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Back to the Roots: Cartoon Saloon's Revitalisation

of the Irish Tradition for Younger Audiences

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Contents

1   Introduction

Myth and folktales have always featured heavily in native Irish culture, boasting a mythology dating back to well before Ireland's introduction to Christianity, which aided in reducing the prominence of the beliefs of this rich pagan culture. Additionally, the subsequent multiple invasions of Ireland and the resulting colonial rule that followed forced the inhabitants to conform to the beliefs of the colonisers. However, despite the lack of first-hand accounts of written work preserving this culture, and the continuous attempts to minimise this culture, the general spirit of these beliefs in the mythological have preserved throughout the ages into modern day.

Throughout the centuries, and most specifically during English rule over Ireland, the Irish have protested the continued destruction and nullification of their native culture by the imposing forces. One of the most recognisable movements against the colonial rule is the Gaelic Revival movement, which was initiated by the Young Ireland movement in the early nineteenth century (*Britannica.com*). This movement focused on the revival of the Gaelic language, which was almost extinct, through recounting the ancient tales and legends of Ireland, originally recorded in Gaelic, in order to reclaim interest in the Gaelic language. This movement restored Gaelic to an extent and awakened a national pride in the Irish for their native culture. This association between patriotic nationalism and its relation to the folklore of Ireland has also continued to be significant in the modern media, with film, literature, and plays all drawing inspirations from the folklore to reconnect to the ancient, idealised identity of the Irish people before colonialism.

Much scholarly research already exists on the state of postcolonial Ireland and how the ideologies of colonisers still influence the culture of Ireland. Kevin Kenny approaches the prospect of Ireland as a British colony from a historical aspect, exploring how established terms such as imperialism and colonialism relate to Ireland, as well as the role of the Irish population in defining Ireland's relationship with the British empire (see: *Ireland and the British Empire,* 2005). Declan Kiberd is another prominent name within Irish studies, and his work addresses how literature aids the development of a nation and how this literature can be affected by coloniser, and later international, influences (see: *The Irish Writer and the World*, 2005).

Geraldine Meaney has also conducted a thorough study of how Irish culture has defined the role of women throughout its history, and the resultant effect on the Irish national image (see: *Gender, Ireland and Cultural Change: Race, Sex and Nation,* 2011).

Scholars such as Tom Walsh have specifically studied how animation, through its storytelling, can be used as a medium for Irish postcolonial critique and analysis. But while these studies have thus far been thoroughly comprehensive, an area that I found lacking in research was the impact that specific items of Irish media, and in particular children's media, could have on its audience through intentional designs of its compositional elements.

Tom Walsh affirms that oral storytelling tradition is a central inspiration for Irish animation and its relevant discourses ("The in-Betweeners: Irish Animation as a Postcolonial Discourse", 15). The importance of the storytelling tradition in anti-colonial sentiments is highlighted in the Gaelic Revival movement, which cemented the necessity of old traditions and beliefs in the creation of a national culture in order to unify the nation and redefine Ireland's identity without any influence of British cultural beliefs. Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy applies the same technique of building national cultures on the foundation of old traditional beliefs, therefore these animations shall be analysed in this thesis to determine how this effect is achieved. The works of Homi K. Bhabha and Frantz Fanon shall be utilised as the theoretical framework of this thesis as their concepts are implemented visually or narratively throughout the Irish trilogy to communicate the importance of past beliefs in the current national identity.

Cartoon Saloon is an independent Irish animation studio that was founded in 1999 by Tomm Moore, Nora Twomey and Paul Young (*Independent.ie*), which is operated from their studio in Kilkenny. The studio has thus far created multiple feature films and animated series which were internationally successful. Their first movie, *Brendan and the Secret of the Kells* (2009) was critically acclaimed, and the company went on to release three other feature films: *Song of the Sea* (2014), *The Breadwinner* (2017), and *Wolfwalkers* (2020), three of which are subjects of analysis in this thesis. Their feature films received positive reviews and multiple nominations for awards such as the Academy Award and BAFTA.

Secret of the Kells (2009), *Song of the Sea* (2014), and *Wolf Walkers* (2020), informally termed the Irish trilogy, are all heavily influenced by Irish folklore and aim to educate and reconnect young Irish audiences with their native culture while also representing Ireland's history of colonialism and its effects in an appropriate manner. Moore states, "I felt it important to

2

reinforce that losing folklore from our everyday life means losing connection to our environment and culture […] folklore and superstitions serve functions beyond entertainment, or quaint stories for tourists. They bind people to the landscape, and that is being lost" (*Cartoonbew.com*). This quote summarises his intentions for these movies to be inspirational as well as entertaining for their audiences.

To justify my choice of these films, I will provide a small synopsis of each to specify how they relate to my thesis topic. *Brendan and the Secret of the Kells* (2009), set in the Viking invasion period, follows the adventures of Brendan as he learns to become a master illuminator. His journey leads him to the forest outside of Kells where he meets the fairy Aisling, who helps him in his quest. These events take place under the constant pressure of the Norsemen and their imminent invasion, which comes to a head at the end of the movie when the Abbey is attacked.

Song of the Sea (2014) tells the story of siblings Ben and Saoirse. Saoirse is the last of the Selkies and the only person capable of freeing the fairy creatures of Ireland, however, without her coat she is unable to complete her task. Therefore, the film follows the siblings as they escape from their grandmother in the city in search of Saoirse's coat, leading them to interact with multiple folklore creatures, who aid them throughout their search.

Lastly, *WolfWalkers* (2020) is a story set in 1650 Kilkenny which tells of an unlikely friendship between an English apprentice wolf hunter and a Wolfwalker, a mythical human that transforms into a wolf when asleep, as they navigate their relationship while the Lord Protector threatens the destruction of the wolves that live in the forests of Kilkenny. Although these films all discuss colonisation, they all present different aspects of the process, pertaining to the beginning invasions (*Secret of the Kells*), the colonised Ireland (*Wolfwalkers*), and the postcolonial state and the aftereffects of colonialism (*Song of the Sea*).

In this thesis I will analyse how the concept of colonialism, and its resulting effect on Irish culture, is presented in the works of Cartoon Saloon in a way that is suitable for younger audiences. Additionally, I will demonstrate how the chosen films attempt to reawaken an interest in indigenous Irish beliefs in younger audiences, and emphasise their importance in the modern cultural identity, through the artistic choices that Cartoon Saloon has made. The focus of my analysis will be the visual aspects of these films and how they establish a connection between the wilderness of Ireland and the folklore characters as well as how this is utilised to

portray old Irish beliefs in a positive light, and in contrast, how industrialised towns and colonising forces are portrayed negatively.

In order to analyse these features in detail I shall examine the composition of the characters and the settings in each movie, and analyse the colour composition, the silhouette of the characters as well as the influences of traditional Celtic art in the natural settings presented in the films. Chris Gosden and J. D. Hill state that Celtic art dates back to middle Iron age, appearing in multiple European countries in stylised reiterations (3), therefore, they could be considered a symbol of the old Irish culture. Certain symbols are used as a recurring motif to create a sense of connection between the past and nature in the Cartoon Saloon movies.

The cinematic tools that are used to portray each setting, such as lighting and shape language, will be also analysed to determine how Cartoon Saloon creates a clear binary system between the city and natural settings and the effect these creative choices have on the audience. Additionally, I will demonstrate how the portrayal of each setting aids in the discourse that these movies attempt to initiate about colonisation.

Furthermore, I shall also evaluate the soundtracks of the movies and analyse how traditional Irish music is interwoven into these films, along with what effect it has on the audience and visuals of the films. Another auditory object of analysis in these movies is the use of the Gaelic language throughout the story in a way that attempts to spark an interest in the Irish youth, which is mainly achieved by infrequent instances of language use by the folklore characters in the movies. Mariavita Cambria cites that through the forced use of another language over the native one of the land, the colonised people tend to have issues with a fractured identity (1). To reconcile this issue, Cartoon Saloon marries the concept of the old Irish folklore to the Gaelic tongue by having the mythical characters use Gaelic when singing or in scenes that reaffirm unity.

Children's films do not typically portray heavy, and violent, topics such as colonialism and cultural displacement, but, as Moore has suggested, it is vital for the younger generation to know of their country's history as they have the ability to shape the future of their nation. Hence, it is also necessary to analyse what techniques these works employ to make their audience aware of the past and their lost native culture, and vanishing language, in a way that would be engaging to younger people.

It should be mentioned, however, that this representation of an idealised indigenous culture is problematic, as these movies portray the national identity of a very specific group of people, the native Irish. Due to the large amount of migration that has taken place for centuries in Ireland, this representation of a native Irish culture being a vital aspect of being Irish could be deemed inappropriate for young migrants who also view these films. However, M.S. Kumar and L.A. Scanlon argue that the indigenous Irish are defined in "a space of disconnect created between revolutionary aspirations and actualization," which further muddles the exact determination of the intended audience for these movies as many migrants are also within the same position (7). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that young native Irish audiences would be colloquially familiar with the folklore represented in these media and can be assumed to the target of the messages in these films. Therefore, I address this thesis with the knowledge that only a minor percentage of all children who view these films will be able to relate to them on a cultural level and direct my analysis to this particular target audience.

Throughout my analysis, I will determine how these movies present postcolonial concepts from the works of Homi. K. Bhaba and Frantz Fanon to introduce young audiences to the notion of postcolonial discourse in a less direct manner.

The process of colonisation and decolonisation involves violence and a displacement of values in order for the shift of power and control to take place. Cartoon Saloon attempts to visualise these occurrences in their movies, and Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) introduce concepts of postcolonialism that will be explored in the context of these films. An aspect of Fanon's works that are addressed in these films is the violence that colonialism entails; this attribute of colonialism is conveyed throughout both the narratives and the visuals of these films and will be expanded upon in the following chapters. Furthermore, the importance of language and national literature are also highlighted in his works, which the Irish trilogy also incorporate in their narratives. Additionally, Fanon draws attention to how the past traditions must be used "with the intention of opening the future" (232) and how these traditions must be altered in order to be harmonious with the struggle that the native population face when attempting to develop their national culture after legal decolonisation, which is also implemented in the Irish trilogy.

After decolonisation, it is impossible for a nation to revert back to the same culture and belief system that was used before colonisation, since during the process of colonisation certain

beliefs and values from the colonisers' culture are adopted by the indigenous population. Therefore, the nation must redefine itself and its culture in order to compensate for these new beliefs and reinvent the old beliefs and traditions that may be outdated.

The works of Homi K. Bhabha, namely *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *The Location of Culture* (1994), also support the idea of a national culture needing to be redefined after decolonisation and serve as a source of inspiration in this thesis. Specifically, his focus on how the national origins of colonised countries are lost and warped throughout time and the pressures of colonialism are directly implemented throughout the narratives of the Irish trilogy (*Nation and Narration*, 1). Bhabha mentions how a nation is never static, rather it is "a much more transitional social reality" (1), which is portrayed throughout the movies of Cartoon Saloon as they reinvent the folklore characters in the films, thereby making them relevant again, which allows children to easily connect with these characters.

Additionally, in the case of written literature, Bhabha argues that the concept of a nation itself is slotted into a restrictive structure that creates textual meaning rather than capturing its accurate meaning to the people of the nation, which Cartoon Saloon's works also acknowledge and attempt to manage by linking national heritage and culture to nature rather than any specific traditions or beliefs (*Nation and Narration*, 2). Furthermore, Bhabha's definition of Mimicry and Hybridity can be applied to the chosen movies. The Irish trilogy incorporate protagonists that are literal hybrids of the folklore and human divisions of their respective films and involve attempts at mimicry in order to conform to the societal standards which are defined based on the coloniser influences.

The effects of colonisation on the landscape of a colony is typically overlooked, despite the fact that most colonisers exploited the natural resources of their colonies and warped the native geography of the colonised lands. Green postcolonialism is the study of how colonisation affects not only the people of a colonised nation, but also the land itself, and the interplay between the two. This approach provides concepts that support the connection that the Cartoon Saloon movies attempt to create between culture and the land. The works of Graham Huggan have been one of the foundations of green postcolonialism and will be utilised in my analysis.

Green postcolonialism draws attention to the fact that colonisation warps the relationship between the indigenous people and the land through exploitation of their natural resources,

and that sometimes this relationship is damaged in such a way that it is no longer possible to repair the damage (Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, 1). This results in the indigenous people being denied their traditional means of profit, while also being denied the new methods of the coloniser due to their natural resources being exploited (2) and warps their relationship with their land into an indifferent industrial relationship rather than one of preservation and respect, as with the old culture. Given Cartoon Saloon's tendency to connect nature to native culture, as is seen in all three movies, this concept is vital in analysing these movies as it allows the more abstract ideas of postcolonialism to take on a more visual representation, making them more comprehensible for young children.

The second chapter of my thesis will expand on the postcolonial concepts discussed above which I will later employ in the analysis of the films. Chapter three will include a brief history of Ireland, focused on the timeframes in which the respective movies take place. Since the visual analysis will be done primarily through grouping similar features of the movies, I will dedicate chapter four to the Cartoon Saloon studios and their general ideologues and chapter five to the plot of the movies and how the events in each open a discourse about postcolonialism for audiences. Seeing as the implementation of the techniques in all three movies are fundamentally the same, I shall analyse the movies as a trilogy and divide the analysis into three chapters: the visual composition of the characters; the composition of the settings; and the soundtrack.

The final chapter will focus on my findings, which will be based on how Cartoon Saloon introduces young audiences to the concept of postcolonialism and highlights the importance of a national culture that acknowledges old beliefs and traditions through their films, and specifically through their visual animation style.

2   Theoretical Framework

Due to the overarching themes of nationality and the historical settings of Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy, these media can be analysed from a postcolonial perspective. Initially, a general definition of postcolonialism will be provided, along with references to the most prominent scholars and their arguments, followed by a more specific review of Frantz Fanon and Homi K. Bhahba's works, as well as an outline of the core concepts of green postcolonialism, which are addressed in the Irish trilogy.

Through its narratives and visual design choices, Cartoon Saloon creates an atmosphere which encourages a positive association with old Irish culture, highlights its connection to nature, and stresses the importance of its preservation. Additionally, the Irish trilogy focuses on themes of reconnection with the folkloric past, journeys of Native self-(re)discovery and reconciliation with nature. Furthermore, through the antagonization of the colonising forces, and the violence involved, the audience is provided a subtle critique of the colonial system. Fanon and Bhabha's works also focus closely on these concepts, hence they will be analysed to determine how Cartoon Saloon's works incorporate postcolonial concepts in their narratives.

2.1   Main Concepts of Postcolonialism

Richard Osborne defines postcolonialism as "[t]he attempt to disentangle this interaction of the 'colonised' and the 'imperial' subjects" (209). At its core, postcolonialism attempts to understand the dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised; the techniques implemented by the coloniser; and how this affected the colonised nations' culture in the past and present day. This definition is very generalised, however, specific scholars in the postcolonial field address this term in various capacities that allow for further introspection into the complex relationship between coloniser and colonised.

Eve Darian-Smith highlights that postcolonialism can be essentially used either "to demarcate the transition from colonialism to self-determination among formerly colonized nations" or "emblematic of continuing, and often veiled, oppression by the West over the rest of the world" in how they conform to Western standards of modernity even in their state of independence (292). Darian-Smith goes on to argue that the western notion of multiculturalism compensates

for the indigenous population's inability to recognise themselves "distinctly" (295). This is because the West, through its othering and devaluing of the Native populations, have sabotaged the ability to recognise a people through their race or cultural values in an unprejudiced way.

It is due to this reason that Darian-Smith insists that it is vital that both the local and global aspects and influences must be acknowledged when defining a nation and its relationship with other nation-states (295). Due to the access to external influences, such as the internet, the consideration of both external and internal influences is vital in how a nation creates its national identity.

One of the most influential scholars in this field is Edward Said, whose work focuses on how power affects culture and histories of the colonised countries. In *Orientalism* he argues that the West defines the colony nations in such a way that ensures it always keeps the upper hand (8), and argues that "ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied" (6). The concept that culture is interwoven with power is vital to defining the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, which is also reiterated by multiple other scholars.

Another prominent scholar is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, whose approach to postcolonialism is focused on the relationship between women by the imperial colonists. She claims that women are not only suppressed by the coloniser, but also by the culture of patriarchy that is socially accepted in familial relations ("Can the Subaltern Speak?", 32). Due to this silencing, the subaltern is not given the opportunity to define themselves, but rather are defined by those in power, resulting in "displaced" identity that is caught between "tradition and modernization" (61). This concept once again echoes the ideas that Said also identifies and further cements the direct relationship between culture, identity, and power.

Graham Huggan defines postcolonialism as a "performative mode of critical revisionism" (*The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*, 9). He asserts that "while postcolonialism's revolutionary impetus holds open a theoretical debate about beginnings [...] revisionist dimensions invite the practical reconsideration of endings" (5) and argues that we must "trouble accepted versions of it [colonisation]" as the past is something that "needs to be returned to again and again" (6). Postcolonialist scholars highlight how the past lingers and affects the current cultures and situations that postcolonial nations face.

Robert Young affirms that the purpose of postcolonial theory is "to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken […] postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies" (3). He also contends that postcolonialism is a continuation of "past conflicts into the experience of the present" which manifest themselves in the "the desire to transform the present" (3) through the continuous discourse on postcolonial identity, culture, and international relationships.

The term postcolonialism is not without issues, however, Ania Loomba claims that "[a] country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time" (12). While it must be acknowledged that a country has earned its independence from a political standpoint, it should be recognised that previous colonisers can still exert influence over a previous colony. Furthermore, Loomba accuses Postcolonialism of shifting "the focus from locations and institutions to individuals and their subjectivities" (20) and disregarding the history of a previous colony before its colonisation (21). Nevertheless, she acknowledges the merits of this field, when used with awareness and caution.

2.2 Cartoon Saloon and The Works of Bhabha, Fanon, and Green Postcolonialism

I shall mainly focus on the Frantz Fanon's works *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) to define how national culture is influenced by the Native and settler population, along with how literature and traditional folklore shapes the culture of a postcolonial nation. The works of Homi K. Bhabha and the concepts he introduces in *The Location of Culture* (1994) and *Nation and Narration* (1990) will be analysed, as they are also visually represented in the Irish trilogy. Furthermore, the general concept of green postcolonialism, will also be defined as they correlate very strongly with the imagery that Cartoon Saloon employs in their works.

The works chosen for the theoretical framework of the thesis are some of the foundations of postcolonial theory, which is very suitable for the analysis of media that potentially represent the first point of contact between younger audiences and postcolonial theory. Postcolonial

media aimed at younger audiences present a foundation that can later be built upon and utilise concepts that are easier to comprehend, as well as representable in a visual fashion, without reducing the core values of the theories. The ideas that these scholars articulate are directly and visually shown throughout the three chosen movies of Cartoon Saloon using symbolic imagery, colour contrast, character design and storytelling.

By illustrating simplified postcolonial concepts in a visual fashion, native Irish audiences are made aware of their country's past and the cultural and geographical changes that befell Ireland as a result of the colonisation. This allows for younger audiences to develop a basic understanding of the essence of postcolonialism and connect with their country through the acknowledgement of its history and trauma.

2.3   Frantz Fanon

Frantz Omar Fanon (1925-1961) was a scholar whose works focus on the struggle for independence, and the relationship between the Algerian Black population and their white suppressors. His work is influenced heavily by his background in psychology, resulting in his works incorporating a psychoanalytic perspective to his analysis of the colonial status of the people. The overarching themes and arguments in his ideology provide a general framework for the struggle of all colonised people and the aftereffects of colonialism in postcolonial societies.

Due to the wide scope of Fanon's work, and Cartoon Saloon's representations of these ideologies, I will provide an outline some of his most applicable concepts, along with how other scholars have built upon these concepts. These philosophies and terms will be referenced throughout the analysis of the movies.

