

## An Analytical Study On The Fairies And Their Place In English Folklore And Literature

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**Abstract:** Most country people all over the world have their own old, superstitious beliefs about the supernatural power of the so called 'fairies' who, sometimes, help in collecting the crops or damage it. It is believed that they, too, can control the conditions of the weather. They are imagined as having kings, queens and courts of their own, with guards of extraordinary power. They were assigned even heavier tasks and placed as the ones who are able to do everything and know all knowledge, and perhaps they can achieve the impossible to man if they want- they can make people healthy or weak. Their dwelling place is supposed to be in the woods, they would come out into the fields at night either to dance or to harm others if annoyed, but if treated kindly they would lead others to safety. Some writers called them 'good fellows.' In fact, these fairies, most of the narrations say, are ugly, hairy and very fond of mischief. All these spirits were very small; in Ireland they are still called the 'little people.'

**ملخص:** معظم أهل الريف في جميع أنحاء العالم يعتقدون بالحكايات والخرافات القديمة فيما يتعلق بالقوة الخارقة للطبيعة التي يسمونها أل فيري ، وهذه المخلوقات قد تساعد في جني المحصول او اتلافه عليهم ، إذ لديهم اعتقاد بأن تلك مخلوقات تسيطر وتتحكم بالجو . وكما يتخيلهم الناس لهم ملوكهم وملكاتهم ومحاكمهم الخاصة ، مع حراسهم ذوي القوة الخارقة ، فقد اسندت إليهم المهمات الشاقة ويعاملون كأنهم القادرون على كل شيء ، ويعلمون كل شيء ، منهم يحققون المستحيل للناس إذا أرادوا فهم يجعلون الناس أصحاء او ضعفاء . فمسكنهم – كما يعتقد الآخرون – الغابات . فهم يتركون أماكنهم الى الحقول اثناء الليل إما للرقص واللهو او لإلحاق الأذى بالإنسان اذا ما غضبوا . وإذا احسنت معاملتهم يرشدون الناس الى بر الامان ، ويبدو ان بعض الكتاب يسموهم بـ "الأصدقاء الأوفياء " .

هذه المخلوقات كما تقول غالبية النصوص ، هم قبيحوا الشكل ، كثيفوا الشعر  
ومولعون بالأعمال المؤذية ، ومن صفاتهم أنهم صغار الحجم ، ومازالوا يعرفون في  
ايرلنده "بذوي الأحجام الصغيرة".

### **Introduction:**

No doubt that most country people in all lands have old, superstitious beliefs about spirits who, in their belief, help them or harm the corps, control the weather and make young children healthy or weak. The people of Britain called these spirits 'fairies' or 'elves'. They were supposed to live in the woods, though they would become out into fields at night to dance in a ring. If annoyed, they could do much harm, but if treated kindly they would guard small children and even help with the housework. Lewes Lavater (1572) wrote "Some man walkth alone in his house and, behold, a spirit appeareth in his sight; yea, and sometimes the dogs also perceive them and fall down at their masters' feet and will by no means depart from them, for they are so afraid themselves too." <sup>(1)</sup>

The strange thing is that the tradition is still there, and lingers on from generation to generation substantially unchanged. Every now and then poets and writers, draw on the tradition, and make out of it something suitable to the spirit of their age. Sometimes this pass back into tradition, and perhaps alters it a little due to the technological advancement of time. There in England, they have the child-sized fairies, and the fairy bride of human size and more than human beauty, the wild hunt, the miraculous passage of time in the fairy land, the fairy who needs a human midwife (and vice versa) is invisible except by the help of a magic ointment and sometime visible totally as human being with beauty and wisdom.

