

overSEAS 2014

This thesis was submitted by its author to the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It was found to be among the best theses submitted in 2014, therefore it was decorated with the School's Outstanding Thesis Award. As such it is published in the form it was submitted in **overSEAS 2014** (<http://seas3.elte.hu/overseas/2014.html>)

ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

Koskó Barbara Petra

Anglisztika alapszak

Angol szakirány

2014

EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

*“With a Faery, Hand in Hand”:
A tündérek és a folklór megjelenése a Viktoriánus
irodalomban*

*“With a Faery, Hand in Hand”:
The Appearance of Fairies and Folklore in Victorian
Literature*

Témavezető:

Dr. Csikós Dóra

egyetemi adjunktus

Készítette:

Koskó Barbara Petra

anglisztika alapszak

angol szakirány

2014

CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH

By my signature below, I certify that my ELTE B.A. thesis, entitled “*With a Faery, Hand in Hand*”: *The Appearance of Fairies and Folklore in the Victorian Literature* is entirely the result of my own work, and that no degree has previously been conferred upon me for this work. In my thesis I have cited all the sources (printed, electronic or oral) I have used faithfully and have always indicated their origin. The electronic version of my thesis (in PDF format) is a true representation (identical copy) of this printed version.

If this pledge is found to be false, I realize that I will be subject to penalties up to and including the forfeiture of the degree earned by my thesis.

Date: 13/04/2014

Signed: Koskó Barbara
.....

A HKR 346. § ad 76. § (4) c) pontja értelmében:

„.... A szakdolgozathoz csatolni kell egy nyilatkozatot arról, hogy a munka a hallgató saját szellemi terméke....”

NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott (Koskó Barbara Petra) ezennel kijelentem és aláírással megerősítem, hogy az ELTE BTK Anglisztika alapképzés/alapszak Angol szakirányán írt jelen záródolgozatom saját szellemi termékem, melyet korábban más szakon még nem nyújtottam be záródolgozatként és amelybemások munkáját (könyv, tanulmány, kézirat, internetes forrás, személyes közlés stb.) idézőjel és pontos hivatkozások nélkül nem építettem be.

Budapest, 2014. 04. 13. _____

Koskó Barbara

Aláírás

A nyilatkozatot a záródolgozathoz kell csatolni.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Fairies and fairy tales in Victorian literature	1
The fairy fascination of the Victorians	1
Fairies, the Faerie, the fairy tale and folklore	4
<i>Fairies</i>	4
<i>The Faerie</i>	6
<i>Fairy Tale</i>	7
<i>Folklore</i>	8
II. <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wuthering Heights</i> in the light of folklore and fairy tales	9
<i>Jane Eyre</i> , the conventional	10
<i>The appearance of folklore in Jane Eyre</i>	10
<i>The appearance of fairy tales in Jane Eyre</i>	13
<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , the reverse	20
<i>The appearance of folklore in Wuthering Heights</i>	20
<i>The appearance of fairy tales in Wuthering Heights</i>	24
III. Conclusion	30
IV. Works Cited	32

I. Fairies and fairy tales in Victorian literature

The fairy fascination of the Victorians

The motif of fairy had a distinguished place in Victorian literature. From the countless Victorian works in which it appeared, this thesis focuses on the two most famous Brontë novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, analysing the differences between them in the use of fairy tales and folk references with regard to the Victorian background. The novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë may not be regarded as the most characteristic works of the aforementioned theme, but fairy and folk belief together with fairy tale motifs appear richly in them. The proposition of this thesis is that in *Jane Eyre* these features appear in more conventional forms, while *Wuthering Heights* presents them in reverse and inverse ways. The objective is to examine, compare and contrast the two novels, and determine whether or not they portray two variants of the same subject matter.

People of nineteenth-century Britain had an open obsession with the idea of fairies (Susina 230). Despite living in the “age of science” (Bown, Burdett, and Thurschewell 23) with countless technological improvements, which caused “the collapsing of time and distance” (1), Victorians seemed strongly fascinated by the possibility of the existence of a fairy realm. Fairies made frequent occurrences in their literature, drama, and art and left their marks on every sphere of life (Silver 3). Originating as a folk belief surrounded by fear (Bown et al 1), the fairy became a central motif in Victorian fiction and poetry; theatre plays, ballets, and operas were written about the topic; fairy pottery, paintings, photos, and even wallpapers appeared in the houses of the Victorians. By the end of the century, however, the theme was relegated to nurseries (Silver 3-59, 185-189).

Romanticism, where the origins of the fairy interest lie – namely, the ‘fairy’ poetry of Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley, together with the composite art of William Blake –, serves as a rich literary legacy. At that time, and until the end of the nineteenth century, fairy tales and

the concept of fairy were not considered childish. The believers of fairies came from all walks of life: from rural people to scientists, historians, artists, and writers (Silver 10, 186, 33).

There were several reasons why the widespread interest in fairies, fairy tales, and folklore came about during the Victorian period. First, there was a constant nostalgic longing for the past in the quickly changing Victorian world. Past represented the desired stability (Wood 282), and also stood for the “fading British past” (Silver 10), which Victorians wanted to preserve by collecting folklore before it disappeared forever (34). It was not only the past, though, where Victorian people longed to be. Fairy tales, through their “ordered, formulary structure” (Kotzin 28), offered “an escape into a happy, ordered world” (30). The realm of Faerie was sometimes imagined as an innocent, untouched nature which had simple distinction between good and evil and which comforted the imagination; it was nothing like the corrupt and complex adult world, the ugly urban surroundings and the trying reality (Bown *Fairies* 84).

Besides these, Victorian people were occupied with fairies because they had a strong need for the existence of the supernatural. Their belief in fairies and busy search for them rooted on the view of the “world becom[ing] a banal place, an existential wasteland, without the possibility of mystical epiphany” (Jones 52). Victorians also had a “passion for scientific investigations” (Silver 32), so their fondness for discovering fairies could be for its own sake, as well.

They also celebrated the possibility of magic in the world and praised it as means of protest against rationalism and logic (31, 40) or revolt against authority (Kotzin 30); “an oblique form of social protest” (Silver 205). Even the motif of ‘the farewell of the fairies’ was used as social criticism: their leaving meant “the passing of the good old ways” (203), the ones before urbanisation and technological development (204).

It was not only industrial progress and secular power, but also religion against which the concept of fairies could be used: it offered an alternative to Christianity and a different explanation of- the unknown (206). Its special form appeared in Ireland, where religion was central enough not to be questioned. There, instead of questioning the existence of God, “people debated the existence (...) of fairies, who were of a lesser order” (lecture delivered by Ní Ghráda 21/02/13).

Fairies were not only celebrated but also feared in the nineteenth century. An elaborate system of superstition and providence was created: people had a chant or spell for everything to protect themselves from fairy intervention. As fairies were believed to be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent (Bown *Fairies* 2) – even Yeats claimed that “[n]ature was full of invisible peoples reacting to and interacting with us” –, people felt the need to “learn to know those who possess[ed them]” (Silver 39-40). Anxiety surrounding the fairies was not only the fear of the supernatural, “the monster ‘other’ [who] can replace them” (87), but, on a larger scale, the projection of the Victorians’ horror of the colonised races who might take revenge on them (143). The fairies, thus, in some ways became the symbols of the lower races of inhabitants within the British colonies.

In addition to all the above mentioned causes, probably the most important reason for reaching out for folklore was the Victorians’ strong sense of national pride. They had political and nationalistic motives for searching for a heroic past: they wanted to prove the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race over the French and the German by finding older and more unique folklore (Silver 19).

It is visible from what was mentioned above that for the Victorians the concept of fairy and the genre of fairy tale were intricately connected, so they can only be analysed together. Given the complexity of the motif of fairy, it is hardly surprising that there are

internal contradictions in every detail: in its origins, in its main characteristics and even in reasons for the obsession itself.