2.3.1 Inferiority of the Colonised as the Identity of the Native

Fanon explores how the colonial identity is warped by the coloniser and how the colonised are made to internalise the mindset of inferiority. In her article, Anindita Mondal summarises Fanon's arguments and encapsulates the identity of the colonised as being "defined in negative terms by those in a position of power" (2). Simply put, the Native is defined as all that the

11

coloniser is not, therefore becoming inferior to the coloniser by embodying traits deemed undesirable by the coloniser.

This new identity of the Native forces positive traits to be hidden in order for the Native to fit into the description that the coloniser has defined, resulting in a splintered identity that exaggerates certain traits while completely disregarding others. Young defines this as "the politics of invisibility [which] involves not actual invisibility, but a refusal of those in power to see who or what is there" (5). To be able to justify the coloniser's authoritarian rule, the Native has to be redefined in such a way that makes him seem in need of guidance and the coloniser's rule.

The inferiority that Fanon pinpoints is also relatable to Paul Gilroy's definition of racism and its usage in colonial suppression. He asserts that racism is a "mode of exploitation" which exaggerates and exhibits racial differences in a way that is "productive" to the colonisers. This enables the colonisers to reiterate the unavoidable inferiority of the Native through outlining the differences between themselves and the Native as something innate and biological (34). He elaborates that "to be dismissed on raciological grounds as bestial or infrahuman was to be cast outside of both culture and historicality" (35), which would also aid the coloniser as it is further proof of the Native's inferiority. This self-feeding cycle allows for the coloniser to maintain control over the Native through the exaggeration of their inherent inferiority and lack of civilisation.

Due to the Enlightenment movement, the European coloniser views himself as a civilising force, therefore the Native is identified as wild and less developed. Fanon asserts that "[t]he feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: It is the racist who creates his inferior" (*Black Skin, White Masks,* 69). The coloniser's feeling of superiority causes the creation of a cyclic cause-effect relationship that, when paired with the physical conditions of colonialism, results in the colonised to eventually believe in their own inferiority and internalise the coloniser's control over them.

To counter their perceived inferiority, the colonised may attempt to mimic the coloniser, however, this misguided attempt results in an amalgamation where the Native loses both his pre-colonial identity and is also unable to fully transform himself into one of the colonisers. Fanon addresses this issue in *Black Skin, White Masks:* "I analyzed my heredity. I made a complete audit of my ailment. I wanted to be typically Negro—it was no longer possible. I

wanted to be white—that was a joke. And, when I tried, on the level of ideas and intellectual activity, to reclaim my negritude, it was snatched away from me" (102). The realisation that the Native can never fully become like the coloniser, and that he has lost his original sense of self inspires the Native to reconnect with their past traditions to restore his identity through his ancestral history and lineage. This concept will be discussed further in section 1.4.

Another possible reaction to the forced sense of inferiority is that "he [the Native] is treated as an inferior but he is not convinced of his inferiority… The Native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 53). This reaction typically results in resistance from the colonised people, both in the form of national literature that glorify their culture, as well as physical resistance such as revolutions or strikes. These reactions often manifest in the process of decolonisation, which will be discussed below.

Loomba asserts that "one of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to 'civilise' its 'others' and to fix them into perpetual 'otherness'" (145). This contradiction causes the reaction that Fanon outlines above, as it justifies the coloniser's attempt to keep the indigenous people in the inferior mind frame; since they are also trying to redefine the Native into something that matches their ideologies.

2.3.2 The Literature of Decolonisation and its Effects on National Patriotism

In its most basic definition, decolonisation is "the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 35). The Native population of a colony unite on a national level to free themselves from the objectification of colonialism and recreate themselves as "new" men, therefore reclaiming their right to define themselves rather than being defined in the limiting framework provided by the coloniser (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 36-37). This unification of the people is the first step towards decolonisation, joining the colonised people as they preserve and restore their national culture, their race, and their geography (46). This unity is the prelude to not only a violent physical resistance against the colonising forces, but also a call to resistance in the literature produced.

Said also supports this argument, in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, he states "grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up

13

and throw off imperial subjection" (xiii). Fanon affirms that the literature that stems from decolonisation "expresses above all a hand-to-hand struggle and it reveals the need that man has to liberate himself from a part of his being which already contained the seeds of decay" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 220). This struggle is often represented by praising the native traditions and stressing the negative traits of the colonial world (221) which aims to bolster confidence in the Native's national identity and lessen the status of inferiority imposed on the Native by the oppressor.

National literature can also be termed a "literature of combat" since it attempts to inspire the Native population to "fight for their existence as a nation" and in doing so attempts to construct, and reawaken, the national consciousness of the people (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 240). Loomba also affirms that literature "encode the tensions, complexities and nuances within colonial cultures" and provide a medium for "appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies" (63). This effect is usually achieved by a heavy reliance on past folklore and traditions, which help to glorify old traditions and entice a sense of national pride in the Native.

Overall, Fanon outlines a three phase system of the evolution of national writers: first, the Native writer's works accommodate the coloniser's culture and values; second, the writer attempts to reconnect with his people, but is unable to, therefore resulting in him focusing on past events, or the reinterpretation of old folklore; and third, the writer turns to producing "fighting literature" in order to reawaken the people's will to fight against the colonial forces (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 221-223). The theme of violence and its importance in Fanon's notions of decolonisation are addressed in the next section.

Similarly, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, also propose a periodic system for the creation of national literature. They contend that the literature produced in the imperial period was biased towards the colonisers as it was "produced by a literate elite whose primary identification is with the colonizing power", however, this literature is ultimately "produced 'under imperial licence' by 'natives' or 'outcasts'" (5). This literature is not considered as representative of the colonised people as it still enforces the views of the colonisers. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin elaborate that this literature was "written on government paper with government ink and pens" (6) and supported the rule of the colonisers while superficially attempting to be seen as native by enlisting indigenous writers.

2.3.3 The Role of Violence in Colonisation and Decolonisation

Colonialism is defined as "separatist and regionalist" as it "reinforces [the existence of individual tribes] and separates" the distinct regions of colonies that the colonisers established in order to curb large uprisings (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 94). Typically, the coloniser attempts to focus the Native's anger, that manifests due to the injustice of their situation, towards other Natives by creating a perceived notion of difference between them, resulting in internal struggles rather than uprisings against the settler. This division is vital in maintaining control of the Natives, as it allows the settler to impose their rule over Natives more easily if they are isolated.

Aside from the psychological aspect of the Native's desire for violence due to the injustice they face, Fanon also remarks that from their first meeting and henceforth, the settler's manipulation and exploitation of the Native is carried out under the threat of war and physical violence to ensure the Native is compliant, albeit reluctantly, to the coloniser's ideology (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 36). Nevertheless, this threat of violence will result in the anger that the Native harbours for the coloniser overtaking the fear. This anger, and the violence that ensues from it, is the force that allows the unification of the colonised against the settler, merging them in a common purpose (40). This unifying violence, along with the old traditions and literature of the colony allow for the indigenous people to unite under the desire for freedom.

Spivak notes that not all colonial violence is physical. In his analysis of Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Graham K. Riach defines the term "Epistemic violence" as "violence inflicted through thought, speech, and writing, rather than actual physical harm" (11). This violence is caused by the fabricated knowledge that the coloniser creates and "constitutes a form of violence, to her [the Native's] mind, and has been used to justify real violence against others" (83). This violence is how the cultural beliefs of a Native population are warped by the settlers through the threat of violence, further internalising the inferior mindset for the Native.

Ironically, violence is the key to both the creation and destruction of the relationship between the colonised and the settler. The internal violent struggle of the Native's renegotiation of his new national identity, as well as the physical violence between a colonised people and their colonisers, is a necessary aspect of decolonisation that is non-negotiable (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 35). Fanon expands on the necessity of violence by claiming it is a "cleansing force" which provides the Native with the means to counter the internalised feelings of inferiority as it

15

"makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (94). This self-respect is necessary for the process of decolonisation, as it begins on a personal level, with each person overcoming the mindset of inferiority and helplessness before they unite as a singular force against the coloniser.

The coloniser's implicit reliance on violence in order to control the Natives cements the fact that violence is both the key to and downfall of the colonisation of a nation, as it is the tool that allows the settler to initially control the Native but is also the tool that the Native uses against the coloniser to reclaim their control over their land (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 40). This cultivated anger, and the resulting violence, allows the Native to challenge, and defeat, the settler within the constraints that the colonisers themselves set up to ensure control over the colony.

2.3.4 Significance of the Past Traditions in National Resistance and Pride

Throughout the process of colonisation, the settler continually attempts to lessen the value of the Native's traditional culture, Fanon argues that "the Native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil" (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 41). This deprecation is integral to the coloniser as it offers many advantages. Firstly, it allows the colonist to enforce their own values more easily, as the Native would be more reciprocal when under the belief that their own culture is nocuous. Secondly, it reduces the chance of resistance as it results in the destruction of the Natives' national pride and history.

Fanon addresses the Native reconnecting with his culture and reviving its value in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

> I tested the limits of my essence; beyond all doubt there was not much of it left. It was here that I made my most remarkable discovery. Properly speaking, this discovery was a rediscovery…All of that, exhumed from the past, spread with its insides out, made it possible for me to find a valid historic place […] I was not a primitive, not even a half-man, I belonged to a race that had already been working in gold and silver two thousand years ago. (99)

When the relationship between coloniser and Native has reached a breaking point, it is this rediscovery that allows the Native to regain his confidence and for him to reconnect with his

fellow countrymen. The pride that the Native regains from his indigenous culture also further promotes the anger towards the colonist, as he is enraged that the colonist belittles him, and his culture, so severely. Said also presents a similar argument, stating "past and present inform each other and [...] each co-exists with the other" (*Culture and Imperialism*, 4), which echoes Fanon's concept of the past heavily influencing the present, as the past also serves as inspiration for the Native.

However, the potential dangers of relying too heavily on past traditions and beliefs must also be addressed. Fanon remarks that if the Native only attempts to reinstate previous beliefs and traditions without adapting them to fit the changed circumstances, he will become "hypnotized by these mummified fragments which because they are static are in fact symbols of negation and outworn contrivances" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 224). He also determines that when the people of a nation are actively battling against colonialism, the meaning of past traditions must also be redefined, as they must aid the Native in asserting his independence from the colonist (224).

Said contends that "appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present" (*Culture and Imperialism*, 3), and although this applies to modern day postcolonial nations, the Natives also employs this same technique in their struggle for decolonisation. For Fanon, this reference to the past is utilised in how traditional stories, struggles, and legends of a nation are modernised and made to adopt more contemporary symbolism (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 240). Through this retelling, these stories take on a new layer of meaning and provide a context for the people of the nation to reconnect with their old culture as it embodies the new difficulties that they are facing.

Anne Markey and Anne O'Conner demonstrate the importance of folklore and old cultural beliefs by asserting that "the impulse to tell stories is universal and timeless, because stories help us to make sense of the world and our place within it" (6). By recontextualising a familiar story, it allows the Native to gain motivation and strength from the old beliefs to better prepare him for the struggles of decolonisation.

The most important capacity of a nation's past culture and beliefs is its ability to act as a beacon of hope for the future (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 210). Through reminiscing of the past glory of the nation, the Native population are given hope that they can reclaim that glory, which

serves to boost morale and serves as a uniting force against the colonist by presenting them with a shared ambition of reviving this idealised past.

2.3.5 The Importance of Language

Fanon insists on the vital importance of language for the colonised person, in *Black Skin, White Masks* he notes how "a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (9). He goes on to remark that the language of the coloniser serves to elevate the colonised people "above his jungle status", however, he also mentions how dangerous this newfound ability is for the coloniser, as the colonised people are given the ability to voice the truth of the oppression they face and challenge the narrative that the colonisers have created (23). The importance of language in decolonisation can also be further stressed due to the importance of fighting literature, as mentioned previously.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin contend that "[o]ne of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language", and that the settler utilises language as a means through which he defines and asserts the "hierarchal structure of power" (*The Empire Writes Back*, 7). This effect is achieved by using language to determine the "'truth', 'order', and 'reality'" (7) that the Native abides by, therefore creating a framework that is fully prejudiced towards the philosophy pf the coloniser. Loomba echoes this argument as she affirms that "[l]anguage and literature are together implicated in constructing the binary of a European self and a non-European other" (66). Language, in both the colonisation and decolonisation, grants the ability to create, redefine, and challenge the ideas of a, both colonised and colonising, people.

On the other hand, this mastery of the coloniser's language also carries an element of danger for the Native as well, as it also warps the Native. Fanon contends that "The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (*Black Skin, White Masks,* 25). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o also affirms that "language carries culture, and culture carries […] the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world." Therefore, to control the colonised people, the coloniser must dominate "the mental universe of the colonised" which is achieved though how they "perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (16). This warping of the Native's psychology causes the indigenous people to believe in their inferiority to the coloniser.

However, this desire to be on the same level as the coloniser can never be fulfilled. Ngũgĩ claims that "language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (9). The language of the coloniser creates multiple issues for the colonised people in their attempts to define themselves within a framework that is prejudiced against them, which only reaffirms their inferiority and encourages the Native to lose his connection with his indigenous culture and national pride.

This paradox creates a segregated identity in the colonised people, since by accepting the language of the coloniser, they are also accepting the coloniser's worldview. John Drabinski, in his entry on Frantz Fanon in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* highlights how this unavoidable acknowledgement of the coloniser's power is in direct contradiction of the colonised people's use of the language to define their identity as an independent people. This results in a conflict in the psyche of the colonised people since they are subconsciously forced to accept their inferior status to the coloniser in their attempts to articulate the truth of their being.

2.4   Homi K. Bhabha

Another influential postcolonial scholar is Homi K. Bhabha, whose work has influenced and inspired much new research and discussion in Postcolonialism theory. Born in 1949 in Mumbai and having finished his studies in the United Kingdom, his unique position as a citizen of a pervious British colony, with the addition of the knowledge of western philosophies have greatly influenced his works. He uses this dual accessibility to elaborate on the complex and abstract terms in his essays with real life examples to allow readers to better comprehend the meaning of the terms he defines.

David Huddart specifies that Bhabha's work is unique in two ways: first, in the vocabulary which provides tools for the reader to analyse colonial writings, and secondly, in clearly highlighting the "double forces" that the West uses to define itself and "justify its rational self-image" (2). Bhabha's focus on colonial and postcolonial literature when studying the relationship between coloniser and colonised people make his work very suitable for the analysis of the Cartoon Saloon movies as they are inspired in part by colonial literature.

By considering the mutual influence of the coloniser and colonised on one another, Bhabha's work provides the tools to explore how the colonised population also actively affect the

19

colonisation (Huddart, 3). The terms that Bhabha coins are heavily alluded to in the Cartoon Saloon works through its representation of its main protagonists, who possess modern traits and adopt more traditional beliefs throughout the course of the movies, resulting in characters that are hybrids of two cultures.

2.4.1 Third Space: The Site Where Identities Are Created

To address the terms defined by Bhabha throughout his essays in *The Location of Culture* (1994), the space in which this terminology is created must first be defined. The Third Space is used by the coloniser and the colonised to redefine themselves, each other, and their relationship. It embodies the "discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, historicized and read anew" (Bhabha, 37). By creating a dynamic space that allows for terms to be redefined, it allows the coloniser, and also in more discrete terms the colonised people, to outline their relationship as it develops and changes.

Additionally, the Third Space opens a dialogue between the coloniser and the colonised and allows them to communicate, influence, and negotiate their identities and their dynamic, rather than the coloniser solely having the ability to dictate the terms of their relationship (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 36). Furthermore, Bhabha suggests that the Third Space "destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code" (37). This portrays the effects of the settler's influence on the Native population's culture as it is censored and warped, as well as how cultural modifications that are enforced onto the colonised people can be in direct contradiction to their own traditional beliefs.

However, despite the creation of the Third Space being due to colonial rule, this concept can also be viewed in a more positive light after decolonisation. Sayyed Rahim Moosavinia and Sayyede Maryam Hosseini contend that "[t]his 'in-between' and 'interstitial' grey space 'belongs' to neither of the poles and stays in 'in-between' the borders" and while this can make the people within this space "elusive", this space can persist after decolonisation as a postcolonial nation attempts to redefine its culture within the international space (4). This more modern rendition of the Third Space is seen within new postcolonial media, including

Cartoon Saloon, as they use this space to open a discussion about the national identity of a postcolonial nation.

This ambivalent space allows for the merging of the traditional and modern values that a nation might have adopted throughout its colonial rule, which can result in the most accurate definition for the identity of a colonised people. This Third Space is the core concept that allows for the development and practice of the terms defined below.

2.4.2 Ambivalence and the Stereotype

The stereotype, what it represents and how it can be challenged are addressed in the Irish trilogy, therefore, I will address Bhabha's definition of this term to be able to highlight how this is applied and subverted in these movies throughout my analysis.

The main argument of Bhabha's work entail the assurance that the relationship between the colonised and coloniser are not simply one sided but rather a dynamic communication with each influencing the other. The term Ambivalence also supports this concept by defining how the dominance of the settler over the Native is not as all-encompassing and the Native is still capable of affecting the settler.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin summarise the concept of Ambivalence as "the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer" (*Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 10). This insinuates that there is a dynamic relationship between the two forces of colonialism, the coloniser and the colonised, and that the coloniser attempts to recompensate the Natives' influence on them through the derogatory framework that they create to define the Native.

Loomba asserts that "these stereotypes provided an ideological justification for different kinds of exploitation" (98), however, this is not the only reason for the creation of the stereotype. Bhabha addresses this topic through his exploration of how the stereotype is defined and altered by the settler. He contends that the inspiration for the creation of the stereotype is based more heavily on the effects of the Native on the settler, specifically the feelings of guilt (*The Location of Culture*, 81-82), rather than a technique to simply dehumanise the Native to justify the actions of the settler.

This Ambivalence is seen as the source of the flexibility that "gives the colonial stereotype its currency" and allows for the stereotype to stay relevant throughout historical changes and provides the coloniser with the means to maintain the supposed "predictability" and stagnant quality of the stereotype (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 67). This is one of the main requirements for the continued dominance of the coloniser as it allows the colonised to be defined as static, incapable of progress, and hence continues to justify the supposed 'benevolent and civilising' rule of the coloniser.

Additionally, Bhabha argues that this stereotyping of the Native also encompasses the wants of the Natives themselves. He writes that "the stereotype is at once a substitute and a shadow. By acceding to the wildest fantasies (in the popular sense) of the colonizer, the stereotyped Other reveals something of the 'fantasy' (as desire, defence) of that position of mastery" (*The Location of Culture*, 82). In essence, the Native is stereotyped as unable to rule themselves, therefore requiring the rule of the coloniser to function, but simultaneously, this definition encompasses the Native's desire for the ability to rule over themselves. This desire for the power to rule is mirrored in both the settler and the Native.

This concept of the Native's wants also being included in the definition of the stereotype is heavily implied throughout the works of Cartoon Saloon, with certain folklore characters proudly displaying the stereotypical traits, which originally contained negative connotations, and challenging the simplicity of the colonial Irish stereotype. This representation of the stereotype introduces the audience to a character that encompasses traits of the stereotype but expands it into a much more complex being, thereby also nullifying the colonial stereotype.

2.4.3 Hybridity

 Hybridity which "commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" is another of Bhabha's concepts that Cartoon Saloon incorporate in their films through their characters (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 108). Bhabha highlights how the cultural exchange between the coloniser and the colonised people is not a one-way communication with the settler enforcing their ideals onto the Natives. It is rather a site for cultural information exchange, with both the settler and the Native culture being affected by the other. Said also affirms that "cultural

experience or indeed every cultural form is radically, quintessentially hybrid" (*Culture and Imperialism*, 58), further reinstating the influences of the coloniser's culture on the postcolonial people's culture, even after decolonisation.