And yet all this talk of the residual nature of the fairy belief is true enough, though the flourishing time of fairy belief must be pushed back to the earliest historic time on faraway Islands or high mountains areas, almost to the verge of per-history. The first class is that of the Trooping Fairies who vary in size and origin. The highest in rank were the Heroic fairies of ancient Scotland, Ireland, the West of England and Wales, down to the small fairies who, as we said above, stole crops from the farmers who lived in England. The heroic

fairies are of human or more than human height. They could be aristocrats among fairy people and passes their time in the aristocratic pursuits of hunting, hawking and riding in procession on white horses hung with silver bells. The ordinary fairy people, however, are smaller in stature, and range from the size of a three year-old-child to the size of an ant. <sup>(2)</sup>This set of beliefs among the English has risen to the sense of exaggeration concerning the size, power and origin of these fairies.

These fairies dance and love music; they can bring success or failure to the farms they visit, and they give gifts which must not be revealed. Like the Heroic fairies they are tricksters and gift-givers; sometimes the gold they give turns into withered leaves, or else worthless-looking rubbish turns into gold or precious stones. This was the English man's belief in the powers of these fairies that inscribed in his mind. Though naturally small they are capable of assuming any shape or size they please. This trait is not assigned to human beings.

The most mischievous activity is the stealing of young children and replacing them with a changed child or an elf. The act in which we human beings find ourselves unable rather stand before these creatures performing their jobs with no care for our feelings and senses, but we find ourselves gapped before the domination of these creatures.

Another type of the fairy in Britain is hobgoblin and Robin Goodfellow. These hobgoblins are rough, hairy spirits who work around farms, guard treasure, keep an eye on servants and generally act as guardian spirits of the home. Puck, who is known in Britain, is most definitely of this ilk of spirits, and despite being regarded as honest and friendly spirits they are easily offended and often mischievous. Therefore, people were very careful to avoid their harms or even to sarcast them. The third type is of mermaids, water spirits and nature fairies as we shall see in the works of the poet Coleridge. But little is known of these spirits because legend has it that the Heroic fairies assimilated these creatures into their ranks. The fourth group, which is closely allied with the nature spirits is of giants, monsters and hags. These might not be thought of as fairies if it wasn't for their links with hobgoblins. This group has the least likeness to human beings and had little contact with mankind- their presence is

felt only in stories and myths swamped in the mystery of time. Accordingly, these fairies have their own realms which could be calm and quiet and could be rebellious. A world which has no link to our actual life. But the importance of these creatures lies in their hidden power which enables them to do whatever they like.

Kipling Rudyard's Puck (1865- 1936) calls the lost heathen gods who took the place among the fairy people 'the old things' and there is little doubt that they can claim their part in the building of the fairy tradition. The earliest mentions of fairies in England occurred in the Anglo-Saxon charms against elf-shot, but the fairy ladies of the medieval romances of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may well have an origin as old. In the later Romances it is clear that most of the fairy ladies belong to the human race. Nimue, the Lady of the Lake, in Lancelot du Lac, the thirteenth century Prose Romance, lived in a wooded country. These fairies are usually loved, and that there was "no lady in the world that more loved" than them.<sup>(3)</sup> This is the realm of these fairies, they have either good or bad nature. They could be angelic or beast, even they host the dead ones.

In Britain, the damsels that used to carry people into lakes or mountains were called fays. There were many of them at that time and more in Britain than in other lands: "they knew", as the story said, "the virtue of the herbs and of stones and of charms, whereby they might be kept in plenty and in the great wealth that they possessed."<sup>(4)</sup> Generally these fairies are believed and they have their own weight among human beings.

The fairy lady (ladies) abided only in woods and in forests that were vast and dense and the lake whereinto they sprang with children. They could be found, too, in the plain at the foot of a hill that was lower than that whereon kings and knights had died. The thing which convinces us that the existence of these fairies are only connected either with fear or (and) the extravagant respect to the dead. However, their abode was so hidden that none might find them. Walter Map (1924) insists in one of his tales that Henno (one of his heroes) mentioned demon wife.<sup>(5)</sup> The Chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire tells us several things about Dracae (water spirits of the Rhone Valley) where fairies used to entice women away by floating in the form of golden cups down the streams where they were washing.

(4)

From the above mentioned narration, we come to know that these fairies either live in rough or smooth places where shades are needed to the rest of people, where very rich food is served that we (people) wish to have but in vain, for they are rich most of the time, the thing which entices the contemporary people to believe in them.

