Tales of the Fey:
The use of traditional Faerie folklore in contemporary young adult fantasy novels

by

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Abstract

There are many examples of novel-length renditions of traditional fairy tales to be found in young adult fantasy literature. Although there is a significant amount of research on the evolution of the fairy tale into novel length narratives, there is little focused on the use of the folklore of Faerie in fantasy novels. This thesis examines the Faerie-related folkloric themes and motifs to be found in four examples of contemporary young adult fantasy novels: An Earthly Knight, Thomas the Rhymer, Tithe, and The Hunter's Moon. Each of these narratives is rich in Faerie folklore. The authors, Janet McNaughton, Ellen Kushner, Holly Black, and O.R. Melling, have gone beyond the pop-culture image of the fairy and explored the many aspects of Faerie to be found in folklore. In their unique ways, these authors each explore Faerie as a realm full of marvels and contradictions, while remaining true to the nature of Faerie found in folklore. This strong base in traditional sources strengthens and adds depth to these narratives.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

As a reader and an educator I realize that quality fantasy has a power that many other genres lack. Tolkien’s “On Fairy-Stories” was of great inspiration to me. Tolkien’s essay explains what the qualities of fantasy and fairy-story are and why they are important.

Tolkien states:

Fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about Fairy, that is Faerie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. Faerie contains many things besides elves and fay, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted. (1965, 9)

Tolkien’s words describe epic, or high, fantasy but they started me thinking of the stories that are about fairies. Although some do, fairy tales often do not even involve a single fairy.

I knew enough about folkloric fairies to know that the pop-culture image of the sweet diminutive fairy is not a true folkloric one. Over the years I have read fantasies involving fairies that had strong folkloric influences. These novels used the darker aspects of Faerie in very interesting ways. I was curious about how the folklore of Faerie was used in modern fantasy.

There is a great deal of writing on the retelling of fairy tales, such as the work of Altmann and de Vos, but the use of fairy folklore in novels has received little academic attention. The information I did find was sparse and written primarily by fantasists.
Purpose of the Proposed Research

When folklorists study folk literature in general, and fairy tales in particular, they primarily examine the motifs and themes depicted. When looking at fairy tales, they catalogue what motifs are present, and the tale is then quantitatively represented by these motif classifications. Psychoanalysts take a different approach to the study of fairy tales. They analyze the psychological importance, relevance and effect of fairy tales. Children's literature academics have looked at the folkloric aspects of fairy tales in greater depth, going beyond cataloguing to analyse the tales' evolution, tale type and motifs present. In addition, the various modern adaptations of these stories have been examined. Although the scholarship around fairy tales is a fascinating and growing field of research, I was able to find little information analysing stories about the fairies. There is a wealth of fantasy literature that does not draw on specific fairy tales, but is deeply inspired by the rich folklore associated with the fairies. Through this thesis I will investigate this fantasy literature in order to observe what folkloric elements are used by contemporary fantasists, and how they use them.
Principal Research Questions

I will examine the following principal research questions in this investigation:

- What Faerie-related folkloric motifs, themes, characters and settings are present in the chosen contemporary young adult fantasy novels?

- How do the selected fantasists use the folkloric material of Faerie in their novels?

- How are fairies depicted in these selected fantasies? Are the fairies represented primarily as the frivolous creatures of popular children’s culture, or are they closer to the mysterious and dangerous beings in folklore?

Thesis

Contemporary fantasy authors, drawing on the folklore surrounding fairies, depict both the enchanting and the sinister aspects of the folkloric material. The diminutive, sparkling, winged creatures, popular with Victorian artists, Disney, and contemporary children, rarely find their way into young adult novels. On the rare occasions when these images of fairy do appear in contemporary young adult fantasy, it is often a ruse, because these creatures like their companions in Faerie are dangerous and powerful begins.
Chapter 2: Definitions and Methodology

Definitions

An analysis of traditional folklore in contemporary young adult fantasy novels must start with a definition of these and related terms.

Fantasy Literature

There are many definitions of ‘fantasy literature.’ I adopted the definition in Lynn’s

*Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults.* Fantasy literature:

is a broad term used to describe books in which magic causes impossible, and often wondrous events to occur. . . . Imaginative fantasies, especially those written for young people over the past quarter-century or so, often contain the most serious of underlying themes. Such themes as the conflict between good and evil, the struggle to preserve joy and hope in a cruel and frightening world, and the acceptance of the inevitability of death. (1989, xix)

Young Adult Literature

I also used Lynn’s definition of young adult literature: books “written for young people in grades 6 through 12 (ages 11-18), as well as those ‘adult’ books that have been adopted by young adult readers” (1989, xix).

Mythic Fiction and Faerie Fantasy

I have used the term *Faerie Fantasy* as a sub-grouping of the term *Mythic Fiction,* which was

coined by authors Charles de Lint and Terri Windling to describe their own work. . . . The simplest and best definition of mythic fiction is fiction that draws essential substance from myth, folklore, fairy tale, and legend. The conscious use of mythic
themes and tropes – that is elements and language that reflect either figurative or literal use of images, symbols and metaphors from myth and folklore. (Bartel 2006)

Faerie Fantasy is the term I use for mythic fiction that draws explicitly on the folklore of Faerie.

Folklore

Mythic Fiction draws its inspiration from the legacies of the oral tradition: myths, legends, folklore, folktales, and fairy tales. Folklore is the broadest of these terms. It is defined in The Children’s Literature Dictionary: Definitions, Resources, and Learning Activities as the “traditional customs, songs, rhymes, riddles, ballads, superstitions, charms, omens, legends, beliefs, fairy tales, fables, myths, dances, rituals, proverbs, riddles, tall tales, etc. of a people” (Latrobe 2002, 76). A folktale is a more specific narrative: it is a “timeless story that developed within the oral tradition and therefore, represents the cumulative authorship of many storytellers” (Latrobe 2002, 76). Fairy tales are the subset of folktales that contain magic, “a power greater than and very different from the powers of human beings” (de Vos and Altmann 1999, 8). Although not all folktales are fairy tales, all traditional fairy tales are folktales, and both draw on folklore.

Fairy tales do not necessarily contain fairies within their narrative. Iona and Peter Opie, in The Classic Fairy Tales, differentiate between a fairy tale and a fairy legend, the latter being a “story about fairy-folk and their activities, that in the eighteenth century was half-believed to be true” (1974, 15). As there seems to be no consistent term used to describe folklore and folktales about Faerie or fairies, I will use the term Fairylore to describe the folklore and folktales directly related to Faerie and its inhabitants.
Motifs and Themes

One area in the study of folklore is the identification of motifs. A motif is defined in Motif Index of the Child Corpus as “the abstract representation of an idea which is realized concretely in individual texts. . . . [a] frequent occurrence of a motif as a moveable stock literary device” (Wurzbach and Salz 1995, 1). These motifs are found in both traditional literature, in its various forms, and in Mythic Fiction inspired by folklore. MacDonald discusses motifs in The Storyteller’s Sourcebook: “folklorists use two kinds of classification to discuss folktales. A type index, developed by Finnish folklorist Aarne in 1910, assigns type numbers to each entire tale . . . . The other scheme assigns each small part of a tale a motif number specific to the particular action, actor, or object of the part” (1982, x). The most important motif-index was created by folklorist Thompson in 1932, and further expanded in 1955. Propp states in Morphology of the Folktale: “classification is one of the first and most important steps of study” (11). Propp also describes the morphology of a folktale as “a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole” (1968, 19). These motifs can be grouped together to create folkloric themes. Veselovskij, quoted in Morphology of the Folktale, defines a theme as “a complex of motifs. A motif can be ascribed to different themes. (‘A theme is a series of motifs. A motif develops into a theme.’)” (1913). The use of motifs and themes by folklorists is primarily quantitative, classifying and cataloguing motifs present in specific folktales.
Faerie: Definitions and Introduction

Etymologically the word fairy comes from the Old French word *fata*, and is associated with fate and the Fates. It is a word with many meanings and associations. Williams discusses the semantics of the term fairy, stating that it has four primary meanings, “in Old French which passed into English, namely (1) enchantment; (2) fairyland, land of illusion; (3) human with special powers; (4) supernatural beings” (1991, 463). Fairy is a relatively modern name; in earlier times *elf* and *fay* were the common names for the same beings. To many folklorists these terms are interchangeable. The definition I will be using is from Ashliman’s *Fairy Lore*: *Faerie*: “The Realm of fairies, and by extension the quality or essence of being a fairy” (2006, 199). I use the term *fairy* to describe the various inhabitants of Faerie. In quotations and references I used the term/spelling according to the original author’s usage.

Why Faerie? What has attracted people all over the world to creatures of this type? Fairies, with witches and ghosts, are manifestations of the supernatural that became entwined with folk culture and tradition. Correll argues: “Fairy beliefs were part of the customary behaviours surrounding rites of passage and seasonal festivals, and were an integral aspect of various activities related to the functioning of household and household economics” (2003, 16-17). Faerie is the inverted image of the human world. “In fayrie all the natural laws are reversed or don’t apply. But this is simply an image of the real reversal and negation which is of the moral and taboo laws” (Duffy 1972, 53). Sociologically, Faerie becomes both the grand dream, and the nightmare, of the common people. Faerie is opulent and enchanting, as are its inhabitants, but fairies were also used to explain many of life’s hardships, such as sudden illnesses and the death of children.
Folkloric fairies are alluring but perilous to humankind. They take what they want, including children and lovers, with no remorse. Despite mass media images, fairies of the folk tradition are “dangerous, capable of terrible harm to people and their property, and every precaution had to be taken to keep them at bay, or at least, placated” (Henderson 1997, 20). Fairies are quick to take insult and “an offence to the fairies or a neglect of the proper charms would bring poor crops and murrain of cattle” (Duffy 1972, 78). Fairies do not follow the same rules as humans. “Faerie represents Power, magical power, incomprehensible to humans, . . . faeries are alien creatures with values and ethics far removed from mankind: they do not think, and most notably, they do not feel the way humans do” (Froud and Lee 1978, 2). Many of the folkloric Faerie motifs under discussion in this thesis are based on these dangers and differences.

Although this research focuses on fairies of the British Isles (including English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh traditions), fairies, or their like, exist in a great many places all over the world. The closest to the fairies from the British Isles would be the Scandinavian elves, trows and trolls. These cultures influenced each other, and so there is a significant overlap within their folk traditions. Northern Europe is not the only geographic region to have these otherworldly inhabitants. “We find in most countries a popular belief in different classes of beings. . . . These beings are usually believed to inhabit, in the caverns of earth, or the depth of the waters, a region of their own. They generally excel mankind in power and in knowledge” (Keightley 1850, 3). Fairylore predates Christianity, and has at times filled the voids left by organized religion by providing explanations for the ineffable. Fairy belief has been attacked over time, but not with complete success and has never really been eradicated. Traditional European Fairylore has travelled with immigrants to North America, particularly Newfoundland. Even in
the modern rational world there is something about Faerie that remains compelling. “Fairies have proven to be very durable. The psychological, social, and aesthetic needs that they filled centuries ago are still with us” (Ashliman 2006, 69). Although few people today truly believe in Faerie, its enchantment has not left us. The wealth of fantasy fiction incorporating elements of Faerie in plot, setting, or character shows that people are still fascinated by these old stories. Henderson suggests that “fairy belief has never really left us, it has simply adapted to the modern, technological age and transposed into UFO sightings and abduction narratives” (1997, 194). It is likely that it is this resilience that attracts fantasy authors and readers to Fairylore.

The literary image of the fairy is much softer than the folk image. Keightley in *The Fairy Mythology* asserts that, “The Fairy Mythology of England divides itself into two branches, that of the people and that of the poets” (1850, 280). The early written records of Faerie seem closer to the folk tradition than later era writings. In the sixteenth century, writers, such as Spenser and Shakespeare, took up the folklore of Faerie as inspiration for their work. This stimulated a change in Faerie’s representation to the frivolous image popular today. These literary fairies, such as Oberon, Puck and Ariel, maintained the beauty and the mischievous elements of Faerie tradition, but the sinister, sometimes deadly, side of Faerie was largely ignored. Focus was on the fairies of the diminutive type. Faerie literature emphasized the ethereal dream-like qualities of the fairies. “In the more literary descriptions of fairies from the sixteenth century onwards, they are said to wear clothes made of flowers, of gossamer spangled with dew and of silvery gauze, but these clothes are not so often found in the traditional accounts” (Briggs 1976, 111). With the diminished size came a diminished fear and respect, and the darker, threatening side of Faerie was virtually ignored.
In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fascination with fairy art continued to promote the wistful image. A few artists, such as Blake and Fuseli, did respond to some of the more sinister folkloric elements of Faerie (Briggs 1967, 164), but most appeared to have focused on fairy beauty and enchantment rather than on the frightening elements. It was during this era that folklore became a respectable academic pursuit. As the folklorists collected traditional Fairylore, some of the writers and artists of the day recognized that the traditional lore was innately inspiring. Kipling was one of these. He laments the fate of the fairies in *Puck of Pook’s Hill*. “Can you wonder the People of the Hills don’t care to be confused with that painty-winged, wand waving, sugar-and-shake-your-head set of impostors? Butterfly wings indeed!” (1906, 19). As anyone knows who grew up watching Disney fairies, the superficial image of the fairy did not disappear. In popular culture, fairies became secular personifications of goodness and beauty, not creatures to be feared and placated.

Starting in the mid-1960s, Briggs and other folklorists re-examined Faerie with great breadth and depth. Their exploration of traditional Fairylore had its focus not only on its beauties, but also its horrors. This academic interest was echoed by an increasing interest among artists and writers. In 1978, Froud and Lee published *Fairies*, an illustrated guide to the real Faerie. “Here, in all their beautiful, horrible glory were the faeries of old British legends, undiluted by greeting card sentiment: gorgeous and grotesque (often at the same time), creatures of ivy, oak and stone – born out of the British landscape, as potent, wild and unpredictable as a force of nature” (Windling 2005, 1). From the 1970s on the floodgates had opened and representations of Faerie started to return to their folkloric roots. In the twenty-first century, the sugar-and-spice fairies still exist, but they keep company with the traditional seductive lovers, child stealers and bloodthirsty hunters of humankind. Contemporary Faerie fantasists, writers
who incorporate elements of Faerie in their fiction, draw on a rich heritage of folk and literary elements to compose their stories, sometimes weaving Fairylore into a modern or historical setting, or using it as the basis for a rich secondary world.

**Methodology**

Although the identification of motifs is interesting, I wanted to contribute more through my research than a classification and count of the motifs present in Faerie Fantasy novels. After considering and discarding categorization, I next looked to the archetypical study of folklore and literature. Dorson in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* discusses the many theoretical approaches to the study of folklore. Archetypical theory is a sub-theory within the classification of psychoanalytical theory. Jung replaced Freud’s sexual symbolism with the symbolism of archetypes arising from the collective unconscious (Dorson 1972, 31). Nodelman also looks at archetypal theory in *The Pleasures of Children’s Literature*. He discusses Jung’s belief in a “collective unconscious, shared by and present in all humans, and ... the images of the collective unconscious, as expressed both in dreams and in literature, as archetypes – basic universal symbols” (2003, 228). Tyson, in *Critical Theory Today*, further discusses archetypes: “the word archetype refers to any recurring image, character type, plot formula, or pattern of action” (1999, 212). Tyson also summarizes Frye’s theory of archetypal criticism, which has grown out of Jungian theory. Frye’s theory “deals with the recurrence of certain narrative patterns throughout the history of Western literature” (Tyson 1999, 212). Von Franz discusses the importance of looking at the archetypes in fairy tales, stating:

If we put many stories together, we see that each one enlightens some typical archetypal process in the collective unconscious ... That is why Jung said that studying fairy tales is a good way to study the comparative anatomy of the collective unconscious, the deeper layers of the human psyche. (1997, 21)
Literary critics using archetypical theory analyse literature based on which archetypes are utilized in a text and how they are represented.

One of the best-known proponents of archetypal theory is Campbell. One of his most renowned works is The Hero with a Thousand Faces, which discusses the hero quest, or monomyth, in depth. Aitken succinctly summarizes Campbell’s quest pattern:

The first stage involves separation from familiar surroundings. In romantic tales this separation often is forced by circumstances. Initiation follows. It usually includes a journey into or through a perilous realm. It reaches a point of crisis in which the hero defeats, outwits, or kills a series of enemies. In some cases he withstands a succession of perils. Finally the hero returns home bearing the insight and wisdom gained on his travels. (1976, 67)

This path of separation-initiation-return echoes ancient rites of passage (Campbell 1949, 30). Thresholds are important to the monomyth because they mark “the entrance to the zone of magnified power . . . . Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger” (Campbell 1949, 77). Campbell’s archetypal hero’s quest pattern has been used to analyse everything from the Bible to the movie Star Wars. Other common archetypical patterns examined in literary criticism are the ‘shadow,’ the darker counterpart of the hero, and the goddess figure.

Critics using archetypal theory do more than just identify and classify the archetypes present; they delve into how, and why, they are used. Campbell’s analysis of the hero’s quest divides the basic departure – initiation – return pattern into more specific elements, or steps, of the quest. The first of Campbell’s steps is The Call to Adventure (1949, ix). Critics exploring the quest structure in a narrative may consider the nature of the call and how this is used. The nature of the call may be a family legacy such as Luke Skywalker’s, a destiny such as Harry Potter’s, or it may be an accidental meeting such as that of Tam Lin and Janet. The call can be the result
of duty, destiny or simple luck, and these add a variance to the story and the development of the hero. Another element in Campbell’s paradigm of the monomyth is *The Crossing of the First Threshold* (1949, x). The crossing of the threshold can be accidental, such as Lucy’s first trip through the wardrobe into Narnia, or a purposeful choice such as Orpheus’ decent into the underworld. In Faerie Fantasy, the crossing is often an actual journey into Faerie. In other narratives, the crossing of the threshold is subtler. Instead of a descent into the otherworld, the protagonist may become conscious of the fact that the threshold is weak and the worlds bleed into each other.

Many of the Faerie Fantasy books I considered for this study follow the quest pattern closely, often with a female protagonist in the role of the hero. I have chosen, however, not to use archetypal theory because it is already a dominant type of fantasy criticism. Instead, I chose to combine archetypal theory with the exploration of the folkloric motifs and themes found in the novels under examination. My methodological approach applies the structure of archetypal theory to the analysis of the folkloric motifs and themes found in Faerie Fantasy. A critical archetypical analysis of these books would study which archetypes are present, as well as how these particular archetypes are presented and used within the plot. A critical evaluation of these books from a folkloric view would identify and count the motifs present. By combining these two approaches, I hope to grant the study of folkloric motifs and themes in fantasy literature more depth, and align this research study away from purely quantitative (the counting of motifs) to a more qualitative investigation (the exploration of these motifs).

The first step in my methodology will identify and examine the themes and motifs present in the selected texts. First I analyze if a particular theme, and any related motifs, was present. Then I scrutinize how the theme is represented, and examine how this choice affects the
narrative. For example, not all Faerie Fantasies incorporate theories regarding the origins of the fairies. A story in which the fairies are fallen angels will have a very different atmosphere and tone than one in which the fairies are ancient Celtic gods, or displaced indigenous people.

I also observe how the fairies themselves are represented. Are they a homogeneous group, or do they represent the diversity found in folklore? How powerful are they? Are they characterized in the text as heroic nobility, kindly brownies, mischievous boggarts, or bloodthirsty monsters? What do they look like: are they the diminutive non-threatening flower fairies of Victorian art, or are they tall, elegant, coldly beautiful or monstrous? In addition, I will examine the relationship between the fairies and humans within the narrative. Are the fairies solicitous, hostile, indifferent, or benevolent towards humans? Do the humans seek out the fairies or are they afraid of them? If humans are afraid, how do they protect themselves? How can the fairies be defeated; what are their weaknesses?

I also evaluate the representation of Faerie as a setting. I compare the depictions of Faerie in the selected works and the folkloric descriptions. How do characters enter or leave Faerie? What does it look like? How is time represented within and outside of Faerie? Following an examination of these questions, I consider how these themes and motifs influence the development of the story.

**Selected Texts**

The texts I have chosen to examine are Holly Black's *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale*, Ellen Kushner's *Thomas the Rhymer*, Janet McNaughton *An Earthly Knight*, and O.R. Melling’s *The Hunter's Moon*. All four books are written by female authors in the last twenty years. Two of the authors are Canadian, and two are American. Two of the books are historical fantasy
based on Faerie ballads, and two are original contemporary narratives. All four titles have been strongly influenced by Fairylore. Although I found little academic criticism on these books, they were all well reviewed and among them have won many fantasy and young adult literature awards (see Appendix B). In addition, they are all noted on various recommended fantasy-reading lists. I chose these particular texts because, as well as receiving awards and being recommended by specialists on fantasy bibliographies, they share the following criteria: they are powerful stories, with strong protagonists, at least one of which is a young woman, and they all follow the basic quest structure usually found in High Fantasy novels. There are many other Faerie Fantasies that fit the criteria for inclusions (for an annotated bibliography of further titles, "Other Faerie Fiction," see Appendix C).
Chapter 3: Fairy Motifs and Themes

Fairy Origins

The motifs of Faerie are varied and often contradictory. Even the theories of the origins of the fairies are vastly different. The theory of fairy origins chosen by an author often affects the development of the fantasy narrative. One Christian belief is that fairies were the intermediaries between humans and angels (Rojcewicz 1991, 488), but the dominant Christian explanation for fairies is that they were fallen angels not wicked enough for Hell. Briggs discusses this point in The Vanishing People:

Some of the angels seduced by Satan were not prominent in his councils, but might rather be counted his dupes. When Michael hurled the hosts of Satan out of Heaven they were followed by an almost endless stream of these comparatively innocent victims of his unholy eloquence. (1978, 30)

When the doors to both Heaven and Hell were closed, those who remained between the two realms became the fairies. The theory of fairies as fallen angels is linked to the motif of the Tithe, a blood sacrifice performed once every seven years (Briggs 1967, 149). In many of the stories that make use of this motif, the sacrifice is to the devil or Hell.

There is also a strong connection between fairies and dead spirits. Sometimes fairies are said to be the spirits of the pagan dead, or ghosts of people killed suddenly before their time. Another theory is that fairies are remnants of the indigenous race of the British Isles that was pushed to the periphery by invading immigrants. A theory popular with folklorists, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is that fairies were the folk memory of long forgotten gods and nature spirits. They “are the demoted Gods of earlier polytheistic religions” (Narvaez 1991, 197). This connection to pagan times had the effect of vilifying fairies during the Reformation.
Faerie Fantasy writers often choose one of these theories as the foundation for their secondary world.

**Categorization of Fairies**

In their analysis of Faerie, folklorists have categorized fairies into distinct groups. These groupings are generally effective, but the lines between the groups are often blurred. The most basic division is between the trooping and the solitary fairies. Trooping fairies live in communities, and usually have a King and/or a Queen. Solitary fairies live alone or occasionally in small family groups. Fairies can also be divided into *good* and *bad* fairies, although this is difficult because fairy morality is very different from that of humans. “In folklore a good fairy is a fairy in a good temper, and a bad fairy is one that has been offended” (Briggs 1967, 108). Briggs has further divided these groups into the categories of Heroic, Trooping, Homely, Tutelary, Nature, and Monsters (1971, 7-9). The divisions between these classifications can be somewhat indistinct, but many of the motifs, nonetheless, relate to one primary grouping.

When the classification narrows into only two groups, those groups are Trooping and Solitary, with the Heroic Fairies absorbed into the Trooping fairy classification. The fairies of this group “are of human stature, or sometimes rather beyond it. These fairies generally live in a Fairyland removed a little from the common world, often underground or in fairy knolls. . . . They revel, dance, hunt, sing like humans, only on a grander scale” (Briggs 1971, 14). The remaining Trooping Fairies can be diminutive, unthreatening but mischievous creatures, or simply homelier versions of the Heroic Fairies. The trooping fairies live within a hierarchical society, usually a monarchy. “The social and political infrastructure of Fairyland was parallel with their human counterparts” (Henderson 1997, 86). Although humans may find them amoral,
the fairies expect a strict adherence to their own codes of morality, from both the humans they
deal with and each other. It is often said that fairies cannot lie, so they do not like to be
questioned. Sexual morality is very different in Faerie (Windling, Autumn 2006). It seems that
when a creature is immortal, life long monogamy has little appeal. “The combination
fayrie/adultery is a very important one. In fayrie all the natural laws are reversed or don’t apply”
(Duffy 1972, 53). Fairy Kings and Queens, in particular, often seek new and engaging human
lovers. This is an important element in stories such as “Thomas the Rhymer” and the many
stories of Finvarra, the Irish King of Faerie. Human lovers are often stolen away from human
spouses or lovers. The Fairy’s spouse apparently accepts these lovers, for they often have their
own.

The Scots divided their fairies into the Seelie and Unseelie courts. ‘Seelie’ means
blessed and the Seelie court is seen as a grouping of relatively benevolent fairies of the heroic
type. These are not harmless, helpless fairies: they are the ones primarily responsible for the
abduction of humans. Like all fairies, they must be dealt with respectfully, for “even the Seelie
Court, however, readily revenged any injury or insult” (Briggs 1976, 353). The Unseelie court,
on the other hand, is filled with the creatures most feared by humans. “The Unseelie court are
never under any circumstances favourable to mankind. They comprise the sluagh, or ‘The Host,’
the band of the unsanctified dead who hover above the earth, snatching up with them
undefended mortals” (Briggs 1976, 419). This court also includes the solitary fairies considered
hostile, and/or dangerous, to humans.

The solitary fairies include both the most helpful and the most malevolent fairies. These
include the household fairies that will help care for a farm or household. They will only work if
they are given proper respect. They gladly take gifts of milk, and the like, but almost always can
be banished with the gift of clothes. They are sometimes attached to a household or at times a family. The Tutelary fairies are also often attached to certain families. They can be mischievous creatures or grave ones like the banshee. The nature fairies are also part of this group, “most of them water fairies of seas, rivers, lochs or bogs. Some are kindly disposed, but the greater part are malevolent” (Briggs 1971, 15). The monsters of Faerie are also included in this grouping and are always a danger to humans.

Fairy Appearance

Fairy appearance is a difficult subject to analyse because the vast majority of fairies have the ability to shape change, turn invisible, or create a glamour that alters their appearance. “The first of the general powers which is common to all fairies is that of glamour, by which people see what the fairies wish them to see and see nothing when the fairies wish to be invisible” (Briggs 1978, 119). Fairies come in all sizes, from the diminutive flower fairies so popular in literature and art, to tall elegant fairies of human height or greater, to homely and ugly creatures. Some folklore indicates that they have “a position between spirit and substance” (Ashliman 2006, 5). They have “light changeable bodies, neither fully flesh or purely spirit, capable of altering their forms at will” (Rejcewicz, 1991). Others, especially the fairy lovers, seem to be completely substantial. Fairy lovers, in ballads and folktales, are usually described as having unearthly beauty; this is sometimes merely a glamour but that does not help the poor humans that fall in love with them, mesmerized by their grandeur. “Many hapless lads and maidens sickened and died after twilight encounters with sweet-talking lovers who turned out to be fairies in disguise” (Windling 2006, 1). The dominant colour of fairy clothing is green and a few fairies are green themselves. Red is also a common colour for fairies’ clothing. The animals of
Faerie, particularly the cattle, are usually magnificent, and when they enter the human realm are much coveted as breeding stock. They are primarily white, sometimes with red ears (Hemming 2002, 71). Not all creatures of Faerie are lovely to behold. The Brownies, Hobgoblins, and their like are often homely or even comical in their appearance. Many of the monsters are hideous; however, some can be very attractive; this is how they lure their prey. Given these differences, it is impossible to answer the question, “What do fairies look like?” This broad range of appearance offers writers a diverse pool of aesthetic imagery to draw upon.

