

THE EDGE OF EQUINOX
A CREATIVE DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The Edge of Equinox

Doctor of Letters Dissertation by

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This creative dissertation, entitled *The Edge of Equinox*, is a combined collection of research surrounding Celtic mythology that supports my subsequent fictional young adult novel, *The Edge of Equinox*, which is the first in a trilogy. Celtic mythology, transgenerational strength and spirituality are topics of consideration through this fantasy fiction genre. In this fantasy fictional novel, the young teenagers from today's world travel to the Celtic Otherworld of Tir Na Nog on a mission to save the balance of both worlds from the chaos caused by the evil god, Mordrach. The story interweaves characters from different times in history to unite in this pursuit, and calls upon the galactic shifts between the two worlds in order to do so. The alignment of time and characters during the equinox is a cumulative climax that assists the main characters to achieve a victory over the cosmic powers of darkness. The critical section of this dissertation will support the research that formed the ideology, mythology and historical

background of the novel. The critical section will also explain the shift between the two worlds of Irish mythology and how the influx of Christianity changed the influence of the power of women in Celtic society. This specific shift will examine the loss of the female druids in history, and how this changed societies further from matriarchal to patriarchal. This transposition is investigated and connected to support the novel's theme of feminine influence and mysticality.

Like the Irish triumvirate, this dissertation will direct the reader towards the understanding of the power of three in Irish mythology and its influences in history. The triad of the Morrigan, the trinity of balance and Druidry, and the balance between the three worlds of Celtic mythology all lead to the voices that speak to us in the edges of coincidental solstices and equinoxes. The openings, the closings, and the universal worlds built upon the ancient myths and runes of Celtic history support our visions of the world today, and this dissertation strives to illuminate that connection.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my dearest husband, Sean, who has been my support buoy, listener and best friend as I swam through the waters of the Irish Sea.

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It is with deepest gratitude that I acknowledge my advisor and reader, Liana Piehler, in the writing of this dissertation and the publication of the novel thereafter. Dr. Piehler's patience and careful speculation upon all of my endeavors has led me to unknown and creative paths I hitherto had not been graced to observe through writing, art and philosophical speculation. She is a person and mentor with whom I undeniably trust and hope to continue to grow with throughout all of my writings.

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I continue to admire Dr. Leslie Sprout for her fastidious and essential knowledge of how to spur on the dissertation process, and her patience throughout all the question and answer periods I have presented to her. This dissertation is a combined "village" of many ancient souls.

Glossary/List of Terms

Tír na nÓg

Literally translates to "land of the young". The word "Tír" is Gaelic for "land" and "Óg" means "young".

Celtic Otherworld

A parallel universe in Celtic mythology that exists alongside our own. Humans can't see or get to it without some mystical assistance.

Tuatha Dé Danann

The gods and goddesses of Irish myth and legend, also known as the Sidhe. They were the original magical inhabitants of Ireland.

Oisín and Niamh

A famous Irish myth about a young warrior who falls in love with a girl from Tír na nÓg. They travel across the sea to Tír na nÓg on Niamh's white horse and live there happily for hundreds of years.

Tír Tairngire

Another name for the Otherworld, which translates to "Land of Promise" or "Promised Land".

Tír fo Thuinn

Another name for the Otherworld, which translates to "Land under the Wave".

The Dagda – Brigid – Goddess of poetry, healing, fertility, and smithcraft. Also associated with fire and the hearth.

Lugh – God of the sun, light, craftsmanship, and war. Known for his skill in many arts and crafts.

Morrigan – Goddess of war, fate, and sovereignty. She often appears as a trio of sisters or a single shapeshifting figure.

Cernunnos – Horned god associated with fertility, animals, and the forest. Often depicted with antlers.

Danu – Mother goddess and the primordial figure of the Tuatha Dé Danann (the gods of the Irish mythological cycle).

Aengus (Aengus Óg) – God of love, youth, and beauty. Often linked to poetry and dreams.

Manannan mac Lir – Sea god associated with the Otherworld. He rules over the waves and is often connected with the mystical realm.

Nuada – God of the sea and a leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Known for his silver hand, which he received after losing his original.

Epona – Goddess of horses, fertility, and protection, often worshiped by the Gauls and the Celts of Britain.

Ogma – God of eloquence, language, and writing. He is credited with creating the Ogham alphabet.

Taranis – God of thunder, associated with the sky and storms. He is often depicted with a wheel or a thunderbolt.

Belenus – God of healing, light, and the sun, often invoked in rituals for purification.

Scáthach – Warrior goddess and teacher of martial arts. She trained the legendary hero Cú Chulainn.

Mag Mell -

Another name for the Otherworld, which translates to "Plain of Delight" or "Delightful Plain". The path over the Atlantic Ocean to Tir Na Nog available during the equinox.

Ildathach -

Another name for the Otherworld, which translates to "Multicolored Place".

Emain Ablach -

Another name for the Otherworld, which translates to "Isle of Apple Trees"

megalith - a very large, usually rough stone

dolman -a prehistoric monument of two or more upright stones supporting a horizontal stone slab found especially in Britain and France and thought to be a tomb

cromlech- a circle of monoliths encircling a dolmen

tumulus-an artificial hillock or mound (as over a grave)

mound- an artificial bank or hill of earth or stones

cairn :an artificial bank or hill of earth or stones *especially* : one constructed over a burial or ceremonial site.

fidchell: an ancient board game, the predecessor to chess, played among the Celts.

Fidchell was played between two people who moved an equal number of pieces across a board.

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Introduction

The Thin Places of the Ancient Celts

In this creative dissertation, my fictional young adult novel, *The Edge of Equinox*, explores Celtic mythology, transgenerational strength and spirituality as topics of consideration through this fantasy fiction genre. The novel will be the first part of a trilogy. The critical section of this dissertation will support the research that formed the ideology, mythology and historical background of the novel. The critical section will also explain the shift between the two worlds of Irish mythology and how the influx of Christianity changed the influence of the power of women in society. This specific shift will examine the loss of the female druids in history, and how this changed societies further from matriarchal to patriarchal. This transposition is investigated and connected to support the novel's theme of feminine influence and mysticity.