Tiffin specifies that postcolonial cultures are "inevitably hybridised" as it is "not possible to create or recreate national or regional formations wholly independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise" (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 95). This lingering effect of the coloniser's culture is also acknowledged by Cartoon Saloon through the characterisation of the protagonists, who embody this hybrid culture of modernity and traditional.

Bhabha remarks that Hybridity is "the sign of the productivity of colonial power […] it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through […] it displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (*The Location of Culture*, 112). The most important aspect of hybridity is its recognition of how the colonial forces maintain power and dominance over the Natives, rather than its resulting cultural influence. This recognition of how the settlers must warp the identity and culture of the Native essentially nullifies the justification the colonist has used in order to rationalise his actions of subjugation against the Native.

However, when this forced misconception of the Native is confronted, the very core of the authority that the settler has over the Native is taken into question (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 113). This development is usually the first step towards decolonisation, as Fanon also suggests, as it represents the first instance of the Native breaking from his mental mindset of colonisation

Furthermore, it is addressed that hybridity is a phenomenon that requires a certain extent of time needs to pass before the Native becomes fully aware of his warped beliefs. Bhabha notes that the colonised people, while being identified based on how the settler has defined them, also "force a re-cognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority […] the colonial discourse has reached that point when, faced with the hybridity of its objects, the *presence* of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112). Once the Native outwardly acknowledges that the coloniser contorts their culture and identity in order to maintain authority, the Native begins to challenge, resistance, and question the coloniser's rule.

23

Hybridity is, however, not only a tool utilised by the coloniser. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin affirm that "[m]ost post-colonial writing has concerned itself with the hybridised nature of post-colonial culture as a strength rather than a weakness" (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 183). Hybridity in postcolonial times allows for past traditions to intertwine with new cultural values "even as older forms continue to exist" (184). Hybridity, therefore, can also be viewed as a representation of Native culture's survival throughout the challenging times of colonial rule, rather than fully denying the past traditions and beliefs of a culture.

The Irish trilogy focuses primarily on this more positive rendition of hybridity, with their narratives predominantly focusing on showing a merging of the old and new cultures into a fusion that both acknowledges the past and adapts it to suit the needs of modern times. This development is portrayed through both the narratives and the personal evolution of the protagonists throughout the films.

2.4.4 Nation and Narration

In his book, *Nation and Narration* (1990), Bhabha addresses the creation of a national culture. He illustrates that "[n]ations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (1). He acknowledges that both the concepts of a nation and the national narrative are based in the beliefs and traditions of the Native people rather than fact.

The intersection between the political discourse that a nation faces when attempting to define itself and the national literature allow the Native people to define their national identity. This notion of a defined nation based on these concepts is particularly prominent in the West, and hence is often implemented in the colonies of the West during their decolonisation process to define themselves independently in terms that their coloniser is able to comprehend (1). By asserting themselves through mimicry of the coloniser, the indigenous population declare their new identity in a way that can also be internationally understood, therefore also establishing themselves as independent in the eyes of their peers.

Said affirms that, in colonial times, stories and narratives "also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history" (*Culture and Imperialism*, xii) resulting in the stories becoming much more valuable to the colonised nation

24

and their preservation all the more vital. Ngũgĩ, in his essay in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* highlights that national literature defines "the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (289). Due to the importance of literature, using this medium when defining a national presence is essential as it establishes the new identity of the Native in relation to his surroundings and the global stage.

The potential of literature to influence a people's culture and self-image restate their importance and the need to analyse them. Spivak contends that "[t]he role of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored" (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 269). This literature can originate from both from the colonised or the coloniser, as both have the capability to influence the Native.

Bhabha argues that the concept of a national tradition is not purely based on the traditions of the Native people but is rather also affected by the process of colonisation. He specifies that "the origins of national traditions turn out to be as much acts of affiliation and establishment as they are moments of disavowal, displacement, exclusion, and cultural contestation" (*Nation and Narration*, 5). Loomba also asserts that "literary and cultural practices also embody cross-cultural interactions and hybridities" (67) which provides further support to the usage of literature in an international setting. This highlights how impactful the colonisation of a nation is in its national culture, as Native population, rather than simply regressing to the old traditions and culture, instead include the trauma of colonisation, giving rise to a new national culture.

This definition of culture is not unproblematic, however, as the national culture must not be viewed as a simplistic "other" when compared to other cultures outside of the nation (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 4). The complex definition of culture is influenced by the notion of hybridity, as it blurred the lines between the Native and settler culture during colonial rule, therefore the dichotomy of the settler's concept of the 'other' is no longer valid.

Furthermore, even in the definition of a national culture, the nation is not fully united as culture is also defined differently in specific regions. Different districts of the nation faced different circumstances during the colonial period, such as different levels of discrimination, violence, and oppression. Therefore, the development and definition of the national culture also varied in accordance with the experience of the different groups.

The main rationale for the assumption of a unified culture is due to the literature of the nation as it only allows for a very narrow view of the nation and ignores the complexities of the national culture (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 3). However, while this generalisation is not ideal, it does provide an advantage as Bhabha asserts that:

> Its positive value lies in displaying the wide dissemination through which we construct the field of meanings and symbols associated with national life [...] Despite the considerable advance this represents, there is a tendency to read the Nation rather restrictively; either, as the ideological apparatus of state power [...] in a more utopian inversion, as the incipient or emergent expression of the 'national-popular' sentiment preserved in a radical memory. (*Nation and Narration*, 3)

Much like Bhabha outlines, scholars can analyse national culture from two viewpoints and consider how they interact in creating a national culture: how the conditions of colonisation affected the nation; how the colonised experience affected specific groups of people, and what effect this had on their understanding of their culture.

Modern media consumption is not solely based on books and the novel, it can be argued that not only literature, but rather all national media, including visual media, can be considered postcolonial and influential on national culture. Hence, I shall analyse Cartoon Saloon's works from the same perspective as Bhabha has outlined for literature, despite the issues that Bhabha raises. The concepts of national literature and its influence on the national culture can be translated onto the Irish trilogy as these works also strive to influence the creation of a national identity in young audiences and incorporate old Irish culture into their developing cultural perspective.

2.5   Green Postcolonialism

The last theory that is used in the analysis of the chosen movies is green postcolonialism. A trademark of the chosen Cartoon Saloon works is the relationship between traditional beliefs and nature and the positive representation of the return to nature. This direct link between culture and nature makes green postcolonialism a very suitable concept for the analysis of these movies, as it attempts to explore similar themes and determine how the native land affects the indigenous people in colonial and postcolonial circumstances.

The inspiration for this theory began with the term Ecological Imperialism in 1986 with Alfred W. Crosby's definition of the term. Coined in *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900,* Crosby explores how colonising forces alter the colonised lands and how this has affected the colonised people. By considering this interdependent relationship between the people and the land, imperialism is deemed not only detrimental to the culture and traditions of the colonised people, but also to the ecologies of the native lands (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 69). This term was the precursor what is now known as green postcolonialism and initiated the exploration of the relationship between the Native and his land.

Environmentalism is another term that is influenced by Ecological Imperialism, and heavily inspired green postcolonialism. Ashcroft defines this term as:

> The conquest and colonization of so many extra-European environments produced irreversible changes in land use, in flora and fauna and frequently damaged beyond repair traditionally balanced relations between indigenous communities and their environments, a relationship – unlike that of their conquerors – crucial to their understanding of their 'being' as of the land rather than merely on it. (*Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 72)

Although not specifically focused on Environmentalism, Said nonetheless acknowledges the vital connection between the Native and his motherland, and how the geography of the land affects the culture and literature of the Native. He argues that "none of us is outside or beyond geography" and that the geography of a colonial nations is an integral part of its colonial experience as the Native's "ideas […] images and imaginings" are heavily influenced by their geographical situation (*Culture and Imperialism*, 7). These influences are also present in the indigenous folklore and beliefs that the Native often exhibits.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin also affirm that "the sense of dislocation from an historical 'homeland' and that created by the dissonance between language, the experience of 'displacement' generates a creative tension within the language" (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 391). This dislocation causes a rift between the Native and his language, and therefore also his culture, since the modification of his land into something completely new and unrecognisable also means that he no longer has the vocabulary to describe his country.

Building on Said's work, Mary Lyn Stoll asserts that the exploitation of the colonised land, and the study of its effect on the Native population, is known as Environmental Colonialism and

focuses on the effects of the Native population's relationship with their motherland and how it is damaged through colonisation (*The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Business Ethics and Society*). Moreover, this exploitation is typically continued after the decolonisation of a land, particularly in poorer countries, which gives rise to the term green postcolonialism.

Green postcolonialism marries the concepts of Ecocriticism and Postcolonialism and studies how the postcolonial states navigate their relationship with their land after decolonisation; the effects on the national literature and culture; as well as how the previous colonisers continue to exploit the native lands. Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt affirm that this denies the Native of his land's natural sources which open the discussion for "new contributions to the analysis of how imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, and postcolonialism not only create basic conditions of inequality between colonizer and colonized" (256). This inequality also allows for the coloniser to further insist on the Native's inferiority in a self-serving cycle that the coloniser creates.

Huggan echoes this argument, claiming that postcolonial works, from an ecological perspective, focus on the damage that the settler causes to indigenous lands, and "the mutual entanglement of biological and cultural factors in providing the ideological basis for imperial rule" ("'Green' Postcolonialism: Ecological Perspectives", 3-4). Additionally, he suggests six fields in which ecologically postcolonial works can be assessed, including a historical and political aspect, however, the third and fourth fields focus more closely on the cultural change that occurs from environmental changes.

In these fields, Huggan highlights the importance of the "(cross-)cultural implications of current ecocritical debates" ("'Green' Postcolonialism: Ecological Perspectives", 21), specifically the results of geological changes on native cultures. A more extensive criticism of how power dichotomies shape the "Western-oriented discourses of intercultural reconciliation" and how "the encroachment of modernity on 'the wild'" are utilised in order to validate imperialist behaviour, both in the past and current times (21). This continuous misuse of the colony lands and resources, even after decolonisation, lends support for Huggan's argument for the importance of a revisionist approach to postcolonialism, as this is not an issue of the past, but rather an ongoing dilemma.

The postcolonial nation adopts the philosophies of Globalism to modernise itself, re-establish its independence, and keep up with the internationally accepted cultural and industrial

standards. However, this Globalism, for Boos and Hunt, is defined as "latter-day colonialism based upon economic and cultural imperialism" and hence "requires industry and extraction with major ecological and environmental impacts" on the postcolonial nation as the concepts of Globalism are determined by the previous colonisers (3). This implies that that "any postcolonial critique must be thoroughly ecocritical at the same time" as the postcolonial nation is also defined by the continued exploitation of its natural resources (3). Once again, this emphasises the intimate connection and interdependency between the land and the colonial experience.

Furthermore, Boos and Hunt emphasise the need to analyse the literature of a nation through this lens as these works are "part of a broader political effort to engage— critically, in many cases—with modernization processes and their consequences, to imagine more equitable social structures, and to rethink the material bases on which such structures might be founded" (251). Therefore, these works must be analysed to determine the position of the postcolonial Native on the new developments and adjustments he has to make in order to modernise his nation.

Furthermore, the analysis of these works aid in identifying how this opinion is portrayed and provide further insight to the development of the internal politics of the postcolonial nation. Although not considered literature, the Irish trilogy can also be considered national media that partake in this discourse, and therefore must be analysed to determine what opinions they depict, particularly as they are aimed at a younger audience who are more impressionable and susceptible to passive consumerism.

The concept of green postcolonialism is somewhat complex, especially for a younger audience, however, since Cartoon Saloon heavily emphasises the connection between the land, the Native population, and their traditional beliefs, it is an integral aspect of the movies that must be analysed. In order address this issue, I will base my analysis of this aspect of the movies solely on the visual representation of the people's connection to the untouched, rural environment and its presentation in a visually positive manner in juxtaposition to the negative portrayal of the colonised dwellings. This presents the audience with simplistic depictions of the relationship between the people and the land which can be easily grasped while still portraying the essential message of green postcolonialism.

3 The Invasions of Ireland and the Process of Independence

One of the integral themes in Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy is colonialism and its aftereffects. When considering the history of Ireland, the reason for this becomes clear as Ireland has been subject to invasions and colonisation for most of its recorded history. Paul F. State provides a comprehensive overview of Ireland's history, and affirms that, Ireland was invaded a total of nine times, and finally recognised as an independent nation on December 6, 1921 (244). In the process of achieving this independence, however, Ireland sacrificed its unity.

Six counties, now referred to as Northern Ireland, disagreed with the separation from Britain and therefore detached themselves from the rest of Ireland to remain as part of the United Kingdom. Although Southern Ireland did eventually gain full independence from the United Kingdom in 1949, it resulted in a split in the island's loyalties, an aftereffect of colonialism, which affirms that Ireland is still not fully separated from this chapter of its history. Therefore, due to the defining role of colonisation in the creation of the Irish national identity, the chosen works of Cartoon Saloon heavily integrate the themes of colonialism and its effects on Ireland, putting particular emphasis on the old beliefs that unify the two segments of the island, as well as serving as a reminder of the terrible deeds of the colonisers towards the Irish.

Due to the long history of colonisation that Ireland has endured, and the number of invasions, I will focus on the invasion and colonisation periods that are addressed in the films, which are the Vikings' invasion and Oliver Cromwell's nine-month campaign in Ireland. Moreover, a short overview of the decolonisation of Ireland, and the influence of Gaelic literature and folklore on this process, will be provided as this fact is both a vital part of the Irish identity, as well as the works of Cartoon Saloon.

3.1 The Invasions of the Vikings (795-1169)

The Vikings that invaded Ireland had set sail from Norway and Denmark and brought with them ruin and trauma for the Irish, however, they also bought advanced weapons and founded the first towns, along with connecting Ireland to a large trading network (State, 41). During their first invasions, the Vikings continuously robbed and terrorised the monasteries located near the sea.

As the monasteries moved further inland to protect their work, the Vikings followed, which allowed for more contact between the invaders and the people of Ireland and for two cultures to blend. By around the year of 950, the Vikings had secured bases in Limerick and Waterford (State, 45). This resulted in the Vikings' culture and seafaring occupation changing the Irish way of life.

The effects of the constant presence of the Vikings on Irish society were not fully negative, although the loss of life and disruption to the typical routine was palpable. They introduced the Irish, a purely agricultural society, to commercial trade, and provided the opportunity for the Irish to trade with overseas (State, 45). Although the artistic splendour of the Irish monasteries was heavily set back, the trade that took place between Ireland and the outside world provided international influence which revigorated the tradition.

The written art was generally left unharmed by the raids and continued to flourish. It was in this period that Irish writers began to adapt renditions of old tales and stories to fit into the current narrative of Ireland. By the second half of the twelfth century "members of educated secular families" replaced the monks as the leading sources of the country's educational development, which allowed more hereditary legends and tales to be recorded (State, 55). Furthermore, the lack of reliance on the monks provided opportunities for the writings at the time to be unedited, from a mythological standpoint, as the censors that were applied to the old legends, due to the church's concept of blasphemy, were no longer being relevant.

3.2   Oliver Cromwell's Campaign in Ireland (1649)

Cromwell arrived in Ireland in August 1649 and began a "three phase attack" on the Irish to fully convert the country to Protestantism and end all Irish resistance (State, 113). On September 11, 1649, his forces massacred over 2,000 of the total 3,000 rebels in Drogheda as "an action meant to instil terror into the remaining rebel garrisons in Ireland" (113). A similar event took place at Wexford a month later, with the attack transpiring on June 21, 1650, after which the remaining men were permitted to emigrate and granted a general pardon.

Cromwell's policies for the island focused on two major aspects: faith and wealth. All religious figures were forcefully coerced to leave Ireland under the threat of imprisonment and execution (State, 114). The joint force of these policies resulted in the extinction of Catholic

landowning aristocracy, their power and land handed to the Protestant upper class. An Act of Settlement was also enacted, which confiscated land from landowners that could not prove their support for the Commonwealth, with the soldiers of the Commonwealth taking ownership of the lands (*Britannica Academic*). However, despite all the restrictions, Cromwell could not stop the practice of Catholicism in Ireland.

3.3   The Process of Decolonisation and the Influence of National Literature (Eighteenth Century-1921)

Between 1845 and 1849, a blight that affected potatoes ravaged Ireland which resulted in over a million people perishing due to starvation and many Irish migrating (State, 164). This became known as the Great Famine and devasted Ireland to the point that its population was reduced to less than half by 1911 (*Britannica Academic*). The Famine also changed the Irish population's attitude as the hardships that they faced resulted in the people relying more heavily on physical resistance.

In the time before and during the Famine, the political climate became increasing more supportive of an independent Ireland. One prominent group of this time was the Young Ireland movement. Established in the 1840s, they published a weekly newspaper called *The Nation* that promoted the idea of an independent Ireland (*Britannica Academic*). Another movement that emerged in the aftereffects of the Famine was the Fenian, named after the mythical band of warriors, led by MacCumhaill. The Fenian was first founded in the early 1860s by the Irish that were residing in America (*Britannica Academic*), who planned for uprisings against the British in Ireland and America. The Fenian movement carried out multiple successful raids in America, but was unable to perform in Ireland, and ultimately ended in the early 1870s.

During the years leading up to the Anglo-Irish war, Gaelic literature experienced a revival period. Between the years 1891 and 1914, Irish writers joined together in writing literature that glorified the Gaelic Irish past in the order to create unity between Irish people (State, 214). The main leader of the Gaelic Literary Revival was William Butler Yeats, who "fashioned a patriotic national picture in deliberate contradistinction to English prejudices of the Irish as a backwards, superstitious race" in order to bolster national pride in the Irish population (State, 214). Yeats was not the only Irish writer that participated in this revival, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw,

and Lady Augusta Gregory were also prominent figures during this period. The Irish relying on their mythic, Gaelic past in order to provide a sense of national pride and unity clearly demonstrate the importance of this folklore in the national consciousness of the Irish people.

Although not a political movement, the Gaelic Literary Revival's glorifying of old Irish culture inspired the Irish political factions into action, who argued for the country's need to be able to govern itself independently in order to preserve its culture. The Sinn Féin ("We Ourselves" in Gaelic Irish) party and one of its main leaders, Arthur Griffith, were one of the prominent political parties that used the Revival to support their reasoning for an independent Irish state.

After multiple uprisings, such as the Easter Rising of 1916, the English and Irish forces clashed in during the years 1919-1921 in what became known as the Anglo-Irish war. In July of 1921, the Anglo-Irish war came to an end and negotiations began between the liberal, pro-British, and republican Irish forces (*Britannica Academic*). On December 6, 1921, the "Irish Free State" was created, which "would be a constitutional monarchy with a two-house parliament" and granted the ability to administer internal and external affairs (State*,* 244). Unfortunately, the peace treaty did not resolve the tension between the two Irish states, which ultimately resulted in the Irish civil war and a split in the Irish population which continues today.

Although Ireland's history continues on to present day, with many struggles as Ireland evolves into a country that embraces modernity and defines itself in an international setting, these occurrences are outside the scope of this thesis as my analysis focuses on the colonisation of Ireland and its aftereffects.

4   The History of Cartoon Saloon and Its Ideology

The beginnings of Irish animation date back to the twentieth century with James Horgan, who was the creator of the first animation in Ireland. However, interest in animation dwindled until the 1950s, with animation reaching the pinnacle of its popularity in the 1980s due to the introduction of American animation companies in Ireland, such as Sullivan Bluth Studio. Animation continues to thrive in Ireland through native animation companies such as Cartoon Saloon, who is one of the most prominent Irish animation studios. In this chapter, I shall outline the history of this studio and the ideology of their works.

