film’s screenwriter Lawrence Edward Watkin dated August 31st 1959. See the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives, the Walt Disney Studios, Burbank, California, USA.

⁹² This information is taken from an email written to the author of this thesis by Maryann Byrnes, Archivist at Wood Lawn Cemetery, dated May 10, 2016.

is constructed through representation by both Kavanagh and Disney, numerous possible influences on the literary and cinematic incarnations of Darby O’Gill will be taken into consideration throughout the main four chapters of this thesis.

Chapter One

Introduction

When Kavanagh's literary debut "Darby Gill and the Good People" first appeared in *McClure's Magazine* in December 1901, it was accompanied by illustrations by Gustave Verbeek in which the Irish characters were subjected to a process known as visual simianisation. Whilst it later affected the representation of the Irish diaspora in the United States of America, the visual simianisation of the Irish people originated in English political cartoons of the 1840s.¹ The fashionable pseudoscience of physiognomy and newer forms of evolutionary thought associated with Charles Darwin, Alfred Russell Wallace and Thomas Henry Huxley were being increasingly misappropriated by certain scientists in order to promote the perception of the Irish people as racially inferior.² According to Jay P Dolan, "in ranking the races of the world these scientists placed the Irish, often referred to as the 'white negro', below the Anglo-Saxon and just above the Negro"³ and, as L Perry Curtis Jr asserts, this scientific racism had a stark influence on English cartoonists when faced with the prospect of communicating racist, anti-Irish sentiments in their visual representation of the Irish people:

By the 1860s no respectable reader of comic weeklies – and most of their readers were respectable – could possibly mistake the simous nose, long upper lip, huge, projecting mouth, and jutting lower jaw as well as sloping forehead for any other category of undesirable or dangerous human being than that known as Irish.⁴

¹ See L Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 29.

² See Jay P Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010), 102 – 103.

³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴ Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 29.

The image of the simian-faced Irishman became associated with Irish Americans more specifically in the 1860s when it was popularised in New York-based *Harper's Weekly* by the hugely influential "Father of the American cartoon"⁵, Thomas Nast, who had himself been influenced by one of the chief English proponents of the simianisation of the Irish people, John Tenniel of *Punch*.

German-born Nast believed that Irish Americans were largely responsible for many social problems not only in New York, the city in which he was living, but also more widely across America during his tenure at *Harper's Weekly* between the 1860s and the 1880s.⁶ Therefore, the simianisation of Irish people was particularly pronounced in his cartoons as he strove to represent a brutish and ignorant Irish diaspora in America as a threat to civilised society:

Whenever Nast drew an Irish-American, he invariably produced a *lusus naturae* or cross between a professional boxer and an orang-utan. The degree of midfacial prognathism and the size of the mouth have to be seen to be believed.⁷

Nast's legacy is apparent in the cartoons and illustrations of *Harper's Weekly* for a period long after his tenure with the publication ended in 1886. A pseudoscientific illustration entitled "Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View" by H Strickland Constable appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1899, for example. It depicts three men identified as "Anglo-Teutonic", "Irish-Iberian" and "Negro" with increasingly simianised features and an accompanying caption asserts the racial inferiority of the Irish people based on two specific reasons; the Irish-Iberians originally descended from an African race and "in consequence of

⁵ The title "Father of the American Cartoon" was most famously attributed to Thomas Nast in an article published in *The New York Times* on August 8th 1908 called "The Historic Elephant and Donkey; It Was Thomas Nast Father of the American Cartoon Who First Brought them into Life".

⁶ Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 58.

⁷ *Ibid.*

isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races".⁸ The visual simianisation of the Irish people would play an incongruous role in the launch of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh's career as a children's author two years later when "Darby Gill and the Good People" was published in the December 1901 edition of *McClure's Magazine*.

Kavanagh offers a celebratory representation of the Irish people through her tale of the daring adventure of Darby Gill amongst the fairies, and yet there is a curious conflict between text and image in "Darby Gill and the Good People", as it was first rendered in *McClure's*. The nine illustrations by Gustave Verbeek that accompany Kavanagh's text simianise the main mortal characters including Darby, his sister-in-law Maureen McGibney and the fairy spy Sheelah Maguire in such a pronounced manner that they are reminiscent of Thomas Nast's *Harper's Weekly* cartoons. This may be explained by the fact that, when Verbeek arrived in New York from his native Holland at the turn of the twentieth century, one of the first jobs as an illustrator and cartoonist that he secured was with *Harper's Weekly*.⁹ Despite simianisation being an established method of visually representing the Irish people in many American magazines and newspapers by 1901, Kavanagh's written text does not contain notions of racial inferiority nor any other negative perceptions of the Irish people that initiated and perpetuated this particular visual representation. This incongruity was subsequently rectified and, whilst illustrations continued to accompany Kavanagh's fairy tales, they were never again drawn by Verbeek and they never again featured visual simianisation. This is true of her tales when they were published on their own as single

⁸ Strickland's 1899 cartoon for *Harper's Weekly* is discussed by Catherine M Egan in her essay "'Still "Black" and "Proud": Irish America and the Racial Politics of Hibernophilia" in *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity and Popular Culture*, ed. Diane Negra (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 24 – 25.

⁹ See Dan Nadel, *Art Out of Time: Unknown Comic Visionaries, 1900 – 1969* (New York: Abrams, 2006), 317.

entities in *McClure's* and elsewhere between 1901 and 1913 and also when they were published in collections as *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* in 1903 and *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* in 1926. The dissociation of images of simianised Irish people from Kavanagh's work seems justified by the fact that Kavanagh's representation of her exclusively Irish characters remains celebratory throughout all seventeen of her fairy tales.¹⁰ This is not to suggest, however, that all of her characters behave admirably or even that Darby Gill, renamed as Darby O'Gill from Kavanagh's second tale onwards,¹¹ always behaves admirably; rather Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people is decidedly complex.

This chapter will discuss the most central and significant aspects of Kavanagh's celebratory yet complex representation of the Irish people throughout her seventeen literary fairy tales and it will explore how this representation appears to have been influenced by the particular literary and socio-historical circumstances in which she was writing in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century. The chapter will be split into four main sections. The first section will discuss how the representation of Darby O'Gill in her first literary fairy tale established a model for how the Irish people are predominantly represented in Kavanagh's work. It will examine the chief characteristics of the Irish people as they are portrayed by Kavanagh and it will suggest that she is conforming to a particular

¹⁰ This figure of seventeen fairy tales encompasses the six featured in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*, the nine featured in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* and two which were not featured in either collection – "The Changeling – A Story of Christmas Eve" from the December 20, 1903 edition of *Chicago Daily Tribune* and "The Ghosts of Chartre's Mill" from the April 1, 1908 edition (Volume 20, Issue 1) of *The New Broadway Magazine*.

¹¹ The two major changes that are apparent in all of Kavanagh's published work following her December 1901 *McClure's Magazine* debut, "Darby Gill and the Good People", are that illustrations featuring simianised Irishmen and Irishwomen no longer accompany Kavanagh's tales and that Darby's surname is henceforth O'Gill rather Gill. It is interesting that, whilst the former change represents an eagerness to shun narrow and regressive attitudes towards Irishness, the latter change appears to assert the necessity of relying upon these narrow and regressive attitudes to a certain extent by insisting that the tales' Irish protagonist should have a Mac or an O in his surname.

cultural construction of Irish identity, which became popular in the diasporic space of Irish America in the late-nineteenth century; the “roguish hero” figure. The second section will argue that Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people in her tales was facilitated by their initial place of publication, *McClure’s Magazine*, which frequently featured overwhelmingly positive representations of the Irish people. It will also argue that it was facilitated by the publishing fashion known as American Celticism and by not only Kavanagh’s adoption of the form of the literary fairy tale but also by her writing of a particular type of literary fairy tale. The third section will consider the idea that certain aspects of Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people were affected by the fact that she addresses a specifically Irish-American audience in her tales. In considering this idea, the attitudes and preoccupations of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century will be examined in order to show how they are reflected in her work. Finally, the fourth section of this chapter will explore the emphasis that Kavanagh places upon the relationships between men and women in her representation of the Irish people, particularly within mortal marriages and in the prominent Irish folkloric figure of the banshee. It will focus on a negative and misogynistic perception of Irish women in American popular culture at the turn of the twentieth century, which was epitomised by the “henpecking wife” figure and which Kavanagh appears to be critiquing in her tales.

Section One

The representation of the Irish people which features throughout Kavanagh's literary fairy tales is epitomised by her first literary fairy tale and her first work to be published, "Darby Gill and the Good People", re-named "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" after its initial appearance in *McClure's*. The tale begins with Kavanagh's assertion that "on the road between Kilcuney and Ballinderg, Jerry Murtaugh, the car-driver, told me this story"¹² and the remainder of the tale consists of Jerry's narration of a remarkable, pivotal incident in the history of the fictional County Tipperary village of Ballinderg, involving local farmer Darby O'Gill, "a cousin of my own mother"¹³ according to Jerry, and the fairy folk, known as the Good People. Darby is an ordinary member of the Ballinderg community who is celebrated for his extraordinary achievement - he confronts the supernaturally powerful and extremely sinister Good People at their Sleive-na-Mon lair for stealing his beloved cow, Rosie; he is imprisoned there against his will; and, with the help of his fellow prisoner and sister-in-law Maureen McGibney, he cleverly succeeds in escaping home to his wife Bridget and eight children. His cleverness is further demonstrated when King Brian Connors and his Good People pursue Darby after his unprecedented escape from Sleive-na-Mon and he cunningly traps them outside his cottage door, refusing to release them until they agree to release all other imprisoned Ballinderg residents, "promise never to moil nor meddle agin with anyone or anything from this parish"¹⁴ and send him ten thousand pounds in gold. As the tale concludes with Darby's historic victory, he is shown to eventually win the respect and affection of King Brian Connors for his good-natured bonhomie, for his bravery in

¹² Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "Darby Gill and the Good People", *McClure's Magazine*, December 1901, 124.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

confronting him and his Good People in the first instance and for his cleverness in outwitting them on two separate occasions. Darby's triumph over the Good People, which has led him to be celebrated and his story to be recounted, is secured not by chance or by coincidence but as a direct result of the various qualities that Darby exhibits throughout the tale. It is clearly shown by Kavanagh, however, that alongside the admirable and positive qualities such as bonhomie, bravery and cleverness that assist him against the Good People, he is also assisted by several dubious and negative qualities which are just as integral to his success.

Kavanagh creates a character who bravely confronts the Good People at their Sleive-na-Mon lair following the kidnapping of his beloved cow, Rosie. Whilst this is a brave act on Darby's part, it can also be read as a reckless, irresponsible and arrogant one for a man with a wife and eight children to support financially, particularly given the fact that his opponents are as formidable as the Good People. Fully believing that they will submit to his will, Darby actually becomes imprisoned by King Brian Connors and his Good People and must rely upon a plan masterminded by his fellow prisoner and sister-in-law Maureen in order to escape.¹⁵ After he escapes, he carries out a plan of his own to imprison the Good People, which requires not only a great deal of cleverness but also a willingness to use this cleverness to behave in a sly and deceitful way, which does not appear to perturb Darby whatsoever.¹⁶ His subsequent triumph is somewhat undermined by the revelation of the limitations of his philanthropy and social conscience as he secures the release of Ballinderg prisoners but no-one else and as he secures gold for himself and his family but for no-one

¹⁵ See Kavanagh, "Darby Gill and the Good People", 126 - 128.

¹⁶ See Ibid., 128 - 132.

else.¹⁷ When he is confronted about his perceived selfishness and greed by his outraged parish priest Father Cassidy, Darby simply and unapologetically explains to him that “if aich had two hundhred pounds what comfort would I have in being rich?”¹⁸ Rather than having no discernible flaws and only ever acting nobly and selflessly, Darby is an ambiguous figure whose behaviour is unpredictable and contradictory and whose positive and negative qualities are equally fundamental to his complex character and to the triumph against the Good People that distinguishes him within the Ballinderg community. Kavanagh refuses to present her protagonist Darby in a straightforward or uncomplicated fashion and this refusal extends to her portrayal of the protagonists of her tales in which Darby does not feature, most notably Pether and Sarah Muldowney, in “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, and Michael Bresnahan in “The Monks of Saint Bride”.

In “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, in which married couple Sarah and Pether Muldowney triumph despite the machinations of Satan, Sarah exhibits the same sort of cleverness as Darby. She also uses her cleverness for deceitful and calculating purposes when a casual comment by an exasperated Sarah about her inscrutable husband Pether – “I’d sell him to Sattin for sixpince this minnit, so I would!”¹⁹ – is heard by a handsome, mysterious stranger whom she soon realises is actually Satan. Not only does Sarah engage in the dubious act of selling her husband to Satan but she also shamelessly manipulates Satan into believing that she originally asked for the greatly inflated price of three pounds and ten shillings. For his part, Pether Muldowney bravely challenges Satan to a fight when he discovers the bargain that he has struck with Sarah²⁰ and, much like Darby’s confrontation

¹⁷ See Kavanagh, “Darby Gill and the Good People”, 132 - 133.

¹⁸ See *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ Kavanagh, “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, 203.

²⁰ See *Ibid.*, 212.

with the Good People at their Sleive-na-Mon lair, this brave act is also shown to be reckless, irresponsible and arrogant given how formidable his opponent is and also given how ill-equipped he is for the confrontation, unlike the resourceful Darby. The couple do not defeat Satan exactly; instead Satan flees from boastful Pether and manipulative Sarah in a state of great irritation after the maddeningly defiant Pether and Sarah prove their ultimate loyalty to each other by forming a united front against him²¹ and, thus, they emerge triumphantly from the encounter. In “The Monks of Saint Bride”, the triumph of Michael Bresnahan in breaking the curse on a haunted monastery and releasing the tormented souls of the eponymous monks into the afterlife is similarly undercut by the inclusion in Kavanagh’s representation of him of several negative and dubious qualities. For example, he does not purposefully venture to the monastery and immediately perform the necessary deed to break the curse. Rather he inadvertently stumbles upon the monastery after unwisely wandering around in the darkness of the night and is terrified by what he encounters.²² Kavanagh constructs him as astute enough to know how to break the curse and resourceful enough to be able to do it but it is also clear that his terror and self-interest prevent him from speaking the prayer that will release the monks for a considerable amount of time.²³ Michael gains considerable standing in the unspecified fishing village in which he lives following his heroic encounter with the monks of Saint Bride, much like Darby does at the conclusion of “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, although his priest Father Driscoll quite rightly suspects that he did not behave as heroically as he potentially could have on that fateful night:

²¹ See Kavanagh, “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, 209 – 213.

²² See Kavanagh, “The Monks of Saint Bride”, 137 – 138.

²³ See *Ibid.*, 141

Naturally he walked happy in his new and deserved importance. There remained but one thorn in his side. Whenever he chanced to meet up with Father Driscoll on the highway the suspicious minded priest would only laugh and shake the riding whip at him. Everyone else paid him his due of dignified respect.²⁴

His pompous indignation at not being granted “his due of dignified respect” by Father Driscoll is another instance in which one of Kavanagh’s mortal protagonists concurrently or subsequently undermines his or her own estimable actions with much less estimable behaviour.

All of these characters embark upon a quest and successfully complete that quest and, therefore, they perform the function of the hero as Joseph Campbell perceives it in the monomyth or hero’s journey which recurs in world mythologies and has greatly influenced the representation of heroes and heroism in other forms of fictional narrative.²⁵ When asked by Bill Moyers about the moral dimension of the hero’s journey, Campbell asserts that it can be identified in the hero’s slavish devotion to completing the quest upon which he or she has embarked to the point that he or she will sacrifice himself or herself.²⁶ If the quest is noble and admirable, then it renders the hero noble and admirable because he or she is singularly dedicated to its completion and this surely accounts for the perception of the hero as a morally impeccable figure –

The moral objective is saving the people or saving the person or supporting an idea.

The hero sacrifices himself for something greater – that’s the morality of it..... The

²⁴ Kavanagh, “The Monks of Saint Bride”, 142.

²⁵ Joseph Campbell explores the monomyth in his seminal work, *The Hero with A Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949).

²⁶ Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 156.

adventure that the hero gets is the one that he is ready for. The adventure is symbolically a manifestation of his character.²⁷

The quests upon which Kavanagh's characters embark are morally impeccable as they all seek to defeat sinister supernatural forces that interfered with and wreaked havoc upon their lives. Their potential identification as heroes is complicated, however, because Kavanagh's characters are neither self-sacrificing nor slavishly devoted to completing their quests, which are vital characteristics of the hero according to Campbell. They are waylaid by their self-interest and by their determination to turn the situations in which they find themselves to their maximum personal advantage. Yet, they all successfully complete their quests and, thus, must be considered heroic to a certain extent. Darby O'Gill, Pether and Sarah Muldowney and Michael Bresnahan are the best examples in Kavanagh's work of how her protagonists behave heroically and yet constantly undercut their own straightforward and uncomplicated heroism with what is well characterised as a definite sense of roguishness. Thus, they conform to a particular cultural construction of Irish identity by being "roguish heroes": clever but flawed individuals with a mischievous and raucous nature whose tendency to selfishly and unscrupulously promote their own interests at the expense of others is tempered by their ability to act nobly and bravely when required to do so and to ultimately do what is morally right. This representation is affectionately rendered by Kavanagh who, as is evident from the tales dealt with above, exploits the roguishness with which she imbues her heroic characters for all its comic potential.

The history of the "roguish hero" is inextricably linked with the history of another indelible cultural construction of Irish identity: the trope of the stage Irishman, which originated in England during the Elizabethan era but thrived upon its exportation to the

²⁷ Campbell and Moyes, *The Power of Myth*, 156.

United States of America around the turn of the nineteenth century.²⁸ By that time, according to Maureen Waters in her influential study of the topic, the stage Irishman was a buffoonish character firmly rooted in rural, peasant life, who had a lazy and slovenly demeanour, an ignorant and unsophisticated outlook and a rudimentary and peculiar grasp of English and was usually engaged in drinking and fighting.²⁹ Waters suggests that earlier studies of the stage Irishman by Maurice Bourgeois and George Duggan were too vociferous in their condemnation of the trope and overstated the extent of its crudeness whilst ignoring its affectionate undertones at the turn of the nineteenth century.³⁰ Dale T Knobel argues that the trope did not remain static and unchanging after its transference to the United States during this period and says that rather than being “a traditional English representation of the Irish full of specifically English prejudices about and ignorance of the real Irish”,³¹ when utilised upon the American stage, it increasingly contained information about American dispositions towards nineteenth-century Irish immigrants.³² Knobel’s analysis of depictions of the stage Irishman on the American stage from 1820 to 1860 suggests that they became increasingly hostile and vitriolic throughout the antebellum period when unprecedentedly large numbers of Irish immigrants arrived in America and when political nativism and anti-Catholicism flourished.³³

Both visual simiansiation of the Irish people in cartoons and illustrations, which also originated in England and thrived upon its exportation to the United States, and the stage Irishman trope experienced similar evolutions as they gradually came to be affected by

²⁸ See Maureen Waters, *The Comic Irishman* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 3 – 7.

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, 3 – 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Dale T Knobel, “A Vocabulary of Ethnic Perception: Content Analysis of the American Stage Irishman, 1820 – 1860”, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol 15, No 1, (April 1981), 45 – 71, 50.

³² See *Ibid.*, 51.

³³ See *Ibid.*, 70.

tensions which arose between native-born Americans and Irish immigrants. They were both also influenced by the apparently scientifically supported notion of the racial inferiority of the Irish people and, indeed, American performers of the stage Irishman trope in legitimate theatre and particularly in vaudevillian entertainment were recorded to have simianised their movements and expressions as late as the early-twentieth century.³⁴ Irish playwright, actor and theatre manager Dion Boucicault relocated to New York City from London during the 1850s. It is Boucicault whom Maureen Waters and William H Williams credit with deliberately rescuing the stage Irishman from the unremittingly negative and offensive American renditions of this period by making subtle yet definite adjustments and thus transforming him “from a mindless buffoon to a comic hero”.³⁵ Boucicault’s re-interpretation of the stage Irishman trope in three extremely popular plays of the 1860s and 1870s, which he both wrote and acted in, remained recognisable to American audiences. Yet, these stage Irishmen were much more palatable and much less offensive for the ever-increasing Irish diaspora in America. As Deirdre McFeely persuasively documents, “the Irish-American community welcomed Boucicault’s elevation of the stage Irishman as a contribution to Irish-American life”.³⁶ Despite being “still associated with ignorance and the ubiquitous pig”,³⁷ the stage Irishman’s peculiar way of speaking English became a distinction, which he could cleverly use to his advantage; his fondness for drinking and fighting became an amusing idiosyncrasy, which was neither brutish nor threatening; and, his residual trace of untrustworthy Otherness was mitigated by decency, optimism and

³⁴ See Knobel, “A Vocabulary of Ethnic Perception”, 60 – 64.

³⁵ William H Williams, *Twas Only An Irishman’s Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800 – 1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 98.

³⁶ Deirdre McFeely, *Dion Boucicault: Irish Identity on Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105.

³⁷ Waters, *The Comic Irishman*, 47.

courage.³⁸ Waters believes that Boucicault, in negotiating Irish cultural identity in the diasporic space, referred back to the rogue figure in whom Samuel Lover and William Carleton had lately specialised in their prose fiction and folklore collections but imbued him with several heroic qualities.³⁹ It could reasonably be argued that Boucicault also referred back to the trickster figure familiar from Irish folk narratives whilst, just as in the case of the rogue figure, simultaneously imbuing him with several heroic qualities.⁴⁰

The result of this creative process was that Boucicault created “roguish heroes” and Myles na Coppaleen, Shaun the Post and Conn the Shaughraun, who feature in *The Colleen Bawn* (1860), *Arrah na Pogue* (1864) and *The Shaughraun* (1874) appear respectively to be the prototypes for the “roguish heroes” created by Kavanagh for her literary fairy tales. As mentioned in the factual account of Kavanagh’s life in the introduction of this thesis, Kavanagh was living with her family on East 55th Street, Manhattan in 1880 having arrived in North America in 1872 and, therefore, it is entirely possible that she was living in close proximity to Broadway during the phenomenally successful 1874 – 1875 premiere production of *The Shaughraun* at Wallack’s Theatre, which was lauded by the city’s Irish-American community.⁴¹ She was definitely living there during the seven-year period from 1878 to 1885 which Christopher Dowd identifies as essential in the development of the figure of the “roguish hero” as he departed the Ireland of Boucicault’s plays and entered American society in a series of “Mulligan Guard” Broadway musical comedies by the

³⁸ See Waters, *The Comic Irishman*, 46 – 47 and 54 – 55.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive account of this folkloric figure, see Alan Harrison, *The Irish Trickster* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

⁴¹ See Christopher Dowd, *The Construction of Irish Identity in American Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 22 – 39.

vaudevillian duo Harrigan and Hart.⁴² Given Kavanagh's connections to the Irish diaspora in America, her presence in Manhattan at this time and her later marriage to her first husband, John Templeton, whose theatrical career straddled both the legitimate theatre and vaudeville, it is difficult to believe that Kavanagh would not have been fully aware of the "roguish hero" when she began to create her own Irish characters.

Waters offered the following conclusion when discussing Boucicault's re-interpretation of the stage Irishman as a "roguish hero", but she could equally have been discussing a number of Kavanagh's characters: "Although they may stretch the truth, they are basically honest with firm loyalties and a core of moral conviction"⁴³ or, as Christopher Dowd puts it, they were "more mischievous than malicious".⁴⁴ It is not only in the combination of admirable and positive qualities with dubious and negative qualities within the one character that Kavanagh's Irish people can be identified as "roguish heroes". Darby's association with a rural existence and with "the ubiquitous pig" is established in the second paragraph of "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" when Darby's cousin's son Jerry Murtaugh recalls that the Good People "had never bothered any of our kith and kin until, for some mysterious rayson, they soured on Darby and took the eldest of his three foine pigs".⁴⁵ All of Kavanagh's protagonists live an entirely rural existence and seem largely ignorant of the world beyond their immediate environs and they all exhibit another chief characteristic of the "roguish hero"; they use their peculiar way of speaking English to their advantage. The best example of this is the following passage from "How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney" in which Sarah manipulates Satan through her use of language into

⁴² See Dowd, *The Construction of Irish Identity*, 39 - 58.

⁴³ Waters, *The Comic Irishman*, 55.

⁴⁴ Dowd, *The Construction of Irish Identity*, 36.

⁴⁵ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1903), 3.

believing that she had asked him for three pounds and ten shillings for her husband when she had actually asked him for much less:

“Three pounds tin and not a fardin less. An’ how dare the loikes of you be callin’ a daycint woman loike me a schaymer,” she shouted, clapping one hand in the other undher the nose of the sthranger, an’ she follyin’ him as he backed step by step from her in the road. “Kape a civil tongue in yer head while yer talking to a lady or I’ll malevogue ye, so I will.”

“Hould where ye are, Mrs Muldowney,” said the flustherayted man and he backed up agin a rock. “I’ll own I was a thrifle quick tempered but I meant no offence ma’am, an’ if you’ll bring Pether to this spot on the morning of the morrow and hand him over to me here I’ll guv ye the three pounds tin down on the nail.”⁴⁶

The important narratological dimension to her characters’ peculiar use of English is signalled by Kavanagh in the persona of Jerry Murtaugh, who ostensibly narrates her tales in this manner. The language that he uses allows him to present the events that he is narrating exactly and uncompromisingly as he wishes them to be presented, which is exactly what Sarah Muldowney and various other characters do within the narratives of his tales. The only chief characteristic of the “roguish hero”, as outlined by Waters, to which Kavanagh’s characters do not really conform is the fondness for drinking and fighting because, although alcohol and violence feature in Kavanagh’s tales, they feature sparingly and neither are shown to be central to the lives of her characters.

Kavanagh makes brief references to Darby O’Gill and King Brian Connors drinking “a noggin of hot punch” together, either in the fairy lair at Sleive-na-Mon or beside the fire in

⁴⁶ Kavanagh, “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, 205.

Darby's cottage on long winter nights,⁴⁷ whilst in one particular tale, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", King Brian's Christmas present for Darby is a jug of poteen.⁴⁸ Similarly, Kavanagh rarely includes references to her characters resorting to violence and, on the rare instances during which they do, Darby and his fellow mortals are shown to be engaging in a desperate attempt to ward off threats from supernatural figures at their most malevolent.⁴⁹ The "roguish hero" remained recognisable from previous incarnations of the stage Irishman, which were imbued with negative stereotypes of Irishness such as over-reliance on and over-indulgence in drinking and fighting. This was achieved through acknowledging the stereotypes rather than entirely conforming to them; thus, the "roguish hero" is shown to be extremely fond of drinking and fighting, but it is not a major, debilitating problem for him. It may be that Kavanagh was furthering that process of distancing Irish characters from these stereotypes of Irishness by including so few references to drinking and fighting, but this may also be accounted for by her awareness of the child audience that she was addressing in her work and by her perception of what was inappropriate for inclusion in such texts.

There is another more substantiated connection between the figure of the "roguish hero" and children's literature, particularly of the period in America when Kavanagh was writing her tales. She may have felt confident in constructing Darby O'Gill and other characters as "roguish heroes" not only because they had become a prominent and popular

⁴⁷ See Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Little People", 13 and 28 and Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1903), 114.

⁴⁸ See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* (Chicago: Jordan Publishing, 1903), 173.

⁴⁹ This is particularly apparent in "The Banshee's Comb" in Kavanagh's first collection *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1903). The tale features violent altercations between Cormac McCarthy and Darby O'Gill and the banshee and her human spy Sheelah Maguire as Cormac and Darby attempt to defend Cormac's ailing wife Eileen against the banshee's sinister advances.

cultural construction of Irish identity in America but also because the “roguish hero” resembled a figure who was prominent and popular in American children’s books of the 1880s and 1890s – the “good bad boy”. According to Gillian Avery, the “good bad boy”, an iconic example of which is Mark Twain’s character Tom Sawyer, functioned as “America’s vision of itself, crude and unruly in his beginnings but endowed by his creator with an instinctive sense of what is right”.⁵⁰ It is understood that he will grow up to be “an ornament to his country”⁵¹ but, in the meantime, he is similar to the Irish “roguish hero” in that he has a mischievous and raucous nature, and he selfishly promotes his own interests, but he can ultimately be relied upon to act nobly and bravely and to do what is morally right.⁵² The success of the “good bad boy” with child readers may have influenced Kavanagh in her decision to construct her characters as “roguish heroes”, given how similar the two figures are in many respects. The second section of this chapter will now argue that, once Kavanagh had decided to represent the Irish people as “roguish heroes”, this representation was then facilitated by her tales’ initial place of publication and by the particular form that they took.

⁵⁰ Avery, *Behold the Child*, 197. For her complete study of the “good bad boy” figure and the texts in which he features, see Avery, *Behold the Child*, 195 – 203.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵² Avery, *Behold the Child*, 199.

Section Two

By emphasising the figure of the “roguish hero” to such an extent in her literary fairy tales, Kavanagh engages in a celebration but not a glorification of the Irish people, representing them as essentially good-natured, morally decent and honourable despite their unquestionable flaws. This representation is entirely consistent with other representations of the Irish people that featured in *McClure’s Magazine*, with which Kavanagh had the most crucial and sustained professional collaboration of her literary career. The magazine had strong connections with the Irish diaspora in America from its foundations onwards, as it was co-founded in 1893 by Samuel Sidney McClure, who was originally from County Antrim. He had emigrated with his remaining family to the United States in 1867 aged nine in the wake of the tragic death of his father.⁵³ It is primarily remembered in the history of American magazine publishing for pioneering a type of investigative journalism subsequently defined by President Theodore Roosevelt as “muckraking” and for exposing a series of scandals in American public life.⁵⁴ Articles of “muckraking” journalism were particularly prominent in *McClure’s* from 1902 to 1906, the period during which Kavanagh was also a frequent contributor to the magazine, and, according to Barbara Nourie, certain articles of “muckraking” journalism were instrumental in ensuring political and social reform in America in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵⁵ “Muckraking” journalism was not

⁵³ See S.S. McClure, *My Autobiography* (London: John Murray, 1914), 25 – 34.

⁵⁴ See Barbara Nourie, “McClure’s Magazine” in *American Mass-Market Magazines*, eds. Alan Nourie and Barbara Nourie (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1990), 247 – 252.

⁵⁵ The most high-profile example of this came as a result of leading “muckraking” journalist Ida Tarbell’s nineteen-part exposé of the corrupt, illegal dealings of oil trusts, the most powerful being the Standard Oil Company run by oil tycoon and the richest man in America at the time, John D. Rockefeller. Tarbell’s work was instrumental in governmental investigations which led to the trust-breaking legislation that eventually heralded the end of the Standard Oil Company. See Nourie, “McClure’s Magazine”, 249.

a financial success for *McClure's*, however.⁵⁶ Rather it was the high quality and wide appeal of its substantial literary content and other non-fiction material, as well as its competitive price, that established it as the most successful American magazine in financial terms by the late 1890s,⁵⁷ with a circulation of 400,000 by 1898.⁵⁸ *McClure's* was uniquely positioned to compete with older, more established and relatively expensive literary magazines such as *Harper's*, *Century* and *Scribner's* due to the extensive contacts of McClure and his co-founder, John Sanborn Phillips, from their years running a pioneering and very successful New York newspaper syndicate, which serialised the books of American and English authors.⁵⁹ They began to exploit these contacts during the magazine's third year and distinguished literary figures including Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, William Dean Howells and Rudyard Kipling obliged them by contributing original material to *McClure's*. The magazine's literary content, which encompassed serialised novels, short fiction and poetry, was not exclusively drawn from McClure and Phillips' contacts in American and English literary circles. *McClure's* had a conscientious literary department from its inception, which was dedicated to nurturing new and emerging literary talent,⁶⁰ and which took risks with unknown authors such as Stephen Crane, Jack London and, indeed, Herminie Templeton Kavanagh.

Kavanagh's professional relationship with *McClure's* ended completely after "Patrick of the Bells" was published in its December 1907 edition, and this may be explained by the momentous events which had taken place the previous year. In 1906, the magazine's staff

⁵⁶ Nourie, "McClure's Magazine", 249.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁵⁸ Gross, "Chapter Two: The Rise of *McClure's*" in "The Staff Break-up of *McClure's Magazine*".

⁵⁹ See Nourie, "McClure's Magazine", 247 – 248 and Greg Gross, "Chapter Two: The Rise of *McClure's*" in "The Explosions of Our Fine Idealistic Undertakings': The Staff Break-up of *McClure's Magazine*" (Thesis, Allegheny College, 1983).

⁶⁰ Nourie, "McClure's Magazine", 248.

rebelled against McClure over their moral qualms following the exposure of his extra-marital affairs and over his extravagant and unrealistic plans to expand his business empire, which they believed gave a testament to his mental instability.⁶¹ In the wake of what one of the magazine's most prominent "muckraking" journalists Ida Tarbell termed "the explosion of our fine idealistic undertakings",⁶² many of the *McClure's* staff including co-founder Phillips left the magazine and, despite surviving in various incarnations until 1929, it went into terminal decline financially.⁶³ Perhaps the specific editorial staff members with whom Kavanagh corresponded from Chicago as she contributed her tales to the magazine had left or perhaps Kavanagh wanted to disassociate herself from the magazine given the recent negative publicity it had attracted and the attendant decrease in its commercial success. Such had been her collaboration with the magazine, however, that her representation of the Irish people as "roguish heroes" in her tales cannot be considered in isolation from their publication in *McClure's* and it is the argument of this chapter that this type of representation was facilitated by their chief place of initial publication. It was facilitated by *McClure's* because the magazine frequently offered its readers extremely sympathetic fictional portrayals of the Irish people, which emphasised their admirable and positive qualities, whilst simultaneously acknowledging their dubious and negative qualities, as Kavanagh did with the figure of the "roguish hero". Many Irish-American authors who represented the Irish people in an extremely sympathetic light had work published in *McClure's*, although Kavanagh's fairy tales were unique amongst the magazine's Irish-American literary output, not only for featuring "roguish heroes" but also for featuring

⁶¹ See Gross, "Chapter Three: The *McClure's* Schism" in "The Staff Break-up of *McClure's* Magazine".

⁶² Tarbell used this term when reflecting upon her central role in the break-up of *McClure's Magazine* in a letter to her erstwhile McClure's colleague and fellow insurgent against SS McClure, Ray Stannard Baker on October 17th 1939. See Gross, "Preface" in "The Staff Break-up of *McClure's Magazine*".

⁶³ See Nourie, "McClure's Magazine", 249 – 250 and Gross, "Chapter Three: The *McClure's* Schism" in "The Staff Break-up of *McClure's*".

supernatural elements and for being set exclusively in Ireland. The short fiction of Kate McPhelim Cleary, Myra Kelly, Clara E Laughlin and Harvey J O'Higgins, conversely, is socially realist in tone and it is set amongst Irish-American communities in Chicago and New York as various characters negotiate their way through the diasporic space of Irish America.⁶⁴ All four authors are mentioned by Charles Fanning in his comprehensive study of Irish-American literature for their significant contributions to Irish-American short fiction at the turn of the twentieth century⁶⁵ and, in the cases of Cleary and Laughlin, the examples he uses of their most accomplished work are short stories which were originally published in *McClure's*.

Cleary's "The Mission of Kitty Malone" and Laughlin's "The Mother of Angela Ann" both concern resilient and kindly matriarchs of large Irish-American families who are confronted with major challenges in the diasporic space but ultimately triumph in the stories' sentimental, romanticised conclusions.⁶⁶ Kelly's *McClure's* stories, which are predominantly set in a multi-ethnic New York elementary school classroom, teeming in equal measure with Irish and Jewish immigrants,⁶⁷ are also to be commended according to

⁶⁴ Clara E Laughlin and Harvey J O'Higgins also made infrequent non-fiction contributions to *McClure's Magazine*. The December 1908 edition of *McClure's* featured an article by Laughlin on the history of *Our American Cousin*, the hugely popular English country-house melodrama by Tom Taylor which became notorious following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln during a performance of the play in April 1865. The August 1911 and September 1911 editions of *McClure's* featured articles by O'Higgins based on celebrated cases of the famous detective William J Burns entitled "The Dynamiters" and "A Promoter of Counterfeits" respectively.

⁶⁵ See Charles Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 180 – 183 for Fanning's discussion of the Irish-American literary achievements of Kate McPhelim Cleary, Myra Kelly and Harvey J O'Higgins and see Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 243 – 244 for his discussion of the Irish-American literary achievements of Clara E Laughlin.

⁶⁶ "The Mission of Kitty Malone" by Kate McPhelim Cleary was first published in the November 1901 edition of *McClure's Magazine* and "The Mother of Angela Ann" by Clara E Laughlin was first published in the October 1908 edition of *McClure's Magazine*. Laughlin continued writing about the lives of Angela Ann Casey, her mother Mary Casey and the extended Casey family in the novel *Just Folks* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910) which was published by The Macmillan Company in New York in 1910. "The Mother of Angela Ann" is incorporated into the narrative of *Just Folks*.

⁶⁷ Many of these stories were based on Kelly's own experiences as an elementary school teacher on the Lower East Side and featured a fictionalised version of herself in the character of Miss Constance Bailey. They were

Fanning for, much like the stories of Cleary and Laughlin, effectively mixing “promising realism with genteel/sentimental tendencies”.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Fanning asserts that the main legacy of the many short stories written by the less accomplished O’Higgins is that they depict Irish Americans in situations in which they had not previously been depicted in fiction.⁶⁹ O’Higgins was the most prolific contributor to *McClure’s* of stories exclusively revolving around Irish-American life and his *McClure’s* stories all serve as an early chronicle of the daily lives of aspirational Irish Americans who were excelling in professions and transitioning into the middle-classes: three of O’Higgins’ *McClure’s* stories concern Irish Americans working in the New York Fire Department, for example.⁷⁰ Another notable aspect of O’Higgins’ contribution to *McClure’s* is his insistence on challenging the negative representation of Irish Americans in American newspapers and magazines, such as those whose articles would be frequently accompanied by illustrations of simianised Irishmen and Irishwomen. A preoccupation of Thomas Nast’s which frequently manifested itself in his *Harper’s Weekly* illustrations, for example, was the perceived role of Irish Americans in upholding and worsening the corruption of the Democratic political machine in New York City, as symbolised for Nast by the organisation Tammany Hall governed by William “Boss” Tweed from the 1850s to the 1870s.⁷¹ In “Tammany’s Tithes”, however, O’Higgins tells the bleak story of an Irish-American man of integrity who recalls how his life was irrevocably

anthologised in a 1904 collection entitled *Little Citizens: The Humours of School Life* (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1904) which was published by McClure and Phillips in New York. Kelly’s professional relationship with SS McClure through his magazine *McClure’s* and his publishing house McClure and Phillips was very similar, therefore, to that of Kavanagh, although many of Kelly’s stories featured in *McClure’s* after rather than before their publication in book form.

⁶⁸ Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 180.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷⁰ These stories are “A Change of Profession”, “Lieut Connors’ Cowardice” and “A Personally Conducted Revolt”, which were published in the November 1902, January 1904 and February 1905 editions of *McClure’s Magazine* respectively.

⁷¹ See Albert Bigelow Paine, *Thomas Nast: His Period and his Pictures* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), 140.

destroyed when he publicly refused to submit to “Boss” Tweed’s corrupt Tammany Hall regime, suggesting that Irish Americans suffered as well as benefited from the corruption that had been identified by Nast as wholly Irish-American.⁷² Another McClure’s story by O’Higgins, “The Exiles” confronts the stereotype of the Irish “Bridget”, the incompetent and uncouth Irish-American domestic servant who terrorised the unfortunate American family for whom she was working. “Bridget” was ubiquitous at the turn of the twentieth century in literary and journalistic content and in popular vaudevillian entertainment in the diasporic space, and she featured frequently in simianised form in cartoons in the New York-based humorous magazine, *Puck*.⁷³ In “The Exiles”, O’Higgins writes back to this particular stereotype by emphasising the abuse and exploitation of young, naïve and inexperienced female immigrants by their unscrupulous American employers and by an apathetic American society more generally.⁷⁴

Much like Kavanagh’s literary fairy tales, however, short stories by all of the authors under discussion complicate the celebration of their characters with an insistence upon acknowledging their negative qualities and the negative repercussions of their actions. In Cleary’s “The Stepmother”, the eponymous character suffers miserably at the hands of her alcoholic and abusive immigrant husband who is resentful that his ambitions of striking gold on the western frontier never came to fruition, whilst in Laughlin’s “Over Monahan’s”, a desperate Irish-American worker on strike commits an act of violence which has devastating consequences for his family. Meanwhile, O’Higgins’s “The Doings of the Devil” introduces

⁷² “Tammany’s Tithes” was published in the October 1906 edition of *McClure’s Magazine*.

⁷³ See Margaret Lynch-Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America 1840 – 1930* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014) and April Schultz, “The Black Mammy and the Irish Bridget: Domestic Service and the Representation of Race, 1830 – 1930”, *Éire-Ireland* 48, 3, 4 (2013), 176 - 212 for comprehensive explorations of the Irish Bridget stereotype to which Harvey J O’Higgins appears to be writing back with his short story “The Exiles”.

⁷⁴ “The Exiles” was published in the March 1906 edition of *McClure’s Magazine*.

McClure's readers to the comically grotesque figure of Mrs Cregan who is so socially pretentious that she leaves her husband after he breaks her beloved china whilst the schoolboy Patrick Brennan in Myra Kelly's "HRH The Prince of Hester Street", who has similar social pretensions to Mrs Cregan, is so offended that he is not given preferential treatment by first-grade schoolteacher Miss Bailey as the eldest son of a New York City policeman that he exacts revenge on his ethnically diverse fellow classmates.⁷⁵ In all of these instances, however, the author concerned somewhat mitigates the misbehaviour of his or her characters by equating it with the plight of the Irish immigrant dealing with life's troubles in a strange and alienating diasporic space. This is similar to how Kavanagh mitigates the misbehaviour of her characters by constructing them as "roguish heroes" who, despite their selfishness and dishonesty, can be ultimately relied upon to act nobly and bravely and do what it is morally right – although it must be acknowledged that Kavanagh's tales are lighter and more comedic in tone than Cleary's and Laughlin's and, thus, her character's misbehaviour is less serious and disturbing. In conclusion, the *McClure's* short fiction of Cleary, Kelly, Laughlin and O'Higgins features an overwhelmingly sympathetic representation of the Irish diaspora in America through the stories of a series of admirable and appealing, if flawed, Irish-American characters. Although operating in entirely different circumstances, the "roguish heroes" of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales are also represented in an overwhelming sympathetic way as admirable and appealing, albeit flawed, individuals, as though this were the magazine's preference regarding its representation of Irish and Irish-American characters. Cleary, Kelly, Laughlin and O'Higgins did not write "roguish heroes", even though their characters all exhibit certain qualities of the "roguish hero", and yet there

⁷⁵ Cleary's "The Stepmother", Laughlin's "Over Monahan's", O'Higgins' "The Doings of the Devil" and Kelly's "HRH The Prince of Hester Street" were published in the September 1901, March 1907, June 1908 and May 1904 editions of *McClure's Magazine* respectively.

is such a clear consistency between their representations of the Irish people and Kavanagh's that one can identify a dedication on behalf of the magazine's editorial staff to a particular type of Irish character. It was fortunate for Kavanagh that the "roguish hero" was deemed to be an acceptable interpretation of this character and could, therefore, be facilitated within the pages of *McClure's*.

It should be acknowledged at this stage that there are rare occasions in which Irish people are portrayed in an extremely negative light in the magazine, which is inconsistent with representations from the five aforementioned authors, however flawed their Irish characters may be. There is, for example, the incongruous incident in which illustrations of simianised Irishmen and Irishwomen accompanied the publication of Kavanagh's "Darby Gill and the Good People" in the December 1901 edition of *McClure's*. When considered in terms of Sue Walsh's convincing, post-colonial reading of Rudyard Kipling's children's adventure novel *Kim*, however, this is not the only occasion in which a correlation is drawn between the Irish people and racial inferiority in either the visual or the written text of a *McClure's* piece of fiction.⁷⁶ *Kim*, which takes place in colonial India and was first published in serialised form in *McClure's* from December 1900 to October 1901,⁷⁷ conforms to a recurring trope in children's adventure stories in which the child protagonist is initially placed at a disadvantage by being orphaned and impoverished.⁷⁸ Walsh believes that Kipling places his protagonist Kimball "Kim" O'Hara at a further disadvantage by positioning him

⁷⁶ Sue Walsh offers this reading of *Kim* in the introductory chapter of her book *Kipling's Children's Literature: Language, Identity and Constructions of Childhood* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

⁷⁷ Following its initial serialisation in *McClure's Magazine*, *Kim* was published in book form in October 1901 by Macmillan and Co in London.

⁷⁸ According to M.O. Grenby, "The children's adventure story typically takes for its protagonists figures who are unimportant in their own lives. They are usually on the margins of the community, neglected and often victimised..... Essentially, the adventure story is a fantasy of empowerment. It makes the marginal and insignificant character central and crucial." See Matthew Grenby, *Children's Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 173 – 174.

precariously between cultures and identities and undermining his easy identification as a “sahib” on equal terms with other representatives of Anglo-Indian and British rule.⁷⁹ According to Walsh’s argument, Kipling achieves this through the description of Kim as “burnt black as any native”⁸⁰ from his time amongst the native population as an urchin on the streets of Lahore and, crucially, through the revelation that Kim’s late parents were Irish.⁸¹ Kipling undermines the racial superiority of Kim by intentionally identifying him with both the Indian people and the Irish people and, therefore, Kipling’s characterisation of his protagonist is dependent upon his readers’ familiarity with the mid-to-late-nineteenth century scientifically racist theories about the Irish, which were discussed earlier in this chapter. Whilst Walsh’s reading of *Kim* as a text in which a correlation is drawn between the Irish people and racial inferiority is convincing, *Kim*’s negative representation of the Irish people should nevertheless be considered mild, brief and implicit in the context of representations of the Irish people in other, contemporary American newspapers and magazines. Also, whilst both Kipling’s characterisation of his protagonist Kim and the “Darby Gill and the Good People” illustrations draw negative conclusions about the Irish people, such instances are so irregular that do not substantially undermine the overwhelmingly positive representation of the Irish people in *McClure’s Magazine* upon which the argument in this section of the chapter has thus far been founded.

This section will now argue that Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people as “roguish heroes” is not only facilitated by their initial publication in *McClure’s Magazine* but

⁷⁹ See Walsh, *Kipling’s Children’s Literature*, 16 – 21. Walsh further argues that by the conclusion of the novel, Kim has transcended his humble and unfortunate origins, as they are perceived by Kipling, and achieved and accepted positioning as a “sahib”, even if his own attitude towards his newly acquired identity is somewhat ambiguous.

⁸⁰ Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*, ed. Edward Said (London: Penguin, 2000), 49.

⁸¹ See *Ibid.*, 133 – 134 and 60.

also by Kavanagh's adoption of both the form of the literary fairy tale and a particular type of literary fairy tale. It will firstly contextualise Kavanagh's writing of literary fairy tales within the American publishing phenomenon of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries which, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, was referred to by Charles Fanning in his history of Irish-American literature as American Celticism. By writing literary fairy tales which are set in Ireland and which incorporate elements of Irish folklore into their narratives, Kavanagh appears to be engaging with and, indeed, exploiting the success of collections of Irish folklore, which were a particularly lucrative component part of American Celticism, a romanticised, imaginative investment in the ancient stories, customs and beliefs of the "homeland". Fanning claims that American Celticism achieved great popularity amongst Irish Americans in the late nineteenth century because it was interpreted by the emerging Irish-American middle classes as recognition that they had thrived in the diasporic space to such an extent that they were "able to afford the luxury of a purely literary self-definition".⁸² American Celticism as a literary movement also appealed to Irish Americans more generally because its sentimentalising approach to representing Ireland and its people meant that texts of American Celticism functioned as a sort of reassuring literary escapism for their diasporic readers, which also instilled in them a sense of their unique cultural heritage.⁸³ It is important to consider how the likelihood of the Irish diaspora in America embracing this highly romanticised and sentimentalised, often fantastical, representation of their "homeland" in the late nineteenth century was becoming greater with every passing year. By 1900, whilst 3,873,104 people had emigrated from Ireland to America since official records had begun in 1820, the number of people born in America with legitimate claims to

⁸² Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 170.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Irish ancestry was increasing constantly.⁸⁴ The story of the Irish diaspora in America was no longer a matter of immigration statistics alone and now required the identification of the Irish as a multi-generational ethnic group. There was a significant proportion of Irish Americans whose sense of Irish identity was not based on any actual experience of Ireland and, therefore, they were not inhibited from embracing the representation of Ireland promoted in texts of American Celticism by personally acquired knowledge of contemporary Irish life.

The lucrative folklore component of American Celticism predominantly consisted of texts which purported to feature retellings of episodes from Irish folklore and placed a particular emphasis on supernatural creatures and phenomena associated with the belief in fairies. The construction of texts of Irish folklore was approached in a variety of different ways by the authors who pursued the writing of such texts - P.M. Haverty drew upon the pre-existing work of Irish folklorists Thomas Crofton Croker, Patrick Kennedy and Thomas Keightley; Jeremiah Curtin conducted field research during a series of trips to Ireland in the 1880s; and Patrick Sarsfield Cassidy created original fiction, which incorporated elements of Irish folklore into its narrative. Whilst Curtin's forensically researched 1895 collection *Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World* bears little resemblance to Cassidy's 1892 Gothic narrative poem *The Borrowed Bride: A Fairy Love Legend of Donegal*,⁸⁵ both texts are united with each other and with the folklore texts of American Celticism not only by their subject matter but also by their classification as diasporic literature. Very few of these texts

⁸⁴ This is according to official statistics released by the Department of Homeland Security and published on pages 6 and 7 of its *2004 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Washington, Department of Homeland Security, 2004).

⁸⁵ See Jeremiah Curtin, *Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1985) and Patrick Sarsfield Cassidy, *The Borrowed Bride: A Fairy Love Legend of Donegal* (New York: Holt Brothers, 1892).

explicitly address or even acknowledge child members of the Irish diaspora in America, however, and, therefore, the vast majority of them cannot be satisfactorily classified as children's as well as diasporic literature. The few that can, however, are hugely significant because, until this period, children's books published in America which specifically addressed an implied Irish-American child reader did not incorporate fantastical, folkloric or supernatural elements into their narratives but rather were socially realist in their tone and execution. There was a proliferation of texts published from the 1830s onwards which featured Irish-American child protagonists negotiating the diasporic space of Irish America and assimilating into American society, some of which preached the importance of Christianity, either in general terms or in respect of a specific denomination, and some of which adopted a secular approach. Pious, religiously didactic texts in the first category notably include The Boston Sunday School Society's *Patrick Clary or the Young Irish Immigrant* (1832) by an anonymous author and The American Sunday School Union's *Irish Amy* of 1854 by Lucy Ellen Guernsey, both of which feature protagonists who must divest themselves of the immoral influence of their Irish parents and then subsequently thrive through hard work, moral fortitude and, above all else, strict religious observance.⁸⁶ Secular texts in the second category, notably including *Only an Irish Boy or Andy Burke's Fortunes and Misfortunes* (1895) by Horatio Alger Jr and *The Widow O'Callaghan's Boys* (1898) by Gulielma Zollinger, were published much later in the century when religious organisations no longer had such a controlling influence over American children's books.⁸⁷ These texts placed a greater emphasis on social mobility as their protagonists transcended their

⁸⁶ See Anonymous, *Patrick Clary or the Young Irish Immigrant* (Boston: Gray and Bowen, General Agents for the Boston Sunday School Society, 1832) and Lucy Ellen Guernsey, *Irish Amy* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1854).

⁸⁷ See Horatio Alger Jr, *Only an Irish Boy or Andy Burke's Fortunes and Misfortunes* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1894) and Gulielma Zollinger, *The Widow O'Callaghan's Boys* (Chicago: AC McClurg and Company, 1898).

impoverished and humble beginnings through hard work and moral fortitude to enjoy middle-class respectability and affluence.

This sort of text was not only written by non-Irish authors and, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Ciara Gallagher has identified two Irish-American children's authors who wrote assimilation narratives for an implied Irish-American child reader, Mary Anne Sadlier and Mary E Mannix.⁸⁸ Sadlier engaged in religious didacticism by drawing a direct correlation between remaining faithful to Roman Catholicism and thriving in the diasporic space in 1850's *Willy Burke or The Irish Immigrant in America* and 1861's *Bessy Conway or The Irish Girl in America*.⁸⁹ Mannix adopts the more secular approach of her contemporaries in 1900's *The Fortunes of a Little Immigrant*,⁹⁰ whilst also showing how Roman Catholicism allows her protagonist, Michael O'Donnell, to access his Irish identity whilst in America. All of the aforementioned texts combine a domestic setting with elements of adventure and are firmly socially realist, without any trace of the fantastical or supernatural elements that are an integral part of the folklore component of American Celticism. It can be stated conclusively, therefore, that two of the earliest examples of folklore texts of American Celticism, Haverty's *Legends and Fairy Tales of Ireland* (1872) and Robert Shelton MacKenzie's *Emerald Gems: A Chaplet of Irish Domestic Tales, Historic, Domestic and Legendary* (1879) represented a major departure in the history of American-published literature which addressed an Irish-American child readership. The intention of both authors to attract Irish-American children to their folklore collections is clearly expressed in their prefaces; Haverty laments the fact that "the recollection of the beautiful

⁸⁸ See Gallagher, "The Development of the Irish Immigrant Experience", 71 – 90.

⁸⁹ See Mary Anne Sadlier, *Willy Burke or the Irish Orphan in America* (Boston: Thomas B Noonan and Co, 1850) and *Bessy Conway or the Irish Girl in America* (New York: PJ Kenedy and Sons, 1863).

⁹⁰ See Mary E Mannix, *The Fortunes of a Little Immigrant* (Notre Dame, IN, 1900).

and wildly romantic stories of fairy and banshee, leprechaun and phooka are almost unknown to the children of the first generation of Irish in this country”⁹¹ whilst MacKenzie hopes that his collection will “recall pleasant memories for Irish natives, and help instill into the hearts of their children born of American soil, a love for the country of their ancestors”.⁹² Haverty and MacKenzie’s cautious acknowledgement of potential child interest in their texts was developed much further in the early twentieth century by Kavanagh and her Irish-American children’s literature contemporaries Seumas MacManus and Padraic Colum whose folklore texts of American Celticism explicitly and continuously addressed an implied child reader.⁹³ Unlike the folklore texts of MacManus and Colum, Kavanagh’s work does not consist of retellings of episodes from Irish folklore but rather incorporates elements of Irish folklore into the narratives of her original tales, much like Cassidy did with his narrative poem *The Borrowed Bride*. Kavanagh’s folkloric texts of American Celticism belong to a literary tradition which emanates from and reflects the folk-tale subgenre of the fairy tale. This has definite implications for the representation of the Irish people as “roguish heroes” within them in two distinct and significant ways, as it allows certain characteristics of the “roguish hero” to be emphasised and it accommodates the complex, contradictory nature of the “roguish hero”.

It is being argued here that Kavanagh wrote literary equivalents of fairy tales from the oral tradition rather than literary equivalents of ordinary folk tales or, indeed, of any

⁹¹ This statement was made by PM Haverty in his preface to *Legends and Fairy Tales of Ireland* (New York: PM Haverty, 1872). It is in this collection that Haverty reproduces earlier fairy tales by Thomas Crofton Croker, Patrick Kennedy and Thomas Keightley.

⁹² This statement was made by Robert Shelton MacKenzie in his preface to *Emerald Gems: A Chaplet of Irish Domestic Tales, Historic, Domestic and Legendary* (Boston: Thomas B Noonan, 1879).

⁹³ Whilst Seumas MacManus was Kavanagh’s exact contemporary, Padraic Colum’s first work which engaged with Irish folklore and addressed an implied diasporic child audience was *A Boy in Eirinn* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1913).

other subgenre of the folk tale which is found in the oral tradition. In order to justify this argument, it is important to establish what exactly constitutes a fairy tale. According to Stephen Swann Jones, there is an essential distinction in the fairy tale which forms the fundamental basis for its identification as a subgenre of the folk tale:

Whilst these other genres of the folk tale are reasonably mimetic – that is, they depict life in fairly realistic terms – fairy tales depict magical or marvellous events or phenomena as a valid part of the human experience..... The magical dimension is presented earnestly and figures prominently in the protagonists' experiences. Whether it is a talking mirror, a talking horse, a magic cloak or a magic lamp, the story must include the protagonist's interaction with something magical, an interaction which serves to validate the existence of things magical in this world.⁹⁴

Maria Tatar agrees with Jones that this distinguishing feature of the fairy tale also serves to define it and she further argues that the presumption of the magical and the supernatural in the fairy tale places it at exactly the opposite end of the folk-tale spectrum from the ordinary folk tale, which is chiefly distinguished by its earthy realism.⁹⁵ In the Ireland presented by Kavanagh in her literary work, *Darby O'Gill* and all of the other human characters accept absolutely the magical and the supernatural as an entirely expected and ordinary part of their lives and it is for this reason that her tales qualify as literary equivalents of oral fairy tales rather than literary equivalents of any other type of oral folk tale. Whilst many of Kavanagh's fairy tales feature fairy characters such as King Brian Connors and his Good People, it is categorically not for this reason that they qualify as fairy tales. In his comprehensive definition of the fairy tale, Jones states that the presence of fairy folk is not necessarily required in a fairy tale but the presence of the magical and the

⁹⁴ Stephen Swann Jones, *Fairy Tales: The Magic Mirror of the Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 9 – 10.

⁹⁵ Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales SECOND EDITION* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 33 – 34.

supernatural is.⁹⁶ Indeed, Andrew Teverson argues persuasively in his exploration of the differences between fairy tales and tales of the fairies that many tales which feature the presence of fairy folk should not strictly be categorised as fairy tales but rather as legends.⁹⁷

Literally translated from the French term *conte de fée* coined by the pioneering writer in its literary form, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy,⁹⁸ the English term *fairy tale* is used metonymically to refer to all folk tales that incorporate the magical and the supernatural into their narratives as a valid part of the human experience. This is because, according to Jones, the word *fairy* in the term *fairy tale* often functions as a signifier not of the fairies themselves but of the fairy realm which, in the English folk tradition, “is the embodiment of the magical aspect of the world”.⁹⁹ By adhering to the form of the fairy tale and its chief distinguishing component of the presence and acceptance of the magical and supernatural in the ordinary, everyday lives of the people, Kavanagh has the opportunity to emphasise chief characteristics of the “roguish hero” in her representation of the Irish people, namely cleverness and bravery. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the “roguish hero” has the cleverness to anticipate the threat under which he is living, he has the bravery to confront this threat, despite the potential repercussions, and he has the cleverness to outwit his threatening opponent and emerge triumphant from the confrontation. An abundance of cleverness and bravery is required of Kavanagh’s characters in particular as they endeavour to anticipate, confront and outwit such formidable supernatural opponents as the Good

⁹⁶ Jones, *Fairy Tales*, 9.