The novel itself travels many worlds and time periods. It begins in an ancient Tir Na Nog, inhabited by the Tuathe de Dannan, the ancient peoples of Celtic mythology. This is a place of strength, wisdom, magic and immortal youth. The Druidry and ancient religion that prevail in this mythological world is another basis of scholarly research for these scholarly portions, whereas the novel *The Edge of Equinox* also supports the immortality within all of us. It is also a voyage of three generations of women and their counterparts. It is how they defeat, through the strength of the triad, the evil that lurks in the hearts of those who choose to destroy humankind and earth through the reclamation

of their inner goddess and strength. The young teenagers that engage in the quest that is thrown upon them are united by time, mythology and space. They are moved to examine the haunted worlds of ghosts and ancestors, as well as the fantastical otherworld known as Tir Na Nog.

Christianity infiltrated Ireland in the year of 451 A.D. This was a time of great transition in Celtic religion, as the current idolatry and paganism in Ireland existed mainly in homage to Druids, Celtic gods and goddesses, with woodfolk and fairies. There was a manifested understanding of why it was important to substitute the existing gods and goddesses for Saints and venerated Christian individuals, mostly to ensure a smooth transition of belief and acquiescence of individuals to the world of Christianity.

Thus, we hear of saints such as Saint Patrick and Saint Brigid, who are great icons and familiar to the Christian religion. While figures of faith and religious devotion, in retrospect, they are transitional beings for the previous existence of the ancient gods and goddesses in the Celtic ancient religion. These saints embody the pagan gods of ancient Ireland due to the exaltation from previous times and beliefs in the area of the Celts.

Celtic wisdom teaches us about spirituality and mysticism, and one of the “most poetic expressions of Celtic wisdom consists of the idea of “Thin Places”(McColman 23). A “thin place” is defined by the Irish as a place known to the Celts in the ancient times as being a sacred site; where the veil that separates our world from the otherworld, the world of silence and eternity. A place where we sense the nearness of the eternal” (McColman 24). These places in Ireland exist in wells, in structures, in seascapes, and ancient monastery ruins, but they are mostly an association. This connection between the

self and the eternal, this is the gift of the mysticism of the Celts, and their corresponding mythology and magic. It is the edge where we touch, not only through nature, but also through spirituality, the edges of the eternal.

Spirituality

“The Celts are the people at the end of the world”(McColman 4).

The Atlantic is the ocean that sidles next to the rocks of Ireland's shore. In ancient and olden times, geographically, Ireland was the stop before the world rushed into the ocean (McColman 4) and thus many myths were created and believed in conjunction with this location. Tir Na Nog, the island of eternal youth, was a fantasy of heroes who wandered on these shores of Western Ireland, the “mystery of the vast ocean continually pounded the shore, representing the edge of mystery and the gateway into an unknown world”(McColman 4).

The Celts were once an enormous and boundless culture. What we see as a tribe based out of Ireland was actually a tribe based from Ireland to modern day Turkey (Galatia). With this vastness of influence, there came a specific Gaelic language. Language, indeed, is one of the markings of any specific civilization, and brings with it the nuances associated with such. The aspect of ancestral Gaelic allows for the people to preserve the nuances of the civilization. Being that Ireland and the Celts were one of the only people that were not conquered by the Roman Empire, their preserved way of thinking (even within the influx of Christianity) spoke the language in a different way, a way that was influenced deeply by nature and mysticism, deep peace and powerful spirit.

Sean O’Duinn was a monk of Glenstal Abbey in County Limerick. (McColman, 34). His insight into spirituality in the Celtic peoples is extraordinary. He indicates that there are “three streams” to Celtic spirituality” (McColman 34). First came the stone age, or pre-Celt stream. With this, the spirituality of stone became an embodiment of magic

and structure in society. The “dolmens,” structures of stones that looked like “tables or altars”, but were actually “remnants of prehistoric tombs and burial sites” (McColman 14). These such sites oriented around the sunrise of the winter solstice so that they “illuminated the tiny passageway in the central chamber where three tombs lay under the roof”(McColman 14). The dolmens were passageways that opened in light and moonlight during the equinoxes and the solstices of ancient nature. These sites were themselves magic and powerful with no language and no words. They are the lead into the second stream.

The Celtic age itself was the second stream. This was the age of myths, soldiers, poetry and stories handed down when “warriors and druids shaped the destiny of the tribal people”(McColman 14). The very heart of these people were shaped in their spirituality during this time period.

The third “stream” was the coming of Christianity into Celtic lands and people. There are legends of Saint Patrick, there are stories of Saint Columcille in Scotland, and a man named Palladius, a great wise man and radical. When this convergence and merging of Christianity into the aspect of Celtic paganism and myth, the druids themselves did not record the “lore of their ancestors in writing” but the Christian monks did, and, therefore, the marriage of Celtic paganism and Christianity united as one.

Author Carl McColman explains that the aspect of Celtic Christianity is also distinctive in its expression of religion. He goes further to explain that conventional churches are worship based buildings or structures, and many aspects of Christianity have these different architectural designs. Celtic Christianity, in contrast, is an outdoor chapel. Nature, trees as pillars, and the “wilderness as a basilica” (McColman 44).

Additionally, contemplative Christian prayer is also far different from orthodox types of chapel prayer. The Irish word for this is Rinnfheitheamh. “Rinn” is translated to a point, edge or tip, and Feitheamh means waiting. A literal translation of Irish prayer is “the edge of waiting” (46). This gives us a visual of contemplation on a rocky cliff or shore, a place where the spiritual edge would meet the literal edge of Ireland and its endings/beginnings; the spiritual equinox and the solstices.

The last part of spirituality used in explanation in Ireland’s Celtic past and mythological references are in respect to the understanding of the word “neart”. This word is the physical embodiment of Celtic spirituality. It is the “force” of energy that keeps things going in the physical world. Neart is the “force”, similar to the Star Wars movie. It is the energy that provides hope. “A thin place is where heart seems to flow and strive especially well”(McColman 181) and therefore is the tie in for all the other three streams to move into, a force in the Celtic spiritual path.

Mythology

With the understanding of the mesh of Ireland's geography and spirituality as its own entity, it is important to address the origins of the myths of the Celts, not only for comprehension on their own and to be familiar with the different aspects of their mythology, but also to identify them as to the marriage of Celtic paganism and Christianity. The layers of the cycles and the layers of the depth of spirituality in Celtic history are symbiotic in nature.

Celtic mythology has four cycles. This is a different scheme of interpretation than, say, Greek or Roman mythology. The cycles break down into stories that are simply related to these cycles. The cycles are from oldest to newest. The mythological cycle, the Ulster cycle, the Fenian cycle and the king cycle. Each cycle is characterized by recurring themes in the stories from those cycles. "Bard Mythologies" states that the cycles have many figures that are based on both real happenings and historical people while also following the certain peoples that moved through Ireland at the time.