4.1   The Birth of Cartoon Saloon

Kilkenny's Cartoon Saloon Studio is an animation studio that has recently received international attention and commendation for its works and unique animation style. Founded in 1999 by Paul Young, Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, Cartoon Saloon has thus far released four feature films, which have received multiple nominations for various awards, and have also produced numerous TV series such as *Puffin Rock* (2015-2016).

Jake Coyle summarises the creation and evolution of this studio in his article, outlining how Moore, Twomey and Young started out with a team of only 12 animators, and worked inside an old orphanage with minimal technological resources (1). Their first feature film, *Brendan and the Secret of the Kells*, was released in 2009, and introduced the iconic and unique art style that Cartoon Saloon would utilise in their Irish folklore trilogy. The artistic choices in this film, along with the heavy usage of ancient Celtic runes and symbols bestow this film with a uniquely Irish feel, which is replicated in the other films in the Irish trilogy: *Song of the Sea* (2015) and *WolfWalkers* (2020). The studio's approach to animation relies heavily on hand-drawn animation, which is used to achieve a nostalgic, organic feel to their work, allowing the audience to more easily connect with the characters and environments with less dialogue.

Cartoon Saloon takes inspiration from the artwork that was prevalent in the time period that they set their films in, which result in a distinctive visual approach that honours the historical influence and cultural background while still incorporating their unique art style. This approach to animation and art style is, as Coyle affirms, "Ireland's answer to Japan's Studio Ghibli" (2)

due to the fact that both companies have distinctly unique animation styles. However, stylised movies such as Disney's *Mulan* and Maverick Richard William's *The Thief and the Cobbler* also served as inspiration for the visual style of the Irish trilogy (*New Yorker*). Much like Studio Ghibli, Cartoon Saloon also strives to convey its narratives not only through dialogue and plot, but also through the aesthetics of their settings and character designs. After the release of *WolfWalkers* in 2020, and the completion of the Irish trilogy, Moore and his partners have announced no further plans to develop feature films for cinema release (*Cartoonsaloon.ie*).

4.2   Preservation of Culture Through Animation

Many scholars and animators, such as Walsh and Moore, recognise the potential of animation in relation to preserving Irish traditions and culture. Walsh summarises this argument as follows:

> Although animation in Ireland might be seen as part of a linear movement towards a purely commercial cinema with little social or political consciousness, a greater awareness of its development demonstrates a frequent and vigorous use of the animated form to interrogate notions of contemporary Irish identity and the relationship between history, tradition and a modern Irish hegemony. ("Reanimating the Past", 15)

This discourse on the Irish identity is often based on the collision between the past and the present and its resulting cultural altercations. Andrew Kincaid specifically outlines how the past of a nation is "shaped by the structures of colonialism [...and] continues to shape the psychology and culture of the nation" (2), which is realised visually in animated works, as Walsh also emphasises. Ireland, as an independent nation, has always relied heavily on its cultural past to distinguish itself from its colonisers and to encourage a feeling of national pride, therefore, this practice has continued into Irish animation as it attempts to define itself in an international setting.

Often, productions in Irish cinema, including animation, use Irish literature, or adaptions of these works, which in turn help to protect the national past preserved through them (Maeve Connolly, 12). This supports Walsh's opinion, since animation, as a medium, attempts to both preserve the old culture, by retelling the tales and stories in a modern medium, and explore what role this culture plays in the definition of a new Irish identity. Irish animation, to some extent, can be viewed as a successor to the Gaelic Literary Revival of the nineteenth and

twentieth Century, which allows Ireland to define its identity once again, on the international stage.

5 Irish Trilogy and Common Postcolonial Themes in Their Narratives

Beginning with *Brendan and the Secret of Kells* (2009), followed by *Song of the Sea* (2015) and finally concluding in 2020 with *WolfWalkers*, the summation of these three movies is informally known as the Irish Trilogy. These feature films are heavily inspired by themes of old Gaelic Irish culture; the dynamic between the old and new cultures in colonial and postcolonial Ireland; and hence emphasise the significance of the past in the modern national identity of Ireland.

Works such as the Irish Trilogy can be recognised as works of culture, as they aim to make their audience more aware of certain aspects of Irish culture by bringing past beliefs and traditions to light. Bhabha asserts that: "such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space [...] The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living" (*The Location of Culture*, 7). By reinventing these past traditions in a modern fashion, Cartoon Saloon is implying that the past beliefs have a place in modern Irish culture. The studio is attempting to communicate that old traditions are still significant as an integral part of the Irish national identity and, therefore, must be preserved and redefined to suit the modern culture of Ireland.

Due to the similar themes and visual implementation by Cartoon Saloon, my analysis will address these films as a trilogy, therefore, the following chapter will outline the plots of the movies shortly, to introduce the basic narratives of these movies.

5.1 Brendan and the Secret of Kells

Brendan is a young boy living in Kells under the care of his uncle, Abbot Cellach, alongside other monks and refugees that have taken shelter in Kells from the Vikings. The Abbot is attempting to prepare Kells for the imminent Viking invasion by building a wall surrounding Kells, however, when brother Aiden, and his cat Pangur Ban, arrive from Iona, life for Brendan changes.

Aiden has brought the book of Iona, a masterfully illuminated bible, with him in order to preserve and complete it. Aiden recognises Brendan's potential as an illuminator and asks him to collect Gall berries from the forest to develop ink and teach him the art of illuminating.

Brendan enters the forest, where he meets Aisling, the last fairy the forest and they quickly become friends. Brendan also finds the domain of Crom Cruach, a pagan god of death, and later learns that the god's eye is a crystal that is vital for the completion of his training as an illuminator.

After defeating Crom Cruach and returning with the crystal, the Abbot discovers that Brendan has escaped outside the walls and imprisons Brendan in the high tower. Aisling helps him escape, and he continues to perfect his craft with the guidance of Brother Aiden in secret.

Without warning, the Vikings attack, and the defences of the abbey are quickly brought down. Brendan and Aiden escape into the forest and are able to get away with the help of Aisling. In the following years, Brendan returns to Kells to show the Abbot the Chi-Rho page, which overjoys him, and the film ends on a splendid rendering of the Chi-Rho page of the book of Kells.

5.2   Song of the Sea

This film follows the story of siblings Ben and Saoirse as they attempt to reconnect with the folkloric past in order to save the mythological creatures of Ireland. The plot begins when Bronagh, a selkie married to a human named Connor, must return to the sea to birth their daughter and does not return.

Throughout the next years, Ben begins to resent his sister, blaming her for the disappearance of their mother, and Saoirse is assumed to be mute. One day, Saoirse rediscovers her selkie coat, however, the next day the siblings leave with their grandmother to live in the city, leaving her coat behind. Both children are very unhappy with this arrangement and decide to run away and try to find their way back.

Throughout their travels, the meet multiple mythical creatures who help them on their journey home. A group of fairies explain to the children that Saoirse, as the last remaining selkie, must regain her voice by reuniting with her coat and sing in order to allow the mythical creatures of Ireland passage to Tir na nOg, the Irish Otherworld. They also warn the children about Macha, the witch, who transforms all fairies and mythical creature to stone by extracting their emotions out.

Saoirse is eventually captured by Macha's owls, with Ben following her and meeting the Great Seanachaí who guides him to Saoirse. After arriving at Macha's house, Ben starts freeing the emotions trapped in her home, including her own, and manages to save Saoirse. Macha, after accepting her emotions of loss, helps the children to reach the lighthouse where they learn that their father has thrown Saoirse's coat into the sea.

Connor and Ben go out to sea to retrieve the coat. Ben finds Saoirse's coat and encourages her to sing the *Song of the Sea*. As she does, the fairies' spirits all unite to enter into Tír na nÓg, including Macha and her son Mac Lir.

Bronagh also appears and reunites with her family, giving Saoirse the choice of going to the Otherworld, but Saoirse decides to stay with her father and brother. The family return to happily living in the lighthouse.

5.3   WolfWalkers

Set in Kilkenny in 1650, *WolfWalkers* follows the story of wolf hunters Robyn Goodfellowe and her father, Bill Goodfellowe, who have recently moved to Kilkenny to help rid the town of the wolf population.

Robyn sneaks into the forest to aid her father, and accidentally shoots her falcon, Merlyn. He is taken away by a mysterious girl and is later found completely healed and accompanied by a young wolf. Startled, Robyn backs into a wolf trap, and is accidentally bitten by the wolf as it attempts to free her.

Robyn is then led to the wolf's den, where she realises that the young wolf is a Wolfwalker called Mebh. Robyn befriends Mebh and promises to help find her mother, Moll, who had left to find the pack a new den but has not yet returned. The next night Robyn transforms into a Wolfwalker, and discovers the imprisoned Moll, who and is being held captive by the Lord Protector.

The following day, Mebh reunites with her mother, as Lord Protector showcases how he has tamed Moll in the town square and attempts to free her while Robyn confronts the Lord Protector. In the chaos that ensues, Mebh retreats into the forest, Bill is bitten, and Moll and Robyn escape.

Bill shoots Moll after following Robyn, and while Mebh attempts to heal Moll in the den, Robyn and part of the pack separate to hold off the Lord Protector's forces, who have invaded the forest. During the clash between the wolves and soldiers, Bill also transforms into a Wolfwalker when Robyn is threatened by the Lord Protector, which results in the death of the Lord Protector. Robyn and her father then join Mebh in the den to heal Moll, which, with the added help, is finally successful.

5.4   Collective Themes in the Irish Trilogy

Several common themes can be determined throughout these narratives, such as the criticism of violence; the glorification of nature; and the redefinition of folklore and native Irish mythology. Cartoon Saloon attempts to rebrand the old Irish culture in order to incorporate those beliefs into the modern culture by recognising the influence of these principles in defining the national identity. Bhabha asserts the importance of the past in defining the present identity of a nation in *Nation and Narration* as follows:

> A nation is a spiritual principle [...] Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present [...] A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more - these are the essential conditions for being a people. (18-19)

This quote outlines the philosophy of Cartoon Saloon, and their insistence on the inclusion of past folkloric beliefs in the present national identity. In difficult times people often rely on legends of past glory and national myths of heroes in order to embolden them to take action against injustices employed towards them. Bhabha further emphasises this point as he argues that nations are "imaginary constructs" that rely on "cultural fiction" for their definition and preservation (*Nation and Narration*, 49). As such the Natives develop an intimate connection with the old stories and characters, which, as Cartoon Saloon also implies, result in them being symbolic representatives of the people's freedom and integral to the national identity.

This concept is echoed by Fanon, as he asserts that old stories, legends, and heroes are adapted to fit new conflicts in order to bolster strength and unity between the native population by making these stories relatable for the Native and reiterating the success of overcoming past

40

struggles (*Wretched of the Earth*, 240). The connection between mythical creatures, folklore culture, and the nation is well established with many examples of usage throughout history including not only Ireland, but also Japan's usage of the legend of Momotaro and his companions against the Oni (demons) as a metaphor for the struggle between Japan and the USA. Cartoon Saloon's choice to include folklore creatures, and their focus on colonisation, in the Irish trilogy can be inferred as the studio critiquing colonialism and promoting national folklore to be included as part of the national identity.

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne explains the usage of legends throughout a nation's history and determines that they are "usually embellished with realistic detail which serves to bolster their credibility" and that, in the modern day, "motifs originating in folklore – narrative, song, belief – are inserted in texts which are otherwise independent of overt folklore influence" (208-209). Cartoon Saloon also employs these techniques in order to make the folklore characters seem like a natural and constant element of both the Irish trilogy narratives and the natural settings, and hence, attempts to cement the old Irish cultural beliefs as an inexorable part of both the country of Ireland and the Irish national identity.

The Celtic folklore characters and the nature in Ireland have an undeniable connection, however, during the colonial period, the native Irish were also commonly associated with nature by the coloniser as they were theoretically less developed. Nevertheless, while they were seen as 'of nature', their claim to the land was disputed and denied, and so, in the struggle for freedom, the people's identity also came to be defined, in part, with regard to their relationship with the land. Kumar and Scanlon affirm that "the land one inhabits shapes the identity, [which is] constructed and shaped by the livid experiences" (4), and that the Celtic influences that inspire a sense of Irishness "coalesces with arguments of both people and land that they have occupied for generations" (3). This link between the native Irish and the folklore characters is also visually reiterated by Cartoon Saloon through the close relationship between the protagonists and the folklore characters.

Throughout the movies, the folklore characters are shown to have a connection to nature, either by residing in such environments or by connecting to their mythical heritage in these settings, such as with Saoirse (*Song of the Sea*). This design choice serves two purposes: it connects the folklore characters with nature; and creates the positive association with nature due to its positive influence on the protagonists.

41

The damage that is inflicted on natural landscapes of colonised countries is mainly due to the invasion and exploitation of natural resources in order to create financial profit for the coloniser. Furthermore, in their attempts to civilise the native population, colonisers encourage the indigenous population away from more sustainable agricultural practices (Huggan and Tiffin, "Green Postcolonialism", 1). Both these motives are addressed throughout the films, particularly in *Song of the Sea* and *WolfWalkers,* and the results of such misuse is emphasised with the dull colours of industrialised and deforested settings; the social limitations it enforces on the protagonists; and the wariness and fear of the folklore creatures in the 'civilised' settings.

Another common theme that is implemented in the Irish trilogy is how the protagonists' acknowledgement of the old Irish beliefs and culture are visually represented by their physical forms taking on an animalistic, or folkloric, form. This is with the exception of Brendan, who remains human throughout the film, but is instead aided immensely on his journey by Aisling, his fairy companion.

This transformation is a metaphor for the identity of the protagonist, a representation of the national Irish identity, adapting to incorporate the old beliefs into its character. This ability to transform into an animal both supports the folklore beliefs in such occurrences, as well as offers support for the importance of the natural landscape that was discussed previously. Huggan and Tiffin emphasise the imperial disregard for the natural world as by "assuming human ethical and material priorities over those of other animals, we continue to repeat the ideology of imperialism, condemning ourselves to Ghosh's perpetual impasse of tiger versus human" ("Green Postcolonialism", 6). By granting the protagonist with the ability to physically become a creature that inhabits the natural setting, Cartoon Saloon critiques the colonialist exploitation of natural landscapes and exhibits the necessity of the natural environment and its preservation through its necessity for the protagonists.

At the finale of the three films in the Irish trilogy the protagonist comes to embrace and incorporate the folklore creatures, and their values, as part of their new identity. This new hybrid identity balances the protagonists morally and physically, allowing them to have more freedom in their socially regimented lifestyle, and to question the biased philosophies that they abided by under duress in order to find a balance within themselves.

This theme is a close imitation of Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the struggle between traditional and modern beliefs in a colonised people. He argues that "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications [the modern and traditional identities] open up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (*The Location of Culture*, 4). This concept is visually presented throughout the Cartoon Saloon movies as the protagonists encounter the folklore creatures, who trigger them to reassess their identity, and cause the protagonist to gain the ability to physically transform into a new form, symbolising the birth of their new hybrid identity.

This hybridity also serves as a very direct criticism of colonial practices since by creating these hybrid identities through the forced adoption of foreign cultures, the native is "both challenging the boundaries of discourse and subtly changing its terms by setting up another specifically colonial space of the negotiations of cultural authority" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 119). When the protagonists familiarise themselves with the folklore creatures, they begin to comprehend the cultural coercion utilised by the colonisers (*WolfWalkers)*, or recognise the faults in their modernised culture and beliefs, which is specifically presented in *Song of the Sea* and also somewhat in *Secret of the Kells*.

As a result of this epiphany, the protagonists come into direct conflict with the sources that encourage this defective culture and challenge their old beliefs, which ultimately results in the protagonists emerging successful, further highlighting the insincerity and the issues with the adopted culture of the coloniser.

Mimicry is another colonial concept that these movies refer to, which is specifically evident in *WolfWalkers*. Throughout the narratives, the protagonists must, willingly or superfluously, imitate the social behaviour that is modelled by the modern culture. Examples of this include Brendan pretending to still be imprisoned in the tower while sneaking out to meet Aisling (*Secret of the Kells*), Granny fully immersing herself into modernised culture throughout the movie (*Song of the Sea*), and Robyn essentially leading a double life, mimicking the societal norms with her father, and exhibiting her true self while with Mebh (*WolfWalkers*).

This mimicry, as Bhabha asserts, "is like camouflage […] a form of resemblance that differs from or defends presence by displaying it" (*The Location of Culture*, 90), which the Irish trilogy narratives also demonstrate through the characters using mimicry in situations that highlight the flaws in the foreign culture, such as Robyn in the scullery and Brendan in the monastery.

43

Additionally, the protagonists that implement mimicry use it as a tactic to gain access to the folklore characters, further drawing the viewer's attention to the juxtaposition between the two cultures. The contrast between the two cultures, specifically the positive presentation of the old culture through the folklore characters, the protagonists' relationship with them, and their local settings are further stressed when the protagonists are forced to mimic the foreign culture of the coloniser after having had the chance to experience the authenticity of the old culture.

Violence is another theme that is dominantly present in all three movies. This is particularly highlighted in *Secret of the Kells*, where the finale is centred on the attack of the Vikings, but also included in *WolfWalkers* in a more subdued manner during the final attack of the Lord Protector on the forest of the Wolfwalkers. *Song of the Sea*, however, mainly addresses the cultural struggle between the old and the modern beliefs.

This recurrent inclusion of violence could be considered Cartoon Saloon's most palpable criticism of the colonial rule since, unlike most other children's media that tackles this topic, Cartoon Saloon does not censor the trauma that colonisation entails. Fanon stresses the importance of violence throughout the colonisation process as "the colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time tries to hide this aspect of things" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 84). This concept is mirrored by Cartoon Saloon through their inclusion of violence in the Irish trilogy and highlighting the destruction that takes place during colonisation.

Another aspect of violence that Cartoon Saloon adapt in their narratives is the cultural genocide that colonisers commit in order to portray the Native in a more vulnerable and barbaric light. Colonialism "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" which negates their beliefs and culture, and results in them losing their national pride and will to fight against the colonisers (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 210). This type of violence is showcased in *Song of the Sea*, in which the folklore creatures reside in very remote areas due to modernisation; symbolising that the foreign culture has falsified old cultural beliefs to the point that the creature themselves assume shrunken new appearances as a visual representation of the old culture's distortion.

The Irish trilogy also reflects Fanon's three phase model for national literature throughout their narratives, in particular in *WolfWalkers* and *Song of the Sea*, while *Secret of the Kells* addresses the initial violence of invasions rather than the spiritual and societal issues that follow. Both the

movies mentioned above offer visual manifestations of Fanon's ideology, with *WolfWalkers* focusing more closely on the final phase, the fighting literature, that is used to awaken people's will to fight, which is represented by the final fight that takes place and the villagers' regaining their will for freedom as a result (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 222). *Song of the Sea* emphasises the first and second phase, which entail the native giving "proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power", and the native reiterating the past culture and beliefs in an incomplete, empty fashion (222). The folklore characters' designs particularly showcase this as the characters are warped, almost husk-like versions of their true forms, which are revealed at the end of the movie, when Saoirse releases them and allows them to move on to the Otherworld.

Although many smaller details are presented in these movies which would warrant a more thorough analysis of each movie individually, the general themes that most of the narratives include are outlined in this chapter. Fanon and Bhabha's works are the main references for the postcolonial concepts of this analysis, as their philosophies are the most relevant to these movies, and the concepts that are specified by these scholars are visually portrayed, making them easier to comprehend.

6   Visual Analysis of Character Archetypes in the Irish Trilogy and the Postcolonial Connotations

The significance of images and visual media cannot be overstated. In today's society, visual media has become a necessity and has gained enormous influence over its audience; often acting as one of the primary methods of enforcing social and cultural values. Gillian Rose addresses the power that images wield, as he asserts that images, and the way they are presented, are "never innocent. These images are never transparent windows on to the world. They interpret the world; they display it in very particular ways" (6). This argument supports the power that images have in influencing how society functions and perceives, however, the implied meaning of the image is not only based on the creators' intentions but also the audience's discernment.