**The Setting of Faerie**

Faerie, too, is elusive and illusory in its description, though the setting is more consistent than the inhabitants. Faerie changes in different stories, but it always appears beautiful and seductive, unless the mortal is capable of seeing past the effects of glamour present. In an article on Welsh folklore, Gwyndaf gives a comprehensive description of Faerie:

> Fairyland was a place of plenty and beauty, wonder and joy, full of golden treasures and evergreen grass and trees and its inhabitants were forever young. The various methods of getting in and out of this magical realm . . . include open caves, magical rocks, and lakes, pools, riverbanks, marshy ground . . . and mists. It was also possible to enter the otherworld through fairy circles or rings. (1991, 161)

Faerie is an imposing and magnificent place that is indescribably beautiful, although in some stories its appearance is simply an illusion. The locations that mark the boundaries between the worlds, such as fairy knolls (hills), were traditionally said to belong to the fairies and it was considered very unlucky to tamper with them. Faerie’s beauty enchanted human visitors, so that if they returned to the mortal realm, the real world seemed pale, drab, and unsatisfying.
Time in Faerie

Time, and the passing of the seasons, is ambiguous in Faerie. Time in Faerie is not that of the human realm, although there is no consistent equation with the human passage of time. Most frequently, time moves faster in Faerie, but this is not always true. Duffy discusses this, “A day in fairyland may be a year or a century in middle-earth. Occasionally the opposite is true and a year in Fairyland may be only a human night. As with time so with space . . . . All normal physical laws are suspended” (1972, 75). Often, in the tales, when a mortal returns to the human world, everyone he has known is dead and he is only a legend or an old mystery. In other stories, the returning human ages rapidly, or even turns to dust, upon touching the ground of the mortal realm (Silver 1999, 168). In other stories, such as “Thomas the Rhymer,” time passes with relative correspondence in Faerie as in the mortal realm. Thomas promises to serve the Fairy Queen for seven years, and when he returns that is exactly how much time has passed. Seven years, as well as a year and a day, are important cycles of time for Faerie. It is at the completion of these cycles that certain obligations must be fulfilled, and it is at these times that the boundary between the worlds is weaker and the rescue of a captive in Faerie is sometimes possible.

In Faerie, all seasons can occur simultaneously and time is blurred at best, but seasonal markers in the mortal realm are still very important to Faerie. May Day (Beltane), Halloween (Samhain), and to a slightly lesser degree Midsummer, are the most important days. On these days, the veil between the worlds is the weakest. Of these days, Halloween was traditionally the most significant, for it “was the time in Celtic areas when fairies, witches and ghosts were supposed to dance together” (Briggs, 1978). Transitions, whether they be seasonal, or physical thresholds such as crossroads, appear time and again as gateways between the worlds.
The Dependence of Fairies on the Human Realm

Although Faerie is separate from the human realm, it is not independent from it. Fairies' lives are entwined with those of mortals; they rely on the human realm to fulfill many of their needs. According to Rojcewicz, fairies need humankind for the following reasons:

[T]o recharge their fairy powers and guarantee their overall socio-psychological well-being. For example, fairies are always grateful for human assistance in making or mending fairy utensils. They also need the cooperation of humans to win their fairy wars. . . . Human intervention also ensures the quality of their leisure, recreation, and sport. (1991, 492)

They also need human food, which on occasion is left by humans, as a gift for them. If food is not freely given the fairies will simply take what they want. They do not always take the actual food; sometimes they only take the “foison” (Briggs 1980, 151), or the goodness, from it and leave behind the nutritionally empty husk.

Fairies also need humans for other purposes. Some humans are lured into Faerie by a lover, or by coming across a fairy celebration. Attractive young adults and talented musicians seem to be the most at risk for this type of abduction. Although certain individuals may enter Faerie somewhat willingly, many are stolen; these victims are often children or new mothers. In their place is left an old or unhealthy fairy, a changeling, or a stock of wood that appears as the corpse of the victim. Midwives are often brought to attend a birth in Faerie. At times, the expectant mother is not a fairy but a captured human woman. Unlike the other captives, midwives are often permitted to return home, and if they have not broken any taboo, they are usually unharmed. Rojcewicz states: “the most significant form of fairy dependence upon mortals involves their genetic evolution. Humans are essential to fairies for a healthy bloodline” (1991, 493). For all its power, Faerie appears to be plagued with a fertility issue.
The human children, replaced by fairy changelings, seem to be kept as adored pets when they are young, but as they age they often become lovers, servants, or are cast out from Faerie (Windling, Autumn 2006). The most sinister use of captives involves the Teind, or the Tithe to Hell, sometimes referred to as the Faeire sacrifice. Every seven years, a blood sacrifice must be made. The traditional stories do not clearly outline the reasons for the sacrifice, but a dire consequence for Faerie if it does not happen is implied. In order to avoid killing their own kind, the fairies will offer a human in their stead.

Some captives do escape, or are rescued. The parents of a changeling child can regain their own child if they can trick the fairy left in his place into revealing himself. Wives and lovers are frequently rescued on transition days; this is often only possible if the captive has not partaken of Faerie food or drink (Packer 1980, 31). Faerie maybe a wondrous place, but few human visitors return to the mortal realm unaffected.

**Fairy Abilities and Behaviour**

Fairies have a variety of abilities depending on their type, but there are some powers that are universal. Despite the depictions in Victorian art, very few fairies have wings, or can fly. They do, however, have the ability to levitate and transport themselves across great distances quickly. Glamour, as discussed earlier, is probably the most essential fairy ability. Fairies can change someone’s luck, for good or ill. They will sometimes give gifts or enhance people’s natural abilities. Many musicians return from Faerie with increased talent and haunting songs. Some people will be given the ability to heal. Thomas the Rhymer was given the tongue that never lies.

The fairies are identified with certain activities. Both Solitary and Trooping
Fairies are known for their mischievousness, a trait sometimes used for fun and at other times employed for revenge or punishment. The Solitary Fairies range from playful sprites to cold-blooded hunters. Some will help humans; others will lead them astray, or cause their deaths. Some will do all of these things depending on their mood. The Trooping Fairies are known for their revelry. Fairies and witches are often linked in these activities; Henderson states that both witches and fairies “enjoy making music, dancing and feasting. Special skills, such as medicinal, musical, and second-sight are attributed to fairies and witches” (1997, 160). During the era of the witch-hunts, this link between witches and fairies contributed to the view that fairies were connected to the devil. Duffy discusses another of their chief pastimes: “hunting itself is reported from every region and age as a fairy pastime” (1972, 56). This pursuit has some overlap with another fairy activity, “the solemn rides and processions” (Briggs 1976, 157), referred to as the *Fairy Rade*.

**Appeasement and Protection**

As fairies can be kind or brutal to humankind, there are many traditions outlining how to avoid offence, appease, and gain protection from them. Fairies are easy to insult; wary humans try their best to avoid this, for it can have dire consequences. Although fairies are known for rewarding generosity and kindness, they just as often punish the selfish and lazy. The fairies hate to hear humans call them by their name, so many euphemisms were created to describe them, such as the “Good Neighbours” (Briggs 1976, 196). In many stories, fairies place specific taboos on people, such as: do not go into a particular room; do not touch one’s fairy bride in anger; or do not use the fairy ointment on oneself. Fairies hate to be spied upon or to have their
have secrets exposed. Humans are usually severely punished if they break these taboos. If a human enters Faerie, the most important taboo they must remember is to never consume Faerie food or drink. This taboo is associated with the connection between fairies and the dead. “The theory of fairies as lost souls is linked to the idea of Fairyland as the equivalent of Hades, the mythical underworld ruled by Pluto and Persephone, where no food or drink may be consumed by the living visitor lest he be compelled to remain there forever” (Pacer 1980, 31). If humans break this taboo, which they often do, either they can never leave, or if they do, they pine away for what they left behind.

Besides appeasing the fairies with proper respect and gifts, such as milk and food, there are many ways to gain protection from the fairies. Christian symbols and piety are “by a very wide margin the most frequently mentioned guarantee against fairy attacks” (Ashliman 2006, 31). Noises such as the ringing of bells, particularly church bells, whistling or similar sounds could, at times, keep the fairies at bay. Humans being taunted by the fairies could turn their clothes inside out, “This act of turning clothes may have been thought to act as a change of identity” (Briggs 1976, 335). Because fairies have pagan roots, many forms of protection come from nature rather than from the church. The most common of these are the use of rowan and holly trees, certain herbs and flowers, iron, and salt. If a human can learn the true name of a fairy, she can gain power over him.

**Seeing the Fairies**

A few humans have the ability to see fairies when they are invisible and to see through fairy glamour. Some people are born with second sight that gives them this ability; some gain it from the use of fairy ointment, or from holding a four-leaf clover. Transition times, such as
midnight, noon and twilight, are the best times of day to spot a fairy (Briggs 1976, 352). Some people lament that they saw the last fairies leave the human realm. Henderson notes, “The final farewell of the fairies is a theme that has always been part of the fairy tradition, even as new encounters are alleged in every generation” (1997, 193-194). If a person is fortunate enough to see the fairies, he should not look away or they may vanish.

**Use of Faerie**

The motifs of Faerie are vivid and diverse. These old stories have been passed down and recreated over the years. Contemporary authors writing Faerie fantasy have a great wealth of material from which to choose. The variety and complexity of these motifs and themes can assist in the creation of vastly different secondary worlds. These new visions of traditional lore are equally as engaging as their time-honoured predecessors.
Chapter 4: Literature Review

Fantasy: Nature and Defence

Much has been written about fantasy literature. Tolkien discusses the genre in “On Fairy-Stories.” He describes the secondary worlds of fantasy collectively as Faerie. Although Tolkien’s definition differs from that used in this research, there are, nonetheless, many similarities. In his words, “Faerie is a perilous land, and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold” (1965, 3). He uses the term fairy-story to describe all fantasies. “The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there: shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords” (1965, 3). His essay has had great influence on many modern fantasists and is one of the articles that inspired me to choose this area of research.

The secondary worlds created by quality fantasy authors are rich with both folkloric and mythological references, as well as many archetypes. Saltman discusses this in her article “The Ordinary and the Fabulous: Canadian Fantasy Literature for Children,” found in Worlds of Wonder:

The literary form of fantasy, in its historical shape as a genre of children’s literature, is recognized precisely by its inclusion of an element of otherness, magic, or wonder, something beyond the quotidian. The roots of fantasy lie deep in the oral tradition of folklore, legend, and mythology; it is often fuelled by archetype and dream. Like the earliest myths and human stories . . . [it] often echoes the monomyth of the hero’s quest, including journey and pilgrimage, trials and tests, honour and betrayal, drama and tragedy. (2004, 189)

British traditional fantasists, such as Tolkien and Lewis, extensively influence North American fantasists. British fantasists have in turn been influenced strongly by the mythology of the
classical era, the Celts and the Norse (Smith 1993, 1). Tolkien was also significantly inspired by the Anglo-Saxons and their Germanic folklore/mythology (Bates 2002). Fairy tales are another influence on fantasists, both early and contemporary.

Saltman discusses the different types of fantasy. The primary breakdown is between high and low fantasy; with sub-genres of enchanted realism, time-travel, historical fantasy and fantasy that takes place in the primary world (2004, 191-196). The books examined here are all high fantasy of various sub-genres. Contemporary, or new fantasy, has its roots in the fantasy traditions of the past but has produced its own elements as well. Steven discusses this in his article “Welwyn Wilton Katz and Charles de Lint: New Fantasy as a Canadian Post-colonial Genre,” in Worlds of Wonder. In new fantasy, there is an “intermingling of realism and the other world, ... [a] penchant for allowing both supernatural and psychological interpretations of happenings to co-exist ambiguously” (2004, 70). This type of fantasy uses archetypical patterns in conjunction with folklore, fairytales, and mythology, often simultaneously.

Contemporary fantasists draw on mythic and folkloric elements, but expand them; for example, fleshing out characters that in their original manifestation are often two-dimensional. Smith, in The Fabulous Realm, discusses elements to be found in contemporary fantasy.

Contemporary fantasy authors reflect a commitment to relevancy in their attempts to create real heroes or heroines who try to deal with the situations in which they are placed. When that situation is strongly based upon mythology, the priority is to make myth a living reality for the protagonist(s) and consequently for the audience. (1993, 310)

Like traditional fantasy, modern fantasy written in the epic tradition is primarily about the fight between good and evil. The protagonist enters into a hostile and dangerous world and must face hardships before becoming victorious. In traditional fantasy, the central character is often orphaned, exiled, or driven by a need or duty. In modern fantasy, the conflicts that drive the
characters are frequently more contemporary in nature “becoming evident in dysfunctional interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships” (Smith 1993, 333).

Contemporary fantasists have taken aspects of traditional tales but applied these traditions to the modern world. This is particularly so for urban fantasies. Pilinovsky states that in “its most recent incarnations in fantasy literature [urban fantasies] reflect a new view of magic, one which takes into account the issues of industrialization and globalization, of societal change in the arenas of finance and interaction” (2005). Smith also argues that “the entrance of fantastic elements into the contemporary setting in effect points out the possibilities of our dreams (or nightmares) coming true” (1993, 351). Both of the contemporary fantasies being discussed here impose the fantastic upon the ‘real world.’

The archetypical element repeatedly found in fantasy literature is the mono-myth or the hero’s journey. This is the classic quest that follows a set structure of journey, adventure, and return. Egoff, in *Worlds Within*, states:

Fantasy, first of all, returns to us what once belonged to us: a consciousness of the unity of the natural and the supernatural worlds, a view of our universe that was wrenched apart with the coming of the ‘Age of Reason.’ Whatever seemingly strange figures we meet in fantasy... the essential truth is that they were there before, they are the archetypes that touch the universal in the human condition. (1988, 18)

The quest is closely linked to coming of age stories. Fantasies, therefore, often incorporate both elements concurrently. Synder looks at these journeys in her article “The Armless Maiden.” She analyses how the male folklore hero systematically follows this archetypal pattern, while the female protagonist has a different journey that rarely involves returning home (2007).

Interestingly, contemporary heroines, in contrast to those in traditional literature, often follow the classical male hero quest pattern and do return home.
Fantasy as a literary genre has faced many criticisms; one of the most damning is that it is just ‘escapist,’ and therefore is not even real literature. Many academics and fantasists have defended fantasy. Poskanzer, in her article “A Case for Fantasy,” lists five rationales to support the importance and power of fantasy. The first is that “fantasy increases the awareness of reality and teaches adaptability to real life situations” (1975, 472). Through fantasy, children and adults can vicariously experience what they never could; fantasy expands the reader’s world. Readers may wish their world was more like the secondary one, but they do not believe it is so. Tolkien eloquently spoke to this: “if men really could not distinguish between frogs and men, fairy-stories about frog-kings would not have arisen” (1965, 54). Poskanzer gives additional reasons to support fantasy: “fantasy encourages ego development and satisfaction. . . . fantasy increases empathy and understanding for other human beings. . . . fantasy encourages imagination and creativity” (1975, 473). These are all traits that educators encourage their charges to develop. A final rationale is that “fantasy satisfies our important aesthetic needs” (1975, 474). This connects to the power of the archetypes represented in fantasy.

Pierce also defends fantasy in her article “Fantasy: Why kids read it, why kids need it.” In her words, “Fantasy, along with science fiction, is a literature of possibilities. It opens the door to the realm of ‘What If,’ challenging readers to see beyond the concrete universe and to envision other ways of living and alternative mindsets” (1993). In the same article she states her belief that “fantasy, more than any other genre, is a literature of empowerment” (1993).

Another important aspect of fantasy is its universal appeal. A well-written fantasy will appeal to readers of all ages and backgrounds. Saltman states, “fantasy is perhaps the only genre to find children and adults reading the same book” (2004, 190). The success of works such as The Hobbit, The Chronicles of Narnia and the Harry Potter series are testaments to this.
In “On Fairy-Stories,” Tolkien answers many of the criticisms of fantasy. Although fantasy can be appreciated by all ages, it is often dismissed as being written only for children. Tolkien responds;

If fairy-story as a kind is worth reading at all it is worthy to be written for and read by adults. They will, of course, put more in and get more out than children can. Then, as a branch of a genuine art, children may hope to get fairy-stories fit for them to read and yet within their measure. (1965, 45)

Tolkien believes that fantasy is “not a lower form but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent” (1965, 47). He believes acutely in the power of fantasy and his words are often used by its defenders.

Tolkien is not the only fantasist to come to the defence of the genre. The prolific fantasist Yolen states in her book Touch Magic:

The tales of Elfland do not stand or fall on their actuality but on their truthfulness, their speaking to the human condition, the longings we all have for the Faerie other. Those are the tales that touch our longing for the better, brighter world; our shared myths, our shaped dreams. (1981, 56)

De Lint asserts, in his discussion of the fantasy sub-genre of magical realism, “The magical elements found in this fiction, be they an intrusion of faerie or merely a slightly askew take on how we perceive the world, are not escapism. Rather, they put us back in touch with the wonder that we have forgotten” (1995, 119). Cooper declares that “fantasy goes one stage beyond realism, requiring complete intellectual surrender, it asks more of the reader, and at its best may offer more” (1984, 281). Le Guin believes in the transformative nature of fantasy: “a fantasy is a journey. It is a journey into the subconscious mind, just as psychoanalysis is. Like psychoanalysis, it can be dangerous; and it will change you” (1984, 207). Lewis comments that fantasy writing “at its best can do more: it can give us experiences we have never had and thus,
instead of ‘commenting on life’, can add to it” (1984, 118). Alexander is an enthusiastic supporter of fantasy and asserts that fantasy has special value: “first, on the very surface of it, the sheer delight of ‘let’s pretend’ and the eager suspension of disbelief; excitement, wonder, astonishment. There is an exuberance in good fantasy quite unlike the most exalted moments of realistic literature” (1984, 145). These authors, and their fellow fantasists, are all passionate about, and steadfast believers in, the power, importance and relevance of fantasy in the modern world.

Folk and Fairy Tales: Nature and Defence

As discussed in the definitions section of this study in Chapter 3, fairy tales are the magical subset of folktales. Linked closely to folk and fairy tales are myths and legends. Crossley-Holland defines these terms in his article “All Folk Welcome:”

A myth is part of a jigsaw of tales, chiefly about goddesses and gods but also human beings and the whole order of creation. These deities mirror the characteristics, activities and values of the culture that creates them... [they are] explanations or revelations of the physical world, our social behaviour and spiritual longings. (2004, 12)

He defines a legend as a folk tale that “has at its heart historical actuality.... curious mixtures of memory and invention, fact and fiction” (2004, 12). In actuality the lines between myths, legends, folk and fairy tales often blur. Travers note that “fairy tales are the myths fallen into time and locality” (1969, 196). Fantasy literature will often draw from these various forms simultaneously.

Although the sub-genre of “literary” fairy tales can be traced to an original author, myths, legends, and traditional folk and fairy tales cannot. The traditional tales go back in time and were passed across generations through the oral tradition. “They have been preserved,
altered, and adapted by the devices of storytellers, and have outlived succeeding generations through the media of voice and memory” (Saltman 1985, 245). Zipes, in *Breaking the Magical Spell*, discusses the history of the folk tale: “Historical, sociological and anthropological studies have shown that the folk tale originated as far back as the Megalithic period and that both non-literate and literate people have been the carriers and transformers of the tales” (1979, 7).

Traditional tales are an unofficial history of a society—its roots personified.

All societies possess forms of traditional heritage and often there is a great deal of similarity between these tales. Windling discusses the universality of fairy tales in her article “Woman and Fairy Tales:"

Many scholars over the last century have attempted to define why fairy tales and magical stories can be found in virtually every culture around the globe. Some scholars view magical tales as pre-scientific attempts to explain the workings of the universe; others see in them remnants of pagan religions or tribal initiation rites; still others dissect them for symbolic portrayals of feminist or class history. The most fascinating thing about fairy tales is that there is some truth in all these different views. There are many ways to interpret the old tales, whether as allegory or metaphor, as art or simple entertainment. No single deconstruction of a fairy tale is “correct,” no single version of a tale is the “true” one. The old tales exist in many different forms, changing and adapting from culture to culture, from generation to generation. (1997)

Saltman discusses why these tales are so appealing:

Everything is clear in the folktale. We know exactly where to place our sympathy. The issues are soon stated, with no unnecessary subtleties of emotion, no bewildering wavering between cause and effect. Everyone acts in character, and the stories move in strong, direct action to the always expected end, where the good come to glory and joy, and evil is punished. (1985, 245)

Even the literary fairy tales, which do not come from oral tradition, often maintain these elements of appeal.

Many of the same criticisms that have been addressed against fantasy have been used to attack traditional tales. They are condemned for being escapist, irrelevant and particularly for
being too violent. As with fantasy, many academics, educators, storytellers and authors have come to the defence of these tales. They stress the importance of these stories both culturally and personally. Warner comments, in *From the Beast to the Blonde*:

> Fairy tales exchange knowledge between an older voice of experience and a younger audience, they present pictures of perils and possibilities that lie ahead, they use terror to set limits on choice and offer consolation to the wronged, they draw social outlines around boys and girls, fathers and mothers, the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled, they point out the evildoers and garland the virtuous, they stand up to adversity with dreams of vengeance, power and vindication. (1994, 21)

Yolen asserts: “The continuum of literature is best maintained by those tales of fantasy, fancy, faerie, and the supra-natural, those crafted visions and bits and pieces of dream-remembering that link our past and our future” (1981, 8). These tales tell future generations what their ancestors valued; they also offer hope and continuity and are a valuable part of our literary heritage.

Zipes has written many books analysing the importance of fairy tales to society and its citizens. In the introduction to *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, he states:

> Rarely do wondertales end unhappily in the oral tradition. They are wish-fulfilments. They are obviously connected to initiation rites that introduce listeners to the ‘proper’ way to become a member of a particular community. The narrative elements issue from real-life experiences and customs to form a paradigm that facilitates recall for tellers and listeners. The paradigmatic structure enables teller and listeners to recognize, store, remember, and reproduce the stories and to change them to fit their experiences and desires due to the easily identifiable characters who are associated with particular assignments and settings. (2000, xvii)

Zipes goes on to discuss how these tales bring about an appreciation for life and its ever-varying situations (2000, xviii).
Some critics of fairy tales point out that fairy tales are too similar; therefore, they lack originality and artistic merit. Defenders of fairy tales believe that these similarities do exist, but that they are a strength, not a fault. Stephens asserts that

Both myth and fairy tale are attributed with value as *story* itself. That is, as a narrative which audiences may recognize as similar to other such narratives because it is patterned by archetypal situations and characterizations, a story transmits its latent value as a particular working out of perennial human desires and destinies. (2000, 333)

There is universality in the human condition and traditional tales speak to this. In these tales, fears, hopes and dreams can manifest in a safe manner. “As long as the fairy tale continues to awaken our wonderment and enable us to project counterworlds to our present society, it will serve a meaningful social and aesthetic function not just for a compensation but for revelation” (Zipes 1999, 29). The continuing nature of, and need for, these tales illustrates the fact that they give something back to the cultures that create them.

Traditional tales have relevance, not just for a culture as a whole, but also to individuals. These tales speak to people in a very personal and powerful way. Windling states, “The old fairy tales had much to say on the subjects of heroism and transformation; about how one finds the courage to fight and prevail against overwhelming odds” (1997). In another article, “Transformations,” Windling speaks about her personal relationship with traditional tales and how much they helped her face a difficult childhood. “Fairy tales taught me the lessons of transformation; they schooled me in courage, honor, and endurance. Someday I too, would enter the woods, and I’d have to be prepared” (2007). Yolen, in *Writing Books for Children*, argues:

Folk stories and fairy tales are a way of looking at life, and they carry important messages to the conscious, pre-conscious, and unconscious mind…. Fairy tales are important. The old tales – and the newly crafted ones, shaped from the waking dreams of literary men and women. (1983, 52)
Traditional tales can enrich a person’s existence; they “strengthen the power of emotion, develop the power of imagination, train the memory and exercise the reason” (Kready 1916). These tales can give their readers the strength to meet hardships and give them hope that there is a better future ahead of them.

As well as fantasists, folklorists and cultural historians, psychologists have also addressed the power and importance of fairy tales. Warner’s *Beast to the Blonde*, discusses fairy tales from the Jungian perspective, with an emphasis on archetypes. Bettelheim’s groundbreaking book *The Uses of Enchantment* looks at these tales from the Freudian point of view. He speaks of the overall message of fairy tales: “That a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence – but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious” (1976, 8). Fairy tales not only engage the imagination but also the psyche.

What a tale will impart to one person is not the same as what it does for another. As with fantasy, the audiences of traditional tales are participant sub-creators of secondary worlds. What they bring to the tale shapes what they take from it. Although he does not discuss the literary concept of secondary worlds, Bethelheim does touch on a similar point: “As with all great art, the fairy tale’s deepest meaning will be different for each person, and different for the same person at various moments in his life” (1976, 12). These stories are ever changing because their readers are ever changing. Lane discusses the nature of fairy tale images; the image is “always the same, always changing. These stories will blossom as you examine them you; can look and look, and they will never lose their ability to delight and enchant. Such is their power!” (1993, xiv).
The “truth” of traditional tales is often discussed. A “myth” can also mean a falsehood. Yet these tales contain an inner truth that draws readers and audiences, generation after generation. “While the fantasy is unreal the good feeling it gives us about ourselves and our future are real, and these real good feelings are what we need to sustain us” (Bettelheim 1976, 126). The tales’ truth lies in what they can do for their readers, what they can represent for them.

Markman comments:

They are true because they are capable of expressing the essence of things or ‘naming’ them by telling a story and by restoring the imagination to a primary place in human consciousness through its function of associative analogical thinking. Moreover, fairy tales can present this alternative truth without jeopardizing our conscious scientific categories of the reality of space, time and causality. (1983, 33)

Truth is not merely the representation of facts; it can also be a reflection of inner, less concrete and less conscious aspects of our existence.

Fantasy as a genre has drawn a great deal from traditional tales. Smith discusses the traditional roots of British fantasy in her book The Fabulous Realm. In her words, “British tradition has a firm footing in folklore and mythology. It has managed to absorb the imaginative perceptions of the Romans, Celts, and Norse peoples” (1993, 1). According to Smith, the fairy tale, in particular, has exerted a powerful influence on fantasy literature. “The fairy tale has had profound and magical effects upon the development of British fantasy” (1993, 24). Rockman touches on the importance of these roots in her article defending the use of fantasy with children. “It is through folktales that humans from the earliest times shared their knowledge of the human psyche and the codes and standards of behavior, fantasy continues this rich tradition” (2001, 42). Regardless of the deep connection between the folktale and fantasy, fantasy novels are not merely extended literary fairy tales. Nikolajeva discusses both the similarities and differences between the two genres in her article “Fantasy Literature and Fairy Tales:”
Most fantasy novels have many similarities to fairy tales. They have inherited the fairy-tale system of characters, set out by Vladimir Propp and his followers: hero, princess, helper, giver, antagonist. The essential difference between the fairy-tale hero and the fantasy protagonist is that the latter often lacks heroic features, can be scared and even reluctant to perform the task, and can sometimes fail. The final goal of fantasy is seldom marriage and enthronement; in contemporary philosophical and ethical fantasy it is most often a matter of spiritual maturation. (2000, 151)

Fantasy has strong traditional roots but has evolved into an independent genre.