The mythological cycle is the oldest (ancient) cycle, and therefore has the least amount of written word included. "It tells stories of gods and supernatural events and the stories were written down by Irish monks during the 10th-14th centuries It tells the story of the history of Ireland- stories about successful settlements of the early Celtic godlike people in Ireland, Tuatha De Danann, the Fir Bolg and the Milesians. Some of the more popular stories are the Children of Lir, The Wooing Of Étain and The Dream of Aengus"(Lewis and Clark 1).

The second cycle is the Ulster cycle. The Ulster cycle of Celtic mythology is during the first century. This cycle shifts from the concentration of nature, music, magic and geologic emphasis of spiritual deities to a time period of war, and the concentrations of war. There are myths from this time period that were created that involve Queen Maeve. The tales of Cú Chulainn are from this era of mythology.

The third epoch of Celtic mythology is referred to as the Fenian Cycle. Written about 3 A.D., it involves the nomadic people that move from place to place in Celtic Ireland and hunt. This cycle showed romantic heroes with animals that upheld them and were manifestations of their character. Fish, in Celtic history, involved an enormous sense of spirituality. The important aspect of seafood, and salmon in particular, is well understood in relation to the region and geography of the Celts, but this is a native animal to other regions. Salmon, indigenous to the region, was very important, and many stories involved salmon as a sacred animal. There are many references to the Irish mythical hero “Finn” and heroine “Fionna” in this cycle. The fish that were in the stories of that time period were sacred in nature. They often were spoken to and had personality and morals to imbue.

The last cycle of the mythological cycle of the Celtic time is called the King Cycle. It was mostly based on the aspects and reasons on how and why being a good king was important. This cycle was roughly from 200-475 A.D. and expanded the merging of paganism and Christianity. The stories from this time were either a poet or bard, and so therefore there was some mixture of historical and mythological. Many of the stories of the bards were mixed with the history of the mythological Tuatha De Danann.

To break down the specific gods and goddesses of this time period can be an extraordinary task, in that the gods and goddesses in each time period of history have a specific type according to the themes of that cycle. The major gods and goddesses of Celtic mythology are rooted in the spiritual theme for that epoch.

The Irish had a Pantheon of gods and goddesses that defined their mythology. Pantheon is defined as all of the gods of a people or religion collectively (Britannica, 45). The breakdown of the mysticism of the Celtic pantheon transcends time and space in terms of its origins. The ancient Celts utilized nature and revered fertility. They were present and uniquely cognisant of wars. They were respectful of sovereignty and music, while also respecting the spirituality of the earth.

To begin to understand Celtic mythology and the ancient Druidry that is behind it, it is important to focus on the Tuathe de Danann. In pre-Christian Ireland, this was a “Legendary group of gods and goddesses, including the powerful Dagda and the mother goddess Danu. They embodied the traits most esteemed by people of ancient Ireland. Their influence extended to various aspects of daily life, such as love, war, weather and seas”(2, Colin).

The ancestors of the Celts were the Tuathe. There is some speculation as to their actual origin. Dagda was the “all-powerful father god”(Colin 2). He was the father of the gods and goddesses, and also the well revered deity across western Europe “(Colin 2). He had many partners (examples including the Morrigan) and was esteemed with great magic. He was known to have a great club and a beautiful harp, both of which could either kill or create amazing and miraculous results. All of the Tuathe de Danann were described as much larger than human in stature and shockingly beautiful, regardless of

sex. Dagda was different, so being described as a wise ruler with a large belly. He was of great humor, and was a strong figure of leadership, and very revered in his wisdom and genial nature. The Dagda often carried three sacred relics with him that defined several of his many talents:

1. “The *coire ansic*, a cauldron that could produce a bountiful feast; one could never be found wanting in the company of the Dagda. This particular relic was one of the Four Treasures of the Tuatha dé Danann, which were crafted in Murias (Wright 1).
2. The *lorg mór*, a mighty club (or staff) that possessed two distinct powers; its head had the power to slay nine men in a single swing while its handle could revive the slain with but a touch (Wright 1).
3. The *uaithne*, an ornate harp carved of oak. This harp could place the seasons in the proper order and command the wills and emotions of men. With these potent abilities, the Dagda was often seen as a god of order putting everything in its place, every time in its season, and every man to their rightful action (Wright 1).

These special items raised Dagda to a magisterial rank in terms of gods and goddesses (Wright 1). He was able to do particularly amazing miracles with his ornate relics.

The goddess Danu, in contrast, was regarded as the mother of the earth. She is the goddess of fertility and a mother figure and guardian to the Tuathe de Dannan (quite literally in translation the People of Danu). Danu was the watchkeeper of Tir Na Nog, the mythical Otherworld where the Tuatha De Danann resided. She was not only a mother figure, but a most revered fighter and sage as well. She is shown to be a stunning sight, with long golden red hair reaching to her legs and a porcelain like complexion. Her eyes

were cobalt blue, compared to depthless wells of water. She would be seen in gold and green and blue, sometimes cloaked in white, all colors of the earth surrounding her. She was a figure of fertility, earth, water and life. She watched over the earth with significant perception upon its ability to thrive. “Some of Danu’s symbols include holy stones, horses, seagulls, fish, amber, gold, flowing water, air, wind, earth, moon, keys and crowns” (Pete 1).

Danu was married to Dagda. She produced many further Tuathe de Danann offspring, including a lineage of deities, heroes, and skilled artisans who form a core part of the Celtic mythological pantheon” (Pete 2). Danu has been the progenitor of the Tuatha de Danann from its beginning, and is therefore the source of its name. The etymology of the name Tuatha de Danaan is derived from the definition “people of the goddess Danu” (Britannica). “As their progenitor, Danu is seen not just as a source of life but also as a protector of her offspring and their endeavors. This protective aspect is less about martial prowess and more about the sovereignty and fertility of the land, which sustains and empowers the Tuatha Dé Danann. Through Danu, the land itself becomes a participant in the mythic narrative, providing the setting and the stakes for the legendary battles and feats of the Tuatha Dé Danann”(Pete 2).

With Danu as the mother of the Tuathe de Danaan people, it is important to describe these peoples and where they reside- Tir Na Nog. It is also important to accentuate the gods that inhabit this land of immortality, and where they have a place in Irish mythology even today. We start in the land of Tir Na Nog with the Morrigan, a triad of goddesses, one in all and all in one. They are represented by many symbols in Celtic ancestry, most notably the triumvirate symbol.