With modern animation no longer only catering to children, it is important to acknowledge certain standards that children's animation abides by. Noel Brown addresses common themes that most media aimed at children conform to, which mainly consist of "reaffirmation of family", "foregrounding of child […] figures", and endings that are "upbeat, emotionally uplifting [and] morally unambiguous" (13-15). These properties ensure that the topics that are presented to young audiences are not only appropriate from a developmental position, but also from a social perspective, as they reaffirm the values of society through their narratives.

Brown highlights that "children's films are perceived locally as important expressions of cultural identity" (21) despite children's films being an "invention of adult society" (15) that focus on instilling values that adults in a society promote. Walsh also supports this concept as he asserts that, due to being associated with portraying unbiased narratives, animation "is particularly adept at both expressing and subverting State ideology" ("The Inbetweeners", 156). Hence, although this media can be deemed as biased, it is nevertheless a vital source for the inculcation of cultural values in young audiences and must be analysed to determine what agenda they fulfil.

The concept of media is very broad in relation to children, as Máire Messenger Davies argues, since media can be considered "a communicative form, in other words a channel or conduit through which information is passed" (14). However, in the case of this thesis, I define media

specifically as animated feature films aimed at children. Additionally, defining the age group which encompasses a 'child' age group is very subjective, specifically in relation to animation and media, with multiple attributes that must be considered such as maturity, growth, and development (Messenger Davies, 9-14). Brown also addresses the issues with defining children as the main audience for any feature film, as a movie is typically enjoyed by multiple age groups, despite the film being marketed towards a young audience, which makes the categorisation of the audience particularly difficult (5-10). The Irish trilogy, from a postcolonial perspective, is aimed at the young Irish generation as they will be more familiar with the characters, narratives, and possess a vague comprehension of Ireland's colonial past.

Although the messages of these films resonate more with the native Irish population, I believe children of other ethnicities that reside in Ireland can also relate to them, as they would also become familiar with the old legends and folklore through their exposure to Irish culture. Hence, they would also be able to grasp the overall message, although perhaps the narratives would not be as compelling due to the lack of personal connection with the old Irish belief and folklore. For the intents of this thesis, I consider the primary audience for these movies to be the youth of Ireland between the ages of seven and twelve.

Animation functions as a platform which has familiarised children with emotions by allowing them to immerse themselves in fantasy worlds, sympathise with the characters, and experience their emotions through compelling storytelling. Meike Uhrig affirms this as "the films' character designs, along with the cameras' focus on their emotional (facial) expressions, therefore allow the viewers to [...] (emotionally) comprehend and thus empathize with the characters' actions" (5). The character design is a vital component in the creation of the first impression that a young audience has of a character, as it also impacts whether or not they empathise with that character throughout the film, therefore, when analysing a film, particularly children's animation, character design must be studied thoroughly.

In the case of Cartoon Saloon, the target audience's perception is of particular importance, as children are often not fully aware of the intricacy of visual meaning making and rely solely on the limited associations they have developed from the media they have thus consumed. Rose affirms that content creators "are concerned not only with how images look, but how they are looked at" (11). This means that creators of visual works must also understand the current associations between certain properties of images, its effect on different audiences, and their

respective world views. Rose also acknowledges the audience as the most important site at which meaning making occurs, since despite the intentions of the creators, the audience applies their own values and knowledge to an image and might interpret a meaning separate from that which was intended (23). Younger audiences mean that Cartoon Saloon must restrict itself to a very limited number of visual techniques, consisting mostly of shape language and colour theory, in order to convey meaning as its target audience will not be able to comprehend more subtle methods.

As previously stated, one of the most distinguishable aspects in Cartoon Saloon studio's works is their unique art style. This distinctive style is further specialised by the incorporation of their artistic inspirations and the prominent art styles in the time periods in which their films are set, such as the book of Kells in *Brendan and the Secret of the Kells* (Tom Moore and Ross Stewart, *Designing the Secret of the Kells*, 21-22), or the woodcut inspirations, a popular art style in the 1650s, utilised in *WolfWalkers* (Charles Solomon, *The Art of WolfWalkers*, 158). Not only is this trait applied to the settings in Cartoon Saloon's movies, but also their character designs.

The marrying of classic character design and stylisation based on inspirational material allows younger audiences to easily distinguish the protagonists and antagonists due to the heavy usage of colour and shape theory, and their unique designs makes them more memorable. In the following chapter, I shall analyse the designs of the characters in the Irish trilogy and identify how the artists communicate their role in the narrative along with how this could be a visual representation of national Irish pride. Furthermore, the importance of folklore in the preservation of the country's national identity shall be addressed as well as how this could be linked to the concepts of the postcolonial theorists that were outlined in the earlier chapters.

The characters discussed below are intentionally designed to incite a positive or negative effect on the audience, depending on their role in the narrative. Given how these films are based on colonialism and its aftereffects, the characters that reject this philosophy are designed in such a way that they encourage support from the audience and the characters that instil colonial rule are framed in a villainous fashion. The opposition between native traditional and colonial forces can be interpreted as a manifestation of the modern native Irish against the "dominant relations of power and knowledge" which are still associated with the colonisers of the past (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 33). This message is visually represented in the designs of the characters, as well as in the narratives of the films.

48

6.1   Protagonists

The protagonists of movies are typically the characters specifically designed for the audience to connect with, and whose point of view and opinions are encouraged onto the audience, therefore, the design of these characters plays an important role in the movie's ability to engage with the audience.

In Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy, the protagonists all share some varying degrees of generic traits often seen in protagonist archetypes such as big eyes, round features and softer, curved lines in their designs and silhouettes. Robin J.S. Sloan affirms the effect of the circle on the audience as this shape is associated with "youth and goodness" and is often used as the main component in the design of children or innocent characters as well as characters that represent "unity, balance, nature, and protection" (29). This focus on the circle as the main shape in the design of the protagonists is very prominent in the characters of Cartoon Saloon, in particular the characters that are quite young, such as Brendan (*Secret of the Kells*) and the siblings Ben and Saoirse (*Song of the Sea*).

When looking at the silhouettes of the protagonists of the Irish trilogy, these characters' designs rely heavily on circular shapes in their composition, which allows the young audience to connect with the protagonist due to their childlike quality. Also, as Sloan outlined, the circular theme in the character designs hold a connotation to innocence and nature, which would be appropriate for the narratives in Cartoon Saloon's movies where protagonists and mythological characters are strongly connected to nature. This design choice helps audiences also make the connection between the protagonist and nature, and in turn the mythical creatures, and to associate nature as a positive concept. In addition to the connection insinuated between the protagonist and nature, these narratives encourage the younger audience to empathise with the protagonist, as a symbol of good, and therefore also be more supportive of the folklore creatures that they associate with and the culture they represent.

Figure 1. Brendan's curved shape language (The Secret of the Kells 29:35)

Figure 2. Ben and Saoirse (Song of the Sea 26:46)

One exception to these design choices is Robyn Goodfellowe, the main protagonist of *WolfWalkers*, as she isn't fully based on a circular motif, but rather a woodcut style inspired mixture of circles and sharper triangular angles. Sloan suggests that while triangles typically represent aggression and hostility, they can also allow a character to embody strength, which could be applied to Robyn's ability to pursue what she believes to be the right course of action despite the obstacles (29). There are two potential reasons that Robin isn't as obviously connected with the themes of innocence and nature: the first could be due to her being older than the other protagonists, and therefore not as childlike; and the second due to her English heritage.

Figure 4. Robyn in her human form (WolWalkers 06:56)

Figure 3. Robyn in her Wolf form (WolfWalkers 37:28)

Due to her lineage, Robyn has a slightly sharper appearance and therefore is not fully integrated with her surrounding when in nature, since she is an outsider to the natural wilderness in Ireland. This analysis is further supported by the fact that her wolf form, while sleek, consists of soft lines and curves, which could signify her integration with the Irish woods and folklore changing her appearance to better suit her new values.

Furthermore, when analysing her silhouette, it can be argued that the most triangular aspect of her designs is related to her hood, which she only dons at the beginning of the movie, when she is under the influence of the English, but is less frequently worn over the course of the movie, and eventually disregarded completely. This development is also adjacent to the discovery of her wolf form; therefore, both occurrences imply a visual manifestation of her disassociation with the English ideology and connection with the native Irish culture.

Figure 5. Robyn without her hood highlighting the softer curves in her design as the movie progresses (WolfWalkers 30:41)

Another important aspect in the design of these characters is the colour schemes that each one entails. Sloan asserts that "When we introduce color into the mix, the potential for visually communicating ideas through character appearance increases exponentially" which supports the importance of colour theory in character designs (33). This concept is particularly important since children, as the target audience, have a very limited understanding of visual meaning making, and therefore rely mainly on the colour scheme and shape of characters in order to decipher their intentions and role throughout the narrative.

While the protagonists in the Irish trilogy adhere to a soft and circular silhouette, the colour schemes between the characters differ somewhat. Nevertheless, once again there seems to be a recurring colour palette that all the designs generally abide by.

Byron Mikellides has conducted a scientific study on the popularity of certain colours, and in his research, he deduces that "while age, culture and other factors influence colour preference there are certain stable relationships regarding the popularity of some colours over time", which supports the assumption that humans naturally develop certain emotional responses to certain colours (5). The development of these colour associations is also influenced by media consumption, particularly animation, which relies heavily on colours to portray certain meanings to the audiences, for example colours such as purple and black are associated with evil characters due to the frequent usage of this colour for the colour scheme of villains.

In the case of Brendan (*Secret of the Kells*), the main colours used in his design are warm earthy tones, such as the brown of his robes, as well as a bright orange and green that are used for his hair and eyes respectively. There is an obvious metaphor in Brendan's appearance, since his features resemble the Irish stereotype of a ginger with green eyes. This design choice allows Brendan to seem more relatable to Irish youth, or to signify that he is the representation of the Irish people in a visual manner since this method is the most comprehensible technique.

Additionally, Brendan's warm colour palette help to signal his good intentions to the audience, since warm colours are associated with "passion, optimism, and excitement" (Sloan, 35). This choice of colour encourages the audience to connect with him more easily, as well as be more sympathetic to his values and beliefs.

Figure 6. Brendan's warm colour scheme and stereotypical Celtic red hair (The Secret of the Kells 06:30)

The concept of using a stereotypical representation of a nation in the design of a protagonist can also have more subtle implications. Bhabha writes that "the stereotype […] is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation", however, Cartoon Saloon uses this negative portrayal of a nation and reframes it in a positive light by showcasing Brendan, both as the protagonist and through his morals, as a positive influence (75). Therefore, by applying the concept of the stereotype in an ironic, backwards way, Cartoon Saloon is further criticising the colonial rule by reinventing the derogatory techniques used against them in a constructive manner.

This practice of incorporating warm tones in a character's colour scheme is also mirrored by Ben, the older sibling from *Song of the Sea,* who is comprised of muted bright colours including

orange, yellow and blue. The muted colours cause his design to lean slightly towards a pastel palette, which further emphasises his safe and trustworthy demeanour to children (Sloan, 35). This also incites the audience to connect more easily with Ben as his colour scheme is very non-confrontational and inviting.

Figure 7. Ben and Saoirse's bright colour schemes (Song of the Sea 01:28:33)

Another potential justification for Ben's muted colour scheme could be to create a visual connection with his sister, Saoirse. While Saoirse is a mythical creature, specifically a Selkie, she can also be considered a main character due to her agency and importance in the narrative. Much like her brother, her silhouette design is strongly based on a circular motif. This helps to visually present her as a character that is assumed to be safe, since, as Bryan Tillman affirms, circles represent "playfulness, comforting and unity" which allow the audience to connect with her more easily (59). Additionally, another reason for the strong use of the circular motif could be to hint to Saoirse's role as a bridge between the real world and the fairy world, since both Saoirse and the folklore characters incorporate the circular theme prominently.

Saoirse's colour scheme also reflects her positive role throughout the film, as she is normally wearing a pastel pink dress, which further reinstates her connection to Ben as siblings through their colour schemes. Furthermore, by placing Saoirse in a colour that is typically known to be very popular with young girls, namely pink, Cartoon Saloon may have attempted to create a character that the audience could project themselves onto.

Saoirse is very pale and has both dark hair and eyes. Cartoon Saloon intended for audiences to associate Saoirse with selkies, as they are said to be "always dark haired and beautiful," hence,

they based her features strongly on these myths to cement the connection between her character and the mythological inspiration (Moore, *Song of the Sea Artbook*, 13). These obvious associations are aimed to help younger audiences understand relationships between the characters more readily and to also adopt a positive outlook towards the mythical characters of Ireland.

The white colour of her sealskin coat could be used to communicate purity and innocence to the audience, which would allow them to empathise with the fairy folk more easily, seeing as their representation portrays them as safe and "good" (Tillman, 93). This positive portrayal of the fairy folk signifies to young audiences that they should be supportive of the fairy characters, who are reinvented as guides that aid the protagonists in their journeys for self-discovery. This depiction of the protagonists' visual connection with the folklore characters, along with the adaption of their purpose into a more relatable context, advertise the old Irish culture and their beliefs as positive rather than outdated.

The last protagonist is Robyn Goodfellowe, who is a young girl of twelve or thirteen. As discussed earlier, her character design is more angular than her predecessors, and this makes her slightly more mature than the other protagonists. The mature theme is also sustained in her colour scheme, with the colours used in her design being relatively dark and muted, especially in comparison to the other protagonists in the Irish trilogy. While this decision can be attributed to the fact that the movie takes place in a more serious setting, this choice also could be due to her English heritage symbolically draining her of her values, which is supported by the fact that her wolf form, while grey, seems more saturated than her human form.

Figure 9. Robyn in her wolf form (WolfWalkers 01:35:57)

Figure 8. Robyn at the beginning of the film (WolfWalkers 06:40)

However, despite the murky colour scheme, her design still hints at her connection to nature, as her tunic is specifically coloured green, a colour strongly indicative of nature. Additionally, at the end of the movie, when Robyn has fully embraced her new status as a Wolfwalker and her new identity, her colour scheme is slightly more saturated and brighter. This could also be due to the brighter setting; however, this new setting is made accessible to her due to Robyn and her father running away with the Wolfwalkers, and therefore, the changes to her appearance are a result of her acceptance of the Wolfwalkers, and the adoption of the Irish folkloric culture.

Figure 10. Robyn at the end of the movie
(WolfWalkers 01:34:55)

 Sloan expands on the usage of saturation in character design and explains that "Low saturation mixes hues with grays to create more realistic, mature colors that can make a character appear more subtle, distant, thoughtful, and complex" (36). Due to the serious tone of the film, it can be argued that the character is designed in such a way to better fit into the settings. However, given the brighter designs of Mebh and other characters from the forest, and Robyn's own brighter colour scheme at the end of the film, it seems more likely that the colour scheme for Robyn at the beginning of the film is representative of her distance from nature and her initial disbelief of old Irish culture, as well as the strong influence of the English culture.

 As she becomes closer to Mebh, representative of the old Irish culture, she starts adopting her beliefs, which is displayed visually in her colour palette being slightly brighter when in her company, and particularly at the end of the film. This is also acknowledged by the creators, as

Moore states that "Mebh brings out the best in Robyn", which further supports Robyn discovering her true identity by adopting old Irish culture (Solomon, 46).

The change in Robyn's silhouette is of particular interest as she is the only protagonist who initially imburses the coloniser's agenda and rule, therefore, by showcasing the development of her shape language into more gentle, circular motifs, through her adoption of native Irish culture, Cartoon Saloon mocks the civilising power of colonisation that is advertised by the colonisers.

Fanon addresses the enriching power of the colonising culture as it allows the colonised to be "elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 9). Through the character of Robyn, Cartoon Saloon highlights the paradoxical irony in the 'civilising' culture of the coloniser by emphasising Robyn's character development through both her adoption of Irish culture and its freeing quality, as well as through her shape language also reflecting this change. It can be argued that through this 'primitivism', she discovers her true self, while also developing humanising, and hence civilising, qualities such as empathy and compassion as well as strong morals.

6.2   Folklore Creatures

The narratives of Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy strongly incorporate Irish folklore characters. These characters function as a visual representation of old beliefs and stories, which allow the audience to be able to more clearly connect and empathise with the old culture and beliefs and more easily comprehend the message that the movies try to communicate: the importance of the preservation of these stories and beliefs. Given their importance in the films, their designs are intentionally made to be welcoming and warm to create a positive association in the minds of the audience.

The usage of these characters is also relevant for young Irish audiences as they already have a knowledge of them from their studies and society. Pádraic Frehan discusses the importance of including stories of folklore in children's school education during the twentieth century and how this helped young Irish children develop a connection to their national past (285). He asserts that, in the 1920s, the folkloric texts in schoolbooks "were the sole provider and disseminator of what can be described as the representative of a national heritage, a national

past that held specific characteristics considered to be essential in acknowledging and developing in the characters of the young school population of the country" (290). Although the inclusion of these texts in school curriculum has dwindled since the 1980s, the cultural impact of the folklore beliefs in Ireland is still very strong, as seen by the abundance of children's books based on legends and myth such as Yvonne Carroll's *Irish Legends for Children*, Una Leavy's *O'Brien Book of Irish Fairy Tales and Legends*, and Kieran Fanning's *Irish Fairy Tales, Myths and Legends.* The fact that young Irish children gain a sense of cultural significance towards these characters and legends provides a secure foundation when consuming these movies as there is already a positive association with the folklore.

The concept that folklore characters present aspects of national identity is significant as it supports the ideologies of Bhabha, who legitimises a nation on the ancestors of the people, "for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea" (*Nation and Narration*, 19). Since these characters are the source of traditions and beliefs shared by the ancestors of the Irish people, and are also patrons of heroes in ancient history, they are the perfect candidates to represent an oppressed grandeur past.

The Secret of the Kells, stars Aisling, a young fairy girl, as the main mythical character, who is the embodiment of pagan culture (Moore, *Designing the Secret of the Kells*, 109). She is also implied to be a member of Tuatha De Danann, the original mythic people of Ireland, who have devolved into mythic creatures over time (David L. Emerson, 263).

Song of the Sea involves many folklore characters including Mac Lir, a prominent sea deity, Macha, who is "a composite character [...] based on several celtic [sic.] witches" and Macha the Celtic war goddess, as well as the Na Daoline Sidhe, who are derived from the Tuatha De Danann. Most importantly, this film features Selkies, people who possess a sealskin which allows them to transform into seals (Moore, *Song of the Sea Artbook*, 12-15).

Lastly, *WolfWalkers* focuses on the myth of the Ossory shapeshifters, men who could transform into wolves as either a supernatural ability or a curse (Moore, *The Art of WolfWalkers*, 11). Most of these narratives involve characters that have the ability to transform into a different form, which can be seen as a deliberate choice, since this ability to transform can also translated into the adaption that old Irish culture and beliefs must undertake to be suitable for the modern, postcolonial Irish culture.

58

Most of these characters have access to both an animal and human form, but end their narrative in their animal forms, or in the case of *Song of the Sea*, depart the modern world completely, leaving only their memories. This symbolises the devolution that must occur to the original beliefs in Celtic deities to embody their new role in the culture as symbols of unity, guidance, and national pride.

All the mythical characters throughout the three movies share the same type of silhouette shape, with their designs heavily relying on circular shapes. As previously discussed, this design choice makes the character seem "approachable and friendly", which encourages the audience to subconsciously support them and view them positively ("Tips & Techniques: Shape Language", 1). This is an essential trait as they represent the old Irish culture, the old beliefs, and the way of life that was untainted by colonialism.

Figure 13. The Fairy folk (Song of the Sea 32:35)

Figure 12. Aisling (The Secret of the Kells 24:33).

