

Character Images and Naming in British Fairy Tales

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Abstract: This article examines the names of fairy tale characters that are common in English folk tales, their typology of origin and structure. Examples of pieces from English folk tales are given and analyzed.

Keywords: Character, fairy tale, hero, protagonist, typology of names, feature, nickname, component, myth, mythology.

Introduction: As a genre of oral folk art, the fairy tale possesses high axiological potential. It embodies the linguistic, ideological, natural-geographical, and cultural-ethnic uniqueness of a particular country. By defining its “everyday” purpose as entertainment and education, the fairy tale fulfills an educational function by acquainting the reader with the system of societal axiological guidelines through an artistic environment. The onomastic component of a literary work plays an important role in revealing the ideological and artistic distinctiveness of the text. Analyzing the anthroponymic corpus of fairy tale characters and their behavioral traits helps to gain a deeper understanding of the work, increases reading motivation, develops critical thinking in readers, and, from a certain point of view, aids in modeling artistic reality related to the surrounding world.

In English folk tales, the main character is most often a human. In addition, animals can also take the role of the protagonist. It should be noted that in most cases, domestic animals such as cats, dogs, goats, oxen, and roosters appear. Mythological creatures can also serve as main characters. For example, mythological beings such as Tom Thumb, a giant (monster) and the devil. In some cases, even objects can become the main characters—for instance, the vinegar in the fairy tale “Mr. Vinegar.”

In British magical fairy tales, the main character is usually portrayed as an ordinary peasant, farmer, hunter, or fisherman. Most of these characters appear in developed magical tales that have absorbed certain aspects of everyday life and reflect the influence of

societal processes.

Animal images are almost never encountered in such fairy tales. Unlike the tales of other nations, animals do not appear even as magical helpers or as givers of magical items. The only exception is the image of the crow in the tale “The Red Ettin”.

Moreover, new characters begin to appear in fairy tales, and the number of characters increases. For example, in the tale “Naughty Princess,” the image of a lackey appears.

By studying the titles of British fairy tales, the specific nature of the characters’ names, their etymology, semantics, and structure, it is possible to identify their uniqueness. Most magical fairy tales are named after their main characters. For example: “Tam Lin” (“groom”), “Tom Tit Tot” (“helper”), “The Red Ettin” (“antagonist”). A tale can also be named after the main character’s nickname, which draws attention to a specific trait of their personality — for instance, “Naughty Princess,” or “The Lazy Beauty and Her Aunts.”

The names of characters in English folk tales are usually composed of three types of structural components:

1. One -component names;
2. Two -component names;
3. Three -component names.

In most cases, the names in English fairy tales are one-component. These names are canonical and originate from Greek and Latin. Such names are typical of ordinary village people or common representatives of English society, and they are used to reflect the

character of the person: Jack, John, Jenny, Mary, Valentine, Margaret.

For example:

"A lad named Jack was once so unhappy at home through his father's ill-treatment, that he made up his mind to run away and seek his fortune in the wide world."

Moreover, Jack is the most frequently encountered name in English fairy tales.

"Jack... er... not Jack... but – whatever – we'll call him Jack anyhow. Don't

make a matter..."

"There lived formerly in the County of Cumberland a nobleman who had

three sons, two of whom were comely and clever youths, but the other a natural

fool, named Jack".

In addition, names that have been passed down from myths are also used in magical fairy tales. For example, Wrekin, Olwen, Guleesh, Musha, Menw, Teirgwaeth, Fin, Cormac and others:

"She foretold to her stepson, Kuhuch, that it was his destiny to marry a maiden named Olwen, or none other".

There are also names that have migrated from legends into fairy tales.

"Arthur, King of England, was a good king and a great warrior".

"Long before Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, there reigned in the eastern part of England a king who kept his Court at Colchester".

Another commonly used type of name in magical fairy tales is the two-component name. Two-component names usually consist of a first name and a nickname. The character's nickname typically reflects certain physical traits such as hair color or height. For example: Jack Hannaford, Jack Turnip, Jack the Fool, Lazy Jack, Canny Jack, Jack the Farmer, Jack the Robber, Daft Jack, Clever Jack, and others:

"The eldest and second eldest were cunning clever fellows, but they called

the youngest Jack the Fool, because they thought he was no better than a

simpleton".

In some cases, the name may indicate the place of residence — for example, Jack o' Kent. The hidden elements within a character's name can sometimes only be identified through additional literary knowledge, dictionaries, or familiarity with other

languages and cultures. For instance, The Red Ettin is the name of a giant. However, the word "ettin" itself has meaning; in Old English, ettin means "giant" or "monster": "...extinct since 16c., from O.E. eoten – giant, monster." Therefore, the literal translation of this name would be "The Red Giant". As seen in the following example:

"The Red Ettin of Ireland

Once lived in Ballygan,

And stole King Malcolm's daughter,

The king of fair Scotland."

In addition, some fairy tale characters bear complex nicknames that serve to enhance the central element of the plot. For example, Cap O'Rushes (literally: "Rush Hat").

Three-component names are rare in English magical fairy tales. These typically include names with complex nicknames that provide an initial characterization of the figure. Analysis of the material shows that such names are uncommon and usually consist of a given name combined with a complex nickname (e.g., Jack the Giant-Killer), or a name paired with a compound surname (e.g., Manny Mac Gragh):

"John Garve Macgillichallum, of Rayaz, was an ancient hero of great celebrity."

"When the magistrates heard of this they made a declaration he should henceforth be termed Jack the Giant-Killer."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the fairy tale genre is considered one of the unique and timeless treasures of English literature. These tales have developed over many centuries, reflecting the dreams, hopes, emotions, and struggles of the people. The English are known as a meticulous nation that values facts, and this characteristic is reflected even in their fairy tales. English fairy tales are rich in various facts and details. Sometimes, an entire story is built around the description of a situation and factual elements, and a resolution may not even be provided. Often, unexpected plot twists occur. In fact, due to the vivid depiction of events and attention to the smallest details, magical fairy tales can read like realistic stories about the everyday lives of ordinary people.

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