The three goddesses in one are representative not only of the power of woman as a trinity (the wise/ancient one, the mother figure, and girl) but also a representative figure of the land itself. “Sometimes believed to be a trio of sisters– Badb, Macha, and Anand (sometimes called Nemain) - each of these aspects, or sisters, each embodying different aspects of life, death, prophecy, magic, and sovereignty”(O’Brien 1). With a crow or a wolf as the symbol of this goddess, she was feared by many and besotted by few.

Celtic cultures believe that the Morrighi (one in all, all in one; the plural of Morrigan) mated and married Dagda at one point, and with this mating procured some many varied offspring. Some of these offspring were malevolent and others were rumored to be powerful and good. Thus they embody both aspects of humanity and the trifold of life, death and prophecy foretold. It is not clear in history which sister of the one deity mated with Dagda. The results were diversified relationships and aspects of this union in terms of offspring and subsequent gods and goddesses.

The Morrigan were both feared and respected, mostly in relation to their powers of might and fearlessness in any situation. Nemain, more than the other two, was known to promote war and anger amongst the people of the Tuatha. The symbolic motif of the Morrigan is the crow, and the Morrighi are often recognized as the harbingers of death, much like the crow itself is bad luck for many Celtic peoples. The crows in many cultures signify death or war, and this is also a particularly powerful symbol in relation to luck and death.

The triad of the Morrigan is a complex part of their mystery, and many may identify with the trio of Christianity. “The Morrigan's portrayal as a triad, including Badb,

Macha, and Nemain - suggests a complexity beyond a singular form. Each name corresponds to different aspects and attributes: Badb with war and chaos, Macha with might and fertility, and Anand/Nemain with sovereignty and the land”(O’Brian, 4).

“When she/they are/is in a human form, she is a young beautiful woman whose hair flawlessly flows. She possesses long, dark hair and usually wears black. However, her clothes were most of the time exposing her body. In some tales, she wears a cloak in order to hide her face away from recognition. Those descriptions apply when she’s in the form of a human being, which is a very rare case. Sometimes, she appears as an old woman too. Most of the time, The Morrigan appears in the form of either a wolf or a crow”(Connolly 1). The Morrigan are the strength of women, not only as a goddess with great power, but also embodying the power that women hold through the stages of their lives. They are sometimes young girls with dreams, hopes, desires and sexual energy. They are other times the mother figure that creates life, a vessel of the earth, embodying the natural form of procreation and the power of rebirth. There is then the wise woman with age who can see beyond the realm of now from experience and intellect, but also concurrently intuitive in nature. These three are the powerful aspect of all women embodied in one goddess, and to whom sometimes danger was attached. Their attachment to the earth is complex, but so, also, is the connection to the deity of worship that surrounds the figure of a woman.

The god Lugh was a youthful warrior god, wielding a spear that had slain the monster and leader of the Formorians, Balor. Lugh was revered for his mastery of war and tactics, his youthful wisdom and energy. “Lugh is the divine father of the Celtic hero

Cú Chulainn, arguably the most famous hero in Irish folktale”(world history.edu). Lugh’s father had been slain by Balor, and his grandfather had made that happen. Thus, Lugh was half Tuathe and half Fomorian. He was a great battle hero, and was eventually made king of Ireland. Some of his weapons are a powerful part of the Tuatha de Danaans’ success against the Fomorians, the evil people that terrify and abuse the Tuathe until they leave for the land of Tir Na Nog.

The goddess Brigid was revered as the Celtic goddess of poems and healing. She was also the goddess of spring. She was a powerful member of the Tuathe de Danann. Her name translates into “exalted one” and she is one of the goddesses who, during the transition from paganism to Christianity, was made into a saint. This was one of Ireland’s patron saints”(worldhistoryedu.com 2).

Oengus, or Aengus, was a handsome and youthful god of the Tuatha de Danann., “Beloved for his polite character, Aengus was able to convince his father to bestow upon him the region of Bru na Boinne in Ireland. Oftentimes, Aengus was depicted in the company of swans. The stories have us believe that Aengus fell madly in love with a girl called Caer Ibormeith whom he had seen in his dreams. After searching the land he found the girl who had turned into a swan and was mingling among several other swans. Aengus ended up marrying her and the two lived happily ever after. In one version of the myths, Aengus’s songs were believed to have the power to put people to sleep for three days and three nights. In addition to being the patron god of young lovers, Aengus was also known as the chief poet of the pantheon. (World History.edu 3).

With these major gods and goddesses explained, it is imperative to illustrate and illuminate the legend and land of Tir Na Nog, the Celtic Land of Immortal Youth. This is where the goddesses and gods reside, and the major influences of such a legend extend far beyond. This land of immortality was inaccessible to humans. Since the Celts were described as an amalgamation of different tribes that shared similar religious beliefs and culture. They were never one country or empire. The ancient Celts covered regions from places in the Iberian peninsula (i.e. Portugal and Spain) to places in Ireland. (world historyedu.com 3).

“The inhabitants of the island of Tír na nÓg are the Tuath(a) Dé Danann which translates as “the folk of the goddess Danu”, although they are sometimes also known by the earlier name “Tuath Dé”, translating as tribe of the gods. The Tuatha are a supernatural race who live in the Otherworld but interact with humans and spend time in the human world. This group is usually thought to be the gods of pre-Christian Ireland, and the god that rules over Tír na nÓg – usually named as Manannán mac Lir – is said to be the first ancestor of the human race and the god of the dead” (celtictitles.com 1).

The place entitled Tir na nOg has an atmosphere of harmony. It has the reputation of endless joy and happiness, a dreamland for many Irish and Celtic descendants. It is, however, not heaven or equivalent to heaven. It is a place where the gods and goddesses of the Celts reside in tranquility, wisdom and harmony until they are needed in the human world or beyond. “Tír na nÓg has been depicted as an island paradise and a place of everlasting youth, beauty, health, abundance and joy. The islanders engage in dancing, poetry, music, entertainment and feasting on the abundance of fruit and vegetables that

grow on the island. Access to Tír na nÓg is said to be achieved by journeying through a mist, by going underwater, or by traveling across the sea on an enchanted boat or horse. The path across the sea is the linear reflection of the sun shining on the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Ireland” (Lally, 1).