⁹⁷ Teverson offers an exact definition of the fairy tale by distinguishing it from various other types of folk tale including the tale of the fairies. He discusses what he perceives as the essential differences between the fairy tale and the tale of the fairies in his book *Fairy Tale* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 25 – 26.

⁹⁸ See Jack Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm* (New York: Norton, 2001), 858.

⁹⁹ Jones, *Fairy Tales*, 9. Jones mentions how fairy tales are also referred to as wonder tales on occasion and states that, unlike the metonymical term of fairy tale, wonder tale is “a term that more generically references the tale’s essential focus on fantastic events and characters”.

People, the banshee, the Devil, sorcerers and ghostly apparitions. Kavanagh makes absolutely clear to her readers that they do actually possess these characteristics in abundance as she describes how they triumph in the extraordinarily challenging fairy-tale circumstances in which she places them, thus emphasising their construction as “roguish heroes”. An integral part of “roguish heroes”, as has already been explored, is their unpredictable, contradictory nature as they undercut the heroic qualities that they possess such as cleverness and bravery with a definite sense of roguishness. If Kavanagh’s adoption of the form of the literary fairy tale allows her to emphasise her characters’ heroic qualities, then her writing of a particular type of literary fairy tale allows her to introduce a significant level of complexity into their characterisation and construct them not straightforwardly as heroes but as “roguish heroes”. Whilst Max Luhti claims that there is only one type of literary fairy tale which is characterised by the narrative simplicity and what he refers to as “one-dimensionality” of the oral tradition from which it has emerged,¹⁰⁰ Cristina Bacchilega discusses two types of literary fairy tales. They are the “traditional” type described by Luhti and more recent “postmodern” literary creations which deliberately discard narrative simplicity and “one-dimensionality”¹⁰¹ and allows for the complex characterisation, which is evident in Kavanagh’s work.

Elizabeth Wanning Harries agrees with Bacchilega that two distinct types of literary fairy tales should be acknowledged but suggests that, as both types belong to long traditions which have actually existed since the foundation of the fairy-tale genre, the terms “compact” and “complex” should be used to refer to them rather than “traditional” and

¹⁰⁰ Max Luhti, *The European Folk Tale: Form and Nature*, trans. John D. Niles (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 11.

¹⁰¹ Cristina Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 146, 23.

“postmodern”.¹⁰² There is no term at the disposal of English-language users to discriminate one distinct type of literary fairy tale from the other whereas, in German, “compact” fairy tales are aligned with *buchmarchen*, which translates as “book tales”, and “complex” fairy tales are aligned with *kunstmarchen*, which translates as “art tales”.¹⁰³ According to Harries, “compact” *buchmarchen* are literary fairy tales which “are usually presented as foundational and original, literally as stories that tell us of origins, as stories that do not depend on other stories but come to us as unmediated expressions of the folk and their desires”.¹⁰⁴ Harries stresses that these tales are intensely literary, given the fact that the authors who have transferred them from the oral tradition to a literary context carefully construct their narrative simplicity as “an implicit guarantee of their traditional and authentic status”.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, an inability to detect the literary efforts of the authors involved in transmitting “compact” *buchmarchen* represents a success rather than a failure in this particular context. Authors who have written this type of literary fairy tale include Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, in the earlier part of his career at any rate. According to Harries, the narratives of “complex” *kunstmarchen* are radically different from the narratives of “compact” *buchmarchen* which are so “long, intricate, digressive, playful, self-referential and self-conscious” that they are far from the “blunt terseness” associated with fairy tales by those such as Luhti who only acknowledge “compact” *buchmarchen*.¹⁰⁶ Authors involved in transmitting “complex” *kunstmarchen* are not restricted by having to carefully construct narrative simplicity in order to mimic the oral tradition and, consequently, they have the freedom to explore the characters and themes of

¹⁰² Harries, *Twice Upon A Time*, 16.

¹⁰³ For a dissection of the terms used in the German language to refer to various and distinct types of fairy tales, see Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, 31 – 32.

¹⁰⁴ Harries, *Twice Upon A Time*, 17.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

their narratives in as complex a manner as they wish. An incontrovertible testament to the long history of this type of literary fairy tale is the fact that its chief early proponents were the French conteuses of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century such as Charlotte Rose de la Force, Marie-Jeanne Lhériter and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy who, as mentioned previously in this chapter, is credited with coining the phrase *conte de fée* or *fairy tale* in the first instance. Other proponents of the “complex” *kunstmarchen* include Oscar Wilde, George MacDonald, Hans Christian Andersen, in the later part of his career, and Herminie Templeton Kavanagh.

Kavanagh's writing of “complex” *kunstmarchen* rather than “compact” *buchmarchen* is absolutely vital to her representation of the Irish people as “roguish heroes” because the figure of the “roguish hero” could not be contained within a narrative of carefully constructed simplicity designed to mimic the conditions of oral transmission. As is greatly in evidence in Kavanagh's tales, “roguish heroes” are too unpredictable and contradictory in their behaviour and they possess too many different qualities, both admirable and positive and dubious and negative, and they are never required to relinquish the latter in favour of the former or, indeed, vice versa. Such complexity is exactly what certain authors of literary fairy tales have seemed determined to avoid. For example, Kavanagh's exact Irish-American children's literature contemporary Seumas MacManus offered many examples of his preferred type of literary fairy tale in his early collections, *In Chimney Corners: Merry Tales of Irish Folklore* (1899) and *Donegal Fairy Stories* (1900). Both of these collections were published in New York by the publishing houses of Kavanagh's early collaborator SS McClure. In another one of his early collections of Irish folklore of 1899, *Through The Turf Smoke: The Love, Lore and Laughter of Old Ireland*, MacManus expresses his intention of

functioning as the modern literary equivalent of the traditional oral storyteller of Ireland or *seanchaí* for adult and child members of the Irish diaspora in America who have travelled far from the “homeland” and are thus excluded from the oral transmission of folk and fairy tales of Ireland:

Civilisation (with its good and ills) has not quite felt itself at home amongst us; books are few; so, there, the shanachy, the teller of tales and the singer of songs still gathers in his old-time glory; on long winter nights the world comes and seats itself, spellbound, at his feet. From early childhood, I, with my little tribute of admiration, sat by his feet. The glory of him dazzled me and I dreamt of one day faring forth and conquering worlds for myself. I was a child, I said, and dreamt dreams. ¹⁰⁷

MacManus’s fairy tales comply with Harries’ definition of “compact” *buchmarchen* because they are presented as unmediated expressions of the folk and this is achieved through the use of a carefully constructed narrative simplicity which mimics their original oral transmission. This simplicity particularly manifests itself in MacManus’s tales through constant repetition of character types, plot details and even individual phrases either within one tale or from one tale to the next.¹⁰⁸ This repetition is a signifier of the origins of the tales in the oral tradition because it can be perceived that “the conditions of oral

¹⁰⁷ Seumas MacManus, *Through the Turf-Smoke: The Love, Lore and Laughter of Old Ireland* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co, 1899), x. MacManus’s intention to function as a *seanchaí* for the Irish diaspora in America is also clear when both the dedication to *In Chimney Corners: Irish Folk-tales* (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1899) and *Donegal Fairy Stories* (New York: McClure and Phillips Co, 1900) are considered in conjunction with each other. He dedicates the first book “To our brave boys and girls who have fared forth from their homes, travelling away and away, for further than I could tell you and twice further than you could tell me, into the Strange Land Beyond, to push their fortune, THIS BOOK”. He states in the second book that “it is a humble disciple who dedicates with great reverence this little book to the memory of those Gaelic shanachies who have kept alive for us – through love of country and love of storytelling only – the fine ancient tales of our race from age to age and from generation to generation”.

¹⁰⁸ The individual phrases that are repeated are often used by MacManus to conclude a fairy tale. “And may you and I be as happy as they were” concludes “The Plaisham” and “The Adventures of Ciad, Son of the King of Norway” from *Donegal Fairy Stories* and “Jack and the King Who Was A Gentleman” from *In Chimney Corners*. “The wedding lasted nine days and the last night was better than the first” concludes “The Amadan of the Dough” from *Donegal Fairy Stories* and “The Black Bull of the Castle of Blood” from *In Chimney Corners*.

transmission have imposed upon them a regularised and formulaic structure”.¹⁰⁹ Another acknowledgement of the origins of MacManus’s tales in the oral tradition is the simple and straightforward characterisation which is completely juxtaposed to the characterisation in Kavanagh’s tales which renders the Irish people “roguish heroes”.

In MacManus’ case, characters are only ever described as possessing particular traits if such traits are necessary for the progression of the tale’s rudimentary plot and for the overall achievement of a discernible moral dimension to the tale. For example, in three of MacManus’s tales “The Old Hag’s Long Leather Bag”, “The Black Bull of the Castle of Blood” and “The Queen of the Golden Mines” each of a family of three siblings undertakes a dangerous quest but it is the third and youngest siblings who triumphs because he or she behaved kindly during the quest whereas his or her older siblings behaved arrogantly.¹¹⁰ Therefore, in the case of these three tales, the kindness of the triumphant youngest sibling is underlined just as the arrogance of the failed older siblings is also underlined so that certain parallels may be drawn between a person’s behaviour and his or her ultimate success in life. The characters in MacManus’s fairy tales are “figures without substance, without inner life, without an environment; they lack any relation to past and future, to time altogether¹¹¹ and, also, whilst MacManus’s fairy tales are set in actual places in Ireland and feature Irish-language names and phrases, Irishness is incidental rather than fundamental to his representation of the Irish people. Given that a number of MacManus’s tales are Irish incarnations of international tale types identified in the Aarne-Thompson classification

¹⁰⁹ Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, 35.

¹¹⁰ For “The Old Hag’s Long Leather Bag”, see MacManus, *Donegal Fairy Stories*, 231 – 256. For “The Black Bull of the Castle of Blood” and “The Queen of the Golden Mines”, see MacManus, *In Chimney Corners*, 105 – 124 and 35 – 54.

¹¹¹ Luhti, *The European Folktale*, 11.

system,¹¹² it is not surprising that the sense of Irishness of the characters featured within them is so vaguely and indiscriminately rendered. In complete contrast, a specific cultural construction of Irish identity is absolutely fundamental to the Irish characters featured within Kavanagh's tales. By writing "complex" *kunstmarchen*, Kavanagh was not restricted from presenting the Irish people as "roguish heroes" by an obligation to use a carefully constructed narrative simplicity in order to mimic their supposed original oral transmission, as MacManus was. Whilst her adoption of the literary fairy tale allowed Kavanagh to emphasise certain limited characteristics of the "roguish hero", her adoption of a particular type of "complex" literary fairy tale allowed her to include as many of the diverging, opposing characteristics encapsulated by the "roguish hero" as she saw fit. The prominence of the figure of the "roguish hero" in Kavanagh's literary fairy tales can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the diasporic audience that she is addressing because it confronted the diaspora's perceived unease with the stage Irishman trope and offered a more palatable alternative. The third section of this chapter will now explore the other ways in which Kavanagh appears to be addressing a diasporic audience in her representation of the Irish people.

¹¹² Five "compact" fairy tales by MacManus correspond to international tale types identified in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* (Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1964). The two tales from *Donegal Fairy Stories* are "The Plaisham" which corresponds to ATU571B: "The Himphamp" and "The Snow, the Crow and the Blood" which corresponds to ATU306: "The Danced-Out Shoes". The three tales from *In Chimney Corners* are "The Widow's Daughter" which corresponds to ATU501: "The Three Old Women Helpers", "The Black Bull of the Castle of Blood" which corresponds to ATU311: "Sisters Rescued by Their Sister" and "Billy Beg and the Bull" which corresponds to ATU510: "Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes", although interestingly the disadvantaged protagonist whose worth and heroism is proven through a shoe test is male in this instance.

Section Three

Kavanagh was a member of the Irish diaspora in the United States of America, although her ethnic identity was more complicated than this suggests because, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, it is more accurate to refer to her as Anglo-Irish-American than Irish-American. She was born to an English mother as well as an Irish father and, before she emigrated with her family at the age of eleven, she seems to have spent the majority of her childhood in England, even though, as a writer, she expresses a wholly Irish-American ethnic identity. This may be accounted for by intentions on Kavanagh's behalf to emulate the success of Irish folklore collections of American Celticism, which directly targeted Irish Americans but it is also true that, at the beginning stage of her literary career, there were at least two significant figures in her life whose ethnic identity was more straightforwardly Irish-American than hers – the first-generation Hannah White with whom she was living and the second-generation Marcus Kavanagh with whom she was in a relationship. This certainly increases the likelihood that Kavanagh both felt a strong affinity with the Irish aspect of her identity and had intimate knowledge of the attitudes and preoccupations of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century. She permeates her representation of the Irish people with contemplations on these attitudes and preoccupations, although any claim that an author's literary work acknowledges the attitudes and preoccupations of a particular diaspora would be undermined by the adoption of an essentialising or homogenizing approach to characterising diasporic experience. Kevin Kenny cautions against adopting this approach in studying the concept of diaspora as he believes that every place in which a particular group has settled should be considered in isolation, claiming that

“to be Irish in Britain or Australia is not the same as being Irish in America”.¹¹³ According to Kenny, diasporas can only be understood “by rejecting the notion that people, nations or races have characteristics or inner essences that stand outside historical time or are grounded in geographical territory”.¹¹⁴ It is the Irish diaspora in America that is being discussed in this thesis and no claims are being made here about the Irish diasporic experience outside of America, although Mary J Hickman believes that the experience of a specific diaspora – such as the Irish diaspora in America – can also be homogenised and essentialised by a failure to acknowledge individual moments in that diaspora’s history and development.

Hickman defines a diaspora not as a static and fixed entity but as “a hybrid, historical social formation in process that has been produced by migration” and that gradually changes “as part of the political, social and economic developments in and between various places of settlement (including ‘the homeland’)”¹¹⁵. The implication of this definition is that, as it cannot possibly fully encompass something which is continually changing, a literary work must capture the diasporic experience at a particular moment in the process of the hybrid, historical social formation. According to Kerby A. Miller, Irish ethnic identity had become synthesised by 1900, the year before Kavanagh’s first literary fairy tale was published, and he lists the most important components of Irish-American self-identity during this period:

A “good Irish American” was at least one if not all of the following: a good Democrat, a practising Catholic, a good family man (or devoted wife and mother), in most cases

¹¹³ Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 107.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹¹⁵ Mary J Hickman, “Diaspora Space and Social (Re)Formations”, *Éire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* 47, 1/2 (2012), 19 – 44, 22.

a loyal union member and nearly always at least a passive supporter of Ireland's "sacred cause".¹¹⁶

This comprehensive definition does not refer exclusively to Irish Americans in any particular social sphere; indeed, Miller suggests that a "virtually all-inclusive Irish-American ethnicity" had been achieved during this period by "adapting Irish traditions and American experiences to both the hegemonic imperatives of the Irish-American bourgeoisie and the assimilable needs and notions of their social inferiors".¹¹⁷ Hickman's definition emphasises not only the importance of locating diasporic writing in a particular period of time within the formation, however, but also in multiple places within the same formation. Further risk of homogenising or essentialising the experience of the Irish diaspora in America is the reason why Hickman objects to certain aspects of Miller's definition of what apparently constituted a "good Irish American" in 1900. A characteristic such as "a loyal union member" prioritises city dwellers over "the large numbers who settled across the expanding United States, often in more rural locations"¹¹⁸ and it is also true to say that it prioritises men over women and adults over children. Conversely, although they were inevitably bolstered by a larger number of affiliated organisations in urban areas, neither Roman Catholicism nor Irish nationalism was as dependent as the Labour movement on place of settlement within the diasporic space or, indeed, on the gender or age of the diaspora member. Both Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism proved dynamic and inclusive enough to define both rural and urban Irish-American communities across America and to dominate the lives of Irish-American men and women and Irish-American adults and children by the start of the

¹¹⁶ Kerby A Miller, "Class, Culture, and Immigrant Group Identity in the United States: The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity" in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 124.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Hickman, "Diasporic Space and Social (Re)Formations", 35.

twentieth century. Meanwhile, strong family values are the component of Miller's definition of "a good Irish American", which is least dependent on place of settlement within the diasporic space or gender or age for its expression.

The three aspects of Miller's definition of a "good Irish American" at the turn of the twentieth century that resonate in Kavanagh's tales in her representation of the Irish people are Roman Catholicism, Irish nationalism and strong family values. Therefore, Kavanagh's fairy tales can be said to address the Irish diaspora in America without prioritising one part of the diaspora over another, whether it is urban dwellers over rural dwellers, men over women or adults over children. There is a definite and sustained connection between the first two of these aspects in the context of Kavanagh's tales. Whilst Father Cassidy and other Catholic priests feature frequently in Kavanagh's tales as strict yet benevolent leaders of the community, the Catholic ideology of the Irish people is elsewhere presented by Kavanagh as so inextricably linked with their nationalist ideology that it forms the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism. This reflects the diasporic situation at the turn of the twentieth century in which, as will be explored in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis, the Catholic ideology of the Irish-American people did indeed become so inextricably linked with their nationalist ideology that it formed the thriving and potent conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism. In the chronology of her tales, the attitude of the Irish people towards Catholic nationalism is first communicated by Kavanagh during Jerry Murtaugh's narration of a particularly acrimonious dispute between Darby O'Gill and his wife Bridget in "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun". Bridget becomes greatly angered and offended when her husband, in the midst of a pompous and self-indulgent mood which he later regrets, suggests that domestic duties such as the ones with which she concerns herself are beneath

the dignity of a man from his family and background.¹¹⁹ She immediately retaliates with a tirade in which she not only asserts the inferiority of his family and background but also the superiority of her own and, as is evident from the passage below, Darby is forced into submission by her evocation of the memory of her most cherished and celebrated relative:

By the time she began talking of her own family, and especially about her Aunt Honoria O'Shaughnessy, who had once shook hands with a bishop, and who in the rebellion of '98 had trun a brick at a Lord Liftenant, whin he was riding by, Darby was as wilted and as forlorn-looking as a rooster caught out in the winther rain. He lost more pride in those few minutes than it had taken months to gather an' hoard. It kept falling in great drops from his forehead.¹²⁰

The two events in Aunt Honoria O'Shaughnessy's life which affirm her Catholic and nationalist credentials respectively appear to be equated in the text by Darby, Bridget and Jerry with the absolute apogee of human achievement. By bringing these two unrelated events in her life together in one sentence, Kavanagh appears to be commenting not so much on the two ideologies as separate entities but as one conflated ideology.

In other tales, Kavanagh evokes an actual historical figure who, through the particular life that he led, became synonymous with the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism, not just in Bridget's family history and lore but in the history and lore of Ireland. Daniel O'Connell is cherished and celebrated by Irish people such as Jerry and Katie O'Flynn, who keep a framed picture of him "enshrined" above their heads on their whitewashed kitchen wall in "Killbohgan and "Killboggan",¹²¹ and Joey and Nancy Hooligan,

¹¹⁹ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 31 - 35.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹²¹ See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "Killbohgan and Killboggan" in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 158.

who name their eldest son Daniel O'Connell Hooligan in "The Sheep Stealer".¹²² Whilst it is important in her representation of the Irish people, Catholic nationalism plays a much more central role in Kavanagh's representation of the Good People, as does the evocation of the memory of Daniel O'Connell, and, therefore, these issues will be dealt with more comprehensively in the second chapter of this thesis. In terms of strong family values, they are pivotal in Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people, the most sympathetic and admirable of whom conform to Kerby A Miller's articulation of the role of family in Irish-American ethnic identity, by being either "a good family man" or "a devoted wife and mother". The small number who are not best described as such at the beginning of the tale in which they feature learn to become so before the tale reaches its conclusion. The fact that Cormac McCarthy is "a good family man" is never in dispute throughout "The Banshee's Comb" as he tirelessly nurses his ailing wife Eileen and launches a desperate attempt to destroy the banshee after she prophesises Eileen's death with her nocturnal keening.¹²³ The fact that Sarah Muldowney is devoted to her husband Pether is undoubtedly in dispute when, in her frustration at the beginning of "How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney", she decides to sell him to Satan for three pounds and ten shillings. She is ultimately reconciled with Pether, however, and her devotion to both her husband and her marriage is strengthened by her experiences during the tale. Meanwhile, in Kavanagh's only tale featuring a child protagonist, "Bridgeen and the Leprechaun", twelve-year-old Bridgeen must perform the role of "a devoted wife and mother" for her widowed father and four

¹²² See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Sheep Stealer" in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 98.

¹²³ See Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 226 – 227.

younger siblings following the recent death of her mother and is rewarded for her enthusiastic and selfless performance of the role by the leprechaun.¹²⁴

In the case of Darby O’Gill in “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, it could be argued that his commitment to his wife Bridget and eight children is one of his main motivations for challenging the Good People at their Sleive-na-Mon lair, which is the catalyst for his entire series of supernatural adventures; he challenges them because they have stolen three pigs and his cow from him and greatly undermined his ability to provide adequately for his family as a result.¹²⁵ Darby is less convincing as “a good family man” in the subsequent tales “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, “The Ashes of Old Wishes” and “The Crocks o’ Goold” and must be taught through his experiences during those particular tales to regard the simple joys of family life more highly. A recurring trope at the conclusion of these tales involves Darby failing to procure the wishes, riches or crocks of gold that he had coveted but being comforted by returning home to his wife and children, to his “cottage ablaze with cheerful light”¹²⁶ and to his “stirabout that was bubbling in the pot”¹²⁷ and, therefore, triumphing in a way which he had not anticipated. Whilst the “roguish hero” is characterised by a strong sense of loyalty to his family, it is reasonable to suggest that the importance of strong family values that is recognised and embodied by Kavanagh’s Irish characters throughout her tales is not only accounted for by the fact that she is adhering to the figure of the “roguish hero”. She may also be reflecting the importance of strong family values in the construction of Irish-American identity at the turn of the twentieth century when she was writing her tales.

¹²⁴ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, “Bridgeen and the Leprechaun” in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 99 - 117.

¹²⁵ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, 3 – 9.

¹²⁶ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, “The Ashes of Old Wishes” in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 23.

¹²⁷ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, “The Crocks o’Goold” in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 195.

It is also reasonable to suggest that the equation of Darby returning home to his family at the conclusion of the aforementioned tales with his own personal triumph validates the commitment to their families not only of Kavanagh's characters but also of her Irish-American readers. There is an alternative reading of the conclusion of these three tales, however, in which Darby's return home functions symbolically as the vicarious fulfilment for Kavanagh's Irish-American readers of a desire which Kerby A. Miller identifies as forming an integral part of the Irish-American consciousness. This appears to have occurred as a result of the particular way in which Irish Americans in the mid-to-late nineteenth century constructed their own emigration narrative.

According to Miller, many post-Famine emigrants perceived themselves most especially as political exiles who were victimised and forced off their native land by tyrannical landlords, the supposed agents of British colonial oppression. Miller suggests that the self-identification of Irish Americans as political exiles was a major reason why Irish nationalism became so important in constructing an Irish-American ethnic identity at the turn of the twentieth century.¹²⁸ It is also important in determining why Irish nationalist sensibilities survived the journey from Ireland to America in the first instance, considering that Irish Americans were removed from the place in which the battle for sovereignty and self-governance was taking place and there was no easily decipherable economic or social gain for those who remained loyal to the nationalist cause. Kevin Kenny asserts that this profound sense of being exiled is not unique to the Irish situation but rather that it is a unifying feature of diasporas around the world because diaspora as a concept is founded

¹²⁸ For Miller's discussion of the role of Irish nationalism in the construction of an Irish-American ethnic identity, see Miller, "The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity", 100 – 106.

upon the notion of enforced rather than voluntary migration.¹²⁹ It is certainly true that the Irish diaspora in America at the time that Kavanagh was writing can be identified as a diaspora which was “a wellspring of nationalism, with migrant communities devoting much of their energy to supporting their homeland”.¹³⁰ Miller suggests another reason for both the survival and the strengthening of nationalism amongst Irish Americans during this period and that is the extreme difficulty that they faced in thriving in the diasporic space:

Poverty, frustration, alienation and homesickness among many Irish in the United States strengthened their emotional identification with the old country and their allegiance to those who promised to liberate Ireland and abolish emigration’s purported causes.¹³¹

A natural accompaniment to this nationalism, either consciously or subconsciously, was the desire to return to the “homeland” from which Kavanagh’s Irish-American readers, whether they were first-generation adults or third-generation children, had been theoretically exiled. Darby’s return home to his cottage symbolises a romantic and sentimental return to the “homeland”, although, as this chapter will now discuss, Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people elsewhere in her tales appears to assert that being exiled from Ireland is a much more desirable situation than remaining there.

In his discussion of American Celticism, Charles Fanning acknowledges the positive effects of the sentimental and romantic literary engagement with the “homeland” which featured in all kinds of texts of American Celticism, including the sort of folklore collections

¹²⁹ Kenny, *Diaspora*, 52.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Miller, “The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity”, 116.

that appear to have influenced Kavanagh's work.¹³² He is chiefly concerned with its negative effects, however, and argues that, "as 'Emerald Isle' sentimentality and nostalgia became rampant, they led to unhealthy romanticising of even the least attractive elements of Irish life".¹³³ He is speaking most especially about the poverty and hardship of the Irish peasantry in particular here and he illustrates his point with an example of a 1923 text by Agnes B McGuire in which destitution is personified as "the beloved companion of the Irish peasant, the Lady Poverty of St Francis's vision, walking barefooted and starry-eyed on the Irish hills".¹³⁴ This quotation is remarkably similar to a passage from Kavanagh's literary fairy tale "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", in which King Brian Connors of the Good People unusually finds himself powerless and at the mercy of the mortal ballad-maker Tom Mulligan and his family through a series of comically unfortunate events. Having been impressed by their kindness and hospitality, King Brian expresses his desire to bestow a gift on Tom and his family once his supernatural powers have been restored to him but categorically refuses to make them rich. He makes the following statement to that effect:

"I'll not make you rich bekase you're a born ballad-maker, and a weaver of fine tales, and a jaynious – if you make a jaynious rich you take all the songs out of him and you spile him. A man's heart-sthrings must be often stretched almost to the breaking to get good music from him. I'll not spile you, Tom Mulligan".¹³⁵

There is great beauty in poverty and hardship as they are being portrayed here by King Brian, who believes that it is vitally important to treasure and preserve these qualities in

¹³² According to Fanning, the positive effects of American Celticism were "its encouragement of pride in the Gaelic past, a sense of the uniqueness of a shared historical tradition and appreciation of the picturesque aspects of contemporary life back in Ireland". See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 170.

¹³³ Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 170.

¹³⁴ Agnes B McGuire, "Catholic Women Writers" in *Catholic Builders of the Nation* (Boston: Continental Press, 1923), 188.

¹³⁵ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 170.

one's life to the point at which "a man's heart-strings must be often stretched". This statement may be interpreted as a rumination on the role of the artist in society generally rather than in a specifically Irish context but it is shown very clearly in the tale that the ballad-maker Tom Mulligan is Irish and that he expresses an Irish folk consciousness. Also, this is by no means the only instance in which poverty and hardship are romanticised by Kavanagh but rather it is a recurring trope in her tales, particularly in those in which Darby O'Gill is the main protagonist.

The three tales that Kavanagh wrote in which Darby returns home to his family after he sought wishes, riches and crocks of gold but failed to attain them present this concluding situation not as a failure but as a triumph for Darby. Thus, these tales, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun", "The Ashes of Old Wishes" and "The Crocks o' Goold" not only testify to the importance of family, as discussed above, but also to the unimportance and undesirability of economic prosperity. King Brian Connors makes a statement to this effect to Darby in "The Ashes of Old Wishes" which is reminiscent of the one he made to the ballad-maker Tom Mulligan in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", although this time it cannot be interpreted as a rumination on the role of the artist in society in any way. After King Brian agrees to grant Darby three wishes on Christmas Eve and Darby immediately asks for riches, King Brian completely refuses to comply on the grounds that it would be catastrophic for Darby to have riches bestowed upon him because they would distract him from experiencing the simple joys of family life and ultimately bring him unhappiness.¹³⁶ It will be discussed in great detail in the second chapter of this thesis how the initially sinister King Brian Connors and his Good People become gradually more benevolent as Kavanagh

¹³⁶ See Kavanagh, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", 6.

continued writing her tales and eventually operated as the moral guardians of the Irish people. As moral guardian King Brian wisely and authoritatively refuses to make Irish people rich in both of these later tales and states explicitly that he is doing so because being rich would ultimately be to their detriment for different reasons, it can be construed that being poor rather than prosperous is shown to be the natural state of being for Kavanagh's Irish people. This idea about poverty and the Irish people and its constant reinforcement by King Brian Connors' wise and authoritative words were developed as Kavanagh continued writing her tales and were not at all established when she wrote her first tale for the December 1901 edition of *McClure's Magazine*, "Darby Gill and the Good People". This is perhaps the reason for the only significant textual revision between the first incarnation of the tale and its subsequent incarnation as the first, eponymous tale in Kavanagh's 1903 collection – apart from the change in title which was discussed earlier. This revision sees the amount of blackmail money bestowed reluctantly on Darby by King Brian reduced significantly from ten thousand pounds to two hundred pounds and suggests a desire on Kavanagh's part not to undermine one of the thematic preoccupation of her later tales.

Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people as naturally suited to economic poverty rather than economic prosperity is important in an exploration of how she addresses a diasporic audience in her work because she constructs this sort of poverty as an essential part of being Irish rather than being Irish-American. Kavanagh's male protagonists work hard to provide for their families by farming the land and, whilst they appear to succeed in this particular ambition, their lives are nevertheless precarious, as is shown in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" in which the theft of three pigs and a cow from Darby by the Good People has the potential to ruin him and his family. Darby and the other

farmers that Kavanagh portrays will never achieve prosperity because of the inescapable limitations of the circumstances in which they find themselves in the “homeland”. These limitations must be considered in terms of the fact that, from the immediately pre-famine period onwards, Irish immigration in America was primarily focused on cities including New York, Chicago, Boston, New Orleans and Philadelphia.¹³⁷ The existence of the Irish people in Kavanagh’s tales is entirely rural and they must survive off the land in one way or another and, therefore, their circumstances are in stark contrast to the overwhelming majority of Kavanagh’s diasporic readers who had left the limiting “homeland” and were free to embrace the opportunities of an urban existence. There are limited opportunities for Kavanagh’s male characters aside from farming, although Joey Hooligan, the smith, in “The Sheep Stealer”, and Cormac McCarthy, the stone-cutter, in “The Banshee’s Comb”, support the work of their farmer neighbours through their own work and, in doing so, live in similarly precarious circumstances. Indeed, Joey supplements his income as a smith by keeping his own sheep¹³⁸ and is outraged to discover that one of his sheep has been stolen.¹³⁹ Jerry Murtaugh interrupts his narration of that incident in “The Sheep Stealer” to declare that “in this counthry of Ireland to steal a sheep is the most dayspicable, unforgivable crime mentioned in the tin commandments”, thus reinforcing the representation of the Irish people as living in such economic deprivation that suffering a theft of an animal or animals could have calamitous consequences.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ According to Kevin Kenny, Irish immigrants to the United States of America from the 1820s onwards had a considerable impact socially on life in a number of American cities as they displayed a very strong preference for settling in urban centres. See Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 60.

¹³⁸ See Kavanagh, “The Sheep Stealer”, 65 – 66.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁴⁰ See *Ibid.*, 64 – 65.

A small number of peripheral characters in Kavanagh's tales have removed themselves from the necessity of farming the land by their learning and education but this is not presented as a desirable situation by Kavanagh. By achieving a certain degree of economic prosperity and entering into a higher social sphere as a result, they have become accustomed to conducting themselves with an irritating and unpleasant air of superiority and, thus, they have alienated themselves from the rest of their communities. These characters include the schoolmaster Maurteen Cavanaugh who is described as "a cross-faced argifying ould man"¹⁴¹ and Doctor McNamara who Darby calls "the blinkin' ould blaggard",¹⁴² whilst Roger O'Brien, who has recently returned to Ballinderg from studying in a college in Dublin, is referred to solely as "the omadhaun" by King Brian in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors".¹⁴³ It should be acknowledged that neither the ballad-maker Tom Mulligan nor the car-driver Jerry Murtaugh rely upon the land for their livelihoods and yet neither is subjected to scathing criticism of their characters by Kavanagh or her characters, perhaps because they both express a certain Irish folk consciousness by singing ballads and narrating Kavanagh's tales respectively. It seems clear that Kavanagh is inviting her diasporic readers to sympathise and identify strongly with those amongst her characters who rely upon the land in precarious economic circumstances, such as Darby O'Gill, and, perhaps,

¹⁴¹ Maurteen Cavanaugh the pompous and unpleasant schoolmaster is a recurring character in Kavanagh's tales and features in "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun" and "The Convarion of Father Cassidy" from *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* and "The Ashes of Old Wishes", "The Sheep Stealer" and "The Crocks o' Goold" from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*. He is referred to as "a cross-faced argifying ould man" on his first appearance in Kavanagh's tales during an altercation with Darby O'Gill. See Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun", 32.

¹⁴² Doctor McNamara features in "The Banshee's Comb" and is called "the blinkin' ould blaggard" by Darby when he offers Darby little comfort during an illness. Doctor McNamara's unpopularity amongst his patients is further exposed in "The Banshee's Comb" when Jerry Murtaugh asserts that "no one, till he was almost at the pint of dissolation, ever wint to that crass, browbatin' ould codger". See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 243 – 244.

¹⁴³ Roger O'Brien is referred to as "the omadhaun" throughout the section of "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" in which he appears which is indeed entitled "The King and the Omadhuan". See Kavanagh, "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", 113 – 136.

also to imagine themselves living that sort of existence had they or their ancestors not left Ireland. The suggestion that these Irish Americans have afforded themselves the opportunity to prosper by leaving the “homeland” of Ireland and entering the diasporic space of Irish America is implied throughout Kavanagh’s tales but is stated explicitly in “Killbohgan and Killboggan”. Jerry O’Flynn despairs at the beginning of the tale after a particularly dismal and unprofitable year on his farm¹⁴⁴ but he and his family are saved from ruin and destitution by the distant, messianic figure of “Uncle Dan in Amerikay” who Jerry believed dead but who sends his nephew a letter which testifies not only to his survival but also to his prosperity:

“Me Uncle Dan in Amerikay isn’t dead after all, Katie”, he exulted, “and to prove it he put tin pounds in the letther; an afther buyin’ all ye tould me to and lashins more, I paid the rint, thanks be, and I have still a matther of four pounds tin tucked safe an’ deep in the bottom of me breeches pocket”.¹⁴⁵

The contrast here between the poor Irishman who stayed in the “homeland” and the prosperous Irishman who entered the diasporic space illustrates clearly how, in her representation of the poverty of the Irish people, Kavanagh flatters the Irish-American people. This contrast is a recurring trope in American children’s book series of the first three decades of the twentieth century, which, in their representation of Ireland and the Irish people in one particular volume of the series, draw the exact same conclusion about emigration and its economic benefits as Kavanagh’s “Killbohgan and Killboggan”.

Kate Douglas Wiggin’s *Penelope’s Irish Experiences* (1902) from her *Penelope* series and Katherine Stokes’ *The Motor Maids by Rose, Shamrock and Thistle* (1912) from her

¹⁴⁴ See Kavanagh, “Killbohgan and Killboggan”, 143.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

Motor Maids series both concern a group of affluent, privileged young ladies from New England travelling around Ireland whilst on their grand tour of Europe.¹⁴⁶ Whilst both authors exploit the comic potential of the challenges faced by their callow characters in navigating the rough, rural terrain and communicating with the naïve, unsophisticated local peasant population with impenetrable accents, they also emphasise the material austerity and economic precariousness that the ladies witness for the first time in their lives. Penelope forms a favourable opinion of the Irish people that she meets in *Penelope's Irish Experiences* but she also reflects in her journal on the contrasting prosperity enjoyed by Irish-American people and asserts that Irish immigrants must have thrived in America because they have acquired attributes in the diasporic space such as punctuality, thrift and cleanliness which are largely absent in the "homeland". In *The Motor Maids by Rose, Shamrock and Thistle*, the contrast between the prosperity of Irish Americans and the poverty of the Irish is explored when one of the young ladies, Elinor, whose great-grandparents emigrated from Ireland, arrives at the small, humble, dilapidated cottage of her distant relatives driving a brand-new motor car and dressed in the latest fashions from Paris. Two further books, Lucy Fitch Perkins' *Irish Twins* (1913) from her *Twins* series and Madeline Brandeis' *Shaun O'Day of Ireland* (1929) from her *Children of All Lands* series explore this contrast by beginning their narratives with their Irish child protagonists living in poor Ireland before later emigrating to prosperous America.¹⁴⁷ Larry and Eileen McQueen, the twins of Perkins' title, and Shaun O'Day do not live in desperate poverty but rather enjoy carefree, childhood adventures in an idyllic if humble rural milieu, although as adulthood

¹⁴⁶ See Kate Douglas Wiggin, *Penelope's Irish Experiences* (Boston/New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co, 1902) and Katherine Stokes, *The Motor Maids by Rose, Shamrock and Thistle* (New York: Hurst and Company, 1912).

¹⁴⁷ See Lucy Fitch Perkins, *Irish Twins* (Boston/New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co, 1913) and Madeline Brandeis, *Shaun O'Day of Ireland* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1929).

approaches the course of their lives is dictated by economic imperatives. There is a political dimension to how poverty in Ireland is presented in *Irish Twins* because the McQueen twins' father becomes determined that his children will not be mistreated, as he has been, by an unscrupulous landlord who is in the habit of charging higher rents on a regular basis and, thus, the entire McQueen family emigrates to America. The now-adult McQueen twins are shown to have prospered in the diasporic space in an epilogue, whilst the prosperity of the diasporic space is made abundantly clear as soon as Shaun emigrates in *Shaun O'Day of Ireland*. He is so initially alienated by the wealth that he witnesses upon his arrival that he can only conceive of it and explain it to his childhood sweetheart waiting for him in Ireland, Eileen, by referring to New York as fairyland and to his benevolent employer as one of the Good People.

These four children's book series of the early-twentieth century all seem preoccupied with educating their implied American child readers about foreign countries by incorporating extensive geographical, historical and cultural information about the chosen countries into their fictional narratives. There can be detected an assumption on the author's behalf that the child reader is operating from a position of total ignorance of the country in question and so, whilst they all explore emigration to the United States in their volumes set in Ireland, it is unconvincing to suggest that the four volumes discussed above address an implied Irish-American child reader in the way that Kavanagh's tales do. They contrast the economic poverty of Ireland with the economic prosperity of America as if wishing to instil a sense of patriotic pride and cultural superiority in their readers, although one cannot discount the possibility that these authors were aware of a potential Irish-American contingent amongst their readerships. There is nevertheless an Otherness to how

Irishness is presented in these books which is entirely absent from Kavanagh's work and which is epitomised by the concluding line of Brandeis' *Shaun O'Day of Ireland* about Shaun O'Day's son and his conception of Shaun's female friend from New York who has come to visit the family in Connemara:

But he will always be wanting to believe that she was a girl fairy, even if he finds that she was not. He will always want to keep his dreams because he is Irish.¹⁴⁸

Whilst the same contrast features in Kavanagh's work and these four other books that were written during the same period, the difference appears to lie in the child reader who is being addressed. In Kavanagh's case, he or she is Irish-American and is invited by Kavanagh to feel flattered by the implication of the contrast and to feel that the decision of his or her ancestors to leave the "homeland" and enter the diasporic space has been vindicated.

A final way in which Kavanagh flatters her Irish-American audience in her representation of the Irish people is through her constant and idiosyncratic use of an exaggerated Hiberno-English literary dialect, which is known as the "brogue" when discussed in the context of the stage Irishman trope and its post-Boucicaultian incarnation, the "roguish hero".¹⁴⁹ The use of the "brogue" by Boucicault in his construction of the "roguish hero" figure often implies a strength rather than a weakness because the "roguish hero" turns what is perceived as his peculiar way of speaking to his own advantage, although it still suggests a certain degree of ignorance of how the English language should be correctly spoken.¹⁵⁰ The "brogue" has much comic potential, therefore, although it is also frequently used simply as a signifier of Irishness in American culture and, indeed, all of the texts of American Celticism, *McClure's Magazine* short stories and Irish-themed American

¹⁴⁸ Brandeis, *Shaun O'Day of Ireland*, 191.

¹⁴⁹ Maureen Waters, *The Comic Irishman*, 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

children's books that have been discussed in this chapter use it in a less exaggerated form and it largely appears to be for this second reason. Whilst it is used by Kavanagh both as a comic conceit and to signify Irishness, it appears to have another function related to the Irish-American audience that she is addressing. Whilst the use of the "brogue" arguably always has negative implications because it implies that Irish people are incapable of speaking English correctly, at its most exaggerated it also implies that Irish people completely misunderstand the English words that they are attempting to pronounce. Kavanagh produces this effect by spelling words and phrases which are in the Hiberno-English dialect in such a manner as to suggest other English words and phrases with entirely different meanings; for example, philosopher is spelt "pillosopher",¹⁵¹ aurora borealis is spelt "An Rory Bory Alice",¹⁵² elixir of life is spelt "he-licks-her of life",¹⁵³ affidavits is spelt "happydavitts",¹⁵⁴ incredulity is spelt "inkerdulity",¹⁵⁵ Cleopatra is spelt "Clayopathra"¹⁵⁶ and Napoleon Bonaparte is spelt "Napoleon Bonyparte".¹⁵⁷ Even wise and powerful King Brian Connors makes a fundamental error in attempting to comprehend a word in "The Banshee's Comb" when he travels abroad to settle a dispute between the German and French fairies over the River Rhine, under the misapprehension that "the river is called after an Irishman be the name of Ryan".¹⁵⁸ The comic potential of the many misunderstandings implied by Kavanagh's use of the "brogue" can only be fully realised if the Irish-American reader appreciates the mistake that the Irish character is making. If so, then the Irish-American reader is again being flattered because of the suggestion that he or she has gained

¹⁵¹ Kavanagh, "The Crocks o'Goold", 183.

¹⁵² Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 199.

¹⁵³ Kavanagh, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", 7.

¹⁵⁴ Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun", 60.

¹⁵⁵ Kavanagh, "The Haunted Bell", 61.

¹⁵⁶ Kavanagh, "The Convarion of Father Cassidy", 63.

¹⁵⁷ Kavanagh, "How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney", 198.

¹⁵⁸ Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 267.

in knowledge, sophistication and worldliness by travelling away from the “homeland” and towards the diasporic space.

An allegorical commentary on an issue specifically related to Irish Americans at the turn of the twentieth century can also be detected in Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people in one of her tales in particular, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” and, in this case, Kavanagh does not flatter her implied Irish-American reader but rather cautions him or her. In their histories of the Irish in America, Kevin Kenny and Jay P. Dolan both discuss the emergence of the Irish-American middle classes in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as increasing numbers of well-established, city-dwelling Irish Americans of the second and third generations moved from their old immigrant neighbourhoods to more aspirational locations in the suburbs of their respective cities.¹⁵⁹ The Irish-American urban middle classes had transcended the socially humble, working-class circumstances in which their forebears operated upon arrival in the diasporic space by graduating from manual labour to jobs as clerks, teachers and sales personnel, which afforded them higher social status. Both Kenny and Dolan acknowledge how middle-class Irish Americans struggled to be accepted across middle-class America and were mocked for accumulating material possessions as a means of constructing their newly-acquired middle-class identity with the derogatory appellations “steam-heat Irish” and, most especially, “lace-curtain Irish”.¹⁶⁰ Kenny further examines the case of these “lace-curtain” Irish Americans by suggesting that their struggle for acceptance greatly accentuated their social pretensions and snobbish attitudes as “they did everything they could to distance themselves from the still-numerous

¹⁵⁹ For Kenny and Dolan’s discussions of the emergence of the Irish-American middle classes, see Kenny, *The American Irish*, 149 and Dolan, *The Irish Americans*, 104 – 105. See also Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 88 – 90.

¹⁶⁰ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 149 and Dolan, *The Irish Americans*, 104.

‘shanty Irish’ and the masses of recent immigrants from the west and south of Ireland”.¹⁶¹ Kenny’s last point invites a reading of “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” in which the social pretensions and snobbish attitudes of “lace-curtain” Irish Americans are being satirised by Kavanagh in her representation of an uncharacteristically pretentious and snobbish Darby O’Gill. Chronologically speaking, the events of “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” take place directly after the events of Kavanagh’s inaugural tale “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” in which Darby both escaped from and triumphed over King Brian Connors and his Good People at Sleive-na-Mon. Therefore, at the beginning of the second tale, Darby is revelling in a higher social status amongst the Ballinderg community than that which he previously enjoyed and he is becoming decidedly arrogant as a result.¹⁶²

Much to the anger and frustration of his wife Bridget, a deluded Darby makes the snobbish and pretentious assertion that he is better than the humble circumstances in which he is living and, in order to justify the assertion and maintain the delusion, Darby distances himself from his actual family history and constructs an entirely fictional one.¹⁶³ The parallel between Darby’s act of distancing himself from his family and “lace-curtain” Irish Americans’ act of distancing themselves from their fellow, less socially mobile Irish Americans seems clear. The satirical force behind Kavanagh’s writing of this particular tale is revealed towards its conclusion when Darby receives a supernatural comeuppance after managing to inveigle three wishes from the cunning leprechaun, one of which being “a home of my ansisthers an’ it must be a castle like Castle Brophy, with pictures of my kith an’ kin on the wall”.¹⁶⁴ His wish is dutifully granted by the leprechaun and, having previously

¹⁶¹ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 149.

¹⁶² Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 31 – 37.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 39 – 40.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

attempted to reconstruct his family history in order to conform to his elevated status in society, Darby is confronted by the reality from which he had distanced himself; “on the right wall, glowered the O’Gills and the O’Gradys, and of all the ragged, sheep-stealing, hangdog-looking villains one ever saw, in or out of jail, it was Darby’s kindred”.¹⁶⁵ He is shown to be devastated and horrified by this confrontation, which functions as his punishment for the social pretensions and snobbish attitudes that he recently acquired and subsequently abandons:

If you have ever at night been groping your way through a dark room, and got a sudden hard bump on your forehead from the edge of the door, you can understand the feelings of the knowledgeable man.¹⁶⁶

Kavanagh appears to be cautioning Irish Americans amongst her readership who may have or may in future become middle-class not to betray or deny their fellow Irish Americans in the pursuit of a middle-class identity because they will suffer the consequences of such snobbery and pretension as Darby did. It has been shown in this final example of how Kavanagh addressed a specifically Irish-American audience that Bridget was aware of the error of her husband’s ways from the beginning and, had he heeded her chastisement, he would not have suffered as he did. This illustrates clearly the pervading dynamic in the relationships between men and women in Kavanagh’s tales which will now be explored at length in the final section of this chapter.

¹⁶⁵ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 53.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

Section Four

In scholarship that has been written on the topic, the “roguish hero” is referred to exclusively as male and in Dion Boucicault’s Irish-themed plays and Harrigan and Hart’s “Mulligan’s Guard” musical comedies, which have been suggested earlier in this chapter as potential sources for Kavanagh, the “roguish hero” is gendered exclusively as male. A major, subversive element of Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people is, therefore, her characterisation of several of her female characters as “roguish heroes”. The significance of this representation is underlined when considered in the context of Judith Butler’s work on the performative nature of gender:

That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex, a true or abiding masculinity or femininity, are also constituted as part of the strategy by which the performative aspect of gender is concealed.¹⁶⁷

By endowing both her male and female characters with characteristics of the “roguish hero”, Kavanagh is refusing to perpetuate the “gender reality” which Butler believes is created through sustained social performances in which there are clear demarcations made between male behaviour and female behaviour. Given the inherent theatricality of gender performance, as Judith Butler defines it,¹⁶⁸ it is surely ironic that Kavanagh means of undermining it is through recourse to the theatrical trope of the “roguish hero”. Not only is one of her female protagonists constructed as a “roguish hero”, as discussed at length above, but, aside from Sarah Muldowney in “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, the

¹⁶⁷ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 908.

¹⁶⁸ See *Ibid.*, 905 – 908.

supporting characters of Maureen McGibney in “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, Bridget O’Gill in “The Banshee’s Comb” and Judy Casey in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors” are also constructed as “roguish hero”. Indeed, the role played by Maureen McGibney in “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” is of vital importance to Darby’s triumph against the Good People upon which his construction as the quintessential “roguish hero” is entirely founded.

Whilst Darby’s unprecedented success in triumphing over the Good People in such spectacular fashion is partly a result of his own actions, it is explicitly stated that it was also entirely dependent upon the fact that during his confinement by the Good People, he happens upon his late, lamented sister-in-law Maureen, who had not died as previously thought but was also kidnapped by the fairy folk and confined in their Sleive-na-Mon lair.¹⁶⁹ It is Maureen who, through her shrewd observations and covert manoeuvres, conceives Darby’s escape plan and oversees its efficient execution by ensuring that Darby is not distracted and seduced by the decadent fairy lifestyle of drinking and dancing at Sleive-na-Mon.¹⁷⁰ As Jerry Murtaugh freely acknowledges in his narration of the tale, “if it weren’t for Maureen McGibney, Darby would be in Sleive-na-Mon at this hour. Sure she was always the wise girl, ready with her crafty plans and warnings”.¹⁷¹ As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Kavanagh’s maiden name was McGibney and, therefore, there can be detected here a degree of metatextual playfulness as a woman named McGibney is responsible for plotting Darby’s triumph in two regards, as a character within the tale and as the author of the tale. The dynamic between Darby and Maureen here establishes a trope that recurs throughout Kavanagh’s tales, in which a man succeeds when a woman wisely supports the

¹⁶⁹ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 14.

endeavour through her own actions and a man fails when a woman wisely withdraws her supports and leaves him to fend for himself. Although this is an empowering feature of Kavanagh's representation of Irish women, it is true to say that when Kavanagh represents Irish women it is invariably within the context of their relationships with the men in their lives.

Kavanagh's thematic preoccupation with women's relationships with men, usually as wives, may have been determined by an insistence on writing back to a construction of Irish identity which was gendered exclusively as female, just as the "roguish hero" appears to have been gendered exclusively as male. Alison M Kibler argues that the most prominent and persistent stereotype of Irish womanhood in the diasporic space, "Bridget", became increasingly controversial in the first decade of the twentieth century when Kavanagh's tales began to be published. She argues that, with the rise in the diasporic space of transatlantic Gaelic revivalism and physical force nationalism, many Irish Americans adopted a firm stance against uncouth, incompetent, violent and lascivious "Bridget" whom they perceived as a slight on the moral integrity of Irish women.¹⁷² Kibler cites, for example, violent protests which took place in New York in 1907 against the vaudevillian act The Russell Brothers during performances of their definitive, long-standing sketch "The Irish Servant Girls"¹⁷³ and yet, despite the fact that the recurring character of Darby's wife is named Bridget, Kavanagh appears to be responding to another, less prominent stereotype of Irish womanhood. The emphasis on Irish women as wives and the particular dynamic that she cultivates for them with their husbands suggest a response to the "henpecking wife", a ferocious and frightening figure who emasculates her husband by her aggressive and overwhelming

¹⁷² See Alison M Kibler, "The Stage Irishwoman", *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 2005), 5 – 30, 22.

¹⁷³ See *Ibid.*, 5 - 6

domination of the domestic space. She was seen primarily in various, popular comic sketches in American vaudevillian entertainment of the last three decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁴ Jennifer Mooney cites an early sketch of this kind called “Any Port in A Storm” in which the character of Purty Pat the Masher is made miserable by the “henpecking” of his wife, who demands of him at one point “Come home and rock the cradle/You know the twins are sick/Or I’ll crack your thick skull/With the soft end of a brick”.¹⁷⁵ The acts The Four Mortons and Sheehan and Sullivan travelled around America in the 1880s and 1890s performing similar sketches in which “henpecking wives” emasculated their unfortunate, pathetic husbands to comic effect.¹⁷⁶

Mooney is sceptical about the notion that the performance of these “henpecking wife” sketches can be fully accounted for by “a tendency on the part of native-born men to imagine other ethnic men to be less masculine than themselves”.¹⁷⁷ As these sketches were devised and performed by vaudevillian entertainers some of whom were of Irish extraction themselves, Mooney suggests that it is simplistic to conclude that these sketches are merely founded upon and promote a racist ideology. Rather she also detects misogyny in the extent to which they privilege the male-centred experience at the expense of the female-centred experience.¹⁷⁸ Hasia R Diner’s study of the acrimonious relationship between Irish-American men and the American women’s suffrage movement of the late-nineteenth century suggests another possible reason why Irish-American men who were working in vaudeville may have wanted to write and perform “henpecking wife” sketches. She says that men in the Irish-American community were concerned about and hostile towards the women’s

¹⁷⁴ See Jennifer Mooney, *Irish Stereotypes in Vaudeville, 1865 – 1905* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 118.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

suffrage movement because of the threat that it posed to the power and control that they asserted within their marriages.¹⁷⁹ Whilst this was surely true of men from other ethnicities also, suffragists directed much ire in their writings and rhetoric towards Irish-American men most especially, for being “violent and brutal particularly when it came to their wives, confirming the feminist position that Irish men bore the responsibility for much of the oppression of women”.¹⁸⁰ Not only this but, in arguing that women should be granted the right to vote, they contrasted their voteless status with that of “the enfranchised Irish man who, no matter how tempestuous, inebriated or irrational, could exercise his right to vote and hold office”.¹⁸¹ An objectionable reaction to such views may have encouraged Irish-American men working within vaudeville during this period towards sketches which mocked the perception of Irish-American women as oppressed and presented an alternative scenario in which they were actually the oppressors. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Kavanagh was married for a period sometime between 1880 and 1893 to John Templeton, the actor and manager whose work straddled both the legitimate theatre and vaudeville and who travelled around America with his trope at a time when “henpecking wife” sketches were reaching the height of their popularity. This biographical detail means that the likelihood of Kavanagh having been extremely familiar with this predominantly vaudevillian construction of Irish identity is very high, although the “henpecking wife” did not feature exclusively in vaudeville.

Kavanagh’s work has been discussed in this chapter in the context of folklore collections of American Celticism and a close textual analysis of Kavanagh’s literary output

¹⁷⁹ See Hasia R Diner, *Erin’s Daughters: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 145 – 155.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 148.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*.

and of the various folklore texts of American Celticism suggests that, in writing her original tales, Kavanagh was greatly influenced in a variety of ways by two 1888 texts in particular. They are the anthology collection *Fairy and Folk Tales of Irish Peasantry* edited by W.B. Yeats¹⁸² and D.R. McAnally Jr's *Irish Wonders*¹⁸³ and this latter text is highly significant in the context of this current discussion because it appropriates the "henpecking wife" figure to startlingly misogynistic effect. She may have felt compelled to respond to this figure to whom she was first exposed during the vaudevillian phase of her life after she discovered it re-appearing throughout this particular folklore text of American Celticism, which proved extremely popular after it was championed by Yeats in the *Providence Journal*.¹⁸⁴ In his preface to *Irish Wonders*, McAnally asserts that the collection was researched and compiled in Ireland "during a recent lengthy visit in the course of which every county in the island was traversed from end to end, and constant association had with the peasant tenantry".¹⁸⁵ McAnally further asserts that the collection's tales were recounted to him by a variety of Irish peasants on his recent visit to Ireland including an Antrim fisherman named Barney O'Toole,¹⁸⁶ a Galway car-man named Jerry Magwire¹⁸⁷ and unnamed Donegal women.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* was published in 1888 by Walter Scott in London, Thomas Whittaker in New York and WJ Gage in Toronto. Whilst it was not written by an American author specifically for a diasporic audience of Irish Americans, it appears to have been appropriated by the American Celticism publishing fashion, most probably due to its similarity to the many Irish folklore collections which were being produced in America and due to Yeats' promotion of Irish mythology, folklore and literature in several American newspapers and journals during the late 1880s and the early 1890s. See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 168.

¹⁸³ The full title of David Russell McAnally Jr's book was *Irish Wonders: The Ghosts, Giants, Pookas, Demons, Leprechawns, Banshees, Fairies, Witches, Widows, Old Maids, and Other Marvels of the Emerald Isle* and it was published by Ward, Lock and Co in both New York and London in 1888.

¹⁸⁴ See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 173.

¹⁸⁵ DR McAnally Jr, *Irish Wonders: The Ghosts, Giants, Pookas, Demons, Leprechawns, Banshees, Fairies, Witches, Widows, Old Maids, and Other Marvels of the Emerald Isle* (New York: Ward, Lock and Co, 1888), Preface.

¹⁸⁶ According to McAnally, the legend of the Gray Man's Path near the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim which he relates in the chapter "The Henpecked Giant" was collected from Barney O'Toole after "a chance boat excursion led to the acquaintance of Mr Barney O'Toole, a fisherman, and conversation developed the fact that this gentleman was thoroughly posted in the local legends". See McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 153.

One singular and defiant narrative voice emerges throughout the collection, however, which is most easily identified by its misogynistic interjections and suggests to the reader that *Irish Wonders* contains a significant amount of original material provided by McAnally himself. The notion that a misogynistic ideology is being promoted in *Irish Wonders* is first suggested by the collection's full title, *Irish Wonders: The Ghosts, Giants, Pookas, Demons, Leprechawns, Banshees, Fairies, Witches, Widows, Old Maids and Other Marvels of the Emerald Isle*. By placing mortal female archetypes such as witches, widows and old maids alongside a variety of supernatural phenomena from Irish folklore, the collection's title presents women as mysterious, unknowable, threatening, sinister entities whose Otherness is akin to the Otherness of ghosts, giants, demons etc. In *Irish Wonders*, the women must be confronted, comprehended and ultimately conquered and it appears that in order to justify this perception of women, McAnally refers constantly to the "henpecking wife" figure.

Whether they are operating in the mortal realm or the supernatural realm, the wives in *Irish Wonders* can be read as "henpecking wives" because they are largely confrontational, irrational and vitriolic; they undermine, harass and torment their husbands at every available opportunity, despite the fact that the benign husbands are entirely undeserving of such treatment. The husbands are represented as being powerless against the sheer force with which their wives dominate the domestic space and, therefore, they strive to avoid the domestic space altogether. In "The Henpecked Giant", for example, the explanation offered for the construction of the Gray Man's Path in the Giant's Causeway in

¹⁸⁷ According to McAnally, the folk tales related in the chapters "The Sexton of Cashel" and "The Defeat of the Widows" were collected from Jerry Magwire. See McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 39 and 190.

¹⁸⁸ According to McAnally, certain details of Irish fairy lore were elucidated by two separate Donegal women during his travels in the county. One of the collection's most remarkable misogynistic interjections comes directly from one of these women during a discussion of the submission of fairy wives to their husbands. McAnally quotes her as saying "They're wan, that's the husband an' the wife, but he's more the wan than she is". See McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 103.