Fairies, the Faerie, the fairy tale and folklore

Fairies were known by several names in the nineteenth century and earlier in the folk consciousness. Most of them were euphemistic because the superstition advised not to offend those who were believed to have the capacity and willingness to cause trouble. The very fact that fairies had various labels, such as the Good People, the Gentle Folk, the Gentry, the Little People, the Wee Folk, the People of the Lios (lecture delivered by Ní Ghráda 21/02/13), the Green Children (Briggs *Fairies* 12), or the elfin people (Silver 34-41), is a good indicator of the complex and problematic nature of the term.

Despite the apparent similarity of the phrases ‘fairy’ and ‘fairy tale’, the latter does not merely mean tales about the former. The word ‘fairy’ is believed to have Latin (*fatum, fatare*) and French (*faer, faerie*) origins, meaning to ‘enchant’ and ‘illusion, land of illusions, inhabitants of that land, individual inhabitant’ respectively, but the meaning of the English word also broadened (Kotzin 7). J. R. R. Tolkien also states that “[f]airy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is Faerie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being” (2). Consequently, we need to distinguish not only the term ‘fairy’ from ‘fairy tale’ but also ‘fairy’ from ‘Faerie’.

Fairies

Defining the motif of fairies is not easy. On top of the obscure nature of these imaginary characters and the vagueness that is present at every level of their representation, there are numerous sources available about them. Although a massive amount of awe and terror girdled around the figure for centuries – especially in the Anglo-Saxon areas (lecture

delivered by Ní Ghráda 21/02/13) –, and although the Study of Fairies became a scientific discipline in the Victorian era (Silver 4), by the twenty-first century fairies had degraded to Tinkerbells of Disney cartoons where they are predominantly portrayed as being nice, tiny and green (Wood 285). The characters of fairies offer much more, though.

Carole G. Silver's book, *Strange and Secret Peoples*, offers a detailed analysis of elfin people, whose origin may be explained on religious or scientific grounds. Religion saw fairies as fallen angels, guardian or governing spirits, nature spirits, souls of the dead or spirits of unbaptized children (36-39). It is clear from the last two accounts that fairies and ghosts were often regarded the same (171). The scientific world of the nineteenth century examined the fairy folk in a much wider spectrum: either as products of disordered imagination or as folk memories of ancient faiths (31, 41); alternatively, they either “resulted from the clash of cultures or races” (45) or provided a missing link in evolution (52). What all these approaches share is that science saw nothing supernatural behind fairies: their magical nature came from their being unknown (51). Consequently, depending on the viewpoint they were seen from, fairies could be either descendants of ancient tribes who became gods, or inferior creatures lower in the evolutionary chain than humans (46, 8). Oddly enough, both approaches were agents of British national pride (6-145).

Resulting most probably from the various aspects from which fairies were looked at, elfin people were imagined in numerous forms. As it was mentioned before, fairies at the centre of attention in the mid-nineteenth century were different from what is thought about them today. They had different sizes, countless forms, could be both male and female, and the central traits were their being omnipresent (Silver 150) and amoral – neither good, nor bad, they could not be “judged by human laws, for [they were] ‘other’, not the children of Adam and Eve” (109). Their best-known types were elves, witches, goblins, dwarves, brownies,

fairy brides or swan-maidens, and the four elementals – sylphs, salamanders, undines and gnomes (59-184).

The Faerie

Describing the term ‘Faerie’ seems easier – at least as far as definitions are concerned. Dictionaries share the same laconic definition: either fairyland or a fairy (OxfordDictionaries.com, Merriam–Webster.com). As mentioned above, Tolkien also described Faerie as “the realm or state in which fairies have their being” (2).

The question of what fairyland is, is more complicated, though. Silver lists various locations like ancient mounds, fairy circles or forts, and pixie rings as dwellings of the elfin people. They were mostly associated with nature and natural places, especially with hilly areas and subterranean dwellings, emphasizing the Victorian idea of a “world within the earth” (42-43, 153-155). Nicola Bown calls fairyland “a version of pastoral, in other words, an Arcadia for the industrial age” (*Fairies* 85) – it is not accidental that an old Irish proverb says that “[w]hen electric light came in (...), the fairies went away” (Bourke 84). Tolkien offers an even wider description claiming that “[the Faerie] holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted” (2). Tolkien also emphasises its “indescribable, though not imperceptible” nature (2). Similarly, Bown states that “[t]he ‘supernatural’ was no alternative or other world, but rather an image, annex or extension of the imposing, ceaselessly volatile real world of the nineteenth century (Bown et al 258).

The above mentioned omnipresence of fairies shows the internal contradictions of this complex belief: elfin people were depicted as omnipresent but were believed to have a realm of their own; they lived in natural dwellings separate from humans, yet their kingdom was not entirely separated from ours.

Fairy Tale

Michael C. Kotzin highlights that “[f]airy tales are perhaps more easily recognized than defined” (7). Tolkien also points out the difficulty of defining the genre (1-15). Similarly to the motif of fairy, the difficulty of defining this genre lies in its origins. Steven Swann Jones suggests that it may be older than Christianity, and adds that “[w]here these traditional stories came from will always be a mystery” (20, 5). “[T]he fairy tale has no landlord” (Jones 29), goes the catchy Italian proverb, which encapsulates the essence of the genre quite thoroughly: it states that “[i]t does not reside in or belong to a single place, person, or culture”. The “genre [was] initially the product of folklore” (32), whereas the literary fairy tale is an invention of the end of the seventeenth century (Zipes 2).

Next to its origins in the folk verbalism, the other main sources of these tales were the various editions of collected fairy tales (Jones 32). Charles Perrault’s folktale collection entitled *Tales of Mother Goose*, which was first translated into English in 1729 (Jones xv), contains tales such as *Cinderella*, *Bluebeard*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Little Red-Riding Hood* (Kotzin 10). Jones considers this collection as being “close to folk sources but beautifully polished” (10). For example Perrault is “credited (...) for having been responsible for disseminating the motif of the glass slipper” in *Cinderella* (39), which became central in its modern versions. The most emblematic figures who have influenced the fate of the genre, however, were inevitably the Grimm brothers, whose landmark collection was brought to the English audience in 1823 in Taylor’s translation (Kotzin 17).

The third source of fairy tales is the literary imitation of a single author (Jones 34). Writing original fairy tales became popular among authors of the Victorian era. Charles Kingsley’s didactic fairy novel, *The Water Babies*, and Lewis Carroll’s emblematic fantasy, *Alice in Wonderland*, were both published in the 1860s (Silver, *Fairies* 206). Most of the major Victorian novelists, like Charles Dickens, John Ruskin and William Makepeace

Thackeray, however, used fairy tales in more realistic ways, building only some of their traits into their stories about everyday life (Kotzin 19) as the age was “devoted to literary realism and rational control of unwieldy forces” (Bown et al 67).

The genre of fairy tale has easily recognisable, prototypical formulas, like the “unpretentious protagonist, the use of fantasy, an adventurous quest, and a happy ending” (Jones 18). In addition to these, the presence of cruel stepmothers or supernatural figures as confronters; the presence of the hero’s helper as a sort of supernatural being, like a good fairy; the transformations of people or things; and marriage presented as the happy ending are also important motifs in a fairy tale (Kotzin 8).

Folklore

The term ‘folklore’ was first used in 1846 by the English antiquarian William Thoms. The word was coined by compounding the stems ‘folk’ and ‘lore’; subsequently, folklore means “the traditional beliefs, legends, and customs, current among the common people” (lecture delivered by Nic an Airchinnigh 14/03/13). Silver gives a similar definition, calling folklore “the remnants or ‘survivals’ of prehistoric animistic beliefs and primitive myth” (45).