Tir Na Nog literally translates into Land of the Young, and in so being called, has been known for centuries as the place where the supernatural beings of Celtic history reside. With the emphasis on residence, it is also understood that Tir Na Nog is not a final resting place of the gods and goddesses. It is a place of paradise, poetry, song and rest.

In *Gods and Fighting Men*, Lady Augusta Gregory says, "It was in a mist the Tuatha de Danann, the people of the gods of Dana, or as some called them, the Men of Dea, came through the air and the high air to Ireland” (Gregory 13). The mist, it was said, was a mix of gray and pink and violet, would appear during the solstices and the equinoxes, and during these thin periods of time, there were openings to allow the gods and goddesses to enter into the territory of Tir Na Nog. When these openings were available, the gods would shift back and forth between Earth and the land of immortality, and sometimes, bring mortals with them. These times resulted often in love affairs and children that were half human and half god, and they would be brought back to Earth or left in Tir Na Nog. Some ancient legends indicate that the most brilliant and amazing humans were actually descendants of Tir Na Nog, having been the offspring of the beautiful Tuath de Danann that resided there.

The people of Tuathe celebrated time and its tenacity. They celebrated the understanding that the world of nature was a balance of two worlds, earth and Tir Na Nog. Many heroes were able to access Tir Na Nog through either the dolmens (megalithic

structures of stone that were built to harness the sun and moon's filtered rays during certain times of the year, also used for burial of kings and women of power and influence) or through the Mag Mell. The Mag Mell was a line of either sun or moon across the Atlantic Ocean during the equinox or the solstice, and it was said those who were destined to be immortal and join the Tuathe could walk across the water and join them in Tir Na nog.

“In some legends, one of the early races of Ireland's conquerors was known as the Tuatha de Danann, and they were considered mighty and powerful. It was believed that once the next wave of invaders arrived, the Tuatha went into hiding. Some tales hold that the Tuatha moved on to Tir na nOg and became the race known as the Fae”(Wiggington, 1). Many believed that the inhabitants of Tir Na Nog were known as fairies, and would visit humans through such form when on Earth. They were the enchanted people.

According to legends, the enemies of the people of the Tuathe were called the Fomorians. Marie Louise Sjoestedt suggests that these are the peoples of nightmares, the larger demons from beneath the ocean, that came and battled the Tuathe. They are the "like the powers of chaos, ever latent and hostile to cosmic order" (Sjoestedt, 4-5).

The dreaded foes of Ireland, these were the people that had defeated the Tuathe in a succession of battles. Throughout these battles, however, there had been seduction and intermingling of the two enemies, and many half Tuathe and half Fomorians were part of this disparity. The Fomorians are regarded as the most evil of their counterparts, and they work to promote havoc in any setting. In description, they are completely opposite of the Tuatha, and are believed to have horrific mannerisms, eldritch in nature.

The Fomorians were extensively ugly. “Some believed that they had the heads of goats, although it may be more likely that they wore goat masks, and others that they were related to the drowned titans of Enoch, the Nephilim. In the Book of Invasions it is said they had but one leg, one eye and one arm! Of course this is a misunderstanding of the crane-stance, a posture they struck when they were casting spells and working magical mischief against their enemies”(The Fomorians).

The Fomorians were sinister, evil, the worst of the gods and goddesses. Their magic was used for chaos and underhanded dealings, as well as to advance any terrible storms or weather. “And theirs was the old magic, the power of the wyrm they held as a great mystery, that antediluvian sorcery from before the great floods which destroyed the ancient world in its corruption and wickedness. Legends tell that they could control the weather, the mists and the waves of the ocean, bring blight upon the crops, sickness upon the cattle, and plague from their festering pits upon the people. The icy blasts of winter were theirs to command, and deadly spirits from chthonic halls could summon to question about the past or future, or events far distant” (McCaffery, Emerald Isle).

As the peoples of the Tuathe battled the Fomorians with vengeance. Their battles were epic. The leader of this evil race was Balor, who had one eye. Balor’s eye was covered with so many coverings, each layer of the cover had its own weapon. It was said that if Balor looked upon a person with his evil eye, he would char him instantly.

“They fought the Fomorians for domination of Ireland and defeated them in the first battle of Moy Tura, but their conquest brought the malevolent gaze of the Fomors to

bear. Still weak after the battle and with their great king Nuada dethroned due to losing an arm, the Dé Danann held council and decided it would be best to make peace with the Fomors, for fear of annihilation”(The Fomorians 3). The Formorians were the great adversaries of the Tuathe, and they constantly tortured them with dark and evil.

“In these tales we learn that not all of the Fomors were hideous in appearance or vicious in temperament. One of their kings, Elatha, was called ”the beautiful Miltonic prince of darkness with golden hair,” and songs praise his wisdom, kindness and mercy, associating him with light and the sun. He traveled across the sea in a silver ship and wore clothes of gold and five gold torcs”(McCafferey, Emerald Isle). He was interested in justice, and worked to forge this throughout the Fomorian rule, however, it was to no avail. When his son, Bres, wanted to go to war against the Tuathe, he refused to join him.

It was after this part of the legend that the Tuathe removed themselves from Earth. The evil Fomorians had one more battle between Lugh and Balor before their complete banishment from the Earth and Tir Na Nog. This battle legend was known as the last battle, or the “Second Battle of MacTured”. Lugh’s father was killed by his grandfather, Balor, and Lugh swore vengeance. He removed himself from the allegiance of the Fomorians and swore to protect the Tuathe de Danann. With this allegiance, the Tuathe began, in movement, to go to Tir Na Nog. It is said that the Tuathe recovered their ability to fly, and some traveled in the mid air to get to the mystical land.



Lugh's Spear (Connolly 6).

“Most importantly, the spear possessed magical abilities, making it impossible to overcome in battle or defeat the warrior who wielded it. Another spear that Lugh possessed was The Slaughterer. In Irish, its name is Areadbhar. According to Irish mythology, that spear would burst into flame all on its own, so its user had to keep it in cold water; that way, the water would put down the flame” (Connolly 12).

The Fomorians remained enemies with the Tuathe, showing up in strange places through insidious ways, their evil powers legendary in terms of the depth of the magic. Many of the Tuathe were frightened of them, and Lugh had been named King for many years. Since he was half Fomorian and half Tuathe, he tried to keep harmony in check between both species of supernatural beings. His spear helped keep these beings in check,

but there were other weapons of great power that the Tuatha De Danann held that gave them intense power over all other beings.