### **Fairies and their Special World**

The fairies of the scattered Island of England, Wales and Irish land are of different sizes, habits, dispositions and kinds, they have their habitations in different places. Evan Wentz (1911), collecting fairy beliefs in Wales at the beginning of this century, found a tale of the parentage of Taliessin with a complete description of an underground Celtic fairyland<sup>(6)</sup> Here, in this connection, I may give an example where

W. Gill, in his book *A Second Manx Scarphook* (1932) stated that one of his characters Johnny Callow, an old grave-digger in the town of Lezarye, lost his way and at last saw a great house and went in. Inside he saw:

"scores of grand ladies and gentlemen in silk and stains and velvet, and all the tables and chairs and dishes were of gold and silver, shining fit to blind you, and there was mortal grand food and drink all set out ready. He walked right in, but none of the ones that was there seemed to see him, so he thought he would take shelter, and watch them for a bit ... but he was tired coming in off the mountains after his day's work, he went to sleep, and when he woke up in the morning and people and all was gone, and he was lying in the fern upon the top of Skyhill. I don't remember whether Johnny said he had eaten of their food or not.<sup>(7)</sup>

Here, we notice that the people, represented in the person of Johnny, stood perplexed before these luxurious meals in which he wishes to participate, but for one cause or another Johnny slept and was unable to share the Fairies' lives, which shows that the latter had an absolute effect in making him go in deep sleep without sharing their generous meals. It is clear that what had this man witnessed was the outcome of the deprivation he lived and that he imagined what he loved. It is obvious that these fairies, as the imaginations of these

narrative people go far, lived in welfare, prosperity and luxury of life. In the fairy kitchen a young man ( in the legend of Innis Sark ) found himself at a royal banquet where he saw "fruit and chickens and turkeys and butter, and cakes fresh from the oven, and crystal cups of bright red wine." <sup>(8)</sup>

Usually the origin of the fairies is restricted to the death of a certain class. For instance, to the heathen dead, and their modern recruits are those who died of a stroke, catalepsy or ant trace-like illness, and sometimes the fairies are said to be the ghost of the old druids or the *ghoul* of the East who eats people and resides at the places where people were killed.

The habitation of the fairies is the underwater and the fairy islands which belong mainly to the Celtic part of the country, rivers and walls, and old destroyed buildings. This shows that these fairies are either rich or poor ones, and every class has its own affairs in connection with man. Thus, their importance comes from the fact that man may take them as his idealism whether they are rich or otherwise. In Bristol Channel area of Somerset, there is a tradition of a fairy island. That is occasionally visible to human eyes. John Rhys in *Celtic Folklore* (1910) tells of invisible area along the Welsh Coast. Sometimes a real land is supposed to be a fairy place, like the Isle of Man<sup>(9)</sup> The most widespread of the Welsh fairy stories which still remain in oral tradition, the Fairy Wife, is generally told about a lake fairy. The water cattle of the Highlands belongs to the underwater fairies. 'Niam' of the golden hair who loved 'Ossian' lived in a fairy island beyond the sea, like the Hy-Brasail of Irish legend<sup>(10)</sup> Then the readers are bewildered whether to consider their being factual or imaginative, for they are, sometimes, in real places as we have seen above and sometimes in imaginative places and unseen, but, however, their deeds are usually remarkable.

These fairies, according to the English are often tutelary spirits. They take an interest in human destiny and work for human friends. These fairies are divided into two types: the ancestral fairy who is attached to a family, and who most commonly bewails coming tragedies or gives advice or luck gifts, and the Brrownie or hobgoblin who performs tasks and attaches itself sometimes to a family and sometimes to a place. I may take an example of the former type when

Lady Wilde (1887) introduced to her readers a living example of the ancestral fairies- the Banshee of Ireland who invariably attached to a family:

But only certain families of historic lineage, or persons gifted with music and song, are attended by this spirit; for music and poetry are fairy gifts, and the possessors of them show kinship to the spirit race- therefore they are watched over by the spirit of life, which is prophecy and inspiration; and by the spirit of doom, which is the revealer of the secrets of death.<sup>(11)</sup>

From what is mentioned above, we come to conclude that these Fairies are found in man's real life, he believes in them and in their deeds. It seems, too, that they are able to reveal the secret of life and death in his life. However this point remains a point of controversy among us concerning their existence.