As it was mentioned before, the collecting and preserving of folklore came into the centre of attention in the nineteenth century. Since the Grimm collection, the desire to preserve the national heritage became a significant urge all over Europe (Kotzin 9). The Victorians desired to search for heroic origins not only to write down the “fading British past” before it disappears forever, but also to reveal the unique greatness of the British and to overrule the French and the German in popular folklore (Silver 19, 34, 31, 10).

The fairy belief appeared as the most common and the most diversified folklore element of the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

II. *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in the light of folklore and fairy tales

In the nineteenth century, the “fictionalizing of the fairies [and] their endless appearance (...) in literature” (Silver, *Fairies* 186) resulted in the motif appearing in a multitude of forms. As mentioned above, some, like Kingsley, used the theme in open forms, whereas the major novelists of the era mostly applied it in more realistic ways (Kotzin 19).

The Brontës adapted the latter usage. Bown claims that women writers seemed to have been less concerned with the topic of fairies than men, but Charlotte Brontë was among the few who applied the motif to their novels (*Fairies* 13). Yet, it was not only Charlotte who turned to folklore when aiming to colour her writings; her sister, Emily also took advantage of her folk knowledge. From the biographies of the sisters, it is clear that the Brontës had a comprehensive insight into the folk and fairy tales, legends and myths of not only Yorkshire but the whole of Europe. This knowledge came mainly from three sources.

First, their two supplementary mother-figures, Tabby, their maid at Haworth Parsonage and Aunt Branwell, who came to live with them after the death of their mother, and also Miss Wooler, their teacher at Roe Head, were perfect oral sources of the countless folk and fairy stories. Additionally, the childhood fantasy sagas of the Brontë siblings, *Angria* and *Gondal*, also helped to deepen their understanding of folk beliefs and improve their imagination (Taxner-Tóth 23-25, 33-44). Besides oral sources and their self-created childhood worlds, written fairy and folk tale collections served as the third source of their knowledge. Both the aforementioned Grimm and Perrault collections were available in English and popular in the Victorian era. Having been able to read both in French and German (Clarke 698, Hewish 62-69), the sisters could also have read the original collections.

Evidently, folk belief, fairy tales and imagination played a central part in the life of the Brontës, which, although not in the same form and degree, appeared in most of their novels. K. M. Briggs points out that even though the Brontë novels are rich in folk legend material,

“it is nowhere overtly expressed” (*Folklore* 202). Living in the nineteenth century, they made use of it in realistic ways, in such a covert form that everything that seemed unearthly at the first glance was immediately explained to look rather ordinary at the second (Kotzin 86). Still, the motif of fairies and fairy tale elements paid their duty to their fictions, as they found a nice balance between going too far into the magical realm of the fantastic and being entirely realistic in their novels. This way they could keep their credibility but also colour their works with enchanting scenes and sublime episodes. At the same time, however, the Brontës, “[u]nlike those novelists who, while using folklore, carefully dissociate[d] themselves from it, (...) [took folk beliefs seriously and] ma[d]e it an essential part of the minds of their heroes and heroines, use[d] it at climactic moments, and link[ed] it to their central themes” (Simpson 47).

Among the Brontë novels, Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre* and Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* are the most significant ones. Both sisters used folk references and fairy tale motifs, but they did it in different ways. This thesis proposes that in *Jane Eyre* these features appear in more conventional forms, while *Wuthering Heights* presents them in reverse and inverse ways. The objective is to examine, compare and contrast them, and decide whether or not they portray two variants of the same subject matter.

***Jane Eyre*, the conventional**

The appearance of folklore in Jane Eyre

As mentioned above, coming from the Victorian fairy fascination in general, and from the personal background of the Brontës in particular, *Jane Eyre* contains various references to folk traditions and within that to the fairy belief of the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

One such fairy motif of the novel is the significance of certain days and hours. Jane meets Rochester at twilight, which evidently is one of the most magical parts of the day. Jane

describes the time in the following way: “the charm of the hour lay in its approaching dimness, in the low-gliding and pale-beaming sun” (*Jane Eyre* 142), and also states that she “lingered till the sun went down amongst the trees, and sank crimson and clear behind them. (...) On the hilltop above [her] sat the rising moon” (143). Clearly, it is nightfall when Rochester approaches. Back in Thornfield he also points out that “it was a proper moonlight evening for [the men in green]” (154) linking Jane for the first time to the fairy folk. Later in the novel, after Jane’s visit to the Reeds, she comes back to Thornfield at sunset, again. Rochester, similarly to the previous incident, remarks on this and connects it to folk belief: “just one of your tricks: not to send for a carriage, and come clattering over street and road like a common mortal, but to steal into the vicinage of your home along with twilight, just as if you were a dream or a shade” (272).

Furthermore, their engagement takes place on an even more magical day, Midsummer Night, “the night of fairy power and love” (Silver 106). On this occasion “Jane’s role is to transport him to a remote, enchanted fairy land” (106). Rochester’s ward, Adèle, however, “with genuine French scepticism” (*Jane Eyre* 296), does not believe in “a whimsical fairy-fantasy” (Simpson 50).

Not only do a few events take place at a magical time, but their whole love story is surrounded by fairy imagery. “Once disaster strikes, all such imagery ceases (...) [b]ut once the lovers are reunited, the old images of fairy-lore are movingly renewed. (...) The idea of Jane as a being of the otherworld, particularly an elf, recurs at each stage in their growing love” (Simpson 50-51). Rochester constantly refers to her as “fairy” (*Jane Eyre* 273), “witch, sorceress” (180), “substance or shadow, you elf” (272), “almost unearthly thing” (283), “sprite or salamander” (281), “mocking changeling – fairy-born and human-bred” (463). He often associates Jane with ghosts, claiming once that “you have rather the look of another world” (153), recalling the Victorian belief which links fairies to ghosts (Silver *Fairies* 171).

It is more than metaphoric naming he uses in connection with Jane; he accuses her of being one of the “men in green” (*Jane Eyre* 154) and of bewitching his horse. On one occasion even Jane sees herself as “half fairy, half imp” (46) in the red room when she looks in the mirror. It is not only Jane who seems to be an eerie creature, though. Rochester is also called a “gnome” (172) and a “brownie” (463) with “shabby black mane” (463).

The aforementioned motif of ‘the farewell of the fairies’ also appears in the novel. Jane refers to it claiming that “[t]he men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago (...). And not even in Hay Lane, or the fields about it, could you find a trace of them. I don’t think either summer or harvest, or winter moon, will ever shine on their revels more” (154). The last sentence is a reference to three of the four Quarter Days of the Celtic folk calendar: May Day, the beginning of summer; Lughnasa, the 1 August, which marks the beginning of the harvesting season; and Samhain, also known as Halloween, which starts the Celtic winter (lecture delivered by Ní Ghráda 31/01/2013). Such elaborate use of elements of folklore clearly shows how thorough Charlotte Brontë’s knowledge was concerning the topic. The influence of her Irish ancestry is also visible from the mention of these Quarter Days, as they appeared most significantly in Ireland.

It is not only elfin people in general to whom Jane Eyre is linked. Silver associates her with a special type of the Wee Folk, the ‘fairy bride’, who leaves her husband behind (106). The parallelism is not coincidental, as there was a certain fear of female fairies and witches in the Victorian era because they were considered symbols of independent and powerful, thus unnatural, female figures (Silver 176). With her longing for financial autonomy, Jane Eyre can be seen as a possible threat to conventional Victorian gender roles. Apparently, Brontë continuously “endows Jane (...) with the traits and acts of the folklore figure” (106).