With the aspect of transportation, the Tuathe had a fantastic choice of majestic and astonishingly magical animals to choose from. Horses were enchanted and distinguished. “Additionally, the Tuatha Dé Danann owned horses that all history professed could never be found elsewhere. Those horses had large eyes and broad chests and were as speedy as the wind. They exerted flame and fire, and resided in “the Great Caves of the Hills” (Connolly 1). Owning those horses made people refer to the Tuatha Dé Danann as the Cave Fairies and they when legend had it that they had retreated to Tir Na Nog, their presence as fairies could be found in caves on earth.

In relation to how the Tuathe people were viewed physically, they were regarded as stunning. “The Tuatha de Danann are usually depicted as tall and pale people with red or blonde hair and blue or green eyes. They are often portrayed as extremely beautiful people which could symbolize the way in which they were revered for their supernatural powers”(Connolly 1). They had many treasures that no other gods, specifically the Fomorians, did. The Sword of Light is the second treasure of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

“The sword made the keeper insuperable and impossible to defeat. If someone ever beat the hero, it was through secret supernatural means. It was one more item that ensured the strength of the Tuatha Dé Danann”(Connolly).

Danu was not the only goddess of the Tuatha de Danann. Apparently, there were more than a few of them. Morrigan was one of them. She was popular for being a shape-shifter

and the Goddess of war, death, and fate in the Celtic mythology. There are some legends that appear to depict Morrigan as a single figure rather than part of the triple Celtic goddesses. With this in mind, the Pagan Irish believed the Morrigan had different qualities that defined her.

“The Pagans believe that she was a protector and healer while the Irish believed she was the frightening. People who follow her still honor her using items like blood bowls and feathers of crows. Some people even hold red clothing as a symbol of the Morrigan”(Connolly).

Another important god was Ogma or Oghma: the god of language and speech, writing and poetry. It was he who invented the Ogham alphabet, and with this giving the people of Ireland a lilting quality of voice and poetry He was the son of Dagma and Danu together. He was swarthy in appearance, but so bright in language that when he spoke, his hair literally shone with brightness in the sun. This god was revered for his ability to articulate and speak in an easy and pure language, always with a persuasive tone.

Ogma was gifted not only in speech, but the lilting capabilities often attributed to the Irish in their poetry and music. “Dagda and Danu had many sons and daughters of which one was named Ogma who was the fairest of the sons of Danu. To him came the gift of poetic prowess and the ability to write. It was often said that rays of sun would beam from his hair and as Peter Beresford Ellis says in his book *The Chronicles of the Celts* ‘he was called Ogma grian-aineacg, of the Sunny Countenance’. So gifted in fact was this god that he thought of a way for man to write speech in what was named after

him as ogham”(Hooper, 1). Ogma was also an undefeatable warrior, and he was revered for both these aspects of his godliness.

Another goddess of great renown was Airmed. Airmed is one of the goddesses of the Tuatha de Danann. “She was the daughter of Dian Cecht and sister of Miach. Like both of them, she was a healer. Her name sometimes is written as Airmid instead of Airmed”(Connolly 1).

Nemain was part of the Morrigan sisters (with Macha and Badb), and she was the goddess who controlled the outcome of battles. After the battle was won or lost, Nemain, often seen as a crow or raven, would alight on the soldiers to contemplate whether they were alive or dead. It was her cry that would solidify the passage of the battle to completion.

Cernunnos, the hunter god, is most recognizable by his mighty antlers, fitting for a hunter known as the forest’s protector. The translation of his name from ancient Celtic is literally “horned”(Connolly). He is the Celtic version of the green man (Pan) seen in other mythologies, who lives in the woods and whose life revolves around nature and the protection of animals.

There are many known tales of Tir Na Nog and the Tuathe de Danann, but the most popular mythological tale is Oisín, son of Finn MacCool. This is a story that is repeatedly told to Irish children and passed down from generation to generation. It is a love story and also a tragedy that bookends the visiting of humans to Tir Na Nog and their fate when they fall in love with goddesses or gods. This specific story refers to the

goddess Niamh, who lives in the Otherworld (Tir Na Nog) who seduces Oisín. She had been in love with him and watching him for some time, and she was a stunningly attractive female Tuath. Niamh brought her magical horse, Enbarr, and she took him across the Mag Mell (during the equinox this is the path to Tir Na Nog from Earth) to the Otherworld.

Oisín was very happy, and had two children with her, but then decided he wanted to visit his own family on Earth. Niamh told him to take Enbarr and not get off the horse, or he would instantly age and die, because Tir Na Nog was the land of immortal youth. He, of course, did, and therefore found that three hundred years had passed, and not any of his people were around anymore. He was instantly changed into a three hundred year old man, and he died, leaving Enbarr to run back to Tir Na Nog.

This story has been passed down from generation to generation, and the storytelling aspect of the Irish has excelled in has made it change dramatically from times until now. These storytellers are called seanchaithe, and have rewarded us with many traditions that are still in use today. There are harvests and the feast of Lúnasa to be adjoined with the legends of the Tuath De Danann. As a summarizing point, there are some elements and symbols that have been associated with the Tuath over the centuries:

The Lia Fáil (Stone of Destiny): Located on the Hill of Tara, this stone was said to roar when touched by the rightful king of Ireland. It is one of the four treasures the Tuath Dé Danann brought to Ireland from their four cities. The four magical treasures are the Sword of Lugh, the Spear of Lugh, Cauldron of the Dagda and the Lia Fáil (the Stone of Destiny). There are a few other symbols associated with Ireland's Tuath as

well. The tripal spiral is a symbol that predates the Celts. A Druidry symbol that is linked with the Tuathe is the Awen symbol. It shows peace, balance and harmony between opposites.

The thin places, those are the magical areas of the mystics and the ancient ones. The Celts were protective of the pagan religion and we know that much of this comes from their ancient writings (oghran) and the aspect of the ancient druids using storytelling to move the information down and pass to later generations., this was the act of preserving the mythological background within the Celts.

There are people that claim to practice Druidry in modern Ireland, but this religion is an “interpretation of what the ancient Celtic Druids did during their height of religious power and prominence”(Wellman 13). “The Druids were the leaders of society that behaved as chieftains, and were so secretive that their body of beliefs, rituals, practices and herbal knowledge was passed onto their acolytes orally”(Wellman 13).