Here is another example of the latter type, the Brownie or hobgoblin fairies of the previous century, when a lady, who was living in Oxfordshire, was brought up at Lemington Hall, five miles away from Newcastle. This lady used to find her house cleaned and the fire lit, and there was something too, about bunches of flowers left on the staircase.<sup>(12)</sup> Which means that these fairies have an important role in man's life, where in every step of his life they leave an effect either positively or negatively, that is according to the treatment these Fairies receive from man. But in the tale of R. L. Tongue of the same century, pixies remained on friendly terms with the family:

The farmer of Knighton was very friendly with the pixies. He used to leave a floorful of corn when he was short-handed, and the pixies would thrash it for him. They did an immense amount of work for him, until one night his wife peeped through the keyhole and saw them hard at it. She wasn't afraid of their squinny eyes and hairy bodies, but she thought it a crying shame they should go naked and cold. She set to work and made some warm clothes for them and left them on the threshing floor, and after that there was no more help from the pixies.<sup>(13)</sup>

These Fairies represent a hidden power and that they are teased if discovered. They help man indefatigably, and do not wait any help,

pity or mercy from anyone. They did not return to the help of this family when they realized that they are discovered.

### **The Characteristic of These Fairies**

These fairies, can be traced and found in many places e.g. the Gailleach Bhur, the Blue Hag of the Highlands who appears to be the personified spirit of Winter, herds the deer, and fight Spring with her staff, with which she freezes the ground, for A. D. Mackenzie, in his *Scottish Folklore and Folk-life* (1935) says that "when at length Spring comes, she throws her staff under a holy tree, under which green grass never grows" <sup>(14)</sup> It is quite clear that the impact they leave in man's life is remarkable on the place they pass by; for in this place where the Fairies staff used to be, the land is barren. This shows that man, humbly, believes in these Fairies and that their force is above his.

In the hills of Leicestershire as in Wales, the Old Woman of the Mountains leads travelers astray. She is one of the hill fairies of Wales. They are friends of goats as the fairy Gailleach is a friend of deer. They, sometimes, come down from the mountains, and enter human houses, where they must be hospitably entertained <sup>(15)</sup> From these two mentioned examples, it seems that some of these Fairies punish man for his bad deeds, as in the case of the Old Woman who used to beguile and lead people astray, and some of them reward man for his good deeds.

A more benevolent and gentle mountain spirit is Ghille Dubh of the Gairlod district. It is said that he was seen in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He (the spirit) was black-haired and dressed in leaves and moss. He looked after lost children and led them home. <sup>(16)</sup> The spirits usually haunt the moorlands, among oaks and birch trees. They only appear in the countryside woods, moors and deserted places. These spirits are not felt or spotted in cities or big towns, the thing which makes available an outlet for our wandering feeling and thought to believe in their existence. It seems that these spirits appear only in the waste or in any place, which is less populated than other places, which makes us doubt the origin and availability of them. For instance, the spirits in Britain, Scotland, Ireland and Wales usually abide among mountains and gloomy shores. The weather given for



these spirits is enough woven to suit them and people as well. I could trace many tales in Western tradition and literature where there are occasional rumours, especially in Somerset, of The Woman of The Mist. A description of her was given to Tongue at Bicknoller in 1962. Here is a picture of one of their places and the act they usually do: "The Woman of the Mist is seen in the Autumn and Winter along the hill-top road near Loxey Thorn. She sometimes looks like an old crone gathering sticks. She was, according to the English people, there, seen face to face in 1920, and again in the 1950s. She just become "the mist"<sup>(17)</sup>

The seas and the lakes spirits are common in the U.K. The mermaid is not confined to the sea, it is even to be found in lakes and ponds. The Irish lakes are infested with many kinds of monsters such as the "Irish Crocodile." The English rivers have their waters spirits, like Peg Powler of the Tess, who has long green hair with a desire for human lives. Often it is the river itself, that is personified, like the Somerset Parrot or Dart.