The Faerie Tradition in Popular Culture and Literature

As discussed in the section on Fairylore in Chapters 2 and 3, in earlier times fairies were part of the world people inhabited. They were aspects of their world with which people struggled, like forces of nature. As rationalism developed in society, and the supernatural became less credible and less feared, the concept of Faerie took on a lighter quality, but did not disappear. The period of transition between the two views of Faerie was a slow and gradual one. Zipes states:

Victorian England was an unusual time for fairy lore because many people from all social classes seriously believed in the existence of fairies, elves, goblins, selkies and dwarfs otherwise know as the little people, and their beliefs were manifested in the prodigious amount of fairy stories, paintings, operas, plays, music and ballets from the 1820’s to the turn of the century. The need to believe in other worlds and other types of living people was certainly connected to a need to escape the pressures of utilitarianism and industrialism. (2000, xxvii-xxviii)

These fairies were primarily “of the gauzy, winged little buzzfly sort that Kipling’s Puck had derided” (Avery 2000, 76). Ellis discusses the Faerie tradition in her speech “Fairies,” presented at the 2005 Children’s Literature New England Conference. She notes that although there is rich folkloric material, such as Briggs’ research,

not all of this tradition is readily available to contemporary children, of course,
because really only one branch of the fairy family tree really flourishes now, and that is
the diminutive fairy type. This type of fairy, which has medieval roots, had its great hey­
day among the visual artists of the Victorian period, from whom we get our standard
popular idea of the fairy, gauze, wings, flowers, mushrooms. Much scorn has been
heaped upon such fairies. (1995)

A look around the children’s section of large bookstores, or movie rental stores, tells
how dominant this type of fairy still is. Windling, in “Fairies in Legend, Lore and Literature,”
discusses the fate of the fairies: “During the middle years of the 20th century, the fairies seemed
to go underground, rarely leaving the Twilight Realm to interact with the world of men – except
to appear in sugar-sweet guise in children’s books and Disney cartoons” (2006). Despite the fact
that this is the dominant image of the fairy in popular culture, the darker aspect of Faerie did not
completely disappear from arts, letters and popular culture. Neither Puck, nor Oberon, could be
deemed sweet or cute. Tinkerbell, even in the Disney version, is vengeful and jealous, and
“Peter Pan has much in common with the otherworldly figures of demon-lover ballads and
romances” (Harris 2001, 237). In today’s popular culture, this darker side of Faerie is re-
emerging as a strong image and archetype in the works of authors, artists and filmmakers.

It was the literary fairies of the Tudor and Elizabethan era that were the first of the ‘light
and fluffy’ fairy images in popular culture. Avery notes, “Shakespeare created a new species of
fairy, and in doing so he brought about the destruction of the fairies of English folklore” (2000,
69). She continues discussing the fate of the fairies in the era of early rationalism. Although they
were essentially banished through the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fairies returned
to popular culture in the nineteenth century and grew in popularity through to the twentieth
(2000, 75). Although the concept of fairies again became an integral part of popular culture, art
and literature, it was most often a milder, softer version of Faerie that was now represented.
Although the softer image of the fairy was dominant, the original images did not
completely cease to exist. In Windling’s words:

One could find them if one looked hard enough – in Ireland, for instance, in the fiction
of James Stephens and Lord Dunsany. But in general, it was not until an Oxford don
named J.R.R. Tolkien wrote about elves in a place called Middle-Earth that fairies came
back to popular art in any numbers. And then they came with a vengeance. (Windling
2006)

Tolkien, Lewis and their like, reintroduced strong folkloric images to popular culture. This trend
continued. Harris discusses this in his dissertation “Folklore, Fantasy and Fiction,” in which he
states: “Recent renewed interest in folk tales, ghost stories, superstitions, and the Celtic tradition
in our own era underscores similar tensions among national, religious, and cultural allegiances
in a broadening multicultural world” (2001, 598). He also discusses the power of using the
traditional in modern story making: “The inclusion of supernatural folklore in realistic fiction
immediately erodes the borders of the text, allowing in a veritable stampede of traditional
associations, rendering the metaphysics of the story indeterminate” (20001, 598). Zipes
considers the specific use of fairytales by modern authors in When Dreams Come True. He
states: “Since the 1970’s and 1980’s the fairytale has become more aggressive, aesthetically
more complex and sophisticated, and more insistent on not distracting readers but helping them
focus on key social problems and issues in their respective societies” (1999, 25). Warner also
analyzes the use of the traditional in modern fantasy literature. She asserts: “Today writers for
children (and sometimes for adults too) who draw on fairytale motifs and characters, . . . are
conjuring up dream worlds as personally idealistic, as politically and socially contentious, and
often as spiritually wary and iconoclastic” (1994, 411-412).

Folklore and fairy tales are strong sources of inspiration for modern fantasists. In her
article “Beauty and the Beast,” Windling states: “There are countless ways one can draw on old
fairy tales to inspire modern works of art and fiction. . . . These ways are limited only by the imagininations of the artists themselves” (2007).

Folk and fairy tales, being part of the oral tradition, have been ever evolving. Cianciolo looks at this phenomenon:

From the beginning of mankind, stories were always told and then passed from narrator to narrator, each storyteller adding his personal touch by changing the story to suit himself. The stories were recast whenever the storyteller wanted the story to fit the setting and values at home. (1993, 82)

Stephens has a similar point of view and discusses the ways fairy tales are being kept alive today. The first is the creation of new stories that use traditional style and content. The second is parody, found commonly in “fractured” fairy tales. The third is to reconstruct them into a framework with a particular point of view. The last approach that Stephens outlines is the psychological interpretation of the traditional tales (2001, 333-334).

Altmann and de Vos have extensively studied the retellings of traditional tales for contemporary readers. In New Tales for Old, they look specifically at the modern interpretations for young adults. They discuss at length the reasons that folktales are such rich inspirations and sources. In their words,

The folktale has this spongelike hospitality and resilience. Its economical style easily accommodates embellishment. The depthless, typical characters and undeveloped settings allow writers to elaborate their particular version of a tale, just as readers or listeners will fill in details meaningful to themselves. The spaces between the extremes and among the isolated elements, like the additive style, are open to the creation of variously nuanced connections. The universal themes and spare, clean outlines of the folktale have a springy strength that supports interpretation without being bent permanently into a different shape by its weight. (1999, 15)
They also discuss the further reasons both writers and readers are drawn to these materials.

These include the need for wonder and grounding in tradition in a contemporary world that lacks both (1999, 28).

Perry also discusses the retellings of fairy tales by modern authors in two articles for The Looking Glass. In "Shaping the Shape of the Future," she states:

Reworkings of long-standing stories that have been carefully adapted to current literary standards (psychological characterization, sense of place, point of view), current literary forms (the novel, most popularly), and current socio-political attitudes (human rights, for example). Contemporary retellings of folk and fairy tales describe the shaping influence that human beings have on story over time, as well as the shaping influence that story has on human beings over time. (2003)

Perry continues the discussion of this topic in her article “Poetry and Archaeology,” in which she states:

Conscientious, active, and self-aware, successful retellers must read as poets and archaeologists, locating and tracking image, sound, and pattern, deciphering metaphor and meaning for a contemporary audience. They must then translate their reading, subject to current socio-historical views, into the operative metaphors of their written work. In so doing, retellers describe the making of meaning as an ongoing process, transmitting and upholding the understanding that a tale has both shaped and been shaped by past voices and hands. As a result, it is the nature of retellings that their narration interacts with literary and social history, and that they are self-reflexive. (2003)

Academics analysing the modern retellings of folklore emphasize how the retelling allows authors to create humour, create mystery or create a safe place to tackle challenging contemporary issues.
The Value of Myth, Folklore and Fantasy Literature for the Child and Young Adult Reader.

The continued popularity of Lewis and Tolkien, the modern trend of movies based on children's fantasy books, and the phenomenon of *Harry Potter* all illustrate how compelling is the need for magic in our rational world. Wannamaker states that these materials are popular "because they tap into a need both children and adults have for a contemporary mythology supported by an ethical foundation" (2003, 47). Modern writers use traditional roots to create powerful fantasies that deeply engage their readers. According to Lynne,

> These books, which usually center around a battle of good versus evil, are of two types. Some involve modern-day characters in dangerous encounters with the mythological past – and a magic that breaks into their everyday world. In others, entirely new mythologies are created. (Lynn 1989, xxv)

Both types invite the modern child reader into a world influenced by the oral traditions of folk and fairy tale.

Children's fantasy exhibit some significant differences from adult fantasy. Lynn states:

> Novels for children and young adults can usually be distinguished from novels for adults on the superficial level of format: Children's and young adult novels are often (but not always) shorter and printed in a larger typeface with wider margins. Some children's novels are illustrated. Most, but not all, human protagonists of children's and young adult novels tend to be young people. (1989, xxii)

The primary difference is the presence of the youth protagonist. Nikolajeva discusses, in *The Magic Code*, the fact that although several of the best-known fairy tales have child protagonists as well, when looking at the whole cannon of traditional tales this is not the norm (1988, 14).

Another common characteristic is that in children's fantasy, like the tradition material before it, there is usually a happy ending (Lynn 1989, xxiii). These stories may be child centred, but they are in no way simplistic or what critics would determine as “childish” stories. Speaking of
contemporary fantasy, Nikolajeva notes, “This new form of fantasy makes heavy demands on
the reader's intellect, which is probably the reason why so many fantasies published for children
are widely read and appreciated by adult readers” (1998, 18). Lynn asserts that:

Imaginative fantasies, especially those written for young people over the past four
decades, often contain the most serious of underlying themes. Such themes as the
conflict between good and evil, the struggle to preserve joy and hope in a cruel and
frightening world, and the acceptance of the inevitability of death have led some critics
to suggest that fantasies may portray a truer version of reality than many or most realistic
novels. (2005, xvi)

These new fantasies written for children, therefore, are a literature of significance.

As discussed earlier, fantasy is a very powerful genre. For children, fantasy has a
particular importance and holds a particular fascination. Saltman states:

Fantasy’s appeal for children is obvious.Marvels and magic abound; detailed,
original geographies and invented languages create full-bodied worlds; heroic, even epic,
adventures involve the struggle between good and evil; morality is as strong a force as it
is in folklore, and addresses the questions of courage, responsibility, personal choice,
and the power of love; extravagant play with the common details of daily life and
inventive alterations of language extend the boundaries of logic and order, shaping new
and imaginative perceptions and providing the release of laughter. Most fascinating of
all, in fantasy there is often something hidden: a meaning, a secret, the celebration of a
private wisdom. (1985, 807)

She continues on this topic, “For child readers, the universal, abstract complexities of human
existence are made specific and palpable in the characters, events, and themes of fantasy” (1985,
811). Fantasy and traditional tales can entice the child reader both emotionally and
intellectually. This appeal is not just a modern one. Thorne-Thomsen speaks to this attraction in
his 1903 article. He states:

The demand for stories is an expression of the child’s desire to learn more of the
wonders of the world around, to get at the heart of things, to come into personal, intimate
contact with the universe. The fairy-story expresses the unconscious longings, hopes,
and struggles of the child. It speaks to him in a language he understands; it gives
expression to that which he feels but dimly and sees but darkly; through it he catches
glimpses of laws governing human life; it interprets his own thoughts to himself; it gives him a perspective of this world and unconsciously influences his actions. (161)

Child readers are drawn to the fantasy genre because it satisfies a desire in their psyches and imagination for more than just everyday life.

Fantasy literature, and traditional tales, can have a profound effect on the child reader. Yolen states, “a child, more open than an adult, is more changed by [their] reading” (2000, 25).

Bettelheim argues that

Fairy tales have unequal value because they offer new dimensions to the child’s imagination which would be impossible for him to discover as truly on his own. Even more important the form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life. (1976, 7)

Bettelheim is one of many to see the psychological importance of fantasy. Jamieson, in her article in *Elsewhere*, asserts:

While fantasy literature is controversial, opposed by those who do not want children exposed to violence or witchcraft, High Fantasy, in offering adventure and a journey of self-discovery in a realm that is not real, can provide readers with a combination of psychological insight and distance from the everyday that is fertile for development. (2003, 111)

Noel, in her dissertation, explores this subject, “Through folk and fairy tale and later in modern fantasy, the symbols of the unconscious which encourage the growth of psychic maturity have continued to exist” (1987, 64). Fantasy can provide a way to look safely at the dangerous. Rockman emphasizes the importance of this value of fantasy for child readers, saying, “One of the best ways for children to tackle the question of evil is through allegory and metaphor. Concepts that are too scary to contemplate in real life can be understood – or at least considered – through fantasy” (2001, 42). Later in the same article she asserts,

Through fantasy – which is, naturally, an extension of the age-old stories, legends,
and hero/heroine tales through the ages – hope is kept alive. And that is what children really want to know: can I get through this? Will evil triumph? What can someone as young/small/helpless as I am accomplish in the face of terror? Folklore and fantasy can often empower the young at a much deeper, more visceral level than other forms of literature. (2001, 43)

Fantasy can give the child reader hope in a world that often seems without it.

Academics and fantasists have also assessed the ways in which fantasy and traditional tales can help children on their journey to adulthood. Yolen comments, “A child who can love the oddities of a fantasy book cannot possibly be xenophobic as an adult” (2000, 54). They can provide a foundation of skills needed to be a successful adult, specifically an accomplished adult reader. Crossley-Holland asserts: “Short, vivid and seldom introspective, myths and folk tales not only help a child to decode the mysterious, often threatening world she or he is growing into, but have the power to quicken a child’s imagination and sow the seeds of a lifelong passion for story” (2004, 12). Lynn makes a similar point:

It is logical to presume that an exposure to fairy tales and fantasy as a child will aid the adult in appreciating more sophisticated literature. Indeed, the lack of exposure to imaginative tales as a child may preclude an adult’s interest in epic, allegory, and folklore; at the very least it may make a ‘suspension of belief’ difficult to achieve. (1989, xxvii)

Despite criticism, there is strong evidence to support the use of fantasy with children as a psychologically, intellectually, sociologically and educationally sound, and important, practice.

The boundaries between adult, young adult and children’s fantasy literature are often difficult to determine. Bice states:

When we explore fantasy literature, literary expectations and age-appropriate guidelines blur. Although the heroes, structure, and intent remain fixed for the most part, the realm of fantasy with its deliberate substance of mirth and matter is not dictated by age. What has been conventionally termed adolescent invariably appeals to older audiences; what has been traditionally a readership limited to eight or so years invariably is ageless if not timeless. (2003, vi)
In her article for *School Library Journal*, fantasist Pierce also explores this point. "Fantasy, even more than other genres, has a large crossover audience, with YAs raiding the adult shelves . . . and adults slipping into the youth sections" (1993, 50). In "Shaping the Shape of the Future," Perry also considers a marketing phenomenon: "Contemporary retellings of folk and fairy tales are generally assigned to the young adult sections of bookstores" (2003). However, some books, like the *Harry Potter* series, can be found in all three sections of a bookstore, though sometimes with different cover art and price.

There is a special connection between adolescents and fantasy literature. Egoff and Saltman examine this relationship in *The New Republic of Childhood*. In their discussion on modern trends in fantasy, they state:

The most noticeable trend within the serious fantasies – and one that links the new Canadian fantasies with those of the protagonists: they now tend to be teenagers rather than children. The move of fantasy into the field of almost young-adult literature allows for the introduction of more complex subject matter. (1990, 271)

Earlier in the same book, they discuss adolescence in general. "According to educational psychologists the chief task of the adolescent is to achieve a sense of identity, to answer the questions ‘Who am I now?’ and ‘Who will I become?’ These themes are at the heart of most young-adult literature" (1990, 86). Traditionally society employed rituals and customs that helped adolescents answer these questions, but contemporary society lacks these rituals. Addressing this reality, De Vos states: "We no longer have definitive examples or rituals that prepare us for puberty, adulthood, old age, and death. Stories, oral and written, have evolved and been created to provide guidelines to help people cope with milestones in their lives" (2000, 8). In this way, quality young adult fantasy can help adolescents, in particular, on their journey to adulthood.
In her dissertation, “The Borrowed Cup of Courage,” Noel examines the importance of fantasy for adolescents. She states:

Such tales of fantasy are important not only as tales of wonder which move the reader into fanciful worlds beyond reality but also as tools for helping adolescents mature intellectually so that they may see more clearly the distinction between childhood and adulthood and know when they have become adults even in a society that has no physical rites or ceremonies to guide them. (1987, 19)

She also argues “the structure of fantasy gives necessary reassurance to adolescents because this structure is based upon the same ritualistic rites of passage found in ancient myth” (1987, 12).

As discussed earlier, fantasies often follow the structure of the mono-myth. “Through fantasy role models, adolescents . . . can vicariously experience the rites of passage in the heroic quest journey, symbolic of the search for identity within the unconscious” (Noel 1987, 197). Saltman touches on this point as well: “The theme of coming of age is inextricably connected in fantasy with those of apprenticeship and heroism” (1985, 811). On the same topic, Altmann states:

When new versions of folk tales aren’t parodies, they are usually quest stories, like the traditional tales on which they are based. A quest is a process of initiation, of transition from one stage of life to another. The heroes of folk tales are always isolated, separated by difference or distance from their home community. They must survive tests that bring them self-knowledge and prepare them for a new place in society. They also have to be open to the wide, wonder-full world from which unexpected helpers come to their aid. The initiatory scenario of the quest story is likely to have particular resonance for teenagers, who face a number of important transitions all at once. (2000, 16)

The hero’s journey mirrors the adolescent’s journey to adulthood, which provides a deep connection between many teen readers and the fantasy genre.

Both traditional tales and fantasy hold appeal for many young adult readers. Retellings of traditional tales for contemporary adolescents, in the form of fantasy novels, have a particular resonance for these readers. Bettelheim discusses the connection between adolescents and traditional tales. He states: “Adolescence is a period of great and rapid change, characterized by
periods of utter passivity and lethargy alternating with frantic activity, even dangerous behavior to ‘prove oneself’ or discharge inner tension” (1976, 225). De Vos points out the link between adolescence and the traditional tale, stating: “Most folk tales and fairy tales were not about children after all, but about young people searching for their identity” (2000, 8). She continues:

Both traditional stories (folk tales, myths, and legends) and the more modern tales (urban legends) provide essential information for young adults to aid them in making sense of themselves, their world, and their place in that world. . . . Stories contain universal truths and are as relevant today as they were when first told. (2000, 9)

The old stories when used in new fantasies combine the strengths of both the traditional stories and fantasy as a genre. These stories appeal to readers of all ages but have a particular significance for adolescent readers.
Chapter 5 - Ballad Novels

Ballads and Folklore

Ballads, like folktales, are anonymous stories rich with folklore. As a form of literature, ballads are remnants of the oral tradition and have no identifiable author. The simplest definition of a ballad “is a song that tells a story” (Manning-Sanders, 1968). They come from traditional culture and were written down for posterity by the early folklorists in the nineteenth-century. The best known of these collectors was Child, who published *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, a five volume collection published in the 1880s and 1890s. Altmann and de Vos succinctly recapitulate Child’s definition of a ballad: “It tells a story, the emphasis is on action and dialogue rather than characterization or description, and it has an anonymous or folk origin” (91).

The ballads are filled with folkloric motifs that can be traced back even further than the ballad tales themselves. Wimberly discusses the history of the ballad in *Folklore in the English & Scottish Ballads*:

> English and Scottish Balladry ... embraces some three hundred pieces, most of them with a number of different versions, each of which has had a more or less unique history -- some of them rescued at one time, some at another, some in one locality, some in another locality, from the stream of oral transmission, with the natural result that the investigator is confronted with a medley of ideas which, even in the case of a single ballad, may typify various levels of culture. (1928, 9)

Henderson, in his thesis on fairy beliefs, states of ballads: “that they provide an articulation of folk beliefs in the early modern period. When we study the ballads we are studying not only the poetry of the folk but stylistic representations of belief as well” (10). The ballads are a rich storehouse of folklore that evolves and changes, as does the culture around them and as such they are valuable resources for the writers of Faerie Fantasy and other types of Mythic Fiction.
Faerie Ballads

One of the assertions that Wimberly repeatedly puts forth is that even those ballads that contain Christian elements have their roots in older, pre-Christian traditions. “Our best ballads are pagan at heart, fully as much so as the traditional songs of Scandinavia, and their religion is as heathen as that of the Helgi lays. [They are an] amalgamation of heathen beliefs with the ideas of a later or alien faith” (Wimberly 1928, 401). Some ballads contain purely human stories but many are centred on supernatural beings, including fairies, witches and ghosts. The distinctions among these beings blur. “We are confronted with striking resemblances between the ballad ghosts and the ballad fairy, and we find, moreover, that witches and fairies, especially in the matter of supernatural powers, are often indistinguishable” (Wimberly 1928, 165). Along the same lines, the division between the land of the dead and Faerie is also hazy.

Like folkloric motifs, ballads are quite wide-ranging. They are not a literary phenomenon limited to the British Isles and are also greatly varied in their content. Ballads from the British Isles, however, do stand out from other ballads in one way. They “are distinguished by the relative prominence of their supernatural ballads” (Buchan, 142). Among these supernatural ballads are the ballads of Faerie.

The stories told in the ballads “portray the otherworld and the otherworld folk and in doing so transmit information about the otherworldly elements of the traditional cosmological picture. They present, for example, the salient characteristics of different kinds of otherworld beings” (Buchan, 146). Eleven of the 305 Child Ballads contain elements of Faerie (Henderson, 10). These include “The Elfin Knight,” “Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight,” “Thomas the Rhymer,” and “Tam Lin.” It is upon these ballads that the authors of the ballad-based Faerie
Fantasies under discussion in this study have specifically drawn. Other Faerie Fantasy authors have utilized motifs and themes found in these stories without explicitly retelling the specific ballads. Ashliman discusses one set of motifs explored in the ballads: the “interaction between humans and fairy folk: including abduction, seduction and marriage” (166). The ballad fairies are rarely of the homely or diminutive varieties; rather, they are “repeatedly portrayed as lavishly adorned and accoutred beings. They live in opulent courts, eat sumptuous foods, and dress in equally sumptuous clothes” (Henderson, 74). The fairies of the ballads are always alluring and often deadly.

The ballads containing Fairylore can be grouped together as the Faerie ballads; “Tam Lin” and “Thomas the Rhymer” are the most famous of these. Many Faerie motifs discussed in this thesis are contained within the Faerie ballads. “The demon – or fairy lover, the changeling, the mortal nurse [midwife] in elfland, and the supernatural lapse of time in the fairy realm are all embodied” (Wimberly 1928, 274) in traditional ballads. The fairies in the ballads are enchantingly beautiful, human size, and often wear green. The popular ethereal winged creature is not found in the ballads. Faerie, as represented in the ballads, is an exquisite place, usually with a subterranean location. The Teind, or Tithe, to Hell is an important motif. In addition to the humans’ roles as midwives, changeling children and the offering at the time of the Tithe, the most common role for humans in the Faerie ballads, as in Fairylore as a whole, is lover of a Faerie noble, often the King or Queen. This is the situation in both “Tam Lin” and “Thomas the Rhymer.” When not kidnapping humans, “the principal occupations of the elves of folksong are dancing, hunting, and riding” (Wimberly 1928, 191).

The ballad of Tam Lin, and his rescuer Janet (sometimes called Margaret), is replete with Fairylore. Briggs, in her rendition of the tale in The Personnel of Fairyland, illustrates...
many of these elements. Tam Lin was stolen as a youth and he has gained powers of the fairies by living with them. The ballad also contains the Fairy processional, the white fairy horse, and the Fairy Queen, who is cold and beautiful. As a seven-year cycle comes to an end, Tam Lin is afraid that he is to be the sacrifice to Hell. The crossroads and Halloween are spatial and temporal transition points that help Janet rescue her lover (1971, 43-45). Jacobs also retains most of these motifs in his rendition of this tale, and adds the element of Tam Lin riding widdershins around a fairy mound (1922, 173) as the cause of his capture.

Fairy motifs are also abundant in “Thomas the Rhymer.” Briggs also retells this story, keeping the folkloric motifs in the foreground. The Queen is beautiful and wears green; Thomas is bound to her through physical contact, a kiss, and is required to serve her for seven years. On the way to Faerie they cross a river of blood (1971, 29-31). Briggs is true to all the primary motifs in this tale including one element, fairly unique to this ballad, a description of the three roads: “the Path of Righteousness, narrow and thorny and unfrequented, and the broad, pleasant, well-trodden road to hell, and the pretty, hidden, twisting path which led to fairyland” (1971, 29). The Queen in this ballad is not as aloof as in most stories; she seems to care for Thomas and lets him go at the end of his seven years. Briggs ties this to the Queen’s fear that Thomas will be chosen for the Tithe (1971, 30). In all versions of the story, Thomas is given the gift of “the tongue that never lies”, and in most, the fairies come to him on his death bed and take him back to Faerie where he lives still.

The primary Faerie Ballads used in the novels under examination in this thesis are “Tam Lin” and “Thomas the Rhymer.” Authors of Faerie Fantasies have used both of these ballads extensively. Although both novels examined here are historical fiction, these ballads, in other
retellings, have also been set in modern times. The stories are rich enough to easily transcend their original settings.

The Novels

*An Earthly Knight* by Janet McNaughton

*An Earthly Knight* is a retelling of “Tam Lin” with elements of the ballad “Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight” also interwoven with the dominant ballad. It is primarily historical fiction with the Faerie elements intertwined with a very realistic historical setting. The year is 1162. Lady Jeanette Avenel, Jenny, lives with her Norman Father and dishonoured sister, Isabel, in the Borders of Scotland. After Isabel’s disgrace, Jenny is expected to make a favourable marriage to help her father gain power and prestige.

Isabel’s story is essentially the narrative of “Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight” with the fey elements removed. Isabel falls in love and runs away with a knight in her father’s household. Unlike the ballad, in McNaughton’s treatment the knight turns out not to be a magical being, but rather an evil human. Isabel takes valuables from her father’s house in lieu of her dowry. The knight’s plan is to take Isabel from the safety of her family, kill her, and steal her wealth.

There are no supernatural explanations for his actions; he is more of a Bluebeard character than elfin. The crusades left him without land and conscience. Isabel, realizing the fate her false beloved plans for her, tricks him and he is killed in the manner he had planned for her. Isabel returns home and is not recognized as a heroine for her bravery, but instead is ostracized for running off with a man and stealing from her father. Her father plans to send her away to a nunnery, but she refuses to confess and so stays at home. While many scorn Isabel, Jenny thinks
that her sister’s actions are brave and admirable, and longs to help her deal with the pain of what has happened.

Jenny is the offspring of her father’s second marriage; unlike her siblings, she is half Scottish. As the second daughter, she is not trained to the station and duty of her elder sister. Now that her sister is in disgrace, and essentially in mourning, the duties of the Lady-of-the-house fall to Jenny. Her father plans to make a beneficial alliance through her marriage. Although he has been a kindly father by standards of the day, Jenny’s happiness in marriage is not one of his priorities. He is overjoyed when the possibility of Jenny marrying the King’s brother is presented.

The story of Tam Lin is intertwined with this historically based plot. The two daughters are forbidden from going to Cater Hall, for Tam Lin, the son of the previous owner, has been seen in the area, and is said to be mad. Jenny is incensed, for Cater Hall is hers; her father gave it to her as her dowry. Jenny, like Janet of the ballad, is a spirited young woman and she visits Cater Hall despite her father’s decree. There she meets Tam Lin, and although she is unsure of him, she is also drawn to him. Over several visits, they fall in love and Jenny becomes pregnant, creating a perilous and complicated situation, as she is about to be betrothed to the King’s brother. At first Jenny is flattered by the thought of such a prestigious marriage, but the more she comes to know her prospective groom, the less she wants to marry him. She announces her pregnancy at the betrothal ceremony. Although this action does release her from her betrothal, she is considered dishonoured. In the end, through a great act of love and courage, she rescues her lover and her honour is partially restored.