Figure 11. Mebh and Moll (WolfWalkers 24:18)

Additionally, these characters are also in direct contradiction to the majority of the antagonists in the films, who represent the concept of colonialism. The fact that the antagonists' shape language is in opposition to that of the mythological characters helps to emphasise a positive association with the mythological characters.

The colour schemes of the characters, however, differ throughout the narratives, with certain characters embodying more colourful palettes and others incorporating paler schemes. Characters such as Mebh and her mother, Moll (*WolfWalkers*), and Macha, as well as the fairy folk (*Song of the Sea*) all have colour schemes that consist of earthy and orange tones that exude a positive feeling towards the audience. Tillman writes that the colour orange "generally

59

evokes feelings of cheerfulness, enthusiasm […] happiness, determination and wisdom" and the colour green inspires emotions of nature, harmony, safety, and optimism (93). These colours encourage the audience to support these characters and heightens the chances of them leaving a lasting impression on the audience, inspiring them to continue research on the folklore characters after viewing the films.

Figure 14. The fairy folk at the end of the film (Song of the Sea 01:20:29)

Figure 16. Macha (Song of the Sea 01:01:38)

Figure 15. Moll and Mebh, the WolfWalkers (WolfWalkers 02:41)

Furthermore, the palettes of these characters are chosen in such a way that they are in sync with their surroundings in nature. This choice helps to create a firm link between these characters and the Irish wilderness to highlight how urbanisation has caused Irish culture to

60

move away from their older beliefs, much like how it has motivated the Irish people to distance themselves away from nature.

Other characters, such as Aisling (*Secret of the Kells*), Bronach, and the Great Seanachaí (*Song of the Sea*) incorporate a much more muted colour scheme. The main colour utilised in their designs is white, which suggest "feelings of purity [...] peace [...] innocence, [and] goodness" (Tillman, 93). This portrayal of innocence in the colour white is a common occurrence within children's media, and it can be assumed that children will make the connection between these characters and their portrayal of 'good' and purity without further prompting.
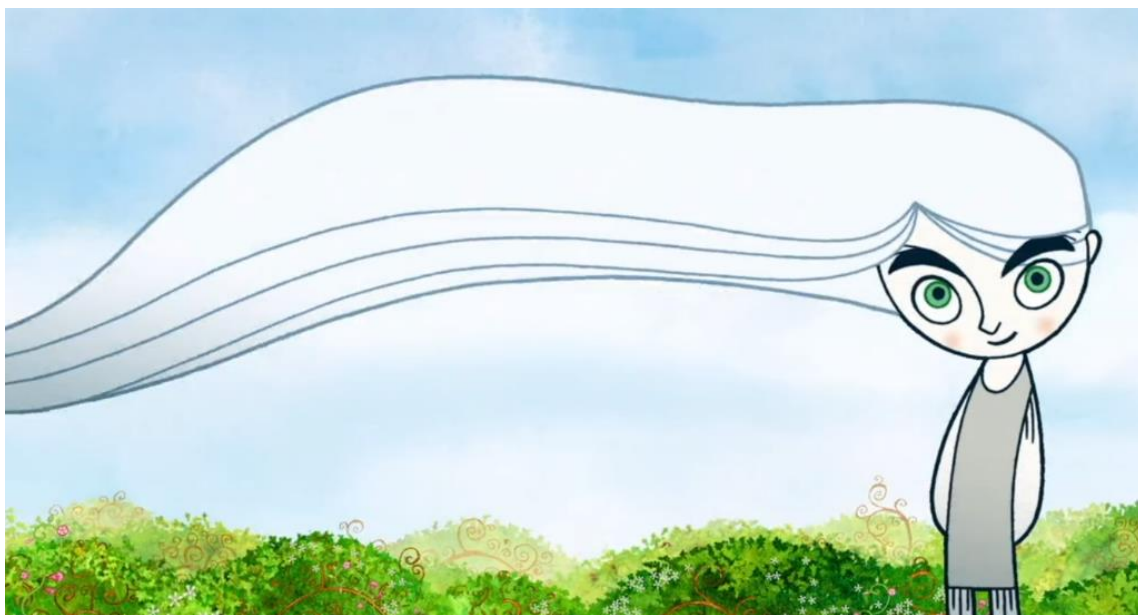
Figure 17. Aisling (The Secret of the Kells 28:41)

Figure 19. The Great Seanachaí (Song of the Sea 51:27)

Figure 18. Bronach (Song of the Sea 01:23:35)

Another significance for this colour is related to the Irish flag, and the symbolism of the colour white in its design. According to the Irish Times, the colour white represents hope for the

peaceful reconciliation and coexistence between the two cultures of the island, the nationalist and unionist segments (*Irish Times*). This symbolism could also be applied to the Aisling and the Great Seanachaí, as they could also be representations of the hope for old Irish culture to be able to find its place in the modern Irish culture of today and continue to adapt and exist in the modern age.

These characters also highlight the fact that the old culture and beliefs are being forgotten, which is further emphasised by their backgrounds. Aisling is the last of her kind that still resides in the forest, and the Great Seanachaí is the physical manifestation of all the folklore stories, who is suffering from memory loss due to the Irish population no longer remembering the old stories. Fanon also supports this idea as he argues that "after a century of colonial domination we find a culture which is rigid in the extreme, or rather what we find are the dregs of culture, its mineral strata. The withering away of the reality of the nation and the death pangs of the national culture are linked to each other in mutual dependence" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 238). The usage of white as the main colour for these characters imply that they have lost all colouration and are slowly fading away, much like how knowledge of the old culture of Ireland has dwindled, as Fanon asserts.

Another interesting aspect of the folklore characters in these movies is that many of them are female. This could be a metaphor for the Irish motherland, hinting at the true identity of Ireland being based, or at least influenced, by the old cultural beliefs.

Lorna Stevens and her colleagues explore the concept of Ireland's association with the feminine and argue that it has been a long-held tradition that is acknowledged in both colonial and postcolonial contexts (1). Writers in the Celtic revival, such as W.B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney, used Irish myths to redefine "Celtic Irishness (the feminine) in oppositional terms to the Anglo-Saxon (the masculine) and in a wholly positive way", and as a result of their work, the feminine is associated with Ireland in the form of "the earth goddess" that opposes the masculine colonists (7). Although this representation of Ireland is now disputed, it continues to be used in literature and media.

Cartoon Saloon also incorporates the feminine representation of Ireland by having the majority of their folklore characters be of the female gender. The folklore characters are all based on circular shapes, which, is more organic, and is therefore also relatable to the female body. This highlights the importance of the, traditionally feminine, Celtic aspect of Irish culture during the

62

colonisation period, given the importance of these characters throughout the narratives. Furthermore, it insinuates that the modern Irish national identity, often represented by the protagonists in the movies, is influenced and aided by the feminine Celtic identity.

One exception to the positive representation of folklore characters is Crom Cruach from *Secret of the Kells.* This character is based on the Celtic war god of the same name, who was mainly worshipped through child sacrifice (Patricia Monaghan, 105). The shape language of this character reflects its role in the narrative and acknowledges the negative connotations of his past, utilising sharp, jagged angles, and incorporating triangular shapes in its facial structure, which insinuate feelings of "aggression, hostility, [and] deviousness" (29). Throughout its appearances, Crom is showcased as very animalistic, which infers that, much like Aisling, he has also devolved over time as the Irish lost their belief in him.

Figure 20. Close up of Crom Cruach

(Secret of the Kells 50:36)

Figure 21. Crom Cruach (Secret of the Kells 50:48)

However, Crom does serve a much more personal purpose for Brendan, as Moore asserts, the god is a representation "of Brendan's fear" rather than an individual entity like Aisling (*Designing the Secret of the Kells*, 141). This dereliction is also supported by Crom's dreamlike realm and excessively simplistic designs, which separates this character from the reality of the world in *Secret of the Kells.* Additionally, Crom's eye serves as the crystal needed in order for Brendan to be able to master the art of illumination, which is a representation of the folklore taking on a new role in the modern culture.

The colour scheme of Crom Cruach also indications that this character is not fully antagonistic, as his realm is mainly consisted of blue, which is typically associated with positive connotations

63

such as faith and wisdom, and power (Tillman, 92). Crom himself is an illuminated green colour, which also has positive associations, as outlined previously.

6.3   Antagonists

The antagonists in Cartoon Saloon's movies are designed in a such a way that is in direct opposition to the designs of the protagonists to promote a negative image to young audiences. In both *Secret of the Kells* and *WolfWalkers*, the antagonists serve as a representation of colonisation as each of these instalments is historically set in a time of invasion.

The silhouette of both the Lord Protector (*WolfWalkers*) and the Vikings (*Secret of the Kells*) are based on both rectangular and triangular shapes, which each respectively implicate a sense of strength and inflexibility, along with danger and sharpness ("Tips &Techniques: Shape Language", 1). This combination of shapes creates a character that seems daunting, unmoving, and ominous which contradicts the shape language of the protagonists and communicates this negative connotation with the antagonist more directly to the audience. Additionally, the antagonist characters are very bulky, especially when compared to the child protagonists, which once again helps instil a feeling of fear and wariness in children and encourages them to be simultaneously more opposed to them and more supportive of the protagonists.

Figure 22. The Vikings (The Secret of the Kells 01:01:00)

Figure 23. The Lord Protector (WolfWalkers 16:12)

Furthermore, rectangular shapes are often associated with masculinity, which could also be a metaphor for colonialism. Stevens et al. determine that colonial forces, specifically the English, viewed themselves as masculine in accordance with the "18th-century Enlightenment perceptions of rational man" and feminised their colonies in an attempt to portray them as irrational, uncivilised, and in need of leadership (4). Much like how the folklore characters are often feminine and act as a metaphor for the native culture of Ireland, as previously addressed, the antagonist characters are visually very masculine and representations of colonist forces.

In terms of colour palettes both these characters have darker colours, with the Vikings in Kells basically being composed as clawed and horned silhouetted creatures rather than humans. This was an intentional choice by Cartoon Saloon, as Moore quotes: "they were meant to be cold, impersonal and frightening as if imagined by a child in medieval times [...and are] more a force of nature than human characters" (*Designing the Secret of Kells*, 117). By making the Vikings an invading force that have very little human resemblance, *Secret of the Kells* presents colonialism as a violent power rather than presenting the colonisers as humans, which is relatable to how a child in such a situation would view invaders to their land. The Vikings embody the tangible violence that Fanon asserts "is in the atmosphere" during the colonisation process (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 70), which is made more prominent with the movie changing its background colours to red and black, with sharp jagged shapes in order to fully portray the all-encompassing power and fear that the Vikings brings. Through this portrayal, Cartoon Saloon offers younger audiences a more authentic experience of how colonialist invasions would have transpired and more directly criticises colonisation by showing the true terror.

65

WolfWalkers, on the other hand, follows a different philosophy. The movie is set in 1650 Kilkenny, with the events that take place mimicking Oliver Cromwell's campaign in Ireland, therefore, the design of the antagonist, the Lord Protector, is also very heavily influenced by Cromwell, with the character being referred to as a fictionalised version of him (Moore, *The Art of WolfWalkers*, 47). The Lord Protector's shape language is similar to that of the Vikings', generally consisting of sharp angles and stocky, rectangular shapes, however, whereas the Vikings are designed to reminiscent inhuman beasts, the Lord Protector resembles a noble.

His clothing seems to be based on that of a general, or prominent military figure, given his cape and body armour, with the colour scheme based in dull dark colours, consisting of browns, greys, and maroon. This dark colour scheme comes into direct opposition to the colour palettes of characters like Mebh and her mother, who are folklore creatures based in the colourful forest, creating an obvious visual dichotomy for younger audiences to understand the conflict between the two forces more easily.

The Lord Protector can also be seen as the embodiment of the coloniser as an educating force, which uses force and duress in order to impose their values onto the uncivilised colonised people. Fanon asserts that colonialism is a "mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 211). This type of belittling ideology is seen throughout the movie when the Lord Protector interacts with the townspeople, however, this stern, unyielding, and condescending demeanour is also portrayed in his design and shape language, as he is both very large and daunting, and his design heavily incorporates angular square shapes (Sloan, 29). Additionally, this is also supported by his stern features, which, once again, include the usage of shape angles and rigid lines, and the fact that most his interactions with the townsfolk take place on horseback, physically placing him in a higher position as a metaphor for his belief in his higher moral position.

Both these antagonists heavily feature the colours black and red, which, according to Tillman, each convey "power […] death, evil […and] fear" along with "war, danger [and] power" respectively (93-94). This combination of colour is very effective for a young audience, since colours with strong connotations such as these send a very clear message towards the audience and allow for easy interpretation. The lack of ambiguity ensures that audiences interpret the values and beliefs that these characters express through either a negative or positive lens.

66

Throughout *Song of the Sea,* Macha is portrayed to be the antagonist, however, when Ben confronts her, and releases her bottled emotions, it is revealed that she was under the misguided belief that she was helping others by taking their emotions as she believed she was shielding them from experiencing painful emotions as she had. Once her emotions are restored, she is remorseful and helps the children get back to their lighthouse in order to save Saoirse.

Macha's colour scheme and shape language also convey her status as a sympathetic character, with her silhouette consisting of curves, soft lines representative of "protection [...and] nature" (Sloan, 28), and her colour scheme being based in warm brown and yellow, both colours that incite comfort and warmth (Sloan, 36). Tillman also argues that yellow could represent the feeling of being "overwhelmed" which is also relevant to her character's inability to process her grief (92). The connotations of this colour scheme are very suited to Macha as her character is misled but ultimately well intentioned.

The character designs in the works of Cartoon Saloon are very indicative of the role the characters play in the narrative, however, the studio also uses this aspect of their works to relay their message of the importance of the old Irish culture to the audience. This message is further emphasised in the settings that the films utilise, which also support the overarching theme of critiquing colonialism. This concept will be expanded on in the next chapter.

7 The Irish Trilogy's Environments, Settings, and Their Postcolonial Implications

The environments which a film employs have a great effect on the audience as it sets the overall atmosphere and also influences the audience's opinion of the characters depending on their surroundings. Uhrig claims that "the overall staging with all its components" allows us to sympathise with, or reject, the characters and the philosophies they represent depending on the settings that they are located in (220). Since the audience views the residence of a certain character as a reflection of their personality, this affords a new potential for expression to the locations of a film.

The Irish trilogy also utilises the settings throughout its narratives, both to help with the characterisation of its cast and to promote the old Irish culture in a more innate, subtle way. The natural environments in these narratives all include abundant references to old Celtic symbols, remains of old shrines, and a general mystical quality that connects these settings very clearly to old Celtic culture. Celtic symbols are interwoven into trees and greenery, which further supports the connection between nature and old Irish culture, while also insinuating that the old culture is an instinctive part of the island's identity. The lighting employed in these environments also emphasises the positive atmosphere by brightening the foliage, their Celtic symbolism, and portraying the scene in a way that would be inviting rather than unsettling, unlike the settings for the antagonists of the movies.

From a Postcolonial aspect, the connection between the natural environments and the true identity of the natives is also reinforced and supported both from a psychological and economical perspective. Roos and Hunt identify the connection between the land and colonisation as an economic undertaking which create "dependent economies that undermine crop diversity, exhaust soil, remove land titles from local populations, and demand unsustainable ecological practices in the name of competition in a cash economy" that confine the native population in an interdependent state that is "cultural, economic, and ecological" (4). The exploitation of the natural environments of a colonised land also results in the destruction of places of cultural significance, which is particularly evident in older cultures that tend to be based more in the worship of nature and wilderness, as seen in old Irish, Greek, and Japanese cultures. This physical destruction results in a psychological estrangement between

the people and the old history of their nation, effectively nullifying their old cultural identity and making them strangers in their own land unless they adopt the culture of the coloniser. The younger and newer generations often accept the culture of the coloniser more willingly as they lack the innate link with their native culture that their predecessors possess and are actively discouraged from developing such a connection both by the coloniser as well as the lack of physical manifestations of such a culture due to the geographical mutilation of the native lands.

The vital importance of children's films in developing a child's social and cultural identity is corroborated by multiple scholars, such as Ian Wojik-Andrews, who argues that "children's films exist as textual practice and social practice, each of which is grounded in the material conditions of history" (158). This philosophy aligns with Henry A. Giroux, who also concurs that children develop their "cultural register" from exposure to "popular cultural forms", however, he further claims that "the struggle over children's culture should be considered as part of a struggle over the related discourses of citizenship, national identity, and democracy itself" (126-128). Furthermore, Brown also asserts that a genre of children's film is dedicated to preserving cultural heritage, and "typically reflect a desire to build on indigenous folkloric", which also aim to influence the emerging cultural identity in younger audiences (66).

Cartoon Saloon's intentions mirror this concept, as Moore also reaffirms that the main objective of the Irish trilogy, and in particular *Song of the Sea,* is to rekindle an interest in old myths and stories in the younger generation to revitalise these old traditions, and in turn, reshape the cultural identity of the young Irish audiences (*Cartoonbrew.com*). In order to have the most impact on the viewer, Cartoon Saloon highlights the importance and positive impact of these old traditions through several aspects of its movies including its narratives, character designs, and its environments.

With meticulous attention to detail, Cartoon Saloon focuses heavily on the design of their environments and the effects that they have on the audience, as shown by the extreme intricacies of these settings and their connotations. Throughout the films, nature and the Irish forests are presented in such a way that is in direct opposition to the industrialised settings that are created, or reinforced, by the colonisers. This is evident in the colour scheme, lighting, and the visual themes that the studio utilises in their works. David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith study the different uses for certain aspects of films and assert that "the overall design

of a setting can shape how we understand story action" which further justifies Cartoon Saloon's attention to detail regarding their settings (116). In the following chapter, the lighting, shape language, colour scheme, and recurrent motifs shall be analysed from a cinematic and postcolonial perspective in order to identify how this studio integrates old Irish culture into its narratives and its potential implications.

7.1 Lighting in Natural and Urban Settings

Throughout the Irish trilogy, the lighting used for the different environments, specifically those of natural and urban settings, remains relatively consistent. The locations that are related to nature are often displayed in a brighter, softer, and more vibrant light as opposed to the duller, but harsher, more muted light that is utilised for urbanised settings. Bordwell and his colleagues define the two types of lighting that is utilised in these settings, arguing that hard lighting creates "sharp edges" and soft lighting "creates a diffused illumination", thereby allowing the settings to also influence the overall atmosphere of the films (127). These features are repeated throughout each of the three narratives, and all emphasise the welcoming atmosphere of the natural settings, due to the softer light that aids in creating a gentler, and harmonious, transition between light and shadow. These settings highlight the contrast between the natural and industrialised settings, since the colder, more rigid atmosphere of these locations accentuate the harsh shadows that give the impression of a segregated environment, and create a sense of wariness and instability.

This choice in lighting supports Cartoon Saloon's message of the old Irish culture being a natural aspect of the Irish identity in the same way that the natural environments, as well as the Celtic symbolism they entail, seamlessly integrate with light and shadows. The urbanised settings, however, illustrate much more distinct shadows that could also be read as a metaphor for the disjunction between the colonisers' modern culture, that is pushed onto the Irish population, and the native culture of the Irish, and their inability to merge, resulting in a decisive split between the ideologies that are visually displayed in the distinct separation between the light and shadows.

Figure 24. The faded lighting used in Kells (Secret of the Kells 09:31)

Figure 25. The vibrant lighting of the forest (Secret of the Kells 26:28)

Another aspect of the lighting is the undertone colour of the light that is employed in these narratives. In their article, Pietro Piazzolla and Marco Gribaudo define the two purposes for the implementation of different coloured light: "a semantic and a syntactical one. The former is the capacity of a color to confer a meaning to a scene [...and] the latter function allows to divide the film in sequences, each one characterized by a dominant color" (4). Cartoon Saloon makes use of the lighting in their films to fulfil both the semantic and syntactical mainly by using

warmer and brighter yellow tones as the main lighting colour in the natural settings, and a cooler, blue-toned light for the urbanised locations.