To go back to the mermaids who are the most ambivalent character. The very sight of them at sea means death to sailors or even to carnation makers. It is the habit to decoy people under water. I found the best example of M. Arnold in his poem of the *Forsaken Merman*, (1849) in which he showed the tragedy of the Merman who fell in love with a woman from the world. He took her to the sea where they lived happily. She came back to the world to pray but did not return to the sea. The Merman felt very sad and wanted her to come back and to bring up her children. The description of some scenes are most charming. The palace of the Merman, where Margret lived, is richly described:

Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep  
Where the winds are all asleep;  
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,  
Where the slat weed sways in the stream,  
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all around,  
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;  
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,

Dry their male and bask in the brine;

Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail and sail, with un shut eye.<sup>(18)</sup>

This poem is very pathetic. It expresses the suffering of so many people which has been brought about by a conflict of forces that exist independent of and outside them. The Merman suffers because she has left him. She suffers because on the one hand she loves the life in the city and on the other her children whom she had left behind. The price is not easy to pay, when she remembers the little ones, she says:

And anon there breaks a sigh,  
And anon there drops a tear,  
From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
And a heart sorrow-laden.  
A long; long sigh;<sup>(19)</sup>

But when the Merman felt fed up from her coming back, he asked his children to go down without her:

Come away, away children; Come children, come down! ....  
Singing: 'Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she!  
And alone dwell for ever  
The kings of the sea.'<sup>(20)</sup>

In English literature, we find that man has obeyed them very humbly, and by the passage of centuries people, particularly the English, felt that there was a parallel force to his despite the fact that this force is invisible.

Not only Arnold (1822- 88) who mentioned the supernatural power in his poetry but

S.T. Coleridge too mentioned these spirits in his poems *Ancient Mariner* (1798), *Kubla Khan* and *Christable* (1797). All three poems present the supernatural; the world of fairies and of dreams but each presents it in its own distinctive way. *The Ancient Mariner* is a masterpiece of vivid description. Nothing in it is more remarkable than the way in which the transition from the detailed, matter-of-fact, and accurate description of the voyage towards and from the South

Pole, to the description of the avowed supernatural manifestation of the phantom ship is managed with so little change of tone that one hardly, in a rapid reading, realizes that the transition has been made. As the Mariner imagined, to his fear, that a spirit had followed the Mariner and other sailor:

And some in dreams assured were  
Of the spirit that plagued us so;  
Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
From the land of mist and snow<sup>(21)</sup>

The Polar spirit had been following the ship right from the South Pole. It had been moving along the ship till it came to the depth of nine fathoms. The spirit of the Pole took it up to the equator. This was done in obedience to what the angels wanted it to do, knowing by that the Polar spirit works under the power of the angels, but the spirit still wants to avenge the bird that had wrongly been killed:

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The Spirit slid: and it was he  
That made the ship to go.

The sails at noon left off their tune,  
And the ship stood still also.<sup>(22)</sup>

Thus the spirit has a part in the suffering of the Mariner. Now the Polar spirit tells other spirits that it has been granted to the Polar that the Mariner shall suffer a long penance for the wrong that he had done. The Polar spirit says:

How long in that same fit I lay  
I have not to declare;  
But ere my living life returned  
I heard and in my soul discerned,  
Two voices in the air.<sup>(23)</sup>

One spirit explains to the other that this man had killed the bird that loved him. The bird was a creature of the Poles and the Polar Spirit loved him. That is the reason why the spirit was now bent on taking revenge:

The Spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow. <sup>(24)</sup>

Hence the importance of these strange creatures in man's life springs, for they have their value in affecting human life. They, every time, leave an impression in man's life. Here, in this example, we see how these spirits punish those who sin like The Mariner who killed one of God's creatures. Therefore, in fear or hope, the English man in particular, takes into his account their power, and this situation, which controls Coleridge's ship, reflects the big effect of these spirits, as an existing power, equals to man's if not more powerful.