McNaughton stays quite true to the story of the ballad in many details and setting. Cater Hall is referred to as Caterhaugh in the ballad, but is Anglicized by McNaughton; regardless of
nomenclatures it is still the place that Janet and Tam Lin meet. The fact that they both have a moral or legal right to it is also part of both McNaughton’s treatment and the original ballad. In the ballad, Janet picks roses from the wild garden; Jenny does this as well. In both, the lovers are mutually wary of, and attracted to, each other with pregnancy as the result of their meetings. This pregnancy, and the love between them, gives Janet/Jenny the motivation and the internal fortitude she needs to rescue Tam Lin. In the climactic scene, McNaughton’s descriptions of the fairies, and Jenny’s rescue of Tam Lin are true to the ballad.

McNaughton uses the folklore of the original ballad well. Many people in the story, particularly the Scots, are wary of the fairies. When the minstrel Cospatric comes through the woods, Jenny is surprised because the “woods belong to the fairies” (6) and locals avoid traveling through them. Jenny’s nurse Galiene is a Scot and a wise woman; it is through her that Jenny learns much of what she knows of Faerie. Galiene is respectful, careful, and cautious of the fairies. “Galiene never used the word fairies if she could help it. She told Jenny it might make them angry” (16). Tam Lin also “never spoke the name of these people, as if the word fairy alone had power” (228).

When Jenny’s horse is suffering from “Elf-locks” Galiene helps. She instructs Jenny to “[p]ut a silver coin in some water and give that to your mare to drink” (213). After Jenny does this, the knots easily come out of the horse’s mane. When this recurs, this time also affecting a stable boy, Galiene is called on again to assist. She instructs them “to put iron bars in all the stalls” (216). These forms of protection are all found in folklore. When Tam Lin makes dinner for Jenny, she is very cautious, for she knows of the taboo against consuming fairy food or drink. “If this were fairy food, she might be captured forever if she so much as tasted it” (226).
In McNaughton’s narrative, as in folklore, fairies differ from humans in many ways. One particular way that is often highlighted is that of emotional difference. In many stories it is said that fairies cannot love as humans do, and this is a mortal strength that can be used against them. When Galiene is preparing Jenny for her rescue of Tam Lin, she states:

A love like this is rare, Jenny, more precious than gold. It will be your only weapon. Some of us have a bit of magic to work spells, but I have known you since the day of your birth, and a more earthly lass never walked in this world. You have no magic to use against the fairy queen. That is just as well, for our magic would shrivel like grass in a fire before her. But you have your love to guide you . . . and the proof of your love for protection. (279)

When she gets to the crossroads, Jenny ties her horse to a rowan tree “for rowan trees have a magic of their own” (291). She is helped by the power of the crossroads, but it is her determination, courage and love that grant Jenny the power to rescue and, literally and metaphorically, keep hold of Tam Lin as he is transformed. These are the qualities and characteristics usually demonstrated by humans that successfully rescue loved ones from Faerie in folktales.

In the ballad “Tam Lin,” and in this novel, the reader never sees Faerie and only sees the fairies themselves at the climax of the story. The fairies here are of the Heroic, or Trooping, variety. No other types are portrayed. Like most folkloric Faerie animals, Tam Lin’s horse is pure white. When Jenny first sees the fairy queen, she is almost overwhelmed:

The woman’s dress was white, but shot through with the colours of a rainbow. This was no earthly garment. Remembering Galiene’s words, Jenny said nothing, but once she had locked eyes with the woman, she found it impossible to look away. She was the most beautiful woman Jenny had ever seen, with long, black hair and pale white skin. But, even at this distance, Jenny could see something hard and cruel. (275)

The mixture of stunning beauty and icy, cruel coldness is a common description of the Faerie Queen.
Time, in *An Earthly Knight*, functions as it does in folklore, somewhat unpredictably but with certain recognizable patterns. In general, time passes faster in Faerie: Galiene tells Jenny that “time passes differently in their world” (20). This chronological effect extends from Faerie itself. After Jenny’s first meeting with Tam Lin, she is surprised that time passed so quickly; “Jenny rubbed her eyes as if to chase the sleep from them, but she was really trying to bring the world back in focus. It seemed impossible that so much time had passed” (72). Although time in Faerie seems to be relative, transitory times and days in the human realm are still very important. This is a common occurrence in folktales about Faerie. Tam Lin tells Jenny, “Every seven years, the fairies pay a tiend to Hell... The tiend is to be paid in a week, on Hallowe’en” (272). Transitory times and places are also particularly important to the rescue of Tam Lin. “At midnight, on Hallowe’en, the fairy folk will ride to Miles Cross, the first crossroads between here and Rowanwald” (273).

In Fairylore, humans can neither see fairies directly, nor see through their glamour, unless the fairies want them to. The exception to this is people with the “sight,” people who can see through the veil separating worlds and/or through magic. The original ballad does not explore this motif, but McNaughton’s narrative touches on it. Tam Lin uses his fairy magic to create Jenny a beautiful and enchanted gown. When she wears it to a fair, a woman exclaims, “what are you doing here, my lady, dressed in cobwebs and old leaves?” (187). The woman was a midwife who had assisted the fairies in the past; she developed the sight to see through the magical fairy “glamour” by virtue of the use of fairy ointment:

When she came into the hall, the men dipped their hands into some water and touched their eyes, so she did the same, and suddenly, all the finery disappeared. She could see it was nothing more than old leaves and bits of moss, fairy glamour as they call it. Since then, she claims she can see anything made by the fairies for what it is. (188)
In Fairylore, midwives are frequently brought to Faerie to help in a delivery, and they often gain the sight in this manner. In McNaughton's narrative, this particular midwife was lucky; frequently the mortal that uses fairy ointment is blinded in punishment.

When the fairies of folklore desire a human to stay with them, they make it very difficult for them to do anything else. Tam Lin describes to Jenny how he came to be with the fairies:

I went out hunting one winter's day and fell from my horse. I hit my head, badly. When I awoke, I was among folk I had never seen before. They cared for me, and I thought all was well, until I tried to return home. Then I understood these were not earthly folk, and I was in their thrall. . . . They wanted me to stay with them forever. (228)

Even after they allow him to leave, Tam Lin is connected to Faerie: "I can be in the land of men, but I am no longer earthly myself. It seems as if I have one foot in both worlds, and I am torn apart by the distance I must stretch to stay that way. If I give up, they will take me forever" (228). This predicament is true in both the ballad and this novel. In Fairylore, the majority of humans that return from Faerie are drastically altered. After Tam Lin is rescued, and his tie to Faerie has been severed, the fairy folk do not let him go readily. The Queen states, "If I had known, Tam Lin, you would betray me, I would have taken out your eyes and put in two of wood" (294). The fairies do not see the fact that they are about to sacrifice him as a betrayal.

Fairies in folklore, particularly the Heroic kind, are powerful beings. They have a variety of abilities. As previously discussed, they can use fairy glamour, change their appearance or even make themselves invisible. As well as hiding themselves, they can move silently. When Tam Lin first approaches Jenny, she is surprised because she had not heard him or his horse. His response: "Snowdrop is silent by nature" (67). When Tam Lin is injured, he is found and healed by the fairies. During his time in Faerie, he develops many fairy abilities, including that of healing. When Jenny is injured, he helps her. He states, "I have a talent for healing" (114).
Fairy abilities prominent in Fairylore are far from being strictly benevolent. At times, fairies use their abilities malignantly to harm or to play mischievous tricks. Although this ballad does not explore this motif in depth, McNaughton’s narrative does. The fairies do not like Jenny’s interactions with Tam Lin. They destroy her best dress and knot her horse’s mane, and a stable boy’s hair, into tangles called “Elf-locks” (211). During the rescue, the fairy shape-changing ability is illustrated.

But suddenly his shoulder was gone. Tam was gone. She felt something wet in her hand. She looked down. It was an esk, a black newt as long as her hand with a crest running the length of its body. . . . She felt it change into something heavier, a dry and leathery rope that writhed as she grasped it. She looked to find a black snake with yellow markings, a head shaped like a flat arrowhead and cruel, copper-coloured eyes—a poisonous adder. . . . She felt it change and grow into something so large she had to stand with her arms around it. . . . Jenny looked into the face of a bear. . . . Suddenly, she was holding a red-hot rod of iron. (292-293)

The fairies in this ballad, as well as McNaughton’s novel, are not frivolous creatures or forces to be trifled with.

McNaughton uses her source material effectively. She successfully creates a convincing, essentially realistic historical setting, and then incorporates the folkloric elements of the ballads and Fairylore. She uses both to create an interesting and powerful narrative. Her protagonist is a feisty, strong-willed young woman, modelled on those characters in folktales that rescue loved ones from Faerie. She is empowered by her bravery, determination and love. In her vision of Faerie and fairies, McNaughton is never sentimental. She creates a Faerie that is enticing, but is also a very dangerous place, as are its inhabitants. If McNaughton had a more gentle interpretation of the nature of Faerie, this story would not have succeeded, for Tam Lin, Jenny, and the reader must believe that Tam Lin’s life is truly in jeopardy. There is a wealth of Fairylore material that McNaughton sensibly excluded, as no narrative could contain it all,
especially given that at times the materials and elements in both the ballads, and Fairylore in
general, contradict each other.

**Thomas the Rhymer by Ellen Kushner**

Like *An Earthly Knight*, *Thomas the Rhymer* is essentially an historical novel. It is
written in the four voices of the primary characters: Thomas, his foster parents Gavin and Meg,
and his human love interest Elspeth. The story is written from Thomas’s perspective only during
his interaction with Faerie. The remainder of the story is narrated from the voices and
perspectives of mortals close to him. The three sections that are not told from Thomas’
perspective are rendered as historical narratives with little portrayal of Faerie. Only the
consequences of Thomas’ experiences in Faerie are directly depicted. Nonetheless, these
sections are not entirely void of Fairylore, as the narrators express the views and traditions of
the common people towards Faerie.

The novel opens with Gavin’s narrative, and tells how he and his wife met Thomas and
the relationship that develops between them. Thomas is visiting them when he disappears. They
know that something is amiss because he left his harp, his means of making a living, at their
farm. They assume that Thomas has died and grieve for him greatly. The story then switches to
Thomas’ perspective. This section starts with Thomas’ meeting the Faerie Queen; it is
fantastical and rich in Fairylore. Thomas accompanies the Queen to Faerie, there to be her
servant, and lover, for seven years. At the end of seven years Thomas is returned to the mortal
realm; Meg tells this part of the story. Then many years elapse and Thomas, an old man, is
dying. He has married Elspeth; they have had children and a good life together. He has enjoyed
a very notable career as a bard and a prophet. This section is told from Elspeth’s perspective. It
ends with Thomas on his deathbed, at which point, the Queen of Faerie comes and takes him back to Faerie.

Like the ballads, and *An Earthly Knight*, *Thomas the Rhymer* is rich in Fairylore. As in the tales of Faerie, the fairies in *Thomas the Rhymer* have an attraction to, and need of, the mortal realm. Much of their sport is at the expense of humans. Both changelings and human lovers are present in Kushner’s vision of Faerie. At the very beginning of the novel, Gavin recounts a story that Tom had once told: a story about a man named Jock, who met a disguised fairy offering to trade a magic fiddle for Jock’s cow. The man realized that “The cow’s milk is wanted for some human child they’ve stolen” (4). This is the first mention of Faerie in the novel and it illustrates the dependence of Faerie on the human realm, a motif pervasive in Fairylore. The fairies are attracted to, and desire, the most beautiful and talented of mortals. When Thomas meets the Faerie Queen, she states, “But I do know you. Thomas the Rhymer, Thomas of the quick wit and clever fingers. I have come for you to harp for me, Thomas, for your fair fame has reached even unto my land. Make music for me, Rhymer, and tell me your tales” (64). When discussing the seven years Thomas must pay to the queen, she warns him: “Elfland holds what it has. Make no mistake: it desires you as you have desired it” (74). Later, as their relationship develops, the queen further elaborates on this interdependence.

As you will have gathered from songs and from your own experience, ... mortals and the mortal world are very attractive to us, although we also despise them. In truth, no Elf can live without sometime coming to Middle-Earth, whether it be twice yearly on our great Dancing Nights, when the Solstice moon draws us to it like the waves of the sea; or if it be those hobs and brownies who so delight in the life of farm and human hearth that they are seen but rarely here in their own land. Humans themselves . . . . There is a heat in you—a warm glow like the sun, like flame . . . . it warms us. When you harp, Thomas, the heat comes off you with a great radiance—no, that’s wrong: it isn’t heat, it’s...it’s...it’s like gold. Like sweet air. It’s the sun, Thomas. The sun of life. (95)
In both this novel, and in much of Fairylore, the fairies lack the type of passion needed for creativity. Thomas notes, when listing to an Elvin musician, "That the music wasn't very good, I thought; more of that tuneless Elvin stuff" (111). The fairy desire for passion and creativity draws them to humanity.

Kushner's fairies are diverse. The court fairies, human in size and shape, have the cold, enchanting beauty that they exhibit in folklore, ballads, and many other examples of Faerie fiction. Thomas describes his first sight of the Queen:

A lady on a fine white horse was riding across the hill. . . . the horse's mane and bridle were strung with silver bells that drowned the burble of the river, and its hooves thudded on the dry hillside . . . . The lady on the horse's back shone bright as spring against the sere autumn grass. Her gown was green as new leaves, her unbound hair like morning sunlight. The world grew coarse around her. (63)

When Thomas meets the queen, he is overwhelmed by her beauty: "One strand of her hair made cobwebs seem thick, and diamonds dull. In that halo of gold, her face shone with an indescribable beauty, full of wit and warmth and pity, all at once" (64-65). Mortals like Thomas cannot resist the Queen of Faerie's allure; "She was all grace and music as she swung up onto her horse's back. My eyes, the world, more than the world, and less; a riddle to be unravelled, a clue to be and me. I could not let her go. I knew there were reasons to stay, but could not reason them" (67).

Fairies of folklore can change their shape at will. This is also true of Kushner's treatment of fairies. Although the queen is usually seen in her guise as an unearthly beauty, she can change her look if it suits her.

There was a shivering in the air around her. And there, in the place of my May Queen, sat a withered hag. Her hair was lank, her face dry and loose-skinned, and her hands crooked and misshapen. Even her gown was old and threadbare. The crown of cherries was the only bright thing about her; an abomination on that unseemly head. From her puckered ugly mouth came the Elf Queen's golden laughter. (71)
The queen’s male counterpart, the Hunter, is also a striking figure. Thomas describes his first meeting with the Hunter: “It was a black horse, the hugest I have ever seen, bigger than a cart horse, but with a racer’s build. Astride it was a man all in black, with long coal-black hair—but his eyebrows and his lips were the red of sunset. He held a long bow in his hand” (78). The queen, and the members of her court, remain the same unless choosing to look differently. They do not age or look weary, “the queen, and all around me, never changed. They were young and beautiful”(116).

The heroic fairies are not the only fairies Kushner includes in the novel. Thomas’ first sightings of Faerie’s other inhabitants are mere glimpses. “I started seeing out of the corners of my eyes some of the land’s people; some tall and graceful as the queen herself; others so tiny I’d have taken them for birds if I didn’t know better” (76-77). When Thomas and the queen first arrive at court, he sees a great array of creatures:

Winged creatures glided like sea gulls down from roof and tower, their iridescent wings banking and catching the light. Several gargoyles detached themselves from the drainpipes to take a lively interest in the proceedings. Something green even crawled up out the well, and sat on the brim with its toes dangling in the water.

There was not a plain creature amongst them. The beautiful ones were beautiful beyond belief: hearty or ethereal, they all may have stepped from the pages of some arcane illuminated missal. And the ugly ones rivalled the whimsy of a stonemason in any cathedral. (81)

Many of the creatures of Faerie, as characterized by Kushner, seem to be, in part, a manifestation of nature: there is a “man with oak leaves in his hair” (81), and a “lady with ivy dripping from her fingers”(81). The inhabitants of Faerie are diverse and each has its place,

Tall and dwarfish, jolly and wraithlike, grave and merry, they all found their places at the tables lining the hall. Last to come in were the folk of the high table, the stately and elegant Elves nearest the queen, who called her ‘sister,’ although they were not kin. Hunter wore red tonight, that perfectly matched his lips and brows, his hair dark as night
against his clothes. On his arm, the queen shone like the sun of Earth in gold brocade, gold even in the blue torches’ glow. (152)

Fairy dress in Kushner’s Faerie is much as it is in Fairylore, rich and opulent. Thomas notes when he first sees his new wardrobe:

It was a prince’s wardrobe. From soft wool jackets to silken hose and velvet caps, all was fine and beautifully cut. I have known lords dressed meaner. My hands went out to finger the brocades—at home I sat at the feet of those that wore them. These were rich with shifting colors, patterned like mazes; supple they hung from my arms, and flowed when I turned. (85)

The queen can also choose to be simply dressed. After a night together, Thomas wakes up to see the queen “clothed only in a white shift, her gold hair unbound spilling down her back” (93). She is not less lovely for this simplicity. Green is the dominant colour of the clothing in Kushner’s Faerie: “It was strange that no matter what color the clothing first appeared—and they were all hues, from earthy copper and garnet to the blue of sky and shadow—in different light all turned to some shade of green, as if there were a third plane to the cloths weaving beyond the warp and weft” (113). The clothing and fabric in this novel help create a sumptuous atmosphere. The descriptions are true to those found in folklore. Unlike the Faerie dress Tam Lin makes for Jenny, Thomas’ clothes do not disappear when he returns to the mortal realm and become evidence that his story is true.

In An Earthly Knight, the reader never sees Faerie. In Thomas the Rhymer, we are treated to a lavish description of it. Thomas’ narrative starts with the lines: “What songs do you sing to them in Elfland? There, where all songs are true, and all stories history” (61). We immediately know that we, with Thomas, have been taken to a world other than the simple, down-to-earth world of Gavin’s narrative. Thomas’ journey to Faerie comes right out of the ballad. He travels
underground, through a river of blood; they stop in an orchard where he cannot eat of the fruit; and he sees the three roads. The orchard is Thomas’ first taste of Faerie:

It was an orchard, carpeted in soft grass sprinkled with white and yellow flowers. It made my heart ache for the orchards of my childhood, where my brother had lifted me into the branches after fruit—then I realized that this one was nothing like them. The grass here was too green, the trees’ bark shone with silver; their pink and white blossoms—no, they were fresh green leaves—were the ripe tang of autumn fruit. . . . Every time I looked I saw and breathed a different season. It dizzied my senses. (69)

Kushner does a powerful job describing the three roads told of in the ballad. The first, the path to Paradise, is described as “the sort of path a woodman makes to mark his trail, through a dense thicket of brambles, with barely room on either side for a body’s two arms. It twisted down, dark and treacherous, and the briars looked fierce” (72). The second, the road to Hell, is a “proper road, broad and well kept, with room for a good pair of carts, or even a company of horses. It wound pleasantly through the grass of a glade” (72). The road to Faerie is the third, “a tiny road of ivory winding through forest, field and stream, all the way up to a distant castle etched fine against the hilltop” (72).

Thomas is comfortably lodged in Faerie; he is taken from his rooms where the courtyard was filled with summer day light to the feasting hall. “Inside I beheld a night-scene: a great hall full of Elvin feasting, with music of all kinds, and tumblers performing in the center... all brightly lit by the cold blue torches. It gave the whole scene a sea cast, as though they were feasting underwater” (86). Even after years in Faerie, Thomas is dazed by the strangeness and contradictions of the place.

As in Fairylore, time in this novel is ambiguous. As discussed, it can be day in one place and night in another. The folkloric motifs regarding the importance of certain times and dates in the mortal realm are often touched upon in Thomas the Rhymer. This is another motif first
mentioned in the story of Jock; “and on every Beltane night which is Fairies’ Holiday, Jock goes to that same hillside and plays, and out come a host of gorgeous folk that are the lords and ladies of Elfland, and they dance to Jock’s fiddle all night long” (4). The numbers seven and three continuously occur in folklore. The fairy that Jock meets knocks on the hill three times. Thomas is taken to Faerie for seven years. This is not a randomly chosen amount of time for Thomas to be away. When he returns and Meg asks him where he has been, he responds, “where do people usually disappear to for seven years?” (179). In general, time is not a concept that is important to the fairies; this is so both in Fairylore and in this novel. When asked how long a feast had lasted, the queen answers, “I’m not sure how long. I really can’t keep track here” (94).

There are many innate differences between mortals and the fairies, both in Fairylore and this novel. These differences can baffle, enchant and condemn the humans that interact with fairies. Our first hint of fairy abilities and behaviour patterns is also seen in the tale of Jock.

When the exchange is made, the fairy takes the cow, and walks right up to the side of the hill, and raps with his staff three times. And the hill opens up and fairy and cow disappear into it, right into Elfland.

As for Jock with his fiddle, he never knows a day’s hunger—but he never knows a day’s rest either. (4)

Fairy gifts often come at a very dear price.

Fairies and their interaction with human lovers can at times be cruel, but at others can be indulgent and captivating. Thomas’ invisible servant turns out to be a changeling, who had become Hunter’s lover when she grew into womanhood, but whom he had cast aside when she started to grow old. In Hunter’s words: “If only you had stayed small.... You were charming when you were little. I tried to keep you so, but I haven’t the knack. It was a mistake to take you to my bed for those few years of beauty you grew into then—I should have known you’d turn on me. Ugly like all the rest” (162). This is not the first or only example of this cruelty. The first
hint of it also comes from a story Thomas tells. “And so the song’s story shone through Tom’s singing: the Elf lord coming to claim the lady’s love, she that had summoned him; and how he sought to take her life after he took his pleasure, to end her power over him; but she sets him to the riddle game and so wins herself free” (17).

This story also introduces the fairy passion for riddles that becomes an important element later in the narrative. The queen gives Thomas the illusion of choice when she first meets him, but she explains that her power over humans is beyond that of mere enchantment.

From the moment you saw me, it would have been hard for you to refuse me anything. The desire you felt for me, that made your head swim and the blood burn in your veins... do not confuse that with your lust for a mortal woman. I am Queen over all Elfland, Thomas—over you I have no need of enchantments. (78)

The Queen of Faerie in Fairylore, and in Kushner’s novel, is powerful and beguiling. However, in both the ballad and the novel, the representation of the queen in Thomas’ story is, significantly, a more compassionate character than in most of Fairylore. She seems to care for Thomas, however she still does not love as a mortal woman would. Thomas laments this, “And she was saying words to me, but never that she loved me, never that. I pleaded with her, my sobs a thorny rose of pleasure. There was no pride left in me; I have never loved a woman more. She was not a woman of course” (139).

In Fairylore, fairies do not divulge their names, for to know a fairy’s true name is to have power over it. When Hunter meets Thomas, he tries to use his knowledge of Thomas’ name against him. The queen responds: “Fool... You know less of the World even than you think. There are a thousand Thomases on Middle-Earth: the name has all the power of a walnut” (80). This lack of names perplexes Thomas; in particular he longs to know the queen’s name. “Where I come from, we all have names. Nobody has a proper name in this place: everyone seems to be
called by their most distinguishing characteristic. You’d think my mother’d christened me ‘Mortal.’ Or ‘Harper’” (127). When explaining why Hunter likes to torment Thomas, the queen gives one reason why names are so carefully guarded in Faerie; “He is not a mortal man. He hasn’t got a soul—or, rather, he has; but it’s bound up in his name. It dies with him” (145). The power of names is a frequent motif in folklore, as is the premise that humans have souls and fairies do not.

Riddles are both a recreation, a way to pass time, and a challenge, to the creatures of Faerie. The preoccupation with riddles exists in folklore, but Kushner places even more emphasis on it here than found in many traditional stories. Several of the fairies come to Thomas and try to engage him in “The Riddle Game.” When he does not answer, they are disappointed and mock him (82-83). When Thomas is first brought to the feasting hall, Hunter and the queen play a riddle game about Thomas and his talent. When Hunter guesses in three tries, those around him are delighted at the sport and skill (87-88). Hunter strives to engage Thomas in a game of riddles about the knight whose soul is trapped in the body of a bird. At first Thomas tries to resist.

What did I care for Hunter’s riddle? I was not an elf; the games he pleased to play with the queen and the court were none of mine.

But the question had been asked; the hole had been opened in the fabric of things, and there is something about a hole, a tear, a rent in anything that is irksome to people of character. (109-110)

Another leisure pursuit that the fairies are partial to is hunting, which is a motif found often in Fairylore. The fairy hunt is different in intent, tone, and atmosphere from mortal hunts. When he is still new to Faerie, a group of fairies take Thomas out on the hunt.

I wondered what we were hunting. Possibly nothing: I noticed that hardly anyone was actually armed . . . . But everyone was whooping and galloping onward. I made no cry, but revelled in the glory of rushing air around me. We wheeled on the hillside and
cantered across the slope, effortless as birds. The horns rang out. It was like a child’s dream of freedom. I was laughing to feel . . . myself a part of the wild Elvin ride. (103)

Although Thomas’ time in Faerie was, in many ways, challenging and difficult, he returns to the mortal realm relatively unscathed and with the gift of the tongue that never lies. Few mortals that go to Faerie are so lucky. Fairylore is dominated by stories of these ill-fated mortals. Trafficking with the fairies can bring reward, but it comes with much peril.

Mortals in Thomas the Rhymer, like the more prudent individuals of folklore, do not take Faerie lightly. They are both respectful and cautious. Fear of the fairies affects the lives of the common people. They stay in after dark not just due to the fear of wild animals, or evil humans, but also because this is when the fairies are most likely to appear. Elspeth asks Thomas, “Will you not be frightened, coming back on the hills in the dark, of piskies and haunts, and the White Mare of Traquair?” (30). When Thomas first arrives at Gavin and Meg’s door, Gavin tell us of the protections they have placed on their home: “we’d had the stones blessed when we built the house, and rowan over the door against those Others” (6-7).

Thomas entertains with many tales of Faerie. In addition to the tale of Jock, he tells the tale of King Orfeo, whose wife is taken by the fairies. This story is not of Kushner’s invention; it is traditional, and has many similarities to the Greek story of Orpheus and his decent to the Underworld. King Orfeo is a gifted musician who plays for the Queen of Fairy to gain her pity and the return of his wife (21). Through this tale we learn that humans can be rescued under certain circumstances, but this deed always requires courage and strength on the part of the rescuer. People of Thomas’ time recognize these stories as truths regarding the fairies.

There are many taboos that apply to Faerie. One of the most common is never calling them fairies; this is tied to the fairy sensitivity about names discussed earlier. When Thomas discusses the fairies by name, Elspeth replies: “Say ‘good folk’…. They don’t like to hear
themselves named” (34). In the traditional tales, and both young adult and adult Faerie Fiction, the protagonist often becomes a fairy’s lover. Faerie Fiction for children does not usually explore this theme. Becoming physically involved with fairies is a very dangerous deed and in few stories do the human lovers of fairies return to their world unscathed. The queen warns Thomas of the cost of kissing her; “Will you have one kiss of me? It will be dearly bought . . . . Dare to kiss my lips, and know that your body follows . . . . You will be mine, Thomas. Let me be sure of you” (65). This action cost Thomas, as he knew it would, but he could not stop himself; “I pulled her to my mouth, and tasted fruit and flesh undreamed of. She quenched my thirst, and at the same time filled me with hunger I knew would never leave me. For just one moment my mind cleared as I thought, I am lost” (65). This enthrallment of Thomas by the queen does not become easier for him to deal with. After the queen’s absence, he laments, “now the world was become simple: her presence was my joy; her absence, my pain. But it was not all right. I had no control over our meetings; she might promise to send for me, and forget, or she might keep me by her for days at a time” (126). A relationship with a Faerie lover, in this novel and many other stories, is more like an addiction than a reciprocal, human romantic relationship.