Female druids in Celtic history were termed ban-druids. The word itself, druid, means “to know” and since this group was the more learned part of ancient Celtic society, this was a fitting reference. “The Druids who were Celts (who the Romans referred to as Gauls) were the knowledge holders, the secret keepers and the storytellers. Even today, there are mystical rituals beneath a full moon, there is nature worship”(Wellman 13). The druids were also the law keepers and sometimes the law makers. Druidry, therefore, was a place of high respect. The aspect of Druidry in Celtic times was not confined to men, and Celtic society, for many reasons, was remarkably equal in terms of gender roles.

Women were also druids, and invited, much similar to the courts of Pythagorus, and respected.

Druidry not being limited to males or females, it was a special place in Celtic society that produced a person noted as a Druid. Druids were not only wise beings, they Diogenes said that the Gaulish philosophers were known both as Druids and as Semnothei, the latter word meaning "Venerable Deities." All Hallows Day was known in Ireland as La Samhna and the month of November as Mi Saman, but the derivation of these words is from Samh, meaning "rest" or "repose from labor"(Wright, 3).

Druids were venerated for their connection to the mystic arts. Celtic arts are in and of themselves a truly unique niche. The word "druid" is "derived from the Celtic deru, "oak," and hud, "enchantment and the name was given because the priests, sages, diviners, and magicians of the ancient Gauls practiced their divination and enchantments in woods and especially under oaks. Dryades, the Greek word, he contends, is derived from the Celtic. The Celtic meaning of the word Druid is "to enclose within a circle" and the word was used in the sense of "explaining they were a "prophet one admitted into the mysteries of the inner circle" (Wright 2). With this in mind, one can ascertain the understanding of why the Druids were thought of as men and women that were outside often and partook in magic rituals in relation to nature. Particularly in the background of the Irish landscape, the aspect of Druidry is even more defined.

There were various mentionings of Druids throughout history. Many famous leaders historians made druidry historically relevant due to how they were revered. "Druids were mentioned by name by the following pre-Christian writers: Aristotle, Sotion, Posidonius,

Julius Caesar, Cicero, Diodorus of Sicily, Timageneus ; and by the following writers of the Christian era : Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Lucian, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dion Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, and St. Cyril, this last-named reproducing the opinion of a more ancient Greek historian, Polyhistor. Omitting Aristotle and Sotion, who knew of the Druids only by hearsay, there are some twelve writers contemporary with the Druids in the heyday of their existence and in their decline” (Wright, 5).

Druids were also known for the understanding and knowledge of heavenly bodies and astronomy, which enabled them to therefore fix definite times for the ceremonies. These ceremonies were regulated by the sun and the moon, and the structures that they built were worshiping grounds that were illuminated by either celestial body during each time period. Their principal hours of devotion were either midday or midnight, according to Wright in his journal article “Druids” from 1924. He also states that with this in mind, the Magi were additionally part of the druidical denomination, being that they were “wise men” that followed the “Northern Star”.

Wright states, “An interesting aspect of Druidry that also was a motif of this mystical and intellectual religion was the repetition of the number three. The Druidical teaching concerning man's spiritual nature is in the following Triad : " In every person there is a soul : In every soul there is intelligence : In every intelligence there is thought. In every thought there is good and evil : In every evil there is death : In every good there is He : In every life there is God."”(Wright 58).

They also were specific about not writing down their words because this, they believed, weakened their memories. They had a writing system that was cryptic called

runes, and these translated into mostly prose or allegorical information. Additionally, Druidry was fixated on the tree as the signpost used for all life and religious understanding. Celtic Druidry was closely connected to the belief in the Tuathe De Dannan, as well. The Irish called the druids the “sidhe” and they also had that name for the Tuathe peoples, both considered groups having a genre of scholars of great reverence.

The old metrical Life of St. Patrick, ascribed to Fiacc of Sleibhte, says : " The Tuatha adored the Sidhe. According to the Book of Armagh, the Sidhe were supernatural beings supposed to dwell in the earth, the sea, the rivers, in valleys and hills, in fountains, wells, and trees. Both they and the natural objects in which they were supposed to dwell were invoked or conciliated. They were supposed to be conciliated by the spells and incantations of a sacred caste called Druada or Magi. The Banshee is just the bcan-sidh, or female sprite or fairy. Mullaghshee, the hill on which the church stands in Ballyshannon, is the hill of the sidh, or fairy palace”(Wright 54). The connection between the Tuathe and the ancient druids is strong, whereas the lives of the ancient Tuathe lived in an area hidden by mist and a sacred caste system. Additionally, the druids, like the Tuathe and Ancient cults, revered women as sacred aspects of their community, unlike the patriarchal system of Christianity.

There were parts of Druidism that were uniquely different from Christianity, and with the influx of Christianity, the resistance of the Druids was not strong or violent. They were peaceful in their transition. “Unlike most religious and spiritual beliefs in Europe at the time, Druids believed in reincarnation. They believed our souls were immortal and could be reborn into different lifeforms. The Druid religion believed there were two

planes of existence; the world we experience now, and the “otherworld.” Some think the Druids believed our souls would live and die in this world and then live and die in the otherworld, trading lifetimes in a cyclical process.” (Gaia 2). It definitely is interesting to note the similarity between the religions in the world at that time and the concepts of Druidism.

“Numerous schools trained noble youth to become Druids. Depending on which type of role one was trained in, the Druidic educational system could take up to 20 years, significant schooling when life expectancy didn’t extend much past the age of 40. Still, it was considered highly esteemed to become a Druid, and despite the patriarchal nature of many of the era’s of that time, women were made Druidesses with equal roles to men. The Druids worshiped female goddesses and a Druidess could take part in a battle or divorce her husband”(Gaia.com, 1).

Can the Druids be responsible for the megalithic sites popular today? “Some theorize that the ancient Druids built Stonehenge, given their reverence for it, as well as other sacred megalithic sites. This idea was first posited by John Aubrey in 1640 and later perpetuated by William Stukeley. Though, this theory has supposedly been discredited as radiocarbon dating showed the stones date back to 3,100 BC, while the known history of the Druids begins around 300 BC”(Gaim 1).

Others believe that the Druids were the wise people who came from Atlantis, and that Atlantis is located next to where Ireland is today. There are many theories regarding these connections, but the monolithic sites, or dolmans, were credited to the druids in all of them, especially in terms of worship and ceremonies.

The Druids and the Tuathe had similarities as well as distinctions, the Druids being fact and the Tuathe being lore (or so we now believe). With that distinction, there were still many wizards and witches and wise written stories continued with both of these aspects of mythology in mind, and many great and celebrated writers have, through their novels and poems, paid homage to the mystical aspects of both of these Celtic wonders of mythology.