Figure 26. The blue tinted lighting of Kilkenny (WolfWalkers 38:50)
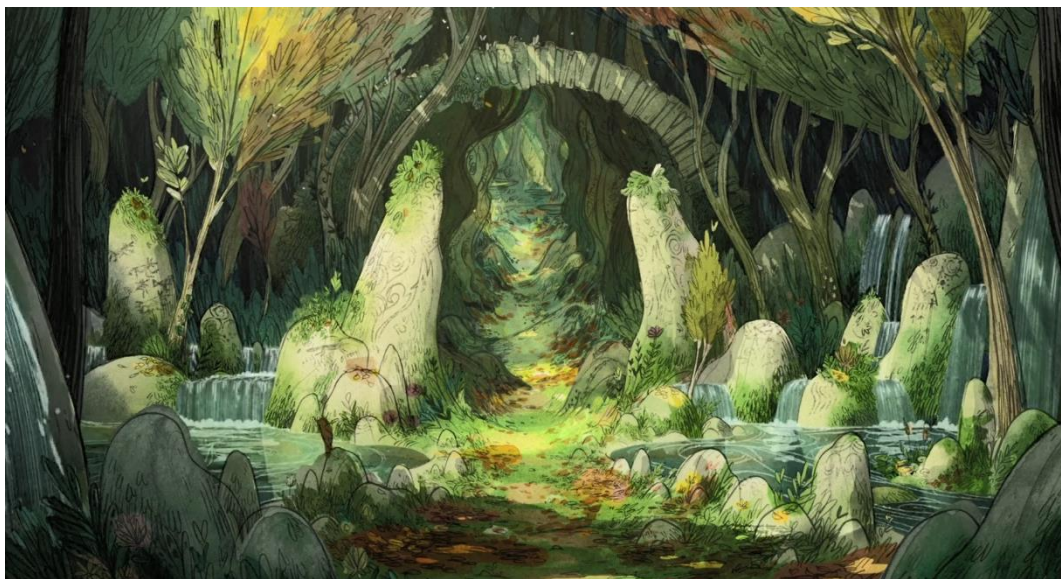
Figure 27. The warm lighting of the forest (WolfWalkers 22:49)

These undertones of the lighting are significant, since as previously discussed, colour theory is highly influential in the overall opinion of the audience. As such, the yellow undertones in lighting would encourage feelings of happiness, comfort, and generally provide a more childish hue due to its brightness, whereas the blue undertones would emphasise feelings of coldness, sadness, as well as a more adult, serious tone (Tillman, 92). Due to the audience mostly comprising of children, this choice of colour provides further significance as the lighting used

in natural settings is designed to appeal more to a younger audience. Additionally, the implications of yellow and blue undertones corresponding respectively to childish and more serious, adult dispositions could also be a recognition of the coloniser's methods of control, as the native people would often be infantilised and portrayed as helpless and uncivilised without the guidance of the coloniser in order for the coloniser to retain control (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 211). However, this philosophy is criticised throughout the narratives, as the natural settings are shown to ultimately be the locations in which culture is best preserved and the urbanised settings are shown to be more violent, less moralised, and culturally hollow.

7.2   Shape language, Colour Theory, and Contrast of Different Settings

Settings and locations are most obviously defined by their architecture of physical components and, as Wojik-Andrews asserts, "involve the intersections between general and specific times and places and character, symbol, tone, and so forth" (180). Cartoon Saloon also takes advantage of the potential symbolism that can be implemented in these locations through the heavy usage of shape language and colour theory in order to both correspond to the characters in those settings, and to influence their audience in a positive or negative way.

In all of the instalments in the Irish trilogy, the settings that are related to colonising forces and influences, such as the abbey (*Secret of the Kells*), the town in *Song of the Sea*, and Kilkenny (*WolfWalkers*) consist of uniform, rigid lines and angular shapes, such as triangles and rectangular designs, which signal tension, conformity and masculine strength (Sloan, 27-29). Additionally, the colour schemes that are applied to these locations provide further support to the shape language, with dull, muted colours such as greys and dark browns featuring heavily in the external architecture of the buildings, which also communicate a sense of forced unity and power (Tillman, 93). Furthermore, these colours are much stronger than the bright, light colours employed in the forests and natural settings, which could also be indicative of the threat of the coloniser's culture being capable of tainting, and overlaying, the native's culture much like the result of these colours mixing. Bordwell et al. argue that "over the course of a narrative, a prop may become a motif", which can also be applied to the Irish trilogy in regard to their contrasting of the urban and rural settings (119). These shapes and colours, and the general monotone unity displayed in the industrialised settings, can be inferred as a metaphor

for the culture of the coloniser coercing the native population to adopt a foreign culture in order to conform to a strict mould of uniformity that the colonisers can more easily control.

Figure 28. The juxtaposition between the shape language of the forest and town (WolfWalkers 51:05)

Figure 30. The wilderness (Song of the Sea 40:28)

Figure 29. The town (Song of the Sea 26:18)

The concept of a foreign culture being advertised to the native people is also explored by Fanon, who outlines how the colonisers devalue the logic and culture of the coloniser. He argues that, as a native, his "unreason is countered with reason, my reason with 'real reason.' Every hand was a losing hand for me" (*Black Face, White Masks*, 101). He further asserts that hollowness of the adoption of the foreign culture results in the Native losing his own originality and his connection to his motherland, until the Native comes upon a "rediscovery" of his history, and culture, which allows him to rebuild himself (95-99). This is a concurrent theme in the Irish

trilogy, with all the protagonists discovering their true selves, or obtaining the tools needed for such, in these natural settings, often with mythical aid.

Another aspect of the designs of the civilised locations in this trilogy is that in both *Secret of the Kells* and *WolfWalkers* these settings are surrounded by a wall, which infers the coloniser's need to alienate the native from their culture in order to destroy their cultural identity and coerce them to adopt the new culture of the coloniser (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 210). The natural settings in these films provide further support for Fanon's idea, as they are designed to be much more inviting and facilitate the protagonists' reconnection with their Celtic past through the discovery of a power (*WolfWalkers*), resources (*Secret of the Kells*), or by quite literally guiding the protagonists' home, proverbially also leading them to their true cultural 'home' (*Song of the Sea*). The urbanised settings seem to attempt to lessen this connection through limiting access and physically not permitting the Native to make contact with the world outside of the coloniser's direct influence.

Figure 31. The wall surrounding Kells (Secret of the Kells 28:51)

Nature and the Irish forests in these films are designed to visually challenge the urbanised settings, and consequently their respective characters and the philosophies they represent, in order to further support the message of the significance of old Irish culture, which is also heavily based on the worship and preservation of nature. Throughout all three narratives, the rural settings are built on curved, soft lines, which, as Sloan affirms, "connote nature […] emphasize playfulness and joy […and] can give an impression of softness, gentleness, sensuality, and femininity" (28). Moore also addresses the deliberate opposition in the designs of the forest and urban settings in *The Art of WolfWalkers* as he asserts that "the conflict is embodied visually in the division between the rectilinear buildings of Kilkenny as the sensually curving vegetation

75

in the forest" (158) and continues to argue that the forests "represent the struggle between the Irish people and the Lord Protector. To the Irish, the woods are an integral part of their homeland, to the Lord Protector, they are the symbol of resistance and disorder he intends to subdue" (162). This is a reiteration of the coloniser's ideals which Cartoon Saloon challenges through the events of the movie.

This philosophy is also applied in *Secret of the Kells*, with Ross declaring that the animation team specifically tried to create a "organic, majestic, magical and dreamlike" atmosphere in the forest to contradict the "mechanical, geometric" shapes utilised in Kells (*Designing the Secret of the Kells,* 85). While the choice of line art in the natural environments represent the resistance of the natives, it can also be interpreted as a visual representation of the colliding cultures, with the culture of the native being curved under the pressure of the coloniser, but adapting to survive, rather than breaking, much like the colonised people. This linear design choice directly contradicts the design of the towns and urbanised locations, which exude an impression of harsh inflexibility and masculinity, referencing the nature of the coloniser's belief of his superiority and insistence on his culture being accepted by the natives.

Figure 32. The vibrant colours and curved line art of the forest (Secret of the Kells 27:36)

Figure 33. The forests of Ireland (WolfWalkers 01:35:32)

The colour schemes that are employed in the rural settings are also symbolic in that they once again contradict those used in the industrialised settings. The vibrant greens, yellows, and oranges that are included in the forests of both *WolfWalkers* and *Secret of the Kells* are not only indicative of the distinctively Irish setting (Stefano Scapolan, *The Art of WolfWalkers*, 162), but also showcase the vivacity of these settings, specifically in comparison to the town and abbey.

Song of the Sea tends to be inclined towards more muted colours, and while this can be viewed as an aesthetic choice to make the settings and characters more cohesive, it can also be read as a metaphor for the faded Irish national identity that is revigorated as Saoirse sings the song of the sea, reawakening the memory of the old Irish beliefs and fae creatures and therefore bringing new life to them. This is further supported by the fact that the locations in which the folklore creatures, such as Macha and the Na Daoline Sidhe, reside are more vibrantly coloured in comparison to other settings. After the folklore creatures have left to the Otherworld, which as Wisarut Painark argues, "is a metaphor for how Celtic culture will last forever" (16), and cemented their place in the new Irish identity, the scenes following also appear to be more brightly tinted with sunnier weather that contrasts the dark, cloudy atmosphere of the film up to this point. This development of the brighter tones, and pleasant weather, can be viewed as a metaphor for the completed, whole Irish identity that has embraced its past, which results in the nature of Ireland being placated and providing ideal weather to signal its approval.

Both Tillman and Sloan affirm that the colours utilised in the forest and nature locations are warm, alluring hues that exude warmth, happiness, wisdom, and in the case of green, nature, healing, and harmony (Sloan, 36, Tillman, 92-93). Due to the fact that the forests and rural locations are implied to be linked to the old Irish culture, the implementation of these colours implies that these settings should be preserved and granted more importance as they can be utilised to reconnect with the past culture and preserve it by conserving the nature of Ireland. Historically, colonists have exploited natural resources of their colonies and justified their actions through their superiority over the natives (Huggan and Tiffin, "Green Postcolonialism", 11), however, these films emphasise the importance of the preservation of these locations, which may be the key to reconnecting with the old Irish beliefs.

7.3   Recurrent Celtic Shape Motifs in Natural Settings

The usage of Celtic symbols in the natural environments, as well as other references to the old pagan religion, such as the leading lights in *Song of the Sea* and remains of Celtic shrines in *WolfWalkers* and *Secret of the Kells*, is an additional attempt by Cartoon Saloon to connect Ireland's nature to the old Celtic Irish culture. This is most evident in *Secret of the Kells*, where there is an abundance of scenes that include megalithic structures, old remains of pagan shrines, as well as Celtic runes and designs carved into the forest trees, however, the other instalments of the Irish trilogy also include more subtle references to the old Irish culture through the remains of pagan structures that are scattered in the forests and landscapes. *Song of the Sea* and *WolfWalkers* rely more heavily on the visual opposition between the urban and rural locations in both the shape language and the respective, contrasting colour schemes.

This repurposing of Celtic symbols is also repeatedly seen throughout the history of Ireland, as Kumar and Scanlon assert that "Ireland is both eternal and primordial in utilizing symbols of the past to project an ideal for the future as what has always existed and will continue to exist" (22). This ideology is directly adapted into the natural settings of Cartoon Saloon, which are framed as locations for cultural preservation and the creation of the national identity, through the protagonist.

Figure 34. Celtic runes blended onto the trunks of the trees (Secret of the Kells 26:27)

These symbols, or structures, are often placed centrally in order to draw the attention of the viewer. Bordwell and his colleagues affirm that "mise-en-scene offers many cues for guiding our attention and emphasizing elements in the frame", therefore, by placing these symbols in

the centre of the frame, it automatically draws the attention of the audience to its presence and hence more noticeably implies the connection between the nature and the old Celtic beliefs (143). Additionally, the runes that are realised in these locations are often very eminent Celtic symbols, to further increase the chance of their recognition by a younger audience, and consequently further cement the link between the old Irish beliefs and the natural settings.

The most prominent Celtic symbols and motifs that are utilised in these narratives are the circular motif that Cartoon Saloon uses in all of its natural settings and the Triad symbol, which is most evidently entwined in the Oak tree in *Secret of the Kells.* The recovered meanings of these symbols are also relevant, as they further signify the old Irish culture and its transformation throughout the age of colonialism.

Figure 35. The Triad on a large oak tree (Secret of the Kells 26:51)

Clare Elizabeth Bonner has conducted research into the meanings of old Celtic runes in her book *Celtic Symbols: The Essential Guide* and affirms that the Triad's design is influenced by the importance of the number three, which depicts the "cyclic changes of life" that refer to both "life, death, and rebirth" as well as "past, present, and future" (87). This symbol, and its construed definition, is relevant to the old Irish culture as it also represents the stages of vivacity for this culture: the active participation of the natives before contact with colonisers; the 'death' of the old culture as the indigenous population are forced to adopt a new culture

and the old culture is deliberately debased by the coloniser; and, finally, the rebirth of the old culture in a new form that is compatible with the modern, hybrid culture of postcolonial Ireland.

Another prominent theme is the usage of circular motifs throughout the films, which are a reference to both the Celtic runes' spherical inclination, seen prominently in the Pictish art style, and the architectural implementation of megalithic structures such as Avebury or Tara. These circular themes, much like the Triad, are also a representation of continuity, but also represent the concept of a sanctuary, and a "magical centre" for the druids' usage in pagan times (Bonner, 36). Cartoon Saloon distinguishes the buildings of urbanised areas and those of the forest by taking inspiration from this architectural inclination towards circular structures, which serves the double purpose of contradicting the architecture in the industrialised areas, while also once more relating the forests to the old Irish culture.

Figure 36. The circular megalithic structure (Secret of the Kells 22:04)

Figure 37. The Celtic inspired snowflakes (Secret of the Kells 59:43)

This connection between nature and circular designs is also showcased in two specific cases in both *Secret of the Kells* and *Song of the Sea*. In the former, during the attack of the Vikings, snow is falling from the sky, however, each snowflake is in a shape of a circular Celtic rune,

80

which directly implies that nature is connected to the Celtic beliefs. The time which this event occurs is further symbolic, as this snowfall begins with the invasion of the Vikings on Kells and presents a stark contrast to the vivid red and black colour schemes of both the Vikings and the invasion within the walls of Kells, seeming to placate the violence by providing a peaceful white cover over the violence. Despite Kells being initially placed in a contradictory role to the forest, the shape of Kells is, from an arial view, that of a Celtic rune, which hints to the Irish coexisting with their pagan past, despite their catholic religion. This can also be seen in catholic written works of this time, including the book of Kells, which was one of the inspirations for this movie.

Another example of this connection between nature, old Celtic beliefs in magic, and circular shapes is seen in *Song of the Sea,* in which Saoirse and Ben are led by small glowing spheres that lead to them the next location of their journey. Every instance in which these lights appear, the children are led towards rural locations, with their first appearance leading Saoirse to her sealskin coat and the sea. Consequent appearances lead the siblings to the creatures of Irish folklore, such as the Na Daoline Sidhe and the Great Seanchaí. The implementation of these lights, and their role in the narrative, once again directly connect the old Celtic beliefs to nature and draw attention to the importance of the interdependency between the two.

Figure 38. Circular, Celtic inspired lights (Song of the Sea 14:18)

WoflWalkers includes more subtle reference to the circular motif and its connection to the old Irish culture and nature. This is prominently seen in the scenes in which the WolfWalkers are transforming back into humans, where the spiritual image of the wolf is based strongly on circular motifs. This is further supported by the illustrations on the walls of the den of the

WolfWalkers, which once again are based off the circular shapes and loosely alludes to Celtic symbols.

Figure 39. Wolf transformation and the inclusion of circular shapes in its design (WolfWalkers 57:00)

Oak trees are another prominent Celtic symbol that are explicitly illustrated throughout the narratives of the Irish trilogy. These trees held very significant power as they were said to symbolize "strength, solidity and sanctuary" and, due to their connection with druids, came to symbolise worship and justice (Bonner, 69). In both *Secret of the Kells* and *WolfWalkers*, the oak tree is showcased as a place of bonding between the folklore characters and the protagonists, hence further cementing its implied importance to the old Celtic culture.

Figure 40. Oak tree which stands between Kilkenny and the forest (01:03:08)

Figure 41. reference to the Tree of Life (Song of the Sea 45:10)

WolfWalkers' placement of the oak tree is specifically significant as it stands between the forest, the realm of magic, and the town of Kilkenny, the land of logic and civilisation. Therefore, it can be inferred that this tree, as both highly symbolic in the old Celtic beliefs, but also, to an outsider, simply a species of local fauna, represents a point of convergence between the two clashing cultures, representing the adaption of the old native culture in order to conform to the new culture. *Song of the Sea*, on the other hand, utilises a reference to the Tree of Life, which is also said to be an oak tree and holds great significance in the old Irish culture. This tree is placed on top of an ancient shrine, now repurposed as a shrine for the Holy Virgin, which once again implies its usage as a symbol for the adaption of the old culture with modern values.

Huggan affirms the importance of recognising the potential for change in the environment, as he claims that "it seems necessary to reaffirm the potential of the environmental imagination to envision alternative worlds, both within and beyond the realm of everyday human experience, which might reinvigorate the continuing global struggle for social and ecological justice." ("'Greening' Postcolonialism: Ecocritical Perspectives", 80) Through the usage of oak trees as a gatekeeper between the mythical and real world, Cartoon Saloon allows the audience to reconsider their opinion of the old culture and bring light to its symbolic value as a motivation tool for national independence without the need to commit fully to the old folktale beliefs as values.

7.4 Postcolonial Connotations of the Design Choices

These design choices could be inferred as a play on the concept that the native is often portrayed as primal by the coloniser. As Fanon argues, "[h]ostile nature, obstinate and fundamentally rebellious, is in fact represented in the colonies by the bush by mosquitoes, natives, and fever, and colonization is a success when all this indocile nature has finally been tamed", which relates the native intimately with nature, and their submission as equal to the taming of the natural landscape of a colonised nation (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 250). Cartoon Saloon, however, not only represents this connection quite directly, but also showcases a positive outcome from this connection between native and nature. Cartoon Saloon's insistence on the portrayal of a connection between the Native, their old culture, and nature is a direct criticism of the colonial system and its false misrepresentations and stereotyping, which as Bhabha asserts is the "splitting of 'official' and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse" (*Location of Culture*, 82). By highlighting the positive, and vital, impact of the 'primal' aspects of the Native, and his connection to nature, Cartoon Saloon protests this stereotyping through mimicry, which "mocks the power [of the coloniser] to be a model" (86) and inverts the outcome by making this aspect of the Native a consistently positive trait and drawing attention to the coloniser's flawed cultural duress on the Native.

The inclusion of these Celtic runes, symbols, and circular motifs all help to cohesively connect the indigenous Irish, the land's nature, and the significance it holds in relation to the old culture, as outlined above. However, Cartoon Saloon also aims to redefine these old beliefs that, while an integral part of the national identity of the Irish population, must be adapted to modern times. As such, rather than including these runes and symbols as a more prominent, and active, part of the narratives, their subtle inclusion of these design choices both acknowledges the powerful role that these beliefs once performed while also offering a new position for them in the identity of the native: no less important, but rather as a keepsake and reminder of the struggle for freedom and a symbol for unity between the Irish.

Bhabha addresses this change in national identity as he also contends that "the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality" (*Nation and Narration*, 1). Cartoon Saloon attempts to acknowledge the importance of these beliefs in the struggle for Ireland's independence, while also insisting on the reinvention of these beliefs as a

commemoration of these values in modern times. This is achieved by granting the beliefs of the old culture a place in the new national identity through highlighting the fundamental relationship between the Native and nature, along with the bonds to the old Celtic beliefs that are represented through the natural environments.