Throughout Fairylore, one of the most common taboos is to refrain from eating or drinking in Faerie. The queen reminds Thomas of this and provides him with human food, so he will be able to return to the mortal realm after his seven years are served (75). Another forbidden act in Faerie is “for one of humankind to name a lord of Elfland” (111). Fairies can also place particular taboos on people; in Thomas’ case, the queen states that: “You may speak to me, Thomas, and to me alone—and you may sing to the hosts in my hall, for that is why I have brought you from your land. But whatever the others may say to you, in forest, field or in hall, look that you answer none but me” (74). When a person breaks a taboo, the consequences
are usually enduring. When Thomas asks if he can take his changeling servant home with him, the queen states, “the woman cannot leave Faery . . . . From childhood, she has eaten the food of Elfland. She cannot go back to your country” (170).

Although the fairies are rarely changed by their encounters with mortals, the humans inevitably are. The queen reminds Thomas of this before she sends him back to his own world. “Did you think to return home unchanged? You, who have ridden the steed of Elfame, and waded the mortal river, and sat in the Oldest Orchard at dawn, with the Elf Queen combing your hair? And listened for seven years to the counsels of our court?” (171). Thomas replies, “No . . . I am not who I was” (171). The queen then continues, “I am though . . . . I am always who I was, and always who I will be, now and forever the same. I do not change” (171). This immortal, unchanging nature of fairies is both what draws humans, such as Thomas, to their fairy lovers and separates them, for humans are in a constant state of flux and transmutation.

Some humans who traffic with fairies do it wisely, and some not so. The wise ones are respectful, do not break taboos and know how to appease their Good Neighbours. They know the ways of the fairies. When Thomas is teasing Elspeth for her belief in the fairies, she reminds him, “They don’t like to be seen” (37). Mortals have many traditions both to appease, and obtain benefit from, the fairies. For example, Elspeth would “leave out a dish of milk at night for the Billie Blin, to bring luck to the house” (36).

Although Kushner does not directly discuss any of the origins of Faerie found in Fairylore, her depiction of Faerie does have many links to the realm of the dead. As previously discussed, the story of King Orfeo is a very similar narrative to that of Orpheus. In Kushner’s version of the tale, the Faerie Queen plays the part of Persephone, Queen of the Dead. This story also reminds the reader that the prohibition of eating in Faerie is the same as that against eating
food of the dead. During a storm, Meg is nervous and tells Gavin, “it’s a night for the dead to ride” (5). Later she elaborates, “The Wild Hunt rides tonight . . . . They ride on horses with nostrils like burning coals, chasing the souls of the wicked, that cannot rest” (6). Thomas again links the dead and Faerie when he describes one of the favourite pastimes of fairies. He states, “Everyone knows the elves take their sport in hunting the restless spirits of humankind: just as some ghosts on earth torment the living, so do Elves torment our ghosts” (135). The common people fear the fairies and the dead for similar reasons: they both have their greatest power in the dark of night.

The queen in Thomas the Rhymer is a much more compassionate and caring figure than the queen Tam Lin becomes involved with. This is true for both Kushner’s narrative and the original ballad. This story draws on much of the enchanting and compelling elements of Faerie. In “Tam Lin” and An Earthly Knight, we see the fairies as purely antagonistic elements in the story. Thomas’ tale, in both ballad and novel form, shows us both the positive and negative aspects of Faerie. Kushner’s queen is represented as truly caring for Thomas, but she is still set apart from his humanity, and unable to love in a human way. Although Faerie is not as negatively represented in this story as in “Tam Lin,” Kushner does not shy away from the darker elements of Faerie. Faerie has many enticements, but it is also fundamentally a dangerous place.

Like the two ballads used in the texts, An Earthly Knight and Thomas the Rhymer both abound in Fairylore. They are both essentially historical fictions with Faerie imposing on the lives of the mortals. In both, the common people are guarded, respectful and cautious towards fairies. They respect taboos, such as not calling them by name and never eating or drinking in Faerie. They know, and use, protections such as iron and rowan wood. The ambiguity of time in Faerie is touched on in both novels but is not a dominant theme in either; however, important
dates in the mortal realm are recognized in both text. The fairies in both narratives are powerful beings with powers such as the ability to create glamour and change appearance/shape. They are desirous of humans: in *An Earthly Knight* human midwives are used, lovers are lured and a human is needed to pay the Tithe. In *Thomas the Rhymer* the needs are similar, but the Tithe is not a motif that is explored. In McNaughton’s Faerie, humans are a great source of entertainment, as they bring passion and a creative compulsion that can only be found in mortals. In neither novel are the fairies powers to be trifled with by humans.

One of the major differences between these novels is that, in *An Earthly Knight* the reader never sees Faerie and only briefly even sees the fairies themselves. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, Faerie is, by contrast, one of the settings of the story. In the former novel, we only see the court fairies of the heroic type. In the latter, we see a great variety of the creatures of Faerie, and Faerie itself is lavishly portrayed. The queen in both stories is hauntingly beautiful and uses this beauty to seduce and control the human in which she is interested in. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, however, the queen is a much more sympathetic character. Although she cannot love as a human, she does seem to be fond of Thomas and honours their arrangement of seven years, without deception. Although Thomas’ Queen is kinder than Tam Lin’s, neither is harmless or innocent. Both authors use the darker elements of Faerie to tell a story revolving around the allures and dangers of Faerie.
Chapter 6: Contemporary Faerie Fantasies

The two novels studied in this section take place in the modern world. Unlike the ballad novels, where the backdrop of the story is a world similar to that found in folklore, in these novels fairies interact with mortals in a world very distant from the folkloric roots of fantasy and Fairylore. Black’s *Tithe* is an urban fantasy, and in her world the fairies have adapted to the modern world. By contrast, in Melling’s *The Hunter’s Moon*, the story primarily takes place in the rural countryside. In this version of Faerie, the fairies shun the cities and modern civilization. Black’s story takes place in the United States and the protagonist is American, which are additional steps away from Faerie’s folkloric and European-Celtic roots. Melling’s story takes place in Ireland, often incorporating sites of importance in Celtic myth and legend. Although Melling’s setting is closer to Fairylore, her protagonist is Canadian, which sets the character somewhat apart from the Faerie of her Celtic ancestors.

The Novels

*Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale* by Holly Black

Black’s *Tithe* takes place in contemporary New Jersey. Kaye is a strong and unconventional sixteen-year-old girl, or so she thinks. Kaye and her musician mother, Ellen, move back to her Grandmother’s home. This move was sudden, due to the fact that Ellen’s boyfriend attempted to kill her for no apparent reason. Kaye’s grandmother does not approve of her daughter’s lifestyle or how she is raising Kaye. Kaye tries to make the best of the move; she reconnects with her childhood friend Janet and also starts to become friends with Janet’s brother.
Shortly after her arrival, Kaye is also visited by some other childhood friends: Spike, Lutie and Gristle, all fairies.

Kaye discovers that she is not who she thinks she is; she has unexpected power and abilities. She is actually not human, but a changeling pixie, with a glamour so strong that even she did not know of her fey origins. Kaye is part of an elaborate ruse to trick the Unseelie Queen into sacrificing a fairy instead of a mortal at the time of the Tithe, an act that would free the solitary fairies in her realm for seven years. Kaye is a pawn used for political manoeuvring by the solitary fairies as well as both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Her life becomes even more complicated when she rescues, and then becomes infatuated with, the Faerie knight Roiben.

Corny, while helping Kaye, becomes enchanted by another Faerie knight, whose affections are cruel and sadistic. Kaye, with help from Roiben, has to save herself from being sacrificed, save Corny from his lover and himself, and then deal with the consequences of her actions.

This novel does not directly draw on a specific ballad, or any other single story, but it is rich in Fairylore from start to finish. The first hints of the involvement of Faerie in Kaye’s life are subtle. Kaye, sitting at the bar where her mother is playing, orders milk (2), a favourite beverage of fairies in folklore. Outside the bar, “The city always smelled like metal to Kaye” (3), which alludes to the Faerie sensitivity to iron found in Fairylore. It is later revealed that Ellen’s boyfriend was enchanted when he tried to kill her. Kaye does not realise it at the time but she does note the fairy responsible for the enchantment: “Lloyd was talking to a guy with long, dark hair. The man looked out of place in the bar, too well dressed or something, but Lloyd had an arm slung over the man’s shoulder. She caught a flash of the man’s eyes. Cat-yellow, reflecting in the dark bar. Kaye shivered” (3). At her grandmother’s house, Kaye tries to lure her childhood friends to come to her by offering them bowls of milk (22).
The fairies in *Tithe* are as various as those found in folklore. Black does not limit herself to one type. When Kaye first meets Roiben, she recognises him as a court fairy (25), often referred to by folklorists as the heroic fairies. Early in the book, Kaye also meets a Kelpie, a solitary Faerie monster (30), who later kills Janet (269). Many of the various types of fairies found in Fairylore are not named but are described. They primarily come from Fairylore of the British Isles, but there are allusions and references to others, such as satyrs (146) and fauns (186), which are more Classical in their origins. Spike is a homely, woody spirit (87). Lutie is a sprite of a type similar to Tinkerbell (88). Even within the courts, many variants of fairies are found. Skillywidden is a spider-like woman who weaves for the court; redcaps run errands for her to others in the court (205). The gentry are at the top of the Faerie hierarchy, both in Black’s novel and in Fairylore, and they are dangerously beautiful in both.

The social structure of Black’s Faerie is regimented. There are the Unseelie and Seelie Courts and the solitary fairies. The Seelie and Unseelie courts are primarily found within Scottish Fairylore, but the other creatures in Black’s Faerie are not solely from the Scottish tradition. The members of the courts are expected to show devotion and loyalty to their leaders. Black explains the courts through one of the solitary fairies, the Thistlewitch:

> Once, there were two courts, the bright and the dark, the Seelie and the Unseelie, the folk of the air and the folk of the earth. They fought like a serpent devouring its own tail, but we kept from their affairs, kept to our hidden groves and underground streams, and they forgot us. Now they have made a truce and remembered that rulers must have subjects. There is such a habit of service among us. (92)

Corny describes the Unseelie Court succinctly: “Looks like that’s where all the bad guys hang out in Faeryland” (118), but this does not necessarily imply that the Seelie Court is formed of the ‘good guys’. Roiben observes the relationship between the solitary fairies and the courts:
The solitary fey had gathered warily at the edges of the brugh. He knew that many among them had no wish to be tied to the Unseelie court, and for a moment he wondered if they could somehow refuse the sacrifice. But ... [t]hey had come to accept their servitude. Indeed, servitude might offer them some protection that independence had not. (190-191)

Those in the lower realms of Faerie hierarchy must show obedience to those above them, but they do not necessarily like them. While looking for Corny, Roiben asks one of the laundry women if she had seen the boy “With our new King” (303). She replies, “That one... King indeed! Yes, there’s a boy about, but I can’t tell you more than that. I’ve learned better than to draw the eye of Gentry” (303). Roiben was sent from the Seelie to the Unseelie Court as part of a truce; he is no longer part of either court. Kaye notes the reactions of the others to Roiben: “He was not one of them, it was true, but he was remote as a king. No one challenged him” (325). In the end, Roiben becomes the new King of the Unseelie Court (326).

As the diversity of fairies represented in *Tithe* is vast, it is no surprise that their appearances also differ greatly. Black’s descriptions are rich, and paint a magnificent picture of both the splendour and the horror of the fey. The first fairy to be described is Roiben; this portrayal gives an intimation of the otherworldliness of the fey:

[Long pewter hair, plastered wetly to his neck, framed a face that was long and full of sharp angles. Rivulets of rain ran over the jointed black armor he wore . . . . He was long-limbed—he would be tall if he were standing. Taller than most people, taller than any Faerie she had ever seen—still, she had no doubt that was what he was, if for no other reason than the pointed tops of his ears knifing through his wet hair—and that he was beautiful in a way that made her breath catch. (24-25)]

The next detailed description is of the kelpie:
Hollow pits formed into flaring nostrils on the snout of a black horse that rose up from the black water as if created from it. Moss and mud slid from its dripping flanks as the thing turned its head to regard Kaye with luminous white eyes . . . [S]he stared at those mottled grey flanks, smooth as sealskin, and stared into the impossible glow of those eyes. (32)

Although the kelpie does not have the beauty of Roiben, it is also a deeply compelling creature; this is a common feature in the folkloric descriptions of fairies. When Kaye sees the kelpie again, she has her fairy senses and it is still a commanding being: “the creature looked different. Its color was not so much black, but an emerald so deep that it looked black. And the nacreous eyes were gleaming like pearls” (126).

Fairy glamour can hide a fairy’s true appearance, but often there are hints of what is beneath the glamour. At first, Kaye recognizes the fey in herself slowly, with subtle clues here and there. Kaye is blonde with Asian eyes: “She stared at her upturned eyes and thin cheeks. For the first time, she wondered where they had really come from. She hadn’t seen Roiben well in the moonlight, but his upturned eyes could have gotten him mistaken for Asian if he hadn’t had such an angular nose” (44). She gets another foreshadowing of her true self later: “For a moment, she had thought that the face she saw in the mirror was green” (77). When her glamour is first removed, Kaye is not located where she can properly see herself. When she is able to do so, she is almost overwhelmed by what she sees:

[S]he saw that her skin was shadowed with the lush dark green of moss. Not a stain, but a tint, as though a veil of green lay over her. Her ear was longer, sticking up through her hair to the top of her head. Her cheek, sunken and sharp, and her eye, slanted and black, all shiny black, with a pinpoint of white pupil. Like a bird eye or a single bead. (108)

When Corny first sees Kaye as a pixie, he thinks she is “a girl in green makeup” (109), but closer, he sees her true-self showing through the last of her glamour:
Up close the girl didn’t look anything like Kaye. She didn’t look anything like anybody. Her upturned eyes were black as oil spills. She was too thin. Tall ears parted her tangled hair on either side of her head. Her skin seemed to be flaking, showing patches of green underneath . . . . The girl smiled at him but her smile was too fierce. (109)

Even when the fairies are in human glamour, they are still striking, and elements of their true nature reveal themselves. When Kaye sees Roiben in a restaurant she notes: “His hair was white as salt under the fluorescent lights and was pulled back in a ponytail. He was wearing a long black wool coat that hid whatever he was wearing underneath . . . . There was so little color in his face that he seemed to be entirely monochromatic, a picture shot in black-and-white film” (77-78).

Black fills her Faerie imagery with marvellous particulars. When Spike and Lutie finally come to visit Kaye after her return, they are described in detail: “Tiny black eyes blinked beneath heavy eyebrows, and long ears rose up from either side of a bare head . . . . He was smaller than she remembered him and clad only in a thin bark that ran over his waist and down part of his legs. At his elbows, points extended into the shapes of thorns” (87). Lutie is very different than Spike: “[S]he could make out Lutie-loo’s thin form, incandescent against the dark tiles of the roof. Her wings were so translucent as to be nearly invisible” (88). As in folklore, green is a common colour referenced throughout this narrative, not just as a pixie’s skin tone, but often as a colour of clothing. Silver is another colour often mentioned. Garments are as varied in Black’s *Tithe* as in Fairylore. “Outfits were composed entirely of petals or leaves. Ragged edges finished off lovely dresses. Ugly, strange, or lovely as the moon, none were plain” (144). This diversity is not limited to the Unseelie Court. In the Seelie Court:

The Folk were as varied as in the Unseelie Court, although they were dressed in brighter colors. They passed a fox-faced man in a tattercoat of many fabrics, trailing ribbons. Another fey wore a golden sheath dress, bright as the sun. She whispered in the ear of a boy wearing a dress as well, his all in robin’s egg blue. (284)
Although the appearance and dress of fairies in *Tithe* are folklorically based, Black also adds distinctly contemporary details. At the rave that the fairies enchant, Kaye sees a great assortment of fairies:

A freckle-faced faerie with flame-red hair that rose up into a Dr. Seuss curl was the first one that she saw. He was dancing like the others, but when he saw her stare, he winked. Looking quickly around, she noticed more, winged sprites with tiny silver hoops piercing the points of their ears, goblins the size of dogs drinking bottled water off the top of the bar, a green-skinned pixie boy with a blue glow stick lighting up the inside of his mouth. And other fey, dim shadows at the edges of the club, flashes of glittering scales. (269)

The Queens of both the Unseelie and Seelie Courts are stunning in their appearance.

Kaye first sees the Unseelie Queen:

The Queen of the Unseelie Court looked down on her, lips quirking into a smile. Her blood-red hair was pulled back into thick, jewelled braids, and the dusky grey of her dress made her skin all the more pale and creamy by comparison. She was inhumanly beautiful, but her smile held no fondness. Kaye was disturbed to find herself smiling back into those cruel blue eyes nonetheless, longing for them to light with approval . . . . The Queen’s eyes were too clear, too blue, Kaye thought. (187)

As striking as the Unseelie Queen is, Kaye finds the Seelie Queen to be even more dazzling. She is overwhelmed by the Queen’s beauty.

There was an auburn-haired faerie dressed in a deep emerald-green coat that flared like a gown. Kaye stopped walking when she saw the woman; she could scarcely remember to breathe. She was the most beautiful thing Kaye had ever seen. Her skin was flawless, her hair shone bright as copper in the sun under a woven circlet of ivy and dogwood blossoms, her eyes were as bright as the green apples that hung near them. Kaye could not just glance at the faerie woman; her eyes were drawn to look until the faerie took up the totality of her vision, rendering all else dull and faded. Roiben did not need to tell her that this was the Queen of the Seelie Court. (286)

Neither queen has a soft or gentle beauty. Their beauty is a weapon they wield to control and manipulate those around them, both mortal and fairy.
Black’s Faerie, like its Queens, is powerfully compelling. When Kaye and Corny first gain entry into Faerie, they find it under a hill (139), the most common location for Faerie to be found in folklore. Before they find it, they hear music (141), also a common motif related to Faerie. Later, when Kaye wants to return to Faerie, Lutie shows her an entrance: “The tree was gnarled and huge, its knobbled and gored trunk giving it the impression of sagging under its own weight. The bark was thin and chipped flaking off like dry skin. At its base, there was a gaping hole where the roots split” (299). Black provides a great deal more detail in describing the inhabitants of Faerie than in describing Faerie itself, but she does include some powerful images of the world of Faerie:

They walked through open doors of silver ivy to a garden where silver apples weighed the boughs of trees nearly to the ground. A slender path of white stones wound around the trees and back over itself throughout the garden. Above the orchard, the curved ceiling glowed as though it were day and they were no longer under the hill. (209)

Black’s version of Faerie is a magical place, but events and activities within it do not all take place by magic. When coming in the “back-door,” Kaye sees the kitchens (300), and the laundry room (302). Although this is not a common motif in folklore, it is one that is still found in some stories. The veil between the worlds becomes noticeable to Kaye; when she enters Faerie through the tree, she feels a similar sensory experience to her earlier visit to Faerie: “like when she had stepped into the hill, she felt the odd fission that she was growing to associate with stepping over into Faerie” (284). Time in Faerie is not a motif explored in this novel, but certain dates in the mortal realm are still important; it is on Samhain (Halloween) that the Tithe must be preformed (100).

Fairy behaviour in *Tithe* ranges from cruel, to mischievous, to kind, though the latter is the least common. Characteristics and abilities differ according to the type of fairy and how powerful it is. At first Kaye is confused by the diversity and complexity of the fairies’
behaviour. “She thought of the faeries she had known when she was a child—impish, quick things—no mention of wars or magical arrows or enemies, certainly no lies, no deception. The man bleeding in the dirt beside her told her how wrong her perceptions of Faery had been” (27). The fairies of the Unseelie Court, in particular, take pleasure in causing pain.

Riddles are an important feature of fairy entertainment; this is true for both courts in this novel as well as in folklore. Sometimes the stakes for solving these riddles are trifles, but at other time they can be a matter of life and death. The Queen offers Kaye a way to escape the sacrifice if she can answer a riddle. Although she is successful, the contest is a ruse and the Queen takes pleasure in the added pain this causes. After the failed sacrifice, the solitary fairies run amuck and humans are their primary targets. One girl is kidnapped but later the news reports that, “She was released tonight after a harrowing day in which she was forced to answer riddles to avoid torture” (251). Fairies enjoy many other games, including chess. Roiben notes to Kaye, “chess was well loved by the Queen. They gamble with it like mortals gamble with cards. She once used it to win a consort, as I recall” (304).

Kaye’s abilities grow as her awareness of her fairy-self emerges. She momentarily brings an old carousel horse to life (15). Later, she plays with the smoke from her cigarette: “She reached up lazily to change the pattern. It shifted at the touch of her fingers, and she could see figures dancing in it—no, they weren’t dancing, they were fighting. Swordsmen duelling in the rising smoke” (57). At this point she does not understand that she is actually making these things happen. She is a bit overwhelmed by these occurrences; at one point she states, “Sometimes when I daydream . . . things happen” (74).

Although various fairies in Tithe have abilities specific to them, or to their particular type of fairy, certain abilities are fairly universal throughout Faerie, both in Tithe and in
Fairylore. Some can fly, others cannot. The Thistlewitch can divine things through eggshells (92). The primary universal ability is the fairy ability to create glamour. Some glamours are not very strong, but Kaye’s is strong enough that even her fairy senses and abilities are muted. When she asks about her glamour, Spike tells her, “It’s a very powerful glamour. Someone put it on to stay” (100). An extension of glamour is the ability to change objects, at least temporarily: “Roiben picked up two leaves from the gutter. In his hands they became crisp bills” (265). In this action and imagery, Black has updated a common fairy motif of turning leaves, or other objects, into fairy gold.

Fairies are sensitive to the environment around them; the fairies in Tithe must deal with pollutants and the iron-filled contemporary world. Kaye is inundated by the pollution when she first gets her fairy senses back: “She could taste chemicals in the air—iron, smoke, other things she had no names for. They played over her tongue in dark harmony. It was too much. It was overwhelming. There were so many sensations buffeting her, too many for her to filter out” (106).

The majority of Black’s fairies see themselves as superior to mortals, but at the same time, they are dependent on the mortal realm. This is a motif often present in Fairylore. The most obvious and important of these dependencies is the Tithe. In Fairylore, the Tithe is usually a sacrifice to Hell and comes from the premise of fairies being fallen angels. Black has kept the sacrifice of the Tithe, but has separated it from its Christian connection to Hell and angels. As the Thistlewitch explains the Tithe to Kaye, “They have brought back the Tithe, the sacrifice of a beautiful and talented mortal. In the Seelie Court they may steal away a poet to join their company, but the Unseelie Court requires blood. In exchange, those who dwell in Unseelie lands must bind themselves into service” (93).
The sacrificial victims for the Tithe are not the only humans that Faerie needs from the mortal realm. In Fairylore, children, and sometime lovers, are taken as changelings, replaced in the mortal realm by either a fairy or an object that looks like the remains of the stolen person. The themes around changelings are obviously of great importance to this novel, as the protagonist is a changeling. As the Thistlewitch explains changelings to Kaye, “In ancient times, we usually left stock—bits of wood or dying fey—enchanted to look like the stolen babe and left in the cradle” (99). The stealing of human children is not an activity solely of the Unseelie Court. It is when Kaye goes to the Seelie court that she finds human changeling children: “[S]he noticed more human children, none older than perhaps six. They were being brushed and petted, their eyes half-lidded and dreamy” (285). Essentially these children are the fairies’ pets. Humans, in Fairylore, are seen as creatures that can be used to relieve boredom. Sometimes these humans are treated relatively well, as are the human changelings in Tithe, but others are treated cruelly. Roiben tries to explain this to Kaye: “They [the fairies] struggle with their own boredom. It is a struggle that often requires increasingly cruel diversions” (203). Corny’s lover is very sadistic towards him.

The most basic need that fairies have from the human realm is the need for sustenance. In Fairylore this can simply involve the stealing of milk and other foodstuffs, but it can be deadlier. In Tithe, there are creatures that will devour human flesh (249). Others kill humans, such as the kelpie who kills Janet, taking her life force but leaving the body (271).

Humans who traffic with the fairies enter a wondrous and dangerous world. This is true for the mortals in Fairylore and in Tithe. Roiben warns Kaye when he first meets her: “Were I you, I would stay clear of the Folk in the future. We are a capricious people, with little regard for mortals” (33). Corny comments to Kaye that, “I think we haven’t seen much so far that is
part of Faery and isn’t dangerous” (174). Mortals can occasionally get the better of the fairies; as Kaye does when she gets Roiben to give her his full name (80). More often, however, they become victims and playthings, like Corny. Corny tries to resist the fairy knight Nephamael, but “One look into those yellow eyes and he broke like a wishbone. Corny stepped into the circle of Nephamael’s arms, basking in the feel of thorns” (211).

The fairies in *Tithe* have many of the same weaknesses evident in the fairies of folklore. There are actions that humans can perform to appease the fairies, or to protect themselves from them. Kaye leaves milk out to encourage her friends to come and see her (34). In Fairylore, fairies have an aversion to cold iron; in Black’s Faerie this is one of the strongest of the fairy aversions, as it “burns faerie flesh” (101) and is essentially a poison to them. If someone knows a fairy’s true name, they possess power over that fairy. Kaye possesses the knowledge of Roiben’s true name and it is with this knowledge that she can compel him to disobey his Queen and save her (222).

There are also many taboos regarding human behaviour when dealing with fairies. Wary Mortals should never violate these taboos. The Thistlewitch explains one of these to Kaye, “You mustn’t even use their speaking names aloud” (93). Another is that there are dire consequences for a mortal that eats or drinks in Faerie; Corny breaks this taboo and is enchanted after drinking Faerie wine (150). When Corny is even further in the thrall of Nephamael, he also eats Faerie food: “It tasted of fulness, of longing and wishful thinking and want, so that one bite left him empty. Nephamael smirked as he watched Corny lick the broken fruit, devour the pulp, sink to his knees, sucking the pale center pit” (209).

Like both McNaughton and Kushner, Black has created a vision of Faerie that is both enticing and perilous. Black’s Faerie is a place that is separate from the mortal realm, but still
intricately tied to it. The most grim of the fairy dependence on mortals is the Tithe and this features prominently in this text. Although Lutie is a close approximation of the gauzy-winged Victorian fairy, she is far from the predominant type of innocuous fairy. The fairies with the greatest power are the members of the gentry, in the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. The Queens, in particular, embody both the seductive and treacherous aspects of Faerie. Black’s Tithe could not exist without the darker element of Faerie, for it is from them that this story evolves.

**The Hunter’s Moon by O.R. Melling**

*The Hunter’s Moon* is the first book in Melling’s *Chronicles of Faerie*. This is the story of two sixteen-year-old cousins who have a strong friendship based on their mutual love and fascination with Faerie and fantasy. Findabhair is a fiery-spirited Irish girl who leads with her heart. Gwen is Canadian, and is a more temperate and cautious person. Both girls have a lifelong love affair with myths, legends, folklore and fantasy. When Gwen comes to Ireland on vacation, Findabhair convinces her parents to let them travel around Ireland, alone, on a type of pilgrimage. The girls want to see the historically significant, sacred and magical sights of Ireland. Findabhair, unknowingly, has a brief encounter with a fairy that causes her to insist on altering their plans with their first stop being the last stop of their original itinerary.

The girls start their journey at Tara, “the ancient royal centre” (11). They decide to spend the night in a carin, a grave mound, which breaks the laws not just of the human realm but of Faerie as well. They are both visited in their sleep and invited to Faerie. Findabhair accepts, while Gwen refuses. When Gwen awakes her cousin is gone and she knows instinctively that she has been taken by the fairies. Gwen then tries to rescue her cousin, a quest that becomes more urgent when she discovers that The Hunter’s Moon, the time of sacrifice, is approaching.
On her quest she make friends and allies; the most important being Mattie, Katie, Dara – the hereditary King of Inch, and his aunt, Granny, a fairy wise woman.