County Antrim is that the eponymous Finn O’Goolighan chooses to pave the path rather than spend time at home with his domineering wife, Missis Finn.¹⁸⁹ Elsewhere in the collection, the exasperation of husbands is sympathetically vindicated by statements such as “sure a woman’s tongue is longer than a man’s patience”¹⁹⁰ and “a husband is bound for to be goshthered day in an’ day out for a woman’s jaw is sharpened on the divil’s grindstone”¹⁹¹ and, also, by the following poem referring to the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib in the Book of Genesis:

The first rib did bring in ruin/ As the rest have since been doin’
Some be wan way, some another/ Woman shtill is mischief’s mother
Be she good or be she avil/ Be she saint or be she divil
Shtill unaisey is his life/ That is marr’d with a wife.¹⁹²

In the chapter entitled “About the Fairies”. McAnally asserts that fairy marriages are generally harmonious because, unlike mortal marriages, “married life in fairy circles is regulated on the basis of the absolute submission of the wife to the husband”.¹⁹³ This statement renders explicit what is implicit throughout the collection; marital disharmony between mortal men and women is perceived by McAnally as entirely the result of “henpecking wives” refusing to submit to their husbands but rather determining to have power and agency as wives within their marriages.

¹⁸⁹ McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 167 – 169.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 103.

Whilst the relationship between Darby O’Gill and his sister-in-law Maureen is important in Kavanagh’s work,¹⁹⁴ the most sustained and fully-explored relationship between Darby and a female character is his relationship with his wife and Maureen’s sister, Bridget. Whilst their marriage has produced eight children and is represented by Kavanagh as a happy and loving one, Bridget is as dominant and forceful as the wives in McAnally’s *Irish Wonders* and the domestic space of the O’Gill household is rendered combative by her attitude towards her husband.¹⁹⁵ The difference with Bridget is that her attitude towards her husband is entirely justified in the text because, just as the counsel and assistance of Maureen was required by Darby for his success against the Good People at Sleive-na-Mon, Bridget’s counsel and assistance is required by Darby as he negotiates his way through life. The disharmony arises from Darby’s inability to acknowledge this aspect about his relationship with Bridget, despite the fact that he is proved wrong in the matters which bring him into conflict with her. For example, the social pretensions about which Bridget chides him in “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” eventually bring him misery through the supernatural comeuppance visited upon him by the leprechaun.¹⁹⁶ Also, in “The Crocks o’ Goold”, his failure to heed her warnings about allowing the tinker Bothered Bill Donohoe to ingratiate himself with the family - as he will lead them into mischief - has the exact

¹⁹⁴ Maureen McGibney is a recurring character in Kavanagh’s tales and, following her rescue of her brother-in-law in the eponymous and first tale in *Darby O’Gill and the Good People*, she appears in that collection’s later tales “The Conversion of Father Cassidy” and “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, in which she once again plays a pivotal role.

¹⁹⁵ This is particularly the case in three of the six tales in which Bridget O’Gill features alongside her husband, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” and “The Banshee’s Comb” from *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* and “The Crocks o’ Goold” from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales*. It is not that Bridget is characterised as less dominant and forceful or that her relationship with her husband is less combative in the other three tales, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” and “The Conversion of Father Cassidy” from *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* and “The Ashes of Old Wishes” from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales*. It is rather that she is a much more peripheral figure in these tales.

¹⁹⁶ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 57.

outcome that she shrewdly predicted.¹⁹⁷ Other male/female relationships between married couples in Ballinderg have a dynamic similar to that between Darby and Bridget. As Jerry Murtaugh discusses the fearlessness of his own grandfather in “The Haunted Bell”, he recalls “Indade, I think there was only one mortil man on airth me gran’father was afeard of, an’ that same one was me gran’mother – an’ she no bigger than a wisp of hay, as the sayin’ is”.¹⁹⁸ In “The Haunted Bell”, Jerry’s grandmother rightly deduces that her husband is responsible for the havoc which is being wreaked on the residents of Ballinderg after he was tricked by the Devil and sets about putting things right.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, whilst Jerry’s statement about the combative relationship between his grandparents is reminiscent of the misogyny in *Irish Wonders*, it becomes clear to the reader as the narrative of “The Haunted Bell” progresses that Kavanagh is not promoting a misogynistic ideology - it is the wife character who is called upon to salvage a mess of her husband’s creation and she wearily obliges. The attitude of these wives towards their husbands in Kavanagh’s tales, which is denounced as “henpecking” by McAnally in *Irish Wonders*, is reconstituted by Kavanagh as a necessary and admirable quality in a conscientious and loving wife.

Another misogynistic feature of *Irish Wonders*, which relates to the “henpecking wife” figure, is the discussion of marriageable women as commodities whose value increases the less likely they are to “henpeck” their potential husbands. In “The Henpecked Giant”, for example, the narrator Barney O’Toole pontificates on the merits of big women as opposed to little women on grounds of temperament,²⁰⁰ whilst “The Defeat of the Widows”

¹⁹⁷ Kavanagh, “The Crocks o’ Goold”, 164.

¹⁹⁸ Kavanagh, “The Haunted Bell”, 25.

¹⁹⁹ The role of Jerry’s grandmother Mrs Malowney in rectifying the disastrous situation of her husband’s creation features in the fifth and concluding part of “The Haunted Bell”. See Kavanagh, “The Haunted Bell”, 53 – 62.

²⁰⁰ McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 166.

ends with the narrator Jerry Magwire recalling advice he once received from the much-married Mr Dooley:

Take you my advice Mister Magwire, an whin ye marry, get you an owld maid, if there's one to be had in the counthry. Gurruls is flighty an axpectin' too much av ye, an' widdys is greedy buzzards as ye've seen be my axpayrience, but owld maids is humble, an thankful for getting' a husband at all, God bless 'em, so they shtrive to plaze an' do as ye bid thim widout grumblin' or axin' throublesome questions.²⁰¹

The extremely subversive extended opening sequence to her tale "The Banshee's Comb" reads as a direct riposte to this assessment of the qualities of women as Bridget O'Gill and four of her fellow Ballinderg wives spend an afternoon sewing, knitting and boasting about the excellent qualities of their respective husbands.²⁰² The initially polite conversation becomes gradually more intense and acrimonious as Bridget, Elizabeth Ann Egan, Mollie Scanlan, Margit Doyle and Caycelia Crowe defend their husbands against slights upon their characters. Bridget is mortified, for example, when Margit spitefully mentions Darby's fear of ghosts and it is in her misguided attempt at damage limitation in this tale that Bridget, out of all the appearances that she makes in Kavanagh's work, can be identified most clearly as a "roguish hero". She speaks boastfully and disingenuously about Darby in order not to feel embarrassed and later manipulates Darby into visiting an ailing neighbour on Halloween Night so that the parish can see that he is actually not afraid of ghosts, but she does not seem to be condemned for this behaviour by Kavanagh. She presents a situation in which husbands are discussed as commodities by their wives rather than vice versa because the more valuable the husbands are, the better they reflect their wives in society and, therefore, as Jerry Murtaugh recounts, "every woman proudly claimed to own an' conthrol

²⁰¹ McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 218.

²⁰² Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 177 – 187.

the handsomest, loikeliest man that ever throd in brogues”.²⁰³ The men who commodify their wives in *Irish Wonders* have the advantage that they can represent themselves in society whereas the women who commodify their husbands in “The Banshee’s Comb” are at disadvantage in this regard, which is why they are forced to assess their husbands’ value. Kavanagh can be understood to not only be confronting the misogyny of the discussion of women as “henpecking wives” and their commodification based upon this supposition but also to be commenting upon the issue of female agency in patriarchal societies.

The defence of “henpecking wives” in Kavanagh’s tales recalls Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s defence of the Evil Queen from the Brothers Grimm’s final 1857 version of “Snow White” in their seminal 1979 work of feminist literary criticism, *The Madwoman in the Attic*.²⁰⁴ Whilst the behaviour of the Evil Queen in “Snow White” may initially be perceived as negative and undesirable, Gilbert and Gubar invite readers of the fairy tale to re-evaluate the Evil Queen’s behaviour in the context of the patriarchal society in which she is operating.²⁰⁵ When considered in this context, they argue, the Evil Queen’s attempted

²⁰³ Kavanagh, “The Banshee’s Comb”, 178.

²⁰⁴ Gilbert and Gubar’s feminist reading of the Brothers Grimms’ “Snow White” is central to their argument in “The Queen’s Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity”, the first chapter of *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (London: Yale University Press, 1984). See 36 – 44.

²⁰⁵ Deficiencies in Gilbert and Gubar’s argument about the Brothers Grimm’s final 1857 version of “Snow White” have been identified and criticised by fairy-tale scholars including Donald Haase and Vanessa Joosen. According to Haase and Joosen, Gilbert and Gubar ignore the sociohistorical and textual context in which the Grimms produced “Snow White” and they do not justify their assertion that the voice of patriarchy has a controlling presence in a tale which originated in an oral storytelling tradition dominated by women. See Donald Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 12 – 13 and Vanessa Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: An Intertextual Dialogue between Fairy-Tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 282 – 285. Gilbert and Gubar’s assertion has since been justified by scholars who have considered the sociohistorical and textual context of “Snow White”, however. For example, Ruth Bottigheimer examines the patterns of direct and indirect speech in the different and evolving Grimm versions of “Snow White” and suggests that the Grimms drew correlations between oral passivity and moral goodness and oral assertion and moral

murder of her stepdaughter, Snow White, is not only necessary but also admirable. It is necessary because once she is married to Snow White's widowed father, it is decreed by patriarchy, as represented by the Magic Mirror on the Wall, that she is no longer the embodiment of patriarchy's feminine ideal of youth, beauty and passivity or "the fairest of them all".²⁰⁶ It is also admirable because, by attempting to murder patriarchy's current feminine ideal, Snow White, she is refusing to be confined by the rigid, suffocating restrictions that have been placed upon her.²⁰⁷ Similarly, the behaviour of wives such as Bridget O'Gill and Jerry Murtaugh's grandmother in which they render the domestic space combative may initially seem negative and undesirable but, when considered in the context of the patriarchal society in which they too are operating in Kavanagh's tales, it is both necessary and admirable. It is necessary because the domestic space is the only space in which women have any power or agency and it is admirable because they are acting in the best interests of their families, as they know much better than their oblivious husbands who are meant to be representing them in society. Both the Grimms' "Snow White" and the figure of the "henpecking wife" can be said to condemn active women and commend passive women and, therefore, by re-interpreting the Grimms and writing back to this particular cultural construction respectively, Gilbert and Gubar and Kavanagh celebrate active women who have agency and who exert power in society in whatever way they can.

There are two instances in Kavanagh's work in which the behaviour of wives which may be perceived as "henpecking" is not attributable to foolish husbands who are acting so foolishly or irresponsibly that they must be forcefully reprimanded in the domestic space

degeneration in their female characters. See Ruth Bottigheimer, *Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (London: Yale University Press, 1987), 181 – 182.

²⁰⁶ Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 37 – 38.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 38 – 39.

where the wives have agency. Whilst the combative attitude of Katie Bresnehan in “The Monks of Saint Bride” and Sarah Muldowney is not mitigated by the behaviour of their husbands as it is with Bridget O’Gill and Jerry Murtaugh’s grandmother, it is mitigated by other aspects of Kavanagh’s representation of their respective marriages. The only problem in the marriage of Katie and Michael Bresnehan in “The Monks of Saint Bride” is Katie’s unfortunate and unwarranted tendency “to be faulting Michael and faulting him and faulting him”.²⁰⁸ It is explicitly clear, however, that Katie – described by Jerry Murtaugh as “the kind-hearted woman”²⁰⁹ and “a good sensible lump of a woman”²¹⁰ - is motivated by love and concern for her husband and, when she realises the detrimental effect that her behaviour is having, she immediately mends her ways.²¹¹ Elsewhere, the combative attitude of Sarah Muldowney towards her husband Pether in “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney” is mitigated by his equally combative attitude towards her; they antagonise each other constantly and, although they are reconciled after the encounter with Satan which was dealt with earlier in this chapter, they continue to antagonise each other but are represented as happy and contented in their marital disharmony.²¹² Indeed, Jerry Murtaugh observes wryly at the conclusion of their tale that “it’s little happiness two could have living together all their lives who had as little deep feeling one for the other as never to touch a sensitive nerve”.²¹³ Therefore, neither Katie Bresnehan nor Sarah Muldowney should be equated with “henpecking wives” and their presence in Kavanagh’s tales does not undermine Kavanagh’s subversive representation of women and their relationships with men in the mortal community. Rather, the presence of these two characters can be

²⁰⁸ Kavanagh, “The Monks of Saint Bride”, 118.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

²¹¹ See *Ibid.*, 142.

²¹² Kavanagh, “How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney”, 217.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 216.

identified as Kavanagh's acknowledgement of an essential truth, which Audre Lorde believes is extremely important to acknowledge, and that is the difference that exists between women.²¹⁴ Whilst Lorde argues her case in the context of race relations, it is true to say that her assertion that the most serious threat to the mobilization of women's joint power is "a pretense to a homogeneity of experience"²¹⁵ is also relevant to the world created by Kavanagh in which the female characters initially seem so similar and, at times, so interchangeable.

The only adult mortal female character to play a prominent role in Kavanagh's work without being married is Sheelah Maguire, who is empowered within the Ballinderg community by unrivalled knowledge of the Good People and their customs and by privileged access into their realm. Her empowerment in society is initially problematised, however, by her representation as a villainous presence, referred to variously as "the ould fairy doctor"²¹⁶ and "a spy for the Good People"²¹⁷ upon her first appearance in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People". Sheelah must be defeated by Darby as she conspires against him with King Brian Connors in the aforementioned tale²¹⁸ and with the banshee in "The Banshee's Comb"²¹⁹ although in her later appearances this empowered and autonomous female figure is not villainous but rather is shown to use her supernatural and fairy knowledge to earnestly help her fellow mortal residents of Ballinderg in times of crisis. Examples include when she advises a distraught Delia McNulty on how to retrieve her son after he is stolen by the Good People and replaced with a changeling in "The Changeling: A Story of Christmas

²¹⁴ See Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference", *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 854 - 860.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 855 – 856.

²¹⁶ Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", 5.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

²¹⁹ Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 233 – 239.

Eve”²²⁰ and when she advises Michael Bresnehan on how break the curse of Saint Bride and emerge triumphant from his encounter with the monks in “The Monks of Saint Bride”.²²¹ Kavanagh appears to be intent on undermining the potential perception of an empowered and autonomous female figure as being villainous by initially complying with it before latterly subverting it, as this is not the case just with Sheelah Maguire but also with the only female fairy character who features in her work; the banshee. In “The Banshee’s Comb”, she initially seems to be a straightforward and uncomplicated villain who arrives in Ballinderg to take Darby’s newlywed neighbour Eileen McCarthy from life into death and she attacks Eileen’s husband Cormac and Darby as they attempt to stop her. She is ultimately portrayed in a more sympathetic light as Darby travels with King Brian Connors to her domain to strike a bargain with her in exchange for the end of her sacred comb that Darby inadvertently stole from her. Not only does she generously agree but she also grants Darby a gift of reconciliation, whilst a humanising glimpse is offered in this scene of her vulnerability as she sings “high and clear and sweet and wild” despite Darby’s observation that “the weight and sorrow of ages were on her pale face”.²²² The representation of the banshee also conforms to the established dynamic of the relationships between men and women in the mortal community in Kavanagh’s work and the opportunity to provide further commentary on male/female relationships may be the reason why Kavanagh chose to feature the banshee.

The banshee is not defined by her relationship with men unlike other female fairy characters who could potentially have featured alongside King Brian Connors and his Good

²²⁰ “The Changeling: A Story of Christmas Eve” was the only one of Kavanagh’s tales that did not appear in either of her fairy tale collections. A possible reason for this omission is that “The Changeling” is considerably shorter than all of the fairy tales in her collections. It was published in the *Chicago Tribune* on the 20th December 1903.

²²¹ See Kavanagh, “The Monks of Saint Bride”, 120.

²²² Kavanagh, “The Banshee’s Comb”, 291 and 293.

People in Kavanagh's tales, such as the wives and daughters of the trooping fairies, who are mentioned by McAnally in *Irish Wonders*,²²³ or the Leanhaun Shee who seeks the love of mortal men and is mentioned by Yeats in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*.²²⁴ Not only is she empowered and autonomous as she performs her singular task but it is also made explicitly clear by Kavanagh that she is the only one, male or female, who has been given this responsibility. In both of these respects at least, Kavanagh's banshee is an accurate representation of the Irish oral incarnation of the female supernatural death messenger figure that recurs throughout European folklore. Whilst her personality has changed significantly since the first written account of her in the eighth century, her role in the lives of Irish people remains largely unchanged.²²⁵ Although the banshee is most closely identified by her plaintive wailing which foreshadows death, her identification as one of the fairy folk is much more tenuous and, according to Patricia Lysaght, altogether spurious. Lysaght argues that the misidentification of the banshee as a fairy may well have occurred due to the mistranslation of the Irish-language phrase "an bhean sí" as "the fairy woman" rather than as the originally intended "woman of the Otherworld", which is meant to refer to her supernatural origin and purpose.²²⁶ Lysaght further argues that this mistranslation is "likely to have coloured beliefs and narratives about the death messenger"²²⁷ and this is certainly the case in Yeats' *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, in which he describes

²²³ McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 103.

²²⁴ Here is the full description by Yeats of the superficially empowered yet ultimately submissive Leanhaun Shee from *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, ed. WB Yeats (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1888), 81: "The Leanhaun Shee (fairy mistress), seeks the love of mortals. If they refuse, she must be their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding another to take their place. The fairy lives on their life and they waste away. Death is no escape from her. She is the Gaelic muse, for she gives inspiration to those she persecutes. The Gaelic poets die young, for she is restless, and will not let them remain long on earth".

²²⁵ See Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death-Messenger* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1986), 202 – 203 and 216 – 217.

²²⁶ See *Ibid.*, 29 – 32 and 43 – 46.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

the banshee as “an attendant fairy”.²²⁸ It appears as though Yeats’ description subsequently coloured Kavanagh’s representation of the banshee in her tale “The Banshee’s Comb”, in which it is explicitly stated numerous times that the banshee is one of the fairies. It appears this way most especially because Kavanagh’s banshee is connected with the phenomenon from Irish folklore known as the *costa bower* or death coach which is driven by the *dullahan* or headless horseman and Yeats’ description of the banshee seems to be the only contemporary source available to Kavanagh which makes this connection.²²⁹

Although the identification of the banshee as a fairy is undoubtedly a distortion of the banshee myth from Irish folk belief, it reinforces her representation in Kavanagh’s tale as an empowered and autonomous female fairy, particularly when she is compared with her male counterparts in the fairy realm. Whilst King Brian Connors and his trooping male fairies engage in leisurely pursuits like drinking and dancing and discuss relatively trivial matters like who was the greatest Irishman who ever lived, the banshee is a much more substantial figure in comparison, and concerns herself with serious matters of life and death. She does have a close relationship with the male character of the *dullahan* named Shaun who drives the *costa bower* for her, although far from being a relationship of equals it is best characterised by his subservience and devotion to her.²³⁰ Furthermore, she is reconstituted by Kavanagh as a figure who not only has supernatural knowledge of who will live and who will die but who also has control over who lives and who dies. This is why when Darby accidentally comes into possession of the banshee’s sacred comb in “The Banshee’s Comb”,

²²⁸ Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, 108.

²²⁹ Here is the part of Yeats’ description of the banshee in which the *cóiste-bodhar* and *dullahan* are evoked in connection with her: “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*”. See Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, 108.

²³⁰ Kavanagh, “The Banshee’s Comb”, 287 – 290.

he is able to strike a bargain with her to avoid the tragic, untimely death of Eileen²³¹. The unique powers of Kavanagh's banshee surely account for her elevated status amongst the fairies; the dullahan proclaims the following, for example, when he hears of Darby's dealings with his beloved banshee: "You must be a jook or an earl, or some other rich pillosopher, to have the most raynoured fairy in the worruld take such a shine to you".²³² For his part, Darby behaves deferentially towards the banshee and greets her decision to spare the life of Eileen by saying "Thank you kindly, Misthress Banshee. Public or private, I'll always say this for you – you're a woman of your worrud".²³³ In Kavanagh's fairy tales, a woman's word carries great significance, whether she is an all-powerful supernatural death messenger or a sensible wife who is exasperated by her husband's nonsensical behaviour. In both the mortal and fairy worlds, the overwhelming impression Kavanagh offers her readers of relationships between men and women is that women justifiably hold the power, whilst the less impressive and less accomplished men are left in their wake.

²³¹ See Kavanagh, "The Banshee's Comb", 236 – 239.

²³² *Ibid.*, 280 – 281.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 239.

Conclusion

The representation of the Irish people in the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh is inextricably linked to the diasporic space of Irish America. This is not simply a reference to the circumstances in which the tales were written and published, although the sympathetic representation of the Irish people in *McClure's Magazine* and the publishing fashion of American Celticism undoubtedly facilitated Kavanagh's particular representation of the Irish people. These tales constantly and unambiguously reflect upon the experience of being Irish in the United States of America. Kavanagh addresses two cultural constructions of Irish identity which originated and were popularised in America during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is reasonable to assume that Kavanagh personally encountered performances of the "roguish hero" and the "henpecking wife" in legitimate theatre and vaudevillian entertainment as she negotiated the diasporic space. As her representation of the Irish people is predicated to a significant degree upon largely conforming to the "roguish hero" figure and absolutely repudiating the "henpecking wife" figure, the influence of these diasporic cultural constructions cannot be overstated. It also must be acknowledged that her representation of the Irish people is influenced in many respects by the commentary that she provides throughout her tales on the issues and preoccupations of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century, as she perceived them. Kavanagh cautions her Irish-American readers against denying their Irish origins as they assimilate into and progress in American society, whilst she also simultaneously sympathises with their desire to return to the "homeland" and flatters them with the assertion that they have removed themselves from the inescapable poverty and limitations of life in the "homeland" through emigrating to America. These significant

aspects of Kavanagh's commentary privilege the Irish-American reader over the Irish reader as they rely upon experience of negotiating the diasporic space for their meaning to be illuminated. Kavanagh represented the Irish people rather than the Irish-American people more specifically and yet the diasporic space and her personal negotiation of it had such a powerful influence on the work that she produced that her identification as an early proponent of Irish-American children's literature is entirely justified.

Chapter Two

Introduction

When six of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh's literary fairy tales were first published together in the 1903 collection *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*, they were introduced by an epigraph which consisted of two verses from "The Fairies", a poem inspired by Irish fairy lore and written by William Allingham. The two chosen verses explore the more sinister machinations of the fairies as well as their fearsome reputation as harbingers of death and despair for the mortals who encounter them:

Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting for fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk, trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap and white owl's feather!
They stole little Bridget for seven years long;
When she came down again her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep but she was dead with sorrow.¹

The verses quoted by Kavanagh in her epigraph do not epitomise the fairy folk or Good People as they are represented in the succeeding fairy tales or, indeed, in her second collection of nine tales, 1926's *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*. Rather Kavanagh's epigraph appears to function as an insight into the established and conventional

¹ William Allingham, "The Fairies" in *Irish Songs and Poems* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887), 128. Both verses are quoted in Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 2.

representation of the Good People from Irish fairy lore in the oral tradition and from literature which was inspired by Irish fairy lore. Once she has acknowledged how the Good People are usually represented, she offers her own innovative and subversive representation of the Good People and consequently undermines the folkloric and literary conventions that are exemplified by "The Fairies".² Kavanagh gestures towards Allingham's dominant representation of the Good People, particularly in her first fairy tale "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", in which mortals are abducted by fairies who are described as "wearing a green velvet cloak, and a red cap, and in every cap was stuck a white owl's feather".³ As she continued writing her fairy tales, however, Kavanagh gradually endowed the Good People with characteristics that had not been previously associated with them to any significant degree and, thus, offered her readers a radically different interpretation of the Irish fairy.

By the completion of Kavanagh's first collection, her Good People had become entirely incompatible with the fairies who "stole little Bridget for seven years long" in Allingham's poem. The Good People, as represented by Kavanagh, were the affectionate and loyal friends of the Irish people who sympathised with their Catholic nationalist ideology and acted benevolently towards them at every available opportunity. In the first chapter of this thesis, it was argued that addressing the Irish diaspora in the United States of

² In the anthology collection *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (New York: Whittaker, 1888), the editor WB Yeats included two sections of tales and poems about the Good People entitled "The Trooping Fairies" and "The Solitary Fairies". Both sections included tales and poems written by Thomas Crofton Croker, William Carleton, Samuel Ferguson, Douglas Hyde, Samuel Lover, Letitia MacLintock, Patrick Kennedy and Yeats himself amongst others. The representation of the fairies in these tales and poems is broadly compatible with Allingham's representation of them in his poem "The Fairies", which features at the beginning of the "The Trooping Fairies" section. Therefore, it can be said that "The Fairies" epitomises the established and conventional literary representation of the Good People in 1888 when Yeats was editing *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*.

³ Kavanagh almost directly transfers the description of the Good People's attire from Allingham's poem "The Fairies".

America at the turn of the twentieth century influenced in several ways Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people. It is the contention of this second chapter that addressing that particular audience also accounts for Kavanagh's innovative and subversive representation of the Good People. The ultimate result of the innovations that she introduced when representing the Good People is that she entirely reconstituted their role in the construction of Irish identity amongst her diasporic readers. Indeed, a consideration of Kavanagh's Good People validates Stuart Hall's argument that cultural identity never remains static but achieves fluidity through changing representation:

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "production", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.⁴

According to Hall, cultural identity can be a matter of "becoming" as well as "being" and this sense of cultural identity as a matter of "becoming" is particularly pertinent in diasporic situations because of the ruptures and discontinuities that undermine the concept of "one experience, one identity".⁵

Therefore, whilst cultural identity is always in process, this is most especially the case for those operating within a diasporic space such as the implied Irish-American readers of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in

⁴ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture and power.⁶

The continuous “play” of history, culture and power is fundamental to Kavanagh’s representation of the Good People and her attendant reconstitution of their role in the construction of Irish identity amongst her diasporic readers. Through this representation, she is acknowledging that, at the turn of the twentieth century, the figure of the “roguish hero” was an extremely popular and recognisable cultural construction of Irish identity amongst diasporic audiences. She was also acknowledging how Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism had risen in popularity throughout the nineteenth century and how the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism was reaching its pinnacle at the turn of the twentieth century in the diasporic space of Irish America. By choosing to promote both the figure of the “roguish hero” and the diaspora’s Catholic nationalism in her representation of the Good People, she had necessarily reconstituted them as a more positive presence in her tales and their subsequent benevolence appears to have been another natural progression for Kavanagh. She was writing for a particular audience at a particular moment in time and, therefore, in her literary fairy tales the Good People became what they had never been before. The first section of this chapter will discuss Kavanagh’s reconstitution of the Good People as the affectionate and loyal friends of the Irish people through her further appropriation of the “roguish hero”. It will consider how and why she introduces a degree of jeopardy into this friendship by retaining the fierce antagonism between the Good People and Roman Catholicism which features prominently in Irish fairy lore. The second section will explore the influence of the Catholic nationalism of the Irish diaspora in America on Kavanagh’s work by discussing how she promotes this Catholic nationalism in her

⁶ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, 225.

representation of how the Good People eventually become reconciled with Roman Catholicism. This section will also argue that, whilst Roman Catholicism is represented in an extremely positive manner in Kavanagh's tales, she also uses the Good People to criticise the attitude of the American Catholic Church at the turn of the twentieth century towards the controversial issue of mixed marriages. The third section of this chapter will assess Kavanagh's later tales in which the newly acquired benevolence of the Good People is fully realised. It will illustrate how they depart so comprehensively from the oral and literary tales of the Good People which had preceded them that their innovative nature reconstitutes the moral instruction of such tales. Finally, the fourth section of this chapter will consider the potential effect of Kavanagh's representation of the Good People on her implied child and adult Irish-American readers in their understanding of Irish fairy lore and their relationship with it as they negotiated the diasporic space.

Section One

The first chapter of this thesis explored Kavanagh's construction of Darby O'Gill as a "roguish hero" in her first literary fairy tale "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" and it showed how he exhibits various characteristics of this figure throughout the narrative as he secures an unlikely triumph against the Good People after he confronts them at their Sleive-na-Mon lair for stealing his beloved cow, Rosie. A comment made by Darby about the Good People at the conclusion of the tale further testifies to his particular type of heroism; when asked by Father Cassidy about why he did not punish the Good People more severely when he had the power to do so, Darby asserts, "I never got better nor friendlier threatment than I did from the Good People. An' the divil a hair of their heads I'd hurt more than need be".⁷ This expression of affection and respect for the Good People seems incongruous with Darby's previous actions in which he threatened their lives if their leader King Brian Connors refused to comply with his demands, yet this tendency to casually and confidently contradict his own behaviour is one of the chief characteristics of the "roguish hero". The "roguish hero" changes allegiances when he perceives that it would be in his best interests to do so but this does not mean that he is insincere in the opinions that he expresses but rather that self-preservation and self-promotion are of the utmost importance to him. The reader is next told that "some way or other the king heard of this saying, an' was so mightily pleased that next night a jug of the finest poteen was left at Darby's door"⁸ and the final paragraph of the tale describes King Brian's regular visits to Darby's cottage from that point onwards. The burgeoning friendship between the pair testifies to King Brian's entire acceptance of and flattered response to Darby's comment about him and his Good People

⁷ Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", 27.

⁸ Ibid., 27 – 28.

and his newly acquired respect and affection for “roguish hero” Darby is a strong indicator that Kavanagh is also constructing King Brian as a “roguish hero”. The conclusion of “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” challenges the reader to reconsider his or her perception of King Brian and his actions earlier in the tale when he heartily greets Darby upon his arrival at the Good People’s Sleive-na-Mon lair and expresses regret at having to confine such an impressive man as Darby there but starkly refuses to release him upon any grounds.⁹ King Brian is as mischievous and raucous and essentially good-hearted as he appears and he is not malingering for sinister purposes as may be expected by a reader only familiar with the Good People from poems such as Allingham’s “The Fairies”. He is sincere in the hearty welcome and effusive praise that he bestows upon Darby, yet it would be detrimental to him to release Darby and risk exposure for him and his kind, and, therefore, he refuses in an act instantly recognisable to those familiar with the figure of the “roguish hero”.

This reading of King Brian Connors’ ambiguous behaviour in “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” in the context of the figure of the “roguish hero” is validated by all of King Brian’s subsequent appearances in Kavanagh’s fairy tales in which both he and his fairy acolytes are explicitly and unambiguously represented as “roguish heroes”. Just like Darby and Kavanagh’s other mortal protagonists who were discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the Good People are clever but flawed individuals with a mischievous and raucous nature whose tendency to selfishly promote their own interests at the expense of others is tempered by their ability to act nobly and bravely when required to do so. Kavanagh’s decision to represent the Good People not as sinister harbingers of death and despair but as “roguish heroes” may have been related to the highly successful American publishing

⁹ See Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, 13.

fashion referred to by Charles Fanning as American Celticism, which was explored in the first chapter of this thesis. It should be remembered that Kavanagh herself was Irish-American, albeit Anglo-Irish-American, and that, as a member of the target readership for American Celticism, she would have been exposed to the perceptions upon which its success was founded. It stands to reason, therefore, that Kavanagh would have been keenly aware of a perception amongst diasporic readers that the Irish mythology and folklore contained in these texts of American Celticism constituted the unique cultural inheritance of the Irish people. She appears to have sought to accommodate and nurture this perception with her representation of the Good People in particular. She wrote original tales which were inspired by and incorporated elements of Irish folklore rather than retellings of episodes of Irish folklore and, therefore, she was unburdened by the necessity of conforming to previous representations of the Good People. It is the contention of this chapter that she exploited her creative freedom in this regard by considering how to effectively accommodate and nurture the diasporic perception of Irish folklore as the unique cultural inheritance of the Irish people. As a result of this consideration, she ultimately decided to endow her Good People with several qualities strongly associated with a particular construction of Irish identity which began to pervade American popular culture in the period immediately preceding the writing of Kavanagh's tales and which held particular appeal for the Irish diaspora in America. It is highly likely that she identified the potential appeal amongst her diasporic readers of conflating the figure of the "roguish hero" who was synonymous with Irishness with folkloric creatures who were perceived as uniquely Irish.

It is also the case that, by constructing Good People such as King Brian Connors as "roguish heroes", Kavanagh essentially renders them the supernatural equivalents of Irish

people such as Darby O’Gill whom she also constructs this way and this facilitates in an efficient and convincing manner the friendship which is beginning at the conclusion of “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”. Supposing that Kavanagh was operating with an awareness of the perception of Irish folklore as the unique cultural heritage of the Irish people, it is reasonable to suggest that, in consideration of what may appeal to her diasporic readers, she may have wished to reconstitute the folkloric creatures who feature most prominently in her tales as a more positive presence in the lives of the Irish people and, thus, they became their affectionate and loyal friends. Kavanagh introduces a degree of jeopardy into this nascent, unprecedented friendship, however, by retaining an important aspect of the representation of the Good People which dominates Irish fairy lore and that is the fierce antagonism between the Good People and Roman Catholicism. It manifests itself predominantly in Kavanagh’s tales through the extremely hostile interactions between King Brian Connors and Ballinderg’s parish priest Father Cassidy in “The Conversion of Father Cassidy”, but it also features in “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, where the reader is told that “pious words” and prayers provide powerful protection against the malicious intentions of the Good People.¹⁰ Whilst Darby O’Gill and King Brian Connors share many similarities as they are characterised by Kavanagh, they are shown to begin their friendship with greatly opposing views on Roman Catholicism and, because Roman Catholicism is central to Darby’s life, it would not be unreasonable for the reader to become concerned that this issue might threaten their friendship. Darby happily adopts Roman Catholicism as his religious creed and allows it to dictate the way he lives his life and he also accepts absolutely Father Cassidy’s role as community leader and spiritual advisor, although he is by no means represented as unerringly pious. He does not always comply with Father Cassidy’s wishes and sometimes

¹⁰ See Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, 16.

frustrates his priest and incurs his wrath, as shown at the conclusion of “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, and yet, in constructing Darby as a “roguish hero”, Kavanagh encourages the reader to consider his behaviour as mischievous rather than irreligious and as flouting authority rather than disrespecting his religion. As Darby is represented as staunchly Catholic and King Brian is represented as staunchly anti-Catholic, the question must be asked why Kavanagh chooses to jeopardise or, at the very least, complicate their friendship with this representation. The history of the belief in fairies in Ireland is inextricably linked with the history of Christianity in Ireland and she may have felt that the fierce antagonism between the Good People and Roman Catholicism was too fundamental a tenet of Irish fairy lore to be ignored.

Whilst the belief in fairies existed in pre-Christian Ireland, it was the arrival of Christianity in Ireland in the fifth century that ensured its survival as the foundation myth surrounding the Irish fairies was successfully Christianised. In pre-Christian Ireland, the fairies were the pagan gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann who roamed the earth until their marginalisation following the triumphant arrival of human beings. As Christianity gained in popularity in Ireland, a transitional phase occurred during the Middle Ages in which the fairies gradually became less associated with the Tuatha Dé Danann and rather were reconstituted as indecisive angels who were banished from heaven by Saint Michael following their failure to fight for God during a Satanic rebellion.¹¹ Not good enough for heaven and not bad enough for hell, they were sent to earth as hostile, vengeful and untrustworthy as the Tuatha Dé Danann gods had been before them. These morally ambiguous supernatural creatures remained recognisable from the fairy belief of pre-

¹¹ See Carolyn White, *A History of Irish Fairies* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1976), 11 – 13 for White’s account of the transition of the Irish fairies from the old gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann to the Christianised fallen angels.

Christian Ireland but were now operating within the framework of Christianity, were endowed with such tenets of Christianity as the prospect of salvation on the Day of Judgement¹² and, crucially, were also set in opposition to Christianity from the outset. The widespread belief in the existence of fairies persisted in Ireland long after Kavanagh wrote her literary fairy tales and late into the twentieth century, and this claim is supported by the following late-twentieth-century observation by Patrick Logan about the Irish attitude towards the simultaneous belief in Christianity and the Good People:

Whatever may be the present state of belief in the fairies there is no doubt that until well into the present century the majority of the people who lived in Ireland knew of the fairies and to some extent believed in them. They were also – most of them – pious and practising Catholics and it never occurred to them that such a dual belief was strange.¹³

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin identifies several reasons for the persistence of the belief at a time when it had largely dwindled elsewhere in Western Europe. According to Ó Giolláin, the fairy belief “retained its relevance owing to the tardiness of a new consciousness being established in Ireland”, which resulted from Ireland’s location as an island on the periphery of Europe as well as late urbanisation and late industrialisation.¹⁴ Ó Giolláin does not elaborate on his use of the term “new consciousness”, although he may be referring to a more rational and scientific approach to understanding the world with which traditional beliefs and customs relating to the fairies are not commonly associated. This inability to judge situations rationally or scientifically is certainly the reason identified by Seán Ó

¹² The prospect of salvation on the Day of Judgement is mentioned in the standard and canonical version of the folk tale “The Fallen Angels” that features in *Miraculous Plenty: Irish Religious Folktales and Legends*, ed. Seán Ó Suilleabháin and trans. William Caulfield (Dublin: Irish Folklore Commission, 2011), 154 – 155.

¹³ Patrick Logan, *The Old Gods: The Facts about Irish Fairies* (Belfast: The Appletree Press, 1981), 15 – 16.

¹⁴ Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland” in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narvaez (London: Garland, 1991), 212.

Suilleabháin for the persistence of the belief as “people always looked for causes for everything that happened and if some otherwise unexplainable occurrence could be ascribed to fairy agency, they felt relieved and comforted”.¹⁵

Both Ó Giolláin and Ó Suilleabháin also acknowledge, however, the significance of the fact that the fairy tradition was one of Ireland’s ancient religious phenomena, alongside the cult of water and certain pagan festivals, which was later imbued with a Christian sensibility through the Christianisation of the foundation myth of the fairies and the establishment of fierce antagonism between the Good People and Christianity.¹⁶ Christianity achieved a certain position of superiority in many folk superstitions as a powerful protection against the more malicious intentions of the Good People¹⁷ and the use of holy water, prayers and the Sign of the Cross were recommended as highly effective methods to ward off unsolicited fairy attention. Whilst such folk superstitions may seem to reinforce the authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland for the duration that the belief in fairies existed, Ó Giolláin undermines this view by citing examples of folk tales in which priests who denounce the Good People receive a terrifying or embarrassing supernatural comeuppance. He concludes that Christianity has definite but not absolute superiority of power over the fairy folk, who are more than capable of reducing clergymen to positions of inferiority.¹⁸ The folk tale *The Priest’s Supper*, collected by Thomas Crofton Croker, is a particularly good representation of the ambivalent outcome of the power struggle between Catholic priests and the Good People that Ó Giolláin identified as a trope of Irish fairy lore. In *The Priest’s*

¹⁵ Seán Ó Suilleabháin, *Irish Folk Custom and Belief/Nósanna agus Piseoga na nGael* (Dublin: The Three Candles, 1991), 82.

¹⁶ See Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland”, 212 and Ó Suilleabháin, *Irish Folk Custom and Belief*, 83.

¹⁷ See White, *A History of Irish Fairies*, 15 and Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland”, 203.

¹⁸ Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland”, 204.

Supper, a summons from Father Horrigan causes the Good People to flee yet, simultaneously, Father Horrigan's supper is rendered decidedly plain when the lavish banquet that was being prepared for him is scuppered by the Good People's interference.¹⁹ Neither the priest nor the fairies emerge entirely triumphant from their encounter in *The Priest's Supper* and it is this ambivalence that characterises the power struggle between Father Cassidy and King Brian Connors in Kavanagh's first literary fairy tale "Darby O'Gill and the Good People".

When Darby cunningly traps King Brian and his Good People and insists that he will not release them until they comply with his wishes, King Brian categorically refuses and, as the following extract reveals, it is only the threat of the prayers of Father Cassidy that convinces him otherwise:

Well, the king gave a roar of anger that was heard in the next barony

"Ye high-handed, hard-hearted robber," he says, "I'll never consent!" says he.

"Plase yerself," says Darby, "I see Father Cassidy comin' down the hedge," he says "an' he has a prayer for ye all in his book that'll burn ye up like wisps of sthraw if he ever catches ye here," says Darby.

With that the roaring and bawling was pitiful to hear, and in a few minutes a bag with two hundhred goold sovereigns in it was trun at Darby's threshold; and fifty people, young an' some of them ould, flew over an' stood beside the King. Some of them had spent years with the fairies. Their relatives thought them dead an' buried. They were the lost ones from that parish.

¹⁹ Although it is featured in WB Yeats' 1888 anthology collection *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, "The Priest's Supper" was originally published in Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland* (London: John Murray, 1825).

With that Darby pulled the bit of twine again, opening the trap, and it wasn't long until every fairy was gone.²⁰

At the climax of the tale, it is the Catholic Church that ultimately ensures not only the defeat of the Good People but also the safety of the Irish peasantry. Father Cassidy's triumph is undermined in the story's final paragraph, however, as it alludes to Darby pursuing his burgeoning friendship with fellow roguish hero King Brian, despite Father Cassidy's obvious disapproval. Kavanagh reconstituted the Good People as "roguish heroes" and the affectionate and loyal friends of the Irish people, and yet she decided against reconstituting their attitude towards and relationship with Roman Catholicism. It is entirely unconvincing to suggest that, as she portrays the Good People in an unprecedentedly positive and sympathetic light, that she is inviting her readers to entirely favour King Brian and his fairy cohorts over Father Cassidy and other official representatives of the Catholic Church. As their dispute intensifies in "The Conversion of Father Cassidy", Kavanagh does not condemn or commend either party and, although the priest is an intimidating presence, as symbolised by his horse's name, Terror, he is also presented as a caring and compassionate leader of the community whose central role in the lives of the people is as necessary as it is unquestioned. It seems as though retaining the fierce opposition between the Good People and Roman Catholicism serves two functions in Kavanagh's tales: her evocation of the folk superstition regarding prayers being a powerful protection against the Good People allows Darby the initial triumph against the Good People that solidifies him as a "roguish hero" in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People". Also, as the second section of this chapter will now explore, by establishing such fierce opposition immediately, she is heavily promoting the

²⁰ Kavanagh, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", 25 – 26.

means through which the ultimate, seemingly impossible reconciliation between King Brian and Father Cassidy is achieved in “The Convarsion of Father Cassidy” – Catholic nationalism.

Section Two

Although it was discussed briefly in the first chapter of this thesis, this chapter will now consider in greater detail the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism which dominated the diasporic space of Irish America at the turn of the twentieth century when Kavanagh was beginning to write her literary fairy tales. Whilst it features in her representation of the Irish people, Catholic nationalism most especially permeates her representation of the Good People, in the reconciliation between Father Cassidy and King Brian Connors and elsewhere. Therefore, it is important to examine how Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism became fundamental in the construction of Irish-American identity during the nineteenth century and how these separate religious and political ideologies became so intertwined that it allowed for the emergence of the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism. It is important to re-iterate at this point that by 1900, 3,873,104 people had emigrated from Ireland to America since official records had begun in 1820,²¹ whilst the number of people born in America with legitimate claims to Irish ancestry was increasing constantly. It also must be re-iterated that the story of the Irish diaspora in America was no longer a matter of immigration statistics alone and now required the identification of the Irish as a multi-generational ethnic group. Any claim to a shared identity amongst a group of people of such quantity and heterogeneity of experience recalls Benedict Anderson's theory of imagined communities. A community such as the Irish diaspora in America is imagined because it can be said with absolute certainty that its members "will never know most of its fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of

²¹ Although no official statistics exist before 1820, it is believed that Irish emigrants to America in the eighteenth century were mainly Protestant unlike the overwhelming majority of Irish emigrants to America in the nineteenth century who were Catholic. By the 1830s, Catholics exceeded Protestants in transatlantic migration from Ireland for the first time since 1700. See Kenny, *The American Irish*, 45.

their communion”.²² It is also imagined because, despite the inevitable disparity in the type of lives lived by its various members, the Irish-American community is often “conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship”.²³ Anderson developed his theory in his sociological work on nation states and in his analysis of the rise of nationalism in recent centuries and the willingness of millions of people to die on account of such imaginings.

The Irish-American community is not a nation state and it was not imagined for the purposes of nationalism but rather to instil a sense of belonging in the people operating within the new social formation of the Irish diaspora in America. The role that nationalism had come to play in the construction of the imagined Irish-American community by the beginning of the twentieth century is remarkable, however, not only because this role was pivotal but also because the nationalism in question related not to the diasporic space itself but to the “homeland”. It was not Irish-American nationalism or even American nationalism with which Irish Americans predominantly concerned themselves but Irish nationalism. According to Anderson’s theory, one of the main reasons for the imagining of communities and subsequent rise of nationalism was the loss of a fundamental cultural conception which characterises periods of religious certainty. Anderson believes that imagined communities and nationalism rose with the decline of “the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of the truth”.²⁴ The imagined Irish-American community and the Irish nationalism that characterised it did not weaken the strict religious observance of its members, however. Roman Catholicism not only accompanied Irish nationalism as a source and expression of

²² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism: Revised Edition* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

Irish-American identity but it also strengthened it by affiliation. The success of Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism amongst the Irish diaspora in America as the nineteenth century progressed was not merely an emigration-related act of transference from the “homeland”. To suggest as much would be to ignore the nuanced situation of both ideologies in nineteenth-century Ireland. For example, religious belief and observance had been in severe decline amongst the Irish Catholic peasantry up until the post-Famine era.²⁵ Also, how well-developed a person’s sense of nationalism was in that same era seems to have depended significantly on location, with Irish speakers from Connacht primarily maintaining interests that were staunchly parochial.²⁶ Furthermore, in order for a particular ideology to thrive as well as it did in the “homeland”, its continued expression in the diasporic space must be necessitated by the unfamiliar situation in which members of the diaspora find themselves.

As Kerby A Miller explains, Roman Catholicism offered the Irish in America an outlet for the construction of their new identity which would not undermine their ability to negotiate their new surroundings:

In circumstances that demanded the abandonment of so many aspects of communal identity, such as the Irish language, Catholicism became the primary expression of

²⁵ Emmet Cullen has written in detail about the remarkable historical phenomenon in which the relationship between Irish Catholics and their religion was revolutionised in the third quarter of the nineteenth century in Ireland. The revolution was overseen by the Archbishop of Dublin Paul Cullen and involved the successful introduction of a number of devotional practices including rosary, forty hours, perpetual adoration, novenas, blessed altars, Via Crucis, benediction, vespers, devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Conception, jubilees, triduums, pilgrimages, shrines, processions and parochial missions. These public exercises were also reinforced by the use of devotional tools and aids such as rosary beads, scapulars, medals, missals, prayer books, catechisms, holy pictures and Agnus Dei, all blessed by priests who had recently acquired that privilege from Rome through the intercession of their bishops. This historical phenomenon was first discussed by Cullen in his essay “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850 – 75” (*The American Historical Review* 77, 3 (1972), 625 – 652).

²⁶ See Kenny, *The American Irish*, 175.

Irish-American consciousness, a development parallel to that taking place in Anglicizing Ireland.²⁷

The centrality of Catholicism to the lives of Irish Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century was also the result of the overwhelming success of the introduction of several innovative devotional practices in the American Catholic Church. Just as his Dublin counterpart Paul Cullen did, New York's Irish-born Archbishop John Hughes introduced these practices in the 1850s and 1860s with the intention of rectifying the superficial grasp of Catholic doctrine amongst Irish-American Catholics. According to Kevin Kenny, the concerted efforts of Cullen and Hughes succeeded in "imposing orthodoxy on the heterodox religious practices of the peasantry of rural Ireland and, by the same token, in industrial and urban Irish America".²⁸ Kenny further credits the introduction of these innovative devotional practices with nurturing a cultural climate in the diasporic space in which Catholicism became synonymous with Irishness. The American Catholic Church managed to capitalise on the arrival of an unprecedented number of Catholics in America in the nineteenth century, which was precipitated by immigration from many European countries but primarily from Ireland. In the period of greatest immigration to America from Ireland which ran from 1840 to 1870,²⁹ for example, the number of Catholics in America rose from 663,000 to 4.5 million.³⁰ Whilst the American Catholic Church oversaw a period of massive expansion in its power and influence, the Irish diaspora in America also benefited from the alliance of Catholicism and Irishness by seizing upon the opportunity for economic and social advancement. Assisted by their fluency in English, Irish Americans came to dominate the

²⁷ Miller, "The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity", 113.

²⁸ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 113.

²⁹ According to statistics from the Department of Homeland Security, 2, 130, 616 of the 3, 873, 104 Irish emigrants who arrived in America between 1820 and 1900 did so between 1840 and 1870.

³⁰ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 113.

Church's hierarchy and, by 1900, constituted two-thirds of all bishops throughout the United States.³¹

The success of Roman Catholicism in the diasporic space may be partially due to the success of Irish nationalism there also as, according to SJ Connolly, in the immediate post-famine period in Ireland, links between religious and political loyalties were becoming firmly re-established and once again Catholicism was being constructed as a valid expression of nationalist sensibilities.³² George Boyce further states that both the Catholic and Protestant churches in Ireland were viewing themselves as “necessarily involved in political life, the better to organise their separate development and the interest of their own people”.³³ This can only be used to explain the nationalism of post-famine Catholic immigrants, however, and the fact remains that Irish Americans were removed from the place in which the battle for sovereignty and self-governance was taking place and there was no easily decipherable economic or social gain for those who remained loyal to the nationalist cause. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Kerby A Miller proffers a convincing argument as to why nationalist sensibilities survived the journey from Ireland to America by aligning the Irish nationalism of the Irish diaspora in America with the constructed narrative of nineteenth-century Irish emigration to which many post-Famine emigrants adhered and in which these emigrants were perceived as political exiles. He also suggests that the difficulties faced by the diaspora in negotiating the diasporic space strengthened their emotional connection with the “homeland”. Kenny, however, degeneralises and deromanticises Miller's argument by discussing the pragmatic reasons why different kinds of nationalism appealed to different

³¹ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 164.

³² See SJ Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780 – 1845* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 252.

³³ George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland: The Search for Stability* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005), 137.

class groupings amongst the Irish diaspora in America as the twentieth century approached. The well-established “lace curtain” Irish-American middle classes were attracted by the idea that a free Ireland would raise the ethnic status of the Irish in America. They also took advantage of the perceived respectability of this pursuit and, therefore, “institutions ostensibly organized to further purely nationalist goals were used as pressure groups for all sorts of other ethnic and political issues”.³⁴ The small but powerful middle classes aligned themselves with the constitutional nationalism of Charles Stewart Parnell’s Home Rule movement whilst, according to Kenny, the more recently arrived Irish-American working classes were much more likely to favour radical nationalism. They saw in radical nationalism the potential for improving their lot, having been encouraged to recognise the plight of the rural poor in Ireland and the plight of the industrial poor in Irish America as different parts of the same story. For example, Patrick Ford, the chief American ally of Michael Davitt of the Land League movement, once famously asserted that “the cause of the poor of Donegal is the cause of the factory slave in Fall River”.³⁵

By 1900, there was great solidarity between both constitutional and radical Irish nationalists and the hierarchy of the American Catholic Church, the differences that characterised their interactions from the 1880s onwards having been overcome.³⁶ This is another instance of the situation in the diasporic space mirroring that in the “homeland” as, in 1900, Catholic nationalism had not been as prominent in Ireland since Daniel O’Connell equated Catholicism with nationalism in the struggle for Catholic emancipation of the 1820s. In the diasporic space of early-twentieth-century Irish America, a correlation was

³⁴ Kenny, *The American Irish*, 172.

³⁵ This quotation is featured in Kenny’s discussion of Patrick Ford’s contribution to Irish-American politics. See Kenny, *The American Irish*, 175.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

drawn between the religious and the political and a pledge of fidelity to one was often seen as an expression of belief in the other. Kavanagh was not a Roman Catholic and there is no existing evidence to suggest that she supported Irish nationalism but she appears to have been keenly aware of the importance of these religious and political affiliations in the construction of Irish ethnic identity. Perhaps this awareness was nurtured not only by being a member of the Irish diaspora but also by her relationship with fellow diaspora member Marcus Kavanagh who, as shown in the introduction of this thesis, was both a Catholic and a nationalist who continually asserted these affiliations in his public life in Chicago during the first two decades of the twentieth century. She would have witnessed at close quarters how awareness of his Catholicism would have been perceived as strengthening his commitment to nationalism and vice versa. It was at this hugely significant diasporic moment for Catholic nationalism that Kavanagh was writing her literary fairy tales in which Catholic nationalism features prominently, most especially in the third tale of her first published collection, "The Convarion of Father Cassidy".³⁷ Kavanagh orchestrates a reconciliation between King Brian and Father Cassidy in this particular tale and thereby she astutely elevates the status of Catholic nationalism by representing this conflated ideology as the only means by which they can be reconciled. At the beginning of this tale, Kavanagh not only reminds the reader of the acrimony between both parties that she established in her first tale "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" but also presents a situation in which relations between them have become even more acrimonious. King Brian's opposition to Roman Catholicism has not altered and he and his fairy cohorts revel in treating Father Cassidy as disrespectfully as

³⁷ The second fairy tale in the collection, "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun", does not feature King Brian Connors as a character or engage with the antipathy of the Good People towards the Catholic Church. It is an entirely separate entity whilst "The Convarion of Father Cassidy" functions as a sort of sequel to "Darby O'Gill and the Good People".

possible, delightedly wresting power away from him at every available opportunity. Having allowed the Good People to infiltrate the homes of his parishioners, Father Cassidy is further humiliated when he is thrown from his horse, Terror, into the bog by the invisible fairies, just as he rides towards Darby's cottage to berate him for having befriended them.³⁸

In the pivotal scene in which all parties have gathered at Darby's cottage, Darby functions as the agent of the reconciliation as he becomes increasingly frustrated by their failure to settle their ideological differences through intelligent and informed debate:

They talked Tayology, Conchology and Distrology, they hammered each other with Jayography, Orthography and Misnography, they welted aich other with Hylosophy, Philosophy and Thrimosophy. They bounced up and down in their sates, they shouted at each other and got purple in the face. But every argyment brought out another nearly as good and twict as loud.³⁹

King Brian's defiant anti-Catholicism and assertion that he and his kind are friends of the Devil continue to cause consternation until Darby changes the subject and asks both men a question which confounded all the Ballinderg residents in attendance at Mrs Morrissey's wake the previous night:

"Tell me," he says – "lave off and tell me who was the greatest man that ever lived?" says he.

At that a surprising thing happened. Brian Connors and Father Cassidy, aich striving to speak first, answered in the same breath and gave the same name.

"Dan'le O'Connell" says they.⁴⁰

³⁸ See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "The Convarion of Father Cassidy" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 67 – 69.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 78 – 79.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Having previously failed to reconcile through recourse to a long, comical list of “ologies,” “ographies” and “osophies”, King Brian and Father Cassidy finally reconcile through their mutual adoration of Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847), the Irishman whose name became synonymous with the Catholic nationalist cause in early-nineteenth-century Irish history. Historically, O’Connell led the campaign for Catholic emancipation in the 1810s and the 1820s, eventually achieving great success with the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in 1829, and, throughout the campaign, O’Connell constructed the campaign as an Irish nationalist issue which should be supported by all Irish nationalists.⁴¹ According to Daithí Ó hÓgáin, Daniel O’Connell became a hugely significant figure not only in Irish history but also in Irish folklore and O’Connell’s championing of both Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism precipitated the interaction in the folk tradition of biographical details and Catholic lore in order to present him as a messianic figure.⁴² A prime example of this practice features in the folk tale of how O’Connell’s parents were rewarded for acting charitably towards the Catholic Church by a priest’s foretelling that “God would send them a baby boy who would be the champion of Ireland”.⁴³ It is clear that “The Conversion of Father Cassidy” relies heavily upon the assumption of knowledge on behalf of the diasporic audience that she is addressing. Kavanagh’s readers must be aware of the specific Catholic nationalist connotations associated with O’Connell in historical and folkloric discourse. Alternatively, they must have the facility to acquire the requisite knowledge from those around them because, without an understanding of O’Connell’s reputation, it is impossible to fully appreciate the nature of the reconciliation that occurs.

⁴¹ A comprehensive account of the Catholic nationalist dimension to the political career of Daniel O’Connell features in Fergus O’Ferrall, *Catholic Emancipation: Daniel O’Connell and the Birth of Irish Democracy 1820 – 30* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985).

⁴² Ó hÓgáin, *The Hero in Irish Folk History*, 101.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

The dissipation of the hostilities between King Brian and Father Cassidy is immediate and absolute following the revelation that, despite their many ideological differences, they both hugely admire a political leader who so strongly signifies both nationalism and Catholicism. King Brian Connors and his Good People categorically do not convert to Catholicism and neither do they choose to reject the Devil, whom they continue to refer to affectionately as “Ould Nick”. They do identify Daniel O’Connell as “the greatest man who ever lived”, however, and O’Connell’s politics were so inextricably linked with Catholicism that knowledge of the Good People’s reverential attitude towards him not only reveals their nationalism but also somewhat undermines their staunch anti-Catholicism. By his evocation of O’Connell, King Brian appears to be endorsing the conflation of the political and the religious as a legitimate course through which the Good People’s nationalist cause may be pursued. Despite remaining ideologically opposed to Roman Catholicism, the nationalist politics of the Good People appear to be so fervent that they are henceforth more tolerant of and more sympathetic with the religion with which Irish nationalism was most closely associated both in the “homeland” and in the diasporic space of Irish America. King Brian Connors and his Good People are also henceforth more tolerant of and more sympathetic with Roman Catholicism’s chief proponent in Kavanagh’s tales, Father Cassidy, and, for his part, Father Cassidy completely revises his attitude also, enthusiastically exclaiming to King Brian “I never saw your ayquil! If we could only send you to Parliament, you’d free Ireland!”⁴⁴ With the title of her fairy tale, Kavanagh exploits the comic potential of presenting a conversion in which it is the Catholic priest who is the convert whilst shrewdly avoiding a title such as “The Convarision of King Brian Connors”, which would overstate the extent to which the anti-Catholicism of King Brian and his fairy cohorts is undermined by the

⁴⁴ Kavanagh, “The Convarision of Father Cassidy”, 82.

tale's revelations. As an analysis of the tale's content reveals, however, the act which is orchestrated by Darby O'Gill is less of a conversion and more of a reconciliation as both parties learn facts which change their attitudes towards each other significantly. It would be far too simplistic to suggest that the only reason that King Brian and Father Cassidy reconcile is because they realise each other's support for Irish nationalism. It is also because they realise that they are both sympathetic to the notion that Catholic nationalism is a legitimate course through which their shared political ambition may be achieved, thus undermining the staunch anti-Catholicism of the Good People without negating it.