Besides Jane Eyre’s characterisation as a fairy, references to folk beliefs also appear elsewhere in the novel. As Jane’s “imagination has been coloured by folklore imbibed in

childhood” (Simpson 51), she can vivify an English folk creature, the Black Dog (Briggs, *Fairies* 55). According to folklore, Black Dogs were “imps from Hell (...), creatures of another order than man, but not necessarily diabolic” (55). The Gytrash Jane recalls from Bessie’s tales in Hay Lane is apparently a regional variation of the Black Dog. In the novel of the Brontës, everything that seems unrealistic is eventually explained rationally, and so the “lion-like creature with long hair and a huge head” (*Jane Eyre* 144) turns out to be “only a traveller taking a short cut to Millcote” (144).

Clearly, Charlotte Brontë richly interwove *Jane Eyre* with folk elements. She made use of significant days and hours of the day; applied fairy imagery surrounding the lovers with countless fairy allusions to their characters; mentioned the motif of ‘the farewell of the fairies’; and built other folk creatures, like the Black Dog, into her novel. These references nicely colour the novel, but decoration is not their main purpose. They serve as a means of disposition which Charlotte Brontë uses to reveal hidden depths of her characters and emphasise their complex nature.

The appearance of fairy tales in Jane Eyre

Being an author of a century in which the collecting of folk and fairy tales became significant, Charlotte Brontë made use of several stories of these kinds. As mentioned above, the Brontës are very likely to have known the collections of Perrault and the Grimms; famous scenes, well-known scenarios and significant formulas of these tales often appeared in their novels. Hence, her simultaneous handling of these motifs supported the Victorian tendency of the traditional “fairy belie[f]’s] (...) becoming a fairy tale” (Wood 282); that is, the shifting of the myth from real-life superstitions to literary fairy stories. From the folk consciousness, fairies moved to literature.

Rochester's appearance, for example, as a 'prince in disguise', when he pretends to be a sybil, telling their future to young women in Thornfield, is based on a motif which very often appears in fairy tales. Besides the references to typical tale scenes, however, Charlotte Brontë's novel reveals more interesting resemblances to definite fairy tales. Micael M. Clarke states that the most obvious reference in *Jane Eyre* is to *Cinderella* (697), but he also links the novel to *Beauty and the Beast*, and to *Bluebeard*.

Sarel Eimerl calls the novel a retelling of *Cinderella* in realistic form, and gives a possible explanation for Brontë's choice of the "eternally popular" (50) tale: "it permits all weak, helpless, and down trodden females to identify themselves with the heroine and to indulge, through her, their fantasies of becoming admired, rich, and happy. Like Cinderella, Jane Eyre (...) win[s] the love of [her] respective Prince Charming, Rochester" (50). Consequently, Charlotte Brontë created a special version of the classical *Cinderella*, the uniqueness of which is threefold.

First, Brontë chose to use the German version of the story instead of the more widespread French one (Clarke 699). The German heroine, Aschenputtel, leaves the ball not because of the demand of her fairy godmother but because of her own decision; similarly, Jane "runs away from the too-powerful prince, though others sell themselves daily to such men, even, stepsister-like, deforming themselves in a vain attempt to meet their requirements" (699, 705). Jane Eyre, metaphorically, is not willing to cut off her toes just to fit into the glass slipper; she is not disposed to giving up her identity for Rochester and accepting to live in bigamy. Instead, she leaves him and comes back only when she wholly fits into the life of her now-broken prince.

Interestingly in Brontë's novel, it is the prince, and not the stepsisters, who loses a limb. This anomaly could be explained by suggesting that the influence of Tabby and Miss Wooler on Charlotte Brontë was so significant that by having known two good stepmother-

like figures, she could make her heroine forgive not only Mrs Reed, but also her cousins. This could be the reason why no mutilation happens to any of the female characters, even though Brontë chose to rely on the crueller Grimm version of *Cinderella*, where the stepsisters are even blinded by the bird helpers of Cinderella (Clarke 699).

Another similarity to Grimm's *Cinderella* emerges in the detail that Aschenputtel goes to the ball three times, not just once (699). There is no ball in the original sense in *Jane Eyre* – except for the feast at Thornfield –, yet the number of significant encounters of Jane and Rochester is also three. They first meet on the causeway when he accuses of Jane having bewitched his horse and causing his fall; their second encounter is the official one in Thornfield right after the accident; and the third occurs at the end of the novel when Jane decides to go back to Rochester. Only then do they start living 'happily ever after'. While choosing their three most important encounters, the short disappearance of Rochester from Thornfield and Jane's visit to the Reeds at the time of her aunt's death are not taken into consideration, as they are relatively short partings and do not play a decisive part in the development of their relationship. Importantly, Jane's going back to him differentiates the novel from the tale as here it is Cinderella who searches for the prince, not vice versa, as in the original scenario.

The novel's other parallelisms are less distinctly linked to Grimms' version, but still retain scenes of the Cinderella story, like the figures of lost mothers and cruel family substitutes, and the testing with demeaning tasks (Clarke 697). Aunt Reed evidently is the 'wicked stepmother', while Jane's cousins, play the role of the pitiless stepsisters (697). Living with them, Jane, as Bessie refers to her, is "less than a servant" (*Jane Eyre* 44) who is "[f]rom every enjoyment (...) excluded" (60). Jane's trials as a Cinderella figure do not cease when she leaves the Reeds; in Lowood, physical hardships, constant cold and "scanty supply of food" (92), are added to her sufferings. In Thornfield, where treated with respect, Jane

starts to live a tale-like life. On one occasion, she even thinks of Thornfield as if she “caught a glimpse of a fairy place” (135). However, the party given for the Ingrams indicates that she “is still in exile in the domestic regions of Rochester’s castle” (Clarke 697). Though not ordered to remove lentils from ashes, she still “is the classic Cinderella: poor, despised, and mistreated” (698). Yet, just like the prince, Rochester falls in love with her.

The second detail that makes the novel a unique version of *Cinderella* is, by maiming Rochester, that Brontë gives the leading role to Jane, while her ‘Prince Charming’ degrades to become only her escort (Eimerl 52). After catching glimpses of possible life prospects of a Cinderella, like in the martyr-like death of “[t]he angelic Helen Burns” and in Miss Temple’s marriage (Gilbert 359), Jane gets the chance to “become a queen in her own right” (Eimerl 52). This can be seen as a depiction of the desire for independence of the nineteenth-century women who are not content with being mere decorations of their husband, but it also alludes to Prince Albert, who was only the Prince Consort and not the king of Queen Victoria.

Thirdly, after having been introduced as a passive Prince Charming, the character of Rochester is also coloured with two more tale figures, Bluebeard and the Beast (Clarke 697). Allusions to these tales give him a complex disposition appearing “simultaneously as a good man hidden beneath an ugly exterior and as an ogre husband with multiple former wives, whom he keeps hidden in a secret room in his castle” (697). Another reference to *Beauty and the Beast* is the presence of Jane’s ‘invisible’ father figures, who loved and cared for her (Bettelheim 199). Mr Reed made his wife promise to take care of Jane after his death, while her uncle in Madeira first searched for her, then saved her from becoming the victim of the Bluebeard-like Rochester, and it was also her uncle who ensured Jane’s desired financial independence.

Furthermore, the novel is not only a peculiar Cinderella story with hints at *Beauty and the Beast*, but, as Sandra M. Gilbert playfully puts it, in *Jane Eyre* “Cinderella meets

Bluebeard" (357), and instead of ending up as the monster's prey, she becomes his loving and caring mate (362).

Seeing Rochester as "a genuine wife-murderer" (Sutherland 70 cited in Lovell-Smith 201) with respect to Bertha, however, is an overstatement; no evidence supports the theory that Rochester is a murderer (Lovell-Smith 201). Sutherland is right, though, in claiming *Jane Eyre* "to be the first adult, non-burlesque treatment of the Bluebeard theme in English Literature" (Sutherland 68 cited in Lovell-Smith 201). The tale's most important characteristics are the dark, predatory, mysterious lord and "the bloody chamber in the attic where he keeps the ghastly relics of past sexual conquests" (Gilbert 358). Still, the novel's treatment of *Bluebeard* is not a conventional one. *Jane Eyre* ends with the monster getting happily married to his intended victim, whereas the dead wife, Bertha, becomes the villain (Sutherland 69 cited in Lovell-Smith 206).