Melling’s representation of Faerie is by far the most positive of those in the novels analysed here. It is very rich in folklore, primarily of the Irish tradition. The social structure of Melling’s Faerie is clearly a monarchy, like most of the folktales that contain the heroic fairies. Kingship is of great importance to the fairies, and even nature responds to this ancient station. When the Faerie King, Finvarra, first appears, the river sings out, “The King passed by. Long live the King” (2). Finvarra is the High King, but there are many lesser Kings, modelled on the Ireland of ancient times. The second in command, and heir to the throne, Midir, is called the tanaiste. He explains the hierarchy of Faerie to Gwen: “I am his second-in-command. Though I am captain of my own troop and there are many like me, Finvarra is High King over all” (79). This reverence of the High King is not limited to the fairies; when he meets Finvarra, Dara states: “All kings and princes look to the High King . . . . It is my honour to stand by you, sire” (160).

The Queens in Melling’s Faerie seem to be the consorts of the Kings and are often mortals. Unlike much Fairylore, there are no Queens of Faerie in this story. This is not as contradictory to Fairylore as it may seem, as Finvarra is a Faerie King mentioned in the Irish folktales. He is a notorious womanizer, with a taste for mortal women; his Faerie queen counterpart, if he has one, is not often mentioned. Granny, in her youth, lived for seven years in Faerie where she was Finvarra’s consort, and was considered a Queen in Faerie. When she goes to a Faerie ball, the fairies are delighted to see her again: “Fond cries surrounded her—‘Grania, you have returned to us!’—as the fairies greeted a former Queen” (179). When Gwen first arrives in Faerie, Findabhair tells her, “I am their Queen” (74), and is treated as such.
The court fairies in *The Hunter's Moon*, like the court fairies of the other novels in this study, are of the heroic type. They are of human form and stature. These are not the only fairies in this book. Melling emphasises the connection of Faerie to nature: “Wood nymphs and dryads encircled their trees, tossing leaves like confetti. Sylphs of the air clasped groups of fairies as if gathering up armfuls of flowers” (121). Although nymphs and dryads come from Classical mythology, they fit nicely into the spirit of Melling’s Faerie.

As a peace offering, Finvarra manifests Gwen’s dream of Faerie:

Her childhood dream come true. Fairies at the end of the garden! It was just as she had always imagined. Sitting on the tip of every leaf, they covered the hedgerow like a mass of bright berries. Tiny and winged, clothed in thistledown and spider web, golden-haired, silver-eyed, shining like fireflies. Their size took nothing from the wonder of their creation... Gwen gazed upon this cluster of fairies with the same awe she viewed the constellations of heaven. Here was infinite life in all its splendour. (167)

This is the closest description, in any of the books studied, to the images found in Victorian Faerie art. Although the Gwen has visions of these fantastical fairies, most of the fairies she interacts with are court fairies, or other human-statured fairies on the court’s business. The court fairies have the same alluring, yet somewhat cold, beauty that is found in Fairylore and in the other novels under discussion. The first fairy to be depicted is Finvarra in his human glamour: “He was exactly her idea of a stunning young man: sharp elegant features like a hawk’s, hair black as the night and keen dark eyes.... She admired the quirkiness of the silk jacket with tight jeans. He seemed somehow familiar” (3). The next fairy the girls become acquainted with is also in human guise. He is a leprechaun who gives them a ride. He was, “[a] wizened old man with a face like a dried apple, he had two bright beads for eyes which winked at them merrily. His suit was brown tweed, worn and patched in places, the jacket closed with a large safety pin. A peaked cap was perched on his head, the same dark-red colouring as his
ruddy cheeks” (14). In both cases, the fairies generally appear human, but there is something odd about them that sets them apart.

The first image of Finvarra, without his human guise, is in Gwen’s dream: “In charged a stallion, black as the night, with nostrils flared and snorting flame. Astride the horse was a dark-caped rider with a face like a hawk’s. He leaned down from his saddle to scoop up his prey” (31). Melling’s Faerie King has an attractive, yet predatory, look about him. When Gwen first sees him in Faerie, he is an even more striking figure: “His jet-black hair fell in a blunt cut reminiscent of ancient Egypt. And like a pharaoh’s carved in stone, his features were finely chiselled, proud and exquisite. The almond shaped eyes glowed deep as dark velvet” (74).

When the fairy host first comes upon Gwen, she is almost overwhelmed by what she sees:

Their arrival was like a blast of wind, a great soft blow. They poured into the hollow like molten silver. Almost indescribable in human terms. Almost invisible to mortal eyes. Their silhouettes against the dark sky hinted of slender graceful shapes, but they were so amorphous as to appear also like falling water or columns of pure light. They were translucent, and transparent too, for Gwen could see the contours of the landscape through them. Did they have wings? Or was that the moonlight trailing behind them? They moved with such breathtaking swiftness that wings, tresses, pale limbs were all the same it seemed. They danced in the circle, singing with wild glee. (61)

When Gwen accompanies Midir and his company to Faerie, she notices the change in the host when they reach their own land: “They were no longer shadowy beings of light, but were solid and human-like while strikingly beautiful” (67). When she attends a fairy revel she sees the true magnificence of the inhabitants of fairy:

Her senses were being bombarded by every kind of marvel. The fairy folk assembled in the hall were as splendid as their court. Of every shape and size and colour, each more exquisite than the next, they were resplendent in an utter extravagance of fashion: flounces of silk and satin; swaths of frosted lace; billowing mantles and floor length trains; high-plumed hats and jewelled fans; clothes sewn with seed pearls and stippled with gems; tiaras shedding veils; necklaces and bracelets glittering with diamonds. (68)
On each occasion that Gwen sees the fairies, they appear different. She wonders what is glamour and what is their true nature. The appearances of Melling's fairies have a transitory quality. When Finvarra meets with the companions at Granny's, he puts on his human guise, but as soon as he leaves, "He was already assuming fairy shape, blending into the shadows of the landscape, rising into the dark sky studded with stars" (165). The diverse descriptions of fairies found in Fairylore vary immensely; Melling has dealt with this fact by depicting their appearance as ephemeral, and in constant transmutation.

In some folktales, Faerie is a land separate and beyond the realm of mortals', in others it is closer at hand, transforming ordinary places, such as crossroads, natural wells and glades, burial mounds, and forest glens, into supernatural extensions of Faerie. Melling's Faerie is modelled on this latter tradition. The first transformation to occur in The Hunter's Moon is of the burial mound in which the girls are sleeping:

The empty mounds and earthworks began to glow as if a falling star had landed. From the jagged contours of the hills and ridges rose the shining silhouette of a palace hall. Walls of gold and silver glittered with gems. A thousand candles blazed within. From the high graceful windows, sweet sounds issued forth: unearthly music, murmur and laughter. (29)

When Gwen travels with the fairy host, she has fairy sight and can see the images of Faerie superimposed on modern Ireland (66).

Hints of Faerie are common in the Ireland Gwen visits. As Dara takes her on a tour of Inch, he points out: "That green trail leads to Dunfinn, the island's fairy fort. See how it keeps to the left of the whins and bramble? The 'sinister' or left-handed way is always the fairy route" (142). When Midir first takes Gwen to Faerie, they enter through a cave deep below the ground (68). This positioning of Faerie underground is a common folkloric theme. The fairies in
Fairylore like their privacy and choose places for their isolation. When Dara and Granny take Gwen to Dunfinn, Granny explains, “This marsh is the Dunfinn ... the fairy palace is beneath it, deep underground. Mortal feet sink when they tread upon it” (155). Although the veil between the human world and Faerie is represented in this novel as being fairly thin, Faerie does not merge with the real world just anywhere, as “the fairies favoured secluded or forsaken regions” (108).

Despite its ability to seep into the human world, Faerie is still a realm apart. When the companions leave on their quest, Finvarra explains, “There are two gates to Fairyland ... which mark the borders of our territory in time though not in space. The White Gates of Morning are the entrance to Faerie. The Black Gates of Night are the exit” (183). When the companions travel through Faerie, they travel through Irish folklore and myth: “On the Plain of the Apple Trees they were showered with pink blossoms. In Tir na nOg they splashed through the fountains of youth. After a deep-sea dive into a warm green ocean, they danced with the mer-people in the Land Below Waves” (189). The Worm explains to Granny the place of Faerie and the human realm in the greater scheme of things, saying the Tree of Life “bears both Faerie and your world like twin golden apples. Two orbs, two moons that eclipse each other, one fantasy, one reality, balanced side by side. Humanity cannot exist without its dreams, but for any dream to exist there must be a sacrifice” (201). In this, Melling’s Faerie has taken on a greater scope than the Faerie of Fairylore. Melling’s Faerie acquires its dominant structures and images from traditional Fairylore, but it also encompasses the realms of dreams and the imagination. Her Faerie is similar to the Faerie that Tolkien discusses in “On Fairy-stories,” examined earlier in this study. This does not lessen the impact of Melling’s rendition of Faerie; instead it creates a more sympathetic response in the characters and the readers alike. If Melling’s Faerie were akin
to that of Black then there would be no reason for the humans to voluntarily give themselves to the sacrifice, for they would have no motivation to save Faerie.

The fairies in *The Hunter's Moon* are powerful creatures. Their abilities and behaviours are consistent with those found in Fairylore. As in the old stories, they may not follow human rules and morality, but they do exactly follow their own. When Gwen is faced with the task of rescuing her cousin from Faerie, she takes stock of what she knows. Melling uses this moment to give the reader a brief summary of the important aspects of Fairylore:

Behind the tales told to modern children was an old peasant belief in another race who lived alongside humans. They were called the ‘Good People’ in an effort to appease them. Some said they were gods and others said they were fallen angels, not good enough for heaven but not bad enough for hell. Descriptions varied in all the books and stories. They could be tiny and winged like butterflies, or taller than mortals, shadowy beings of light and air. They didn’t dislike humans, but then again they often played tricks on them, sometimes cruel ones. They were wilful and capricious and wild as the wind, loved music and dancing and perpetual frolic. Their favourite haunts were hills and forests, but they also dwelled inside mountains and in the ruins of ancient monuments. (34-35)

This description recapitulates many important aspects of Fairylore. It considers not only fairy behaviour, but also fairy appearance and origins. As in Fairylore, and in the other novels under consideration, the primary talent of the fairies is the ability to create fairy glamour. In *The Hunter’s Moon*, this ability is extended to Findabhair once she is part of the fairy court (73). This is similar to the abilities that Tam Lin gains in *An Earthly Knight*, when he magically creates a dress for Jenny.

The fairies’ connection with nature gives them power in this area. When the reader is first introduced to Finvarra, he is watching a polluted river flow by: “A ray of gold flashed from his fingers to strike the turbid waters like a shaft of light. It was only for a second, the blink of an eye, but in that moment the river ran free” (1). The fairies use this power over nature to hinder Gwen’s rescue attempts: “Gwen had no idea how long she stood there, watching the sky.
Nor did she notice the tendrils of the hawthorn as they reached out to catch her. Another gust of wind and the branches clung to her jeans, twining around her legs like climbing ivy” (109). The fairies’ element is nature and they feel uncomfortable when away from it for long; Finvarra states, “Mortal dwellings are too close for me” (165).

Fairies have the ability to influence and manipulate humans. They can also affect humans’ memories. After their first meeting at the beginning of the novel, Finvarra clouds Findabhair’s memory of the meeting so she feels as if she were daydreaming (5). When Gwen wakes in the mound alone, she realizes that Findabhair has “been stolen by the fairies” (34), but the humans that are “stolen” in Melling’s version of Faerie are not so much abducted as lured into Faerie. In Melling’s Faerie, these kidnapped humans are willing victims; they have either accepted an invitation to Faerie, or have broken a Faerie taboo. The fairies entice humans to do their bidding in a way that makes the human a full participant in their ultimate ensnarement.

Gwen is furious with the leprechaun that does not warn them; his response to her is “Fair’s fair. Ye got what ye came for” (35).

Melling’s fairies, like those in folklore, are different from humans, especially in the area of morality. Their emotional lives are different from those of mortals. When Gwen sees Finvarra take her cousin, he looks down at her and she notes: “There was no remorse or pity in those sloe-black eyes” (31). When Gwen finds her cousin, Findabhair warns Gwen that the King is annoyed with her for spoiling his fun: “[H]e wanted the two of us, the cheeky thing. Fairies are not monogamous by any stretch of the imagination” (72). This is also true of the fairies of folklore, and Finvarra, in particular, is a notorious womanizer. Findabhair loves her life with the fairies, but she is also cautious and realizes that “they are not like us. They don’t have the same kind of feelings. Guilt is something they’ve never known, which might be fine for some, but it
means they can get away with murder without batting an eyelid” (74). This portrayal is very consistent with Fairylore. The fairies have no qualms about harming someone who opposes their desires; when Gwen threatens to interfere with their pleasure, they poison her. Dara takes the unconscious Gwen to Granny, who states, “[M]edicine won’t help her. Not the new kind, anyway. There’s a pisreog on her—of that I’m certain. It wasn’t you that struck her but a fairy dart” (129). Fairy darts, referred to as elf shot in Saxon times, are very common fairy weapons found in Fairylore.

Fairies are playful creatures, both in folklore and in this narrative. They see everything as a game, although at times it is a deadly game. The leprechaun tells Gwen of the challenge that is ahead for her: “Ye were looking for something and now it’s found ye. Make the most of it. The fairy court is on its summer circuit of the country. Ye’ll have to be quick-witted and light-footed if ye want to find your kin” (36). After Gwen admits that they had a part in creating the situation, the leprechaun states, “That’s the spirit . . . . We all love a game and ye are two fine girls, strong and true. We’ll get great sport out of ye” (37). Findabhair tries to explain to her cousin what living with the fairies is like: “Life is a game for the fairies, Gwen. Feasting and frolic, music and dancing. They’ve been here since the world began, but they never grow old and I’d say they never grow up” (73). Finvarra tries to force Gwen to make a choice; her response, although not what he expects, amuses him: “True to his nature, Finvarra’s quick temper changed to delight. A smile of approval brightened his features. ‘You wish to continue the game?’” (119).

Melling’s Faerie is just as dependent on the human realm as is Faerie in folklore. Although Melling’s fairies do not seem to need the human realm for daily sustenance, they do rely on humans for many things, some trivial but others of immense importance. Humans are an
important source of entertainment and diversion for the fairies; this is true in *The Hunter’s Moon* and Fairylore. Mattie tells Gwen about a man from his village, “who was taken by the fairies when he was young. To play a hurling match for them. He was the best hurler in the parish. He was never quite the same afterwards—had that look about him, not quite here, not quite there” (44). Gwen questions Findabhair about why Finvarra is interested in mortal women. Findabhair responds, “Novelty, my dear. These people have been alive for aeons. They know each other so well they’d die of boredom if it wasn’t for us” (116). Faerie is not just dependent on humans for amusement; its needs run much deeper. Granny explains this dependence to Gwen:

Fairyland is a wondrous dream in many ways, but every world casts a shadow and even in paradise there was a serpent. Beyond the gates of Faerie lies an all-consuming chaos in the shape of a Great Worm. Crom Cruac is his name and he is also called the Hunter. Driven from Fairyland at the dawn of time, immortal and indestructible, he is kept at bay by a form of tribute.

Every seven years by the fairy calendar, which can be centuries or more in human terms, a hostage is yielded up to his devouring appetite. If this were not so, he would rise up and devour Fairyland itself. Even as the Great Worm exacts a tribute from the fairies, they in turn exact a tribute from us. The sacrifice, the hostage, is taken from our race. (153)

Later in the novel, Finvarra adds more to this tale, “At the heart of the story about your race and mine is this simple truth. Mortals must choose again and again to save Fairyland. If they do not, we will die” (164). Although in Fairylore the Tithe is usually a sacrifice to Hell, rather than to Crom Cruac, the Great Worm, it is not an invention by Melling. The Great Worm comes from Irish mythology and is a figure associated in myth with human sacrifice.

One of the primary themes explored in this book is human interaction with the fairies, sometimes referred to in Fairylore as trafficking with the fairies. The cousins both love the fantasy they associate with Faerie. Findabhair tells her cousin: “I’ve always wanted to sleep in a
mound or on top of a fairy rath. You know that’s how it’s done according to all the legends and vision-poems” (23). This romanticism is not common in the old stories where humans rarely seek out the fairies, but rather avoid them for self-preservation. Gwen is continually surprised by the modern Irish she encounters who accept her story. When she first meets Mattie, she tells him everything that has happened. His response is, “Brave girls to sleep in a mound, but foolhardy too. There’s no doubt about it. The fairies have got her” (44). Gwen is taken aback by this reaction from a rational businessman. He counters, “Is it any less likely than believing in angels or saints or even Himself for that matter?” (44). Before they part, Mattie advises Gwen: “There are rules and traditions that govern the mingling of the fairy folk with our kind. They’ll help you as much as hinder you” (46). He also states, “The fairy folk don’t have as much power as they used to. There’s not much room for them in a modern country” (46), reinforcing the connection between fairies and nature present in this story and Fairylore.

When Gwen first meets the fairy host, she finds them both enticing and frightening. “There was something inside her, some vague, restless and exiled part of her, which recognized them. Remembered them. In the deep ocean of her subconscious, the dreamer stirred. She wavered between the huge fear of what might happen if she joined them and the equally huge fear of being left behind” (63). In The Hunter’s Moon, humans, when interacting with the fairies, almost become fey themselves: “Gwen could have ridden forever. She had left behind all memory of her ordinary self” (67). This is part of the lure of Faerie. Findabhair gets the power of fairy glamour after only a short while in Faerie: “With a big smile and a wave of her hand, Findabhair sprinkled her cousin with starry dust. Gwen gasped at the transformations. Clouds of orange-red satin floated to the ground, trimmed with a silver fringe. Rubies winked on her ears
and throat” (73). In this, Fairylore is inconsistent; Tam Lin develops fairy-like abilities, but Thomas the Rhymer does not.

Melling’s vision of Faerie is a kinder place than the versions of Faerie in the other novels analyzed. As stated earlier, Melling’s Faerie is more akin to the Faerie Tolkien discusses in “On Fairy-Stories.” It is the world of fantasy, in part derived from folklore, but in part drawn from human imagination and dreams. People can be lured, enticed or tricked into Faerie, but they often participate in the decision. Mattie tells Gwen, “I doubt they could have taken her if she didn’t want to go” (47). There are no changeling children present in *The Hunter’s Moon*. These fairies are benevolent to those who are respectful and kind to them. Katie and Gwen overhear fairies talking about how Katie is their “good neighbour” (93), and for her sake they knowingly let the two eavesdrop on their conversation about the movements of the Faerie court. Katie is thrilled with this: “[S]ometimes you need something to keep you going. A dream, or a vision of the future maybe. The fairies have always been my secret comfort . . . . And they called me their good neighbour!” (95).

This more benign Faerie is not without its dangers; in fact its gentler nature makes it an even more enticing trap for unwary mortals. After attending the Faerie banquet, Gwen has trouble keeping herself in the modern human world:

The day had been a blur of faces and place. It hadn’t been easy keeping herself on track. Images of the banquet hall would float through her mind, and sometimes she felt as if she were there again. Other times her ears throbbed with fairy music. The worst was the sudden shift of scene, when she found herself somewhere else entirely, somewhere impossibly bright and shining. (98)

This sensation of being in two places at once worsens for Gwen and is explained by Findabhair: “You’re half in, half out . . . . Your body dwells amongst mortals but your spirit is in Fairyland. You’re being pushed and pulled between the two. You’ll keep falling into the cracks, through
time and different worlds. It can only get worse” (114). Findabhair tries to convince Gwen that everything will be all right, “Gwen, everything is possible when you’re a magical being” (116). Gwen counters, “That’s not true... and you know it isn’t. You can’t have your cake and eat it too. You can’t live in both worlds at the same time. You’re only a visitor to our world now. You don’t live here any more” (116). When Dara and Granny rescue Gwen, they caution her, “You can’t do as you please with them. There are rules and customs that govern what goes on between us and the Good Folk” (139). Although Findabhair chose to go to Faerie, she cannot simply choose to leave:

The customary length of time for a ‘stay’ in Fairyland is seven years. This is regardless of choice. Many of our kind have visited the fairies of their own free will, but others have been stolen: young men to take part in their sports and games; new mothers to wet-nurse their babies; beautiful girls to be the King’s bride. The marriages are also for seven years but they can be longer if the mortal wishes.... The fairies bless whoever goes among them with special gifts. Many a famous musician of Ireland has ‘gone abroad’ to return with the plaintive airs of Faerie. Others are given wonder tales to delight this world or the lore of healing with herbs and plants. If a visit goes badly, if the human tries to trick the fairies or steal their riches, they can be cursed with ill health, bad luck, even sickness unto death. (139-140)

Despite Melling’s depiction of Faerie as a more benevolent sphere than the Faerie of the other novels under consideration, it is not without its dark side, and these darker elements are also present in Fairylore.

The humans in The Hunter’s Moon recognize the importance and interconnectedness of Faerie and their world. Despite the fact he has a family, Mattie goes on the quest with the knowledge that he might not come back. Before leaving, he has a long talk with his wife, “We both come from villages where the old ways haven’t died out altogether. It seems right to go when you are called” (171). The magic of Faerie affects the companions early in their quest. Mattie tells Katie that when he first passed her on the road, he knew she was one of the companions gathering: “I knew it was you. For a moment I saw something else. Not a girl on a
motorbike, but a giantess on a horse!” (171). This does not surprise Katie, and she answers, “When the sunlight hit your Mercedes, it looked like a silver chariot. That’s why I waved. Strange doings are afoot and we are already part of them” (171). Before meeting the Crom Cruac, the companions are blessed by Faerie:

Only when they neared the end of their journey were they aware of the change that had occurred. As if they had passed through the waters of rebirth, or the purifying rite of a baptismal fire, each had been transformed. They had taken on the form that was their very soul, no longer inside them, but worn without like a shining garment. Each bore the aspect of what they might be. (190)

Through Faerie the companions become more than just their mortal selves, they become participants in an archetypical battle.

In *The Hunter’s Moon*, the humans that believe in Faerie are generally respectful towards the fairies. The girls, by sleeping in the mound, break taboos and therefore create a bond between themselves and Faerie. When Gwen asks the leprechaun about her cousin’s safety, he tells her:

Is she safe and sound, are you askin’ me? . . . Sound in the head and safe in her bed. Have ye any right to demand that after barging into secret places without so much as a by-your-leave? If it’s safety and soundness ye wanted, ye’d have been better off fallyin’ the Yankee trail to Killarney and all that blamey. There’s only one thing the fairy folk ask of your kind and that’s to be left alone. Ye broke more laws than your own when ye slept in the mound. (36)

The taboos in *The Hunter’s Moon* are derived from folkloric tradition. Avoiding places sacred to the fairies is one. Mattie warns Gwen of another: “If you do cross over into Fairyland, take no food or drink or you’ll come under their sway” (46). Later, Midir gives her the same warning (67). Despite the warnings when Gwen is at the Faerie banquet, the allure was more than she could bear, for “The feast laid out was temptation itself” (81). When Gwen succumbs to temptation, the fairies celebrate: “She had no sooner swallowed than the company broke into uproarious applause. Findabhair sank back in her chair with dismay. Finvarra leaped to his feet .
The lady hath failed her trial! She is ours!” (83). It was this test, many years before, that Granny too had failed (178).

There are traditions in dealing with Faerie, which go beyond taboos and trials. Katie follows these traditions. She explains this when Gwen asks her if she believes in fairies, “Yes... Ever since I was a little girl. I still leave out a drop of the best milk on the windowsill at night, or some wine if we have it for dinner. It’s an old tradition, a courtesy” (90). Gwen is perplexed by the modern Irish acceptance of Faerie; she asks Dara if most people believe. He responds, “They do and they don’t. Let’s face it, what have fairies to do with jobs and politics, new roads or farming? The two worlds have never been so far apart. But you wouldn’t find too many country people willing to cut down trees on a fairy fort. Not for love nor money” (145).

Fairy limitations and aversions found in Fairylore do not feature prominently in Melling’s narrative, but they do in the second book in this series, The Summer King. Although these restrictions are not a theme explored by Melling in depth in The Hunter’s Moon, they are not completely absent. Findabhair sweeps Gwen away from the gathering and takes her to a well in the woods, so that she could talk with Gwen. She explains, “We can talk normally now... They can’t hear voices that cross over water” (113). The fairies have less power over water (127); when Gwen is poisoned by the fairy dart, she struggles against the effects. As she walks across the causeway to Inch Isle, she starts to feel better, “but as soon as she set foot on the other side she was overwhelmed by weakness once more” (127). When Granny sets to healing Gwen, she sends Dara to fetch “branches from the ash tree and the whitethorn” (129). Folklorically, certain trees and plants will protect humans from fairies; the ash is commonly used for this purpose. As Granny continues her preparations, she tells Dara to: “Wreathe the doorway and
windows. Then strew this bag of primroses on the threshold and sills. I gathered them on May Eve, so they are very potent. These will keep out the Wee Folk” (132).

Time in Faerie is not a dominant theme addressed in *The Hunter’s Moon*, but it is subtly explored. The one direct comment on time and Faerie comes near the resolution of the narrative, as the companions cross the threshold of the White Gates of Morning: “Whether it took seconds or aeons to cross that beautiful country, they couldn’t be certain. Time is meaningless in a land suspended between morning and night. It held the breath of infinity within its borders” (189).

Certain times of the day have extra power for the fairies. It is in the twilight at both dawn and dusk that Faerie has the most power: “As the darkness met light in the dim borderland before dawn, the stillness over Tara began to shudder. To come alive. Before time could cross from night to day, one world was about to eclipse another” (29). When Gwen searches for the Faerie banquet, she arrives in the area early: “[S]he had a few hours yet to find what she was looking for. Twilight was the appointed time” (50). There are several other references to twilight and the fairies through the text. In Fairylore, transitional times are often linked to the fairies. Seven years is a time frame often found in folklore. Thomas stays in Faerie for seven years; the sacrifice that Tam Lin fears happens every seven years. In *Tithe*, the fairies are to make their sacrifice once every seven years; it is the same in *The Hunter’s Moon*. The major difference is that, in the other narratives, the seven-year cycle is based on the human passage of time, while in *The Hunter’s Moon*, the seven year cycle is based on the Faerie calendar (151).

The theories relating to the origin of Faerie are also not deeply explored by Melling in this novel, but nonetheless motifs related to it surface in the course of the work. Melling draws some links between the dead and Faerie. When Gwen is in the mound, a barrow wight comes to warn her of the danger she is facing. The fairies honour the ancient peoples of Ireland, and can
see them as they lived. As they travel past a group of Celtic villagers, the fairies cry out “All hail to the ancient tribes of Erin” (64). Gwen, accompanying them, sees sights of the mythical and historical Ireland of the past, and sees the ancient people as if they were still living. This happens several times through the course of the narrative. This theme of fairies being able to interact with people across time is similar to that explored by Kipling in *Puck of Pook’s Hill*.

Melling also creates allusions to the angels, delicately touching on the connection between the fairies and angels. Before facing Crom Cruac, each of the companions is transformed into the archetype they embody. Finvarra’s transformation has definite mythic associations: “In chain mail of woven light, he carried a golden shield and spear. From his shoulders unfurled two great wings; not the gossamer appendages his own people sported at times, but the swan’s span of feathered strength, ribbed with muscle and bone of iron. He had become his higher self, the avenging Archangel” (191). Crom Cruac is also influenced by the same mythic tradition. Finvarra explains to the companions the history of the Worm: “[I]t was not Faeire that expelled Crom Cruac beyond our gates . . . . According to our legends, he was chained there by the archangels after a great war in the Empyrean, a realm higher than our own” (184). Katie responds to this information: “Oh God, I hope he isn’t who I think he is . . . . I haven’t been to Mass in ages” (184).