Kavanagh's subversive representation of the Good People as Catholic nationalist sympathisers who have an affinity with, if not a liking for, Roman Catholicism is reinforced when "The Conversion of Father Cassidy", the third tale from Kavanagh's 1903 collection, is read in conjunction with the collection's fourth tale, "How the Fairies Came to Ireland", which features King Brian's own retelling of the foundation myth of the Good People. It is immediately apparent to the reader of "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" that King Brian and Father Cassidy have become friendly following their reconciliation in the previous tale.⁴⁵ Thus, the priest now feels confident in raising a controversial topic with the King of the Good People by asking him if there is any truth in the rumours that his people are fallen angels who were banished from Heaven following a Satanic rebellion.⁴⁶ King Brian's version of events reflects WB Yeats' and DR McAnally Jr's discussion of the origin of the Irish fairies in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* and *Irish Wonders* respectively, both of which

⁴⁵ "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" was originally published in the July 1902 edition of *McClure's Magazine*, seven months before the magazine's publication of "The Conversion of Father Cassidy" in March 1903. The revised chronological order in which the fairy tales appear in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* makes more narrative sense in terms of the relationship between Father Cassidy and King Brian Connors.

⁴⁶ Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "How the Fairies Came to Ireland" in *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1903), 104.

were established as verifiable influences on Kavanagh's work in the first chapter of this thesis.⁴⁷ Kavanagh's reinterpretation of the foundation myth through King Brian's narration of his own life story features a significant innovation which did not originate with McAnally or elsewhere, however. Although the fairy refusal to fight for God and against Satan remains crucial to the story, Kavanagh's innovation has the effect of undermining the Good People's rejection of Christianity just as King Brian concludes his narration. According to King Brian, the Good People were not merely thrown from Heaven for remaining neutral during the Satanic rebellion to fend for themselves in the unknown territory of the Earth. Having been beseeched by kindly Saint Michael to show mercy to the Good People, their sin being one of omission rather than treachery, the Angel Gabriel reaches a compromise. Regarding King Brian, the Angel Gabriel declares "I'll let him settle in any part of the world he likes, and I'll send there the kind of human beans he'd wish most for. Now give your ordher and I'll make for you the kind of people you'd like to live among".⁴⁸ In this departure from the foundation myth as it had been previously presented, Kavanagh afforded King Brian the opportunity to endorse a particular race of people and their associated causes and concerns and, crucially, their religious affiliation.

Therefore, King Brian's initial list of requests functions as an endorsement of the figure of the "roguish hero" which, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, is fundamental in Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people throughout her literary fairy tales. In the carefully constructed passage by Kavanagh below, King Brian continues with his list of requests which indirectly and implicitly endorse the Irish people and, as his

⁴⁷ See McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 92 – 93 and Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, Introduction.

⁴⁸ Kavanagh, "How the Fairies Came to Ireland", 104.

endorsement reaches its climax, ideological allegiances which are similar to those exposed in "The Convarion of Father Cassidy" manifest themselves:

"And" says I, "I'd like them poor and parsecuted, bekase when a man gets rich, there's no more fun in him."

"Yes, I'll fix that. Thru for you" says the Angel Gabriel, writing.

"And I don't want them to be Christians" says I; "make them Haythens or Pagans, for Christians are too much worried about the Day of Judgement."

"Stop there! Say no more!" says the saint. "If I make as fine a race of people as that I won't send them to hell to plaze you, Brian Connors."

"At laste" says I, "make them Jews."

"If I made them Jews" he says, slowly screwing up one eye to think, "how could you keep them poor? No, no!" he said, shutting up the book; "go your ways; you have enough."⁴⁹

King Brian's reference to the Irish as "poor and parsecuted" functions as his acknowledgement of the colonial oppression of the Irish people and serves to further underline the nationalist sympathies of the Good People. This reference also allows for the revelation of King Brian's affinity with the poor which later has implications as he discusses with the Angel Gabriel the ideal religion of the Good People's earthly companions. King Brian's insistence that the Good People should not be placed amongst Christians is rejected by the Angel Gabriel for being incompatible with the imagined race that he had previously requested. Not only could he not bear for such a wonderful race to be pagans and, therefore, condemned to Hell but he also suggests that poverty and Judaism are mutually exclusive characteristics in the human race. Kavanagh's employment of racial stereotyping

⁴⁹ Kavanagh, "How the Fairies Came to Ireland", 105 – 106.

of the Jewish people is unfortunately compounded by the suggestion in the text that King Brian asks to live amongst Jews as a last resort, yet it does have an important function. This initial consideration and ultimate rejection of other religions testifies to the fact that the Good People have an affinity with Christianity and Christians, even though they are reluctant to accept or admit it themselves. They are ultimately sent to live amongst Christians because, despite King Brian's statement to the contrary, it is human beings with that particular religious affiliation with whom they are most compatible.

When read in conjunction with "The Convarion of Father Cassidy", the inadvertent choice of King Brian to live amongst persecuted and poor Irish Christians appears once again to testify to the Catholic nationalist sympathies of the Good People and their affinity with Catholicism. Although references are made to Christianity rather than Catholicism in "How the Fairies Came to Ireland", it is important to remember that Kavanagh's choice of words reflects the origins of the foundation myth of the Irish fairies in the fifth century, as previously discussed in this chapter, long before the reformation of the Catholic Church and the foundation of a variety of Christian denominations. The assertion that King Brian is revealing a certain affinity with Catholicism rather than Christianity more generally in his retelling of the myth is supported by the conceit of King Brian choosing to tell his story to Father Cassidy, the official representative of the Catholic Church in Kavanagh's tales. Also, in his official capacity as a Catholic priest, Father Cassidy is a leader of the community of Ballinderg amongst whom the Good People have settled, which further indicates that a correlation is being drawn between the Good People and Catholicism in "How the Fairies Came to Ireland". Despite her reconstitution of the attitude of the Good People towards Roman Catholicism, Kavanagh ensures that she does not entirely undermine their status as

roguish heroes and their attendant mischievous and rancorous tendencies either. This is apparent in “How the Fairies Came to Ireland” during King Brian’s retelling of the foundation myth of the fairies as he not only insists upon defending Satan against criticism but also disparages the Christian preoccupation with the Day of Judgement. It is also apparent after the telling of King Brian’s story when his subsequent conversation with Father Cassidy on an unrelated matter leads him to challenge rather than accept the priest’s moral authority. He presents him with the conundrum of whether or not he should allow his poverty-stricken parishioners to eat bacon and cabbage which has been bestowed on them by the fairies who, in turn, acquired the items through dishonest means. Father Cassidy is perplexed and tormented but ultimately decides to warn the parishioners in question, the Healy family, of what he perceives as the danger to their immortal souls.⁵⁰ Thus, as the two characters bid each other goodnight and the tale reaches its conclusion, Kavanagh has presented the reader with a situation in which the fairy has assisted the priest in administering to the moral wellbeing of his parishioners whilst ensuring that his mischievous and rancorous tendencies remain undiminished.

Another instance in Kavanagh’s *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* in which the reconciliation between King Brian and Father Cassidy benefits the Irish people occurs at the conclusion of the collection’s previous tale, “The Conversion of Father Cassidy”. The omniscient King of the Good People conspires with the Catholic priest to administer as effectively as possible to the residents of Ballinderg. He again assists him in rescuing the Healy family but in a much less obtuse manner than at the conclusion of “How the Fairies Came to Ireland”. He simply informs him that the Healys are stricken by fever in their

⁵⁰ See Kavanagh, “How the Fairies Came to Ireland”, 108 – 110.

mountainous isolation and unable send word to him about it.⁵¹ From this exchange in “The Convarion of Father Cassidy” onwards, King Brian’s behaviour towards Darby O’Gill, his family and his neighbours becomes increasingly benevolent and his role within the mortal community can be said to be akin to that of a priest, albeit an omniscient one with a fondness for the Devil, supernatural powers and the mischievous and rancorous tendencies of the “roguish hero”. In the fifth fairy tale of Kavanagh’s first collection, “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”,⁵² Father Cassidy does not appear and instead King Brian conspires with Darby and his sister-in-law Maureen to improve the lot of various Ballinderg residents. In the first section of the tale, he orchestrates a reunion between thwarted lovers Roger O’Brien, the son of a landlord, and Norah Costello, the daughter of a tenant farmer, who were driven apart by his disapproving father.⁵³ King Brian cheerfully sings various ballads from the Irish folk tradition as he administers to the parish. This is yet another method employed by Kavanagh to construct for the Good People Catholic nationalist sympathies, because, as this chapter will now explore, one of the ballads upon which Kavanagh places particular emphasis in the narrative, “Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn” promotes a Catholic nationalist ideology.

This anonymously written ballad appears to have been much more popular amongst Irish Americans in the nineteenth century than it was elsewhere and, therefore, it can be argued that Kavanagh was placing her diasporic readers in a particularly privileged position by alluding to a work which was of much greater significance in the diasporic space that it was in “homeland”. “Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn” appeared in many broadside

⁵¹ See Kavanagh, “The Convarion of Father Cassidy”, 84.

⁵² “The Adventures of King Brian Connors” is the first fairy tale in the collection which was not originally published in *McClure’s Magazine* but written specifically for the collection.

⁵³ “The Adventures of King Brian Connors” is divided into three distinct sections, ‘The King and the Omadhaun’, ‘The Couple without Childher’ and ‘The Luck of the Mulligans’. The eponymous “omadhaun” is Roger O’Brien.

editions throughout the nineteenth century⁵⁴ but was also popularised by Irish writer William Carleton's 1855 novel of the same name which has been described by Charles Fanning as "an American favourite".⁵⁵ Carleton's *Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn: A Tale Founded Upon Fact* is a fictionalised account of the real events described in the ballad surrounding the notorious love affair in County Sligo in the 1740s between the Catholic gentleman William Reilly and the Protestant heiress Helen Folliard.⁵⁶ He reproduces the ballad in his preface to the first edition and offers a convincing explanation for its immediate popularity which acknowledges the Catholic nationalist ideology that it promotes:

At that unhappy time the Penal Laws were in deadly and terrible operation; and we need not be surprised that a young and handsome Catholic should earn a boundless popularity, especially amongst those of his own creed, by the daring and resolute act of taking away a Protestant heiress – the daughter of a persecutor – and whose fame, from her loveliness and accomplishments had already become proverbial among the great body of the Irish people and, indeed, throughout all classes. It was looked upon as a kind of triumph over the persecutors and, in this instance, Cupid himself seems to espouse the cause of the beads and rosary and to become a tight little Catholic.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See Stephen Rohs, *Eccentric Nation: Irish Performance in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), 90.

⁵⁵ Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 14.

⁵⁶ Carleton's novel should not be confused with Dion Boucicault's 1860 play *The Colleen Bawn or The Brides of Garryowen*, which was based on an entirely different set of real events. Stephen Rohs does suggest, however, that Carleton's approach to transforming Irish tradition into popular entertainment using "many varieties of Irish rebels and rascals and many mutations of fair-haired and virtuous girls" did influence Boucicault in his writing of *The Colleen Bawn* and his other plays. See Rohs, *Eccentric Nation*, 91. Undoubtedly, the success of Boucicault's *The Colleen Bawn* with Irish-American audiences bolstered the popularity of both Carleton's novel and the ballad. See McFeely, *Dion Boucicault*, 13 – 16.

⁵⁷ William Carleton, "Preface" in *Willie Reilly and His Dear Colleen Bawn: A Tale Founded Upon Fact* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co, 1857), 5. A note of mockery can be detected in the final sentence quoted above from Carleton's preface. Carleton did acquire a reputation in his own lifetime for espousing anti-Catholic sentiments and, therefore, it may seem peculiar that he appropriated a true story with such Catholic nationalist resonance. He makes it explicitly clear later in the preface that it is the sort of persecution endured by Catholics under the Penal Laws in Ireland that he condemns. For Carleton, the fact that it is Irish Catholics who were persecuted and subsequently rebel against persecution in his novel is irrelevant, as he explains "The author trusts that he has avoided, as far as the truthful treatment of his subject would enable him, the

It is not only King Brian's singing of "Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn"⁵⁸ that contributes to his portrayal by Kavanagh as sympathetic to the Catholic nationalist cause in this particular tale. It is also the fact that the plight of the ballad's young lovers mirrors that of the thwarted couple Roger and Norah who were reunited through King Brian's intervention earlier in the tale. Although the gender roles are reversed and it is never explicitly stated that Roger is Protestant and Norah is Catholic, the correlation is clear to anyone familiar with any of the retellings of William Reilly and Helen Folliard's relationship. Therefore, as he both sings "Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn" and orchestrates a reunion between Norah and Roger, it can be said that King Brian's Catholic nationalist sympathies are reflected in both his words and his deeds in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors".

Whilst this chapter has thus far been preoccupied with exploring the relationship between King Brian Connors and his Good People and Catholic nationalism, it is true to say that several allusions are made in Kavanagh's tales which are exclusively nationalist in their ideological significance rather than Catholic nationalist more specifically. Whilst the reconciliation between King Brian and Father Cassidy is founded upon their agreement that Daniel O'Connell was the greatest man who ever lived, it is reinforced later in that same tale, "The Conversion of Father Cassidy", by their agreement that either Brian Boru (circa 941–1014) or Owen Roe O'Neill (1590–1649) was the greatest warrior who ever lived and their agreement that Thomas Moore (1779–1852) was the greatest poet who ever lived.

expression of any political sentiment calculated to give offence to any party – an attempt of singular difficulty in a country so miserably divided upon religious feeling as this". See Carleton, "Preface", 7 – 8.

⁵⁸ The fact that the ballad sung by King Brian Connors in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" is entitled "Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn" suggests that Kavanagh is referencing Carleton's novel as much as the ballad on which it was based. According to Rohs, *Eccentric Nation*, 90, the ballad was popularly known simply as "Willie Reilly and his Colleen Bawn".

Each of these historical figures are signifiers of Irish nationalism, although, in the case of Brian Boru, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh points to the extreme difficulty of extricating the truth about the historical figure from his popular image as “Ireland’s greatest king” who steadfastly defended Ireland against invasion.⁵⁹ This level of uncertainty derives from the fact that both folk and historical accounts of Boru’s eleventh-century reign can be traced back to a twelfth-century literary narrative of political propaganda commissioned by his great-grandson Muirchertach of the Uí Briain clan,⁶⁰ the hagiographic *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* or *The War of the Irish with the Foreigners*. Whilst Owen Roe O’Neill had strong associations with Irish nationalism, which are much better supported by historical evidence,⁶¹ the reputations of both men as heroes of the nationalist cause were strengthened by literary representations such as Thomas Davis’ poems “The Battle of Clontarf”⁶² and “Lament for Owen Roe O’Neill”,⁶³ which were both first published in the nationalist newspaper of the Young Irelander movement, *The Nation*. The allusion to Thomas Moore in “The Conversion of Father Cassidy” places Kavanagh’s diasporic readers in a particularly privileged position, as did the allusion to “Willie Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn” in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, because Moore’s work became crucial in the construction of Irish identity in the diasporic space in a way which it did not elsewhere. Despite their commercial appeal in Ireland and England before their introduction to the

⁵⁹ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh investigates Brian Boru’s reputation as “Ireland’s greatest king” in her book *Brian Boru: Ireland’s Greatest King?* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007).

⁶⁰ See Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland’s Greatest King?*, 12 – 13 and Daithí Ó hÓgáin, *The Hero in Irish Folk History* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillian, 1985), 70.

⁶¹ A comprehensive account of the Catholic nationalist dimension to the political career of Owen Roe O’Neill features in Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland: The Mission of Rinuccini 1645 – 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁶² *The Nation* was printed from 1842 to 1844 and “The Battle of Clontarf” by Thomas Davis, one of the newspaper’s three co-founders, featured in the June 24th 1843 edition.

⁶³ Thomas Davis, “Lament for Owen Roe O’Neill” in *The Ballads of Ireland: Volume One*, ed. Edward Hayes (Dublin: James Duffy and Sons, 1869), 188. The poem states that God will take revenge on those who murdered Owen Roe O’Neill and ends with the lines “Your troubles are all over, you’re at rest with God on high/ But we’re slaves and we’re orphans Owen, why did you die?”

American marketplace, Moore's new lyrical compositions for existing Irish tunes, the most enduring of which was "The Minstrel Boy", were so popular in the United States that he has been identified by Mick Moloney as one of the most successful songwriters of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴

Moore's anthology collection *Irish Melodies* was first published in America in 1815 by Irish nationalist immigrant Matthew Carey and had appeared in thirty separate volumes by 1900,⁶⁵ whilst his lyrical compositions also had less formal incarnations in songsters, songbooks, broadsides and sheet music during this same period.⁶⁶ Although it undoubtedly attracted a diverse audience, Moore's work appealed, in particular, to Irish immigrants who perceived themselves as political exiles and whose sympathies lay with the cause of Irish nationalism. They responded to Moore's creation of "genteel images of Ireland as an oppressed nation always looking backwards wistfully at a Gaelic culture that has been lost and oppressed through centuries of colonial domination".⁶⁷ Another example of Kavanagh endowing King Brian with nationalist sensibilities occurs in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" in which he cheerfully sings verses from a nationalist ballad very like those included Moore's *Irish Melodies*. The anonymously written "The Ballad of Donnelly and Cooper" commemorates a legendary boxing match which took place between the celebrated English prize-fighter George Cooper and the talented and aspiring Irishman Dan Donnelly (1788 – 1820) on the Curragh of Kildare on the 13th of December in 1815, in which Donnelly secured an unexpected and resounding victory in seven rounds.⁶⁸ The defeat of

⁶⁴ Mick Moloney, "Irish Popular Music" in *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, eds. JJ Lee and Marion R Casey (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 381.

⁶⁵ See Charles Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years in Irish-American Fiction*, 12 and 16.

⁶⁶ See Moloney, "Irish Popular Music", 381.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 382.

⁶⁸ See Patrick Myler, *Regency Rogue: Dan Donnelly his Life and Legends* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1976), 58.

the Englishman was a welcome distraction for a population still recovering from the devastation caused by the crushed Irish nationalist rebellion of 1798. Having been further disheartened by more recent events which confirmed British military dominance in foreign territories, such as the defeat of the Napoleon-led French army in the Battle of Waterloo six months earlier, the symbolic resonance of Donnelly's victory was immediately seized upon by Irish nationalists. According to Donnelly's biographer, Patrick Myler, the Dublin-born boxer came to be heralded as a hero of the Irish nationalist cause and he was immortalised in the Irish folk tradition through this ballad which endured long after his death and into the twentieth century.⁶⁹ Myler suggests that it also provided the inspiration for a series of similar boxing ballads with a nationalist theme in which the balladeers concerned themselves with "the glorification of Ireland's struggle against British domination, as symbolised when an Irish fist bloodied an English nose".⁷⁰

The first verse of "The Ballad of Donnelly and Cooper" which is quoted in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" begins with the line "Come all ye throe-born Irishmen wherever you may be",⁷¹ suggesting that "throe" Irishness means that a person is unquestionably loyal to the nationalist cause. Also, by diverging from this opening line as it usually appears in written reproductions of the ballad – "Come all you true bred Irishmen, I hope you will draw near"⁷² – Kavanagh takes care not to exclude her diasporic readers from

⁶⁹ Myler, *Regency Rogue*, 58.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷¹ The full first verse reads "Come all you true bred Irishmen, I hope you will draw near/ And likewise pay attention, all ye assembled here/ It's of as true a story, as ever you did hear/ Of Donnelly and Cooper that fought all on Kildare". See *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland: a guidebook to the living tradition of folksinging in the British Isles and Ireland, containing 360 folksongs from field recordings sung in English, Lowland Scots, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish, Channel Islands French, Romany and Tinkers' Cants, etc.*, ed. Peter Kennedy (London: Cassell, 1975), 700.

⁷² The full first verse as quoted by King Brian Connors in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" is "Come all ye throe-born Irishmen wherever you may be/ I hope you'll pay attention and listen unto me-e-e/ If you'll pay

engaging with either the event that the ballad joyfully recalls or its ideological significance. The Irish in America may not have been bred in Ireland and may not be in a position to draw near to the “homeland” and, therefore, Kavanagh changes the lyrics that King Brian sings rather than allow her readers’ Irishness to be undermined. The evocation of Boru, O’Neill and Moore during the reconciliation between King Brian and Father Cassidy and King Brian’s singing of “The Ballad of Donnelly and Cooper” remind the reader of the nationalist politics of the Good People as they are represented by Kavanagh. These instances further support the argument constructed above that Kavanagh’s Good People are such fervent nationalists that, despite their antipathy towards and ideological differences with Catholicism, they support and are sympathetic with the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism. This serves to undermine their absolute anti-Catholicism and yet it would be misguided to suggest that Kavanagh’s decision to undermine the absolute anti-Catholicism of the Good People in her tales means that she entirely endorses and is never critical of the Catholic Church, particularly as it administers to the faithful in the diasporic space. On the contrary, Kavanagh engages in a retelling of an episode from the Fenian cycle of Irish mythology entitled “Patrick of the Bells” and makes its allegorical resonance as a criticism of the American Catholic Church’s attitude towards mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants abundantly clear. In her retelling of the journey of the heroic Fenian warrior Óisín to Tír na n-Óg with his beloved Niamh of the Golden Hair and his elegiac return to a transformed Ireland three hundred years later, the peculiar and unprecedented relationship between a member of the mortal community, Óisín, and a member of the fairy community, Niamh, allows Kavanagh to comment upon what was an extremely controversial issue

attention the truth I will declare/ How Donnelly fought Cooper on the Curragh of Kildare”. See Kavanagh, “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, 142.

during the period in which she was writing. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Kavanagh's second marriage to Marcus Kavanagh was a mixed marriage as she was Anglican and he was Catholic and, therefore, it is highly likely that she would have felt compelled to seize upon such an opportunity to comment allegorically on mixed marriages given her personal circumstances. "Patrick of the Bells" was published in 1907 and she did not marry Marcus Kavanagh until 1908 and yet, given that an understanding existed for several years that they would marry once she was widowed by the death of her estranged first husband, one can easily accept that she had formed strident opinions on the topic by 1907.

This chapter has discussed how central and important Roman Catholicism was in the construction of an Irish-American ethnic identity at the turn of the twentieth century. Jay P Dolan believes that Roman Catholicism was so central and important in the lives of Irish Americans that this nurtured a palpable hostility towards non-Catholic elements of society which was remarkable for the strength of its anti-Protestant tone.⁷³ The situation was exacerbated by the fierce and unequivocal stance of the clerical authorities of the American Catholic Church and, whilst Protestants grew up learning to fear the Otherness of Catholicism, Catholics grew up believing Protestants were a "perishing and debauched multitude of heretics and infidels".⁷⁴ Late into the twentieth century, Irish-American Catholics were often told in no uncertain terms by church authorities to avoid contact with Protestants and, consequently, many Catholics grew up never actually knowing any Protestants. Dolan believes that the most revealing indication of this indoctrinated prejudice was the attitude towards mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants. Whilst mixed marriages were not totally forbidden, they were only allowed for just and grave causes:

⁷³ See Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 228.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Overall, since the American Catholic Church taught that marrying a Protestant was clearly a threat to one's salvation and to the salvation of the children as well, it was strongly and continuously discouraged. Though the numbers did increase during the early twentieth century, a religiously mixed marriage remained an uncommon and peculiar affair.⁷⁵

The peril of mixed marriages was often highlighted in Catholic fiction and, in his study of such fiction, Charles Fanning asserts that this is most especially the case in the works of Mary Anne Sadlier, a hugely significant Irish-American literary figure who occasionally wrote books for children, as discussed briefly in the first chapter of this thesis. Writing in Quebec and later in New York in the 1850s and 1860s, Sadlier's vehement opposition to friendly encounters between Catholics and Protestants, let alone marriages between them, permeated her novels for both adult and child members of the Irish diaspora. Whilst her condemnation of mixed marriages is at its most extreme in her 1855 novel for adults *The Blakes and Flanagans*,⁷⁶ in her novels specifically targeted at younger readers, *Willy Burke or The Irish Orphan in America* (1850) and *Bessy Conway or The Irish Girl in America* (1861), she immediately establishes a link between the ability of her young Catholic immigrant protagonists to thrive in the diasporic space and their determination not to abandon their religion or fraternise with Protestants.⁷⁷ By deviating so drastically from the established conclusion of the myth of Óisín in Tír na n-Óg, Kavanagh endows her version of the story with a heretofore unexplored allegorical resonance and, thus, offers a completely contrasting perspective on relations between Catholics and Protestants in the diasporic space and on the issue of mixed marriages.

⁷⁵ Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 228.

⁷⁶ See Mary Anne Sadlier, *The Blakes and Flanagans* (New York: Benziger, 1859).

⁷⁷ See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 118 – 120 and 134 – 136.

After its first appearance in the December 1907 edition of *McClure's Magazine*, "Patrick of the Bells" was revised and published alongside eight of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* in 1926. In the preface to that collection, Kavanagh acknowledges the anomalous nature of "Patrick of the Bells" amongst her work but claims that she chose to engage with Irish mythology on this particular occasion because of the opportunity that she discerned to re-imagine the established and traditional conclusion of the Oisín in Tír na n-Óg myth.

"Patrick of the Bells" has no logical place in this collection. It was written in protest against the unjust tradition of the Gaelic scholars which has made my own great Saint Patrick cruel to his warrior-guest, the brave pagan poet, Ossian. So I hold my protest here.⁷⁸

"Patrick of the Bells" begins with Ossian, the celebrated champion of the Fianna warriors and beloved son of their leader Finn MacCumhull, meeting and being captivated by Niahm of the Golden Hair, Goddess of the Sidhe and Princess of the Country of the Young and adopts the myth's established narrative until the point at which Ossian returns to an Ireland which he does not recognise, is transformed into a decrepit and ailing old man and is comforted by the passing cleric known amongst the people as Patrick of the Bells.⁷⁹ Ossian is appalled by the decline of his pagan beliefs and the advent of Christianity and defies Patrick both in his assertion that the pre-Christian pagans of the Fianna have been subjected to eternal damnation and in his insistence on baptising Ossian before his imminent death and ensuring his eternal salvation:

⁷⁸ Kavanagh, *The Ashes of Old Wishes*, Preface.

⁷⁹ See Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, "Patrick of the Bells" in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*, 218 – 230. Throughout the tale, Kavanagh adopts the eccentric spellings of "Ossian" and "Niahm" for the characters whose names are usually spelt "Oisín" and "Niamh".

Then keep your heaven for yourself, O Patrick of the crooked staff, and for the likes of these ill-singing clerics! As for myself, I want none of it. I will go to this hell you speak about, to be with Finn, my father, and my son Oscar, and the friends of my youth.⁸⁰

Although Oisín's defiance of Saint Patrick had usually featured in the myth, it had become remarkably more prominent in some of the myth's most recent literary retellings and was accompanied by bitter and hostile arguments between the pair which underlined both Oisín's nobility and Patrick's cruelty. Such retellings include that of W.B. Yeats in the eponymous epic poem of his 1889 collection *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* and that of Lady Gregory in the Oisín chapters of her 1904 collection of Irish mythology, *Gods and Fighting Men*.⁸¹

In versions of the myth from the thirteenth century onwards, Oisín and Saint Patrick engage in a friendly exchange of opposing views rather than an openly bitter and hostile argument and Oisín is eventually subdued by his own weariness and the force of Saint Patrick's convictions.⁸² In Yeats' retelling of the myth, however, Oisín categorically refuses to be separated for eternity from the Fianna by baptism and "The Wanderings of Oisín" concludes with Oisín's final declaration of loyalty to the Fianna: "when life in my body has ceased, I will go to Caoilte and Conan and Bran, Sceolan and Lonair, and dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flames or at feast".⁸³ Yeatsian scholars including Daniel Gomes, Roy Foster and Hiroko Ikeda have suggested that this conclusion is permeated with cultural nationalist ideology. Their consensus is that Yeats constructs Oisín's defiance of Saint Patrick

⁸⁰ Kavanagh, "Patrick of the Bells", 232.

⁸¹ See WB Yeats, *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (London: Paul, Trench and Company, 1889) and Lady Augusta Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men* (London: J Murray, 1904).

⁸² See Daithí Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend and Romance*, 351.

⁸³ Yeats, *The Wanderings of Oisín*, 32.

and loyalty to the lost mythological heroes of ancient Ireland as an expression of support for his friend and mentor John O'Leary and his fellow Fenian nationalists whose revolutionary activities were denounced by senior Irish Catholic clergy in the 1860s.⁸⁴ Whilst the conclusion of Lady Gregory's retelling of the myth is more traditional than that of Yeats, her Oisín also categorically refuses at first to be separated for eternity from the Fianna by baptism but is ultimately resigned to and pathetically laments the tragic fate of such noble and brave warriors. His loyalty to the Fianna is absolutely unassailable, although it grieves him to lamentations rather than provokes him into defiant action, and, therefore, Lady Gregory's retelling of the myth can also be identified as a cultural nationalist investment in the mythological heroes of ancient Ireland as an expression of modern nationalist sentiments. There are two distinct reasons which suggest that it was the Oisín chapters of Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men* which were particularly influential on Kavanagh's retelling of the myth of Oisín in *Tír na n-Óg* and her re-imagining of its conclusion. The cruelty of Saint Patrick, which Kavanagh acknowledges as her main motivation in engaging with this myth in the first instance, is most especially pronounced in Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men* as the saint displays a remarkable lack of compassion or mercy towards the vulnerable old man who pleads with him for words of comfort about his fellow Fianna warriors. There are also clear parallels between the cruel taunts of Saint Patrick in *Gods and Fighting Men* and those of his counterpart in "Patrick of the Bells" as the former cries "Stop your talk you withered witless old man!"⁸⁵ and the latter cries "Cease your blasphemies, O

⁸⁴ See Daniel Gomes, "Reviving Oisín: Yeats and the Conflicted Appeal of Irish Mythology", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 56, 4 (2014), 376 – 399, the "Oisín Comes Home" chapter in *Words Alone: Yeats and his Inheritances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 129 – 173 and Hiroko Ikeda, "The Explorations of Ancient Memories: Shadows of Irish Tradition in WB Yeats' *The Wanderings of Oisín*", *Journal of Irish Studies* 29 (2014), 45 – 52.

⁸⁵ Lady Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men*, 455.

withered old man!”⁸⁶ The second reason for suggesting that Kavanagh was drawing upon the work of Lady Gregory is that it is precisely when the acrimonious and inconclusive interactions between Oisín and Saint Patrick end in *Gods and Fighting Men* that Kavanagh introduces into her retelling the innovations that re-imagine the myth’s conclusion and rehabilitate the character of cruel Patrick of the Bells.

Patrick becomes troubled by his inability to comfort Ossian in his turmoil and grief and, after a full day of praying, contemplating and communing with God, he takes Ossian to the river at Gabhra where he performs a miracle; he recalls from the ground the ashes of the dead and damned Fianna warriors of pre-Christian, pagan Ireland, including Ossian’s father Finn and son Osgar, and, once they have materialised, he baptises them in the river alongside Ossian himself.⁸⁷ This miraculous event does not occur in any other version of the myth but appears to have been purposefully created by Kavanagh in order to present an allegorical scenario to her Irish-American readers in which people with diverging religious allegiances are offered the opportunity to be eternally reunited by a compassionate and merciful religious leader. One could also argue that Kavanagh felt it important to construct a more satisfying narrative for the popular myth than the one to which she had been exposed as an Irish-American reader investing in Irish mythology as part of her unique cultural heritage. The allegorical resonance of a further, final act of compassion and mercy carried out by Patrick of the Bells for the sake of Ossian cannot be denied, however, and it retrospectively casts a sharper allegorical light on Patrick’s miracle at the river of Gabhra. Patrick of the Bells, from his long, acrimonious interactions with Ossian, knew that it was not only the prospect of being separated for eternity from the Fianna that tortured him but

⁸⁶ Kavanagh, “Patrick of the Bells”, 240.

⁸⁷ See *Ibid.*, 242 – 245.

also the prospect of being separated from his beloved Niahm of the Golden Hair, who he could not possibly contrive to baptise as he had with the Fianna. Therefore, his final act for Ossian is the following prayer:

“Oh Father, of the mortal and of the immortal – Lover of the lands of life and of the lands of fairie! Among all your countless creatures, where was there one life worn with braver honor or in such deep agony of loyalty. Thou whose Omnipotence canst join the real to the invisible, take pity on the fevered longing of his soul; somewhere in your unseen Universe let the two faithful hearts join once more and forever. I ask this prayer to be granted not out of Thy mercy but from Thine Infinite Justice. Grant him peace and rest and happiness, O Lord!”⁸⁸

The implied eternal reunion between Ossian and Niahm does not depend upon the conversion of either party to the other party’s religion but on the benevolent and compassionate God of Patrick’s convictions and the transcendent power of love, loyalty and devotion. In his narration of “Patrick of the Bells”, Jerry Murtaugh acknowledges that all clerics resoundingly dispute the implication that Patrick was beseeching God with this prayer to reunite the two parties in a mixed marriage for eternity and yet he defiantly if deferentially concludes that “It isn’t for the likes of us who have little knowledge of pious ways to contradict them. But a poor puzzled hope comes into my own mind sometimes. Anyhow sure God understood”.⁸⁹

This echoes Kavanagh’s proposition in her preface to *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales* that if a profound truth is indeed revealed in “Patrick of the Bells”, it is clerics who have strenuously suppressed, distorted and denied it for their own ends:

⁸⁸ Kavanagh, “Patrick of the Bells”, 246.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

My story follows the beaten path of tradition but only for the little distance which that path runs true. Nothing could happen to that poet Ossian except for good as the great warmed-hearted Patrick wished. So, while my readers may not find this greatest miracle of Saint Patrick written down by the clerics in their big leather book, still, I am sure they will feel as I do, that my own history of this wonderful event is necessarily true.⁹⁰

According to Ciara Ní Bhroin, the Oisín in Tír na n-Óg myth is traditionally characterised by its “Pagan-Christian dichotomy”⁹¹ and yet by drawing an allegorical correlation between this Pagan-Christian dichotomy and tension between Catholics and Protestants in the diasporic space and by re-imagining the myth’s conclusion in such a strikingly peculiar and individual manner, Kavanagh advocates and celebrates mixed marriages. She appears to be seeking to reassure any future potential participants in mixed marriages amongst her younger readership that, whether one party converts to the other party’s religion or neither party converts, love, loyalty and devotion to each other and to their respective families will conquer all obstacles. She also appears to be urging all those amongst her readership who may be prejudiced against mixed marriages, be they children or adults, to adopt a more sympathetic outlook and, in doing so, she boldly suggests that they have been deliberately misled on this issue by American Catholic Church authorities. In “Patrick of the Bells”, Herminie Templeton Kavanagh clearly implicates such religious leaders in the controversy that loomed largely over mixed marriages at the turn of the twentieth century and, by representing Saint Patrick as behaving kindly rather than cruelly when confronted with the complexities of mixed marriages she offers an alternative clerical viewpoint which she believes is right and just or, in her own words, “necessarily true”. “Patrick of the Bells”

⁹⁰ Kavanagh, *The Ashes of Old Wishes*, Preface.

⁹¹ Ciara Ní Bhroin, “Mythologizing Ireland” in *Irish Children’s Literature and Culture: New Perspectives on Contemporary Writing*, eds. Valerie Coghlan and Keith O’Sullivan, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

introduces a degree of ambivalence towards Roman Catholicism into Kavanagh's work, through its implied criticism of the American Catholic Church and its unequivocal stance on mixed marriages and yet it is important to note that this is the only instance in which she criticises Roman Catholicism and its official representatives. Elsewhere, Kavanagh celebrates and advocates the centrality and importance of Roman Catholicism in the construction of the Irish-American ethnic identity of her diasporic readers and she also appears to legitimise the conflated ideology of Catholic nationalism which was dominating the diasporic space when she was writing her tales. This commentary upon Roman Catholicism and Catholic nationalism is inextricably linked in Kavanagh's tales with her representation of the Good People because, as has been illustrated above, Kavanagh uses the Good People to reflect upon their significance in the diasporic space of Irish America. Whilst the revelation of their Catholic nationalist sympathies dominates Kavanagh's early tales featuring the Good People, the third section of this chapter will now explore another major characteristic of Kavanagh's Good People which dominates their appearances in her later tales.

Section Three

In characterising the Good People as friends of the Irish people who sympathised with their Catholic nationalist ideology, Kavanagh includes instances of fairy benevolence such as King Brian leaving a jug of poteen at Darby's door in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" or King Brian informing Father Cassidy that the Healy family of his parish are stricken with fever and require his help in "The Convarion of Father Cassidy". Having established the friendship between the King Brian and the Good People and Darby O'Gill and the Irish people and having reconciled King Brian and the Good People to Roman Catholicism, Kavanagh appears to have decided that another natural progression in her innovative and subversive representation of the Good People would be to pursue this early suggestion of their benevolent nature. By the beginning of her fifth tale "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", the Good People had been transformed into benevolent supernatural beings who oversaw all proceedings in the mortal world and rewarded virtue, punished vice and dutifully came to the aid of deserving mortals in times of crisis. The benevolence of the Good People dominates the remainder of their appearances in Kavanagh's first collection and all of their appearances in her second collection, *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*. Whilst the degree of benevolence with which Kavanagh endows her incarnation of the Good People was unprecedented, it would be simplistic to suggest that there were no previous examples from folklore or literature of the Good People behaving benevolently. Daithí Ó hÓgáin has acknowledged examples of the Good People behaving kindly towards mortals whom they encounter in the Irish oral tradition,⁹² although his

⁹² See Daithí Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend and Romance: An Encyclopaedia of the Irish Folk Tradition* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991), 189.

assessment that they are “quite benevolent in certain ways”⁹³ articulates the qualified nature of this benevolence. This is also true of the benevolence of the Good People in many literary representations such as Thomas Crofton Croker’s “The Legend of Knockgrafton”, in which the good-natured, humpbacked Lusmore strays into the fairies’ path and they are so delighted by a lyrical addition which he makes to their unearthly melody that they remove a hump from his back which had plagued him since birth. They only take an interest in Lusmore because he has entered their realm and made a positive contribution to their community and, whilst Lusmore does benefit from their benevolence, the Good People did not actively seek to reward a virtuous mortal and, indeed, it is not even his virtue that they reward but rather his musicality.⁹⁴ The fairy creature known as the pooka acts benevolently towards the mortals with whom he interacts in Patrick Kennedy’s “The Kildare Pooka”⁹⁵ and Lady Wilde’s “Fairy Help – the Phouka”⁹⁶ although, in both of these instances, this benevolence is also shown to have its limitations.

In “The Kildare Pooka” by Patrick Kennedy, the pooka helps the servants of a country estate with their domestic chores, although this benevolence is entirely enforced because of a curse which has been placed upon him, and once the servants inadvertently lift the curse by presenting him with a suit of clothes worthy of a gentleman they never encounter him following his release from servitude again. The benevolence of the pooka in “Fairy Help – The Phouka” by Lady Wilde is not enforced as he responds to the kindness of a farmer’s son

⁹³ Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend and Romance*, 189.

⁹⁴ Croker, “The Legend of Knockgrafton” in *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 30.

⁹⁵ “The Kildare Pooka” was first published in Patrick Kennedy, *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* (London: Macmillan, 1866).

⁹⁶ According to Katharine Briggs, the friendly and helpful supernatural being is a trope which recurs in international folklore and the pooka is the Irish equivalent of a creature in English folklore known as the brownie. See Katharine Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1967), 33 – 34. There are many anglicised spellings of the Irish-language word *púca*, including *pooka*, *phooka* and, as used by Lady Wilde, *phouka*. This study uses *pooka* as it is the *púca*’s most common English-language incarnation and it most accurately reflects its Irish-language origins.

named Phadrig by spending every night grinding corn in Phadrig's father's mill, which ultimately brings the family wealth and prosperity. Phadrig also presents this version of the pooka with a suit of clothes worthy of a gentleman, however, and as soon as he does so, the pooka leaves the mill in search of new adventures and never returns. Therefore, whilst this pooka exhibits a moral consciousness, he nevertheless abandons his philanthropic endeavours when it pleases him. In all three tales of fairy benevolence that have been discussed here, the Good People are indeed benevolent but they are also selfish, apathetic and capricious and they either do not exhibit a moral consciousness or else they exhibit a limited one. In contrast, Kavanagh reconstituted the Good People as supernatural beings who actively and willingly participated in the moral improvement of human beings by rewarding virtue, punishing vice and dutifully administering to those who deserved their help. Whilst King Brian Connors' status as a "roguish hero" is not entirely discarded, he and his Good People are now endowed with a profound sense of moral responsibility towards human beings for the very first time and acted upon it continuously and conscientiously. Indeed, so striking was their transformation from previous incarnations in Irish folk tradition that the name commonly ascribed to the Irish fairies gains a particular resonance. In her book *A History of Irish Fairies*, Carolyn White asserts that the name emanates from a superstitious custom which recurs throughout European folklore:

Most often the Irish fairies are called the good people or the gentry. In Greece, mortals called the blood-thirsting Furies the Eumendies or the kindly ones in the hope that they would not destroy their lands or people. In Ireland the title "the good people" serves the same function, because the fairies, quick to be offended, must be

placated or they might, in a moment of anger, devastate the crops or cause mortal children to sicken and die.⁹⁷

When they are first introduced in the early fairy tales of her first collection *Darby O’Gill and the Good People*, this is an appropriate name for Kavanagh’s fairies for the exact reasons described by White. By the fifth fairy tale of that same collection, “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, it becomes an appropriate name for Kavanagh’s fairies not because they threaten destruction on the human beings with whom they interact but because, in moral terms, their behaviour could well be summarised as “good”.

The moral goodness of the newly benevolent Good People is affirmed repeatedly in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors” as King Brian administers to various distressed Ballinderg residents including, as previously discussed in this chapter, the thwarted lovers Roger O’ Brien and Norah Costello. By actively seeking to improve the lives of the unassuming mortals whom he encounters, the usually invincible King of the Good People finds himself placed in an unusually vulnerable position. When his ultimately successful attempts to reunite Roger and Norah detain him in the mortal world after sunset, he is temporarily stripped of his supernatural powers.⁹⁸ King Brian’s benevolence achieves greater significance when considered in terms of the personal sacrifice he makes – albeit temporarily – for the sake of human beings whom previously incarnations of the Good People had frequently treated with contempt and apathy. The powerless King Brian is stranded for an entire day in the mortal world and his comically misguided attempts to reunite with his mortal companions Darby and Maureen and return to his fairy realm at Sleive-na-Mon lead him into the path of Barney and Judy Casey, known locally as the “the

⁹⁷ White, *A History of Irish Fairies*, 8.

⁹⁸ See Kavanagh, “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, 135 – 136.

couple without childher” and the impoverished ballad-maker Tom Mulligan and his family. Once his powers are restored to him, King Brian bestows the gifts of a baby boy and an endless supply of food and drink on the Casey and Mulligan households respectively. No specific moral lessons are taught in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors” and, in the case of Barney and Judy, immorality is not the cause of their misfortunes. The narrator insists that the childlessness of the Caseys is no reflection on their moral character whatsoever:

Some foolish people whuspered that this lack of family was a punishment for an oul saycret crime. But that saying was nonsense, for an honest couple the sun didn’t shine on. It was only a pinance sint from Heaven as any other pinance is sint; ‘twas like poverty, sickness, or being born a Connaught man – just to keep them humble-hearted.⁹⁹

This is not to suggest that they never behave in a morally deficient or dubious manner, however, as Barney and Judy Casey knowingly steal a baby from the Mulligans in their desperation for a child of their own. It is their ultimate moral decency that ensures their eventual happiness when they act nobly by returning the baby to his parents and King Brian presents them with a baby of their own. Therefore, the Caseys epitomise Kavanagh’s characterisation of the Irish people as “roguish heroes”, a concept which has been used in this thesis to analyse Darby O’Gill himself and other characters who are represented as undoubtedly flawed yet simultaneously good-natured and decent. All of the characters that King Brian meets during his adventures are a testament to the moral decency of the Irish people and, indeed, the endorsements that they receive from their newly acquired moral guardian King Brian Connors are incontrovertible proof of their goodness.

⁹⁹ Kavanagh, “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, 137.

Although no specific moral lessons are taught in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, it is significant that all of the gifts bestowed upon the mortal characters accentuate their capacity to experience the joys of ordinary family life. Kavanagh returns to the theme of the importance of family in “The Ashes of Old Wishes”, the first and eponymous tale in Kavanagh’s second collection, in which a specific moral lesson about the importance of family is taught by King Brian Connors to Darby O’Gill. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the importance of family is a thematic preoccupation in Kavanagh’s tales which can be said to be related to her addressing a specifically Irish-American readership. There is at times a morally didactic dimension to her exploration of this theme and, in her later tales of the Good People, the moral preoccupations of Kavanagh become the moral preoccupations of the Good People as they are the vessel through which a tale’s moral message is imparted. Thus, in “The Ashes of Old Wishes”, King Brian brings Darby on a spiritual journey of renewal on Christmas Eve after he becomes disenchanted with his humble lot in life. In a tale which can be viewed as a version of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (1843), King Brian acts as the benign supernatural presence who cajoles his mortal companion into experiencing an epiphany. He spirits Darby into the homes of Ballinderg residents who are all miserable because, for reasons including death, disability and estrangement, they are unable to experience happy family lives. This is categorically not the case for Darby whose wife Bridget, eight children and cat Malachi are eagerly awaiting his return home. Darby is ultimately convinced by the wisdom of King Brian’s words and, at the conclusion of the tale, he reflects “Why thin, afther this night I’ll always say that the man who can’t find happiness in his own home naden’t look for it elsewhere”.¹⁰⁰ Thus, King Brian has succeeded in imparting his moral message to Darby in the tale in which the moral

¹⁰⁰ Kavanagh, “The Ashes of Old Wishes”, 23.

philosophy of the Good People is most clearly defined. As a defender of traditional family values, King Brian is simultaneously imbued by Kavanagh with a solemn conviction in the corrupting influence of wealth and riches, another previously-discussed element of Kavanagh's representation of the Irish people for an Irish-American readership from the first chapter. This is particularly in evidence in "The Ashes of Old Wishes" when Darby asks King Brian to grant him the wealth and riches that he failed to extract from the cunning leprechaun in "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun". King Brian is angered when Darby expresses what he perceives as false and greedy values and implores him to see sense saying "Haven't I tould you ag'in and ag'in that I'd never rune ye and spile ye by givin' ye riches?"¹⁰¹ Therefore, the benevolence of the Good People involves not only bestowing gifts but also refusing to bestow gifts when doing so would contravene their moral philosophy and, ultimately, not improve the lives of the human beings in question, morally or otherwise.

Whilst King Brian's belief in traditional family values is explicitly stated in "The Ashes of Old Wishes", the leprechaun's belief in the exact same values is implicitly revealed in "Bridgeen and the Leprechaun" by his kindly treatment of a young girl named Bridgeen Daley for whom family is of the utmost importance. Arguably the most troublesome of all fairy creatures, the leprechaun proved to be untrustworthy and malicious in his previous encounter with Darby in "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun". He too has acquired a great deal of benevolence, however, by the time he meets Bridgeen Daley in the fourth fairy tale of Kavanagh's second collection. The leprechaun finds Bridgeen's one and only wish deeply moving as, instead of seeking some sort of material gain, she simply asks to see her recently

¹⁰¹ Kavanagh, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", 6.

deceased mother one last time. He regretfully informs Bridgeen that even a powerful creature such as he cannot reunite her with her mother because she is now “a blessed sperrit up in Heaven”¹⁰² and beyond his jurisdiction. She is so devastated by his response that the leprechaun selflessly resolves to try his very best to grant her wish.¹⁰³ Just as King Brian did in “The Adventures of King Brian Connors”, the leprechaun greatly inconveniences himself for the sake of a mortal’s happiness and is ultimately triumphant when Mrs Daley and her daughter are briefly reunited under a withered tree. It is not only Bridgeen’s wish that testifies to her love and devotion to her family but also the fact that she has dutifully taken responsibility for her four younger siblings and the running of the Daley household following her mother’s recent death. As Bridgeen is rewarded by the leprechaun specifically for her virtuous behaviour in respect of her family, it is once again clear that Kavanagh’s Good People, in their morally robust and endlessly benevolent later incarnation, function as the guardians of the essential moral truth, as perceived by Kavanagh, of the importance of family.

A further gift bestowed upon Bridgeen by the leprechaun in “Bridgeen and the Leprechaun” explores the implications of the tentative reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the fairy world which took place in “The Convarision of Father Cassidy” and “How the Fairies Came to Ireland” in Kavanagh’s first collection. Bridgeen’s Confirmation is due to take place in Ballinderg on the day following her encounter with the leprechaun and supernatural reunion with her late mother. The narrator of Bridgeen’s tale repeatedly states that she is not adequately prepared for this special event having lately been preoccupied with her mother’s household duties. Upon returning to her cottage that evening, she is

¹⁰² Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, “Bridgeen and the Leprechaun” in *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales*, 113.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 114.

greeted by a box which has been sent to her by the leprechaun, “and what do you think was in that same box? Why, nothing else but the prettiest white dress and veil and wreath ever worn in Ballinderg.”¹⁰⁴ The leprechaun sending Bridgeen clothes to wear for receiving one of the seven holy sacraments of the Catholic Church is not an incongruous act in the context of Kavanagh’s fairy tales. Rather it is a continuation of Kavanagh’s subversive representation of the Good People as having an affinity with Catholics and their religion whilst not fully endorsing it or subscribing to it. The leprechaun’s gift is the most explicit statement of this affinity in Kavanagh’s tales as, despite the many gifts bestowed by King Brian in previous tales, this is the first instance in which a gift bestowed by a fairy character is directly related to Roman Catholicism. Significantly, although the Confirmation clothes are sent by the leprechaun, they are delivered to Bridgeen’s cottage by the recurring character of Father Cassidy. Earlier in the tale, it was Father Cassidy who facilitated Bridgeen’s initial meeting with the leprechaun when he encouraged her to seek him out¹⁰⁵ and, therefore, it can be said that “Bridgeen and the Leprechaun” functions as the ultimate vindication of the reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the fairy world. In acting benevolently towards Bridgeen and rewarding her virtue, the leprechaun conspires with and is ably assisted by Father Cassidy and, therefore, their reconciliation can be said to greatly enrich the lives of the Irish people whom they both earnestly serve.¹⁰⁶

Both the benevolence of Kavanagh’s Good People and their rapprochement with Roman Catholicism represent distinct departures from the Good People as they are

¹⁰⁴ Kavanagh, “Bridgeen and the Leprechaun”, 117.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁰⁶ The Good People appear in one more tale from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales*. In “The Crocks o’ Goold”, King Brian Connors is a peripheral figure who asks Darby O’Gill to assist him in locating the Good People’s missing crocks of gold. This particularly comical tale has no discernible moral lesson and, whilst King Brian is portrayed as benevolent, he does not in this instance function as a supernatural agent of moral instruction.

traditionally portrayed in Irish fairy lore and other literary representations of the Good People. Whilst re-imagining the Good People in her tales, she also continually alludes to the traditions of the Irish fairies that she is deliberately subverting, thus acknowledging the folklore from which her fairies originate and from which she drew her inspiration. The Good People remain recognisable after King Brian's reconciliation with Father Cassidy because, whilst they reveal a certain affinity with Roman Catholicism, they certainly do not become Catholics or re-evaluate their own religious or philosophical ideology. Therefore, they are free to make a barrage of irreligious claims following "The Conversion of Father Cassidy" without appearing contradictory. In a similar way, the Good People remain recognisable in Kavanagh's later tales as "roguish hero" King Brian's newly acquired benevolence is cleverly undercut with brief moments which seem incongruous with his role as the benevolent moral guardian of the Irish people. For example, in "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", King Brian is only in a position to give the Caseys a baby after the death of the boy that they had newly adopted because the boy was not, in fact, dead but had been stolen away by his fairy underlings and replaced with an ailing changeling.¹⁰⁷ Also, in a comical episode from "The Ashes of Old Wishes", King Brian becomes increasingly frustrated by Darby's refusal to be persuaded by his moral instruction and curses him with a dreadful toothache in order to hasten his friend's eventual epiphany.¹⁰⁸ These acts, as they are presented by Kavanagh, are reminiscent less of the malevolence of the fairies at their most sinister and more of the selfishly motivated mischievousness of the "roguish hero" and they serve to remind the reader that this is the same ambiguous figure first introduced in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People". It is true to say, however, that from "The Adventures of King Brian Connors"

¹⁰⁷ See Kavanagh, "The Adventures of King Brian Connors", 157.

¹⁰⁸ See Kavanagh, "The Ashes of Old Wishes", 20.

onwards, the Good People were no longer convincing as the supernatural antagonists of the Irish people. This is undoubtedly the reason why they appear much less frequently in Kavanagh's second collection and are replaced in that antagonistic role by sorcerers, ghostly apparitions and Satan.¹⁰⁹

By choosing to represent her Good People as the benevolent moral guardians, Kavanagh necessarily introduced an element of moral instruction into her tales which often did not feature in tales of the Good People from Irish fairy lore. Indeed, Diane Purkiss's assertion that moral instruction of any kind is not commonly associated with the fairies in English folk tradition could well be applied to the fairies in Irish folk tradition also:

Actually, as we shall see, fairies are an invention that almost wholly lacks moral engagement. In stories about fairies, there are exceedingly strict rules of behaviour, but these apply not to fairies but to human beings, and they exist for reasons of self-preservation, not morality. Rather than good or bad, fairies are more simply and plainly *dangerous*.¹¹⁰

These strict rules of behaviour feature regularly in oral and literary representations of the Good People, they do not have a discernible moral lesson which can be applied to other situations and they do not transcend the superstitions of Irish fairy lore from which they originate. These rules exist entirely in order for human beings to learn how to co-exist peacefully with the fairies and to avoid incurring their wrath, as is clearly shown in Thomas Crofton Croker's "The Legend of Knockfierna", which begins with the following advice for living:

¹⁰⁹ Sorcerers feature in "Killbrogan and Killboggan", ghostly apparitions feature in "The Monks of Saint Bride" and "The Crocks o' Goold" and Satan features in "The Haunted Bell", "The Crocks o' Goold" and "How Satan Cheated Sarah Muldowney" from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*.

¹¹⁰ Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 8.

It is a very good thing not to be any way in dread of the fairies, for without doubt they have then less power over a person; but to make too free with them, or to disbelieve in them altogether, is as foolish a thing as man, woman or child can do.¹¹¹

The advice can also be more specific, such as in William Carleton's "The Rival Kempers" in which the reader is advised about how to avoid the fate of Mrs Corcoran, who was struck down by a mystery illness for years long all because she threw her dirty water out whilst the invisible Good People were passing by her house.¹¹² There are both oral and literary examples of morally instructive tales of the Good People, however, in which the Good People perform a symbolic function as the misery and misfortune that will befall an immoral person who refuses to mend his or her ways. The reader is not advised about how to behave towards the Good People exactly but rather cautioned against indulging in certain behaviour, as choosing to engage in perceived immorality will lead directly to an unhappy encounter with the Good People at their most malevolent or devious.

In tales from the Irish oral tradition featuring the leprechaun being captured by but later outwitting a greedy, covetous human, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin identifies great morally didactic possibilities as "the fact that people rarely succeed in capturing his crock of gold tends to stress the value of work and belittles the illusion that things can be got for nothing".¹¹³ Ó Giolláin cites several of these oral leprechaun tales which conclude with a man digging up what he thinks is a crock of gold but is actually "a box and inside he finds a

¹¹¹ Croker, "The Legend of Knockfierna" in *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (London: John Murray, 1825), 13.

¹¹² "Paddy Corcoran's Wife" is an extract from "The Rival Kempers" which first appeared in William Carleton, *Tales and Sketches Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of the Irish Peasantry* (Dublin: Duffy, 1845).

¹¹³ Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, "Capturer of Fairy Shoemaker Outwitted: The Multiple Marker Versions", *Béaloideas* 59 (1991), 161 – 166, 165.

note telling him to work hard, sometimes along with a set of tools”.¹¹⁴ According to Patricia Lysaght, an implicit correlation is drawn between a human being out late at night and that human indulging in unsavoury and immoral behaviour in several tales from the Irish oral tradition featuring the banshee. Humans are punished for their behaviour by a terrifying encounter with the banshee, who traditionally dislikes being disturbed during her nocturnal keening and, thus, these tales warn those listening to them against indulging in behaviour which requires being out so late at night.¹¹⁵ This motif also features in Douglas Hyde’s literary tale of the fairies “Teig O’Kane and the Corpse”, although it is the trooping fairies rather than the banshee who terrify the eponymous dissolute young man into reforming his character.¹¹⁶ When appropriated in literature, this type of morally instructive tale featuring the Good People can reflect the preoccupations of the tale’s author and this is the case in Patrick Kennedy’s “The Tobinstown Sheeogue”, in which Katty Clark’s son is stolen away by the Good People after she fails not only to say her prayers but also to make the sign of the cross on her son’s forehead or sprinkle him with holy water. Once her son is returned to her, Katty realises the error of her ways and practices her Catholicism with renewed vigour and reverence. Deficiencies such as those exhibited by Katty were a particular preoccupation of Kennedy; as Anne Markey has noted regarding his work, “orthodox Catholicism and moral didacticism became the guiding forces underpinning the literary presentation of Irish oral tales” and, therefore, “several stories have concluding morals which assert the necessity for orthodox Catholic religious observance”.¹¹⁷ After failing in this regard, Katty’s initial punishment and eventual reformation are facilitated by falling afoul of the Good People

¹¹⁴ Ó Giolláin, Diarmuid, “Capturer of Fairy Shoemaker Outwitted”, 165.

¹¹⁵ See Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death-Messenger* (Dun Laoghaire: The Glendale Press, 1986), 179 – 180.

¹¹⁶ “Teig O Kane and the Corpse” was first published in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, having been, according to WB Yeats, “literally translated from the Irish by Douglas Hyde”.

¹¹⁷ Anne Markey, *Oscar Wilde’s Fairy Tales: Origins and Contexts* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 28.

and, whatever the behaviour that needs to be punished and reformed, falling afoul of the Good People is the essential element of this type of morally instructive tale.

In her early literary fairy tales, Kavanagh occasionally chooses to introduce an element of moral instruction by having her mortal characters falling afoul of the Good People as punishment for their perceived immorality. In “The Changeling: A Story of Christmas Eve”, for example, Darby’s neighbour Delia McNulty is punished for spoiling her baby son when he is stolen away by the Good People and replaced by an ugly and intransigent changeling.¹¹⁸ Just as in Kennedy’s “The Tobinstown Sheeogue”, the kidnapping of the child by the Good People in “The Changeling: A Story of Christmas Eve” is constructed as a punishment for the child’s mother, although it is Delia’s indulgent parenting style rather than her lack of orthodox Catholic religious observance which is being condemned. Both Kennedy and Kavanagh exploit the didactic possibilities inherent in the motif of the fairy changeling from Irish fairy lore in order to condemn behaviour which they believe renders their characters unsuitable mothers. In “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, as discussed extensively in the first chapter of this thesis, Darby is punished with a terrifying comeuppance for coveting material wealth and an elevated station in life by wishing to be transformed into an extravagantly wealthy member of the landed gentry. At the conclusion of the tale, Darby is tricked by the leprechaun into making a fourth wish, thus relinquishing his three previous wishes and becoming a humble farmer once again¹¹⁹ and this moment is presented as a traumatic experience for Darby as he is sent hurtling through the air all the while being mocked by the assembled, invisible Good People:

¹¹⁸ See Kavanagh, “The Changeling: A Story of Christmas Eve”, *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1903.