Yet, Bertha's figure is not that simple. In *Jane Eyre*, according to Rose Lovell-Smith's interpretation, the classical tale role of the hero's helper is split into three parts (201). The first, Grace Poole, being the guardian of the mad wife and thus of Rochester's secret, without doubt, helps him (201). The position of the second helper is more ambiguous: Mrs Fairfax, as the housekeeper and a distant relative of Bluebeard, "welcom[es] Jane to (...) [his] castle, seat[s] her by a warm fire, [and] pl[ies] her with food" (201-202). She not only welcomes Jane to Thornfield, but it is also Mrs Fairfax who hires her as a governess, thus invites her in the first place. At the same time, however, "womanly sympathy makes her anxious for Jane's welfare" (202), so she is loyal not only to Rochester but also to Jane. Still, her double loyalty is not surprising.

The third aspect of the helper is more interesting. Lovell-Smith names Bertha Mason as functioning identically to "the gruesome sights – butchered bodies and dripping blood – that confront the heroine (...): even the dead offer knowledge that is necessary to the heroine

if she is going to survive” (202). Lovell-Smith sees Bertha’s tearing of Jane’s wedding veil as a “warning against the marriage (...) [and considers the] “socially ‘dead’ wife (...) a helper” (202) of the heroine. Bertha, appearing physically ghastly, equal with the dead wives: she “seems to lack personality or individuality: she is all sign” (202).

Contrary to Lovell-Smith’s analysis, however, Bertha can be seen more than a helper and a sign. She can either be considered an evil folk creature or an innocent victim of fairy tale villains.

Stressing the dangers she caused, like setting Rochester’s bed on fire and attacking Mason, Jane thinks of Bertha as a “mystery, that broke out, now in fire and now in blood, at the dearest hours of night” (*Jane Eyre* 239). Jane calls her a “mocking demon” (240), but her custom of appearing always at the middle of the night, and the way she attacks Mason – “She sucked the blood: she said she’d drain [his] heart” (242) – links her with a more specific creature of folk belief, the vampire. Fairies, in their complex nature, sometimes had “a vampire-like habit of sucking human blood” (Briggs, *Fairies* 96).

Yet, a change in the viewpoint can reveal a completely different aspect of Bertha’s character. When the creole wife of Rochester is not looked from the prejudiced nineteenth-century perspective, which was filled with the imperial Britain’s fear of the colonies (Silver 143), she can be seen as not only the victim of Bluebeard, but also as an allusion to Grimms’ *Rapunzel*. Similarly to the heroine of the classic tale, Bertha is taken away from her family and locked in an attic for life with her only companion and connection to the outside world being Grace Poole, a witchlike drunkard. No prince climbs up by her tresses to save her, though; only Rochester, her ‘guard-husband’, who imprisoned her in the first place, comes occasionally, but being the prince of Jane Eyre, he has no intention to free Bertha.

Still, Rochester shows some resemblance to the prince in *Rapunzel*, as he also gets blinded when trying to save Bertha in the fire. At the end of the novel, however, it is not

Bertha who heals Rochester but Jane, and there is no happy ending for Bertha, who dies in the fire. She, being stigmatised by imperial bias (Silver 87, 143) and declared mad, represents the real life prospects of Rapunzel: going slowly crazy of neglect and loneliness. The other side of her story is presented in a postcolonial prequel to *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

From what was said above, it is visible that Charlotte Brontë richly interwove *Jane Eyre* with folklore and fairy tales using them similarly to, however not identically with, their original, conventional meanings and forms. The most obvious similarity is to *Cinderella*. There is a 'prince' and an orphan girl, who, after trials and tribulations, find their way to each other to live happily ever after. Living in the nineteenth century where wives were seen as properties of their husbands, Brontë shaded her novel by endowing her Cinderella with a desire for self-reliance. Jane Eyre works to earn her living and decides to go back to Rochester only after she gains her financial independence. It is her own decision and not economic necessity that leads her back to him.

However, this romantic view can be questioned and indeed Clarke does so when he asks "what happened to the woman who once so stirringly declared women's desires for independence, replaced by a Jane now apparently living only for Rochester" (695). Clarke does not overstate when he says that Jane lives *only* for Rochester; after he becomes blind and loses a hand, Jane takes on the role of nurse for him. Taking care of someone and constantly tending him is a traditionally female role; consequently, Jane does not become liberated in the practical sense, even though in theory, with her inheritance, she gains financial independence.

Similarly, her equality with her husband is problematic. Although she is the more active member in their relationship, their equality seems to stem from Rochester's change rather than Jane's attaining the same status as a fully capable man. Clarke's dilemma, then, can be answered by saying that the omnipresent Victorian inequality and realism were so

strongly present in Charlotte Brontë's mind that even when writing a peculiar fairy tale she could not imagine absolute equality between man and woman. Clearly, this is why Jane got a maimed and not a wholesome prince, as this was the only way a woman could keep her moderate independence in the nineteenth century.

Brontë's preference for the Grimm and not the Perrault version of *Cinderella* also supports her Victorian realism, as she could use the brutal German variant more authentically to reach the desired ending of the novel. Today's popular French version could have seemed too idealistic and optimistic to Charlotte Brontë.

Consequently, her use of fairy tales was not entirely conventional, but the main elements of the tales she included kept their original forms. Even if some of the details took on different colours and shades, *Jane Eyre* can still be seen as a much more conventional application of the fairy tale in Victorian literature than Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

***Wuthering Heights*, the reverse**

The appearance of folklore in Wuthering Heights

Virginia Woolf once compared the two Brontë novels, stating that *Wuthering Heights* is "more difficult (...) to understand than *Jane Eyre*, because Emily was a greater poet than Charlotte" (n. p.). Accordingly, finding folk references and fairy tale elements in the "wild and fierce" (Bentley 91) *Wuthering Heights* is more difficult. Emily Brontë used folklore and fairy tales in her own unique ways, in inverse and reverse forms.

Similarly to her sister, Emily Brontë's thorough knowledge of the Yorkshire folklore is reflected throughout her novel, with multiple references to folk belief and fairy imagery. Unlike in *Jane Eyre*, however, the source of the main characters' belief is left untold. While in *Jane Eyre*, Jane is clearly influenced by Bessie's stories, Emily makes no mention of Ellen Dean's telling tales to Catherine and Heathcliff (Simpson 51-52). Jacqueline Simpson links

their spontaneous beliefs to their fiery souls and claims that “their gentler counterparts, Cathy and Hareton, are also associated with folklore” (52). The only hint that Nelly could be the source of their folk belief is that she sings a lullaby, a ghost-ballad, to Hareton once (55). Nevertheless, as the novel is set in an isolated place, it is mainly Nelly who mirrors the superstitions of the country folk.

Notwithstanding, both Catherine and Heathcliff have deep belief in folk superstitions. He once says that “I have a strong faith in ghosts: I have a conviction that they can, and do exist, among us!” (*Wuthering Heights* 209). Catherine’s superstitious nature is best revealed in her death scene. The “semi-delirium of (...) her fatal illness is dominated by omens, folk-beliefs and ghost-lore” (Simpson 57). She worries about the pigeon feathers in her pillows, “imagining [Nelly] an old woman ‘gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers’ ”, and she is afraid of her ghostly reflection in the mirror at the stroke of midnight (57-58).

This significant hour of the day appears elsewhere in the novel, as well. Catherine gives birth to her daughter at midnight, “the hour when ghosts traditionally walk” (Brook-Davies 61). Similarly to *Jane Eyre*, the possibility of the ghosts’ presence has central importance in *Wuthering Heights*.