Not only in Britain, Scotland, Ireland and Wales that these spirits have their dwelling places but in Germany too, where there are spirits which guard the cornfields. I may introduce an other example of the good spirits who guard people's belongings from other mischievous ones. For instance, a Folk-singer, Jeannie Roberston was told (in 1959) by her grandmother as a personal experience that when Mrs. Roberston's grandmother was fifteen years old, she had a pony of her own. That particular year there was a poor harvest. The girl:

Determined that her pony should not want, even if she had to steal for it. One night they (farmers) near a fine field, where the corn was standing in shocks, ready to be led. That night, after the rest of the camp was asleep, she stole out and went to the field. It was a bright moonlight night, as clear as day. She stooped to pick up a sheaf, and some thing moved beside her. She glanced aside, and saw a wee, wee woman, as big as a year-old child, dressed in white silky stuff, with glittering jewels on her, but jumped on to one of the sheaves, and leapt from shock to shock. The girl drew back. Though her horse starved, she felt she could not steal from that field...So the girl went back empty handed. <sup>(25)</sup>

It seems that the girl who went to the field to steal a sheaf was under the effect of her fear, the fear which was seen embodied in the so-called spirit she saw. Therefore, we find that there is an essential role in conveying a lesson in morality to man's daily practices. For the

spirits, last night, interfered to prevent a theft from the fields that Mrs. Roberston does not possess.

### **Fairies relation to the Dead Ones**

These fairies appear very often to travelers in the shape of riders who became the knights of the regions they appear in. We notice that not only in Britain but also all over Europe the cavalcade of the dead rides was in various forms. For instance, Wild Edric and his fairy wife were still said to ride the Welsh border in the nineteenth century and even in the start of the twentieth century. The ride of the dead tale is to be found in the Heywood's *Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* (1641), in which he told of a centurion in Western Europe, who, when was riding out with his two servants:

Met a great procession of people nobly mounted, and at the tail of the procession rode his late cook, who had been dead a few days. He was riding a fine horse and leading another, on which he invited the centurion to mount. They were going, he said, to the Holy Land and he knew that the centurion had an earnest desire to go there... The intrepid centurion accepted the invitation, and vanished from the sight of his two servants, who had been riding with him...He returned next day, having seen all the sights of Jerusalem in that short time, and bringing with him two supernatural presents, a kerchief that could only be cleaned by fire and a poisoned dagger.<sup>(26)</sup>

From the given example of the dead rides, it is obvious that the centurion was in good mood or relation with his cook who was seen in his best form. Moreover, the centurion, seemed to be his dream of seeing Jerusalem and bringing exotic gifts from there. However, this example does not put away reality beyond doubt. The Fairies materialized themselves in the person of the good dead cook whose name was connected with the Holy Land because he was kind and with good reputation, therefore, the spirits made the general view of Jerusalem before his eyes as blessing a thing.

We shall go back to Coleridge who painted the picture of the dead, hosted by the spirits, in a perfect way through his poem *The Ancient Mariner*, where we can imagine the picture of the working dead men on the ship. The arrival of the ship with Death, and Life-in-Death is

again wonderfully clear. The ship that sailed out of the port was a real ship it was later transformed into a thing belonging to the world of the supernatural. We move with it in that world for sometime but when the story ends we are back with the ancient Mariner in the world of reality, and the ship is no more than spider's web. But when the picture of spiritual suffering is going to begin, the poet describes the scene very well. The picture itself is a suggestion of what is going to happen. The forces that are acting are clearly supernatural forces. Thus he says:

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down  
'T was sad as sad could be;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea' <sup>(27)</sup>

All this suffering came as a punishment for killing the innocent Albatross which is one of the creation of God. The spirits made all suffer the Mariner's bad deed. They show man that they have the power to do whatever they like, and their power is beyond man's reach who, in every time, submits to their power. The appearance of the woman showed her to be death, and the discovery of the other two women on the ship supported the idea of the return of the dead in the form of women spirits and fairies:

And those her ribs through which the Sun  
Did peer, as through a grate?  
And is that Woman all her crew?  
Is that a DEATH? And are there two?  
Is DEATH that woman's mate? <sup>(28)</sup>

This fairy woman had red lips, her eyes showed a lack of modesty and her hair was of a golden red colour. Her skin was so white that she appeared suffering from leprosy. She was the *Nightmare* Life in Death. She was so terrible that any man would be terribly afraid of her:

Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH she was,  
Who thickens man's blood with cold. <sup>(29)</sup>

Here lies the importance of the appearance of these strange and powerful creatures, they appear punishing and teaching us lessons in morality and good treatment not only with our fellow men, but with all the creations of God. Even before Coleridge, W. Shakespeare used these supernatural creatures in the most worldly read literature through his masterpieces of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and many other comedy plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These able creatures usually appear as reformers and not as corrupting unless they are dealt wrongly with. For instance, we find Hamlet speaking to the spirit of his father:

If thou hast any sound or use a voice  
Speak to me.

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death.<sup>(30)</sup>

Somewhere we find the ghost speaking to Hamlet the son, where the latter was very much sure that he is talking to his dead father, the spirit says to him:

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night  
... ..  
Revenge his soul and most unnatural murder  
... ..  
It is given out that, sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me, so the whole ear  
Of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death.<sup>(31)</sup>

These Spirits are not patient when man sins, they appear in the form of the right and justice to the concerned ones like Hamlet the son. Here lies the great importance of these supernatural creatures who distinguish good from evil. For the man, represented in the person of Hamlet, was unable to discover the secret of the late king's death without their help.

In Shakespeare, too, the witches are introduced associated with unwholesome objects. The familiar or attendant spirit of the first

Witch is a cat, but not like any other cat we are familiar with, while of the second a toad, and the third Witch is unknown- possibly Hecate. The prophecies at the beginning of the play led Macbeth to his success; those at the end, to his death. In addition to the apparitions, Banquo's ghost also makes another appearance with his show of kings.

Their powers, in part (i) foretell future events; (ii) create tempests and storms; (iii) sink ships; (iv) ride on the blast; (v) sail the sea in a sieve. They could not, however, do fatal harm to their victims if the victims did not renounce God. Hence we gather that the sailor's wife was a devout woman and the Witch could revenge herself only by persecuting the husband:

Witch 1

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,  
And munched, and munched, and munched: Give me  
quoth I:

"Aroint thee, witch! The rump-fed ronyon cries  
Her husband 's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger" <sup>(32)</sup>

In this way, thus, the role of these hidden creatures is quite clear, this time, in beguiling man to evil doing, and not to virtue as in the case of Macbeth. These Fairies want to prove for man that there is power still which dominates man's, whatever tyrannous he is. Here we see the role of the witches in dragging Macbeth to his destruction through the trap of fate. It seems, then, that these creatures may punish man, even for his intention as Macbeth. They prepared the trap for him when they found him over ambitious to wear an illegal crown. We notice that there is connection between these ghosts, gods or devils and the fairies, although, the distinction between the fairies and the dead is vague and shifting. In the Western part of the country Britain, the little white moths that flutter about the grass in the evening are called "pisgies" and are said to be the souls of unbaptized children. The fairies are called Spunkies and Pinkets.

These fairies, according to the Christian belief, appear after the person concerned is dead to show that the dead is not at rest, and he or she is not expiated after his death.



The unbaptized child, in the Fairies' opinion is in Christianity unaccepted, when he or she dies his or her soul remains revolving around the earth reminding man, particularly those who were living with him, that they committed mistake rather than they sin forgetting to baptize him or her. Therefore, the role of these creatures, in reminding others to do their humanitarian and religious duty, is quite clear.