¹¹⁹ See Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 57.

Darby – a thousand wild voices screaming an’ mocking above him – was on his back, kicking and squirming and striving to get up, but some load hilt him down an’ something bound his eyes shut.¹²⁰

Both “The Changeling – A Story of Christmas Eve” and “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun” were written early in Kavanagh’s writing career before she fully reconstituted the role of the Good People in ways incompatible with the instances of fairy malevolence which are detailed above. Just as an encounter with the Good People at their most malevolent can function as punishment for perceived immorality, an encounter with the Good People at their most benevolent can function as reward for perceived moral excellence, as is in evidence in the examples of fairy benevolence from other writers that were detailed above, “The Legend of Knockgrafton” and “Fairy Help – The Phouka”. This is another method in which tales of the Good People can be morally instructive, although it is the contention of this chapter that the moral instruction featured in Kavanagh’s later tales of the benevolent Good People is unique because no other tales in either the oral or literary tradition represents the Good People as the benevolent moral guardians of the Irish people who actively and continuously seek to reward virtue, punish vice and improve the lives of deserving mortals in need of their help.

¹²⁰ See Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Leprechaun”, 57.

Section Four

This chapter has thus far established various subversive and innovative elements of Kavanagh's representation of the Good People. It will now reflect upon what has been established with a consideration in the fourth and final section of this chapter of the implications of this subversive and innovative representation for her diasporic readers' understanding of and engagement with Irish fairy lore. As one's conception of supernatural, folkloric beings such as the Good People tends to evolve as one grows older, it is important at this stage to return to the notion of dual address in Kavanagh's work which has been alluded to throughout this thesis thus far and will now be explored in greater detail. The assertion of dual address, which is fundamental to this discussion of reader response to Kavanagh's particular construction of the Good People, will firstly be contextualised within the history of *McClure's Magazine* and secondly will be explained within Kavanagh's work. Kavanagh is not the only children's author to address a dual audience in *McClure's*, although many other contemporary American magazines took a different approach when publishing children's literature. Gillian Avery asserts that, whilst many juvenile magazines flourished in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries,¹²¹ the most popular and prominent of these was *St Nicholas*, launched in 1873 as an adjunct to the adult periodical *Scribner's Monthly* under the editorship of Mary Mapes Dodge.¹²² The material that Dodge chose to publish by authors such as Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, Frances Hodgson Burnett and Robert Louis Stevenson explicitly addressed a younger child readership on the whole and did not facilitate the adoption of dual address. In *McClure's Magazine*, however, dual address featured frequently on account of Rudyard Kipling's twelve-year association with

¹²¹ See Avery, *Behold the Child*, 146 – 152.

¹²² See *Ibid.*, 150 – 152.

the magazine which saw the serialisation in *McClure's* of several of his most popular and enduring novels including the boys' adventure stories *Kim* and *Captain Courageous*, the school story *Stalky and Co* and the historical fantasy *Robin Goodfellow and his Friends* as well as the publication of several of his *Jungle Book* stories.¹²³ All of these texts are unlike Kipling's *Just So Stories for Young Children* (1902), which had been published by Dodge in *St Nicholas*, because, whilst they explicitly and unambiguously address an audience of younger children, Kipling's children's texts from *McClure's* contain material to interest, excite and entertain both older children and adults.¹²⁴ Kavanagh follows Kipling's *McClure's* model for children's literature with her literary fairy tales by providing material for both child and adult readers and she achieves this through her use of dual address.

There is an excellent, early example of Kavanagh's accomplished use of dual address towards the conclusion of her very first literary fairy tale, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" when Darby is discussing with Father Cassidy the three requests he placed with King Brian Connors before agreeing to release him and his imprisoned Good People. The priest chastises Darby for only asking for gold for himself but he also chastises him for only asking King Brian to release those mortal prisoners at Sleive-na-Mon who hail from their parish of Ballinderg. Darby's rebuttal of Father Cassidy's chastisement succeeds at addressing a dual audience because a reader can respond to it in two entirely different, yet equally legitimate

¹²³ *Captain Courageous* was serialised in *McClure's Magazine* from November 1896 to May 1897 and *Stalky and Co* began serialisation in *McClure's* the following year and ran from December 1898 and June 1899. *Robin Goodfellow and his Friends* was serialised in *McClure's* from May 1906 to October 1906; it was renamed as *Puck of Pook's Hill* when it was first published in book form that same year by Macmillan and Co in London. The *Jungle Book* stories "Kaa's Hunting", "Letting to the Jungle" and "Quiquern" were published in the January 1894, January 1895 and November 1885 editions of *McClure's* respectively.

¹²⁴ Indeed, the fact that these children's texts by Kipling explicitly address an implied adult reader has led to disagreement amongst literary critics about whether or not they constitute literature for children at all. Sue Walsh says that *Kim* is a particularly controversial text in this regard due to the qualities that have been identified in the novel by successive critics which have often challenged their narrow perceptions of what constitutes a children's text. See Walsh, *Kipling's Children's Literature*, 6 – 11.

ways: “When Mrs Malowney there goes home and finds that Tim has married the Widow Hogan, ye’ll say I let out too many, even of this parish, I’m thinkin’.”¹²⁵ Kavanagh constantly explores the theme of marital disharmony in her fairy tales for its comic implications; in this particular instance, the strain which will inevitably be placed on the Malowney marriage by the supernatural return of Mrs Malowney and the revelation of Mr Malowney’s accidental bigamy can be appreciated more fully by those readers who have either personal experience of or a sophisticated outlook on relationships between married men and women. Those readers who do not have this experience or this outlook are not excluded from engaging with this passage, however, as they are afforded the opportunity to delight and revel in the chaos which is being caused by the Good People’s presence in the lives of Ballinderg residents. As has been discussed at length throughout both the first and second chapters of this thesis, there are several occasions during which Kavanagh appears to be using dual address to incorporate a commentary of the main preoccupations and concerns of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century. This constitutes dual address because the tales can still be understood and appreciated on a certain level even if the reader is not aware that this social commentary is taking place; for example, Kavanagh’s retelling of the Oisín in Tír na n-Óg myth is not rendered incoherent by a reader’s failure to detect the tale’s allegorical endorsement of mixed marriages.

When an author uses dual address in a text apparently directed at children, it is important to acknowledge not only the diversity in how the various readers will respond to the work but also the diversity in how the various readers will conceive culturally of significant elements of the narrative. Therefore, when considering the impact of Kavanagh’s

¹²⁵ Kavanagh, “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”, 26 – 27.

innovative representation of the Good People on her diasporic dual readership, the diversity in how these various readers would have conceived of the Irish fairies culturally must be taken into account in determining reader response. By investing her diasporic fairy tales with Irish fairy lore to such an extent, Kavanagh appears to be urging sophisticated, experienced readers to embrace the Good People as a folkloric construction whose Irish incarnation forms part of the unique cultural heritage of the Irish people. Her particular contention may be that, despite their traditional portrayal as irreligious, they are not necessarily incompatible with a Catholic nationalist ideology and both the Good People and Catholic nationalism can legitimately be employed in the diaspora's construction of Irish identity. This contention is supported by Kavanagh's portrayal of her Good People as "roguish heroes", which serves to consolidate their characterisation as uniquely Irish, and by the benevolence of her Good People, who are a much more appealing and reassuring prospect for the Irish diaspora in the construction of their Irish identity than the wholly sinister incarnations that preceded them. Conversely, such a contention which is abstract and notional for sophisticated, experienced readers is literal and instructive for naïve, inexperienced readers who may be inclined to believe in the actual existence of fairies in the "homeland". It is important to note, however, that the assumption that this belief was exclusively held by children in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Ireland is an entirely false one, as previously mentioned in this chapter. Indeed, any Irish or Irish-American children's fiction written in this period which testifies to the existence of the Good People problematises the adult and child binaries used by Barbara Wall when discussing sophisticated, experienced readers and naïve, inexperienced readers respectively in her original definition of dual address.

In her essentialising approach to identifying reader response, Wall relies upon the espousal of a certain level of sophistication and experience on behalf of her implied adult reader which does not always reflect the reality of the situation. This is the main criticism that scholars have levelled at Wall's theory of the three forms of narrative address in children's fiction since her book on the topic was first published. Whilst many scholars such as Kimberley Reynolds and Pat Pinsent have praised Wall's theory as "useful"¹²⁶ and "a very valuable tool"¹²⁷ respectively in analysing children's books and their narratives, others such as David Rudd and Emer O'Sullivan have questioned its validity. Rudd cites her failure to acknowledge that terms such as "child" and "adult" are cultural constructions which carry with them problematic assumptions and generalisations such as equating adults with being educated and children with being less educated or altogether uneducated.¹²⁸ Similarly, O'Sullivan cautions against using the "child" and "adult" dichotomy because she believes that this does not reflect the reality of the variety and breadth of experience within both of these separate categories.¹²⁹ This thesis has extrapolated from Wall's original use of the "child" and "adult" dichotomy and discussed reader response in terms of naïve and inexperienced readers and sophisticated and experienced readers instead. Wall's original use of dichotomic terminology would be problematic in approaching Kavanagh's work in particular because it would assume that every adult diasporic reader of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales conceives of the Good People not as actual creatures in existence in the "homeland" but as a cultural construction. As this chapter has discussed, this was not the case amongst the rural peasant class in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century as,

¹²⁶ Kimberley Reynolds, *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25.

¹²⁷ Pat Pinsent, *Children's Literature: Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 40.

¹²⁸ See David Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 10

¹²⁹ See Emer O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 16.

despite the best efforts of Archbishop Paul Cullen, the belief in fairies and the superstitious practices associated with the belief remained deeply engrained in the folk consciousness.¹³⁰

No greater testament to the power and influence of the belief in the existence of the Good People in rural Ireland during this period exists than the notorious burning of Bridget Cleary in 1895 in the County Tipperary townland of Ballyvadlea near Slievenamon, the home of the Good People according to Kavanagh's tales. Angela Bourke identifies an earnest belief that the ailing twenty-six-year-old woman had been spirited away by the Good People and replaced by a fairy changeling as at least partially responsible for her violent death at the hands of various members of her own family.¹³¹ Despite its notoriety, Bourke claims that the most remarkable aspect of the case was how unremarkable it actually was; in rural Ireland in the late-nineteenth century, members of the peasant class frequently mistook unexplained symptoms, physical abnormalities and intellectual disabilities as evidence of a fairy changeling's presence.¹³² Kavanagh was writing specifically for the Irish in America and common features of Irish emigrant life such as removal from a peripheral location, arrival in an urbanised and industrialised environment and greater awareness of different approaches to understanding the world were identified by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin and Seán Ó Suilleabháin earlier in this chapter as key factors in the eradication of the belief in the existence in fairies. Given its sheer prevalence throughout Ireland at the time that Kavanagh was writing, however, it is highly unlikely that the belief in the

¹³⁰ For an analysis of the antagonism between Irish folk beliefs such as those relating to the fairies and the Catholic Church authorities in Ireland, see Pádraig Ó Héalaí, "Priest versus Healer", *Béaloides*, 62-3 (1994-5), 171-188

¹³¹ Bourke's comprehensive account of the notorious case features in *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: Second Edition* (London: Pimlico, 2006).

¹³² Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*, 33 – 38.

possibility of the Good People's existence had been entirely eradicated in her supposedly sophisticated and experienced "adult" diasporic readers.

Howsoever Kavanagh's dual readership, be they children or adults, conceived of the Good People, the fact remains that their representation as "roguish heroes" who are sympathetic with the Catholic nationalist cause and act benevolently towards the Irish people departs significantly from the established and traditional representation of them in the Irish folk tradition. When considered in terms of this bold and revisionist characterisation of the Good People, the relationship between Kavanagh's literary fairy tales and Irish folklore is an intriguing one. Kavanagh transformed the Irish fairies so dramatically for the benefit of her diasporic readers that the question must be asked as to whether or not her fairy tales actually constitute a misrepresentation of Irish folklore. Douglas Hyde was greatly exercised by literary misrepresentations of folklore in the late nineteenth century and, in the preface to his 1890 collection of folktales *Beside the Fire: A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories*, he wrote very dismissively of many of the nineteenth-century writers whose tales of the Good People were discussed earlier in this chapter. He criticises Thomas Crofton Croker, William Carleton and Lady Wilde for adopting a literary style which reflects the English idiom and for too often adding their own original material, thus rendering their folktales misrepresentative and inauthentic,¹³³ whilst he scathingly refers to the folktales of Patrick Kennedy as "the detritus of genuine Gaelic folktales".¹³⁴ Despite the fact that numerous Irish folklore collections had been published from 1825 onwards, Hyde wrote in 1890 that "the folk-lore of Ireland, like its folk songs and native literature, remains

¹³³ See Douglas Hyde, "Preface" in *Beside the Fire: A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories* (London: David Nutt, 1890), x – xvi for a discussion of the merits and demerits of the various collectors of Irish folklore whose work had been published during the period from 1825 until 1890. They include Thomas Crofton Croker, William Carleton, Samuel Lover, Patrick Kennedy, Lady Jane Wilde and Jeremiah Curtin.

¹³⁴ Hyde, *Beside the Fire*, xi.

practically unexploited and ungathered".¹³⁵ Hyde appears to be of the opinion that the majority of the previously published Irish folktales were not folklore but "fakelore", defined by the American folklorist Richard Dorson as "a synthetic product claiming to be authentic oral tradition but actually tailored for mass edification" which "mised and gulled the public".¹³⁶ It is difficult to determine whether or not Kavanagh's ten literary fairy tales featuring the Good People could justly be referred to as "fakelore" as many aspects of Kavanagh's tales suggest to the informed reader that they are not accurate reproductions of genuine folk tales but originally conceived literary creations.

Kavanagh begins both collections by informing the reader that the tales contained therein were told to her in a jaunting car by its reliable driver Jerry Murtaugh, who goes between Kilcuney and Ballinderg.¹³⁷ Any potential claims made by Kavanagh to the genuine folk origins of the tales in her collections are immediately undermined, however, as she situates Jerry Murtaugh between two fictional locations. By deliberately discrediting the alleged storyteller of her tales, it could be argued that she is parodying a conceit which features in McAnally's *Irish Wonders* in which a boisterous local character acts as an intermediary between the folklorist and the Irish peasantry. *Irish Wonders* is evidently Kavanagh's particular point of reference in this regard, as McAnally claims that a number of the folk tales which feature in that collection are "furnished by Jerry Magwire, a jolly carman of Galway".¹³⁸ By presenting her readers with an intermediary storyteller who operates

¹³⁵ Hyde, *Beside the Fire*, x.

¹³⁶ Richard Dorson, *Folklore and Fakelore: Essays toward a Discipline of Folk Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 5.

¹³⁷ Kavanagh informs the reader at the beginning of *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* that "these adventures were first related to me by Mr Jerry Murtaugh, a reliable car-driver who goes between Kilcuney and Ballinderg". At the beginning of *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*, Kavanagh informs the reader that "these tales were written as told in a jaunting car by Jerry Murtaugh, the reliable driver who goes between Kilcuney and Ballinderg".

¹³⁸ McAnally, *Irish Wonders*, 190.

in a fictional space and whose reliability she insists upon in both collections, Kavanagh is playfully suggesting the potential unreliability of tales purporting to be told by invented characters who are constructed as the guardians of genuine Irish folklore. Jerry Murtaugh also functions as a unifying narrator for Kavanagh's tales which, in a significant departure from other collections of Irish folklore, are all set in the fictional Ballinderg and its surrounding areas and all feature a series of interconnected and recurring characters including King Brian Connors and his various Good People and Darby O'Gill and his family and neighbours. It should be considered, however, that both the element of parody in the character of Jerry Murtaugh and the departure from the usual narrative structure of Irish folktale collections may not have occurred to those readers for whom Kavanagh's work was an introduction to Irish folklore, either because of their youth or their previous lack of engagement with the subject in its literary form. Another indication that Kavanagh's fairy tales are her own creation is the fact that, as previously discussed in this chapter, she reminds her readers of the established representation of the Good People by quoting Allingham's "The Fairies" in her epigraph only to subvert it greatly. It should also be considered, however, that those readers unfamiliar with Irish fairy lore should not be expected to recognise that Kavanagh is subverting the traditional representation of the Good People in her tales rather than merely focusing on some of their traditional characteristics which had been left unexplored. It is not only a legitimate inability to appreciate the aforementioned features of Kavanagh's tales which may lead to a reader believing them to be genuine Irish folktales, however.

In the vast amount of extraneous publicity material that accompanied the original 1903 release of *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* and that was quoted in various American

newspapers, the extent to which the collection's tales originated with Kavanagh was understated and the extent to which they reflected Irish folklore was repeatedly overstated. The fairy tales of Kavanagh's first collection were described as "the incarnate spirit of Irish fairy lore"¹³⁹ by the *Chicago Tribune* and as "actually legends of place and folklore"¹⁴⁰ by the *New York Times*, whilst *The Fort William Journal Gazette* was most explicit of all in its categorisation of the tales:

The stories that she tells in her book are real folk-lore tales of old Ireland and are as near in form as possible to the tales as they are told by the cottagers at their peat fires in the Emerald Isle. The source of Miss Templeton's inspiration is said to be an interesting old relative who imbibed those tales in her cradle, and told them to Miss Templeton, who now relates them to us.¹⁴¹

The figure of the "interesting old relative" is presented as the guardian of genuine Irish folklore and an intermediary between the folklorist and the Irish peasantry. Ironically, the "interesting old relative" in this article has the exact same function as "Jerry Magwire, a jolly car-man of Galway" in McAnally's *Irish Wonders*, who is parodied by Kavanagh in the character of Jerry Murtaugh. Although these articles serve to undermine Kavanagh's immeasurable contribution to *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* by suggesting that they were simply retellings of existing tales, the author herself was implicated in this misidentification, not in the textual but the paratextual, introductory content of her second collection, *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*:

Only the garments these legends wear are my own; the stories themselves are as old, as deeply planted, and as real as the gray sentinel cliffs along the Antrim coast.

¹³⁹ "Chicago Woman Writing Irish Fairy Tales", *Chicago Tribune*, August 2, 1902, 16. This article was written in anticipation of the publication of *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* the following summer.

¹⁴⁰ "About Authors", *New York Times*, May 30, 1903, 16.

¹⁴¹ "Literary News and Comment", *Fort William Journal Gazette*, July 26, 1903, 16.

These tales are no one's and everyone's. The wind whispers them through the lonesome hedges and along the white, winding roads; they creep out of the gray mists that float up from the regretful, unforgetting ocean; the curlews cry them to one another across the wide, mysterious bogs at dusk fall. At evening turf fires, I have seen them shining in the wistful eyes of long-remembering old men. Through all the mystical, ancient byways they linger, half a dream, half a memory, so elusive that no two may hold them the same.¹⁴²

Kavanagh's romantic and sentimental preface is remarkably disingenuous given what is revealed about the tales through their analysis in the first two chapters of this thesis and, also, given what is revealed about Kavanagh's life in the factual biographical account featured in the introduction of this thesis. Whilst she may have been influenced by the authentically Irish oral storytelling of members of her own family, of members of her second husband's family or, indeed, of Hannah White, with whom she was lodging the year before her first tale was published, it can be conclusively said that Kavanagh spent very little time, either in childhood or adulthood, in Ireland, despite what this preface suggests. When considered together with the earlier collection's publicity campaign, this preface does offer a major insight into the concerted effort made by both author and publisher to market Darby O'Gill's adventures amongst the fairies as genuine Irish folk tales.

Kavanagh's literary fairy tales featuring the Good People were not written as though they were genuine Irish folk tales but they were continuously marketed as such and, in that regard, they can justly be referred to as "fakelore". Dorson originally coined the term "fakelore" in 1950 whilst he was denouncing collections of original stories about the American folk hero Paul Bunyan which were both written and marketed as genuine American folk tales. He identified market forces as the reason why, despite their total lack of

¹⁴² Kavanagh, *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*, "Preface".

folk authenticity, the Paul Bunyan collections were presented in this manner, concluding that genuine folk tales had proven to be much more popular with readers than original stories featuring folk heroes.¹⁴³ This strategic misrepresentation of original stories as genuine folk tales is reminiscent of a collection from the early nineteenth century which, just like Kavanagh's collections almost a century later, was written by a female writer who was living in America yet inspired by Irish folklore. *Tales of the Emerald Isle or Legends of Ireland* by a writer identified only as "a Lady of Boston" was published in New York in 1828 and consists of both Gothic renditions of genuine Irish legends and original Gothic tales of Ireland. *Tales of the Emerald Isle* was written and marketed as a collection of Irish folklore, however, a decision which Anne Markey believes displayed "an astute appreciation of market forces", given both the recent abatement in the mania for Gothic fiction and the recent emergence of interest in collections of national folklore.¹⁴⁴ Collections of Irish folklore were so popular and fashionable in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century America¹⁴⁵ that this is surely the reason why Kavanagh and her publishers erroneously presented her collections as akin to the work of contemporary Irish folklorists working in the United States such as Barry O'Connor, Jeremiah Curtin and Seumas MacManus. Nevertheless, her consideration of market forces did not interfere with her vision for the Good People in her writing of the fairy tales. Rather than seizing upon every opportunity to increase the marketability of her tales, she pursued an innovative representation of the Good People which was potentially alienating for established readers

¹⁴³ See Richard Dorson, "Folklore and Fake Lore", *The American Mercury*, March 1950, 335 – 342 for Dorson's introduction of the term "fakelore" and for his identification of market forces as the reason why books of tales about Paul Bunyan, including Stanley Newton's *Paul Bunyan of the Great Lakes*, were presented as genuine folklore.

¹⁴⁴ Anne Markey, "The Gothicization of Irish Folklore", in *Irish Gothics*, eds., Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 110 – 111.

¹⁴⁵ See Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 167 – 173.

of Irish folklore collections who would expect the sinister creatures of Allingham's "The Fairies". She did not compromise in representing the Good People for adult and child members of the Irish diaspora in the United States of America at the turn of the twentieth century as she wished them to be represented and, thus, the Good People in her tales are unmistakably her own unique creation.

Conclusion

The first chapter of this thesis concluded by arguing that the representation of the Irish people in the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh was inextricably linked with the diasporic space of Irish America in which it was produced. This second chapter will now conclude by arguing that the same is true of their representation of the Good People. Firstly, it is true because the figure of the “roguish hero”, a cultural construction of Irish identity which was particularly prominent in the United States of America, is fundamental to Kavanagh’s characterisation of the Good People in her work. Secondly, it is true because, once the initially ambiguous figures of King Brian Connors and his fairy acolytes are revealed as “roguish heroes”, the only major ideological difference between them and their “roguish hero” counterparts in the mortal realm is resolved in a singular manner. It is resolved through recourse to the Catholic nationalist allegiances which formed a major defining characteristic of the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century and, thus, Kavanagh can be said to be once again commenting upon major issues and preoccupations affecting the diaspora. Thirdly, the assertion that this representation of the Good People is inextricably linked with the diasporic space gains further credibility when one considers what was potentially Kavanagh’s chief motivating factor in reconstituting the role of the fairy folk of Irish folklore in the lives of the Irish people. In acknowledgement of the American Celticism publishing fashion which insisted upon Irish folklore as the unique cultural heritage of the Irish people, Kavanagh may well have felt it necessary to present folkloric creatures of such ideological significance for Irish Americans as a much more positive and appealing presence than the vast majority of previous literary and folkloric incarnations would have suggested. Once they are established as “roguish heroes” and once

they are reconciled with the Catholic Church's centrality in Irish society, the rehabilitation of a formerly malign presence is furthered by Kavanagh as King Brian and his acolytes become the loyal friends of the Irish people as well as, ultimately, their benevolent moral guardians. This subversive and innovative representation of the Good People was presented in publicity materials as an accurate and authentic representation of these creatures as they appear in the Irish folk tradition but it was nothing of the kind. Rather Kavanagh's Good People are her own unique creation determined by a particular diasporic space at a particular diasporic moment.

Chapter Three

Introduction

An adaptation of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh's literary fairy tales was released by Walt Disney Productions on the 26th of June 1959 as the live-action feature film *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, directed by Robert Stevenson from a screenplay by Lawrence Edward Watkin. This summer release brought to fruition the Irish-themed project that was first pursued by Disney fourteen years earlier when, on the 3rd of July 1945, an unsolicited original story treatment entitled *The Little People* was sent speculatively by screenwriter Maurice Geraghty to the offices of Walt Disney Productions in Burbank, California.¹ The story treatment is set in the fictional County Donegal village of Ballindarrol at the turn of the twentieth century. It recounts how the politically conscious tenant farmer Dermot O'Farrell and his fiercely independent daughter Etain refuse to be bullied into submission by their Anglo-Irish landlord, the unscrupulous and cruel Lord Donoughmore. Determined to secure the release from prison of her father who has been falsely accused of a crime at Lord Donoughmore's contrivance, Etain finds her campaign against Donoughmore complicated by her burgeoning romantic relationship with his kind-hearted nephew, Michael. Etain has been raised on her father's stories of the fairy folk, referred to throughout as the Little People, and, in her desperation, seeks them out at their fairy fort and respectfully beseeches them to help her. The Little People, angered by Lord Donoughmore's arrogant refusal to believe in their existence, willingly oblige Etain and secure her father's release,

¹ The story treatment *The Little People* was sent to the Walt Disney Studios by Myron Selznick and Company Inc, the talent agency who represented the screenwriter Maurice Geraghty, and it was received on the 3rd of July 1945. This indicates that the treatment had not been commissioned by Disney but rather had been sent speculatively. See the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

their farm's success, her happiness with Michael and Lord Donoughmore's disgrace. The story treatment features a framing device in which Dermot regales a small group of little children with the tale and it transpires at the story's conclusion that the children are his grandchildren from the marriage of Etain to Michael. The immediate decision was made by executives at Walt Disney Productions to pursue this Irish-themed project and Geraghty's initial story treatment, *The Little People* eventually evolved into *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*.

During its unusually lengthy, fourteen-year gestation period, the project encompassed numerous story treatments and drafts of the screenplay, which were produced by three separate screenwriters. Yet, it was quite early in the story-development process when the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh were consulted and the project moved away from Geraghty's original idea and became an adaptation of Kavanagh's work. The influence of Kavanagh's work on the Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions can first be discerned after screenwriting duties were transferred from Geraghty, who submitted three versions of his story treatment in total between July and September 1945,² to his fellow screenwriter, John Tucker Battle. Battle produced a revised treatment of Geraghty's story in January 1946 but it was once Geraghty's story was entirely abandoned and a new direction taken for the project at Walt Disney Productions that the influence of Kavanagh's work on the Irish-themed project and its representation of Ireland and Irish people, culture and folklore became hugely significant. Battle's first full screenplay for the film, submitted in October of 1946, introduced the characters of Darby O'Gill and King Brian Connors and also introduced many narrative devices and tropes which both

² Walt Disney Productions received a sequence blackout of Geraghty's *The Little People* on the 5th of August 1945 and a revised story treatment on the 5th of September 1945. This is the last material submitted by Geraghty to Walt Disney Productions regarding this project. See the *Darby O'Gill* file, Walt Disney Archives.

originated in Kavanagh's tales and featured in the final film, most especially the denouement involving the banshee, the death coach and Darby's fourth wish. The nature of the project as an adaptation of Kavanagh's two collections of literary fairy tales was not only first asserted by but also later strengthened by Battle during his tenure as the film's screenwriter and this was maintained by Lawrence Edward Watkin, the film's third and final screenwriter, when he was hired by Disney in the summer of 1947.³

Watkin was an American professor of English literature and novelist and, unlike Geraghty and Battle, was not an experienced screenwriter and had no film or television writing credits when hired by Disney to work on the project.⁴ It is certainly the case, however, that elements of Watkin's first and most celebrated novel, 1937's *On Borrowed Time* bear a striking similarity to the Irish-themed project as it had evolved during Battle's tenure.⁵ *On Borrowed Time* also features a fateful encounter between a human being and a supernatural being in which the former manages to outwit the latter and this thematic correspondence may have been a significant contributing factor to Watkin's appointment.⁶ Despite his background as a novelist, Watkin did not attempt to write an original story on the fairy folk of Ireland as Geraghty had done; rather two separate drafts of the screenplay submitted by him to Walt Disney Productions in May and June of 1947 reflect Battle's reconstitution of the project as an adaptation of Kavanagh's work. The project was officially shelved for several years due to severe financial difficulties at Walt Disney Productions in the immediate period after the Second World War and the resulting inability to pursue the

³ See press release "Disney Signs Watkin to Script 'Little People', Sails for Eire July 31st", the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Lawrence Edward Watkin, *On Borrowed Time* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1937).

⁶ This is certainly stated in the press release announcing Watkin's appointment to write the film: "Watkin was selected by Disney to develop the 'Little People' story because of the fanciful type of writing indicated in most of his literary efforts, especially in 'On Borrowed Time'" See the *Darby O'Gill* file, Walt Disney Archives.

ground-breaking visual-effect techniques which Disney felt were required to realise the film satisfactorily.⁷ The development of the project appears to have recommenced in earnest in 1957. It was after Watkins' revised story outline and final draft of the screenplay were accepted in August and October of that year that Disney enlisted Hedda Hopper to exclusively reveal in her "Looking at Hollywood" column in *The Los Angeles Times* that production would soon begin on his much-anticipated "Irish story".⁸ The screenplay by Watkin that was eventually filmed in the spring and summer of 1958 follows the established model for Walt Disney Productions' family entertainments and reflects the literary material from which it was adapted by addressing an implied dual audience of both child and adult viewers. It is essentially an adaptation of two of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales featuring the characters of Darby O'Gill and King Brian Connors, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People" and "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun". It also incorporates elements of six other tales by Kavanagh into the narrative whilst also including a significant amount of original material.⁹

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis will be concerned with the representation of the Little People in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* but, firstly, this third chapter is concerned with how the Irish people are represented in the film and, therefore, it will

⁷ Lawrence Edward Watkin explained the situation in a letter to Dr James Delargy, Director of the Irish Folklore Commission, who had been assisting Watkin and various staff members at Walt Disney Productions with their research for their "Irish story" since the summer of 1946. In the letter dated the 19th July 1949, Watkin said that the project had been "O.Keyed but is now K.Oed for the time being as finance enters in" but reassured Delargy that the film would be made eventually. See the Walt Disney file, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

⁸ The first new version of the "Irish story" in ten years appeared under the title of *The Wishes of Darby O'Gill* on the 20th of August 1957. It was a revised story outline by Lawrence Edward Watkin and was followed by a complete draft of the screenplay on the 28th of October 1957, the day of Hedda Hopper's official announcement of the film in her "Looking at Hollywood" column in *the Los Angeles Times*. A final draft of the screenplay was submitted by Watkin on January 21st 1958 before filming began on the 1st of April 1958. See the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁹ The six other tales are "The Adventures of King Brian Connors" and "The Banshee's Comb" from *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* (New York: McClure and Phillips, 1903) and "The Ashes of Old Wishes", "The Haunted Bell", "Bridgeen and the Leprechaun" and "Killbohgan and Killboggan" from *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales* (Chicago: Jordan Publishing, 1926).

discuss every major aspect of this representation. It will explore in great detail the relationship between Kavanagh's work and the Walt Disney Productions' film directed by Stevenson from a screenplay by Watkin. It will also discuss what may be legitimately perceived as other potential influences on the representation of Irish people in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* such as the cultural values and political ideologies promoted by Walt Disney and Walt Disney Productions during this period, as well as the chief components of the post-war representation of Irish people in films by other major American film studios. The first section of this chapter will explore the resurgence in mainstream American cinema in the decade immediately following the Second World War of representations of Ireland as an unspoiled, pre-modern rural idyll. The second section will explore how the figure of the "roguish hero" and its attendant stereotypes dominated representations of Irish people in mainstream American cinema from the very beginning and how the "roguish hero" figure appeared to reach its apogee with the celebrated career of Barry Fitzgerald. Both of these sections will discuss, in particular, the influence of such representations of Ireland and the Irish people on how Ireland and the Irish people are represented in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and they will assess how this cinematic representation serves to both reinforce and undermine Kavanagh's representation of Ireland and the Irish people in her stories. The third section of this chapter will explore the social stratification of the Irish people that features in the portrayal of the fictional rural community of Rathcullen in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. It will examine how the film's representation of social hierarchies both conforms to the elitism of Walt Disney Productions' animated fairy-tale adaptations and clashes with the anti-Communist individualism of the majority of its post-war, live-action output, as well as clashing with the representation of society and class in Kavanagh's work. The fourth and final section of this chapter will engage with the film's representation of

women and the relationships between men and women which, whilst reflecting and emulating both the established perception of Irish women in mainstream American cinema and the established construction of gender roles in Disney films, is in stark contrast with the representation of women and the relationships between men and women in Kavanagh's work.

Section One

Ireland is represented as an unspoiled, pre-modern, rural idyll throughout *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*. The film’s unspoiled, pre-modern, rural, idyllic mise-en-scene is immediately established in the first shot that appears on screen as the opening credits roll. It shows the fictional County Kerry village of Rathcullen and the leisurely pace at which everyday life is conducted by its inhabitants. Rathcullen in its entirety consists of an informally constructed street featuring a small number of buildings and enveloped by vast expanses of green fields and trees as well as a meandering country road which leads to the estate of Lord Fitzpatrick and Knocknasheega, the impressive hill under which the fairies have their lair. In the very first shot of the film, Rathcullen appears to be sparsely populated with a small group of men standing around a Celtic cross talking to each other as boys bustle about them playing hurling and as horses, cattle and poultry are led slowly and deliberately in different directions. This opening shot, which is lingered upon for forty seconds, offers a representation of Ireland which is entirely consistent with how Kavanagh chooses to represent Ireland in her literary fairy tales. As discussed extensively in the first chapter of this thesis, Kavanagh’s representation of Ireland appears to have been both influenced by and a component of the fairy and folk-tale dimension of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century fashion in American publishing which Charles Fanning refers to as American Celticism. Whether they included fantastical elements or not, literary texts of American Celticism were invariably set in Ireland and usually presented Ireland to their implied audience of diasporic readers as an unspoiled, pre-modern rural idyll. Whilst Fanning believes that American Celticism reached its apogee during its initial period of great success, he also contends that the commitment in American publishing to presenting this

particular vision of Ireland to a diasporic readership has never dissipated and has always remained popular with Irish Americans.¹⁰ According to Diane Negra, this is by no means an exclusively literary phenomenon but rather bucolic representations of Ireland have infiltrated virtually every form of popular culture in the United States of America and thrived.¹¹ In the context of Mikhail Bakhtin's influential work on chronotypes or "time spaces", it may be argued that cultural representations of Ireland in American popular culture invariably exist in an idyllic chronotope or "time space".¹² In this type of chronotope, according to Bakhtin, spatial and temporal indicators are fused to present a world of vivid particularity in which time is operating at a very different pace from elsewhere:

This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. But in this little spatially limited world a sequence of generations is localized that is potentially without limit.¹³

The use of this idyllic chronotope in American popular culture, which has proven consistently popular, implies that life in Ireland is in stark contrast to life in the diasporic space, in which Irish people have changed and progressed through successive generations but have also suffered and struggled as a result.

In her appraisal of this multimedia phenomenon, Negra does not neglect the irony of the commodification and commercialisation of such bucolic representations of Ireland:

¹⁰ Charles Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 173.

¹¹ See Diane Negra, "Introduction" in *The Irish in Us*, 3.

¹² See Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: The University of Austin Press, 1981), 84.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 225.

While fantasies of Ireland posit a culture unsullied by consumerism and modernity, Ireland is nevertheless a buy-in category and it comes in a staggering variety of consumable forms available across a broad spectrum of outlets.¹⁴

Negra claims that the sale of Ireland as a land unspoiled by commercialism proved to be very commercially valuable throughout the twentieth century and it was certainly embraced wholeheartedly in mainstream American cinema in the period immediately following the Second World War, during which time *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* was being developed at Walt Disney Productions. The New York-based film studio the Kalem Company was responsible for the earliest American cinematic representations of Irish people in Ireland in a series of short, silent films which were designed to appeal to Irish Americans such as *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), *The Colleen Bawn* (1911) and *You Remember Ellen* (1912).¹⁵ Whilst Irish people continued to feature as central characters in mainstream American cinema throughout the 1920s and 1930s, these films were rarely set in Ireland but were rather concerned with how the Irish could negotiate the diasporic space of Irish America and assimilate into American society.¹⁶ There was a resurgence of films which were actually set in Ireland in the late 1940s when *The Luck of the Irish* (1948) and *Top o’ the Morning* (1949) emerged from the Hollywood studio system,¹⁷ to be followed swiftly by *The Quiet Man* in 1952. Stephanie Rains offers an explanation for this resurgence by placing the conception, production and release of these films in their socio-historical context. She argues that the commercial viability and potential of films actually set in Ireland had increased exponentially by the late 1940s due to the rapid growth both in the population of

¹⁴ Bahktin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 4.

¹⁵ See *The Lad from Old Ireland* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1910), *The Colleen Bawn* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1911) and *You Remember Ellen* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1912).

¹⁶ See Kevin Rockett, “The Irish Migrant and Film” in *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, ed. Ruth Barton (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 17 – 44.

¹⁷ See *The Luck of the Irish* (Henry Koster, USA, 1948) and *Top o’ the Morning* (David Miller, USA, 1949).

Irish Americans who had never been to Ireland and in the opportunities for foreign travel after the Second World War.¹⁸ Cinematic representations of Ireland achieved much greater significance during this period as they were transformed by socio-economic factors from being merely “remembered personal histories which were lost to the emigrant who could rarely expect to return” to “representing inherited collective histories to later-generation Irish Americans who might well make the journey ‘back’ to Ireland”.¹⁹ With the post-war arrival of increased availability and affordability of air travel, ambitions to return from the diasporic space to the “homeland” of Ireland had transcended the realms of fantasy and wish fulfilment and now represented a realistic aspiration for the Irish diaspora in America.

This emerging aspiration amongst Irish-American audiences was shrewdly acknowledged and mirrored in the actual narratives of *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top o’ the Morning* and *The Quiet Man*, all three of which feature a central male protagonist who is an Irish American returning from the diasporic space to the “homeland”. Indeed, the development of protagonists Stephen Fitzgerald, Joe Mulqueen and Sean Thornton through the narratives of these respective films is the opposite of that in the vast majority of the Irish-themed American films which had preceded them. As Tony Tracy reflects in the case of Sean Thornton in *The Quiet Man* directed by John Ford, “in the reversal of the stereotypical Irish immigrant’s path to assimilation, it is Sean Thornton, played by the quintessential western pioneer John Wayne, who must adapt to the ways of his new (old) world in Ford’s romantic-pastoral”.²⁰ The “homeland” to which these three protagonists return is

¹⁸ See Stephanie Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture, 1945 - 2000* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 101.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tony Tracy, “Captain Lightfoot (1955): Caught between A Rock (Hudson) and A Rapparee” in *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, ed. Ruth Barton (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 194.

romanticised as an unspoiled, pre-modern, rural idyll and they do not encounter any major signifiers of modernisation, progress or change. This representation of Ireland is accounted for convincingly by Brian McIlroy who supports the aforementioned arguments of Negra and Rains by characterising the relationship between the Irish American and Ireland as one which is inextricably linked with the notion of “lost heritage”.²¹ The representations of Ireland in these three films epitomise the tendency in twentieth-century American popular culture to nurture rather than undermine the eagerness of the Irish American to envisage contemporary Ireland as exactly the same as the land from which their ancestors set sail. This is achieved by comforting the Irish-American viewer with an imagined past rather than confronting them with the actual present.

It is most certainly the case that a bucolic vision of Ireland is also presented in order to strengthen the view which began to be promoted cinematically during this period that Ireland could potentially provide catharsis to troubled and alienated Irish Americans for whom modern American society could not offer a satisfactory remedy. In *The Luck of the Irish*, the disillusioned main protagonist Stephen Fitzgerald, played by Tyrone Power, is tempted by the prospect of political power and extraordinary wealth in New York City but ultimately retreats to an Irish idyll which is presented as the most effective moral antidote to “the corruption and cynicism and dissatisfaction of modern American life”.²² Similarly, Luke Gibbons offers a reading of *The Quiet Man* in which Ford is presenting Ireland as a place of potential renewal and restoration for traumatised Irish-American men who served in the American Army during World War Two. Gibbons suggests that Ford metaphorically

²¹ Brian McIlroy, “Searching for the Sub(genre): Irish-American Film Comedy” in *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, ed. Ruth Barton (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 307.

²² Matthew Fee, “Sometimes the Imagination is a safer place: Fantastic spaces and The Fifth Province” in *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism*, ed. Brian McIlroy (New York: Routledge, 2007), 125.

equates the traumatising effect on champion Pittsburgh prize-fighter Sean Thornton of accidentally killing an opponent during a boxing match to the traumatising effect of war through his pioneering use of unmotivated flashbacks in *The Quiet Man* to that fateful boxing match.²³ He says that Sean's flashbacks in *The Quiet Man* bear a telling similarity to "a disorientating and harrowing re-staging of the long-term consequences of the trauma of the Second World War" in Alan Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959).²⁴ Whether or not one is convinced by this particular reading by Gibbons, the fact remains that the traumatised Sean is renewed and restored by returning from the alienating diasporic space to his idyllic "homeland". Tony Tracy credits the perceived desire on behalf of the diaspora after the Second World War to both return to the "homeland" of Ireland and be cured of whatever ailed them psychologically during their trip with John Ford's eventual success during this post-war period in securing finance for his "escapist and visually sumptuous story about homecoming" after several failed attempts.²⁵ These perceived dual desires on behalf of the diaspora are also fundamental to the bucolic representation of Ireland in this post-war period, a representation to which the later-produced *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* also strictly adheres.

It is important to note that the Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions did not always adhere so strictly to this representation of Ireland. Indeed, the initial three story treatments submitted by Geraghty in the summer and autumn of 1945 contain elements which greatly undermine the potential identification of Ireland as idyllic. As is apparent from the description of its basic narrative earlier in this chapter, Geraghty's *The Little People* represents Ireland as a land in which people live precariously in meagre conditions at the

²³ Luke Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 59.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Tracy, "Caught between (Rock) Hudson and a Rapparee", 194.

mercy of cruel and unscrupulous landlords and it is, therefore, reminiscent of the Irish-themed Kalem Company films of the 1910s. It appears as though director Sidney Olcott, screenwriter Gene Gauntier and the rest of the creative team at the Kalem Company deliberately chose not to represent Ireland as idyllic in several of these films in consideration of their target Irish-American audience: an audience, as Stephanie Rains asserted, “whose only likely chance to see again the home they remembered was through films located here”.²⁶ These short, silent films were all shot on location in Ireland and, therefore, offered Irish-American audiences a glimpse of their “homeland”, whilst simultaneously validating their emigration or the emigration of their ancestors. This was achieved through the characterisation of Ireland as the land of poverty, oppression and hardship and through the antithetical characterisation of the United States of America as “the land of bounty, freedom and opportunity”.²⁷ In their assessment of these films, Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill state that this approach is most evident in the narrative of the Kalem Company’s debut effort, *The Lad from Old Ireland*, which quickly transports its hero, Terry, from the harsh conditions on the land to the more lucrative work opportunities in New York before Terry returns to Ireland ten years later, his fortunes made, just in time to save his sweetheart, Aileene, from eviction.²⁸ The Kalem Company’s decision to afford their target Irish-American audience the opportunity to revel in remembering Ireland in affectionate terms but also to revel in several of their films’ implication that they were absolutely right to leave Ireland in the first instance appears to have been vindicated by their commercial success. It seems as though representations of Ireland could only afford to

²⁶ Stephanie Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture, 1945 - 2000* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 101.

²⁷ Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill, *Ireland and Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), 9.

²⁸ Rockett, Gibbons and Hill, *Ireland and Cinema*, 9.

be idyllic in post-World War Two mainstream American cinema because Ireland had been reconstituted in the intervening period as a place to which Irish-American audiences could legitimately aspire to return.

Geraghty may have been influenced by the Kalem Company in his representation of conditions in Ireland as being far from idyllic, although it should be acknowledged that his incorporation of supernatural elements is a significant departure from the realistic aesthetic of *The Lad from Old Ireland* and its successors.²⁹ There is a political dimension to the strife and instability which Dermot O'Farrell and his daughter Etain are required to overcome in *The Little People*, however, as the cause of their troubles is the unjust treatment to which they are subjected by their landlord Lord Donoughmore, who represents the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in Geraghty's story. In an ideological flourish which is also reminiscent of the Irish-themed Kalem Company films, it is suggested that the plight of the Irish people is directly related to the continued colonisation of Ireland and the attendant oppression of the native population.³⁰ Both the very first draft of the film of 1945, *The Little People*, and the final incarnation of the film, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, are set in an unspoiled, pre-modern and rural Ireland during an ill-defined period, which resembles the turn of the twentieth century and yet the latter features none of the political commentary of the former. Following the abandonment of Geraghty's *The Little People* in its entirety, the Irish-

²⁹ None of the twenty-two Irish-themed Kalem Company short silent films made between 1910 and 1915 incorporates supernatural elements into its narrative. The films had a variety of sources from the plays of Dion Boucicault in the cases of *The Colleen Bawn* (1911), *Arrah na Pogue* (Sidney Olcott, USA, Ireland, 1911) and *The Shaughraun* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1912) to the poetry of Thomas Moore in the case of *You Remember Ellen*. There was also considerable number of films based on Irish history which were told from a nationalist perspective and they included *Rory O'Moore* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1911), *Ireland the Oppressed* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1912) and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* (Sidney Olcott, USA/Ireland, 1915).

³⁰ According to Rockett, Gibbons and Hill in their assessment of the Kalem Company films, "Irish nationalism is sympathetically portrayed while English rule in Ireland is unfavourably contrasted with America which proves to be the escape route for both political oppression and poverty.....The community itself.....is seen as a repository of collective opposition to the English presence". See Rockett, Gibbons and Hill, *Ireland and Cinema*, 8 - 9.

themed project at Walt Disney Productions immediately became less politicised and ominous and more romanticised and fantastical and this must surely be somewhat accounted for by the fact that Kavanagh's literary fairy tales were first consulted at this time. In Geraghty's *The Little People*, the fairy folk rescue Dermot and Etain from the misfortunes brought upon them by the tyrannical Lord Donoughmore yet, in every draft of the story by both of its subsequent screenwriters John Tucker Battle and Lawrence Edward Watkin, it is the fairy folk who are both the cause of and solution to the misfortunes of the peasant protagonists. The complex characterisation of the fairy folk as being equally capable to behaving benevolently and malevolently and as both causing and solving the misfortunes of the mortals whom they encounter permeates Kavanagh's tales, as discussed comprehensively in the second chapter of this thesis. The influence of Kavanagh's tales on Battle and Watkin allowed them to tell stories in which their peasant protagonists are met with sufficient strife and instability to drive the narrative forward, and yet this strife and instability is so negligible and slight and so removed from reality by its supernatural origins that it is not incongruous with the representation of Ireland as idyllic.

In October 1946 and February 1947, when Battle submitted the first two drafts of the screenplay to feature the characters of Darby O'Gill and King Brian Connors, the revised formulation of Ireland was immediately apparent in the central dilemma with which Darby is confronted. In the first draft, *The Wee Folk*, Darby must conspire with King Brian to retrieve from King Brian's fairy lair the local Anglo-Irish aristocrat who has been kidnapped by the fairies and replaced with a changeling. In the second draft, Darby must conspire with King Brian to avert the humiliation of the local Anglo-Irish aristocratic family at a celebrated annual horse race after the family's prize-winning entry has been placed under an

enchantment by King Brian and his fairies. Darby endeavours to help the troubled aristocrats in both drafts because they are much more benign figures than the Lord Donoughmore of Geraghty's story and because, in the only major narrative detail retained from Geraghty, his daughter Kathleen is in love with a kind-hearted younger member of the family. By constructing a fraught relationship between the fairy folk and Anglo-Irish aristocratic families in which the former's dislike for and suspicion of the latter have negative repercussions for the entire community, Battle appears to be making a certain, implicit criticism of the continued presence of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in Ireland. Watkin subsequently excised these Anglo-Irish characters and their political connotations and chose to adhere more closely to Kavanagh's original tales in devising a story around which Darby and King Brian could operate and, thus, he arrived at a narrative structure which was eventually settled upon for the final film. The basic story of how Darby cleverly escapes from the fairies after they kidnap him and subsequently tricks King Brian of the Little People into granting him three wishes until King Brian grows fond of Darby and helps him to avert a potential personal tragedy was introduced in Watkin's second story treatment entitled *The Wishes of Darby O'Gill*. This basic story and its ultimate translation into a film by Watkin's more comprehensive screenplay and Robert Stevenson's direction further strengthens the representation of Ireland as idyllic. The problems that serve to disturb the lives of the main characters in the film are borne of contained incidents and specific scenarios which are removed from reality by their supernatural nature and which do not alert the audience to fundamental flaws in a dysfunctional society relating to the country's colonisation or, indeed, any other issue. Interestingly, the final draft of the screenplay re-introduces the Anglo-Irish ascendancy to the Irish community of Rathcullen in which it is set, yet, as will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, Watkin's radical re-interpretation of the

effect of colonial social hierarchies means that that it is now endowed with entirely different political connotations.

Darby O’Gill and the Little People does slightly qualify the idyllic nature of the Ireland in which it is set by the implication that better opportunities and experiences are available to those who chose to leave the “homeland” and enter the diasporic space. This is achieved by the inclusion in Watkin’s final screenplay of an allusion to Kavanagh’s tale “Killbohgan and Killboggan” in which, as explored in the first chapter of this thesis, Kavanagh identifies an inextricable link between poverty and the Irish but, crucially, not between poverty and Irish Americans by deliberately offering a glimpse of the contrasting prosperity enjoyed by the Irish diaspora in America. An incident similar to that in Kavanagh’s “Killbohgan and Killboggan” takes place in the film when a letter from Norah Cassidy’s son in America arrives at Rathcullen post-office during a scene between the post-mistress Mrs O’Toole (Maureen Halligan) and one of the film’s chief antagonists, Sheelah Sugrue (Estelle Winwood). Sheelah greets the letter by saying “Ah, there’ll be money in that!”, although the impact is not comparable in the film because the contents of the letter are never actually disclosed as they are in the tale so that the viewer never learns whether or not there is money in it or how well Norah Cassidy’s son is, in fact, succeeding in the diasporic space. The scene primarily functions as further evidence of Sheelah’s disingenuous and mercenary nature, although the implication that Irish people enjoy prosperity in the diasporic space which they do not in the “homeland” is nevertheless there. This slight qualification of the idyllic nature of Ireland also features in *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top O’ The Morning* and *The Quiet Man*, and the contrast is seen much more sharply due to the fact that each of these films features Irish-American protagonists returning from the diasporic space to the “homeland” with

wealth, knowledge and sophistication, which is so clearly lacking in the exclusively Irish characters with whom they interact. This is a comic conceit in all three of these films and, just as in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, it merely serves to slightly qualify rather than severely undermine the idyllic nature of Ireland. The extent to which the Kalem Company sought to flatter and reassure their target Irish-American audience in the 1910s is not discernible in these later films.

The scene involving Sheelah Sugrue in the post office was not added by Watkin until 1957 although, as drafts of the screenplay from as early as 1946 present a bucolic vision of Ireland, it is evident that the Irish-themed project as it began to be envisaged at Walt Disney Productions was anticipating the representation of Ireland which would later be articulated by Twentieth Century Fox with *The Luck of the Irish* in 1948, by Paramount Pictures with *Top o’ the Morning* in 1949 and by Republic Pictures with *The Quiet Man* in 1952. It was due to its unusually extended development period that *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* was eventually produced and released considerably later than these three films, although their success, particularly that of *The Quiet Man*, may have served to validate the radically different direction that the Irish-themed project had taken in terms of the representation of Ireland since Geraghty’s initial concept in 1945. It is important in this chapter on the representation of Irish people in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* to have also discussed the film’s representation of Ireland because it is invariably the case, as identified by Matthew Fee, that films which conform to stereotype by presenting a bucolic vision of Ireland endow their Irish characters with stereotypical traits of Irishness,³¹ and thus it proves with this particular film. Its characters were not presented as reconstructed by the experience of

³¹ See Fee, “Sometimes the imagination is a safer place”, 124.

leaving the “homeland” and operating in the diasporic space but rather were introduced to audiences as traditional and authentic Irish people in a traditional and authentic Irish setting and, therefore, this required the employment of stereotypes of both Ireland and Irishness, which were recognisable from American popular culture. The first and second chapters of this thesis illustrated how Kavanagh represents Darby O’Gill, King Brian Connors and several more of her Irish characters as “roguish heroes” in her literary fairy tales. Despite Darby appearing to be considerably older in the film than he is in Kavanagh’s work, both he and King Brian in their cinematic iterations also adhere closely in their characterisation to Boucicault’s re-interpretation of the stereotypical stage Irishman as a “roguish hero”. The decision to emulate Kavanagh’s characterisation of Darby and King Brian in the adaptation of her tales is not surprising given the fact that the “roguish hero” figure transcended its theatrical origins to infiltrate other areas of American popular culture and become enduringly popular in mainstream American cinema from the Irish-themed Kalem Company films of the 1910s onwards.³² Disney’s appropriation of the “roguish hero” figure and, crucially, of the stereotypes of Irishness with which it remained associated will now be explored in the second section of this chapter.

³² Ruth Barton, *Acting Irish in Hollywood: From Fitzgerald to Farrell* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 11 - 13.

Section Two

Walt Disney Productions' commitment to representing the central characters in its Irish-themed project as "roguish heroes" is confirmed by testaments of Walt Disney's personal determination to secure Barry Fitzgerald for the lead dual roles of Darby and King Brian Connors, his supernatural alter ego. In her assessment of his acting career in the United States of America, Ruth Barton asserts that Fitzgerald was the actor who was most closely associated with performing this re-interpreted stage Irishman stereotype, both earnestly and ironically, in numerous mainstream American films between the 1930s and the 1950s.³³ He would have been associated with this type of performance when Disney first discussed the idea of hiring him to star in Walt Disney Productions' recently conceived *The Little People* in 1945, yet this association was greatly strengthened in the intervening period between these initial discussions and Disney's announcement to Hedda Hopper in 1957 that Fitzgerald would indeed star in the subsequently retitled *The Wishes of Darby O'Gill*. This is because, in the intervening period, Fitzgerald featured in both *Top o' the Morning* and *The Quiet Man* as Briny McNaughton and Michaelleen Óg Flynn respectively. As is characteristic of a film, which many critics believe emphasises the performativity of Irishness and acknowledges its construction of Ireland as a diasporic fantasy, *The Quiet Man* features a scene in which Michaelleen knowingly refers to himself as a "shaughraun" and, in doing so, "summons up the ghost of Boucicault and his reworking of the stage Irishman".³⁴ After Fitzgerald was forced to decline becoming involved with the Disney film due to failing health,³⁵ Walt Disney personally sought out and hired Albert Sharpe,³⁶ an actor who had

³³ See Ruth Barton's exploration of Barry Fitzgerald's Hollywood career in *Acting Irish in Hollywood*, 21 - 43.

³⁴ Barton, *Acting Irish in Hollywood*, 38 - 39.

³⁵ Tony Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 57.

proven his credentials in the kind of performance in which Fitzgerald had specialised when he originated the role of Finian McLonnergan in the 1947 Broadway musical *Finian's Rainbow*.³⁷ Written by Fred Saidy, Burton Lane and E.Y. Harburg, *Finian's Rainbow* was yet another example of an Irish-themed text in American popular culture in which the characterisation of the central Irish figure was clearly influenced by Boucicault's re-interpretation of the stage Irishman as a "roguish hero".

Whilst the figure of the "roguish hero" projected a much more positive and affectionate image of Irishness than previously, it retained many stereotypes of the Irish people and four stereotypes in particular apply to the "roguish heroes" and other characters in the Disney film. As well as establishing its representation of Ireland as an unspoiled, pre-modern rural idyll, the forty-second opening shot of the film provides an insight into how the Irish people will be represented once the audience is introduced to formal, named characters. Under the direction of Robert Stevenson, the director of photography Winton C Hoch chose a camera angle for this first shot of the village of Rathcullen which foregrounds two buildings in particular, the church with an imposing spire which looms over the village and the public house, the Rathcullen Arms, which is recognisable from its beer barrels, lined up beside the wall. Stevenson is making an early allusion to two of the four stereotypical traits of Irishness which are reinforced in Watkin's screenplay; preoccupations with Roman Catholicism and alcohol consumption are as central to the Irish character as it is constructed here as tendencies towards superstitious customs and violent confrontations, which emerge later as the film progresses. Each of these perceived facets of the Irish character is

³⁶ See the Official Press Book, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

³⁷ It is extremely likely that Disney and his staff would have been aware of *Finian's Rainbow* and Albert Sharpe's leading performance as Finian McLonnergan because the musical was a great success when it premiered on Broadway on the 10th of January 1947 and ran for 725 performances until it closed on the 2nd of October the following year. It also won three prestigious Tony awards for outstanding achievement in theatre.

presented very differently in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* from how it is presented in Kavanagh’s literary fairy tales with none of them featuring as centrally in the lives of the characters in her work as they do in the lives of the characters in the film. As shown in the first chapter of this thesis, for example, the stereotypes of the drinking Irish and the fighting Irish are greatly undermined by Kavanagh through her use of brief and infrequent references to drinking and fighting throughout her tales. Both of these stereotypes are much more rigorously applied in the film, conversely, although they are endowed by their role and significance in Watkin’s narrative with moralistic connotations. Drinking and fighting are presented as perfectly natural and healthy facets of the Irish character in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* but the film condemns excessive drinking and fighting in its representation of the film’s primary antagonist, the arrogant, bullying mail cart driver Pony Sugrue, played by Kieron Moore.

The centrality of alcohol consumption amongst the lives of Darby O’Gill and his neighbours, whilst alluded to during the opening credits sequence, is more firmly established in the film’s first scene featuring Darby as he sits in the Rathcullen Arms in the middle of the afternoon regaling a substantial gathering of people with his tale of the time he encountered King Brian Connors in the ruins on the top of Knocknasheega. Henceforth, all of the group scenes in the film take place in this public house and it is where the community congregates at moments of great excitement, where characters immediately go when they are searching for other characters and even where the parish priest Father Murphy, played by Dennis O’Dea, goes when he wants to make an important announcement. Alcoholic drinks are consumed during all of these scenes although it is only

Pony Sugrue who wishes to indulge excessively, at which point he is reprimanded by publican Tom Kerrigan, played by J.G. Devlin:

TOM: You'll get no more whiskey here today but if you care to be sociable you can have a glass of stout.

PONY: I ordered whiskey and divil a foot will I stir from here until I get it.

TOM: Pony Sugrue, you're blue-moulded for want of a beating and if I was ten years younger I'd give it to you.

PONY: Ah but you're not ten years younger, are ye?