Melling’s interpretation of Faerie, as presented in *The Hunter’s Moon*, is a significantly more positive view than those presented by Black, Kushner and McNaughton. Melling’s fairies are neither malevolent to human kind, nor are they trifles to be dismissed. Her fairies are powerful and enchanting creatures. They do not follow human rules, but strictly follow their own. Humans must be wary of this version of Faerie, but they are also innately drawn to it. Melling has used folkloric elements of Faerie and expanded them to encompass the worlds of
dreams and the imagination. Although this is a more positive representation of Faerie than that found in the other three narratives in this study, it is still not a safe place for mortals. At the heart of this story is the sacrifice, the Tithe. This novel significantly differs from the narratives by Black and McNaughton, which also centre plots on the Tithe. Only in Melling's narrative is there a true willingness on the part of the victim to be the sacrifice. Humans in this secondary world see the necessity and importance of Faerie for humanity. Melling's Faerie is a realm that humans feel is worth surrendering their lives for, while in the narratives by Black and McNaughton, the human protagonists actively work against the Tithe. In these latter versions of Faerie, it maybe an enchanting and magical land, but it is not a place that humans cherish or seek out.
Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings

My research thesis is that authors of Faerie Fiction written for young adults portray two diametrically opposed aspects of Faerie, the alluring and the perilous. The protagonists in the narratives studied are drawn into Faerie through the former, while the latter creates the primary conflict in the stories. The pop-culture image of the fairy is occasionally represented in these narratives but it is neither the norm, nor even common. For each of the novels studied, I examined each group of themes and motifs discussed in Chapter 3. I found similarities and differences among each of the four authors' use of the themes and motifs of Fairylore.

The first of the themes and motifs I examined was that of the origins of the fairies. Although this was not a primary source for the authors under consideration, several approached it in subtle ways. In *An Earthly Knight*, fairy origins are not mentioned, but the Tithe is specifically to Hell, and, therefore, this narrative is aligned to the theory that fairies are fallen angels suspended between Heaven and Hell. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, there is similarly no direct link with particular theories. However there are allusions connecting the fairies and the dead. Through one of her characters, Melling, in *The Hunter's Moon*, gives a brief summary of Fairylore, including the theory that fairies are fallen angels. This is again alluded to through Finvarra’s transformation into an archangel. Throughout *The Hunter’s Moon*, there are also allusions linking Faerie and the dead. In *Tithe* there is no exploration of this theme; in fact, even the Tithe has been separated from its connection to Hell. Although fairy origins are not primary themes explored in the four narratives, this does not indicate that the themes are absent from all
young adult Faerie Fiction. Several of the books mentioned in Appendix C use fairy origins as a primary feature of the narrative.

The next aspects of Fairylore examined were the categorization of the fairies, including the types of fairies, the social structures to which they belong, as well as that of fairy appearance. In *An Earthly Knight*, the story never takes the reader into the realm of Faerie, and therefore the number of fairies described is minimal. Those that are present are strictly the heroic court fairies. The Queen is powerful, alluring and coldly beautiful. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, the categorization of fairies is diverse and encompasses the array of fairies found in folklore. These fairies all live in the monarchical social structure of the fairy court, with the Queen and Hunter as its rulers. In their usual guise, the heroic court fairies are enchantingly lovely, other fairies are more homely in appearance, and some are depicted as manifestations of nature. The fairies found in *Tithe* are also greatly varied, from the tall exquisite heroic fairies, through monsters, to sprites that look very much like the fairies found in Victorian art and Disney cartoons. These fairies live within either the Seelie or the Unseelie courts, or are solitary fairies that owe allegiance to the court dominant in their area. These courts are rigidly hierarchical. The fairies in *The Hunter's Moon* also live in a hierarchical monotheistic society, but although there is a High King, there is more than a single king. The social structure of this rendition of Faerie is closely based on the ancient Irish system of Kingship. As in *Tithe* and *Thomas the Rhymer*, the fairies in *The Hunter's Moon* are diverse, covering the full range found in Fairylore. This book differs from the others in the emphasis put on the power of glamour. Although Gwen observes all types of fairies, it is never clear if she is seeing them as they really are or if they are showing her what she wants, and expects, to see.
In three of the four texts examined, *Thomas the Rhymer*, *Tithe*, and *The Hunter's Moon*, the reader enters Faerie with the protagonist. In all three, Faerie is represented as an enchanting and magical place. Although the descriptions of Faerie created by Kushner, Black and Melling are unique, they all draw heavily on Fairylore and, therefore, there are many similarities in their renditions of the realm. In all three, Faerie is found by going underground. It is a place where the normal laws of nature do not apply; a tree can be in bloom and with fruit at the same time. Its glory can overwhelm the senses of mortals and, therefore, those that travel there are in danger of being drawn into its power permanently. Time is ambiguous. It can be day in one place and night in another, and the same occurs for the seasons. Humans returning to their own realm can find that no time has elapsed, or, more often, that a greater period of time than they had conceived had lapsed. The fairies, when it suits them, can operate within normal time. Within all four of the narratives examined, certain dates, such as Halloween (Samhain), and specific times, such as the twilight times of dusk and dawn, are important to fairies. The fairies' ambiguous relationship with time is well documented in Fairylore.

In all of the novels examined here, Faerie has a profound need of humanity. Despite this central tenet, there is, nonetheless, minimal exploration of the common Fairylore theme of the fairies' need for sustenance from the mortal realm in any of these books. However, in all four narratives, the fairy desire for mortal lovers is a theme explored in depth. The need for human midwives is explored only in *Thomas the Rhymer*. In *Tithe* and *Thomas the Rhymer*, changelings are an important element in the story. In all but *Thomas the Rhymer*, the fairy dependence on mortals for the sacrifice, at the time of the Tithe, is of primary importance to plot development. As in Fairylore, in none of these novels is Faerie completely independent from the human realm.
Another subject explored by all four authors is the abilities and behaviours of the fairies. The universal fairy ability found throughout Fairylore, and present in these narratives, is the fairy ability to create glamour. Different types of fairies have different abilities; the fairies in *An Earthly Knight* are the least diverse in the representation of their abilities. In all four narratives, the fairies do not demonstrate the same capacity for emotion as humans. They do not suffer from guilt and do not feel regret. They do not conform to human standards of morality but do strictly follow their own code of behaviour. The fairy love of games and riddles is explored in all but *An Earthly Knight*.

Humans that interact with fairies are often in grave danger; this is true for both Fairylore and the four novels under discussion. Even those characters that leave their dealings with Faerie unharmed are inevitably altered by the experience. The mortals caught up with the fairies never disregard the power of Faerie. The taboos associated with Faerie and the ways to appease the “Good neighbours” are referenced by all four authors. Never partaking of fairy food or drink is a taboo of importance in all narratives examined. *Tithe* and *Thomas the Rhymer* both explore the theme relating to the power of a fairy’s true name. Each of these authors, McNaughton, Kushner, Black and Melling, draws on elements from Fairylore in different ways; although all incorporate into their narratives taboos, appeasements and protections, each author chooses aspects not treated in the other narratives. For example, the fairy aversion to iron is explored in depth in *Tithe*, but not in the other novels. This is not surprising, for no single narrative could contain the vast storehouse of themes and motifs found in Fairylore.
Summary of Findings

My primary research questions were the following: What Faerie-related folkloric motifs, themes, characters and settings are present in the chosen contemporary young adult fantasy novels? How do the selected fantasists use the folkloric material of Faerie in their novels? How are fairies depicted in these selected fantasies? Are the fairies represented primarily as the frivolous creatures of popular children’s culture, or are they closer to the mysterious and dangerous beings in folklore? These general questions were further broken down into the following more specific questions: Are fairies depicted as a homogeneous group, or do they represent the diversity found in folklore? How powerful are they? Are they characterized in the text as heroic nobility, kindly brownies, mischievous boggarts, and/or bloodthirsty monsters? What do they look like: are they the diminutive non-threatening flower fairies of Victorian art, the tall, elegant and coldly beautiful, or something else? What is the nature of the interactions between fairies and humans within the narrative? Are the fairies solicitous, hostile, indifferent, or benevolent towards humans? Do the humans seek out the fairies or are they afraid of them? If humans are wary, how do they protect themselves? How can the fairies be defeated; what are their weaknesses? Through my research I answered each of these questions in relation to the four books examined. There are both similarities and differences among the narratives created by McNaughton, Kushner, Black, and Melling.

There are many aspects of Fairylore to be found in these narratives. Among the four authors studied, all of the groupings of themes discussed in Chapter 3 have been explored and interpreted in the texts. In *An Earthly Knight*, there is only one type of fairy depicted, the heroic court fairy, but in the other three novels, the diversity of Faerie is represented. In all narratives the fairies are powerful beings, although there are fairies that are more and less powerful than
others. None of the narratives, even the two that are more sympathetic to Faerie, *Thomas the Rhymer* and *The Hunter’s Moon*, represent fairies as completely benign creatures. The court fairies dominate all four narratives. Although these creatures are portrayed as stunningly beautiful, the beauty is not a human beauty, but is cold. The pop-culture image of the fairy can be found in *Tithe* and *The Hunter’s Moon*, but although this particular aspect is part of Faerie, it is not a central feature, as envisioned by the authors of these texts.

The relationships between humans and fairies in these narratives are dominated by physical and emotional needs and desires. Physical, amorous relationships between fairies and mortals are found in all of the novels explored. At the outset of *The Hunter’s Moon*, Gwen and Findabhair have a very romantic and somewhat naïve vision of the fairies, and so they seek out Faerie. Thomas and Tam Lin do not look for the fairies, but when the queen entices them, they behave, at least in part, as willing victims. Kaye’s journey, in *Tithe*, is different, for she is a fairy and therefore cannot choose to separate herself from their world entirely. In all four novels it is easier to gain entry into Faerie than to leave it. There are many taboos, appeasements and protections, which influence how mortals and fairies interact, treated as motifs and plot devices in the narratives.

Although the fairies in all four novels are potent magical beings, they can be defeated. All of the human protagonists in these novels are victorious, although not all the victories come without cost. Essentially, all four narratives have resolutions that may be described as following the convention of the “happy” ending. Fairylore, and the ballads drawn from it, have many stories of humans who, acting with courage, strength and love, defeat the fairies. There are equally many folktales, and Fairylore, in which the narrative does not end well for the humans who traffic with the fairies. Although these cautionary tales do not appear to be used as the
inspiration for the primary plots of Faerie Fiction, they are often used as secondary threads or as ways to reference the danger of Faerie. In the three books that depict Faerie itself, *Thomas the Rhymer*, *Tithe*, and *The Hunter's Moon*, similar images are used to describe and evoke the realm; in each of the three, it is represented as an enchanting and alluring place where normal human conventions do not apply. These depictions of Faerie closely coincide with the imagery of Faerie found in Fairylore.

**Conclusions**

Although I heartily agree with the defenders of fantasy that speak of the power and worth of this genre, I do not naively concur that all fantasy published is good literature. Many fantasies are formulaic and lack depth. Quality fantasy, on the other hand, is more than just a good story; it taps into elements of the human psyche and imagination that are universal. Tolkien, Lewis and their like were not the first writers to create fantastical secondary worlds, but they have been a great influence to many, if not most, contemporary fantasists. The worlds of these authors are richly based in folklore, myth and history, but less imaginative writers seem to base their worlds on the worlds of successful fantasists, not on the source material they drew from. These formulistic worlds have a medieval flavour, human protagonists face grave danger, and there are the inevitable elves, fairies, and/or dwarves who help, harm or distract the protagonist. There is magic in these worlds, but it is not available to everyone, only to those with a special calling, whether for good or evil. If a reader were to create a checklist of what is essential to a fantasy novel, they would likely meet the criteria, but there would be something vital missing from these narratives. This something can be found in the writings of authors of
Mythic Fiction who go beyond the generic fantasy setting by drawing on material much older and more powerful.

Authors of Mythic Fiction create secondary worlds that are rich and engaging. These are worlds with internal integrity and layer upon layer of detail. Through the merging of the old and new these authors create a secondary world that is compelling and draws the reader in. There are similarities among many contemporary fantasists and the works of Tolkien and Lewis, but not because they are using any actual formula of fantasy predicated upon the works of the earlier masters of fantasy. These similarities are due to the fact that the contemporary authors in this study have also gone back to the original source material. They build their own vivid secondary worlds on the foundations of traditional literature, myths, legends, and folklore. McNaughton, Kushner, Black, and Melling have all successfully done this. They have each used Fairylore as the foundation for the world they fashion, and their works show that, although the source material can be the same, the interpretations and manifestations created from this source material can be vastly different.

Fantasy literature has connections to traditional tales: myths, legends, fairy tales, folktales and folklore. These tales have no authors and are in constant evolution, especially the folk material. There is universality to many of the tales; for example, there are versions of Cinderella in many different cultures. Fairies, or creatures like them, are also found in cultures throughout the world. Traditional tales and folklore can bridge generations and connect people cross-culturally. The role of the oral story teller is not as important, and necessary, as it once was, but the traditional material has not disappeared with the teller. This material is being transformed for the future. The roots and allusions of traditional lore can be seen in more than
fantasy literature; they can also be found in other genres of literature, the arts, pop-culture and modern media.

Proponents of the concept of the collective unconscious believe that the universality of these tales is due to the universality of the human psyche. Authors of Mythic Fiction tap into powerful sources when they incorporate traditional material into their creations. Their stories and secondary worlds are unique, but at the same time there is something familiar, a recognizable pattern that is comforting, and yet there is also enough diversion from the original source to intrigue a reader. Writers of Mythic Fiction can bring these ancient archetypes and images to new readers. If a reader is already familiar with the source material, it does not distract from the enjoyment of the created secondary world. In fact, this can add to the richness and pleasure experienced by the reader. According to Tolkien, among others, as a sub-creator of the secondary world, the more a reader brings to the world, the richer it is.

The authors using Fairylore have created a sub-genre within Mythic Fiction: Faerie Fiction. When a reader starts to explore this sub-genre, the traditional information learned in one rendition of Faerie can add to the experience of another. McNaughton, Kushner, Black, Melling and other writers of Faerie Fiction all utilize the same source material, and it can be a fascinating process to examine in what ways and with what purpose this material is used and transformed.

The pop-culture image of the fairy is a beautiful one. Some of the Victorian fairy art is exquisite and is aesthetically very inspirational. One just has to look into a primary classroom on Halloween to see how entrenched and important this image is to our culture. The fairy has become the embodiment of goodness and light in a secular world. This image is one that girls are very drawn to, as the boys seem drawn to superheroes. Perhaps this gender bias towards
fairies is why the majority of the Faerie Fiction discussed in Appendix C have female protagonists. In our secular and multicultural world, religious symbols are not as acceptable as public icons as they once were. It is far more likely that, in primary classrooms, one would find a fairy princess and Spiderman than an angel. The pop-culture image of the fairy has developed to the point of being an archetype. It appears that the separation, between the literary fairy and the folkloric fairy, which started with Shakespeare and Spencer, has gradually evolved into the present archetype of splendour and goodness, bordering on the archetype of the goddess, but without religious connotations.

As important as the Good-fairy archetype has become, it is not the equivalent of the fairies found in Fairylore. The fairies represented in folklore are much more powerful and a great deal less benign. Perhaps when the little girls, from the primary classroom imagined above, mature, they may find the archetype that once engaged them no longer satisfies, but at the same time there is a connection to Faerie that remains strong. As these girls become young women, they seek for a different version of Faerie, one that satisfies the more complicated needs of adolescence.

The writers of Faerie Fiction for young adults in this study are drawn more to folkloric Faerie imagery, than to the pop-culture image. When interacting with personifications of goodness and light, there is no point of conflict, no peril or enticement that could draw the protagonist away from his or her safe home and onto the path of the hero’s journey. Faerie is a wondrous place filled with menace. It is this dual nature of Faerie that is so fascinating. Writers and readers seem to be deeply drawn to this ambivalent and dichotomous reality. Although far from the personification of goodness, most folkloric fairies are not inherently evil, any more than a cat is evil when it hunts a mouse. Writers that draw on this material can use it to create
ambiguity and intrigue. For, if a creature does not behave by human rules, its behaviour can be unpredictable. Neither the protagonist, nor the reader, can ever be sure if the fairies will help, cause harm, or perhaps do both. This gives a writer a great deal of liberty.

In *An Earthy Knight*, the fairies are beautiful, powerful and alluring, but they are strictly antagonistic towards Janet. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, the fairies are extremely ambiguous; they are variously cruel or generous. In the end they honour their word, and Thomas is one of the few mortals to be truly blessed by his time in Faerie, although the gift of prophecy can be seen as a mixed blessing. The fairies in *Tithe* are generally very antagonistic to Kaye, but as she herself turns out to be a fairy, as does her lover, it is impossible to say that all the fairies are hostile. Kaye has allies and enemies among the fairies. The fairies in *The Hunter's Moon* are not particularly cruel, but they do use humans for sport. It is hard for Gwen to know when to trust or when not to trust them. The ambiguity associated with Faerie is a strength that this study’s authors draw upon, because the contradictions have an internal logic based on the wealth of Fairylore. The narrative dichotomies and incongruities add to the power and tension in the stories. On the other hand, incongruities in other non-fantasy genres of literature can cause the reader to disengage from the secondary world.

The darker aspects of Faerie seem to be part of its seductive power; this appears to be true for both the protagonists in Fairylore and Faerie Fiction, as well as the readers. Actual seduction of mortals by fairies is a theme present in all of the narratives examined, as well as the majority of the novels mentioned in Appendix C. The exceptions to this rule are novels bridging young adult and juvenile literature, such as the *Artemis Fowl* series. Janet, in *An Earthly Knight*, does not have to face the temptation of a fairy lover, but Tam Lin does and it was through this relationship with the Queen that she gained power over him. In *Thomas the Rhymer*, the
seduction is obvious and a central element to the plot. There are many layers and types of seduction within Tithe. In The Hunter's Moon the seduction has more elements of a courtship than in the other narratives studied. The demon lover is an ancient archetype found in folklore and myth; the fairy lover is similar, but the fey ambiguity adds to this element and transforms it. The fairy lover can embody both the mortal lover’s deepest desires and their deepest fears, and these may in turn reflect the desires and fears of readers.

The Tithe is a central theme in An Earthly Knight, Tithe, and The Hunter’s Moon, but in each it is treated very differently. McNaughton’s depiction is the closest to the Tithe to Hell found in Scottish folklore. She has neither embellished nor added to its inherent conflict and danger. Janet and Tam Lin’s story pivots upon this central theme. Black’s treatment has taken the basic nature of the Tithe, but separated it from its connections to Hell. Melling’s interpretation is infused with Irish folklore and mythology; the sacrifice is a needed element in the balancing of the cosmos. The Tithe is not just used by these three authors but by several others, as noted in Appendix C. Human sacrifice is a very dramatic and powerful archetypical pattern to draw upon, yet when it is represented within modern settings, and some historical and fantasy settings, it can appear to be melodramatic and unbelievable. Because of the fact that normal rules do not apply in Faerie, the mythic imagery and folkloric need for sacrifice can be explored without disturbing the suspension of disbelief experienced by the readers when they become sub-creators of a secondary world.

Faerie is a world where mortals have little, or no, control. Life, when one is interacting with Faerie, is full of surprises, some of which are dangerous and some of which can bring great joy. Fairylore indicates that those mortals victorious over the fairies that wish them harm succeed through strength, courage and the power of love. These themes are common among a
great deal of young adult literature, as they are part of the coming of age story, as well as the quest structure of the monomyth. Gwen and Findabhair seek out the fairies in *The Hunter's Moon*, but this seems to be an exception to the norm. In the other three narratives examined, many of novels mentioned in Appendix C, and much of Fairylore, humans unwittingly become involved with the fairies, although sometimes the dealings are the result of the breaking of taboos. This seems to parallel the life journey of adolescents, who often find themselves dealing with concerns they never sought.

The success of these novels, and other Faerie Fiction, seems to indicate that there is a potent quality to Faerie that lures people into these narratives. Although almost obliterated by the power of the pop-culture image of the fairy, the folkloric fairy has not vanished. These fairies are found in the work of folklore scholars and the artists and authors who appreciate their worth. In Appendix C, I briefly examine other Faerie fantasies. Although my list is in no way exhaustive, and I am certain that there are many titles that I did not explore, it is a beginning resource for further reading and research. This wealth of materials indicates an attraction to these darker and more enticing images of Faerie. McNaughton, Kushner, Black, and Melling have all obviously invested much time, thought and effort to the study of Fairylore. This is also true for other writers of quality Faerie Fiction. Although not found in the four novels examined, several of the works in Appendix C have bibliographies or further reading lists. These authors have established a connection between academic folklore and the fantasy genre.

McNaughton, Kushner, Black, and Melling have created secondary fantasy worlds that are not just vaguely medieval and mythical, as is much of published fantasy for young adults. By contrast, the authors have created worlds with an exactitude of detail through Fairylore references, and a breath and depth founded on emotional and psychological allusion to the
Faerie realm. These created secondary worlds are strongly grounded in folklore. This foundation empowers the text and creates a connection between the fictional worlds and the realm of traditional tales. As discussed in Chapter 4, traditional tales have importance culturally, artistically and psychologically. By their very nature, traditional tales continuously evolve, adapting to society as it changes. Faerie Fiction, in general, and in these four novels, in particular, can be seen as a current example of the development of these folkloric motifs. McNaughton, Kushner, Black, and Melling have mined the depths of Fairylore to create unique and engrossing narratives that bring the power of traditional tales to modern young adult readers.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this research is the fact that it examines only four novels. This restriction was necessary, due to considerations of space, in order to engage in a close reading of the narratives and to create a detailed analysis of the motifs and themes found in these novels. There is also no statistical significance to my study. A quantitative examination of Fairylore themes and motifs established through a broad cross examination of texts, could expose patterns of use that cannot be determined by this more in-depth analysis of a small number of narratives. A quantitative study could statistically determine what are the most, and least, common elements of Fairylore to be found in young adult fantasy literature. Although I chose not to examine the archetypical patterns of these narratives, my research did indicate that these Faerie Fantasies are as rich in archetypes as they are in folklore. Because I wanted to utilize a cross section of sub-genres, I chose two historical fantasies and two contemporary fantasies. If, by contrast, I had focused on one of the two, my research may have exposed more patterns within
the chosen sub-genre. Another limitation is present in the fact that I only examined contemporary fantasy writers. If I had studied novels written before 1990, I may have found that previous authors were attracted to the same themes, or that certain aspects of Faerie were ignored.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

As an addition to the research and critical writing on the adaptation of fairy tales into novels, continued research on Fairylore could bring forth interesting results. One recommendation is a quantitative analysis of Faerie Fiction, in order to examine which themes and motifs are most commonly used. Another fruitful area of study could explore the representation of Faerie in juvenile (i.e., children’s, rather than young adult, fiction, or perhaps compare the two. A more in-depth look at sub-genres may also produce some interesting results. I chose to examine in my sample, two narratives each of American and Canadian authors, but I focused my analysis on the similarities and differences between sub-genres, rather than on the similarities and differences between authors of different nationalities. A study that looks at motifs and themes present in the writings of authors of different nationalities could be an interesting study, using either quantitative or qualitative analysis. A further study could look at the Faerie themes present through different eras, to see if there are any noticeable differences and evolution in the use of Faerie between contemporary Faerie Fiction authors and their predecessors.
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Appendix A: Faerie Motifs: Selected Lists

Selected Faerie Motifs from Stith Thompson’s Motif-Index (1955, 250-531):

dogs enchanted by fairy music (B182.1.7)
tabu to offend fairy (C46) to dig in fairy ring (C523.2)
tabu: spying on fairies (C51.4.3)
kissing fairy forbidden (C122)
eating in fairyland forbidden (C211.1)
speaking tabu in fairyland (C715.1)
imposes tabu (C901.1)
staying too long in fairyland forbidden (C7121.1)
transformation by fairy (D683.7)
magic object received from fairy (D813ff)
fairies’ magic power (D1719.5)
power of prophecy from fairy (D1812.1.1)
fairy music evil omen (D1812.5.1.13)
magic beautification of fairy (D1860.01)
rejuvenation by fairy (D1882.2) resuscitation by fairy (E121.8)
confers invisibility (D1983.2)
fairies pursued in wild hunt (E501.5.2)
converses with dead (E545.8) otherworld confused with land of dead (F585.0.1)
possession of fairies (F240ff)
fairy knight entices maiden away and kills her (F301.5)
mortal goes to fairyland and marries fairy (F302ff)
fairy abducts those with whom is in love (F302.3.1.1)

lover taken to Fairyland (F302.3.4.4)

fairies carry people away to fairyland (F320ff)

theft from fairies (F350ff)

malevolent fairies (F360ff)

mortal abandoning world for fairyland (F373)

assigns task (H938)

fairy performs task (H973.1)

assigns quest (H1219.4)

quest to fairyland (H1286) from (F379.1)

quest for queen of fairies (H1381.3.8)

fairies blamed for theft (K419.10)

vow to marry queen of fairies (M146.1)

mortal fosters fairy child to prevent crop destruction (M242.1)

mysterious housekeeper fairy mistress (N831.1.1)

pagans flee into fairy mounds (P426.0.1)

punishment for desertion of fairy mistress (Q247)

woman abducted by fairy (R16.3)

escape to fairyland (R326) from (R218)

rescue from a fairy stronghold (R1112.3)

fallen angels become fairies (V236.1)
Selected Faerie Motifs from Margaret Read MacDonald’s *The Storyteller’s Sourcebook* (1982, 3-616):

C51.4.3. Tabu: spying on secret help of fairies.

C211.1. Tabu: eating in fairyland.

C932. Loss of wife (husband) for breaking tabu.

C952. Immediate return to other world because of broken tabu.

C953. Person must remain in other world because of broken tabu.

D1960. Supernatural lapse of time in fairyland (also in: D2011, F377, F379.1, F420.6.1.3.1, G312.8).

F103.1. “Green children” visit world of mortals.

F110. Journey to terrestrial other worlds.


F235.4.1. Fairies made visible through use of ointment.

F244.2. Fairy shows hiding place of treasure in return for freedom.

F300. Marriage or liaison with fairy; F302.1. Man goes to fairyland and marries fairy.

F302.4.2. Fairy comes into man’s power when he steals her wings (clothes).

She leaves when she finds them.

F311.1. Fairy godmother. Attendant good fairy.

F316.1. Fairy’s curse partially overcome by another fairy’s amendment.

F320. Fairies carry people away to fairyland.

F321. Fairy steals child from cradle; F324. Youth abducted by fairy.


Changeling is mature and only seems to be a child.
F321.1.1. Changeling betrays his age when his wonder is excited.

F321.1.4.5. When changeling is threatened with burning, child is returned.

F321.3. Man goes to fairyland and rescues stolen child.

F321.9. Fairy child (foundling) raised by mortal. Returns to fairies when grown.

F329.1. Fairies carry off youth; he has gift of prophecy when he returns to earth. (Thomas the Rhymer.) Taken by queen of fairyland for three days (seven years). In later life a white hart and hind come to fetch him back to fairyland.


F331.1. Mortal wins fairies’ gratitude by joining in their dance.

F331.4. Mortal wins fairies’ gratitude by playing for their dance.

F348.0.1. Fairy gift disappears or is turned to something worthless when tabu is broken.