In fact, the early written word surrounding the Tuathe or the Otherworld was written by monks, upon the infiltration of Christianity into Ireland. Since the revered druids were not able write them down according to their ritualistic practices, the Christian monks took on that responsibility.

Both the Druidic and Pythagorean alphabets were Etruscan in character. The three Orders of Druidism correspond to the three orders of Pythagoras, Pythagoreans, and Pythagorists. Each cultivated the study of theosophy: metaphysics, ethics, physics, the magnitude and form of the earth, the motions of the heavens and stars, medicine, and magic. Pythagoras uninitiated and forbade it to be written down.

Most influential writers have taken the Celtic mythology to a whole different level. The most influential writers have incorporated the Druidry and natural scheme of the Celts to produce writing and poems that contain their own “voices”. The lilting tone and the singsong nature in which the Irish peoples would write their songs, verses and stories were considered by nature a language that is an almost physical representation of the ways of their origin.

For instance, writers have traced Celtic mythology through poetry and prose to represent the free and spiritual awareness that is so indicative of Ireland and its peoples. Oscar Wilde is a renowned Irish writer, rich in detail and wit, speaking of Ireland and its politics, being blatant in his criticism and reverence at the same time.

One of the most inspirational writers who incorporates Celtic myth into his writing is William Butler Yeats. Much of his early work is strong and influenced by Irish myth and folklore, although as he got older, he spoke of newer and relevant issues. He won the 1923 Nobel Peace Prize. Romanticized by the Ireland of eras past, Yeats wrote poems about Irish history and figures of Celtic mythology, including “To the Rose upon the Rood of Time,” “To Ireland in the Coming Times,” and “The Song of Wandering Aengus.” These poems in particular engage in legends and folklore while evoking traditional ballads and songs.

It must be noted that JRR Tolkien utilized much of the Tuathe de Danaan as models when he was writing about the Noldor. He referred to elven people as larger than life, and shining in nature, which is exactly how the Tuathe are always described. They are “untouched by age and time” and have a glowing inner beauty. States Kinnibaugh in *Mythlore*, “This is not to say that the Noldor and Tuatha De Danaan spent all, or most, or even much of their time composing lies and avoiding battles in some abstract realm. In fact, the opposite is the case, and herein lies a crucial difference between Tolkien's Elves and all elves before or after. Gunnell states that Scandinavian elves "do not inhabit forests or live in trees. Nor—for 99% of the time—are they warriors" (Gunnell 7). The Noldor—and the Tuatha De Danaan—are. Immortality guards them from old age and

disease, but even the greatest heroes are vulnerable to death in battle, and often receive it. "Their divinity does not render them permanently invulnerable, nor exempt from violent death" (Mac Cana 64). Nuada, the first High King of the Tuatha De Danann, perishes in the Battle of Moytura North at the hands of the Fomorian king Balor (who, in a sequence of unavoidably suspicious similarities, is also called the Evil Eye, and who resides in the Tower of Glass)"(Kinninbaugh 33). The influence of Celtic mythology on Tolkien's finished and unfinished work is particularly strong, though he would not speak to it with certainty.

Additionally, C.S. Lewis uses Celtic mythology to provide emphasis on his world of Narnia. C.S. Lewis was also a good friend of JRR Tolkien, and it is undisputed that Tolkien based his Noldor people upon the Tuatha.

The land of Narnia, known from *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* as well as the *Chronicles of Narnia*, has roots in Irish mythology ("C.S. Lewis and the Real Narnia"). C. S. Lewis grew up in Belfast, Ireland and was fascinated with Irish mythology as a child, and from it emerged his creation of Narnia ("C.S. Lewis..."). His book, now a major motion picture, includes local landscapes reflective of Irish mythology ("C.S. Lewis...")" (1, Lewis studied at Oxford University, where he met J.R.R. Tolkien worked across the hall from him, and was a close colleague.

"*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, written by C.S Lewis heavily alludes to many mythical creatures from Celtic Mythology. Many of the creatures such as the forn, hags, boggles and white stags may have been inspired by the Celtic animistic approach to their deities. Furthermore, the Celts believed in multiple worlds where you could pass

from one to another (generally through bodies of water), people argued that this Celtic belief inspired Lewis's idea of "The portal to Narnia" (1, Bellingham).

Moving into the 1960s and the 1970s, we have the female writer Madeleine L'Engle, a great personal influence for me, who wrote *A Wrinkle in Time* and *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* amongst and other books that not only were based on Celtic myths, but also the belief of the Druids, and the mythology of the Tuathe. Additionally incorporating various other mythology, L'Engle bases her stories on situations that are solved by moving "within" someone's soul, thus being reborn again, which is what the pagan Druids taught to in Ancient Ireland. She even refers to St. Patrick's rune in one of the books to save them all from the "powers of darkness". The connections are uncanny, and poetic as well.

It is notable to learn that many of the myths were based on and around strong female goddesses, and all of these authors emphasize that within their writing, given the resounding influence of Celtic mythology in their writings.

It is also important to realize that many of the writers and interpreters of the Celtic myths were women, inspired, most likely, by the powerful portrayal of the heroes and goddesses that they were researching. Additionally, the men in the stories are respectful and reverent to the female figures. One can also be cognizant of the depth and work that these interpretations did involve, and how there must be some sort of a passion for such literature in terms of the meticulous arrangement of the myth's tales. Lady Charlotte Guest was one of the important female figures that invested much of their life and research into the interpretation of these specific tales, namely The Mabinogion. Lady

Guest worked to tirelessly separate the work of the different Celtic mythology cycles as well, and was able to even additionally separate the Arthurian tales for interpretation.

The spiritual nature of Celtic mythology, as a whole, is not specifically a clear cut story regarding gods and goddesses. The topography of Ireland, the geographical movement of the Celts from one country to another, the lack of written word and the passing on of tales by spoken word, and the rogue beauty of the Celtic land and sea prepare readers to take all of this background into consideration when interpretation is the result. The different cycles of the mythology mixed with the emphasis on Druidry, which in and of itself has a mystical and magical connection, will continue to provide background to enjoy and revel in the past, present and future of the Celts and the tales they bring to us. It is when we are able to visit the “thin places” that we are fully able to become the very best versions of ourselves, and this has a deep history of philosophy that has been prescribed to by the Celts for thousands of years and will continue thereupon as we continue to search through the edges and thin places.

Vitae

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