The aggressive nature of this exchange between Pony and Tom is underlined by the performance of Moore, as Pony attempts to boorishly intimidate Tom with his considerable physical presence, and by the point-of-view camera angles chosen by Hoch that emphasise the disparity in height between Tom and his aggressor. Pony's extremely bellicose nature is also evident in his ultimately futile efforts to secure the affections of Darby's daughter, Katie, played by Janet Munro, when he violently threatens Katie's fellow suitors, Sean (James O'Hara) and Michael McBride (Sean Connery). Tellingly, in one scene, he knocks Michael unconscious and smears his lips with alcohol to give the impression that his rival has fallen into a drunken stupor whilst attending to his duties as caretaker on Lord Fitzpatrick's estate. As Pony is attempting to destroy Michael's reputation and prospects here, not only does this scene confirm Pony's villainy but it also implicitly constructs the Rathcullen community as one in which wanton drunkenness is viewed as utterly abhorrent and unacceptable, however much its people enjoy drinking alcohol moderately.

The villainous Pony is not the only character who behaves violently in the film, however, although the film suggests that there are positive acts of violence which should be

encouraged and negative acts of violence which should be discouraged, with clear distinctions made between them both. Fighting is presented as entirely natural and healthy when Michael resorts to beating Pony into submission at the film's denouement as suitable punishment for his abhorrent behaviour in a scene which is reminiscent of the climactic donnybrook sequence in *The Quiet Man*. This violent final confrontation between Michael and Pony was most likely influenced by this particular sequence from *The Quiet Man* even though, as Kevin Rockett asserts, this key aspect of Ford's film belonged to a tradition which was established very early in the history of representations of Irish people in mainstream American cinema.³⁸ According to Rockett, "fighting was a regular feature of such films and continued to serve as a narrative resolution of many Irish-themed films well into the sound era".³⁹ It is important to mention, however, that it was not until Lawrence Edward Watkin returned to the shelved Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions with a new story outline in August 1957 that the donnybrook between Michael McBride and Pony Sugrue featured in the screenplay. None of the story treatments, story outlines or drafts of the screenplay written by Maurice Geraghty, John Tucker Battle or Watkin before the release of *The Quiet Man* by Republic Pictures in 1952 features a sequence either at the narrative's climax or elsewhere in the narrative during which two characters fight each other to the excitement and entertainment of an assembled crowd. The entertainment value of the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* donnybrook is qualified, however, by a consideration of the ethics of the situation, which is not provided in *The Quiet Man* or elsewhere. Instances of what are perceived to be acceptable and unacceptable levels of fighting and drinking may well have been included in Watkin's screenplay with an awareness that the final film would

³⁸ See Rockett, "The Irish Migrant and Film", 27.

³⁹ Ibid.

be marketed and released by Walt Disney Productions as an entertainment for children as well as adults. It seems to have been deemed important to show scenes of fighting and drinking in a film which represents Irish people but it also seems to have been deemed important that these scenes be sanitised, moralised and rendered entirely suitable for the implied child audience that it would be addressing alongside its implied adult audience. The exact same issues had occurred for Kavanagh who likewise addressed a dual implied audience of adults and children. It is reasonable to suggest, however, that the decision not to include much alcohol consumption or many violent acts in her work was also motivated by a conscious effort to distance her representation of the Irish people from these two particular stereotypes.

The centrality of Roman Catholicism in the lives of the Irish people featured in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* is alluded to with the architectural dominance of the church in the opening forty-second shot of Rathcullen but is articulated to a much greater extent in the very next scene by the work of set decorators Emile Kuri and Fred MacLean on the interior set of the gatehouse where the O’Gill family lives. The walls and mirrors are liberally adorned with an array of paraphernalia which testifies to the centrality of Roman Catholicism in the lives of Darby and Katie such as a holy water font, a St Brigid’s cross, a picture of the Sacred Heart of Mary, a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, holy medals, rosary beads and a Crucifix. It is clear that the Catholic religion is central to the lives not only of the O’Gills but also of the film’s supporting characters, who represent the wider Rathcullen community, by the fact that the role of all-powerful community leader is freely and gladly given to the official representative of the Catholic Church in the village. In the first Rathcullen Arms scene mentioned above, for example, in which Tom confronts Pony

about his obnoxious behaviour and demands for more alcohol, Pony is undeterred until he is forced into compliance with the landlord's rules of conduct when Tom assures him that "while you're in the Rathcullen Arms, you'll sit quietly or I'll have Father Murphy forbid you to come here at all". The elevated position and considerable authority of the local Catholic priest within the Rathcullen community is confirmed later in that same scene when Father Murphy enters and is treated with subservience, obedience and deference by all assembled named characters including Darby, Tom, Katie, pub regular Paddy Scanlon (Farrell Pelly), barmaid Molly Malloy (Nora O'Mahoney) and, most strikingly, the habitually disrespectful Pony. They doff their caps to him, stand up and remain standing in his presence and use phrases whilst conversing with him such as "Excuse me, Your Reverence" and "Saving your presence, Father Murphy". The character of Father Murphy, as he is written by Lawrence Edward Watkin and performed by Dennis O'Dea, is genial, robust and quietly authoritative and conforms largely to the extremely flattering representation of Catholic priests which dominated mainstream American cinema from the late 1930s onwards.

Kevin Rockett accounts for the cinematic construction of Catholic priests as heroic figures, which was most famously featured in the hugely successful *Going My Way* (1944), by suggesting that Hollywood studio bosses were keen to placate the Catholic Church authorities, who had been aggressively campaigning since the late 1920s for the right to regulate the cinema-going experience on moral grounds.⁴⁰ These invariably Irish-American movie priests were, according to Rockett, "manly, common-sense social workers guiding their flocks, young and old, in righteous ways, saving bodies as well as souls"⁴¹ and, whilst

⁴⁰ See Rockett, "The Irish Migrant and Film", 30 – 31.

⁴¹ Lawrence J McCaffrey, "Going My Way and Irish-American Catholicism: Myth and Reality" in *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, ed. Ruth Barton (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 187.

Father Murphy is a somewhat peripheral character and is operating in the “homeland” rather than the diasporic space, he does belong to this model. He certainly wields his power and authority with a much lighter touch than the Catholic priests in Kavanagh’s work, chiefly the recurring figure of Father Cassidy, who are similarly well-intentioned and compassionate yet much stricter on their parishioners. Father Cassidy also causes problems for Darby O’Gill in Kavanagh’s first collection, *Darby O’Gill and the Good People*, by objecting to Darby’s friendly association with the Good People until he himself is later reconciled with King Brian Connors. Throughout *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, conversely, Father Murphy has no qualms about tolerating Darby’s adventures amongst the fairies and greets talk of them with amused indifference. In the first Rathcullen Arms scene, however, Father Murphy exploits the information that Darby “used the priest and the Church against the powers of darkness for his own ends” in his dealings with King Brian Connors and manipulates him into agreeing to retrieve a church-bell from the nearby parish of Glencoe and bring it home with his horse and cart. In his appropriation of the inciting incident of Kavanagh’s tale “The Haunted Bell”, Father Murphy is seen to exploit his position of authority, albeit for the betterment of the parish as he perceives it, and Darby complies with his request entirely unaware of having been manipulated. This scene endows the relationship between the Irish people and their Catholicism with negative connotations, in that Catholicism is so important and central to their lives that they are left vulnerable to being manipulated and exploited by Catholic Church authorities. Unlike the Darby O’Gill character of Kavanagh’s work who frequently treats Father Cassidy with defiance and irreverence due to his construction as a “roguish hero”, the film’s Darby is so compliant and reverent towards Father Murphy that, in this regard, he seems to be endowed with a certain degree of credulity, naiveté and unworldliness. Interestingly, in the film’s treatment of the relationship between the Irish

people and superstition, which is the fourth and final stereotype of Irishness with which it engages, all of the sympathetic human characters except Darby are presented as credulous, naïve and unworldly.

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the human characters in Kavanagh's literary fairy tales accept absolutely the magical and the supernatural as an entirely expected and ordinary part of their lives. This is not because they are superstitious but because they frequently encounter magical and supernatural entities and occurrences in the fairy-tale version of Ireland in which they operate. Therefore, their adherence to customs which are designed to placate and flatter and deter the Good People, the leprechaun, the banshee, ghosts, Satan and other supernatural beings is constructed by Kavanagh not as superstitious but rather as sensible behaviour from intelligent people. In the film, the Little People are shown to the audience to exist and, therefore, we can easily believe the testimony of Darby regarding all of his previous encounters with them. Even though Darby is the only human character within the film to bear witness to the existence of the Little People, however, all of the other sympathetic human characters believe unerringly and absolutely in the Little People. They do so without any evidence to support their belief except the testimony of Darby, who is explicitly written by Watkin as not altogether trustworthy or reliable. He tells blatant lies to Lord Fitzpatrick in attempting to defend his lacklustre, lazy performance of his duties as estate caretaker, he engages in subterfuge in attempting to force King Brian Connors to yield his supernatural powers and he conceals certain facts from both Michael and Katie in attempting to bring them together romantically. Whilst all these acts of deception are committed in Darby's inimitably roguish and good-natured manner, they nonetheless encourage the audience to view Darby as

untrustworthy and unreliable. Thus, even though we know that the Little People exist, it is reasonable for us as audience members to consider that his family and friends are being credulous, naïve and unworldly in believing in the Little People on his word alone. The film appears to draw a connection between the Irish people's relationship with Roman Catholicism and the Irish people's relationship with superstition. It suggests that they are so slavishly devoted to both that they place themselves in the vulnerable position of being easily and openly manipulated. This suggestion greatly undermines the cleverness with which Kavanagh endowed the Irish people in her tales. Not only does Watkin conform to the stereotype of the Irish people as wildly superstitious that had been purposefully subverted in the source material but he further suggests that a superstitious belief in the Little People is an essential characteristic of Irishness. This is evident in the development of the character of Michael McBride whose initially sceptical attitude towards the widespread local belief in the Little People when he arrives from Dublin at the beginning of the film is entirely transformed by the film's climax.

His scepticism is enunciated by the gently mocking tone adopted by Sean Connery whenever his character Michael is required to respond to claims that Darby has enjoyed adventures amongst the Little People and that he has even met King Brian Connors. In one gatehouse scene, the incongruity of his attitude towards the superstitious belief in the Little People is apparent when Katie angrily and defensively reacts to an offensive assumption that he casually makes about her father:

MICHAEL: I gathered from what he said last night that he might capture the leprechaun.

KATIE: He has great games with them.

MICHAEL: When he's taken a drop too many?

KATIE: He's not a drinking man!

Michael's attitude is transformed through becoming better acquainted with the O'Gills and assimilating into the Rathcullen community and, during the triumphant, climatic scene in which he beats Pony Sugrue into submission over his unacceptable behaviour, he challenges Pony with the words "What sort of man are you at all that doesn't believe in the Little People?" Pony functions as a counterpoint to Michael during this scene as both characters had been previously presented throughout the film as reluctant to embrace the superstitious belief in the Little People, with Pony being particularly aggressive and offensive in his disdainful rejection of the belief. Not only is Pony incompatible with the rest of the Rathcullen community on account of his excessive approach to drinking and fighting but also on account of his refusal to accept or embrace the superstitious belief in the Little People. Pony eventually enters into self-imposed exile by going to live in Cahirciveen, announcing to the assembled crowd in The Rathcullen Arms with whom he has proven incompatible "I've heard enough silly blather about Little People to last me a lifetime". In contrast, Michael wholeheartedly adopts the superstitious beliefs and customs of the O'Gills and their fellow Rathcullen residents and the conversion of Michael represents the ultimate act of assimilation into this Irish community. The tension that arises between those who believe in the fairies and those who do not was present from the earliest development stage of the Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions onwards.⁴²

In his foreword to his original submission in the summer of 1945, Maurice Geraghty writes the following as a charming flourish to accompany his story treatment:

⁴² The development of this theme can be seen in three drafts in particular. For Geraghty's *The Little People* of the 3rd of July 1945, Watkin's *The Little People* of the 12th of May 1947 and Watkin's *The Wishes of Darby O'Gill* of the 24th of June 1947, see *the Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

This story is drawn from the old Irish folk and fairy tales. Some sceptics may say that everything that occurs in it can be logically and naturally explained and that the remainder of the tale about the Little People was only a dream and there is something to be said for this view. But people who have knowledge of such things will know that the wee folk of the hills were fully responsible.⁴³

When Lawrence Edward Watkin took charge of the project, he foregrounded this theme and examined how a fairy sceptic might assimilate into a community in which superstitions are deeply engrained and pervade every aspect of everyday life. In his two story treatments of 1947, he offered a nuanced and sophisticated examination of this theme through the character of the newly arrived schoolteacher, named Maurteen Cavanaugh in the first and Fergus McBride in the second, who antagonises Darby O’Gill and others with his commitment to logic and the rational. At the conclusion of both of these treatments, the Maurteen/Fergus schoolteacher figure still does not believe in the fairies but has come to respect and learn the value of such a belief.⁴⁴ The assimilation of a stranger through his engagement with the belief in fairies was retained for the final screenplay for the film but the examination of the theme was simplified by Watkin through the progression of the character of Michael McBride in the narrative. It can be concluded that the film’s implication that superstitious beliefs are fundamental to the Irish character is challenged and undermined by earlier drafts of the screenplay by Watkin, which present a more complex sympathetic Irish character in the figure of Maurteen Cavanaugh/Fergus McBride. It must be concluded, therefore, that a superstitious nature is promoted alongside drinking, fighting and Roman Catholicism as intrinsic to the Irish character in *Darby O’Gill and the Little*

⁴³ See the preface of Geraghty’s original story treatment of the 3rd of July 1945 in the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁴⁴ See Watkin, *The Little People* (May 7, 1947) and Watkin, *The Wishes of Darby O’Gill* (June 24, 1947), the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

People. It is particularly unfortunate that the film adheres so closely to these stereotypes of Irishness because these same stereotypes are questioned and subverted in a very deliberate manner by Kavanagh in the film's source material, despite her representation of several of her Irish characters as "roguish heroes". Whereas Kavanagh attempted to reconstitute what it meant to be Irish to a certain extent for her younger diasporic audience, Walt Disney Productions produced and released a film which constructed Irish identity for their younger diasporic audience by perpetuating these aforementioned stereotypes.

Section Three

This chapter has discussed how Ireland and the Irish people are represented in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* through the film’s portrayal of the fictional rural community of Rathcullen and its inhabitants. It will now proceed to discuss how the society in which the characters operate is stratified and how the preservation of Rathcullen’s clearly defined social hierarchy is presented as so fundamental to the happiness which is ultimately achieved by Darby O’Gill and his family that it is reasonable to suggest that the film promotes a socially elitist ideology. This ideology cannot be explained by acknowledging the film’s identity either as a post-war mainstream American film set in Ireland⁴⁵ or as an adaptation of the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh but rather by acknowledging its identity as a product of Walt Disney Productions during the tenure of Walt Disney as its chief executive. The social stratification of Rathcullen in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* is not complicated or difficult to decipher: the village is comprised almost entirely of members of the native Irish peasant class, except for Lord Fitzpatrick, played by Walter Fitzgerald, who is a member of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy class and, therefore, operates at much higher level in the social hierarchy. Certain members of the community enjoy elevated status and a privileged position by association such as Father Murphy, who is the official representative of the revered Catholic Church, and Darby and Katie O’Gill, who live in the gatehouse on Lord Fitzpatrick’s estate on account of Darby’s job as estate caretaker. The fact that the O’Gills are separated socially from the rest of the community and enjoy elevated status and a privileged position is signalled in the film’s opening

⁴⁵ Of all the Irish-themed films which emerged from mainstream American cinema in the immediate post-World War Two era, *The Quiet Man* is the one that includes characters who are explicitly shown to be from different social and economic backgrounds from the majority of the Inishfree community. The characters include Rev and Mrs Plainfair and the Widow Tillane but unlike in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, however, they do not appear to be operating within a clearly-defined and rigid social hierarchy.

sequence when the camera follows Sheelah Sugrue, as she makes the considerable journey from the village to the gatehouse on Lord Fitzpatrick's estate. Sheelah's journey lasts the entirety of the opening sequence over which the credits roll and culminates in her walking through the estate's large and impressive gates and leaving behind her the village which, as the shot is composed, seems miniscule and insignificant in the background. The enviable lifestyle of Darby and Katie is further established by the size of the gatehouse in which they live and by incisive remarks made by the socially aspirational Sheelah to Katie on her visit to the gatehouse, during which the viewer is alerted to the widow's scheming and sly nature as she attempts to "put a flea in Katie's ear" and orchestrate a marriage between Darby's daughter and her son Pony. Sheelah's comments to Katie that "there's little that's lacking here unless t'would be a man to cook for" and about "the grand house you live in and the fine position your father has with his Lordship" not only aid in the characterisation of Sheelah but also alert the viewer to the elevated status and privileged position enjoyed by the O'Gills by association with Lord Fitzpatrick.

This lifestyle is threatened by the arrival of Michael McBride from Dublin to replace Darby in his job as caretaker on Lord Fitzpatrick's estate and to replace both Darby and Katie in their occupancy of the gatehouse and, therefore, deprive them of the chief material benefits of their association with Lord Fitzpatrick, which distinguish them from the rest of the Rathcullen community. The prospective loss of their status and position through the arrival of Michael is perceived by both Darby and Katie as potentially devastating to the other party and this is revealed in conversations that they both have with the thoroughly decent yet inadvertently antagonistic Michael. After being criticised by Michael for not telling Katie about their forthcoming change of circumstances, Darby explains how sensitive

a topic it is by saying that “she was born at the gatehouse and for twenty years she’s lived in it. It gives us a standing in the town”. Meanwhile, when Katie finally learns of their forthcoming change of circumstances, she angrily confronts Michael about the terrible effect that she believes the news must have had on her father by asserting that “no wonder he’s chasing the fairy gold and him half out of his mind trying to keep a little bit of self-respect in the town”. Both Darby and Katie are presented as extremely conscious of the superior position that they occupy in the social hierarchy and they appear to be horrified by the prospect of the family being forced into relinquishing it, a situation which is happily avoided at the film’s conclusion by Michael and Katie’s burgeoning romance and, as is strongly implied, their imminent marriage. The fact that successfully retaining their superior social position accentuates the ultimate happiness of the film’s main characters as well as the satisfying nature of the conclusion of the narrative is an unmistakeable signifier of the elitist ideology which is being promoted in the film. This elitism appears peculiar when the film is considered in the context of the anti-elitism which has been identified by Steven Watts as permeating the vast majority of Walt Disney Productions’ live-action film and television productions during this period. According to Watts’ argument, the sustained anti-elitist ideology which characterised the company’s live-action output throughout the 1950s can be accounted for by Walt Disney’s fierce and unequivocal stance against Communism.

In February 1944, Walt Disney became a founding member and Vice President of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, an organisation whose mission statement asserted its members’ commitment to “the American Way of Life” and, also, their determination to stand “in sharp revolt against a rising tide of Communism, Fascism and kindred beliefs that seek by subversive means to undermine and change this

way of life.”⁴⁶ The Alliance strongly encouraged the relocation of the House of Un-American Activities Committee to Hollywood in 1947 with the purpose of holding hearings on the perceived Communist influence on contemporary film-making, and Disney launched into a vociferous denunciation of Communism during his own evidence to the Committee. Disney had been profoundly disturbed on a personal and professional level by the three-month animators’ strike which took place at Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California in 1941 and Watts locates the extent of Disney’s hostility towards Communism in the hugely disruptive and destabilising effect that the strike had on him and his company for a considerable amount of time after 1941.⁴⁷ During his evidence to the House of Un-American Activities Committee in 1947, Disney dismissed the suggestion that dissatisfaction amongst his employees precipitated the strike but rather placed the entirety of the blame for the incident on carefully orchestrated smear campaigns by “Commie groups”.⁴⁸ Watts’s theory is that Disney’s strong anti-Communist sentiments, which were nurtured by his own personal experiences, combined with the necessity that Disney perceived to reassure the American public in their Cold War anxieties. Together they forged a unifying position in the entertainment products that he manufactured which is best described as “libertarian populism”. Disney did not discard entirely the ideals and values that he had previously sought to instil in the American public through his films; rather “the remnants of the older, optimistic, inclusive populism of the Depression era provided an important foundation for

⁴⁶ See Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (Columbia: First University of Missouri Press, 1997), 240.

⁴⁷ For comprehensive examinations of the 1941 three-month animators’ strike at Disney’s Burbank studios, which Disney later referred to as “the toughest period in my whole life”, and its complex causes and effects, see Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 204 – 227 and Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art and Commerce of Walt Disney: Third Edition* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc Publisher, 1997), 249 – 262.

⁴⁸ For a thorough account of Disney’s evidence to the House of Un-American Activities Committee in 1947, see Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 284.

this position but Disney reshaped it to conform to the exigencies of the Cold War”.⁴⁹ The “libertarian populism” identified by Watts functions as a repudiation of Communist values and ideals through embracing what is constructed as an intrinsically American way-of-life:

Against the threat of Communist collectivism and authoritarianism, Disney insisted on Americans’ dedication to individualism and freedom. Yet at the same time he carefully stressed his fellow citizens’ instinct for community cohesion and their willingness to be team players in a large cause.⁵⁰

By the specific manner in which this “libertarian populism” is articulated by Walt Disney Productions in live-action film and television productions during this era, there can be detected the simultaneous and incidental promotion of an anti-elitist ideology.

Walt Disney and his company wholeheartedly embraced television in the mid-1950s and exploited the long-form, serial possibilities of the medium by producing a number of hugely successful television series which appropriated the lives of historical figures and sought to re-inforce the status which they already enjoyed as American folk heroes. The recurring adventures of American War of Independence veteran Francis Marion (1732–1795) and western frontiersmen John Slaughter (1841–1922) and Elfego Baca (1865–1945) featured in *The Swamp Fox* (1959–1961), *The Tales of Texas John Slaughter* (1958–1961) and *The Nine Lives of Elfego Baca* (1958) respectively.⁵¹ In each of these series, the protagonists are constructed as American iterations of the Robin Hood archetype. Just like the fictional Diego de la Vega in the Disney series *Zorro* (1957–1959),⁵² they were anti-

⁴⁹ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 288.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ All three were shown as part of the *Disneyland* anthology series which aired on the ABC Television Network.

⁵² Unlike the protagonists of the other series mentioned, Diego de la Vega was fictional and he and his alter ego Zorro were created by Johnston McCulley and first appeared in 1919 in a five-part serialised story “The Curse of Capistrano” in the New York-based pulp magazine *All-Story Weekly*. This Disney *Zorro* series was also shown as part of *Disneyland* on the ABC Television Network.

establishment, individualist figures who defended and championed the working classes and who categorically did not conform to the elitist assumptions of the societies in which they were operating. Also, throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, Walt Disney Productions produced and released a number of film adaptations of works of children's literature including Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* in 1950, Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* in 1957, Johann David Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson* in 1960 Eleanor H Porter's *Pollyanna* in 1960 and Robert T Reilly's *Red Hugh, Prince of Donegal* in 1966.⁵³ Alongside *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1954),⁵⁴ these films deliberately celebrate the awesome achievements of the individual irrespective of the socio-economic background from which he or she has emerged and, thus, in their valorisation of individualism, these films also serve to promote an anti-elitist ideology. In *The Fighting Prince of Donegal*, the adaptation of Reilly's historical novel, for example, the sixteenth-century Irish prince Red Hugh O'Donnell must single-handedly protect his clan and castle from foreign invaders and is hindered rather than helped by being the eponymous prince of Donegal. *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, conversely, promotes an elitist ideology and there are two potential explanations for why it does so in the era of "libertarian populism" at Walt Disney Productions. It may be accounted for by the film's Irishness and, by extension, its non-Americanness because, as Watts argues when he first proposes the concept of "libertarian populism" in this Disney context, it is founded upon celebrating "the merits of the American individual, as opposed to the image of the Soviet communal automaton".⁵⁵ Whilst the majority of these films and television series that espoused "libertarian populism" were set in America and featured

⁵³ For these Disney adaptations of children's novels, see *Treasure Island* (Byron Haskin, USA/UK, 1950), *Old Yeller* (Robert Stevenson, USA, 1957), *Swiss Family Robinson* (Ken Annakin, USA, 1960), *Pollyanna* (David Swift, USA, 1960) and *The Fighting Prince of Donegal* (Michael O'Herlihy, USA/UK, 1966).

⁵⁴ See *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (Richard Fleischer, USA, 1954).

⁵⁵ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 302.

American characters, this was not exclusively the case, however, with *Treasure Island* and *The Fighting Prince of Donegal* being notable exceptions. It is much more likely that the film promotes an elitist ideology because, although it is a live-action film, it is closer in its narrative structure and ideological allegiances to Disney's animated films of the era. Just like these animated films, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* upholds a vision of life which conforms to the Disney fairy-tale model and "presents a utopian vision predicated upon conservative establishment values and existing social hierarchies".⁵⁶

The appropriation of literary versions of oral tales from European folklore for feature-length animated films at Walt Disney Productions began with its very first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)⁵⁷ which firmly established the Disney fairy-tale model all the while being designed to convince audiences that it is an almost indistinguishable product from its source material.⁵⁸ Jack Zipes argues to the contrary, however, and says that films which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model are entirely separate entities. He argues that they are chiefly characterised by their boundless dedication to an elitist ideology as "they impose a vision of life, the better life, on viewers that deludes audiences into believing that power can and should be entrusted only to those members of elite groups fit to administer society".⁵⁹ Zipes convincingly includes four Disney animated films of the 1950s on his list of films which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model and they are *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953) and *Sleeping*

⁵⁶ Andrew Teverson, *Fairy Tale*, 141.

⁵⁷ See *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (David Hand, William Cottrell, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce and Ben Sharpsteen, USA, 1937).

⁵⁸ See the "Breaking the Disney Spell" chapter in Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, 72 – 95.

⁵⁹ Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy Tale Films* (London: Routledge, 2011), 23.

Beauty (1959).⁶⁰ Therefore, it can be inferred from this list that films of the Disney fairy-tale model are not necessarily adapted from literary versions of oral tales but are always adapted from stories which contain magical and supernatural elements.⁶¹ It can also be inferred that the anti-elitist “libertarian populism” of this era in the history of Walt Disney Productions did not succeed in penetrating the company’s animated output as it did with its live-action film and television productions. According to Zipes, those films which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model and have a prominent romantic dimension articulate their elitist ideology through the adoption of a specific narrative structure which begins, just as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* does, with a prince character embarking on a quest for a mate.⁶² The trope of a prince character embarking on a quest for a mate can be considered to promote elitist assumptions because of the manner in which his quest progresses and concludes; the prince finds a disadvantaged virginal young woman who will serve his vested interests and suit the role of trophy princess and they marry in splendid and rarefied surroundings whilst the supporting characters attend to them admiringly if not obsequiously.⁶³ Zipes calls this utopian vision of life elitist because “everyone knows his or her role and their roles are geared towards guaranteeing the happiness of their heroes seemingly born to be admired as fetishist objects”.⁶⁴ Films produced and released by Walt

⁶⁰ See *Cinderella* (Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson, USA, 1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson, USA, 1951), *Peter Pan* (Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson, USA, 1953) and *Sleeping Beauty* (Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson and Les Clark).

⁶¹ See Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, 23. Films produced and released in the 1950s comprise four of the fourteen films on Zipes’ list, suggesting that animated products which conformed to the Disney fairy-tale model were particularly prolific during this decade. It should be remembered that the book was published in 2011, however, and that, therefore, the most recent film mentioned on the list is *The Princess and the Frog*, which was released in 2009.

⁶² See Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, 24.

⁶³ See *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, 24.

Disney Productions in the 1950s which adopt this narrative structure include not only *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* but also *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*.

Michael McBride, Lord Fitzpatrick’s newly appointed caretaker from Dublin, functions as the prince character with Katie O’Gill as his chosen mate who serves his vested interests. She does so because she is already mistress of the caretaker’s gatehouse and she and her father are greatly respected in the Rathcullen community into which Michael hopes to be accepted. Katie is ironically placed at the disadvantage necessary for her to occupy the trophy princess role by the arrival of Michael which threatens their privileged lifestyle and, therefore, he represents for the O’Gills both their potential ruination and their ultimate salvation. Michael and Katie are not attended by servants but the wider community support and protect them unfailingly and the only characters who resent and covet the O’Gills’ elevated status and privileged position are the film’s antagonists Pony and Sheelah Sugrue. It can be said, therefore, that, just like the lower orders that populate *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*, the Rathcullen villagers work to preserve the established social hierarchy in their community in which the O’Gills and Michael are members of the elite. The O’Gills and Michael do not live in a splendid palace and they are not attended to by countless servants but, in the context of Disney’s Irish-themed project, they function as the “special chosen celebrities”⁶⁵ who are destined to operate at a higher social level than the majority of the population for the betterment of the entire society. The social hierarchy in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* is quite clearly a colonial social hierarchy because the O’Gills and Michael are only elevated in the eyes of the community by their association with Lord Fitzpatrick, who represents the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in the text. As the film firmly celebrates the

⁶⁵ Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, 26.

privileges enjoyed by its main characters, it is reasonable to suggest that it also celebrates the means through which they enjoy those privileges, the colonisation of Ireland. As personified by the largely absent Lord Fitzpatrick, colonisation is a benign and unobtrusive force in the lives of the native Irish population; when he does appear, he acts kindly towards those characters who are presented to the audience as deserving his kindness and acts scornfully towards those characters who are presented to the audience as deserving his scorn. He treats Darby with great dignity and is sincerely grateful for his years of service as estate caretaker and, even though he is astute enough to realise that Darby has not worked as efficiently or reliably as he could have, his affection for Darby overrides any potential feelings of disgruntlement. He confides in Michael how much he likes the people of Rathcullen in general, although he treats Pony and Sheelah Sugrue very dismissively when they make their mercenary attempts to ingratiate themselves with him.

As his behaviour is beyond reproach and he is portrayed very sympathetically, it must be acknowledged that this aspect of the film is startlingly incongruous with the representation of the characters who symbolise the colonisation of Ireland in the film's source material. Such characters appear infrequently and peripherally in Kavanagh's work; Lord Killgobbin is irredeemably unpleasant in "The Ashes of Old Wishes" and meeting him serves to reassure Darby about the value of his own humble, peasant existence. Meanwhile, Roger O'Brien, the educated son of a cruel local landlord is only redeemed from his confirmed status as "the omadhaun" by his marriage to Norah Costello, the daughter of a tenant farmer, which serves as his assimilation into the noble Irish peasantry. The film's apparent vindication of the colonisation of Ireland is, in all probability, a consequence of its adherence to the socially elitist ideology of the Disney fairy-tale model. It is underlined,

however, by the almost complete absence in the film of the nationalist rhetoric and ideology espoused by various human and supernatural characters in Kavanagh's work.⁶⁶ It is interesting to note how the Disney fairy-tale model's elitist, utopian vision of life which is presented in the completed film contrasts so sharply with the vision of life promoted in Maurice Geraghty's first story treatment of 1945 which launched the Irish-themed film project at Walt Disney Productions. Geraghty's *The Little People* has, in actual fact, quite a lot in common with the Disney television series of the late 1950s which celebrated anti-elitist, individualist heroes who protected and championed the working classes, although the central heroic figure is singular for being both Irish and female. In her crusade against her cruel and unscrupulous landlord, the central heroic figure of Etain O'Farrell would have epitomised Disney's valorisation of anti-elitist individualism throughout the 1950s and early 1960s as a response to the perceived threat of Communism and the perceived Cold War anxieties of the American public. It is doubtful, however, given the history of both the representation of Irish women in mainstream American cinema and the representation of women in Disney films whether a female character with as much agency as Etain O'Farrell would ever have been permitted to feature in the final version of the film. It is the representation of the film's female characters that will now be explored in detail in the fourth and final section of this chapter.

⁶⁶ It could be argued that two scenes in the film have nationalist connotations. The first is the scene in which Michael and Katie, during a day of courting, walk to the ruins on the top of Knocknasheega and look down upon a vast expanse of Irish countryside and quote lines in unison which are variations of lines from the poem "The Pillar Towers of Ireland" by the patriotic poet Denis Florence McCarthy which was first published in the Irish nationalist newspaper of the 1840s, *The Nation*. The lines are "The ruins of old Ireland how wondrously they stand/ By the lakes and rushing rivers on the hilltops of our land/ Around these walls of battle the Viking and the Dane/ the Normans and the Saxon and the cavaliers of Spain". The scene certainly invites the audience to view Ireland as a country with a proud and noble history but the potential identification of nationalist ideology in these lines is undermined by how isolated and decontextualized they are. The second scene with nationalist connotations features the introduction of King Brian Connors in his fairy lair and it will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

Section Four

The representation of Katie O’Gill and the other female characters in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* can be said to conform to both the representation of women in other Disney products of this era and to the established representation of Irish women in mainstream American cinema. This section will argue, however, that the film’s representation of women is ultimately influenced and determined to a much greater extent by previous cinematic incarnations of Irish women than previous cinematic incarnations of Disney women. In constructing this argument, it is important that this section focuses on the “Irish colleen”, a figure which dominated representations of Irish women in mainstream American cinema from the 1920s to the 1950s and which clearly had a discernible influence on the representation of Katie O’Gill in particular. Diane Negra, Ruth Barton and Stephanie Rains have written extensively on the figure of the “Irish colleen” and its promotion of the idea that there is a particular type of Irish femininity, which is distinctive from American femininity and which is characterised by a profound connection to the unspoiled simplicity of the natural world and a commitment to traditional and conservative patriarchal values. Negra and Barton have both identified cases in which the potentially threatening dimension to transgressive or challenging representations of women on screen was mitigated by the Irishness of either the character or the actress playing her. According to Negra, for example, the Hollywood career of Colleen Moore, who was often dubbed “the Irish flapper” in publicity materials, reassured American audiences throughout the 1920s when traditional American femininity was in crisis due to the emergence of the “New Woman”, a figure who embodied freedom from repressive, patriarchal ideals regarding women and their role in

society.⁶⁷ Moore was a prominent proponent of the bobbed hairstyle which became an iconic image of female emancipation in American popular culture in the 1920s and yet the figure of the “Irish colleen” was a strong constituent element of both her on-screen and off-screen personas.⁶⁸ Negra argues that Moore’s association with the “Irish colleen” was compounded by her frequent roles in wish-fulfilment Cinderella narratives so that she ultimately stood not for the empowerment of the “New Woman” but “for a reversion to dependent, passive femininity”.⁶⁹ She believes that Irishness was uniquely positioned to assist Hollywood filmmakers in their promotion of a conservative feminine ideal because “Irishness as a category was more recuperable within the Hollywood ideological system than were, for instance, Polish or Italian ethnic identities which offered no ‘safe’ stereotypes comparable to the figure of the Irish Colleen”.⁷⁰

Barton identifies the importance of the off-screen personas of Maureen O’Sullivan and Maureen O’Hara as “Irish colleens” to the success of their Hollywood acting careers, even though they rarely played Irish characters. In the case of O’Sullivan, Barton considers the significance of her off-screen Irishness in her recurring on-screen role as English explorer Jane Porter in a series of Tarzan adventure films produced by Metro Goldwyn Mayer in the 1930s and 1940s.⁷¹ She concludes that MGM saw in her “a kind of idealised Englishness which was reflected in her off-screen persona as, ironically, a good Catholic Irish woman” and, thus, “they could create a character whose sexuality was mitigated by her innocence

⁶⁷ Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London: Routledge, 2001), 25.

⁶⁸ For a comprehensive examination of the positioning of Colleen Moore as an “Irish colleen” throughout her cinematic career and its ideological implications, see Negra, *Off-White Hollywood*, 25 – 54.

⁶⁹ Negra, *Off-White Hollywood*, 52.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ See *Tarzan the Ape Man* (WS van Dyke, USA, 1932), *Tarzan and his Mate* (Cedric Gibbons, USA, 1934), *Tarzan Escapes* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1936), *Tarzan Finds A Son!* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1939), *Tarzan’s Secret Treasure* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1941) and *Tarzan’s New York Adventure* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1942).

and who subsequently could convince as a demure housewife".⁷² She says that O'Sullivan's performances as the sexually-fulfilled Jane indulging in an erotic jungle fantasy with her ape-man Tarzan convey "utter guilelessness". This became intertwined in the minds of the audience with O'Sullivan's on-screen Englishness and off-screen Irishness to such an extent that the films' representation of femininity is rendered unchallenging as a result.⁷³ Similarly, in the case of O'Hara, Barton claims that her off-screen Irishness was vital to the success of her cinematic persona as an empowered and active pirate queen in a series of swashbuckling adventures films that she made with Twentieth Century Fox and RKO Pictures throughout the 1940s.⁷⁴ Barton agrees with Jeffrey Richards that audiences felt able to enjoy and be excited by O'Hara's on-screen, dominatrix-like behaviour, before her character is inevitably punished and pacified by her male counterpart, because her off-screen persona as "a good Catholic Irish woman"⁷⁵ allowed for "vicarious participation in the heroine's escapades that were marked from the outset as safely unreal".⁷⁶ Whilst Catholicism is also implicated, it is true to say that Irishness was being employed in the cases of both O'Sullivan and O'Hara to quell the potential outrage or unsettling of the audience because of the association in the popular American consciousness of Irish femininity with

⁷² Barton gives as evidence of the popular perception of Maureen O'Sullivan as "a good Catholic Irish woman" the fact that, in 1947, she received the annual St Patrick's Day presentation from the Catholic Film and Radio Review, awarded to an actor or actress of Irish lineage, eminent in the profession, who have in their public and private lives manifested a devotion to Irish ideals as set forth in the Constitution of Éire". See Barton, *Acting Irish in Hollywood*, 80.

⁷³ See *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁴ See *Ibid.*, 98. The films starring Maureen O'Hara being referred to by Barton here in particular are *The Black Swan* (Henry King, USA, 1942), *The Spanish Main* (Frank Borzage, USA, 1945) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (Richard Wallace, USA, 1947).

⁷⁵ Barton cites examples of references in the publicity materials for O'Hara's swashbuckling adventures to her Irish-Catholic background such as "She is in her own Hays office. She balked at taking a bath in a tub for a movie scene because 'my folks in Ireland would think I had turned out all bad'. She has kept a strict promise to her mother never to pose for leg art. She is strict about the negligees she wears for the movies". See Barton, *Acting Irish in Hollywood*, 97.

⁷⁶ Jeffrey Richards, *Swordsmen of the Screen: From Douglas Fairbanks to Michael York* (New York: Routledge, 1977), 38.

the unspoiled simplicity of the natural world and traditional and conservative patriarchal values. This association featured heavily in the characterisation of the leading female characters in the Irish-themed films which emerged from the Hollywood studio system in the immediate post-war years. As Stephanie Rains acknowledges, Anne Baxter's Nora in *The Luck of the Irish*, Ann Blyth's Conn in *Top o' the Morning* and Maureen O'Hara's Mary-Kate in *The Quiet Man* are all firmly in the "Irish colleen" model and are figured as "pretty but natural, outgoing but traditional and passionate but sensible".⁷⁷

This chapter will now explore how Katie O'Gill belongs in this category of post-war "Irish colleens" because, just like her counterparts in the three aforementioned films, she is "pretty but natural, outgoing but traditional and passionate but sensible" and she is characterised throughout the film by her naturalness and her domesticity. *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top O' The Morning* and *The Quiet Man* all notably feature sequences in which female characters are deliberately figured as creatures of the natural world and these images are reminiscent of sequences from films which starred Colleen Moore in the 1920s. Negra discusses, in particular, the scene from a film of 1922 with an assimilation narrative called *Come On Over*⁷⁸ in which Moore's character Moyna Killiea is introduced as she waits to bid farewell to her soon-to-emigrate boyfriend Shane:

When we first see Moyna, she is sitting in a glen; as she waits for Shane she roams the cliffs and hills of Lisdoonvarna in sequences designed to endow Irish femininity with elemental, natural simplicity.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 154.

⁷⁸ See *Come on Over* (Alfred E Green, USA, 1922).

⁷⁹ Negra, *Off-White Hollywood*, 41.

Scenes from all three of the post-war Irish-themed films being discussed here are tellingly reminiscent of this scene from *Come On Over* and most especially the iconic example from *The Quiet Man* in which Sean sees Mary-Kate for the first time herding sheep through a glen, which is mentioned by Negra in her discussion of Moore's first appearance in *Come On Over*. As discussed earlier in this chapter, scholars often consider *The Quiet Man* to be a film which foregrounds its own nature as a constructed diasporic fantasy and, certainly, the film appears to be gesturing towards the constructedness of its portrayal of Irish femininity as Sean responds to the sight of Mary-Kate by asking "Hey, is that real? She couldn't be!" This endowment of Irish femininity with elemental, natural simplicity is most strongly present in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* in a scene in which Katie emerges from behind trees as though she is a creature who inhabits such surroundings and, also, in the film's signature song "Pretty Irish Girl", composed by Oliver Wallace, which is heard four times, once instrumentally and thrice accompanied by screenwriter Lawrence Edward Watkin's lyrics.

References to the natural world are scattered throughout Watkin's lyrics of "Pretty Irish Girl" and images of seagulls flying over heather, fishermen unfurling crimson sails, dew on hayricks, blarney-speaking geese and Gaelic-singing thrushes are proposed as evidence of the beauty of the natural world in Ireland. The correlation is then explicitly drawn between Irish femininity and the unspoiled simplicity of Irish nature:

Oh the earth is filled with beauty and it's gathered all together
In the form and face and dainty grace of a pretty Irish girl
Oh she is my dear, my darling one, her eyes so sparkling full of fun
No other, no other can match the likes of her!

The fact that Katie is the “pretty Irish girl” of the song’s lyrics seems obvious to the viewer not only because all lyrical renditions of the song appear in scenes which are concerned with the courtship of Katie and Michael McBride but also because she is the only young female character featured in the film. The scene in which Michael sings “Pretty Irish Girl” whilst thinking of Katie and simultaneously scything on the wild and overgrown estate of Lord Fitzpatrick bears a particular patriarchal resonance when considered in terms of Patrick D Murphy’s application of ecofeminist theories in his discussion of a wide variety of films produced and released by Walt Disney Productions.⁸⁰ It is Murphy’s contention that from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937) onwards, Disney’s films often present a world in which men rather than humans are the universal centre and are, therefore, entitled to dominate both women and nature if and when they see fit. Murphy expresses concern about what he perceives as the potential effect of such films on their implied child audience as, according to him, “in viewing *Snow White*, young boys may be assured that when all is right with the world, women and nature remain ready to serve them”.⁸¹ In the relevant scene in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, Michael scythes with great skill and confidence and is, therefore, shown to exert an impressive level of mastery over nature. With an explicit correlation drawn between nature and femininity in this Irish context, the implication of Michael’s ultimate and inevitable mastery over Katie seems clear. For her part, Katie is shown in a later scene to be singing “Pretty Irish Girl” independently of Michael from whom she originally learned the lyrics. This can be read as representing her own

⁸⁰ See Patrick D Murphy, “‘The Whole Wide World Was Scrubbed Clean’: The Androcentric World of Denatured Disney” in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1995), 125 – 136.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

internalisation and acceptance of the type of Irish femininity which the song and its original singer Michael Herald and promote.

Stephanie Rains' justification for identifying Nora, Conn and Mary-Kate as profoundly traditional "Irish colleens" in *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top O' The Morning* and *The Quiet Man* is that she believes that they are all immediately characterised by their domesticity through their introduction into the narratives as housekeepers for male relatives, be they single brothers or widowed fathers.⁸² When the Irish-American male protagonists Stephen, Joe and Sean return to the "homeland" from the diasporic space and meet, fall in love with and marry Nora, Conn and Mary-Kate respectively, all that is required of their brides is a minor transition as they leave one domestic space and enter another. They are thoroughly prepared by their previous experiences for the roles of wife and mother and they are never seen to aspire to any other roles which would necessitate them operating outside of their domestic spaces. Rains claims that the traditional and conservative values associated with Irish femininity manifest themselves through the main female characters' commitment to domesticity in these films because of the post-war context in which the films were produced and released. In Rains' view, "after the rigours of war, it appears, the Irish-American hero had earned the reward of nurture from a profoundly more domestic sexual partner".⁸³ She also suggests that in the immediate post-war era in America in which women were keen to continue enjoying and benefitting from the greater social and economic freedom which had been thrust upon them by the necessities of war, the domestic Irish colleen represented "an

⁸² For Stephanie Rains' dissection of the characterisations of Nora, Conn and Mary-Kate in *The Luck of the Irish* (1948), *Top o' the Morning* (1949) and *The Quiet Man* (1952) respectively, see Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 153 – 158.

⁸³ Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 154.

imaginative retreat to Ireland as a source of non-threatening femininity”.⁸⁴ In the case of Katie O’Gill, she is characterised throughout the film by her efficient negotiation of the domestic space of the O’Gill family home in the gatehouse on Lord Fitzpatrick’s estate. She is first seen churning butter and performs various domestic duties impeccably throughout the film, impressing Michael in particular with her culinary prowess which leads him to flatter her with the line of dialogue “Well, now aren’t you the clever girl?” Just like the other post-war “Irish colleens” discussed here, her readiness for a domestic life as wife and mother has been honed by circumstances which have necessitated her performing the role of housekeeper for a male relative, in this case her widowed father, Darby. Her readiness is signalled early in the film during Katie’s conversation with Sheelah Sugrue:

SHEELAH: There’s little that’s lacking here unless it would be a man to cook for.

KATIE: I have me father to cook for.

SHEELAH: So you do, so you do but I meant a man of your own!

A key element of the domesticity of these post-war Irish colleens is, according to Stephanie Rains, their aptitude for maternal nurturing⁸⁵ and it is clearly shown in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* that Katie is a maternally nurturing presence in the life of her father, Darby.

When Katie’s situation is considered in terms on Luce Irigaray’s argument about the circulation of women in a patriarchal society as the commodities of men, it is clear that she has been rendered a highly valuable commodity indeed by her aptitude for maternal nurturing.⁸⁶ The fact that Katie is viewed in this society as a commodity is signalled very early in the film by the machinations of Sheelah Sugrue who wishes to accumulate material

⁸⁴ Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 158.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See Luce Irigaray, “Women on the Market”, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 799 – 811.

wealth for her son, Pony, and who identifies Darby's job, Darby's home and Darby's daughter as the three main prizes to be won. The film itself chooses to reward Michael McBride, the heroic counterpart to her villainous son, with everything that she has coveted for Pony, thus reinforcing and validating this society's commodification of Katie. According to Irigaray's theory, a woman ceases to be a valuable commodity once she becomes a mother because her essential, reproductive role in the functioning of society undermines the patriarchal social order and she, therefore, must be enclosed as private property and excluded from exchange.⁸⁷ Irigaray's subsequent statement that "the virginal woman, on the other hand, is pure exchange value"⁸⁸ reveals why Katie is such a valuable commodity. Not only is she a virginal woman but, through her maternal nurturing of her father Darby, she has been implicitly performing the role of mother, which is required for a patriarchal society to function properly, without actually being one. The relationship between Katie and Darby is constructed as similar to that between a mother and child as a result of the representation of Darby as, amongst other things, a whimsical and fanciful daydreamer and, therefore, somewhat childish. Katie is shown to be exasperated by Darby's more immature and irresponsible behaviour yet she is also fiercely protective of him and extremely conscious of his vulnerability and, therefore, it is not unreasonable to identify a distinctive maternal aspect to Katie's devotion to and nurturing of her father. In this regard, this central relationship of the film is reminiscent of the central father-daughter relationship between Finian McLonergan and his only daughter Sharon in the previously mentioned 1947 Broadway musical, *Finian's Rainbow*. Whilst a father-daughter relationship was central to the Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions from its earliest story treatments in

⁸⁷ See Irigaray, "Women on the Market", 807.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

1945, Finian and Sharon's relationship closely mirrors that between Darby and Katie as it appears in Watkin's re-drafted screenplay of 1957. Their interactions with and attitudes towards each other are determined by the death of Finian's wife and Sharon's mother but also by Finian's whimsicality and childishness which means that Sharon is required to adopt the roles of surrogate domestic partner and devoted maternal nurturer, just as Katie is in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*.

The death of the mother in a central family situation is not only a recurring trope in mainstream American films of the immediate post-war era which are set in Ireland but also, as Lynda Haas has explored in detail, features frequently in a wide variety of live-action and animated films by Walt Disney Productions.⁸⁹ Haas identifies this recurring trope as a patriarchal narrative convention which functions to rob the mother of any agency and which simultaneously sentimentalises and silences her⁹⁰ and yet it appears to also have another important patriarchal function in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. Suggesting the film's indebtedness to previous representations of femininity in Irish-themed mainstream American films as well as in other Disney products in this regard, the use of the dead mother trope in the case of this film allows Katie to familiarise herself thoroughly with domesticity and prepare for her inevitable roles as wife and mother. Also, when Luce's Irigaray's theory on the commodification of women in patriarchal societies is applied to Katie's situation in this film, it is also true to say that the death of her mother has allowed Katie to increase her own market value and desirability exponentially. Steven Watts discusses the maternal nurturing and domesticity of female Disney characters, which he says was particularly

⁸⁹ See Lynda Haas, "'Eighty-Six the Mother': Murder, Matricide and Good Mothers" in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1995), 193 – 211.

⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, 196.

prominent from the late 1940s to the early 1960s but which he decontextualizes from the dead mother trope. Rather he believes that this era's insistence upon maternal nurturing and domesticity is accounted for by Walt Disney's wish to promote the idea that, despite the threat and uncertainty of the Cold War, obstacles to happy family life could be kept to a bare minimum by "sustained virtuous effort".⁹¹ According to Watts, gender formulations helped considerably in promoting this idea and this explains the construction of idealised female characters as "self-sacrificing moral instructors, skilled domestic managers and compassionate caregivers".⁹² This description can be convincingly applied to Katie O'Gill. Katie's naturalness and domesticity have thus far been discussed most closely in relation to representations of Irish women in post-war mainstream American cinema. It should be acknowledged, however, that Katie O'Gill is a recognisable Disney female character who shares many salient qualities with leading and supporting female characters from the company's live-action and animated output of the period. It has been shown that the correlation between nature and femininity, the dead mother trope and the construction of female characters as "skilled domestic managers and compassionate care-givers", which all feature in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, have been identified by Patrick D Murphy, Lynda Haas and Steven Watts as major Disney characteristics. It may be that, whilst her chief characteristics have been explored here in the context of post-war, cinematic "Irish colleens", Katie would have been characterised in a very similar manner if she had been a non-Irish character in a Disney product of this era.

⁹¹ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 329.

⁹² *Ibid.*

It is extremely problematic, however, to attempt to apply to Katie another prominent aspect of the formulation of contemporaneous Disney females, which is identified by Watts in the following passage:

His heroines, clearly dealing from a position of moral strength in the domestic realm, were.....also frequently assertive and individualist as they defended and promoted their own interests. In Disney's films, women certainly presided over the family sphere but they were not afraid to venture into the public realm when duty called.⁹³

Conversely, Katie's progression throughout the narrative suggests that she must learn not to be assertive or individualist and she is ultimately revealed as an emphatically conservative figure who renounces the public sphere and accepts and embraces the dominance of men and her own domesticity. In this regard, Katie is more closely associated not with contemporaneous Disney females but with "Irish colleens" of post-war mainstream American films whose conservatism is signalled for Stephanie Rains by the superficiality of their assertive individualism, which she refers to as their "feistiness".⁹⁴ Martin MacLoone also refers to the superficial "feistiness" of these "Irish colleen" characters in mainstream American cinema of the immediate post-war era and he claims that it led to the emergence of "a paradoxical stereotype of Irish womanhood" who was "a strong-willed, independent woman nevertheless committed to conservative social values".⁹⁵ She may initially appear strong-willed and independent and yet, as the narrative progresses, efforts to construct her as such are increasingly employed to disguise a genuine lack of agency or empowerment on her part which is reinforced by the narrative's conclusion by an assertion of her commitment to conservative social values. In her assessment of the most prominent and

⁹³ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 329.

⁹⁴ See Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 154.

⁹⁵ Martin MacLoone, *Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 50.

popular post-war “Irish colleen”, *The Quiet Man’s* Mary-Kate Danaher, Elizabeth Butler-Cullingford reveals the crucial points at which the narrative of that particular film follows this pattern. Whilst Mary-Kate initially complies with her society’s expectations of her by marrying Sean Thornton, she may subsequently be perceived as a transgressive figure when she refuses to consummate her marriage until she is granted her dowry by her intransigent brother. Butler-Cullingford observes a peculiar trajectory in the character of Mary-Kate after she finally receives her dowry, however, as “her momentary possession of her ‘rights’ restores her self-respect, but the only use she makes of her liberation is to return home as ‘the woman of the house’ and cook Thornton’s supper”.⁹⁶ As she allows herself to be firmly re-enclosed in the domestic family hierarchy by the conclusion of *The Quiet Man*, it seems clear that Mary-Kate undermines her strong-willed and independent actions by her subsequent behaviour.

The very similar manner in which Katie acts in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* is evident in two sharply contrasting scenes in which a confrontation takes place between her two main suitors, Michael McBride and Pony Sugrue. In the first scene, Katie and Michael are enjoying an afternoon of courting when they are interrupted by a characteristically aggressive Pony whose efforts to provoke Michael into fighting with him appear to have been successful when Michael lays down his jacket and bears his fists. Before any fighting can commence, Katie intervenes on Michael’s behalf and shouts at Pony “If you lay a finger on him, I’ll never speak to you again!” at which point Pony relents and allows both Katie and Michael to pass by without further incident, although not before smiling smugly at what he perceives as his dominance of the situation. An affronted Michael chastises Katie for

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Butler-Cullingford, *Ireland’s Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish literature and Popular Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 169.

emasculating him by intervening on his behalf, to which Katie justifies her actions by unapologetically asserting “Pony Sugue would have killed you!” The second scene is the confrontation between Michael and Pony in the Rathcullen Arms at the film’s conclusion during which, as discussed extensively in this chapter already, Michael finally beats Pony into submission much to the delight of the assembled Rathcullen residents. Katie is conspicuous by her absence in this scene but it is revealed in the next scene that she has been waiting dutifully by the horse and cart outside the Rathcullen Arms. Her decision to not even be present during the confrontation signifies the extent to which she is now submitting to the superiority of Michael in defeating their nemesis Pony and securing success and happiness for them both in public matters. Katie’s radical re-appraisal of her own role and purpose between the first confrontation scene and the second confrontation scene may be accounted for by her traumatic near-death experience which took place in the intervening period and by her apparent interpretation of who was to blame for the incident which caused it.

The incident takes place after Katie furiously rows with Michael following her discovery through Sheelah’s machinations that she and Darby could potentially be evicted from the gatehouse because of Michael. In her rage, she hits Michael across the face and recklessly ignores his protestations about collecting the O’Gills’ horse Clayopathra, which has been bewitched by the Little People and has wandered onto Knocknasheega. Michael warns her that, as night-time is fast approaching, it would be dangerous to venture onto Knocknasheega to retrieve Clayopathra and, after stubbornly insisting on acting against his advice and independently of him, Katie proves Michael right when she falls whilst climbing the mountain, contracts a life-threatening fever and attracts the attention of a sinister

incarnation of the banshee. After Darby secures his daughter's future health and happiness from an equally kind and cunning King Brian, Katie awakens from her fever "fine and sony like a baby woken from sleep" but, also, with an altogether different demeanour from the one to which the audience has become accustomed throughout the film. It is suggested by Watkin's screenplay, Janet Murno's performance and Winston C Hoch's cinematography in the scene in which Katie awakens that she believes that she was the architect of her own misfortune by disobeying Michael and that she interprets her near-death experience as chastisement for her strong-willed and independent actions. Katie's face in this scene betrays feelings of contriteness and mortification regarding her behaviour and the camera angles chosen for the reconciliation between her and Michael as she lies in bed and he leans over her emphasise Katie's vulnerable and weakened position. When Katie criticises herself for her temper, Michael replies "well, I like a lively girl!" and yet she is characterised in the film's closing scenes not by liveliness or "feistiness" but as cautious and hesitant in her general demeanour and as submissive and passive in her relationship with Michael, a prime example of this being her choice to wait outside whilst Michael confronts Pony. The viewer is left to assume that Katie will henceforth decline from asserting herself in public spaces such as the Rathcullen Arms and rather retreat into domesticity as Michael's wife and mother to his children, as well as continuing to care for her father, albeit in much less assertive manner.

Regarding the two other significant human female characters in the film, Sheelah Sugrue and Molly Malloy, there is a direct correlation drawn between the extent to which they embrace domestic conformity and subservience to men and the extent to which they are viewed as sympathetic and admirable by the film's other characters and by the film

itself. Molly is only ever seen being servile, whether she is dutifully and cheerfully working behind the bar at the Rathcullen Arms, taking orders and instructions from publican Tom Kerrigan, or gravely and conscientiously nursing Katie through her illness in the O’Gill family home. Whilst she is not figured as an “Irish colleen” character, the actress playing her, Nora O’Mahoney, visibly being in early middle age, she displays a superficial “feistiness” reminiscent of the “Irish colleen” as she looks disapprovingly at Pony Sugrue but remains silent and leaves it to the male characters around her to chastise him both verbally and physically for his villainous behaviour. Molly appears to be very popular within the community and, in one scene, Darby speaks very highly of her to King Brian Connors and wishes for her to have a crock of gold. In contrast, Darby clearly views Sheelah Sugrue altogether differently, looking at her suspiciously across the yard in front of the gatehouse in one scene, whilst, in another scene, he advises Katie to wear her holy medal as protection when in Sheelah’s company for fear that she may be a witch. Sheelah is not characterised by her dutiful demeanour but rather by her restlessness and ruthlessness in her efforts to secure for her son Pony a better social and economic position in Rathcullen as Darby’s replacement as Lord Fitzpatrick’s caretaker. Whilst Molly is only ever seen performing her duties in the Rathcullen Arms or in the O’Gill family home, Sheelah is seen in various different locations and never in her own domestic space as she schemes on behalf of her son. Her antagonism in the film’s narrative manifests itself through her lack of passivity, submission or domesticity and the fact that she is an incongruous figure within the community is signalled in the opening sequence as everyone around her adopts a leisurely pace and she, conversely, adopts a hurried pace as she scurries along on her way to manipulate Katie as part of her grand scheme.