F348.7.1. Abuse of fairy gifts brings about their loss.

F378.0.1. Mortal expelled from fairyland for breaking tabu.

F378.5. Tabu: Plucking flowers from bed tended by fairies.

F379.5A. Person joins dance of fairies and cannot be seen. His companion is suspected of murdering him and is given a certain time (a year and a day) to clear himself. He goes to the spot where his companion has disappeared, contrives to see his friend (by putting his foot inside fairy ring on grass) and pulls him out of ring.

F380. Defeating or ridding oneself of fairies.

F381.1. Fairy leaves when he is named; F381.3. Fairy leaves when he is given clothes.
Appendix B: Selected Awards and Recommendations

Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale

- Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children’s Literature 2003, Finalist
  - Black’s second Faerie novel Valiant was also a finalist for this same award in 2006
- Teen’s Top Ten List Winner, 2003, Young Adult Galley Group (a collaborative program of Metropolitan State University and St. Paul Public Library)
- Best Books for Young Adults 2003, American Library Association – Young Adult Library Services Association
- Contemporary Fantasy Reading List Endicott Studio for Mythic Arts
- Books for the Teenage 2002, New York Public Library
- Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children’s Literature 2003, Finalist

The Hunter’s Moon

- The Year’s Best 2003, Resource Links
- Best Children’s Book of the Year 2005, Bank Street College of Education
- Booklist Book Review Stars 2005
- Editors’ Choice: Books for Youth 2005, and Top 10 Romance Fiction for Youth
  American Library Association-Booklist
An Earthly Knight

- **Year’s Best 2003, Resource Links**
- **Anne Connor Brimer Award 2004, Shortlist**
- **Mr. Christie’s Book Awards 2003, (English 12 Years and Up) Silver Seal**
- **Stellar Award 2006, Winner**
- **Young Adult Canadian Book Award 2004, Shortlist, Canadian Library Association**

Thomas the Rhymer

- **Mythopoeic Fantasy Award*1991, Winner**
- **Books for the Teen Age 1991, New York Public Library**
- **World Fantasy Award 1991**
- **Find Your Fantasy List New Jersey State Library Youth Services**
- **Traditional Fantasy Reading List Endicott Studio for Mythic Arts**

*Note the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award did not separate adult and children’s books until 1992
Appendix C: Other Faerie Fiction

Novels


Maeve is sent to spend the summer with her relatives in Newfoundland. There she realizes that, like her grandmother, she has second sight. She also discovers that the fantastical world her grandmother wrote about was not a fantasy. Maeve travels through the veil and ends up in Anwen, Avalon, where she becomes embroiled in the battle between the light and the darkness. This book is rich with folklore, primarily Celtic and Arthurian. The dominant Fairylore in this narrative is that fairies are fallen angels, who took the middle way and refused to fight in the battle between the light and the dark. They have the power of enchantment, glamour, and the ability to manipulate time.


This is the prequel to *The Hidden World*; it is the story of Maeve’s grandmother Jean. Jean’s second sight is stronger than her granddaughter’s and it is something she has learned to live with. This story takes place during WWII and when Jean enters Anwen she discovers that it too is embroiled in a war with Anwen’s version of the Vikings. The two worlds are parallel and what happens in one can manifest changes in the other. This book is also rich in Celtic folklore and the primary Fairylore themes are the same as above.


This series tells of the adventures of three siblings who stumble in to Faerie through a secret room and an old journal. The fairies in this series are of many types some are a threat to the Grace children, while others are helpful, but even the helpful ones have their own motivations. Only people with the sight can see fairies, unless the fairies choose to be seen. The
sight can be gained by such means as having fairy spit rubbed in one’s eyes or by using a seeing stone. The children quickly find out that fairies are dangerous and learn ways to protect themselves.


Irish Children’s

A human boy inadvertently becomes involved with the conflict between the supporters of the Faerie Emperor and the “faeries of the night”. These two factions have similarities to the Seelie and Unseelie courts. The story explains why fairies in the mortal realm sometimes appear human size and at others as small winged creatures. These are the primary Faerie motifs used in this story. The secondary world here is a traditional fantasy world but is not explicitly Fairylore dominated.


American YA/Adult

Bull brings Faerie to Minneapolis in the 1980s. Faerie is separate yet part of the city. Eddi, a talented musician, attracts the attention of the fairies. The fairies in this story are greatly varied, and are of both the solitary and trouping types, depicted as everything from beautiful to horrific. The primary motif in this story is the reliance of Faerie on humankind. The Seelie and the Unseelie courts are at war, but when all of the soldiers are immortal, the battles lack consequence. The fairies need to bind a human to them in order to give them mortality. The fairies are represented as very attractive and alluring but the differences between humans and fairies are highlighted, especially the emotional and moral differences. Eddi, as a mortal with a talent the fairies prize, is able to touch both worlds.


Irish Children’s/YA

The secondary world of this series is definitely an original creation, but it is full of folkloric influences, and deals specifically with Faerie. Faerie is a subterranean world where fairies live protected from humankind by both their magic and superior technology. Many of
their abilities are traditional, whether they are performed through technology or magic. They can mesmerize humans, rewrite memories, fly and turn invisible. The fairies are unaging and have great healing powers, but can be killed. The fairies run the full range of those found in folklore, from pixies to trolls, and the descriptions are quite true to folklore.


This book takes the Tam Lin story and places it in the 1970s at Carlton College in the American Midwest. It starts out as a modern coming of age story, but gradually the Faerie elements are introduced. The Fairy Queen is the primary antagonist in this story. As in the original, Janet must rescue her lover from being killed as the fairy Tithe.


Imogene, a seventeen-year-old with a past, moves into de Lint’s mythically rich Newford. She befriends the school ghost and in doing so accidentally insults the fairies. The fairies in this story are brownies gone bad. Like many fairies in folklore, they are not evil but are amoral. They will do whatever they want to entertain themselves, caring nothing for the consequences. They are vanquished from the school by the gift of clothing and thanks. This is the customary way to cause brownies to leave, but in most traditional stories, the gift is given in genuine gratitude and not with the desire to force them away. The fairies are not the primary players in this narrative, but they are the catalyst that causes it all to happen.


Eithnie, a painter, returns to the woods that once inspired her. She is both drawn to and repulsed by the fey spirits of the woods. They speak to her and ask for her help but she fears for her sanity. She ends up being a surrogate mother to the Fairy Queen’s daughter. The main motif in this story is the connection between fairies and nature: as nature is being destroyed, so too are the fairies, as they are the spirits of the land.

American Adult

This novel is written in two voices, with alternating chapters. The two protagonists are the two halves of a changeling trade. Each character is trying to figure out who he is, who he was, and to make peace with his new life. The hobgoblins in this story live as unaging wild children in the woods rather than in folkloric Faerie. They live apart from human society but take what they need from it. It is a very interesting story, however, but other than in the primary premise it does not draw heavily on Fairylore.


Irish Adult

The people of Erl decide they want magic in their land and so their Lord sends his son to Elfland to win the hand of the King of Elfland’s Daughter. They have a child and while he is still young his mother is called home, and his father leaves on a quest to find her. As their son grows to manhood, magic does enter the land and the people are not as happy with the actuality as they were with the idea. The motifs used in this story are the timeless nature of Faerie, the differences and interdependence of Faerie and the human realm, the variety of the creatures of Faerie, the ethereal beauty of Faerie nobility, fairies as immortals, and the ability of Faerie to warp reality.


American YA

This is the sequel to the historical fantasy *The Sea of Trolls* described below. Jack, a druid’s apprentice, goes to Faerie to rescue his sister, who he thinks has been taken by the fairies. As it turns out she actually is a fairy so the rescue is aborted. The origin theory that fairies are fallen angels is an important motif of this narrative, as is the connected motif of the Tithe. This book is rich with Fairylore; other themes and motifs found here are: time in Faerie,
taboos, Faerie as a location deep under the earth, and the beauty and the emotional coldness of the fairies.

———. The Sea of Trolls. New York: Atheneum Books for Young
American Ya

This story starts out as historical fiction. Jack, a druid’s apprentice, is captured on a Viking raid. It slowly becomes more folkloric and fantastical. The folklore in this story is Scandinavia, not British, and the supernatural creatures in this story are the trolls. The trolls and fairies have many similarities; they are magical and some have the power of shape shifting. They live in a magical, yet dangerous land, separate from the mortal realm. They also take human lovers and have a formidable queen.

American Adult

This is a traditional quest story based on Celtic mythology and legends. The folkloric connection between the Tuatha de Danann, Irish gods, heroes and fairies is explored. The central characters are heroes, essentially human with special abilities. The story takes place during the time before the invasion that forced the Tuatha de Danann to live underground in their Sidhes, where their legends and that of the fairies merge.

American (originally English) Ya/Adult

Tristran, who is unknowingly half fairy, lives on the border between Faerie and the human realm. It is a border that is normally never crossed, except every nine years on May Day when there is a fair. Tristran makes a promise that sends him on a quest into Faerie. This is primarily a literary fairy tale but it does contain some folkloric motifs. Faerie is an otherworldly place, filled with danger and magic. Like many folktales, things often are not what they seem. The Faerie royalty are cold and immoral, by human standards. Witches and ghosts are also inhabitants of Faerie in this story.

American Adult

Another Faerie war is about to take place – this time in Elizabethan London. The queen’s forces are weakened because she has lost her heir. He was exchanged with a human changeling as a baby in order to protect him, and then he was nowhere to be found. Besides changelings, and the conflict between the fairies of different courts, this novel uses other motifs as well. Humans can only see the fairies in their midst if they have the sight, or are given it by a fairy. The royals of Faerie appear as coldly beautiful humans but their subjects are the variant creatures of their realm. The moral and emotional ambiguity of Faerie is examined through the experience of Alice, mother of the human changeling. Faerie is a separate realm and the veil between the words is getting thicker and harder to navigate.


English YA

This is essentially the story of Tam Lin in modern day, and includes some aspects of Thomas the Rhymer. A teen-age girl remembers the friendship she started with a talented young musician years before. There are gaps in her memory and a mystery to be solved before it is too late. The motifs present in this book are effectively the ones found in the Faerie ballads. These motifs are woven subtly interwoven and it is only part way through the book that the allusions become clear.


English YA

Anita, on her sixteenth birthday, discovers that she is not a middle class English girl but instead a lost princess of fairy. As in Fairylore, the mortal realm and Faerie overlap in places in this novel. Otherwise there is not a lot of Fairylore in this narrative. It is essentially the fictional offspring of the early literary fairies.

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English  

In *Puck of Pook’s Hill*, two children, Dan and Una, perform their version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and inadvertently invoke Puck. Puck is the last fairy on earth and he educates the children through introducing them to people of different times throughout British history. The main Faerie motif in this story is the disappearance of the race of Faerie. Kipling also touches on motifs such as places and trees sacred to the fairies as well as the fairies’ ability to work magic and affect memory. In *Rewards & Fairies*, Puck continues the children’s education. This book is rich in history, but only minimally touches on Fairylore. There is, however, one memorable scene where the children try to stop Puck from using “oak, ash and thorn” to erase their memories by using the iron in the nails of their shoes.

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English  

YA  

Troll Fell illustrates many of the similarities of the fairies of the British Isles and the Trolls of Scandinavia. After the death of his father, Peer is taken to live with his disreputable uncles. Peer discovers their plot to give children to the Troll King in return for riches. Some of the similar motifs used in this book are the wealth and subterranean nature of the Troll kingdom, as well as the hierarchical structures of these societies, the danger of eating or drinking in the otherworld, the desire for human children as servants and/or playthings, and the presence of monstrous creatures such as Jenny Greenteeth.

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American  

YA  

Aislinn, like other members of her family, has the sight and can see through fairy glamour. Her grandmother has warned her repeatedly never to acknowledge that she can see the fairies for they do not like to be seen, and will often punish mortals who can see them. Keenan, the Faerie Summer King, is searching for his Summer Queen, who will balance his power and help him defeat his mother, the cruel Winter Queen. Keenan thinks that Aislinn is “the one”, but she is not particularly interested in the job. This story is rich in folklore motifs. The
grandmother’s warnings about the consequences of seeing the fairies come right out of folklore. The aloof and arrogant manner of the fairies is also a common motif. Aislinn, through her courage and boldness, negotiates with the fairies and finds a compromise. Fairies making compromises is not a common motif in Fairylore, but are not unheard of. Aislinn’s strength and valour liken her to the type of mortals in Fairylore that best the fairies.


This narrative tells the story of a Faerie changeling exchange, from the point of view of the fairy changeling left behind in the human realm. This is another story about a half-human fairy that is rich in Fairylore. Saaski cannot go back to Faerie, though she longs to. She has a great aversion to iron and a love of wild places and music. She finds her birth father, who has not been ‘right’ since being cast from Faerie. She does not fit in among the villagers, and her differences become dangerous. Before leaving the village for good Saaski decides to rescue the child whom she replaced. The description of the fairy mound and the activities within it are very traditional. Time has moved differently there; the child Saaski rescues is much younger than she is.


The main protagonist in this novel discovers that his baby sister is a fairy changeling. In order to rescue his real sibling from Faerie he must show great courage and determination, common traits of heroes that successfully challenge the Fey. On his journey Johnny comes face to face with many common fairy motifs such as the fairy hunt, fairy glamour, the taboo against eating food and the Fairy Rade. He also interacts with Faerie personnel such as the fairy queen, Thomas Rhymer, and the vampiric water spirit Jenny Greenteeth. Nobelman notes Katharine Briggs’ A Dictionary of Fairies in his endnotes.

American YA

This fantasy begins as a late Tutor historical novel. Kate is banished from the court, to a remote manor that has been trafficking with the fairies for years. The primary motif affecting this story is the fairy sacrifice, or Tithe. The fairies take the Lord’s daughter to be used as the sacrifice. When this is discovered, her uncle, Christopher, trades himself for her. When Kate discovers the plot and threatens to expose it, the fairies’ collaborator in the manor turns her over to them. They take her deep into the fairy mound. A bard, who had been to Faerie, had told Kate a little of what to expect. Although he was allowed to leave Faerie, his wits were not intact, so his counsel and assistance are unreliable. The Fairy Queen plays a large part in the story; she is stunning, callous and near impossible to resist. Cold iron becomes Kate’s ally; this and her strong will help her maintain her selfhood within Faerie and resist the magic woven there. The ballad of Tam Lin is referenced throughout this story, giving Kate the knowledge she needs to rescue Christopher from being sacrificed.


English Adult

In folklore witches are often the only mortals not enchanted by the fairies. In addition the fairies and the witches are often tied together an amicable way. Not so in this book. In *Lords and Ladies*, the witches of Disc World try to stop the Fairy invasion of their land. Pratchett’s fairies have great majesty and elegance; they are deeply enchanting and can easily sway humans with their glamour. They are also cruel and callous, bordering on sadistic. They use humans for their own entertainment and they are fascinated by music and dance. The boundary between Faerie and the human realm is thin at certain specific times, as in Fairylore. The infiltration of Faerie into the human realm takes place at Midsummer. The fairies’ greatest weaknesses are their aversion to iron and their underestimating of humans, and witches in particular. There are many allusions through the book to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. 
Witches and fairies are again at odds in this novel. Tiffany, a young untrained witch, discovers that the world of the Fairy Queen is encroaching on her own. Things become serious when the Queen steals Tiffany’s brother and she goes to Faerie to bring him back. Like the few mortals in folklore who can see through enchantment, Tiffany sees Faerie as a dark and unreal place. The Queen steals children because fairies cannot have their own, and the stolen children do not age. The creatures of her realm come from the more nightmarish aspects of Faerie, including Jenny Greenteeth and grimhounds. Tiffany is aided by the “pictsies,” a group of thieving, drinking and mysterious “wee men.”


Although primarily a world of Rowling’s invention, *Harry Potter* is full of folkloric influences, some of which involve Faerie. Doby and the other house elves are essentially brownies; they are even freed from service by the gift of clothing. For other Faerie creatures, such as the Boggart, Rowling took the folkloric and transformed it to suit her plot.


Precinct, the half human son of the Faerie Queen, falls in love with Graciosa, a young human noble woman, with magical potential. She denies her power at first but eventually embraces it in order to save Percinet. This book is more of a literary fairy tale than a folklore rich narrative, but it does contain folkloric motifs nonetheless. Faerie is a beautiful, enchanting land; its boundaries are not firm and humans rarely travel back and forth. One motif extremely important to this plot is the fairies’ aversion to iron.
A runaway teen goes to *Bordertown*, the dividing line between the mortal realm and Faerie. This depiction of the fairies is very gritty. *Bordertown* is rough, and the elves, humans and half-elves do not always get along. Rival gangs, and the disenfranchised youth of both cultures, dominate the town. Traditional fairy magic exists here side by side with technology, but neither works predictably. Across the border is located Faerie proper, a mysterious place where humans cannot go. If they try they never return. The elves are tall and heartlessly beautiful. Although the creation of this secondary world is rooted in folklore, the motifs in the story are more of a classic coming of age fantasy than of explicit Fairylore.

Snyder uses many fairy motifs in this story. Most of the action in this book takes place on a farm in the Midwest. Cassie is, unknowingly, one-quarter Fey and is drawn into an ageless conflict between the Red and Green Clans. These clans of nature spirits are similar to the Seelie and Unseelie court, as are their interactions. The author also uses the enticement of the Demon Lover and many little folkloric details such as turning the milk sour and using rowan wood as protection.

This chapter book looks at darker elements of Faerie, more common in books for older readers. After the death of his father, a boy, Charlie, and his family move to the mountains of North Carolina. There his sister starts to become sickly and it is feared she has consumption. The people of this area are immigrants from countries such as Ireland, and the belief in Faerie is still strong among them. When Charlie discovers that the fairies have taken his sister, and a sickly fairy changeling has been left in her stead, he goes off to rescue her. Charlie, like his father and grandmother, is a talented fiddler. He gets tricked into a contest with a fairy fiddler, but is victorious and wins freedom for his sister and himself. The majority of the elements of this story are drawn from motifs found in Fairylore.
Short Story Collections


This collection of traditional folktales covers the wide scope of material found in the genre of traditional literature; however stories involving the fairies and the dead are the dominant types. These fairies are wild, and humans are cautious when dealing with them. When someone angers them, or breaks a taboo, the fairies in these stories will seek retribution unquestioningly.


This is an anthology of YA Fairy-fantasy stories. It is a wonderfully rich storehouse of Fairylore from around the world written by top fantasy writers. It includes urban fairy fantasy and more traditional stories, as well as a wonderful Further Reading appendix.


This anthology of YA and adult short stories is full of the folklore of the forest. These stories honour the spirits of the wild, not just fairies, but other nature spirits and forces as well.


This is a collection of de Lint’s coming of age stories. Not all are Faerie stories, but all are Mythic Fiction. Two are from the shared world of Bordertown, and several are from de Lint’s fairy—infested Newford. Many of the fairies in these stories have an edge and the human-fairy interactions are often challenging.

This collection of short stories, by a single author, explores many aspects of Fairylore. The stories take place in Fairy Kingdoms across the world but there is a single folkloric perspective on the material. Several stories are about changelings, many deal with the hierarchy and tradition of the court and the interdependent, and parallel, realm of mortals.


This anthology is written using the structure of a tourist’s guidebook to *Bordertown*, the town on the border of Faerie and the human realm. This is a shared secondary world that has been used by many urban fantasists. It is a gritty urban fantasy world filled with folkloric elements. Fairies/Elves are cold, beautiful, unaging, alluring and aloof. They function with a different set of morals and conventions than humans. They can enter the human realm, but humans that go to Faerie do not return. They are essentially magical beings but magic does not work reliably in Bordertown. The culture of Bordertown is based on the coming together of two very different realities. This book alternates between tourist guidebook sections and short stories connected to the subject of the guidebooks. Kushner is one of the contributors.

**Miscellaneous Faerie/Fantasy books**


This is a non-academic folklore book outlining the most common and interesting fairies of the Irish tradition. It is similar in style and content to Froud and Lee’s *Faeries*, discussed below.

This is a beautifully illustrated, non-narrative, introduction to Faerie. It is essentially a book on Fairylore, but it is not written in an academic style. It is very accessible and engaging both for older children and adults. Fairies in this book are not the sugar-and-spice variety. Some of the fairies are depicted as beautiful and alluring, but many are dark and dangerous, a few are both. I was given this book as a teen. It was my first introduction to the darker, and more intriguing, aspects of Fairylore and was instrumental in the development of my interest in Faerie.


This is a companion book to *Lady Cottington’s Pressed Fairy Book* below. Lady Cottington discovers her sister’s album of fairy photos, which also served as her journal. Lady Cottington adds her own comments throughout. Lady Cottington was told that her sister Euphemia had died when she was young. Euphemia is much more attracted to the fairies than her sister, and it is revealed she did not die, but went away with them. The journal structure acts as a format for the beautiful and amusing fairy photographs and art of Froud and Lee.


This beautifully illustrated book shows the sassy and mischievous side of Faerie. The text of the book is a series of diary entries from Lady Cottington, who at an early age could see the fairies and developed a taste for pressing them instead of flowers.
This is a tourist guidebook to the collective secondary world of fantasy. In a humorous manor it looks at the clichés and traditions in fantasy, especially traditional and epic fantasy influenced by Tolkien and Lewis.
Appendix D: Plot Summaries

Plot summaries of books in the same series as analyzed books:


*Valiant* takes place in New York following the unsuccessful Tithe of *Tithe*. Val flees her suburban life and heads to New York after finding out her mother and boyfriend have been having an affair. She is drawn into a group of street kids living in an abandoned subway station. One of them, Luis, has the sight, which cost him an eye when an angry fairy found out. The group has been drawn into the world of the exiled fey in the city. Luis’ brother, Dave, and their friend Lolli have become addicted to the fairy drug Never More. Unknown to the others, Dave has been killing fairies. Val experiments with the drug, finds herself drawn into a conflict between the Seelie and Unseelie courts, and falls in love with Ravus, an exiled troll. Val goes to the Unseelie court to confront the fairy double agent that has been plotting to kill Ravus. There she kills her, as the fairy was about to attack Roiben.

There are many motifs present in this novel. The fairy hierarchy and society is still very traditional although now they are in North America. There are a great variety of Faerie inhabitants, some friendly to humans, some mischievous and many that are dangerous and predatory. The iron surrounding them negatively affects the fairies living in the city. Fairies do not live by human moral standards, but have their own which they follow often to the letter. When they give their word they keep it and they cannot lie.


With *Ironside*, Black returns to the story of Kaye. After the unsuccessful Tithe and the death of the Unseelie Queen, the two courts have a short cease-fire until Roiben’s coronation. Kaye finds herself living in two worlds. In the human realm, she is living the life she has always known, the life of the human changeling child exchanged for her when they were very young. Her other life is as a pixie who has fallen in love with a fairy knight about to be crowned King of the Unseelie court.
At Roiben's coronation, Kaye is tricked into declaring her desire to be his consort. In order to protect her, Roiben sends her on an impossible quest. She sees this as his complete rejection of her and is heartbroken. She feels guilty about living a lie and eventually tells the truth to her mother; who does not react well. Kaye and her friend Corny, who is both drawn to and seeks revenge on, the fairies, meet Luis. Then enters the Seelie Queen, Silarial, who wants to use Kaye to destroy Roiben and take over the Unseelie court. Kaye makes a deal to restore the child exchanged for her to her mother. She and her mortal friends are taken to the Queen but eventually escape after Corny kills a fairy that had cursed him. They manage to get away but in retribution Dave is killed. Like most fairytales this story has a happy ending. With Kaye's assistance Roiben thwarts Silarial's plans and becomes King of both courts. Kaye solves the impossible quest and is reunited with both Roiben and her mother. Corny and Luis fall in love.

Like the others in the series this book is rich with Fairylore. The fairies of the royal courts are cold and calculating; humans are their toys and tools to be used without remorse. The vast array of fairies is represented; their weaknesses are exploited by Kaye and her human companions.


A Canadian teen, Honor, dies while on a mission for Faerie. Her twin sister Laurel returns to Ireland a year after her sister's death. Honor's soul is trapped in limbo and Laurel takes on her sister's quest in order to earn her sister's place in Faerie. Laurel must find, and rescue, the Summer King so that he can light the Midsummer Fire or the realms of Faerie and our world will be severed. Laurel is helped by the spirit of the pirate queen Grace O'Malley and Ian, a boy from her grandparent's village. Ian turns out to be a changeling projection of the Summer King's spirit. The Summer King is a violent and arrogant creature, but Ian's spirit has been tempered by those around him who have loved him. Laurel succeeds, and Honor is granted entry into Faerie. The High King is in love with Honor and she becomes the new queen of Faerie.

Although they are relying on her, the fairies give Laurel very little help and often leave out very important information. It is continuously commented on that fairies and humans are different and function by different rules and ethics. They will use people as they see fit; if they survive
they will be rewarded. The worlds of the dead and Faerie are blurred. Laurel learns the taboos and protections connected to Faerie: do not eat fairy food or drink, turn your clothes inside out, salt, iron (knife), running water, St. John’s Wort, a ring of stones etc. She uses these, her love for her sister, her sharp wit and courage to complete her mission.

There are many additional fairy motifs in this story, specifically from Irish folklore. Faerie has made a mark on Irish culture and Laurel finds that many people believe, or want to. The fairies of the royal court are of the Heroic type; other inhabitants also are present. Although many are generally benevolent towards humans, they will not hesitate to use these mortals for their own ends, even if this puts the humans working for them in grave danger. The gateway points of the year are important, in this story specifically Midsummer.


Eleven-year-old Dana is the youngest of Melling’s protagonists; she lives alone with her Canadian father, Gabriel, in Eastern Ireland. Her mother was a fairy queen who forgot her identity when she was enchanted by Gabriel’s music. She disappeared when Dana was young. Neither father nor daughter knew her secret nature. Honor comes to Dana, in the guise of the High Queen of Faerie, and starts Dana on a quest. Dana must wake King Lugh, the second-in-command to the High King, so he can help fight the darkness. This struggle is paralleled in the human world by environmentalists who are trying to protect an ancient forest, a forest important to Faerie. Through her journey, Dana learns about her own strengths and heritage, as well as who her mother is and why she left.

Like the other books in the series, the primary motif of the story is the reliance of Faerie on humans. Many different inhabitants of Faerie appear in the story, both the light and the dark. Fairies use glamour, are immortal, can shape shift and can grant wishes under certain circumstances. The fairies of the royal court are glorious and friendly towards Dana, but nonetheless they follow their own rules and she is often frustrated by the lack of support she gets considering she is on a quest to save Faerie.


*The Book of Dreams* brings the three previous protagonists in the *Chronicles of Faerie* together in Canada. Dana, now a teenager, is living in Canada with her father and stepmother.
Laurel and Gwen are now young adults living in their home country. The gates between the worlds have been shattered and Dana is the only one that can reconnect the worlds. She is sent on another quest, this time assisted by her boyfriend Jean, who is a loup-garou (a French-Canadian Werewolf) and later Laurel and Gwen. Through this story Melling illustrates the similarities and interconnectedness of world folklore and mythology. In the end the one hidden, and therefore intact, gateway to Faerie is the centre point for a great battle between good and evil.

Again, this story’s primary motif is the dependence of Faerie on humans. It is the humans’ job to fight back the dark. In this book, Melling looks more at world folklore and myth than specifically Fairylore. Despite this many of the folkloric elements found in the other books are still found: the variety of Faerie’s inhabitants, the magical abilities of fairies, their otherworldliness. Dana meets fairies that came from Ireland with the human immigrant families to whom they were attached. These fairies have kept many of their traditional aspects, but have also adapted to their new land. Melling also plays tribute to modern urban fantasists; there are trolls under the subway and Dana’s aunts are big Charles de Lint fans.