Not only ghosts, but various other folk creatures are also evoked in the novel. *Wuthering Heights* is thickly decorated with fairy references, and they mostly apply to the main characters. It is not mere decoration, though; the unconventional protagonists are a means of distancing the novel from reality and, like in *Jane Eyre*, fairy imagery appears mostly to mark lovers.

Without doubt, Heathcliff has the biggest number of elfin associations. He is called a “goblin” (239); a “monster (...) not a human thing” (125); “only half a man” (131); a “little dark thing” (239); a “fiend” (243); and an “imp of Satan (27). His “basilisk eyes” (130), his “‘queer’ end” (225), and his having no age or surname to carve into his tombstone also

support the idea of his being unearthly. Even the demonic associations link him to the Little People, as fairies were often seen as “fallen angels not good enough for heaven and not bad enough for hell” (lecture delivered by Ní Ghráda 21/02/13). Likewise, Heathcliff, and also Catherine, are “equally unsuited to Heaven and Hell [so] wander the world for ever as fairies or will-o-the-wisps” (Simpson 55). The novel’s closing also gives hints at this idea, as the couple is believed to haunt the moors.

Similarly to *Jane Eyre*, fantastical associations in connection with the protagonist go beyond the English folklore. Before the death of Heathcliff, “Nelly’s uncomprehending horror is too strong for English lore (...) [so she reaches out to] more exotic sources” (Simpson 52-53) calling Heathcliff a “ghoul or a vampire” (*Wuthering Heights* 239). Instead of being a real-person, Heathcliff could also be seen as a “natural force” (Cecil n. p., cited in Watts 46), which links him to a special type of fairies, the elementals. Most often, though, he is regarded as a changeling because nothing is known of his past and origins.

Changelingism is probably the most common element of the Anglo-Saxon fairy belief. “Mortals of all ages and both sexes are enticed into Fairyland; but unchristened children, ‘little pagans’, are particularly liable to be carried off” (Briggs, *Fairies* 115). The mention of pagans particularly supports the likelihood of Heathcliff being a changeling, as he is christened only by the Earnshaws. Heathcliff is both his Christian name and his surname, which is another characteristic that intensifies his oddity and further alienates him not only from the Earnshaws and from others in general.

Although Heathcliff is called a changeling most of the time, Lockwood, after his nightmarish encounter with Catherine’s ghost, is persuaded that *she* is a changeling, a “little fiend” (*Wuthering Heights* 18). Simpson goes as far as calling “Heathcliff a rebellious demon and Catherine (...) an ineffective wizard” (52). This idea is drawn from Nelly’s claim that

“[t]he spirit which served [Catherine] was growing intractable, and she could neither lay it nor control it” (*Wuthering Heights* 82).

Allusions to folk creatures surround Cathy and Hareton, as well. The presence of two separate couples makes Emily’s novel more complex than Charlotte’s, in which only one love story is depicted.

Folk references connected to the younger generation are of a milder nature: no ghosts are mentioned but fairies of the Penistone Craggs (Simpson 58-59). They first meet there, and Hareton tells fairy stories about “the mysteries of the Fairy Cave, and twenty other queer places” (*Wuthering Heights* 144). Cathy is also associated with fairies. She is called a “beneficent fairy” (9) and a “good fairy” (9) by Lockwood, while Nelly refers to her being “as gay as a fairy” (139). The dwellers of *Wuthering Height*, on the other hand, see another aspect in her elfin-like personality: she is considered a wicked “little witch” (10) by Joseph and at one time called “saucy witch” (142) by Hareton.

From what was mentioned above it is clear that Emily Brontë, like her sister, used her extensive knowledge of folklore and fairy belief to colour her novel. Again, parallel to *Jane Eyre*, these allusions are not mere decorations but serve important purposes: they are means of distancing the otherwise realistic novel from everyday life. Even though “the sisters (...) share some specific motifs” (Simpson 60), there are differences in their use of folklore. Emily requires more from the reader, “expecting him to understand bare allusions to elf-bolts, wraiths, pigeon-feathers, or ghostly doubles seen in mirrors” (60). “[S]he [typically] assumes the belief to be as well-known to her readers as to herself, and will not halt the flow of her story for self-conscious explanations. (...) Charlotte is far more explanatory, using frequent references to Bessie’s tales as the means by which Jane presents unfamiliar folklore to the reader” (58-60).

The appearance of fairy tales in Wuthering Heights

In a traditional fairy tale, distinctive openings, like “once upon a time” and “once in an old castle in the midst of a large and dense forest” (Bettelheim 62), distance the narration from reality. *Wuthering Heights*, however, is wholly naturalistic; Emily Brontë never created anything that would cross the boundaries of reality (Taxner-Tóth 146). Set in a real, concrete Yorkshire location, displacement had to be done in another way (Hyland 58). It is primarily the characters that make the otherwise realistic novel so peculiar. The uncanny hero and heroine, Heathcliff and Catherine, seem to reach out to the fantastical.

It is clear from the definition of the genre given earlier that *Wuthering Heights* is not an archetypal fairy tale; if elements and interpretations of the novel are examined, though, several similarities can be found.

Like in *Jane Eyre*, and in several famous fairy tales, a number of step-parents appear in the novel. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar consider the new generation of the Earnshaws, Hindley and Frances, not only step-parents of Catherine and Heathcliff but transformed or alien parents unable to replace the old, real ones, who “were shadowy but mythically grand (...) parents of fairy tales” (*Madwoman* 269). It is not only Hindley and Frances who act like step-parents, though. Almost every character who happens to stay alive long enough plays this role; even Heathcliff ‘fosters’ Hareton. His relationship with his son, Linton, is also like that of a wicked stepparent: for him Linton is not family but a tool; Heathcliff uses him in his revenge campaign against Edgar. Yet, only Nelly functions as a real parent-figure in the novel. She is the one who turns with affectionate love and care to the children – except for Edgar, who clearly loves his daughter, Catherine – and who, seemingly, tries to be the ‘mother’ to all the others: to Catherine and Heathcliff, but also to Hareton, Cathy, and Linton.

Here, unlike in *Jane Eyre*, no forgiveness is granted to cruel and incapable step-parents, but affectionate ones are not rewarded, either. Unlike Jane's stepmother-like teacher, Miss Temple, who gets married and goes to live happily ever after, Edgar dies and unwillingly hands his daughter to Heathcliff, while Nelly gets no tribute from anyone, either.

Transformation, another widespread fairy tale formula (Bettelheim 42-47), is applied to the protagonists, as well. In the case of Heathcliff, only a three-year absence marks the process of change. He, quite like the youngest son in fairy tales, goes out to the world and comes back having gained wealth. Nevertheless, getting rich is not Heathcliff's biggest desire. Unlike classical heroes, we are not given any explanation about where he went and what he did. As he is not a conventional fairy tale hero, no heroic battle or chivalrous deed is mentioned, only an obscure hint that he could have been in the army. Yet, he comes back altered: "tall, athletic, well-formed (...), [he] looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilised ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified" (*Wuthering Heights* 69). Just a few pages later, though, his description is supplemented with the detail that "though his exterior was altered, his mind was unchangeable, and unchanged" (73). His transformation, hence, is only the mask of a smart villain who uses the disguise to reach his goals.

The transformation of Catherine, on the other hand, is not just a mask. From being a wild and tameless creature who spends her whole life outdoors, asks for a whip, and runs "barefoot" (33) on the moor, she becomes "Mrs Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange, and a wife of a stranger; an exile, and outcast (...) from what had been [her] world" (91). This way, she falls lower and lower. First, she is a happy savage; then, she becomes an almost archetypal wife. However, since she cannot be an angel in the house, she goes mad, and at the end becomes a wretched, restless ghost waiting for Heathcliff to join her. Catherine's change is not purposeful; she has no intention with it except for marrying Edgar, by which she

believes that she “can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of [her] brother’s power” (*Wuthering Heights* 58).