It is confirmed by a profile of the actress Estelle Winwood, which was drawn up at Walt Disney Productions amongst other publicity materials for the film, that her character Sheelah Sugrue was based on a similarly scheming and duplicitous older female character in Kavanagh's tales, the spy for the Good People, Sheila Maguire.⁹⁷ As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, no female character in Kavanagh's tales is presented as entirely villainous or antagonistic or unsympathetic and yet they are in the film in the two instances in which female characters created by Kavanagh have direct cinematic counterparts. Disney's Sheelah Sugrue lacks the redeeming qualities attributed to Kavanagh's Sheila Maguire who, in a certain amount of her appearances in Kavanagh's tales, is shown to earnestly offer advice and support to her Ballinderg neighbours as they confront certain supernatural elements. Similarly, the sinister incarnation of the banshee in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* is clearly based on Kavanagh's characterisation of her in "The Banshee's Comb". Nevertheless, in Kavanagh's tale, she is a more complex, ambiguous figure who is not defeated by Darby and King Brian but rather strikes a bargain with them which brings their quarrel to an end. The banshee of the film, who never speaks but only wails, is not granted the humanising, redeeming final scene that is granted to the banshee in "The Banshee's Comb", in which, through her conversation with Darby and King Brian, her complexities are revealed. It is interesting to consider the representation of the banshee in the context of the film's director Robert Stevenson's career, particularly two of his later

⁹⁷ In an actor's profile on Estelle Winwood, which was prepared as part of the film's publicity materials during post-production in the autumn of 1958, Winwood's character is described as "a spy for the Little People" and as "Darby's bete noire". As neither of these descriptions accurately reflect her character in the film yet do accurately reflect the recurring character of Sheila Maguire in Kavanagh's literary fairy tales, it can reasonably be assumed that this literary character was the original basis upon which Sheelah Sugrue was formed by Watkin in his screenplay. For the actor's profile on Estelle Winwood, see the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

successes with Disney, *Mary Poppins* (1964) and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971).⁹⁸ Whilst the former film condemns the supernatural agency of women, the latter two films celebrate it with female characters who are not relegated to the role of silenced supporting villain as the banshee is but rather are the film's central protagonists. Mary Poppins in *Mary Poppins* and Eglantine Price in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* are both shown to use their supernatural agency admirably as they reconcile an increasingly estranged family and prevent the Nazis from invading Britain during World War Two respectively. Douglas Brode believes that these characters are constructed as "positive yet peculiar forces living peaceably in the world"⁹⁹ and yet, whilst their peculiarity may still be emphasised, the positivity with which they are portrayed represents a definite departure from the earlier banshee. This is despite the fact that the banshee is ultimately a positive force in Kavanagh's "The Banshee's Comb" just as Mary and Eglantine are in the source works by PL Travers and Mary Norton in which they feature.¹⁰⁰

In another contradiction with its later adaptation, the female characters in Kavanagh's source material who exclusively operate in the domestic space do not passively submit to the will of male characters. Their assertive autonomy is not superficially rendered or ultimately sacrificed to the patriarchal notion of the rightful submission of the wife to the husband and the refusal of the married female characters to behave submissively is entirely justified in Kavanagh's representation by their superiority in wisdom and judgement. The progression of the increasingly passive and submissive Katie O'Gill through the narrative of *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* is incongruous with both the source material and other

⁹⁸ See *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (Robert Stevenson, USA/UK, 1971).

⁹⁹ Brode, *From Walt to Woodstock*, 173.

¹⁰⁰ See PL Travers, *Mary Poppins* (London: Harper Collins, 1934) and Mary Norton, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (London: Orion Books, 1947).

other female live-action Disney protagonists. It should be remembered, for example, that, the year following the film's release, Disney began an extremely profitable six-year association with child actress Hayley Mills, during which time both on-screen and off-screen personas were carefully crafted for Mills in which she was figured as "a compelling portrait of the modern female ideal"¹⁰¹ which was precipitated by what were perceived as the necessities of the Cold War era. Beginning with the 1960 adaptation of Eleanor H Porter's *Pollyanna*, Steven Watts reflects upon Mills' association with Disney by saying that the recurring character type that she was given to play was "a domestic moralist who bravely ventures out to become an active agent in society."¹⁰² Furthermore, this image of Mills was reinforced by publicity materials which characterised her as "a combination of domestic zeal and worldly engagement".¹⁰³ Katie O'Gill's contrasting retreat from the world is difficult to comprehend when considered in this context and yet, much like the representation of class in the film, the representation of women is easier to comprehend when considered in the context not of other live-action Disney films of the era but of its animated ones, particularly those constructed using the Disney fairy-tale model. This model clearly promoted a patriarchal ideology and this may be partly explained by the literary source material which was being referred to when the model was first established as this material often sought to uphold the patriarchy. Jack Zipes locates these fairy-tale films' celebration and reinforcement of patriarchal assumptions in the centrality of the work of the Brothers Grimm in the construction of the Disney fairy-tale model combined with Walt Disney's own adherence and commitment to the patriarchal notions which the Brothers Grimm

¹⁰¹ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 332.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 333.

incorporated into their versions of fairy tales.¹⁰⁴ In her analysis of principal female characters in animated feature films from the “classic” Disney era from 1937 to 1967, Amy Davis reveals that female characters from films which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model are much more passive and have much less agency than female characters from films which do not and suggests that this is because active, empowered heroines in literary fairy tales are “not typical”.¹⁰⁵

It is true to say, however, that Disney films which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model perpetuate patriarchal assumptions even when the literary source material from which they are adapted attempts to undermine these assumptions. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan’s discuss this exact issue regarding Walt Disney Productions’ 1953 adaptation of JM Barrie’s 1911 novel *Peter and Wendy*.¹⁰⁶ Cartmell and Whelehan believe that Barrie undermines patriarchal assumptions about families and society at the conclusion of his novel as it is asserted that women through Wendy’s line of genealogy continue to progress and change and carry the weight and responsibility in their dealings with Peter Pan with evident ease.¹⁰⁷ They also comment upon how patriarchy appears to be reaching a crisis point with the father Mr Darling “being conveyed to and from his kennel, as self-inflicted punishment for having made a misjudgement that placed his family in jeopardy”.¹⁰⁸ It is clear from the exploration in the first chapter of this thesis of Kavanagh’s representation of women that several of her tales also undermine patriarchal assumptions about families and society in a similarly subtle manner. According to Cartmell and Whelehan, the

¹⁰⁴ See Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell”, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Davis, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches*, 96.

¹⁰⁶ See JM Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911).

¹⁰⁷ See Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, *Screen Adaptation, Impure Cinema* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 63.

¹⁰⁸ See *Ibid.*, 64.

conclusion of *Peter and Wendy* is in stark contrast with the conclusion of Disney's 1953 adaptation in which Mr Darling is not subjected to the doghouse; instead, he reconciles his differences with Wendy and he is given the final word which leaves the viewer "with the feeling that patriarchy has been restored and that the women are now in good hands".¹⁰⁹ They conclude that "as the Barrie version flirts with a matriarchal conclusion, the Disney version provides us with a decidedly patriarchal ending."¹¹⁰ A similar statement could be made regarding the relationship between Kavanagh's tales and the Disney film adaptation, although it could be argued that *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* is much more vociferous in its condemnation of active, empowered women than *Peter Pan* or, indeed, any of the other Disney films of this era which conform to the Disney fairy-tale model. In the film's especially patriarchal ending, Katie O'Gill, following her traumatic near-death experience for which she blames herself and her temper, is reconciled to her position in her relationship with Michael as society will allow it and adopts a more passive and subservient role in her final scenes in the film. Even Sheelah Sugrue is silenced by her son Pony who, in his exasperation at the failure of her constant machinations, tells her "Hold your whist – I'll have no more from you!" Whilst they are similar to other Disney women in many ways, the evidence suggests that ultimately these female characters are dominated, domesticated and silenced to this degree not because they are Disney women but rather because they are Irish women.

¹⁰⁹ Cartmell and Whelehan, *Screen Adaptation, Impure Cinema*, 64.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Although *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* is an adaptation of two collections of literary fairy tales by Herminie Templeton Kavanagh, the film’s representation of the Irish people is not only influenced by Kavanagh’s work but also by the established representation of Irish characters in mainstream American cinema and by standard practices of representation at Walt Disney Productions. This means that Disney’s representation and Kavanagh’s representation diverge considerably from each other in major aspects and, indeed, it is only in one major aspect that both representations exactly mirror each other. The film presents the Irish people as living in an unspoiled, pre-modern, rural idyll just like the tales from which it is adapted and yet the perpetuation of cinematic conventions relating to both Irish characters and Disney characters serves to undermine Kavanagh’s influence elsewhere. The tales and the film conform to the figure of the “roguish hero” and yet, whilst Kavanagh largely divests her “roguish heroes” of the stereotypes of Irishness with which they remained associated, Disney reinforces them to the extent to which they dominate the characterisation of Darby O’Gill and several other characters. Kavanagh celebrates the noble Irish peasantry and the cause of Irish nationalism in her tales, whereas Disney promotes elitist and colonial assumptions as the film’s protagonists triumph through the social stratification of their Irish community founded upon associations with the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. The stereotypical Irish traits in the film may be accounted for by mainstream American cinema, particularly of the post-World War Two era, and the colonial social hierarchy may be accounted for by the Disney fairy tale model and yet the film’s celebration of feminine beauty, passivity and domesticity seems to be informed by a combination of both, if predominantly the former. The appropriation of a prominent cultural construction

of Irish identity in the figure of the “Irish colleen” is certainly contrary to Kavanagh’s celebration of Irish women who are engaged, active and empowered and it is in the representation of women that Kavanagh and Disney diverge most sharply. Kavanagh’s tales of the early twentieth century privilege Irish-American readers and Irish-themed mainstream American films from before 1959 privilege Irish-American viewers and yet Disney addressed a more generalised audience with the attitudes and ideologies of its films. Therefore, it should be remembered that, out of three major influences on the film’s representation of the Irish people, only two promote an Irish-American view whereas the third promotes a Disney view.

Chapter Four

Introduction

The disparity between how the fairies from Irish folklore are represented in the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh and how they are represented in the feature film adaptation by Walt Disney Productions is signalled by the fact that the title of Kavanagh's first collection, *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*, was changed to *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* for the film. The change in terminology from "Good People" to "Little People" and every other major aspect of the film's representation of these Little People is best understood when the specific audience which was being targeted by Disney for the film is taken in consideration. It has already been established in the introduction of this thesis that Disney films sought a dual implied viewership of children and adults but, in the case of this Irish-themed project, this viewership was not simply American but Irish-American more specifically. A document which was circulated around the publicity department at Disney in anticipation of the film's release corroborates this assertion about the film's target audience:

The publicity campaign supporting the release of *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* will be conducted through newspapers, magazines, wire services and any TV show, as heretofore. But unlike previous features, *Darby O'Gill* will have a ready-made market potential of twenty million Irish-Americans. Special attention will be paid to these people with shamrocks in their eyes. Their numbers alone could carry the picture to big box-office earnings.¹

This document is referring to the marketing campaign surrounding the film and yet it is highly likely that this awareness of audience infiltrated the making of the film itself and it is

¹ See "*Darby O'Gill and the Little People – Idea Campaign*", the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

no more conspicuous than in the representation of the Little People. This representation reflects an Irish-American understanding and appreciation of Irish folklore and culture and it prioritises those viewers operating in the diasporic space of Irish America or, in the language of theorists of cultural hybridity, the “third space” of Irish America.² The notion of cultural hybridity is relevant in this instance because the representation of the Little People is not determined by the perceptions of Irish viewers or American viewers but rather of Irish-American viewers, which is an altogether different prospect.

As pioneering theorists of cultural hybridity such as Homi Bhabha viewed the topic from a postcolonial perspective, they tend to consider cultural hybridity in wholly positive terms as “a privileged means of resistance and subversion with a strong liberatory potential for the colonized or subaltern subjects”.³ Amar Acheraïou believes that this view represents a refusal to acknowledge the ambivalence of cultural hybridity and, whilst accepting its capacity for transgression and emancipation, he says that these aforementioned theorists fail to acknowledge the variety of circumstances in which hybridity has occurred historically.⁴ The cultural hybridity that determined the representation of the Little People in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* did not occur as the result of the imposition of the culture of a colonizing power onto the culture of colonized subjects but rather it occurred as the result of migration from a “homeland” into a diasporic space. Stuart Hall argues in his work on cultural hybridity that it is an evitable consequence of a certain type of migration, such as that which took place from Ireland to the United States of America during the twentieth century:

² The term “third space” is used by Homi Bhabha in his seminal exploration of cultural hybridity. See *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 211.

³ Amar Acheraïou, *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 104.

⁴ *Ibid.*

There can, therefore, be no simple 'return' or 'recovery' of the ancestral past which is not re-experienced through the categories of the present: no base for creative enunciation in a simple reproduction of traditional forms which are not transformed by the technologies and the identities of the present.⁵

Ien Ang pursues this further by suggesting not only that cultural hybridity is inevitable in diasporic situations but also that it always has negative implications for those operating in the diasporic space or "third space" from which the new cultural position emanates and this is because it involves an "unsettling of identities".⁶ He argues that "the very condition of inbetweenness can never be a question of simply shaking hands, of happy, harmonious merger and fusion" and, thus, it is "riven with potential miscommunication and intercultural conflict".⁷ Whilst the difficulties engendered by cultural hybridity to which Ang refers are mitigated in colonial situations by the means of resistance that it bestows upon colonized, subaltern subjects, they are not mitigated in this manner in the non-colonial, Irish-American context. The representation of the Little People in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and the process through which this representation was eventually settled upon affirm both the inevitability of cultural hybridity in diasporic situations and the intercultural conflicts engendered by cultural hybridity. These issues relating to cultural hybridity will inform the discussion throughout the fourth and final chapter of this thesis of the specifically Irish-American context in which the Little People were represented in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*.

⁵ Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities" in *"Race", Culture and Difference*, eds. James Donald and Ali Rattansi (London: The Open University Press, 1992), 258.

⁶ Ien Ang, "Together-In-Difference: Beyond Diaspora into Hybridity", *Asian Studies Review*, 27 (2), 141 – 154, 147.

⁷ Ibid.

The first section of this chapter will chart the process through which Disney's Irish-themed project became an adaptation of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales because, it will argue, these tales offered a solution to the problem of how the Little People should be represented in the film. It will reflect upon the alternative representation which was discarded in favour of Kavanagh's representation and will analyse why the latter proved so attractive to the screenwriters and executives at Walt Disney Productions. It will also show how the film's final representation of the Little People adheres closely to Kavanagh's conception of the Good People whilst also diverging in certain major aspects in respect of the target Irish-American audience. The second section of this chapter will acknowledge that the Little People were represented not only in the film itself but also in its extensive and sophisticated marketing campaign targeted at Irish Americans. It will include an analysis of the oft-repeated assertions of the actual existence of leprechauns in Ireland and the assiduous efforts made by Disney staff to preserve and perpetuate this illusion and to fit it into the narrative of return to the "homeland" which was prevalent in post-war mainstream American cinema. The third section of this chapter will discuss the film's representation of the Little People in the context of Disney's engagement with Irish folklore and culture through research trips to Ireland as the process of story development continued in the late 1940s. It will reflect upon the relationship between Walt Disney Productions and the Irish Folklore Commission and it will argue that this relationship was ultimately of minor significance in terms of the film's representation of the Little People because of tensions which arose between Irish sensibilities and Irish-American sensibilities. The fourth and final section of this chapter will consider how the film's representation of the Little People may have impacted upon her implied child and adult Irish-American viewers in their understanding of Irish fairy lore and their relationship with it as they negotiated the

diasporic space. It will discuss how this representation, which was designed to appeal to the target Irish-American audience, was constructed by Walt Disney and his staff as one which was scrupulously researched and authentically Irish in a manner reminiscent of Kavanagh's claims about her literary fairy tales.

Section One

As shown in the third chapter of this thesis, the Irish-themed project at Walt Disney Productions which eventually became *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* did not begin as an adaptation of Kavanagh’s work and it appears that it became an adaptation of her work because of the issue of how to represent the Little People. It does initially seem a peculiar exercise in adaptation as Kavanagh’s two volumes of literary fairy tales, *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* and *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill, Tales* were languishing in a state of almost absolute obscurity in 1945 when the decision was taken at Walt Disney Productions to adapt them for the recently conceived, Irish-themed project. This is apart from a tiny yet vocal cohort of devoted readers, one of whom, Dr J Russell Elkinton of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, wrote a letter to Walt Disney in June 1959 after hearing about the imminent release of his company’s adaptation of Kavanagh’s work.⁸ Dr Elkinton informed Disney in this letter that Kavanagh’s first collection was a childhood favourite in his family and beseeched him for information about the author and her background and about the circumstances in which her tales came to be written and published.⁹ He reveals not only the fruitlessness of his previous inquiries and efforts to learn more about Kavanagh and her work but also the fruitlessness of the inquiries and efforts of his circle of acquaintance to whom he introduced her work, including his late journalist friend Philomena Hart of *The Providence Journal*, Rhode Island who wrote an article on the subject

⁸ Several letters were sent to Walt Disney Studios, Burbank, California in the summer and autumn of 1959 by members of the general public who were responding to seeing either the special *Darby O’Gill*-themed episode of Disneyland entitled “I Met the King of the Leprechauns” or the film itself. They were written by children and adults and mostly question the assertion made in the film’s publicity material about the actual existence of the Little People in Ireland or look to have it confirmed for them beyond doubt. The one letter that does not engage with this topic is the one letter that mentions Herminie Templeton Kavanagh and her literary fairy tales and is dated the 9th of June 1959. See the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁹ See the letter from J Russell Elkinton to Walt Disney, 9 June 1959, the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

in 1944.¹⁰ There is no existing information which contradicts Elkinton's concluding remarks in his letter to Disney about "the minor literary mystery that the book and author became by 1944",¹¹ the year before Kavanagh's work was chosen for adaptation. Given the obscurity of both Kavanagh and her work, it is difficult to account for the sudden and peculiar emergence of this particular literary material in cinematic form and certainly the reasons offered by scholars in the field of adaptation studies do not seem relevant in this instance.

Linda Hutcheon acknowledges the heretofore underexplored issue of why texts are chosen for adaptation and she asserts most strongly the need to consider this initial stage rather than merely to focus on other key stages in the adaptation process.¹² Firstly, she says that the chief motivation in many instances is potential financial gain from a recognised and popular cultural product with a guaranteed core audience.¹³ John Ellis discusses this point from an audience's perspective and argues that the appeal lies in the fact that "adaptation into another medium becomes a means of prolonging the pleasure of the original presentation and repeating the production of a memory".¹⁴ Hutcheon also asserts that a text is rendered desirable by the opportunity to increase cultural capital through entering into an act of adaptation which is "upwardly mobile" on account of the perceived hierarchy of the arts i.e. when a television miniseries is adapted from a nineteenth-century novel.¹⁵ Julie Sanders also argues that "upwardly mobile" adaptations function as "an attempt to

¹⁰ In his letter to Disney, Elkinton included a copy of Philomena Hart's article on the subject which was published in her column in the 7th of June 1944 edition of *The Providence Journal* and entitled "Paging Herminie Templeton Kavanagh. An Elusive Author Is Pursued Through Many Decades". See the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹¹ See the letter of J Russell Elkinton to Walt Disney, 9 June 1959, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹² Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation SECOND EDITION* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 86.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, 86 – 88.

¹⁴ John Ellis, "The Literary Adaptation: An Introduction", *Screen* 23 (1), 3 – 5, 3.

¹⁵ See Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 91 – 92.

make texts ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences”, thus attracting a larger audience who had heretofore not engaged with the text.¹⁶ The adaptation of a text may also be precipitated, according to Hutcheon, by the personal dedication of an adapter to engaging in social or political commentary through undermining, reinforcing or subverting the ideological allegiances of a text in its adaptation.¹⁷ Sanders agrees with Deborah Cartmell when she says that this dedication to commenting upon social or political issues which are raised in the source text is a large part of the reason why many adapters do not simply transpose the text from one medium to another in order to maximise its potential commercial success.¹⁸ None of the aforementioned reasons for why texts are chosen for adaptation can be applied to any potential explanation of why Kavanagh’s tales were adapted into *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*. This is because they are all founded upon the assumption of a certain degree of popularity and prominence regarding the text which is being adapted and this was categorically not the case in the particular instance being discussed here. Neither 1903’s *Darby O’Gill and the Good People* nor 1926’s *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O’Gill Tales* was popular or prominent in the United States of America or elsewhere in the period from 1945 to 1959 and neither of them appear to have ever enjoyed a period of popularity or prominence. It seems as though they were both considered as desirable and eventually chosen for adaptation because they offered a definitive solution to an issue which had arisen during a pre-existing creative process and that was the issue of how the Little People should be represented in order to best engage and attract the film’s target Irish-American viewership.

¹⁶ Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 19.

¹⁷ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 92 – 95.

¹⁸ See Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 24.

An analysis of the early progression of the story development process on the Irish-themed project suggests that this issue was increasingly becoming a cause for concern at Walt Disney Productions. As discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, it appears that the decision was taken to pursue a story treatment entitled *The Little People* after it was sent speculatively to Walt Disney himself by screenwriter Maurice Geraghty. Ironically, although they lend Geraghty's initial story treatment their name and are fundamental to the project from its inception onwards, it is the characterisation of the supernatural creatures based upon the fairies of Irish folklore which is least firmly established and satisfactorily developed.¹⁹ Their function in the narrative is clearly expressed as they assist the wronged and honourable Etain O'Farrell and her father Dermot in triumphing over their cruel landlord and the narrative's chief antagonist, Lord Donoughmore, and yet they are vaguely and perfunctorily characterised in comparison to the mortal characters who also occupy the narrative. The two subsequent story treatments that were later submitted by Geraghty do not develop the characterisation of the Little People to any noticeable extent, but instead seem to have been written with the main objective of improving the basic narrative structure.²⁰ It is highly likely that the issue of how the Little People would ultimately be represented in the final film was raised with Geraghty, however, as, in August 1945, he submitted a comprehensive appendix to his second story treatment relating to his elaborate intentions to include in his narrative a variety of Little People with vivid and distinctive personalities.²¹ As the project currently stood, the fairy community being represented was

¹⁹ See Maurice Geraghty, *The Little People: Story Treatment*, 3 July 1945, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

²⁰ See Maurice Geraghty, *The Little People: Sequence Blockout*, 5 August 1945 and Maurice Geraghty, *The Little People: Story Treatment*, 5 September 1945, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

²¹ See Geraghty, *The Little People: Sequence Blockout*, 63 – 70.

presided over by the Queen of the Little People who lived at her fairy fort on Lord Donoughmore's land with her many unnamed, indistinguishable fairy underlings. Geraghty acknowledges in his document of August 1945 that, in contemplating how he would develop his fairy characters substantially beyond the vague sketches of his early story treatments, he read a considerable amount of reference books on Irish folklore.²² Ultimately, however, he "followed the conception of the Little People"²³ that features in five literary fairy tales across the collections *The Wee Men of Ballywooden* (1930) and *From the Horn of the Moon* (1931) by Irish-American children's author Arthur Mason.

Whilst Aedín Clements makes reference to him and his work in her discussion of Irish-American children's literature of the early twentieth century,²⁴ Arthur Mason (1876 – 1955) is an almost entirely neglected literary figure, whose children's books have never been critically analysed. This is despite the fact that his papers are available for study at the University of Oregon. Born and raised in the village of Strangford, County Down, Mason was a merchant sailor who travelled the world before becoming an American citizen in 1899, and later a writer of fiction.²⁵ In both of his collections, the fairy folk are referred to throughout as the Wee Men and they are represented as liminal, ethereal figures who are entirely uninterested in and apathetic towards the human world but who occasionally concern themselves with it when their own community is threatened. The mortal characters occupy a fairy-tale version of Mason's childhood home of Strangford in which their mortal,

²² See Geraghty, *The Little People: Sequence Blockout*, 63 – 68.

²³ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁴ See Clements, "Padraic Colum, the Horn Book and the Irish in American Children's Literature in the Early Twentieth Century", 154 – 163.

²⁵ The best source of biographical information about the obscure literary figure Arthur Mason is the overview of the archival collection of the papers of Mason and his wife Mary Frank Mason who was a librarian and also wrote children's literature. The archival collection dates from 1920 to 1957 and is housed at the Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Oregon.

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv33535>

earthly interests often happily coincide with the interests of the Wee Men; for example, in “The Night of the Big Wind”, the Wee Men work furiously to retrieve the thatched roof of Danny O’Fay’s cottage not for Danny’s benefit but because that is where they sleep.²⁶ Danny and his neighbours have faith that the Wee Men’s night-time machinations will reap rewards and re-establish order from chaos and they are proven right in each tale, although all fairy assistance is inadvertently given and selfishly motivated. Similarly, any mischief caused by the Wee Men is done inadvertently and in total ignorance of its consequences such as when they place every pig in Strangford under an enchantment in “Pigs in the Castle”.²⁷ Whilst this particular episode has comic implications, it also highlights both the Wee Men’s aspiration to be self-contained and their failure to fully achieve that aim. They are not only separated from the human world by their lack of interest in engaging with it but also by the way that their community is ordered which is not recognisably human. This is most apparent in the recurring trope throughout the tales in which the names of the Wee Men serve only to identify their roles, with no allowance for individuality or familial ties. Sometimes the names of the characters reflect their mundane and pragmatic tasks such as Gruel Stirrer, Cockle Gatherer, Snedder of Turnpis, Stoker of Wheat Sheaves and Tanner of Nets and sometimes the names of the characters reflect their whimsical and surreal tasks such as Wheeler of Daylight, Hanger of Shadows and Keeper of the Casks of Time. Mason places a great emphasis in each of his tales on the importance of the efficient and competent completion of certain tasks related to the specific predicament in which the Wee

²⁶ “The Night of the Big Wind” features in Arthur Mason, *The Wee Men of Ballywooden* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1930).

²⁷ “Pigs in the Castle” features in Arthur Mason, *From the Horn of the Moon* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1931).

Men find themselves and, in this regard, there is a strong connection between his stories for children and his stories for adults.

Mason claims in the preface that the tales contained in *The Wee Men of Ballywooden* were inspired by fairy lore that he heard during his childhood.²⁸ It is undeniable, however, that both this text and *From the Horn of the Moon* share thematic preoccupations with his earlier collections for an adult audience of maritime adventure tales based upon his own personal experiences.²⁹ These collections examine the relationships between various members of a ship's crew each with their own allotted tasks who work together to achieve a clearly defined end and Mason uses this trope to explore the politics of teamwork and the dynamics of power. These major aspects of his work absolutely extend into his representation of the Wee Men, except that the crew are supernatural creatures who generally travel through the air rather than aboard a ship. There is an exception in "Coggelty Curry", in which Mason's autobiographical inspiration for the tale is especially apparent as the Wee Men set sail in a ship to retrieve the stolen fairy bagpipes.³⁰ The fact that Mason's Wee Men are only ever shown interacting with each other as a sort of supernatural equivalent of a ship's crew underlines their etherealness and liminality and further separates them from the human realm of existence as it is represented in realistic terms by Mason. An appraisal of the document drafted and submitted by Geraghty in August 1945, in which he discusses at great length his intended representation of the Little People, validates his assertion in that same document that this representation would be

²⁸ See Arthur Mason, "Preface" to *The Wee Men of Ballywooden* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1930).

²⁹ The collections of autobiographical maritime adventure tales for an adult readership being referred to here were all published in the 1920s before Mason began his career in children's literature with the publication of *The Wee Men of Ballywooden* in 1930.

³⁰ "Coggelty-Curry features in Mason, *The Wee Men of Ballywooden*.

closely based upon Mason's representation of the Wee Men. He was clearly committed to Mason's characterisation of the Wee Men and it was perhaps this commitment which meant that, after submitting his third story treatment, he was replaced in his role on the Irish-themed project, which he had conceived by John Tucker Battle. Whilst his replacement with Battle may have been completely unrelated to his proposed representation of the Little People, it is remarkable that, in the first full story treatment submitted by Battle in January 1946, Geraghty's basic narrative involving the conflict between the O'Farrells and Lord Donoughmore remains intact, whilst significant revisions are immediately made to how the Little People are represented.³¹

It is most notable that the scene in which Etain seeks assistance from the Little People for her predicament is radically different in many respects from how it was portrayed by Geraghty with Battle merely retaining the purpose and outcome of Etain's encounter with the Little People. The ethereal and liminal figure of the Queen of the Little People is replaced by the King of the Little People who is a much less aloof and ambiguous presence in the scenes that he shares with Etain, as he delights in her visit and invites her to enter his fairy palace. Etain appears to have interrupted a celebration upon entering the fairy palace with the King as she witnesses much drinking and feasting and merrymaking and, although she is initially disconcerted, she soon relaxes because of the familiarity of the situation. The activities are familiar to her as a member of the Irish peasant class and the hierarchical structure upon which this fairy society is formed, with the aforementioned King, his Queen and the Prime Minister presiding over their subjects, is also familiar to her as an interloper from the human world. Essentially, Battle rejects Arthur Mason's influence on

³¹ See John Tucker Battle, *The Little People: Story Treatment*, 17 September, 1945, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

Geraghty in his representation of the Little People in his early story treatments by largely removing their ethereal and liminal qualities and investing them not only with a significant degree of humanity and with a keen interest in human affairs but also with several stereotypical traits of Irishness. All of these revisions suggest that, whilst Geraghty had been guided by Mason's conception of the Wee Men, Battle is being guided by Herminie Templeton Kavanagh's conception of the Good People, with this revised scene bearing a remarkable resemblance to Darby O'Gill's first encounter with King Brian Connors in "Darby O'Gill and the Good People". The first mention of Kavanagh's work in relation to Disney's Irish-themed project is a handwritten note on a copy of Geraghty's third, September 1945 story treatment of *The Little People* referring to Kavanagh's interpretation of the creation myth of Irish fairies in "How the Fairies Came to Ireland".³² It is not unreasonable to extrapolate from this that the note may have been written by Battle after the project was re-assigned to him and he began to experiment with a different, more appealing representation of the Little People than the one previously offered by Geraghty. Alternatively, the note could have been written by another staff member at Walt Disney Productions who may also have advised Battle to consult Kavanagh's work as he experimented with his representation of the Little People.

Whether or not Battle consulted Kavanagh's work at this early stage, he certainly consulted it in preparation of the first full draft of a screenplay for the project which was entitled *The Wee Folk* and submitted on October 31st 1946 in anticipation of a forthcoming research trip to Ireland.³³ In *The Wee Folk*, in which Geraghty's narrative is finally

³² For the handwritten note which reads "See Kavanagh Pg 104", see Geraghty, *The Little People: Story Treatment*, 5 September 1945, 2.

³³ For this submission by Battle on October 31st 1946 entitled *The Wee Folk*, see the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives. Battle mentions in his introduction how the screenplay was completed specifically for the

abandoned, Battle expands upon the parallels between the fairy world and the human world and introduces the characters of Darby O’Gill and King Brian Connors, representing them just as Kavanagh had with the latter being the supernatural equivalent of the former. Battle seized upon Kavanagh’s construction of both Darby and King Brian as “roguish heroes” which allowed for the dissipation of the hostilities between them and the transformation of King Brian from being Darby’s supernatural antagonist to being his loyal friend and guardian. The representation of King Brian as a “roguish hero” and as Darby’s eventual loyal friend and guardian was retained in every subsequent draft of the screenplay by both Battle and Watkin. The evidence suggests that Disney’s Irish-themed project became an adaptation of Kavanagh’s work because of these particular aspects of Kavanagh’s radical re-imagining of the Irish fairies by Kavanagh, which she had presented to her target Irish-American readership at the turn of the twentieth century. Disney seemed determined to emulate Kavanagh’s representation of the Little People in these particular aspects and this may well have been because staff working on the project believed that this representation would prove engaging and appealing to their target viewership of post-war Irish Americans. The figure of the “roguish hero” was a relatively recent concept when Kavanagh was writing her literary fairy tales but it had not only proven its multi-generational durability in the interim period but also expanded its cultural dominance through cinema. The “roguish hero” figure, with its attendant Irish stereotypes, was continuing to dominate representations of Irish people in mainstream American cinema during this period of story development at Walt Disney Productions and is seen throughout the post-war, Irish-themed films *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top O’ The Morning* and *The Quiet Man*. As discussed in the third

forthcoming research trip to Ireland as a reference point and as an indicator of the current status of the project for the benefit of Disney and his entourage.

chapter of this thesis, Disney sought Barry Fitzgerald, known for his cinematic interpretations of this particular type of stage Irishman, to play both Darby O’Gill and King Brian Connors but when Fitzgerald became unavailable, Disney personally sought out Albert Sharpe to play Darby due to his own success with this particular type of stage Irishman on the Broadway stage in *Finian’s Rainbow*. Whilst there is no extant documentation to confirm this assertion, the ultimate casting of Jimmy O’Dea as King Brian may have been precipitated by his role in John Ford’s 1957 film *The Rising of the Moon* in which he plays train station porter Paddy Morrissey very much as a “roguish hero”.

Kavanagh’s representation of the Good People conformed to an Irish-American understanding and appreciation of Irish culture and folklore through its appropriation of a construction of Irish identity which gained particular popularity and prominence in the diasporic space. Whilst Arthur Mason’s tales of the Wee Men can be classified as Irish-American children’s literature just as much as Kavanagh’s tales of the Good People, their representation of the Wee Men does not prioritise an Irish-American perspective in the same way. This is despite the fact that he presents his stories to his implied Irish-American readers as nostalgic remembrances from the “homeland” in his preface to *The Wee Men of Ballywooden*.³⁴ Indeed, of all the material consulted by Geraghty, Battle and Watkin which featured representations of the fairy folk from Irish folklore, it appears that none of it was perceived as accommodating the implied Irish-American viewership in quite the same way as Kavanagh’s tales. Whilst firmly modelled on the “roguish heroes” of Kavanagh’s tales, however, the Little People as they appear in the finished film of 1959 deviate from them in several ways. Stereotypes of Irishness commonly associated with the “roguish hero” are

³⁴ See Mason, *The Wee Men of Ballywooden*, Preface.

undermined by Kavanagh in her representation of the Good People and yet they are reinforced in the film, just as the film reinforces the stereotypes of Irishness which are undermined by Kavanagh in her literary representation of the Irish people. As discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, alcohol and violence feature prominently in the film's representation of the Irish people and are endowed with moralistic connotations and this is also evident in a particular sequence involving King Brian Connors. Although he is ultimately presented as the antithesis of the film's bullying antagonist Pony Sugrue, King Brian is equally punished for consuming excessive amounts of alcohol and for resorting to physical intimidation when Darby exploits his drunkenness and tricks him into remaining in the mortal realm after sunrise, thus temporarily relieving him of his supernatural powers. His violent response to realising that he has been defeated by Darby does nothing to improve his situation whatsoever and, therefore, this sequence confirms that not only does the film's perpetuation of the stereotype of the drunken, fighting Irish extend to the Little People but that this perpetuation is also presented in a morally didactic fashion. It is not only in the promotion of the stereotype of the drunken, fighting Irish that the Disney film deviates from the representation of the Good People in Kavanagh's tales but also in the absence of both their reconciliation with Roman Catholicism and their Catholic nationalist sensibilities.

Whilst Kavanagh's Good People come to begrudgingly sympathise with Roman Catholicism if not wholeheartedly subscribe to it, an antagonistic relationship between the Little People and Roman Catholicism is sustained throughout the film with no suggestion of the conflict being resolved. Echoing Kavanagh's tale "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", Roman Catholicism has the power to physically harm the Little People in the film – Darby warns King Brian against trying to inveigle his way out of granting him three wishes by

sternly threatening “You’ll either give them to me or you’ll answer to the church. I’ll have Father Murphy curse you with a blessing that will shrivel you up in a minute”. Whilst the moral supremacy of Roman Catholicism over the Good People is later challenged and undermined in Kavanagh’s tale “The Convarion of Father Cassidy”, it is never challenged or undermined – not even momentarily – in the film, not even to orchestrate, as Kavanagh does, a friendlier relationship between the two powerful forces. Although the Catholic nationalist sympathies that are central to Kavanagh’s representation of the Good People as her first collection progresses are absent from the film’s representation of the Little People, nationalist sentiments are expressed by King Brian during the extended sequence set in his Knocknasheega lair in which he and his Little People are first introduced. King Brian is seen to proudly display the sword of Brian Boru and he draws Darby’s attention to it, referring in reverential terms to “Brian Boru, who drove out the Danes”. King Brian’s nationalism is further subtly implied by the fact that he displays a harp which he claims to be “the harp which once through Tara’s halls the soul of music shed”, invoking the lyrics and sentiments of Thomas Moore’s nationalist ballad “The Harp that Once Through Tara’s Halls”.³⁵ Boru and Moore appear to be evoked in this sequence in order to signify King Brian’s political allegiances in a conceit appropriated directly from Kavanagh’s tale “The Convarion of Father Cassidy”. Therefore, it can be definitively stated that, whilst the film conforms to Kavanagh’s construction of the Little People as nationalists, it divests them of their Catholic nationalist sympathies, preferring to retain their entirely antagonistic relationship with the morally supreme Catholic Church. The decision not to interfere with the moral supremacy of the Catholic Church as it appears in the film may have been made in order to conform to the established, wholly positive representation of the Catholic religion and Catholic priests in

³⁵ See Thomas Moore, *Irish Melodies* (Washington: D and J Sadlier, 1874), 131.

mainstream American cinema which persisted into the 1950s and which is described in detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

The film also deviates from Kavanagh's tales by referring to the fairies using the term "Little People" rather than "Good People" and, also, by amalgamating two distinct types of fairy, the trooping fairies, who are referred to as the Little People, and a solitary fairy known as the leprechaun. This amalgamation may be accounted for by the fact that the narrative of Watkin's ultimate screenplay for the film is essentially an amalgamation of the narratives of two of Kavanagh's literary fairy tales, "Darby O'Gill and the Good People", in which Darby's supernatural antagonist is King Brian Connors of the trooping fairies and "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun" in which Darby's supernatural antagonist is an unnamed leprechaun. The amalgamation of a trooping fairy and a leprechaun in the character of King Brian has the effect of strengthening the character's construction as a "roguish hero", as King Brian retains both the charming and affable nature of Kavanagh's trooping fairies and the sly and cunning nature of Kavanagh's leprechaun. Despite several comical attempts to gain advantage over each other, the development of a friendship based upon mutual respect and affection between the King Brian and Darby and the dissipation of the hostilities between them seem inevitable from their first meeting at Knocknasheega in the film. At its conclusion, King Brian saves Darby's life by cunningly perpetrating the leprechaun's fourth wish trick which featured in "Darby O'Gill and the Leprechaun" on him, thus cancelling out Darby's previous wish to be taken away by the banshee in the death coach instead of his daughter Katie. King Brian's deceitful behaviour is mitigated by his honourable intentions and, therefore, this action, drawn from the actions of both the trooping fairies and the leprechaun in Kavanagh's work, consolidates King Brian Connors' construction as a "roguish

hero". It is unlikely that the trooping fairies and the leprechaun were amalgamated mainly for the purpose of consolidating King Brian's construction as a "roguish hero", however, and it is much more likely that this decision was made, just like the decision to use the term "Little People", on account of the target Irish-American viewership and its perceived understanding of Irish culture and folklore.

Firstly, it should be acknowledged that, although it is encountered much less frequently than the term "Good People", Irish folklorist Seán Ó Suilleabháin identifies the term "Little People" as having a solid foundation in the Irish oral tradition as a way of referring to the fairies.³⁶ When choosing between the two terms, it is understandable that Disney would choose the more accessible, self-explanatory, non-culturally-specific term which does not prioritise those operating in the "homeland" over those operating in the diasporic space. In fact, the term "Little People" may have had a resonance for Irish Americans, as the culture to which they were exposed was a hybridised culture composed of both Irish and American elements. According to American folklorist John Bierhorst, diminutive creatures with supernatural abilities feature in the folklore of many disparate Native American tribes including the Cherokee, the Inuit, the Iroquois, the Zuni and the Toba.³⁷ Bierhorst argues that whenever tales of these creatures were appropriated for a more generalised American audience, the original terms used to refer to them were invariably translated into English as "Little People".³⁸ It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the term "Little People" and the concept that it encapsulates may have somewhat

³⁶ See Ó Suilleabháin, *Irish Folk Custom and Belief*, 82.

³⁷ See John Bierhorst, *The Deetkatoo: Native American Stories about Little People* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1998), vii – viii.

³⁸ See Bierhorst, *The Deetkatoo*, viii – ix.

infiltrated the Irish-American consciousness and prepared those operating in the diasporic space for its use in an Irish folkloric context.

The amalgamation of the trooping fairies with the leprechaun, meanwhile, surely relates to the dominant position which was occupied by the leprechaun in Irish-American popular culture from the late-nineteenth century onwards, precipitated by the American Celticism publishing fashion which has been discussed extensively throughout this thesis. There has thus far been no comprehensive study conducted into the role of the leprechaun in Irish-American popular culture which could offer an explanation as to why this figure captured the Irish-American attention as vividly and consistently as it did. The monopolising effect of the leprechaun's popularity on an Irish-American understanding and appreciation of Irish folklore and culture is illustrated in the following extract from Maurice Geraghty's story treatment *The Little People*, however, which was written in September 1945 before the project was reconstituted as an adaptation of Kavanagh's work:

THOMAS: What manner of fairies are they at all, Gran'ther?

PHELMIM: Leprechauns, of course. What other manner of fairies would there be?³⁹

It is also true to say the profile of the leprechaun in American popular culture increased significantly between September 1945 and the film's eventual release fourteen years later due to the figure's appearances in the film *The Luck of the Irish* (1948), the Broadway musical *Finian's Rainbow* (1947) and the theatrically-released, seven-minute Loony Tunes cartoon, *The Wearing of the Grin* (1951).⁴⁰ The amalgamation of the trooping fairies and the leprechaun has no solid foundation in the Irish oral tradition whatsoever and Kavanagh's

³⁹ Maurice Geraghty, *The Little People: Story Treatment*, 17 September 1945, 4, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁴⁰ See *The Wearing of the Grin* (Charles M Jones, USA, 1951).

tales very clearly enunciate the difference between the two creatures. This amalgamation took place in the film nevertheless and the reason appears to have been that, just like in the case of the term “Little People”, the film was targeting an Irish-American viewership. Despite being referred to as “Little People” and being amalgamated with the leprechaun, other aspects of the film’s representation of Little People are extremely faithful to Kavanagh’s descriptions such the costume design by Chuck Keehne and Gertrude Casey and the set decoration by Emile Kuri and Fred MacLean which realise the attire and lair of King Brian and his acolytes respectively. The Little People are not only represented within the text of the film itself, however, and it is their paratextual representation that will now be discussed in the second section of this chapter.

Section Two

The Little People featured prominently in the extensive and sophisticated marketing campaign which was launched by the publicity department at Walt Disney Productions to coincide with the film's release in the summer of 1959. An allusion to this publicity campaign is made within *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* itself during the opening credits sequence when the following title card appears on screen:

My thanks to King Brian of Knocknasheega and his leprechauns whose gracious co-operation made this picture possible - Walt Disney.

The campaign's central concept was to capture the attention of potential viewers of the film throughout the United States of America by insisting upon the actual existence of the Little People - referred to as leprechauns in the vast majority of the publicity materials - in the real Ireland of the present day and not merely in the fictionalised version of Ireland presented in the film. The campaign also sought to capture attention by insisting not only upon the existence of the Little People but also upon their involvement in the making of the film. It is entirely appropriate that the film's title card, which references the campaign's central concept, is presented as a personal statement by Walt Disney himself. He pledged his personal support for this concept at lunch with chief personnel of the publicity department at his Burbank facility in March 1958. John Conner of the publicity department was in attendance at that meeting and he summarised what he perceived to be an extremely productive meeting as follows:

Walt expressed great enthusiasm for attempting to keep the DARBY O'GILL publicity campaign on the fanciful side when dealing with King Brian and some 300 other "Leprechauns" appearing in the film story. He made it clear he understands that, of course, no one among the press would be entirely taken in by any pretense that

actual “Leprechauns” will be used in our cast, but suggested we do our utmost to keep the newsmen with us in a tongue-in-cheek campaign where our “Little People” are concerned. Thus he set a definite policy line which Card feels can be adhered to in a practical manner.⁴¹

Card Walker of the publicity department was proved correct and the definite policy line which was set by Disney during this meeting was adhered to throughout the campaign surrounding the film’s release. Given the centrality of the role played by this representation of the Little People in the “tongue-in-cheek” publicity campaign, it is important that this representation, which is quite separate from the representation of the Little People within the film, is now explored.

It is highly likely that the assertions of the actual existence of leprechauns and their involvement in the making of the film were central aspects of the film’s marketing strategy because of the specific audience at which the film was being marketed which, as revealed by another document from the publicity department, was Irish Americans or “those people with shamrocks in their eyes”. The audience was not simply Irish-American children or Irish-American adults but rather Disney appears to have sought to accommodate both demographics and it may have been thought that this publicity campaign featuring the Little People would engage both of these facets of the film’s dual implied target audience in equal measure. Perhaps it was thought that it would engage naïve, inexperienced viewers who could be deceived into believing that these creatures, with which they were perceived as being familiar and having an affinity, actually existed in Ireland and were involved in the making of the film. Perhaps it was felt that it would also engage sophisticated, experienced

⁴¹ Inter-office communication with the subject heading “Leprechaun Campaign” from John Conner to Card Walker, Bob Dorfman, Larry Graburn, Stan Jones, Tom Jones, Jack Jungmeyer, Charles Levy, Irving Ludwig, John Ormond, Joe Reddy Leo Samuels and Leonard Shannon, 17 March 1958, the *Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

viewers because they may be amused and entertained by these notions being proposed by Disney regarding creatures, with which they would also have been perceived as being familiar and having an affinity. These viewers would subsequently go and see the film and be presented with a portrayal of the Little People as “roguish heroes”, loyal friends of the Irish people and nationalist supporters which would influence their own conception of these creatures whether or not they believed in their existence. The targeting of a specifically Irish-American audience with this “tongue-in-cheek” publicity campaign surely accounts for why two major components of the campaign appropriate the narrative of return from the diasporic space to the “homeland”. As discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, this narrative featured in the Irish-themed mainstream American films of the post-war era which were made and released whilst Disney’s Irish-themed project was in development. According to Stephanie Rains, this was not the first time in which the return narrative was appropriated in order to advertise an Irish-themed product to Irish-American consumers. Rains asserts that the appropriation of the return narrative in advertising was an early innovation of the rapidly expanding modern Irish tourist industry as it sought to attract large numbers of Irish Americans in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴² She primarily cites promotional films which definitely post-date the release of Disney’s film and its attendant marketing campaign such as *Honeymoon in Ireland* (1963) and *Ireland Invites You* (1966) but she also discusses *The Spell of Ireland*, which she deduces was made in Ireland and distributed in America in the early 1950s.⁴³ *The Spell of Ireland* appropriates the return narrative which was popularised by films such as *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top o’ the Morning* and *The Quiet Man* but also appears to self-consciously acknowledge this fact by making explicit references to one

⁴² For a comprehensive examination of the appropriation of the return narrative by the early Irish tourist industry, see Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 106 – 117.

⁴³ See *Ibid.*, 141.

particular scene from *The Quiet Man* in which the recently returned Sean Thornton gazes upon his childhood home in Innisfree for the first time in decades and hears his mother's voice reminiscing about his Irish childhood.⁴⁴

Darby O'Gill and the Little People is strikingly similar to *The Luck of the Irish*, *Top o' the Morning* and *The Quiet Man* in its romanticising of Ireland as an unspoiled, pre-modern rural idyll and yet it is unlike those films as its narrative does not feature an Irish American returning from the diasporic space to the "homeland". The publicists behind the marketing of the film appropriated that narrative in their efforts to appeal to Irish Americans and assert the actual existence of leprechauns and their involvement in the making of the film, however, and whilst the return narrative does not feature in the main text of the film, it does feature in two key promotional paratexts. In both of these paratexts, Walt Disney is positioned as the Irish American who is returning from the diasporic space to the "homeland" as he endeavours to realise his Irish-themed project for the cinema and decides to recruit real leprechauns to avoid undermining the integrity of the project through the use of unconvincing, animated alternatives. Walt Disney's identification as Irish-American is founded upon a verified fact in his own family history that his great-grandfather Arundel Elias Disney emigrated to America from County Kilkenny as a young man aged twenty-two in 1823⁴⁵ and the extrapolation asserted in both of these paratexts is that Disney is, therefore, "half-Irish". The first of these paratexts to appear as promotion for the film was "How I Met the King of the Leprechauns", the leading article in the February 1959 edition of the official publication of Walt Disney Productions, *Walt Disney's Magazine*, in which an alternative,

⁴⁴ See Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 115.

⁴⁵ See Neal Gabler, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination* (New York: Random House, 2006), 4.

fictionalised history of the making of the film is offered to readers.⁴⁶ The article was written by unit publicist John Conner⁴⁷ but is credited to Walt Disney and describes Walt Disney's fulfilment of his childhood ambition to return to Ireland and meet a leprechaun, the opportunity for which arose when, during the development process for his forthcoming Irish-themed film, "we decided to use real Little People".⁴⁸ The article begins with Walt Disney's reminiscences about his long-term association with leprechauns due to his Irish heritage:

Being half Irish myself, I learned about the Leprechauns of Ireland while I was still a small boy on our farm at Marceline, Missouri. I began to believe in Leprechauns, then, because some of my relatives had pretty convincing stories to tell about the magic powers of these Little People, and their tricks, and what they could do when angry. So, I promised myself that one day, after I had grown up, I would go to the land of the Leprechaun myself, and meet one in person.⁴⁹

Conner's appropriation of the return narrative for this article is apparent in this opening paragraph in which Walt Disney's desire to return to the "homeland" from the diasporic space is immediately established and presented in the context of the Little People.

Once Walt Disney arrives in Ireland in search of leprechauns, he consults an elderly folklore scholar in a library in Dublin who advises him to contact Darby O'Gill, whose knowledge of the Little People exceeds that of anyone else in Ireland. Darby in turn introduces Walt Disney to King Brian Connors during a private audience at which the fairy

⁴⁶ The February 1959 edition of *Walt Disney's Magazine* was identified as VOLUME IV, NO II and, as it was the leading article of that edition, "How I Met the King of the Leprechauns" occupied the front cover as well as pages 4 – 7.

⁴⁷ See the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives for a draft of the article submitted for approval for use in the magazine in which it is clearly stated that it was prepared by John Conner.

⁴⁸ John Conner, *Walt Disney's Magazine*, February 1959, 5. Please note that Walt Disney's name erroneously appears in the article's by-line in a deliberate attempt to create the illusion of his authorship of the article.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

king reluctantly appears. Walt Disney suggests that King Brian's suspicious and unfriendly demeanour changed utterly once he heard of his Irish ancestry and that he had returned from America. Consequently, the article concludes on a triumphant note with King Brian enthusiastically agreeing to travel to Walt Disney's studios in California and appear in the film alongside one hundred and fifty of his fairy followers. In the narrative of the article written by Conner, the firmly Irish-American Walt Disney returns to Ireland with the conviction that the "homeland" offers a definitive resolution to a major problem which cannot be resolved in the diasporic space and he is ultimately proven correct. The resolution of a problem is a recurring trope in the return narrative and is seen in *The Luck of the Irish* as Stephen Fitzgerald seeks a moral antidote for the corruption, cynicism and dissatisfaction of modern American society, whilst in *The Quiet Man* as Sean Thornton seeks renewal and restoration after his traumatic experiences in the boxing ring. In "How I Met the King of the Leprechauns", Walt Disney faces a problem of an altogether different and extraordinary nature as he seeks leprechauns to star in his film and yet, despite the fantastical premise, the resolution to the problem is the same because once he returns to Ireland, all is quickly resolved. When it was published in *Walt Disney's Magazine*, the article was accompanied by images which depicted Walt Disney conversing with King Brian Connors and Darby O'Gill on his trip to Ireland and these images were stills from the second paratext which sought to promote the film, the television special *I Captured the King of the Leprechauns*.

This television special featured as an episode of Disney's anthology television series *Disneyland* which was broadcast across the United States of America on the ABC Network on the 29th of May 1959, four months after the publication of the article and less than a

month before the film's American release.⁵⁰ Directed by Robert Stevenson and written by Lawrence Edward Watkin, the television special essentially conforms to the narrative of return from the diasporic space to the "homeland" which features in Conner's article. A further dimension to the return narrative is incorporated into *I Captured the King of the Leprechauns* as a framing device separate from the main section set in Ireland in which Disney performs alongside Albert Sharpe and Jimmy O'Dea in specially commissioned scenes.⁵¹ It is extremely significant that this framing device involves the Irish-American actor Pat O'Brien, who Kevin Rockett identifies as being one of the most recognisably "Irish" actors for mainstream American cinema audiences during the 1940s and 1950s, alongside James Cagney and Spencer Tracy.⁵² O'Brien's perceived Irishness is reinforced in Walt Disney's opening address to the audience in which he explains that he visited O'Brien for advice when undertaking his proposed Irish-themed project because "there's nobody more Irish than Pat O'Brien". It seems clear that O'Brien is meant to represent the Irish diaspora in America to a much greater extent than the "half-Irish" Disney when O'Brien first appears in the television special and immediately begins to ruminate on Ireland's greatest contribution to the world:

⁵⁰ The 29th May 1959 television special "I Captured the King of the Leprechauns" was broadcast on the ABC Network as the twenty-sixth episode of the fifth season of *Disneyland*.

⁵¹ Filming schedules in the *Darby O'Gill* file of the Walt Disney Archives reveal that these specially commissioned scenes for the television special were filmed during the second half of filming for *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* from June to August 1958, which comprised the technically complex and challenging scenes in which the Little People appear and interact with Darby O'Gill. Many leading cast members had already been discharged by this stage and this accounts for the presence of only certain of the film's characters in the new material featured in "I Captured the King of the Leprechauns". Apart from Albert Sharpe as Darby O'Gill and Jimmy O'Dea as King Brian Connors, only Jack MacGowran as King Brian's acolyte Phadrig Oge reprises his role for the television special. Scenes involving Pat O'Brien were filmed much later in the spring of 1959. As Watkin's teleplay for the television special was prepared by the summer of 1958 so that the services of the film's Ireland-based actors could be used whilst they remained in California, it seems likely that John Conner's February 1959 article for *Walt Disney's Magazine* which adheres to the same narrative had been influenced by Watkin's teleplay rather than the contrary.

⁵² See Rockett, "The Irish Migrant and Film", 30.

PAT O'BRIEN: Oh gee, it's a grand country. Awfully poor though. You see they've never had any iron or coal for export but they've got one great commodity they've sent all over the world.

WALT DISNEY: What's that?

PAT O'BRIEN: Men, Walt my lad! Fine upstanding men. And women too. Do you realise, Walt, the great contributions that they've made to this country alone? Did you know that eleven of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Irish?

WALT DISNEY: No, I didn't.

PAT O'BRIEN: Well, it's true. Take my family for instance.....

O'Brien subsequently draws upon his extensive knowledge of Irish folklore accessed through his own family history to educate Disney, singing a song about the Little People learned from his grandmother entitled "And the Fairy Was Laughing Too", reciting a poem about the banshee dedicated to serve the O'Brien family entitled "The Wail of the Banshee" and showing him a treasured family heirloom of a miniature clay pipe left behind by a leprechaun after an encounter with O'Brien's honest Uncle Dennis.⁵³ During this dialogue between Disney and O'Brien, folklore is discussed with the utmost reverence by O'Brien as though it is the unique cultural heritage of Irish Americans which has been passed down to them from previous generations but which must be preserved for future generations.

By encouraging the "half-Irish" Disney to return to Ireland in search of leprechauns, it could reasonably be interpreted that O'Brien is charging him on behalf of all members of the Irish diaspora in America to retrieve what could potentially be lost to them through their dislocation from the "homeland". In the final scene, the recently-returned Disney visits

⁵³ This song is a version of the traditional ballad "The Leprachaun". See Patrick Weston Joyce, *Ancient Irish Music: Comprising One Hundred Airs Hitherto Unpublished* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1873), 100 – 101. The poem cannot be traced to any pre-existing source and, therefore, it appears to have been written by Watkin for this television special.

O'Brien again in his American home and regales him with his experiences on his trip to Ireland. Disney confirms for him that he has succeeded in his mission to retrieve what could potentially be lost by informing a completely astonished and rapturously excited O'Brien that he has both found the perfect leprechaun story to tell and persuaded King Brian Connors and his fellow leprechauns to appear in his film. This leads O'Brien to address the audience directly by turning to look into the camera and proclaiming "Now, this I've got to see!" The astonishing and exciting outcome of Disney's return to Ireland has a profound impact on O'Brien, and the inference which O'Brien's fellow Irish Americans are left to ponder is that this outcome can only be experienced in its glorious entirety by going to see the film when it is released in cinemas. Both of these promotional paratexts which explicitly address Irish Americans were distributed through the official Disney-controlled channels of *Walt Disney's Magazine* and the television series *Disneyland*. As articulated by Disney at the publicity strategy meeting, for this angle of the publicity campaign to be as comprehensive as possible the co-operation of various other media outlets not controlled by Disney was required. That co-operation was secured on several occasions throughout filming on the project from May to August 1958 but mostly in anticipation of the film's release in cities across America from June to August 1959 and some inventive strategies were employed by Disney's industrious publicity team in order to exploit this co-operation. Thus, this paratextual representation of the Little People as actually existing in Ireland and being involved in the making of the film can be said to have become extremely prolific. Some major elements of the publicity campaign featuring the Little People which relied upon outside co-operation will now be highlighted in order to establish just how prolific this representation became.

Journalists were invited to visit the soundstage at Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California in July and August 1958 when the technically challenging and complex scenes involving King Brian Connors and the Little People were being filmed and, after being escorted around the soundstage by Walt Disney, were asked to participate in the light-hearted, playful deception which Disney intended to perpetrate on his target Irish-American viewership. His greatest ally in the media Hedda Hopper, who had previously been given several exclusives by Disney regarding the film's progress since the project's inception in 1945, unsurprisingly complied with Disney's wishes in her "Looking at Hollywood" column for *The Los Angeles Times* on 5th July 1958.⁵⁴ Neil Rau of *The Los Angeles Examiner* also complied with Disney's wishes following his visit to Walt Disney Studios and the article that he wrote captures the "tongue-in-cheek" tone desired by Disney for this publicity campaign:

Some readers who believe in the wee folk of Ireland may smile over my bewilderment after I visit the set of *DO'G and the Little People* on Stage Four at Walt Disney Studios but Walt himself has no sympathy at all with my scepticism. "Don't you doubt there are leprechauns until a leprechaun himself tells you there aren't any", Walt tells me and then with the inconsistency of a leprechaun he refuses to introduce me to the one appearing in the scene before us".⁵⁵

The following summer, in anticipation of the film's release in cinemas, the publicity department organised television and radio interviews for Irish actor Michael O'Herlihy, who had been hired as the film's technical advisor as a favour to his older brother, the established Oscar-nominated Hollywood actor, Dan O'Herlihy.⁵⁶ Whilst he may have advised technically on the film during filming the previous summer, his task was now to assert

⁵⁴ Hedda Hopper, "Looking at Hollywood: Disney Discusses His Leprechauns", *The Los Angeles Times*, 5 July 1958.

⁵⁵ Neil Rau, "Skeptic, Leprechaun Meet – Almost – On Set", *The Los Angeles Examiner*, 17 August 1958, 6.

