

## Thesis Abstract

While the Gaelic poetry of Scottish critic, translator, and novelist Christopher Whyte (1952) has received both critical attention and acclaim, his four English-language novels to date are generally less known and studied. All Whyte's novels deal with the themes of gender, queerness, and challenging heteronormativity, with magic also featuring prominently in three of his four works. The focus of this thesis is on the three novels that present magic and fantastic elements as an important part of their plot: *Euphemia MacFarrigle and the Laughing Virgin*, *The Warlock of Strathearn* and *The Cloud Machinery*. The objective of this work is to give an overview of the magical elements and their use in each of the novels with focus on the integral topics of identity, gender and sexuality, while also aiming to explore the theme of the *fantastic* in each of them. To examine the element of the *fantastic* in each novel and provide a theoretical framework for the research, this thesis employs the 1975 English edition of Tzvetan Todorov's survey *The Fantastic: A Structuralist Approach to a Literary Genre*.

The thesis is structured into three integral chapters, each focusing on one of the chosen novels, exploring the origin, use and limitations of magic in the specific novel. The thesis presents an overview of the magical elements used in each novel and their connection to the themes of identity that are the key point of focus of Whyte's novels. Although magic is presented as a neutral force in all three works, its features and usage vary depending on the characters and themes of each individual novel. While *The Cloud Machinery* and *Euphemia MacFarrigle and the Laughing Virgin* both embody Todorov's concept of *the fantastic*, *The Warlock of Strathearn* comes closest to his definition of *the marvelous* literary genre.