Fanon, on the other hand, reasons the Native, once he realises that he has lost himself in his attempt to adopt the foreign culture, attempts to reconnect with his people and his native culture, which "renounces the present and the future in the name of a mystical past" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 7). However, Cartoon Saloon offers an alternative evolution of culture rather than attempting to reinstate the old, untouched, culture by determining new roles for the beliefs that the Native's old culture entailed. Fanon, in *Wretched of the Earth*, readdresses this issue and affirms that, due to the changes that affect the native population throughout the process of both colonisation and decolonisation "it is of capital importance to follow the evolution of these relations during the struggle for national freedom" (238). Therefore, by reframing the Celtic beliefs of the old culture as a part of Ireland's nature, and showcasing them as a positive influence, these beliefs, and the culture that stemmed from them, are presented as an integral part of the nation, and affect the national identity of Irish population much like the environment of their motherland.

By combining the elements discussed above, Cartoon Saloon creates an immersive world for younger audiences with obvious connotations towards the importance of both nature and the old Irish culture and religion. Additionally, these settings support their respective characters by mirroring their intentions, through their colour and shape language, and strengthening the audience's perceived opinion of the characters, both negative and positive.

8 Gaelic and Traditional Music in the Irish Trilogy

Soundtracks play an important role in the Irish trilogy and further strengthen the link between nature, folklore, and the old culture through strategic use of Gaelic Irish and traditional music. Zhige Lui outlines the integral role of sound in animation, as this media is "essentially silent", and thus the soundtrack is "an indispensable element" (3), which "may be used indirectly to enhance the story" and compliments the visuals of a film by "working on its audience subconsciously," as Tomlinson Holman contends (xi). This chapter shall explore how sound in the Irish trilogy is utilised to create a positive atmosphere in natural settings and link the folklore characters to the native Gaelic language, emphasising the integral role they play in the Irish national identity.

8.1 Usage of Traditional Irish Music Throughout the Irish trilogy

Much like Lui, James Monaco outlines that importance of sound in a film, arguing that it should be "of equal importance with the image" (125), which is echoed by Moore, as he confirms the significance of the usage of traditional music in the instalments of the Irish trilogy (*The Art of WolfWalkers*, 213). Many scholars, such as Benjamin Nagari (42), Graeme Harper (183), and Holman (xi), delineate the emotional influence of music within a film, asserting that the soundtrack of a film encourages certain reactions from the audience that the visuals cannot achieve, and complements the visuals to further their effect on the audience.

The Irish trilogy soundtracks include music from Kila, an orchestral group specialising in traditional Irish music, and Bruno Coulais, their composer, who have worked together throughout the films and developed a unique style that is associated with the Irish trilogy. Coulais highlights the importance of the soundtrack in these movies as he argues that in animation "you are not in a realistic world, so the music has more importance" and that the music "almost becomes another character" (214), which is also supported by Monaco. Harper asserts that the soundtrack of a film "has a variety of thresholds of influence" (5) and can also be consumed independently as "audio text, most commonly comprised of music, related to a film" (3), which highlights the importance of the soundtrack and Coulais' insistence on the soundtrack serving an independent purpose.

The link between the folklore characters, nature, and traditional folklore music is an active decision, as Coulais confirms, and continues to expand on this decision as "the music is a counterpoint that reveals secrets within the film" (*The Art of WolfWalkers*, 214). Remael Aline argues that "even if sound and image do not fully coincide [...] the spectators [...] will experience them as synchronous" (264), which Cartoon Saloon utilises to associate old traditions to nature through the incorporation of traditional music within the soundtracks of the Irish trilogy. This supports the concept that the music also delivers a message to the audience, namely the connection between old Irish culture and national identity.

Sound in an animated movie serves many purposes, such as "introducing environment background [....] portraying indirectly the main character's nature and expressing their' [sic] emotions" (Lui, 5), and "connect[ing] otherwise unconnected ideas" (Remael, 262). The Irish trilogy use music in order to communicate their message to their audience, as, throughout the narratives of the Irish trilogy, the interactions between the protagonists and folklore characters are accompanied by traditional Irish music to emphasise their connection.

In particular, upbeat traditional music is specifically incorporated during joyous scenes where the protagonist is bonding with the folklore characters, as seen in all three movies when the folklore characters are forging a relationship with the protagonists. The inclusion of traditional music further supports the positive association between the forest and folklore characters in an auditory fashion. Jessica Green contends that music can communicate themes and helps to "control the way that the audience interprets a film" (82), which directly reflects Cartoon Saloon's reasoning for using traditional music in rural, forest settings. Through the usage of bright traditional music during these scenes, the Irish trilogy encourages the audience to view these settings and characters as positive influences on the protagonist, an embodiment of the national identity, and hence insinuates the positive influence of old Irish culture in the postcolonial Irish identity.

Another potential justification for the usage of traditional music in these scenes is the role of music in cultural perseverance. Martin Dowling explores the revival of traditional Irish music and affirms that throughout the Gaelic Literary Revival, music aspired to be "a symbol of the whole society" (56), which was integral to the development of national identity, particularly from the 1970s onwards (61). By using music that is already influential to the development of

national identity, Cartoon Saloon further highlights the importance of pagan old culture and nature in the national identity.

Furthermore, Irish music has undergone many changes throughout the ages, redefined to better represent modern Ireland (Dowling, 62-65), which also echoes the message that Cartoon Saloon attempts to communicate with its audience about old Irish culture. However, these nuances of traditional music will likely only be understood by older audiences, as younger audiences lack the historical knowledge required to comprehend the role of traditional Irish music in the creation of national identity.

8.2   Usage of Gaelic Irish by the Folklore Characters

Throughout the narratives of the Irish trilogy, all the folklore characters incorporate Gaelic Irish in their speech, which directly strengthens the established link between folklore characters and old Irish culture as Gaelic Irish is the native language of Ireland. Both Saoirse (Song of the Sea) and Aisling (*Secret of the Kells*) perform magical feats by singing in Gaelic, which symbolises the power of this language and links it further to the old pagan culture. Fanon and Bhabha stress the power that language bestows on the Native, with Fanon affirming that "[t]o speak a language is to take on a world, a culture" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 25). A language also entails the worldview of the culture from which the language originates (9), which, in the Irish trilogy, connotes that the native culture of Ireland is accessible through Gaelic, as is represented by Gaelic being spoken exclusively by folklore characters.

Another aspect of language usage is that it "invites people to unite, but it does not force them to do so" (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 16), which is also represented in the Irish trilogy through the magical acts of the folklore characters and the aid they offer to the protagonists. In *Secret of the Kells*, Aisling uses Gaelic singing to help Brendan escape, unifying them as Aisling helps Brendan to defeat Crom Cruach. In *Song of the Sea*, when Saoirse sings, partly in Gaelic, the folklore creatures all join to leave for the Otherworld, resulting in the unification of old and modern culture. Both these instances include unification for a common purpose, which supports the unifying power of language that Bhabha contends.

The extent of Gaelic Irish that is used in each instalment is also significant, as it emphasises the effect of colonialism, in different stages, on a language. *Secret of the Kells* includes the most

Gaelic lines, which insinuates that colonialism has not yet repressed the native language. This is further supported by Brendan being capable of understanding the Irish that Aisling quotes. In *WolfWalkers*, which takes place in the height of colonisation, the only Gaelic used is by Mebh at the end of the film, once Robyn has fully embraced being a Wolfwalker, which shows a drastic decrease in its usage. Lastly, in *Song of the Sea*, which takes place after decolonisation, once again only the folklore characters use Gaelic, with Saoirse only singing in Gaelic after she is reunited with her selkie coat. However, the movie also entails the most usage of Gaelic Irish, which could be a reference to the language gaining support once again after decolonisation and through the Gaelic Literary Revival. Additionally, this frequent usage of Gaelic in *Song of the Sea* could be indicative of Cartoon Saloon's insistence on the importance of cultural preservation, in particular as this movie focuses on the potential loss of the old cultural values. This frequent, and exclusive, usage of Gaelic further reinstates the connection between the old Irish culture and the Gaelic language, and highlights the necessity for the Irish to reconnect once again with their national language in order to more easily gain access to their traditional culture.

Both the traditional Irish music and Gaelic Irish is utilised quite subtly in the Irish trilogy, nevertheless, Cartoon Saloon purposefully implements these techniques to further insist on the importance of old Irish culture by emphasising the role it plays in preserving the native language of Ireland. The use of Gaelic by the folklore characters and traditional music in natural settings help to reaffirm the connection between language, culture, and nature in an auditory fashion that supports the visual associations, as previously discussed.

9 Conclusion

Throughout the course of this thesis, I have addressed how Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy uses visual, auditory, and narrative techniques to draw attention to the old culture of Ireland and emphasise its significance in the identity of the Irish people. Additionally, the techniques which these films employ to critique colonialism and highlight its negative effects in the national identity were analysed through a postcolonial perspective.

The theoretical framework which I used for this analysis consisted of the works of Frantz Fanon and Homi K. Bhabha, along with the concepts of green postcolonialism, which was discussed in detail throughout the second chapter of this thesis. Fanon clarifies that the coloniser asserts power through the use of violence against the Native; and the systematic devaluation of the indigenous popoulation's native culture in order to coerce the Native to internalise their colonisation. Bhabha also supports this claim, as he theorises that the coloniser uses techniques such as stereotyping and hybridity to invalidate the Native. However, he further expands on how these techniques can also be used to challenge the coloniser by questioning the superiority of the coloniser.

The importance of national literature and traditional mythology in the creation of national identity is also a concept that both scholars affirm throughout their works, as these traditions take on new meaning and are redefined during decolonisation, which bolsters national pride in the native population. Furthermore, the main arguments of green postcolonialism, which focuses on the relationship of the indigenous people and their native lands, as well as the destructive effects of colonisation, are addressed as Cartoon Saloon also explores this relationship throughout their works.

In the analysis of the Irish trilogy, I determine how these concepts are utilised to highlight the role of old Irish traditions in the national identity of the new generation. Through the intentional usage of shape language and colour theory, folklore characters and natural settings are created in a manner that is pleasing and positive to younger audiences to encourage a positive association towards old Irish culture, which is represented through these settings and characters. The usage of organic curved lines, bright lightning, and vibrant colours in natural settings and the characters that reside within provide the audience with a positive impression which is further strengthened by the role that these settings and characters play in the plots of

90

the films. As these characters symbolise the old Irish culture, the positive influence that they have on the audience also incites young children to develop a more optimistic impression of old Celtic culture and better comprehend its importance.

Similarly, the settings of the colonists as well as the characters of the colonisers are designed in such a way that connotes negative emotions in the audience, mainly through the use of dark colours and angular shape language, which allow Cartoon Saloon to critique colonialism in an indirect manner. However, the Irish trilogy also does not recoil from more direct criticism, as the dark atmosphere of the towns and the antagonist characters, and particularly the violence that they bring, all influence the audience directly in a negative way and symbolise the violent effect of colonisation on the Irish culture and serve as a reminder of the trauma inflicted upon the Irish people in the colonial period.

In all three movies, the protagonists, representing the postcolonial Irish identity, discover their true selves through contact with the folklore creatures and reconnecting with nature. While these developments expand on the positive associations that the movies build visually, they also emphasise that the national identity is incomplete without acknowledgement of the folkloric past of Ireland due to the importance of these characters in the plots. Nevertheless, the Irish trilogy also focuses on the old culture of Ireland adapting to the modern culture by allowing the folklore characters to support and strengthen the protagonist, mimicking the role of folklore during the Gaelic Literary Revival.

Furthermore, all instalments of the Irish trilogy include at least one instance of a folklore character speaking Gaelic Irish, linking these characters to the old traditional values in an auditory manner and symbolising them as the link to the past. In the soundtracks of the Irish trilogy, traditional Irish music is also incorporated into the scenes where the folklore characters and protagonists interact, which also strengthens the connection between national identity and old culture.

These narratives, along with the visual and auditory decisions, reflect the arguments of both Fanon and Bhabha, mirroring the concepts that they outline in a more comprehensible fashion, and draw attention to the importance of nature, thereby also reflecting the arguments of green postcolonialism. By analysing the visualisation of these concepts in the Irish trilogy, I have identified that Cartoon Saloon utilises visual techniques, such as colour theory and thematic character design, to influence the audience's opinion towards old Irish culture. Additionally,

91

strategical use of traditional Irish music, and narratives that involve the positive portrayal of old Celtic beliefs and negative portrayal of colonialism, incite an interest in old Celtic culture in younger audiences through stressing the necessity of these beliefs in the modern times. The emphasis on the indispensable positive influence of the folklore characters on the protagonists, and the aid they provide throughout the story, outlines the significance of these characters, which symbolises the integral need for the old culture to be integrated into the modern national identity. Through the positive portrayal of the old native culture, Cartoon Saloon also attempts to critique the colonisation process and the techniques employed by colonisers to further undermine the value of the old culture.

Although scholars such as Tom Walsh and Maeve Connolly have considered how animation can be used to open a discourse on the postcolonial Irish identity, and have offered examples on how this is achieved, fewer scholars have specifically addressed Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy.

As Cartoon Saloon's movies have gained international attention, scholars have begun to analyse these movies to determine how the old traditions are represented for younger audiences and their connotations. However, up to this point there has not yet been a study which considers these films as a trilogy, and attempts to analyse the common techniques that are implemented to highlight the importance of the Celtic tradition in the national identity. Additionally, the studies of Cartoon Saloon's works mainly don't address the colonist past of Ireland, the violence it entailed, and its debilitating effect on the Irish culture, which is referenced directly or indirectly throughout the Irish trilogy. In this thesis, I attempted to fill these cavities within the comprehensive framework of works on postcolonial animation that is already available.

Due to the scope of my analysis, the instalments of the Irish trilogy were studied as a unit rather than individually. This allowed me to better recognise overarching animation and storytelling techniques that are employed in these films. However, this has also limited my ability to analyse the nuances of each instalment to determine the specific inspirations for each film, and their resulting message to the audience. Each of these movies address a certain stage of colonisation, and its remnant effects after decolonisation, and therefore highlights a different stage of Irish culture, and the specific role of old Irish culture during this period.

An example of this can be seen throughout the different finales in *WoflWalkers* and *Song of the Sea*, with the first resulting in the humans, Robyn and her father, joining the folklore characters, and the second ending with the folklore characters being sent to the Otherworld. The various

finales each respectively symbolise the different usages and methods of acknowledgement of old Irish culture in different settings. However, this explicit symbolism, and their meanings, are unique to each film and must be analysed individually, which is unfortunately outside of the scope of this study. The works of Wisarut Painark, Marwa AlKhayat, and Aisling Holohan address these films in more detail and provide a more thorough analysis of these films, which highlight the specific connotations of each film and how this effect is achieved.

This thesis acts as an introduction to the postcolonial inspirations in Cartoon Saloon's works and their implementations in relation to Bhabha, Fanon, and green postcolonialism. However, as previously outlined, each instalment of the Irish trilogy is full of rich symbolism that are worthy of individual analysis. Furthermore, my theoretical framework throughout this thesis is limited in comparison to the plethora of works in the postcolonial field, which could also provide further inspiration, such as analysis of these movies through a feminist postcolonial or ecocritical lens, for future studies.

Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy is an excellent example of how modern media has adopted the role of literature in relation to the creation of national identity. The importance of these old beliefs and stories in the identity of postcolonial nations cannot be understated, however, due to the lack of direct relevance, this significance is often lost on younger generations. In their narratives, Cartoon Saloon continually highlight the importance of this culture and communicate the need for its preservation and acknowledgement with their audience through various film techniques, in an attempt to influence their sense of national pride and raise awareness in younger native Irish audiences about their cultural past. In my opinion, Cartoon Saloon's works, as well as other works that also focus on national themes, should be studied alongside national literature in the academic system as these works are modern, age-appropriate successors to the older literature. These media also serve the same purpose: the perseverance of old culture and the strengthening of national pride, which is a topic that all education programs attempt to address, therefore making the inclusion of these media a valuable tool.

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Table of Figures

100

101

Appendix 1: Abstract in English

Cartoon Saloon's Irish trilogy introduces younger audiences to Ireland's colonial past and reframes the old Celtic beliefs in a modern way that grants them new relevance. This study analyses the visual, narrative, and auditorial elements of these films to explore how the negative effects of colonisation, the role of old Celtic beliefs in the creation of the national identity, and the significance of nature in the preservation of old culture are combined to communicate the value of the old culture in modern times. Due to the impressionable state of younger audiences, the messages that these films communicate are examined to determine how this inspires the incorporation of the old culture in the national identity.

This study utilises the works of Homi K. Bhabha and Frantz Fanon, along with the concepts of green postcolonialism, to conduct the analysis of the Irish trilogy and determine the postcolonial concepts realised in these works. Using this framework, I determine how these films critique the colonisation techniques outlined by Bhabha and Fanon, and how visual techniques are employed to create a positive image of old Celtic culture for younger audiences and stresses their significance throughout the narratives. Additionally, the settings are analysed as they promote old Celtic beliefs, create a strong connection to the folklore characters, and juxtapose the urban and natural settings which illustrate the connection between the Native and his lands, as green postcolonialism outlines.

The influence of animation on young audiences, and the sensitive themes that Cartoon Saloon address, justifies the analysis of their content. The Irish trilogy serves as both an instrument to raise awareness of Ireland's colonial past and a message to inspire interest in old folklore and stress its necessity within the national identity.

Appendix 2: Abstract in German

Die Irish trilogy von Cartoon Saloon führt ein jüngeres Publikum in die koloniale Vergangenheit Irlands ein und verleiht den alten keltischen Glaubensvorstellungen auf moderne Weise neue Relevanz. In dieser Arbeit werden die visuellen, narrativen und auditiven Elemente dieser Filme analysiert, um zu untersuchen, wie die negativen Auswirkungen der Kolonialisierung, die Rolle des alten keltischen Glaubens bei der Schaffung der nationalen Identität und die Bedeutung der wahren Natur Irlands bei der Bewahrung der alten Kulturen, kombiniert werden, um den Wert des vorangegangenen in der heutigen Zeit zu vermitteln. Aufgrund der Wirksamkeit moderne Medien auf dem jüngeren Publikum werden diese Filme untersucht, um festzustellen, wie sie mit Einbindung des alten Kultur Irlands die nationale Identität inspirieren.

Diese Studie nutzt die Werke von Homi K. Bhabha und Frantz Fanon sowie die Konzepte des grünen Postkolonialismus, um die Irish trilogy zu analysieren und die in diesen Werken verwirklichten postkolonialen Konzepte zu bestimmen. Anhand dieses Rahmens stelle ich fest, wie diese Filme, die von Bhabha und Fanon beschriebenen Kolonisierungstechniken kritisieren und wie visuelle Techniken eingesetzt werden, um ein positives Bild der alten keltischen Kultur für ein jüngeres Publikum zu schaffen, und diese in ihre Erzählungen betonen. Darüber hinaus werden Film-Schauplätze analysiert, da sie den alten keltischen Glauben fördern und eine starke Verbindung zu den Folklorefiguren schaffen. Dabei stehen sich Städtische und Ländliche Schauplätze gegenüber, was die Verbindung zwischen dem Eingeborenen und seinem Land verdeutlicht, wie es der grüne Postkolonialismus beschreibt.

Der Einfluss des Zeichentrickfilms auf ein junges Publikum und die sensiblen Themen, die Cartoon Saloon aufgreift, rechtfertigen die Analyse ihres Inhalts. Die Irish trilogy dient sowohl als Instrument, um das Bewusstsein für die koloniale Vergangenheit Irlands zu schärfen, als auch als Botschaft, um das Interesse an alter Folklore zu wecken und ihre Notwendigkeit für die nationale Identität zu betonen.