⁵⁶ See the Official Press Book, the *Darby O'Gill* file, Walt Disney Archives.

further the actual existence of the Little People in Ireland not only with the authority of an Irishman but also with the authority of, as he was somewhat dubiously described by Jim Hardiman, the television and radio promotions director of Disney's publicity department, "an expert in leprechauns and Irish folklore".⁵⁷ Understandably eager to ingratiate himself with a studio as prestigious as Disney and perhaps contractually obliged also, O'Herlihy appeared on KTLA RADIO⁵⁸ and KCOP-TV⁵⁹ in Los Angeles to convince sceptics that real leprechauns were used in the making of the film, claiming that his duties as technical advisor on the film extended to chaperoning King Brian Connors and three hundred of his Little People when they travelled to California for filming.⁶⁰ He brought with him to the interviews as further evidence of their actual existence a miniature leprechaun suit and footage of the leprechauns arriving in California for filming.⁶¹

In order to further the illusion that King Brian Connors and his Little People actually existed and had travelled from Ireland to appear in the film, Jimmy O'Dea, who was hired to play King Brian, was subjected to an unusual request once he arrived in California in mid-April 1958 from his home in Dublin for filming. He was asked to pose for photographers in character and costume as King Brian in various "behind-the-scenes" scenarios and he agreed, writing a bewildered letter home to his sister Rita in which he tells her "Believe it or not they are selling me over here as King Brian Connors".⁶² Seven photographs were subsequently produced and distributed to various media outlets which supposedly offered an insight into life in California for King Brian when the cameras were not rolling on set and

⁵⁷ Letter from Jim Hardiman to Larry Finley, 17 June 1959, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ See letter from Jim Hardiman to Tom Duggan, 20 May 1959, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁰ See letter from Hardiman to Finley, 17 June 1959.

⁶¹ See *Ibid.*

⁶² Letter from Jimmy O'Dea to Rita O'Dea, 29 June 1958, Irish Theatre Archive 131/9/01B.

when his day's filming was completed, three of which featured Walt Disney, two of which featured his "co-star" Albert Sharpe, who played Darby, and two of which featured another of his "co-stars" Janet Munro, who played Katie. In the first three, King Brian is relaxing in a miniature deck chair on the desk in Walt Disney's office as Disney sits behind the desk taking a phone call,⁶³ King Brian negotiates the terms of his contract to appear in the film with Walt Disney once again in Disney's office⁶⁴ and Walt Disney takes King Brian on a tour of his animal farm in Disneyland and introduces him to his miniature Sardinian donkeys imported from Italy.⁶⁵ In the next two, King Brian poses with Albert Sharpe beside the miniature "Leprechauns Only" door on set⁶⁶ and King Brian is seen sitting on Albert Sharpe's coat in Sharpe's trailer as they practise their lines together.⁶⁷ In the final two photographs, King Brian poses with Janet Munro beside the miniature "Leprechauns Only" door on set⁶⁸ and King Brian is seen relaxing on a Californian beach with a bikini-clad Janet Munro in a break from filming.⁶⁹ There is also a deliberate lack of visibility regarding Jimmy O'Dea in the regular publicity materials surrounding key cast members with an actor's profile being created for King Brian Connors for distribution to the press instead. Whilst there was also an actor's profile created for Jimmy O'Dea, there was a note placed on the file saying that it was strictly for office use only.⁷⁰ According to O'Dea's biographer Philip B Ryan, the disappointed actor had thought that his career would flourish in mainstream American

⁶³ See Image DAR Pub 1786, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁴ See Image DAR Pub 1656, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁵ See Image DAR Pub 1659, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁶ See Image DAR Pub 1796, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁷ See Image DAR Pub 1795, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁸ See Image DAR Pub 1793, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁶⁹ See Image DAR Pub 2152, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁷⁰ For the actor's profile for King Brian Connors which was prepared by staff in the publicity department of Walt Disney Productions in the autumn of 1958 and for the actor's profile for Jimmy O'Dea, which was prepared at the same time, as well as the "for office use only" note that was placed upon it later, see the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

cinema following his appearance in the Disney film.⁷¹ His frustration arising from his contractually-obliged complicity in furthering the illusion upon which the film's publicity campaign was founded can be detected in his letter home to his sister Rita.⁷²

This illusion had unfortunate consequences not only for O'Dea but also for Walt Disney himself, who could not revel in the remarkable technical achievements of his film but rather merely allude to them.⁷³ The pioneering visual effects employed by Peter Ellershaw to realise the Little People on screen could not be acknowledged in publicity materials lest the illusion being created be undermined. This issue was encountered on one notable occasion when, in preparation for the film's Dublin, New York and Los Angeles premieres, Bob Dorfman of the Disney publicity department's New York office hailed "the terrific possibilities of the over-sized props that were made" in order to decorate the venues of the premieres and attract public attention.⁷⁴ As these oversized props were made in order to achieve the "forced perspective" technique integral to the realisation of the Little People on screen, Stan Jones of the California office dismissed the idea, citing the difficulty of transporting such cumbersome items around the world but also stating firmly that "we feel, also, that to use such props generally in our publicity campaigns would tend to dispel the illusions that add so much whimsy and genuine entertainment to the picture."⁷⁵ It is clear that the assertion of the actual existence of the Little People in Ireland and their involvement in the making of the film was of the utmost importance and this could not be threatened. The title card which appears briefly on screen at the beginning of the film, in

⁷¹ See Philip B Ryan, *Jimmy O'Dea: The Pride of the Coombe* (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1991), 213.

⁷² Letter from Jimmy O'Dea to Rita O'Dea, 29 June 1958, Irish Theatre Archive 131/9/01B

⁷³ See the Official Press Book, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁷⁴ Inter-office communication from Bob Dorfman to Larry Graburn, 20 August 1958, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

⁷⁵ Inter-office communication from Stan Jones (answering for temporarily absent Larry Graburn) to Bob Dorfman, 4 September 1958, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

which Walt Disney personally thanks King Brian Connors and his leprechauns for their co-operation, belies the huge amount of work undertaken by the publicity department at Walt Disney Productions to disseminate the assertions that it contains. This prolific paratextual representation of the Little People is a separate entity from the film's representation of the Little People and yet they both appear to have been determined by Walt Disney and his staff's perception of what would most likely engage and attract the film's target Irish-American audience. Both representations so firmly accommodate and prioritise a specifically Irish-American perspective on Irish culture and folklore rather than an Irish or an American one that they validate Stuart Hall's assertion that cultural hybridity is inevitable in diasporic situations. Ien Ang's assertion about the unavoidable intercultural conflict engendered by cultural hybridity's unsettling of identities will be now be validated in the third section of this chapter as it explores Disney's research trips to Ireland in preparation for the Irish-themed project and the tense relationship between Walt Disney Productions and the Irish Folklore Commission.

Section Three

Walt Disney embarked upon a research trip to Ireland with his entourage in November 1946 and, subsequently, newly-hired screenwriter Lawrence Edward Watkin was sent to Ireland on a further research trip in August 1947. The conflict between an Irish understanding and appreciation of Irish culture and folklore and an Irish-American understanding and appreciation of Irish culture and folklore characterised both of these research trips. This conflict may well account for their ultimate lack of any major influence on the representation of the Little People in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* or in its accompanying publicity campaign. This section will begin, however, by suggesting another reason for this lack of any major influence and that is Walt Disney’s other likely motivations for conducting these research trips apart from sincerely wanting “to gather material on Irish folklore and culture”,⁷⁶ as he insisted to Hedda Hopper in June 1946. Walt Disney and his staff undertook many trips during the 1940s to locations of special interest for projects which were currently in development. Whilst other reasons for these trips have been identified by Disney scholars, Walt Disney always insisted to the press that they were motivated by his dedication to handling folklore and literature which emanated from cultures with which he could not wholly identify with reverence and integrity. Neal Gabler discusses a trip that Disney undertook to Atlanta, Georgia in November 1940 to negotiate with the family of the late Joel Chandler Harris about securing the rights to produce an adaptation of his *Uncle Remus* stories based upon African-American folk tales. In an interview with *Variety*, Disney did not mention the issue of securing rights for the project but rather he presented the trip as a research opportunity “to get an authentic feeling of

⁷⁶ Hedda Hopper, “Looking at Hollywood: DISNEY – Blend of Fantasy and Reality”, *The Los Angeles Times*, 30 June 1946.

Uncle Remus country so we can do as faithful a job as possible to these stories".⁷⁷ According to Gabler and Steven Watts, there was also a contrived disparity between the public perception and actual reality of the reasons which prompted Disney to visit South America in the summer of 1941 with an extensive entourage nicknamed El Grupo.⁷⁸ The trip was commissioned by the newly established Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs which conceived the idea of sending Disney as a Goodwill Ambassador during wartime due to the popularity of his films in several South American territories. Whilst anxious to escape from the increasingly acrimonious animators' strike which was dominating the agenda at his Burbank facility, Watts claims that he was reluctant to go until "the project was redefined as a trip to gather material for films",⁷⁹ which eventually became *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944).⁸⁰

Walt Disney Productions announced the intention of El Grupo "to utilize properly.....customs which had never failed to fascinate them"⁸¹ and a certain amount of folk material was gathered. Both Watts and Gabler conclude, however, that El Grupo were largely preoccupied by several organised social functions designed to display Disney to his adoring fans amongst South American aristocrats and Heads of State.⁸² Disney scholars have not explored the reasons that motivated his research trip to Ireland in November 1946 and yet it is reasonable to suggest that the extremely difficult circumstances in which Walt Disney Productions was operating in the immediate post-war period were at least partially

⁷⁷ See Neal Gabler, *Walt Disney*, 433.

⁷⁸ See Gabler, *Walt Disney*, 372 and Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 244.

⁷⁹ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 244.

⁸⁰ See *Saludos Amigos* (Norman Ferguson, Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske and Bill Roberts, USA, 1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (Norman Ferguson, Jack Kinney, Bill Roberts, Harold Young and Clyde Geronimi, USA, 1944).

⁸¹ Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 244.

⁸² See Gabler, *Walt Disney*, 372 – 373 and Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 245.

responsible. The company had been placed in a precarious position financially by many factors including its inability to sell its products to certain foreign territories during the war and its aforementioned animators' strike which considerably stalled production on several projects.⁸³ The company's misfortunes were only exacerbated immediately after the war by disappointing box-office returns and extremely dismissive critical reception to their newest releases which meant that public and press attention Walt Disney Productions received was invariably negative.⁸⁴ Watts also identifies the immediate post-war period as one of great disillusionment for Walt Disney personally because he was disturbed by the recent industrial unrest at his company and frustrated by financial constraints which rendered him unable to forge ahead immediately with several lavish, expensive projects which he believed would re-establish his fortunes and reputation.⁸⁵ Watts believes that this disillusionment led him to spend an increasing amount of time away from his headquarters at the Burbank facility between 1945 and 1948 and to travel around the United States and abroad as often as possible.⁸⁶ The research trip to Ireland in November 1946 afforded him both the opportunity to travel and the opportunity to gain some valuable positive publicity relating to his company's future but, much like his trips for *Song of the South*, *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*, these potential non-research-related reasons were never publicly disclosed. Rather the research trips to Ireland were presented as having been motivated entirely by Walt Disney's profound awareness of cultural sensitivities and this assertion played a pivotal role in Disney and his staff's successful efforts to secure the co-operation

⁸³ See Watts, *The Magic Kingdom*, 204 and 259 – 261.

⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, 249 – 251.

⁸⁵ See *Ibid.*, 264.

⁸⁶ See *Ibid.*, 265.

and assistance of the Government of Ireland and, eventually, the Irish Folklore Commission with his Irish-themed project.

From the first overtures made by Disney's staff to Irish government officials to the point at which the Irish Folklore Commission became involved, an emphasis was placed upon Walt Disney's apparently profound awareness of cultural sensitivities relating to issues of representation and misrepresentation. In September 1946, Jack Lavin, senior associate at Walt Disney Productions in Burbank, California telephoned the Consulate of Ireland in nearby San Francisco to inform the staff there that Disney would be travelling to Ireland "on a research mission" that November with an entourage of six comprising his wife Lillian, producer Perce Pearce and his wife, the project's current screenwriter John Tucker Battle and his wife and production executive Larry Lansburgh.⁸⁷ This information was communicated to Freddy Boland, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs in Dublin and Boland was contacted again in October 1946 by a staff member at the Irish Consulate in San Francisco and told that he and his colleagues had been invited to Disney's Burbank facility to tour the studio lot and discuss the forthcoming trip. Having accepted the invitation, the writer comments in his letter to Boland upon Disney's anxiety to visit Ireland before developing his Irish-themed project any further and he explains to Boland Disney's chief reason for feeling so anxious:

He stated that most film studios when producing films with foreign backgrounds employed experts to conduct, in advance, research work regarding the country concerned. Such experts usually confined their research activities to this country

⁸⁷ The details of the telephone call between Jack Lavin of Walt Disney Productions and an unspecified member of staff at the Consulate of Ireland, San Francisco are recalled in a letter sent from the Consulate to The Secretary of the Department of External Affairs in Dublin, Ireland on 18 September 1946. See National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs 323/32, "Visit of members of Walt Disney productions to Ireland to make cartoon motion pictures of Irish life and folklore".

with resulting misrepresentation of the countries concerned. Mr Disney has been offered the services of numerous persons claiming to be experts on Ireland and its folklore, but he prefers to go to Ireland to get a real picture of our country before attempting to produce his film.⁸⁸

The Department of External Affairs, apparently convinced by Disney's plea for co-operation and assistance in his mission to avoid misrepresenting Ireland and its folklore, sent civil servant Brian J Connolly to liaise with Disney and his staff when they arrived in London in November 1946 before travelling over to Ireland. Further convinced by Disney's plea for guidance in avoiding misrepresentation, Connolly orchestrated a meeting between Disney and his staff and the Irish Folklore Commission which was subsequently to prove fundamental to the research conducted on both trips undertaken by Disney personnel to Ireland.

It is reasonable to suggest that senior staff at the Department of External Affairs recognised the potential economic benefits for the country in assisting and co-operating with Walt Disney on his Irish-themed project. Brian J Connolly's briefing letter to James Delargy, Director of the Irish Folklore Commission, also suggests, however, an earnest belief in the commitment to avoiding misrepresentation of Irish culture and folklore expressed by Disney, whom he describes as "interesting and a genuine artist".⁸⁹ There can also be detected in Connolly's letter to Delargy a commitment on behalf of the Department of External Affairs as well as on behalf of Disney to ensure that misrepresentation is avoided. Connolly explicitly states that he has recommended the Irish Folklore Commission to the

⁸⁸ Letter from the Consulate of Ireland, San Francisco to Freddy Boland of the Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 22 October 1946, National Archives of Ireland, Department of External Affairs 323/32, "Visit of members of Walt Disney productions to Ireland to make cartoon motion pictures of Irish life and folklore".

⁸⁹ Letter from Brian J Connolly to James Delargy, 21 November 1946, the Disney file, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

Disney party amid concerns that pursuing research opportunities elsewhere in the country “would give them results which might not necessarily be pleasing to Irish opinion”.⁹⁰ This issue is central to the tension that existed between Walt Disney and his staff and James Delargy and his staff because Delargy had been charged with promoting material which would be “pleasing to Irish opinion” whereas it seems clear that Disney was not interested in pleasing Irish opinion ultimately but rather in pleasing Irish-American opinion. Both men had contrasting ideas about what constituted misrepresentation of Irish culture and folklore because of the different audiences at whom their representations were targeted. In his study of the interactions between Walt Disney Productions and the Irish Folklore Commission, Tony Tracy reflects upon the many similarities between Walt Disney and Delargy who “were charismatic and visionary leaders professionally dedicated to gaining recognition for folk narrative in modern culture” but suggests that, crucially, they did so in “strikingly different contexts”.⁹¹ He locates the tension between the two men in the fact that Walt Disney, “a highly creative exploiter of disparate narrative traditions in the global medium of the movies” and Delargy, “the state-sanctioned director of the national folklore collection” approached Irish folklore from radically different perspectives and did not have the same priorities.⁹² Tracy argues that a film about leprechauns might have been looked upon by Delargy as undermining and trivialising the work of the relatively new Irish Folklore Commission which sought “to categorise and promote Irish folklore in a systematic and serious fashion”.⁹³ It is also true that he was operating under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs, perceived during this period by Tracy as “enthusiastic that

⁹⁰ Letter from Connolly to Delargy, 21 November 1946.

⁹¹ Tracy, “When Disney Met Delargy”, 48.

⁹² See *Ibid.*, 50 – 51.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 58.

Ireland would not continue to suffer the crude stereotypes of the colonial era”,⁹⁴ stereotypes with which the leprechaun trope would surely have been strongly associated.

It appears that the proposed film in which leprechauns were to be the central focus constituted for Delargy a misrepresentation of Irish folklore predicated upon trivialising the commission’s serious work and conforming to regressive Irish stereotypes. The issue of avoiding misrepresentation had been presented by Delargy as one of the main reasons for founding an organisation devoted to studying, collecting and preserving Irish folklore. He wrote the following in June 1927 in the editorial of the first edition of the commission’s official publication, *Béaloides*:

The aim of our Society is a humble one – to collect what still remains of the folklore of our country. We are not yet in a position to form an accurate judgement of its merits, but of this we are certain that the nonsensical rubbish that passes for Irish folklore, both in Ireland and outside, is not representative of our Irish people.⁹⁵

Delargy appears to have had very rigid ideas about what constituted an authentic representation of Irish folklore, although his particular approach has been criticised by folklore scholars including Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch and Diarmuid Ó Giolláin for emphasising certain aspects of Irish society at the expense of others.⁹⁶ Delargy favoured folk material which was rooted in rural, Irish-language, Roman Catholic communities to such an extent that he would have inevitably viewed perceptions of Irish folklore rooted not in these communities but in the diasporic space of Irish America as somewhat inauthentic and

⁹⁴ Tracy, “When Disney Met Delargy”, 58.

⁹⁵ See Bo Almquist, “The Irish Folklore Commission: Achievement and Legacy”, *Béaloides* 45/47 (1977 – 1979), 6 – 26, 6.

⁹⁶ See Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch, “The Primacy of Form: A ‘Folk Ideology’ in de Valera’s Politics” in *De Valera and His Times*, eds., J. P. O’Carroll and John A. Murphy. (Cork: Cork University Press, 1986), 47-61 and Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, “An Cultúr Coiteann agus Léann an Bhéaloidis”, *Leachtai Cholm Cille*, 26 (1996), 137-158.

misrepresentative. Delargy's discomfort at Disney's proposed film about leprechauns as well as anxieties about his own and the Irish Folklore Commission's potential facilitation of such a project led to his vain attempts to dissuade Walt Disney himself from continuing with the project in its current leprechaun-centred incarnation. Tracy says that Delargy was "well known for his grace and PR skills"⁹⁷ and, therefore, it is unsurprising that, despite his reservations about the project, Delargy established a genial and respectful relationship with Walt Disney and his entourage during their brief week-long visit, which began when they arrived in Dublin from London on the 22nd of November 1946. He hosted the Disney party at the offices of the Irish Folklore Commission on the Earlsfort Terrace campus of University College Dublin and at his own home and he accompanied them on research trips that he had organised to Connemara, Kerry and Wicklow. He also accompanied Disney on a visit to the Phoenix Park to be received by President of Ireland Seán T O'Kelly.⁹⁸ As the Irish-themed project continued to be developed at Walt Disney Productions in the following years, Delargy was written to for advice on several occasions by senior staff until the project was officially shelved in the summer of 1949.⁹⁹

Despite their undoubtedly genial relations with each other, the relationship between both organisations and their leaders was also tense and strained from the very beginning due to Delargy's insistence upon attempting to dissuade Walt Disney from continuing with his leprechaun-centred project. The first meeting between James Delargy and Walt Disney is described in the memoir of Delargy's folklorist colleague at the Irish Folklore Commission, Bríd Mahon. Upon meeting Disney at the offices of the Irish Folklore Commission on the

⁹⁷ Tony Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 48.

⁹⁸ The itinerary of the research trip to Ireland undertaken by Disney and his entourage of six in November 1946 is recalled in Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 48 – 49.

⁹⁹ For details of Delargy's correspondence with staff members at Walt Disney Productions, chiefly Larry Lansburgh and Lawrence Edward Watkin, see Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 49 – 56.

same day that he arrived in Ireland, Delargy immediately informed Disney that he was “dismayed” to hear of his plan to make a film about leprechauns.¹⁰⁰ Whilst Disney and his staff seemed keenly aware of the meeting’s potential as a publicity stunt, Bríd Mahon recalls how Delargy approached the occasion determined to persuade Disney to adopt an alternative Irish folk narrative for his film, such as “Deirdre of the Sorrows”, “The Táin”, “The Well at the World’s End”, “The Children of Lir” or “The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne”,¹⁰¹ but the efforts of him and his staff proved fruitless:

Following the wishes of our director, we tried to interest Disney in one or other of the great heroic sagas. But no; nothing but leprechauns would do the man who had set his heart on meeting one and had travelled across the Atlantic in the hope that his wish might come true.¹⁰²

Delargy’s evident dismay at Disney’s plan to make a film about leprechauns and Disney’s absolute dismissal of Delargy’s concerns on their initial meeting introduced a definite degree of tension. Whilst this tension did not hinder Walt Disney Productions in developing a beneficial, genial relationship with the Irish Folklore Commission, it appears to have greatly limited the amount of research that Disney staff felt comfortable conducting on the project’s main focus, leprechauns. A press release written and distributed by the publicity department at Disney’s Burbank facility subsequent to the research trip of November 1946 conjures a scenario which Disney and his entourage may have expected and preferred but which, on account of Delargy’s reservations, categorically did not materialise:

Disney stirred up the aery mountains, down the rushy glens, and along O’Connell Street in Dublin searching for lore which he will use when he starts work on his new fantasy, ‘The Little People’ The Eire government, ready to help in the perpetuation

¹⁰⁰ Bríd Mahon, *While Green Grass Grows: Memoirs of A Folklorist* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), 50.

¹⁰¹ See *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 50 – 51.

on celluloid of the fascinating Irish lore, turned over all the facilities of the Irish Folklore Commission, headed by Prof Seamus Delargy, to Disney and his party.¹⁰³

It is reasonable to deduce from this alternative version of events which was reported as fact that Walt Disney and his entourage expected Delargy to be more enthusiastic and reverential in his attitude towards them than he actually was.

As Tomás Ó h-Íde has outlined in great detail, this was not the first occasion on which Delargy had been enlisted by the Government of Ireland to act in an advisory capacity on a film which incorporated elements of Irish folklore into its narrative.¹⁰⁴ *Oidhche Sheannchais* (1934), identified by Ó h-Íde as the first Irish-language film, was commissioned by the Department of Education, and completed in its entirety at Gainsborough Studios in Islington, London during the post-production phase of its American director Robert Flaherty's feature-length documentary *Man of Aran* (1934).¹⁰⁵ Delargy, working as a lecturer in Irish Folklore at University College Dublin at the time, accepted a request from the Department of Education to advise Flaherty on the short, fifteen-minute film which was to feature a seanchaí reciting a folk tale by a fireside to an enraptured audience comprised of actors from *Man of Aran*. Delargy was charged with finding a suitable seanchaí from the Aran Islands to appear in the film and with accompanying the chosen Seáinín Tom Sheáin of An Srúthán, Árainn to London as his chaperone. He also supervised the particular version of the fairy sea legend "Máirtín 'ac Conraoi" which was to be recited in the film and ensured that Seáinín Tom Sheáin's island pronunciation would not prove too difficult to understand

¹⁰³ For the relevant press release, prepared by Joe Reddy at Walt Disney Productions in Burbank, California for immediate release on 23 November 1946, see the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹⁰⁴ See Tomás Ó h-Íde, "Robert Flaherty's *Oidhche Sheannchais*: The First Film in Irish", *New Hibernia Review*, 18 (4), Winter/Geimhreadh 2014.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 69 – 70.

for general schoolchild audiences.¹⁰⁶ It can be concluded that Delargy proved indispensable to Flaherty during the making of *Oidhche Sheannchais* as he is thanked most especially in the opening credits of the film. It was perhaps his previous experience collaborating so closely with a filmmaker of Flaherty's success and reputation which meant that he was able to interact so confidently with the Disney party upon their arrival in Dublin on the 22nd of November 1946, even to the point where he felt comfortable criticising their plans. He was being extremely naïve if he was convinced that his opinions and advice would be as highly valued as they had been when he worked with Flaherty, however. The crucial difference between the two film projects is that Flaherty had been employed by the Department of Education to make that particular folklore-centric, state-sanctioned film and was obliged to a certain degree to comply with the wishes of the Irish Government and their folklore spokesperson. Walt Disney was operating under no such obligation but rather he seems to have felt obliged to accommodate a particularly Irish-American perspective on Irish culture and folklore in his making of his Irish-themed film and this perspective encompassed the non-negotiable centrality of leprechauns. Therefore, from the first meeting between Disney and Delargy onwards, leprechauns appear to have become a controversial topic which was deliberately avoided for diplomatic reasons not only as the research trip continued but also in all of the subsequent correspondence between both organisations.

Tony Tracy suggests this diplomatic avoidance of the topic of leprechauns as the reason for a curious absence in the correspondence and material which was sent between Dublin and California in the year following the first research trip to Ireland. A considerable amount of material was sent by Delargy to Burbank, California relating to Irish nature,

¹⁰⁶ Ó hÍde, "Robert Flaherty's *Oídhche Sheannchais*", 71 – 74.

history, geography, folklore, custom and literature throughout 1947, either taken from the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission or bought through an account at Hodges Figgis booksellers.¹⁰⁷ Despite the wealth of material on leprechauns being housed at the Commission alone, however, this material was never mentioned by either Delargy or his main Disney correspondent, Larry Lansburgh.¹⁰⁸ Notwithstanding the curtailment of research on leprechauns, Disney staff did receive material relating to Irish folklore and culture through their association with the Irish Folklore Commission, which had a discernible influence on the film in its final incarnation and this influence will now be explored. An element that was introduced into the story development process immediately after the Disney party returned to America from the first research trip in November 1946 was the trope from Irish fairy lore of the pookah horse enchanted by the fairy folk in order to do their bidding. In a letter written to Delargy in early January 1947, Lansburgh asks him specifically “if you had the chance to find further material on the Fairy Horse”,¹⁰⁹ suggesting that the Disney party had been introduced to this concept whilst in Ireland and were enthusiastic about its potential inclusion. Delargy acquiesced by sending notes that he had personally prepared from the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission¹¹⁰ and it is certainly the case that the pookah horse features prominently in the next completed draft of the screenplay for the project which was submitted by John Tucker Battle on the 5th of February

¹⁰⁷ See Hodges Figgis account details, the Disney file, the National Folklore Collection.

¹⁰⁸ See Tracy, “When Disney Met Delargy”, 58. For a comprehensive list of the Irish-related material sent by Delargy to Walt Disney Productions in Burbank, California, see the *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives. The list confirms Tracy’s assertion about the curious absence of leprechauns in the material that had been requested.

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Larry Lansburgh to James Delargy, 6 January 1947, the Disney file, the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

¹¹⁰ Letter from James Delargy to Larry Lansburgh, 13 January 1947, the Disney file, the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

1947.¹¹¹ In this radically different draft, Darby O’Gill is reconfigured as a celebrated former jockey who is an expert in horses and his daughter Kathleen falls in love with a roguish horse trainer who is actually Lord Kevin Fitzhugh in disguise. The narrative culminates in a popular horse race thrown into chaos by the appearance of a pookah horse sent by King Brian Connors which Darby recognises and tames in time to ensure the restoration of order and Kathleen’s happiness. The centrality of the pookah horse in this draft of the screenplay suggests that Disney, committed as ever to pursuing potential sources of exciting visual spectacle, was instantly fascinated by this particular folkloric figure upon learning about it in Ireland and instructed Battle to incorporate it into the film’s narrative. It is unlikely that Battle would have suddenly decided to feature horses so prominently in his latest draft of the screenplay without being instructed to do so by either Disney or a senior executive.

When Lawrence Edward Watkin was subsequently hired to re-draft the screenplay in the summer of 1947, the theme of horse racing was downplayed and yet the pookah horse remained in every draft that he wrote including the final version of the film’s screenplay which was ultimately used when production began in 1958. Pioneering visual effects by Joshua Meador are employed in the film to realise the enchantment or “comehither” placed upon the O’Gill family horse Clayopathra who leads Darby O’Gill to his encounter with King Brian Connors at Knocknasheega, an incident which takes place in Kavanagh’s “Darby O’Gill and the Good People” although the animal in that instance is Darby’s cow Rosie. Also, the film’s final screenplay suggests that, when writing dialogue for his characters, Watkin consulted one book in particular which was sent by Delargy to Lansburg in early 1947 and that is Patrick Weston Joyce’s *English as We Speak It In Ireland* (1910). Written by an

¹¹¹ See John Tucker Battle, *The Little People: Draft Screenplay*, 5 February 1947, the *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

educationalist and antiquarian who was a very significant figure in the preservation of Irish-language culture and the scholarly examination of Hiberno-English,¹¹² the book includes a compendium of phrases supposedly used for a variety of topics of conversation and its author repeatedly asserts that these phrases are uniquely and categorically Irish in origin. All of the most distinctive, florid and singular phrases dispersed throughout Watkin's screenplay which linguistically signify the Irishness of the film's characters can be traced to *English As We Speak It In Ireland*. They may have been included in the screenplay in order to complement the "brogue", an established linguistic signifier of Irishness with which mainstream American audiences would have been familiar. These phrases include "Time enough lost the ducks",¹¹³ "If you sup with the devil, you need a long spoon",¹¹⁴ "He thinks no small beer of himself",¹¹⁵ "He's as proud as a whitewashed pig",¹¹⁶ "Tis only a stepmother would blame you",¹¹⁷ "You're blue-moulded for want of a beating",¹¹⁸ "Your heart's as cold as a wet Christmas", "By all the goats in Kerry!", "She's a fine doorful of a woman" and "She has a tongue on her could clip a hedge".¹¹⁹ Whilst this influence on Watkin during his writing of the film was conducted remotely and orchestrated by a research trip in which he did not personally undertake, he was also clearly influenced by a

¹¹² See Terence Dolan, Introduction to *English As We Speak It In Ireland SECOND EDITION* by Patrick Weston Joyce (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1979)

¹¹³ Patrick Weston Joyce, *English As We Speak It In Ireland SECOND EDITION* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1979), 114.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

research trip to Ireland that he undertook with his wife in August 1947, nine months after the first research trip to Ireland by Disney personnel.¹²⁰

At the request of Larry Lansburgh,¹²¹ Delargy met with the Watkins at the Irish Folklore Commission upon their arrival in Ireland and prepared for them an itinerary for their visit, much as he had nine months previously, although Tracy quite rightly asserts that this itinerary was more detailed and had scholarly depth.¹²² This seems appropriate for this second Disney research trip which, even though it was announced in a press release disseminated by Walt Disney Productions, was much less publicity-oriented and much more academically rigorous. Delargy's itinerary for the Watkins featured recommendations of places of particular folkloric interest to visit all around the country and included the contact details of a folklore expert in each place. It is suggested by subsequent correspondence written by Watkin about the trip that he and his wife developed a particular rapport with renowned folklore collector Tadhg Murphy and his wife when they visited the Murphys at their home in Waterville, County Kerry on Delargy's recommendation¹²³ and perhaps it is no coincidence that every subsequent iteration of the screenplay written by Watkin henceforth was set in County Kerry. This research trip was certainly productive because there is a remarkable difference between the two story treatments that Watkin submitted to Disney executives before his research trip and the extensive, novel-length story treatment that he submitted in January 1948 following his return to the United States. This new story

¹²⁰ See press release "Disney Signs Watkin To Script 'Little People', Sails for Eire July 31st", 21 July 1947, the Darby O'Gill and the Little People file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹²¹ Letter from Larry Lansburgh to James Delargy, 16 July 1947, the Disney file, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

¹²² Tracy, "When Disney Met Delargy", 54.

¹²³ When asked by the publicity department if he wished to invite anyone in particular to the Dublin premiere on the 24th of June 1959, Watkin asked that invitations be sent to Tadhg Murphy and his wife, citing the invaluable insight into Irish folklore and culture which his time in Waterville, County Kerry with them had afforded him. See letter from Watkin to the publicity department, May 1959, the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

treatment was called *The Wishes of Barney O'Shea* and, whilst it still incorporated many of Kavanagh's characters and conceits and essentially retains the same narrative structure as previous drafts, it immediately and consistently reveals a significant shift in its author's relationship with Ireland. Watkin is no longer merely engaging with Ireland as an abstract, literary notion but as a definite and actual space.¹²⁴ In *The Wishes of Barney O'Shea*, Watkin includes with great confidence his newly acquired knowledge of Irish folklore, culture and geography and, most especially, of the Irish language and its influence on the naming of people and places and on the way that English is spoken in Ireland. This draft, for example, reveals assiduous efforts on Watkin's behalf to capture the rhythms of Hiberno-English, as this conversation between the characters of Barney and Fergus illustrates:

"Tis a grand violin you have."

"Ah, 'tis!"

"And you're the man that can play it."

"I am."

"Did you ever used to play 'Fire on the Mountain'?"

"I used."¹²⁵

These Hiberno-English rhythms feature throughout Watkin's final version of the screenplay, which he submitted ten years after his research trip to Ireland, as well as actual Irish-language dialogue between King Brian and his acolytes, who refer to him constantly as "A Thiarna" or "Your Lordship". Other nuggets of Irish folklore, culture and geography which he appears to have acquired in Ireland also feature in the final version of Watkin's screenplay.

¹²⁴ See Lawrence Edward Watkin, *The Wishes of Barney O'Shea: Draft of the Novel*, January 1948, the *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

The real County Kerry town of Cahirciveen is mentioned several times, the mountainous lair of the fairy folk is called Knocknasheega, which is an anglicised version of the Irish-language phrase “Cnoc na Síog” literally translating as “Mountain of the Fairies”, and the fairies dance the iconic Irish jig, “The Fox Chase”.¹²⁶

The influence of both of the Disney research trips to Ireland on *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* has now been explored and it is curious to note that, even though they took the Irish Folklore Commission and folklorists as their central focus, their ultimate effect on the representation of the Little People in particular is rather negligible. Both the use of Joyce’s “English As We Speak It In Ireland” and the research gathered by Watkin in Ireland influence the way that the Little People speak and yet they influence the way the human characters speak just as much and arguably more so. The use of the pookah horse trope from Irish folklore occurs in the film as a direct result of the first research trip to Ireland taken by Disney and his entourage, whilst the designation of the term Knocknasheega for the fairy lair and the conceit of the fairies playing the jig “The Fox Chase” both emanate from Watkin’s research. It can be stated absolutely, however, that no other element of the representation of the Little People can convincingly be traced to either of the research trips. These trips are not the only contemporaneous events which can be said to have influenced the film’s representation of the Little People. This section will now conclude by discussing two other discernible influences on aspects of the film’s representation of the Little People, which emanate not from research material gathered by Disney staff but from the re-emergence in post-war mainstream American cinema of films set in Ireland. Firstly, in *The Luck of the Irish* (1948), an assertion is made by Horace the Leprechaun that gold and jewels

¹²⁶ See Watkin, *The Wishes of Barney O’Shea, the Darby O’Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

in the possession of the Irish fairies were recovered from ships of the Spanish Armada which were wrecked off the Irish coast in 1588.¹²⁷ The very same assertion, which simultaneously endows the fairies with historical specificity and ethereal timelessness, is made by King Brian Connors when Darby O’Gill is entranced by the casket of gold and jewels which is housed in the fairy lair at Knocknasheega. Secondly, when Darby first enters into the fairy lair earlier in that scene, King Brian and his Little People are playing the Irish polka “The Rakes of Mallow” on their various traditional Irish instruments and dancing rapturously to it. This is unlikely to have been a coincidence given that particular polka’s significance in Irish-American popular culture by 1959. “The Rakes of Mallow” features prominently on the soundtrack of the greatest commercial success of the Irish-themed, post-war films, *The Quiet Man* (1952), particularly during the extended donnybrook sequence at the film’s conclusion and the film’s instant popularity amongst the target audience for *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* surely accounts for its inclusion.¹²⁸ It functions as an intertextual reference which testifies to the unimpeachable Irishness of the Little People upon their introduction into the film.

These two examples testify to the attention which was paid not only to how Irish culture and folklore were presented in Ireland to Disney staff on research trips but also to how Irish culture and folklore were presented in mainstream American cinema during the same period. It is highly likely that attention was paid to these films because of their

¹²⁷ *The Luck of the Irish* (1948), directed by Henry Koster for 20th Century Fox, was adapted from the obscure novel *There Was A Little Man* by Guy and Constance Jones, which is not mentioned anywhere amongst the extensive research material compiled by Maurice Geraghty at the project’s inception or by James Delargy at Larry Lansburgh’s request, suggesting that source of this detail was, in all probability, cinematic.

¹²⁸ This argument is further strengthened by the fact that the polka, which was first recorded in the 1780s, was arranged in a new version in the mid-twentieth century by composer Leroy Anderson and it is Anderson’s arrangement which is heard in *The Quiet Man* and, subsequently, in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* seven years later.

privileging of an Irish-American perspective on Irish culture and folklore which Walt Disney Productions sought to emulate for their Irish-themed project. Attention was only paid to the research that was conducted in Ireland on Irish folklore and culture when it did not contradict or undermine this Irish-American perspective. This accounts for the tense interactions between Walt Disney and his staff on one hand and James Delargy and his staff on the other and it is also accounts for the handling of an issue which was once again raised after Lawrence Edward Watkin's research trip to Ireland in August 1947. In the story treatment *The Wishes of Barney O'Shea* written by Watkin on his return to the United States, the fairy folk are referred to throughout not as the Little People but as the Good People. It seems probable that Watkin encountered that particular term for the fairies on numerous occasions before travelling to Ireland as he set about adapting Kavanagh's *Darby O'Gill and the Good People*. He was undoubtedly encouraged to use the term "Good People" upon his return from Ireland, however, on hearing it used by for James Delargy, Tadhg Murphy or one of the other folklore experts that he encountered whilst in Ireland. In all probability, Watkin was presented with what he perceived as inconvertible arguments for the use of the term the "Good People", given that it has a much greater foundation in Irish fairy lore than "Little People", and yet this privileging of an Irish perspective evidently could not be countenanced by Disney. The fourth and final section of this chapter will now proceed to explore the film's relationship with Irish fairy lore given the extent to which it privileges Irish Americans in its representation of the Little People.

Section Four

Viewers of *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* and its attendant publicity campaign, whether children or adults or believers or non-believers, are confronted with a representation of the fairy folk from Irish folklore which draws upon various influences but is ultimately a unique Disney product which prioritises an Irish-American perspective. This prioritising of a particular view, whether or not this view exists in the source material, recalls Richard Schickel’s hugely influential denunciation of Walt Disney’s approach to the adaptation of folklore and literature which emanated from a cultural tradition which was not his own. Schickel believes that, when Walt Disney chose to adapt folklore from a different cultural tradition, he always approached the folklore in question “as a conqueror, never as a servant” with a distinct lack of “sympathy and respect for alien traditions”¹²⁹ and the process always had a detrimental effect on the source material as a result:

He could make something his own, all right, but that process nearly always robbed the work at hand of its uniqueness, of its soul, if you will. In its place he put jokes and songs and fright effects, but nearly always seemed to diminish what he touched.¹³⁰

Regarding literature from a different cultural tradition, Schickel believes that the literary works in question were arrogantly treated by Walt Disney Productions as “grist for a mighty mill, properties to do with as the proprietor of the machine would”¹³¹ and he does not detect in the finished products any sense of “obligation to the originals or to the cultural traditions that they represented”.¹³² He uses *Song of the South* (1946) as an example of a

¹²⁹ Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art and Commerce of Walt Disney Third Edition* (Chicago: Ivan R Dee Inc., 1997), 227.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 296.

¹³² Ibid.

Disney film which is adapted from both folkloric material and literary material, being based, as it is, upon Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings: The Folklore of the Old Plantation* (1881) which incorporates into its original narrative various African-American folktales collected by Harris.¹³³ As *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* is also adapted from works of original fiction which incorporate a significant amount of folklore into their narratives, it could be argued that Kavanagh's folkloric and literary tales were as doubly degraded through the process of Disney adaptation as Schickel believes Harris's *Uncle Remus* tales were.

The difficulty in applying Schickel's argument in the case of this particular film is that the cultural traditions that it represents cannot be said to be entirely alien to Walt Disney, given that one set of his paternal great-grandparents were Irish and emigrated from County Kilkenny in the early nineteenth century. This fact was emphasised during the film's marketing campaign in order to construct Walt Disney as "half-Irish" and, whilst this may be viewed as a disingenuous overstatement, it remains true that he was an Irish American. He did not entirely belong to the culture being represented on screen but he did belong to a related, hybrid culture and this must surely have influenced the ways in which the film and the publicity campaign prioritised his fellow Irish Americans in its representation of the Little People. Walt Disney's own identification with a hybrid Irish-American culture suggests that it was not a lack of sympathy and respect for Irish traditions which produced the company's representation of the Little People but rather a different perspective on Irish traditions which arose from the hybridization of Irish culture and American culture. The introduction of this chapter examined Stuart Hall's theory that cultural hybridity is inevitable in diasporic

¹³³ For Schickel's reference to *Song of the South* in his discussion of Disney's adaptation of folkloric material and for his reference to *Song of the South* in his discussion of Disney's adaptation of literary material, see Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 226 – 227 and 276 – 277.

situations because identities are transformed by the collision of the past and the present. A related essay by Hall was featured in the second chapter of this thesis on Kavanagh's representation of the Good People in which he elaborates on an important aspect in the process of cultural hybridization by stating that cultural identity achieves fluidity through changing representation. It was argued in that chapter that Kavanagh produced her subversive and innovative representation of the Good People in her literary fairy tales based upon her personal conviction of what their role in the cultural identity of her diasporic, Irish-American readers should be. It could be stated that Kavanagh was, therefore, engaging in the process of cultural hybridization by attempting to incorporate elements of both Irish culture and American culture into the one representation. This chapter has argued that Walt Disney produced a representation of the Little People in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* based upon the conviction of both him and his staff of what their role in the cultural identity of his diasporic, Irish-American viewers already was. Perhaps informed by being part of the hybrid culture from which the Little People emanate, Walt Disney was not engaging in the process of cultural hybridization like Kavanagh but rather he was reflecting an already completed process of cultural hybridization as he perceived it. Whilst operating at opposite ends of the process, both Kavanagh and Disney prioritised their Irish-American audience and they did so whilst claiming the contrary.

Walt Disney never publicly admitted to promoting an Irish-American view of Irish folklore in the film but rather he attracted a great deal of publicity by asserting that the film's representation of the Little People would constitute an accurate and authentic representation of Irish culture and folklore in all aspects. It was this notion upon which the co-operation and assistance of the Department of External Affairs and the Irish Folklore

Commission was secured. Both of the subsequent research trips that resulted from this co-operation and assistance were constructed in press releases distributed by Walt Disney Productions as motivated by Walt Disney's personal mission to avoid misrepresenting Irish culture and folklore. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the paratextual *Disneyland* television special *I Met the King of the Leprechauns* insisted that the representation of the Little People in the completed film was accurate, authentic and representative and this insistence also featured in an aspect of the film's publicity campaign which has not yet been explored which will now be examined. Unit publicist John Conner, having consulted with the Irish-American Historical Society regarding major Irish-American media outlets,¹³⁴ wrote in June 1959 to the editors of various publications throughout America with large Irish-American readerships including San Francisco's *The Leader*, Kentucky's *The Kentucky Irish American*, Boston's *Boston Herald* and New York's *Irish World* and *Irish Echo*.¹³⁵ Conner sent these editors "background and feature material on the picture", which presents the aspects of Irish folklore and culture which feature in the film as the unique cultural heritage of the Irish people. It is implied throughout this material that one's understanding of the unique cultural heritage of the Irish people would be greatly enriched by seeing the insightful film and its accurate and authentic representation of Irish culture and folklore.¹³⁶ The material is written as though it is intended to engender the excitement, wonder and reverence in the implied Irish-American reader that Walt Disney's tales of the Little People did in Pat O'Brien in *I Captured the King of the Leprechauns*. The assertion of an accurate and authentic

¹³⁴ This is according to documentation in the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

¹³⁵ There is evidence in the *Darby O'Gill* file in the Walt Disney Archives that, having received a reply to his query from the Irish American Historical Society, 991 Fifth Avenue, New York regarding major Irish-American media outlets, Conner proceeded to write to these publications using a template that he had previously composed. He wrote to *The Kentucky Irish American* on June 3rd 1959, to *The Leader* on June 4th 1959 and to *Boston Herald*, *Irish World* and *Irish Echo* on June 5th 1959.

¹³⁶ See letter template and accompanying material prepared by John Conner and the Publicity Department in the *Darby O'Gill* file, the Walt Disney Archives.

representation makes sense when considered in terms of Disney's keen awareness of cultural sensitivities which was explored earlier in this chapter. Judging by the latter two ways in which the assertion was used in the film's publicity campaign, however, it may also be the case that Disney and his staff felt that this assertion would please their target demographic of Irish Americans.

Despite his vehement criticism of the handling of literary and folkloric source material at Walt Disney Productions whilst Walt Disney was the company's director, Richard Schickel does offer one possible line of defence, "that of invincible ignorance", arguing that it is feasible that Disney did not realise how his "wanton tampering" might be considered offensive.¹³⁷ This line of defence cannot be applied to the representation of the Little People in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* whatsoever because Walt Disney actually asserted his intention to avoid causing offence through misrepresentation in this particular instance. Rather he was fully aware of how the film's representation of the Little People was diverging from their representation in Irish folklore and yet his staff nevertheless disseminated publicity material which positioned it as a faithful account of the fairy folk as they appear in Irish folk tradition. Kavanagh's preface to 1926's *The Ashes of Old Wishes and Other Darby O'Gill Tales*, in which she says that "only the garments these legends wear are my own; the stories themselves are as old, as deeply planted, and as real as the gray sentinel cliffs along the Antrim coast", is reminiscent of this positioning of the Disney film in folkloric terms. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the film in the context of "fakelore" just as Kavanagh's literary fairy tales were considered in this context in the second chapter of this thesis, given the tales' surrounding publicity materials, in which the author herself participated, which

¹³⁷ Schickel, *The Disney Version*, 296.

sought to construct her original literary work as retellings of genuine Irish folktales. When their respective publicity campaigns are taken into account, it could reasonably be argued that both Kavanagh's tales and the Disney film constitute "fakelore" for exactly the same reason that they sought to disguise the extent to which they newly created rather simply appropriated their representations of Irish folklore. Two differences emerge when they are compared with each other, however; firstly, the Disney film departs more significantly from the representation of the fairies in Irish folklore than Kavanagh's tales and, secondly, Disney had considerably more resources at their disposal when publicising the film than Kavanagh and her publishers had and, thus, Disney's dissemination of its problematic assertions reached a much wider audience. It seems clear that Walt Disney and his staff's perception of a uniquely Irish-American perspective of Irish culture and folklore was the largest single influence on the film's representation of the Little People, although this could never be admitted.

Conclusion

The third chapter of this thesis concluded by arguing that the representation of the Irish people in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* was influenced to a certain extent by the standard practices of representation at Walt Disney Productions and, thus, was somewhat determined by factors beyond what was perceived as an Irish-American perspective on Irish people. This fourth and final chapter will conclude by arguing that the film’s representation of the Little People, a previously unexplored concept at Walt Disney Productions, was entirely determined by an Irish-American perspective on the fairy folk of Irish folklore. This is why the obscure literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh were unexpectedly adapted in an extremely high-profile way, although only elements of Kavanagh’s representation of the Good People which were felt to accommodate an Irish-American appreciation and understanding of Irish culture and folklore could be countenanced. Therefore, both the literary and the cinematic incarnations of the Irish fairies conform to a prominent cultural construction of Irish identity in the diasporic space by being “roguish heroes” and yet whilst these figures are referred to throughout Kavanagh’s tales as “Good People”, they are referred to throughout the Disney film as “Little People”. Disney’s prioritising of an Irish-American perspective not only accounts for these deviations between Kavanagh’s tales and the Disney film in their respective representations of the fairies but also accounts for the tense relationship that Disney and his staff experienced with James Delargy of the Irish Folklore Commission and his staff, who were dismayed by Walt Disney’s insistence on foregrounding leprechauns in his company’s Irish-themed project. The result of this confrontation between Irish-American sensibilities and Irish sensibilities was not that Walt Disney was deterred from realising his vision but rather than the folkloric resources

made available to Disney by the Irish Government were not utilised as they may otherwise have been. Walt Disney and his company doggedly pursued what they perceived as an Irish-American perspective on the Little People despite all contrary assertions to which they were exposed and they produced their own unique interpretation for the film and its attendant publicity campaign. Disney's Little People were never acknowledged as the result of the lengthy creative and marketing process that they most assuredly were but rather they were identified in publicity materials as an accurate and authentic representation of the fairy folk that had emerged immaculately from the Irish folk tradition.

Conclusion

The sustained and comprehensive scholarly analysis that featured throughout the main four chapters of this thesis has shown how both the literary and cinematic incarnations of Darby O’Gill provide great insights into the complex construction of a specifically Irish-American diasporic identity in early and mid-twentieth-century American culture. Indeed, despite the influence of the elitist and sexist assumptions of the Disney fairy-tale model in the film’s representation of the Irish people, there is one dominating and unifying influence on Kavanagh’s representation of the Irish people and the Good People and on Disney’s representation of the Irish people and the Little People – the Irish diaspora in the United States in America. In their construction of Irish identity through representation, Kavanagh and Disney privileged and prioritised the understanding and appreciation of Irish identity, culture and folklore which was espoused by Irish people who were living in America over Irish people living in Ireland. This surely accounts for why the term “Darby O’Gill” is used as a signifier of a pejorative construction of Irish identity not in the modern Irish-American consciousness but rather in the modern Irish consciousness. This thesis began as an investigation into the extent to which the use of the “Darby O’Gill” signifier is justified and, therefore, it will now present its findings. It appears as though the type of pejorative construction of Irish identity which has become inextricably linked with Darby O’Gill in the modern Irish consciousness is perceived as originating in the United States of America and promoting an inauthentic view founded upon an over-emphasis of certain aspects of Irish life and regressive behavioural stereotypes. It can now be stated authoritatively that it is justified in regard to both Kavanagh’s literary fairy tales and the Disney film, although the particular construction of Irish identity that the use of the term signifies is more prevalent in

the latter than in the former. The four elements of identity construction which are encompassed by the signifier will now be considered individually. Firstly, it is clear that both the literary and cinematic iterations of the character of Darby O’Gill and the version of Ireland that he inhabits originated in America but it is also clear that they were exclusively addressing an Irish audience in America. This is an important point because the signifier seems to assume that the constructions of Irish identity that are being signified should be dismissed as failures if they do not secure the approval and engagement of an Irish audience in Ireland. This was never the intention of either Kavanagh or Disney, however, as they constructed Irish identity through representation and, therefore, it would be entirely unfair to dismiss their work on this account.

The second element of the “Darby O’Gill” signifier is that it promotes an inauthentic view and this allegation can be said to be justified regarding both the tales and the film when one considers the one aspect of their construction of Irish identity which can be objectively judged as either authentic or inauthentic. In centralising representations of the fairy folk from Irish folklore, this thesis has shown how both Kavanagh and Disney depart significantly from the representations of the fairy folk that feature in the Irish folk tradition. Both representations could be defended as the result of their authors engaging in a creative process in the diaspora space which is influenced by the hybridisation of Irish culture and American culture. Allegations of inauthenticity are legitimised, however, by disingenuous assertions in the publicity materials for both the literary and cinematic products which say that their Good People and Little People are entirely authentic reflections of the Irish folk tradition. The third element of the “Darby O’Gill” signifier is that it over-emphasises certain aspects of Irish life and it is certainly true that neither the tales nor the film acknowledge to

any significant degree an existence in Ireland which is not characterised by a rural location, supernatural interference and Roman Catholicism. Regarding the conditions in which Irish people live, the contrast between the prosperity of the diasporic space of Irish America and the poverty of the “homeland” of Ireland is implied in both the tales and the film. This means that in the literary and cinematic texts the Irish people are almost exclusively shown to be operating in humble conditions which testify to the threat of destitution rather than the luxury of affluence. This essentialising approach to representing Irish life also extends to the political as well as the religious allegiances of the Irish people, even though the conclusions drawn about nationalist politics by Kavanagh are completely different from those drawn, perhaps inadvertently, by Disney. Whilst the characters in Kavanagh’s tales all ardently support the cause of Irish nationalism, all of the characters in the Disney film appear to have adopted the opposite view by maintaining the community in which they live as a functioning colonial social hierarchy presided over by a benign representative of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. Therefore, whilst the tales and the film offer opposing representations in this particular instance, it can nevertheless be concluded that a wide variety of aspects of Irish life are over-emphasised in both the tales and the film through the absence of any alternative representation being offered.

The “Darby O’Gill” signifier also encompasses the promotion of regressive behavioural stereotypes relating to the Irish people and it is in this fourth and final element of the signifier that Kavanagh and Disney diverge significantly from each other. It is for this reason that it can be definitively stated that it is only in the context of the cinematic iteration of Darby O’Gill that the signifier should be deemed to be justified without reservation or qualification. Conversely, Kavanagh adopts a more nuanced approach to

constructing Irish identity which is beyond the parameters of the signifier in certain regards. It is in the behaviour that she ascribes to her Irish characters, be they mortal human beings or supernatural folkloric creatures, that she refuses to ever conform fully to stereotypes without introducing a degree of subversion to her representation. Both the tales and the film appropriate a cultural construction of Irish identity in the figure of the “roguish hero” which, whilst representing a more sympathetic and positive reconstitution of the stage Irishman trope when it was pioneered, was nevertheless recognisable from its adherence to behavioural stereotypes. In her appropriation of this cultural construction of Irish identity, Kavanagh defied its gendered nature by writing both male and female “roguish heroes”, she reinforced the cleverness with which the “roguish hero” was endowed at every available narrative opportunity and she undermined the stereotypes of the drinking, fighting Irish by featuring them only in a brief and perfunctory manner. In a reversal of the situation which one may have expected, given the fact that there is fifty-eight years between the publication of Kavanagh’s first literary fairy tale in 1901 and the release of the Disney film in 1959, the latter adheres strictly to the figure as it was when it was first introduced in the mid-nineteenth century and it discards the subversions of the former. In *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, the “roguish heroes” are gendered entirely as male, the cleverness of the characters is undercut by their slavish devotion to both superstition and Roman Catholicism which allows them to be manipulated and deceived and the stereotypes of the drinking, fighting Irish are reinforced by their prominence throughout the film. It remains true that, however subversive her appropriation of the “roguish hero” proves to be in her work, Kavanagh adheres to a certain extent to a cultural construction of Irish identity which reinforces and promotes behavioural stereotypes. It is in her representation of women, whether they are mortal or supernatural, that she is unreservedly subversive and

progressive as she rejects previous cultural constructions of Irish female identity and their attendant stereotypical behaviours.

Kavanagh entirely repudiates the “henpecking wife” figure and she simply does not engage with the “Irish Bridget” figure or the “Irish colleen” figure. She refutes the negativity with which the notion of dominant and forceful Irish women was presented through the figure of the “henpecking wife”. She celebrates Irish women who challenge society’s patriarchal assumptions by exerting power and authority in whatever way possible within their inevitable marriages to their less impressive male counterparts. The ultimate vindication of the right of women to be active, empowered and engaged in their lives features in her very first tale “Darby O’Gill and the Good People”. It should be remembered that the author’s namesake, Maureen McGibney, is praised for orchestrating the successful escape of her brother-in-law Darby O’Gill from his confinement in the lair of the Good People, as the reader is told that without her cleverness, which is shown to far exceed Darby’s, he would still be confined by the Good People to this very day. Whilst Kavanagh’s repudiates the “henpecking wife” figure through her characterisation of a variety of female characters, including the banshee of Irish folk tradition, Disney again undermines her progressive position. Influenced by the sexist assumptions of the Disney fairy-tale model and especially by the “Irish colleen” figure who was dominating mainstream American films of that era, the Disney film celebrates Irish women who behave very differently from those created by Kavanagh. The film celebrates Irish women whose assertive autonomy is a superficial artifice and who ultimately passively submit to the will of their husbands and retreat from society into the domestic space. The character of Katie O’Gill ultimately embodies a cultural construction of Irish female identity, the “Irish colleen” figure, which

reinforces the stereotypes that Kavanagh was previously subverting in her repudiation of another cultural construction of Irish female identity, the “henpecking wife” figure. In ascribing patterns of behaviour to the Irish people, Kavanagh never simply perpetuates stereotypes but rather offers her Irish-American readers an alternative perspective which either subverts the stereotypes or rejects them entirely. It is only in her representation of women that she rejects them entirely and, therefore, it is the feminist ideology which permeates her pioneering work in the field of Irish-American children’s literature that truly distinguishes her construction of Irish identity from that in *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*. This thesis will now conclude by considering the wider implications of the findings of this research project in three separate areas of literary and cultural discourse, relating to the ethnic addressee in cultural texts, the use of signifiers and Irish-American children’s literature respectively.

Firstly, it has been argued throughout this thesis that both the literary fairy tales of Herminie Templeton Kavanagh and their 1959 live-action film adaptation address an implied dual implied audience of Irish-American children and adults. It has shown how identifying the age profile of the implied audience is very important in understanding a children’s text but it has also shown how identifying the ethnic profile of the implied audience is very important too. A text which is set in Ireland and features Irish characters and themes does not necessarily address a straightforwardly Irish audience but can exclusively address an Irish audience whose ethnic identity has been complicated by leaving the “homeland” of Ireland and entering the diasporic space of Irish America. Such Irish-American constructions of Irish identity should not simply be dismissed or derided but rather they should be considered within the legitimate cultural category in which they operate. Perhaps they do

conform to a questionable construction of Irish identity in certain respects but this does not mean that the fascinating and perceptive insights into the Irish diaspora in America that they offer at the particular moment at which they are produced should, therefore, be discarded. Secondly, the findings of this thesis also suggest that caution should be exercised in the use of signifiers in cultural discourse for, although they may reflect a perception in the modern consciousness, the appropriation of specific terms as signifiers may result in misrepresentation. In the case of the signifier which was investigated in this thesis, the use of the term in question has been shown to be not fully justified because there is not only a cinematic dimension but also a literary dimension, which is encapsulated by that term and Kavanagh's *Darby O'Gill* tales do not construct Irish identity exactly as the "Darby O'Gill" signifier suggests. To assume as much is to render a disservice to Kavanagh's work in the field of Irish-American children's literature, which has already been badly served by literary scholarship which has barely acknowledged her significant contribution. That is the essence of the third and final point which now concludes this thesis, as it has been made abundantly clear during the writing of this thesis that Irish-American children's literature in general is severely underrepresented in literary scholarship, with Padraic Colum and Mary Anne Sadlier being the only two authors whose work has been analysed to any substantial degree. Kavanagh's absence from analysis is a major oversight, not because her work was later adapted by Walt Disney Productions to great notoriety but because of the unique nature of what she undertook and achieved with her writing. Kavanagh wrote original feminist fairy tales for the Irish diaspora in America at the turn of the twentieth century which entertained and challenged readers in equal measure with their construction of Irish identity.

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