However, the connection, between the Trooping Fairies and the dead is strong too in Ireland as anywhere as many of Lady Wilde's stories show. I may quote the tale of Kathleen who met her dead lover by the charm of spirits, the spirits who, according to this story acquire part of Divination, for they told Kathleen what to do if she wanted to see her dead lover, the thing she did. However, the story goes in this way:

Kathleen was a young girl of Innis Sark who mourning very bitterly for the death of her lover. One evening, as she sat at the roadside, a beautiful lady appeared to her, and gave a ring of herbs, telling her that she would see her lover if she looked through it. She looked, and saw him, very pale but crowned with gold, and dancing in a noble company. The lady gave her a larger wreath, and told her that she could visit her lover every night if she burn a leaf of it, but she must neither pray nor cross herself while the smoke was rising, or he would vanish forever... Every night she shut herself in her room and burnt a leaf, and while it smouldered she lay in a trance and danced in the bright hills with her lover. But her mother was deeply troubled, because Kathleen would go neither to church nor confession, and was quite changed from the girl she had been. One night she crept up and looked through a chink in the door, and saw Kathleen set fire to the leaf and sink in a trance on her bed. Then the mother knelt down, and prayed aloud to Holy Mother to save her child's soul. Then she burst open the door, and made the sign of the cross over her. At that Kathleen started up, and cried 'Mother! Mother! The dead are coming after me! They are here!' And she tossed about like one in a fit. The priest came and prayed over her, and cursed the wreath, which crumbled into ashes as he spoke. Then Kathleen lay quiet; but there was no strength left in her, and before midnight she died.<sup>(33)</sup>

### **Conclusion**

We notice that these Spirits, the knower of the unknown, could not, at the end, stand or resist the prayer and the advent of the priest who dismissed and cancelled the effect of their charms through his prayers. The thing which supports my hypothesis that: the Spirits' charm does affect man particularly when he or she is alone, and under the effect of his own hallucination of love, fear or anger. For, throughout the tales and stories of this study, we come to know that the affected ones were all alone. The stories say something connected with religion, for the Fairies asked Kathleen not to pray and not to cross herself while burning is going on if she wanted to see her dead lover. She did what the Fairies asked her to do, and she danced immediately with him, but the reality was not like that, for her mother saw her in trance and not in dance. The thing which, according to this story, emphasizes that some of the Fairies are harmful ones as they vanished by the prayer of the priest, where the girl (Kathleen) swooned,

and before the midnight she was dead. Thus, these fairies either entice, or beguile others, or attract them to the good path of life or to its evil side. This means that the Fairies have a positive side in man's life but also have a negative side.

In the light of the foregoing reading about the fairies and their tales, that are all connected with man, and according to the incidents mentioned in this research, we come to know that man and only man who is the target of these supernatural creatures. we may conclude that the relation of these fairies to man is the relation of the master to his slave. We, human beings, were intimated by these supernatural powers. We were victimized by the ability of these creatures and pitted by our inability in front of this unconquered power. It seems that man and only man who is conquered by such power and magic; by such an enchantment which is unbelievable, for most of the stories and tales narrated in this research were about a single victimized man or woman, and seldom to find a tale about a group of men or ladies who were undergone such an enchantment. This brings to mind too, that the tales narrated here were not factual and the whole matter is that the persons concerned throughout these tales are either under a heavy burden of fear of being alone

somewhere at a particular time, or affected by the death of beloved ones.

However, the persons affected by these fairies must have suffered a pressure of psychological circumstances, or perhaps they have created what they narrated out of their visions and affected images. Finally, the world of fairies, in general, pushes us, in the twenty-first century, into a belief that fairies are connected to the world of superstition and dream, to the world of exaggeration and impossibility.

And that those who claimed to have seen and dealt with them, they waded into a superstitious world. Those people might have had fear or unrest in their lives. We have to bear in mind that these fairies are internationally known, mingled with others' literature and folklore. They have their own impact on the world tradition. But the modern man who is dipped into modernism, into the world of sophisticated technology, this temporary man, may not believe in these fairies. His defense may come much convincing to some extent that if these fairies are really able to make a change on the ground where man lives, why don't they kick man somewhere and dominate the Earth where man abide? This hypothesis may do well in the modern, learned and civilized man's mind.

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