These transformations are not like Jane Eyre’s rising, who, from being a servant-like orphan girl, with the help of a fairy godmother-like uncle, becomes a financially independent woman, who is able to decide whether to get married or not. No outside help is offered to Catherine as *Wuthering Heights* is a “perfect misanthropist’s heaven” (1).

Another fairy tale motif present in *Wuthering Heights* is the ‘prince in disguise’ theme. As it was referred to earlier, Heathcliff is often called a changeling, and as his aforementioned transformation indicates, he also hides himself behind the mask of a changed man. In his childhood, even Nelly persuades him to have faith in himself:

Who knows but your father was Emperor of China and your mother an Indian queen (...)? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England. Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer! (40)

It is not only Heathcliff who can be seen as a prince in disguise, though. Hareton Earnshaw, the mistreated heir of *Wuthering Heights*, with his name over the main door, also appears in this role as his relationship with Cathy develops. From a “rough and uncultivated [person with] his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands (...) embrowned like those of the common labourer” (7), he starts to learn how to read and is “desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge” (218). His “beneficent fairy (9), Cathy, “civilizes and makes [him] happy” (Kotzin 67).

Besides universal fairy tale motifs, scenes and characters from the most famous fairy tales, like *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Bluebeard*, can be found in Emily Brontë’s peculiar novel.

Although not in such a conventional form as it appears in *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* also shows resemblances to one of the most well-known fairy tales, *Cinderella*. Again, the Grimm version is used, in which the “father goes on a journey and asks his daughters what gift he can bring them” (Clarke 698). Although *Wuthering Heights* does not open with the traditional ‘once upon a time’ formula, Nelly’s narration starts with the father’s ritual question of what to bring home from his three-day journey.

This scene of the ritual question also appears in *Beauty and the Beast*. Q. D. Leavis sums it up by stating that in the “opening of the Earnshaw story (...) the father, like the merchant in *Beauty and the Beast*, goes off to the city promising to bring his children back the presents each has commanded: but the fiddle [is] smashed and the whip lost so the only present he brings for them is the Beast himself” (26). Leavis goes on claiming that, unlike in the original storyline, Catherine “forg[ets] her prince and he [is] forced to remain the monster, destroying her” (26).

Although Nelly’s narrative starts similarly to the *Cinderella* story, the presence of the conventional *Cinderella*-figure in *Wuthering Heights* is questionable. The only link between *Cinderella* and the main characters, even Heathcliff, is their becoming orphans, and, as mentioned above, having been mistreated by wicked step-parents. The character of the younger Cathy shows the closest resemblance to the classic fairy tale figure. Yet, the world of the novel is an inverse one: there is no ball but the moor, and Cathy does not choose a Prince Charming – that is, Lockwood, “who doubtlessly sees himself as a kind of Prince Charming” (Kotzin 67) – but a prince in disguise, Hareton.

Beast, accordingly, does not play his traditional role in the novel. As it was mentioned above, with Catherine’s choosing Edgar, Heathcliff “is doomed to Beast’s form” (Leavis 27), and he, seemingly, has no intention of leaving it behind. Even after his physical and intellectual transformation he keeps his original nature. Another Beast, however, Hareton, has

the capacity and the possibility of changing for better and for good. As mentioned earlier, with the help of Cathy, his 'prince in disguise'-figure can rise from his degraded position caused by Heathcliff and reach his legitimate status of being the lord of Wuthering Heights.

Besides the characters, the storyline itself also shows similarities with *Beauty and the Beast*. The scene with the father's ritual question has already been mentioned, but there is another part of the tale which emerges in the novel. Bruno Bettelheim states that originally the father "causes the heroine to join the Beast; she does it because of her love for or obedience to her father" (283). In *Wuthering Heights* likewise: the father brings Heathcliff home, and although it is not Catherine's obedience towards her father that ignites her friendship with Heathcliff, it is doubtlessly old Earnshaw who unites his daughter with the Beast. Here, unlike in the original tale, the union does not bring their 'living happily ever after' in the traditional sense.

Although the novel has the closest similarity to the characters and scenes of *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, it also has some allusions to *Bluebeard* and to *Snow White*. *Wuthering Heights* temporarily becomes a Bluebeard's castle when Heathcliff briefly takes up a Bluebeard-role keeping Cathy captive. What complicates the scene and distances it from the original *Bluebeard* is the application of the episode in a reverse way: it is not Bluebeard's wife who is kept captive but the wife of his son. Moreover, none of them intend to kill Cathy; she, by her forced marriage to Linton, is only used in Heathcliff's revenge campaign against Edgar.

The reference to *Snow White* is more conventional. When Heathcliff opens Catherine's coffin lid, she, her corpse preserved in the bog, appears like Snow White in the glass coffin. Heathcliff mentions even "[seeing] her face again – it is hers yet" (*Wuthering Heights* 209). According to the inverse nature of the novel, however, Catherine does not come back from the

dead. It is her prince, Heathcliff, who, if he wants to be reunited with her, has to die; this is the only way for their reverse 'happy ending' to be fulfilled.

The closing of the novel, the supposed fairy tale ending, is again controversial. Simpson claims that "the union achieved by Heathcliff and Catherine (...) has brought them peace on their own terms" (60). Similarly, in Paul Cheetham's view, "Heathcliff and Catherine have at last been mystically reunited" (37). Claire Saunders, on the other hand, does not accept the second generation's living 'happily ever after' in *Wuthering Heights*. In her view, the house should be left to the wandering souls of Catherine and Heathcliff (28).

Yet, as Heathcliff and Catherine are peculiar people with unique concepts of the world, we can conclude that although they probably do not rest in peace, haunting the moors fits better with their uncanny love story. Hence, their ending, within their own terms, can be regarded as happy. If we accept this, a twofold happy ending closes the novel: an earthy and a divine one.

From what was said above, it is clear that *Wuthering Heights* is a rather complicated and complex novel. Unlike in *Jane Eyre*, where only one couple is depicted with numerous references to fairy tale figures, here two couples appear in the light of fairy tales. Furthermore, these allusions to tale formulas are used in an inverse and reverse form. No Prince Charming is united with Cinderella but a Beast, a prince in disguise. From the two Beast figures that appear in the novel, only one, Hareton, can transform into a prince, whereas Heathcliff is doomed to Beast-hood. The motifs of *Bluebeard* are also used in a unique way, whereas the allusion to *Snow White* is conventional.

The motif of step-parents also appears in the novel, but no one is given forgiveness from the wicked ones, nor are the caring ones rewarded. The transformations of the protagonists are not archetypal, either. Heathcliff's alternation is used as a mask, whereas Catherine loses herself in the process.

III. Conclusion

By taking all the aforementioned details into consideration, we can claim that the proposition of the thesis has been proved. Folk references and fairy tale motifs are present in both Brontë novels. Emily and Charlotte Brontë used multiple folk beliefs and fairy tales to colour their books, but these allusions do not serve only as decorations. They represent the Brontë's immense knowledge and interest in these themes, and also symbolize aspects of characters, emotions and scenes that pure realism would not be able to do.

As it was explained above, folk and fairy beliefs came into the centre of attention in the nineteenth century and were used as symbols of numerous contemporary views and concepts. In the Brontës' application these themes are used to show the special nature of their characters. The protagonists of the novels reveal some aspects of their personality which are not easily understandable. By associating them with folk creatures, not only is their strangeness explained, but they are also distanced from ordinary people. As the Victorians had an omnipresent fear of 'the other', it is not surprising that the Brontës tried to highlight the peculiarity of their uncanny characters to ensure the readers that they would not come across figures like Heathcliff. With their realistic explanations on scenes, like, for instance, Jane Eyre's encounter with the Gytrash, they also ensured the readers that the folk creatures were shifting into metaphors of literature.

Interestingly, while incorporating various fairy tales, which today have degraded into children's stories, into their novels, the Brontë sisters could create complex adult heroes and heroines, who, unlike the characters of the tales, are neither entirely good nor completely evil, but whose personality has multiple layers. The interesting paradox arises from the fact that traditional fairy tale characters, according to children's "preference of contrast" (Mérei and V. Binét 240-241), cannot hold the capacity of being both good and bad.

It is clear that in *Jane Eyre* fairy tale motifs emerge in a more traditional form than in *Wuthering Heights*. It is true, however, that even Charlotte Brontë's conventional application of the tales differs slightly from their original versions. Her Cinderella-like Jane Eyre is more active than the archetypal protagonist and aims to gain not only her Prince Charming at the end but also financial freedom. Nevertheless, Charlotte Brontë, being a Victorian author, was too much of a realist to let her heroine rise and become equal with a wholesome man; consequently, Rochester has to be maimed. Likewise, drawn from Jane Eyre's strength, the heroine does not fall victim to her Bluebeard, but learns how to become his loving, lawful wife. Hence, her Beast could get back into his prince-form.

The use of fairy tales in *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, is much further from the original storylines. Heathcliff, the Beast, unlike Rochester, remains the Beast and is doomed to fail. The Cinderella-figures are also ambivalent in Emily Brontë's novel, and the only real Cinderella is the younger Cathy. Lyn Pykett claims that similarly to "Jane Eyre's legacy, the restoration of Catherine's property equalises the balance of power between marriage partners. A degree of financial independence for the female partner seems to be a prerequisite for the companionate marriages with which both of these novels end" (96). However, by obtaining the financial autonomy, none of these heroines win an archetypal prince. Both Jane and Cathy get a physically or mentally degraded man, who needs their help to be improved. Hence, we can conclude that what seems a rising of women in the gender hierarchy is really a degradation of men. Although the Brontës wished to break the Victorian ties of inequality, as realist writers, they could not stray too far from reality.

IV. Works Cited

Primary sources

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Ed. Q. D Leavis. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England:

Penguin, 1966. Print.

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2000. Print.

Secondary sources

Bentley, Phyllis. *The Brontës and their World*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1970.

Print.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The uses of enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales*.

Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1988. Print.

Bourke, Angela. "The Baby and the Bathwater: The Cultural Loss in Nineteenth-Century

Ireland." *Ideology and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Tadhg Foley and Seán Ryder.

Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts, 1998. 79-92. Print.

Bown, Nicola. *Fairies in the Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge

UP, 2001. Print.

Bown, Nicola, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell. *The Victorian Supernatural*.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.

Briggs, K. M. "Folklore in Nineteenth-Century English Literature." *Folklore* 83.3 (1972):

194-209. *JSTOR*. Web. 09 Sept. 2013.

<[http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1259545?ref=search-](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1259545?ref=search-gateway:f52cd7ab9b83677cc22f875ed0c31da0)

[gateway:f52cd7ab9b83677cc22f875ed0c31da0](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1259545?ref=search-gateway:f52cd7ab9b83677cc22f875ed0c31da0)>.

---. *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967.

Print.

- Brook-Davies, Douglas. "Characters, ghosts, and the margins of *Wuthering Heights*." *Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë*. Ed. Linda Cookson, Bryan Loughrey. Harlow: Longman, 1988. 60-70. Print.
- Cheetham, Paul. "Wuthering Heights as a ghost-story." *Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë*. Ed. Linda Cookson, Bryan Loughrey. Harlow: Longman, 1988. 30-39. Print.
- Clarke, Micael M. "Brontë's "Jane Eyre" and the Grimms' Cinderella." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 40.4 (2000): 695-710. *JSTOR*. Web. 08. Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556246>>.
- Eimerl, Sarel. "Story by Cinderella." *The Reporter* 22 Feb. 1968: 48-52. Web. 02 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.unz.org/Pub/Reporter-1968feb22-00048>>.
- "Faerie." *Merriam-Webster.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faerie>>.
- "Faerie." *Oxforddictionaries.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/faerie?q=faerie>>.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. "'Jane Eyre' and the Secrets of Furious Lovemaking." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 31.3, Thirtieth Anniversary Issue: III (1998): 351-72. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1346105?ref=search-gateway:ef541adb8e8257b7e3fd7794370ee825>>.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Gubar, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984. Print.
- Hewish, John. *Emily Brontë: A Critical and Biographical Study*. London: Macmillan, 1969. Print.
- Hyland, Peter. "Wuthering Heights and the Gothic myth." *Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë*. Ed. Linda Cookson, Bryan Loughrey. Harlow: Longman, 1988. 50-59. Print.

- Jones, Steven Swann. *The fairy tale: The magic mirror of imagination*. New York and London: Twayne Prentice Hall Intern., 1995. Print.
- Kotzin, Michael C. *Dickens and the Fairy Tale*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular, 1972. Print.
- Leavis, Q. D. "A Fresh Approach to 'Wuthering Heights'." *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë*. Ed. Patsy Stoneman. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993. 24-38. Print.
- Lovell-Smith, Rose. "Anti-Housewives and Ogres' Housekeepers: The Roles of Bluebeard's Female Helper." *Folklore* 113.2 (2002): 197-214. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/1260676?ref=search-gateway:1edd110c29ce29b3dd35a9e04e010f44>>.
- Mérei Ferenc, and V. Binét Ágnes. *Gyermeklélektan*. Budapest: Gondolat, 1978
- Nic an Airchinnigh, Meadhbh. "Introducing Folklore and Ethnology." Irish Folklore 1, GA4105. University of Limerick, Limerick. 14 Mar. 2013. Lecture.
- Ní Ghráda, Máire. "Fairies and Fairy Lore". Irish Folklore 1, GA4105. University of Limerick, Limerick. 21 Febr. 2013. Lecture.
- . "Introductory Lecture on Irish Folklore". Irish Folklore 1, GA4105. University of Limerick, Limerick. 31 Jan. 2013. Lecture.
- Pykett, Lyn. "Gender and Genre in 'Wuthering Heights': Gothic Plot and Domestic Fiction." *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë*. Ed. Patsy Stoneman. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993. 86-99. Print.
- Saunders, Claire. "Place in *Wuthering Heights*." *Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë*. Ed. Linda Cookson, Bryan Loughrey. Harlow: Longman, 1988. 20-29. Print.
- Silver, Carole G. *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.

- Simpson, Jacqueline. "The Function of Folklore in 'Jane Eyre' and 'Wuthering Heights'." *Folklore* 85.1 (1974): 47-61. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1260281>>.
- Susina, Jan. "Dealing with Victorian Fairies." *Children's Literature* 28.1 (2000): 230-37. *MUSE*. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/childrens_literature/v028/28.susina.pdf>.
- Taxner-Tóth, Ernő. *A Brontë nővérek világa*. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1984. Print.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy Stories." [Http://public.callutheran.edu/~brint/Arts/Tolkien.pdf](http://public.callutheran.edu/~brint/Arts/Tolkien.pdf). N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <<http://public.callutheran.edu/~brint/Arts/Tolkien.pdf>>
- Watts, Cedric. "Tensions in the characterisation of Heathcliff." *Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë*. Ed. Linda Cookson, Bryan Loughrey. Harlow: Longman, 1988. 40-49. Print.
- Wood, Juliette. "Filming Fairies: Popular Film, Audience Response and Meaning in Contemporary Fairy Lore." *Folklore* 117.3 (2006): 279-96. *JSTOR*. Web. 29. Sept. 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/30035375?ref=search-gateway:c2409b99998ffa6cf058b81bc81c3de8>>.
- Woolf, Virginia. "'Jane Eyre' and 'Wuthering Heights'." *The Common Reader* (1916): n. pag. Web. 08 Mar. 2014. <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91c/chapter14.html> >.
- Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.